

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

**Date:** December 16, 2008  
**Location:** UC 171  
**Time:** 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

**Present:** S. Tardi, C. Williams, G. Guerrieri, J. Pinkston, E. Matthews, S. Selke, F. Pavese, R. Wolk, M. Williams, K. Martin, K. Martus, J. Najarian, S. Wollock, S. Alon, R. Soto, R. Pardi, L. Gazzillo Diaz, E. Martinez, E. Knaus, T. Newman, J. Peterman, A. Montare, K. McNeal, J. Matthew, R. Kearney, C. Simon, E. Goldstein, A. Cheo, E. Phadia, T. Heinzen, C. Goldstein, D. Potacco, M. Rosar, R. Cauthen, M. Giorgio

**Items distributed to the Council and General Membership:**

- 1) November 18, 2008 General and Executive/Local Council Meeting Minutes
- 2) Agreement regarding the 2007-20087 Sabbatical Committee Recommendations Concerning Applications for Full Year Sabbaticals

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 12:46 pm.

**2. Adoption of the Agenda**

**A motion to modify the agenda to move (#8) Adjunct Faculty Officer's Report to #4 was made by K. Martus, seconded by J. Peterman. Approved unanimously.**

**3. Approval of Minutes of the November 18, 2008 General Membership and Executive/Local Council Meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by K. Martus and seconded by J. Peterman. Approved unanimously.**

**4. Adjunct Faculty Officer's Report**

Pavese announced that he has been working with Ellie Goldstein, Chair of the Membership Committee, to prepare membership letters. He asked the department representatives to encourage everyone, including adjunct faculty members, to become full members of the Union. Pavese reported that he recently met with John Polding concerning a change in the pension choices for adjunct faculty members. Current adjunct faculty members will have the choice of remaining with the PERS system or switching over to ABP, while new adjunct faculty members will be automatically enrolled in the ABP system. The changes are slated to take place in the spring and all adjunct faculty members will be contacted by Human Resources and will receive a letter from the Union outlining the changes. Pavese noted that

those who choose not to make an election may lose benefits. He asked the department representatives to be sure and report this information to all adjunct faculty members. Tardi added that adjunct faculty members should also be reminded to use the university email system and to frequently check their email. A member asked if it is possible to run a workshop regarding the pension changes. Pavese stated that the information was printed in the November 8<sup>th</sup> issue of *The Voice*, and he plans to send a copy of that information to all adjunct faculty members. Tardi noted that it is very difficult to get a substantial number of adjunct faculty members together in one place at one time. Pavese agreed that scheduling is a problem, and stated that one of his objectives is to scan the article and send it out with the email message. Tardi noted that in light of the budget situation, there was a misunderstanding about whether or not there have been blanket cut-backs on the use of adjunct faculty members. She stated that she does not believe that blanket cut-backs have taken place. Pavese said to encourage the administration to consider the ethical aspects of retaining good adjunct faculty members who have been at the university for a long time. Tardi said that due to the fiscal crisis, the administration wants to fill classes to the maximum instead of hiring adjunct faculty members for the spring semester. She further stated that she hopes the administration will be conscious of the short term and long term effects their decisions have because adjunct faculty members are needed at this institution.

## **5. Announcements**

Tardi wished everyone a healthy and happy holiday season and a restful break. She cautioned the Membership about responding to what she calls “in-fighting” on the University server. She said that specifically, turf wars are taking place in response to the GE issue, and from her perspective as a Union leader, she believes it is best for the administration to know as little as possible about the disagreements that take place among faculty and staff members. In a discussion with the Provost, Tardi noted that the method being used to discuss the GE changes is ineffective.

## **6. President’s Report**

### **a. State and University Fiscal Concerns**

Tardi expressed her concerns over the current fiscal crisis nationwide and particularly the crisis in the New York metro area. She anticipates that next year will be extremely difficult and stated that Council has already mentioned that the governor is considering cancelling the State contracts, and that all the State colleges might be facing an additional 10% decrease in funding. Tardi noted that while we were able to absorb this year’s decrease in State funding, we cannot raise tuition significantly and risk making ourselves non-competitive. Tardi said the biggest discretionary funds in New Jersey are in higher education and she is worried that the State will attempt to implement a mandatory furlough. Tardi said we need to show how professors and other higher education workers in this State serve students and serve them well, and that’s one reason why branding, advertising, and marketing are so crucial. Tardi expressed her dissatisfaction with

