

December 2, 2014

President Marcy,

We stand in solidarity with our colleagues at Dominican University who seek to form a labor union to bargain collectively for just wages, job security, health, and other benefits.

As contingent faculty members ourselves, we appreciate the challenges that Dominican University contingents face: Our tenuous employment relies on the changing needs of the university from semester to semester. We have no job security, we are shut out of university governance, we struggle with unpredictable course loads, and we receive few if any employer-provided benefits.

Furthermore, we know that contingent faculty working conditions affect student learning conditions, and we propose that unionization will not only improve our lives but assist the educational mission of the community to which we all belong.

Support for contingent faculty unions is gathering steam nationwide, and support for unionization itself enjoys a long and enduring history in Catholic institutions. The *Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church* holds that labor unions exert a “positive influence for social order and solidarity, and are therefore an indispensable element of social life” (2004). According to the Catholic Bishops of the United States, “The Church fully supports the right of workers to form unions or other associations to secure their rights to fair wages and working conditions.... No one may deny the right to organize without attacking human dignity itself” (1986).

Although outside individuals and groups are entitled to their thoughts on whether contingent faculty would be served by unionizing, the Contingent Faculty of Dominican University alone have the right to answer this question themselves.

Given this, we are writing to urge you to respect your employees’ right to organize a union by remaining neutral and refraining from using college resources to influence the organizing effort. The right to support or not support a union should be made by the individual contingent professor without fear of retaliation.

—The Saint Mary's College Contingent Faculty Union Organizing Committee:

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