

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

Date: Tuesday, April 17, 2007
Location: Raubinger 01
Time: 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

Present: S. Tardi, C. Williams, J. Pinkston, E. Matthews, S. Selke, F. Pavese, J. Wilkerson, C. Goldstein, M. Peek, S.H. Chung, G. Guerrieri, J. Levitan, J. Najarian, S. Wollock, P. Jackson, R. Pardi, R. Rehberg, M. Innis-Jimenez, S. Betts, D. Fengya, J. Peterman, A. Montare, S. Lawrence, A. Scala, C. Simon, E. Goldstein, M. Turkish, L. Dye, K.H. Kim, D. Van Boerum, M. Martin, O. dela Suaree, A. Cheo, E. Phadia, E. Gonzalez, V. Vicari, T. Ramin, R. Martinez, M. Giorgio, V. Bhat

Items distributed to the Council and General Membership:

- 1) Proposed Agenda for Meeting
- 2) Minutes of the General and Executive/Local Council Meeting (March 20, 2007)
- 3) ART Agreement

1. Call to Order

Due to flooding in Paterson, S. Tardi was delayed and requested that Chriss Williams call the meeting to order. Williams called the meeting to order at 12:46 pm. At Tardi's request, a moment of silence was observed in remembrance of the tragedy at Virginia Tech.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by A. Montare, and seconded by J. Wilkerson. Approved unanimously.

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

A motion to approve the minutes was made by J. Najarian, and seconded by A. Montare. Approved unanimously.

Williams stated that it is important to address the Virginia Tech situation in all classes, and noted that the Union's response must be proactive. He said that one positive thing that can come out of the tragedy is the establishment of a well-known emergency plan on campus. A member pointed out that students may be referred to the Counseling, Health and Wellness Center in Morrison Hall. Another member commented that faculty members are wondering how to address the issue. Williams noted that we live in an open society and there is no way to fully protect against the violence that occurred at Virginia Tech. He said the only thing we have some control over is how secure we feel, but whether or not we actually are more secure is another matter. A member commented that *The Star Ledger* interviewed several university presidents regarding the plans

that were put in place following 911, and apparently all State universities are required to have a plan in place. Another member said she believes there should be discussions about the use of violent (aggressive) language in classes, and feels it is just as important as discussions about racist and sexist language. A member commented that he discussed the issue in all three of his morning classes, and advised the students to be aware of emergency situations and be prepared to take decisive action.

4. ART Agreement

Williams said he is pleased to announce that a copy of the signed ART agreement is included in the packet. A member stated that members in her department are concerned about the criteria for ART and questioned if faculty members would be able to provide input. She said they are also concerned that the criteria can be used to keep people out of the ART program. Williams said the guidelines for the award of 1-4 semesters will be developed by the Administration in consultation with the Union. A member asked if there is a grievance policy or some way to find out what happened in the case of a proposal being rejected. Williams said while there is no official appeal process, candidates whose outcome differs from the award requested and candidates whose proposal is rejected will be provided with the reasons by the Provost. Williams noted that the final decision still rests in the hands of the Provost.

Williams said Union Leadership requested that faculty members who teach 4 credit courses be allowed to use ART for 4 credits (four credits = one course), but the Provost deemed the program as being strictly based on credit hours. Williams acknowledged that the ART application process is not perfect but stated that it is inherently better than the Administration making all the decisions. A member agreed that it does seem like a better system than before, but expressed concern about going to the Provost and/or the Associate Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research to discuss proposals. The member said she had tried to set up meetings to speak to the Administration about her proposal in the past and they cancelled the meeting several times until the 30 day deadline passed. The member asked that the agreement clearly state that anyone who is not awarded can go and talk to the Administration and have it clearly explained. Williams stressed the importance of writing a clear proposal. He said he expects more faculty members than ever will now participate in the ART program. He encouraged everyone to let colleagues know how critically important it is to write clear proposals and to attend Union sponsored seminars on developing ART proposals, much like the seminars that are offered on the promotion and retention process. A member stated that she once saw a score sheet with the delineation of the points the ART Committee uses to score each proposal, and she suggested that the form be distributed as it may help applicants phrase their proposal to meet the criteria in a certain way.

Williams stated that under the former proposal, there was a clause stating that proposals not completed in a timely matter would be subject to a penalty. The new proposal states that if the faculty member discovers that he/she cannot complete the activity as previously thought, the faculty member can notify the Department Chairperson and the Dean so the proposal can be modified without a penalty.

