

March 12, 2010

To the Pomona College Community:

Ten days ago I received petitions from members of the College community, concerning an effort to form a union among Dining Services staff. I circulated a copy of my response to the petition to all of you on March 3. As discussion continues, I would like to take this opportunity to address directly some of the questions and assertions that have been raised concerning unionization and to provide additional information to the community.

I want to be clear that the decision to unionize or not rests with our Dining Services workers. Pomona College is not blocking any unionization effort. In my response to the petition, I rejected the specific option of a card check process, as is the College's right in this situation. My decision is based on the belief that I and other members of the College staff should be able to participate in an open discussion of the issues, and that Dining Services staff members should be granted the opportunity to determine their future through a secret ballot. That said, if the option of an NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) process were presented, and if we received authorization cards naming a sponsoring union and signed by the required minimum of 30% of staff members, we would commit to scheduling and holding the secret ballot vote as quickly as possible.

However, the question remains whether a union is necessary. In the past few years, we have made many changes in the Dining Services area that have improved salaries and benefits, the number of hours available for work, staff and management communication and the processes for resolution of workplace issues. I intend to continue to work with our management and staff to ensure that every legitimate concern is addressed in a thoughtful and timely manner, and that we provide competitive wages and benefits along with a positive work environment. This will remain true whether or not our Dining Services employees decide to unionize.

I have already committed publicly and in writing that such a process would be free of intimidation and that staff members who express support of unionization will not be subject to retaliation. Intimidation and retaliation are unacceptable in any workplace, and certainly antithetical to the values of the Pomona College community.

For facts concerning Dining Services wages, hours, and benefits, as well as copies of the petition, my response, and a summary of events, please check the following link to the Pomona College Web site: www.pomona.edu/unionization.

David Oxtoby