

Dear Fellow Adjunct Faculty Members,

Greetings and Happy New Year!

I am writing to you today to urge you to support the effort currently underway to establish an Adjunct Faculty Union here at Lesley University.

Let me introduce myself: I am a long-time Adjunct Faculty Member. I have taught at Lesley for the better part of 18 years in the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences. I have taught both core courses and electives in the programs of Counseling and Psychology and Intercultural Relations. I am a committed teacher and I gain much from teaching in these programs. The supervisors as well as the faculty and administrative staff in these departments have treated me with utmost respect, fairness and kindness. I have no personal complaint to lodge against the university management or my supervisors at Lesley. I enjoy and value excellent working and professional relationships.

While I have great relationships within these departments, **the fact remains that critical decisions on matters that profoundly impact my life - my health insurance, my pay, my job stability and my work environment - are made by the university administration.** We have no voice, no input and no recourse.

Along with many other institutions of higher education, Lesley has followed the trend of relying more and more heavily on adjunct faculty to provide instruction. And yet, the terms of our employment do not reflect the essentiality of our presence at Lesley (we are now 700 strong!) and they vary from one of us to the next. I believe it would make such a difference both materially and in terms of morale if we were able to bring everyone up to an agreed-upon standard.

I am aware that some of us are content with our present working conditions and don't feel the need to be part of an organized cohort. I certainly understand that when we are in a good enough position, we tend to want to leave it be. And yet, how do we ensure that our conditions can remain good enough and/or excellent? What if tomorrow your fantastically wonderful supervisor left and the new supervisor decided they didn't want to hire you back after 5 years of employment? What if it was two days before classes began and you were told that your class was cancelled? What if you were eligible for health care under the new Health Care law and suddenly your hours were cut? What would you do? What is our recourse?

I am not saying that a bargaining unit would solve all matters. However, I do believe it is a strong starting point for engaging in meaningful conversations about our working lives and to **create a standard of equitable and sustainable terms of employment for us all.**

In a few weeks, you will receive a ballot asking you to vote on the creation of an Adjunct Faculty Union at Lesley. I urge you to think about how a union would be in your best interest and join us to improve the quality of education and opportunity for all members of the Lesley community.

All best in the New Year.

Shaari Neretin, MSW, L.I.C.S.W.
Senior Adjunct Faculty, Lesley University