

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

Date: November 17, 2009
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. Mwaura, L. Mbogoni, G. Pope, M. Williams, K. Martin, G. Gerardi, K. Martus, K. Smith, D. Joslin, J. Najarian, R. Soto, L. Gazzillo Diaz, D. Koistinen, E. Martinez, S. Betts, D. Fengya, T. Newman, J. Peterman, A. Montare, A. Tesfaye, G. Furst, D. Catarina, D. Hill, A. Holpp Scala, J. Matthew, R. Kearney, C. Simon, E. Goldstein, E. Antoniou, K. Malu, D. Nacin, J. Heavey, S. Rienstra, B. Su, D. Potacco, A. Cheo, J. Hutchinson, N. Kalb, K.H. Kim, R. Grier, R. Cauthen

Items distributed to the Council and General Membership:

- 1) October 20, 2009 General and Executive/Local Council Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:39 pm.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion to accept the agenda was made by S. Rienstra and seconded by A. Montare. Approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes of the October 20, 2009 General Membership and Executive/Local Council Meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by A. Montare and seconded by A. Scala. Approved unanimously.

4. Treasurer's Report

Matthews gave the treasurer's report for our Local (unit members may read the details of this report at the Union office in Hunziker Hall, 101). Matthews explained that although the National AFT has implemented a dues increase, the Executive Board voted to pay the increase out of the Union budget rather than pass it on to the Membership. Tardi noted that even though this is a violation of the National AFT Constitution, the Executive Board could not rationalize implementing a dues increase during a prolonged wage freeze. This matter will be reconsidered in September 2010. Matthews also discussed the Oppenheimer account, and made recommendations about funds placement.

5. a. AFT Dues

Postponed until September 2010 depending on salary increase.

b. Aft Investment

D. Potacco made a motion to move funds as recommended by the treasurer. Seconded by K. Martus. Approved unanimously.

c. Botto House: Irwin Nack Honoree

Tardi stated that Irwin Nack is being honored by the Botto House in Haledon, and the Executive Board voted to purchase three tickets to the dinner at a cost of \$100 each. Two members of the Executive Board and Al Montare will attend. The Membership supported this action.

6. President's Report

a. Fiscal Concerns

Tardi stated that the implications of the election of a new governor are unknown at this time. Christie has already contacted the Communication Workers of America (CWA) and stated that he does not want additional layoffs, therefore he would like to reexamine the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Tardi stated that this may be "code" for his intention to ask CWA to give up what was agreed upon in the MOA under Corzine. Tardi said she plans to hold the position that Governor Corzine made this agreement and it should be fulfilled, but she realizes it will be a difficult position to maintain. Tardi noted that a State Council meeting will be held on Friday, 11/20 and she hopes to get more information at that time. Tardi further noted that she warned the Membership prior to voting on the MOA that the MOA might not be honored, and if CWA (the largest Union) caves in to the new Governor, AFT will be pressured to follow. Tardi said she will contact the CWA President on our campus to see if more information is available. A member commented that according to the *Bergen Record*, the State budget is worse than expected and we could be facing a budget deficit in excess of \$8 billion.

b. Advisement

Tardi stated there are individuals on campus, including some members of our bargaining unit, who are working on a new advisement model that does not include compensation. Tardi explained that while she is not against examining the advisement process and developing new techniques to make the process run more smoothly, she is very concerned that the direction of the new model does not include compensation for faculty members who participate in advisement. Tardi noted that we have a signed agreement regarding compensation for advisement, and other State Universities would like to model it. Tardi said she addressed this matter with the Chairperson of the Faculty Senate, and also with the Provost. The Provost indicated that he supports the current agreement for advisement. Tardi asked for the Membership's feelings on this matter.

