



*“...given our country’s lack of legal protections for workers, they are obliged to create unions...to protect their interests”*

- Sven Oftedal, Augsburg Seminary President 1907-1911, 1882 (Chrislock, 1969, p.124)

In Augsburg University’s 150 year history we have strived to educate our students to be informed citizens, thoughtful stewards, critical thinkers and responsible leaders. Augsburg has made a commitment to social justice, increasing access and fostering equity. The professional staff at Augsburg are integral to this community’s success. Today, the staff of Augsburg are uniting to hold the institution accountable to this mission.

In 2020, Augsburg experienced significant changes in its financial security and institutional procedures. The responsibilities and expectations of staff have continued to accrue while support from other staff and compensation have been consistently undermined.

These new challenges follow years of demonstrated negligence towards the institution’s fiscal sustainability and the needs of its staff. Compounding issues of low pay, expensive health benefits, few opportunities for upward movement, and failure to maintain a diverse and experienced staff have negatively affected our ability to serve students in accordance with the ideals embodied by Augsburg’s mission.

### **Augsburg Staff Union and Our Mission**

Unionization offers all of us rights in the workplace for the very first time — this is central to achieving our mission: **protecting and empowering every staff member at Augsburg so that we can do our work to its fullest, and best serve our students and our community.**

Our union enshrines our shared values into everything that we do: inclusion and solidarity, transparency and accountability; a seat at the table. Together, we turn toward collective bargaining in order to deliver on these values, win rights at the workplace, and preserve them.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Transparent pay structure that provides for fair and sustainable compensation for all positions.
- Equitable and transparent hiring procedures that achieve the university's commitment to equity and inclusion.
- Clear and consistent procedures for ensuring accountability among supervisors in regards to performance reviews and disciplinary actions.
- Clearly defined and consistently implemented policies that are applied equally to all.
- Policies, practices, and benefits that prioritize personalized employee wellness, safety, and mental health.
- Investment in practices that foster comprehensive personal and professional growth.
- Preserving a democratic university culture that fosters a sense of community in the workplace.
- Improving job security and rewarding years of service to the university.
- The proactive inclusion of employees in university-wide decisions that affect us all.
- Respect for Augsburg as an ecosystem in which staff, faculty, and students are held as equal partners in shared governance.

### **Promoting Augsburg's Goals Through Unionization**

In February of 2020, Augsburg's leadership announced an intention to establish clearer expectations for workplace culture in the following aspects:

**Innovation/Change-Adeptness:** *A union at Augsburg would encourage change-adeptness by ensuring that all members of staff are democratically involved in changes made. With the input of union members, Augsburg can move forward with institutional changes with the trust and support of its full community.*

**Accountability/Stewardship:** *The university should not promise stewardship and accountability to its students, alumni, and community without also extending the same to its staff. Staff concerns about insufficient compensation and benefits, and our grievances with campus policies and changes that affect us, should not go unheard. A union can ensure Augsburg's accountability to its staff, and protect our interests.*

**Equity/Inclusion:** *In order to fully honor its commitment to equity and inclusion, the institution must formally recognize the rights of all of its workers to a life of fulfillment and dignity. Without the input of the lowest-paid and most marginalized of its community, and of those who work directly with diverse students, Augsburg cannot claim success in this aim.*

**Effective Collaboration:** *The recent hardships at Augsburg were met with careful and prudent action from Augsburg's leadership, but much of the weight of this crisis has fallen on the*

*shoulders of staff members. Though it is clear that the President and his staff made their decisions with honest consideration for the community, many of us nevertheless suffered pay reductions, furloughs, and layoffs. A union at Augsburg would ensure that future decisions are made through more thorough collaboration, allowing staff the opportunity to protect their interest and the interests of the students they serve.*

Guaranteeing a lasting impact for our students is a goal that we all share; each of us work to safeguard and enrich Augsburg's commitments to social justice, equity, and a positive impact on society. All of our voices help protect what's great about Augsburg and improve what isn't. That is why our union's focus is on all the staff who serve our students. Augsburg University would not be whole without the staff that facilitate its programs and create an enriching environment for students.