



CalArts administration sent an email to all CalArts faculty and staff with information on unionization. We appreciate that they are encouraging us to make an “informed choice” on unionization. But since their communication includes some misleading information and leaves out lots of other useful information that would help CalArts employees make an “informed choice,” we feel a responsibility to share some corrections and useful information they leave out.

What CalArts says	What CalArts leaves out
<p><b>How much are union dues and fees?</b></p> <p>We don’t know. The union sets the dues and fees its members pay for its services. In terms of the UAW, more information can be found on their <a href="#">website</a>.</p>	<p>We do know! Union dues are 1.44% of gross monthly income, as listed on the website linked in the answer. These dues provide CalArts faculty and staff the resources needed to enforce the protections and collective voice that we win in a union contract. More information and answers to frequently asked questions about union dues can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>Can employees who are being organized speak to one another about unionization?</b></p> <p>Yes. Employees who may be represented by a union may speak freely to each other about issues surrounding unionization. Employees are also free to speak with their supervisor or any of CalArts’ leadership regarding unionization. Employees also have the right not to discuss unionization or share their feelings about unionization. Employees speaking about unionization to other employees does not constitute an official statement or position from CalArts about the process—any official statements will be clearly marked as such.</p> <p>CalArts respects each employee’s right to have personal opinions and their right to privacy. No person in their official capacity at CalArts will ever question an employee about</p>	<p>To be clear, CalArts United is made up entirely of CalArts faculty and staff. This effort is led by us, the employees—we are the union. We expect CalArts leadership will respect our right to openly discuss the work we are doing together.</p>

<p>their views regarding unions or union organizing efforts.</p>	
<p><b>Would there be consequences if I voice my views either for or against unionization?</b></p> <p>No. Any such consequences would violate the National Labor Relations Act, as well as CalArts employee policies, and run counter to our values. Supervisory employees, however, must not encourage or discourage non-supervisory employees from unionization as per the National Labor Relations Act, as provided in the supervisory training. No CalArts employee may retaliate in any way against anyone because of their views.</p>	<p>While there don't appear to be any documented policies on the CalArts website or in the staff or faculty handbooks addressing this, we expect CalArts leadership to adhere to the National Labor Relations Act and refrain from interfering in our unionization efforts. Furthermore, "supervisory employees" are defined by the National Labor Relations Act, not by CalArts' arbitrary guidelines. Because CalArts does not currently have cohesive supervisory job families, we encourage all employees to remain engaged and informed regarding unionization efforts at CalArts.</p>
<p><b>How is a union authorized to represent employees?</b></p> <p>Paid employees union organizers attempt to collect signed "authorization cards" from employees in the group the union seeks to represent. If the union collects enough signed cards to support a petition for representation (typically 30% or more of the employees in the unit), it can file a petition for a representation election with the NLRB.</p> <p>The NLRB will then hold an election in which employees vote by secret ballot whether or not they want union representation. A union that believes it has evidence of majority support of employees in an appropriate bargaining unit may also demand voluntary recognition from an employer without giving those employees an opportunity to exercise their right to vote in an election conducted by the NLRB.</p>	<p>CalArts faculty and staff—not paid UAW employees—have worked together to collect signed union authorization cards from 76% of workers across the Institute. This is an exciting milestone, as it far exceeds the required 30% and means we've officially achieved supermajority! CalArts could choose to voluntarily recognize our union or agree to move swiftly to an election without challenging CalArts faculty and staff's right to form a union. We hope CalArts will not delay any further and will agree to a fair process for verifying majority support.</p>
<p><b>Who is eligible to vote?</b></p> <p>Employees in an appropriate bargaining unit. The NLRB will decide what is an appropriate unit and who is eligible to vote based on their</p>	<p>In a meeting with CalArts United representatives, CalArts administration indicated that they are likely to challenge the inclusion of some staff and faculty in the unit,</p>

