

# AAUP

## American Association of University Professors

### Statement on Collective Bargaining

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The basic purposes of the American Association of University Professors are to protect academic freedom, to establish and strengthen institutions of faculty governance, to provide fair procedures for resolving grievances, to promote the economic well-being of faculty and other academic professionals, and to advance the interests of higher education. Collective bargaining is an effective instrument for achieving these objectives.

The presence of institutions of faculty governance does not preclude the need for or usefulness of collective bargaining. On the contrary, collective bargaining can be used to increase the effectiveness of those institutions by extending their areas of competence, defining their authority, and strengthening their voice in areas of shared authority and responsibility. The Association therefore affirms that faculties at both public and private institutions are entitled, as professionals, to choose by an election or comparable informal means to engage in collective bargaining in order to ensure effective faculty governance. Trustees and administrators are of course free publicly to question the desirability of collective bargaining, but they should not resort to litigation or other means having the purpose or effect of restraining or coercing the faculty in its choice of collective bargaining. Where a faculty chooses collective bargaining, the trustees and administration have a corresponding obligation to bargain in good faith with the faculty-selected representative and should not resort to litigation or any other means intended to avoid this obligation.

As a national organization that has historically played a major role in formulating and implementing the principles that govern relationships in academic life, the Association promotes collective bargaining to reinforce the best features of higher education. The principles of academic freedom and tenure, fair procedures, faculty participation in governance, and the primary responsibility of the faculty for determining academic policy will thereby be secured. Moreover, collective bargaining gives the faculty an effective voice in decisions that vitally affect its members' professional well-being, such as the allocation of financial resources and determination of faculty salaries and benefits. For these reasons, the Association supports efforts of local chapters to pursue collective bargaining.

<https://www.aaup.org/issues/collective-bargaining/resources-collective-bargaining>

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# What Faculty Unions Do

MAR 9, 2011

Cary Nelson  
Professor of English  
UIUC  
AAUP President (2006-2012)

When faculty members at the University of Illinois at Chicago began mobilizing for a union recognition drive in 2010 they were motivated in part by concern that the central administration was drifting away from the campus's historic commitment to its urban mission. Located in a substantially racially segregated city with many minority families having no college graduates, the campus had long studied urban life and offered upward mobility opportunities for local residents. Rather than just plead this cause with the administration, faculty members increasingly saw the need to sit down and negotiate binding levels of support for this mission.

When I visited the University of Northern Iowa in 2010 a different topic was under discussion. Faculty members were increasingly concerned about the debt levels their students were accumulating. They felt their union should make it a priority to address the issue and propose solutions to the problem.

At the University of Rhode Island the faculty union took on the task of helping graduate student employees there organize for collective bargaining. Wages and working conditions for teaching and research assistants needed improvement. The only way to get them was to organize. A few years later they helped part-time faculty organize. Though it is not guaranteed, unionized faculty are more likely than their nonunionized counterparts to promote the welfare of all members of their college or university community.

Faculty unions are not simply about their own bread and butter issues. Indeed research shows that, although unionized community college faculty earn more than their nonunionized counterparts, full-time unionized and non-unionized faculty at four-year institutions earn about the same. Most unionized faculty, however, have stronger benefits packages, and union contracts have proven good protection during a recession. Contractual raises were honored, and contracts prevented administrators from imposing furloughs without faculty consent.

Yet the need to protect and enhance shared governance is instead often what motivates faculty members to form unions. Shared governance refers to the structures the administration and the faculty put in place to assign primary responsibility for various elements of campus life. As professional educators, faculty members are particularly concerned with their role in curriculum design, setting hiring priorities, and shaping instructional budget decisions.

Unfortunately, on too many campuses the faculty is being supplanted in its areas of expertise by administrators who have no experience in or training for making decisions on academic and educational issues. A union contract is the best way to secure agreements on these matters. Thus a

unionized faculty often has a better chance of putting its professional judgment to use, judgment that can otherwise be depreciated or dismissed.

Since the parties to a contract negotiation can have different interests and priorities, the process can be tense and difficult. Negotiations can break down if either or both parties are acting in bad faith or are unwilling to compromise. Yet the process offers a structure fundamentally directed toward resolving conflicts, not exacerbating them. Union negotiations can in fact restore working relations between faculty members and administrators on a campus where they have broken down.

