

Vermont Students, Workers Object to Tuition Dollars Being Used to Fund Poverty Wages

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By [Jonathan Leavitt](#), [Truthout](#) / News Analysis

Rising tuition, faculty cuts and non-living wages for janitors and food workers in Vermont institutions of higher learning are prompting student labor organizers to ask if tuition dollars should be used to exacerbate inequality.

In Vermont, labor unrest in higher education is giving way to powerful new forms of adjunct, staff and student organization. At "progressive" Burlington College, once run by Bernie Sanders' wife, a controversial neoliberal "restructuring" has spurred restive students to dissolve their student government and form a "more democratic student union." At St. Michael's College, the mission statement of which is packed with social justice verbiage, the school has refused to give a contract to the first union in the Catholic College's 109-year history. In response, an "alt-labor" coalition of low-wage janitors, students and Vermont Workers' Center members has staged a series of rallies, dragging St. Mike's \$434,000 per year President John J. Neuhauser back to the bargaining table. At the University of Vermont, [shantytowns \(to win divestment from apartheid\)](#) and occupations of the president's wing of the Waterman administration building ([to win a more diverse faculty](#) divest from war profiteering and [protest tuition increases](#)) are as much a prerequisite for a Catamount green-and-gold graduation as any seminar. Yet despite hunger strikes and tent cities for livable wages for low-wage food service workers, French multinational corporation Sodexo, with \$16 billion a year in revenue, is attempting to use the Affordable Care Act as a pretext to tear up low-wage food workers' health care, retirement and dental benefits. Central to all of these labor struggles are an increasingly unified statewide movement of student labor organizers asking urgently: Should our tuition dollars at these progressive higher institutions be used to fund poverty wages and exacerbate Vermont's inequality?



(Photo: [Justin Henry / Flickr](#))

Vermont's higher-education uprising comes after decades of the United States distancing itself ever farther from the UN's 1966 requirement that member countries implement "progressive introduction of free education." Over the intervening half century, US colleges and universities increasingly have moved to commodify the human right to education. As the relative deprivation of the swelling ranks of adjuncts and low-wage staff members increases, these new forms of worker organization are growing increasingly commonplace. In [Portland, the student union has bolstered the teachers' ability to resist austerity](#); [UC graduate students voted to go on strike alongside AFSCME 3299 patient care workers](#) in November; [professors supported Cooper Union students who'd occupied their president's office](#), temporarily defeating the imposition of tuition; and during the Quebec Student strike, [Professors against the Hike and a broader social strike](#) proved a powerful ally in helping to students maintain the strike mandate and [defeat the proposed 82 percent tuition increase](#). In 1960, 75 percent of US professors were full-time. These days, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), in its annual faculty compensation survey, reports 76 percent of college and university educators are "contingent," meaning non-tenure-track faculty, adjuncts or graduate students. As Wallerstein writes, the great depression saw a professional managerial class erected as a stabilizing white-collar barrier between the financial elites and unemployed workers movements and radical labor. Tuition-free institutions such as the [City University of New York](#), the [University of California](#) system and Cooper Union were part of this process, generating the "[pronounced social and economic mobility of the postwar period](#)." Those storied institutions are in the process of being subsumed by a new higher-ed vision: [The University of Phoenix has grown bigger than the entire University of California system and the Ivy League schools combined](#). As

the neoliberal higher-education model demands ever more profits from adjuncts and debt-saddled students, the firewall preserving the university system of old has been dismantled almost completely, creating unifying motivations for broad solidarity networks across faculty and staff members and students.

"It is well past time for students, workers and community organizing efforts to join forces," said James Haslam, director of the Vermont Workers' Center. "The struggles of students fighting for democracy and the soul of their schools while facing higher tuition and huge amounts of student debt need to be linked to the workers at these schools organizing against corporate greed to establish dignified working conditions."

Powerful Allies and a Permissive Context for New Forms of Campus Labor Organizing

Much attention has been given to [student debt](#) becoming the second-largest sector of private debt in the United States. Student movements internationally and nationally struggling against the privatization of the human right to education have received much less mainstream media coverage. Low-wage campus workers and student labor organizers in Vermont have a very permissive world context in which to change that, with political power elites regularly issuing statements of support.

