

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
UUP Albany Chapter
October 10, 2013

Attendees: P. Abraham, B. Benjamin, L. Bickmore, P. Breiner, E. Briere, J. Collins, C. Fox, L. Gallagher, J. Gendron, J. Greiman, J. Hanifan, J. Harton, T. Hoey, F. Jaquez, C. Jewell, J. Jurkowski, M. Knee, S. Kudzin, D. LaFond, G. Landsman, M. Manjak, R. McGlaufflin, C. Merbler, P. Pinho, L. Pyles, B. Pyszczyuka, H. Scheck, M. Seidel, B. Shadrick, P. Stasi, I. Steen, B. Sutton, E. Torgersen, B. Trachtenberg, R. Vives, E. Warnke, L. Wilder, L. Wittner, B. Ziman, K. Thompson-LaPerle

I. VISIT FROM PRESIDENT JONES

- a) Bret Benjamin thanked President Jones for coming to the meeting and stated that he hoped this will begin an ongoing conversation. UUP is the largest union on campus with about 2000 employees who are central to mission of the university. Faculty and professionals, full-time, part-time, tenured and contingents from all the campuses (East, Uptown, Downtown) are represented on this Executive Committee (EC) which is elected by the chapter. The 55-member EC is supplemented by 77 department representatives across the institution and as such are broadly representative of UAlbany. Members are volunteers who do the work because they want to, are deeply committed to the university, and have a profound investment in the intellectual mission, the research mission, the teaching mission, the mission to serve students and the community. UUP offers the president a constructive relationship, a venue for communication, and a forum for unvarnished feedback.
- b) Tom Hoey, VP for Professionals, added that the president's presence at the EC is a historic event and very welcome. Some items of concern to those he represents included:
 - 1) Morale: UUP would like to see improvement in the general climate of respect, for example people are being non-renewed by email instead of face to face, some have felt they are harassed so that they will want to quit, there are late performance programs and evaluations, some have been told they could not take appropriate leave time. Perhaps a president's suggestion box would be a good start.
 - 2) Campus environment: People smoke by building air intakes making building interiors smoky, broken equipment (such as bathroom vent fans) lead to unpleasant areas, tight basements offices without windows make unpalatable work spaces.
 - 3) Limited resources: The private room in Patroon was converted to offices and UUP had to rent a tent outside the Science Library for its annual membership meeting. The U should build community spirit in shared spaces, not encourage people to rush home.
 - 4) Community involvement: Community organizations don't trust the U. UUP can partner with the U with members reaching out, mentoring student groups, and building community relationships. Similarly UUP can partner with the U to act as one to help increase funding from the legislature.
- c) Barry Trachtenberg, VP for Academics, came to UUP in 2010, the year of program deactivations. His department, Judaic Studies, went from a department to program and from a major to a minor, all without consultation and discussion. Many have turned to UUP stating we need an institution where we can be heard and can be part of improving it. He shared faculty's top 3 issues:
 - 1) Lack of true commitment to public education at UAlbany: tax free zones, public/private partnerships, and online degrees are not good for the public. These put faculty in position of producing workers, not citizens.
 - 2) Academic standards: the loss of multiple academic programs at the U, the push toward online teaching, the watering down of the gen eds show a decline of academic standards.

Simultaneously the standards for faculty productivity are increasing, demands of part-time contingents are increasing, the standards for tenure and promotion are increasing.