As corporatization increasingly penetrates campuses, as business men and women come to dominate boards of trustees, and as a burgeoning class of career administrators with no classroom experience takes charge of decision-making, faculty members often realize they need to level the campus playing field if they are to have a chance to win support for the values they believe should define higher education. Of course, for the thousands of faculty members who teach part-time or full-time on temporary appointments, most of them cut out of any meaningful role in campus governance, unionization is literally the only route to a living wage and decent working conditions. Not only may they have no health care coverage without a union contract; they may have no office space or campus mailbox without one. But even tenured faculty increasingly feel disempowered. A faculty senate can bewail a campus trend to decrease investment in the primary mission of instruction. A union can negotiate to guarantee reinvestment in instruction. As one common slogan has it, "United We Negotiate, Divided We Beg."

A union can negotiate actual agreements for hiring the teachers departments need. Faculty unions have negotiated agreements increasing the proportion of the full-time faculty necessary to provide students with fully committed teachers. Many such faculty contracts benefit students by establishing required office hours, teaching loads, and student course evaluations.

Union contracts can also win contractual status for the fundamental values of academic freedom and shared governance. A legally binding contract is a much stronger guarantee than a faculty or staff handbook. The AAUP recommends specific language to secure these and other critical values, and union negotiators for faculty members, academic professionals, or graduate student employees can get that language included in contracts. A good union contract can protect the right to speak forthrightly about campus policies. Without that protection, faculty members and academic professionals are vulnerable to sanctions or dismissal if they disagree with administration policies or proposals. A corporation can demand conformity from its employees; a university should not be able to do so.

On many campuses, faculty members and other employees can be punished for vague, improper, or unsupported charges without any opportunity to defend themselves or confront their accusers. Sometimes the only appeal is to the very administrator who acted rashly in the first place. Union contracts typically establish clear, enforceable procedures to assure that faculty members, academic professionals, and graduate student employees receive due process. And they make the experience of pursuing grievances far more orderly by assigning them to dispassionate negotiation.

For some people the due process clauses in a contract will prove its single most important feature. They ensure that justice can prevail at critical moments in a professional career.

Maintaining these values requires constant work. As I argue in my book *No University Is an Island* (New York University Press, 2010), faculty unions can grow stale over time, the passion of their founders can be supplanted by the complaisance of later generations. Those faculty unions that have lost touch with their larger, community-oriented social missions need to recover them. The current assaults on public employee unionization may trigger exactly that sort of renaissance.

Critics of faculty unionization often argue that faculty members are not like workers in an auto plant. How can such individualistic people benefit from a union? But as the paragraphs above suggest, a contract for faculty members or other academic professionals is a very different document from one for an assembly line worker. A good higher education union contract protects the freedom of choice and expression we value in members of a university community. It should embody fundamental universal AAUP principles of academic freedom and shared governance but also reflect an institution's distinctive character and mission and the priorities of the local faculty. A well-written union contract helps faculty members become the individuals they want to be. The disparaging contrasts anti-union commentators have drawn between faculty members and industrial workers are fundamentally contemptible. Neither industrial nor campus solidarity is a form of herd mentality. Faculty solidarity is a collective method for securing individual rights and freedoms and a way to give authority and leverage to the values faculty endorse. Collective bargaining restores the balance of power that has been distorted by increasingly centralized administration.

In that context, the wave of anti-union legislation that has overtaken state houses in 2011 is revealed to be far more sinister than an effort to cut investment in public higher education, wretched though that is for equal opportunity in a democratic society. It embodies a much larger cultural agenda, larger even than the aim of undercutting unions' impact on future elections. In the case of the attack on faculty unions at public colleges and universities, it is, I believe, an effort to produce docile campuses, campuses where faculty members and academic professionals who speak their minds can be cast out of the community because they no longer have unions to protect them. That is one impulse behind the special vengeance Ohio legislators have focused on faculty unions. Convinced by aging culture warriors that American campuses are overwhelmingly progressive, Republican legislators want to legislate a *Silent Spring* in American higher education. Those who care about higher education and academic freedom should spare no effort to defeat these efforts and restore the fundamental right of all employees to organize their voices as they choose.

