



Website and Blog Launch

Over the past year, ASPRO members have asked that we post more about the issue of collective bargaining on our website.

These members wanted to be able to direct their colleagues to a site which would have the facts about the collective bargaining proposals that have been offered by Governor Doyle and the Senate Democrats, as well as the arguments offered in opposition to the proposals.

To meet this need, ASPRO has launched a dedicated website on collective bargaining legislation and a blog to encourage dialog among academic staff across the System.

The site and the blog are open to anyone, not just ASPRO members. **We encourage you to let your academic staff colleagues know about the site.**

ASPRO wants all academic staff members to be able to review the facts for themselves and dialog with colleagues about the advantages and disadvantages of collective bargaining.

Check out the site - and the blog - at:
www.isaunionforu.com

Join in the discussion on the blog. Simply click on "comments" under the post you want to respond to. Then in the "Leave a Comment" box, type in your comments. You will be asked to type in a "verification word" and select a "name" with "anonymous" as an option.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Senate Bill 353 -- Collective Bargaining

Unions win latest battle

As you know, Senator Dave Hansen introduced Senate Bill 353 which would grant collective bargaining rights to faculty and academic staff of the UW System. Of course, the 41-page bill also **very specifically outlines how the collective bargaining units will be formed.** [A copy of the bill](#) is posted on our new collective bargaining website.

SB 353 was referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Education chaired by Senator Kathleen Vinehout who was a faculty member in Illinois before becoming a dairy farmer outside of Eau Claire. The **one and only Senate hearing** on SB 353 was held on December 17th on the Eau Claire campus. ASPRO's lobbyist Janet Swandby contacted Senator Vinehout's staff and expressed dismay that the only hearing on the bill will be held in Eau Claire when the majority of academic staff are in Madison and Milwaukee. ASPRO also expressed disappointment that the hearing would be held during a very busy time of year.

ASPRO submitted formal, written testimony opposing the bill. That testimony has been posted on the [blog](#) associated with our new collective bargaining website.

Committee Vote

On Wednesday, the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Education **voted to recommend passage of SB 353 on a 4-1 vote.** This was **not a surprise.** Four of the five Senators on the Committee are co-sponsors of the bill --all three Democrats (Vinehout, Plale, and Lassa) and one Republican (Kapanke). The second Republican, Senator Sheila Harsdorf, voted against the motion.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) published a press release touting the vote, but, as usual, misstated the next step for SB 353. Contrary to AFT's belief, SB 353's next step is not the floor of the Senate. Because implementation of SB 353 would cost the State money, the bill must go to the Joint Committee on Finance first.

Cost of Collective Bargaining

Passage of SB 353 would cost the State money – big money. The [fiscal notes](#) prepared by the UW System and other state agencies predict that implementation of this collective bargaining scheme for the UW faculty and academic staff will cost the State **more than \$2.2 million ANNUALLY.**

Finance Committee is Key

The next hurdle will be more difficult for the unions and other supporters of SB 353. The Committee is comprised of 8 Democrats and 8 Republicans. In order for the bill to be voted on in the Senate, a majority of the Committee must vote to recommend passage. The Democrats' votes are almost assured. Seven of the eight are co-sponsors of the bill. Only Senator Judy Robson of Beloit is not.

The Republicans will be ASPRO's ticket to stopping the bill, and you can be assured that your lobbyists will be working to keep SB 353 from becoming law.

