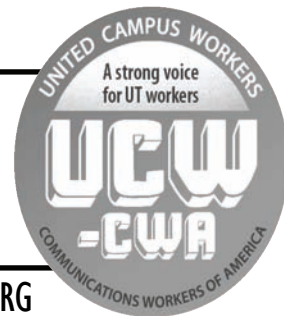


UT CAMPUS VOICES

News for UT staff and faculty

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2007 Pay Raise a Step in the Right Direction

"Giving a 3% cost of living increase or \$900 to ALL employees is directly attributable to the work of UCW and UT working together on behalf of higher education employees." State Representative and Budget Committee Chairman Harry Tindell

On Monday, June 11, the Tennessee General Assembly passed the Tennessee budget for 2007-2008. It called for a 3% across the board pay raise for all higher education employees, both faculty and staff. Additional monies were allocated to make the higher education compensation package comparable with what state employees are receiving.

On Tuesday June 12 UT President Petersen announced that the minimum pay raise for UT staff would be \$900. This represents the largest minimum increase for UT employees in well over a decade, and goes a long way toward ensuring that all UT employees are paid a living wage.

United Campus Workers-CWA local 3865 originally called for a \$1500 across the board pay raise. We felt that such a raise was necessary to remedy the persistent poverty wages at UT and was a raise that all UT employees deserved. Many higher education employees work second and third jobs just to make ends meet, and quite a few even qualify for food stamps.

With pay this low, the \$900 floor is certainly a step in the right direction. But UT employees know we deserve better, and more MUST be done.

Following the raise announcement, UCW polled many employees on campus to get their thoughts on it. While appreciative of the raise, many pointed out that with increases in the costs of everyday items like milk, gas, and food, this raise will barely keep up with inflation. Others mentioned that health



UCW-CWA members engage state lawmakers. Above, UCW-CWA President Tom Smith, State Representative Joe Armstrong of Knoxville, and UCW member Dr. George White, Jr. pose after a meeting; below, UCW Knoxville chapter vice-president Pat Kerschietter, State Representative Harry Tindell of Knoxville, and member Tony Haynes chat about UT.

insurance is slated to go up again this year. Additionally, others pointed out that the lack of substantive raises for several years means that pay at UT is still well below what it ought to be.

The biggest victory of this budget is the assurance that all faculty will receive the full cost of living raise before merit pay is given. During the previous two years faculty received raises of only 1 and 1.5%, with an additional merit pool going to a select few. The defeat of the administrations' "merit first" plan signals a major change in direction, a change in course that we must work to continue.

We will have to wait and see how the 2% salary pool to address "merit and market salary issues" is implemented. At an Employee Relations Committee meeting on June 12 in Knoxville, Provost Holub, a top UTK administrator, stated that on average UT employees would be receiving 5% this year. More analysis of this will appear in future articles.

How did we get here?

Those of us active with United Campus Workers often hear from critics of the union that "we take credit for things we didn't do."

It is important that this be addressed, because the successes of this year would not have come about without the work of many

different actors. While we acknowledge and appreciate the work of the UT government relations team, many others were involved as well in achieving this victory.

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UCW-CWA lobbying delegation to Nashville poses with State Senator Tim Burchett.

UCW - CWA
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UT employees lobby for a pay raise

by *Pat Kerschietter*

On March 13, United Campus Workers- Communications Workers of America held our first lobby day of the 2007 Legislative session. Close to 50 UT faculty, staff, and students from Knoxville and Chattanooga met with over 50 Tennessee legislators, including Lt. Governor Ron Ramsey and Speaker of the House Jimmy Naifeh.

Legislators heard first-hand the concerns of UT employees who have experienced the inequities of the UT pay system. Information was given out about our support for an across the board pay raise of 5% or \$1500, whichever was more.

We met with Representative Craig Fitzhugh, chairman of the House Finance, Ways, and Means committee, who told us he would do what he could to improve on the Governor's 1% pay raise proposal. Other legislators expressed support for increasing the 1% proposal, and ensuring parity with what other state employees will receive.

Kathy Herd, a UCW member in the UTK Engineering Services department, felt the trip was a good learning experience. "I feel we were well prepared and made our point well," Herd said. "I think it is important for UT employees to participate in these trips to meet the people that have our financial fate in our hands."

Barbara Ray, a UCW member who teaches in the Teacher Prep Academy at UTC, stated, "It's well worth going. You get a feeling for how decisions are made and how different legislators feel about our issues."

Susan North, an English instructor at UTC who has lobbied several times in the past years said she felt this year's lobby day was the best ever. "We were better or-

ganized, the legislators knew who we are, and we had a clear message for them. I felt like our time was well spent and we gained some support and good will."