"State colleges are public institutions that should not only provide quality, affordable education to the public but should exemplify how Vermont presents itself to the outside world," state Sen. Anthony Pollina said. "And they should teach by example, one example being economic and social justice and respect for the rights and dignity of workers - that means high road contracting at livable wages." Pollina introduced [SB40, legislation to end cost shifting onto Vermont students and families because of Vermont's increasing lack of funding higher education](#). When people talk about the hollowing out or corporatization of higher education, they rarely picture Vermont, however the "progressive" state is [last in the nation in terms of funding public higher education for its residents](#). To wit, the state of Vermont's funding for the operational budgets of UVM and the Vermont State Colleges - and thereby Vermonters' access to the human right to education - has fallen from 51 percent in 1980 to 8.5 percent today. This increasing shift of costs onto working Vermont families comes at a time when economic [inequality grew faster in Vermont than in any other state but one for 15 straight years](#) and [Vermont's top 1 percent of income earners have seen their incomes more than triple since 1970](#). Vermont's divestment from funding higher education comes in a context of calls to [fully fund public colleges](#) and where the sum of the federal government's "various and sundry student aid initiatives" could have [covered the tuition bill of every student at every public college in the country](#)."

Powerful state Sen. Tim Ashe says, "[Those who are organizing] are surrounded by low-wage researchers and academics and staff. At this time of dramatic transformation of higher ed with increasing usage of adjuncts and massive online courses, they need continue to call the question: Is higher ed is going to serve the interests of a very few while leaving low pay for so many."

The Public University as Low-Wage Employer

What are the long-term effects on the state of Vermont's human rights obligations when public institutions such as UVM and the network of state colleges become low-wage employers? What are the broad, societal implications for the state of Vermont if 1,000 low-wage Sodexo employees at public colleges "no longer qualify for health and dental coverage, sick and vacation days and a retirement package at the end of the year?" In recent months, the [federal government's reliance on similar low-wage contractors](#) has promulgated a festering inequity, [labor stoppages](#) and [unionization](#) for low-wage food service workers inside the [Smithsonian and Pentagon](#). Students at Vermont's largest college see labor unrest inside federal institutions as a harbinger of what's to come for public colleges.

"Adjuncts and low-wage workers have the potential to be some of our strongest allies in the struggle for campus equity," says UVM Students Stand Up organizer David Fernandez, "as they are some of the most directly affected by the corporatization of the university, and solidarity between these members of the community and students is crucial to creating a more democratic and just university."



Fernandez and many other UVM students have been organizing against Sodexo's misclassification of these 1,000 low-wage food workers. The corporation is using Affordable Care Act compliance as a rationale to "redefine full-time employment" as 30 hours a week, effectively rendering all 1,000 of its Vermont employees part-time, and gutting previously negotiated employee benefits. Four months of students and workers organizing triggered an elite schism of sorts: [The president of UVM and the Vermont State College chancellor [issued twin letters condemning the removal of workers' benefits](#), potentially causing a temporary freeze of the reclassification at UVM and the Vermont State Colleges. However Sodexo, undaunted, issued a statement that it plans to move forward with removing its low-wage employees' benefits statewide.

The Feminization of Poverty Inside Vermont State Colleges

"By virtue of Sodexo's contract, competition with other food service providers is eliminated," said UVM economics professor Stephanie Seguino. "Given the likelihood that Sodexo earns above-market profits, it is not unreasonable that UVM and VSC, as public institutions, require Sodexo to pay living wages and offer reasonable benefits to workers as a condition of their monopoly in food service on campus." According to Seguino's research, jobs with wages and benefits below a living wage essentially shift Sodexo's labor costs to the public sector in the form of social supports, as well as the "social costs that result from poverty."

As Barbra Ehrenreich points out, there's an [intersecctionality of poverty and gender among low-wage workers](#). "In many ways, these jobs are a trap: They pay so little that you cannot accumulate even a couple of hundred dollars to help you make the transition to a better-paying job. They often give you no control over your work schedule, making it impossible to arrange for child care or take a second job." Seguino says this national trend, referred to by many labor journalists as the "feminization of poverty," is reflected in a lack of paid sick days for Sodexo workers. "A failure to adopt sound public policies that reinforce the ability for low-wage workers to care for themselves and their families creates a perverse financial incentive for employers to create more low-wage, temporary, part-time and seasonal positions," Seguino said. "This is already a problem at Sodexo, and there is the potential for this type of family responsibility discrimination to worsen with the reclassification of workers."

