Tufts Faculty Forward: United for our profession and for our University.

INSIDE:
our top priorities for union contract bargaining

Join Us.
Dear Colleagues,

Lecturers, full- and part-time, make up more than half of the teaching staff at Tufts — a share that has grown over time. There are almost 100 Full-time Lecturers, and together we teach more than 400 courses a year, or almost 25% of the total in Arts & Sciences.

Part-Time Lecturers unionized last year, and in October won a contract achieving significant gains. And now, Full-Time Lecturers have the same opportunity to unionize.

Without a union, we remain the only group of instructors without a formal voice. With a union, we can more effectively address our collective concerns, many of which are the same as those of our part-time colleagues.

The issues discussed at right are among the top priorities that came up in organizing conversations we’ve had over the past several months. However, please keep in mind that, after the vote, we will send a bargaining survey to all Full-Time Lecturers soliciting feedback about what our top bargaining priorities should be. Only then will we be able to develop proposals that reflect the stated goals and objectives of the group as a whole.

As this will be a democratic process, we hope that everyone will participate and help set the priorities for negotiations.

Sincerely,

The Tufts Full-Time Lecturers’ Organizing Committee
EMPLOYMENT SECURITY
Despite the comfort level that some of us may feel, the fact is that we are all “at will” employees. Our contracts — which can vary vastly in their provisions — can be subject to non-renewal with no explanation. In a sense, we reapply for our jobs with each renewal. Non-renewal can come with a change in administration at Tufts or in our own departments. Or, as is more common, our roles can change from year to year without much input from us.

This precariousness means that it is difficult for us to plan beyond our contracts, even if some of us have been here for years or even decades. It also means that many of us shoulder work that tenured faculty, facing explicit research demands, cannot take on. Indeed, we may feel we need to accept additional work in order to make ourselves less dispensable.

With a union, we can gain protection from arbitrary decisions about our employment and our contracts — and with greater job security for us, the entire University will be strengthened.

PARITY IN PAY & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Equal pay for equal work does not exist at the moment for Tufts Full-Time Lecturers. Although our teaching load expanded by 50% in 2010, our pay stayed the same. Yet students and the University continue to get equal attention from us in terms of teaching and advising. When it comes to how academic credit is assigned, tuition rates are set or course evaluations are administered, our work is not assessed any differently. But we Lecturers continue to be paid unequally. And for our professional development—which for some of us includes areas like research—we are afforded little support.

We love what we do and remain dedicated to the high caliber of our students and the high quality of the teaching for which Tufts is known. Basic respect for our work is essential to the long-term health of Tufts, both as a leading research university and an institution that takes strong positions in support of social justice. But respect of this sort cannot exist until there has been significant movement toward pay parity for our labor.

With a union, we gain a seat at the table to negotiate for basic pay and support for professional development. And we will join our part-time colleagues, who, with their union, won a contract with significant pay increases and a newly instituted professional development fund.

EQUITABLE WORKLOAD
The current Full-Time Lecturers’ workload includes teaching, advising, serving on committees and performing service on behalf of our departments. In 2010, our teaching load was increased from four to six courses per academic year with no increase in compensation — and with no input from us.

Many Full-Time Lecturers shoulder a heavy burden of teaching and advising, and are assigned to required introductory/gateway courses and capstone courses. While we are honored to be entrusted with nurturing our beginning students and helping our seniors graduate, the time investment these courses present can be daunting. Enrollment in introductory courses can number in the hundreds. Some of us have to carry two large classes in a single semester. Capstone courses also impose demanding responsibilities — guiding students in writing, revising, and polishing papers that synthesize their learning in their major. Finally, many of us take on large numbers of advisees, dedicating numerous hours to one-on-one meetings with students.

With a union, we can gain better recognition of our contributions and a more equitable accounting of workloads.
“We are all committed to doing what it takes to make Tufts University the extraordinary institution it is. And we deserve to be treated fairly and with respect as colleagues — in other words, as fellow teachers and fellow scholars.

“Together, we seek a formal voice in the decisions that affect our working conditions and pay. With a union, we can make Tufts even better — a place that practices what it preaches about active citizenship, inclusion, and ethical, transparent governance.”

-The Tufts Full-Time Lecturers’ Organizing Committee