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# 5 TOP REASONS

## for supporting higher education unions & collective bargaining

### 1. SIUE IS A GREAT PLACE – WE WANT TO PROTECT IT

- We want to protect quality education and make state funding a priority.
- Your support of the Faculty Association sends a strong message to Springfield.
- Our Faculty Association will formalize and legally protect what we like about current policies, as well as change what we think could be better or clearer, including final and binding third-party arbitration to resolve disputes.

### 2. WE DESERVE A GUARANTEED VOICE ON CAMPUS

- Right now, our faculty voice is only advisory.
- With an Association, tough decisions forced upon SIUE by the state will include *our* voice.
- When necessary, we will work together with administration to determine and implement creative responses to any budgetary constraints and reductions.
- We, the SIUE faculty, will be able to negotiate raises, cost of living increases – even class size and more.
- The Faculty Association will complement, support, and strengthen our Faculty Senate.

### 3. ADD OUR NUMBERS TO COALITIONS WITH COMMON GOALS

- Our statewide union (the Illinois Education Association) *already* belongs to a coalition with other unions and university administrations – working together to hold the state accountable and demand full funding of Higher Education!
- We are one of only three of the 12 Illinois public university faculties yet to formally unionize.
- Together we can protect pensions, and fight to maintain health coverage at a reasonable cost.
- We will work in concert with other SIUE employee unions on local common goals as well.
- We're the only SIUE employee group on campus without union protection and the ability to collectively bargain.

### 4. SUMMER CLASSES

- We deserve transparency regarding SIUE summer budgets – summer offerings must remain an *educational service*, not a 'revenue producer.'
- The ill-conceived 'Winter Term' has only siphoned students from summer – and winter term salaries are *cut-rate*.

### 5. UNIONIZATION PREVENTS BUDGETARY 'HIDE AND SEEK'

- The IEA conducts detailed analyses of university budgets and audits. We'll have our own experts to keep us informed and prepared for negotiations.
- Our Association will allow us to finally bargain on an equal footing with SIU-Carbondale, assuring that our campus budget doesn't fund other units within the SIU system!

Go to the **FAQ** on the menu above for other useful information

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## Unionizing Pays Big Dividend for Professors at Regional Public Universities

By Peter Schmidt APRIL 03, 2016

Full-time instructors at regional public universities earn an average of about \$21,000, or nearly 25 percent, more in pay and benefits annually if they belong to a union, concludes a groundbreaking new study of compensation at such institutions.

The location and size of the employer also makes a big difference. Those in larger suburban public universities, the highest-paying category of institutions studied, earned an average of nearly \$17,000, or 20 percent, more in pay and benefits annually than those at midsize rural institutions, the lowest-paying category.

Such pay gaps become even larger when all three factors — location, size, and union status — are considered together. Unionized instructors at larger suburban institutions earn an average of about \$40,000, or 50 percent, more than their nonunionized peers at midsize rural institutions, the study found.

Past research on faculty earnings at public universities has offered a distorted picture by lumping in data from state flagships and from regional institutions, argues a [paper](#) summarizing the study's findings.

Given how the nation's 390 public regional universities differ from flagships in their missions, student populations, and faculty workloads, they "deserve analysis in their own right," says the paper, presented in New York on Sunday at the annual conference of the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions.

The paper says the new study also differs from other research on faculty earnings in that it takes into account not just salaries but fringe benefits as well. To provide such an analysis, however, the researchers had to use data from the 2010-11 academic year, because the Education Department stopped collecting information on faculty benefits after that point.

The new paper's authors are Nathaniel J. Bray, an associate professor of higher-education administration at University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa; Stephen G. Katsinas, a professor of higher education administration at Alabama and director of its Education Policy Center; and Johnson A. Ogun, a fellow at the center and an assistant professor of culinary arts at the University of North Alabama. Mr. Bray and Mr. Katsinas found similar payoffs to unionization in a study of community-college instructors' earnings [published last year](#).

### Benefits Under Debate

The degree to which college faculty members benefit from joining unions is heavily debated by education researchers, partly because efforts to quantify any impact on their earnings are confounded by factors such as market-related variations in what colleges are willing to pay their employees and geographic differences in income.

