

Thanks for coming today. The issues at stake in our forming a union of adjunct faculty likely affect *every single person in this room*. Whether you attend Hamline, work or teach at Hamline, help run Hamline, or pay to send your child to Hamline, the conditions that shape our lives as adjunct faculty bear directly on Hamline's capacity to deliver the excellence in teaching and learning that it has pledged to deliver.

Before we turn to our other speakers let me tell you briefly how we came to this day.

We began to organize a union, with the support and encouragement of SEIU, the Service Employees International Union, in spring 2014. The simplest explanation is that we were profoundly weary of being invisible, forgotten, and isolated. So weary that until the union movement began, we may not have even been able to name those things.

But this was the truth for some of us who, as adjunct—that is, part-time—faculty, had found Hamline a good place to exercise our gifts as teachers for nearly a decade (some for even longer). Over ten years, from 2005 to 2014, tuition at Hamline had increased 50%, from \$23,000 to \$34,500/year. During that same ten-year period former President Hanson's compensation grew from about \$290,000/year to \$535,000/year, placing her into the top 1% for income in the United States—with a comfortable \$100,000 to spare. Meanwhile, when we adjuncts looked at our own pay stubs, we noticed something alarming. In 2005 I made \$4000 to teach a course at Hamline. In 2014, with tuition rising and the President's pay soaring, my pay stub STILL said \$4000 per course.

Invisible. How could anyone in the administration not have noticed? When I went shopping in 2014 for clothes or groceries, I looked futilely for the section in the store with the 2005 prices, but that train had long ago left the station. And my paycheck was not on board.

Isolation. Many of us adjuncts barely knew each other. We teach part-time, often on multiple campuses, or we juggle multiple jobs. Out of the 77 adjunct faculty teaching in the spring of 2014, I knew two ... one of whom was me.

And then this happened. As we began to have conversations with each other we found a host of mutual concerns, common frustrations, shared anxieties, and collective hopes. Now, we love teaching; we appreciate both our students and our fulltime faculty colleagues, and we treasure being part of a vibrant academic community. But we were *weary* of being unseen, uncompensated, and un-connected.

Which is why our conversations gained momentum. Despite public opposition by President Hanson and Provost Jenson. Despite a university website set up to “educate” adjuncts about the perils of forming a union. And despite the university hiring an outside law firm to coordinate their efforts to try and stop our union drive. In fact, when we held our union vote in June 2014, a resounding 80% of us voted YES.

It's ironic that Hamline trusts us—indeed “markets” our ability—to help train students to think critically—and yet has consistently disparaged our ability to think critically ourselves about the disparities that mark our membership in this community.

Since September 2014, for fourteen months now, a team of five adjunct faculty and an SEIU negotiator has been bargaining with a six person team of administrators and an attorney from another outside law firm, hired for his expertise at limiting union gains in higher education.

First contracts have *a lot* of fine print to pin down, and we've managed to pin down most of it. But as we've ventured into the economics, the dollar signs, things have slowed down markedly. Securing Hamline's commitment to invest financially both in our well-being and in a more consistent sense of social justice has been difficult.

So, in short, we're here today because we want to invite Hamline more publicly than is possible at the bargaining table, to exercise the very mission, vision, and values that are at the heart of this university that we love. We seek to model those values as we teach our students. We want Hamline to model those values in their regard for us.

Closing Remarks by David Weiss

November 6, 2015

Adjunct Faculty in Religion and Steward for Hamline Adjunct Union, Local 284

I'm humbled by the grace, the wisdom, and the passion of the words shared here today.

It is true that we face *serious* challenges ahead of us—and not just in the bargaining room.

The economic (and ideological) pressures facing colleges and universities today are enormous. And administrators feel them with particular force.

At the same time, fulltime faculty find their governance weakened, both by structural changes and also simply by the overwhelming time demands of teaching, scholarship and service—especially with fewer fulltime colleagues to share the load. These strains make it *possible*—but, as you have heard today, *hardly inevitable*—for full-time and part-time faculty to be framed as adversaries in a zero-sum game.

We believe it is possible to envision a Hamline that is at once affordable to students *and* economically just to faculty—both fulltime and part-time. We envision academic communities where teaching is an honored—and fairly compensated—vocation, whether you carry a full load or a single course. We assert that our pursuit of justice and dignity within the campus community only strengthens the fabric of learning at Hamline. If we commend our students to fashioning a world where exploitation is *not* accepted as simply the way things are, then we must commend ourselves to the same project here at Hamline.

We believe that Hamline, so proud to be Minnesota's first university, has an equal opportunity to take pride in modeling a *new way* to be a university today. We are eager to partner, not just with our fulltime faculty colleagues as well as our students, *but also with the administration* in this daring venture.

So I hope to see deans and vice-presidents, even the provost and the president, bring some groceries to the food drive. As a visible pledge of their commitment to join us in working for a contract—and a future—that can be both just and sustainable for all of us.

We—are hungry for justice. I hope you are, too. Thank you.