

FACT SHEET – AB 1550 (L. Rivas)

Protect Bargaining Rights for University of California Faculty

Purpose

Labor unions protect employees and ensure they work in a healthy and safe work environment. However, recent actions by the University of California (UC) could undermine collective bargaining and fair representation.

AB 1550 (L. Rivas) preserves employees' rights by ensuring they keep their union representation.

Background

In 1979, the Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act (HEERA) became the state law that regulated the labor relations for the UC, their employees, and the Labor organizations that represented the employees. The Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) administers HEERA.

The UC Academic Senate was created alongside the UC system in 1868. The Academic Senate and the ten Divisional Senates provide the organizational framework that allow faculty to participate in the UC's governance. The Senate's responsibilities include authorizing, approving, and supervising all courses and determining the conditions for admissions.

They also serve an advisory role to the UC Board of Regents on issues like the budget, faculty welfare, and academic environment. Until recently, members of the Academic Senate were

tenure or tenure-track faculty members. Under HEERA, members of the Academic Senate are not union members unless the entire Senate, either at an individual campus or across the whole system, choose to unionize. Currently, only UC Santa Cruz has decided to unionize their Academic Senate.

Three years ago, the UC Office of the President requested that the UC Board of Regents move six part-time Non-Senate faculty job classifications for lecturers into the Academic Senate. The six part-time positions were actively covered by a collective bargaining agreement prior to the move but lost their union representation when moved to the Academic Senate. This decision was challenged by the Labor union that represented the part-time positions; however, PERB decided that those job classifications could no longer be union represented positions because of HEERA rules.

Though the classifications were vacant at the time the UC decided to move them, it sets a dangerous precedent that could result in workers losing their union representation.



For example, the University of California could seek to sideline individual Labor leaders among their faculty simply by moving their job classification to the Academic Senate, eliminating their union representation.

The UC could also seek to eliminate an entire bargaining unit by moving all of its constituent faculty job titles to the Academic Senate.

What This Bill Will Do

AB 1550 protects faculty bargaining rights by allowing faculty who are currently in a bargaining unit to remain eligible for union representation even if the UC moves those faculty positions in the Academic Senate.

This measure will also prevent the UC from creating new faculty job classifications in the Academic Senate that are virtually identical to existing classifications currently represented by the union

Support

California Labor Federation (Co-Sponsor)

California Federation of Teachers (Sponsor)

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