There's a substantial overlap between those states with relatively high costs of living and those states where public employees can join unions. Conversely, living costs, and all workers' pay, is relatively low in those states in the South where public employees are barred from collective bargaining.

"It is a completely different world living in San Francisco than living in Kansas," said Thomas L. Harnisch, director state relations and policy analysis for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. In many cases, he said, rural public universities "are just going to have smaller salaries due to the cost of living."

Past studies that focused entirely on faculty salaries and factored in public flagships found no more than modest benefits to belonging to a faculty union at a public four-year college.

The new study links unionization to an \$11,000, or 15 percent, difference in the average salaries paid to full-time instructors at regional public universities and about a \$10,000, or 32 percent, difference in the average benefit package offered such instructors.

*There's a substantial overlap between those states with relatively high costs of living and those states where public employees can join unions.*

In an interview last week, Mr. Katsinas said the difference in overall compensation that his study linked to unionization was far too large to be attributable to differences in the cost of living.

Mr. Katsinas acknowledged that his study used a shorthand method for classifying instructors as unionized, based on whether their state's labor laws let instructors at regional public colleges engage in collective bargaining.

But, he said, virtually all such institutions' faculty members belong to unions in states where it is allowed, and often such unions enter into contracts with university-system offices overseeing many or all such campuses in their state.

Of the more than 127,000 full-time instructors whose earnings were analyzed in the study, 63 percent worked in the 30 states where they could collectively bargain at the time the data were gathered. The study classified as unionized the full-time instructors at about three-fourths of the 55 suburban, three-fifths of the 74 urban, and half of 261 rural public universities it examined.

Mr. Harnisch, of the state-colleges association, said he was pleased to see a study focusing on regional public universities, which he called "a sector of public higher education that is really the workhorse but often gets overlooked for elite private institutions and public flagships."

*Peter Schmidt writes about affirmative action, academic labor, and issues related to academic freedom. Contact him at [peter.schmidt@chronicle.com](mailto:peter.schmidt@chronicle.com).*

## The Solution to Higher Ed's Bad Pay Is Unions

*Unionized faculty earn about \$21,000 more annually in pay and benefits than their non-unionized peers.*

By [Michelle Chen](#)

April 13, 2016

Depending on how you measure achievement, the public higher-education system is either highly dysfunctional or hugely successful. While professors face sinking salaries and students writhe under crushing tuition and debt bills, higher education is a booming business, oozing with investment and research capital. But a close look at faculty compensation shows how labor shapes the political economy of the American campus.

[A comprehensive analysis of public-regional-university faculties](#) calculates the difference a union makes: about \$21,000 annually in pay and benefits. Average salaries of unionized full-time teachers are approximately 15 percent higher, adding some \$11,000 to annual earnings, compared to non-union peers. Their benefits bring in an additional \$10,000 on average, roughly a third more than non-union counterparts.

Researchers Stephen Katsinas and Nathaniel Bray of University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, and Johnson Ogun of University of North Alabama, crunched data for about 390 public regional universities and found that faculties with collective bargaining rights have a distinct advantage. Even accounting for region and institutional size, union-negotiated contracts are linked to markedly higher annual compensation levels, particularly in large suburban regional institutions (\$18,500 more annually) and smaller urban institutions (\$17,600 more annually), and significantly higher salaries and benefits even at relatively lower-paying rural institutions.

The study doesn't cover other measures like academic productivity. But consider how union rights and the leverage of a strong contract could change how an institution values academic labor as a long-term institutional investment. According to the study, across a 30-year career at a unionized institution, inflation-adjusted earnings "can easily exceed \$1 million."

Maintaining a strong, dedicated teaching workforce is crucial at regional universities that serve as a middle tier of higher education, with high concentrations of [disadvantaged students](#), such as "first-generation" college attendees. Additionally, researchers observe that these institutions "are highly committed to be good [stewards of place](#)," with a focus on educating and improving the surrounding community's social conditions (including, for example, uplifting a generation of students in depressed Rust Belt towns seeking brighter career prospects).

