

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

Date: February 18, 2010
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, L. Mbogoni, G. Pope, M. Williams, K. Martin, G. Gerardi, K. Martus, B. Kollia, J. Najarian, S. Wollock, R. Rimmer, R. Soto, R. Pardi, L. Gazzillo Diaz, D. Koistinen, E. Martinez, S. Betts, D. Fengya, K. Louie, A. Montare, D. Hill, G. Furst, B. Jones, A. Holpp Scala, J. Matthew, S. Karibi-Whyte, R. Martinez, C. Simon, D. Potacco, E. Antoniou, E. Goldstein, B. Diamond, G. Overdorf, K. Makarec, B. Pakizegi, S. Sabatino, A. Rady, R. Cauthen, L. Fornarotto, T. Vandergast, J. Austin, M. Rosar, D. Nacin, J. Hutchinson, M. Arteaga, S. Rienstra, J. Heavey, R. Schwartz, A. Schaefer, L. Hamel

Items distributed to the Council and General Membership:

- 1) December 15, 2010 General and Executive/Local Council Meeting Minutes
- 2) Slate of Candidates AFT 1796 Executive Board

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 pm.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

A adopt the agenda was made by K. Martus and seconded by A. Montare. Approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes of the December 15, 2010 General Membership and Executive/Local Council Meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by A. Montare and seconded by K. Martus. Approved unanimously.

4. Announcements

Tardi called attention to the Executive Board slate of candidates for 2010-2012 in the packet, and noted that anyone who is interested in running for an Executive Board position is welcome to self-nominate or ask someone to nominate them. Run-off elections will be held if necessary. Tardi further noted that the Executive Board is going through a restructuring due to the fact that Guerrieri is unable to commit to her duties as V.P. of Negotiations during master contract negotiations in 2011. Tardi stated that Donna Fengya has been brought on board as an assistant V.P. of Negotiations at no additional cost to the Membership. She will be trained by Guerrieri and will be totally prepared for her new role by the time negotiations begin.

5. Action Items

a. Legacy Dinner

Tardi stated that the Executive Board voted to send her and a guest to the Legacy Dinner on April 16. Tardi noted that this year's event is in honor of President Speert, and she feels that it is appropriate and important to have Union representation at this event.

A motion to pay for two tickets (\$400) to the Legacy Dinner was made by K. Martus and seconded by J. Najarian. Approved unanimously.

b. AFT New Jersey

Tardi stated that the AFT State Council Leadership is proposing that the nine State locals join an affiliate group which is an expanded AFT New Jersey. The current expanded AFT New Jersey includes pre-K through grade 12 teachers, Rutgers, and community colleges. Tardi explained that the nurse's union was invited to join and originally agreed to join, but have since declined because they feel they are strong enough on their own. Tardi noted that the State Council has provided all locals with a list of the pros and cons, and she is suspicious of the document because several items are listed on the "pros" side, with only a few "cons." She said one major red flag is that according to Nick Yovnello, President CNJSCL, the State Council reserves will be depleted by 60%. Tardi stated that the major benefit of affiliating with this group is that our numbers will be larger and that might translate to more power when it comes to lobbying and applying pressure to legislators. Tardi pointed out, however, that larger numbers might not translate into greater power if the various groups do not share the same goals.

Tardi stated another major issue is that our dues will eventually increase. Although AFT National will absorb a percentage of the increase and the Council will absorb a portion of the increase for the next four years (with a possibility of some increase in earlier years), there will be a minimum increase of \$6.00 per member after four years. Tardi and Ed Matthews explained that AFT New Jersey has a \$1,000,000 budget that goes primarily toward administrative costs, such as the salaries for an organizer and a researcher.

