



UNION SPOTLIGHT

AFT Washington, AFL-CIO

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December 2014

Wishing you and your loved ones a wonderful holiday season and happy new year!

from the AFT Washington staff



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Front row: Sylvia Watson, Elizabeth Ferrell, Tracey Whitten. Middle row: Rosalinda Aguirre, Nancy Kennedy and Molly; Bernal Baca, Kristin Elia, and Dan Troccoli. Back row: Natalie Sowinski, Christine Landon, Merrilee Miron, Karen Strickland, and Cris Rice.

Puget Sound Labor Agency: Giving and Receiving in Times of Need and Every Day

The holiday season can be a difficult time of year for many. The Puget Sound Labor Agency (PSLA), a non-profit organization founded in 1975 by labor unions, can help. Their mission is to “improve the quality of life for people needing assistance and to provide an avenue for unions and their families to help.” The PSLA is able to help others because of the support it receives from union members, labor organizations, United Way of King County, foundations, and charitable fundraising.

If you or someone you know needs help, the PSLA may be able to assist through their food bank, emergency services program, or the Regional Access Mobility Program (RAMP). You can visit their website at <http://www.pslaonline.org/index.cfm>, call them at (206) 448-9277, or email them at psla@pslaonline.org for more information about their services and programs.

The PSLA food bank, located in the Labor Temple, serves people living in certain Seattle areas (98101, 98109, 98111, 98121, 98134, and 98199) and union members regardless of where they live. They provide diapers and baby food and sometimes have pet food. The food bank is located on the main floor of the Seattle Labor Temple at 2800 First Avenue in Seattle. Please visit their website or call

for the dates and times of day the food bank is open.

In partnership with IAM 751 and the Regional Access Mobility Program (RAMP), the PSLA provides residential wheelchair ramps for the disabled. The PSLA-RAMP program has been able to build about 85 ramps per year. If you need a ramp built for your home or community building, contact **Jerry Otis** at jotis@pslaonline.org or (425) 387-2291.

Want to give rather than receive? The RAMP program is also a good place to volunteer your carpentry or other building skills, as well as your time. PSLA is always grateful for those who volunteer, offer in-kind donations, or provide financial support. The PSLA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and most donations are tax-deductible.

Soon members will be able to support PSLA and our education scholarship fund by donating through the United Way. Watch the website for details.

Be sure to check out their website for the many ways you can volunteer your time, funds, or skills to help the PSLA help others.

We are stronger together, and together we can help our union brothers, sisters, and families in times of crisis and need.



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Board meetings are usually held on the first Saturday of the month except for holidays and summer months. Board members are elected to two-year terms.

AFT Washington represents over 6,500 members in early childhood education, K-12, and higher education in Washington State and is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, which represents 1.5 million members nationwide.

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Check out our 2015 legislative agenda at wa.aft.org/legislation and keep abreast of our bills by signing up for The Legisletter, to get weekly updates during the session.



Karen Strickland

President's Column

Now more than ever, we're stronger together!

You may have noticed a theme in my articles, conversations, and speeches over the last year: strong locals and strong relationships with community partners are essential to our success. Why? Because these are the qualities we can parlay into power — power at the bargaining table, in the electoral process, and at the legislative and policymaking tables. Why is this so important? As unions grew around the middle of the last century, the middle class became a reality. As unions lose ground, the middle class is shrinking. This is not random; the connection between union power and the well-being of people like you and me is undeniable. The relentless, coordinated attacks on the labor movement are driven by the knowledge that the collective voice of a strong middle class is a force to be reckoned with.

One of the primary focuses of the attacks on unions and the middle class are the efforts to eliminate collective bargaining. The Koch brothers and their cronies, representatives of the 1%, are spending big bucks funding the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) which has introduced legislation at the local level (e.g., Sequim, Shelton) that would eliminate collective bargaining, as well as at the state level to do the same (e.g. Wisconsin).

