

Statement by Religious Studies Faculty Supporting Fairness in the Voting Process for Unionization

The undersigned faculty of the Religious Studies Department would like to offer our perspective on the current negotiations regarding how to conduct the unionization vote. Like many of our colleagues across the University, we believe it is in everyone's interest for the Administration to ensure a fair election process in the coming weeks.

On May 6, 2020, Religious Studies faculty issued a statement that offered a view of the mission of a Jesuit, Catholic University, and the consequences of this mission for actions the University was developing to address budget deficits from the pandemic. We believe the values and principles articulated in that statement – drawn from the Ignatian tradition and Catholic Social Teaching – apply to the current negotiations underway regarding how to conduct the unionization vote. We recall in particular this paragraph:

The most basic principle in this reimagining is that justice entails caring in a particular way for those most “marginalized” and allowing decision making strategies to be driven by a concern for what promotes right relationship among all university constituencies, especially those most in need. Caring for the whole person is not just a Jesuit tagline; it is an exercise of justice, and therefore carries a cost that the institution must be willing to pay.

The undersigned recognize that the matter of unionization is controversial. Even among those who recognize that there must be changes made to create a more equitable and stable work environment for contingent faculty, there is debate about the extent to which unionization is the best strategy to achieve our shared goals.

But we are in agreement that:

- 1) the University administration's decision to employ an anti-union law firm, Littler Mendelson, to lead their negotiations on the unionization election is not consistent with the University mission;
- 2) the best way forward is for the University to work within the clear guidelines offered by the National Labor Relations Board, such that only ballots cast should be counted as votes either for or against unionization – those who decide not to cast ballots should not be counted as “votes” against unionization;
- 3) continued negotiations in good faith is a desideratum.

Signatures

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