Sodexo worker Deb Ploof, inside Senator Baruth's Senate Economic Development Committee hearings on Sodexo, lays out the reality of how "everyone is going to work sick already." Ploof said Sodexo "officially" urges workers to take sick days but imposes a point penalty for instances when a worker is out. When seven points are accrued, the worker is terminated, effectively giving workers a false choice between taking care of their health and their family or their job. Ploof's daughter is a Sodexo employee who had accrued six points. Because of Sodexo's "climate of fear," she refused to go to the hospital for emergency surgery until Ploof begged her daughter's supervisor not to give her a point for taking sick time.

At Baruth's hearing, Esther Hasskamp, a graduate student and Johnson State College Sodexo employee, recounted a harrowing story: Her sick leave was retroactively adjusted after her gallbladder surgery, providing a fig leaf for the food giant to fire her. Hasskamp laid out the impossible logic of Sodexo's sick-leave policy, "You can't make financial decisions or live knowing that if you get sick again, you have no income anymore."

In what's a recurrent motif for nonunion low-wage workers on Vermont college campuses, Sodexo workers

involved in the organizing have been terminated in what many allies and organizers consider retaliatory fashion. "There is such a high level of fear of losing their jobs. [Cheryl Bell and I talked to Seven Days](#)," Ploof said. "Since then, Cheryl Bell was written up for being in the hospital for pneumonia. Ultimately she has been fired since then." Another Sodexo food service worker in December, according to Ploof, went to work so sick "he was throwing up in the garbage can and [Sodexo] let him work his entire shift as a cashier."

Baruth described the multinational imbuing fear in their low-wage Vermont employees around sick days as a "disciplinary management tool." "The workers are kept in a kind of uncertainty. They feel as though it might be an excused absence if they are in the hospital, but honestly they don't know. The idea that people would worry when they are hospitalized - when they are getting organs removed - that they would be written up or losing their job seems extreme."

After hearing the experiences of Hasskamp, Ploof and others, the commissioner of the Vermont Department of Labor, Annie Noonan, recapitulated the very formal sounding [National Labor Relations Act Chapter 7 "protections"](#) and the NLRB process. Union members in the room seemed skeptical that a process that, at best, might deliver justice in the form of a toothless 8.5-by-11-inch paper tiger of a workplace flier. Sen. Ann Cummings shared labor organizers' concerns. "What I heard is they are afraid for their jobs. They have to put food in their mouths, food in their families' mouths, and pay their rent. They don't have the luxury of helping the NLRB act. If you weren't afraid, you wouldn't go to work throwing up in the trash can."

Republican committee chairman Kevin Mullin, frustrated with the unmet fundamental needs of his constituents interjected: "This is ridiculous. We have a situation where they are exposing the public to a health risk by having a policy where someone is penalized for not coming to work when they are sick. If they are allowed to do that, then we should at least pass some some sort of health care legislation. This is insane." Interestingly, there will be [paid-sick-days legislation in Mullin and Baruth's committee during this legislative session](#).

In this context of toothless NLRB penalties, students are showing they can act as a powerful [alt-labor](#) configuration, building power with other student labor groups around the state with the goal of winning justice for Sodexo workers. As David Fernandez said, "[The Vermont Student Organizing Project](#) is the beginning of a statewide student association in Vermont. A student union is definitely the long-term vision of [UVM's Student Stand Up] organizing."

Dissolving the Student Government, Forming a Student Union and Fighting for a Voiceless Faculty

The median adjunct professor pay nationally is a mere \$2,700 for a semester-long course - and typically those adjunct "professors" lack health insurance, paid sick days, retirement plans and the many other benefits that defined academia's mid-20th century social contract. Burlington College is taking this poverty-wage academic model through the looking glass. Following the Plunkett administration's recent controversial restructuring, 93 percent of Burlington College's 213 faculty will be adjuncts, receiving \$250 to \$3,200 per semester-long course (pay varies depending on class size). The AAUP's annual report on the Economic Status of the Profession describes "unabated growth of contingent employment," like Burlington College's, as "the most significant trend in academic labor of this era."