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court ruled that home healthcare workers need not pay a representation fee to the union, even as they benefit from the union's efforts, such as the nearly doubling of wages and health care coverage won through representation by SEIU. Anti-union, moneyed activists have a line-up of legal cases ready to file in their effort to eliminate the representation fee for all public sector employees.

These extreme measures demonstrate their fear. They demand a fight.

With these kinds of attacks in mind, I ask you: How are you participating in the life of your union?

Are you a non-fee payer benefitting from representation but not paying a "fair share?" Are you a fee payer contributing to the treasury but otherwise MIA?

Or are you a member who attends meetings, stuffs envelopes, or reads the negotiations updates? That's a good start - can you take it to the next level? Can you help by talking to nonmembers about joining? How about attending our convention or the Northwest Leadership Forum? What about holding a leadership position in your union?

You know how it goes . . . a few committed souls carry the load for many. Sure, we are all busy juggling any number of responsibilities, but we're cheating ourselves out of the true potential of our collective power. When more members take ownership of their union, we see the effect at the bargaining table, in grievance outcomes, and in legislative and policy wins.

You will also see it in your community. When we push back on ALEC-driven legislation impacting collective bargaining, we are pushing back on ALEC's efforts to strip away voters' rights. When we stand with our allies fighting for voters' rights, they stand with us in return.

If you're not convinced of your essential role in building a more powerful union, take one of your union leaders for coffee or a beer and ask her/him what they are doing to build the union. And then ask how you can help. You are the union. You are essential to its strength.

On another note, AFT Washington worked hard this electoral season — my deepest thanks to those of you who took action. We continue to face some high hurdles come legislative session in January. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The budget deficit is deep, and it is abundantly clear that Washington State needs solutions to the revenue crisis we are facing. We will fight forward with our allies toward a revenue system that reclaims the promise of our democracy. And yes, we will be reaching out to you for your help in doing so.

Our Organizing Director, **Dorothy Gibson**, has resigned. I have worked with her since I took office, and I'm grateful for all I have learned from her. I count her among one of AFT Washington's strongest allies. She has brought a tremendous energy, passion, and commitment to our union and she will be missed. I wish her all the best as she embarks on her next endeavor. — *Karen*



Mark Thomason, Mark Millbauer, Vik Bahl, Erin Gilbert, and John Avery

Five + One Gators in Olympia

by Vik Bahl, English Faculty and United Faculty Executive Board

At the Green River Community College's (GRCC) November Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting, Board chair and former Auburn Mayor **Pete Lewis** told the faculty that if we weren't happy with what was happening at GRCC there was nothing the BOT could do and that we should go down to Olympia instead. On Friday afternoon, December 5, that's just what "five + one" Gators did!

Mark Millbauer, Mark Thomason, Erin Gilbert, John Avery, and Vik Bahl, representing the Green River United Faculty, had a productive and substantive meeting with three members of the Governor's staff: **Molly Keenan** (Director of Boards and Commissions), **Marcie Maxwell** (Senior Policy Advisor on Education), and **Paulette Avalos** (Policy Advisor on Labor), along with our AFT Washington lobbyist **Bernal Baca**. We met for more than one hour.

In our meeting, we described the crisis on campus, including the reasons for the Vote of No

Confidence in President Ely; the diminished role of instruction; the breakdown in shared governance and communication between administration and faculty; the BOT's unwillingness to hear our viewpoints; the BOT's failure to provide adequate evaluation and oversight of the president; potential ethics violations regarding salaries and employment decisions; and the poor morale on campus, especially due to the large and damaging exodus of longstanding employees.

