

# P S U F A

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## CALENDAR

**October 10, 2008**

### **PSUFA Member Meeting**

At Simon Benson House 1803 SW Park Avenue - main floor (Across the park blocks from Smith Center) 3:00-5:00 pm

## DEADLINES

**December 1, 2008**

**Education Fund for Winter term classes.**

**Professional Development Fund for activities January-June, 2009**

**December 15**

**Health Fund Applications for Fall term**



**LEARN**more about PSUFA by checking out our web-site <http://www.psufa.org/>

*From the President's Desk:*

## Oregon as a pivotal testing ground for anti-worker legislation

Our new academic year begins with much promise: we welcome Dr. Wim Weiwel, our new President, to the campus, and PSU is the proud recipient of a first-time ever



25 million dollar grant from the Miller Foundation for sustainability education. Both help to elevate expectations and attitudes regarding the status of higher education and the role PSU plays in our city and state. President Weiwel brings a fresh perspective and leadership style to a campus that has been fraught with conflict between administration and faculty over the last few years of contract negotiations. I am hopeful, as are many other members of the campus community, that Dr. Weiwel's academic background and skills in working with people may contribute to a more wholesome management system and improved faculty morale. Dr. Weiwel is clearly attuned to the possibilities that exist in the urban environment and committed to realizing the potential of PSU as a great urban university.

As the year begins I welcome all the new members who have joined PSUFA, and invite those of you who have not yet joined to do so by using the form on our web-site, or on the back of this newsletter. We will be reaching out to all our

members for greater participation in union activities that help to improve communication and work relations on campus. One of our most important functions is education of our students, ourselves, and one another. We have posted the new contract on our web-site, and I encourage you to read the summary of new provisions. Negotiations for the 2009-2011 will begin in April, 2009. Consider becoming part of the bargaining team.

Meanwhile, this term we will be focusing on the elections that seem more important than ever in determining the future of our country and our living and working environment. Despite conviction for racketeering, Bill Sizemore is back with a handful of ballot measures that aim to undermine state government, education, public safety and healthcare, and to limit citizen's rights to contribute to charities, union, or other organizations through voluntary payroll deductions. Voters have rejected versions of this and similar measures several times in the past. They return again and again because Bill Sizemore has turned Oregon's initiative process into a money making operation that is funded by out of state, ultra-conservative interests that see Oregon as a pivotal testing ground for anti-worker legislation.

**Have a great year, and be sure to vote.**

# OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Our ability as a union to serve the many needs and interests of adjunct faculty, depends entirely on the participation of members. Help in dealing with problems on the job, with obtaining funds for health care, classes, professional development, and help with understanding university operations and programs, are the kinds of services the union provides. PSUFA is able to provide some vital services ONLY because of the volunteer efforts of members.

Right now we are missing three members of our Executive Council. Some of those individuals have gone on to full time employment, and we celebrate their success, and give thanks here for their important contributions to PSUFA. Stephanie Blackman, who served last year as Vice-President, brought a strong voice to our lobbying effort in Salem and to the negotiating table as a member of the Bargaining Team. Pamela Kenley-Meschino performed a vital function in editing this newsletter for two years, producing

some of our finest issues. And Butch Holmberg did double duty as a member of the Bargaining Team and Vice-President for Grievances.

Now it is time for new people to step forward and share in the process of making Portland State University a better place to study and work. Opportunity abounds. You might volunteer to serve on the Executive Council and learn more about how the union operates. You would be helping those members who are already working in multiple roles to do a better job. "The more hands, the lighter the task," one member cheerily reminded me. So I will outline here some of the tasks and indicate where some extra hands are needed.

**Grievance Committee:** This is one of our most important functions. Hear first-hand from individuals about issues that arise and learn how the contract is maintained so as to protect academic freedom and individual rights on the job. This committee also makes recommendations to the Labor/ Management Committee and the Bargaining Team.

**Bargaining Team:** Our current contract expires June 30, 2009. The team will begin negotiations in April. The team consists of some experienced people and others new to the process. Volunteering opens the door to greater learning about how the university works. It also builds camaraderie among members.

**Web-site Management:** You don't need to be a technical whiz; that part is done for you. This job simply involves monitoring what's up on the site and overseeing updates to make the site more informative and accessible for all members.

