

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

Date: Tuesday, December 19, 2006
Location: Ben Shahn, Room 20
Time: 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

Present: S. Tardi, C. Williams, L. Gazzillo Diaz, J. Pinkston, M. Mwaura, E. Matthews, S. Selke, F. Pavese, R. Wolk, G. Pope, M. Peek, G. Guerrieri, J. Carter, J. Najarian, A. Pachtman, P. Jackson, I. Nack, M. Innis-Jimenez, G. Shepherd, S. Betts, D. Fengya, K. Louie, J. Peterman, M. Thompson, A. Montare, S. Lawrence, P. Stein, C. Mulrine, J. Matthew, R. Schwartz, L. Orr, C. Simon, L. Dye, A. Cheo, R. Kovaleski, T. Clancy, P. Ryan, R. Meyer, E. Gonzalez, O. DelaSuaree, A. Joachim, J. Akromi, M. Giorgio, K. Park, V. Vicari, G. Furst, K. Chen, B. Gorski, T. Adeniran, L. Fornarotto, E. Phadia, S. Shalom, T. Gundling, N. Kalb, V. Bhat, R. Kaplan, R. Cauthen, M. Goldstein

Items distributed to the Council and General Membership:

- 1) Proposed Agenda for Meeting
- 2) Minutes of the General and Executive/Local Council Meeting from 11/21/06
- 3) Assigned Released Time and Alternate Assignment Program Revised Concept Proposals

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:36 pm.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by M. Goldstein, seconded by J. Najarian.

Modifying agenda item: Discussion of payment of Department Representatives.

The agenda with the modification was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes of the General Membership and Executive/Local Council Meeting.

A motion to approve the November 21, 2006 minutes was made by A.

Pachtman, seconded by J. Najarian. Approved unanimously.

4. Announcements

Word of Appreciation

Tardi thanked the Department Representatives, the committee members, and members of the Executive Board for their service during the year, and said she looks forward to the new year.

Administration Issues

Tardi reported that President Speert has received a salary increase in the amount of approximately 2.5%. She said the Board of Trustees expressed confidence in the way he has managed the fiscal crisis. Tardi noted that the president of Rowan University was given a 12% increase, which seems to be the emerging pattern.

Tardi said the furlough (one week off with no pay) originally planned for spring break would have been implemented if the Union had not pressured the Governor to restore some of the salary funding. Revenue was also provided to our University by Tardi's advocating before the Board of Trustees for the implementation of the Winter Session. Tardi said she was thanked publicly at a Board of Trustees meeting for suggesting that the University offer a Winter Session to generate revenue. (Applause from the membership)

Tardi said members of several departments have contacted the Union Leadership regarding the expanding workload of both Faculty and Professional Staff. Members are being asked to take on more responsibility without being properly compensated. Assessment Coordinators are receiving 3-9 credits of Released Time, an amount that varies from department to department. Tardi said the Union Leadership suggests that members examine the duties they are being asked to perform, and use their own judgment to determine whether it is a small service that could be looked upon favorably in retention, tenure, or range adjustment portfolios, or something more extensive for which they should be compensated. Tardi reminded the membership that they have the right to say no and can be confident that they will be backed by the Union Leadership. Tardi said faculty frequently express concern that students will suffer if faculty do not engage in these services. She said students suffer when members do not take a stand and speak up when they are asked to take on responsibilities beyond service. She further noted that when faculty are overworked, there is likely to be a decrease in the quality of services, and that is why it is so important to have an appropriate Alternate Assignment program in place. Members who bring issues to the Union can be assured that the Union Leadership will never disclose anyone's name without permission.

State Negotiations Process

Tardi reported that Kevin McGovern was hired as a Negotiations Advisor for the Council. Health benefits continue to be among the most important concerns. Since the CWA Union is the first to negotiate, those standards will apply to AFT members. Tardi said the Governor is pushing for an early settlement and that negotiations will begin again on January 18th. Tardi reminded the membership that she will provide email updates on the major negotiation issues.

