



BUILDING A NATIONAL MOVEMENT

15th Annual CGEU Conference,
August 10-13, 2006, Philadelphia

Preliminary Program

Thursday, August 10	
3-10 p.m.	Check-in – GET-UP offices
Friday, August 11	
8-8:45	Breakfast
9-10:30	<p>Opening Plenary</p> <p>Address: “Sector Organizing” – The purpose of placing an address on sector organizing at the beginning of the conference is for attendees to learn about how some unions have been changing their strategic planning and organizing models over the past several years. The conference itself is engineered to move us in the direction of thinking and organizing as a sector of the labor movement, instead of as members of different internationals.</p>
10:45-11:15	<p>Working Groups: Initial Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Implementing National Contract Standards</i> – this working group will compile a model contract for the grad employee movement. The goal is to establish pay, benefit, and workload standards for our sector of the labor force. These standards will evolve over time, but we need a model that grad unions across the country can look to as we enter contract negotiations over the next few years. • <i>Winning Union Rights for all Grad Employees</i> – While some states allow unionization of grad employees, others are right-to-work states, and some, like Ohio, even specifically prohibit grad employees from unionizing. The Brown decision took away that legal right from grads in the private sector. This working group will focus on strategies to gain collective bargaining rights for all grad employees. It will also consider our relation to other academic workers and how a more capacious vision of academic labor could aid all our struggles. • <i>Crafting our National Message</i> – This working group will consider how to use the resources at our collective disposal to shape the message and identity of the grad labor movement, both internally and externally. How can the CGEU website become a more effective clearing house of information for our members, grads considering organizing, the media, and other interested parties? What should the components of our national message be and how can we best educate allies and the general public about our struggle? Can we create and perpetuate a common message across our various internationals? <p>Each working group will be facilitated by a pre-selected grad employee leader with applicable expertise. The purpose of the working groups is to devise goals and a plan to achieve them over the next year(s). When registering for the CGEU conference, each person will be asked to rank their preferences for a working group. At this initial meeting, members will introduce themselves and will discuss the goals of the working group for the weekend. The members of each working group will hopefully consult with each other informally at meals and during workshops throughout the weekend. The main</p>

	working group meeting will occur on Saturday afternoon, so that members can bring the knowledge gained from the workshops to this brainstorming and planning session.
11:30-12:30	Lunch Speaker: TBA
12:45-2:45	Action – TBA
3:00-4:30	<p>Workshops I</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Organizing 101: Member Recruitment</i> – This workshop will teach successful strategies for initial and follow-up organizing conversations. Whether you are new to union organizing or are already an activist, we can all improve our one-on-one recruiting skills. 2. <i>Media Relations</i> – How the media portrays our unions’ struggles has a major impact on the success or failure of our activities. Whether at public or private institutions, administrators and trustees worry about public opinion. This workshop will deal with how to shape your union’s message in the various media forums available in the twenty-first century, how to cultivate members of the press, how to proactively get your message out instead of reacting to administration actions, how to use media information gathering patterns to your advantage, etc. 3. <i>Organizing Around the Law</i> – The NLRB’s Brown decision and anti-union laws in right-to-work states constitute significant barriers to grad unionization. Despite these barriers, workers in the United States and in other countries have found alternative ways to organize to gain more control over their work. This workshop will investigate organizing models that do not require government sanction. 4. <i>New Frontiers in Benefits</i> – Grad employee unions (and some institutions on their own) have greatly improved the benefits packages for grad employees over the past few years: domestic partner benefits, transgender recognition, parental leave, etc. This workshop will provide an overview of these new directions in benefits packages and a consideration of different models. 5. <i>Building Campus Coalitions</i> – Grad labor unions have many potential allies on campus: other unions, undergraduates, staff, faculty, alumni, etc. These groups can be powerful allies in our struggles, or they can work against us. This workshop will consider how to reach out to these potential allies to create coalitions before and during union drives or contract negotiations. <p>When registering, each attendee will rank preferences for workshops they would like to attend in each of the three workshop groups. We can use this information to address any workshops that do not have a critical mass of attendees.</p> <p>Each workshop will be led by a person with particular expertise in the topic. The presenters will either be professionals from our different internationals or grad organizers/activists with particular expertise in the topic. The expectation is that the presenter will have the session planned out and will provide handouts so that attendees can take the information back to their unions for further dissemination. For example, the person leading the Media Relations panel will teach attendees how to cultivate media connections, how to shape their union’s PR message, how to proactively respond in the media to issues critical to their union, etc.</p> <p>The schedule for the workshops may change somewhat as we try to accommodate the scheduling limitations of our presenters.</p>
TBA	Dinner – TBA

