

CaLARTS

Rodrigo Arruda <rarruda@calarts.edu>

Landslide victory!

1 message

CalArts United Organizing Committee <info@calartsunited.org>
Reply-To: CalArts United Organizing Committee <info@calartsunited.org>
To: Rodrigo <rarruda@calarts.edu>

Fri, Mar 28, 2025 at 3:47 PM



Dear Rodrigo,

65 years ago, workers came together to create CalArts. Among them were Walt and Roy Disney. The workforces of the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music and the Chouinard Art Institute joined as a single unit, breaking ground on May 3, 1969.

For 65 years, faculty and staff have made CalArts a pilgrimage for generations of students who have grown into visionaries that define what art is, what it can do, and what it will become. And for 65 years, its workers have accomplished this, extraordinarily, without a union.

That changed yesterday, March 27, 2025.

CalArts United-UAW is now official. With overwhelming support across faculty and staff, we have formed a union to ensure our voices are heard and our labor is respected.

The vote began for eligible employees in-person on March 5th and 6th and concluded recently with the end of the mail-in voting period. All votes cast were secret ballot as per NLRB protocol. The numbers speak for themselves.

99.2% of special faculty (126 yes to 1 no) who voted supported forming a union.

89.6% of regular and technical faculty (95 yes to 11 no) who voted supported forming a union.

87% of staff (137 yes to 20 no) who voted supported forming a union.

92% of all CalArts Faculty and Staff who voted, voted to form CalArts United.

Including Challenged ballots, 456 CalArts employees—representing 76% of the workforce—participated in our union election. All 3 units are now official and will be certified by the NLRB in the coming weeks.

This landslide victory sends a clear message that faculty and staff are united, organized, and ready for a better CalArts that recognizes our diverse voices and needs.

Last year, on March 13th, 2024, a CalArts worker reached out to the UAW. A few Zooms later and we were standing together, listening to, respecting, and recognizing each other. CalArts United has always been here, but now we have a name. If you're reading this, you're likely a part of this movement.

We've formed alliances across offices and schools, creating something CalArts has never had before, and through our unity, we aim to counter and resolve the issues that have caused severe turmoil within the institute and its community.

Decisions have been made at CalArts that run against the philosophy of the Institute, and move us away from the core values and original mission that have historically defined our journey to educate our students.

CalArts was never meant to be a luxury suite for six-figure executives who view our labor as an abstraction. We are deeply concerned about the disrespect CalArts showed to a recent exhibition of 150 posters, created by a CalArts student and plastered across campus to critically address rising concerns.

CalArts faculty and staff have always deserved fair pay, comprehensive benefits, the best resources, and significant decision-making power. Yet, without our essential influence, more and more decisions have been made that are steering CalArts in a deeply worrisome direction.

CalArts workers turned out in droves to vote, choosing a future we begin building today. Members of the organizing committee have heard firsthand that voters left the voting booths with a renewed sense of agency, determination, and joy.

We need all hands on deck to work towards resolving CalArts's supervisory challenges and to win fair contracts for all three units. Now that you have a seat at the table, what do you want to do with it? What's first? A livable wage? Real healthcare? A manageable workload? Remote work options? Tuition remission?

We demanded to be heard. Now, CalArts is legally bound to listen. What do you want to say?

Our organizer meetings take place Thursdays at 4pm. Respond to this email to receive in-person and Zoom meeting information. Our strength is our diversity. Join us to devise a timeline for next steps: electing a Bargaining Team, surveying staff and faculty about what we want to see in our first contracts, and crafting our initial bargaining demands.

In solidarity,

CalArts-United Organizing Committee



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