



**ANNUAL
REPORT**
2016-2017 ACADEMIC YEAR

MISSION STATEMENT

WE ADVOCATE FOR THE
MEDICAL/DENTAL TRAINEES
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
WASHINGTON AND AFFILIATED
PROGRAMS IN MATTERS OF
EMPLOYMENT, PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT, AND PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT DURING THEIR
TRAINING.

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HISTORY OF THE UNION

The University of Washington Housestaff Association (UWHA) has a long and storied history of advocating for residents and fellows. Through decades of hard work, the UWHA has provided for collective bargaining between University of Washington Residents and the University in order to achieve a goal of improving the work environment of housestaff and better caring for patients. Since its founding in 1964 the UWHA, backed by enthusiastic residents and fellows, has fought a series of important battles to bring housestaff the benefits that they now enjoy.

1964 — The newly established UWHA took the lead in advocating with the administration for workplace improvements. Residents bargained collectively for a raise and increased benefits and was able to avoid the looming strike. Residents still lacked a contract, meaning that the conditions of their employment could change at any time.

1970s — During the course of many meetings, UWHA and UW craft the “Blue Book,” the first draft contract for residents. In 1980, the advisory committee stopped meeting and the proposed grievance procedures faded away. The School of Medicine never publicized the Blue Book and residents again found themselves demoralized without a contract and without any legal basis for future negotiation.

1980s—The UW administration refused to recognize the UWHA as a representative of the residents and again refused to bargain. Once again residents prepared to strike and the UWHA successfully negotiated a contract guaranteeing improvements in work conditions such as meals provided while on call, a grievance procedure, better pay, and fringe benefits. During the 1980-81 wave of resident activism, there was much discussion on the legal status of residents and their rights to negotiate collectively. At that time, under the law, residents were clearly defined as students without the power or legal backing to collectively bargain. It was only by threatening to strike, that University officials were forced to recognize the residents as a non-exclusive collective bargaining group and accede to some of their demands.

1990s–2000s— Following its successes in 1981, the UWHA entered a state of dormancy over the next two decades. In 1999-2000, residents elected to the advisory committee were eager to improve the dialogue and discussion about resident working conditions environment in the UW system. These residents realized that restoring the UWHA was the best way to achieve these goals. They drafted new bylaws, elected officers, and resumed control of the Housestaff Association dues accounts. Over the next decade, the resuscitated UWHA achieved some improvements such as making residents eligible for civil and educational leave, enrolling residents in matched retirement accounts, and creation of the Safe-Ride-Home program.

2010s—A survey of residents clearly demonstrated low wages relative to the cost of living in Seattle and high educational debt burdens. Furthermore, despite the high cost of living in Seattle UW was paying residents *at or below the national average*. The high cost of parking and childcare also placed a financial burden on residents.

The UWHA brought these issues to the University’s attention, but were met with heavy resistance. In 2014, after collecting hundreds of signatures from housestaff, the UWHA reorganized into a union. The University fought this assiduously. Despite an extensive campaign and legal challenges by the University, in the fall of 2014 UW Residents were given the opportunity to unionize. The housestaff voted overwhelmingly (>75%) in favor of forming a union.

Negotiations between the UWHA and UW began in January of 2015 and continued for almost two years. Initially, UW refused to offer any form of housing or parking funds and refused to increase salaries commensurate with the costs of living. After over 20 months of negotiations, the UWHA and UW reached a new contract.

The new contract was brought to the housestaff, who voted overwhelmingly (>99%) to ratify it. Following ratification on November 1, 2016, the new contract went into effect. That year the UWHA administered childcare fund was established.

In 2017, residents voted to change the UWHA constitution, more than doubling the number of board members and officers. The increase in staff and the continued enthusiasm has enabled the association to expand its role. Unfortunately, as the University faces a widening fiscal shortfall, the GME has continued to cut resident benefits. Current issues facing housestaff include GME’s decision to stop supporting the Safe-Ride-Home program, their failure to support the bike transportation program, and their ongoing attempts to undermine the right to moonlight. Furthermore, the costs of living in Seattle continues to rise. These issues will be paramount in the 2019 contract negotiations. The experience of the UWHA has clearly shown that residents are at our best, and we accomplish the most, when we establish clear goals and work together to achieve them. With the continued enthusiasm and support of over 1300 members, the housestaff represented by UWHA will meet these challenges and continue the five-decade struggle for better wages and benefits.