Tardi said that when Council representatives proposed the idea of joining AFT New Jersey during a State Council meeting, our Local took the position that each member of the Council should have a vote to determine whether or not to affiliate. Tardi further noted that the leadership of some locals make decisions for their members, but that our Local does not operate that way. She asked our Local's attorney to investigate if the Council can move forward on this without asking each member. Tardi noted that if the Council decides to move forward with this, our Local might not have a say in the matter. She further noted that the Leadership of our Local fights for the Membership even though voices are not always heard. Members questioned the degree of support provided by the State Council to William Paterson specifically and Unionism in general. Tardi noted that she is already investigating (along with the Union attorney), the possibility of breaking away from the State Council. She noted that there is a small window of

opportunity to break away from the Council prior to the next contract negotiations, and she wants to get all the details so our Membership can make an informed decision.

A member stated that she is weary of joining with NJEA. Another member clarified that this affiliation would not be with NJEA but would be with Pre-K through 12 AFT. Tardi noted that we do not share the same goals as the Pre-K through 12 AFT and that is why we rarely participate in AFT National meetings.

Tardi said that while negotiating the last contract, the Unions opened up Pandora's Box by agreeing to pay in 1.5% for health benefits. Tardi noted that our Local objected to this. It is likely that in the next contract, that figure will be increased to a minimum of 3% and possibly even up to 5%. Tardi noted that the State has proposed a third tier system which means that members who come on board are not assured the same rights and benefits as present members. Tardi said that since new hires get higher salaries, and are told up front about the cost of pension and health benefits, she favors this plan over the alternative, which is to require current members to pay more.

Questions and comments from members

A member asked if there is a possibility that the State Council's affiliation with AFT New Jersey will eventually lead to the dissolution of the AFT State Council. Tardi said the AFT New Jersey organizers promised no modification to our Council. She noted, however, that Christie is threatening to require us to negotiate on a local level only, and if that happens, she sees no need for a State Council. A member stated that pre-K through 12 teachers are the likely target of the Governor, and it seems that if we join together with them, we are putting ourselves in the bull's-eye as well. Tardi agreed, and added that in our contract, we are already paying toward our health benefits, however, pre-K through 12 teachers and other municipal workers are not. The Governor is threatening to detenure K-12 teachers and take away their pensions and other benefits. Tardi said she is waiting for the "shoe to drop," and the Governor to declare a salary freeze for our bargaining unit. She noted that the State Council negotiated a poor, end-loaded contract. Tardi further noted that Christie now has the opportunity to look at the MOA and claim that he inherited the problems and the State does not have the funds to fulfill obligations that were made under the previous administration. A member expressed concern that if salaries and other benefits are decreased, the University will have difficulty attracting quality individuals.

Tardi said she is concerned about a reduction of health and pension benefits for our unit. She said that Christie can easily sell his plan to reduce our benefits by stating the amounts of our salaries and benefits, and then pointing out that workers in the private sector do not get those kinds of salaries and benefits, yet State workers get them. Tardi noted that the general public does not look at what we do, but rather at what we get; there is little to no public support for educators.

Williams stated that he fears most people are scared and want to link up with

others because numbers represent power. He stated that he would like for us to be perceived as being different because we have a unique mission in the State. Williams further stated that rather than always saying that New Jersey outsources talented students, people should be reminded that we are a great State that attracts wonderful students.

A member asked where the pronouncements of the new Governor can be found. Tardi responded that Christie is quoted in the newspapers and on the Council website. Tardi stated that our Local's Executive Board is not comfortable with the manner in which the Council is pushing AFT New Jersey, and members fear that it was a "done deal" from the beginning. Tardi said she is leery because the nurses had originally planned to join, but opted out, and she also fears that we will be overwhelmed by Rutgers because we do not share the same goals. Tardi noted that she believes every member of each local has the right to vote on this issue, but recognizes that we cannot make the other locals in the Council require a vote by all members. Williams noted that it is upsetting that the Council wants to avoid permitting every AFT member to vote on this issue.

