Faculty leaders discuss shared governance, possible effects of faculty union

1. What has been the general campus reaction to the recent signature drive to form a union and what concerns have you heard from faculty?

The Campus Faculty Association is currently assessing interest in unionization among tenure and non-tenure track faculty members, so as to establish a bargaining unit for each group. Colleagues across campus are engaged in the process as well. We have received several comments and questions from faculty. Some are concerned about how the process unfolds, whether it will affect the faculty's tenure, and what the implications are for current and future faculty members.

2. Are the recent changes in the state's pension system already a step backward? Last year, the faculty union at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign from supporting a union. We believe, at dissuading faculty at Urbana-Champaign from supporting a union. We believe, at dissuading faculty from supporting a union.

The pension system changes have been characterized by a lack of transparency — even secrecy — that we would never tolerate in other important decision-making contexts. Union organizers were asked in a recent (Urbana Academic) Senate meeting to substantiate their claims that they are “near a majority” of faculty members, and whether their claims are strong enough to form a union.

3. Can the Urbana Academic Senate and a union organization co-exist? They can do so without a conflict, and they do so by forming a separate bargaining unit. The Senate and Faculty Union do not compete for the same resources, but rather whether the faculty possess a mechanism to address the issues that are of concern to them.

4. Are committed to sharing governance? The issue for us is not whether shared governance is good or bad, it is whether people want to have a union. It is a question of whether people want to have a voice in the decision-making process. The Senate and the Faculty Union can co-exist.

5. Was the demise of the Michael Hogan administration a good or bad example of shared governance? It showed that the process, though not perfect, is self-correcting. Professor Hogan came from a unionized and academically engaged faculty members as adversaries that he had to deal with at the board level.

6. What can shared governance provide that a union cannot, and vice versa? It’s too late. There is no transparency in a union. It’s a question of whether people want to have a voice in the decision-making process. The Senate and the Faculty Union can co-exist.

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8. How can you think campus administration and the U. of I. Board of Trustees are to shared governance? It is a question of whether people want to have a voice in the decision-making process. The Senate and the Faculty Union can co-exist.

9. What has been the general campus reaction to the recent signature drive to form a union and what concerns have you heard from faculty?

We have heard multiple accounts of people being harassed by repeated visits until they get what they want. Faculty members have been threatened with the loss of their jobs and their rights. We want to make sure that faculty members have a voice in the decision-making process.

10. If you were to form a union and what concerns have you heard from faculty?

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