

August AoS Agenda

August 18th, 1 pm, 239 Greene, Room 207

Facilitating: Seana Lymer

Notetaking: Anne Pasek

Timekeeping: Jess Feldman

Present: David Klassen, Michelle O'Brien, Seana Lymer, Jess Feldman, Rani Yeung, Jacob Denz, Ziad Dallal, Anne Pasek, Nathan Pensler, Darach Miller, (virtually): Chris Nickell, Claudia Carrera, Ella Wind

[no quorum at the meeting]

Action items noted in red.

Standing Committee Reports (30 min)

Including brief highlights of pre-circulated reports, specific motions/resolutions for debate and approval, & committee recommendations not otherwise specified.

Political Solidarity

The committee is building an on-call list of activists willing to participate in the rallies and demonstrations of our coalitional allies. The goal is to get 50 people by September.

Contact David to add your name if you'd like to be a part of the on-call list.

Political Solidarity has been organizing with FASP for a rally on Sept 1 involving many important groups like NYU Divest & SLAM. The rally will be at Washington Square at 4, it will then head to Bobst to submit individual and coalitional demands, and then finally it will go to Cole's to protest the expansion plan. The #ThanksJohn hashtag will also be hijacked to good ends.

1) Motion to Support FASP Rally

David motions that AoS agree to provide members, a speaker, a banner, and an endorsement to the cause.

There was unanimous support for the motion. It is provisionally approved, and will be circulated by email to get full quorum.

Seana will inquire at the Local about getting our hands on the GSOC banner and some UAW wheels for the festivities.

Back from CGEU (the North American grad worker's union conference), David reported on 3 resolutions passed at the conference, which as a delegate he would like the AoS to endorse in turn. They call for demilitarization of campus police, support for the BlackLivesMatter movement within union circles, and solidarity with SFU strikers. The Political Solidarity Committee will follow these motions with its own motion next month, specific to our aspirations for the Local and the BlackLivesMatter movement..

2) Statement of Solidarity with TSSU Strike

GSOC-UAW Local 2110 stands in solidarity with our fellow workers at Simon Fraser University as they continue their strike for a fair contract.

What TSSU is fighting for, including equality for language instructors, workload protections for TAs, job security for adjuncts, workplace safety and timely payment of wages, are vital for any academic workplace. Their struggles are a part of existing worldwide struggles against worker precarity and against the exacerbated exploitation under neoliberalism.

The onus lies entirely on the university administration to meet the needs of its workers and offer them a fair contract, especially as many of these come at no additional cost to the university.

Simon Fraser runs because workers make it run. At SFU, TSSU members provide 50% of the face time teaching and a majority of distance education for less than 5% of the budget. It is the clear responsibility of the Simon Fraser administration to provide adequate working conditions to its workers and bargain in good faith.

Our support and solidarity go out to the striking workers at Simon Fraser University, and we urge the administration of this university to take the necessary steps to negotiate a fair contract.

There is unanimous support for the motion. It passes provisionally, and will be circulated by email to get full quorum

3) Support for Demilitarizing and Disarming Campus Police Forces

WHEREAS, University of Cincinnati police officer Ray Tensing, in cold blood, murdered Samuel Dubose, an unarmed Black man during a traffic stop, and the people of Cincinnati have taken to the streets to demand justice,

WHEREAS, the University of Cincinnati's police force is emblematic of violent, racist, unaccountable campus police forces across the country which not only carry out crimes like the murder of Samuel Dubose, but also participate in the displacement of residents of university neighborhoods, residential racial segregation, the profiling of students of color, and the repression of student protest and labor organizing,

WHEREAS, campus police forces have inadequate accountability to the community where such accountability exists at all, and report only to university administrations,

WHEREAS, campus police forces often collude with municipal and county police forces in their racist policing tactics,

WHEREAS, campus police forces structurally impede the education and livelihood of people of color on college campuses, a clear contradiction of their supposed purpose of serving and protecting the campus community,

WHEREAS, funding and resources are being stripped away from student learning across higher education even as campus police forces acquire more weapons, equipment, and personnel,

WHEREAS, GSOC-UAW-Local 2110 is committed to social justice and to campus environments where people of color are not under constant threat of violence and harassment, and is committed to supporting the Black liberation struggle,

WHEREAS, university police forces protect administrations rather than support students and workers, and weapons do not contribute to a collaborative, safe campus environment,

WHEREAS, unarmed public safety without arrest power could provide conflict de-escalation and resolution, restorative justice programs, safety escorts, and victim services and data, without also creating the oppressive and repressive apparatus of armed police forces,

BE IT RESOLVED, that, as an expression of support for the Black Lives Matter movement, as a matter of workplace safety, and as a statement of solidarity with the communities that are too often under attacks of many forms from our institutions of higher education, GSOC-UAW-Local 2110 calls on all campus administrations to:

1. Disarm campus police forces,
2. Reduce campus police department budgets and allot those funds for academics, and recruitment and retention of Black students,
3. Remove campus police from operations off of university property, including all public streets.