The Gators provided various solutions, such as the urgency of appointing future board members with labor and higher education backgrounds and with better ties to our local community. We recommended more meaningful and substantive evaluation of the president; more direct communication between the BOT and Instruction, including a standing report by the Instructional Council chair in addition to the current Union report; and greater familiarity with instructional

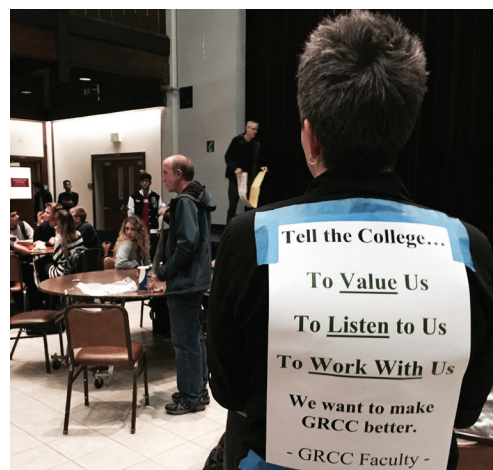
and college issues through campus visits by the BOT.

The governor's staff listened attentively and respectfully. **Molly Keenan** explained her role in the appointment of new board members. Ms. Keenan sought our views on what qualifications or criteria we would like to see for new board members, as well as our honest feedback on current board members. She encouraged us to send feedback, and invited us to recommend additional candidates whom we believe would be suitable.

The next step is to meet with **Kim Tanaka**, who is the Boards and Commissions Coordinator at the State Board for Community & Technical Colleges (SBCTC). She is responsible for providing training to new BOT members along with organizing the TACTC conferences. Bernal recommended that the AFT and faculty provide training on union issues during the TACTC conferences.

The five of us left feeling positive and optimistic. We felt we had been heard. We believe the governor's office understood some of our concerns and priorities with regard to the appointment of trustees and the significance of Instruction.

(cont'd on pg. 7)



Aligning Teachers' Professional Learning Continuum

United Faculty of Western Washington receives AFT Innovation Fund Grant

There is a growing national emphasis on high-stakes assessment for teachers at all levels of practice, from preservice through the veteran stages of teaching.

Last spring, **Dr. Steven Wojcikiewicz**, Assistant Director of the Educational Issues Department of American Federation of Teachers (AFT), visited Western Washington University (WWU) to discuss the current legislative and policy environment in teacher education.

His presentation emphasized how all teachers now work in a culture of high-stakes assessment that has the potential to undermine quality teaching and learning if not approached thoughtfully.

The State of Washington, for example, has now implemented a certification requirement that all preservice candidates need to pass the Education Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA), a rigorous performance assessment that requires them to prepare three to five lessons, analyze their teaching in the areas of planning, instruction, and assessment, and support students' academic language development and metacognition. While the goals to document and demonstrate each candidate's ability to effectively teach his/her subject matter to all students are admirable, the edTPA often causes significant stress and anxiety for candidates during their student teaching due to its emphasis on technical writing, its scoring by outside evaluators (hired by Pearson, PLC), and the real challenges experienced by the candidates' cooperating teachers who are unequipped with quality mentoring strategies to support the objectives of edTPA and

often see the high-stakes assessment as an imposition on their goals for quality teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Partnerships

When prompted about AFT's response to such high-stakes assessment efforts, Dr. Wojcikiewicz introduced an opportunity for the United Faculty of Western Washington (UFWW) to engage the AFT Innovation Fund to support the alignment of the professional learning and performance assessment of preservice teachers across a professional continuum. As a result, faculty from WWU worked with the local Bellingham school district and were invited to apply for and were awarded an Innovation Grant (\$150,000) to support WWU teacher candidates.

The project, "**Aligning Teachers' Professional Learning Continuum**," represents a strong partnership between the UFWW, WWU, and Bellingham Public Schools. The project is focused on effective mentoring strategies that promote learning-focused conversations, the connections between the high-stakes performance assessments required by teachers through the veteran stages of teaching, and effective mathematics instruction that emphasizes tasks with high cognitive demand.

Collaboration

The participants in the grant-sponsored workshops include WWU preservice candidates, university faculty and supervisors, cooperating teachers, teachers on special assignment, principals, and district personnel from the school district. A



key focus of this project is the *collective work* with the intention of supporting the pre-service teachers as they prepare for the edTPA, their faculty and supervisors as they mentor them, and their cooperating teachers as they navigate new math curricula in the district and prepare for performance assessments such as Washington's now-required teacher performance assessment.

