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UW-Superior faculty vote “union yes”

Superior, Wis. – Earlier today, faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Superior voted 75-5 in favor of union representation through The Association of UW Professionals (TAUWP), a local union affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers and AFT-Wisconsin.

The vote is first of its kind since the 2009 state budget was passed, extending collective bargaining rights to UW faculty and academic staff. While TAUWP—a non-collective bargaining union—has led organizing efforts for years on each of the UW campuses, academic staff and faculty have only been able to form collective bargaining unions since June 2009.

Bryan Kennedy, president of AFT-Wisconsin, stated that today’s vote came as no surprise. “For over forty years, faculty and academic staff throughout the UW System have demanded the right to collectively bargain with the employer, a right that TAUWP/AFT-Wisconsin activists won in 2009. Exercising this right has been a long time coming; today’s historic and resounding election results substantiate that.”

Marshall Johnson, a UW-Superior sociology professor, believes that the benefits of a faculty union will extend to the entire campus. “Faculty are among the most effective stewards of our campus community, and having a voice at the table will directly impact the success of our students and UW-Superior as a whole. Having an equal voice in issues such as workload will ultimately enable us to be attentive to our students’ educational needs on an individual basis.”

According to Marshall, the faculty union will give UW-Superior a long-term advantage in recruitment and retention. “At UW-Superior, faculty pride ourselves on our tradition of academic excellence. Having a meaningful voice in our workplace will augment that tradition by attracting and retaining top-notch faculty.”

With a majority of faculty having voted in favor of collective bargaining representation, contract negotiations with the employer will commence shortly.

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