

WHY WE CANNOT BE SILENT ABOUT FACULTY UNIONIZATION | NOV 17

*A letter from Ana Mari Cauce and Jerry Baldasty
November 17*



Dear Colleagues,

We have written to you several times to provide information about the faculty unionization effort by SEIU. We were not planning to write to you again this soon, but we have learned that SEIU is circulating a petition asking the UW administration “to take a neutral stance throughout the democratic process of forming a union and to respect the rights of faculty to unionize.”

We fully respect the rights of all employees, including faculty, to unionize and we have said or done nothing contrary to those rights. We have, instead, expressed our firmly held opinion that unionization of our faculty would be contrary to the interests of our faculty, our students and our community. We do not believe that unionization will be helpful in our drive for excellence. We do not believe that abridging the gains we have made in and through shared governance — at the democratically elected Senate, college/school and department levels — will serve the University and all of its constituencies. And we do not believe that our presence in a bipartisan Olympia, with a divisive organizing campaign or contentious negotiations in the background, will be as fruitful.

We also respect the right to petition. It should be clear, though, that the University administration is not taking a neutral stance and will participate in the debate and discussion of faculty unionization. We have carefully considered this matter, and we believe our views are legitimate and belong in the debate, as do everyone’s views, regardless of faculty rank or position. We are troubled by the apparent aim of this petition to stifle debate on this issue. We are a community of ideas, and the best ideas are formed through discussion and debate. Faculty members have the right to hear and consider all opinions, just as they have the right to discard opinions that are not persuasive. It is contrary to our strength as an academic institution to eliminate one source of information and perspective.

(Ana Mari Cauce and Jerry Baldasty letter continued)

With that in mind, we encourage you to visit the websites created to address this matter.

[The Informed Choice](#) website, which we launched, argues a collaborative approach between faculty and the administration is the best path forward. [UW Excellence](#), launched by faculty members, makes the case against faculty unionization and has a petition where faculty members are registering their opposition. [UW Faculty Forward](#), an AAUP/SEIU effort, makes the case in favor of faculty unionization and has a petition where faculty members are registering support.

Every single faculty member is a leader at this University. Leaders lead through discourse, through analysis and through persuasion. For both of us, if we see something that will take the University off our path to excellence, we must speak up about it. We intend to express our views in this debate, and we encourage you to do so as well and to protect each other's right to be heard, free from any intimidation.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,



Ana Mari Cauce
President



Jerry Baldasty
Interim Provost &
Executive Vice President