

Why does Lehigh outsource? (9)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Lehigh University, Serious Issues October 27, 2018

(9th in a series of posts on Lehigh University)

Peter Crownfield is officially retired, but spends most of his time working with students in his role as internship coordinator for the Alliance for Sustainable Communities–Lehigh Valley.

Gadfly:

When speaking about effects on low-paid employees, I think it also is important to discuss why a significant number of people who work at Lehigh (and many other colleges & universities) are paid less than living wages. Most are in jobs such as building, landscape, & dining services that are outsourced to private companies. Why?

Do the institutions lack the management competence to manage these operations themselves? Does outsourcing allow the university to distance itself from substandard wages & benefits? Are jobs outsourced to avoid having to provide free tuition to those employees or their children?

(Incidentally, when people from SEIU were in the Lehigh Valley about 10 years ago to organize Sodexo workers, Lehigh tried unsuccessfully to ban them from the campus, giving tacit support to the underpayment of workers by Sodexo.)

Peter Crownfield