

Dear Colleagues,

We hope this message finds you well during the wrap-up of another successful semester. Surely everyone is looking forward to a well-deserved break and so are we. Before we all break for the year, we, the members of the adjunct bargaining committee, would like to send you an update on critical developments in negotiations over our collective labor agreement with the University.

In previous updates, we have told you that we have already reached agreement on guarantees of access to web space, office equipment, and office space. We have now moved on to one of the most substantial issues of the negotiation process, likely to interest all of you. According to the bargaining survey that adjuncts teaching last Spring filled out, 82% of adjuncts rate “security of getting re-appointed to the same came course” as “Most Important” or “Very Important” and 81% of respondents identified “opportunities for extended contracts” as “Most Important” or “Very Important.” With this mandate in mind, we have spent several of the past bargaining sessions trying to reach an agreement with the University on ways for adjuncts to be hired beyond a per-semester basis.

Currently, we are advancing a proposal where adjuncts who taught a stable course pattern every year for 3 years would then receive year-long appointments rather than per-semester ones. We believe this is a reasonable request, and that it leaves significant flexibility for administration’s changing needs. Moreover, the large majority of SEIU-negotiated adjunct contracts have achieved protections like this. The University has thus far resisted this proposal; at first, they said, because they felt job stability offered no tangible benefit to student learning, and that the broader Wash U community prefers a system where adjuncts may only have semester-long appointments.

Because this issue is of such high priority to all adjuncts with whom we have spoken, we have recently begun a campaign to open lines of communication and support between adjuncts and other groups in the Wash U community. On Wednesday, December 2, we delivered to Chancellor Mark Wrighton and Provost Holden Thorp a petition with nearly-50 signatures from tenure-track and tenured professors, requesting that the administration “negotiate with an open mind and in good faith with the adjunct faculty” and asking that “Provost Thorp become directly involved in contract negotiations, attending as many meetings as [his] schedule permits.”

In order to further raise the administration’s awareness of our support in the Wash U community, we held a rally in the Brookings quad on Wednesday December 9, which was attended by undergraduates, graduate students, tenured and tenure-track faculty, and custodial staff. More than 300 individuals attended and participated in this event, which was covered by both the *St. Louis Business Journal* and KSDK Channel 5 news. To those of you who participated, thank you for your continued support. The broad base of support we have begun to receive from faculty, staff, and students has been nothing short of inspiring, and we want anyone who could not attend to understand how respected and appreciated we adjuncts are in the broader Wash U community.

Here are links to media coverage of the event:

[http://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/morning\\_call/2015/12/washington-university-adjuncts-hold-rally-as.html](http://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/morning_call/2015/12/washington-university-adjuncts-hold-rally-as.html)

<http://www.ksdk.com/videos/news/education/2015/12/09/adjunct-professors-rally-for-higher-wages/77077938/>

We met the University for bargaining the next day and delivered both the faculty petition to Chancellor Wrighton and Provost Thorp and a petition signed by over 1,000 undergraduates in support of adjunct faculty. Several tenured faculty members requested to observe the meeting in light of recent coverage: Professors Guinn Batten, William J. Maxwell, and Jessica Rosenfeld of the English department and Professor Bret Gustafson of Anthropology. We want to thank them for their continued support.

The University's bargaining team now acknowledged the support we have in the community and that student learning might be benefited by opportunities for longer appointment. That said, they are now reluctant on the grounds that annual appointments would critically affect their "flexibility." In our coming meeting, we will hope to open discussions of how we can address the needs of administrative flexibility *and* longer teaching appointments that so many of you have told us you need. When we have finished this critical issue, we shall move on to the ever important issue of compensation, then on to benefits, and finally, on to a ratification of our contract via a vote by you, the members of the unit.

Our next two bargaining sessions will take place on Thursday January 14<sup>th</sup> and January 28<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to attend either of these sessions, please contact a member of the bargaining unit at least 48 hours in advance. As always, should you have any questions or concerns, please contact any of the representatives listed below.

As we reach this critical juncture of negotiating on these very important issues, it is more important than ever that you give us your feedback. It's also important for you to offer your support if you're willing to give it. Here's how you can help with very little effort: you can contact Chancellor Mark Wrighton and Provost Holden Thorp regarding the importance of year-long appointments, by emailing them at: [wrighton@wustl.edu](mailto:wrighton@wustl.edu) and [thorp@wustl.edu](mailto:thorp@wustl.edu), respectively. Or call Chancellor Wrighton at (314) 935-5100 and Provost Thorp at (314) 935-3000. Many other student and faculty bodies have already begun these actions on our behalf, but we encourage you all to continue contacting them: your voice matters.

If you are interested in further support shown for us by the Wash U and local community, please see the post-script to this message with a list of links to various media coverage.

Yours in Solidarity,

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PS: A brief list of additional media coverage of our cause this semester—

<http://www.studlife.com/scene/2015/09/10/the-work-horses-the-plight-of-adjunct-faculty-at-wu/>

<http://www.studlife.com/news/2015/10/28/wash-u-inc-panel-discusses-role-of-corporate-business-model-at-wu/>

<http://www.studlife.com/forum/op-ed-submission/2015/09/23/an-open-letter-to-the-chancellor/>

<http://www.riverfronttimes.com/newsblog/2015/07/15/at-wash-u-and-webster-a-fight-to-unionize-adjunct-professors-with-different-results>

<http://www.studlife.com/news/2015/10/12/student-worker-alliance-protests-outside-duc-for-adjunct-rights/>