

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

Date: Tuesday, May 8, 2007
Location: Raubinger 01
Time: 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

Present: S. Tardi, L. Gazzillo Diaz, C. Williams, J. Pinkston, M. Mwaura, E. Matthews, S. Selke, R. Wolk, G. Pope, C. Goldstein, S.H. Chung, G. Guerrieri, J. Carter, S. Wollock, A. Pachtman, R. Rehberg, I. Nack, M. Innis-Jimenez, S. Betts, D. Fengya, K. Louie, J. Peterman, A. Montare, K. Park, C. Mulrine, A. Scala, C. Simon, K.H. Kim, L. Dye, M. Kim, V. Vicari.

Items distributed to the Council and General Membership:

- 1) Proposed Agenda for Meeting
- 2) Minutes of the General and Executive/Local Council Emergency Meeting (April 5, 2007)
- 3) Minutes of the General and Executive/Local Council Meeting (April 17, 2007)
- 4) Statement form McEnerney, Brady, & Company, LLC

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:47 pm.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by A. Montare, and seconded by D. Fengya. Motion was approved unanimously.

Modifying agenda items:

Tardi requested to add the President's report following #5. A motion to amend the agenda was made by A. Montare and seconded by E. Matthews. The motion was approved unanimously.

A motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by A. Montare and seconded by E. Matthews. The motion was approved unanimously.

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

A motion to approve the April 17, 2007 minutes was made by A. Montare and seconded by G. Pope. The motion was approved unanimously.

A motion to approve the April 5, 2007 emergency meeting minutes was made by A. Montare and seconded by A. Pachtman. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Professional Staff Evaluation Process and Calendar

Selke reported that an agreement was reached between the Union Executive Board and the Administration regarding Professional Staff evaluation forms. She indicated that the same evaluation form will be used for Professional Staff reappointment and for evaluation within the multiyear contract. Tardi noted that if Professional Staff members encounter issues with their supervisors they should contact the Union Leadership, so the problem can be addressed in a general way rather than pointing to a specific member.

5. Action Items

a. Budget

Tardi explained that the budget is late because Treasurer Mwaura presented it late to the Executive Board. She said Mwaura is also the Treasurer for the State Council and is accustomed to operating on a different timetable as far as the budget is concerned. She said the Executive Board addressed the issue and Mwaura now knows the exact procedure for next year. Mwaura presented the budget and pointed out that there was a change made to the council delegate line item since the membership reviewed the proposed budget at the April 17th meeting. The amount was increased to accommodate the cost of mileage for each delegate. Tardi added that state delegates are paid \$100 per meeting in addition to mileage. She further noted that she, Gazzillo Diaz, and Williams do not get paid per meeting and are only reimbursed for gas and mileage.

Mwaura explained that by the way in which the budget is presented, surplus from the previous years' budget is not rolled over. Consequently, negative amount balances are not an indication that finances to run the Union are unavailable. Tardi added that the Executive Board is concerned that we are overpaying AFT National and the State Council (the amount we pay is based on the number of members). The figures that the Administration provided are different from those of AFT National and the State Council. Since it is the Treasurer's responsibility to provide per cap payments to Council and National AFT, Mwaura will go back through the University payroll records from last year to determine exactly how many members were in our Union. Tardi said it is in the best interest of the Council if our numbers are high. She said that the National AFT figures are suspect since they claim they got the numbers from a membership suite program that we do not use. Tardi noted that it is not clear exactly what our legal rights are as far as recouping money that was overpaid and we are checking with the attorney. If they determine we can recoup the money, Ed Matthews will do a two year audit of the payroll records (2004-05 and 2005-06) over the summer and will be paid for his services. Mwaura will do the one year audit (2006-07) as part of his regular duties as treasurer. Tardi reiterated that Matthews will only do the audit if we can recoup the funds.

Mwaura pointed out that the summer contingency credits have decreased. Last year, 11 credits were allotted for summer contingency and a total of 5.5 credits were used by the President and the V.P. of Negotiations. Tardi said she wants the membership to understand that the 11 credits of summer contingency listed in the proposed budget are there only in the event of an emergency. Tardi referred to the accountant's statement in the meeting packet stating that our

finances have been reviewed and everything is in order. She said she will invite Vince Baldassano to the September meeting to discuss our investments.

Al Montare, Chairman of the Budget Committee, said that the budget committee recently met and approved the proposed budget. He said one person on the committee felt excluded and has since resigned. Montare stated that there was difficulty getting the Budget Committee together, and in an effort to present the budget to the membership in a timely manner, he provisionally passed the budget so it could be presented at today's meeting. He explained that an emergency meeting of the Budget Committee was called, and the person who resigned was not able to attend at that time. The Budget Committee then approved the budget. Montare pointed out that the AFT national dues estimate for the 2007-08 year is more in line with what we are anticipating to pay verses what the previous budget estimated. He also noted a correction on the second page where the amount being paid to the Treasurer had been miscalculated.