The downsizing of the school's prized film and cinema studies department and media activism department exacerbates that trend. Longtime faculty members and department heads were given the false choice of being pushed downward into adjunct status, losing all their benefits and a huge swath of their wages, or being terminated outright. Athena Pepe, a first year Media Activism student, says "I came to Burlington College specifically for the media activism program. I feel as though I have been sold a future that is no longer available to me. These unfair firings show that the administration is not acting in the best interest of the students and betraying the fundamental values and character of the school."



Burlington College
Vermont USA

Burlington College's mission statement has language about "fostering the just, humane society."

Yet while the Plunkett administration is flying to China with our \$4.5 million in annual tuition dollars, our faculty are getting poverty wages

Important Dates for Contracts and Payroll

Monday August 27	complete
Fri 9/6	End of Free Fall Drop
Fri 10/25	contracts have been received
Fri 11/23	paychecks to be distributed to faculty mailboxes
Fri 12/7	on the morning of each payday.

Contracts for regular courses and workshops will be emailed within one week after the end of free fall. Contracts for any Degree Project work (DP Instructor or Reader) will be emailed to faculty at the end of the semester.

To enroll in direct deposit, please provide a voided check to HR.

Pay Rates

3 credit courses 5-8 students - \$2500 9-16 students - \$2900 17-20 students - \$3200	Workshops (1 credit) 5-10 students - \$700 11-20 students - \$900
Tutorial (3 credits) 1-4 students - \$500 per student	Guided Independent Study (GIS) (3 credits) 1-4 students - \$360 per student
Degree Project Degree Project 1 Instructor (DP1) - \$250 Degree Project 2 Instructor (DP2) - \$325 Degree Project Reader - \$100	Masters Program Faculty - \$750 Advisor (student's first residency) - \$350 Advisor (subsequent residencies) - \$200

Student anguish over the prospect of losing cherished professors and subsidizing poverty wages served as unifying motivations, galvanizing a movement that saw students attempting to bring the issues directly to prospective students in a November 16, 2013, open house. Plunkett herself momentarily demobilized students, blocking them at the doorway to the open house. Undeterred, students continued organizing, and the Plunkett administration increased its attempts to pressure students not to speak out.

"My job as a resident adviser was threatened," said former SGA president Molly Skerry. "If I were to be involved in any sort of student protest. ... The word that was used was *sabotaged*. If I was involved in anything that would 'sabotage' an open house, my job would be - they would have to relook at the appropriateness. That was something the dean said directly to my supervisor - who had to relay [it] to me. I know other students have been singled out." Skerry said the dean and president cornered her while she was working. "The intention was to bully me and bully others," identifying her as a "ringleader" and asking her to "pacify students."

A students-only meeting November 22 saw the dissolution of the existing student government by constitutional change. Students then formed a "student union" similar to that of [Quebec's successful student strikes](#) (which incidentally have resulted in the cheapest tuition in North America). "I have resigned from student government in favor of a more democratic student union. Our voice has not been reflected in these controversial changes," former student government president David Littlefield said. "We do not consent to our tuition dollars being used to fund poverty wages and real estate development rather than 'fostering the just, humane society,' outlined in the mission statement of the Burlington College we used to know."

"Part of forming the student union is [remembering our past](#) and moving forward with those values," Skerry said.

"The teal circle is a sign of solidarity with the student union and staff. I feel powerful walking through the building wearing it, and it's really encouraging seeing so many students and even some faculty and staff wearing them." Skerry and Littlefield said there's been a large increase in participatory student decision making since the formation of the student union.

The students, many of them steeped in same media activism and film programs the Plunkett administration was intent on gutting, produced a viral video inside the all-campus meeting, which subsequently was [picked up by national progressive media](#). Additionally the student union [leaked the poverty wages for adjuncts](#) and [retrofitted the school's marketing campaign](#), which featured their faces, reflecting the divide between what Littlefield calls "the Burlington College that we used to know" and the new hollowed-out neoliberal vision.

"Our college bred us to be activists and to speak out, so the irony is really inescapable," Skerry said. "It's gorgeous the way Burlington College students are fighting back with our art and everything we've been taught here; we're fighting for those values because we don't see them in the administration right now."

