

Dear Father McShane and members of the Board of Trustees,

We are the proud parents of a Fordham senior who has had excellent relationships with his professors during his academic career. One professor helped him get into study abroad in Rome, where he made professional connections that helped him get the internship he will start in June. Two others wrote him letters of recommendation for law school; he starts at Boston College Law in the fall. A dean and faculty member were his Manresa advisors and helped him discover ways he could learn and help others through volunteer work in New York City. Yet now we learn that these very people, the ones who have been most generous to our son, worked with him after hours, answered email on the weekends, and went the extra mile, are facing a benefits cut that will make it hard for them to make ends meet in New York. We are disappointed in our chosen Jesuit University and are writing to ask you to please reconsider.

Our son told us of a Lecturer who was ill last year but fortunately had great insurance and did not have to face the financial obstacles that many in our country face when ill. If that faculty member were sick next year instead of last, she would have medical bills that might make it impossible for her to be treated. Is this how a Jesuit University should treat its teachers?

In our current national climate, people are being confronted with all kinds of new uncertainties: deportation of family members, loss of healthcare, environmental deregulation, and so on. Fordham University should be a haven from such anxieties, as well as from the profiteering that is driving many of these changes. Isn't Fordham a non-profit university? Then spend our money on our child's education, which includes fair pay and excellent benefits for professors.

Finally, we understand that decisions about benefits and pay packages are to be made jointly at Fordham, between faculty and the administration. We have learned that this agreement has been violated, and that the benefits cut and salary raises (if any) are to be imposed. Again, the parallels with our national government are alarming. Is following an autocratic model any way to demonstrate to students the "collaboration," "dignity," and "promotion of justice" you describe in your mission statement? Please don't let our kids (soon to be donating alumni) down or make us regret our decision to send our son to Fordham. Please return shared governance and excellent benefits to the faculty.

Sincerely,