

COGNITION

MEMBERS RUN THIS UNION!

SEPTEMBER 2013

President's Report II Cathryn Lucas

Hi all,

I hope your semester has started off well. I am very excited about this upcoming year! It is both a joy and a great responsibility to be the president of COGS in a non-bargaining year. While we may not be seated across the table fighting for better benefits & wages, we have a lot to do this year. You might think of this year as the dissertation/thesis proposal: gathering background information, finding the right people to interview, developing the argument, etc. Now is the time to set ourselves up for bargaining next year – which means we need to set our priorities. If you have ideas or suggestions, don't hesitate to contact us via email, facebook, or telephone. Now is also the time to build momentum, there are some things we just can't achieve at the bargaining table. Instead, we need to build a unified front with our allies to show the university that we will not settle for mediocre living and working conditions. We have several new and innovative campaigns in the works, and if you'd like to get involved, again don't hesitate to contact us via email, facebook, or telephone. I'm looking forward to working with you!

COGS Organizing Committee

In this non-bargaining year, we have been making great headway by focusing our energies on establishing a solid membership base. During departmental orientations, we were able to get around 80 new members. Our Organizing Blitz is now underway from September 23rd until October 4th. During this time we visit all graduate employees, members and non-members, to update folks on what we're doing and recruit new members. This is a great time to become more involved with COGS, and we are asking anyone with some time to spare to volunteer. Email cogs@cogs.org if you would like to volunteer for Blitz next week. Please take some time to talk to non-member graduate employees in your department about the benefits of COGS, and get everyone amped up for a great year!

COGS Organizing Committee

President II Cathryn Lucas

Vice President II Harper Lee Haynes

Financial Officer II Matt Hodler

Chief Campus Steward II Kelly Gallagher

Blue Area Steward II Kristen Degree

Red Area Steward II Judah Unmuth-Yockey

Yellow Area Steward II Noah Johnson

Press and Publicity Chair II Andrew Desforges

Social Chair II Allison Wanger

Labor Solidarity Chair II Corinne Teed

Political Action Chair II Shawn Harmsen

Unity Chair II Kate Kedley

International Student Rep II

Chenthuran Jayachandiran

UE Field Organizer II Jennifer Marsh

Office Coordinator II Jillian Moore

COGS Organizer II Brendan Baylor

IN THIS ISSUE

<u>President's Report</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>UE National Report</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Officer's Reports</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Calendar</u>	<u>3</u>

Political Action Chair's Report II Shawn Harmsen

Greetings my fellow COGS members!

I hope you are all adjusting well to the new semester! If you are new, you should be noticing your first paychecks and be registered for health benefits (fingers crossed you won't need those!). Did you know that this benefit package is the 2nd best in the Big 10, and just a few years ago before COGS got started here at Iowa it was ranked around the bottom? All of us graduate students owe a debt of gratitude to those who have worked diligently over the years to negotiate a livable wage and humane health care, spending huge amounts of personal time and energy to do so.

You may be wondering why the political action chair is talking about contract negotiations. It's simple. If we aren't careful about Iowa state politics, we will lose the ability to even bargain in the first place. COGS is not a partisan organization, and that is proper and should be respected. Yet it is worth noting that the partisans themselves have settled out quite clearly along party lines, with the Republican party stripping collective bargaining rights from our fellow graduate students in places like Wisconsin and Michigan, and nearly here in Iowa. In March of 2011, the GOP controlled Iowa House passed a bill, on party lines, that would have destroyed collective bargaining. It was defeated along party lines in the Democrat controlled Iowa Senate. But it's a narrow margin. Democrats currently have a two member advantage in the Senate. And if only seat is lost, it becomes a tie to be decided by what is currently a Republican Lt. Governor. So what can we do about this?