For these schools, labor power could have a massive impact on teaching and learning. In terms of a professor's experience at work, a solid benefits package promotes maintaining a stable and devoted faculty. In an academic labor market reeling from budget deficits and economic

volatility, the researchers argue that middle-brow campuses “are challenged, with state budget cuts, to recruit and retain talented faculty.” Meanwhile, the teaching profession is becoming deskilled and mechanized to serve more students with fewer resources. A union contract with job security and top-notch benefits could answer the prayers of many impoverished adjuncts and heavily indebted young doctorates, especially when ultra-prestigious, lavishly funded institutions shut them out of tenure-track positions.

Katsinas also noted that socioeconomic advantages linked to unionization could attract faculty from [underrepresented and disadvantaged groups](#). (The promise of targeted academic workforce funding was demonstrated with the [National Defense Education Act’s Title IV program](#), which in the late 1950s and ’60s brought an unprecedented cadre of blacks and women into professorships through targeted doctoral education funding.)

As schools compete nationally for a [shockingly small pool of non–white male aspiring professors](#), Katsinas says via e-mail, “large gaps in monetary compensation mean that the poorer paying institutions may face a tremendous challenge retaining the few minority faculty they can attract.”

If those schools can [develop and sustain scholars of color](#), their intellectual and cultural presence would be directly deployed in the education of a [high-needs student population](#), which often [skews more poor, black, and brown](#) than that of elite private colleges and research universities.

A fair benefits package could also include basic progressive social provisions, such as paid family leave, that both foster fairer working conditions and support women and parents on faculty.

In other words, at a time when [affirmative action is under political siege](#), empowering academic labor can help cultivate and effectively distribute academics from underrepresented groups across the higher education field, while engaging their communities of teachers, students, and workers.

In the absence of comprehensive policy-driven efforts to strengthen diversity and equity in academic labor, unions appear to be the primary line of defense for public institutions struggling with privatization and austerity. The City University of New York’s (where the author has worked as a graduate student) famously militant faculty and staff union, Professional Staff Congress, has in recent weeks [edged close to a strike](#) as contract negotiations have [reached an intense impasse](#), centering on long-overdue pay raises. Bringing together all faculty (including struggling graduate fellows and adjuncts) and students, massive protests for both fair pay and equitable funding have decisively [challenged proposed budget cuts](#), despite threats of legal penalties.

The California Faculty Association at California State University [has also recently successfully pushed for long-sought wage increases](#). But an integral part of its months-long campaign was an ongoing, overarching movement for [social justice across campus](#). So labor protests also tackle issues like [ensuring access and affordability](#) for low-income students, [combating the gender pay gap for faculty](#), and promoting the hiring of academics of color to better serve a heavily black, Latino, and Asian-American student body.

Jennifer Eagan, president of the California Faculty Association, tells *The Nation* that while academics usually trade on their individual talents, when it comes to labor issues, “you can have all the best data and arguments, but if you don’t have power, your employer might be free to ignore you.” In the recent contract disputes, she adds, labor and community consciousness converged: “For a lot of the faculty, having that mutual support and solidarity to be able to go fight for fair salaries together,” while emphasizing for the public “how low faculty salaries were starting to negatively impact the system, which is supposed to belong to the people of California.... A lot people really did connect those dots... [showing that] our struggle really had to do with the health of the system, for both current students and future students.”

Public universities are grounded in the project of broadly serving working-class students, and the educational opportunity they potentially steward braces the fulcrum of social mobility. Despite the commercialization of the campus, labor power can shift the higher-education system back to its fundamental mission.

[Michelle Chen Twitter](#) Michelle Chen is a contributing writer for *The Nation*.

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# How would a union affect faculty and staff?

## **Will union representation and collective bargaining enhance our salary and working conditions?**

Collective bargaining offers the opportunity for faculty and staff to be full partners in any decisions that affect salary, pay practices, and working conditions. From the unions' perspective, collective bargaining is a pro-active process, that is, faculty and staff would introduce comprehensive proposals regarding salary issues and working conditions that embody their goals in these areas.

The ensuing negotiations would shape the ultimate agreement on these issues. Salary and working conditions are invariably enhanced when faculty and staff collectively identify desired outcomes and negotiate from a unified position.

