



**United University Professions
Albany Chapter**

July 17, 2014

Dear President Stefanco,

First, allow me to extend my warm welcome to you as you make the move to Albany. As you know, one thing that makes this region so engaging is the wealth of educational institutions in the area. As your colleague from the neighboring University at Albany, I congratulate you on your position, welcome you to the area, and look forward to perhaps meeting with you in the future.

I write in my capacity as the President of the Albany Chapter of United University Professions (UUP), the union that represents nearly 40,000 faculty and staff within the SUNY System. The composition of our union is relevant to this correspondence: we represent tenure-line faculty and professional staff, as well as part-time, contingent, and adjunct academics and professionals. The issue of contingent and adjunct faculty has been among the top priorities in the UUP agenda for roughly the past decade as SUNY, like colleges and universities throughout the country, has been forced to rely increasingly on such faculty to deliver instruction. As you are well aware, contingent faculty provide crucial instruction, frequently teaching introductory, general education, and core courses. However, they typically do so at deplorable rates of pay, with few if any health benefits, poor access to campus resources and office space, few if any job protections, radical uncertainty about future employment, and a lack of representation in institutional structures. As I am sure you will agree, the precarity of this employment structure, by necessity, undermines the quality of instruction at institutions of higher education across the country, St. Rose and University at Albany included.

I am aware that adjunct faculty at the College of St. Rose have filed a petition with the NLRB to unionize. Attached please find a copy of a resolution, unanimously passed on July 17, 2014 by our Executive Committee, affirming our Chapter's full support of these unionizing efforts. In the spirit of this resolution I urge you, the College of St. Rose administration, and any representatives that the College contracts, to remain neutral throughout this process. After a fair and open process, your faculty deserve the opportunity to vote on whether they choose to have union representation without any coercion or intimidation, no matter how seemingly small.

If the adjunct faculty at St. Rose vote to unionize, I think that you will ultimately come to see the enormous benefits of a unionized faculty, both for the faculty and the College. Given the conditions I sketch above, union representation provides one of the few—perhaps the only—mechanisms available to establish and enforce protections for those faculty whose work is most exploited and most vulnerable. Ideally we will return to a higher-educational landscape in which tenure-track academic jobs are the norm, and the full protections of academic freedom and permanent appointment are afforded to most, if not all, instructional faculty. I sincerely hope this will happen and will work towards this goal. In the interim, however, and given the realities of a contingent “new faculty majority,” the unionization of adjuncts is both the right thing to do for the individuals who are working in those positions, and also in the best interests of the College of St.

Rose and its students. Again I urge you to remain neutral throughout the period leading up to the unionization vote.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized capital letter 'B' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Bret Benjamin,
President, Albany Chapter UUP