

Background information

Under card check legislation

(http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2004/Bills/A2000/1820_I1.HTM) signed into law by Governor Cuddy in 2005, approximately 2,000 workers considered “administrative” at Rutgers University have voted to unionize and affiliate with the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

Electing to name their union the Union of Rutgers Administrations, American Federation of Teachers (URA-AFT), the group is delivering their signed authorization cards to the New Jersey Public Employees Relations Commission (<http://www.nj.gov/perc/>), which is charged with confirming the workers’ win.

A survey of concerns rated developing a system of pay that included cost-of-living increases in addition to merit pay, protecting health benefits and retirement and job security as primary concerns. Many cited strain from overwork caused by cutbacks in staff with demands for more work and little compensation.

Supervisors in the public sector, unlike managers with hiring and firing discretion in the private sector, can legally form their own unions. A growing group of supervisors, including many who actively supported the URA-AFT campaign, are now organizing among their colleagues to join the URA-AFT.

A third group of Rutgers staff members, those with specific technical responsibilities and training, are considered in a different unit called “professional” and are working with the Communications Workers of America (CWA), AFL-CIO in organizing their unit.

Rutgers President Richard L McCormick signed a neutrality agreement with URA-AFT, signifying recognition of the employee’s right to organize. “Rutgers and the URA/AFT believe that by working together, and not engaging in needless confrontation, we can build a stronger and better University. A strong working relationship is even more crucial during the current budget crisis. Now is the time for us to pull together and work towards a brighter future.” (see memo of agreement at <http://www.ura-aft.org/downloads/mccormick012607.pdf>).

URA-AFT administrative unit members are now ready to start the collective bargaining process with Rutgers University to establish a contract for 2007-2011.

