Introducing your new Labor Relations Representative: Amber Cooper

Amber Cooper joined ONA in 2016 as a labor representative. Before joining ONA, she spent 12 years as a steward, union officer, local president, and worked as local staff and lead negotiator for the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation at University of Oregon (UO), and before that at University of Michigan (UM), University of Illinois-Chicago, and University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. While in higher education organizing, she helped with eight contract campaigns, yearly organizing drives, political organizing and contract enforcement. While at UM, she helped organize a historic disability rights campaign securing a specially designated fund, and winning significant improvements in workplace accommodations. She also helped with an organizing drive to attempt to gain collective bargaining rights for research assistants at UM. Most recently she acted as lead negotiator during UO’s eight-day strike, winning over four weeks of paid parental and sick leave, ending all layoffs for low enrollment and securing a 10 percent wage increase over two years. Amber was born and raised in Portland, Oregon, but went to undergrad at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, before beginning her grand tour of the Midwest. In her spare time she competes for a world champion roller derby team, the Rose City Rollers.
Evaluating our Membership: Proposed Changes to ONA’s Bylaws

Representing More Than Nurses

We, the members of ONA’s Economic and General Welfare (E&GW) Cabinet are bringing forward a proposal to amend ONA’s bylaws. This proposal would allow other types of employees represented by ONA under collective bargaining agreements to become members of ONA. It would enable licensed practical nurses (LPNs), certified nursing assistants (CNAs), physician assistants (PAs), social workers and others covered by one of our collective bargaining agreements to enjoy the full rights of being an ONA member.

This proposal will be voted on during our April 2016 House of Delegates. There are a multiple reasons the Cabinet is proposing this change.

Right now, ONA represents LPNs and PAs at Multnomah County and LPNs at American Red Cross, Bay Area Hospital, Coquille Valley Hospital, Good Shepherd Medical Center, and McKenzie-Willamette Hospital.

Yet these individuals, despite some of them being extraordinary leaders within their bargaining units, have no vote within ONA. They can’t hold statewide leadership positions. They can’t attend our House of Delegates. They can’t vote on local dues increases or our leadership. They are denied a voice in the union that claims to speak for them.

But we benefit from their participation in our union. They allow us to speak with one united voice across our bargaining units. Multnomah County has 240 registered nurses and 40 LPNs and PAs represented by ONA. Together, these three groups collaborate on common concerns around patient load, scheduling and working conditions.

With each added voice, it becomes harder for the County to refuse to address common concerns. It also becomes harder for the County to drive a wedge between different provider groups. We are stronger as a union when we are working together, not apart.

The benefit of amending our bylaws also extends to groups of nurses with whom ONA currently has little to no connection – nurses who work in long-term care, rehabilitation centers and clinics.

Nurses who work in these settings regularly contact ONA to see if we would be willing to represent them. Not surprisingly, many of the other employees in these facilities are not nurses, but the conditions they work under are often deplorable.

There are stories of violence against the nurses and other health care professionals. There are stories of unilateral terminations for speaking up about working conditions. And there are stories about professionals feeling unable to practice safely.

But we turn these nurses away. The reality is that ONA can’t affect change in a workplace where it only represents a small group of employees. Five nurses at a long-term care facility can’t affect meaningful change to patient care standards, wages, benefits and working conditions by themselves.

Those nurses need to be part of a united bargaining unit to collaborate with other employees at their facility on their shared concerns.

That is what our proposed bylaw changes would allow ONA to do. They would allow us to organize nurses and other employees who work in long-term care facilities, rehabilitation centers, clinics and other settings. Once organized, they could gain a voice in our union and we can work to address their staffing concerns through legislation, or help resolve workplace safety, wages and benefits issues with them during negotiations.

ONA’s membership has said they want us to represent other professions beyond nurses. In a 2014 statewide survey conducted by ONA’s Professional Services department, the majority of registered nurses surveyed supported ONA representing additional classifications of employees. The survey also revealed about a quarter disagreed with the proposed change and many were neutral.

This proposed change may alter ONA, but we think it will be for the better. It will allow us to be a voice for nurses who otherwise don’t have a voice in our union. It will allow us to work collaboratively with our coworkers to positively change our workplaces. And it will allow us to advocate for patients in new settings including long-term care, rehabilitation centers and clinics.

We ask that you support the changes we are bringing forward at ONA’s House of Delegates.

