

Dear Colleagues:

Summertime, and the living is easy. So in the grand tradition of labor, I will take a day off tomorrow and be back in touch after the Memorial Day holiday.

Also in the grand tradition of labor, we are hearing considerable concern about both the present and the future of the UIC workforce. Will the administration use the current crisis as an excuse to accelerate the decline of full-time faculty jobs?

As today's ultra-hard-working faculty comrade relates one version of this concern:

I recently learned that the administration has floated several proposals. One stuck out. At a meeting, top administrators asked heads to inquire of faculty: "Can lectures be combined if all classes with 70+ will be online (asynchronously)?" I'm not sure whether the union is aware of this, so I wanted to bring it to UICUF's attention. As someone who is currently scheduled to teach several hundred students next semester (including three classes with more than 100 students), the idea of the university asking departments to combine already enormous classes is disturbing, both from a pedagogical standpoint and from a labor standpoint. It has made me and several of my colleagues wonder whether they might try to use this to pay faculty to teach twice as many students for the same salary. I hope that we are able to make sure this does not happen.

This kind of concern can, of course, be immediately put to rest by an emphatic statement from the administration that it would never consider using a public health crisis to reduce the size of the faculty. Again, though--in the grand tradition of labor--if such a statement is not forthcoming, we will be vigilant in fighting to assure that such a damaging shrinkage does not happen.

With best wishes,

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