**Audit Committee:** AFT Rules for a small local like ours require an annual review of finances that is performed by a committee of no less than three members. PSUFA is fortunate to have members with sufficient competence in accounting procedures to manage this work, but another volunteer would help assure continuity.

Put them all together and they spell UNITY! Call now for details and volunteer!

## LABOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

By Margi McCue

In recent contract negotiations with PSU administration we agreed to set up a Labor-Management committee to resolve issues and concerns of members. The goal is to meet on a regular basis to discuss questions and problems that members have raised, and to resolve those we can in order to avoid escalation to a grievance level. The committee is to be comprised of 2-3 members of PSUFA and 2-3 PSU administrators. We need people to serve on the Committee and welcome volunteers. This is a good way to become better acquainted with the role of the union in relation to PSU Administration without making a long-term commitment. Our

*We need people to serve on the Committee and welcome volunteers.*

first meeting addressed the issues surrounding PERS contributions for part-time faculty in response to complaints from members who had sizeable and unanticipated deductions taken from their paychecks. Four members participated and learned a great deal about how the University's retirement program works.

**SUPPORT YOUR  
PSUFA  
UNION!**

## SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

By Barbara Dudley

What will the recently announced a \$25 million matching grant to support the University's efforts in sustainability mean for PSU? Sustainability is the new moniker for much of what used to be called environmental sciences, corporate responsibility, and green business practices. There is, however, one significant aspect of sustainability which is often overlooked, the third leg of the three legged stool, "social sustainability."

A core group of PSU professors and students have been in the forefront of the evolving definition and measure of social sustainability. For the last four years, Dr. Veronica Dujon (Soc) and Dr. Mary King (Econ) and adjunct faculty member Barbara Dudley (PA) have been co-teaching a graduate class on Social Sustainability within the Graduate Sustainability Certificate Program. The class attracts graduate students from all disciplines.

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# WHAT'S UP WITH PERS?

Something new and deeply disturbing is happening in the administration of the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS). Since mid-March the PSUFA list-serve has received numerous plaintive cries from members whose paychecks have been "hit" by Human Resources for overdue payments to the state retirement system.

PSUFA's new Labor/Management Team requested a meeting with HR to find out why. We found that the system itself has become more complex since it was reformed in 2003. While we can attempt to address the problem in our next round of negotiations, part-time faculty need to have more information about the system now.

As a first step, notice of mandatory participation in OUS retirement programs is now included in the standard letter of appointment for part-time faculty. Here's the scoop:

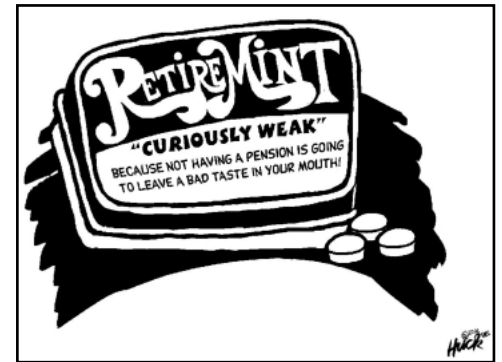
To become eligible, you must have worked for 6 continuous months with a

PERS covered employer (such as PSU), AND have worked 600 hours in a calendar year through PSU and/or any other PERS covered employers. Once you become eligible PSU is obligated to begin contributing 6% of your salary to your retirement plan.

If you work at multiple schools or state institutions the hours you work are combined in the total at the end of the year to determine your eligibility. Communication between institutions can fail, and when that happens you may be hurt. For example, HR discovered late in the year that they should have been deducting the 6% from an employee's pay. They corrected the error by deducting a very large amount from her final paycheck. The solution seemed harsh; it would have been preferable to work out a gradual series of payments. But HR is also bound by the "temporary" nature of adjunct hiring. Although the adjunct may expect to continue working in subsequent terms, the fact of their contract end date there is no concrete agreement

that would allow HR to wait for payment.

The obvious solution to this problem lies in our negotiations for a new contract. Many employers within the OUS system "pick up" the 6% for their employees. Adjunct faculty are more easily injured by the system as it currently operates. Having the 6% pick-up is the only sure way to alleviate the pain caused by problems of tracking and reporting of hours for faculty working at multiple institutions, or for those adjuncts at PSU who from time to time are bumped above .5 FTE and gain the 6% pick up and then lose it when they move back the following term.



