

# RWU Town Hall

## Mediation and Bargaining Escalation

September 24, 2025



# Introductions

## Meeting Host

**Abigail Moore (she/her)**

MAT lead, B-Council  
Research Assistant II  
Cell, Developmental and Cancer  
Biology

## Chat Monitor

**Eddie Charlton**

## Bargaining Team Presenter

**Wes Horton (he/him)**

Computational Biologist  
Cell, Developmental, and Cancer Biology

## Note-Taker

**Lauren Charney (she/her)**

MAT lead, B-Council  
Research Audiologist  
Oregon Hearing Research Center

## Attendance Tracker

**Chadwick Smith (he/him)**

MAT Lead  
Senior Research Assistant  
Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care  
Medicine

## Slideshow Creators

**Abigail Moore**

**Wes Horton**

**Eddie Charlton**

**Chadwick Smith**



## AFSCME Staff

**Eddie Charlton (he/him):** Council Representative

**Tania Ahmed (they/them):** Organizer

# Outline

- Our current bargaining position
  - Package 1A - Economics
  - Package 1B - Working Conditions
  - OHSU's latest counter
- Mediation - what is it and what to expect
- Opportunities for activism
  - Informational picket
  - Membership drive
  - Support our union
- Questions!



# Our Current Bargaining Position

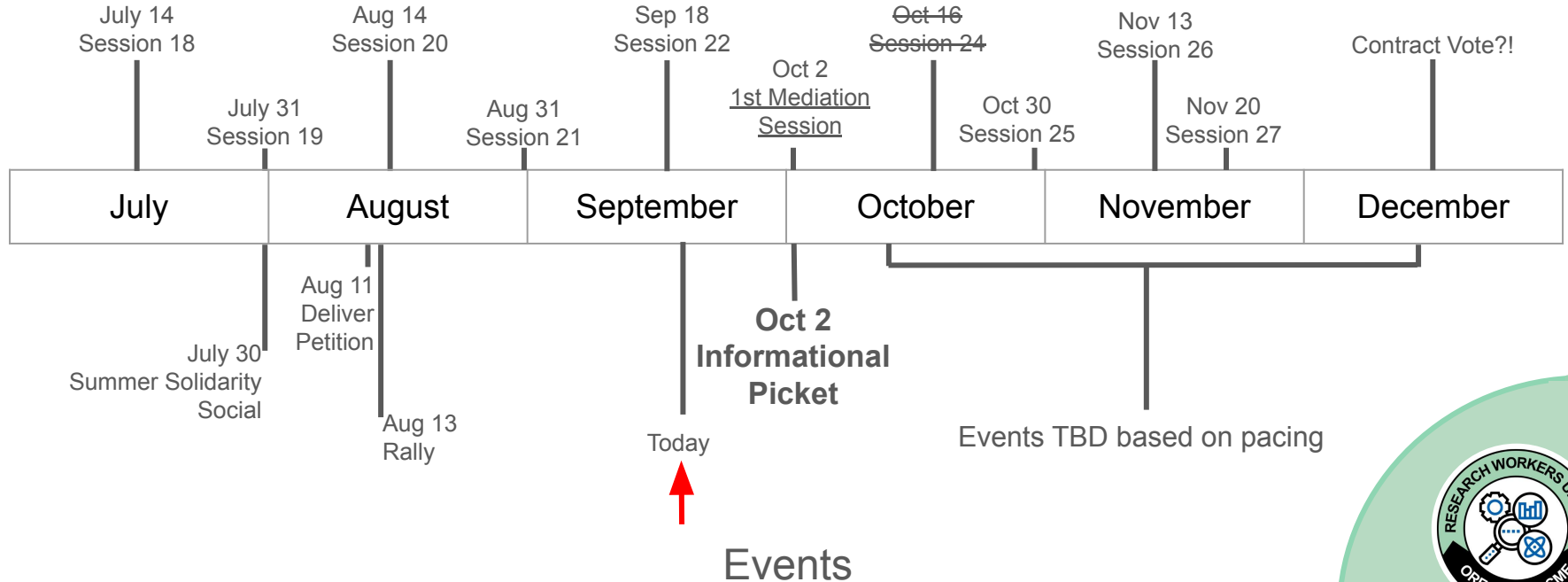


[Tentatively Agreed \(TA'd\) Articles](#)

