Update on Adjunct Faculty Organizing Efforts in Massachusetts

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AICUM FALL SYMPOSIUM
October 3, 2013
SEIU Local 500 Adjunct Action

- Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 500 “Adjunct Action”
  - Regional campaigns in Washington, D.C., Boston, etc.

- SEIU’s Major Successes in Washington provided a powerful springboard into the Greater Boston Area

- American University, George Washington University, Montgomery College and Georgetown University were organized
  - NOTE: At Georgetown, out of 650 eligible, less than 50% voted – but 72% voted “yes”
Adjunct Action in Boston

• “Adjunct Action” has already established a presence in Boston
  – Tufts University adjuncts voted 128 “yes” and 57 “no” on 9/26/13 at NLRB Count
  – Bentley University adjuncts’ ballots will be counted on October 4th (if no “shutdown”)
  – Northeastern University is also a target of Adjunct Action, although no NLRB petition has been filed
The Reality of Adjuncts in Higher Ed

• Adjunct issue has been percolating for many years

• Adjuncts have the same basic needs as all other employees – and more given history

• “Respect & Dignity” are the slogans in most union organizing campaigns

• Duquesne University
  – Adjunct Mary Margaret Vojtko’s tragic passing went “viral” and galvanized adjuncts
The Reality of Adjuncts in Higher Ed

• Adjuncts feel “exploited,” “ignored,” “taken for granted”

• Adjuncts feel disrespected and unappreciated by both Administration and Full-Time Faculty

• Comments on websites and WBUR make it clear – the adjuncts are hungry and eager for solidarity – and SEIU will provide it
The Reality of Adjuncts in Higher Ed

• Adjuncts are a special group

• Academic credentials and experience

• Feel undervalued and undercompensated
  – That’s where the SEIU steps in

• Private Sector Union Membership still at 7%
  – Plenty of opportunity for unions
The Reality of Adjuncts in Higher Ed

- SEIU Local 500, UAW, AAUP, Steelworkers and others
- Successful adjunct campaigns could lead to full-time faculty organizing, in some cases
- What should colleges and universities do?
- Key leadership strategy:
  - “Walk a Mile in Their Shoes...”
The Reality of Adjuncts in Higher Ed

• What would be important to you as an adjunct?

• **Key Issues:**
  – Compensation
  – Health Care
  – Respect From Administration and Full-Time Faculty
  – Job Security
  – Longer Term Contracts
  – Tuition Assistance
  – Consideration for Full-Time Positions
  – Leave For Professional Development
  – Office Space
  – Official Email Address
  – Library Access
  – Recognition in Course Catalog and Website
  – Regular Meetings with Administration
The Reality of Adjuncts in Higher Ed

• Quick story about my law partner
• Different types of adjunct faculty
• Those who teach part-time for personal reasons
The Reality of Adjuncts in Higher Ed

- Those who accept multiple adjunct appointments as their primary source of income
- SEIU – Adjunct Action focuses on the adjuncts with multiple appointments
- Regional nature of Adjunct Action Campaign will “cross-over” between institutions, making it easier to organize
Strategic Recommendations

• The adjunct issue must be taken seriously and given priority attention

• Leadership should initiate communications with adjuncts and hold open meetings to listen and understand adjunct concerns

• If not already in place, administration should establish protocols for regular communication with and recognition for adjuncts
Strategic Recommendations

• Let’s listen to what some adjuncts have to say:
  – Rebecca Kaiser Gibson, Tufts – interviewed on “Radio Boston” on 9/26/13
  – Andy Klatt, Tufts

• Closing Recommendation:
  – BE PROACTIVE, Before A Petition is Filed