

**Executive Vice President – United Academics**  
**Deborah Olson**

UA governance defines this position as having the responsibility to:

1. Assume the duties of president in his/her absence
2. Coordinate the Collective Bargaining Committee
3. Serve on other committees as needed
4. Co-sign financial documents

The needs of the organization dictate the activities of this office more so than many other offices. I have chaired EC meetings when the president has been out of town and occasionally represented him or the union at other meetings. During these past 2 years I made presentations at state, regional and national AFT or AAUP conferences on behalf United Academics. Most of the presentations concerned our organizing history, bargaining process, or implementation issues. This year I represented UA at an AFT-NEA Higher Education Conference in Florida and presented on a panel with 2 NEA-affiliated community college instructors and also at a labor and higher education conference in NYC. For the latter, our executive director and I presented on a panel with 4 representatives of UO Academic Affairs, including their labor relations director. I have also represented the union at internal administration candidate meetings. The candidates for HR director, for example, all had a meeting with campus union representatives on their site visit schedule. I see this aspect of the position as filling in where there's a need, as well as serving to assist the president of the union.

The CBC meets in the run up to bargaining. The role has been to develop bargaining issues or platforms. The CBC was extremely active before the bargaining of our first contract (we didn't have officers then so I wasn't the chair.) Prior to the bargaining of our 2<sup>nd</sup> contract, I chaired CBC monthly meetings to work on the issues for bargaining and then from those issues, to develop the bargaining platform. These issues grew of a member survey that I work on with many others and from notes we all took during the initial implementation of the contract about what needs tweaking. Once bargaining started this 2<sup>nd</sup> time around the CBC has not been active.

The Organizing Committee, chaired by the Organizing and Membership chair, has subsumed the umbrella role of contract action team and organizing. Active members of the Rep Assembly and Stewards are the eyes and ears of the union at the local level. I have sat on this committee.

The Implementation Committee (IC) has been an important part of my work. This committee grew out of the need to have members familiar with our first contract working with Academic Affairs to implement the complex policy development process. We meet weekly with AA representatives in what we've called the Joint IC. When AA had luncheons or workshops to introduce policies to deans and department heads, we took turns attending. Once we had officers, the president joined this group but I also remained on the committee. The UA Implementation committee and EC have had many local meetings with small groups of faculty or departments concerning the implementation of our policies. This has often been dependent on our schedules and availability. In all of these committees I work closely with our executive director as our messages need to be on the same page and I often do not know the "bigger picture" as well as he does.

I have also worked closely with AAUP-Oregon, serving as a vice-president of communications. This isn't the position I thought it was, but it does require close work with the AAUP-OR director, who is great to work with. I've consulted on their website and written UA pieces for the state newsletter. I am also on the AFT-Oregon Strategic Planning committee.

The first CBA resulted in a deadlock on the issue of intellectual property. An MOU was signed with the administration to form a joint committee to see if the issue could be resolved. I co-chaired this group along with Chuck Williams from Innovation Partnerships (the IP office for the UO). The complexity of this work requires more description than I could give in this report, but we have recently resumed our work with meeting scheduled over the summer to rewrite the OARs and IMDs into one cohesive policy that will give faculty more transparency, clearer guidelines and a degree of control over their intellectual work.

Lastly, besides the president and the treasurer, there needs to be 1 or 2 officers who are available to co-sign checks. This happens on an irregular basis, as needed by Kristy, and depends on whoever is on campus and available.

## **VP-TTF report: Gina Psaki, 9 June 2015**

As Vice President for TTF Affairs in 2013–15 I have concentrated on assisting bargaining unit tenure-track faculty in moments of professional difficulty such as promotion and tenure denials, mid-term review, evaluation for merit or equity increases, grievance situations, and discipline. Many grievances arise from actual contract violations by supervisors, and others from difficult relations among colleagues or between a colleague and a supervisor. For most TTF, however, by far the major problems in 2013–15 have been connected to evaluations for promotion and tenure. The stakes are enormous for the colleague affected; the emotional intensity is painful; and challenging what appears to be straight “academic judgment” is delicate. For all these reasons, assisting colleagues with P&T problems is a compelling but difficult remit. I have assisted colleagues in drafting responses / rebuttals to performance reviews, and to tenure decisions at the departmental, college, and university levels; in preparing tenure-denial appeals to the PTRAC; and in seeking resolutions in advance for possible conflicts around tenure or performance review. There has been so much overlap with my participation on the Grievance Committee that I plan to dedicate my future activity to the Grievance Committee.

There’s a great deal for a VP for Tenure-Track Affairs to do outside of assisting colleagues in distress. Some of it got done: town halls, listening sessions, and outreach; attending Academic Affairs workshops on P&T and retirement for faculty and department heads; continuing to build our membership (the category with the highest percentage of UA members is in fact TTF). But some of the work just didn’t, and a VP-TTF interested in making deliberate progress on TT worklife issues may be able to focus on : working on building community among the TTF across campus; collating comparative data on salary and teaching loads; getting out in front of issues roiling on other campuses, such as threats to tenure (Wisconsin!) and academic freedom (don’t tweet in Kansas or Illinois!), and the narrowing of TTF access to sabbatical leaves (Univ of Kansas, for example). Our next VP for TTF can count on my help for looking through department and unit P&T documents for problem areas, and finding ways to bring those to departments’ attention without making them dig in behind “this is how we’ve always done it.”