There is unanimous support for the motion. It passes provisionally, and will be circulated by email to get full quorum

4) Support for the #BlackLivesMatter Movement

WHEREAS, the United States is in the midst of a national crisis of police violence against people of color, and overwhelmingly black people, and this crisis is of epidemic proportions, now counting at least one black life taken by police or security forces every

week across the country and with a total of 678 police killings since January 1, 2015;¹
and

WHEREAS, police brutality against black people reaches into every corner of the United States, north and south, east and west, and affects every kind of person, young and old, trans or cisgender; and because these instances of police brutality continued unabated across the US and Canada, acts of protest, mobilization, and rebellion have resurged in a sustained way across the country, drawing on the legacy of the Black Freedom Struggle; and

WHEREAS, the explosion of protest and rebellion last summer in Ferguson, MO served to shine a spotlight on the issue of police brutality and to arouse millions of people around the US, Canada, and around the world to action, and

WHEREAS, the labor movement, as the potential champion for the interests of the immense majority of our society, and as the most racially integrated movement in the US and Canada, has an obligation to support the aims and means of the #BlackLivesMatter movement; and

WHEREAS, the progressive wing of the labor movement has a proud history of supporting the fight for racial justice and equality, dating back to the beginning of the 20th century but also through the 1950s and 1960s, when many of our parent unions supported the struggle against Jim Crow in the US South, and our support today would follow in these proud footsteps; and

WHEREAS, police unions, in contrast to the progressive record of organized labor, have regularly sought to advance the militarization of the police and policies extending police impunity while defending individual officers who commit racist murders, and

WHEREAS, numerous unions and labor leaders like the United Federation of Teachers,² the Teaching Assistants Association,³ ATU Local 689,⁴ UFCW president Joe Hansen,⁵ and AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka,⁶ among others, have already indicated their support for the movement and despite any and all of their shortcomings, we desire to further this support and transform it into action by our local unions and members in solidarity with local #BlackLivesMatter organizing;

¹ <http://killedbypolice.net>

² <http://nypost.com/2014/08/16/teachers-union-backing-sharptons-planned-rally-against-police/>

³ <http://fox6now.com/2015/03/11/new-rally-planned-in-madison-police-shooting/>

⁴ http://www.atulocal689.org/uploads/4/1/1/4/41141827/police_violence_rally.pdf

⁵ <http://www.ufcw.org/2014/08/22/ufcw-president-hansen-statement-on-mother-of-michael-brown/>

⁶ <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2014/09/30/1333201/-We-Need-to-Talk-About-Ferguson#>

WHEREAS, as members of GSOC-UAW-Local 2110, we recognize that we are a self-selected group of union activists who are committed to the fight for social justice, and we aim to change the stance of our own International unions to one of robust and enthusiastic support and solidarity with the #BlackLivesMatter

BE IT RESOLVED, that GSOC-UAW-Local 2110 commit itself to

1. Engage in a campaign to educate and win over their Local memberships to support for the #BlackLivesMatter movement,
2. Work within our own central labor councils, statewide bodies, and parent unions to win over affiliated bodies to give resources and material aid to #BlackLivesMatter organizations and actions, mobilize their union memberships for local campaigns, issuing public statements to formally put themselves on record in support of the movement, and preparing where necessary for the police union question,
3. Recruit our unions to help support the development of international expressions of the #BlackLivesMatter movement that will continue to engage in organizing across the US and Canada.

There is unanimous support for the motion. It passes provisionally, and will be circulated by email to get full quorum

Political Solidarity will continue to work on this issue.

Unit Reps will report this directive at the next Joint Council Meeting.

Anne will reformat our motions once finalized, for sharing via social media.

Political Solidarity concluded its report by noting that a social justice training session for Stewards has been scheduled from October 20th from 4-6.

Mark this date in your calendars, Stewards and anyone interested!

