

Candidate statement for UFE Executive Board At-large Member
Christopher Kirby, Professor of Philosophy

I joined the EWU faculty in 2008. From 2009 to 2014, I served on the UFE executive board in several roles—including VP of membership, Chief Steward/Grievance Officer, and (informally) as Webmaster. I've also served in various roles in the other arm of shared governance at Eastern—the Faculty Organization—including as Secretary in AY '20-'21 and as an at-large member of the FO Rules Committee this past year. I've been an alternate FO senator for MLL/Philosophy and have served on various university-wide committees (FAC, R&SC, UH&SC, and GPAC). After gaining this experience with the inner workings of our university, I'd be proud to serve once again on the UFE executive board.

If elected I will remain committed to the values enumerated in Article II of the UFE constitution—namely “*the preservation of public education, freedom of inquiry, discussion, and association*” and I'll work diligently toward achieving its constitutional purpose to “*represent all members of the unit in bargaining, grievances, and in all matters relating to terms and conditions of employment.*” As a long-time union member, I've always believed that faculty working conditions ARE student learning conditions. If we are to secure either, both must be safeguarded.

But, working conditions shift... and unions must learn to shift with them if they hope to assist faculty in navigating the fast-paced currents of our profession. Drawing from a variety of experiences and perspectives, both within union memberships and without, will be key. That's why, if elected, I will work to connect the UFE with union compatriots regionally (the Spokane Regional Labor Council) within Washington state, (Washington Education Association), and at the national level (the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education)—so that we may learn from their successes.

As more and more of our work moves outside of the office, unions will need innovative approaches for greater two-way communication with their members. If elected, I will work to ensure UFE's on-campus presence remains highly visible (and its work wholly transparent) through a stronger online presence.

Finally, if higher education is to truly become more equitable and inclusive, faculty unions will need to attend to an increasingly diverse range of interests among their members by transitioning away from old position-based bargaining strategies toward a more interest-based approach. If elected, I will work to ensure our union identifies that multiplicity of interests before staking its bargaining positions.