In essence, this initiative is intended to have *local* control over preservice and inservice professional development and support high-quality teacher learning.

Project Director **Dr. Matthew Miller** (WWU Elementary Education) notes, "Teachers now live and work in a culture of high-stakes performance assessment throughout all stages of their teaching career. While this can be daunting, this union-sponsored grant project is an opportunity to take back some of the control of teachers' professional development, roll up our collective sleeves, and focus on what matters most — to support students' learning and teachers' professional growth."

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Higher Education Stakeholders Gather at Summit



A first of its kind,” exclaimed Bernal Baca, Lobbyist for AFT Washington.

What he was referring to was the first Higher Education Stakeholders Summit that assembled stakeholders including students, faculty, classified staff, and community organizations. This summit was action oriented and provided skill-building workshops to enhance individual and collective advocacy for higher education. Over 50 people attended the event at Tacoma Community College in October. The focus was on supporting our public higher education system — already recognized as high quality — by generating ideas about revenue and collaboration among stakeholders.

The morning provided a solid foundation on defunding and its impact on students, faculty, staff, and the community, grounding discussion in real personal experiences about the impacts of the state funding crisis.

The afternoon shifted into hands-on workshops on organizing communities around shared values, using art

to draw attention to and dramatize the issue, and influencing legislators in Olympia. Former Representative **Phyllis Gutierrez-Kenney** provided guidance and leadership on effectively interacting with state legislators.

According to Rep. Gutierrez-Kenney, “I am impressed with the quality of the participants. In such a short time they really got it.”

In the “Art as Advocacy” workshop, **Karen Strickland** observed the power of artistic expression as a force for change.

“Singing as a form of protest often makes people uncomfortable – that’s because it is such a unifying and powerful act,” Karen said.

Overall, the summit ended on an upbeat note with the group vowing to commit to working together in the future. Joint lobbying in Olympia and campus-based stakeholder actions are two specific ideas we will pursue this legislative session. So stay tuned – you, too, may have the opportunity to sing on the Capitol steps or hallways of your campus.

Aligning Teachers’ Learning (from pg. 5)

Miller added, “This support from the AFT Innovation Fund is providing us an opportunity to bring stakeholders together to collectively approach teacher assessment that is learner-centered, grounded in strong content, and developmentally appropriate.”

The project leadership team will be collecting and analyzing data on the impact of the project work, and will report on its findings in 2015.

For more information about the “Aligning Teachers’ Professional Learning Continuum” project, contact Project Director **Dr. Matthew Miller**, matthew.miller@wwu.edu.

Locals can compete annually for the AFT Innovation Fund grant. The Fund supports on-the-ground ideas from educators to help improve public education.

If you’d like to go green and get Union Spotlight electronically, please contact Christine Landon, 206-432-8075 or clandon@aftwa.org.

Save the Date!
AFT Washington
2015 Convention

May 15 and 16
Hotel Murano, Tacoma

To campaign or not to campaign

by Dan Troccoli, Internal Organizer

Waging a campaign around a workplace or social issue in the union can be a lot of hard work. It's sometimes alluring to seek shortcuts and alternative means to the end goal. However, there is value in the process of getting there as it is vital to building the strength of the union.

Any round of negotiations without a campaign to mobilize members has pitfalls associated with it. Of course, losing ground on working conditions and rights of union members is the most obvious consequence. But perhaps more damaging in the long run is what is called **third-partying the union**.

Third-partying means to see the union as separate from the members, or a third party in a group: the employee, the employer, and the union. In fact, the union is the members, without which there is no union. This is becoming startlingly clear as union membership is hitting 70-year lows. There is a crying need for unions to make a serious culture shift from services to a social justice, organizing model.