## **What is the record of negotiations at other higher education institutions?**

Other institutions, large and small, such as the California State University system, the State University of New York system, the University of Hawai'i, Central Oregon State College, many of the universities in Montana, and the community colleges in most states, have successfully utilized the collective bargaining process. In addition, many of these faculty and staff members have enhanced their standing with their respective legislatures and administrations by utilizing and encouraging effective modes of communication and dispute resolution.

## **Does a negotiated contract offer greater security than a current shared governance agreement?**

A negotiated agreement offers all employees the greatest degree of certainty and security. Such an agreement clearly sets forth the terms and conditions of employment. These terms reflect the input of employees and are secured by agreement for a specified length of time. The usual current shared governance procedure controls only the relationship between the administration and the faculty or staff. The board of trustees is not bound in any legal way to a decision reached through the shared governance agreement. In this time of fiscal volatility an agreement built on faculty involvement would provide a significant increase in stability.

## **What are some of the benefits and services NEA provides higher-education unions?**

- Strong and Effective Advocacy -- From Maine to Hawai'i and Michigan to Texas, the NEA represents faculty, academic professionals, and university personnel in every type of institution -- from public and private community colleges to Ph.D.-granting universities. The NEA and its state affiliates offer professional advice, support, and assistance on key issues like salary, benefits, and pay equity. Association experts visit campuses to assist faculty and staff members in settling problems such as violations of tenure rights or workplace abuses.

- Seasoned Political Representation -- Key decisions on the future of higher education are generally made by politicians, not educators. Faculty and staff need a strong, reliable voice to carry our views to the state capital and to Washington DC. NEA represents the interests of students and educators in the political arena and strives to increase public support for public education. When it comes to political advocacy on education reform policy, tenure, productivity, financial support for higher education, effective tax reform, retirement benefits, health care reform, and other policies that have a significant impact on ourselves and our institution, the union has been and will continue to be the only truly effective advocate for educators.
- Legal Assistance -- Union members receive legal assistance in dealing with most employment related claims. All higher education union members are automatically protected by a one million dollar professional liability insurance policy. This liability insurance exists to defend members in cases that arise during the performance of their professional duties. It is also noteworthy to mention here that the NEA legal staff has effectively argued that academic freedom should be recognized as a constitutional right. As a result, tenure is now viewed as a property right protected by the 14th Amendment.
- Publications -- The NEA periodically publishes various journals, newsletters, and reports containing information and data about higher education. Union members automatically receive these publications. Check out the publications on NEA's Higher Ed web site.

### **Who will develop the constitution and bylaws of the new union?**

Faculty and/or staff who become members of the local chapter would develop and adopt a constitution and bylaws to replace any interim operating principles. Officers would be democratically elected, and committee appointments made in accordance with the constitution and bylaws. The constitution and bylaws would be established in a fully democratic and inclusive manner.

### **How would I have a voice in the union?**

The union would establish a constitution and bylaws that address the organizations structure and rules of operation. Specifically, these democratically established procedures would define the kinds of officers, committees, and representative structures that would exist. In addition, the electoral procedure, length of office, etc., would be established. Individuals would participate by becoming members and seeking an active and, perhaps, elected role in the organization.

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## Living with unions in higher education

*Colleges and universities offer tips on managing unionizing efforts on campus*

[Stefanie Botelho](#)

February 2, 2015

The temperature around higher education unionizing efforts often runs hot. Officials are reluctant to have outside labor groups on campus or to relinquish control over important personnel decisions—including pay, benefits and other sensitive employee issues.

But should higher ed leaders fear [unionization](#) efforts?

One primary area of worry for institutions whose employees are beginning to organize is that assistance will come from groups unfamiliar with higher ed.

“To bring in an outsider— there is a lot of concern, rightfully, [over whether] these folks truly understand how a university operates,” says Scott Schneider, head of the Higher Education Practice Group for Fisher & Phillips, a national labor and employment law firm that represents employers.

The cost of unionizing can build quickly for an institution when hiring new administrators to handle new organizational structures, adds Schneider, who is also the associate general counsel for Tulane University in New Orleans.

However, experience proves that not all concerns are as dire as initially perceived, says Christian Sweeney, the AFL-CIO’s deputy organizing director.

