

► Bargaining Session Etiquette: A Guide for the Innocent and the Eager*

Dear Mother Jones:

I am a member of LEO and want to attend some of the upcoming bargaining sessions with the Administration, but I'm not sure what's expected of me when I'm there. Could you shed some light on this matter?

—A Newcomer to Negotiations

Dear Newcomer:

My expertise lies in the public arena of unruly protest rather than the intimate venue of controlled negotiations. Your predicament calls for the cultivation of an "inside voice," a skill that I have yet to master. Hence, I've taken the liberty of forwarding your letter to Emily Post, whose advice follows. Should you find yourself marching, pamphleting, and yelling at a later stage of the bargaining process, I shall be only too happy to attend you as a guiding force.

Bargaining proceeds along somewhat formal—one might even say "ritualized"—lines, as each side acts out its part in an adversarial pas de deux. Hence, there are a few "dos" and "don'ts" that you should bear in mind both when you are at—or, rather, near—and away from the table.

The process is not so formal that you need arrive at the start and stay the whole time. It's acceptable to come and go while negotiations are in process, provided you are not disruptive. Do try to come for a two-hour block, and recruit your colleagues to venture over with you. Your bargaining team will welcome some solid "contingents" (forgive the pun). Only LEO members are permitted to attend bargaining, except by express invitation. So you'll have to forgo treating this as an educational experience for students, friends, and relatives. If you arrive at the start of the bargaining session, you may be asked, along with others, to introduce yourself and identify the campus and school where you teach. This request is made primarily in

the spirit of openness rather than for the purpose of keeping tabs on the activities of LEO members.

As a general rule, observers sit behind LEO's bargaining team. You will thus be in a position both to support your team via mental telepathy and to observe the faces of the opposing team as ideas are exchanged across the table. Of course, this seating arrangement means that the other team can see your face too. Given that what passes for give *and* take between the two sides may sometimes seem like only one *or* the other (depending on your point of view), do be sure not to react in inappropriate ways. Irresistible as it may be, eye-rolling, guffawing, or slapping your forehead in utter exasperation at the other side demeans LEO's standing in this process, so refrain from these actions. If you feel the urge to break into a verse of "Solidarity Forever," consider stepping out for a breath of fresh air. Knitting and other similarly low-impact activities have proven to be acceptable outlets for the nervous energy of some observers.

Admittedly, bargaining sometimes moves at glacial pace, and accordingly you may feel tempted to chat with your neighbor or find yourself slipping into a state of somnolence. Surely, you needn't be told that such behavior is rude. But understand too that extraneous voices will be unpleasantly distracting to your team members, who have to be attentive at all times to what is being said at the table. And, a bit of shut-eye will suggest to the other team that you aren't all that interested in what's going on. It's not necessary that you be perfectly engaged at every moment, but a semblance of following the process is encouraged. Breaks in bargaining offer opportunities to attend to some work—to jot down a grocery list, compose a poem, grade a few quizzes, solve the Riemann hypothesis, and the like.

If last September you read "Bargaining 101," the back-to-school issue of this estimable publication, then you already know that bargaining sessions are routinely punctuated by caucuses—

closed meetings for each team, where participants express their reactions to proposals and analyze the current state of negotiations, as well as strategize for the next encounter at the table. LEO's bargaining team will welcome your participation in its caucus. While your views will be solicited, you are in no way required to contribute.

In caucusing, as in bargaining, there are a few rules formulated to ensure productivity. Time is limited. So, when contributing to the discussion, be concise and stay on point. The team will want to hear from everyone who has input to offer specifically related to the issues at hand. A caucus is not the place to comment on earlier parts of the negotiation process or to question decisions that have already been made. It will be counterproductive for your team to have to go over old ground or reopen what has already been closed for the time being.

Some protocols should be observed even when the formalities of caucusing and bargaining are suspended. Do not engage in sidebars with members of either team. And note that it would be inappropriate in this context to chat it up, even informally, with anyone on the opposing team whom you may know personally. Be careful, for obvious reasons, what you say about the process and the people involved in it as you traverse the corridors and visit the restroom of the bargaining location. (Best to say nothing, no doubt you'll agree.)

Finally, after you leave a session for the day, it's important to respect the sensitive nature of negotiations by keeping the content and the tone of what transpires confidential. Should anyone from the media ask you for comment, refer the request to the bargaining team, as tempting as it may be to speak at length about the shortcomings of the other side's proposals. That's what LEO's media spokesperson is for!

*The Editors gratefully acknowledge the influence of Karen Gordon's grammar handbook, *The Transitive Vampire*, on the title of this article.



