

Dear Colleagues:

Good morning! I hope that you had a good weekend.

I write again, of course, on behalf of UIC United Faculty. We look forward to the town hall this morning. We hope it serves as just one of many ways for the hearing of many diverse faculty voices—ultimately leading to having union leaders at the table.

Today's email involves one truly foundational issue. That matter has come to us from many of our members. It's simple, but profound, expressed this way in the words of one faculty member:

Why should Non Tenure Track faculty prepare for fall if they do now know if they will be renewed until July 15? And then not paid for that work?

Some context: from what we can tell, the contracts of upwards of 150 NTT faculty members will expire this Friday, on May 15th. There is of course an issue of humanity here: should the university, ethically, not renew these devoted, conscientious, and hard-working teachers, thus forcing them to lose their health insurance in the midst of the worst pandemic of our lifetimes?

That said, the issue before the committee is pedagogical. These NTT faculty teach a wide variety of classes, many of them quite large. UIC is making no commitment to them whatsoever. That means that, at best, they will have to scramble to prepare for their courses just a few weeks before the beginning of the semester. Completely uncompensated. That's terrible for them, and arguably even more terrible for our students.

There is some rhetoric from the administration that "we are all in this together." We would very much like to believe this, and work in concert to make the university whole. However, when the needs of both our students and our most vulnerable faculty are so summarily dismissed, where does that leave us all?

With best wishes,

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