

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
TESC Student Support Services Staff Union
COMPILED BY UNITED FACULTY OF EVERGREEN May 2013

Q. Who is in the non-managerial exempt staff union, known as the Student Support Services Staff Union? (SSSSU)

A. Employees from student affairs staff, including Academic Advisors, Admissions Counselors, Resident Directors, Student Activities advisors, Mental Health Counselors, Financial Aid Counselors, Career Development Center Counselors, First Peoples' Coordinator, Key Student Services Counselors, Gear Up and Upward Bound advisors, Flaming Eggplant advisor, CPJ advisor, and athletic coaches. There are about 62 positions in the bargaining unit, currently filled by 55 employees. They are a bargaining unit of Washington State Federation of State Employees, WFSE local 443. These are regular, exempt, non-managerial positions; they are salaried workers exempt from overtime pay. Exempt staff who are NOT in the SSSSU bargaining unit include upper-level managers and supervisors.

Q. When was SSSSU formed and how long have they been negotiating for their first contract?

A. They came together as a union through a card campaign in 2011. Most of the workers signed cards to join the bargaining unit and an election was unnecessary. They formed a bargaining team and started negotiations with the College in February 2012 and have made little progress on basic issues. This means they have been bargaining for over 15 months and have been unable to reach a tentative agreement with the Evergreen administration.

Q. What are SSSSU 's key issues ?

A. Key issues are "just cause," fair compensation and seniority. These workers currently have "at will" status which means their employment can be terminated at any time for any reason, or for no reason. They are trying to negotiate "just cause" protections, a standard system of principles that protects workers from arbitrary or unfair discipline or termination. Another key issue is fair compensation, workers in this bargaining unit are typically hired in at a certain rate of compensation and stay there without change, potentially for years. They are seeking modest pay increases and step increases. Seniority recognizes length of service when considering reductions in force. The SSSSU bargaining team wants a fair and just contract by Graduation 2013. See their video at: <http://vimeo.com/tescsssu>

Q. Are there potential strike actions coming up?

A. Yes. A strike action would mean that SSSSU bargaining unit members would walk off the job and set up picket lines on campus. Also note that A DAY OF ACTION is scheduled for Tuesday May 28, starting at 7:30 AM at the Evergreen Bus Circle in front of Red Square.

Q. What do these strike actions mean for faculty and other Evergreen community members?

A. FACULTY: Should picket lines go up, United Faculty of Evergreen (UFE) members and other faculty in the UFE bargaining unit will be encouraged NOT to cross picket lines (this is a basic union principle of solidarity, supporting workers' rights). STAFF: Classified staff are unionized and are organizing to encourage their members NOT to cross picket lines. STUDENTS: A coalition of student groups is organizing to educate students about how to support workers' rights in a labor dispute, including honoring the basic principle of NOT crossing a picket line. They are organizing students to pledge NOT to attend classes or other events on campus should picket lines go up.

Q. For faculty, are there any alternatives to cancelling classes?

A. Alternatives include rescheduling classes or holding classes in alternative spaces. UFE leaders are working with other union leaders and community members to find alternative spaces off campus in union and community spaces. Contact your UFE steward or officers for further information.

Q. What can I do now?

A. Contact your steward or UFE Coordinating Committee Members to sign a petition pledging not to cross picket lines. Contact Laurie Meeker (UFE Chair) <meekerl@earthlink.net> 360-259-8139, or Elizabeth Williamson (UFE Stewards Coordinator) <williamson.elizabeth@gmail.com> 360-451-3843 for information on alternative classroom space. If you would like to join the picket line or provide support like food and drinks, please let us know.