## Candidate Interview and Recommendation Process

by Kelly Cowan, PSUFA V-P for Political Action

During the political primary season PSUFA participated in the process of interviewing candidates so that we might endorse the ones most likely to stand up for our member's values. We interviewed over 20 candidates for the U.S. Senate, state-wide offices, and legislative seats. We continued the process by interviewing candidates for the 5th Congressional district to replace Darleen Hooley, who is retiring.

For those not familiar with the process, I would like to tell you a little about how it works. A questionnaire is developed primarily from resolutions passed at conventions. For state offices, AFT-Oregon develops the questionnaire, and for federal offices, we get input from the AFT national office. We invite all major candidates to fill

out the questionnaire and participate in a face-to-face interview with us. Interviews typically last about an hour and give us a chance to directly engage with the candidates. Notices about candidate interviews are sent to local Presidents, who encourage their members to participate in this process. The main participants are usually members of the political and legislative committees at each local, but I want to emphasize that the process is open to all members. We would love to get additional participation.

Once the interview process is complete, the members from each local in attendance discuss and debate the merits of each candidate in order to make a final recommendation. The process we follow is intended to be very systematic and transparent so that all members know that AFT candidate

endorsements are made through a fair and open process. Not all members may agree with these endorsement and individuals are certainly free to decide whether they will follow the AFT recommendation or will vote for another candidate. However, by making a group recommendation for strong candidates, who represent the views of the majority of our members, AFT gains additional clout in the political process and candidates (learn) know it is important to listen to our priorities.

Member participation in the political processes and activities of the union is encouraged and valued. We work hard to make sure we represent the views of our members as well as we can. Please contact me for information about how you might help in this very important election year.

# AFT-Oregon Recommendations 2008 Ballot Measures

## **YES on Measure 56.**

This measure restores the principle that voting matters by revoking the “double majority” requirement. Under Measure 56 local bond measures win by the majority of people who actually vote, restoring fairness to local elections. (Legislative Referral)

## **NO on Measure 58.**

This measure imposes a one-size-fits-all teaching mandate for students learning English, and makes no exceptions for learning disabilities. It would cost the state an estimated \$250 million a year for at least two years, and would make it more difficult for students to learn English. Measure 58 takes away the local control from parents and teachers. (Sponsored by Bill Sizemore)

## **NO on Measure 59.**

Measure 59 would cut \$2.4 billion in funding for education, public safety and healthcare. While Oregon’s wealthiest taxpayers could deduct an unlimited amount of their federal tax on their state income tax return, 75 percent of Oregonians would not receive one extra dollar. Count this as another Bill Sizemore attack on working Oregonians.

## **NO on Measure 60.**

Measure 60 calls for teachers’ salaries to be based only on “classroom performance,” not qualifications or experience, or even a need for cost-of-living raises. However, the measure does not define how teachers’ performance would be quantified. That means more standardized tests. Measure 60 punishes the teachers who take the most challenging assignments – where students don’t test as well. (Sponsored by Bill Sizemore)

## **NO on Measure 61.**

This rigid one-size-fits-all approach to crime would require the construction of at least three more prisons, to the tune of 1.3 billion dollars. Overall implementation of the

measure would end up costing an additional minimum of \$160 million. That’s way too high a price tag for sentencing gimmicks that just don’t work. (Sponsor by Kevin Mannix)

## **NO on Measure 62.**

Measure 62 would take nearly \$200 million right out of the State School Fund. The result: fewer teachers, lower pay, larger classes, fewer classroom supplies and materials. This measure is brought to the ballot by Kevin Mannix and funded primarily by Nevada businessman Loren Parks, who has invested millions into Mannix and Sizemore efforts over the years.

## **NO on Measure 63.**

Labor unions, renters advocates and environmental groups are joining together to oppose Measure 63, which would allow residential and farm property owners to build structures on their own property valued at \$35,000 with no safety permits or inspections whatsoever. This measure would override state and local codes now in place. (Sponsored by Bill Sizemore)

## **NO on Measure 64.**

This measure would silence the voices of working people by stopping public employees from using voluntary payroll deductions to donate to charities, unions or any other organizations. Sound familiar? It should. Bill Sizemore has gotten this measure on the ballot three times already, and three times, Oregonians have voted against it.

