

LOCAL 1796
At
William Paterson University of New Jersey
General and Executive/Local Council Meeting

Date: November 16, 2004
Location: Valley Road Auditorium
Time: 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Present: Stephen Betts (Marketing and Management), Robert Bing, Dee Catarina (Special Education and Counseling), Robert Chesney (Biology), Linda Gazzillo Diaz, Iris Torres DiMaio, Donna Fengya (Mathematics), Amy Giovanetti (Exercise and Movement Science), Claudia Goldstein (Art), Joyce Heavey, Jane Hutchison (Library), Phoebe Jackson (English), Daphne Joslin (Community Health), Richard Kearney, Christine Kelly (Political Science), Robert Kovalski, Ileana LaBergere, Kem Louie (Nursing), Charles Magistro, Esther Martinez (Languages and Cultures), Kevin Martus (Chemistry and Physics), Alberto Montare (Psychology), Irwin Nack (History), John Najarian (Computer Science), Andy Pachtman (Early Childhood and Elementary Education), John Peterman (Philosophy), Lou Rivela, Martin Rudnick, Arlene Scala (Women's Studies), Provost Chernoh Sesay, Cindy Simon, Peter Stein (Sociology), David Stern (Exercise and Movement Science), Paul Swanson (Economics and Finance), Sue Tardi, Stacy Toriello, Diana Van Boerum, Linnea Weiland, Chriss Williams (Communication), Robert Wolk, Stan Wollock, Lian Xu, Sherry Xu, Melda Yildiz (Secondary and Middle School Education), J. K. Yun (Accounting and Law)

Items distributed to the Council and General Membership:

- 1) Proposed Agenda for November 16, 2004 Meeting
- 2) Minutes of the October 19, 2004 General and Executive/Local Council Meeting

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:50 pm.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was moved by Caterina, and seconded by Gazzillo Diaz. Approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes of the October 19, 2004 General Membership and Executive/Local Council Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes was moved by Simon, and seconded by Giovanelli. Approved unanimously.

4. Welcome Invited Guest (Dr. Sesay)

Prior to the Provost's arrival, President Tardi introduced Stephanie Medina to the membership as the Local's new Administrative Assistant.

Tardi welcomed the Provost. Dr. Sesay thanked the Local for inviting him to the meeting, and thanked Tardi for the working relationship they have enjoyed under her Presidency. He indicated that this relationship has led to the fast resolution of many issues before they became serious problems. The Provost credited the working relationship between the Administration and the Union for several beneficial programs for faculty (mentioning UFRAC, promotional opportunities, and benefits including tuition-free enrollment for faculty children). The Provost indicated the Administration is currently seeking creative ways to address the issue of faculty teaching loads, which the Administration recognizes as a problem needing attention.

5. Student Scholarships

Tardi indicated that the Local is conferring the 2003-2004 scholarships late due to the illness of Barbara Bohny, a member of the Scholarship Committee. Tardi thanked Marjorie Goldstein, Richard Blonna and Daphne Joslin for serving on the 2003-2004 Scholarship Committee. Two scholarships will be conferred at our next meeting.

6. Update: AFT "Colleague in Need" Response

Tardi updated the membership on the overwhelming response to Barbara Bohny's eligibility for donated sick days. In the process, Tardi identified a problem in the inequitable allocation of donated days (on a first come, first served basis) and recommended that a series of deadlines be set for such appeals so that donated days can be distributed among all who elect to participate. Tardi transmitted Bohny's thanks to the membership for its generosity. Tardi announced that two other members (whose names she was not at liberty to disclose) are also currently suffering from serious illnesses. A member from the floor suggested the possibility of a "bank" for sick days, and Tardi indicated this is an idea the Union was considering bringing to the attention of the Administration. Since the program involves state approval, the legal issues surrounding the process must first be examined.

7. Union and Administration Collaborative Efforts

a. Restructuring the donated sick time process

Tardi recapitulated her previous comments on this topic, and indicated that cooperation with the Administration has been and will continue to be critical to success on this front.

b. Retention and tenure process clarification

Tardi emphasized to the members the fact that the retention and tenure process is not detailed in the contract but rather in departmental policies and bylaws, and that these should be consulted by any faculty member involved in these processes as authoritative documents. In a number of cases this year members have experienced problems owing in part to misunderstandings about the source of retention and tenure policies and procedures.

c. Teaching online student and peer evaluations

Union leadership has been instrumental in addressing academic and policy issues regarding online course evaluations. The Provost's appointed Technology Committee has been looking into this matter. In general, departments must approve the initial draft of student evaluation forms administered online, and these should then be submitted to the Union and Administration for comment. The critical issue is that uniform standards should apply to faculty teaching in-class, online or hybrid courses.

d. Professional staff bona fide

In our master agreement (state contract), there is a section pertaining to bona fide offers from other institutions and the procedure for approaching the Administration when these are tendered; but there is no parallel agreement for Professional Staff. In a recent case, the Union and Administration drew up an agreement providing this parallel for a Professional Staff member.

