



The most important thing to know about your union is that YOU are the union. A union is only as strong, effective and powerful as the members who participate in its operation and activities. Your voice and your presence are extremely important in all processes.

You can best exercise that power by being informed, and stay involved and active in your union.

Every member can take a number of simple steps to make your union a more powerful and effective vehicle for advancing your interests and the interests of your colleagues. **These steps include:**

- **Read your contract and keep it handy** – Your contract delineates your rights and benefits at work and represents the focus of your union's activity.
- **Submit ideas for contract proposals** – When contracts come up for renegotiation members have the opportunity to submit proposals to be considered for inclusion in the negotiation. This is your opportunity to propose changes or new ideas to improve your workplace.
- **Go to your union leadership if you have a question** – If you are unclear about what your contract says, or what your union is doing to address an issue, go to one of your elected leaders and ask them. The names of your leaders are posted on your MNA bulletin boards.
- **Attend meetings** – If you cannot make a meeting, send a surrogate from your department who you trust to express your views and help you stay informed.
- **Read newsletters, E-Mails, etc.** – Your Chapter 315 Team has stepped up efforts with contract updates and email blasts to keep members informed of ongoing issues. Review this material so you know what is going on. Visit both your Chapter <http://www.csulb.edu/org/csea/> and the CSUEU <http://www.csueu.org> web-sites on a regular basis.
- **Participate in and vote in the election of leaders of your union** – The CSUEU has by-laws that dictate a process for holding elections of its leadership. If you have the time, run for election. If you don't have time, learn about who is running. If you know of a member who shares your views and is a strong leader, encourage them to run for election. ***Make sure you vote.***
- **Participate in the activities of your Campus Chapter** – As your union does its work on your behalf, it will engage in a number of activities, including leafleting, member surveys, petition drives, picketing, etc. The success of all of these activities depends on broad participation by the membership. If your union is engaged in an activity, participate. **Remember the Union is you.**
- **Be politically informed and involved.** You need to communicate to your Union leadership. You need to develop and maintain a relationship with your state legislators by e-mails and phone calls. You can do this easily by visiting www.sen.ca.gov and www.assembly.ca.gov
- Again, **YOU ARE THE UNION** and your Union is only as strong as its members. By engaging in some or all of these activities you can guarantee that the union is successful in representing your interests.