Local 1796 Political Involvement

Tardi noted the importance of increased political involvement by our Local. Chriss Williams spoke about a recent rally in Trenton that was attended by public employees, teachers, and professors. He said no members attended as representatives from William Paterson. Williams said the Union Executive Board noted that they spend a great deal of time working on issues on campus and have failed to make an outward connection with

the greater issues involving the state. Williams explained that the Executive Board has decided our Local will become more active in the state system during the coming months, and plans to become more involved in politics and other matters that occur outside our Local.

Tardi agreed with Williams, and said that this Local is very good at taking care of campus business, but that is not enough. She noted that the Executive Board is committed to having at least one member represent our Local at each state-wide political event. The Executive Board is forming a list of members who desire to be politically active, and are willing to attend political and other state-wide events. She encouraged those who are interested to contact the Union office.

Frank Pavese, Chairperson of the COPE Committee said he plans to move away from blanket endorsements and hopes to shift the emphasis back to the issues. He will provide updates on COPE at future meetings.

5. Action Items

a. AFT Scholarships

Tardi explained that last year, the Local decided to offer the two \$500 AFT Scholarships through the office of Institutional Advancement in order to acquire greater applicant exposure. That office has since created a new rule that the minimum scholarship amount that can be offered is \$1000.00. Tardi said there are three choices: 1) combine the two scholarships into one scholarship for \$1000, 2) discontinue offering the scholarships through the office of Institutional Advancement and offer them both for \$500 while hoping to get enough applicants on our own, or 3) increase both scholarships to \$1,000. Treasurer Muroki Mwaura stated that we have enough money to increase the amount of the scholarships.

P. Stein moved that the Union establish two \$1,000 scholarships for each year, one named the Irwin Nack Scholarship and the other named AFT Local 1796 Scholarship, and that the scholarship process be facilitated by the Office of Institutional Advancement while remaining under the control of Local 1796.

The motion was seconded by L. Dye.

Discussion:

A member stated that by today's standards, \$1000 would be more useful to students than \$500. Another member stated that given the number of students with economic needs, she would rather see four students receive awards of \$500 each. A member pointed out that when the Union had total control of the funds and the process, it was very difficult to get applicants, even after extending the deadline. The member said that having total control seems like a good idea, but the process does not work if no one applies. Another member questioned the role of institutional advancement and why the Union cannot simply advertise the same way they do. Tardi said they offer multiple scholarships that students can apply for simultaneously. If the student meets the criteria they are automatically placed in the pool.

The motion passed with one abstention. Tardi noted that she will write a letter to Institutional Advancement confirming that the Union's role in the scholarships is clearly stated.

b. Alternate Assignment

Tardi noted that the membership decided at the November 21, 2006 meeting to separate Administrative Released Time from scholarship, and during a recent meeting the Provost agreed 1) the ART Committee will be composed of elected members, 2) the administration will commit a percentage of the budget to the ART program, and 3) accountability for ART will be accepted within the year-end reports, with no additional report required.

Tardi said there are still negative parts to the agreement, including that the ART proposal requires the signatures of both the Department Chairperson and the Dean after they have reviewed it, and it is then sent to the Associate Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research who gives the lists of the rankings back to the Deans for final determination of the list. The administration claims that by doing this, the Deans can advocate for people who have been turned down, and that people who were awarded cannot be removed from the committee's final list.

Tardi questioned the current role of the Deans in the process. Tardi said if faculty members waive their rights in the ART application, Deans may make comments without the faculty member's knowledge. She reminded the membership to never sign anything "waiving your rights." By not waiving your rights, the Dean must notify you of comments that are provided. Tardi said if someone is turned down, they should have a right to know why they were turned down.

