

Amy,

Well, I am trying mightily to be a reasonable and reasonably open-minded person on this issue. I can sense the creaking of my sclerotic neurons even as I write this.

The thing is, as an oldish dog, I have been alive long enough and have worked in enough environments involving unions to predict that there would be major tradeoffs between the advantages and disadvantages of SEIU representation at the UW.

You list a number of concessions achieved via union representation, not all of which I think are good things [elected department chairs], and many of which are likely achievable without SEIU representation. Nonetheless, this latest example of the impressively polished marketing campaign being run by SEIU advocates does offer glitters of temptation.

But as a former commission salesman with a history of some expertise in polishing a sales pitch, I know that all that glitters should not mean sold.

A big reason I am not sold concerns the appropriateness of SEIU as the union. It is a union with political views and influence that I have more than a little trouble abiding. For instance, a host of SEIU locals, including SEIU 925 representing education, endorsed and financially supported in the last election cycle a certain Seattle city council member who is so completely sorry, I had to pause for a second to regain my composure.

The point is that I (and many others) would be painfully at odds with a host of SEIU political objectives and political endorsements. Accordingly, I am hugely reluctant to agree to a deal that would (barring the demise of *Aboud v. CTA*) be a massive boost to SEIU's political mission. I think I am far from alone in this regard.

Another reason that I and others have to be leery of SEIU is its recent and still steaming pile of an attempt to trammel the core constitutional principle of free expression by seeking to make President Cauce and everyone else in her administration ineligible to state their case regarding the prospects of unionization

(see: http://www.uwfacultyforward.org/group_asks_cauce_to_stay_netural_on_union). My view is that President Cauce et al. *have an obligation* to present their case and that SEIU is obliged by the overriding core value of free expression to stay the hell out of the way and let that happen. For my part, I am hugely reluctant to join or be financially conscripted by *any* organization that would argue otherwise.

Against the backdrop of SEIU's political stance and arrogation of free expression we have a new administration led by the first President in a very long time who, I believe, is not just genuinely faculty-centric but who is actually committed to making things better for UW faculty. We do not yet know how all this will play out, and as I stated elsewhere, the Dark Side does have excellent cookies. But I do think that it is both premature and even something of an insult to this sea change of an administration to insist that we now need SEIU to make things better.

Which brings us back to tradeoffs. The UW is an enormously large and complicated aggregation of entities and funding support relative to which I see no apt analogy amid the existing unionized higher education institutions. I and many others want to gain a better sense of whether union advantages to some entities (e.g., contingent faculty) might well impair the well-being of other entities, and how this potentially very complex interplay involving limited resources and competing interests might impact the broader multifarious mission of the UW. I think a powerful conservation principle is quietly lying in wait here. I need to understand this better and so do a lot of others.

Yet advocates for SEIU would have us precipitously embark upon what I think is a very risky experiment in socio-academic-political

engineering which could well place the self-interest of SEIU above the broader interests and mission of the UW. You will perhaps counter that the union would be led by faculty elected / selected by peer faculty, but in my experience, union leadership tends to fall into the hands of energetic activist true believers with strong ties to the Mother Ship above.

As to the notion that various politicians in Olympia are urging UW unionization on grounds that it would increase the ability of the UW to get what it wants, well maybe, but I doubt it. Olympia is also home to many politicians who I think would regard a UW union as further grounds for alienation. Indeed, I think that a great many Washingtonians and political representatives in regions removed from the bubble of Seattle's burgeoning population of Marxist retrorevolutionaries would be appalled if the UW were to unionize under the banner of SEIU.

What seems more realistic is that UW SEIUnionization would enhance the revenue stream directed to the modest cadre of not-very-effective-at-supporting-the UW liberal legislators, again barring the demise of Abood. Thus the urgings of Gov. Inslee and other liberal-leaning politicians to unionize come as no surprise and indeed seem not at all probative regarding advantages of unionization.

And I am still trying to get my head around the assertion that “*The Supreme Court decision on whether unions can expect to collect fees from non-members [...] is entirely separate [from the issue of unionization].*” I simply do not think that this discussion can be separated from the strong likelihood of Adios Abood.

Moreover, the notion that “...*bad Supreme Court decisions should embolden us, not defeat us*” seems emblematic of what I respectfully suggest is an abiding tendency by progressive activists to substitute wishful thinking for solid logic and analysis. If Abood goes, so go the millions of dollars of political ammunition that advocates of UW unionization so eagerly seek. (But if *Friedrichs v. CTA* is successful, I

suppose that might also markedly reduce opposition to UW unionization).

I believe that the union push at the UW is largely fueled by the problematic shift to contingent faculty. However, the PERC requirement of all-or-none when it comes to unionization does not itself justify making the plight of contingent faculty the tail that wags the Big Husky.

Respectfully,

Karl