Message from the president

We are now nearing the end of the first year under our first collective bargaining agreement and we continue to rapidly develop as an organization. Before addressing any other issues, I would like to take an opportunity to thank you all for your patience and support. This is a learning and growing experience for our organization, and we are making exceptional gains in fostering vital relationships, creating and improving membership benefits, and defending all the various benefits we have been promised under the CBA. We are striving to do all these things on your behalf, and we could not be as successful as we have been without your support. so again, thank you!

As the UWHA continues to mature we are trying to ensure we build the organization on a foundation of values that will always steer it in the correct direction, and keep it working for you. With that in mind, we feel that one of our most vital values is transparency. We recognize that you have all entrusted us as your union representatives, and with your membership dues, and we want to make sure you all know what we are trying to accomplish and where your much-appreciated dues are going. In an effort to remain transparent we have compiled this annual report, and going forward we hope to eventually be able to prepare a report such as this semi-annually. This year we will also be holding our first general membership meeting on January 16, 2017, more details to follow.

Another value of utmost import is accountability. In this report you will find an accounting of the grievances we have filed, the programs and initiatives we have launched this last year, and a summary of important upcoming issues. The UWHA Board truly is accountable to all of you for our efforts and we would ask that you continue to hold us to a high expectation of accountability. Not only do we need to keep in remembrance that the UWHA Board is accountable to all of you, but we can never forget that the GME and all the various medical/dental training programs must be held accountable to all of us for their contractual obligations. We worked hard to secure an excellent first contract, and now we are fighting to protect the benefits we secured in that contract. Ensuring the University of Washington and the GME Department fulfill their contractual obligations is a constant challenge, and our ongoing vigilance guaranteeing all contractual agreements are met is central to the role of the UWHA. Please know this, we will never stop monitoring the actions of the GME and will always hold them accountable whenever they attempt to shirk their contractual obligations.

The last value that I want to discuss is vision. We have the unique opportunity this year to be between collective bargaining sessions which allows us to focus more on the structure of the organization and plan for what we want the organization to be in the future. I have spent much time thinking about what this organization should ideally be, and how we can positively impact the lives of those we serve. This contemplation led me to revisit our Mission Statement and in this annual report you will find our new concise resident-centered mission statement which encapsulates my vision for what this organization is supposed to be. Along with the Board, I am also working on a strategic plan to ensure we can meet our goals this year, secure a strong and competitive contract during collective bargaining next year, and ensure that we can continue to scale membership benefits over the next 3 years. To help us expand our vision the board has been reaching out to other resident labor unions to determine what unique benefits these trainees experience, and to help us make a plan for how to secure such benefits for all of you.

-- *Trevor Gessel*

SUMMARY OF CONTRACT NEGOTIATION

Achievements

- Salary increases of 3% per year (\$1700 per year, per R-level)
- Transportation stipend (\$750 per year)
- Home call stipend (\$1150 per year)
- Professional development funds (including \$350 per year, with rollover)
- WA State Medical License reimbursement (for amount of limited license)
- ATLS, ACLS, PALS, BLS certifications reimbursement
- USMLE Step III reimbursement
- Child care fund with need-based allocation
- Alternative transportation incentive fund for eco-friendly commuters
- One paid and two unpaid (personal) holidays per year

Other UWHA Benefits:

- The Housestaff Research Award – a peer reviewed grant fund for resident/fellow scholarship
- Administrative and legal support for any resident suffering threatened remediation or termination

Future Efforts:

- Clarifying moonlighting issues within the GME
- Expansion of bike parking
- Bike-share membership to include various bike-share programs for commuting
- Paternity leave
- Expansion of lactation / pumping facilities at all sites
- No 3rd trimester call for expecting mothers

GETTING INVOLVED WITH THE WSMA

The UWHA is currently busy laying the foundation of the union and preparing for contract negotiations. At this time we are unable to use time and resources for lobbying or political activism. If you are interested in getting involved in these activities, we encourage you to contact Billy Chen (billchen@uw.edu), the resident representative with the Washington State Medical Association.