The Provost indicated that all Administration/Union discussions take into account the interests of Professional Staff, and that they are not forgotten in any discussions or negotiations.

A member from the floor asked about the deadlines for faculty promotion applications, as two of these fall on weekend days. Tardi said her understanding is that when this occurs the deadline is extended to the following Monday, but she will seek clarification from Boucher on this.

Tardi also noted that bylaws supersede past practice in departmental proceedings, but bylaws cannot be revised in the middle of a promotion or retention process simply to make them accord with what a departmental committee wants to do.

8. Holiday Social Announcement

Tardi noted the upcoming Thanksgiving community outreach program for local senior citizens; this is the seventh year for this very successful program. This year it is being held at the Brownstone this coming Saturday and will be hosted by Tardi. The Provost reiterated the positive aspects of this program.

Tardi also announced the University's upcoming holiday social on December 4th.

9. Officers' Reports

President - Tardi announced that the Union is sponsoring a lunchtime promotion/range adjustment workshop for faculty on December 2 in Raubinger Hall, to be conducted by herself and Bing, and she strongly encouraged all eligible faculty to attend this program. The Provost emphasized that the phenomenon of inadequate applications for available promotion/range adjustment slots creates difficulties when those who claim there are insufficient opportunities try to make their case.

There was some discussion on the number promotional opportunities for those seeking to move from Assistant to Associate rank, and it was agreed that these are not adequate.

Tardi indicated that reported instances of inequities in promotions and/or range adjustments have been addressed by Union leadership.

A member from the floor provided an example of advising departmental colleagues to seek range adjustments.

A member asked whether the institution would consider concurrent tenure decision and promotion to Associate Professor, as she was of the opinion that this practice is fairly standard in many institutions. Tardi noted that this is not the practice in most New Jersey state institutions, although the period of time that passes before Assistant Professors can realistically expect to receive promotions to Associate Professor has been reduced.

Tardi explained that the Union has negotiated with the Administration for an additional step for those with Full Professor rank.

Tardi noted that the Union is now offering (mandatory) training for those members willing to serve as observers on University committees so that they are fully acquainted with the policies that apply. A member emphasized that the role of the Union observer is not merely to observe but to see to it that the Committee follows the proper procedures in its deliberations to ensure that fair and equitable standards are maintained at all times, and observers have the right to intervene in meetings if these policies are not being followed. Tardi further noted that observers need to keep accurate minutes of meetings they attend.

Negotiation Vice President – Gazzillo Diaz reported on her meeting with Boucher this week about the faculty range adjustment Application procedure, in which the Union sought clarification and made recommendations for changes to streamline the process. The recommendations are currently being examined by the Administration. The Union is also working with the Administration for improved language in the content of multi-year contracts and progress is moving forward on this front as well.

Professional Staff – DiMaio reported on an upcoming workshop for professional staff

considering seeking range adjustments (covering folder preparation).

Grievance Vice President – Magistro emphasized to the membership that departments and departmental committees need to take seriously their mentoring role with tenure candidates, as he has observed instances in which candidates receive glowing reviews for three years and then turn against candidates on the eve of tenure decisions. Magistro urged those who serve on retention and tenure committees to act early in written reviews of candidates if they see problems with a candidate that could reasonably be addressed early in a faculty member's candidacy.

Both Magistro and Tardi urged members to scrupulously observe the procedures required for appealing denial-of-reappointment or denial-of-tenure decisions, as there have been a number of unfortunate incidents in which this has not been done. After a certain number of ill-advised steps by faculty who have received such decisions, the Union is left in a poor position to render help to members. The Provost emphatically concurred with this.

The Provost concluded by urging all faculty to join the Union and for all Union members to become politically active in support of higher education, especially in light of the new state administration.

Kelly announced that an American Democracy Project-sponsored student club is organizing a debate on (state and federal) government support of higher education and will be dealing with this issue.

10. Order of the Day (1:50 pm)

11. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn moved by Catarina, and seconded by Montare. Approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Kearney, Recording Secretary
[Final Edit: December 9, 2004]