A member stated that he is concerned that our voices are not being heard, and would like more information about the mechanism to break away from the State Council. Tardi mentioned that some time ago when she looked into breaking away from the State Council, the Executive Board at the time disagreed because the members felt the move was anti-Union and were concerned that individuals in our Local would object. Tardi said another concern is that the President of the University may have to approve the action, and none of the three candidates being considered for president have experience with bargaining units. She further noted that Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) approval may also be required.

E. Martinez made a motion to bring the question of whether or not the members of our Local support our Council becoming affiliated with AFT New Jersey to a local referendum if our attorney states that we cannot force a Council-wide referendum. The motion was seconded by A. Montare and approved unanimously.

M. Martin made a motion for the Union Leadership to send a list of the Pros/Cons regarding our Local's affiliation with AFT New Jersey to the Membership, as well as a recommendation from the Executive Board about whether or not to affiliate with AFT New Jersey. K. Martus seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Tardi told the department representatives to discuss this matter with their colleagues. A member asked if participation in AFT New Jersey will place us in a more adversarial position as far as the Governor is concerned. Tardi responded that while we are in an adversarial position most of the time, she thinks the Governor will be extremely annoyed by the formation of an even bigger group

that opposes him. She stated that he will likely turn this around and claim that we are wasting money and time by forming even bigger Unions.

6. President's Report

a. Fiscal Crisis Update

Tardi stated that she has no information regarding what Christie plans to do regarding the MOA, but she will update the Membership as information becomes available. She noted that when the information does become available, it might require immediate action from the Membership in regard to contacting legislators or other lobbying efforts.

b. Mobilization Efforts

Tardi stated that at the last meeting, she asked the department representatives to discuss the possibility of a strike with their colleagues, and if there was interest, to get the names of possible strike captains. She noted that some people went back and announced that the Union wants to strike and that was not the case, but rather, the Union wants to know under what circumstances the Membership is willing to mobilize. A department representative said that some of her colleagues stated that the issues facing us are outrageous and the Union should strike, while others said the issues are outrageous, but we should think about it some more. Tardi said while the Union Leadership wants to avoid a strike, she still wants to know what it will take to get members to organize. Tardi said it is very discouraging that individuals on campus are not standing up for themselves, and gave an example that several people changed their furlough days in order to participate in the University Core Curriculum panels (GE committee). Tardi noted that despite all the furlough days, members are being asked to do more and more work and are seen as "stepping up to the plate." Tardi pointed out that this practice will not discourage the Administration from demanding more furlough days in the future. Tardi said she has only received four comments about the negative impact of the furlough, and this is not enough information to take before the Administration and the Board of Trustees to argue against future furloughs. She reminded the Membership to consider the furlough when choosing to participate in meetings, assessment, and advisement activities, rather than just saying yes and allowing the administration to pile on the work.

7. V.P. of Negotiations

The V.P. of Negotiations is currently working on a "Boatload" policy. By contract, faculty members are required to teach 24 credits in an academic year. Tardi clarified that a boatload class is the equivalent of two sections of a course taught as one class. The Union Leadership would like to hear opinions on the minimum and the maximum number of students that should be recommended to constitute a boatload class and the coordinating compensation. Members were asked to email Guerrieri with suggestions and/or questions.

Questions arose regarding the new prescription plan (Medco). Tardi noted that members should contact Debra Davis, the staff representative at the Council as

she has been very successful at resolving issues regarding prescription coverage that individual members have not been able to resolve. The Membership will be provided with Ms. Davis' contact information by email.