BECOME A PROGRAM LIASON!

We are looking for individuals to serve as a go-between for each program. Being a liaison helps your department get the most value out of the union, and helps every housestaff member reach the union easily, especially programs that are particularly busy, small, or historically farther from the union.

If you are interested in becoming a liaison, email Kevin Seitz at kevin.seitz@gmail.com.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

We want to warmly invite you to the first official UWHA General Membership Meeting

When: January 16th from 6-8pm

Where: Location TBD

What: The UWHA would like to use this meeting to get everyone up to speed on the current status of our negotiations, and inform you all of future efforts. More importantly, as your representatives we want to encourage your participation and hear your voice! We hope you'll bring any questions, issues or testimonials you have to share with us so that we may continue to represent to the best of our abilities.

Stay tuned—we will be sending out a survey to solicit any questions or concerns you may have, particularly important for all those who cannot attend! This is your opportunity to help us help you!

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS



Childcare

The childcare fund provides \$50,000 to residents to offset the high cost of childcare in Seattle. Although when distributed among all eligible residents this amounts to very little, the hope is to increase the fund in subsequent contract negotiations. Based on eligibility, the lump sum was distributed among eligible residents after stratification i.e. number of children, age, and number of residents in the family. For the current academic period, we will split the \$50,000 into two time periods. The first half will open for applications in September 2017, and the second half will open in March 2018. Look for a future email with a link to a survey that will serve as the application! Moreover, the CBA provides childcare benefits such as discounts on Nanny and Au Pair Services, priority enrollment at Bright Horizons, and backup childcare at Bright Horizons and KinderCare. In addition, waitlist fees are partially reimbursed by GME.

In the 2016-2017 academic year, we were able to use the childcare fund to help 76 residents (68 families) offset the costs of their childcare. The average amount per weighted score point was \$391.82 with the average weighted score being 1.877 (median 1.83). The average disbursement from the fund was \$735.30. Scores ranged from 1 – 3.16 with disbursements ranging from \$319.82 – \$1238.15.

Obviously, this is not enough, as the childcare costs in Seattle are usually at least \$1800/month, potentially more depending on how many children you have as well as the ages of the children. More assistance is needed to help offset these outrageous costs, and this will be a focus in the next round of negotiations.



Grant Program

The purpose of the UWHA Grant Program is to support high quality housestaff research and scholarship. Projects include basic, translational, and clinical research. All proposals are subjected to blinded review and scored according to five characteristics (Quality, Practicality, Importance, Mentor, and Budget). In 2017 there were over 30 submissions, and the top 48% (16 proposals from 12 residency/fellowship programs) were funded. Awards ranged from \$700 to \$5000 (depending on the requirements of the project), and in total \$34,040.96 was awarded. Overall, the feedback received about the program has been very positive and we are excited to continue to support housestaff research in the future. We look forward to presenting the results of the 2017 research projects in Spring 2018, and we plan to open applications for 2018 awards in January 2018.



Bike Program

As part of the contract, we negotiated two separate forms of bicycle reimbursement: a \$25/quarter biking incentive program, and a \$100/year maintenance cost reimbursement fund. Initially, in an effort to limit the benefits residents could receive, UW took the stance that these two programs were actually one fund. We filed a formal grievance regarding this stance, and the labor relations department ruled in our favor. This settled the matter, and residents will continue to receive both benefits. It was rewarding to see this process for settling disagreements work in a just and timely manner.

