

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

Date: September 16, 2008
Location: SC 211
Time: 12:43 pm – 1:45 pm

Present: S. Tardi, C. Williams, G. Guerrieri, J. Pinkston, E. Matthews, S. Selke, F. Pavese, R. Grier, G. Pope, M. Williams, K. Asada, J. Carter, J. Najarian, S. Wollock, M. Turkish, P. Swanson, R. Soto, S. Alon, L. Gazzillo Diaz, J. Cho, D. Fengya, K. Louie, J. Peterman, A. Montare, G. Furst, M. Yildiz, A. Holpp Scala, J. Matthew, M. Giorgio, C. Simon, E. Goldstein, J. Hutchison, K. Martus, R. Cauthen, A. Cheo, M. Rosar, V. Fiaud, N. Kalb, C. Hong, M. Arteaga, S. Rienstra, J. Heavey, D. Van Boerum, K.H. Kim

Items distributed to the Council and General Membership:

- 1) May 13, 2008 General and Executive/Local Council Meeting Minutes
- 2) Calendar of Workshops and General Meeting Dates
- 3) Lists of Department Representatives, State delegates, Standing Committee Chairs
- 4) AFT Local 1796 Leadership Goals and Objectives
- 5) Adjunct Faculty Supplemental Medical Plan

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:43 pm.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

After discussion, the agenda was modified to add “Political Campaign Discussion” under New Business. A motion to approve the agenda with the modifications was made by F. Pavese and seconded by R. Soto. Approved unanimously.

3. Approval of the May 13, 2008 General Membership and Executive/Local Council Meeting minutes. A motion to accept the minutes was made by A. Montare and seconded by K. Martus. Approved unanimously.

4. President’s Report

a. Welcome New Unit Members

Tardi welcomed everyone back for the new academic year. Members of the Executive Board and the Membership introduced themselves.

b. Department Representatives Approval

Several changes to the department representative listing were discussed.

A motion to approve the department representatives listing with the changes was made by K. Martus and seconded by A. Montare. Approved unanimously.

c. State Delegates Approval

Tardi noted that the number of delegates we are allotted depends on the number of full paying members in our Local (“full paying” includes those who pay the agency fee of 85% as well as their own additional contribution of 15%). The State Council maintains that we are entitled to 13 delegates, but Tardi plans to confirm that this figure is accurate. **A motion to accept the delegate list with the alternates was made by A. Montare and seconded by E. Goldstein. Approved unanimously.** Selke noted that if we determine that we are allotted more delegates, the list will be modified.

d. Salary Increase

A member asked when the cost of living adjustment (COLA) will appear on paychecks. Tardi responded that the 3% increase goes into effect in September and will be reflected on the October paychecks. A member questioned the amount of the adjunct faculty increase. Tardi responded that the amount depends on the number of semesters the person has taught at the University. She asked Pavese, the Adjunct Faculty Representative, to find out the exact amount and report back to the Membership.

e. Dues Increase

Tardi said the AFT National voted for an increase in dues and our Local was not aware of it. She said this is very problematic because we estimate our budget each academic year, and we were not notified of the increase even though the former treasurer contacted AFT National and Council to get an estimate on the dues for the 2008-2009 academic year. Our Local budgeted for a certain amount based on the information from AFT National and Council prior to receiving the message from National regarding the increase. Tardi stated that she told Council representatives to write to National and object to this practice of submitting resolutions to increase dues without notifying the Council and locals of its intentions. Council representatives said that since our Membership received a raise, an increase in dues should not matter. Tardi said one of her main objections to this is the fact that the Union Leadership did not have a chance to discuss the matter locally. The amount of the increase will be 65 cents per paycheck this year and an additional 65 cents per paycheck next year for fulltime faculty members. Tardi said the increase will be used to help build a strike fund in case we have serious issues in the next contract. A member questioned if the dues for part-time faculty members and adjunct faculty members will also be increased. Tardi said yes, but the amount will be less, with part-time members paying an additional 32 cents per paycheck, and adjunct faculty members paying an additional 17 cents per paycheck. Tardi asked the representatives to discuss the matter with their departments. The Union Leadership will send the Membership a general notification with a rationale for the increase that has been provided by the State Council. Tardi said in the future she hopes AFT National will provide resolutions prior to the end of an academic year so the Membership can be made aware of any changes. A member commented that National should have considered that although we received an increase in pay, we are now paying more for our

health care benefits. Tardi stated that National is aware of that, and she thinks that if they are going to implement an increase, they should have a plan of how it will benefit us. Tardi noted that most of the money in our budget goes to AFT National and Council, and they must be held accountable for the services they provide to our Local.