Each year UCW-CWA schedules an annual lobby day to Nashville, where we bring employees and supporters from our campuses to meet with members of the general assembly. Smaller lobby days are scheduled before after the annual one. Even if you can't attend the main lobby day because of a scheduling conflict, the smaller ones are worth going on as well. Please contact us if you would like to be included on a future delegation.

We encourage everyone to get involved with UCW in this important effort in grassroots democracy! Our future as UT staff and faculty depend on YOUR involvement!



UCW Chattanooga chapter vice-president Shela Van Ness with State Senator Rosalind Kurita

Members of United Campus Workers - Communications Workers of America Local 3865 share why they joined UCW—and why other people should, too!

WHY WE JOINED UCW

Diane Woodley, UTK Department of Housing

I've been here 15 years. Your body gets wore down by the overtime in the summer. You don't have a summertime because of all the work that you have to do then.

But now that UCW helped with that it is better. UCW helps get raises and to be treated equally and fairly on the job.

Now you don't have to do as much overtime. It was mandatory and now it is where you don't have to do as many hours—it makes it better for people.



Celeste Brooks, Counselor in the UT McNair Program

I joined UCW because I believe in its mission, and I wholeheartedly support the tireless efforts that the UCW engages in to ensure that the best interests of UT Faculty and Staff or being served, and that of the larger Knoxville community.

There is strength in numbers, so I would encourage others to join in the efforts of UCW. Where there is no justice, there is no peace!



Fran Ansley, Professor at the College of Law

Most fundamentally, I am active in the union because I believe in democracy at work. At a university, I believe workplace democracy requires an organization that is independent of the administration, one that can stand by, speak for and be accountable to campus employees. UCW-CWA fills that bill here at UTK, and I am proud to be a member.



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The "union" isn't some abstract idea, but a living, breathing organization that is working hard to improve working conditions at UT. United Campus Workers has over 500 members at the Knoxville and Chattanooga campuses. We are an organized group of employees who are working for change at UT.

In 2005, UT employees, acting collectively through our union UCW-CWA and with allies in the Tennessee AFL-CIO, introduced a bill in the Tennessee legislature that would give all higher education workers a \$1200 raise. This historic legislation ultimately did not pass the General Assembly; however, it represented the starting point of exciting activism on the part of UT employees who want to make a difference at the University.

Over the past three years, scores of UCW-CWA members have taken personal vacation time to lobby for respect and fair pay in Nashville. This year was no different.

In November of 2006, when UT employees first heard from President Petersen and the UT Board of Trustees that a 5% pay plan had been passed as the official recommendation to the state, we were excited. After several years without any raises in the 1990s and subsequent inadequate raises, a 5% raise was welcome news.

UCW-CWA took seriously this pay plan, devoting much of our last newsletter to a thorough analysis of the information available to the public.

The other shoe dropped in mid-February when Gov. Phil Bredeisen released a budget that contained a 1% raise for higher education employees. Campus employees throughout the UT system were shocked, and did not understand how the Governor, who is chairman of the Board of Trustees, could recommend a budget so completely at odds with UT recommendations. It seemed that once again higher education employees were expected to live with less than what we deserved.

Many UT workers, confused by the 1% raise, waited for UT to address this massive disconnect. However, word never came from the administration; in fact UT made no public mention of the raise to staff and faculty until May 30, 2007.

UCW-CWA did not sit around hoping the promised 5% would magically appear. Instead, we organized van-loads of UT staff, faculty, and students and headed to Nashville. We brought close to 50 employees and student supporters to the State Legislature in early March to make our case for a *fair* raise directly.

On that lobby day we had more than 50 meetings with members of the State House and Senate. We brought the message that UT employees needed a 5% pay raise, with a flat dollar minimum for the lowest paid. We asked for an end to the so-called "merit pay" schemes that our faculty suffered through for the past two years, and we requested money comparable to what

other state workers have already received to address pay compression and poverty level wages.

For the first time in three years our members were greeted by Senators and Representatives who recognized the UCW. Members of the General Assembly knew who we were and where we were from. They understood our issues; they apologized for leaving us in a lurch while other state workers received a 3% across the board raise and more than \$20 million to address pay compression. They remembered the \$1200 flat raise, and several remembered some of the personal stories told to them by our members over these past three years of lobbying efforts. Members of the General Assembly confirmed what our members have come to know: UCW's power and influence is growing!

Following our big lobby day in March, we made several smaller lobby trips to Nashville where we continued to push for a fair pay raise. In Knoxville and Chattanooga we organized a letter and

email campaign to state Senator Jamie Woodson, who received close to 1000 communications from UT employees and community members. We stayed in weekly contact with key members of the Tennessee General Assembly to check on the status of where the budget stands. During the final days of the session we sent several hundred emails to members of the House and Senate, and our members again traveled to Nashville to make our case for a raise directly to the decision makers.

Though the UCW didn't force UT or the state legislature to implement this budget, it would be naive for anyone to say that we didn't have a positive impact on this year's outcome.

