

## **June 2019 UCWGA State-wide Meeting Minutes**

June 19th, 2019 6pm-7pm

**Facilitator and time keeper:** Bekah Ward

**In Attendance:** Daren Fowler (Georgia State University), Bekah Ward (Georgia Gwinnett College), Melanie Barron (CWA), Terry Dunbar (GA Tech), Justin Simpson (University of Georgia), Pete Rorabaugh (KSU)

### **Chapter Reports, activities, priorities, and needs:**

**Daren (GA State):** At our last meeting we finalized the language for our Fight for 15 petition. We can send it to you to add signatures. This is the beginning of our fall campaign which will center on the fight for 15 as a recruitment tool and a crucial part of the union. We are also working on events for fall. Primary focus is on the fall: Tabling, petition drive, orientations we can be present for.

**Bekah (GGC):** One plan we have had at GGC is to have a button day. Could be a good idea for UGA because of high membership. Button days were fun at GGC because we got to explain to the union to students and coworkers.

United Students Against Sweatshops presented at the CWA conference and I am interested in starting a chapter.

**Daren:** I can't see how that would be a bad thing. I am planning on bringing it up at our next meeting.

**Terri (GA Tech):** We aren't having regular meetings over the summer but the logistics group is meeting of the summer to plan for fall. The conference gave us the idea of doing labor and Know Your Rights trainings for members and non-members to increase awareness of why unions are important. We are still working on how to reframe our campaign for the fall to increase faculty and staff engagement. We are planning an event at the GA Beer Garden in Sweet Auburn with Emory, GA Tech, GSU, and GGC on July 20 from 7-10pm.

**Bekah:** What do you think the interest for a living wage campaign would be at Tech?

Terry: A lot of our low wage workers unfortunately are privatized, so the extent to which we can organize low wage workers is limited. We want to work toward fighting to bring those services in house. GA State did that somewhat recently. There is interest in fair wage campaign, but it won't hit a lot of people right now. There is a lot of interest in addressing student fees.

**Daren:** GA State is talking about doing a Know Your Rights in the fall, this could be an opportunity to bring campuses in the greater Atlanta area together

Terry: Current members would likely be interested in a central meetup off campus, but prospective members might not be interested in leaving campus.

**Daren:** I think any time we can get the chapters together is a good idea.

**Bekah:** CWA hall would be a good central location for this. We have also talked about having an organizer training for current members so we could do these near the same time.

**Justin Simpson (UGA):** I am a part of the Fair Wage committee and point person for the Grad Committee. On May Day we had a fair wage picnic with music. We had 100 to 150 people turn up for that. At the very beginning of the summer we came together to research BOR members. We sent an email and still have not gotten a response.

**Terry:** I did not get a response either.

**Bekah:** Sometimes you can get people to respond if you show up at their office, so we could form a delegation to deliver a letter.

**Justin:** Kate also had this idea but we had a limited amount of time and participants. Kyky will be setting up another grad student meeting in the future.

**Bekah:** Another option is to go to their place of employment, most are bankers or real estate agents.

**Justin:** Some of them are really rich and powerful and getting personal information is difficult.

**Bekah (GGC):** We haven't been meeting a lot because anyone who is in town over the summer is teaching a lot. But we have been communicating via email about the film screening at the beer garden and organizer training. We had 3 sit downs where we got cards. One of our members recruited their first member which was very exciting. There are many events with our new president coming so we are working on a plan to normalize the union and act as if we have always been a powerful force on campus.

**Melanie:** Those are new members since the last statewide call? That's so great!

**Upcoming Events:**

**July 24th from 6pm-8pm** we have the big auditorium at GGC (seats 150) to screen a documentary about how the Kentucky teachers fought for their pension. Hopefully we will have people from Kentucky calling in. There is legislation coming down to gut the pension program and USG has not been making payments. Those of us who have invested in the pensions are vulnerable. GGC was chosen because it is convenient to Athens and Atlanta.

**July 20th 7pm-10pm** at the Georgia Beer Garden is a meet up with GA Tech, GSU, GGC, and EmoryUnite. Updates from chapters and a chance to network with other members.

**Bekah:** EmoryUnite has worked with us before informing incoming grad students that they weren't going to get paid until the end of their first month. They got the admin to change this policy.

**July 25th-**KSU will have another recruitment meeting where we are inviting staff that responded to our May Day survey blast. We will focus on the work we are doing on our pay equity study. Using this as a building ground on rolling out a pay equity campaign in the fall.

**What trainings do you think would be the most valuable to people to people in your chapters to help build our union?**

**Terry:** At GA Tech we could use help approaching conversations asking people to join the union. I recruited my first member this week. A lot of us are socially awkward.

**Bekah:** KSU has expressed interest in a Research 101 training. They have been doing a lot of beautiful research on equity.

**Daren:** What Terry said and also the Research 101. How to approach and build relationships and have the confidence to introduce the union to new people.

**Justin:** How to introduce and sell the union. Especially when it's like a "cold call". How to bring it up, which is awkward because you are sort of selling them something. How to respond to resistance. If we don't have the right to strike it doesn't kind of take the teeth away from the union. Should we pursue follow ups? The difference between how to start a conversation in our own departments vs outside of our own departments.

**Bekah:** I was thinking hearing some of this that we could do a lot of role plays. I think you have covered most of what GGC would like to do. Mapping out legislation and who we can target would be a good training. Also the BOR. Who our targets are and how to do opposition research on them.