Tardi noted that while there is not an adversarial relationship between all faculty members and administrators, it does occur to some extent, and it is important to be clear about those in whom we choose to put our faith, control and trust. She said the history of this Local has been to keep the level of involvement of the Deans and the administration at a minimum. The Provost said he wants to formally include the Deans in the process at the beginning and at the end. Tardi said that if decisions can be reversed, she questions the purpose of having an elected committee. Gazzillo-Diaz commented that the Dean's involvement in this process is a crucial issue and the members should state exactly how they feel, so the negotiations team can go back and make the membership's wishes known to the administration.

A member questioned the administration's reason for wanting the Deans to be involved. Tardi noted that the Provost chooses to compare our institution with others such as Montclair and Rowan. Our Local has worked hard to minimize the role of Deans beyond the retention and tenure process. We have made every effort to have our own colleagues control promotions, range adjustments, etc. A member asked exactly what role the Provost expects the Deans to have. Tardi said he wants them to have the exact role they have now, plus he wants the Union to sanction them for final approval. A member commented that he wonders what has been practiced that the members are not aware of.

Another member commented that a Dean would be able to veto a decision of the committee and could also add the names of people the committee had decided not to award. Tardi said that Steve Hahn made it known that the Deans only advocated for someone when they had been turned down. A member stated that advocating can also mean that someone comes off the list. Tardi said she feels the administration is operating in bad faith. She said they indicate that they want to follow the Montclair model, but according to that model, whoever applies and is eligible, receives it. The administration should demonstrate good faith by finding the money, and not worrying about who should be deleted.

A member stated that in the past, senior professors came together and advocated for the title of Provost because they wanted a Chief Academic Officer who could stand up to the president. Tardi stated that this Provost listens well but does not make decisions quickly. A member stated that a much bigger issue is that the University gives one tenth of 1% to faculty members for doing research, and it would not be difficult for them to vastly expand this program. The member said he has no problem with the Deans having a say on the front end and then allowing the faculty committee to make the final determination. He feels the Deans should not be able to veto a faculty driven process, especially when faculty members are creating a benefit to the university.

Tardi stated that the Provost is adamant that the Deans have an official role. She said she personally feels that a Dean or a Chairperson should not be approving what research a faculty member will be working on, and she sees this as a violation of academic freedom. However, she told the Provost she will go back to the membership and whether they agree with her position or not, she will present to him what the members decide.

A member questioned if a member would have the right to respond if the Deans have a say in the matter. Tardi said as long as the member does not sign the form stating that they waive their rights.

P. Stein made a motion to remove the comments section from the ART form, and allow the Deans to have a role at the beginning of the process prior to the faculty committee's work, and require their signature of review only (not approval).

A. Montare seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously.

Tardi expressed concern that faculty members are so overwhelmed, that they are not focusing on things that need to be done. She stressed the importance of taking back shared governance, and not allowing being "stepped on" with more work and less pay.

L. Dye made a motion that the administration act in good faith for supporting research, at the level of not less than one half of one percent of the total operating budget so that all faculty who meet criteria will receive ART.

M. Goldstein seconded the motion.

Discussion:

A member commented that we should be careful about giving a number that sounds extremely low. Another member stated that it is helpful to adopt a motion because it gives the Union ground in order to achieve the first point which is to minimize the Dean's role in the process.

The motion was approved unanimously.

6. Professional Staff Update

Shari Selke reported that the new annual evaluation form and procedure for members on multiyear contracts should be approved soon and copies of the agreement will be distributed. Selke also reminded members that the deadline for the Professional Staff Performance Based promotions is approaching, and anyone who would like assistance with their portfolio should contact Selke or Ed Matthews for assistance. She also encouraged individuals who are doing work outside of their job title to contact the Union Leadership.

7. Adjunct Update

Frank Pavese will give an update at the next meeting.

8. New Business

A member stated that he sees no reason why Union members should be paid to serve as Department Representatives, and noted that the money could be used toward scholarships.

J. Peterman made a motion to discontinue the practice of paying members to \$12.50 per meeting to serve as Department Representatives. The motion failed due to lack of a second.

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn made by A. Montare, and seconded by F. Pavese. Approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Pinkston,
Recording Secretary
[Edited:]