Questions and comments from members

A member stated that people will not do a good job of advising unless they are properly compensated for it. Tardi agreed, stating that she has been a faithful

advisor for 18 years, and if the University develops a model in which there is no compensation, which in her opinion signals that advisement is not important, she will no longer participate in it. She noted that some of the people who are driving the new advisement model do not have advisement responsibilities, so they do not have a full understanding of the process and what is involved. A member stated that the individuals behind this plan for eliminating compensation regarding advisement should do advisement without getting paid. A member stated that the new GE curriculum is going to require more training and additional work, and that advisors deserve to be compensated for their time. A department representative stated that one of her colleagues has 45 advisees and is so overwhelmed that she asked if the Union would consider seeking more compensation for advisement. Tardi asked the Department Representatives to go back and discuss this matter with members of their departments because colleagues need to understand the importance of developmental advisement and how much work it requires, particularly in large departments. Tardi stated that having overworked and underpaid faculty members does not benefit students. She further stated that the individuals driving this new advisement model do not have the right to negotiate on behalf of the Union, and are undermining the work of the Union.

Tardi noted that the Union is here to assist the Membership, and therefore, assists the students. Tardi stated that one recent example of this, was the issue raised by a faculty member regarding insufficient lighting in one of the smart classrooms on campus. The faculty member brought forth the issue to Union leadership requesting advice and assistance. Tardi noted that Union Leadership was able to provide advice and apply pressure to the administration to resolve the problems. As a result, all of the smart classrooms on the main campus will be provided with appropriate lighting by the end of the semester. Faculty members and students benefit from this action.

7. Grievance Update

Williams reported that three faculty members received letters of non-reappointment from the President. Williams stated that he assisted two of the individuals with writing response letters, and both were retained for another year. He also worked with the third person who was also retained. Tardi noted that in terms of reappointments and tenure, the Union's job is to highlight the candidate's strength and contributions. She noted that the Union does not seek to overturn department decisions, however it has an obligation to help protect the candidate's rights, and help them present the best folder possible. A member asked if there were specific reasons why the president changed his mind, or why he was denying them in the first place. Williams responded that the President had various reasons, but the Union Leadership was able to help the members present a broader view of the situation so the President could make a more informed decision.

Williams stated that the Union is involved with two ongoing issues of a very sensitive nature. Union Leadership is working with the President to resolve the

issues. On a side note, Williams mentioned that the Union has a good working relationship with President Speert, and he hopes it will be possible to build a similar relationship with the new president.

6. Negotiations Update

Guerrieri, Tardi, and Williams met with the Administration to review the ART pilot. Issues discussed included the composition of the ART Committee and the length of the reports. The Union recommended that the length of the interim report should be only a few lines and that the final report should be approximately 250 words. Guerrieri noted that while the Administration seemed amiable to the ideas, negotiations are progressing slowly. She will report back on the progress at a future meeting.

Guerrieri reported that she is working to address the compensation for internships. She noted that the Faculty Senate approved guidelines for individuals who are supervising internships, and the Provost approved the guidelines, so she will work on translating the guidelines into policy that will include appropriate compensation for individuals supervising internships. Guerrieri said she will contact the Department Chairs for more information about the current level of compensation that is being offered in each department.

Tardi noted that some members have expressed concern about applying for ART after they submitted only a three line report, but she assured them that the Union observer for the committee will make sure that this not held against them. Tardi reminded the Membership to carefully read the policy prior to submitting a proposal, and to never offer more or less information than what is required.

7. Old Business

Tardi noted that the Campus Safety Committee has taken little action, and she has recommended that sub-committees be formed in order to deal with issues. Tardi stated that new faculty and professional staff members need training in order to understand the students who are being educated at this institution. She noted that there have been many misunderstandings in classrooms that have led to professors requiring assistance from the Union grievance officer. She stressed that better communication is needed so individuals know exactly how to handle certain situations, and students need to be educated about appropriate behavior. Tardi said that while she is not advocating for mandatory training for faculty and staff members who have worked here for years, she does favor an orientation for new faculty and staff members. She asked anyone with suggestions or recommendations about safety concerns to bring them forward.