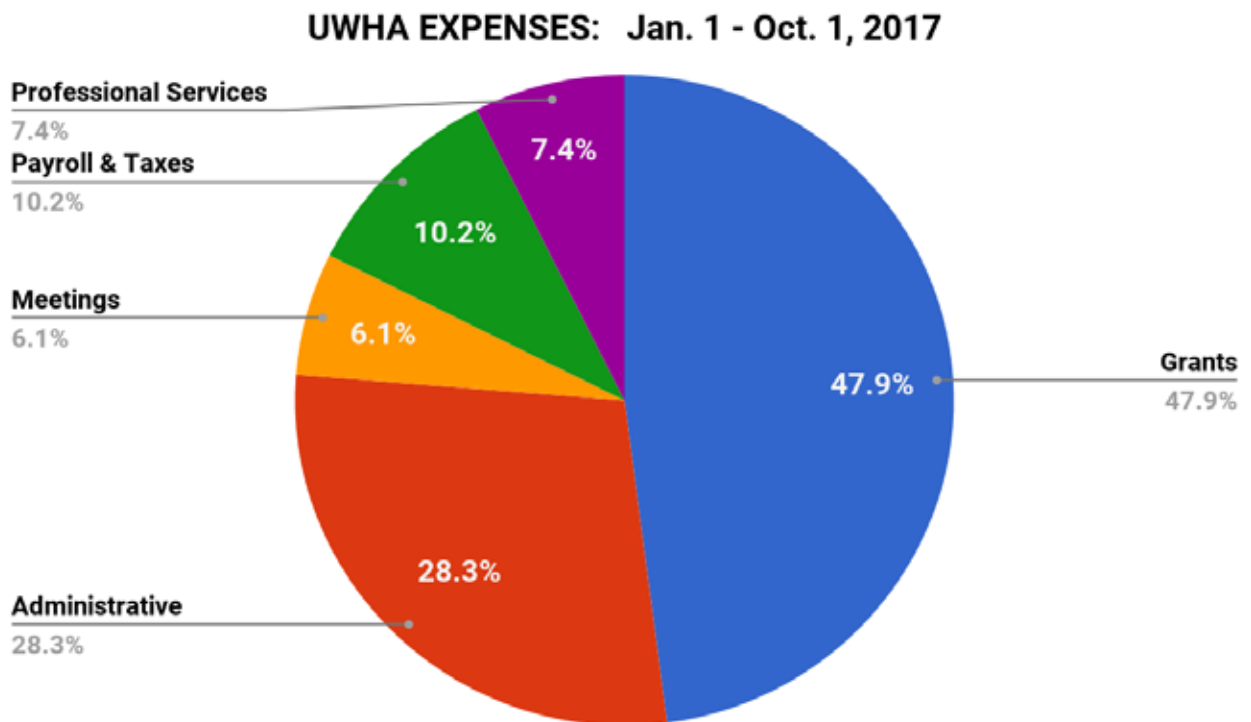
Although the processing of forms, receipts, and payments rests with GME, the administration of the bike funds is a joint responsibility of UWHA and GME. Given the number of new programs to be set up in a limited amount of time between contract signing and the end of last academic year, the roll out of these funds became somewhat rushed and chaotic. A particular sticking point was the disagreement between UWHA and GME of what constituted a "maintenance cost." We apologize to anyone who was inconvenienced by this confusion. We are working to coordinate with GME more closely this year to make sure that everyone has clear instructions of what is reimbursable and how to submit the required paperwork. In the future, we would like to try and expand these funds to submit alternative commuters of all types (i.e. not just bikers).

FINANCIAL REPORT

Following the success of last year's negotiations, the UWHA has made substantial changes to its financial structure. This year we saw the hire of our first employee, Jordan Chamberlain, filed our WA business license, and implemented a new method in the way we collect union dues. These changes have been instituted with the goal to create a sustainable organization that can continue to effectively advocate and bargain on behalf of the UW Housestaff.

Our goal is to be as open and transparent as possible with our housestaff on UWHA's allocation of union dues. Please contact us if you ever have questions or concerns regarding the collection or use of union dues. It is our hope you will feel confident union dues are used to the benefit of our housestaff.

