

## **Occupy CU General Assembly Minutes**

Friday, February 3, 2012

Champaign Public Library, 6 to 9 pm

**NEXT MEETING: Friday, February 17, 2012, at the Champaign Library, 6 to 9.**

In attendance: Chris, Theresa, Rachel, Damian, Eleanor, Chandler, Jesse, Susan, Stuart, Karen, Ya'aqov, Pam, Ricky, Chris

**LOGISTICS/AGENDA PROPOSAL:** Susan volunteered to facilitate and reviewed hand gestures; Damian volunteered to keep the stack.

**WELCOME/MOTIVATION MOMENTS:** Eleanor said it was great that we were educating the community on Citizens United. Stuart reported on the ruling this week where banks are being forced to make payments to the public, but stated it is really a pittance. Susan said that the jail issue is a reason we have to Occupy; we are not being allowed to be a part of the decision making. There are powers that be who are ignoring public opinion. There seems to be a 1% is controlling the decision making. Damian said that perhaps we can be a little more bold in our initiatives: not design a more "humane" jail, but help get the people out of jail who should not be there, help prevent incarcerations for those overrepresented.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

~ Flex-N-Gate – Rachel reported that she is coordinating an Eco-Feminism conference at the Women's Resources Center (Green and Wright Streets, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor) on March 12<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup>. Among teach-ins and other activities, there will be a Flex-N-Gate session on Tuesday. She plans to invite workers from the company and have translators on hand.

~ Stuart and Eleanor reported that Mark Braverman was speaking several times in the next few days but wanted to announce in particular that there would be a film showing and discussion on Sunday, 2/26/12, from 2 to 5, at McKinley Presbyterian Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor East room. The film is entitled: "Steadfast Hope: The Palestinian Quest for Just Peace" and is by the Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Eleanor reported that she heard Braverman speak and that he was great.

~ Colin announced that he would be holding another door-to-door petition training on Tuesday, 2/14, at the IMC/Lincoln Square area, at 7:30 p.m.

~ Rachel reported on 2 upcoming events: Open Mic on sex and sexuality on 2/11/12 at Red Star Liquors, across from the library and next to Iron Post, at 9:30 p.m. There will be free cupcakes and sex toy giveaways. On Monday night, 2/13, there will be a hot topic discussion on polyamory, from 7 to 9 pm.

~ Chris announced the Weekly Occupy a Street Corner on Saturday, 2/11/12, from 2 to 4, at Bradley and Neil Street.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

~ Flex-N-Gate – There was a discussion that there should be another UAW point person besides Sandra since she may not always be available. Damian and Rachel volunteered to be in touch with the union representative of the UAW. Ricky shared that UAW reps met with Flex-N-Gate people to figure out a plan to move forward.

~ Jail addition - There was a lot of passionate discussion about the proposed addition to the jail. Susan reported on attending the hearing and Chris talked about the involvement of CU Citizens for Peace and Justice. Chris said that the best way to help now is attend the county board meetings on East Washington at the Brookens Administration Building, from 6 to 7 every Tuesday night. You should come prepared to speak. Trying to get organizations Involved. The group is trying to issue a Citizens RFP where the following are featured: investing in before-arrest services, as well as services for the time one is in jail. Inside the jail, they would like a matrix of social service agencies, a minimum security work release center, AA, NA, a garden, etc. Chris will be sure to include our list serve in any information he receives.

~ Ricky announced a rally on 2/14 at noon on the Quad, at the Illini Union side. Its purpose is to bring out problems at the university with the way the students and the workers are being treated. Workers are making less money, students are being charged more, etc. It will be a short rally with the potential of a gimmick wherein a “valentine” is sent to the president listing the grievances.

~ Theresa asked for clarification on how to disseminate the minutes. All agreed that they will be sent to the complete list serve, as well as be posted on the OccupyCU.org website.

~ Incomplete actions – Ya’aqov asked whether we can have a stack for ideas because we sometimes bring up ideas and they don’t get taken up further. He then reminded us of a few: to engage and bring in people from nearby towns; planning something less predictable and conventional. For example, can we do something indoors? Pretend you are on the phone and read an OcCUpy flier in a public space. Or go to a bank and have a loud conversation about the Move Your Money/banking issues. We need to think about what can we do that is different. Susan said whatever we do, it needs to be easy and doable. She then suggested that we might want to contact businesses about contributing food to our organization not so that we get fed but in order to make contact with new people and let them know what we are doing. Susan made a proposal to have Ya’aqov and others meet and make a plan to have new innovative actions. Rachel asked that the group be different from Outreach since it serves different purposes. Rachel suggested that a flier be made that present the “committee” as way to get people involved. Use it as a call for participation, as an outlet/venue for contributing creative thinking for future actions that we can take.

