

COCAL VI RESOLUTION ON CEW SCHEDULING

Whereas Campus Equity Week has proven a valuable structure for the organizing of contingent academic labor, and

Whereas the coordination of local, regional and national activities in support of improving working conditions and professionalizing contingent academic labor has proven to be an effective organizing tool, therefore,

Be it resolved that the academic leadership represented at COCAL VI strongly supports the CEW Steering Committee's recommendation that the last week in October (overlapping into November when appropriate) be designated as Campus Equity Week/Fair Employment Week while recognizing a need for flexibility given organizational priorities.

CEW STEERING COMMITTEE STATEMENT

After considerable discussion of the options, the Campus Equity Week/Fair Employment Week (CEW/FEW) Steering Committee recommends that CEW/FEW should be designated as the last week in October (overlapping into November when appropriate), but that due to the '04 elections, there would be no central coordination of CEW in the United States this year. FEW 2004 will be coordinated in Canada by The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) as usual. It is understood that, in keeping with the fundamental CEW principle of local autonomy, local, state, or regional organizations may depart from this schedule should their issues determine such a course is desirable.

Of course, local, state, or regional organizations in the U. S. are encouraged to use the CEW/FEW format, materials, and accumulated energy for their own 2004 organizing projects if they want to. The <cewAction@topica.com> listserv will remain active. Some maintenance and updating of the <cewAction.org> website will continue so organizers are encouraged to feed announcements and information for the site to Chris Storer at <storerchris@fhda.edu>.

Resolution in Opposition to U.S. National Labor Relations Board Ruling Barring Graduate Employees from Organizing Under the National Labor Relations Act

WHEREAS, 260,000 teaching and research assistants are currently identified by the U.S. Department of Education as part of the higher education instructional workforce; and

WHEREAS, graduate employees represent a growing component of contingent academic labor in U.S. institutions of higher education and are increasingly responsible for undergraduate education in United States, particularly in private and public research universities; and

WHEREAS, graduate employees routinely earn less compensation in the form of stipends and tuition waiver than is necessary to cover school and living expenses, and rarely have access to adequate healthcare and other benefits; and

WHEREAS, over 40,000 graduate employees in the United States have organized unions and successfully negotiated collective bargaining contracts which have improved the working conditions of graduate employees as well as the undergraduate educational environment; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor is “to improve higher education through the collective achievement of job security, livable wages, academic freedom, and time and resources for academic research and professional development for contingent academic laborers”; and

WHEREAS, in 2000 the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) held that teaching assistants, research assistants, and proctors at New York University are employees entitled to organize for collective bargaining under the National Labor Relations Act (Act,) prompting collective bargaining campaigns in a number of private universities including the Brown University, University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University and Tufts University; and

WHEREAS, on July 13, 2004, the NLRB by a 3-2 vote along partisan lines, overruled the NYU decision in the case of Brown University, ruling that graduate teaching and research assistants are *not* employees eligible to unionize under the Act; and

WHEREAS, in the words of the dissenting members of the Board, this decision is “woefully out of touch with contemporary academic reality . . . seeing the academic world as somehow removed from the economic realm that labor law addresses—as

if there was no room in the ivory tower for a sweatshop”:

RESOLVED, that attendees at the sixth meeting of the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor denounce this ruling as a partisan decision designed to deny workers their basic right to organize collectively; and

RESOLVED that attendees encourage their national organizations to explore all possible avenues to reverse this decision and to extend the benefits of unionization to graduate employees at private universities.

Submitted by: Graduate Employees' Organization, University of Michigan, AFT Local 3550

Workers' Rights Teach-ins

COCAL is proud to join the call for a nationwide movement of college and university teach-ins on the theme “Workers’ Rights are Human Rights.” Teach-ins are a vital part of the AFL-CIO’s [Voice@Work](#) campaign to win the freedom of America’s workers to form unions without employer interference.

We will reach out to student activists, pro-labor faculty, campus unionists and campus workers who are struggling to organize, in order to build an ongoing, self-sustaining, year-round national movement of workers’ rights teach-ins.

The goals of this teach-ins movement are to educate and mobilize college students. We want as many college students as possible to gain the knowledge that:

- Workers’ freedom to form unions is, and should be, a fundamental human right.
- Calling something a human right has consequences and imposes obligations on government and other actors in society (including business) to uphold and protect that right.
- Suppression of workers’ freedom to form unions is widespread in the U.S.; and this suppression is imposing steep costs, on workers and on all of society.

An even more important goal of these workers’ rights teach-ins is to convince students that they have a personal stake in the struggle to win workers’ freedom to form unions—and can make a difference in its outcome. At teach-ins around the country, students can be encouraged to:

- Support organizing and collective bargaining campaigns underway on their campuses and in their communities—and urge universities to adopt codes of conduct that commit them as employers to respect workers’ rights.
- Support federal legislation to protect workers’ freedom to form unions—especially the Employee Free Choice Act, introduced Nov. 21, 2003 by Sen. Edward Kennedy and Rep. George Miller.
- Work for the election of pro-workers’ rights candidates for political office.
- Enter the AFL-CIO’s Organizing Institute and Union Summer programs.

The AFL-CIO has prepared a Teach-ins Toolkit which COCAL commits to distribute to all of our members. The Toolkit is a comprehensive guide to planning and organizing a successful teach-in.

COCAL is pleased to join the call for a nationwide movement of workers' rights teach-ins. We urge our members to organize teach-ins on their campuses, and to do their part to make every one of them a resounding success.

Resolutions Introduced and Passed at Closing Plenary by Members of the Mexican Delegation

Maria de la Luz Arriaga proposed the following:

COCAL VI declares itself in favor of demanding the exclusion of education from the free trade agreements because they accelerate the privatization and increase contingent labor in education.

Arturo Ramos proposed this resolution:

This sixth conference of COCAL supports the struggle of the workers of the Mexican Institute of Social Security against the privatization of social security and the pension system and in defense of their collective bargaining agreement. We especially declare ourselves in favor of the right of the people of Mexico to count on a system of high quality social security as a fundamental expression of their human rights.