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Want to Thank Island Community for your
support then and now.

My name is Sarah Slavick and I would like to comment on the resolution in support of the faculty union organizing and bargaining at Lesley University. For the past fifteen years, I have been an adjunct professor in the Fine Arts Department of Lesley University's College of Art and Design (LUCAD). I would like to bring to your attention the situation for many of the adjunct professors at Lesley. Adjunct professors are 48% of the faculty at Lesley University and even more at LUCAD. While we are nearly half of the faculty at Lesley, we have had little to no say on the trajectory of the curriculum. This means that Lesley, along with many universities in the country, have fewer and fewer people dedicated to revising curriculum and thinking about the education mission of the school. Many of the adjuncts working at LUCAD and at Lesley in general, have been there for over 20 years, dedicating themselves to educating the numerous graduates in their artistic and academic pursuits. Just as the country's gains have almost all gone to the 1%, there has been explosive growth in administrative positions and the salaries of those positions at Lesley over the past decades while adjunct pay at Lesley remains miserably low at poverty levels. Over a dozen administrators at Lesley make over six figures, but an adjunct faculty would have to teach 28 courses a year to reach that figure!

As talented professors, who have clearly demonstrated their commitment to teaching, we have to fight for our jobs every four months. At times, we do not know if we will be teaching until the last minute-just days, weeks, or even hours before a class is scheduled to begin. We have been asked to take half-pay for under-enrolled classes which require the same amount of work. Some of us, who have designed specific class curriculum, have had our courses taken. Some of us are living below the poverty line. We teach the same classes for the same credits as our full-time colleagues but receive a fraction of the pay. My credentials match, and in many cases even surpass, those of my full-time colleagues and yet I do not get retirement, health benefits and little faculty development support. While we love the work we do and know we have made a difference in the lives of our students, we are speaking out against this exploitation and are determined to no longer be invisible.

The adjunct struggle is operating in the same continuum of labor struggles in history. Poverty is poverty and we are the working poor. Many of us need food stamps and collect unemployment when we have no work.

It doesn't have to be this way. Lesley's adjuncts have formed a union and are negotiating our first contract. We unionized to taken action with a collective vision to achieve meaningful change. Unfortunately, progress in negotiations has been too slow. Your support of this resolution will send a message to the administration to agree to equitable compensation and job stability for its adjunct faculty. Thank you for your support.