~ Occupy the Midwest - Rachel mentioned the regional meeting from March 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> in St Louis. The call is out to invite different Occupies to form regional working groups to help define the convergence. Rachel will send the informational email around again about the event. After reading the plan, we might want to plan around our participation in being there. How can we contribute and submit proposals and maybe go.

~ Table on campus – Chandler asked about occupying a table on campus. Rachel shared that there is a table in the student union on the Quad side. It is first-come, first-served. There was a discussion about whether we need to create an RSO (registered student organization) so that we can qualify for university resources and funding for things like having students attend conferences, for example. Damian shared that the members of Occupy the Quad felt they were doing fine without any university help. The reason they had been reluctant to register is because there is a lot of silly paperwork. Since Chandler can sit at the table without registering and Occupy the Quad feels they are fine as they are, it was decided to let things stand as is. We did ask Damian to contact the members Occupy the Quad to ask them if they would like to be on our list serve so that they can be more aware of what we are doing.

~ Hot Topics on Gender and Race in the Occupy Movement – Rachel announced a program at the Women’s Center on 2/27, from 7 to 9 pm on Gender and Race in the Occupy movement. Rachel proposed to ask Occupy CU for an endorsement and heavy involvement. Panelists and Rachel collectively come up with the generative questions that will inform the panel. The questions are thrown out at the beginning and people discuss. There was some discussion about what it means to endorse this particular event. Rachel clarified that she was hoping that since she was intending to have a panel on the Occupy movement, she wanted the people who were involved in on the planning; that was most important. Damian said we should engage in discussion as it makes us stronger, even if not more numerous. We voted on “supporting” the panel discussion and all were in favor. Anyone who is interested in being on the panel or formulating questions should contact Rachel at: [rachelstrm@gmail.com](mailto:rachelstrm@gmail.com)

~ Media spokesperson – Theresa asked about whether or not we should have a media spokesperson. We all agreed that we were happy to have Matt and Sean represent the group to the person who had recently inquired about our movement. Matt and Sean will hold the interview over the radio so that there is no misrepresentation of our positions or actions. The group felt that we should not select a sole spokesperson but that it be determined by event or as needed. Rachel suggested that we should try to include women and people of color when possible as spokespeople so that it counterbalances the perception out there that Occupy is white, male, college-educated, and young. In related communication issues, Chris reported on how Mayor Don Gerard discussed his involvement in helping with the One Winter Night fundraiser and how he was worried that he would be associated with Occupy. Chris also said that the program “Penny for Your Thoughts,” hosted by Jim Terpin, on 1400 AM, is a great place to voice our concerns. There is a lot of talk about Occupy. Rachel added that we can use a regular column in the *Public Eye* for regular Occupy news.

~ Meeting schedule: Pam asked about having meetings on Friday night. She had talked with a few people recently who said they could not make Friday nights. Eleanor suggested asking these individuals to go to other meetings, like Outreach. Damian reminded everyone to tell people who ask that there will be plenty of opportunities to be involved without coming to a meeting. We just need to plug

these people in. Theresa suggested that we plan alternative meetings but do so far enough in advance so that people can schedule their time. Ya'aqov suggested that we make changes in the Spring.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

*Outreach Committee:* Ya'aqov reported that the committee talked about Flex-N-Gate, the jail construction, and how and where to distribute fliers. Eleanor said that she will be in touch with the Human Services Council about leaving fliers with them.

*G8/NATO:* Damian reported on the upcoming G8/NATO summits on May 19 – 20. There was a planning meeting held on 2/8 where we discussed general ideas and how to proceed with a timeline. The group will write something on why CU people should be involved in the summit. After that we will begin a media campaign. We are counting on people writing letters as well. We will host a couple forums to raise awareness for others and for us. In April we will focus on how to get people to Chicago (buses if enough people vs. car pools vs. trains, etc.) as well as logistics once we are there (hostels, Voices in the Wilderness contacts from the SDaS, a contact of Rachel's). We will focus on how to get people involved. Many unions in Chicago have already endorsed the rally. Chris said that we want to be a part of the massive numbers of people who will attend this international event.

*Anti-eviction Committee:* Jesse reported that they are trying to schedule a meeting for Wednesday, 2/15, whose purpose is to organize the group's efforts.

*Move to Amend training* - Chandler reported that the trained individuals will not go door to door this weekend due to the cold and wind, but Chandler will submit paper work to the township to get the item on the ballot. Only needs 15 signatures and once the item is placed on the ballot, we will be able to vote on it. He will use the email addresses of the people who have signed the petition to remind them to get out and vote on the referendum when the time comes.

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