“After a period of time, the universities realize that the sky isn’t going to fall when unions happen,” Sweeney says. “There are concerns about maintaining quality of programs, but those concerns are demonstrably misplaced. I don't think unions undermine academic quality—they improve it.”

### Unions branching out

*The growth of unions in both strength and numbers is inspiring a variety of higher education groups to consider the advantages of organizing.*

*Full-time, non-tenure track professors—already unionized at American University—are organizing on campuses across the country, such as Michigan State University and Rutgers.*

*William LeoGrande, American’s associate vice provost for academic affairs, says the majority of these professors are just looking to create a more solid future for themselves and their families.*

*Postdoctoral researchers are also beginning to organize. These researchers are at all 10 University of California campuses are represented by the UAW Local 5810, which is also known as the “Union for Post-Docs.” Pay is only a part this group’s agenda.*

*“Postdoctoral researchers are raising questions in universities concerning pay and benefits, as STEM is an area of massive growth in university employment,” says Christian Sweeney, the AFL-CIO’s deputy organizing director.*

*“Another area of concern is international researchers who have spouses who can’t work in this country.”*

Unions have existed on at least some campuses for a century, with the Association of College Unions International recently celebrating its 100th anniversary. But heightened activity means more campus administrators are having to make room for organized labor.

Unions have gained traction recently at a variety of public and private institutions, including:

- Property workers at Boston University.
- [Adjuncts](#) at New York University, Tufts University in Massachusetts, University of Connecticut and Marist College in New York.
- Tenure- and non-tenure track faculty at University of Oregon and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

And Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois continues to make news as its football players attempt to form a union, seeking year-round health benefits and other protections. (Salaries for players are not currently part of the negotiations.)

In fact, while numbers aren't available for all areas of higher ed, data from the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions shows that faculty and graduate students are organizing more and more. In 2012, about 390,000 faculty were members of collective bargaining units, a 14 percent spike from 2006.

But unions don't spring up overnight. Here's how campus officials have managed various stages of the unionization process on campus.

## **Inklings of organization**

William LeoGrande, associate vice provost for academic affairs at American University in Washington, D.C., says labor relations were "generally positive" there before official unionization efforts began.

A student group organized in defense of adjunct rights during in 2012, and there was at least one demonstration. Off-campus meetings were held by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) to brief adjuncts on the benefits of unionization.

American University administrators emailed adjuncts to convey the institution's views of unionization.

"We didn't aggressively oppose the campaign before the election [to negotiate a contract]. We strongly encouraged people to learn the issues and vote," says LeoGrande. "Our thinking was, if every adjunct voted, that the union probably wouldn't work. Most of our adjuncts are working professionals, and they teach because they enjoy it, not for benefits."

LeoGrande says not much changed on campus during organization efforts. "The student rallies in support of the union only drew a couple dozen participants. Even most adjuncts did not seem very engaged, since turnout in the election was less than 50 percent," he says.

Still, the numbers were strong enough to create a union. American's adjuncts negotiated their first two-year contract on July 1, 2013.

## **The initial negotiation process**

Security workers at the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York voted to unionize eight years ago. Jeffrey Knapp, associate vice president for human resources and risk assessment, says the negotiations with the International Union, Security, Police, Fire Professionals of America (SPFPA) were difficult and time-consuming.

"SPFPA had some very legitimate goals, and goals that were simply unrealistic in terms of pay increase, pension benefits and work conditions," he says. "A number of negotiating sessions were devoted to assisting the union negotiating team in understanding specifically the cost and impact of what they were requesting." After 11 months of work on a contract, a mediator was brought in.

Despite the risk of bias and other interference, Knapp says the university had a positive experience with the mediator.

“We agreed to mediation because the college was certain that its compensation and benefits proposals were supported by market data and that the work rule proposals were reasonable and grounded in established business practice,” he says. “In the end, the college was able to present evidence that enabled the mediator to bring the parties together.”

LeoGrande says ongoing negotiations can impact a workforce. American University employees “contacted the news media, contacted elected officials, publicized their issues through the student newspaper and established informational packets.” However, he adds, the unions remained discreet during times of negotiation.

There were four main issues at American University concerning adjunct employment: salary, job security, a new grievance process and systematic performance evaluations, LeoGrande says.