## **NO on Measure 65.**

Voters of any party could vote for any candidate in a primary and only the top two winners would move on to the general election. A drastic change to the system we have now, Measure 65 would shut out minor parties, eliminate party endorsements, and could leave a major party without a candidate to vote for. (Sponsored by Phil Keisling)

## **PRIME TIME FOR POLITICAL ACTION**

Message from Mark Schwebke, President of AFT-Oregon

Every election our members ask, “Why should our union be involved in politics?” It’s an important question which deserves an answer.

Ballot measure and candidates for political office have a great impact on our livelihoods—from our wages and benefits, to our everyday working conditions. Unions help members with all the issues that affect our working lives.

This election we face many serious challenges. With them come opportunities to make significant strikes on the issues that matter to members.

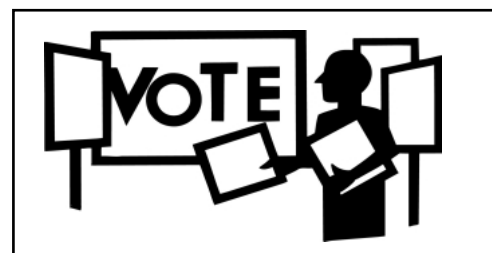
Our union, through a democratic process which culminated with an overwhelming vote by delegates to the 2008 AFT Convention, recommends Illinois Senator Barack Obama for President.

We face real threats this election with initiative racketeer Bill Sizemore again using fraud and forgery to qualify multiple ballot measures. He wants to hinder public education and health-care. One Sizemore initiative—Measure 64—will silence the voices of public employees from participating in political Action. Oregon voters have rejected this measure three times. [See the summary of AFT-Oregon’s positions of Measures which impact our members. For more information, visit [www.defendoregon.org](http://www.defendoregon.org).]

Many of our members, through affiliation with AFT-Oregon, AFT and the AFL-CIO, are actively engaged in talking with other union members and their families about the importance of registering to vote, the issues around the fall campaigns, and the importance of mailing their ballots.

You can make a difference in Election 2008 by participating in the following activities:

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# LABOR ON CLIMATE CHANGE

By Brooke Jacobson

AFT member Barbara Byrd is turning labor's attention to the question of what global climate change might mean for Oregon's environment, economy, and jobs. As Chair of Oregon AFL-CIO's Committee on Climate Change, Barbara Byrd sees education as the first order of business for the labor movement, whose members need to have a voice in developing strategies to cope with the conditions of change.

Shortly after taking office in early 2006 as Secretary-Treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO, Byrd began to see that concern about global climate change was growing both within and outside the labor movement. The Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board was considering a convention resolution urging the U.S. to sign on to the Kyoto Accords. Originally pro-

posed by PSUFA member Rachel Hibbard, the resolution resulted in a split vote and was tabled. New to the board, Byrd learned that nine other Kyoto resolutions had been submitted from other unions and similarly been voted down, while some unions were taking steps within their own ranks. For her that meant it was time for the labor movement to show leadership.

Barbara Byrd was one of twenty North American trade unionists who attended the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia in December 2007. At the end of January she met for the first time with her committee, which is broadly representative of the labor movement in Oregon. The primary task for committee members is to become better informed about the issues and various strategies for addressing concerns about energy, sustainability and jobs.

The committee has met three times and is working to keep abreast of data and developments at the local, state, and regional level.

Byrd's committee is scheduled to publish a report to the AFL-CIO Executive Council on the results of their study in June as the Council begins setting priorities for the 2009 legislative session. One key facet of labor's agenda for the coming year is to encourage examination and discussion of the study's findings by all union members so that they in turn can help others in their communities. The goal is to use the tools of social dialogue and collective bargaining to understand the potential for job growth as well as the inherent risks of social and economic consequences associated with making the transition to green technologies.

*continued from page 4*

## PRIME TIME FOR POLITICAL ACTION

**Get informed.** Learn more about the process of how you and your fellow union members make decisions on the issues that impact your job.