[In Progress Articles \(per session\)](#)

# Bargaining Session Timeline

## Bargaining Sessions



# Stages of Bargaining

Early Sessions	Middle Sessions	Packages	Endgame
<p>Walk teams through proposals</p> <p>Ask clarifying questions about implementation, reasoning, meaning, etc.</p>	<p>Teams begin to understand each other's priorities and limits</p> <p>Begin to TA articles</p> <p>Research and provide evidence for arguments (RFIs)</p> <p>Member testimonies</p> <p>Begin talking economics</p>	<p>Combine multiple issues</p> <p>Make one contingent on another - give up in one area to gain in another*</p> <p>Most other articles have been TA'd by now</p>	<p>Last, best, and final offer from the employer</p> <p>Conditional (e.g. time limited) offers</p> <p>Mediation -&gt; impasse -&gt; strike notification</p> <p>-or-</p> <p>Contract ratification with recommendation from committee!</p>

# Update: 2% GROW Merit Raise - Status Quo ULP

- Management confirmed that researchers **will not be receiving the 2% raise that unclassified administrative (UA) employees will receive in October.**
  - This is despite years of Researchers and UA receiving identical raises following the GROW process, including last year after the union was certified.
- **AFSCME/RWU feel we have a strong argument that this is a status quo violation and we will be filing an [Unfair Labor Practice \(ULP\)](#) to challenge this.**
  - Management's rationale is that this "2%" is covered by the first year of their compensation article and anything paid to Researchers now will ultimately reduce what they can offer us in the contract - we disagree!
- **We are hoping to have this ULP filed very shortly.**
  - The reality is that it takes time for these to be processed and arbitrated by the state. We will fight to make retroactive pay a part of the settlement of the ULP.



# Package 1A - Economics

- Compensation:
  - 10% bilingual differential
  - 2% retention increases
- Insurance:
  - national health plan
  - expanded mandatory coverages
- Retirement:
  - add retirement counseling
- Time Off and Leaves:
  - Only 8 hours PTS before accessing EIB
  - 160 hours cash out on termination
  - 3 days' bereavement

## Progressive Wage Scale

Grade	% Increase
U01.H	7.50%
U02.S/H	7.25%
U03.S/H	7.00%
U04.S	6.75%
U05.S/H	6.50%
U06.S/H	6.25%
U07.S/H	6.00%
U08.S/H	5.75%
U09.S/H	5.50%
U10.S/H	5.25%
U11.S/H	5.00%
U12.S/H	4.75%
U13.S/H	4.50%
U14.S/H & 325.S/H	4.25%
U15.S/H & 330.S/H	4.00%

+2% for employees working > 6 months



# Package 1A - Economics

- Compensation:
  - 5% bilingual differential
  - ~~2% retention increases~~
- Insurance:
  - ~~national health plan~~
  - ~~expanded mandatory coverages~~
- Retirement:
  - add retirement counseling
- Time Off and Leaves:
  - ~~Only 8 hours PTS before accessing EIB~~
  - ~~160 hours cash out on termination~~
  - 80 hours at 50% pay on termination
  - 3 days' bereavement

## ~~Progressive Wage Scale~~

Grade	% Increase
U01.H	7.50%
U02.S/H	7.25%
U03.S/H	7.00%
U04.S	6.75%
U05.S/H	6.50%
U06.S/H	6.25%
U07.S/H	6.00%
U08.S/H	5.75%
U09.S/H	5.50%
U10.S/H	5.25%
U11.S/H	5.00%
U12.S/H	4.75%
U13.S/H	4.50%
U14.S/H & 325.S/H	4.25%
U15.S/H & 330.S/H	4.00%

