

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

Date: October 16, 2007
Location: Valley Road 2021
Time: 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

Present: S. Tardi, L. Gazzillo Diaz, Ed Matthews, S. Selke, I. DiMaio, F. Pavese, G. Pope, R. Schwartz, M. Peek, K. Martus, G. Guerrieri, J. Carter, S. Wollock, R. Soto, M. Innis-Jimenez, S. Betts, K. Louie, A. Montare, K. Chen, A. Rotonda, A. Scala, R. Kearney, M. Giorgio, R. McCullum, C. Simon, E. Goldstein, J. Hutchinson, K.H. Kim, I. Nack, A. Mir, S. Musa, R. Kashyap, F. Li, B. Mason, A. Grossman, S. Godar

Items distributed to the Council and General Membership:

- 1) Faculty and Staff Promotional Opportunities: Rationale, Data Analysis & Recommendations 2007-2008 Academic Year (Submitted 10/15/2007)
- 2) AFT College Council Endorsements 2007

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:41 pm.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by K. Martus, and seconded by E. Goldstein. Approved unanimously.

Modifying agenda items:

Tardi requested a modification to the agenda:

4. Announcements
5. President's Report
 - 5a Teaching Load
 - 5b. Adjunct Faculty Representative/Cope Officer Report
 - 5c. Promotional Opportunities
6. Action items

A motion to approve the agenda with modifications was made by K. Martus, seconded by G. Pope. Approved unanimously.

- 3. Approval of Minutes of the September 18, 2007 General Membership and Executive/Local Council Meeting -- A motion to approve the minutes was made by S. Selke, seconded by K. Martus. Approved unanimously.**

4. Announcements

Tardi announced that a petition concerning Darfur is being circulated by Gina Guerrieri and reminded members of upcoming promotion workshops.

5. President's report

a. Teaching Load

(Please note: Due to the sensitive nature of the minutes, this section represents an executive summary rather than the actual minutes. For details regarding this discussion, please ask your Department Representative, or inquire at the Union office, Hunziker Hall, room 100).

Tardi said it was brought to her attention that the Provost was invited to attend a meeting at one of the colleges during which teaching credit load and the new ART Program were the focus. Tardi expressed concern over this matter because under no circumstances is anyone other than Union Leadership authorized to negotiate on behalf of the membership, and to do so is a direct violation of the contract.

Tardi noted that Alternate Assignment is one of the major areas currently under negotiation. Each of the colleges should work with Union Leadership toward a unified plan for a reduction in teaching load. Tardi said the needs of the faculty are similar throughout the institution. A reduced teaching load is necessary in **all** departments to recruit and retain quality faculty and to permit individual professional growth and quality service to the institution. Tardi said the Union Leadership has been negotiating the ART Program for over a year. She noted that ART was an agenda item on almost every meeting for over a year, and regular discussions about the matter occurred and updates were given at General and Executive Board meetings. Tardi noted that at no time did anyone from the college that met with the Provost provide one concrete suggestion or give any indication that he or she was not satisfied with the proposed ART Program. Tardi said the current ART Program is a pilot program which will be assessed in two years. The assessment will be based on the needs of the faculty members at William Paterson University, not on any specific college.

Tardi said she received complaints from faculty members who were concerned that the members from an individual college were attempting to negotiate with the Provost. Tardi recommended writing a letter to the Board of Trustees stating that negotiations may be conducted with the Union Leadership only. Negotiations outside of this body constitute an Unfair Labor Practice. Tardi noted that this Union Leadership has fought very hard to maintain Union cohesiveness.

Comments from members

- The Union should fight to maintain the benefits that a college was promised by the Administration.
- A change in administrative leadership should not result in a change of the benefits for members of the college.
- Concerns were expressed regarding accreditation needs.
- The Union should fight to have perks gained by one college spread out to everyone.

- If there is evidence of the Administration conducting negotiations with any sub-group, then there is no choice but to file an Unfair Labor Practice.