Visit www.Oregonrn.org and sign up to attend ONA’s Convention and House of Delegates to share your voice on proposed changes to ONA’s bylaws.
Red Cross Officer Elections Are Still Open!

*Don’t forget to nominate by March 31, 2016.*

It is time for election of the executive committee, officers and professional nursing care committee (PNCC).

All executive officers and the PNCC seats are open and we encourage nurses who have not been involved to please do so. Have you thought about changes you would like to make to improve patient care or nurses’ working environments? Are you willing to help others work on those issues? Do you want to be a leader in making changes? Then nominate yourself or someone you know. The description of leadership positions and the nomination form can be found on pages three and four.

Nominations will be open through March 31, 2016. Only Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) members may hold office and serve on the PNCC.

Want to join ONA? Please contact Amber Cooper at cooper@oregonrn.org or 503-293-0011.

Position Descriptions

The following descriptions are excerpts and summaries from the ONA/ARC bylaws. For full descriptions please refer to the ONA/ARC bylaws found on the ONA website at: [www.oregonRN.org](http://www.oregonRN.org). Choose American Red Cross under “Find Your Bargaining Unit” and find “Bylaws” under the documents section.

**President**

Conducts and supervises the affairs of the Red Cross bargaining unit. Serves as an ex-officio member of all ONA/ARC committees. Appoints special committees and their members with the approval of the executive committee. Fills vacancies that occur on committees with the approval of the executive committee until the next regular election. In conjunction with the treasurer, disburses or orders the disbursement of all monies necessary to pay the bills, obligations and indebtedness of ONA/ARC, which have been properly incurred.

**Vice president**

Assists the president in the discharge of all duties. In case of the president’s absence, the vice president performs the duties of the president. Should the president’s position be vacated, the vice president shall serve as the president until the next election.

**Secretary**

Sends out meeting notices as directed. On at least an annual basis, update all members’ contact information, including correct mailing addresses, home and work telephone numbers and email addresses and provides this information to ONA. Collects names of nominees for elected positions and constructs a ballot for all the names submitted. Confirms that the nominees are willing to serve and when there is no membership chair, ensures the nominee is in good standing. Record, maintain and archive minutes for all executive committee meetings. Sits on the elections committee and conducts correspondence as directed by the executive committee.

**Treasurer**

Has financial responsibility over the financial affairs of the ONA/ARC bargaining unit. Makes at least a quarterly report to the executive committee and EGW that includes the assets and liabilities of the ONA/ARC bargaining unit. Keeps itemized records, showing the source of all monies received and spent, and keep records, vouchers, work sheets, books and accounts and all resolutions to verify such report and provide a copy of this information to EGW by Dec. 31 of every year.

**PNCC committee**

Composition—The PNCC will be composed of the PNCC chair and representatives of the various units as appointed by the executive committee or as otherwise specified by the collective bargaining agreement.

Its duties include making recommendations for educational and training programs compatible with identified hospital goals; processing and analyzing unsafe staffing reports and taking the necessary steps to address issues raised in unsafe staffing reports when necessary; making timely reports to the executive committee and ONA concerning unsafe staffing reports and educational and training programs; serving on the hospital’s staffing committee or ensuring the staffing committee has duly elected representatives; and making recommendations to the facility of ways and means to improve patient care.
Oregon Nurses Association at the American Red Cross

Pursuant to the bylaws, executive officer and professional nursing care committee (PNCC) member elections are now due. Write the names of the nurse(s) you would like to nominate for each position. Please print clearly.

Nomination forms for officers and PNCC are below. You must be a member in good standing in order to nominate or to serve. If possible, please get the signature of each nurse that you nominate to indicate their acceptance of the nomination and consent to serve in the nominated position. If not possible, we will confirm directly.

Return completed forms to Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) no later than April 1, 2016:

1. Fax to ONA, Attn: Whitney Wong at 503-293-0013
3. Email to wong@oregonrn.org

Officer Nomination Form

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<th>Position</th>
<th>Name of Nominee</th>
<th>Signature of Nominee (Signifying consent to run and serve if elected)</th>
<th>Date</th>
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PNCC Nomination Form

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Please include your contact information below.

ONA will use this information to update its own records and track who has submitted nominations.

Name: ___________________________ Address: ___________________________

City: ___________________________ State: ___________________________ Zip: ___________________________

Home Phone #: ___________________________ Work Phone #: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________