Communications

Anne reported that Coms has started a trial run of a new mail client. As she leaves the unit rep role in the fall, she hopes to work on additional plans for more communications outreach (broadsheets, posters). In the meantime, she and Chris are answering tons of email and building good relationships out of the ongoing bonuses and health insurance implementation debacles.

Organizing

Organizing's main goal this coming month is to get department meetings underway. This will start with a massive email campaign, requiring everyone's participation. Throughout all of September, there's also plans for a wave of 1 on 1 organizing and tabling efforts.

Please send Nathan and Ella any coming events at which the committee could table.

Nathan further emphasized the importance of giving special care and extra attention to Poly because there aren't that many Stewards there (based out of, or active in).

Consider signing up for a Poly department!

Bylaws

Last night there was an email (via the new mailchimp client) with proposed changes to the ARE, extending its deadline by a month. Members will vote on this, and presuming it passes, we'll have more time to review and develop our first proper bylaws.

Please vote and encourage others to do so!

Contract Enforcement

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Organization of grievances (20 min)

Demonstration of the new Google Sheets setup (presented by Seana).

We have encountered a lot of grievances this summer, and it's difficult to hold this information all together. Contract Enforcement has created several tools to help in this matter, including a form, a Master and Anonymized Register, and flowchart (to be archived in the Google Drive for future reference).

Every a steward encounters a potential grievance, even if they aren't ultimately processing it themselves, they will fill out a form with the information about the case. This is an automated system. Information from the forms will then be migrated into a master and anonymized register for observation, delegation, and archiving. Contract enforcement, at least 1 unit rep, and Patrick will have access to the Master Register, containing the full information of every grievance. Stewards will be able to consult the anonymized register, providing an archive of past grievances and potential patterns of activity/resolution, all without compromising the privacy of the grievant.

This system will also help with workflow. The unit rep(s) will be able to supervise Steward activity and delegate grievances when necessary. They will also be responsible for monitoring and maintaining the Master Register.

Presently the register only records the type of grievance, the date/timeline, the department, and the stewards assigned. Michelle suggested that more details should be added to the anonymized register--- perhaps taking the form of a space to describing the nature of the problem in more detail (without identifying information). Seana agreed.

Seana further described how templates have been drafted for Stewards to use, specific to different types of grievances (like class cancellation, etc.), listing relevant sections of the contract, and describing the steps appropriate to each part of the grievance procedure. A basic primer on how to do grievances is also being drafted, to guide Stewards who haven't taken grievance training, and to refresh the memories of those that have. All these materials will be added to the Steward Google Drive.

Jacob recommended that the contract be reviewed, as it specifies the steps for the grievance process. He further suggested that some people might want to specialize in particular steps of that process or in particular departments.

Jess asked for further clarification about how the assignment of responsibility would work. Seana replied that there would be a core team of at least 1 unit rep monitoring the registers, capable of helping Steward-less grievances find homes, and privy to the big-picture view of what work was/needed to happen where. The unit rep(s) would step in to redistribute work if it looked like Stewards might burn themselves out with overwork, and so that the most appropriate people get experience and get to practice their expertise. Seana further mentioned that this system could be reviewed at a later date if there was a problem.

Rani asks where email chains should be archived. Darach mentioned that he had previously set up a contract enforcement gmail account that could suffice as an archive; one has just to 'cc it in correspondence with grievants (contact.gsoc.contract@gmail.com).

Anne moves that the committee be thanked for its work. Jess seconds. It passes unanimously.

Seana will email out instructions tomorrow, and move all the materials into the Drive where they will be good to go.

Stewards should use these forms when they encounter and develop potential grievances.

Organizing situation for Fall 2015 (40 min)

Review and affirm timeline and to-do list, make recommendations, and open a brief discussion (by Organizing Committee)

Developing on Nathan's earlier comments, Ella stated that the Organizing Committee's priorities for the next month involve a lot of tabling as well as larger effort, on the part of the whole Assembly of Stewards, to email steward-less departments and set up departmental meetings about the union.

Tabling & departmental-wide meetings in series have a threefold goals:

- 1) A way to get low-hanging fruit (interested students, active union supporters, the union-curious) introduced to the union and counted in the card drive,*
- 2) To gather feedback on departmental & individual issues, setting priorities for the union's work in the coming year, and*
- 3) To recruit departmental organizers/squad leaders.*

Nathan continued, stating that the next two weeks are critical for organizing these meetings. Everyone's help is needed. As was the case when getting the word out about the bonus issue, we will use the [squad structure sign up sheet](#) to divide the work.

