

Anthony D. Kinslow
Associate Vice President for Human Resources
Chief Human Resources Officer



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We have recently been made aware that a group of University of Rochester faculty members have reached out via email to some of their colleagues with an expressed interest in forming a contingent faculty union to be represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

This is obviously a matter of import to all of us – the University, the students, and the broader University community – but it is also one of great potential impact to you and your colleagues. The decision you may be asked to make is one of significant consequence, so I'd like to encourage you to understand the facts about the Service Employees International Union and the process by which a union would be recognized here at the U of R before you make any decisions, such as whether to sign a card signifying your support.

By way of brief background, the process by which unions become the bargaining representative for employees is governed by federal law. The first step in the process is usually for a union to solicit support in the form of signed union authorization cards seeking to represent employees for purposes of collective bargaining. Those cards are used to seek an election supervised by a federal agency, the National Labor Relations Board, to determine whether the union will represent all of the employees in the bargaining unit (or in some cases to argue that the union is the representative of the employees without a secret ballot election). So, the decision as to whether to sign a union authorization card – which is a legal document – is an important one that should be carefully considered.

You may have received, or may at some future point receive, an email containing a link inviting you to "join the movement to raise standards in higher education." The link takes you to a form of an electronic union authorization card that, if filled out and submitted electronically, will identify you as having signed up in favor of a union election, even though you may only have intended to submit the form to express solidarity or to seek more information, or for some other purpose.

Your dean or director is available to answer – or find out the answer to – any questions you may have about the University's position, how the process works, what it means to be represented by a union, whether the SEIU will be able to achieve their stated aims if a union were voted in here on campus, etc.

Thank you for your time and attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony D. Kinslow".

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