

# Milwaukee Graduate Assistant Association

## January/February Newsletter

### Education Rights Day and Rally!

On March 4, 2010, the MGAA will be joining with a wide coalition of University groups to demonstrate against tuition hikes and university hierarchy. This rally will demonstrate opposition to the university's treatment of funding issues, while also pushing for general questioning of the climate of secrecy, evasion and upper-tier benefits. Other contributing groups include Students for a Democratic Society, The Association of University of Wisconsin Professionals and seventeen other campus organizations. This event will take place at noon at the Union Concourse.

### Years of Funding Declining

The issue of how many years of funding grad students receive was central to the 2007-09 contract campaign. While most departments offer 2 years of funding for MA students, many offer less than adequate funding for PhD work; some offer only 3 years. During the last round of contract negotiations, we attempted to standardize years of funding across departments, with a minimum of 2 years of funding for MA students and a minimum of 5 years of funding for PhD students. Although we gained language stating that employers "will make a good faith effort to provide financial support to all TAs/PAs in good standing," this language is not enough to ensure that all TAs/PAs will have enough funding to complete their degrees. This issue will be pursued further in the next round of contract negotiations.

The MGAA has recently filed a grievance with the English department, which cut PhD funding from six years to five years. Many students in the English department were having trouble graduating before the department decided to strip a year of support. The decision to cut years of funding was made without input from the MGAA, which is part of our grievance. If funding is an issue in your department, and you would like to be part of the bargaining team that fights for this issue, please contact Meridith Kruse, VP of Bargaining, at [mmkruse@uwm.edu](mailto:mmkruse@uwm.edu).



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For more information, please visit our website at  
[www.mgaa.org](http://www.mgaa.org).

### Upcoming Events

**March 2: Worksite  
Leader Meeting,  
12:00-1:30. Location  
TBD.**

**March 4: Education  
Rights Day & Rally.  
12:00 at Union Con-  
course.**

**March 11: next AFTW  
meeting in Eau Claire**

**April 22: General  
Membership Meeting,  
6:00-7:30. Union 181.**

### Upcoming WSL Meeting

Worksite leaders are needed in every department across campus so that ALL members are represented. The MGAA is planning another pair of Worksite Leader training sessions. The focus is on drawing in new members and ideas, engaging in direct, ongoing actions to meet the issues of graduate employees across different departments, and building a system of representation.

This meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 2 from 12:00-1:30. Location TBD.

# Highlights from Fall 2009/Early 2010

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## Haiti Relief Contribution

After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti organizations and individuals around the US gave money and resources to support the victims and rebuild the country. MGAA sent \$1,000 to Zanmi Lasante, a project of Partners in Health. PIH has worked in Haiti for over 20 years, delivering medical resources to Haitians, working to fight poverty as the root of inadequate health care, and supporting the public sector infrastructure to deliver health care to the poorest communities.

To donate as a group or individually to Partners in Health's Haiti project, go to [www.standwithhaiti.org/](http://www.standwithhaiti.org/)

## MGAA Executive Committee Opposes AFTW Endorsement of Tom Barrett for Governor

The choices for governor among the major parties as its shaping up for 2010 is between the Democratic Mayor of Milwaukee Tom Barrett and the Republican Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker.

While no progressive (or liberal, or leftist) wants to see Walker elected governor, Barrett hasn't quite proven himself on key issues for workers and poor communities. Two very important issues, especially for MGAA members and their allies, are the Paid Sick Days referendum and the future of a democratically controlled Milwaukee Public School Board. Barrett refused to institute city-wide paid sick leave and pay for Milwaukee's lowest paid workers, and was a major force behind a take-over attempt of the publicly elected school board. Both actions are troubling, as they involve key issues for the labor movement: democracy and fair working conditions for all.

The MGAA Executive Committee submitted a letter to the AFTW Committee on Political Education (COPE) at their January meeting, which stated these concerns. The full text of the letter is available at [www.mgaa.org](http://www.mgaa.org).

## Recent Events

### New Executive Committee members.

On November 12, 2009, elections were held for the positions of Co-President and VP of Membership. Jason La Corte (Math) and Jacob Glicklich (History) were elected respectively.

AFT-W Meeting. On February 6, 2010, MGAA sent representatives to the Wisconsin branch of the American Federation of Teachers, in the context of their discussion on endorsements and campaign contributions. We weighed in the interview process for gubernatorial candidate Tom Barrett and the various state legislature candidates also under consideration.

Education Rights Campaign. On February 10 MGAA coordinated with SDS and TAUWP for its contribution to the Education Rights Campaign. We worked on revising the general petition demanding a tuition freeze, chancellor pay cut and university transparency. Subsequently we coordinated planning for March 4 Education Rights Day and long-term action.

WSL Training. On February 11th the MGAA had two Worksite Leader training sessions, meeting with representatives from nine departments. We discussed the role and importance of the Worksite Leaders, and also introduced new participants. We ran through specific scenarios in dealing with department problems, such as addressing employees required work more weekly than the contract allowed.