

United we bargain. Divided we beg.

Temple Adjuncts Unionize!

Frequently-asked Questions about Unionization



Why unionize?

Without a union, the administration will continue to have unfettered power to decide all the conditions of our working relationship; we just get to take it or leave it. Right now, the administration dictates how much it will pay us per course, how many courses we may teach, whether to offer us health benefits, when to notify us about our assignments, whether to fire us or decline to reappoint us for any reason or no reason at all, among other things. Individually, we have only the power of refusal – not always a feasible option. We need a collective voice to bargain for what we deserve. Having a union will allow us to collectively negotiate over issues such as the length of our contract, appointment decisions, a grievance procedure, salary, and benefits.

What is the Adjunct Organizing Committee (AOC)?

We are a group of adjunct faculty at Temple. We teach in a variety of disciplines, but are united by our commitment to winning collective bargaining rights for adjuncts at Temple. The AOC receives crucial support from the Temple Association of University Professionals (TAUP), which represents Temple's fulltime faculty. Names and emails of representatives of the AOC are on the reverse.

What do we want?

In the immediate time frame, we want to achieve recognition of TAUP as our bargaining representative. When the union and administration sit down to negotiate, our first priorities will be a substantial increase in pay, health insurance, and a measure of job security.

Ultimately, we will work toward parity with the fulltime faculty in the bargaining unit – proportional pay, benefits, and institutional support for equivalent work.

How can we achieve union recognition?

To gain legal recognition of TAUP as our representative, we must hold an election. The decision of the majority of voting adjuncts will determine the outcome.

Before we have a right to an election, however, the AOC must file with the PA Labor Relations Board (PLRB) a substantial number of authorization cards signed by Temple adjuncts. At least 30% of the eligible adjunct population must sign a card in order to trigger an election. This semester, the AOC is distributing authorization cards and asking adjuncts to sign one.

What does it mean when I sign an authorization card?

When you sign a card, you are indicating that you want the PLRB to supervise an election for Temple adjuncts to vote on whether TAUP (a local of the American Federation of Teachers) will represent us in collective bargaining on all matters concerning terms and conditions of employment.

Will my department head know I have signed a card?

NO! The signed cards are kept confidential by AOC and the PLRB. Temple administrators will never see them. Whether you drop your card in the mail or give it directly to an AOC representative, the card will be kept secure. When the AOC submits the cards, the PLRB will validate them by comparing the names to a list of adjuncts supplied by Temple; it will not tell Temple who signed the cards.

Will the administration or my department retaliate against me if I support unionization?

It is very unlikely they will retaliate. Here's why:

It is against the law. Pennsylvania law prohibits employers from taking punitive action against employees for exercising their right to organize for collective bargaining;

TAUP fully supports the adjunct organizing effort and will treat acts of retaliation against us very seriously; and

Temple University has not retaliated against fulltime faculty who support the TAUP.

Does signing a card obligate me to vote for TAUP representation?

No. The card signals your interest in voting in an election, but does not represent a vote or commit you to voting in favor of the union. Moreover, PLRB will conduct the election by secret ballot, so you will be free to vote any way you choose.

How many adjuncts will be represented by TAUP?

The AOC estimates that there are approximately 900 to 1,000 adjunct faculty who would become part of the bargaining unit. TAUP already represents approximately 1,300 fulltime faculty.

Are adjuncts part of faculty unions at other colleges and universities?

Yes. In the Mid-Atlantic region alone, adjuncts are unionized at all the state universities in the Pennsylvania and New Jersey systems, as well as SUNY, CUNY, NYU, Rutgers, Community College of Philadelphia, Bucks and Montgomery County Community Colleges, and many others. Over 50,000 adjuncts nationwide are represented by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

What is in their contracts?

Unions have negotiated substantial salary increases, medical benefits, grievance procedures, and job security measures, among other provisions, on behalf of adjuncts. Raises far exceed dues paid by union members.

If we unionize will we have to strike?

A strike is absolutely the weapon of last resort of any union, and the decision to strike is made by the members of the union. TAUP recently went through some very tough negotiations for the full-time faculty, and achieved an excellent contract without any need to strike.

If you are an adjunct, help us take the first step toward dignity and recognition by signing an authorization card. If you don't have a card, please go to the AOC website at <http://adjuncts.taup.org>. Click "sign an authorization card NOW!" Or contact the TAUP office and ask for a card: 215-763-2287 or 1-7641, taupaft@aol.com, Barton Hall, A231.

If you have additional questions or concerns about supporting the effort to unionize adjuncts at Temple, please contact one of your adjunct colleagues from the AOC:

Regina Bannan, AOC Chair
regina.banna@verizon.net

Frank Fucile
fafucile@gmail.com

Ralph Flood
ralflood@earthlink.net

Amy Weigand
weiganda@verizon.net

Carol Jenkins
cjenkins27@gmail.com

Dan Friedlaender
dff036@gmail.com

Frequently Asked Questions about Signing an Authorization Card

What is an authorization card?

The card petitions the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board (PLRB) to hold an election to see if adjuncts at Temple want to be represented by the Temple Association of University Professionals. It takes 30 per cent of the eligible employees to trigger an election. It then takes 50 per cent of those voting in the election to win union representation.

Are the cards confidential?

Absolutely! They will **never** be seen by Temple administrators. When the AFT receives cards, they are secured. When we file for a secret ballot election, the cards will be validated by the PLRB.

What does it mean when I sign an authorization card?

When you sign a card you are asking for an election for Temple adjuncts in the TAUP schools and colleges to vote on whether TAUP, AFT-PA, AFT, AFL-CIO will represent them in collective bargaining for all matters concerning wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment.

When there is an election, does signing a card obligate me to vote for TAUP?

When an election is conducted by the PLRB, it is a secret ballot. No one will know how you voted.

What other colleges and universities have had their adjuncts organize?

Just in our region, all the state universities in the Pennsylvania and New Jersey systems, SUNY, CUNY, NYU, Rutgers, Community College of Philadelphia, Bucks and Montco Community Colleges and many others. Over 50,000 adjuncts nationwide are represented by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

What sort of contracts have they gotten?

In all cases, substantial salary increases, medical benefits, and a measure of job security. As one example, adjuncts at CCP have attained salaries 40 per cent higher than those at comparable non-unionized colleges in the area; partial or full medical benefits, depending on seniority; and job security based on seniority.

What's the status of the organizing effort here at Temple?

The Adjuncts Organizing Committee has enlarged our leadership group, the steering committee, which meets regularly with a liaison group from TAUP and AFT. TAUP is now actively participating in our effort to reach all the adjuncts and is providing financial support. We will be working in parallel with TAUP as we both enroll new members throughout this year. Together with AFT, we are developing a timeline with benchmark dates for our membership campaign.

How do I know if I am eligible?

At the time of the election the Labor Board will determine who is eligible to vote, using criteria such as the semesters in which you taught, whether you are an administrator, and so forth.

Is the administration or my department likely to retaliate against me if I get involved?

They are highly unlikely to do so. It is against the law, and so far universities have avoided heavy-handed unfair labor practices.

What protections do I have?

Pennsylvania labor law prohibits employers from taking punitive action against people for engaging in their right to organize for collective bargaining. In addition, the TAUP and the AFT-Pennsylvania, with their considerable legal resources, fully support our organizing effort.

If we join a union will we have to strike?

A strike is absolutely the last resort of any union. No one wants a strike. It hurts both sides and presents difficult public relations problems. TAUP recently went through some very tough negotiations and came out with an excellent contract that made both sides happy. We will use all reasonable means to avoid strikes.