the new marketing campaign, stating that it was put on the table before being shown to the faculty and the administration spent \$1 million to figure out that we have an image problem. She noted that during the last budget crisis, she was able to counteract the furlough by suggesting that the winter session be implemented, and it has turned out to be quite lucrative for the University. Tardi stated that while the Union was able to negotiate a decent number of promotions and range adjustments, there are never enough slots available. She further stated that Union Leadership was able to increase the number promotions and range adjustments from the number the administration had planned on making available. Tardi said that President Speert recently made a comment about the unusual number of faculty members who were tenured (there were 26 this year). Tardi reminded the Membership that prior to hiring individuals, department members should make sure they are a good fit because it's not fair to relocate people so we can "try them out." If they are not a good fit or if there are reservations about them, they should not be hired in the first place.

Tardi said the Provost told her the State has mentioned the word furlough, and she considers this to be a quick and dirty solution to the fiscal problems. She encouraged the Membership to think of other ways of reducing spending and increasing revenue, and stated that anyone with ideas should put them forward. A member stated that he thinks cutting sections of courses is going to irritate students, and if they can't get the classes they want and/or need, it could impact retention. Tardi said the Provost assured her that classes that are necessary for timely degree completion will not be cancelled. Tardi noted that her concern with the cancellation of classes is equity since it is left up to the deans to decide what classes are cut. Tardi said she wants the Union to establish criteria for cancelling classes, and apply it fairly across the board. Tardi said she told the Provost that if the registration window was open longer more classes might fill. The Provost told her he wanted to close them now and would reopen them if necessary. Tardi asked the Membership to make the Union Leadership aware of cancelled classes and any inequities that occur. A member asked what happens when classes are cancelled resulting in a faculty member going below load. Tardi responded that a faculty member cannot go below load because the chairperson must find a course for them to teach. She noted that due to managerial prerogative, it may not be a course or a schedule that the faculty member desires, but the chair must find a course for them to teach as no one can be paid less. Tardi said the chairperson might also "bump" an adjunct faculty member from a course in order to give it to a fulltime member, and she urged department representatives to discuss the importance of respecting adjunct faculty members. A member commented that faculty members must have a 24 credit load during the entire year, so it is possible to teach a reduced load during one semester and make it up during another semester. A member asked if it is possible to combine similar graduate and undergraduate courses. Tardi questioned the ethics of combining graduate and undergraduate classes for fiscal reasons. She said this issue was recently discussed at the Faculty Senate, and she is aware that this practice occurs at other universities, but it has not been the practice at William Paterson. Tardi noted that

it is unfortunate that many of our members are not fully aware of their rights and/or don't know about all the policies so they tend to just go along with whatever they are told without questioning anything.

**b. Outside Activities Report**

Tardi stated that there have been a number of questions and concerns about the outside activities report. Williams said he researched the matter, and that a primary concern is whether or not our internal ethics form follows the state's mandate. He found that two documents exist; one for our institution, and one for the State. He noted that the institutional form is the one that everyone uses and it incorporates the State form. Williams noted that there does not seem to be any significant differences in the two forms. Tardi noted that the Union and the administration fought this issue about two years ago because the State Ethics Board developed the policy without considering its application to faculty members. Tardi commented that the request for information about voluntary service and household information is very intrusive. A member questioned the survey that was recently distributed by HR regarding race and ethnicity. Tardi said she will check with the Council about this because they did not identify it to the Union as a State requirement, nor did they provide a reason for it. Tardi said there is no need to complete the form until the Union has had a chance to do research on it. A member stated that he opposes the form, so he opened the document, didn't check off anything, and closed it.

**c. Banner Security Issue**

Tardi said that over the course of a recent five day period, individuals in the College of Education were able to access student and faculty names, phone numbers, addresses, and social security numbers in Banner. After an investigation, it was determined that only two people accessed the system and they did not appear to have suspicious purposes for doing so. Tardi stated that she considers this to be a breach of security and she is very concerned about how this was allowed to occur, and what problems may occur in the future. She has been told by the administration that they're "working on it." Tardi said the Union will follow through with this matter.