A. Scala made a motion for the President of the Union to write a letter to the Board of Trustees stating that negotiations are to be conducted by the Union Leadership only. I. Nack seconded the motion.

Discussion: A member asked if “negotiations” really took place at the meeting of the Provost and the specific college. Tardi responded that she was aware of the concern of the specific college, and had requested to be invited to a meeting to discuss those concerns, but no invitation was extended. A member said that the letter should be clear that the Union is considering taking action and not waiting to see if it happens again. Another member stated that he was present at the college meeting and the “negotiations” were weak enough that he did not even notice it was taking place. The member stated that the Provost was not invited to the meeting by the faculty and that during the course of the meeting faculty members attempted to cut off “that kind of talk.” He said ART was discussed because faculty members in the college wanted to know if ART previously granted by the Dean now has to undergo the traditional ART process. Tardi reiterated her concerns about engaging “in that kind of talk” with the Administration. Tardi said she was told by the Provost that many individuals in the college under discussion believe that their ART proposal should not have to be reviewed by individuals outside their college. Tardi noted that all faculty members applying for ART are reviewed by individuals outside of their college. She said she will personally serve as the Union observer on the ART committee to ensure the process is done properly. Tardi stated that when members go directly to the Provost with their concerns rather than going through the Union Leadership, the Provost interprets that as problems within the membership. Tardi said that because of a few complaints by individual members about the promotion process, the Provost is already in favor of considering changing the promotion policy to create another level of review. Tardi emphasized that Union Membership must remain united to protect the policies and procedures that have been negotiated by Union Leadership with the assistance of the Union Membership. These policies and procedures were developed to maintain faculty control of promotional opportunities in the practice of fairness and equity.

Tardi asked if there are any objections to the motion. One member indicated he objected. Another member questioned why the discussion that occurred at the meeting was considered as “negotiating.” Tardi said she believes that the Provost interpreted the members of that college as advocating for their own unique needs rather than fighting for everyone in the Union. Tardi stated that arguing for unique needs rather than common needs leads to a “divide and conquer” mentality. A member said the Provost was not invited by the faculty and he believes the Dean invited the Provost. Another member indicated that the point is not who invited the Provost but that he shouldn’t have been there in the first place therefore it is only appropriate to send a letter to the Administration. Another member stated

that everyone knows the Union Leadership is in charge; that is why we pay dues and attend meetings. One member stated that the Provost was consistent in all his statements to the college and the college members were consistent in arguing that issues (i.e. ART) have been negotiated with the prior Administration.

Tardi responded that the letter she will write to the Board of Trustees will not mention the specific incidence. The purpose is to place the Administration on notice that the Union Leadership is by contract the only official bargaining agent.

A member stated that the members of the college in question are in favor of equity and agree that all faculty members across campus should stand together. He said the mood at the meeting was not as it was portrayed, and the faculty position is not one of “us versus them.” The member said he agrees that it is important and necessary to assert the Union’s rights and important to remind the Administration that they can only negotiate with the Union Leadership. He said he does feel however, that the letter may produce the very “us versus them” mentality that Tardi is trying to avoid in the first place. The member further stated that he thought individuals at the meeting with the Provost were simply expressing concerns. Tardi responded that she has been negotiating with this administration for a very long time, and whether or not negotiations were done actively or inactively, the point is that members from the specific college have come to meetings and were well aware of how Union Leadership and membership feel about inequities. Tardi noted that any perception that we are not one supports Administrative rather than Union goals. Gazzillo Diaz said that the Provost used the word “negotiation” when referring to this matter. She further added that the Provost took “great glee” in expressing that one of the specific colleges wants a separate ART Program. Matthews confirmed Tardi’s and Gazzillo Diaz’s assessment of the situation with the Provost.

A vote on the motion for the President of the Union to write a letter to the Board of Trustees, stating that the negotiations are to be conducted by the Union Leadership was called by Tardi. Twenty (20) said yes, eight (8) were opposed, and there were three (3) abstentions. A member called for a recount by a show of hands. The vote resulted with twenty six (26) voting yes, five (5) opposed, and four (4) abstentions. The motion was approved.

