

# (almost) At The Table

## GEO and the University begin on a positive note

Contract negotiations between the GEO and the University of Michigan don't officially open until December 6, but the sides have already worked together productively on a number of issues. On Friday, November 16 representatives from each team met and were able to quickly agree on ground rules for the negotiations. Last week, when the University had difficulty finding an appropriate room for the first negotiating session, GEO found and reserved a room at the Michigan Union. This week representatives from both bargaining teams will meet at a special pre-bargaining session to work on technical issues related to dues collection and the process by which the University shares information with the GEO.

"I'm glad that we've got a running start," said GEO Lead Negotiator Colleen Woods. "As we've worked through the ground rules and scheduling problems we've been able to listen to each other and find ways to move forward. Hopefully we'll be close to an agreement on some of the technical issues even before negotiations begin."

Ground rules are the guidelines which establish how negotiations are to proceed, and cover subjects ranging from the procedures used to end a bargaining session to the question of who is allowed to speak for and authorize agreements for each side. For GEO the most important issue is that members be allowed to attend all bargaining sessions.

Technical issues have been discussed in sidebar in previous negotiations between GEO and the University. This year many of the technical changes being proposed by the GEO involve putting into the Contract language that has been worked out during Special Conferences over the last few years. For example, at a Special Conference last year GEO learned that the reason reports from the University to the GEO sometimes arrived late was that the Contract specified that reports arrive on a certain day of the month, but the University's computer system runs reports based on the day of the week. GEO's current proposal changes the schedule for reports so that the University will be able to meet its contractual obligations.

Although the ground rules and technical articles are not being discussed during open bargaining sessions, copies of the ground rules and GEO's proposals on the technical articles will be available at the GEO office and at all bargaining sessions. Interested members are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with these materials and communicate suggestions or concerns to the bargaining committee.

## Your GEO Calendar of Events!!

Bargaining Schedule for Dec 2007-Jan 2008 Be there! Drop by for any amount of time!

**Thursday, Dec 6 2-5pm** Initial GEO Presentation – Our issues, interests, and platform  
*Michigan Union, Room Anderson D*

**Thursday, Dec 13 2-5pm** Proposals on anti-discrimination, job posting, definitions, and eliminating the ten term rule  
*Mason Hall 3330*

**Week of Jan 7-11** Proposals on benefits -- health care, mental health, dental, vision  
*Location TBD*

**Week of Jan 14-18** Proposals on salaries, tuition waivers and training  
*Location TBD*

## GEO and LEO OPEN HOUSE!

**Dec 12 5-7pm** Open House Celebrate the new office we now share with LEO, the lecturers' union at UM. Stop by for food and drinks!

**Wed 7pm+** Party! **There will most definitely be an afterparty!**

## Meet Your Bargaining Team!

**Gene Cassidy** is a first year in the History Department, and he is crazy excited to be at the bargaining table. He will be handling issues of childcare, parental issues, and assorted types of leave.

**Emma Garrett** is in her third year in the English/Women's Studies PhD program. She has been a general GEO activist for about 2 years, a member of the critical moment editorial collective for 2 years, and a queer feminist since high school. Emma has volunteered to tackle issues of "professionalism," including (but not limited to) job postings and accommodations for employees with disabilities.

**Spencer Piston** is a second-year in Political Science, and this is his first year of involvement with GEO. Spencer will especially focus on health care as a member of the bargaining team.

**Julie Robert** is a 5th year in Romance Languages and Literatures studying French. Her involvement with GEO began at the end of the last contract campaign in 2005. Julie will be working on the article governing the union's relation to the University.

**Colleen Woods** is a second year in the Department of History. She has been involved with GEO for over a year and previously served as the chair of the Solidarity and Political Action Committee.