



ERIKA STRASSBURGER



Member of Council - District 8

Office of the President
Chatham University
Mellon Center, 2nd Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15232

February 6, 2024

Dear President Dr. Rhonda Phillips and Members of the Board of Trustees:

I write to express my strong support of members of the faculty of Chatham University who are seeking a union contract.

As the City Council member representing Chatham's Squirrel Hill and Shadyside campus, I have a vested interest in the sustainability and success of this historic institution. During my ten years serving Council District 8, first as chief of staff and now as a Council Member, I have been fortunate to regularly interface with the university and the people who make it thrive. I've valued my working relationship with Chatham leadership, appreciated insightful conversations with faculty members, and enjoyed regular engagement with your talented students—many of whom have served our office as outstanding interns. I have been proud to see Chatham evolve and produce graduates who contribute to our rich civic fabric. That said, Chatham's current challenging financial situation calls not only for temporary stabilization, but lasting systemic change to help prevent future budgetary crises.

I believe that faculty members gaining collective bargaining rights will provide them with the personal security they need to remain part of the university family in the short and long term. A CBA will allow them to continue wielding their unique expertise to make the university even better for faculty, students, and the broader community. Specifically, a contract that requires faculty to be treated as equal partners in governance and mandates transparency in decision making will ensure that precious resources are allocated in a fair and responsible way.

In this time of uncertainty for Chatham, establishing a baseline of trust between the university and its faculty is imperative to the continued success of the institution. With collective representation, they will achieve the protections necessary to thrive in their vital roles at the university. A great university needs great faculty members, and faculty members need adequate security in order to realize their own greatness. The unionization drive is the vehicle to unlock their best work yet.

Sincerely,

Erika Strassburger

Pittsburgh City Council Member, District 8

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