

Contacting your union rep

When you are reaching out to a staff rep, steward, or fellow employee regarding a workplace violation or union issue, make sure to use your personal email or phone number to make the contact. Not only does our contract prohibit the use of state resources for union business, it is also in your best interest to keep these sensitive matters from becoming public record.

WPEA staff representatives

John Littel — Columbia Basin College, Walla Walla Community College, and Wenatchee Valley College

Steven Sloniker — Yakima Valley Community College

Columbia Basin College steward

Carol Groce, assistant chief shop steward

Walla Walla Community College steward

Jackson Vance

Wenatchee Valley College stewards

Rafe Carroll, chief shop steward

Roger Montanez, assistant chief shop steward

Mary Rabchuk

Sue Root

Yakima Valley Community College stewards

Cathy Van Winsen, chief shop steward

Stefanie Menard, assistant chief shop steward

Ron Anderson

Justin Busby

Chuck Cummings

Eugene Gandy, Jr.

Marie Kennedy

Senaida Lopez

Susan Meredith

Jeff Morrow

John Olson

Raoul Perez

Lisa Rice

De'Andre Sanders

Peggy Van Dyke

WPEA Organizes New Unit at Big Bend Community College

Over the last year, WPEA Organizing and Research Specialist Jason Holland worked tirelessly with a group of workers at Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake to help them form a union in their workplace for the first time. That work paid off when in January the Public Employees Relations Commission recognized WPEA as the bargaining agent for the IT department at the College.

Currently Jason and John Littel are working with the members to prepare to negotiate a first contract, and John has begun his role as Staff Representative, helping our new members with some long standing issues in the workplace. Welcome aboard Big Bend—let's all work to help build a strong union for our new members.



Jason

Outreach project underway

Recently, you may have spotted WPEA organizers Cammie, Kathleen, and Chad on your campus. They have started a new member outreach project and have been holding educational meetings, talking to members, and identifying ways to strengthen the union at each college.

Cammie Pavesic joined WPEA in February to help with the new member outreach project. She has many years of experience working as an organizer, recently with SEIU 775 in Spokane. Cammie will be meeting with members in Eastern Washington, identifying ways to strengthen the union.

Kathleen Oest returned to WPEA in March 2015 and is currently working as both a staff representative and as an organizer. Kathleen brings her experience organizing at unions from Nevada to Washington (including WPEA).

Chad Elbandagji joined WPEA in October. After serving in the US Army during 9/11, Chad helped military veterans in his community return home and build a life. Working alongside community partners, Chad had the opportunity to branch into union organizing.



Kathleen and Chad

If you see them on campus, be sure to introduce yourself and have a quick conversation with them to find out more. You can also reach them at cammie@wpea.org, kathleen@wpea.org, or chad@wpea.org.



Cammie



Wenatchee Valley grievance win over parking rates

At the start of Fall Quarter in 2014, Wenatchee Valley College imposed a fee for parking on campus. Believing the fee to be a unilateral change in working conditions as well as a violation of our current collective bargaining agreement, WPEA filed a grievance regarding this fee.

After several attempts to resolve the grievance within the college, the union ultimately decided to advance the grievance to arbitration. WPEA sent a clear message that the collective bargaining agreement must be respected. The union does not take arbitration issues lightly; in fact that this was our first case to go to hearing in several years.

The heart of the issue was whether or not the college could impose parking rates without first bargaining with your union. As this change placed a financial burden on members, WPEA had no other option but to file the grievance. On several occasions, the union attempted to resolve the grievance through settlement proposals. Unfortunately, the parties were unable to reach a mutually-agreeable resolution.

The parties presented their cases before an arbitrator in September of 2015. The union argued that the language of our current contract meant that the college would need to maintain free parking. The college argued that they were applying fees that were previously in place.

Ultimately, the union prevailed and members at the college who purchased parking passes received reimbursement. Unfortunately, the parking situation is not over. Moving forward, the college again wants to have staff pay for parking beginning spring quarter. The union maintains its original position that the college cannot require staff to pay for parking under the current collective bargaining agreement. WPEA will keep you informed as this issue moves forward. If you'd like the most up to date information, please contact one of your shop stewards or your staff representative.

Recent Columbia Basin College bargaining

Recently, WPEA sat down with Columbia Basin College and the Office of Financial Management to negotiate changes to the security procedures at the college. The college has experienced an increase in car prowls as well as more non-students not authorized to be on campus.

To address this, we negotiated over increased responsibilities for WPEA-represented campus security officers, along with the addition of a number of security cameras. In the negotiation, WPEA focused on security procedures that protected students and employees, and didn't adversely affect WPEA members. Additionally, we were able to work with the college to reallocate WPEA-represented security guards to campus security officers, along with the higher salary range.

After the cameras were installed, VP Brooks showed us all the current camera locations.

Many thanks to the security team as well as CBC Steward Carol Groce, who helped with every step of the successful negotiation.

Walla Walla Community College updates

Walla Walla Community College has enjoyed higher enrollment and increased resources since its recognition as the Best American Community College several years ago. And now the college is beginning the recruitment for a new President. HR has put together a broad search committee that will include WPEA member Melissa Rodriguez. Congratulations Melissa! It's important that employees' voices are heard and Melissa will represent them well.

Staff Representative John Littel has been meeting with Facilities Director Shane Loper and some of the skilled trades members to begin discussions around formal workplace training programs for our members. John has also started meetings with Dr. Ruth Russo, head of the Faculty Union, to share information and start a better working relationship between our unions.

Several Walla Walla unions have started a forum for meeting and discussing common labor interests, called the Walla Walla Working Families Roundtable. The Roundtable meets at 6pm on the second Monday of the month at Smith's Restaurant. All WPEA members are welcome and encouraged to participate. Please contact John Littel for more information.