

Friday, May 19, 2017

Dear Members of the Fordham Family

After much consultation and reflection, I have decided that the University will not oppose the unionization of adjunct faculty. As you receive this email, we have initiated discussion with the union over the University adopting a stance of neutrality regarding the organization of our adjunct faculty.

I have become convinced of the rightness of this course of action over the last few months by conversations with my fellow Jesuits. After all, organized labor has deep roots in Catholic social justice teachings. And though this is an issue that many universities are facing—not all of which have come to the same decision—given its Jesuit traditions and historic connection to first-generation and working-class students, Fordham has a special duty in this area.

There is a cost to this decision—literally. As I have said regarding salary and benefits negotiations with the tenured and tenure-track faculty, and the mandate to hold down tuition increases, the University seeks a balance of goods: there simply are not funds enough to do everything we would like to do. We do not yet know what the full impact of this decision will be, but I have asked our chief financial officer to ensure any additional funding required for adjunct salaries comes from areas that least affect our mission.

Finally, I want to acknowledge all of you who wrote to me and called my office on this issue. Though it may not always be as obvious as I'd like, I am sensitive to the concerns of the University community, and I deeply appreciate your input. I would not have made this decision were it not the right thing to do, but in this case, popular opinion and the ethical choice were in harmony.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Commencement, and to all of you I wish a long, peaceful summer.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. McShane, S.J.