

THE WESTERN UNION

UFWW Executive Council

President: William Lyne
Vice President: Kristi Lemm
Treasurer: Bob Marshall
Chief Steward:
Steven Garfinkle
Director of Communications:
Kyle Crowder
At Large: Joara Minhara
At Large: Jeff Young

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Art: E. Bereal
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Computer Science: M. Meehan
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Special Education: W. Lay
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R. Chauvin
Economics: P. Storer
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WE ARE OFFICIAL!

UFWW FOUNDING CONVENTION HELPS PUT FINAL PIECES IN PLACE FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AT WESTERN

On November 15, the United Faculty of Western Washington held its Founding Convention, marking an important step in the development of the union. The strong turnout included faculty from every college and featured the official ratification of the union's constitution and bylaws. Among the other key events was the election of the first UFWW Executive Council.

While marking the official launch of Western's first legally recognized faculty union, the convention also provided the opportunity for reflection on the long struggle for collective bargaining. Retired faculty member Milt Krieger recounted efforts to establish a faculty union in the 1970s, long before the passage of the state's enabling legislation.



Since the convention, the Executive Council has worked to officially establish the union's affiliation with the Washington Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, bolstered efforts aimed at improving legislative support for higher education, and developed strategies to maintain open communication between members of the bar-

gaining unit as we negotiate our first contract. According to newly elected UFWW President Bill Lyne, "the executive council is working really hard to establish a strong organizational base that will allow us to effectively represent the interests of all members of the bargaining unit, which is the only way to realize the promise of collective bargaining at Western."

ABOUT OUR NEW NEWSLETTER

As part of our broader effort to maintain open communication between members of the UFWW, the *Western Union* will be published each quarter, bringing you regular updates on

the contract negotiations, news from our affiliates, and other key information related to collective bargaining and higher education. We welcome letters and comments from our mem-

bers. Submissions will be published as space allows. Our letter policy is available on the UFWW website at:

<http://www.ufws.org/western>

BARGAINING UPDATE

The UFWW Bargaining Team has been working hard through the summer and fall to write our initial contract proposal. This proposal will cover all aspects of faculty compensation and working conditions. We have been guided in this effort by the excellent responses we received to our faculty survey and our bargaining forums in the fall. In creating the initial proposal we have worked hard to articulate and preserve the many things about Western's

programs and departments that currently work so well. At the same time, we have used the faculty input to create proposals that will improve our work and advance Western's educational mission. We expect to deliver the initial proposal to the administration in late January. We look forward to working with the members of the administration's bargaining team to create a contract that will make Western the strongest institution possible.

The UFWW bargaining team is chaired by David Bover (Computer Sci.) and includes Edoh Amiran (Mathematics), Ramona Chauvin (Woodring), Susan Costanzo (History), Kyle Crowder (Sociology), Anna Eblen (Communication), Larry Estrada (Fairhaven), Vicki Hamblin (Mod. and Classical Languages), David Leaf (Biology), Kevin Leonard (History), William Lyne (English), Matt Roelofs (Economics), and Katie Stables (Mathematics).

OPINION: BEYOND "WASHINGTON LEARNS"

BY JOHANN N. NEEM, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY,
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Governor Christine Gregoire recently unveiled "Washington Learns," a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve the state's educational system. The report considers education "the single most important investment we can make for the future of our children and our state."

Washington Learns emphasizes equalizing access to the state's colleges and universities and expanding vocational, technical, and professional training, progressive goals that should be supported.

There is a danger to Washington Learns, however. The report threatens to turn the state's universities into vocational schools by expanding degrees in "high-demand fields" without accounting for liberal education.

Liberal education is the essence of democratic education. The word "liberal" shares the same root as the word "liberty." America's founding fathers believed that voters should be educated. John Adams was confident that "that whenever, a general knowledge and Sensibility have prevailed among the People, Arbitrary Govern-

ment and every kind of oppression have lessened and disappeared in Proportion." Thomas Jefferson urged his home state Virginia to support public schools for all young boys. The best students would then go on to the University of Virginia, which would prepare them to be civic leaders.

Liberal education requires a wall of separation between universities and the market. Unlike vocational education, curricular decisions in the arts and sciences should be guided by what citizens need, not the market.

Vocational education draws on a different, equally progressive, tradition: the free soil tradition. Jefferson believed that government should create fair markets by giving citizens access to capital. In the 1800s this meant land. Jefferson devoted his public career to redistributing western lands to citizens. The American West would be the basis for American equality and liberty, he hoped.

Abraham Lincoln and other Republicans picked up these themes in the Homestead Act (1862) which offered western land to families willing to work

it. That same year Republicans passed the Morrill Act setting aside federal land for states to establish technical colleges focusing on "agriculture and mechanic arts." Republican educational and land policies together offered citizens an opportunity to thrive in a fair market.

Washingtonians today need intellectual capital, not land. Governor Gregoire is correct that we should renew our commitment to redistributing capital by providing better vocational, technical, and professional education.

If we conflate vocational training with education, however, we will have better equipped workers but much less qualified citizens and civic leaders. Doing both things well is the only way to make our democracy stronger and our economy more fair and competitive.

This essay has been adapted from "Beyond Washington Learns", which appeared in the Seattle Times, January 7, 2007. The Washington Learns report can be found at <http://www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov>

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Johann Neem



The *Western Union* is a quarterly publication designed to foster communication between members of the UFWW.

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YOUR UNION BY THE NUMBERS

4 The number of four-year universities in Washington State at which the faculty have voted in favor of collective bargaining.

170 The number of WWU faculty members who have become official members of the UFWW as of this writing.

3 Main reasons why you should join the union even though the UFWW is obligated to represent every member of the faculty: 1) membership affords you the opportunity to help shape UFWW's agenda and to work with faculty from every unit on campus to help

us better serve your department and the students of Washington State; 2) as a member, you have the opportunity to participate in the program council and work with members of other university faculties to advance the goals of higher education in the state and nation; and 3) the contract currently under development will apply to all faculty, but only members get to vote on the contract.

33 The number of people, including all departmental stewards and every member of the Executive Council, who can collect your membership form when you are ready to join.

13 The number of units still in need of a departmental steward: Chemistry, Communication Science, Dance, Educational Leadership, Engineering Technology, Finance and Marketing, Geology, Human Services and Rehab, Journalism, Management, Philosophy, Physics, and Theatre Arts.

10 The level of importance, on a scale of 1 to 10, of a departmental steward in ensuring that the interests of your colleagues and your department are well represented in the collective bargaining process. Contact Steven Garfinkle to become a steward.