January 2010

In this issue

@ Bargaining: helpful advice from Emily Post

How one Lecturer got hooked @ Bargaining

2010 Bargaining Schedule

Get Organized!

"Why Me?"



LEO & Management place all initial articles on the table, February 5—be there!

► Why Attend Bargaining: One Lecturer's Story

The year before the first LEO contract was in place, the new dean of the school where I was teaching made a clean sweep of lecturers without regard to quality and years of teaching, commitment to our students, and service to the University; he did this simply because he wanted to and he could. I had been teaching at UM for twelve years; most of the thirty or so lecturers who no longer had jobs had been at the school for ten to thirty years. We were engaged members of the school community—active in developing curriculum, advising graduate students, sitting on committees, etc. Where once we were encouraged to participate and vote, we were now locked out of faculty meetings. The acknowledgment that one colleague got for twenty-nine years of teaching was a phone call asking him to return his keys—nothing more.

Two lecturers survived the purge; I was one of them. My colleague and I had already signed our union cards for the newly formed Lecturers' Employee Organization. We'd attended a few meetings,

joined in phone-banking, stuffed envelopes. But what had happened to our colleagues was a shocking illustration of what could happen to other hard-working, dedicated lecturers who were still without the protection that a contract and grievance procedure could provide against arbitrary treatment. It inspired us to further action—we decided to attend bargaining sessions for that first contract.

While the contract that I saw forming heartened me, the negotiating process itself was compelling and the skill of LEO's bargaining team was inspiring. Watching fellow lecturers engage across the table with university lawyers and administrators to hammer out the contract—session after session, line by line, word by word—had a deep impact on me. The contributions of time and effort, heart and soul, that the lecturers on the bargaining team were giving to forge a fair contract made sitting in support on Fridays seem like the least I could do.

During breaks from sessions at the table, the LEO contingent discussed, strategized, let off steam, regrouped, got feedback, got fed, got rowdy, wrote new language, and found a way

forward together. These caucuses were places where we all had a chance to contribute, not only the bargaining team but also members who had been preparing for negotiations for months and months and members who simply observed for a few hours at a time, as I did. Here, those of us with tiny voices and “no experience” were heard and respected.

What I witnessed at bargaining sessions made me decide to start saying “yes” where I once had said “no”—“Yes, I'll call and bring other lecturers in my department.” “Yes, I'll make office visits across campus.” “Yes, I'll participate in the membership meeting.” LEO continues to improve the work lives of lecturers because members make it happen. Saying “yes” and showing up at a bargaining session is a no-brainer—it simply makes a difference to be there.

Postscript: As one outcome of the first LEO contract, many of the lecturers in my school who had been unfairly “let go” were rehired. In a meeting with lecturers new to the school, one of the rehired, long-time lecturers held up a LEO contract and declared, “This is huge!” It has, indeed, made a huge difference in our lives.



Post the attached bargaining schedule & mark the Fridays when you can be there!

First negotiating session—
January 22,
9:30am-5:30pm,
Ann Arbor,
Michigan League,
Rooms C & D

Your support is key to a strong 2010-2013 LEO contract!

Why Me?

Stevens F. Wandmacher, *Philosophy, Flint*

Chair, LEO-Flint; Member, LEO Bargaining Committee

My life inside UM: *I teach a variety of courses in philosophy, ranging from introductions to logic, philosophy, and ethics through upper division courses in philosophy of the mind, feminist ethics, and social and political philosophy. In addition, I am the Interim Director of the Student Veterans Resource Center.*

My life outside UM: *My family life is very busy. My wife is an assistant principal, and we have two active daughters. We enjoy traveling, camping, and seeing things most people only read about. I am a huge hockey fan, a Deadhead, and a Great Lakes wreck diver.*

Why me? *I have taught at UM-Flint for 15 years. My department has always treated me very well. I became active in LEO because of the University's inability on the whole to recognize and respect the role my fellow lecturers and I play in helping it be the great Research I university that it is. Without our contributions in teaching, the remainder of the faculty would not be able to make the research contributions for which the University is known. Recognition, demonstrated in terms of job security, and respect, demonstrated in terms of appropriate compensation and acknowledgement, are critical issues for me.*

My favorite... *shipwreck that I have visited is the Regina off Sanilac Shores. Because...aside from the history of how she was lost with all hands, it amazes me how a 200 foot long freighter could be lying in 80 feet of water and not be found for 70 plus years.*

LEO Links: leounion.org • theleosshare.blogspot.com • twitter.com/leounion
Facebook: Lecturers' Employee Organization • LEO office: 734-995-1813