f. Goals and Objectives

Tardi referred to the Goals and Objectives in the packet, and pointed out that some goals could have been stated as objectives if they were strictly dependent upon Union leadership. However, since they are dependent upon the administration, specific timeframes cannot be established. Tardi encouraged the Membership to suggest other goals. A member said she would like our Local to increase political action because over the summer, our actions helped retain benefits for adjunct faculty members. She said she would like to expand our Local's presence in local and county politics. Tardi said we have been involved by contributing money and hosting a legislative breakfast. Pavese, the COPE representative, stated that we must lobby no matter how distasteful it is. Tardi said this is the responsibility of the COPE Director, since COPE is a system by which members can contact legislators. Tardi noted that the participation of our Local and other Locals has been very poor. She said she is concerned that National and Council do not always consult individual Locals about what positions we hold or give us the opportunity to get member feedback. Pavese noted that our elected representatives will do things from their own viewpoint so it is important that we all have input. He said if we do not like the way they represent us then we should not re-elect them. Tardi said she told Steve Young at Council that if possible, Cope Directors should be given time to get input from the Local before being asked to vote on important matters because it is the Council's responsibility to let the Locals know about issues in a timely manner.

Tardi stated that in regard to the last objective regarding member training, promotion, range adjustment, retention, and tenure workshops are already planned for this semester and a calendar will be sent to the Membership.

A member suggested that since student enrollment is down, a goal should be included that supports students. Tardi responded that we can develop a better liaison with the goals we have in common with students. Tardi said that as Union President, she has attended many tuition hearings over the years, and this was the first year there was a good response by the students and the faculty. She said the Board of Trustees is cognizant of what the tuition is, and that is why William Paterson had such a low tuition increase this year.

g. BOT Retreat

Tardi stated that at last semester's Board of Trustees' retreat, she, along with Sue Godar, the Chairperson of the Faculty Senate, had a "gag" order and were basically seated in a corner and told not to speak. Following that meeting, Tardi had expressed her outrage and frustration, and she reported that at the most recent BOT retreat, they were invited to sit at the table and were

encouraged to participate. Tardi said it was clear to her for the first time, that the BOT is aware of the issues we face at this University. Tardi said she told the group about the negative reputation and image of the school. Two or three BOT members graduated from William Paterson, and they remember the University at a time when things were different. They understand that we have an image problem that must be addressed. Tardi said the BOT wants faculty input and she encouraged the Membership to contact her or send email correspondence directly to BOT members. Tardi noted that the board is going to be re-examining the marketing campaign and they are looking at data which indicates that William Paterson has a higher SAT average than Montclair, although that is not being published. She noted that the number of sponsored students at William Paterson does not fit that so they are not highlighting that fact. Tardi stated that the board wants a strong campaign that puts us in a position of power and strength. She said the board decided that the goal is to reach 12,000 students, and they are now trying to decide what cohort they will focus on to achieve this goal. They discussed focusing on admitting more Honors students to help raise the profile of the institution and assist with recruitment, but Tardi stated she is concerned this could result in the University being viewed as elitist, when our mission statement focuses on diversity. Tardi stated that most of the BOT members are corporate leaders and it has taken them a while to realize that there are no easy solutions.

A member stated that Montclair is the fastest growing university in the United States, with more than 400 international students and a 99% graduation rate. The member stated that he continues to ask about international students, recruiting techniques, reputation, and image at William Paterson because we have to be very strong. Tardi agreed, stating that we recruit from a very small area, focusing on Passaic, Morris, and Bergen counties. A member expressed concern that people think the term diverse equals minority, and that the issue is economics, not ethnicity. Another member commented that once we get students, we have to retain them. The member stated that students from Passaic Community College would be willing to transfer to William Paterson if they thought they would get academic support, and that William Paterson needs to increase support to non-traditional students and students of varying cultures. Tardi noted that the BOT agrees that we have been successful at increasing diversity but acknowledges that the retention rates are not good. As Sue Godar told the BOT, although we have a good retention rate in the first year, the problems do not become evident until the second year due to probation and dismissal policies. A member stated that when he hears there is an advertising campaign for branding, it makes him think of a cow. The member further stated that corporations need brand names, and although our administration might like that, in reality we should be working under the model of an academy. He said he would like to see a campaign that stresses that William Paterson is an academy, not a training school. Tardi stated that there is no chance of that in the future because the word “customer” is in their lingo and they’re not willing to adopt another perspective. A member questioned how you relate to an academy when people don’t understand the concept. The member replied that it’s not in the use of the word, but rather