<p>status as an employee under the National Labor Relations Act.</p> <p>Some employees' eligibility to vote may not be completely resolved at the time of the election. These employees will vote "under challenge," meaning their votes will not be counted until their eligibility is resolved. It is still very important for these employees to vote.</p>	<p>including employees they consider "supervisory" or "managerial." Unfortunately, employers often object to bargaining unit composition to delay workers their right to form a union. We hope that CalArts will agree to include faculty and staff in the bargaining unit, instead of delaying by demanding a hearing at the NLRB.</p>
<p><b>How will the relationship between CalArts and its employees change if the union wins an election?</b></p> <p>The union would become the collective-bargaining representative for the unit of employees and the exclusive representative in all dealings with CalArts regarding a represented employees' terms and conditions of employment. The current relationship between CalArts and its employees could be modified because CalArts will have an obligation to deal with the union concerning employees' terms and conditions of employment and include the union in discussions with employees on these matters, especially before reaching agreements that could change terms and conditions of employment—even if the change is beneficial to the employee.</p>	<p>WE are the union—CalArts faculty and staff. Yes, the current relationship between CalArts and its employees can and should be improved. CalArts will have an obligation to negotiate directly with faculty and staff regarding OUR terms and conditions of employment. Faculty and staff will be included in these discussions —<i>that's right</i>, we will have a meaningful voice in shaping our own working conditions!</p>
<p><b>If an election results in representation by a union, could there be another election to remove or "decertify" the union?</b></p> <p>Technically yes, although this is unusual. The NLRB will not process a union decertification petition for at least one year after an election. Such a petition would need to be initiated by the employees themselves, with no assistance from CalArts or the union. If the union and CalArts agree on a union contract with a term of three years or longer, the NLRB will not process a union decertification petition for the first three years of that contract. Given this, it is difficult to decertify a union after it is certified as the official representative of a bargaining unit.</p>	<p>There is no shortage of right-wing organizations across the US that work to decertify labor unions. However, choosing to decertify is rare. No group of academic employees who have joined the UAW has ever been decertified. The overwhelming consensus is that by unionizing, academic employees have more rights and greater power to democratically seek improved working conditions.</p> <p>Remember, WE are the union. Every action we take, both during the organizing process and beyond, is done collectively and thoughtfully by</p>

	<p>CalArts faculty and staff. The work of the bargaining committee will continue, as will our commitment to listening to and representing the diverse voices of the CalArts community.</p>
<p><b>What does it mean to be exclusively represented by the union?</b></p> <p>If a union is certified to represent a bargaining unit, it represents all employees in that bargaining unit, whether or not they choose to join the union individually. The union becomes the official collective bargaining representative of each employee, and has the authority to negotiate on behalf of all employees in the bargaining unit. Matters such as wage increases, benefits, and working conditions become subject to the negotiated terms and conditions agreed upon between the union and CalArts, and an individual employee may not negotiate directly through a dialogue with CalArts without authorization from the union.</p>	<p>By forming a union, we gain the right to collectively bargain with CalArts. This is a deeply democratic process that involves electing a bargaining team (made up of faculty and staff), collecting feedback through surveys, town halls, and other avenues, drafting and voting on initial bargaining demands, exchanging proposals with CalArts at the bargaining table, and ultimately voting on whether to ratify any proposed agreement before it goes into effect.</p> <p>"Exclusive representation" means that all CalArts faculty and staff will benefit from and be protected by the contract should we vote to ratify it. Currently, we are all subject to policies created unilaterally by CalArts administration. Forming a union means that CalArts will be required to negotiate with our elected representatives and cannot bypass our union with a "side deal" or ignore our voice.</p>
<p><b>May employees determine what issues a union would address prior to voting in a union election?</b></p> <p>We don't know. This is determined by the union's internal rules and processes. Typically, the terms of contract negotiations are set by the union bargaining committee after the union is elected to represent the bargaining unit. The members of the bargaining committee may be either elected or appointed by the union.</p> <p>Once collective bargaining begins, all terms and conditions of employment—such as wages, benefits, workload/hours, professional development, across-the-board increases,</p>	<p>In fact, staff and faculty have already been having open discussions with each other across CalArts to identify the issues that need to be addressed and to define the goals we have as a collective community for bargaining.</p> <p>The purpose of CalArts United is to introduce democratic practices into an otherwise hierarchical, top-down system of inequity.</p> <p>CalArts United is committed to upholding democratic practices in collective bargaining and gathering input from the community via surveys, small group discussions, and town</p>

