

A Faculty Union Begins at UIC

By John K. Wilson

Faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago have approved a union jointly organized by the AAUP, the American Federation of Teachers, and the Illinois Federation of Teachers. But University of Illinois continue to fight against recognizing the union. On April 29, 2011, the UIC United Faculty filed the forms with a majority of faculty endorsing the union, which includes both tenure-track and adjunct faculty. The move was announced at the Illinois AAUP's annual meeting on April 30, 2011 in conjunction with the Collective Bargaining Congress.

The University of Illinois hired a prominent union-busting legal firm to argue its case, claiming that state law prohibited a union with all faculty included. UIC faculty disagreed: "We have followed the law, and previous case law clearly shows that we have every legal right to be recognized as one union," said Lennard Davis, Distinguished Professor in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UIC. It was discovered that the University of Illinois has spent more than \$3 million on outside counsel alone for labor issues in the past 10 years.

An Administrative Law Judge ruled in favor of the union on July 15th, and after the University of Illinois administration appealed to the entire Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB), the union again emerged victorious on September 15th. The IELRB also rejected the University's motion to stay its ruling. However, the University has filed another appeal to the 4th District Court of Illinois, and is refusing to bargain with the new union. Darold Barnum, professor of managerial studies at UIC, declared: "We call on the administration to end this attack on faculty and work with us to strengthen our university." To learn more about the union, go to <http://uicunitedfaculty.org>.