

Letter of Support from Tenured and Tenure Track Faculty

Alfred, Marcus

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To: Frederick, Wayne <HUPresident@Howard.edu>; Wutoh, Anthony <awutoh@Howard.edu>

Cc: Taylor, Christie <christie.taylor@Howard.edu>

Dear President Frederick and Provost Wutoh:

Howard University's core aim is "to forward the development of scholars and professionals who drive change and engage in scholarship that provides solutions to contemporary global problems, particularly issues impacting the African Diaspora."

As our university transforms in the twenty-first century, we must articulate how its values should be implemented, particularly with respect to its core mission of scholarship and teaching. As tenured and tenure-track faculty, it is our obligation to ensure that all faculty receive the fair compensation and stable employment required to provide students with teaching and mentorship of the highest caliber.

Non-tenure-track lecturers and adjunct faculty teach about 2,000 courses per year to Howard University students. The overwhelming majority of Howard non-tenure-track and adjunct faculty, including people who studied and have taught at Howard for a decade or more, work on a succession of term-to-term or year-to-year contracts, with no security. Our departments depend heavily on the work of these colleagues. Therefore, we fully understand how much is lost—in terms of quality teaching, experience, and service—when such faculty are removed because of factors like the seven-year rule, or when they leave due to the insecurity produced by temporary contracts. It is not only the non-tenure-track faculty themselves who lose by such policies, but the University as well.

The majority of non-tenure-track full-time Lecturers have terminal degrees, and many are active professionally in their fields. Despite their credentials, these faculty members are paid, on average, less than \$50,000 per year. Adjunct faculty are paid as little as \$4,000 per course: less than 2/3 of what the already underpaid full-time Lecturer receives on a per course basis. Even as they have become integral partners in educating our students, they continue to be treated as a class apart.

These conditions facing non-tenure-track faculty stand in direct conflict with our shared mission as Howard University educators, and with the commitment to students that mission entails:

- "provid[ing] an educational experience of exceptional quality at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels to students of high academic standing and potential, with emphasis on educational opportunities for Black students."
- "...the University is dedicated to attracting and sustaining a cadre of faculty who are, through their teaching, research and service, committed to the development of distinguished, historically aware, and compassionate graduates and to the discovery of solutions to human problems in the United States and throughout the world."

Howard University can make a different choice in its policies toward these faculty members—one more consistent with our mission and commitment to students, and to the Black community and African Diaspora writ large. Until our administration seizes the opportunity before it, we will support our non-tenure-track colleagues in their efforts toward achieving a just and equitable contract.

Sincerely,

Marcus Alfred, Associate Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy
Nikole Hannah-Jones, Professor, Department of Department of Media, Journalism and Film
Greg Carr, Associate Professor, Department of Afro American Studies
Guericke C. Royal, Associate Professor, Department of Music
Jeffrey R. Kerr-Ritchie, Professor & Director of Graduate Studies, Department of History
Rodney D. Green, Professor Emeritus, Department of Economics
Sankar Sitaraman, Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics
Joshua Myers, Associate Professor, Department of Afro-American Studies
Krista Johnson, Associate Professor, Department of African Studies
Rachel Watson, Associate Professor, Department of English
Emily Blank, Associate Professor, Department of Economics
Mali Collins, Assistant Professor, Department of English
James Thomas Jackson, Associate Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
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Christopher Shinn, Associate Professor, Department of English
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Eleanor King, Professor, Department of Sociology and Criminology
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