Below you will find a chart breaking down UWHA's expenses for Jan. 1, 2017–Oct. 1, 2017. As seen below, a substantial amount of this year's expenses came from our UWHA Research Grant Awards funding high quality research by our very own housestaff. Other significant expenses included payroll and taxes, legal and financial services, website hosting and software, as well as internal UWHA and GME meetings. The distribution of UWHA's expenses will likely change substantially this coming year as we shift our focus for the upcoming negotiations with GME in 2018



WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

You have the right to union representation at investigatory interviews. Investigatory interviews occur when a supervisor questions an employee to determine a basis for discipline or to allow an employee to defend his or her actions. If an employee suspects the results of the interview may lead to disciplinary actions, he or she may invoke his or her Weingarten rights. These rights are upheld by the US Supreme Court. During an investigatory interview the following rules apply:

Rule 1: The employee must make a clear request for union representation before or during the interview. The employee cannot be punished for making this request.

Rule 2: After the employee makes the request, the employer must choose from among three options. The employer must: Grant the

request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives and has a chance to consult privately with the employee; or Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or Give the employee a choice of: (1) having the interview without representation or (2) ending the interview.

Rule 3: If the supervisor denies the request for union representation and continues to ask questions, he or she commits an unfair labor practice and the employee has the right to refuse to answer. The supervisor cannot discipline the employee for such a refusal.

Save the card below to have on hand in case you need to ask for a union representative.

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working condition, I respectfully request that my union representative or steward be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions."

UWHA BOARD BIOS



Trevor Gessel, UWHA President. I am honored for the opportunity to serve you all as President of the UWHA! I have come to realize how the medical/dental trainees at the University of Washington represent a particularly vulnerable population in matters of employment, and that an organization such as the UWHA is vital to their success. It is no secret, post-graduate training in medicine and dentistry is stressful! On top of that, you add our personal lives and it gets even more difficult. As a husband and father of three energetic little boys I can relate with the stresses of life. It is my firm belief that as trainees we should be able to, at least by some small degree, improve more than just our professional selves, and it is our employers' responsibility to make this possible.

Ben Wolpaw, Vice President. I am a third year medicine resident interested in quality improvement and health systems work. I will be staying around next year to be the medicine department's chief resident for quality improvement at HMC. I am glad to be able to participate in the UWHA executive board for the second year! Negotiating a contract was lots of work, but it turns out that learning how to support and defend resident interests under the new contract is quite an undertaking as well! It has been great to work on this project with bright and motivated residents from a variety of specialties. Residents are a key part of our medical system, and I think we deserve a strong voice looking out for our interests. In my free time I enjoy watching sunsets and playing games of all types, ideally at the same time.



Marlee Hahn, Secretary. I am an emergency medicine R4, and am in my second year of involvement with the UWHA. As the current secretary and past social chair I have enjoyed working with this self-driven group to represent and negotiate on behalf of the housestaff. This time has been marked by significant change for our group, and I look forward to continuing to serve as a resource and advocate for the residents and fellows through this coming year!

Doug Leedy, Treasurer. Hello! I'm your UWHA Treasurer. I'll be working to manage the UWHA finances along with continuing to advocate for our UW Housestaff. I'm a current R2 in the internal medicine program, and as a local Washingtonian and UW alumnus, I bleed purple and gold. I want nothing more than to support this great Housestaff and to make the University of Washington the best place to train at.



Liz Harmon, Social Ambassador. I am honored to serve as your UWHA Social Ambassador. A little about myself: I grew up in Chicago, and I went to medical school at the University of Pennsylvania. I'm excited to be in my second year of emergency medicine residency at UW. In my free time, I love to run, hike, explore Seattle, and hang out with friends and family. As residents and fellows, we work incredibly hard and provide excellent, compassionate care for our patients. We also face significant challenges, and we can carry a heavy burden at times. I am excited to be your Social Ambassador because I believe in the importance of bringing people together outside of medicine to connect, relax, share our experiences, and re-energize.

