

Book Review

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Robert Engvall's *Inside the Faculty Union*, tells the cautionary tale of assuming faculty union activism in the higher education setting, particularly in universities. Faculty members considering union leadership will get an insight into the union presidency through his work, and those who are uninvolved in the union will gain a better understanding of the importance of union participation. Administrators will get a glimpse into not only the strategies used by faculty unions in bargaining but both the professional and personal toll such an endeavor can take on the people charged with carrying out a college's mission. Anyone with an interest in higher education, human resources, or contract negotiation can leave this reading with applicable lessons but as the narrative gets deeper, it's clear that those considering union leadership will most benefit from the experiences and lessons provided throughout.

Engvall takes his readers through the stages of his experience serving as president of a faculty union during a bargaining term. While not necessarily in a linear order, readers are painted with a picture of union presidency from the initial open letter to union membership soliciting election to the final stages of healing and improved mental health. Engvall admits that his experiences may

not be universal, but the lessons he has learned can be applied in a practical sense to those in all facets of higher education. Engvall also opens by acknowledging his bias against those in administration and authority in universities and states an effort to callout such bias throughout the chapters. This perspective may even be a necessity and asset during contract negotiations. Each chapter tells a particular story about the role of union presidency and contract negotiations. The chapters often include some underpinnings and insights into the motivation of faculty members of both pro and anti-union stance. To close each chapter, Engvall summarizes the proceeding pages as lessons learned. While certainly presented from an angle of university faculty union leadership, these lessons can be used by anyone with an investment in the labor and instructional side of higher education. The lessons learned may even be considered mandatory literature for those contemplating union leadership both inside and outside of higher education.

While each chapter presents robust lessons that can be applied by faculty and administrators alike, the true wealth in this piece comes from several themes that can be extracted throughout the contents. These themes or lessons can be considered advice as seen through the lens of faculty leaders bargaining a contract. Of most prominence is the declaration of what holds true importance during contract negotiation: wages, hours, and working conditions. All other issues are secondary to the larger issues in negotiation. Engvall makes this case through example by taking readers through an upset faculty member's petition to address parking citations. Fighting such ancillary issues to the main cause can be a sacrifice to social capital that will be needed when the rubber hits the road. Small victories can be necessary for momentum and morale, but they come at a cost that might not produce returns when the larger issues come to into play: wages, hours, and working conditions. The second realization that a potential union leader may discover is a challenge that one may not expect. The faculty membership itself may be as large of a challenge to face as the administration negotiating against the union. The challenge of the task and the effects those challenges can have become apparent as a union president must navigate teaching, research, a divided faculty, and an adversary administration with professional negotiators completely dedicated to the task. Also of great value are Engvall's takes on handling an initial contract, the formation of a negotiation team, the dangers of increased adjuncts and lecturers, and merit-based pay in the academy. Those pondering more active roles in union leadership will be made aware of the personal and professional risks that are involved in doing so. Those sitting on the sidelines or even rebelling against the union will see just how dangerous that indifference may be to professorship.

Those reading this work without diverse experiences in higher education may see faculty union leaders as heroes with all odds against them, faculty members as victims, uncooperative faculty members as incompetent and inconvenient roadblocks, and administrators as villains. Engvall makes no attempt to sugarcoat this perspective but does mention that places of true collaboration

and partnership exist. Assumptions are made about the lack of ability to have real impact in online teaching modalities, student's relationships with tenure-track professors, and younger professor's fake activism through social media examples. Engvall isn't deceitful in these biases and is simply sharing his experiences in the process of contraction negotiation as a union leader. While the assumptions and biases that are shared may turn off some readers, the lessons learned that can be applied for the betterment of everyone involved in higher education shouldn't be ignored. *Inside the Faculty Union* adds needed literature to higher education's knowledge of the faculty union experience and can be seen as a handbook for anyone considering faculty union leadership. With the corporatization of higher education and further divide between administration and faculty, this text serves as an eyeopener to those unaware of what happens when the doors are closed.