Comments from members

A member questioned if there was a quorum when the committee made its final determination. Tardi said the official members of the Budget Committee are Al Montare, chair; Ken Schneider, Jane Hutchinson, Ester Martinez, Bob Bing, and Rey Martinez. E. Martinez and Bing were not available for the emergency meeting and Hutchinson was out of town due to an illness/death in the family and did not know when she would be returning. Tardi noted that the constitution does not state that there must be a quorum, but rather, it states only that "the Executive Board prepares the budget and submits it to the Budget Committee for recommendation." Tardi said that the process was done properly in terms of the constitution, but since we are trying to change the constitution to include stricter rules, we attempted to go ahead and apply them. Unfortunately, not all the members of the committee could attend the meeting. A member asked if all the appropriate protocol to arrive at the presentation of this budget has been satisfied to the letter. Williams responded that it has been satisfied beyond the letter.

Montare said that he volunteered to serve on the Budget Committee because he served as Treasurer for six or seven years. He said he will resign as the chair of the committee. A member stated that she is concerned about this issue because the constitution says that when not specifically stated, we will follow Roberts Rules of Order, and since this is the case, there would have to be a quorum. The member further stated that issue should be addressed not only in the Budget Committee but in all committees. Williams said that although he doesn't necessarily disagree with the member's remarks, he would like to know where that is stated in the constitution. He further added that from the standpoint of the current constitution, this process was clean. Tardi noted that Mwaura offered to explain the budget to any member of the Budget Committee who was interested prior to today's meeting. He also invited the person who felt excluded from the budget meeting to meet with him to address any issues, and that person chose not to make an appointment.

S. Wollock made a motion to approve the budget. I. Nack seconded. The motion was approved with one abstention.

b. Department Representatives

Tardi reported that due to a lack of response, the names of the Department Representatives and

State Delegates cannot be updated until September, and she recommends that since negotiations are currently underway, that the representatives and delegates are kept in place provisionally. **A. Montare made a motion to keep the Department Representatives and State Delegates in place. A. Scala seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

c. Committee Members (Budget, Legal, Nominations, Elections)

Tardi announced the committees that are in place: Library - Judy Matthew and Richard Kearney; Professional Staff - Michael Georgio, Ray Martinez, and Roosevelt McCullom; Adjunct – Cindy Simon and Vince Vicari; Budget and Audit – Jane Hutchison, Esther Martinez, Al Montare, Ken Schneider, Chris Mulrine, and Rey Martinez; Career Development & Tuition Reimbursement – Donna Fengya and Melda Yildiz; Election – Jean Levitan; Legal – Al Montare and Chriss Williams; Legislative Liaison/COPE – Frank Pavese; Membership – Ellie Goldstein and Marion Turkish; Scholarship – Kem Louie, Frank Pavese, and Janet Tracy; COPE – Linda Gazzillo-Diaz, Frank Pavese, Susanna Tardi, and Gina Guerrieri.

A motion to approve the Representatives and Committee members was made by A. Montare, seconded by M. Turkish. The motion passed unanimously.

Tardi reminded the membership that it is important to volunteer to serve on committees. She thanked the individuals who serve on committees and also thanked the department representatives for serving, noting that \$12.50 is not adequate compensation for their work. Tardi also recognized members of the Executive Board and noted that we have a good team in place and have received positive feedback from members regarding the way this Leadership operates. A member stated that he cannot believe that this Local is so hands-on and said he has no trust in the Council. Tardi said that this Leadership fights hard for the membership. She gave an example of a member who had an issue with the Dean changing his FSPA. Tardi said even though the Council and the Administration advised against it, she went to arbitration over this matter because she wanted to fight for the principle. She said this made the member feel confident in our Local Leadership, sent a message to the Administration, and demonstrated that our Leadership is accountable (applause from members).

6. President's report

Tardi reported that she expressed concerns about campus safety at a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees (BOT). She noted that she does not have confidence in the Critical Incidence plan the Administration presented to the BOT. She asked the President to form a task force in order to allow many people to provide input and give the experts on campus an opportunity to make suggestions. Tardi said the President maintains that the Valley Road campus is safe, and that the emergency response time is faster than the main campus because it is covered by Wayne police. Tardi said the Union would like to take a proactive approach, but there is really nothing that can be done until an incident occurs.

Tardi also discussed the ceiling problems at Shea Auditorium. She said the performances were stopped until they examined the building and it was deemed safe. Tardi reminded the membership that the Union is very concerned with employee safety issues. Tardi further requested that the President provide a statement from the structural engineer indicating that the building is safe.

