

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

Date: April 21, 2009
Location: UC 171
Time: 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm

Present: S. Tardi, G. Guerrieri, E. Matthews, S. Selke, F. Pavese, R. Wolk, G. Pope, M. Williams, K. Martin, K. Martus, K. Asada, J. Carter, J. Najarian, S. Wollock, R. Soto, L. Gazzillo Diaz, J. Cho, E. Martinez, D. Fengya, T. Newman, K. Louie, J. Peterman, K. McNeal, G. Furst, A. Holpp Scala, J. Matthew, R. Kearney, C. Simon, E. Goldstein, R. Schwartz, J. Hutchison, R. Su, M. Rosar, D. Van Boerum, J. Heavey, S. Rienstra, L. Refsland, P. Chen, C. Goldstein, S. Thompson, M. Mwaura, M. Giorgio, T. Finnegan, L. Emiola, B. Duffy, R. Cauthen

Items distributed to the Council and General Membership:

- 1) March 26, 2009 General and Executive/Local Council Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:40 pm.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Tardi requested to modify the agenda to have announcements first, and then move the GE discussion to President's report "a." A motion to adopt the agenda was made by K. Martus and seconded by S. Wollock. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes of the March 26, 2009 General Membership and Executive/Local Council Meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by G. Pope and seconded by A Cheo. Approved unanimously.

4. Announcements

Tardi stated that Jane Hutchinson is running for the Wayne Board of Education and asked the Membership to support her. Tardi further stated that Faculty Senate elections will be held soon, and she asked the Membership to please support Senate candidates who are strong Union members. Tardi stated that CWA is having a public protest regarding civil service on April 23 in response to the Governor's ability to lay off workers from municipalities/counties through furloughs. Ten seats are available on the bus that is leaving at 3:00 p.m.

5. Treasurer's Report—Budget Approval

Matthews presented the same budget that was presented at the March meeting with the year-to-date figures updated. Tardi stated that anyone who wishes to examine the budget in more detail is welcome to view it at the Union office. K. Martus made a motion to accept the budget, seconded by A. Holpp Scala. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. President's Report

a. General Education

Tardi stated the Union Leadership has expressed Union related GE concerns that have not been addressed by the GE Committee. Tardi noted that the GE curriculum will be predominantly driven by students, and she is concerned about what will happen to small departments. She also expressed concern about the

fiscal crisis and questioned how the new GE proposal is going to be economically feasible. Tardi further noted that Kean University has shut down their social work department and personnel must be retrained. Peterman stated that the Provost has said he will not eliminate departments or make cutbacks due to the new GE program. Tardi pointed out that the Provost did not say that he would not make cutbacks due to the fiscal crisis. Peterman noted that in the first two years, the GE program is structured in such a way that small departments are guaranteed a certain number of sections. He said that if the offerings are managed, then issues with small departments should be fine. Tardi stated that we should protect all individuals whom the University made commitments to upon hiring and tenuring. She further stated that she would like Peterman and Levitan to raise this issue with the Administration. Tardi noted that she agrees that the GE curriculum should be revised, but she is concerned about rushing into a program that is potentially dangerous to our members. A member expressed concern about adopting a program when the effects on student's credit hours are unknown. Another member questioned how the GE reform will impact resources, specifically, faculty development resources. Tardi stated that since the Ridgefield Park case, the Administration has managerial prerogative regarding the courses faculty members teach and their schedules. Tardi emphasized the need to bring these issues and concerns up to the Provost publicly, on the floor of the Senate. Tardi stated that if a department is eliminated, tenure means nothing. She further stated that although President Speert said there would be no programmatic cuts, he sent out a letter regarding programmatic changes, and she wants to know exactly what that means. A member stated that the memo stated underperforming programs and departments. Tardi said that we need to have answers from the Administration on the Senate floor. A member expressed concern that someone in the Senate will call the question and the debate will be over. The member also said that he is not convinced that when these new courses come out, that they will have the same distribution of upper and lower level classes. He wonders if this will result in the loss of adjunct faculty members. Peterman suggested passing the framework first, then SLOOs, and then the class requirements could be brought back to the Senate for a later vote. Tardi responded that if the plan is not appropriate, and the implementation isn't stated, then she cannot buy into it. Peterman stated the GE proposal is similar to what other institutions are doing. Tardi stated that our students are different than the students at the other institutions that are being compared. Tardi said the Administration needs to answer questions about the impact on small departments and how managerial prerogative might play a role in what courses faculty members teach. A member stated that everyone should be treated fairly. A member stated that some students will take 34 credits and others will take 52 credits depending upon the major. The member stated that students will not be challenged to take higher level courses or go further for another major due to the GE curriculum. Peterman stated that most students will take 43 or so credits. Tardi stated that this particular grid has only been discussed for two or three weeks, not two years. A member expressed concern that someone in the Senate will call the question and this will end up being the final grid. Another member stated that a vote is required to call the question and it must pass by a 2/3 majority. Tardi asked for clarification about whether or not the Provost requested 2/3 majority before the new GE proposal is passed. Peterman stated that is correct. Peterman further stated that the GE Committee has brought up many of the same issues currently being discussed at this meeting. He said that he will discuss the matter with the Provost and ask him to publically address some of the concerns at the next Senate meeting. A member stated that he feels more discussion is necessary and questioned why the proposal must be voted on next week. Peterman stated that it is up to the Senate to decide whether or not the vote is taken. He further stated that he is not sure all the questions will be answered because many of the issues will need to be worked out in the fall and possibly voted on again in December.