In departments where we already have contacts, we'll work with those individuals to co-host a meeting with them. In departments where we don't have any contacts, we'll invite (by email and by flyer) all students to meetings happening nearby.

Stewards are encouraged to buddy up with each other if they feel inexperienced. Michelle emphasized that the buddy system is an excellent one, advantageous to organizers both old and new. The Organizing Committee can help pair you up if desired. It is also working on more support materials to guide new Stewards through these exchanges.

Claudia suggested that some training should be offered to departmental contacts/squad leaders to prepare everyone for these meetings. Seana said that she would also benefit from that training, and suggested that it should be offered early, in advance of the September meetings. Chris suggested that this could take the form of a happy hour, to break up the meeting drudgery. Nathan agreed, but also suggesting that it could be split between the bar and the meeting room.

Darach asked about whether or not we had reached out to departmental administrators. Anne said that as part of our contract a welcome letter will be sent along with all letters of appointment and union cards, but that the collection of cards is still an open question (they could go to Stewards or departmental admins, and that as such we may need to cultivate those relationships too).

Chris asked about the link between the smaller departmental meetings and the larger General Meetings on Sept. 21st & 24th. He asked that we use the former as funnels for the latter, so that we can have a critical mass of excited people to comment on bylaws and run for elections.

Ella reflected on her experiences doing this work in the past. She said that one really good meeting can boost a department's involvement massively. She said that the Organizing Committee and more seasoned organizers should reflect on these experiences, and think about what contributes to a meeting's success.

Ella said that, in addition to the meetings, everyone might also do a round of knocking door to door with cards before the Oct. 1 no-initiation-fee deadline but she expressed concerns about this perhaps being too much work. Chris suggested that door-to-door resources should be prioritized for specific departments (like Econ, where folks are both generally out of the loop and centrally clustered together). If the conditions aren't right, or if the department's already well organized, it might not be the best use of door to door resources. Michelle responded by saying that well organized departments are such because of the door-to-door organizing, so the tactic shouldn't be abandoned full stop, but to delegate the work other people (not unit reps or perhaps even stewards) in these departments. Nathan concurred with Michelle, stating that this could be the best of both worlds. Chris agreed.

Jacob stated that we need to have a conversation about how to present dues in an empowering way to members, appealing to their better nature.

Michelle stated strongly that Organizing should mobilize the membership around a campaign for something that we couldn't win in the contract, but that is nevertheless incredibly important from a social justice point of view. She said that devoting September/October to the card campaign was great, but that priorities should shift as the union gets more organized/established. She further added that, like cards, this is something that everyone should work on, even as the Organizing Committee coordinates. Ella agreed, adding that developing these priorities this is one of the objectives of the September departmental meetings.

Nathan asked about access to worker's lists, which NYU is contractually mandated to provide to us. He expressed a desire for them, even if incomplete, by mid-September. Chris informed us that the contract obliges NYU to provide this to the union within 30 days of the start of the semester.

Nathan concluded the section opening a discussion about how to organize at Poly. He wanted to ask Patrick to give Poly special focus, and share some thoughts on how to approach the School. It's got some unique challenges (not a lot of office/work space, & a greater respect for quiet therein), so the union's usual means of engagement might need to be a little different (camping out in the library, cafeteria).

Claudia added that there's a lot of welcome week events, graduate specific, at Poly which could provide opportunities for unofficial conversations. Seana asked if Poly has separate teacher training events from Washington Square, and if we might otherwise miss them. Nathan said that this will be researched and planned by the committee in the next few days.

Nathan emphasized that it's critical that we mobilize organizers on Poly. He expressed his intent to continue to remind people about this need. He will try to coordinate fieldtrips for Washington Square organizers to go down together. Chris added that the next AoS should be held at Poly, and that we should drum up support for this in advance.

Jacob stated that we should be clear/have further conversations about what to expect from handing out cards (do we ask for them back right away?). He added that some potential organizers won't necessarily come to union meetings/training, but could still be great organizers and contacts. Nathan agreed, stating that it makes more sense for people at Poly without established union contacts in their department to complete and return cards on the spot.

EVERYONE: Please follow the circulated directions about emailing your departments about setting up departmental meetings. How do you do this? Check your inbox for subject line "Organizing Committee Report Back" from Aug 16. The email/meeting template is [here](#).

Consider signing up for a department or two at Poly!