10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by seconded by A. Montare and seconded by K. Martus. It was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Pinkston,
Recording Secretary
[Edited:]

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:]

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

Date: April 20, 2010
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, G. Pope, M. Williams, K. Martin, K. Martus, K. Smith, B. Kollia, D. Joslin, J. Najarian, S. Wollock, R. Rimmer, R. Soto, R. Pardi, L. Gazzillo Diaz, E. Gonzalez, E. Martinez, S. Betts, D. Fengya, T. Newman, K. Louie, J. Peterman, A. Tesfaye, A. Montare, D. Hill, G. Furst, E. Sabogal, J. Matthew, R. Kearney, S. Karibi-Whyte, R. Martinez, C. Simon, D. Potacco, L. Hamel, A. Schaefer, B. Diamond, R. Verdicchio, D. Miller, D. Nacin, R. Schwartz, K. Wagner, B. Duffy, M. Rosar, T. Clancy, G. Andreopoulos, M. Arteaga, J. Heavey, C. Hong, P. Whiteman, S. Rienstra, O. Ricaldi, M. Ellis, N. Magaldi, B. Mason, T. Finnegan, P. Jackson, J. Parras, S. Thompson, J. Bernstein, M. Sebetich, N. Pakizegi, K. Makarec, C. Donaghy, N. Kalb, R. Cauthen

Items distributed to the Council and General Membership:

- 1) March 25, 2010 General and Executive/Local Council Meeting Minutes
Letter of Agreement IV -- Health Insurance Retirement

Corrections made to the March 25, 2010 minutes

Due to clerical errors, Donna Fengya's name was omitted from the list of Executive Board candidates listed in the minutes, and Rosa Sota's name was omitted from the list of those present at the March 25, 2010 meeting.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:38 pm.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion to adopt the agenda was made by K. Martus and seconded by B. Duffy Approved unanimously.

3. **Approval of Minutes of the March 25, 2010 General Membership and Executive/Local Council Meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by A. Montare and seconded by K. Martus. Approved unanimously.**

4. **Action Items**

a. 2010-2012 AFT Executive Board “Vote”

With no individuals running in opposition of the slate of candidates for the Executive Board, the Recording Secretary cast one vote to elect the candidates for a two-year term (applause from the Membership).

President’s Report

a. Fiscal Crisis Update

Tardi stated that President Speert announced his suggestions for closing the University’s budget gap at the campus-wide meeting earlier this month, and his suggestions included a possible three week University closure. Tardi stated that although the Union Leadership has a strategy for dealing with the closure idea, however, the strategy cannot be revealed at this point due to political reasons. Tardi stated that Speert recently hosted a meeting for the campus union leaders, and stated during that meeting that an increase in student enrollment can help avert a potential closing. Tardi recommended that the Union and Administration negotiate an agreement regarding faculty participation in recruitment efforts. She proposed that faculty members could participate for no compensation at first, with the understanding that as soon as the economic situation improves, faculty will be compensated for student recruitment. Tardi noted that in the past when the Union provided proposals that deal with service similar to ART, the Administration’s response has always been no. Tardi further noted that the Provost is aware that faculty participation in recruitment efforts increases the conversion rate, but he does not want faculty involved if compensation is required. Tardi stated that the President said he will negotiate an agreement for recruitment if compensation for advisement is put back on the table. Tardi refused, stating that there will be no trade off, and the faculty will not be held hostage. Tardi told the Membership that we need creative ideas that will increase revenue. She stated that she is continuing to ask for top-down accountability. For example, she questioned why an administrator’s salary is not reduced, when that person’s role and responsibilities are diminished. She further stated that she is concerned about the President’s plan to hire 23 new faculty members at this time. She noted that while she is supportive of new faculty, she is more concerned about the current faculty and professional staff. She feels the Administration should examine the new positions very closely, to make sure they are absolutely necessary. Tardi noted that last year, prior to the AFT Memorandum of Agreement, she questioned why other universities were allowed to use their reserves, but William Paterson could not. This year, the University community is being told that “some” of the reserves will be used. She further questioned why Steve Bolyai, the VP of Administration and Finance, chose not to freeze departmental budgets this year as he has in the past, yet took \$1,000,000 from reserves for those budgets. Tardi stated that she strongly disagreed with the woman who stood up at the President’s meeting and thanked him for saving jobs. She said it would be one thing if the Administration has exhausted all means to avoid this fiscal crisis, but that’s not the case; a closing is a quick and dirty solution to the problem, and it doesn’t address the real problems at the University.

Tardi stated that she doesn't know if the State will try to negotiate a new agreement. She noted that the Leadership of our Local did not want to sign the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) last July, but we had no choice because we did not have the support of the legislature. Tardi said that some members have complained that the self-directed furlough days did not demonstrate a negative impact on the University. She explained that while that is true, many members of our bargaining unit could not afford to be unpaid for an extended amount of time, and since we were going to take the hit, the Leadership decided to work out an agreement that would permit flexibility regarding the paychecks in which furlough days would be reflected. Tardi noted that every single member of our bargaining unit at every sister University in the Council had the same number of furlough days. When negotiating the MOA, our Local's leaders fought hard to insure that the administrators would have the same furlough and pay freeze as the unit members. The administrators at William Paterson received the same number of furlough days as the faculty and staff, but at other universities, the presidents chose not to impose the same number of days on their administrators that were imposed on faculty and staff. Tardi assured the Membership that the Executive Board members are on top of this fiscal crisis issue, and are trying to generate ideas for increasing revenue to the University. She encouraged members to bring forth concrete suggestions.

Questions and comments from members

A member commented that he believes we will be here at the same time next year, talking about the same thing, and he expressed disappointment that the Administration cut nothing and did not consult with anyone prior to the President's meeting. He also pointed out that the proposed closing amounts to a bigger percentage of salary for 10 month employees. The member further stated that he doesn't believe the Administration has any clue how to get the University out of this situation, and questioned why we should just "roll over" and not demonstrate our dissatisfaction. Tardi noted that one problem has been that faculty and staff members have gone out of their way as professionals to meet the ever expanding University needs despite the furloughs. She noted that members have been changing their furlough days in order to accommodate the needs of the students and the University, and that there has been no slow down of work, so it appears that business as usual has been occurring. She stated that there is no oversight body of the University presidents and/or Board of Trustees members. They have autonomy. A member asked if there is a way that the Union members can organize. Tardi said that departments can organize and be creative, but she noted that it is illegal for the Union president to make recommendations that could be seen as violating the MOA since her signature is on the MOA. Tardi said it is frustrating that she can only present issues to the members of the Board of Trustees at open, public meetings where it is difficult to be frank and discuss issues about Administrative accountability. A member asked if the incoming president is on board with President Speert's ideas. Tardi said she listened carefully to President Speert's remarks, and he initially made a point of taking responsibility for his recommendation for University closure, but then later said the new president and the Board of Trustees will be making the decisions. Tardi

noted that based upon our State contract, the decision regarding any campus closure must be made prior to Dr. Waldron's starting date in August. A member stated that when people are on furlough, they should not be on campus nor should they be doing any university related work. The member stated that in her case, this means the students get their quizzes back late. Tardi stated that no one should work on furlough days on or off campus. A member asked when the Administration will announce if there will be furlough days in the coming year. Tardi responded that President Speert cannot issue furlough days. He stated that he can only issue a University closing, and we will know if this will occur after the State budget is passed. According to the contract, the president must announce a University closing 195 days prior to the intended date of closure. Tardi noted that we are slated to receive our contract increase, and are not slated to have furlough days in the next year. A member stated that if the furlough issue does come up, departments should decide as a group not to attend events and meetings. The member said that currently, the impact of not working on furlough days is felt only by the member, and that a coordinated effort within the department would make an impact on the University. Tardi stated that an individual can make an impact because if enough individual students are complaining that their needs are not being addressed (e.g. quizzes not being returned in a timely manner), the BOT can see the negative impact of furlough days on the students and the University as a whole; however she agreed that a coordinated effort could have a more significant impact. A member commented that the University is in the process of a transition, and this is an opportunity for the new president to show that she is dynamic and cares for the faculty. The member asked if the Union can request that the new president meet with the faculty and professional staff to discuss the future of the University. Tardi responded that we can certainly ask, but the new president is under no obligation to meet with us. Williams commented that he feels it is shameful that President Speert's answer to the problem is to close the University and hope for a better future. Tardi stated that the Union Leadership and the Membership can come up with ideas. A member suggested that our AFT Membership meet with the Board of Trustees and the incoming president to share ideas and recommendations to assist in closing the WPU budget deficit. Tardi said that winter session was one idea that was brought to the attention of the Board and proved to be successful. She noted that other universities are trying new things that are successful and we can try and emulate those ideas, but the problem is that we needed the ideas yesterday because according to President Speert, our budget was cut by 25%. She noted the Union is working on a rally that will take place to reinstate the Millionaire's Tax, and hopefully get the money put back where it belongs; however, there are no assurances that it will be put back. Tardi said that each year when the budget crisis hits, she has always suggested sending the associate deans back to faculty. She said that while she is not diminishing the role of the colleagues who engage in this role, but she feels that in difficult times, administrative restructuring needs to occur. Tardi questioned whether in this fiscal crisis, is it responsible to hire 23 new faculty members. She also wants the Administration to engage in a top-down review of administrators, particularly those who make \$100,000 per year or more.

While many of those administrators deserve the pay they are receiving, there are certainly those who have not successfully fulfilled their designated roles and responsibilities. Tardi also stated that the fund raising methods on this campus need to be examined. Comments from faculty indicate that they would be more willing to donate to the University, if they were more respected.

A member stated that she supports the idea of having a coordinated effort regarding furlough days. Tardi said to put this in perspective, one should think of it as multiplying the number of our members times 7 furlough days at 7 hours per day, to get the total number of hours missed. That is a significant number and it should make an impact on the work output that can be accomplished. Tardi noted that if the Board of Trustees members do not recognize the negative impact of furlough days or University closings, furloughs and closings may be the first rather than the last option whenever there is a fiscal crisis.

A member stated that William Paterson receives less funding for the budget than compared to the other State universities. Tardi noted that there is a formula for the funding provided. A member asked what percent of our salary will be lost if the University is closed for three weeks. Tardi responded that the figure is 5.8% for 12 month employees and is significantly higher for faculty members who are ten month employees. Tardi reiterated that the closing is one suggestion, and the Union is not accepting it as being the only way to solve the fiscal crisis. A member stated that William Paterson should be bringing in many more international students. Tardi agreed, stating that this issue comes up every year at Senate meetings but is never resolved.

Tardi said that our Union Leadership is proactive and warned last year that we would be right back in this fiscal situation this year. A member stated that while she was glad to have self-directed furlough days, they do not seem to be very effective from the students' perspective, because they see the absence of one or two people as not being substantial. A member stated that we should take advantage of opportunities in the coming year to take collective action. A member stated that there is a leverage point coming up with commencement, and that would be a great time for faculty members to take a stand, and demonstrate discontent to the Board and the Administration. Tardi expressed concern regarding faculty duties and obligations, and also expressed concern with disrupting our students' graduation. A member stated that it is not written in the contract or handbook that faculty must be on the field. A member questioned if there is a new position designated as commencement coordinator. Tardi noted that this position has existed for many years. Tardi said that the VP of Negotiations is going to submit a request for everyone's released time to determine who is getting paid at the University. A member commented that tickets are now being issued for graduation, and they contain barcodes that will be scanned. The member asked if "big brother" is watching. Tardi stated that the Administration expects faculty members to attend graduation. Tardi said that we can attempt to address our issues with the Board of Trustees, but the budget won't be officially announced until June or July. Tardi said she is willing to do what the Membership wants, as long

