



Manhattan College  
Riverdale  
New York, 10471

President's Office

February 14, 2011

Dear Colleagues:

It is your decision. Adjunct faculty are facing a choice that has important implications for the future of the College. I am confident that you will exercise your responsibility with the seriousness and care that it deserves, that you will inform yourself fully about NYSUT and its interests, and that you will vote for what finally is in the best interest of the entire Manhattan College community.

I came to Manhattan College to serve as President because I was impressed with what the College had achieved and inspired by its enormous potential for the future. I saw an institution with a strong faculty and dedicated staff, working together in a community that was small enough for everyone to have a common sense of purpose. I saw Manhattan College as genuinely deserving to use the word "community" when it described its educational environment.

Much of my work in my first year was aimed toward insuring that that sense of community would be honored and, wherever possible, improved and deepened. The hiring that we have done in senior administrative positions and the work that we continue to do as part of strategic planning is designed to strengthen this sense of our common mission. This lies at the very center of our concern. Our examination of our governance structures to assure that our decision-making processes are as transparent and inclusive as possible has been a major part of that effort.

I think that we made a very good start on these efforts in the past year and a half. I believe that we have made progress in important areas and have clearly shown that we understand the virtues of a collegial and collaborative approach to mission—an approach that acknowledges the important contributions of all members of our community.

The fact that NYSUT writes to members of our community without reference to any of our recent work is troubling and indicative of NYSUT's lack of understanding of the nature of this institution and the direction in which it is moving. Indeed, the union's only reference to "the administration" is to disparage anything that we say as disingenuous, setting up a divisive rhetoric of "us" versus "them" that is not at all in the spirit of Manhattan College. I would ask only that you measure this rhetoric against the reality of the past eighteen months. I would ask you to consider that our actions have earned us at least the benefit of the doubt and an opportunity to continue the good work already begun.

Over the past few days I have received many notes and emails from long standing members of the community supporting our position. I am grateful for these notes and heartened by

them. Some of the most heartening have come from some of our long-term adjunct faculty. Some of these colleagues are also alumni of the College and have written to express their affection for their alma mater and their hope that the College will not be divided by these events. Others have told me that they have had a personally rewarding and enriching career teaching our students as an aspect of their professional achievements. Many have been inspired by their work here to continue to pursue their own advanced studies and to mentor our graduates. These colleagues have expressed their confidence that positive, meaningful, and timely changes can be achieved collegially with their deans, chairs, and colleagues. Such comments clearly show that NYSUT has not made the case that it is indispensable or essential to the future of all of our adjunct faculty.

The NLRB will be mailing ballots on February 16th to adjunct faculty who taught 3 or more credits in Spring 2010 and Fall 2010 so that they can vote whether or not they want the union. The mailing will come with instructions on how to complete and mail back the ballot. Ballots must be received back at the NLRB office by the morning of March 2<sup>nd</sup>. The outcome will be decided by the majority of those voting, not the majority of adjuncts. If you do not vote you have no role in the outcome.

Therefore, I urge *all* of our adjunct faculty to cast a responsible and realistic vote and to vote for Manhattan College and not for NYSUT. We can do this together. Thank you for your faithful service to the College in the great work of teaching the next generation of Jaspers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Brennan O'Donnell".

Brennan O'Donnell, Ph.D.