

# You Ask, We Answer

Since announcing the NLRB election, we've heard from staff with questions about what unionization would mean for you personally, and for your work at Penn Libraries.

## Here are your top FAQs

### What can staff do if they don't want a union?

Importantly, you have the right to vote "NO" if you don't want a union. Penn Libraries staff have rights when it comes to the August 7 and 8 NLRB election. These include the right to ask the union questions, to be free of pressure or coercion by union supporters, and the right to campaign against the union. Staff can talk with coworkers and share your reasons, feelings and opinions about unionization. You also have the right for your vote to remain confidential through the secret ballot election. No one should tell you how to vote and no one will know how you vote – the National Labor Relations Board conducts a secret ballot election.

### Why haven't we heard much from the union?

Penn Libraries can't speak to what the union's priorities are or how it is communicating. However, if you are feeling left out now before the election you may ask yourself, what would being unionized by this union feel like? Will the union listen to all staff and treat you properly when it comes time to bargaining on your behalf?

### How could our benefits change if a simple majority votes to unionize?

Benefits, like pay, are mandatory subjects of bargaining. This includes health insurance, life insurance, retirement, paid leave, remote work arrangements, schedule flexibility and other benefits. These benefits could change, but like other bargaining topics, there is no guarantee they will get better. Negotiations could result in benefits changing in ways you may not want or like. It's also important to know that even in negotiations, an employer is not legally required to give in to union demands. So, simply because a union may make promises about higher pay or better benefits doesn't mean it can deliver on those promises.

### How is the election outcome decided?

By a majority of eligible voters who vote. For example, if the bargaining unit has 100 members and 50 of them turn out to vote, and 26 vote "NO," then the staff will not be unionized. However, if 26 vote "YES," the entire group of eligible staff would be unionized.

### What happens after the election?

If the majority of voters vote "NO," we continue to work together on identifying solutions and making improvements to Penn Libraries. If the union wins a majority of votes, the University will be obligated to enter collective bargaining with union representatives. Penn Libraries would be legally required to maintain the status quo in terms of pay and benefits until a contract is reached.

### If the union is voted in and we decide later that we don't like it, can we just opt out?

No. Removing a union once it is voted in, known as "decertification," is a lengthy and difficult process that, based on labor law, can only occur at specific times. If, after voting a union in but before a contract was signed, staff decided they didn't want the union, it could take a year to even hold a decertification vote. If there is a signed contract, it could be almost three years or more before a decertification vote could take place. Penn Libraries would be legally prohibited from helping remove the union. This means staff would have to lead the process, possibly hire attorneys, and personally pay any associated fees.



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