The job security issue proved to be particularly challenging in reaching an agreement, as the university wanted to maintain the right to refuse employment if a more qualified applicant emerged.

“We have an obligation to put the best faculty members in the classroom,” LeoGrande says, adding that anyone displaced for that reason would get a one-time payment proportionate to their normal stipend.

The negotiations at American remained civil—even during disagreements—and LeoGrande says he believes “both sides are happy with the resulting structure.”

A carefully negotiated contract can change campuses for the better, and clearly defining the issues can solidify the relationship between administration and staff, says Sweeney of the AFL-CIO.

“A contract can be a useful tool for management to clearly lay out their terms, such as workload expectations,” he says.

“Spelling out a sexual harassment and discriminatory system every three or four years is a good system to keep people invested. It also tends to stop problems before they start.”

## **Moving forward, together**

What is life like on campuses where unions are well entrenched in the culture?

“We don’t see a large difference in terms of day-to-day operations,” says LeoGrande. “Our relationship with the union is very good.”

Regardless of the specific group, unionization is undoubtedly changing the face of higher education, and in some cases at least both sides see it as positive.

“Unions are a success, as we’re developing new ideas and serving an important function,” says Fred Kowal, president of United University Professions, the labor union for the State University of New York. “

The faculty and staff we represent is changing: In some ways, the face is growing younger. That’s a victory: Bringing in the next generation of leaders who are committed to the public good of public higher education.”

*Stefanie Botelho is newsletter editor.*

# EIU faculty union rejects cuts

JARAD JARMON  
Herald & Review

Mar 16, 2016

CHARLESTON -- Eastern Illinois University faculty and academic support employees are considering a deferral in salaries after the recent rejection of the Eastern administration's previous proposal that included salary reductions.

According to an EIU-UPI faculty union news release, with a 70 percent voting participation rate, the faculty and academic support personnel voted not to accept Eastern President David Glassman's proposed 5.6 percent reduction in the base salary of faculty and academic support staff.

UPI leadership offered a different proposal that would defer salaries of faculty and academic support employees to make up for the money needed for payroll for the rest of the fiscal year.

The news release states "the need for sufficient cash flow to continue operation was readily recognized by nearly all faculty and academic support personnel," but that the Eastern administration proposal had shortcomings. The salary reductions proposal was unfair to more financially vulnerable UPI members, according to EIU-UPI.

"Our members deserve a proposal that they can trust -- something that helps EIU with the cash flow problem that Governor (Bruce) Rauner has forced upon us, while allowing us to do our job to educate our students and to protect our campus and community," said Jonathan Blitz, EIU-UPI president.

Billy Hung, EIU-UPI media coordinator, said the UPI proposal has key differences besides deferring instead of reducing salaries.

Instead of a flat rate for all faculty and academic support employees, those members with a base salary of \$50,000 or less will defer a total sum equal to 2.5 percent of their annual base contract salary; those with salaries of \$50,001 to \$75,000, 5 percent; those with salary of \$75,001 to \$100,000, 6.5 percent; and those with salaries of \$100,001 or more, 7.5 percent.

This would open up more than \$2 million to be used, more than Glassman's requested amount. Hung said this also protects those in the lower brackets from as much financial difficulty as there would be with a flat rate.

The UPI proposal also differs in the repayment process. The proposal would use money assigned to MAP grants as well as fiscal year 2016 and 2017 appropriations, unlike the other proposal that only would take from FY2016 funding.

Also, when appropriations come in, for every dollar Eastern gets, UPI gets a dollar to repay the deferrals.

"From all appropriations, equal amounts will be assigned to the administration and to UPI until all deferrals have been repaid or until the entire appropriation has been exhausted," the

proposal also reads. "For example, in the case of a (\$4 million) appropriation, (\$2 million) shall be allocated to refund UPI deferred salaries, and (\$2 million) shall be allocated to EIU."

If Eastern receives no state funding in FY2016 and FY2017, the deferral will be converted to a reduction and the university would not have to pay back the owed amount.

The faculty and academic support personnel will vote on this pay deferral plan, starting on March 21 and concluding on March 22.

EIU-UPI represents 515 members of tenured, tenure-track faculty, annually contracted faculty, and academic support personnel.

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