

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 26, 2013

CONTACT
Jia-Jia Zhu, SEIU Local 925
206.317.4463 | jjzhu@seiu925.org

Tufts University Part-Time Faculty Vote to Form Union with Adjunct Action/SEIU, Build Momentum for Raising Standards Across Boston

Voting Continues at Pacific Lutheran University

Tacoma, WA – Adjunct faculty at Tufts University in Boston have overwhelmingly voted to form a union with Adjunct Action, a project of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The victory sets the table for contract negotiations at Tufts and sets the tone for the October 4th vote tally for adjunct faculty at Bentley University.

Instructors at Northeastern University, Tufts, Bentley and other Boston area colleges and universities are part of a growing movement of adjunct and contingent faculty coming together for a voice in their profession and in the future of higher education.

Tufts part-time lecturer Carol Wilkinson, who has taught at Tufts since 1986, said, "This victory is exciting and important for the entire Tufts University community. I'm happy that my part-time colleagues and I will have a greater say in making Tufts an even better place to work and to learn."

Pacific Lutheran University contingent faculty, Jane Harty, said, "It is inspiring to see the success of Tufts University faculty in their unionization vote, and to see the support that their administration has given them to form that union. Theirs is indeed a "culture of collaboration," unlike what is happening at PLU where contingent faculty are left out. We so very much want PLU to be a better place for both faculty and students and feel that we can really achieve significant and positive changes by unionizing. We hope our administration will drop their appeal, which isn't helpful to quality education, and allow our democratic votes to be counted as Tufts University did and as Georgetown University did in June."

Once a middle-class profession, part-time and non-tenure track faculty are now the majority of faculty at our colleges and universities and their numbers continue to increase. Reflecting a sad fact of life for millions of workers across America, contingent faculty, typically have no job security and low pay that forces adjuncts to string together jobs at multiple colleges and universities to make ends meet. The Boston Globe [reported](#) new census data that reflects widening economic inequality where, "lower-income households are a steadily increasing share of the population, while middle- to higher-income groups shrank or were flat."

Revenues at all types of degree-granting institutions have steadily increased in the last two decades, with private institutions showing more gain than public institutions.^[1] However,

in both the private and public sectors, the proportion of total spending going toward the direct cost of instruction through faculty salaries has declined.^[2]

Tufts part-time faculty member Andy Klatt said, “Now that we’ve won our union at Tufts, we’ll be preparing for the collective bargaining process that is the only hope for achieving a measure of democracy, balance, and fairness in the academic workplace. This is an important victory for part-time faculty at Tufts and an encouraging step in the movement to organize contingent faculty across the country.”

Bentley University adjunct faculty members are also voting to join Adjunct Action/SEIU and the National Labor Relations Board will count the ballots on October 4. Prof. Jack Dempsey has a dozen years of experience teaching students in Bentley University's Department of English & Media Studies. He said, “We want to congratulate the part-time faculty at Tufts University on their campaign to unionize and stand up for the value that they contribute to their school and students. When we win our vote to unionize on October 4th, we'll be thinking of you and thinking ahead to a regional and national effort with our sisters and brothers at Tufts and other schools. The day of our second-rate status is ending, and a new one is on the horizon.”

Adjunct and part-time faculty at numerous schools in the Los Angeles area are engaging in conversations about forming their own union to raise standards for private, non-profit universities in California. These coast to coast efforts come on the heels of victories by part-time professors in the Washington, D.C. area. There, contingent faculty significantly improved their pay, job security, benefits and working conditions after forming a union with SEIU.

###

Adjuncts and Contingents Together Washington is a project of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 925, a member of the nation’s largest and fastest growing union and home to over 15,000 unionized adjuncts and contingents who have won improvements in pay, job security, evaluation processes, and access to retirement benefits.

actogetherwa.org

[1] Wellman, Jane, Desrochers, Donna, and Lenihan, Colleen. 2008. “The Growing Imbalance: Recent Trends in U.S. Postsecondary Education Finance,” p. 19. A report of The Delta Cost Project, http://www.deltacostproject.org/analyses/delta_reports.asp

[2] Ibid., p. 27 and 28