

HR Offers Questions to Ask Union Organizers

March 26, 2008

TO: PAT Staff, Operating Staff and Extension Educators
FROM: Sharon Demers, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources
DATE: March 19, 2008
RE: Staff Unionization

In keeping in the spirit of making an informed choice, I would urge you to ask the union organizers and staff who are supporting one of the unions to answer some of these questions:

- How much are the union dues?
- Can my dues be increased?
- Will I have to pay an initiation fee to join the union?
- Do all union members pay the same dollar amount in dues or do some members pay more than others?
- Can the union set limits on the minimum or maximum amount of my pay that is subject to union dues?
- If the union wins the election, or is deemed the authorized representative by majority petition without an election, will I be required to join the union and pay dues or can I choose not to pay dues?
- If I choose not to pay dues, will I be required to pay a collective bargaining service fee (agency fee)?
- If I am required to pay the service fee, how much is the fee?

We also believe staff need to be well informed about a union's priorities and it may be helpful for you to ask union representatives some of these questions:

- What factors are considered a priority when the union bargains for salary increases: across-the-board increases, pay for performance (merit increases), job market based increases, employee length of service, and/or other factors?
- Does seniority (length of service) always rule? In competition for job openings? Scheduling vacation leave? Managing potential layoffs? Selection for overtime assignments?
- Can the union file a grievance on my behalf without my permission?
Is any part of the local union's collective bargaining agenda set by the national union?