Shock Doctrine Burlington College-Style

Following the dissolution of the student government, the creation of the student union and the students' press release, viral video and the resultant media scrutiny, Plunkett staged a series of interviews that the casual observer might mistake as damage control. In alternative weekly *Seven Days*: "It's no secret that Burlington College has very creative and passionate students. ... Our new marketing materials are extraordinary. ... Our students' use of these materials to further their message is a reflection of how strongly our brand resonates with them." In the *Burlington Free Press*: "The expectation for department chairs, Plunkett said, is that they will grow their programs in an entrepreneurial way." Perhaps more surprising than the free-market sound bites is the way the Plunkett administration claims Burlington College's austerity measures [have nothing to do with the school's recent \\$10 million debt incurred from a new campus](#). An earlier round of similar controversial changes prompted the resignation of Robin Lloyd, longtime trustee and publisher of *Towards Freedom*. New board members, one of whom poses [with the Merrill Lynch Bull logo for his Burlington College photo](#), aren't exactly cut from the student union's teal felt.

As to the road ahead, Skerry shares the vision of building a broad statewide campus solidarity network. "Solidarity is extremely important. We're not alone; other students are having these same experiences. But even more so, we're taking the next steps; we're all getting spoken over; we're getting beat down, but we're a lot more powerful banding together."

One crucial test for the union's constituent power will be whether it can effectively win justice for what students describe as "fearfully silent faculty." Secondly, can this nascent student movement build a permissive world context through helping the Vermont Student Organizing Project build a statewide solidarity network around livable wages and student power? Finally, can the student union continue its momentum into a new semester? Students report the administration is attempting to force a new student government on the student body. Clearly these sorts of actions would pose a serious challenge to student autonomy, as well as to students' fundamental right to organize and freely associate.

"The school is at an ideological crossroads," [Burlington College Student Union](#) member Ned McEleney said. "Either we allow the Plunkett administration to take us toward a corporate model where administrators make decisions with our money behind closed doors and push faculty downward to poverty wages, or the students organize and create the just, humane college we were promised." McEleney said that because of these controversial changes, he "won't be returning to Burlington College this semester."

One Big Union: Students and Workers Building Power to Win a Historic Contract



September 20, 2013, an idyllic parents' weekend at progressive St. Michael's College: a cornflower blue sky, unseasonably warm temperatures, out-of-state cars brimming with family passing through the campus gates - only to be caught unawares by a large labor solidarity rally. It's very fashionable in labor journalism to weigh the powerful prefigurative possibilities of "alt-labor" configurations joining traditional unions. In front of St. Mike's, this theorizing materialized as a massive coalition of unions and [student labor formations](#) from three campuses demanding an end to retaliatory firings "better working conditions, just cause and a livable wage" for the low-wage janitors of St. Mike's. Students' families were faced with a critical moment of self-recognition: Are our \$39,000-per-year tuition checks underwriting labor abuses? A November 2 rally in a driving rain and a third rally that marched through campus chanting, "What do we want? Contract! When do we want it? Now!" on the November 14 anniversary of the janitors voting for their union emphasized this vibrant new formation of student and worker power.

The widely perceived retaliatory firing of Kingston and Dannis Hackney, drummer for [seminal Detroit proto-punk band Death](#), set off a public relations nightmare of alumni indignation, which called "[on Saint Mike's administration to hold up the social justice tradition in action and not just in empty rhetoric. Until the college does the right thing, we will not donate another dime to the school.](#)"

According to Lebel, the school uses budgets to leverage student groups, and keeps SGA from having any meaningful autonomy: "SLAM was going to try to pass a resolution at the Student Government Administration to support [janitors'] effort organizing a union. A woman from student life intervened." Kingston details how a professor aligned with the administration tried to persuade students to cancel the parents' weekend rally.

Additionally, St. Michael's has been funneling tuition dollars to a \$600-per-hour "union buster" lawyer. "[They're using the Walmart and McDonald's playbook,](#)" says St. Michael's political science professor Bill Grover.

Members of SLAM brought janitors snacks and coffee timed to coincide with a 5 AM janitors petition drive meeting - as they'd been doing for years. Janitors were quickly able to get the signatures they needed to file for the first union election in Saint Mike's history. "If we didn't have the support of the students, I'm not sure if we would have had all the signatures we needed. I'm not sure if we would have gotten all the votes we needed," Kingston noted. Additionally, leading up to the election, there was a two-month span that SLAM organized continuously, gathering signatures from hundreds of students showing support for the janitors' union, writing commentaries in the campus newspaper, making Quebec-style purple felt squares and hanging posters. "The press reported that we won the election, but they don't know the members of SLAM created the environment we needed to make it happen," Kingston said.

