



Academic Staff Professionals Representation Organization

Advocating on Behalf of Academic Staff Since 1989...

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“Unit Clarification” Or Undemocratic Union Organizing

In the last [newsletter](#), we outlined the newest challenge facing the academic staff of the UW System – “unit clarification”. Unions currently representing other State employees are anxious to fold as many as 4000 academic staff positions into their ranks without having to spend any time on campus “organizing”, that is, persuading you and your colleagues to form a collective bargaining unit. Last week, we shared a [copy of the letter](#) some Category A (non-instructional) academic staff received from WPEC (an AFT local).

Who Has Standing?

The academic staff, and ASPRO as an organization, are used to challenge. The difficulty with “unit clarification” is that neither you as an individual nor ASPRO as an organization has standing before the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission (WERC). Only the UW System and/or the Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) can formally oppose a “unit clarification” petition from a union.

All signs are that the UW System will not “roll-over” and allow academic staff positions to be folded into the ranks of existing unions representing other State employees. And ASPRO has reached out to [President Kevin Reilly](#) suggesting that our organization collaborate with him and his staff to mount an effective challenge to the unions’ petitions.

What Can You Do?

ASPRO members have contacted us and asked what they can do as individuals to express their unhappiness with the unions’ “back-door” attempt at organizing the academic staff. **The first step would be to let your State Senator and State Representative know how you feel.**

Legislators passed the budget bill that included language granting collective bargaining rights to faculty and academic staff of the UW System. Those advocating for collective bargaining repeatedly referred to their efforts as granting you the “right to choose” to be represented by a union. “Unit clarification” denies some Category A academic staff and researchers a vote, a choice. Under “unit clarification”, you (and/or your colleagues) could be assigned to a union (and pay union dues) without a vote.

ASPRO members thought they would have the option of forming a collective bargaining unit comprised of all of the academic staff on their campus or a unit comprised of both academic staff and faculty. “Unit clarification” divides the academic staff by assigning some to a variety of State employee unions and, thereby, separates them from their faculty colleagues.

Contacting Legislators

ASPRO encourages you to email or call your Senator and Representative today. Here is what you need to convey:

- Give your name and home address.
- Mention your academic staff position and campus.
- Express your opposition to “unit clarification.” Ask your legislators to contact Jennifer Donnelly at OSER and urge her to formally join with the UW System in opposing any union’s “unit clarification” petition to the WERC. All UW academic staff deserve to be able to vote on union representation.

To find your legislators’ contact information OR if you do not know who your Senator or Representative is, it is easy to check by going to <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/w3asp/waml/waml.aspx>.

Remember that it would be inappropriate and unethical to use University equipment to make these contacts. Please use your personal telephone, computer or email account.

ASPRO is Your Voice

We will keep you posted on ASPRO’s efforts to oppose “unit clarification”. We encourage you to share this newsletter with your academic staff colleagues. If they are alarmed or dismayed by the prospect of “unit clarification”, ask them to join ASPRO to help fund the fight. Click [here](#) for an ASPRO membership application form.

For more information about the issue of collective bargaining and “unit clarification”, check out the website www.isaunionforu.com. As always, ASPRO is interested in your reaction to “unit clarification”. Please share your thoughts with us by emailing aspro@aspro.net or by posting at <http://isaunionforu.blogspot.com>.