

Feb. 21, 2014

UIC United Faculty strike illustrates challenges facing public higher education nationwide

The Campaign for the Future of Higher Education stands in solidarity with the University of Illinois at Chicago United Faculty, a joint affiliate of AAUP and AFT, who conducted a two-day strike, February 18 and February 19 to pressure the administration to bargain a fair first contract.

We stand with our UICUF colleagues who are calling for prioritizing instructional over administrative expenditures and reversing a long-standing pattern of significantly disproportionate increases in non-instructional personnel and costs. It is time to reverse the university's misplaced priorities: UIC students are paying more and getting less access to full-time faculty.

We support our UICUF colleagues' proposal for greater due process and job security, a career progression for full-time, non-tenure-track faculty, as well as for a substantial increase in what is dramatically substandard and unfair pay for faculty who teach such a large proportion of lower division, undergraduate classes. It is time for the institution to commit to quality employment conditions for its faculty, especially of the under-supported full-time, non-tenure-track faculty.

The faculty's working conditions are directly related to students' learning conditions and opportunities, which are being compromised.

We applaud our UICUF colleagues' commitment to an affordable, quality higher education for the diverse, urban population of Chicago students, many of whom are working and are the first in their families to attend college. It is important for the institution to recommit to its historic mission. We should not be rationing access to a broad, high quality education by race/ethnicity and class background.

The widespread support that the strike has earned from student groups and unions, from employee unions on and off-campus, and from groups committed to diversity is a testament to the principles that the UIC United Faculty are fighting for. It also speaks to the broad coalitions that are so important to ensuring that our public institutions remain truly public and focused on serving the broad public interest.

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