**d. Professional Staff NL Study**

Tardi noted that a year-long study regarding the hours worked by Professional Staff members is about to be implemented. She urged Professional Staff to participate in this study and she warned that unless a significant number of Professional Staff members participate, the Union will not be able to address the issue in future contracts. Selke stated that a letter outlining the details of the study will be sent jointly from the administration and the Union. She urged all Professional Staff members to participate in the study which will allow the Union to gather data on how various offices across campus handle the sometimes large number of hours worked by Professional Staff members. She noted that timesheets will not change, but Professional Staff members will be required to complete a paper form (on work time), and submit it to their supervisor for

approval. After the supervisor signs the form, the supervisor will have the responsibility of submitting the form to Human Resources and they will provide a copy to the Union. A member suggested that Professional Staff members also make a copy of the form for themselves. Tardi stated that she cannot stress enough how important it is that that all Professional Staff members participate in the study. Guerrieri noted that this is not intended to be antagonistic toward a person's supervisor; it is merely to demonstrate how much time the Professional Staff put in each week and how the matter in handled in various departments.

#### **e. Scholarships**

Tardi reported that this year our Local will be awarding a number of scholarships totaling \$5,000: one from AFT Council (\$1,000), two AFT scholarships from our Local (\$1,000 each), and two Irwin Nack scholarships (\$1,000 each). The Union office will soon begin advertising the scholarships. Tardi said that anyone wishing to serve on the scholarship committee should notify her. When applying, students will be required to write an essay about what unionism means to them.

### **7. Grievance Officer's Report**

#### **a. Retention and Tenure Results**

Williams reported that approximately six people were notified that they were not being retained. Of those requesting Union assistance, one individual had their decision was reversed. He said this number is in line with what usually occurs, and he stressed the importance of mentoring new members to give them less chance of being placed in this position.

#### **b. Sabbatical Leave Resolution**

Williams stated that the Union filed a grievance regarding last year's sabbatical leave process, and the 12 members who applied for a full year sabbatical but were only awarded a ½ year, were invited to reapply for one remaining ½ year position. Tardi will serve as the observer on the committee. Due to the persistence of Union Leadership, this issue involving the sabbatical leave process was resolved.

Williams described an incident that ended up being a misunderstanding between two members. He said issues between members are very difficult to resolve, and the Union is here to mediate those types of disputes. A member commented about the tenure results and described an instance that occurred in the past when a person was not recommended for tenure in his department. The member stated that he went back to the previous letters written about this person and was able to point out the individual's track record which resulted in the decision being reversed. Tardi noted that is why it is important to give colleagues feedback and point out some of the areas in which they need improvement, rather than waiting until they are in their third year to let them know that issues exist. Tardi further stated that the policy requires that mentoring be done by the retention and tenure committee. A member asked when a person is denied tenure, is that position frozen, or is it offered to another individual who may not be up to par for tenure. Tardi responded by saying that if a person is not qualified, then they should not be

retained. The president has the right to notify a person even in his or her fifth year that fiscal constraints do not allow for their tenure.

## **8. Negotiation Officer's Report**

### **a. Sabbatical Leave Policy Update**

Guerrieri reported that negotiations are still underway regarding the sabbatical leave policy, and the sticking point is that the administration will not agree to two separate pools. Tardi added that the Union requested that the applicants are put in two separate pools to be ranked, prior to being discussed, examined, and awarded. Tardi noted that a person cannot apply for a one year sabbatical and be eligible for the ½ year.

### **b. Assessment Coordinator Compensation Update**

Guerrieri reported that negotiations regarding the assessment coordinator compensation have stalled. She said that after working on this issue for close to two years with no resolution, the Union is considering telling the Membership to cease assessment activities until the matter is resolved. Tardi stated that one issue is that assessment is not the same in each department; in some cases more advanced work is necessary, while in others it is almost to the point of maintenance. Tardi further stated that individuals coordinating assessment efforts deserve to be compensated at a rate of no more than 3 credits per year; some individuals were being compensated and others were not.

## **9. New Business**

A member stated that he received a memo about paid family leave, but the memo failed to express what the percentage is. Tardi said she would look into this and send a clarification. Another member encouraged everyone to support the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), a union organization tool that allows employees to form and join labor unions. More information about EFCA is available on the national AFT website ([www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org)).

## **10. Adjournment**

**A motion to adjourn was made by A. Montare, seconded by J. Matthew, and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Pinkston,  
Recording Secretary  
[Edited:]