

GOUCHER FACULTY UNION

Dear Goucher Colleagues:

23 October, 2014

We would like to thank President Bowen for his open communication with the faculty about the important issue of forming a union. Clearly, there are significant changes happening at Goucher. President Bowen says that our union campaign proposes a fundamental change to the campus. We believe that we all deserve a seat at the table at which decisions are made, and that the change brought by establishing a union will be positive and more inclusive, while respecting Goucher's community principles, which include social justice.

While President Bowen's letter outlines some features of collective bargaining, we feel some of the specifics may be misleading. We would like to clarify these specifics.

First, after commencing collective bargaining, no one pays any dues until after a contract is negotiated and approved by a majority of the contingent faculty. In other words, no one will be required to pay dues until we have all voted on a contract we believe is worth the proposed dues. The contract's details are decided and voted upon by us, the faculty in question. It is inaccurate to characterize the process as "employing an outside interest to control your interests." Rather, this process places authority where it belongs: in a democratic and collegial institution.

As President Bowen suggested, a listening tour is an excellent idea. We applaud the administration's efforts to engage with non-tenure track faculty. In fact, listening to and engaging with our colleagues is a key part of the collective bargaining process. Under collective bargaining, non-tenure track faculty would first democratically elect representatives who will form the bargaining committee. The committee would then systematically gather information from all faculty members and departments to determine what issues and concerns are of most importance.

Once we are unionized and seated at the bargaining table, we will be able to have a direct and representative conversation with the administration. We strongly believe that this is a more democratic, responsive, and fair process for coming to a mutually beneficial agreement that includes our collective concerns than the non-representative system now in place. A union will be indispensable for ensuring, through collective bargaining, negotiations for fair and equitable compensation, job security, benefits and transparency.

We believe that working together as a community through a democratic process is the best way to make teaching here a more rewarding and better experience and to honor Goucher's commitment to social justice.

We would like to echo President Bowen's call to educate yourself. We urge you to visit SEIU's website (www.seiu.org) and to talk to friends and colleagues at other colleges and universities like the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), Georgetown, American University, George Washington University, University of the District of Columbia, and Howard that have successfully unionized contingent faculty. In addition, please go to our website for regular updates, www.goucherfacultyunion.org. One of the best ways to educate yourself is to speak with your fellow educators on the organizing committee. We will be hosting a union meeting in the upcoming weeks.

- The Goucher Faculty Union Organizing Committee