The words of the famous abolitionist Frederick Douglass would be important for us to reflect on: "If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation...want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters...Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

We still have a long way to go. Please join us as we work to improve conditions for all UT employees!

Legislators Comment on UCW-CWA

"I am very pleased with the strong support our valuable higher education employees received in this budget. Advocates for the University's employees delivered a very clear and effective message to legislators for increasing wages. The effective combination of the leadership of President Petersen, an outstanding grassroots organization by campus workers and a supportive local delegation, produced very positive results."

Senate Education Committee Chairperson Jamie Woodson

"I am pleased with the results of this year's appropriation for Higher Education and UT. The work of the employees, both faculty and staff, made a real impact on the final budget."

"I look forward to working with UCW next year."

House Budget Committee Chairman Harry Tindell

Vice-President Britt back at UT, and with a raise!

by Tom Smith

Jack Britt, retired UT Executive Vice President for Research, is coming back to work at the University. At the UT Board of Trustees' Executive and Compensation Committee meeting on May 14, 2007, President Petersen and the UT Administration requested approval to bring Dr. Britt back on staff under state guidelines that allow retirees to work up to 120 days a year.

Dr. Britt's new hourly rate of pay will be \$120.19!

The Executive and Compensation Committee did place some strings on Dr. Britt's re-employment. The period of re-employment extends for one year, and the Administration can only spend the equivalent of one day's worth of work for that year – a salary of roughly \$50,000 for one day of work a week! Of course, all of this

is in addition to Dr. Britt's retirement package. He had been paid \$230,000 during the 05/06 budget year (according to UT Budget Book salary listing available in Hodges Library Reference Department).

The kicker in all of this: Dr. Britt appears to have actually gotten a \$5.00 per hour raise in moving from retirement to re-employment. *Here's to hoping that all UT employees get a similar \$5.00 an hour pay increase!*

At the most recent Employees Relation Council (ERC) meeting we requested a listing of all former administrators who are employed under the post-retirement guidelines. We will keep everyone informed of such information as it becomes available.

IN MEMORIAM

Two wonderful individuals who were members of our union and loyal UT employees passed away in recent months.

Gale Brewer retired from UTK in July of 2006 but continued to play an active role in United Campus Workers. She worked as a support staff member in the College of Education for most of her time at UT. Gale was known for her spunk and kindness, and literally everyone who had the privilege of knowing her would attest to those attributes. Gale was active in recruiting new members to UCW, and was best known for her speech given to the Knox county legislative delegation in 2005 in support of the \$1200 pay increase. We miss her and are honored that we had the privilege to be a part of her life.

Melba Venearo worked for the UTK Hodges library in the Access and Delivery Services department. Melba was incredibly talented in the arts, particularly with sewing and painting. She completed a bachelor's degree in Art from UTK and continued to work on her education. According to her coworkers, she was very nice and never said anything bad about anyone. Throughout her battle with cancer she always showed great strength. While experiencing great pain, she continued to come to work because of her dedication to the university. She serves as an inspiration to us all.



UT CAMPUS VOICES // SUMMER 2007

A MAJOR MILESTONE : UCW-CWA hits 500 !

We are elated to announce that UCW-CWA now has over 500 members!

Some said it would never happen, others worked to make sure it did not. But we remained committed to justice on the job at UT and beyond. First dozens, then hundreds of average folks showed their dedication to the students, Tennessee taxpayers and each other by joining UCW-CWA. Scores of union members went to Nashville to lobby the Tennessee General Assembly, sent emails, postcards and made phone calls. This commitment, dedication and hard work has and continues to make changes in our everyday lives.

This latest milestone is no small accomplishment. It took hundreds of union members talking with friends, co-workers and complete strangers about the work our union is doing and the vision of a better UT that we strive to make a reality.

There is power in numbers; we learned this lesson years ago. We are not ready to rest on any laurels yet. We have contacts at UT Martin, Mississippi State, MTSU and TSU in middle Tennessee.

Now more than ever we need you to step up and help us push things to the next level. If you have not joined yet, what are you waiting for? If you are already a member, consider becoming active in the UCW-CWA Legislative Committee or help us with our efforts to gain new members. Working together, 500 members is just the beginning!

CALENDAR of EVENTS

JULY 15 - 17

Toronto, Canada

CWA ANNUAL CONVENTION *Delegates from UCW-CWA will travel to the annual international convention of Communications Workers of America.*

**NEED MORE INFO? WANT TO GET INVOLVED?
ATTEND YOUR LOCAL UCW-CWA CHAPTER
MEETING!**

KNOXVILLE

Tuesday, July 10

Tuesday, July 24

UNITE Building (1124 N. Broadway, Knoxville,
TN 37917)

CHATTANOOGA

Thursday, July 26 5:15pm

303 Brock Hall

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