Whether for a contract or other union priority, campaigns are opportunities to engage more members and non-members than usual. The urgency of the issues at the heart of the campaign provides a renewed motivation to strengthen union representative and communication structures. Other union priorities, including political ones, if paired effectively with campaign issues, can be seen as another front in the struggle instead of typical union "chores."

Identifying and developing new leadership happens if the increased

campaign responsibilities are distributed out from the existing leadership structure to newly re-energized members. A campaign also provides opportunities to make or solidify relationships with community allies and other unions, which are essential to build and maintain even when a campaign is done. Member engagement is not an end goal, but a necessity in constant struggle with employers trying to reign in what they see as external labor costs: our wages and benefits.

To paraphrase abolitionist **Frederick Douglass**, the struggle may be moral or it may be physical, but it must be a struggle.

Five + One Gator

(cont'd from pg. 4)

We are extremely grateful to **Bernal** for setting up this historic, unprecedented meeting with the governor's office.

Merrilee Miron, Dan Troccoli, and Sylvia Watson of the state federation have supported us throughout as we have mobilized and organized to get to this level.

Numerous GRCC faculty were also instrumental in making this meeting so focused and poignant, including the UF Executive Board, the Street Heat team, and **Steve Kinholt's** genius guerrilla tactics.

Oh, and you might be wondering about who our +1 Gator was. Just as the Seahawks have their 12th Man, we had our 6th Gator with us. Retired Green River faculty leader **Hank Galmish** infused us with his ebullient spirit and good wishes from Colorado on our drive to Olympia!

Thank You, Election Volunteers!

by Kristin Elia, Political Organizer

The results are in and the electoral landscape is set for the next two years. The State Legislature has split-party control, with a Democratic majority in the House and a Republican majority in the Senate.

While the election results were not what we hoped for, AFT Washington made big strides in building our long-term political power. We engaged 270 members in conversations about issues that matter to them, we recruited 60 unique volunteers to make phone calls and knock on doors, and we increased our COPE donor base by nearly five percent. And, together with our partners, we reached out to hundreds of thousands of voters in targeted districts in an effort to bring about a better Washington.

We must celebrate our accomplishments! A special thanks and recognition to our repeat rock-star volunteers, who showed up for more than one shift to make sure that we reached voters with our message this year: **Glenda Hanson** (Renton TC Faculty), **Libby Schoene, Esther Sunde, Dove John, and Jeb Wyman** (AFT Seattle), **Amy Kinsel and Elizabeth Hanson** (Shoreline CC Faculty), **Kevin Asman and David McAvoy** (South Puget Sound CC Faculty), **David Ortiz** (Cascadia College Faculty), **Rita Smilkstein and Susan Levy** (Retirees Chapter 8045R).

We must also recognize the top three locals who had the highest volunteer turnout this year, working with AFT Washington staff to recruit members

(cont'd on pg. 8)

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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Newly elected local presidents

The following officers were elected by their local membership between August and December.

Clover Park TC Classified #4789:

Libby Voigt

United Faculty of Eastern Washington #4904: **Michael Conlin**

Whatcom CC Faculty #3591:

Tresha Dutton

Renton TC Faculty #3914: **Gary Neill**

Grays Harbor CC #4984: **Darby Cavin**

Save the Date!

Professional Development Conference for Classified Members

Saturday, March 14, 2015

Giaudrone Middle School
3049 S. Alaska St., Tacoma

- Network with other classified members!
- Participate in skills-based training.
- Door prizes! Lunch provided.

Watch for registration coming soon!

Election Volunteers (from pg. 7)

and spread the word about our political program and the importance of participation: AFT Seattle, Shoreline CC Faculty, and South Puget Sound CC Faculty!

With the campaigns behind us, AFT Washington will move forward and get ready to redouble our efforts for the legislative session in 2015. We cannot do this work without our members and that's why we thank you for all you do to help our union build political and legislative power!

Now, onward to Olympia!

[You can find our 2015 legislative agenda on our website at wa.aft.org/legislation. The session begins Monday, Jan. 12.]