

**Prepared comments for  
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My name is Teresa Politano. I have taught journalism here at Rutgers since 1999, and I'm here to speak today about the university budget.

One of my current students hopes to become a religion reporter in the Middle East, to give voice to the faithful whose voices are drowned by the extremists. Another wants to cover the ever-changing technology industry.

It is my responsibility to teach them how to find the truth, to report on it fairly and accurately, to help them make qualitative distinctions amid today's media world of 30-second sound bytes and celebrity worship. Our future, our democracy, will rely on their ability to do so.

It's a tremendous responsibility. But I'm lucky. My students are smart, and they never fail to impress me. They work hard—many have jobs to help pay for their educations or help support their families. They write stories about their grandparents who survived the Holocaust, their parents who fled communism. They've been homeless, their friends have died of drug overdoses, they have seen gunplay in their middle-school locker rooms. Rutgers students do not come to class with a sense of entitlement. They have already lived full lives. They embody, in so many ways and at so many levels, what it means to be American. They are New Jersey's best and brightest. It's an honor to teach such an eager, hard-working and diverse group.

The university wants me to be proud of my school. I am. I'm proud to teach at Rutgers. My students are proud to be here, proud of the education they receive here. One of my students, a woman whose parents could afford to send her to an Ivy League school, said she felt she had received an Ivy League education here at Rutgers.

These students see the value of Rutgers University.

But I'm embarrassed by my salary. I earn less than \$4,000 a semester. I've been teaching here since 1999, but I receive no additional benefits. No contributions toward health care. No sick pay. No tuition remission. No job security.

I'm an award-winning journalist who has worked in New York City, Washington, D.C., South Florida and for many New Jersey publications. When I left the business as a news executive, I was directly supervising more than 100 people. Today, that hands-on expertise earns me less than \$4,000 a semester. I could earn almost as much by working three

days a week as a substitute secretary in the public schools of Union County, which says a lot about the hierarchy of education in this state.

The part-time lecturers at Rutgers teach more than 30 percent of the university's classes. Yet we comprise less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the university instructional budget. My salary is typical. Most of us earn less than \$4,000 a semester.

Many Ivy League universities have begun to recognize the value of their adjunct staff; they're offering better salaries, benefits, job security. Rutgers has the chance to do so as well. It's time Rutgers increased its budget for part-time faculty. If Rutgers University wants its students to continue to value the education they receive here, it must begin to value its staff as well.