

Specialized Faculty Unionization

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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The administration has received many questions about what the certification of the CFA as the union representing specialized faculty on the Urbana campus will mean. The following FAQ was created to answer those questions. If you have additional questions, please submit them to Heather Horn in Academic Human Resources at [hwilson@illinois.edu](mailto:hwilson@illinois.edu) and responses will be added as information becomes available.

**1. If I am now represented by the Campus Faculty Association, will I be able to receive a salary increase as part of the campus salary program for this academic year?**

No. Not until the issue is negotiated with the union. Because specialized faculty have chosen to unionize, our new reality is that wages are negotiated through collective bargaining.

**2. What does it mean to be represented by a union?**

It means that the union (CFA) negotiates the wages, hours and terms and conditions of your employment collectively. You may no longer negotiate those matters with university administrators (e.g., your department head, dean, etc.) on your own behalf.

**3. How did this happen?**

Fifty percent plus one of the 473 specialized faculty members at Illinois signed cards, papers or petitions that authorized it.

**4. I did not get to vote in an election on the question of establishing a union. Do all specialized faculty have the right to vote in an election?**

No. Illinois law allows a union to be recognized through a so-called “card check” procedure, which involves collecting signatures from a “majority interest” of employees in the proposed bargaining unit. A majority is defined as 50% plus 1 employees in the proposed unit.

**5. When did the Specialized Faculty or Non-Tenure Track faculty form a bargaining unit (i.e., unionize)?**

On July 8, 2014, the University received notification from the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB) that the Campus Faculty Association, IFT-AFT, AAUP (CFA) had been certified as the union representing Non-Tenure Track (NTT) faculty (“specialized faculty”) on the Urbana Campus.

**6. Who is in the union, and what specialized faculty positions are included in the bargaining unit?**

In general, individuals who hold specialized faculty appointments totaling a 51% or greater FTE.

Positions with a total FTE equal to or greater than 51% with the following specialized faculty titles (including those titles with Adjunct and Visiting modifiers) are included in the CFA bargaining unit:

Instructor

Senior Instructor

Lecturer

Senior Lecturer

Clinical Associate

Research Associate

Teaching Associate

Clinical Assistant Professor

Clinical Associate Professor

Clinical Professor

Research Assistant Professor

Research Associate Professor

Research Professor

Teaching Assistant Professor

Teaching Associate Professor

Teaching Professor

Adjunct Assistant Professor

Adjunct Associate Professor

Adjunct Professor

Visiting Assistant Professor

Visiting Associate Professor

Visiting Professor

**7. What about Postdoctoral Research Associate, Intern, Visiting Scholar and Emeritus Faculty positions?**

These positions are excluded from the CFA specialized faculty bargaining unit.

**8. Are specialized faculty in all colleges included in the CFA specialized faculty bargaining unit?**

No. Specialized faculty in the College of Medicine, College of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Law are not included in the CFA bargaining unit.

**9. How can I verify whether I am in the CFA specialized faculty bargaining unit?**

Check with your college-level budget and/or human resources administrator. For further information, contact the Office of Academic Human Resources, specifically Heather Horn, [hwilson@illinois.edu](mailto:hwilson@illinois.edu), 333-6747, or Sharon Reynolds, [sreynlds@illinois.edu](mailto:sreynlds@illinois.edu).

**10. I think I signed one of those cards/papers/petitions, but I didn't realize it meant I was actually voting to form a union. Will revoking my signature change the outcome?**

No. Illinois labor law assumes you read and understood a union authorization card, paper or petition you signed, and revoking your signature after a union has been certified will not impact the Labor Board's ruling.

**11. I did not sign anything, nor vote in an election, and I am opposed to unionization. Am I required to be represented by the union?**

Yes. Because a simple majority of specialized faculty signed cards, papers or petitions in support of a union, all specialized faculty members in covered positions are represented by the Campus Faculty Association. All those in the bargaining unit are subject to the wages, hours and terms and conditions of employment negotiated by the union on their behalf.

**12. (May)/ Can I remove myself from the bargaining unit?**

No. You cannot, as long as you are in a covered position. While we understand that not all employees wish to be represented by a union, the university cannot remove a covered position from a bargaining unit that has been certified by the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB).

**13. The Campus Faculty Association is telling me that the university could give me a salary increase as part of the campus salary program. Is that true?**

Applying the campus salary program to unionized employees would constitute a unilateral change to wages, which the university cannot do now that the union has been recognized. Wage increases must be bargained together with all other terms and conditions of employment. However, right now there are potentially two different bargaining units that cover teaching associates (one for teachers at University High School and one for all other teaching associates). Therefore, the university is appealing the recent certification and has asked the Court to resolve this configuration issue as quickly as possible.

**14. My department is pursuing a promotion for me into another specialized faculty position. Can my promotion be processed, and can I receive a salary increase associated with my new position?**

Yes. The certification does not preclude the campus from continuing the status quo practice of promoting specialized faculty members into new positions, including providing a promotional increase associated with the higher level duties. The campus will continue to do all it can to appropriately advance and reward hardworking employees.

**15. How does being part of a collective bargaining unit impact the status quo policies and procedures set out in Provost Communication No. 25?**

The university is required to maintain the status quo regarding wages, hours and terms and conditions of employment, subject to collective bargaining. Colleges and departments will continue operations in progress during the period of negotiations. For example, under existing policy, units have the ability to continue providing competitive counter offers, promoting individuals and proceeding on the many items in Provost Communication No. 25 from spring

2014. Also, units should continue other practices and policies that are part of the status quo operations.

**16. Will I have union dues/fair share fees deducted from my pay check and what amount will be deducted?**

Union dues are set exclusively by the union. Whether the university withholds union dues, or their alternative fair share fees, from employees' paychecks will be determined in collective bargaining.

**17. What is the university doing now to address the situation?**

The university is appealing the certification, because the configuration of the bargaining unit is incorrect. It does not accurately reflect the presumptive bargaining unit of non-tenure track faculty at the Urbana campus as set forth in the state regulations. Specifically, the specialized faculty job title of Teaching Associate was improperly split into two different bargaining units represented by two different unions. The university had asked the court to help quickly resolve this issue, by consolidating the issues and accelerating the process. The court has granted that request. The university's goal is to ensure that there is a single bargaining unit that accurately reflects classifications that should be in the bargaining unit.

**18. Who can I contact for more information or if I have questions?**

You can contact the Office of Academic Human Resources, specifically Heather Horn, [hwilson@illinois.edu](mailto:hwilson@illinois.edu), 333-6747, or Sharon Reynolds, [sreynlds@illinois.edu](mailto:sreynlds@illinois.edu).