- 3) Disparaging treatment of women faculty and faculty of color: The U provides little support and a hostile climate. Pay disparities and the difficult climate were in the news over summer. UUP will be working on this and would like to work with the U.
- d) Roberto Vives, Officer for Contingents, in his 29th year as a full-time contingent in Athletics, shared his constituency's majors concerns:
 - 1) Salary: Contingent faculty salary is \$2500-3000 per course. Should an instructor be able to teach 4 courses a semester, their annual salary would only be \$12K. A statewide reasonable minimum would be a good start. Every other state employee has a minimum. Quality education is compromised if contingents are not paid a living wage.
 - 2) Job security: A U report stated 90% of contingent term appointments range from 1 semester to 1 year. A quarter of them, about 500, have 10+ years of quality service to the U. He has worked here 28 years and is still renewed 1 year at a time.
 - 3) Respect: Being treated like professionals with adequate office space and resources, being included in meetings, having more of a voice in departmental and college governance matters, and having advancement opportunities would show the U values contingents.
- e) President Jones responded that he appreciated the invitation and this conversation with UUP as an opportunity to get to know us and get a sense for the issues, challenges and concerns. He stated we have to work collectively to resolve climate, culture, and employment issues as these are critical to the success of the U. The number of adjuncts is growing and we need to be sure they are fairly treated, know expectations, and are respected as important members of the U community. Process is important to him as is fairness, transparency and engagement. He respects each of us, fully values us and is absolutely committed to and looking forward to working with us. He appreciates the opportunity to use us as a sounding board to make sure our perspective is factored in. He invited all to email him, stating he is accessible and cares about what we think. While we may not always agree, he will consider our input. Difficult decisions have to be made, and sometimes we have to play the hand we are dealt, but we can play that hand to win. He went on to say it is difficult to manage a research institution of higher education when funding has decreased precipitously and there are limits to raising tuition. NY SUNY2020 lays out a 5-year plan that families and administration can work within. It's necessary to drive economic vitality and educate citizenry for the advancement of NY, the region, and the nation and UAlbany will play a critical role. He will try to expand the educational offerings of the U. We need to increase international recruitment, expand the U's role in community engagement, develop alternative revenue streams and reduce unnecessary duplication/consider shared services.
- f) A short Q&A time followed with several committees' representatives sharing concerns. President Jones stated he was troubled by the concerns and appreciated everyone's commitment to working toward solutions together.

II. MINUTES

The **EC minutes from the last meeting were moved, seconded, and approved without changes** (unanimous in favor, 0 no votes, 1 abstention).

III. REVIEW OF LABOR MANGEMENT NOTES

Notes were sent in the pre-meeting materials. There being limited time Bret Benjamin asked that questions be sent to him.

IV. OFFICER REPORTS/REPORTS AND UPDATES FROM CHAPTER CMTES

Reports were provided with pre-meeting materials. There being limited time Bret Benjamin asked that questions be sent to him or the committees. He will provide more time for discussion at future meetings and thanked committees for meeting and providing survey questions.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Candy Merbler was thanked and honored with a plaque for her many years of tireless service to UUP.
2. A question was raised regarding the situation of Sodexo workers. Individual faculty have sent letters to Sodexo. Bret Benjamin will contact their union again to see if and how UUP can be of assistance.
3. A proposal from the Contingents Concerns Committee regarding tabling in the Campus Center for Campus Equity Week was briefly discussed. EC members are needed to staff the table. Due to limited time, the request to purchase supplies and Halloween candy was deferred to an online vote.
4. The Women's Concerns Committee is working on a proposal for a joint event with Affirmative Action and possibly other groups to sponsor a panel discussion. Details will be worked out and brought to the EC at an upcoming meeting.
5. New Labor/Management agenda items were not discussed due to time constraints. Bret Benjamin requested that items be sent to him directly.
6. There was discussion on how best to conduct online voting (this is not new; we already had the possibility of emergency online voting). LaFond stated that this issue required more discussion and moved that the EC not vote on an e-voting procedure at this meeting. Discussion ensued. Ideally the e-voting process would mirror the process for votes at EC meetings, but use Doodle or Survey Monkey, etc. If such a service is used there should be a reconciliation period where people can object if votes were not recorded properly. Bret Benjamin clarified that electronic votes would not be used for critical, directional items, but simple items. A screen shot of the final tabulation could be sent to everyone. There was some concern that issues might not be fully discussed online. Some issues require e-voting between the meetings and we need to have a way to fund proposals such as the Contingent Concerns tabling request. The question was called. The motion was defeated. Merbler moved that the Chapter use e-voting, with a discussion period on email, followed by a vote on a Doodle or Survey Monkey poll, followed by the circulation of a screenshot. Motion was approved. (16 in favor, 6 opposed, 2 abstentions)
7. All were reminded about the UUP homecoming tailgate event 10/19/13.

Meeting adjourned 2:10pm. The next EC meeting will be 11/14/13 12-2pm.

Minutes submitted by J Harton.