After the motion was passed, a few members continued to add comments regarding the issue. Tardi emphasized that in order for a university to be “real” university, a three course teaching load is needed. She encouraged the membership to come and talk to the Union Leadership or invite the leadership to a meeting where everyone can work together as a unified body.

A member stated that he likes the idea of making this University a real university and he would like to see a 3/3 load for everyone. Tardi said that point did not come out in the meeting with the specific college at all. A member asked if there is a limit on the ART, and questioned why the Union doesn’t fight for everyone to

get a 3/3 load. Tardi noted that the Union Leadership is fighting for a 3/3 load through ART and/or an Alternate Assignment Program. Tardi said she asked the Provost to focus on initiatives such as the assessment initiative that is required by Middle States to justify a reduction in teaching load. Tardi further noted that the ART Program is a pilot study for two years and she is waiting to see if the Administration will fulfill their commitment.

A motion to move the agenda was made by K. Martus and seconded by A. Montare. The motion passed with twenty three (23) voting yes, nine (9) opposed, and one (1) abstention.

A member accused Tardi of cutting off the discussion. Tardi noted that she voted against the motion to move the agenda, but the motion carried. The agenda was moved.

A member stated that it is very difficult to recruit faculty members for the college in question. Tardi noted that it is a problem for all departments, not just for departments in that specific college, and she ended the discussion by stating that due to the fact that it is a common issue, we should come together and fight as one for a reduction in teaching load.

b. Adjunct Faculty/Cope Officer Report

Pavese came forward to give an update on the negotiations involving the adjunct evaluations. A member asked for clarification regarding if adjunct faculty members are separate from part-time. Pavese said they are separate. Pavese said that requiring faculty to evaluate adjunct faculty one time each semester and for each prep was too much of a burden. He said negotiations with the Administration regarding this matter are moving along, and he hopes to reach an agreement later this week that would limit evaluations to one time per year and in the case of new preps, with the exception of extraordinary situations. Tardi noted that the Administration had previously said this issue was not negotiable and that it was managerial prerogative. They claimed that since faculty members have been doing the evaluations for 25 years, that it is now part of their duties and responsibilities, and it must be done every semester and for every new prep. That was what led to the memo Tardi sent last week asking for the Membership to evaluate only newly hired adjunct faculty until this matter can be settled.

c. Promotions

Tardi noted that there has been a decrease in the number of promotions, and the Administration says it is due to the budget. She told the Department Representatives to go back and encourage faculty and professional staff members to apply for range adjustments and promotions because the more people who apply, the more Union Leadership can justify asking for more slots to be available. A member questioned the rationale behind the same number of people being promoted and why they are so “bunched up” at the associate level. Tardi

said she has been warning the Administration that his balloon effect would occur. She said the Administration is for the most part trying to allow people to move from the assistant level to the associate level but they are getting bottled up at the associate level. She said we have been trying to move all the cohorts forward, but the Administration cites fiscal constraints. Union Leadership examines the history of those eligible, those who applied, and the number awarded. Other than fiscal constraints, the factors used by the Administration remain unclear. The Union believes that if policy states a person is eligible and the person meets the criteria, then the Administration should provide it. Tardi noted that during the discussion of promotional opportunities, the President was trying to calculate how much range adjustments were going to cost the University. Tardi clarified that the range adjustment policy is that after four years, a faculty member is eligible for a second range adjustment. She noted that that is why the pool of eligibility is not decreasing.

6. Action Item

Martus made a motion to approve Iris DiMaio as Assistant Professional Staff Representative, seconded by Matthews. The motion was approved unanimously.

Pavese distributed a list of Union endorsements for the upcoming election and encouraged Department Representatives to discuss the matter with their departments.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Martus, seconded by Selke. Approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Pinkston,
Recording Secretary
[Edited:]