**Pete:** KSU just had a meeting to plan an event that we have going on next month. Because we are pretty small our energies have been internally focused. I would appreciate a more thorough understanding of legalities. What are we absolutely allowed to do and not to do? Sometimes I suspect we could be pushing the envelope harder. Where we are allowed to be? What we are allowed to do or not do with computers? Who and when we can email? For myself: more direct action training: If you hold an event and someone tells you you have to leave, what do you do? This would make people more comfortable because they know what the ground is.

**Bekah:** This is a full day of training! A note on "we are not allowed to strike": the wv teachers struck even though they weren't allowed to. And on the computer use at GGC we often use our own computers and printers, some because of the vibe, but also because although the rumor is it will get our union decertified, we aren't certified anyhow. That's more of an argument for unions that have bargaining rights, and we don't.

**Bekah:** What two week period would we like this to happen in?

**Pete:** who would be invited?

**Bekah:** Everyone in the union. My guess is we would have 20-50 if we had it in one day in one place. Do we want to shoot for the weekend of 8/10 or 8/17?

**Pete:** The 10th is golden

**Bekah:** I'll bring this to steering.

### **Impressions from those who attended the CWA public sector conference**

**Bekah:** At least five people on this call attended the conference in Memphis.

**Terri:** I think the conference was really amazing. One of the things I got out of this was networking with other grad workers in other states (Alabama, Louisiana, Tennessee) who are trying to start chapters and brainstorming about how to combine our collective efforts. Labor rights and know your rights training sessions to sell the union to new people.

**Darren:** It was fantastic. The importance of visualizing what the goal is 2 years from now locally and across the state was motivating and exciting. And another session about expanding our training capacities and thinking of what trainings we need to start planning: for instance stewardship training. This will grow the union and also better protect our members.

**Melanie:** I just want to give a big thumbs up to everyone who came. I am glad to hear people really enjoyed it and got a lot out of it. Karly sent the notes from the higher ed session along with a survey. If you haven't already, please take the time to complete the survey to keep it a great experience for everyone.

**Bekah:** I just want to get folks on other campuses the information about how south-wide this movement is. Alabama and Louisiana have fewer than 50 members and are working toward a charter. Mississippi has over 50 and has a charter. Georgia went from around 50 members in January 2018 to almost 400. Having a regional vision in the labor hostile region is possible. We are in the same union as social workers in New Jersey, upstate New York city employees, California higher ed. We deserve public services and we are part of that project. We are in solidarity with all members of the public sector.

**Justin:** Can people who didn't go get the notes?

**Melanie:** I'll send them.

**Terri:** Some people are still finishing theirs

**Pete:** We use slack at KSU and I think a statewide slack would be a good idea. I realize it would be overloaded with information but it's a good place to collect things.

**Bekah:** Some of us helped organize the March for Science and are burned out on slack.

**Melanie:** TN doesn't have a statewide slack. As a caution, a lot of people have a hard time figuring it out so it can become an accessibility issue.

**Bekah:** We need more horizontal communication methods.

**Pete:** I would never advocate slack being the mandatory thing, but I do think that if even one person in a chapter could get information there it would be a good. Sort of a facebook replacement.

**Justin:** How do we get information about what's going on in steering? If there have been problems we should know about it to learn from our mistakes.

**Bekah:** It's super ironic that there is not a lot of communication at UGA since 6 of 7 steering members are based at UGA.

**Pete:** Figuring out with steering how to be more transparent would be a good thing and help people feel more engaged in the union.

**Bekah:** We have more momentum on the website and we have discussed posting steering meeting minutes but we need to figure out how to do this in a way that isn't sharing our strategy with people who don't need to see it.

**Melanie:** GA is at almost 400 members, 394, so I encourage everyone to help us get to 400 by the end of the month.

### **Elections:**

**Bekah:** There are 2 elections coming up.

**Steering:** We have talked about this a lot. Cindy, Joey, and Joe have stepped down. We would like to expand these positions outside of UGA. If you know anyone who can spare time for a monthly call and a few weekly tasks please nominate them or ask them to nominate themselves.

**CWA Convention Delegates:** We are entitled to two delegates at the CWA convention in Las Vegas on July 29th, 30th, and 31st. CWA is  $\frac{2}{3}$  private sector but the other  $\frac{1}{3}$  is public sector. Normally voting takes place via paper ballots mailed to every member 4 months in advance, but this did not happen. Joe Fu is going to send out an email tomorrow asking for nominees. ~~Hotel and plane tickets will be paid for, but delegates should expect to cover their own meals.~~ [Correction: delegates will need to cover their own expenses.] If anyone is interested please consider nominating yourself.

CWA is voting on using a pot of money that doesn't get used a lot, the Growth Fund, they have been using it to organize more sectors. I hope that our delegates vote for that. This is where Melanie and Karly get most of their money.

**Pete:** Should they be/not be steering?

**Bekah:** Either way. 2 people on steering are willing to go if need be.

**Daren:**What is the time table for finalizing nomination and election?

**Bekah:** It will be in the email that goes out tomorrow. Not long, a week to 1.5 weeks.

**Bekah:** is anyone here interested in being a delegate? We would love broad representation of the union.

**Recurring date for the statewide meeting:**

6pm on the 3rd Wednesday, every month until December.

**Bekah:** Thank you for all of your chapter specific work.