

Informational FAQs Regarding Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Unionization Efforts at SIUE

- 1. What if I am asked to sign a card or petition indicating my support for a tenured and tenure-track faculty union? What does this really mean and what am I signing?**

In order for a union to seek representation on your behalf, the union is required by the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act (IELRA) to prove that the union has a majority of tenure and tenure-track faculty (as the union has defined their proposed unit), who desire to be represented by them. Signing a petition or card indicates that you want this group to represent you and also means that you voted “yes” for union representation.

- 2. If I signed a card/petition, will I get to vote on whether or not a union represents me and my colleagues?**

If the union can prove to the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB) that they have cards from over 50% of the faculty members in the defined unit, there will be no election. You and your colleagues will be represented by the union, whether or not you or they signed a card.

The union has already filed a Petition with the IELRB stating that they do have support from a majority of the proposed bargaining unit. The IELRB has scheduled a hearing in this case, on the question of representation, for October 17, 2016.

- 3. If I felt misled, pressured, or coerced into signing a card during the unionization drive, is there anything I can do now?**

Pursuant to the IELRA, if you believe that you experienced fraud or coercion in regards to your signature, you should contact the IELRB at the address below prior to the October 17, 2016 hearing date. The Board Agent assigned to this case is Ms. Eileen Brennan.

160 North LaSalle Street, Suite N-400
Chicago, IL 60601-3103
Telephone: 312-793-3170
Fax: 312-793-3369

If you believe that you have experienced fraud or coercion in this process, and choose to make contact with the IELRB, you may also notify Senior Associate General Counsel Phyleccia Cole of your contact and your experience, at pcole@siue.edu or 618-650-2514.

4. If I do not sign a card/petition, do not vote in an election and do not want to be represented by a union, is there a way I can “opt out”?

No. The Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB) will determine if tenured and tenure-track faculty are represented by the union based on the number of cards signed or the election results (if an election is held). If the union can prove a majority of interest, there will not be an election. If you are a tenured or tenure-track faculty member and meet the determined definition of the represented group, by default, you will be a member of the bargaining unit and governed by the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. You will have no choice in this matter.

5. How would shared governance be affected by a unionization of faculty?

It will change. The union becomes the exclusive representative of the faculty on all issues contained in the collective bargaining agreement, a document yet to be written. The collective bargaining agreement will supersede existing University policies and/or operating papers for your school/college and/or department. Under a collective bargaining agreement, the University will be required to formally negotiate certain decisions with the identified union representative(s) only and not with individual faculty members or the Faculty Senate. Issues related to educational policies are not considered mandatory subjects of bargaining.

6. Will all of my tenured and tenure-track faculty colleagues be represented in the union?

No, the union has proposed the composition of the bargaining unit, with certain groups of faculty excluded. The unit composition and exclusions as stated in the petition are found in the IELRB Notice that has been posted on campus and sent to all faculty members.

7. If the union is certified and recognized by the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB), will I or my colleagues be able to negotiate directly with the University administrators - our Chancellor, our Provost, our Deans and our Chairs?

No. The union will become your exclusive representative and special considerations are rare. Both the University and the union will have identified representatives - not necessarily from your department or college/school - that will end up determining your conditions of employment. Once defined by the collective bargaining agreement, it will be impossible for deans and chairs to unilaterally offer tenured and tenure-track faculty individualized modifications to the working conditions established by the union contract.

8. If I am represented by a union, how will my compensation be determined? What part of my compensation will be based on merit?

Your compensation will be determined through the collective bargaining process and not through the current policies in existence for your school/college. Merit raises and salary adjustments will be determined through the collective bargaining process.

9. How does the collective bargaining agreement with the union affect the policies in the Faculty Handbook?

The collective bargaining agreement can supersede policies and procedures already in place that have been established through shared governance.

10. I understand that there may be a cost or fee to belong to a union. What is this and what is it for?

The cost to belong to a union is referred to as dues. Members of unions pay monthly dues to help cover the union's costs for their representation. Typically, dues are deducted from faculty paychecks. More specific questions related to dues should be directed to the union.

11. If I am in the collective bargaining unit but don't want to be a union member, will I still have to pay dues?

You could be required to pay an agency fee (Fair Share) which covers the union's cost for representation. Fair Share dues are typically deducted from faculty paychecks, if applicable.

12. If the union either obtains a majority interest or is successful in an election, what will happen next?

The University and the union will meet to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement.

13. Can administrators such as deans and chairs be part of a faculty union?

Faculty administrators who are supervisory, managerial, and/or confidential are typically excluded from a bargaining unit under the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act.

14. Are there legal restrictions concerning what administrators may say or do during a period of unionization activities?

Yes. Administrators can't make any promises as to what could happen if a union campaign is successful or not. Administrators can't conduct polls of who is a union supporter and who is not a union supporter. Administrators cannot take adverse or special actions toward you because of your support or opposition to unionization. Administrators can talk to you about facts, correct any misinformation and communicate their opinions on unionization.