



Recently, I sent a letter to you about the Teamsters Local 251, which is trying to hold an election to become union representatives of all custodians, facilities workers (including grounds/caretakers and movers) and group leaders at RISD. As a follow up, I wanted to provide you with further information to help you make an informed decision on election day.

RISD greatly values every member of its community, especially our custodian and facilities workers who work hard to take care of our campus. We have a long history of being a fair employer and are proud that people want to work at RISD. As a reminder, my door is always open and you are welcome to speak directly with me at any time as you are not currently represented by a union. I will always do my best to address and correct any problems that you bring to my attention.

Sincerely,

Jack Silva
Vice President, Campus Services

Frequently Asked Questions

Representation by a Union

What does it mean to be organized into a union?

If you are represented by a union, your pay, benefits, hours of work and other terms of employment must be negotiated between RISD and your union and confirmed in a contract. If a union were to represent the custodial and facilities workers at RISD, then you would no longer be able to negotiate directly with your manager or supervisor on working conditions and pay.

Does being part of a union guarantee me salary increases and the same benefits?

No, being part of the union does not mean that you are guaranteed to receive an increase in pay and benefits. In fact, even the pay and benefits that employees have today are not guaranteed in the future since negotiations are not based on current levels. Each union separately bargains with RISD and the outcome may or may not result in pay and benefit increases above that of non-unionized staff.

Will I have to pay any money to the union if it is voted in? What does it cost to be part of the union?

Yes. Currently, RISD workers currently enjoy competitive pay and benefits without paying union dues. The Teamsters Local 251 represented stationary engineers at RISD for many years, and these workers paid approximately \$34.62 per paycheck and \$900.12 annually in dues. That is equal to roughly 2–3 percent of your take-home pay that you may currently be using for your own family's needs.



What will it mean for me if the union wins the election?

If Teamsters Local 251 wins the election, then RISD must negotiate with Teamsters 251 about the pay, work schedules, and other terms and conditions of employment of every staff member in the unit and your supervisor cannot deal directly with you on any of these issues.

Will being in a union change current roles and relationships between employees and supervisors?

Yes. Your supervisor and RISD are only allowed to deal with the union about pay, hours and working conditions. This doesn't mean you can never speak to your supervisor about such matters, but it does mean that your supervisor or the administration cannot deal directly with you when it comes to changes and decisions on these things.

The Election Process

What will I be voting on?

There will be one question on the ballot with two answers to choose from. The question will be "Do you wish to be represented for purposes of collective bargaining by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 251?" There will be two boxes on the ballot under that question with an instruction to mark one of them. If you mark the "Yes" box, you are voting to be represented by the union, the Teamsters Local 251. If you mark the "No" box, you are voting not to be represented by the union, Teamsters Local 251.

How is the election decided?

The result of the election is based on a **majority of those who vote**, not the majority of the custodians and facilities workers as a whole. For example, if there are 67 custodial and facilities workers total and only 20 of them vote and they all vote yes, the union would then be allowed to represent all 67 workers. Therefore, it is extremely important that you vote to have input on the result.

Will I have to be represented by the union even if I don't sign a card or I vote "no" in the election?

Yes, if the union is successful then they would represent all custodians and facilities workers (including grounds/caretakers and movers), whether or not you support the union or voted "NO" in an election.

When and where do I vote in this election?

The election will be held by mail ballot. The election is a secret ballot election that will be conducted by NLRB staff. Eligible voters can cast their ballots by mail on or around January 11, 2022.



What is a union authorization card?

A union authorization card is a document that indicates your support for union representation. These cards come in various forms and we do not know what type of card RISD staff have been asked to sign.

Can I Vote “No” even though I signed a union authorization card?

Yes. Even if you signed a union authorization card, you are still free to vote “No” in the election. Elections are by secret ballot so no one will ever know how you voted.

Will I have a chance to vote every year on whether to keep the union or not?

No. There is no reelection process allowed by law. There is a process for voting a union out, but it is extremely rare for a union to be voted out once they represent a group of employees. Every custodial and facilities worker, (including grounds/caretakers and movers) at RISD must consider the long-term consequences of this important vote.

Since there is an election, does this mean that RISD employees want to be represented by Teamsters Local 251?

No. Teamsters Local 251 only need to show that 30 percent of RISD employees eligible to be in the bargaining unit expressed an interest in union representation.

Rules and Regulations

If someone claims to represent a union, do I have to listen to them?

No, you are not required to listen or answer questions. It is your choice to speak with them.

If someone will not take no for an answer, is there anything I can do to make them stop?

Yes, you can close your door or walk away. If the person will not respect your wishes, or if you feel threatened, call the police.

Are the union organizers permitted to talk to me in the workplace or at my home?

Yes. The union is permitted to come onto the campus as a part of its campaign, but its organizers may not disrupt your work. They should not harass or intimidate anyone. You have the right to accept information from a union representative, and set up a time to discuss union matters during your non-work time. If you do not wish to interact with union organizers, you may ask them to leave. If anyone harasses or intimidates you at work, you should notify RISD Human Resources immediately (401-454-6606 or contact your HR Partner). There have also been instances of union organizers visiting employees at their homes. While this is permitted, you do not have to discuss these issues at home or to grant entrance to your home.

What are the rules if a co-worker approaches me during working time to discuss a union?

You have the right to work without being solicited by any individual regarding organizing, regardless of



their union stance. Notify your supervisor or Human Resources if you have concerns with inappropriate organizing contact.

If I choose to listen to a union organizer, can I ask the individual for identification?

Yes. If they are unable or unwilling to do so, be cautious. Any union organizer should present ID upon request.

If someone claims to be from RISD, can I ask them for identification?

Yes, but if they are unable or unwilling to do so, be cautious. Anyone from RISD will have a proper RISD ID. Anyone claiming to be from RISD who wants to discuss unionization is not doing so on behalf of RISD.

Is RISD required to allow unions to talk to employees in RISD facilities or speak at departmental meetings?

No. Union officials are not allowed to disrupt or interfere with employees performing their normal work activities. RISD may allow space to be used for meetings involving union officials and allow union organizers to speak with employees during non-working time (including breaks) in non-working areas of campus.

What can employees do to support or oppose the union?

Whether you support or oppose the union, you have the same rights. You can freely discuss experiences and opinions with fellow employees, pointing out the reasons why you feel the way you do about the union. Such discussions should not be held in the workplace during work time, however.

Can my Supervisor or the Administration send me letters or discuss their concerns about the union?

Supervisors and all employees have the right to discuss and write about topics and concerns typically present during union organizing as long as it does not interfere with the performance of their individual job duties or the job duties of other employees. We encourage you to be actively engaged in making your own decision and to encourage engagement in others. Union representation does not guarantee that a contract will include wage or salary increases or retain the same benefits employees now enjoy. Negotiations do not necessarily begin with what you have now and only go up.

Why is the administration participating in this unionization debate?

RISD values all members of our community, especially our custodian and facilities workers who work hard to take care of our campus. We have a long history of being a fair employer and are proud that people want to work at RISD. RISD believes that a union is not in the best interest of our workers, but we also respect your right to make a decision about what is right for you. We will make sure you have accurate information about this very important issue so that you can make an informed decision on election day.