I am not going to tell you which party or which candidates for whom you should vote. Instead I am going to be doing my best to promote three goals and I hope you will join me in this effort. They are first to get COGS members registered to vote locally (if possible), second to get members informed, and third to get COGS members involved! Coming up in January, Iowa will once again hold its caucuses (this happens every two years). If you are registered to vote locally and have declared a party, you may attend your precinct caucus, and you may have a voice in the selection of candidates and issues. If you are reluctant to declare a party, remember you can still vote for whomever you like come November. But by declaring and getting involved, you will get a fairly unique opportunity to get your political voice heard.

As we get closer to January, I will supply more information, and hopefully opportunities to meet with political candidates so you can evaluate them face-to-face.

In solidarity,
Shawn Harmsen

Financial Officer's Report II Matt Hodler

Hello all,

My name is Matt Hodler and I am your Financial Officer for 2013-2014. I do not have much to report other than that, aside from working on my dissertation, I spent the summer paying bills and learning more about the financial relationships between our Local 896, UE Western Region, and national (UERMWA). Most importantly, I have – with the help of the Coordinating Committee – put together a budget for this year that needs to be discussed and voted on at next month's GMM. I hope to see y'all there and I look forward to serving the Union this year.

In solidarity,
Matt

Yellow Area Steward's Report II Noah Johnson

As Yellow Area Steward for this academic year I will work to assist the Union in their campaign to consolidate and strengthen our membership. I see my chief role in this endeavor to be the creation and documentation of the network of Department Stewards within the Yellow Area, and I look forward to talking with anyone from the Yellow Area that is already a Department Steward of may be interested in becoming their department's Steward.

I would like to see a Department Steward in each department covered under the Yellow Area, and I recognize that this will only be possible if we make our support of our members more visible and more suited to their situation as graduate students at the University of Iowa.

I believe that addressing the needs of our membership are central to this task, and I am hoping that I will be able to talk to both members and non-members in my Area to determine what is working for Union members and what needs more attention.

In Solidarity,
Noah Johnson

UE National II Convention Report

The 73rd UE National Convention was held from August 23-29 in Chicago, IL. As delegates, COGS-896 members Kelly Gallagher, Cathryn Lucas-Carr, and Jason Whistler helped to set the political and organizational agenda for the next two years. The many workshops, committees, and speak outs were designed around the theme of the convention: “Resist, Revive, Resurge.” The UE recognizes that as an organization, we must adapt to the changing world around us. Rev. Dr. William Barber movingly spoke about the Moral Monday campaign in North Carolina, Kristine Mayle spoke about the community centered organizing led by the Chicago Teachers Union, and everyone from the convention joined with Fight for 15 and Warehouse Workers for Justice in a rally against corporate greed – which included 15 glorious minutes occupying the McDonalds in Union Station at rush hour.

Got a question about COGS?

Got an issue with COGS?

Come on out for an open discussion about the graduate employee union at the university of iowa.

**Monday, November 11, 5:30 pm
COGS General Membership Meeting
COGS office, Old Brick**

CALENDAR

September 23 – October 4, 2013

COGS Fall Organizing Blitz

COGS stewards and volunteer organizers will visit graduate employees across campus to answer questions and recruit new union members.

Thursday, September 26, 3:00 p.m.

Human Rights in the Garment Industry:
Alta Gracia Workers Share their Stories

Iowa Memorial Union, Michigan Room 351
Sponsored by the Labor Center and Amnesty International

Thursday, October 3, 5:00 pm

Take Action for a Living Wage!

Iowa City Pedestrian Mall, Fountain
Rally to support low-wage workers and
RAISE the minimum wage with Center for Worker Justice.

Friday, October 4, 5:00 pm

COGS Happy Hour

Clinton Street Social Club
First beer or soda is on the union.

Thursday, October 17, 5:30 pm

COGS General Membership Meeting

COGS office, Old Brick
DUES, budget, and arbitration votes.
Attend this meeting!

Monday, November 11, 5:30 pm

COGS General Membership Meeting

COGS office, Old Brick

THE UNIVERSITY
WORKS
BECAUSE WE DO