Questions and comments from members

A member noted that members of the Passaic County Gang Unit visited the Valley Road campus and the first thing they encountered were students sleeping at the front desk. Tardi said she and many individuals have expressed concerns

about safety at Valley Road. She noted that Chief Horvath said that if necessary, the Wayne police will respond to an emergency at the Valley Road campus very quickly. Tardi said more cameras are needed on campus. A member stated that he replied to the bear alert email, and received an automatic reply stating that “you don’t have permission to speak to this person.” Williams noted that since this is an open campus, we have to strike a balance between being open and being secure. A member stated that better lighting would make her feel more secure. A member stated that as a criminologist, she knows that school is one of the most dangerous places, and she feels that it is only a matter time before someone here will be victimized. A member stated that civil liberty issues are also a concern. Guerrieri stated that when a student feels unsafe, he or she can call the campus police and ask to be escorted, and she asked if that service is also available to faculty members. Tardi responded that yes, faculty members can request an escort; however they might have to wait. A member suggested that we invite the campus chief to our next Union meeting and express our concerns. Tardi responded that Chief Horvath and Terry Bogorad have been very cooperative with the Union, and she will invite Chief Horvath to our next meeting. A member asked if the classrooms have intercoms. Tardi responded no. A member stated that there is only one entrance/exit to the classrooms, and questioned what the procedures are if something occurred similar to Virginia Tech. A member stated that a phone should be attached to each classroom wall that has a direct line to the campus operator. Williams stated that rather than spending money to wire telephones, it would be cheaper to buy everyone a cell phone. He further stated that every student and most professors have a cell phone, and we would be much better served by putting funds toward new lighting and other improvements. A member noted that the smart classrooms should already be wired. A member suggested posting emergency numbers in each classroom. A member asked if it is a law to have two exits. Tardi said these are all issues we need to bring forth and take under consideration. She thanked the Membership for their comments.

8. New Business

Ellie Goldstein, Chair of the Membership Committee, announced that she is sending out membership letters, and reminded the Membership that more members translates into more delegate voting strength.

A member asked about the possibility of being present on campus on furlough days to get media attention and to make the statement that our presence is necessary. Tardi stated that we initially thought about that, but one problem is that we are not covered by workman’s compensation on furlough days. She also said that she doesn’t think we’re going to easily change the public’s viewpoint and stressed that there is a need for a year-round campaign that shows what we do. Tardi further stated that a publicity campaign highlighting what we do in higher education needs to be in place all the time, not just in times of crisis. Tardi said the Union is collecting information about work that did not get accomplished due to the furlough. Tardi noted that President Speert informed the Board of Trustees that the furlough would not have a negative impact on the students or the

University and that statement was not accurate. She urged the Membership to forward emails and other information to the Union that demonstrates that the furlough does have a negative impact. A member stated that if we get furloughed again, we should try to organize something when everyone takes the same day. Tardi said one problem with that is that the furlough days require approval of the deans, and they will not approve for everyone to take a day at the same time. Tardi noted that the State is going to have a difficult time at the bargaining table in the future because they have lost our trust. A member stated that while it was unfortunate for students, her department took furlough days during the advisement period, and faculty members put up signs, and changed their voicemail message and automatic email replies to indicate that they were on an unpaid furlough. Tardi said that while faculty and staff members are professional and sensitive to students' needs, it is important to remember that the State is responsible for the negative consequences furlough days have on students and the university. Tardi noted that the SGA academic affairs council is working on language for a position they plan to take regarding the furlough because the students are feeling it. A member commented that State workers are being demonized, and this is very unfair because people do not take into consideration the amount of work that is accomplished by teachers and professors. Tardi said she has discussed this issue at the Council level for three years, and even though the Vice-President of the Council is responsible for mounting a publicity campaign, nothing has materialized. A member stated that she has seen furlough signs throughout the campus, and it makes a statement. She encouraged all members to place signs on their doors when they are away on a furlough day. The member further stated that students are not aware that faculty members have responsibilities other than teaching, and she noted that it is up to each person to educate students about the various types of work that is required of individuals who are part of an academic community. A member asked if Union members are covered by workman's compensation during the summer. Tardi will double-check on this and report back to the Membership.

9. Adjournment

**A motion to adjourn was made by A. Tesfaye, and seconded by G. Pope.
Approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Pinkston,
Recording Secretary
[Edited:]