## Across the Boards

Year 1 - 2%  
Year 2 - 1.75%  
Year 3 - 1.75%

~~+2% for employees  
working > 6 months~~

<https://www.ohsuresearchersunited.org/what-weve-won-what-were-asking>



# Package 1B - Working Conditions

- Reclassification:
  - Employee-initiated; 14 and 30 day time limits for manager and HR responses, respectively
  - Minimum 5% raise upon upwards reclassification
- Hours of Work:
  - Employer-approved conference/symposium/etc attendance is time worked
  - Holiday premium pay
- Career Development:
  - 16 hours of paid job-related training time
- International Affairs:
  - Paid visa fees
  - Up to 10 days of PTO if required to leave the country for visa renewal
  - Permanent residency sponsorship
- Hardship Fund: \$60,000

<https://www.ohsuresearchersunited.org/what-weve-won-what-were-asking>



# Package 1B - Working Conditions

- Reclassification:
  - ~~Employee-initiated; 14 and 30 day time limits for manager and HR responses, respectively~~
  - ~~Minimum 5% raise upon upwards reclassification~~ Convoluted promotion process and still no employee agency
- Hours of Work:
  - ~~Employer-approved conference/symposium/etc attendance is time worked~~
  - Holiday premium pay
- Career Development: No response to PI eligibility
  - 16 hours of paid job-related training time
- International Affairs:
  - Paid visa fees <maybe>
  - Up to 10 days of PTO if required to leave the country for visa renewal
  - Permanent residency sponsorship
- ~~Hardship Fund: \$60,000~~

<https://www.ohsuresearchersunited.org/what-weve-won-what-were-asking>



# Reaching an Agreement - Mediation

- Both parties have determined that mediation is necessary and have jointly scheduled a session on 10/2, with more to be decided.
  - These sessions will run longer than normal - typically 9am-5pm (or later!)
- Mediation and subsequent steps are governed by [PECBA](#)
  - Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act - ORS 243.650-243.806
- Mediation is a common occurrence in contract negotiations
  - *“Over 90% of PECBA contract negotiation cases referred to mediation are settled prior to interest arbitration or strike. Less than 1% of these cases result in a strike.”*
  - Even when a strike does occur, the ERB continues the mediation process.



# What is mediation?

- <https://www.oregon.gov/erb/pages/mediation.aspx>
- Change in duration and format
  - All-day (or longer) sessions
  - Mediator will meet with both parties together and individually
- Allows us to be more creative/dynamic - “If you can give us X, then we can meet you in the middle on Y”
- Mediation sessions are generally closed-door and confidential for both parties.
- The RWU bargaining team will relate summaries of what has taken place to the general membership slack throughout the mediation sessions

General  
Membership Slack



# Reaching an Agreement - Impasse

- We can take as much time in mediation as we'd like
- If mediation is unsuccessful, after at least 15 days, impasse is declared
- Impasse gives each bargaining team 7 days to submit their final contract proposals along with cost summaries
- Must wait another 30 days after final offers are published before doing anything else, this is referred to as the “cooling off period.”
- Following the “cooling off period” there is a “10-day notice of intent”
  - RWU can choose to strike and/or Employer may implement final offer.



# Reaching an Agreement - Strike

- Our **last** resort is to strike.
- AFSCME unions at OHSU have had to strike only once in the last 30-odd years.
- Based on previous contracts with OHSU (e.g. postdocs last summer), we expect that a strike **threat** will be necessary for OHSU to give us meaningful responses to our outstanding articles.
- The stronger our union (i.e. the **more** members we have and the more vocal they are), the **less** likely it is that we would have to resort to a strike.



# What is a Strike Threat?

- A strike is a mass work stoppage in protest of unfair working or contract conditions.
- **We can avoid strikes by being a strong union. Our power in numbers helps us be prepared. Become a union member, get involved, and strengthen our union's presence.**
- The threat of withholding our labor gives us leverage when bargaining for a fair contract.
- Higher membership rates = stronger strike threat
- Legal protections allow us to strike without retaliation from management.
- Visa-holders are protected. You are legally allowed to strike!

OHSU works because we do!

