

Dear Colleagues:

I apologize for falling silent for so long. Our world has been convulsed by so many voices of justice, and my own family has been weathering a COVID crisis.

Moreover, the union has been preparing to move the advocacy for most of our concerns to the bargaining table, as negotiations over COVID-related impacts to our workplace will begin on Thursday.

Yet I will continue to write occasionally as issues of powerful importance come up. Today's message relates to matters that are not only crucial to the security and dignity of our non-tenure-track faculty, but are also of utmost importance to both faculty and students of color. The faculty of the School of Art and Art History have boldly and bravely stepped forward to campaign for their own faculty, but the issues they raise are of importance throughout the university.

Karyn Sandlos, Associate Professor and Head of UIC's BFA in Art Education program, provides valuable context for the attached letter:

As we enter the second half of June, we remain deeply concerned about the status of NTT faculty across the university. The majority of NTT faculty have yet to receive fall contracts; at the same time, many of them have been assigned Course Builders/TAs and asked to complete training in online instruction and other work for UIC on a voluntary basis over the summer.

While we are aware of the July 16th, 2020 contractual deadline for notification, at the top of our minds is the impact on our NTT faculty of remaining in limbo for another month with respect to their fall employment. Within the larger context of instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and more recently the anguish and protest over the murder of George Floyd, our valued NTT faculty are waiting to hear from UIC as to whether or not and to what extent they have jobs at UIC in the fall.

Faculty in the School of Art & Art History have written a letter to Chancellor Amiridis highlighting the situation of four essential NTT faculty who are still awaiting 3-year contracts they were promised in February 2020. These four faculty members teach required classes and help run programs in SAAH; they are considered essential by SAAH faculty and students alike. The four NTT faculty also represent the majority of faculty diversity in SAAH. Not only would the loss of these faculty put our SAAH programs in jeopardy, it would hit faculty and students of color particularly hard in this challenging moment.

How will UIC administration prioritize equity and diversity in NTT reappointment decisions? We are encouraged by recent public statements from the Chancellor and the Graduate College, which highlight their commitments to diversifying the faculty through efforts to recruit and retain more African American faculty. We sincerely hope these commitments include, indeed will immediately start with, the re-hiring NTT faculty of color who are currently uncertain if they will be re-appointed.

Demonstrating a lack of commitment to our NTT faculty will have a disproportionate impact on students of color at UIC, and in SAAH in particular. Now more than ever, UIC students need a diverse faculty to meet them when they return to campus in the fall.

Ultimately, we here at UICUF urge you as individuals, and also as a general Task Force, to do what you can to move the administration to do what is responsible, humane, and just. So many people

throughout the country, and around the world, have been bravely speaking up recently. We ask you to do so now, here at UIC.

And in the meantime, I very much hope that you are weathering your own storms as well as possible.

With best wishes,

Robert

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