**Register to Vote.** Voter Registration ends October 14, 2008 for the General Election. Make sure your family and friends are registered. [Download the form from [www.sos.state.or.us/other/vr.htm](http://www.sos.state.or.us/other/vr.htm).]

**Volunteer.** This Fall, join other in activities such as phone banking, or labor to neighbor walks. Contact AFT-Oregon at: (503) 595-3880 to find out about activities in your area.

**Contribute** to AFT-Oregon's Political Action Fund. Each election cycle, members' voluntary contributions to PAF assist worker friendly candidates and ballot measures. Download your contribution form today at [www.aft-oregon.org](http://www.aft-oregon.org). Not only will you help to make a difference, but your contribution may be tax deductible as well.

**Above all, please remember that your vote is your voice in the future.** If you have questions or can assist with any of the above activities, contact AFT-Oregon at

**(503) 595-3880**

**Editor's Note:** PSUFA members who would like to help distribute election materials, contribute to PAF, or assist in activities on campus may contact Kelly Cowan ([kcowan@pdx.edu](mailto:kcowan@pdx.edu)).

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## SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

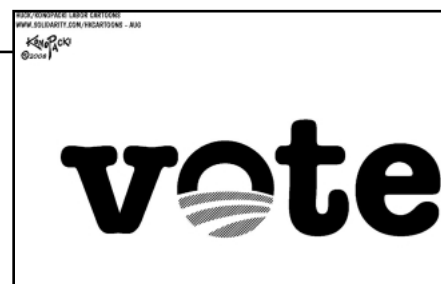
Social sustainability, as we have defined it through our class discussions, "refers to both (1) the processes that generate social health and well-being now and in the future and (2) those social institutions that facilitate environmental and economic sustainability now and for the future."

The social sustainability program has also included regular seminars since 2005 engaging faculty, students, staff and community members on a variety of topics relevant to "Social Sustainability." (To learn more and get the 2008-09 schedule of seminars, contact Marion Sharp at [sharpml@pdx.edu](mailto:sharpml@pdx.edu).)

Discussions and papers from the seminars led to the publication of a

book, *Understanding the Social Dimension of Sustainability*, edited by Dujon and King, as well as Jesse Dillard from the PSU School of Business. Chapters are written by PSU faculty and graduate students. The book is due out next month from Routledge Press.

A great deal could be done to build on existing strengths in the nascent field of social sustainability here at PSU. Our vision is an institute—focused locally, nationally and internationally—that would serve as a center for cutting edge research and teaching. As one of the few institutions focused on this effort, located in a city where local government and businesses are open to discussions about the social aspect of sustainability, PSU is uniquely placed to make a significant contribution to the scholarship and practice of social sustainability.



Return Service Requested

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**Kelly Cowan** teaches in Business Administration  
**Margi McCue** teaches in the Women's  
Studies Department

**J O I N**  
**P S U F A**



(Please print)  
Send completed form to: PSUFA, P.O. Box 8434, Portland, OR 97207-8434

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ID # \_\_\_\_\_  
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PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
DEPARTMENT \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

All Adjunct Faculty and Researchers working less than half time (under .5 FTE) at PSU, pay an agency fee of 13.41 or 11.18 per month (scaled to income level), which is automatically deducted from your pay. That fee, however, does not make you a voting member of the local. Only by signing a membership form do you become a voting member — able to shape policy, vote on contracts and elect officers.

Pursuant to ORS 292.005 and until further notice from me in writing delivered to the University payroll office, I hereby authorize the Disbursing Officer, Oregon Department of Higher Education, to deduct from my paycheck in the customary manner the regular membership dues for the Federation as established and certified by the Federation.

Dues paid to the PSU Faculty Association may not be deductible for Federal Income Tax purposes; however, under limited circumstances, dues may qualify as a business expense. Signing this membership application will increase your deduction by approximately \$5.00 per month, and will give you a voice and a vote.

## PSUFA OFFICERS

**Brooke Jacobson**, (SP) President

**vacant**, Vice President

**Barbara Branham**, (ART) Secretary-Treasurer

**Margi McCue**, (WS) VP Collective Bargaining

**Kelly Cowan**, (SBA) VP for Political Action

**Donna Root**, (EDU) VP for Membership

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