



Forming our Faculty Union at Oregon Tech

Certification

On June 27th, our union, Oregon Tech AAUP, was certified as the exclusive representative of full time (0.5 FTE or greater) faculty, instructors, and librarians of Oregon Tech. Simultaneous to filing for this unit, we also filed for certification of a second bargaining unit of department chairs. The Oregon Tech administration objected to this bargaining unit, arguing that chairs do not have access to collective bargaining rights under the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA). We disagree with this interpretation of the law and will engage in a hearing process to clarify the right of department chairs to have their bargaining unit certified. We hope to conclude this process this summer so that all faculty, including chairs, can begin contract negotiations in the fall.

Building an Interim Leadership Structure

We have established the Oregon Tech Coordinating Committee as an interim leadership structure. Any interested faculty member is invited to get involved! Generally, we want to be sure that we're able to communicate with the entire faculty going forward and that we're doing the work that allows us to negotiate the best first contract possible. Building a broad, representative base of leaders and activists is the best way to ensure this happens.

Growing Our Membership

Each faculty member will be given the opportunity to join Oregon Tech AAUP as a member. Becoming a member gives you a voice in setting priorities for our union and helps support the work we do. This fall, we will engage in a membership drive among our colleagues to build the strongest base of support possible.

Formalizing our Organization

During this interim period, we will need to establish a committee to work on crafting our union's constitution and bylaws. Once those documents are approved by the Oregon Tech AAUP membership, we will hold elections for officers.

Bargaining Our First Contract

We have begun the early work of bargaining this summer by researching faculty contracts, receiving training from AAUP, and planning our bargaining process. Again, all faculty are invited to participate. In early fall, we will conduct surveys and hold meetings to identify and prioritize the gains we want to make in our first contract. A group of faculty members will sit at the bargaining table with a team from the administration and negotiate until we reach an agreement on our contract. Our intention will be to start negotiations sometime in the fall. Since this will be our first union contract, negotiations will likely take most of the 2018-19 academic year.

Ratifying Our First Contract

Once we reach an agreement with the Administration, the entire membership of Oregon Tech AAUP will vote on whether to accept this contract. This is called the 'ratification' of our contract. Once the contract is ratified, it is put into effect and becomes binding on both parties for the length of the agreement. Most higher education contracts have terms of agreement between one and five years. We will return to the negotiating table to bargain the next contract before the first one expires. Each successive negotiation attempts to improve the document, creating better practices to support the work of faculty and strengthen the institution.