

Power to the Librarians:

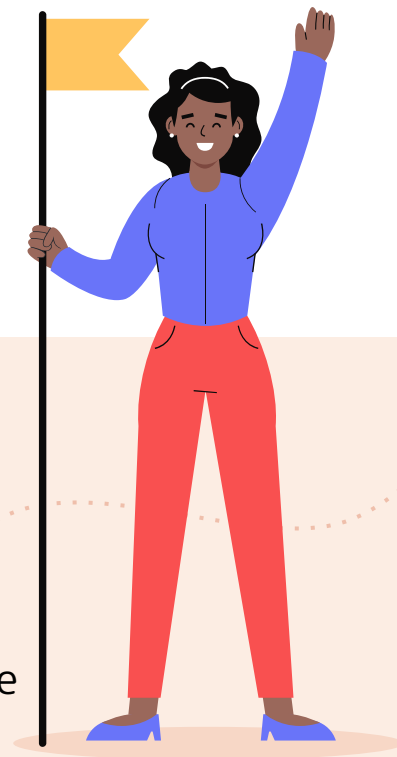
Lessons Learned from Union Work

Hélène Huet, University of Florida

Maria Atilano, University of North Florida

Angeleen Neely-Sardon, Indian River State College

Chelsea Nesvig, University of Washington Bothell/Cascadia College



#ACRL2023



Agenda

- Introductions
- Tips on effective bargaining and organizing strategies
- Wins, challenges and lessons learned
- Becoming (more) involved in your union
- Q & A



Introductions

Our “Union Stories”



Hélène Huet

European Studies Librarian at the University of Florida

Maybe the only French person who hates coffee, red wine, and smelly cheeses!

Current senator and member of the Membership Committee of UFF-UF, former co-chair of the Bargaining Team (for 3 years).



Maria Atilano

Student Engagement Librarian at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville

2x English major and lover of books and bulldogs

Current VP of UFF-UNF; previous Secretary, Senator, and Bargaining Team member



Angeleen Neely-Sardon

Reference Librarian/Assistant Professor
at Indian River State College

Celebrating 15 years of being a librarian
this November!

Member of the IRSC Chapter of AAUP &
informal “researcher”

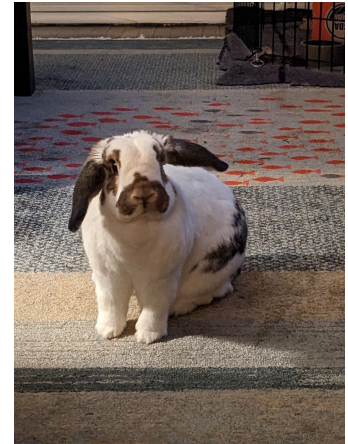


Chelsea Nesvig

Global & Policy Studies/Research & Instruction
Librarian at UW Bothell/Cascadia College

Planned to be a veterinarian, majored in French,
became a librarian!

Member of the UW Libraries Union Organizing
Committee and Contract Action Team





Bargaining and Organizing Tips

“In **union** there is **strength**.”

– Aesop

Organizing from Scratch

- Make decisions and learn possibilities
 - Who will be in your bargaining unit?
 - Which union to organize with?
- Get ready to have lots of conversations!
 - Some information can/can't be shared
- Rules about certifying a union varies by state

Never Stop Organizing

- Be a good colleague
 - No need to be confrontational
 - Build connections instead!
- Collaborate with your Union organizer(s)
- Develop a clear vision for why people should care
- Get involved with university shared governance
 - Learn how the sausage is made

Bargaining

- Pack the room
 - Bargaining = organizing opportunity
- Keep the local press in the loop
- Survey your bargaining unit
- Articulate clear goals early on
- Have a diverse, representative team
- Be persistent, annoying, and organized
- Be in charge of the document – control it!



The Union Difference

“You are **never** strong enough that you don’t **need help.**”

– Cesar Chavez



Examples of Wins

- Univ. of Wash. (<https://tinyurl.com/uwlucontract>)
 - New salary minimums for librarians
 - Grievance process
 - DEI article, academic freedom article
- UF
 - Requires UF to provide NTT faculty with a reason for non-renewal and allows NTT faculty to appeal non-renewal to their dean
 - 9- and 10-month faculty with summer appointments are now eligible for retirement compensation

Examples of Wins

- UNF
 - 6% raise in 2020 (plus merit bonus)
 - 5% raise in 2022 (plus retroactive)
- IRSC
 - Negotiated a more fair evaluation process based on more than course success rates



Lessons Learned

"If you don't **take the reins**, it's going to stay the same. Nothin's gonna change if you don't change it."

– Dolly Parton



The Good

- Initial organizing = **worth it**
- Networking with colleagues
- Librarians have strengths that other faculty may not
 - Better access/outreach
 - Research and collaboration skills
 - On frontline of academic freedom fight

Challenges and Limitations

- SO MUCH work, often beyond work hours
- Change = slow
- Librarian faculty can be pigeonholed
- Limitations to union work
 - Are there other avenues to affect change?
- Difficulty getting buy-in from both sides
- Schedule controls you, you don't always control the schedule



Become Involved in Your Union

"When I rise it will be **with** the ranks,
and not **from** the ranks."

– Eugene V. Debs.



Find YOUR Union Story

- Shared governance
- The more members the better
- Higher salaries
- Protection from inside and outside forces
 - Tyrannical supervisors
 - Moms for Liberty
- Way to have your voice be heard



Thank You!

Questions?

And/Or Share YOUR Union Stories

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