

Dan DiPiero, M.A., M.F.A.
PhD Student, Comparative Studies Department
Ohio State University

February 19, 2015

Central Ohio Adjuncts, Ohio Education Coalition, and Parties of Concern,

I read with great enthusiasm your email to the Ohio State teaching community regarding National Adjunct Walkout Day, this coming February 25. As a member of the New Faculty Majority, a PhD student in the humanities, and as someone who has spoken out on adjunct issues at a conference on pedagogies (<http://ct21st.org/schedule/>), I am heartened by and appreciative of your call to action. The first purpose of this letter, therefore, is to make it known that I am keen to become more involved, if you would have me, and to help in any way that I can to further the issues of adjunct and student exploitation.

The second purpose of my letter, however, is to inquire about the decision to re-frame NAWD as a day of dignity, instead of a day of protest. I am aware of the fact that NAWD is not organized by a unified body, and also that what codified wording there is online does suggest “teach-ins” as viable alternatives to “walk-outs”. Furthermore, I truly believe that a movement involving such diverse and plural institutions must necessarily manifest differently in its specific, local contexts, for the betterment of the movement as a whole. This is all to say that I am in no way advocating for a vision that I perceive to be the “correct” way to protest, or to move our issues forward.

Nevertheless, I must admit that I am dismayed at the unilateral decision that seems to have been leveled at the State of Ohio, albeit by a coalition, to remove the option of walking out from the language of that email, which, as the only widely-circulated email on the issue within the OSU community, holds a considerable amount of influence. The email, and the coalition by extension, seems to assume that this is being done for the benefit of professors who may face retaliation. However, an obvious feature of a national call to action is the power of *numbers* to prevent such retaliation; it is difficult to punish adjunct faculty who participate in a walkout if the entire adjunct workforce walks out. As you know, adjuncts compose upwards of 60% of the University workforce.

Because adjunct exploitation and soaring student debt are two sides of the same Corporate-University-Coin, I have all along advocated that students and adjuncts abandon their classrooms *together* and furthermore, *all at once*. Not only are both allies in the struggle against University administrators, but the two groups also constitute an outrageous majority of every single campus. Without them, administrators and full-time professors are left to stare at walls.

There is a tremendously powerful potential inherent in a unified strike between student and adjunct laborers, and this potential has been seriously mitigated by the language in your email. This language should have framed your “Adjunct Dignity Day” options as just those: options. Instead, through the invocation of a broad coalition, the language claims to speak for every adjunct in the state, which I assure you it does not. By taking a strike off the table, your email not only stifles one of the largest potential shows of solidarity in the country, but also puts teachers at odds over whether and how to participate. With an event that is taking place across the nation, and one that is named National Adjunct *Walkout Day* it strikes me as unacceptable to declare that allies in Ohio are to be discouraged (effectively) from participating in that way.

I would not like to rush to any conclusions regarding the way this decision was made, knowing that you are most visible and vocal allies in this struggle. What I would like to do is to inquire: on whose authority do you “designate” February 25th “Adjunct Dignity Day” and furthermore “in Ohio”? On whose authority do you purport to speak for me in this regard, and for my colleagues, and for their students, who may have an interest in a walk-out?

Finally, because of my deep investment in this issue and its effects on the people in my life, I am very motivated to share my concerns in this letter with the Ohio community. However, before I do so, I feel I must first give you a chance to respond.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan DiPiero". The signature is stylized with a large, looping flourish at the end and a horizontal line underneath.

Dan DiPiero