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Coalition of Higher Ed Unions Issues Joint Statement on Future of Higher Ed under Harris Administration

Labor Relations Update on **September 24, 2024**

Last week, a coalition of 11 international unions, such as the SEIU, AFT, UAW, and CWA, representing faculty, staff, and graduate workers across college and university campuses around the country issued a "Statement of Unity" outlining its vision for higher education and calling on presidential candidate Kamala Harris, and all elected officials, to "join our struggle to reclaim public higher education for the public good." To announce the formation of its alliance and its plans for rebuilding a higher education system, the coalition—the Labor for Higher Education Coalition—held a press conference last Monday where a number of union leaders gave brief remarks about their shared vision.

According to the Coalition, higher education is under attack—historical defunding from federal and state governments and the growing corporatization of higher education has resulted in increased tuition, ballooning student debt, and the "adjunctification" of colleges and universities. Several coalition leaders talked about their concerns with the affordability and accessibility of higher education and what they view as threats to academic freedom on college campuses. Some union representatives pointed to the growing use of contingent, non-tenure faculty as evidence of the declining working conditions and worsening job insecurity faced by teachers in the higher education industry.

As articulated in their Statement of Unity, the Coalition is advocating for:

- Full federal funding of public higher education, particularly community colleges, technical schools, state colleges and universities, research institutes, and academic institutions serving minorities;
- Expanded access to higher education by, in part, ending student debt;
- Sustainable working conditions for higher education employees; and

- Selection of government officials who align with the Coalition’s view of higher education as a public good.

As the Coalition emphasized at their press conference, the Statement of Unity is an important first step and they plan to continue this work on every campus as the unions negotiate contracts on behalf of higher ed workers. As always, we will continue to monitor and report updates on unionization in higher ed.

View original.

Related Professionals

- **Paul Salvatore**
  Partner