union mythbusting

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brought to you by united campus workers UVA
Why should I pay dues?

Union dues are a collective investment with direct benefits to you, including better health care, better working conditions, and higher pay. Dues vary based on income. For graduate students and part-time workers, joining UCW costs only $8/month. This comes out to less than just 27 cents a day.
Union dues go to pay labor bureaucrats who hobnob with managers and politicians and don’t end up doing anything for workers.

UCW’s elected leadership is made up of rank-and-file higher education employees who are elected by other union members. Steering committee members are not paid.

As a democratic organization, you will have a vote on where your local membership dollars are spent!
Your right to belong and be active in a union is protected by state and federal law. Campus workers also generally have the right to talk about the union at work. If you can talk about sports games or sell girl scout cookies at work, you can invite your coworkers to join the union.

If you fear retaliation, don’t worry—the union has your back! We protect our members, starting with keeping our union membership rolls completely private.

But I could be fired for joining a union.
If I join, I will be forced to strike.

We are the union! UCW does what our members want us to do. Through the union, all workers have a voice and collectively decide on the union’s actions and positions.

Other UCW chapters have engaged in their organizing in public forums on personal time, to significant success. Political activities such as picketing, rallies, and leafleting on your lunch break or after work are forms of expression and free association, and are expressly protected.
I thought we couldn’t have unions in Virginia because it’s a right to work state.

“Right to work” simply means you cannot be required to join a union in order to join a workplace or profession. It does not make joining unions illegal. However, it does weaken union power by taking away public workers’ right to strike and collectively bargain.

One of our priorities as a union will be to use our collective power to help change this legislative landscape and exert pressure on UVa to join us in this effort. The current political landscape in Virginia means we have an opportunity to lobby for union and bargaining rights for ourselves and all our fellow workers in the commonwealth.
I’m personally well-compensated and feel safe in my position, so I don’t need a union.

We know many professional workers in higher ed feel that unions are not necessary for them. But being a “professional” is no protection against being underpaid, overworked, or treated unfairly. Universities’ responses to the current pandemic show even tenured faculty are not safe from layoffs and pay cuts. Being in a union is not about the type of work you do. It is about respect and fairness on the job. We all deserve those things.
I’m starting to understand the power a union can help workers achieve! Where can I learn more?

You can e-mail us at ucw.uva@gmail.com, or reach out to whoever shared this pamphlet with you! When you’re ready to become a member, follow the code on the next page.

We hope you join our growing coalition of workers and students in fighting for a more just and equitable university for all.
HAVE QUESTIONS? CONCERNS?
WANT TO SAY HI?
EMAIL US!
ucw.uva@gmail.com

JOIN TODAY: