

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes  
UUP Albany Chapter  
September 6, 2016**

**Attendees:** B. Benjamin, J. Collins, A. Craig, R. Friedman, J. Gendron, M. Grosshandler, J. Hanifan, J. Harton, T. Hoey, C. Jewell, M. Knee, D. LaFond, G. Landsman, A. Major, M. Manjak, R. McClamrock, R. L. Miller, Jr., D. Myers, A. Olin, G. Petry, G. Robinson, P. Romain, R. See, B. Shadrick, P. Stasi, R. Tolley, E. Torgersen, R. Vives, C. Walcek, B. Weaver, L. Wilder, L. Wittner, & K. Thompson-LaPerle.

**I. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes were moved by P Romain, seconded by C Jewell. All approved with 6 abstentions.

**II. Review of LM Notes 6/14/16 and 8/23/16**

Although it has not yet been formally communicated, we should congratulate ourselves on achieving the new starting salary for part-time lecturers of \$3600/course (up from \$2800, although different departments have different base pay--Biology insisted on \$6K for part-timers in the mid-1980's). The administration stated goal is up to \$5K/course in the next 2 years. Additional compact budget plan requests were put in to accomplish this. The budget process not yet been announced. There should be a report coming from administration regarding the contingent committee's work, outlining its progress over the last year (moving more part-timers to 2 courses making them eligible for healthcare benefits, making longer appointments/fewer single semester appointments, etc.). The Professional Development and Paths to Permanence groups are still being discussed. There were questions about University in the High School program. J Dangler at statewide has been looking into this. If high school teachers are teaching college courses, they should have a graduate degree in the field. UHS has pushed against that saying as long as teachers had some graduate level classes they could teach (high school teachers are not required to have an MA in their subject area, just in Education). It appears that UUP work is being taken from us. This is part of the pressure on time to completion. UHS in competing with AP, other colleges, etc. B Benjamin reminded the EC if they have LM questions or issues, to please share these with him.

**III. Appointment of VP of Academics and Treasurer**

Because B Trachtenberg vacated his UUP position as Vice President for Academics in July the EC must fill the remainder of his current term, which runs through June 1, 2017. At the last meeting we agreed to appoint a VP instead of running a separate chapter election (following the process that we've established for officer appointments). There will be chapter elections in spring to elect new officers and delegates. Benjamin circulated an email asking for nominations on 8/10, which included instructions about the process. One nomination, for Paul Stasi, was received and his statement was circulated. This is not an interim position (it completes the end of a term, and so will run from today through June 1, 2017). The president recommended appointing P Stasi to the vacated VP for Academics position.

There was discussion of the process of appointments and whether nominations could come from the floor. One delegate raised concern that Benjamin's email mistakenly indicated that this was an "interim" position, and asked whether the process should be started anew. Questions were raised about the time involved and the need for officers to be in place given all the work to be done. The call for nominations resulted in a single nomination, and no questions from other interested parties. A question was raised whether the VP position could remain open, but because of the volume of work this did not seem feasible. The By-laws indicate the position must be filled. L Wittner called the question and P Romain seconded. A vote of 2/3 in favor was needed to end discussion. There were 2 no votes, no abstentions and the remainder approved, ending discussion. On the vote to approve P Stasi's appointment to serve the remainder of the term as VP for Academics, all but one approved and there was one abstention.

Because P Stasi had been elected as the Assistant VP for Academics, his appointment as VP creates a vacancy in the Assistant VP for Academics position. A Major has served as the interim Assistant VP for Academics this last year while P Stasi was on sabbatical. A Major is willing to continue in the role for the

duration of the vacated term. Because the position was not vacant until today's appointment of P. Stasi to VPA, the president could not have circulated a call for nominations prior to today's meeting. Benjamin indicated that the EC could choose to re-appoint A. Major to the AVPA position today, or they could postpone the appointment decision for another month, and follow the typical nomination procedure. T Hoey moved, P Romain seconded that A Major be appointed Assistant VP for Academics now to complete the term. It was argued that this would reduce disruption, and recognize the excellent work Aaron has done in this role. A concern was raised about the process. Some delegates argued that we should postpone the appointment, and follow the procedure that we have used in the previous appointments, including soliciting nominations. A concern was raised about the practice of officer appointments rather than full elections. The bylaws stipulate that if an office is vacated the EC has the responsibility to set procedures to appoint until the next election. On the motion to appoint A Major Assistant VP for Academics for the remainder of the term there were 15 yes votes, 10 no votes, and 1 abstention.

A concern was raised that members are not aware of how leadership positions are decided and that the process is unfair. It was pointed out that the appointment process is similar to the one used for elections at the DA. The EC is ruled by its bylaws which the membership has access to, along with meeting minutes. The EC works as a body to make decisions and act responsibly. There was a discussion of what it means to act as a representative body. A concern was raised that the EC's quick decision to appoint A. Major not only prevented members at large from being considered, it also prevented other EC members from being nominated and given the opportunity to run for the position.

Similarly Rob See has been serving as elected Treasurer, but has asked to step down. A call was made inviting candidates and one stepped up to complete the current term (through June 1, 2017), A Olin, a past UUP treasurer. T Hoey moved, R See seconded the EC approve A Olin to complete the Treasurer's term. All but one approved with no abstentions.