"A bold student labor configuration shows the bargaining unit there is actually supported, gives people the extra courage to go through with it. After all the intimidation, people get frightened," St. Mike's janitor Graham Lebel said. There were three captive-audience meetings that Lebel said were "completely ridiculous" and "helpful for us." Inside the anti-union meetings, the social justice school engaged in "scare tactics" around union dues, broke down how "unions were good back in the day, but we don't have child labor any more" and noted how "this isn't General Motors; there's only 37 of you."

"But that has really changed now. The union had a lot to do with it." Lebel said. "They were all incredibly condescending throughout all of these meetings. We met with the president, and he was condescending the whole time. He said he was offended because he'd 'tried so hard to keep the family together.'" According to janitor Pratit Gurung, St. Mike's head of Human Resources Tina Tenny was worried that forming a union would "damage the Catholic faith." Generalized harassment, intimidation and a climate that allowed for "racist, wildly offensive" anti-immigrant, anti-union posters to remain on the wall until Gurung insisted they be removed. "Pratit had to take

it to the next level," Lebel said.

The Neuhauser administration, according to Kingston, "should do the moral, just and right thing, which is to settle a fair contract now, and it's going to happen through a movement of custodians and students building power."

"They're going to settle." Lebel said. "We're going to use every tactic we can think of between now and then to win a contract."

In an email to all St Mike's employees, administrator Michael Lew illuminated how the school is unwilling to settle on a wage increase that the janitors union is asking for. The wage increase the school is refusing, according to Lebel, is "50 cents an hour." The total amount for the entire bargaining unit would be roughly equivalent to the tuition for one student. Or as Graham puts it, "If Neuhauser's salary was reduced to \$400,000," it would offset the cost of the "substantial" 50-cent hourly increase. "Maybe he can't live on \$400,000 per year. He has free housing and a car, but maybe he can't do it."

"In the face of the Neuhauser administration's anti-union stance, the janitors' most powerful weapon is solidarity across struggles," Lebel said. Like UVM students, Burlington College Student Union members and Vermont Student Organizing Project students, Lebel shares the collective vision of Vermont campuses acting as one big union fighting for livable wages and education as a human right. "When the administrations of these schools begin to realize that we are highly organized, that is when we begin to win," Lebel said. "All of these schools have mission statements, and it is always the administrators who try to undermine these missions. And it's students, workers and faculty, through their organizing, who ultimately can uphold them."

The Path Forward for Adjunct, Janitor and Food Service Workers' Dignity and Education as a Human Right

As the spring semester begins in Vermont, these new forms of worker organization face crucial tests. Will they be able to solidify their emergent social movement potential into a powerful federation of organized campuses to act as one big union for low-wage members of the faculty and staff? The Vermont Workers' Center's James Haslam said, "These fights need to be deeply rooted in the broader community, as the working families struggle to be able to find good jobs and afford higher education for their families. United, we have the power to reclaim these institutions to benefit our communities and together build a real democracy." Will these solidarity networks win measurable collective bargaining and contract victories for low-wage workers at Vermont colleges? Certainly Lebel hopes so. "Burlington College's student union is great! The problem with student government associations is that they are controlled by administrations. A student union can operate completely autonomously. It would be great if UVM and Saint Mike's dissolved their student governments!" The Vermont Student Organizing Project isn't sitting idly by waiting for one big student-faculty-staff union to slowly emerge; a statewide student power conference is scheduled for February 7.

"The conference will be an opportunity for students from across the state to meet, begin to form the relationships we will need to effectively organize and emerge energized to do the ground work needed on our individual campuses to make this project a reality," David Fernandez said. "We'll all have the chance to learn from each other, both of the information we know about how our education system functions and by sharing our stories of how the current crisis in higher education has affected us."

For Vermont campus labor organizers, several things bode well for keeping the issues in the spotlight. A very public denouement or escalation to the lengthy St Michael's janitorial contract saga appears imminent. Based on prior history, the Neuhauser and Plunkett administrations, as well as Sodexo, seem unlikely to relinquish their polarizing roles opposing dignity for their workers. Although this might lead to short-term challenges, the quickly eroding vestiges of student, faculty and staff equity in higher education will, in the words of state Senator Ashe, continually "call the question" as to why "higher ed is going to serve the interests of a very few."

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