

Smells like Strike Season

UO's student and faculty unions take a stand on possible spring strikes

BY SAMANTHA SOBEL

On March 11, the faculty union at the University of Oregon, United Academics, will vote on a strike authorization arguing that faculty compensation is not keeping pace with inflation since the pandemic. At the same time, the UO Student Workers union has been in negotiation with the university for nine months over wage protection against nondiscrimination and consistent pay in a timely manner.

United Academics has been bargaining with the university for over a year, fighting to keep faculty compensation at pace with inflation and the university's budget. Edward Davis, a professor in Earth Sciences at UO and chair of the Organizing and Membership Committee for United Academics, says that despite the university's budget showing room for raises, the administration is reluctant to increase faculty salaries to pre-COVID levels.

A strike authorization is a process that allows members of a union to vote to call a strike if the circumstances warrant it. This helps ensure the decision to strike is in the majority. The earliest the strike would occur is the beginning of spring term, on the last day of March or the first day of April.

Davis says, "I'm an associate professor, so that means I've gone through the process to earn tenure and got a raise, an 8 percent raise that comes with earning tenure. That happened to me right before COVID and 2019 in the fall."

Members of the United Academics are UO faculty, including full-time and part-time research and instructional staff, tenure-related and non-tenure-track staff, library staff, officers of research and former staff.

Davis says that since 2019, inflation has eaten up all of his raises, which means he is earning less than he was before earning tenure.

Davis says, "It feels insulting to be told by the leadership of the university that my work doesn't matter, the effort that I go through to stay relevant and my expertise doesn't matter. And that's just my particular example. That's repeated across all of the faculty at the university, and some folks are in worse situations than I am by a lot."

He adds, "We deserve to be paid in a fair way that reflects all the work that we've done to keep the University of Oregon open through the COVID crisis, and then continuing on today. And so the strike authorization vote is an opportunity for us to be really clear about our membership's feelings on the current negotiations."

Simultaneously, the UO administration is currently negotiating with the University of Oregon Student Workers union after being investigated by the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries last October for not paying new employees within 35 days of work, which is illegal under state law.

The UOSW is made up of student workers in

every department on campus, allowing anyone holding a position labeled as "student employee" to join. The bargaining unit excludes supervisory and confidential employees, and employees from other bargaining units.

Izzie Marshall, student worker in health services and member of the UOSW bargaining team says, "The university doesn't want the arbitration part of our agreements article to be applied to harassment and discrimination on campus. This is something that a lot of other schools have."

Arbitration is a way to settle a disagreement with the help of a third party.

Marshall adds, "It wouldn't even cost the university any money. And it shouldn't be controversial." She says, "It just feels like the university is taking advantage of us student workers."

Victoria Piñeiro, a UOSW lead negotiator says, "Our goal is just to get a livable wage for people, have people be paid on time in a time that doesn't break the law and having those protections against discrimination harassment, because that just has no room in the workplace to be happening."

Angela Seydel, UO's director of Issues Management, says the university is not scheduling interviews regarding student negotiations or negotiations with United Academics, but provided a statement on behalf of the university.

Of UOSW she writes, "We value our student workers and appreciate their contributions and shared commitment to the university. We are committed to continuing to negotiate a contract that positions everyone for long-term success." Seydel adds that "progress has been made" on the contract with UOSW.