# Opportunities for Activism



# Successful Petition for a Fair Contract

RWU showed up!

1,009 signatures delivered  
to President Shereef  
Elnahal

It's clear - RWU members  
want a fair pay and living  
wage.

Let's keep up the  
momentum...



# Informational Picket

**What's an informational Picket?** A public demonstration for the purpose of informing the public about union concerns.

- Most unions at OHSU strategically use informational pickets over the course of their bargaining campaign to build pressure on management.
- Under Oregon's Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA), it is illegal for managers to monitor, question, or punish employees for any union-related activity.
  - If you experience this or hear about it happening, please document it and let Eddie know at [echarlton@oregonafscme.org](mailto:echarlton@oregonafscme.org).
- Informational pickets are NOT strikes! You can participate on your lunch break or outside of normal working hours.

# RWU's First Informational Picket!

**When:** Thursday, October 2nd 12-1PM during RWU mediation

**Who:** Research Workers United and Local 328 at OHSU

**What:** Show our combined force with Local 328 and highlight common shared issues in bargaining such as the fight for a living wage for all AFSCME members at OHSU and improved insurance benefits.

**Where:** The north end of Elizabeth Caruthers park at the Southwest Waterfront, near the Center for Health and Healing Building 2 (CHH2).

**This may be the first picket, but it won't be the last!**



# Membership Drive

- A focused effort to grow membership until the contract is finalized
  - Higher membership numbers increase striking power
  - Helps build credibility at the bargaining table.
- **Join our team** to reach out to researchers yet to join RWU:
  - Message researchers and ask them to sign a card
  - Come to RWU events and bring your fellow researchers!
  - Sign your membership card and check with colleagues if they have signed theirs



# Show Support!

Even Small Actions can make a BIG difference

- Get your RWU T-shirt and wear it
- Check your email for updates
- Make sure you're following us on social media platforms
  - Instagram/Facebook: @researchworkers
  - Like, comment, and share our posts
- Join our Slack workspace for RWU members!
  - Get real-time answers to your questions
  - Stay up to date on the latest RWU news



# Opportunities to get involved!



## Green Out the Board of Directors



Local 328  
**AFSCME**

Or tune in  
online:

**When:** September 26<sup>th</sup>, meet @ 8:30am  
**Where:** Robertson Life Sciences Building Atrium

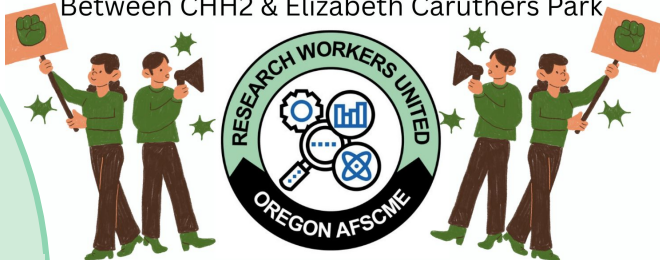
Wear green and attend the Board of Directors meeting on Sept. 26 starting at 9:15am. Make some noise and support your bargaining team!



## Join The Fight!

**Informational Picket:** 10/2 12-1p

Between CHH2 & Elizabeth Caruthers Park



Bonus points!!

Advanced Practice United  
Presents



# PICKET PARTY

## SEPT 25TH 12PM-1PM

Elizabeth Caruthers Park  
South Waterfront  
Farmers Market

\*\*Special Guests\*\*

**Brassless Chaps and  
Unpresidented Brass Bands**



# Your Union Needs You! Want more info?

Email:

[researchworkersunited@gmail.com](mailto:researchworkersunited@gmail.com)

Website:

[www.ohsuresearchersunited.org](http://www.ohsuresearchersunited.org)

Slack:

[https://join.slack.com/t/rwugeneral-membership/shared\\_invite/zt-2vnjf1bus-0j0P08dS8RTFGaJDtvTaPQ](https://join.slack.com/t/rwugeneral-membership/shared_invite/zt-2vnjf1bus-0j0P08dS8RTFGaJDtvTaPQ)

Instagram: @researchworkers



# Questions?



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