



## NEWSPAPER GUILD OF PITTSBURGH

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **ARBITRATOR RULES IN FAVOR OF POINT PARK LABOR UNION, ORDERS UNIVERSITY TO RESCIND LAYOFF NOTICES TO 17 FACULTY**

After 17 faculty members at Point Park University received non renewal letters informing them that they would be out of a job when their term contract expires, an arbitrator on Thursday ruled in favor of the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh TNG-CWA Local 38061, the union that represents full-time faculty.

The university has been ordered to retain affected faculty members and rescind the 17 layoff notices, which appeared to target members of minority groups, including women of color and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Ten percent of combined full-time faculty and staff identify as people of color, according to university data. Affected faculty — which included the

faculty union's executive committee unit delegate Ben Schonberger — received non renewal letters from the university in February.

"This is an incredible victory for all faculty that work under our CBA. The contract is designed to fairly support us and our work," Schonberger said.

"We are beyond elated by this ruling and thankful for the arbitrator's clear recognition of specific language in Article 18 and Article 31 of the CBA that the university violated and misunderstood," said Loretta Wimbley, President of the Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh.

"Seventeen educators, who are people with bills to pay, homes to sustain and mouths to feed, get to keep their jobs. The students they serve will greatly reap too."

In pursuing the elimination of untenured faculty positions, university management relied on a calculated misreading of Article 18 (Appointments and Renewal) of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), by calling these position eliminations a non-renewal of an appointment. The Union rebuked this action by noting that, if completed, it would amount to Position Eliminations as laid out in Article 31 of the CBA, which clearly states that any such attempt must be accomplished by September 15 to take effect at the end of the academic year in August, and must first meet other criteria, such as the elimination of overload, emeritus, and part-time teaching assignments.

University officials previously cited the COVID-19 pandemic as a reason that position eliminations are needed; however, management has accepted over \$9 million in federal support through the CARES Acts, and has failed to be transparent as to how those funds were used.

Arbitrator Matthew M. Franckiewicz concluded the university did not meet the September 15 timetable to notify the affected faculty members. The university's decision to lean on section 1 in Article 18 of the CBA was a "somewhat convoluted construction," the arbitrator stated.

*The Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh represents about 120 unionized newsroom employees at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and about 130 full-time faculty members at Point Park University.*