as the Membership stands behind her and the Executive Board. A member suggested that faculty attend commencement, but refuse to go on stage. Tardi stated that she thought this was a better statement, since it shows concern and support for our students, while at the same time, expresses discontent with the proposed fifteen day closure to resolve the fiscal crisis. A member stated that faculty should attend commencement and distribute information leaflets. Tardi suggested sending a letter to the BOT, inviting them to attend a meeting with our Membership, and then if the Board refuses, the absence of faculty on the platform could be the response. By a straw vote, members unanimously supported attending a meeting with the Board of Trustees. A member stated that she likes the idea of providing information and educating people who are attending commencement. Tardi stated that she believes commencement is not the time to “educate the public,” because the audience includes parents who are focused on their child’s graduation. She would favor a written statement explaining why faculty are sitting or standing with the students and not on the platform, but not a detailed, educational leaflet. A member stated that she thinks distributing information indicates that the faculty is working in good faith to raise a valid point. The member further stated that it would serve as a building activity for the future; a way of building community support. A member suggested not attending the ceremony but staying on the periphery. Another member stated that he supports the idea of attending commencement, but sitting on the field with the students and leaving the platform empty. He said this will show respect for the students, yet still make a point. Tardi said she fears an attempt to make a statement at commencement will alienate the public by politicizing their children’s graduation. A member stated that not everyone knows what the word furlough means. Tardi agreed, stating that the public does not understand and that educators have been demonized. The public thinks that faculty members make enormous amounts of money and only work a couple of days per week. Tardi further stated that the public image is totally distorted, and it’s going to be very difficult to break that down at one commencement.

R. Pardi made a motion that if the Board of Trustees members refuse to meet with members of our bargaining unit, that faculty members attend commencement, but sit with the students rather than be seated on the platform. K. Wagner seconded the motion.

Discussion: A member stated that this action may be prohibited by safety rules. A member stated that this action should be precise, and he would like to have this broken into two motions: 1) Contact the board of trustees and give them one week to respond. 2) If they refuse to meet, then we recommend not participating in the platform at commencement.

The motion carried with one nay vote.

b. Health Plan proposal

Tardi noted that there is a new health plan proposal by Bret Schundler that if

passed, will make our retiring members pay for health insurance at the prevailing rate that is in the contract. Tardi noted that we do not believe there is overall support for this in the legislature. Tardi explained that members are currently protected by whatever tier they are in, and when planning to retire, they must provide three months notice in order to get the benefits. Tardi stated that she is checking into the legal ramifications and will report back to the Membership. She noted that anyone who is preparing to retire should contact Diane Kaiser in Human Resources.

c. AFT Local Voting Results and AFT Affiliation Council Voting Results

Tardi reported that our Local voted not to affiliate with the expanded AFT New Jersey, and although we had 14 delegate votes at the Council meeting, the Council voted 70 to 35 in favor of joining the group. A member asked if Rutgers's is also a part of the group and Tardi said yes.

5. **Adjunct Faculty Report**

Pavese reported that adjunct faculty members will not be impacted by a potential University closing or by the pension. Pavese announced that a rally is being planned on 5/22 in Trenton to protect public services and demand restoration of the Millionaire's Tax. The Council is spending \$20,000 on buses to transport people to the event. He asked members to send an email to the AFT Office if they want to attend.

6. **V.P. for Grievances Report**

Williams reported that he is assisting someone who was notified of intention to non-reappoint by the President. The person was successfully retained for another year.

7. **V.P. of Negotiations Report**

Guerrieri reported that the ART Pilot Program has officially been converted to policy (applause from the Membership). She reported that she and Donna Fengya are currently working on a compensation policy for internships and boatload courses, and asked the department representatives who have information that is pertinent to those two issues to send an email to the AFT Office. She also reported that she is meeting with members to review the current contract and identify issues of concern. She noted that anyone who would like to identify a contract issue should send an email message to the AFT Office (aft-office@wpunj.edu).

8. **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by D. Fengya, seconded by L. Gazzillo Diaz and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Pinkston,
Recording Secretary
[Edited:]