<p>teaching responsibilities, etc.—are subject to union negotiations. The negotiated terms of agreement reached through the bargaining process would apply to everyone in the bargaining unit. CalArts would be prohibited from making exceptions to all or part of the agreement for any represented employee.</p>	<p>halls to ensure that all voices are truly heard and represented—something we deserve and have never had.</p> <p>All faculty and staff are encouraged to share their bargaining priorities! What are your goals in your role at CalArts? Are you exhausted? Reach out. Is too much being asked of you? Join the conversation. Frustrated and feeling powerless to do anything about it? CalArts United is gathering power. What do you want to bargain for? Send us an email at <a href="mailto:info@calartsunited.org">info@calartsunited.org</a>.</p>
<p><b>Can the union negotiate away benefits employees currently have?</b></p> <p>Yes. Negotiations may result in changes that employees perceive as improvements, and they may result in terms that are less compelling or materially different than what is currently in place. During collective bargaining, all aspects of employment—including wages, benefits, and working conditions—are subject to negotiation, and may increase, decrease, or remain the same.</p>	<p>Part of why we are choosing to form a union is to preserve what we currently enjoy about working at CalArts. Currently, CalArts can unilaterally change or remove benefits without meaningful input from faculty and staff, as they did when they enrolled us in an inadequate health care plan. With a union, they will be obligated to bargain over any changes. With a union, we will have the power to say <b>no</b> to any changes that make our jobs or lives more difficult.</p> <p>CalArts faculty and staff will be the ones deciding what to bargain over and then democratically vote on the contract. We challenge the notion that the qualities we cherish about CalArts could somehow be diminished by ensuring that all staff and faculty are heard and respected.</p>
<p><b>If a union has successfully organized similar bargaining units at other schools, can it dictate the same terms at CalArts?</b></p> <p>No. Any terms negotiated at another college or university would not automatically apply to CalArts, and CalArts would not be required to agree to terms because they are in contracts at other institutions. CalArts has a right to negotiate a collective-bargaining agreement relevant to its employees and you deserve a</p>	<p>Correct! Faculty and staff would get to decide what to bargain over. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to organizing.</p>

<p>contract that recognizes your unique work and contributions to the Institute.</p>	
<p><b>If the union is certified, would faculty and staff still be protected by the Faculty and Staff Handbooks, respectively?</b></p> <p>It depends. Generally, the negotiated terms of the collective bargaining agreement will govern the terms and conditions of employment for the bargaining unit employees.</p>	<p>Right now, the CalArts administration solely wields the power to dictate the policies in the faculty and staff handbooks and is free to ignore the input of faculty and staff in that process. The Administration is free to make changes at any time, often disregarding the input and wellbeing of CalArts workers. By forming a union, faculty and staff would gain a meaningful voice in negotiating a binding contract that addresses our collective needs.</p>
<p><b>How would unionization affect shared governance?</b></p> <p>We don't know for sure. However, we believe shared governance and its participants, role, and purpose would be subject to negotiation and required to comply with negotiated labor/management definitions. Currently, CalArts' unicameral, Institute-wide shared-governance structure includes not only faculty, but also staff and students for non-academic matters. It is possible that collective bargaining would shift the interactions between CalArts and its employees in a way that changes the spirit and practice of shared governance at the Institute.</p>	<p>Let's be honest here... what CalArts leadership calls shared governance hasn't always felt like shared governance. Between massive changes to our benefits and million-dollar purchases we were not made aware of until after the fact, "shared governance" often feels more like a slogan than a meaningful attempt at sharing in governance. Unionization and collective bargaining will give staff and faculty a true seat at the table. The administration claims that shared governance would be subject to negotiation and must comply with negotiated labor and management definitions—yes, that's what it means to negotiate over the terms and conditions of our work! And yes, it is possible that collective bargaining would transform interactions between CalArts and its employees in a way that enhances the current practice of shared governance—for the better.</p>