b. Fiscal Crisis Update

Tardi stated that during a recent Provost's expanded budget committee meeting, the news was presented that one of the answers to the fiscal crisis might be a "closing." Tardi further stated that President Speert described the "closing," and it seems that two years ago he described the same thing as a "furlough." She said this means that during spring break only essential employees will work. The University will be closed to all other employees and they will receive no pay. She said that he cannot legally use the word

“furlough,” so he is playing a word game and referring to it as a “closing.” Tardi stated that it is the position of our Local and Council that we will not take a cut in pay, and will not give up our salary increase, an increment or a paid spring break. She said the AFT Council had a meeting with the State Treasurer and one problem is that the State does not know how to apply a furlough to faculty members. Tardi said we are joining with CWA and offering a deferment to the Governor, but he is not cooperating. A member said that Pennsylvania has a deferment in regard to medical insurance. Tardi said that no one has the exact statute regarding being furloughed, and that our contract conflicts with the definition of furlough. Tardi stated that she attempted to get the Council to support our SGA’s march on Trenton, and while William Paterson was willing, other college students were not. A member stated that a colleague in her department asked her to express his idea of giving 1% of our paychecks to support non-tenured faculty members. Tardi responded that we do not have any non-tenured tenure track faculty in danger at this point. A member stated that the President said that we are in a fiscal crisis, but he doesn’t have a clear idea about what will happen after the State budget is approved by the legislators. Tardi stated that the Council has attorneys who pointed out that the Governor is misinterpreting what President Obama has stated regarding money for higher education, and that could change things for us. A member stated that the President has an obligation to tell us his plans. Tardi responded that he has already said that his solution is a closing (furlough). He also said that we have some reserve money, but he does not know if the Board of Trustees will authorize the use of the reserves. Tardi told the President that the Membership wants to know if there is a concrete plan, and wants to hear about the worst case scenario. A member asked what it means for William Paterson’s public image if we are given a furlough and other universities are not. Tardi stated that this issue should be addressed by the President. Tardi stated that they cannot impose both a furlough and wage freeze. She said the message to the faculty and professional staff is to keep fighting against the wage and increment freeze and/or any closing (furlough). A member asked what this has to do with all the administrators teaching a class next fall. Tardi stated that all administrators with a discipline will teach one class next semester without pay. Tardi further stated that this concerns her because the administrators will be taking classes away from adjunct faculty members. A member asked how a potential furlough affects adjunct faculty members. Tardi stated that the President said we will need more adjunct faculty members due to the fiscal crisis. A member asked if anyone came up with ideas to generate revenue. Tardi said that no significant money generating ideas have been put forward, but anyone with suggestions should tell the administration. A member stated that if the University closed for one week, students could have significant issues with financial aid due to federal regulations. A member suggested recruiting more international students. Tardi stated that while that is important, the person in charge of Enrollment Management stated that international students are not a priority for this institution. Tardi stated that we can halt this furlough by recruiting more individuals to the University, but noted that this is not a faculty role and responsibility. Members expressed concern regarding the admissions process and gave information regarding situations when students were not fairly evaluated and rejected or the application process took many months and the potential student ended up going to another university. Tardi will follow up with the President. She noted that the Administration has told her that the reserve is at the highest level it has ever been. She has asked the Council to put in an inquiry to see what reserves each institution has, since other institutions said they will use their reserve to avoid a closing (furlough).

c. Support for CWA

Tardi asked the Membership to please attend the march on April 23 if possible.

d. March on Trenton

Tardi stated that it is important for us to support our students. A member questioned why students from other institutions do not march. Tardi stated that she does not know, but on our campus, the new SGA President and the Young Democratic Socialists have organized. Tardi stated that she is proud that they are taking initiative.

e. Scholarships

Tardi asked the Membership to announce to students that this Friday is the deadline for scholarship applications. Five \$1,000 scholarships are available.

7. Adjunct Faculty Representative's Report

Pavese reported that he recently held two meetings with adjuncts to discuss issues. He noted that the number one concern among adjunct faculty members is in relation to the fiscal crisis and GE program is job security.

8. VP for Grievances Report

Tardi stated that the Union Leadership is involved in two large cases, both of which may go to arbitration. She reminded the Membership that anyone who has a concern about another member believed to have done something egregious, should give the Union an opportunity to look into situation before going to administration. Once the matter has gone to the administration, it cannot be pulled back.

9. VP for Negotiations Report

Guerrieri stated that faculty can decide on assessment methods for their own department. She reminded the Membership that assessment should only evaluate courses and it is important not to participate in assessment activities that evaluate faculty members. Tardi stated that the agreement devised for the Department Assessment Coordinator is not for the committee members, but for the coordinator only. It is for the individual responsible for developing the assessment methods, gathering and coordinating data, and writing up reports. Tardi noted that regarding assessment, if only one faculty member is teaching the course, it comes back to that particular faculty member. A member stated that in her college, students' names and 855 numbers are on the assessment forms, and although this is not required by NCATE, the Administration told them to include the information. Tardi stated that it is your right as a department to raise these issues. Tardi said she will express assessment concerns to the Provost in the case where students are being identified by name or 855 numbers.

10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by A. Holpp Scala, and seconded by M. Mwaura. The meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gazzillo Diaz, Ed.D. ATC
Substitute Secretary