

## Unionization Q&A

❖ Why would Ohio University faculty consider unionizing?

➤ A faculty union would help ensure shared governance, academic freedom, and economic security at an especially uncertain time at Ohio University (and for universities in general). It would require the administration to come to the table and negotiate with faculty over the most important issues.

❖ Are other university faculty in Ohio unionized?

➤ Yes. Of the 14 public universities in Ohio, OU is one of just three universities without a faculty union.

❖ Are any of our peer institutions unionized?

➤ Yes. There are more than 200 four-year colleges and universities that have unions with collective bargaining agreements. These include three of our peer institutions, as listed on the university's Office of Institutional Research website: the University of New Hampshire, the University of Rhode Island, and Oregon State University. Additionally, the following research-extensive institutions also have faculty unions: Rutgers University, NJIT, the SUNY system, UCONN, the University of Delaware, the University of Oregon, the University of South Florida, and the University of Vermont.

❖ Will a union solve our problems?

➤ A union is not a solution in and of itself. A union is a vehicle for faculty to band together and speak with one voice. It would give us a say over things that currently are the sole discretion of the OU administration and board of trustees.

❖ What is the legal process of forming a collective bargaining unit of faculty? ➤

Because OU faculty are public employees, we would follow the State of Ohio's collective bargaining law (Ohio Revised Code 4117). While there are nuances, the basic legal process involves: 1) A minimum of 30% of eligible faculty sign cards indicating they would like to hold an election on whether to establish a union. (We would collect more than a majority of signed cards before we would file for an election, however.) Individual cards are not accessible to OU administration (they only receive a total count). 2) File for an election with the State Employment Relations Board (SERB). 3) SERB conducts an election. A simple majority (50% + 1) of all faculty is required to form the union.

❖ Would all full-time faculty be in the same bargaining unit?

➤ Yes. All full-time faculty, regardless of tenure status, would be in the same bargaining unit. It is possible to form a unit of only tenured/tenure-track faculty, or only non-tenure-eligible faculty. However, having all full time faculty in a single unit helps prevent divisions among faculty and also gives the union strength in numbers.

❖ Can part-time faculty be in the bargaining unit?

➤ No. Ohio is the only state that explicitly excludes part-time faculty and graduate students from its collective bargaining law.

❖ How much will dues be if we form a union?

➤ Dues must be voted upon by the membership and negotiated with the university. They typically fall at or below 1% of one's base salary at other unionized campuses in Ohio. In addition, no dues will be collected from faculty members until a contract is agreed upon and ratified by the entire membership. Also, the majority of dues stay with the local chapter and are used at the discretion of the membership.

❖ What kinds of things can the union negotiate?

➤ A faculty union can negotiate virtually anything related to the terms and conditions of employment. A typical faculty collective bargaining agreement in Ohio covers: compensation, health benefits, grievance procedures, family leave, professional leave, sick leave, disciplinary procedures, and much more.

❖ Can a faculty union make a difference at Ohio University during this time of financial crisis in higher education?

➤ Yes. Faculty unions have made a difference at these Ohio universities:

- The Kent State faculty union, after negotiating the deferral of salary increases, saved all but a few full-time, non-tenure track jobs.
- After Bowling Green State University announced they would terminate contracts for as many as 60 full-time, non-tenure-track faculty, the faculty union made a strong case for retaining them and negotiated severance packages for any faculty member who was let go. In the end, only 17 faculty were terminated, and they got severance packages.
- The University of Cincinnati, which has a faculty union, has had no faculty layoffs.