## **Grievance and Contract Administration Chair – United Academics**

According to the Constitution of United Academics of the University of Oregon, Article VI, section 12, this position has the following responsibilities:

- a. Be responsible for pursuing the resolution of faculty grievances;
- b. Be acquainted with current grievance procedures and with the implementation of the current contract;
- c. Assist and advise persons in the bargaining unit from the initiation of a grievance to its eventual resolution;
- d. With the support and advice of the Grievance and Contract Administration Committee, advise the Executive Council on all matters pertaining to the grievance procedure and on all grievance cases as well as any problems regarding the implementation of the current contract;
- e. With the advice of the Grievance and Contract Administration Committee, appoint Assistant Grievance Officers as necessary;
- f. Work with the Faculty Senate’s ombudsperson and grievance committee when appropriate; and
- g. Perform other duties as delegated by the President or assigned by the Executive Council.

This description encompasses much of what the Grievance Chair and Committee are responsible for, but in its implementation the last two years the Executive Director was the individual with whom the Chair works most closely and the individual who does much of the leg work in terms of meeting with the university’s Human Resources Director, corresponding by email, who formulates many of the letters, and assistants grievants in properly preparing their documents. The Chair or the Executive Director is typically the first a grievant contacts with their issue, a first meeting ensues in order to get a complete picture of the situation/trouble experienced, and to help the potential grievant process whether or not what has happened (or not happened) is a violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Typically one or two members of the Committee also participate in this meeting and subsequent follow-ups. If a case looks like it might reach the level of arbitration, the Chair, along with the Executive Director (after a vote of the Grievance Committee), take the case to the full Executive Committee for a vote.

It became clear over the course of the two years I was officially in this role (and more time preceding that), that the workload of this position is unpredictable. Course release is essential and while it might not align with timing of cases, does provide the faculty member the opportunity to engage in extra training, help with time for the many emails and phone calls involved with cases, and to attend meetings with grievants, Affirmative Action, Human Resources, and any other parties involved. The hiring of an additional staff person is also essential as the Executive Director needs support in some of the calendaring and follow up required for this process.

Holding regularly scheduled Grievance Committee meetings was a challenge the first couple of years, largely because of the unpredictability of when a complaint comes in and the typically urgent nature of meetings and time frame for follow up. Once cases are in the works, however, regular meetings during the term assure everyone is up to date and can weigh in on what is happening with the cases. Therefore, having trained committee members “on call” is essential and dividing up work of meeting with potential grievants essential. Whenever possible I suggest there being two persons present at all meetings in order to get the most information to do the best job and for reality checking what is said and read.

I had no interactions with the university Ombudsperson. This might be an area for development for future Chairs.

The Grievance Committee serves a critical function as a place for interaction between faculty members and the union and with the university. Supporting our colleagues, hearing their stories, and assisting them through the process of making sure the CBA is consistently and uniformly applied has been emotional and satisfying work.

### **Chair, Committee for Organizing, Mobilization, and Communications (“COMC”)**

As its title suggests, this job has three main parts—all equally important. The first concerns the long-term project of building up the union and its network of departmental stewards and representatives to ensure, first, that the rights of UO faculty under the Collective Bargaining Agreement are honored and, second, so that colleagues have someone they can turn to with problems in the workplace. Mobilization involves membership drives and encouraging colleagues to turn out for United Academics meetings and bargaining sessions. Finally, the communications tasks involve the chair of COMC in the editing and distribution of United Academics’ policy statements, updates on bargaining, editorials, press releases—in short, anything that involves getting the word out about the United Academics and its accomplishments.

### **2014-2015 Year-end Report from the Committee on State Issues in Higher Education**

This year the Committee on State Issues in Higher Education worked on a number of issues. The committee, which over the year comprised Michael Stern, Peter Keyes, Catrin Rode, Forest Pyle, and me, met on average every two weeks, sometimes more.

In Fall, we began meeting to map out strategies for the year. We discussed what areas we thought were important to work on as well as where we would have impact. We discussed our areas of activity being campus, the new institutional board, the state legislature, and our state allies including AAUP OR and AFT OR. Much of our focus in the Fall was taken up in solidarity with the GTFF strike. This was an obvious area for work as the GTFF is an ally both on campus and in the state.

In October, three Committee members, Michael Stern, Peter Keyes, and I travelled to Corvallis for an AAUP OR legislative summit meeting, where we began discussions of how to approach working together in the upcoming legislative session.

In Winter Quarter, we began focusing more directly on the state legislative session. In February we hosted an AAUP Oregon legislative lobbying workshop, where we discussed the need to figure out what our own priorities were and to focus that energy. We are not close to being able to sponsor our own bills yet, but we began discussing legislation that we wanted to endorse, from AAUP OR, AFT OR and other allies. Our committee discussed numerous bills and made recommendations to our Executive Committee. We also went up to Salem for lobbying in concert with SEIU, AFT OR and AAUP OR.

In Spring Quarter we continued to work on legislative issues, and joined an AFT OR lobby Day in April. We also met with Lane County Commissioner Pete Sorenson to discuss broadening our network in terms of connections to legislators. To that end we sent out a survey to UA activists asking if anyone had connections to Salem. For our last UA General Assembly meeting, we invited Sorenson and State Rep Paul Holvey to speak, along with an AFT organizer who gave a presentation on an impending “right-to-work” campaign in Oregon in 2016. This was a good way to emphasize the role of politics in our local more generally.