Comments from members

A member expressed his shock and concern that concrete fell from the ceiling in Shea. He said the university has a premier jazz program and the maintenance of Shea needs to be a high priority on this campus. Another member said she feels it is a very serious matter and she did not get the sense that it was taken seriously enough. Tardi acknowledged the concerns and stated that she wants to see proof that the inspectors are doing what they need to do. She noted that the building is in need of repairs but that funding is a problem as they have not been able to raise a sufficient amount of money. A member asked if there is a faculty or Union committee in place to deal with safety issues on campus. Tardi responded that her responsibility is to notify the Administration and follow through when there are questions about safety. A member commented that everyone on campus should be aware of the Tort Law stating that the University is liable if injuries result from dangers on campus that are not repaired in a timely fashion. A member described one incident with a problem with bees in Science 200A. The member said she reported the problem on a weekly basis throughout an entire semester, and it was finally corrected when there was only one week of class left. Tardi said issues like this are not acceptable and the solutions that are provided are unacceptable. Tardi noted that she wrote a letter on behalf of the Union, stating that if anything should happen the Administration is responsible. She further stated that she told the BOT that a more concrete safety plan is needed on this campus and the issue of aggressive students in the classroom needs to be addressed. Tardi said she told the BOT that William Paterson should be more proactive on this issue and that a consumer mentality among the students is exacerbating the issue. Tardi said the BOT seemed interested and Martone and Sherman agreed to hold a series of forums designed to make this campus safer from that perspective.

A member commented on the consumer mentality of the students, and expressed concern that faculty members are rated by students in every class during every semester through the current evaluation process. The member further commented that William Paterson hires faculty who are specialists in certain areas, and then students get to rate them. The member suggested that the Union (not the Senate), should have a rating system for the Administration, and each semester the results should be published in the public newspapers. The member gave an example of how the teachers in the Wayne public school system wrote letters to the Board expressing their disapproval with the Superintendent and the person was not rehired. Tardi responded that in terms of student evaluations, if anyone is dissatisfied with the wording, it can be changed. She said the State requires that the evaluations take place, but departments can have control over the questions in them. Tardi stated that she would be happy to provide a survey to rate the Administration, but noted that the Senate has such a survey and the BOT has made it known that they do not have to pay attention to the outcome. The member suggested making it open to the public. Tardi responded that it would be more effective if faculty and staff attend the BOT meetings, as that is the best way to let the Administration know that there is Union support. A member said that in regard to aggressive students, one way to reach students and improve their civility is to offer training seminars and ask the First Year Seminar teachers to talk about what is expected. Tardi responded that while that is an excellent idea, the problem is that the Administration has not decided what to do with the First Year Seminar because the amount of information to be covered is overwhelming. Students are so bombarded with information that they take nothing seriously. Tardi noted that civility is a requirement, and students need to know

that when they graduate and go out in the workforce that they cannot talk back to their supervisor. Tardi said she believes we are doing a disservice to students if we ignore this behavior.

S. Wollock moved that the Union organize a faculty satisfaction survey that will serve as an annual report card stating what the faculty thinks about the Administration.

M. Innis-Jimenez seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

A member suggested developing a policy regarding the language of the evaluation and changing it so that the department or committee that evaluates the faculty shall consider the students' opinions and make it clear that students are registering an opinion, not an evaluation. If there are retention and tenure problems, the Administration cannot reject a person based on students' opinions. The member stressed difference in the words evaluation and opinion. Tardi responded that regardless of the language, the surveys are evaluative. She said higher scores in terms of teaching are evaluative, even if they are not supposed to be used that way. A member suggested that the Administration should be retrained to change use the word opinion, and they may have to be reminded of the process.

L. Dye made a motion to work toward renaming the student evaluations to student "opinionnaire." The motion was seconded by S. Wollock.

Discussion:

Williams said that at some point there is going to be some measurement of what that opinion is and someone is going to be higher than someone else. Tardi said the other danger is that the Administration likes to spin it to say that faculty members do not want to be assessed because we are not doing what we are supposed to do. There is pressure from the State and the BOT regarding assessment. She said we may be able to modify it from assessment to opinion but it will be the same thing. A member stated that we are not supposed to be comparing faculty members to one another. Tardi said that while that may be true, the Administration still does. A member stated that she would like to affirm what was said, and that she feels that by referring to the evaluations as student questionnaires we are changing the culture. She also said the departments do need to look seriously at these forms and write questions that we really want opinions about. The member said that changing the language for this process is a move in the right direction. Another member stated that we have a technical situation and we must lay the groundwork for a move that we want to make in the future. The member said opinion is not evidentiary. Another member said he would like to commend L. Dye on her suggestion. He said that he thinks it is fantastic because it changes the whole concept. He also stated that we must do the survey on the administration. A member stated that if the department determines the questions and not the college, then we should be able to call it whatever we want. Tardi said the Union Leadership will go back and review the handbook policy regarding student questionnaires and retention and tenure, promotion, and range adjustments. She suggested that members discuss this matter in their departments, decide what they want to do, and then forward the suggestions to the Union Leadership and the Administration.

The motion to work toward renaming the student evaluations to student opinionnaire passed unanimously.

A member asked if there are any updates on negotiations. Tardi responded that there have been no meetings due to final exams. She said members will be notified via email of any developments in the coming weeks. The email will be sent from the Tardi-AFT account.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Montare and seconded by Scala. Approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:51 p.m

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Pinkston
Recording Secretary
[Edited:]