

An Organized + United Faculty = Power

JENNY LEE – CANDIDATE’S STATEMENT, DECEMBER 2013

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I am running for Union President 2014-2016, and I ask for your vote. My greater goal is a true union of Pratt faculty. If elected, I will step down as Senate President, ensuring an orderly transition in the Senate, and forging an enduring connection between both faculty bodies.

As Union President, I will organize and unite faculty to make sure we have the power to defend our rights and our jobs in the face of administrative plans for change. I will bring Union and Senate together as a united, forceful faculty voice. I will make this a stronger, fairer, more transparent, and open Union.

My priorities as Union President:

1. Establishing a democratic Union structure that assures transparency and accountability in all Union procedures, including decision-making, contract negotiations, finances, communication and meetings.
2. Constituting a Union Steering Committee, elected by members, to advise Union officers.
3. In close consultation with members, establishing Union bylaws, known to and approved by the members.
4. A strong coalition of Pratt faculty’s Union and Senate.
5. Opening communication among members and between Union officers and membership.
6. Commitment to ensuring faculty’s responsibility in curriculum, especially through departmental curriculum committees and genuine faculty representation.
7. Protecting the faculty’s rights, including the right to free speech and dissent, and the right to have grievances defended energetically and fairly.
8. Regaining ground lost in recent negotiations (especially for adjuncts and CCEs).
9. In the face of the administration’s “Proposed Curriculum Guidelines”: vigilantly protecting faculty rights in curriculum, and guarding against potential deleterious effects on faculty’s terms and conditions of employment and the Pratt education.

To this position I bring:

1. Years of experience leading the Academic Senate and in other roles serving faculty.
2. Years of teaching and professional experience.
3. A knowledge of the workings of the entire Institute, with relationships forged at every level, including with faculty, staff, student, administration, and Board.
4. Integrity, dedication, tenacity and resilience.
5. Fairness and a commitment to transparency.



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Greater transparency and accountability

I pledge to foster open communication among Union members and with Union officers and to enable this communication through meetings, blogs, comment sites, and all useful avenues. Some Union communication has been limited and controlled. Faculty must be able to easily share information and concerns about negotiations and other issues. All members have the right to express opinions, including dissent.

Members must be kept informed during negotiation proceedings. I will make sure the terms of any proposed contract are clear to all members. Faculty must have full opportunity to discuss all issues before voting.

I will present a yearly financial statement, as union leaders are legally required to do. Though your agency fee and dues have increased our Union budget, members have not been informed where this money goes. As dues-paying members, you are entitled to that information. As Senate President, I submitted such financial statements, and I will do so as your Union President.

A more democratic process

The Union IS its membership. Our members can better participate in decision-making and will benefit from more open communication. I will directly involve faculty in decisions about Union negotiations. Union members are entitled to open and frank dialogue, including dissent.

Contract votes will not be scheduled during summer and breaks—these votes must take place when faculty are present to make informed decisions. All elections and votes should be conducted during the semester.

I will establish a Steering Committee elected by the membership, to advise the Union Executive Committee.

The faculty have for many years asked the Union to draft its own bylaws. If elected, one of my first items of business will be making sure our union has published bylaws and procedures, and that any changes are approved by the membership. I will ensure the Union is in full compliance with all legal standards and regulations.

Union meetings have been too few and their agendas too narrow, and minutes not kept or made available: I will hold regular meetings with the full membership, open to your ideas. Records will be kept of these meetings.

Defending faculty rights and academic freedom

Faculty voice must be primary in curricular decisions. I staunchly support and implement this principle in the Senate: now through the Union, I vow to work with the Senate to strengthen departmental faculty curriculum committees. Defining and defending faculty's role in curriculum is critical right now, given the administration's proposed UG curriculum guidelines. I will be vigilant about the potential effects of these guidelines and work to minimize any negative effect on faculty employment.

I will be energetic, strategic, and fair in grievance processes. I will continue the support of departmental Peer Review Committees, making sure they are independent and well constituted. I will protect the contract. I will defend faculty rights. And, I will make sure you are informed of those rights.

As Union President, I will continue my long-standing commitment to shared governance. Both Union and Senate are faculty's representative governance bodies. As Senate president, I engaged the Pratt community in defense of our educational values, and as Union president, I will ensure cooperation between the Faculty Union and Academic Senate in your best interests. I am committed to a Union-Senate coalition, as directed by the faculty at Pratt.

Negotiating and defending the contract

Assess what was lost in recent negotiations for adjuncts, CCEs, and faculty rights, generally. With faculty input, develop a plan and strategy to regain those losses.

Achieve better pay for both FT and PT faculty of all rank

Increase the ratio of FT faculty and the number of CCEs.

Challenge the increase in administrative costs, taking place while faculty salaries and positions are held back.

Press the administration to improve our learning environment by assuring optimal working conditions, which include better studios, classrooms and offices, upgrade of facilities that need technology, and improved access, maintenance, and repair.

Experience, dedication, and grit

I pledge to be tough at the negotiating table.

While I will fight for your rights and best interest, I also pledge to foster cooperation throughout the Pratt community.

In my years as Senate President and in other roles serving faculty, I have gained experience and insight I will use to improve terms and conditions of employment for FT and PT faculty. I have forged relationships at the administration and Board levels that I will use to advance faculty interests. My knowledge of the Institute will benefit us both in fighting at the bargaining table, and in working together, when we can, with the administration and Pratt community.

I will stand up for your rights, represent you and serve you, and make this a better union of Pratt faculty.

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