

Oct. 19, 2016

Dear APSCUF,

My name is David Johnson. I'm President of the Southern Illinois University Faculty Association (IEA-NEA). I thought I'd just take a moment to reach out and say we're with you. Faculty everywhere deserve decent wages and benefits: that's the only way to ensure our students get a quality education.

We at SIUC went on strike not that long ago (the fall of 2011). It wasn't an easy decision, but it was the right one, in the face of an administration that was unwilling to bargain in good faith (as a state court later confirmed), and was intent on watering down tenure. Sometimes the longterm interest of a university and its students can only be protected by a strike. As is the case in Pennsylvania, our administration tried to insist that students go to classes even if their professors were gone--here they shipped in "qualified substitute instructors." But the students didn't buy it: they came out in hundreds to support us. If there's one piece of advice I could give, it would be to keep students in the forefront of your thoughts and plans: they are the key to emerging from a strike with a positive experience, and strong contract.

We wish for you and your students a quick & positive resolution of your strike.

In solidarity,

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