

# Voices: Chipping Away at Solidarity

Thursday, December 22, 2016



Last week, I was dismayed to learn that the UNHPA and NEA-NH filed two petitions for unionization at UNH. The bargaining units will include some operating staff as well as some PAT positions. But it is important to note that not all operating staff positions and not all PAT positions on campus are included in this group. We are not voting as a University, we are voting by department and then again broken down within those departments, only select groups are voting. If the union is good for all, why aren't we all voting?

In my department half of us are included in the vote and half are not. We are one department but only half are allowed to vote on something that may eventually affect all of us? More importantly, we are one university, why isn't everyone included in this vote? The reason to me is simply that the NEA does not have enough support to allow the whole campus to vote at once.

They prefer to chip away at the solidarity of the University, department by department in hopes of eventually gaining control of the entire University.

Why let them gain control piece by piece, a tactic known as divide and conquer?

If this election goes through as planned, potentially I will be working alongside other employees in my department who are not

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unionized, they will not be paying the \$375 that I will be forced to pay as my union dues. I will be paying \$375 annually, this is not a one time fee, but every year for the rest of my time at UNH. I did the math, and I'm not happy with the total and this is the first thing the union will do for me? The \$375 dues fee is for me or for the union? They tell me a "seat at the table." I already have that. I have a boss who I can go to and discuss a work issue with, and if he was not available I would move up the chain of command and there is always my HR partner. What more do I need? I do not need anyone to intercede on my behalf. I can speak for myself. I always have and I am confident in my abilities to do so. I do not want to pay anyone to speak for me with regards to my best interests. I have always stood on my own and I hold that core value very dearly, I have worked for the last 35+ years in several jobs and locations, with the last two and a half years here at UNH so I am not a long term employee here as I have more experience outside of UNH. What this experience has shown me, is that that the benefits that I have been provided here at UNH are far better than any I have ever received elsewhere. I have worked at two nationally recognized firms and at a small local firm for the majority of my life so I am speaking from experience. For my fellow employees who have only worked at UNH and think that the union will provide so much more, you really need to look at other companies to see what they provide their employees and compare those to UNH. You will realize how good the benefits we have here are, all without paying \$375 to a union.

I am writing this because I believe there are many employees here at UNH who are like me, they don't know where or how to stop the infiltration of the union, piece by piece so this is my first attempt to share my point of view.

Unions make money and support themselves by acquiring new union members and collecting the annual dues. They are not an altruistic group working on the betterment of humankind. They are

a business and they are out to make money which is understandable. I just don't want them making money off me and my coworkers through our annual dues.

Please think long and hard about this election and how you want to vote.

For those of us who do not want the union, you need to get out and vote when the time comes. This is important and it is up to each one of us to follow through and vote. Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate this forum to share my views without any reprisal or personal attacks.

—Kathleen Sheahan

Office of Business Affairs BSC

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