

Administration appeals faculty union filing to ERB

By STEFAN OSTRACH
Special Correspondent

EUGENE — A union organizing effort by a majority of faculty employed by the University of Oregon (UO) has been delayed.

Just four minutes before a 5 p.m. deadline on April 4, lawyers representing UO's administration filed objections with the state Employment Relations Board (ERB). United Academics of the University of Oregon (UA-UO), a joint effort by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), had previously turned in 1,100 cards signed by a majority of teaching staff seeking to join

together in a single bargaining unit. UO has 1,912 faculty members.

Under card check provisions of Oregon's public sector labor law, if ERB finds the bargaining unit to be appropriate, it will certify the union and order the UO administration to bargain.

The administration's objections would gut the union campaign. It wants to exclude from the bargaining unit tenure-related faculty; adjunct and affiliate faculty; postdoctoral scholars; research associates and fellows; emeritus and other retired faculty; visiting or guest faculty; and faculty of graduate and professional degree programs. Further, it wants to expand the definition of

a supervisor to include all principal investigators, department heads, directors of centers and institutes, and all faculty who work with graduate fellows.

In a statement posted on their website, UA-UO wrote: "They seem intent on limiting the right of faculty to be part of a union... These objections include most faculty at the UO."

The objections are suspect because the Oregon University System already negotiates with an AFT local at Portland State that is similar to the broad one sought by the UO academics.

Last minute objections are often used as a tactic by employers to stall organizing campaigns because it gives them more time to undermine the drive. ERB has scheduled hearings on the administration's objections for May 5-7, which will be seven weeks after the cards were submitted. Additional days of hearings may be needed before a recommended order is issued. That order can be appealed to the full ERB and to the courts.

After initially pledging to remain neutral, UO administrators spent \$25,000 for a consultant to prepare a web page expressing common anti-union themes. More recently, acting UO President Robert Berdahl told UA-

UO leaders that he was going to oppose the union. "Regardless of the outcome of the ERB proceedings, the university's goal remains the same: to maintain a strong relationship with those who contribute to the university in all its endeavors — especially in its core mission of teaching, research and public service," Berdahl said in a prepared statement.

Tina Boscha, an organizer and UO composition instructor, told the Eugene Register Guard: "We are all part of the university mission, whether tenure track or nontenure track or research. It's all about research and instruction and educating Oregon's citizens.

"We are confident that they (ERB) will eventually rule that this bargaining unit is appropriate."

...Ryan-Wyden Medicare plan

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low Democrats, who say it's still a voucher system.

Wyden insists that the new plan isn't a voucher. "A voucher is like a glorified coupon, and it never keeps up with costs," he explained to the NOLC Executive Board. "Unlike vouchers, premium support is variable, it rises with health care costs."

Wyden said premium support payments would be pegged to the actual cost of health care in a given area, determined by an annual competitive bidding process.

Last month, Ryan unveiled the House Republicans' 2013 budget proposal, which includes in it the Ryan-Wyden Medicare plan.

"I oppose it, sight unseen," Wyden told the NOLC Executive Board.

Texas Hold'em card tournament draws 61 players, raises \$3,027 for Doernbecher

Unions for Kids raised \$3,027 at its inaugural Texas Hold'em card tournament April 14 at the Sheet Metal Workers Local 16 union hall in Portland.

The poker tournament is a spin-off of the annual Motorcycle Poker Run and motorcycle raffle sponsored by Unions for Kids, a 501(c3) non-profit founded 10 years ago by union members to raise money for Doernbecher Children's Hospital. To date, more than \$271,000 has been donated.

John Candioto, business manager of Local 16, coordinated the Texas hold'em event. Sixty-one players participated and 13 businesses and/or union locals sponsored tables.

Top four finishers were Doug Haase, Joe Harris, Jonathan Moss, and Chris Sewall. Each received a Visa gift card.

"I can't thank enough everyone who helped out," Candioto said. "I'm so jacked at the amount raised in the first year. I'm getting started now for next year's event."

Tickets are still being sold for a chance to win a new Harley — a 2012 Heritage Softail Classic. Tickets are \$10 each, with only 5,000 sold. The drawing will be held at 4 p.m., June 9, following the motorcycle poker run.

For more information, call Lee Duncan at 503-260-5905 or go on line to lee@unionsforkids.org.

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