	Speaker: TBA
TBA	Party – TBA
Saturday, August 12	
8-8:45	Breakfast
9-10:30	<p>Workshops II</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Organizing 201: Organizational Structure</i> – This workshop will deal with how to create and maintain union internal organizational structures, both before and after recognition drives. 2. <i>Bargaining 101: Your First Contract</i> – A bad first contract can plague a union for years. This workshop will cover the most important rights and benefits that each new grad employee union should have in their first contract. 3. <i>Corporate Campaigns I</i> – Corporate Campaigns have emerged as a powerful tool for unions to pressure employers and their allies. Over the past several years some grad employee campaigns and unions have adapted Corporate Campaigns to the higher ed. workplace. This workshop (and its second half in the next session) will cover the basic methods and strategies used in Corporate Campaigns and how best to adapt them to your university. 4. <i>Lobbying/Political Mobilization</i> – State and federal politicians shape the labor laws that govern our abilities to organize and bargain. This workshop will cover the basics for cultivating political allies and effectively lobbying politicians. It will also consider how to best use the resources and connections of your parent unions to influence the political process and to gain the aid of politicians in your union’s struggles. 5. <i>Organizing Across the Disciplines</i> – The different priorities of the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts have caused all of our unions difficulties. This workshop will consider strategies to appeal to and organize grads across the disciplines. Also, as we work toward developing workload standards, expectations in different disciplines pose barriers to such standards. This workshop will consider how to create inclusive workload standards.
10:45-12:15	<p>Workshops III</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Union Recognition Elections / Card Drives</i> – This panel will consider best practices for running recognition drives, depending on the labor laws affecting your campus and other unique circumstances. 2. <i>Bargaining 201: Improving Your Next Contract</i> – The control of academia has shifted significantly over the past three or four decades to the benefit of university administrators. Graduate student employee and faculty unions are at the forefront of turning this tide’s corporatizing ethos. As our unions bargain each new contract, we strive to improve pay and benefits, but also to take more control of our workload and conditions. This panel will consider strategies to take further control of our labor through the contract process. 3. <i>Leader Cultivation and Retention</i> – the average shelf life for a grad labor activist is 2-3 years. This workshop will cover strategies to cultivate member/leaders earlier in their grad school careers and to retain them longer, while being sensitive to their academic progress. This workshop will also consider how to transition our leaders to faculty organizing after they graduate, while being sensitive to the precarious situation of junior faculty and adjuncts. 4. <i>Corporate Campaigns II</i> – see above. 5. <i>Striking</i> – Over the past few years, several grad locals have gone on strikes of various kinds. This panel will consider the pros and cons of various different kinds of strikes and lessons learned from them. It will also consider issues to

	take into account when choosing which type of strike is best for your local's situation and how to run them effectively.
12:30-1:30	Lunch Speaker: TBA
1:30-3:30	Working Groups: Main Planning Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sector Contract Standards</i> • <i>Securing Collective Bargaining Rights</i> • <i>Crafting our Message</i>
3:45-5:30	Strategic Planning for the Coming Year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Groups' summary reports • Open discussion of Working Groups' recommendations • Planning for further revision of recommendations and implementation during 2006-2007. Hopefully, these working groups will continue in some form throughout the next academic year.
TBA	Dinner – TBA Speaker: TBA
TBA	Party – TBA
Sunday, August 13	
10-10:45	Brunch
11-12	Closing Plenary