

February 14, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

As you may be aware, the United Auto Workers have filed a petition with New Hampshire's Public Employee Labor Relations Board. The petition is to organize those students that are graduate student employees who are on Assistantships: Graduate Research Assistants and Graduate Assistants including Teaching Assistants ("Grad Assistants").

As the employer, the University has an obligation to immediately post the petition and complete and return to PELRB a certificate of posting, which has been done. The University also provides a list of those in the bargaining unit positions (GAs including TAs and GRAs) to PELRB so the Board may review the UAW authorization cards signed by Grad Assistants. This has also been completed and PELRB notified UNH that the petition is supported by authorization cards from at least 30% of the Grad Assistants in the proposed bargaining unit.

Currently, the parties are in the midst of a fifteen-day period during which others seeking to organize this group may file an intervenor petition with PELRB. If there are no intervenors, typically an election is scheduled by PELRB following a pre-election conference. UNH anticipates that the election will be scheduled this semester consistent with the rules which govern PELRB.

For some of you, a union organizing drive is a new process. You may have questions about what is happening and why, and how you can respond as a staff or faculty member, inclusive of PIs, who supervises Grad Assistant work.

Supervisors—and all employees—have the right to discuss and write about topics and concerns typically present during union organizing as long as it does not interfere with the performance of their individual job duties or the job duties of other employees. We encourage our Grad Assistants to be actively engaged in making their own decision and encourage others to be engaged in the process provided it is consistent with our obligations. The employer may not restrain, coerce or otherwise interfere with its employees in the exercise of their rights including the right to participate in an election if they are eligible. You may continue to engage with Grad Assistants as you normally would, and you may:

1. TELL Grad Assistants that their voice matters and they can share their views— pro- or anti-union—with you, co-workers and the university. You can also express your own opinion.
2. INFORM Grad Assistants of any untrue, misleading or incomplete statements made by the union or its supporters. You may give Grad Assistants the complete and correct facts.
3. REMIND Grad Assistants that they are free to join or not join any organization, including the union.

There are a few very important rules you need to follow during a labor organizing process, mostly defined by state labor law.

In the performance of your duties as a supervisor of Grad Assistants, you cannot:

1. Restrain, coerce or otherwise interfere with them regarding the exercise of their rights to be pro- or anti-union or to not be involved at all.
2. Threaten the loss of status, benefits, or course selection, etc. as a result of unionization.
3. Discriminate in any way on the basis of pro- or anti-union activity or sentiment.
4. Ask Grad Assistants for an expression of their thoughts about a union or its officers.
5. Ask Grad Assistants how they intend to vote.
6. Tell Grad Assistants how they should vote.

However, you may continue to supervise your Grad Assistants as you would any other day. Consistent with the above rules, you may:

1. Remind Grad Assistants that they may not participate in a strike, and may not participate in a protest, march, or other non-work activity during working hours.
2. Remember: Grad Assistants may wear pins, stickers, etc. in support or opposed to the union during work hours AND Grad Assistants may engage in “water cooler” discussions about the union as they would any other subject.

If you have any questions, please forward them directly to the Graduate Dean’s Office at grad.deansoffice@unh.edu. We will have additional information to share with you after our All Chairs and Academic Leaders meeting on February 23.

Thank you for all you do to support our students including our graduate students on assistantships. Please share this message with others in your departments who regularly supervise Grad Assistants.

Sincerely,

Wayne E. Jones, Jr.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Cari Moorhead
Dean of the Graduate School