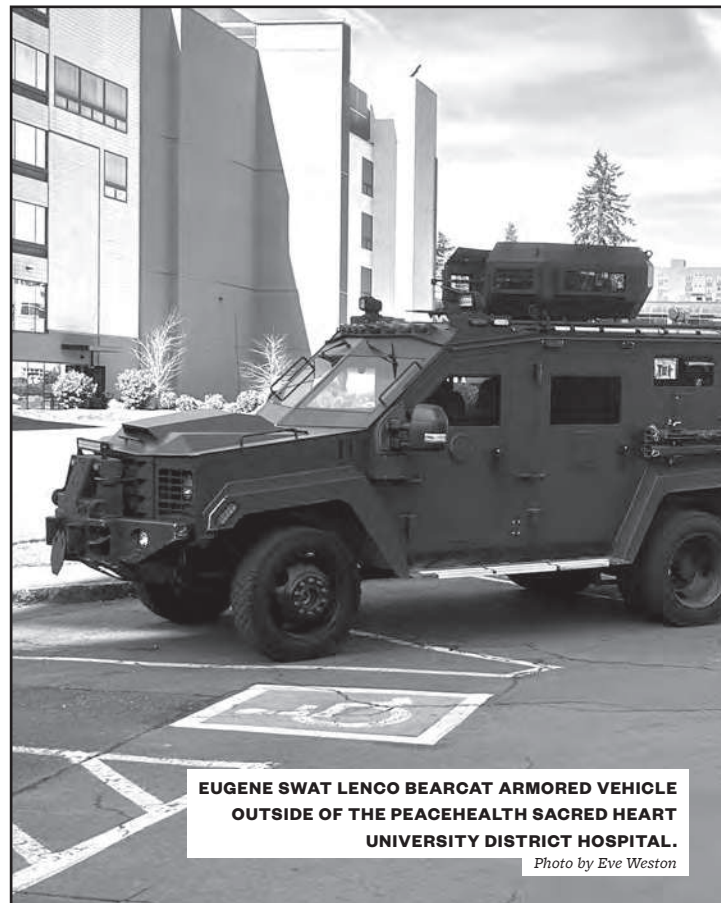
Of United Academics she writes, "We are committed to working toward an agreement on a fair contract that invests in our valued faculty and sustains the long-term viability of our university community. At the same time, we must also be responsible stewards of the university's financial resources."

Piñeiro says, "We had bargaining on Friday for 13 hours and couldn't even come to an agreement on grievance and arbitration over nondiscrimination, harassment," and she continues "right now we're really struggling with getting our noneconomic issues agreed upon before we even start touching things like wages and our pay period and things like that."

UOSW's last rally, The Final Quackdown, to convince administration to settle a fair contract is on Friday, March 14.

Davis says that if negotiations keep heading down the same path, there is potential for UO to have two of its unions on strike at the same time during spring term.

For more information on United Academics go to UAUOregon.org and find UOSW as [UOStudentWorkers](https://www.instagram.com/UOStudentWorkers) on Instagram.



EUGENE SWAT LENCO BEARCAT ARMORED VEHICLE
OUTSIDE OF THE PEACEHEALTH SACRED HEART
UNIVERSITY DISTRICT HOSPITAL.

Photo by Eve Weston

SWAT TRAINING AT UNIVERSITY-AREA HOSPITAL

The Eugene Police Department has partnered with PeaceHealth to conduct tactical training in the unused University District Hospital

BY EVE WESTON

Eugene Police Special Operations and Tactics (SWAT) is using the abandoned PeaceHealth Sacred Heart University District Hospital for training. In an email to *Eugene Weekly*, SWAT Lt. Chuck Salsbury writes via an EPD spokesperson that the SWAT team has partnered with the hospital for several years.

Salsbury says that the purpose of the training is to simulate police tactics such as hostage rescue and active violent incidents, commonly known as active shooters.

"EPD SWAT trains monthly in order to keep up with industry standards and training protocols and to better prepare our officers for real world incident situations that we may come across," Salsbury writes. He confirms that SWAT utilizes a special kind of ammunition during these training sessions called "simunition."

Simunition is a type of non-lethal training ammunition used to realistically simulate real weapons fire in a safe manner. Simunition is used in regular semi-automatic firearms, but requires specially modified components to work correctly. It allows officers to train with the same weapons they would use in the field.

This kind of ammunition is typically used during force-on-force training, which involves two opposing sides firing real, non-lethal projectiles at one another. "We do often have our officers participating in training at this location in scenario-based simulation training utilizing simunition in order to facilitate our officer's training in the most realistic force on force training," Salsbury writes.

Salsbury writes that the unused hospital is used by the entire police department as needed for the training department. *EW* reached out to PeaceHealth for comment but received no response.