

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Averting Strike, Adjunct Faculty Reach Tentative Contract Settlement at Northeastern University

With walkout looming, university administrators agree to improve wages, reduce classroom instability for more than 900 instructors

BOSTON, MA – Adjunct faculty at Northeastern University reached a contract settlement early this morning with campus administrators – a three-year agreement that makes significant progress in compensation and course stability, professional development and the faculty role in decisions that affect their work. Facing a campus-wide walkout that was set to begin January 19, administrators came back to the table this week for a series of negotiation sessions overseen by a federal mediator. The resulting settlement is subject to a ratification vote by affected Northeastern faculty.

Among the major gains in the three-year tentative agreement:

- *Improved Pay that Values Teaching:* Adjunct faculty will receive significant, across-the-board increases in per-course pay – varied by department and college – including double-digit raises for the lowest-paid instructors.
- *Improved Course Stability:* For the first time, adjunct faculty will be compensated for courses cancelled on short notice before a semester begins. Northeastern has also committed to promoting greater predictability and consistency in who teaches courses semester-to-semester.
- *Inclusion in the Northeastern Community:* Adjunct faculty will have an elevated voice in decisions that impact their teaching and their students – including a formal process to deal with workplace conflicts and violations.
- *Professional Development Fund:* Northeastern adjunct faculty will have access to funding to support research, scholarship, civic engagement, and professional and artistic practice that contribute to the learning experience on campus.

“Today, we add our voices to the chorus of faculty who have organized to improve higher education across the country,” said Haley Malm a bargaining team leader from Northeastern’s Global Pathways Program. “As one of the lowest-paid adjuncts on campus, this contract will result in a double-digit raise. Negotiations are always tough, but I think that’s a clear win.”

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The tentative agreement caps off a 19-month effort by more than 900 educators at Northeastern, who voted to join Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 509's [Faculty Forward](#) division in May of 2014. In the ensuing months, elected officials, community leaders, students and alumni joined part- and full-time faculty in [an aggressive public campaign](#) to improve teaching and learning conditions at the Boston campus.

“So many members of the Northeastern community came together in this effort – to bring the focus of our university back to the classroom,” said Nora Callahan, a student in the College of Social Sciences & Humanities. “As a student, I’m excited that my professors have finally won the respect they deserve and the working conditions they need to deliver a top-notch education.”

Wednesday’s settlement marks the latest milestone in the growing faculty union movement in Massachusetts – with more than 3,400 educators now joined in a shared effort to raise standards and improve the overall quality of higher education through SEIU Local 509. Contract negotiations are underway among contingent faculty at Bentley University and BU, following landmark agreements at [Tufts](#) and [Lesley](#) last year. In December, non-tenure-track faculty won their union election at Brandeis University by a four-to-one margin. And tenured faculty at the Tufts University School of Medicine [filed a precedent-setting union petition](#), breaking new ground in the nationwide movement to address the crisis in higher education.

“When this process began, I had doubts about what could be accomplished through collective bargaining. But negotiations over this contract changed my views completely,” said Elliot Chikofsky, who has taught engineering technology at Northeastern for nearly three decades. “Adjunct faculty now have a real seat at the table on issues like course schedules and curriculum planning. We can finally contribute and be recognized for those contributions.”

SEIU Local 509 represents more than 18,000 human service workers and educators throughout the commonwealth, including 3,400 part- and full-time faculty in the Greater Boston area. SEIU 509 members provide a variety of social services to elders, at-risk children and people with mental illnesses or developmental disabilities — as well as educational opportunities from early learning to higher education. Local 509 is part of the Service Employees International Union, the fastest-growing labor union in the United States. For more information, visit <http://seiu509.org>.

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