

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

Date: March 25, 2010
Location: Valley Road, 1016-107
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, G. Pope, M. Williams, K. Martin, G. Gerardi, K. Martus, K. Smith, S. Wollock, L. Gazzillo Diaz, E. Gonzalez, L. Gazzillo Diaz, E. Martinez, S. Betts, D. Fengya, K. Louie, A. Tesfaye, A. Montare, G. Furst, A. Holpp Scala, J. Matthew, R. Kearney, I. DiMaio, S. Karibi-Whyte, D. Potacco, A. Antoniou, K.H. Kim, B. Mason, T. Clancy, L. Vignier, B. Diamond, D. Nacin, M. Rosar, L. Refsland, R. Cauthen

Items distributed to the Council and General Membership:

- 1) February 18, 2010 General and Executive/Local Council Meeting Minutes
- 2) AFT Executive Board Slate for 2010-2012
- 3) AFT NJ State Federation affiliation Pros, Cons & Executive Board Recommendation

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:37 pm.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion to modify the agenda to move (#6) Elections to #4 was made by K. Martus, seconded by A. Montare. Approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes of the February 18, 2010 General Membership and Executive/Local Council Meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by A. Montare and seconded by E. Antoniou. Approved unanimously.

4. Elections Committee Report

Tardi referred to the slate of candidates for the 2010-2012 Executive Board in the packet. She noted that the slate of candidates was provided last month even though it was not officially due until the March meeting. Tardi explained that as per the Local's Constitution, the Executive Board is required to meet with the Elections Committee. At this meeting, the candidates expressed their reasons for wanting to serve, as well as the contributions they have made in the past and would like to make in the future. Eliana Antoniou, a member of the Elections Committee, presented the slate to the Membership. Tardi asked for additional nominations from the floor for individuals to serve on the Union Executive Board. There were no additional nominations.

A. Scala made a motion to accept the slate of candidates as presented. A. Montare seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

The slate follows:

Susanna Tardi, President
Chriss Williams, Vice President for Grievances
Edward Matthews, Treasurer
Jan Pinkston, Recording Secretary
Shari Selke, Professional Staff Representative
Frank Pavese, Adjunct Faculty Representative
Robert Wolk, Librarian Faculty Representative

(Tardi moved ahead with the President's report, due to a technical problem projecting the budget data.)

5. **President's Report**

a. Governor's Budget Address

Tardi stated that the President's recent letter did not reflect the seriousness of the State budget crisis. In the letter, the President stated that he will continue with the faculty searches. Tardi noted that while she is in favor of adding additional faculty and staff, she is also concerned about protecting the current faculty and staff, and maintaining promises that were made. She has requested that the Administration examine all positions and determine what positions are essential. Tardi stated that the best-case scenario is that all searches go on, no one is laid off, and the University is able to recruit a sufficient number of students to compensate for a 25% reduction in State funding. She stated that the worst-case scenario is three weeks of University closing for all non-essential employees. Tardi stated that the Administration has already calculated salaries in relation to a University closing. The Governor cannot rescind the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and has no choice but to fund the salary increases as promised. Administrators have calculated that faculty members at the top step will end up with approximately a 5% increase in salary, and will lose a relatively small percentage of that if hit with a three-week campus closing. Those who are not at the top step will end up with a small increase. Tardi noted that the Union's position is that members of our bargaining unit have already made sacrifices by losing their 3.5% negotiated salary increase and by mandatory furloughs.

Comments from members

A member stated that he was told that some faculty and staff at the State colleges and universities did not have their salaries frozen and did not have a seven day mandatory furlough. Tardi responded that the impact was equal for all individuals in our bargaining unit at all State colleges and universities. She said that while President Speert chose to impose the same number of furlough days on administrators at William Paterson, other university presidents did not necessarily do that, and some administrators at other universities were not forced to take furlough days. Tardi noted that it is likely that there will no longer be nine sister locals in New Jersey, because Gov. Christie is planning to merge Thomas Edison into Rutgers. A member asked when the pay increases take effect. Tardi responded that according to the MOA, the raise increases take effect on July 1,

2010 and January 1, 2011. A member questioned how the federal government's new health insurance bill would affect the State insurance plan. Tardi stated that the federal government's health insurance plan is very complicated and even those who contributed to writing it, do not completely understand it. She expects the legislature to find loopholes in it. She noted that the new pharmaceutical company, Medco, is much more intricate than Caremark (our previous pharmaceutical carrier), and she feels that the State is trying to create a system that is so difficult, people will just give up and not attempt to take advantage of the benefits. A member asked if unions will strike. Tardi responded that she is concerned about striking with this governor. She said mobilizing and slowing down are options, but it will be difficult to strike in this climate since everyone is blaming the previous Administration. Tardi said another concern is that our new University president is coming on board in August and the Administration is already laying the groundwork to impose "campus closings," during winter break, spring break, and the week after commencement. Tardi said that some members of our bargaining unit commented that that the Union should have negotiated an MOA that produced a stronger impact, and have asked why all faculty and staff members were not mandated to take furlough days at the same time. Tardi said the Union Leadership considered this carefully, but due to strong messages from the constituency saying that some members of our community could not afford to do that, the Leadership felt that self-directed furlough days were the best option. Tardi said it is important to be prepared for what is coming next, and she asked for suggestions from the Membership for a plan of action if the President says he is planning a "closing." She stated that a closing could be averted if revenue is generated. Tardi further stated that her idea to implement a winter session helped two years ago when we faced a similar situation, and more ideas like that are needed now. She urged the Membership to submit ideas for revenue generation. She noted that due to budget cuts, there are rumors that Felician College may have to close, and that could have a positive effect on our enrollment. She further noted that contact with faculty members is one of the best ways to recruit prospective students, and she has encouraged the Administration to negotiate an agreement for faculty members who engage in recruitment activities. She noted that the former V.P. for Enrollment Management created a model for student recruitment that was faculty dependent without asking faculty, and it proved to be unsuccessful. Tardi noted that she has drawn up a service model in which faculty can be involved in recruitment and advisement initiatives and receive proper compensation, but the problem is that some faculty members are overly eager and end up being abused. A member asked about participation at open house events. Tardi responded that she is not talking about open houses, but rather about recruitment activities that involve traveling to high schools, writing letters, calling students, and engaging in other activities that take a lot of time. Tardi noted that the faculty members, especially those on the UCC panels are all engaging in curriculum revision and are all stepping up to the plate as much as possible. She further noted that while this is well intentioned, it makes it difficult to prove that furlough days have an impact since the sessions are usually held on Fridays, the most popular day for faculty furloughs. Many faculty members have rescinded their faculty days in order to attend these panel sessions. A member stated that Bergen County Community College has 761 international students and he has urged the Administration to contact them. Tardi stated that she knows the member has been trying for over ten years to attract international

students to William Paterson, but one issue that continues to be raised is the question of whether or not these students require remediation. The member stated that Montclair State University has 1000 international students and William Paterson should have at least 500 international students. Tardi noted that at this point in time, our Administration would not support that idea. A member stated that Montclair only makes money on international students during the first year, because after that, they pay in-state tuition. Another member commented that Farleigh Dickinson has 1200 international students and does extremely well. Tardi stated that she is concerned about any commitments without the substantiation that the University will benefit. A member asked if it possible for the Union Executive Board to bring forth issues like this to the Faculty Senate. Tardi responded that the Senate Chair would dismiss any issues as Union matters. Tardi noted that since the Senate is only a recommending body to the Provost, why would she bring issues to the Senate when she can take them directly to the President. She further noted that the members of the Union represent every constituency, therefore, what we decide in a Union meeting does not need to go to the Senate, although she has sought Senate support in past with little success.

A member described an issue she had with a faculty search and complained that she had mistakenly been following an old policy that is no longer valid, and the University does not want to reimburse her.

(The issue with the projector was resolved, so the meeting now focused on the Treasurer's report.)

