

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT UNIONIZATION OF ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS

What does it mean to be represented by a union?

Unionization changes an employee's relationship with the University. As a non-represented employee, you currently have a direct employment relationship with the University. As a result, you and your supervisor/principal investigator can work out details about your pay, hours, etc.

If a union becomes your exclusive representative, the terms and conditions of your employment will be subject to collective bargaining. You would *not* be able to negotiate with your supervisors/principal investigators on wages, hours or working conditions, except as provided by the labor agreement. The University and the union must negotiate all future changes in wages, hours and other conditions of employment.

What is the next step in the union representation process? Will I get to vote?

Unionization may result from union cards signed by employees or by a secret election ballot. A union must show that a majority of academic researchers want to be represented by a union. Academic researchers may be asked to sign an authorization card/petition. Signing the authorization card/petition is your way to show that you want to be exclusively represented by the union. Your signature on a card or petition may constitute your vote. The choice is yours.

What are the potential academic titles affected by this union representation process?

Project Scientists, Professional Researchers, Cooperative Extension Specialists, Scientific Engineering Associates, Junior Specialists, Specialists, Agronomists, and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Researchers may be approached to sign an authorization card/petition.

What does signing an authorization card or petition mean?

It means you want the union to become your exclusive representative for purposes of negotiating with UC regarding your wages, benefits and other terms of employment. UC supports employees' rights to determine whether they think unionization is beneficial. UC believes this choice should be well informed.

How many academic researchers are needed to determine unionization?

A simple majority of employees (50 percent plus one vote) of the target group determines that the whole group will be part of a union.

If a simple majority of academic researchers choose unionization, will I have to become a member of that union and pay dues?

No, you are not required to become a member. However, the union would have the right to collect dues/fees from all employees in the bargaining unit, whether or not they wish to be represented by this union.

- Employees who choose to join the union and become members are required to pay union dues.
- Employees who choose not to join the union may be required to pay an agency fee. Although the amount of money paid for agency fees may be very close to the amount paid for union dues, the union cannot spend agency fee money on political contributions. In exchange for agency fees, the union represents these employees in collective bargaining and in other matters.
- The union may charge employees more for union dues than it charges those who choose not to join the union for agency fees.

Who determines the union dues and agency fees that employees must pay?

The union determines the amount of the union dues and agency fees. Once the union tells the University how much it charges employees for union dues and agency fees, the University is required to collect these amounts through automatic payroll deductions and remit them to the unions.

In calendar year 2016, UC unions collected about \$59 million in union dues and agency fees from the estimated 78,000 UC employees they represent.

What happens when a union becomes my exclusive representative?

The union will bargain for wages, benefits, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment in the represented bargaining unit. As an exclusive representative, a union has the right to represent members of the bargaining unit throughout the grievance process. It also has the right to require employees to pay fees in support of its representation responsibilities. Employees who choose to join the union and become members are required to pay union dues.