5. Master Contract Update

Williams said there is nothing significant to report concerning the Master Contract Negotiations. Frank Pavese stated that he attended a recent meeting concerning adjunct faculty and there was little movement on any of the issues. Pavese said he assumes that the process will move very quickly at the end. A member stated that something should come out of the Governor's accident since he was not wearing his seat belt, and some insurance companies will not pay if individuals are not wearing a seatbelt. The member noted that Gov. Corzine will have his medical care paid, and questioned "when is he going to worry about us?" Williams agreed that the health benefits are a concern. He stated that his understanding is that the State is proposing to eliminate the Traditional Plan (for all those not grandfathered by the current agreement) and offer a proposed new PPO plan along with two different HMO's. Williams said the proposed new PPO came about because as part of the normal negotiations process, the State puts out a Request for Proposals (RFP). This establishes the criteria for the proposal and invites bids. Experts from AFT National and two pension representatives attended the March 23 contract negotiations meeting, and the AFT National representative requested a copy of the RFP so he can evaluate it and compare it to our current health plans and make a true assessment. The State claims it is against the law to distribute the RFP, but agreed to provide a copy of an old RFP which is supposedly similar to the one that was put out this year. The AFT National representative is currently reviewing the old version. A member stated that since the RFP has been distributed to insurance companies, it should be considered a public document. Another member suggested that if the old version of the RFP is acceptable, then tell the State we accept the old one. Williams stated that it is not a matter of us accepting anything. He said the analogy of not buying a house without looking at it applies to the health benefits proposal. Even though the CWA ratified their agreement, if our Union is unhappy, we still have a group of people and we can exert influence. Williams stated we may not know if this is a good health plan or not until we get it.

Tardi noted that Nick Yovnello, President of the State Council has repeatedly stated that the State is not saving money but is trying to make a political statement that "no New Jersey employee gets a free ride regarding health benefits." Tardi further stated that she has requested that President Yovnello provide data to substantiate his claim. Members of the negotiating team (Williams, Mwaura, and Montare) acknowledged the statement by the Council President and Tardi's request for data.

S. Betts made a motion to request that the Council President provide data to substantiate his statement that the state is not saving money and that the health benefits issue is just as important as salary. J. Wilkerson seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

6. Budget

Tardi noted that this budget was not approved by the Executive Board. The Treasurer submitted the budget too late for appropriate Executive Board review. Mwaura presented the budget for feedback from the membership. It will now go to the Budget Committee and the Union Executive Board for approval, and will be presented to the General Membership for approval at the May meeting.

7. New Business

Tardi said she would like to reorganize the office staff and hire an administrative assistant for twenty hours per week for 12 months at a rate of \$8 - \$15 per hour depending on experience. She said she is looking to hire someone from the outside. She said she would prefer not to hire a student due to the sensitive nature of the work. A member asked if the position can be advertised to adjunct faculty and Tardi said she tried that in the past and it did not work out.

8. Executive Board Nominations

Eleanor Goldstein, substituting for Marion Turkish, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, provided the nominations for the Executive Board for the 2007-2008 year: Susanna Tardi, President; Linda Gazzillo Diaz, Vice President for Negotiations; Chriss Williams, Vice President for Grievances; Ed Matthews and Shari Selke, Professional Staff Co-Representatives; Jan Pinkston, Recording Secretary; Robert Wolk, Library Officer; Frank Pavese, Adjunct Officer; and Muroki Mwaura, Treasurer. According to the Nominating Committee, no other nominations were received and consequently, the Recording Secretary cast one vote for each of the nominees. The nominees were then elected to the Executive Board for the 2007-2008 year.

9. Announcements

Tardi reminded the membership that Senate elections are underway and it is very important to vote. She noted that a strong Union and a strong Senate will help move Union and academic issues forward. Members Ki Hee Kim, Donna Fengya and Diana Van Boerum stated that they are running for positions in the Senate and would appreciate votes.

Tardi said Cindy Simon is running for the Wayne School Board and would appreciate votes.

Gina Guerrieri reminded the membership about the upcoming rally for Darfur in Washington, DC, and thanked the Union for their support. Tardi thanked Guerrieri for her commitment and dedication regarding her work on that issue (applause from membership).

Tardi announced that she lost the election for Executive Vice-President of the State Council by five votes. She thanked everyone for their support and pledged to monitor the activities of the State Council. In the next two years she will consider to work toward the development of a more effective State Council.

A University Health Fair will be offered in Wightman Gym on April 19th. The American Democracy Project is sponsoring a Globalization Conference on April 26-27. Tardi urged members to attend.

10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Montare, and seconded by Scala. Approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Pinkston,
Recording Secretary