

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE IN SOLIDARITY WITH BOSTON AREA ADJUNCT FACULTY

Cambridge City Council Backs The Organization Of Lesley University Adjunct Faculty, And Adjunct Faculty Throughout The Boston Area

PRESS RELEASE

January 13, 2014

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Cambridge City Council Passes Resolution Honoring
Adjunct Instructors, Supporting Right to Form a Union
Council Resolution Calls on Universities to Remain
Neutral in Adjunct Union Efforts

Cambridge, MA – On Monday, the Cambridge City Council passed a resolution of support of adjunct instructors, calling for colleges and universities in the Boston area to support adjunct and contingent faculty given their significant role in academia, and to also allow them to unionize without interference. Lesley University adjuncts will begin voting to join SEIU/Adjunct Action in late January and several attended the City Council meeting.

The policy order/resolution was introduced by City Councilor Leland Cheung and was supported by all voting council members. Below is the full text of the resolution.

The resolution is another way students, full-time professors, community leaders and elected officials are coming together to support Boston-area adjuncts as they help build a nationwide movement to improve standards for the profession by forming unions with SEIU/Adjunct Action.

Shira Karman has been an instructor in Lesley's Expressive Therapy department, off and on for three decades. Shira said, "Cambridge City Council's resolution and

support are exciting and energizing. We've received and appreciated support from other corners too; Lesley full-time faculty, Lesley alumni and students are standing with us as we vote to form our union. I love teaching at Lesley but too often we feel invisible. We, the adjunct faculty, need to feel seen and respected because we are a vital part of Lesley community. Adjunct faculty make up a majority of the teaching staff and by achieving greater recognition and integration at Lesley, we will help make Lesley the best institution of higher learning that it can be."

Higher education is a vital part of the Massachusetts economy and our state's future. Over half a million students are pursuing a degree at Massachusetts post-secondary institutions. Colleges and universities account for a greater share of employment and payroll in Massachusetts than in almost any other state in the country and post-secondary instructors are among the fastest growing occupations in the state.

Increasingly, however, the state's colleges and universities are turning to adjunct faculty to carry out their core mission of teaching while shifting resources from instruction to administration, funded by quickly rising tuition and resulting in record levels of student debt.

Adjunct faculty are caught up in this crisis in higher education. Adjuncts, numbering nearly 20,000 state-wide, are contingent workers: overworked and underpaid, generally with no job security or access to health and retirement benefits.

But now, adjuncts in Massachusetts are leading a nationwide movement to form unions, raise standards in higher education, and advocate for better working conditions and benefits for themselves and their colleagues.

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Adjunct Action is a project of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the nation's largest and fastest growing union and home to over 18,000 unionized college and university adjunct faculty who have won improvements in pay, job security, evaluation processes, and access to retirement benefits.

www.adjunctaction.org

FULL TEXT OF RESOLUTION

WHEREAS: There are almost 13,000 non-union and non-tenure faculty currently working at Boston-area non-profit colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS: There are currently over 270,000 students enrolled in 4-year non-profit colleges and universities in the Boston area, including at least 44,000 in Cambridge, who increasingly depend on the instruction and guidance of adjunct professors; and

WHEREAS: Students can pay upwards of \$50,000 in tuition and living expenses every year to attend a college or university in the Boston area; and

WHEREAS: Adjunct professors should be adequately supported by their institutions for their growing presence and role in the academic pursuits of students in the Boston area; and

WHEREAS: Adjunct professors have little job security and must take on multiple course loads in order to make ends meet; and

WHEREAS: Most Boston-area colleges and universities do not provide health care benefits to their adjunct professors; and

WHEREAS: The cost of living in the Boston area is 32 percent higher than the U.S. average; and

WHEREAS: Adjunct professors in the Boston area should be paid fair wages and benefits that allow them to support themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS: The decision of whether to unionize belongs solely to workers, and should not be interfered with by management or their agents; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge City Council go on record expressing support for fair wages and benefits for Cambridge's adjunct professors, the right of Cambridge's adjunct professors to form a union, and the adoption of free and fair union election principles, similar to those that have been adopted by many higher education institutions in other U.S. cities, which establish the commitment that workers are "free" to make up their own mind, under "fair" voting conditions; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to send a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to SEIU's Boston office.