July 18, 2020

Members of the St. John’s University Community:

Following the example of our President’s June 6, 2020 letter on anti-racism, as a Catholic and Vincentian University, St. John’s AAUP chapter strongly condemns all forms of racism, violence, intolerance, hate and bigotry. We must speak out against racial injustice and hate. We commit ourselves to building a racially just university and society.

St. John’s University’s AAUP, a faculty union representing full-time and adjunct faculty, stands against racism and discrimination against minoritized members of our community. As a union which maintains a direct relationship with the National AAUP in serving the interests of the faculty, it strives to represent the faculty and to promote their professional status, dignity and prestige as university professors and as union members, inside and outside of the university; to promote free discussion of shared interests and problems; to collectively bargain on behalf of members; to represent members when they have grievances; to promote free and independent discussion of common problems and interests; to promote research and scholarship; to host discussions of better student-faculty relations, improved methods of instruction, the status of faculty at St. John’s and other institutions, and the general intellectual level of the university. The AAUP pledges to continue to engage in these activities and more in an anti-racist way.

We, the members of the AAUP Executive Board, commit to intensifying our active work against racism and discrimination both individually and as a professional faculty representative body. To quote from a letter from AAUP National President Rudy Fichtenbaum, “Many have said that we need to have a conversation about racism and inequality. But a conversation is not enough. What we need is bold action.” We agree with President Fichtenbaum.

In response to the anti-racism petition we have received from almost 250 signatories across the university thus far, we have initiated several changes that will address the anti-racist work that letter calls us to do. In addition to implementing several suggestions from members, we have pledged to update and revise our union constitution, expand our membership, expand the Executive Board of the AAUP, revise election procedure, and solicit faculty opinion through instruments such as regular meetings and surveys as we prepare for the first Fall chapter meeting of the AAUP. We encourage faculty to participate in the SJU bias reporting process and we look forward to consulting regularly with SJU faculty advocacy groups and equity organizations. Furthermore we will require all AAUP officers, and strongly encourage our entire membership, to participate in AAUP anti-racism educational activities, and other training to support our continuing education as appropriate. We look forward to the time when the university supports anti-racism training for the entire faculty. We invite more suggestions from all our faculty members to ways in which the union can be pro-active in identifying and dealing with racism, bias, and discrimination against minoritized faculty. As faculty leaders, we join together, across our different schools and disciplines, together with our University President and administration, working to end racism in our classrooms, in our meetings and activities, in our professional and scholarly development, with our students and with our colleagues. This is our pledge.

Members of the Executive Board of the St. John’s Chapter

of the American Association of University Professors

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