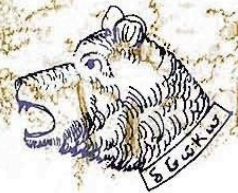


# Order of the Golden Bear



The Usual Place, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015

The topic of tonight's discussion concerned labor on campus.

This topic came in the wake of the ASUC's decision to contract auxiliary services for the new ASUC Student Union facilities, including Chartwells Dining Services. Pertinent labor issues outside of the Student Union controversy informed this discussion as well.

Some Fellows expressed concern over the terms of the labor contract the ASUC signed with Chartwells Dining Services. Fellows highlighted the fact that some of the wages were insufficient to meet the cost of living in Berkeley. Some Fellows claimed that it appeared as though there was a deliberate hiring of part-time employees to avoid supplying more benefits to workers.

In response, a number of fellows provided clarifying information to ease concerns about the contract and the benefits being given to Chartwells. One Fellow claimed that there was a lot of misinformation about the contract and stated that the Chartwells benefits cover everyone who works for Chartwells, not just part time employees. Another Fellow stated that the ASUC operating procedure has measures for benefits, fair wages, and pricing informed by a code of ethics. If student standards are unmet, changes happen swiftly as students do speak up and work to make changes. This Fellow further acknowledged that the agreement with Chartwells is a lease, not a permanent operating agreement. The ASUC could consider hiring campus employees in the future, after the expiration of the contract. Directly addressing the concerns of a previous speaker about living wages, one Fellow stated that the ASUC plans on meeting UC President Janet Napolitano's UC wide \$15 minimum wage mandate before the 2017 deadline.

Aside from the ASUC labor contract concerns, Fellows also discussed labor issues in other parts of the campus. One Fellow expressed concern over hiring practices in the machine shops of Jacobs Hall, claiming that some full time workers were being offered positions in the shop, but only part time, capped at 19.5 hours per week. This speaker was disturbed by what they perceived to be a preference for hiring part time employees over full time staff to avoid paying for benefits. In response, a fellow noted that when an organization hires part time employees rather than full time employees, the organization is able to be more flexible. This speaker also

encouraged the fellowship to refrain from casting judgment, as Fellows would need more information on the types of projects that the shop is hiring for.

Many Fellows discussed grievances with TA, GSI, staff, and faculty labor issues as well. Some Fellows noted how some departments might have hired more TAs with fewer hours to circumvent having to pay student tuition that is required when students reach the 20 hours per week benchmark. One Fellow noted that once student fees become a part of TA compensation packages, compensation often becomes unfeasible for some departments. This Fellow claimed that negotiating alternatives to fee compensation with students could lead to compromise that is equally beneficial to employers and student employees. One Fellow noted that they believed their TA compensation package was fair and quite liberal. However, a few Fellows argued that in other departments, the amount of time and prep work that is required to manage multiple sections often exceeds compensation. One Fellow noted that athletics also provides tuition compensation for select student employees and encouraged the fellowship to consider the inequity in how these privileges and special compensation packages are distributed around campus.

Some Fellows encouraged the Order to consider how ASUC and university wages impact employees and the community of people who live in the greater Berkeley area. One Fellow said that many of the employees working on campus minimum wage could neither afford to live in the City of Berkeley nor send their children to school at UC Berkeley. Low wages exclude these workers being a part of the Berkeley community. Fellows prompted the fellowship to consider how transient members of the Cal community (students and some faculty) treat the permanent members of the community (campus employees and faculty). One Fellow shared a personal anecdote about campus layoffs that criticized the highly impersonal way in which departments on campus now interact with their staff as a result of the defunding—and subsequent corporatization—of the university. Fellows were reminded that the way the university acts towards employees reflects on the moral character of the university itself, fostering this culture in students as they graduate and move abroad.

A few Fellows ended the discussion with calls for action. One Fellow suggested that students should volunteer in the community more frequently as a way to give back to campus workers and their families. One Fellow called for the ASUC to foster a culture of philanthropy (independent of University fundraising campaigns) to make the ASUC more financially sustainable long-term. As an alternative to devoting energy to lengthy debates on contemporary issues, another Fellow implored students to consider the legacy they hope to leave behind, challenging students to innovate and develop a vision for the campus that addresses its financial sustainability.