Nick Mark, Immediate Past President. I was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. I attended Brown University as an undergraduate, New York University for medical school, and the University of Washington for internal medicine residency followed by pulmonary, critical care fellowship. After seeing the financial hardships imposed on housestaff, I became actively involved in the unionization effort in 2013-14, was one of the lead contract negotiators after unionization in 2015-16, and worked to implement the new contract when I served as UWHA president from 2016-2017. I remain a member of the UWHA executive board where I continue to advocate for residents rights.



Jordan Chamberlain, UWHA Administrator. I joined the UWHA team in spring 2017 but I've been following the union since its inception in 2014 (my husband is a radiology resident). I moved to Seattle in 2010 and have worked as a grant writer and manager at an education research center at the University of Washington. My background is in grant administration, non-profit management, editing, and technical writing. I am so thrilled to work with the dedicated professionals in the UWHA.



Wayne Brisbane. I am currently a PGY-5 urology resident. Prior to this I went to medical school at Loma Linda University in southern California. Throughout my training I have been involved in research with a focus on improving technology within medicine. I think that UWHA provides an excellent service to residents and fellows by providing an early career research scholarship award. Further I believe the board should be involved in promoting cross discipline collaboration to promote research and clinical excellence.

Jen Dines. I grew up in Washington and went to the University of WA for my undergraduate training. With strong ties to UW, I hope to foster the relationship of all parties involved to better the lives of residents, with the ultimate goal of improved patient care. The demands of training in residency, high cost of living and quality childcare in Seattle are of particular interest to me. As the mother of twin sons, I understand the constant struggle of balancing home and work life. I hope to achieve a program that aims to offset the cost of childcare in Seattle for residents. UWHA is an important organization that collectively gives a voice to the many trainees that keep UWMC and affiliated hospitals running! A strong partnership with GME is vital and I hope to continue a working relationship with all who are involved.



Natalie Freidin. I am currently a second year nephrology fellow. I came to UW because I spent time at Harborview as a resident and loved it. My free time is spent with my daughter, Chloe, my husband and our two rescue dogs. I joined the UWHA leadership because it is essential that residents and fellows are represented by their own. The UWHA is extremely important, as for many years and in many other parts of the country, residents and fellows have not had or do not have a voice representing their own interests despite how much we, as physicians, advocate for others. During my time on the UWHA, I would like to see improved parental leave policies at the UW for residents and fellows.

Adam Greenbaum. After growing up in Houston, I moved to St. Louis for undergraduate. I attended Washington University, a school founded in 1853 (the unfortunately named University of Washington came into existence 8 years later). After completing my bachelor's degree in computer science, I stayed at Wash U for my MD/PhD. After 12 years in St. Louis, I matched in internal medicine at the University of California San Diego. I ultimately developed sunshine toxicity, and matched again in medical oncology at the unfortunately named University of Washington. I am currently a 3rd year fellow researching non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. My primary interest with the UWHA is ensuring that GME policies are fair to residents and in compliance with the collective bargaining agreement.



Asha Pathak. I'm a third year fellow in endocrinology. I would like to advocate for non-ACGME fellows and participate in evaluation of how the terms of the UWHA contract have been implemented. It is wonderful and inspiring to be part of the UWHA board. Everyone is truly dedicated to supporting residents and fellows.

Kevin Seitz. I'm a second year medicine resident and proud to serve you as a general board member of the UWHA. The work done over the last several years in negotiating our contract was truly impressive, and it's been inspiring to learn from the leadership that made that possible. Over the next year, it is my goal to improve outreach from the UWHA to housestaff, particularly in programs that have had less representation, to ensure that we all have the rights and protections we need to do our jobs.



Evgeny "Gene" Bistrika, Idaho Liason. I was originally born in the Ukraine and immigrated to the United States in 1989. I received my undergraduate at Western Oregon University and Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine from Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences. I spent six years in EMS as a firefighter/paramedic with Hoquiam Firefighters Local 315 as a member in good standing. I am married to my wife, Janel, and have a daughter, Amelia (15 months). I consider the Pacific Northwest home and plan on returning to practice in the Aberdeen/Olympia area upon completion of my residency.

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