

Thoughts on a Union for UNH Staff

Tuesday, October 25, 2016



Dear Colleagues,

As President Huddleston shared in his recent announcement of a salary increase, employees play a critical role in the success of the university. Merit increases are possible when people contribute their talents and achieve our strategic goals. President Huddleston and the administration value the commitment shared by employees, which is to make



CHRISTOPHER CLEMENT

UNH one of the best public flagship universities in the nation.

Since joining the university in 2014, I have been continuously impressed by the capabilities and work ethic of colleagues here at UNH. As a life-long New Hampshire resident, nothing gives me more pride than serving our state through its flagship university. I would argue that UNH achieves this excellence with impressive discipline of efficiency and creativity in the face of challenging financial circumstances. The accomplishments of our students,

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alumni, faculty and staff are nothing short of world-class. Today, I am writing to share my opinion about the NEA's recent effort to unionize our PAT and OS staff.

I strongly believe union representation for the PAT and OS staff is unnecessary. For decades, unions have really done just one thing: speak for employees. Because UNH staff are fully capable of speaking for themselves, they do not need a replacement voice from a national union with an annual price tag of \$375 per person in union dues or agency service fees. Today, your voice is your voice, clear and unfiltered. Today, you can raise your own concerns with your supervisor, others in management and human resources. The success of the employee councils and other communication mechanisms attest that your voice is being heard.

UNH has demonstrated a firm commitment to fair, competitive pay and benefits. The average non-union employee salary increases already awarded in 2015 and 2016 were slightly above 3 percent in each of those years. Further, some employees received equity adjustments on top of this amount, a reflection of our commitment to pay fairly and competitively compared to external markets. The union has written incorrectly in prior communications that employees only received a 1 percent increase. I want to make sure that you realize that figure is incorrect.

None of us is perfect, and that certainly includes the university's leadership. Our communication with you is improving and will continue to improve, union or no union, because it is important to us that you receive timely and accurate information regarding the important events and decisions that can affect your work life here. It is equally important to us that we hear your comments and questions, and we hope that the employee councils and other communication vehicles will continue to provide that voice for you. As I shared with the councils and council leadership, I am available and pleased to meet with them.

I regret that the union has initiated this distraction to our shared goal of providing excellent education, research, outreach and other services at UNH. I hope the union's organizing effort will end soon. Until then, however, UNH will continue to provide you with information related to this process. If you have any questions as we go forward, [please do not hesitate to ask](#).

Sincerely,

Christopher D. Clement

Vice President for Finance & Administration

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