that we have to change the perspective of getting more students to understand the concept that we are going to educate not train. Another member agreed, stating that the vast numbers of students are not coming here to enrich their mind. Tardi stated that the BOT members must deal with the practical, everyday issues. They want to increase enrollment so they have money to make the University a better place. A member stated that there is a reality at Trenton state. They turned that university around, changed the requirements, and became a better institution on an academic basis. Tardi agreed, but stated that it took three years, and during that time period Trenton State's enrollment decreased. Tardi said we're already at the bottom so that is not an option. A member stated the importance of attracting international students. He said he is amazed at how eager Korean universities are to train their students in English and that we need to be more active instead of waiting for students to apply to us. Tardi stated that if you have strategies for doing that, please pass them along to the board. A member stated that the report from Institutional Advancement regarding why students do not come back to William Paterson is very enlightening and all members should read it.

h. Member request related to Health Insurance

Tardi asked all department representatives to poll their members and determine if anyone is having problems with the health care system. She said if so, please identify the problems and report them to the AFT office or bring them up at the next meeting so we can report problems to the Council and try to improve the services that are provided.

5. Vice President for Grievances Report

a. Weingarten Rights

Williams told the membership that everyone has Weingarten Rights which means that if you are ever called into a meeting and you have a reasonable basis to think that discipline is involved, you have a right to request Union representation. Williams said that this applies even in casual situations, and he noted that just the fact that there is a question means that an investigation has already occurred and it is your right to contact the Union. Cards describing Weingarten Rights are being printed by the Council, and will be distributed to all faculty, professional staff, and librarians.

b. Sabbatical Leave Grievance

Williams reported that the Sabbatical Leave grievance is an ongoing issue that he hopes will be resolved in the next few weeks. Williams stated that the Union Leadership submitted a fair and decent proposal to the administration, and is waiting for a response.

c. Pending Legal Issues

Williams described a matter involving an individual who violated the State and University ethics code by having a second fulltime job. He noted that while it is common for faculty to teach at other universities, permission is required and is granted the majority of the time. The problem is that the individual failed to report the employment on the ethics form and that is why

they are coming down on him so hard. A member questioned ART and Williams stated that it is implied that a person would not spend the extra time teaching at another institution. Williams said everyone should be aware of this and fill out the ethics form accurately. Tardi noted that this rule includes all employment including work that is done on a voluntary basis. Tardi said the Union tried to fight the inclusion of volunteer work, but the State Ethics Commission determined that volunteer work can possibly present a conflict of interest regardless of it is on a person's own time or not.

6. Vice President for Negotiations Report

a. Sabbatical Leave Policy Revision

Guerrieri described issues with the Sabbatical distribution. She stated that no one who applied for a one year sabbatical received it and that the Union Leadership will work with the administration to make the process more equitable in the future by putting the applicants in two separate pools. The Union is proposing a policy that would require that the Union and administration meet as soon as the number of leaves are available and what percentage of the sabbatical leave requests are fulltime and part-time. Guerrieri stated that if there are not enough applications, some will be reverted to the full year pool so no positions are sacrificed. A member asked if the information on the number of leaves will be made available. Tardi stated that we don't know if the administration will accept the proposal or not. She noted that the Sabbatical Leave Committee needed more guidelines beyond what is stated in the current policy.

Pavese made a motion to put the items not covered at this meeting first on the agenda at the October meeting. The motion was seconded by A. Holpp Scala. The motion was approved unanimously.

b. NL Professional Staff Study

Selke stated that William Paterson is the only University that does not have a local agreement regarding NL compensation for professional staff. As per the contract, we must now go forward with a study to determine the number of actual hours that Professional Staff work. She said it is imperative that all professional staff members participate in the study, and it will require very little time on their part. Guerrieri stated that the study is not intended to be combative or antagonistic, but rather, it should be seen as something positive that will help establish a permanent record that will be consistent in the event that supervisors change. We are waiting for the Office of Employee Relations (OER) to move the "study" forward.

7. Adjunct Faculty Representative Report

a. Health Insurance

Pavese clarified that adjunct faculty members make \$1100 per credit per semester if they have taught less than 16 semesters at the University. If they have taught over 16 semesters, the amount is increased to \$1150 per credit per

semester. Pavese will be distributing information about a health plan that adjunct faculty members are eligible to purchase.

8. Old Business

A member pointed out that the meeting room is in violation because the doors marked “exit” are locked. Tardi said Williams should mention that when he calls to complain that the gate to Lot 3 is not working.

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by A. Montare and seconded by R. Soto. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Pinkston,
Recording Secretary
[Edited:]