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TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer *Jm*

DATE: October 30, 2014

SUBJECT: Petition for Union Organization of Part-Time Faculty

On October 29, 2014 the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to hold an election to establish union representation for the part-time faculty on the University's Charles River and Medical Campuses. The proposed unit includes all schools and colleges *except for* the School of Medicine (though it includes the Division of Graduate Medical Sciences), School of Dental Medicine, School of Management, and Graduate School of Management. It includes part-time faculty who are compensated on a per course or per hour basis and who teach at least one credit-bearing course in a degree granting program or, in the case of CELOP faculty, one class in a pre-matriculation certificate program. It also includes employees who work for the University in another capacity but teach a class or course as described above.

The proposed unit excludes all full-time faculty, whether tenured, tenure track, or on contracts. It also excludes visiting faculty, graduate assistants, faculty who teach only online or who teach at non-Massachusetts campuses, a variety of administrators, and athletic coaches.

The University believes that certain aspects of SEIU's proposed unit are not appropriate and will immediately begin discussions with the SEIU regarding the unit definition. If agreement cannot be reached, a hearing will be held, and the composition of the unit will be determined by the NLRB.

A secret ballot election by part-time faculty within the defined unit will then be conducted by the NLRB at some point in the weeks ahead. We will keep you informed as to the outcome of this process.

It is our position that using the collective bargaining process to establish and monitor the working conditions of our part-time faculty is not in the best interests of our students or faculty as a whole, and that a unionized part-time faculty will not be able to provide a better education for our students.

If there is an election, whether or not a union will be established will be decided by a simple majority of those who vote, regardless of the number of eligible voters, so it is essential for each

eligible voter to make an informed choice and to vote. If the organizing effort is successful and a union is established, the union becomes the exclusive representative for all part-time faculty in the unit, whether or not a particular faculty member voted in the election or favors union representation. We do not believe that a master contract, negotiated by a union representative in an adversarial setting, is the best way to make sure that our part-time faculty are appropriately valued by the University and treated with the respect that they deserve.

As you know, in April 2013 we began to collect information on the working conditions of our part-time faculty in order to identify best practices that could be extended across the university. In October 2013, we convened a working group of part-time and full-time faculty and administrators, to develop specific recommendations about a wide range of issues of concern to part-time faculty at Boston University and across the nation. Since that time, we have made real progress in understanding the choices we need to make as we balance the needs of all of our faculty and students. The working group report was submitted in February 2014 and has been posted at <http://www.bu.edu/provost/faculty-affairs/part-time-faculty/part-time-faculty-working-group-report>. A number of the 37 recommendations have been implemented and some require additional consideration. While the union organizers have attempted to frame this work as a response to their activities, it preceded the organizing effort on our campus. If you look at the recommendations and reflect on the activities in your school or college, I think you will recognize the progress we have made and the progress we hope to continue to make in a collegial atmosphere.

Our goal is to remain an employer of choice for the highly talented part-time faculty population. Our graduate and professional programs are successful in part because of the participation each semester of accomplished professionals in the Boston area whose expertise in specialized areas complements the teaching of our full-time faculty. Employment through union membership, under terms of a collective bargaining agreement, may not reflect the relationship these professionals wish to have with Boston University. However, neither the part-time faculty nor the University will have the choice to operate outside such a setting if the union election is successful.

I realize that many of you may have questions and concerns about this process as it unfolds. We have established a website at <http://www.bu.edu/parttimefaculty> that should provide answers to many of those questions and that provides contact information for further communication.