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Rutgers Administrative Staff Unit Elects to Unionize

Largest unit has decided to unionize; Sets stage for Supervisors group

NEW BRUNSWICK, April 25... After thousands of individual discussions and hundreds of small group meetings, an overwhelming majority of approximately 2,000 administrative workers at Rutgers University have elected to unionize by officially forming the Union of Rutgers Administrators-American Federation of Teachers (URA-AFT). Rutgers administrative staff workers talked about negotiating an equitable system for determining raises and promotions, preserving health and retirement benefits and protecting jobs, showing a consensus by signing authorization cards.

"Organizing under the card check system means that we made a decision with an actual majority of the unit because every member counts," said administrative assistant Lucye Millerand. "That is a true democratic process. Our members were able to talk about whether unionization is the right thing to do at Rutgers—and most of us have decided 'yes.'"

"The New Jersey State AFL-CIO is proud of the efforts of the URA-AFT to bring a voice at work to the administrative staff at Rutgers University," said Charles Wowkanech, President of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO. "Rutgers and the labor movement have a long and proud history of supporting the efforts of working families to improve their standard of living, and it is only fitting that these workers also be able to benefit from having a real voice at work."

Filing the cards with the certifying board in Trenton also signifies the launch of the second phase of the URA-AFT campaign, led by first-level supervisors at Rutgers. These managers and directors are the next largest group looking for representation with URA-AFT in a University which will be nearly 90% unionized after the administrative unit's decision. "We are in the same pool as our colleagues in the administrative unit in terms of pay allocations and currently receive the same benefit packages," said Julia Zapcic, a director of development. "We believe that affiliating with the American Federation of Teachers, a union that also represents Rutgers faculty, in URA-AFT, we will create the type of professional organization we need to support our work and the University's goals." A third group of Rutgers staff members, those with specific technical responsibilities and training, are in a different group termed "professional" and are working with the Communications Workers of America (CWA), AFL-CIO in organizing their unit.

The Union of Rutgers Administrators is a rapidly growing group of administrative and supervisory staff who have joined the American Federation of Teachers, the largest union of higher education employees, to form URA—AFT.

