

I am in a rather special minority. Only a handful of us still at PSU were teaching here in 1976-77, when we last held a vote on faculty unionization. I do not have a strong interest in this year's outcome, as I am now in the Retirement Transition Program, and will not be paying dues to any union that my colleagues may choose to have represent them. However, as I came to Plymouth State after a manufacturing career in which I worked side-by-side with members of the United Auto Workers, United Steelworkers, and United Mineworkers, and as I have taught the Plymouth State course in Labor-Management Relations, I want share with my colleagues a few personal observations about American labor unions.

1. It was my observation in industry that American unions are big businesses. As any business does, they work to maximize their revenues (which are the members' dues). The effect is that, however noble their beginnings, they come over time to resist productivity, to discourage and disparage those who want to excel, and to defend the unproductive.
2. It was my observation that unions remove far more freedom from their members than they do from management. If you want to know how it feels to be shunned, take a dissenting view from your local union president, and make your view known. The effect is to remove, from all but the most brave and outspoken, their right of free speech.
3. In 1977 I told my colleagues, among whom I was then a newcomer, that I did not fear their organizing themselves into a union, that I knew they had a right to bargain collectively if they so chose, but that personally, I did not spend all those years in college and graduate school in order to carry a union card. I had, and still have, no disrespect for those who belong to unions, but I consider myself a professional, and I do not believe that professionals should need a union to speak for them, to their colleagues or to their administrators. I'll speak for myself, thank you.

In 1977, the KSC and UNH faculties voted on the same day that we did, and both campuses went union. We alone deferred. I was proud of my colleagues that day, and I believe that we have been treated well and fairly by the University System of New Hampshire, ever since.

Respectfully,

Duncan C. McDougall

Professor
College of Business Administration