



Six Things to Know About the Upcoming Unionization Election

An election will be held on Wednesday, May 8, and Thursday, May 9, 2024, for you to decide whether PUPS-UAW, a union affiliated with the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (“United Auto Workers”), will form a bargaining unit representing postdocs and associate research scholars at Princeton University.

Below are six important facts to know about the upcoming vote:

1.

The election will determine whether the PUPS-UAW union will be the exclusive representative for all current and future postdocs and associate research scholars at Princeton.

You are being asked to vote on whether or not you wish to be represented by PUPS-UAW, a union affiliated with the United Auto Workers. By voting yes, you are stating that you would like PUPS-UAW to negotiate with the University on your behalf (and on behalf of all current and future postdocs and associate research scholars) concerning the terms and conditions of employment. (See #6 for more details).

If it wins the election, the union will seek the right to deduct from payroll checks dues or agency fees from all members of the bargaining unit. Dues or agency fees typically range between 1-2% of an employee’s gross salary (e.g., between \$650 and \$1,300 per year for an employee earning \$65,000 per year).

2.

All members of the “bargaining unit” are eligible to vote.

The bargaining unit consists of all full-time and regular part-time postdoctoral research associates, postdoctoral research fellows, associate research scholars, senior research assistants, and postgraduate research associates employed by Princeton University as of March 19, 2024.

3.

The election will be decided by the majority of people who actually vote, not by the majority of all eligible voters.

The outcome of the election will be determined by a majority of those who cast ballots, not by the majority of those eligible to vote. Everyone in the bargaining unit (see #2 above) is bound by the results of the election. You cannot “opt out” of the union if the majority of voters vote “yes.” The way to ensure that your voice is heard is to vote and encourage other eligible colleagues to do so.

4.

The outcome of the election impacts everyone in the bargaining unit.

The result of the vote will be binding on all employees in the bargaining unit (i.e., everyone in a position covered by the bargaining unit), as well as all future employees hired into such positions. If a majority of the voters choose to be represented by a union, the terms and conditions of employment for all the positions in the unit will be governed by the collective bargaining agreement (“CBA”) that is eventually negotiated by the University and PUPS-UAW, regardless of whether an individual employee wants their role to be subject to the agreement. Thus, it is critical that the final tally of the election represent the will of a majority of the eligible voters.

5.

Collective bargaining focuses on employees as a group, not as individuals.

This means that a union would speak and act for all members of the bargaining unit. The provisions in the CBA would apply to all unit members, unless exceptions are provided for in the contract. The union would decide what to prioritize in negotiations, what not to advance in negotiations, and, ultimately, what to agree upon with the University in a proposed CBA. The proposals the union may advance will not necessarily become part of the CBA, because both the University and the union must agree on all provisions of a contract.

6.

Collective bargaining applies to a limited number of subjects.

Since collective bargaining is the primary means by which the labor union represents your interests, it is important for you to understand the scope and limitations of the collective bargaining process. The National Labor Relations Act (“NLRA”) requires that labor unions and employers negotiate in good faith about “mandatory subjects of bargaining.” These subjects cover wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment, and typically include matters such as:

- Wages
- Working hours and time off
- Safety procedures
- Employment benefits
- Grievance procedures for alleged breaches of the collective bargaining agreement

Academic and strategic decisions (e.g., the nature or focus of curriculum or research, and the establishment or change of departments or programs) are not mandatory subjects of bargaining, and the University would not have to negotiate about them. A collective bargaining agreement cannot contain any provisions that are contrary to federal laws or regulations, such as Title IX and immigration laws.

Throughout this process, you remain our priority.

With or without a union, Princeton University continues to be committed to the well-being and fair treatment of its community of postdocs and associate research scholars. We will continue to provide information regarding the unionization process, the upcoming election, and your current compensation and benefits as Princeton employees. For more information about unionization, please consult the [“Frequently Asked Questions”](#) page on the Office of the Dean of the Faculty website, or contact [Karen Haskin](#), associate dean for academic affairs, or [Tithi Basu Mallik](#), assistant dean for postdoctoral affairs.

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