6. **Treasurer's Report - Budget**

Ed Matthews reported on our Local's proposed budget for 2010-2011. Al Montare noted that as Chairman of the Budget Committee, he met with the five-member budget committee two weeks ago, and the proposed budget was approved unanimously.

A motion to accept the 2010-2011 budget was made by K. Martus and seconded by A. Scala.

Discussion: A member questioned the rationale for increasing AFT dues. Tardi stated that there is no rationale because we approve our budget prior to the AFT National, and we never know how much they will increase dues. Tardi stated that she checked into breaking away from the National and the State Council, and it would not be feasible for our Local to make that move. Presently the Local must be affiliated with the national organization, and breaking away from National and the State Council would require approval from the Public Employees Relations Committee (PERC) and possibly the approval of the University president. Tardi noted that in addition, for political reasons, this may not be the ideal time for the action.

The motion to accept the 2010-2011 budget was approved unanimously.

5b. WPU Reserves

At a recent Faculty Senate meeting, Steve Bolyai announced that the University would use \$1,000,000 from the reserves rather than freezing spending from departmental budgets for the remainder of the fiscal year. Tardi noted that one week after he made that statement, the University community was told “the sky is falling.” Tardi stated that she told President Speert to freeze departmental budgets and apply the funds toward the University closing that he might have in mind. Tardi further noted that last year she asked about using the reserves to avert furloughs, and she was told that it could not be done. Williams said it is important to inform and educate students about these matters. Tardi stated that there was recently a national day designated in which the students and faculty were supposed to get together and protest the lack of funding for higher education, but she did not encourage participation because the students leading the protest did not really understand the issues at hand. A flyer was circulated by the students recommending that all student loans be cancelled. They did not thoroughly understand the severity of the economic crisis in New Jersey. Tardi indicated that we need to educate our students to understand the importance of negotiating, not merely demanding.

5c. AFT New Jersey

Tardi distributed the Pros and Cons document and the Executive Board’s recommendation regarding affiliation with the expanded AFT New Jersey. She noted that our Executive Board does not have a crystal ball, and we cannot be sure that this recommendation not to affiliate is the “right” decision. She further noted that we may not have a choice in the matter because it is likely to be approved by the other locals, whether or not our Local agrees to it. Tardi stated that the Leadership of our Local unanimously recommends that the Membership does not support affiliation with the expanded AFT New Jersey, primarily because of the current political climate and the financial implications associated with this action. (In addition to increasing our dues, 60% of the Council reserves could be depleted). A member stated that the proposed change will align us with Pre-K through 12 AFT and he is opposed to this because we have very different goals, and the interests of the groups involved are too divergent. Tardi stated that the State Council leadership believes that that the numbers represent strength and power, however, Tardi stated that numbers do not mean anything if the groups cannot coalesce. She noted that the State Council is desperate and they acknowledge it, so most of their decisions are fear-based. A member stated that we are in tough times, so why join a group that is in even more trouble than we are. Tardi reminded the Membership that our Local’s Leadership represents the Membership, therefore, our Local will conduct an anonymous vote on this matter through “Campus Vote.” Tardi noted that by voting in our Local, our State Delegates will know how our members feel prior to the April Council meeting when all sister locals will vote on whether or not to affiliate with the expanded AFT New Jersey. Tardi further noted that while Delegates can vote how they want, they are accountable to the Membership. Williams reminded the Membership to watch for an email from Campus Vote and for more information from the AFT office regarding this matter.

7. Vice President for Grievances Report

Williams noted that anyone who received a letter of intent of non-reappointment should contact him.

8. Vice President of Negotiations Report

Guerrieri reported that she is still working out the details for the ART policy and is beginning to create a policy for internship compensation. She is also working on the Boatload policy. A boatload is one course that has two sections that are combined into one. The Union is attempting to determine the minimum and maximum course enrollments that should constitute a boatload. The number varies from department to department, with some classes having 60 students, and some having as many as 90. The Union Leadership wants input on creating a minimum and maximum number, as well as opinions on whether or not grading assistance should be offered. Faculty members who teach boatload classes are asked to contact Guerrieri and let her know the details.

10. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Pinkston,
Recording Secretary
[Edited:]