

"We're Forming a Union!"

FAQ

Q. Why are we forming a union?

A. We want to improve our working conditions at Brandeis. With a union, we will have a stronger, more unified voice to make improvements to our jobs, our profession and the Brandeis community. Low pay, unpredictability, and lack of job security limit our professional advancement and force many of us to string together jobs at multiple institutions to make ends meet. Our working conditions are our students' learning conditions, and we see room for improvement.

Q. Who will be in charge of our union?

A. We will make all of the decisions for our own union. We will elect officers and ratify a union contract by a majority vote. All members can help shape our union through bargaining surveys, serving on committees, and electing officers. All of the proposals for our contract will come from us. And during the process of achieving a contract with the school, we will decide when the proposed contract is good enough to be ratified by a majority vote.

Q. How does a union work?

A. Having a union empowers people to make positive changes where they work. What is most important to you: Pay increases? Longer contracts? Affordable health insurance? Having a union does not guarantee any particular improvement or benefit, but through our union college and university faculty will make improvements where we work. Through the power of collective bargaining, instructors across the country have won a voice at the table and the right to negotiate with campus administrators as peers.

Q. I am full-time but not tenure-track, how does this apply to me?

A. Whether you are full or part-time, we all need a strong voice to improve our working conditions. Together, part-and full-time contract faculty comprise a large percentage of the teaching staff at Brandeis and share many of the same concerns around job security and other issues. With a union, contingent faculty may bargain for continuous appointments and dismissal only for "just cause". Working alongside each other on common goals will benefit everyone.

Q. What is SEIU Local 509?

A. SEIU is the Service Employees International Union. SEIU represents 75,000 members in public and private higher education in the United States—21,000 are college and university adjunct and contract faculty. It is the fastest growing union in the country, with 2 million members nationwide. Local 509 represents more than 18,000 educators and human service workers across Massachusetts.

Q. What is "Faculty Forward" and the "citywide model"?

A. Faculty Forward is a campaign to unite adjunct and contingent faculty at Boston area campuses — including Northeastern, Tufts, Lesley, Simmons, Boston University and others. Through union contracts, non-tenure track faculty are already winning better pay, job security and access to professional development. But we need to go further to unite faculty across our communities — because we know this crisis in higher education is not siloed to individual institutions. We will need a movement to truly effect change.

Through SEIU, faculty are forming a Boston-area organizing committee, working together across campuses to improve conditions and refocus higher education on the importance of student success, quality instruction and economic opportunity.

BRANDEIS

FACULTY FORWARD

Please sign and return your confidential Union Authorization Card on the back today!

Q. What have others achieved by forming a union?

A. In the Boston area, contingent faculty have negotiated contracts that have won: pay increases, the establishment of professional development funds, “just cause” clauses protecting members from arbitrary discipline or discharge, a defined rate of compensation in the event of course cancellation, among other improvements. Because this is our union, what we achieve in bargaining will reflect our priorities and issues specific to Brandeis.

More importantly, forming a union will allow us to have a voice in determining our working conditions. For the first time, part-time faculty at Northeastern, Tufts and Lesley have a role in the decision-making that affects their teaching conditions and their futures.

Q. How will the administration respond?

A. The argument against a union that most employers respond with usually comes down to this, “You will be better off if you let us stay in charge of making all of the decisions.” Most employers would very much like to continue making all of the decisions without giving those who work for them a real voice in the process. It’s typical for a university administration to launch a campaign that tries to convince us to change our minds about forming a union. However, most folks realize that standing together to build a union is the best choice for all of us. We invite the administration at Brandeis University to take a neutral stance on our union to let us make this important decision for ourselves.

Whatever the administration’s response, our union activity is protected by the law and the strength of our numbers. The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) Section 8(a) prohibits an employer from threatening us for voting “yes,” interrogating us about union activity, promising any benefit for voting “no” or surveilling any union activity (meetings, events, etc.).

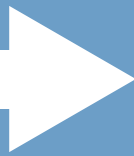
Q. How much will dues be?

A. Dues for members in Massachusetts are 1.5 percent of our gross salary. But, more importantly, no one will pay dues until we have: (i) formed our union; (ii) negotiated our first contract; and (iii) voted as a group to approve that contract. In other words, no one will pay dues to our union until we know exactly what gains we’ve achieved through collective bargaining. In short, we decide when we have an agreement that is worth our dues money.

Q. How long will this take?

A. The voting usually happens four to six weeks after the cards are filed with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) for an election but the process may take longer. Once the ballots are counted, if there are more “yes” votes than “no” votes, we will then have a seat at the table with Brandeis to improve our pay, benefits and working conditions by negotiating a union contract.

What you can do to help:



The first step to build our union is to sign and return the confidential Union Authorization Card below, and send it back in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope. As soon as possible, we will file our cards with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

Once we win the NLRB union election, we will begin bargaining for the improvements we want to see at Brandeis University.

Union Authorization Card

To stand with my colleagues – and to win a voice for ourselves and the students we teach – I support forming a union with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 509. I understand this card will be filed with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to establish the necessary interest to hold a union election.

By winning our union election, my colleagues and I – with SEIU Local 509 as our exclusive collective bargaining agent – will earn the right to bargain as equals with our employer over our pay, working conditions and other conditions of our employment.

Name _____ Title _____

Employer _____ Department _____

Cellphone _____ Home phone _____ Email _____

Do **not** send me text message alerts (Standard data rates may apply)

Street _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Signature & Date _____

Adjunct Action / SEIU 509 / Faculty Forward ■ 100 Talcott Ave - Watertown, MA ■ seiu509.org