#### **IV. SIRF Report from Academic Concerns**

The EC was presented with a draft report on SIRFs and the evaluation of academic faculty, authored by A Major in collaboration with and approval by the Academic Concerns Committee. As with other reports, once the SIRF report is approved by the EC it will be posted to the chapter website under chapter documents and given to Labor/Management and administration to ask them to take up these issues. A Major and the committee wrote the report which started from a study done by the university that looked at SIRF data over five years and the effects of moving to online SIRFs. The first part of the report goes to re-evaluating their data and pointing to several areas of concern (bias against females, lower level courses, contingents, etc.). The tool is not a good measure of teaching effectiveness. Senate legislation brought SIRFs into existence. SIRFs were implemented by administration to evaluate faculty teaching/get student input, but were never intended to be part of tenure and promotion evaluations which is a peer-driven process. The report notes the process has strayed from its original intent, recommends it return to peer-centered evaluation of faculty teaching and provides suggestions. The EC provided suggestions for improvement (including more detailed narrative addressing the effect on gender, explaining data, more information about the university's study, very low response rates, address the university's incentive process to increase response rates (that if 60% of students respond the results will be shared, similar to Rate My Professor, which was announced to students last year) and how this is suggested as adding weight to this tool, adding stronger statements of UUP's opposition to the SIRF process and its use in faculty evaluation). The university seems to recognize the data is flawed if there are few respondents, but does not follow that through. A careful read of the study shows student evaluations are not just imperfect, but invalid measures of instructor performance. Faculty have lost their jobs at UAlbany because of SIRFs. Contingents are the most vulnerable. The university Senate, coupled with departments must develop a method to measure teaching effectiveness. UUP's role is to safeguard procedure. The Academic Concerns Committee has now brought forward three related issues: problems with department-level guidelines about review, tenure and promotion processes, the need for an ombudsperson, and SIRFs related to academic assessment. A Major will bring the revision back to the EC next month for approval.

## V. **Committee Chair Recommendations**

As per the bylaws the president recommends and the EC votes on the list of committees and chairs the president puts forward. Committee chairs as proposed by the president will roll over from last year with some minor changes. A Olin moved and P Romain seconded we accept the **president's recommendation for committee chairs**. All but one approved with no abstentions. B Benjamin plans to meet with committee chairs in the next couple weeks and encourage committees to start meeting right away and meet more regularly than last year.

## VI. **Review Expectations of EC Members**

All agreed with the expectations outlined on the agenda (at a minimum members should attend UUP meetings and DAs, be de facto department representatives, be involved in the ongoing membership drive, be on at least 1 chapter committee, participate in one political event each year, participate in VOTE-COPE). EC meetings alternate between Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday this year to accommodate labor contract negotiations meetings (alternating days were originally implemented to help academics who teach a class and might not otherwise be able to attend). All EC members are statewide delegates. The chapter should send a full delegation—this helps us better contribute to statewide matters. Two-way communication is very important. Last year's membership drive went well with over great last 300 new members signed since February, however this is an ongoing obligation since membership changes each semester. We all must help get new members signed up, let them know they're part of a union, and have benefits and protections. Chapter committee obligations are not onerous, but help put initiatives on the table, move policy driven items forward, provide data for concerns that require attention, etc. The SIRF report just discussed is a great example. UUP has been *the* advocate for SUNY over the past three decades, regularly putting initiatives forward. If everyone could contribute a dollar a paycheck or a flat sum to VOTE-COPE go this goes to PAC's political initiatives that support public education. Union dues cannot be used to support political activities. Of the unions, UUP has among the lowest contributions. VOTE-COPE is what allows the labor movement to fight for our most important concerns—we invest in ourselves by contributing. Contributions can be made by mail or online. All were reminded to not use university email/equipment/state resources for political work.

## VII. **DA Preparation**

All were reminded the fall Delegate Assembly (DA) is scheduled for 9/30/16-10/1/16 and to RSVP ASAP. Business from the previous DA must first be concluded with those present who attended the spring DA. Several constitutional amendments are being considered including changing the UUP statewide committee structure, extending the term of statewide offices from two to three years, and extending the time allotted to candidate fora.

## VIII. **Revisit Decision to Purchase New Chapter Banner**

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

## XI. **Officer Reports**

Reports were provided electronically.

## XII. **Other**

- Michelle Tuohy will assume for M Bartoszek's role as the **EAP Coordinator**.
- B Benjamin reiterated the **Good & Welfare** envelope is used to help with matters for which UUP funds cannot be used.
- It was moved that the **EC authorize payment for all EC meetings this year and that the president have discretion to utilize chapter and good and welfare funds up to \$150 at a time**. R Miller moved, J Hanifan seconded and all approved with no abstentions.
- It was moved that **the president be allowed at his discretion to use chapter and Good and Welfare funds to spend up to \$150 at a time**. A Major moved and C Jewell seconded, all approved with no abstentions.

- All were reminded about Tuesday's **barbecue** and that volunteers should arrive at 10 to set up.
- The Peace & Justice Committee is bringing Kari Norgaard from the University of Oregon 10/6/16 to give a talk on climate change. P Romain moved and J Hanifan seconded the chapter give \$200 (agency fee) for the **honorarium**. All approved.
- In spring the chapter discussed ways to collect funds for a donation to St. Vincent de Paul's food pantry. It was moved by P Romain and seconded by J Hanifan that **the chapter make a matching donation of up to \$500 for its fall membership barbecue raffle**. All approved.
- T Hoey moved, J Hanifan seconded and all approved the chapter using up to \$200 for the 10/8/16 **homecoming tailgate barbecue** for members at the arena as has been done the last three years.

Meeting adjourned at 2:10pm. Minutes submitted by J Harton.