

UUP Albany Chapter Labor Management Meeting Notes February 18, 2014

Attendees:

Labor: B Benjamin, B Trachtenberg, T Hoey, R Vives, J Harton, M Seidel

Management: B Hedberg, J Mancuso, C Threthaway

- 1) **Budget Updates and Analysis:** UUP shared its legislative advocacy agenda with the campus, asking whether there were areas of mutual and shared interest about which UAlbany and UUP might collectively advocate. None of the contractual raises are accounted for in the current state budget, meaning that campuses will have to cover the costs with current funds. UUP asked explicitly for these, but SUNY continues to be timid in its requests. UUP is actively advocating for increases to the SUNY operating budget and to and re-fund hospitals to last year's levels. Benjamin shared UUP talking points regarding legislation, including investing in public higher education and creating a broad endowment to avoid the annual legislative request for restoration of funds and stated that UUP has developed a broad, comprehensive plan for downstate with other funding to stabilize healthcare in that region. UUP is pursuing again the freedom of information legislation related to transparency of the Research Foundation (while overall the RF has agreed it is FOILable, campus RF offices have not). There are bills specifically exempting CNSE and donors from scrutiny. UUP will be meeting with local and regional legislators for an upcoming higher ed lobby day. Hedberg stated President Jones welcomes the opportunity for UAlbany and UUP to reinforce each other's needs with legislators. Mancuso will check with John Giarrusso regarding needs for capital funds and maintenance. The University had no specific details about its own legislative priorities to share with UUP at present.
- 2) **CNSE Updates:** Hedberg is not aware of anything new beyond what President Jones shared at the last meeting. Benjamin will be meeting soon with the UUP Statewide President and the Chapter President at SUNY-IT.
- 3) **Start-Up NY:** The campus plan is now approved and is moving forward to Empire State Development. Hedberg said there are no material changes, just refinements for internal inconsistencies. Hedberg did not know if the steering committee had been established. UUP requested a participatory role in this process.
- 4) **Employee Recognition:** HR is supportive of a recognition program in principal, but has had limited resources. Benjamin asked if, now that the new contract matters are resolved, there are resources available and when this could be accomplished. Mancuso asked Benjamin to appoint someone to meet with HR and other groups to discuss this and to better understand all the issues. Mancuso will set up a meeting in the next few weeks. Denise Szelest ran a list of those with 20+ years (over 400 people) and looked at their status, leaves, etc. Hoey asked that the list include the MCs also.
- 5) **Update on Deactivated Programs:** Hedberg stated that while he understood why this issue was of such importance to UUP, he was uncertain about its relevance at the Labor-Management meeting. Hedberg reported the UPPC of the faculty senate is reviewing some organizational combination of the Theater and Music departments. Benjamin responded that Labor Management is contractually designated as a site in which issues of interest and concern to our members can be discussed. We need not have specific terms and conditions issues in order to raise issues that affect our members. Seidel raised concerns about the effects of seniority for the merging program if retrenchment is an issue since those in the pre-existing department have seniority. UUP will have to evaluate this for the protection of members. Benjamin will bring this concern to UPPC since they are considering the change. Similarly, there may be tenure concerns related to changes with CNSE. Benjamin raised the

concern that there was a 3-year reactivation window cited at the time of deactivations and that time is at hand. Hedberg stated this is not a concern, that the default is to keep the inactive programs, that nothing will happen automatically to change that. There are no current plans to systematically re-evaluate the status of the deactivated programs. Hedberg was reminded that UAlbany currently has only one language major, Spanish in LLC (EAS majors are studies, not language, majors) and the negative impacts this has on the university.

- 6) **Review of Faculty in CAS:** Faculty had reported concerns that tenured faculty were suddenly being reviewed by the dean's office and that this new process was perceived as hostile and punitive. Benjamin, Trachtenberg and Seidel had a productive meeting with the CAS dean and her staff about this on 2/14/14. The dean assured them there are no hostile intentions, however it remains troubling that the review criteria were not established in collaboration with departments. When asked about her criteria for faculty assessment regarding research productivity and equitable contribution, the dean said she wanted to see forward movement, a "scholarly pulse," and that faculty would not be tasked with additional course loads as long as they could show that. Hedberg suggested ideally this might energize faculty. The dean's objective is not to make everyone a full professor; she said this was the choice of the individual faculty. Hedberg noted that it may not be in the university's best interest to have too many associate professors. Trachtenberg voiced concern about having too many over-serviced associate professors, who, as a result, find it difficult to move quickly to promotion. The dean said she'd encourage associate professors who are over-serviced to get off those assignments to have enough time to focus on their scholarly activity. All agreed that programs should be reviewing faculty productivity and expectations. The dean thought a dozen faculty out of 300+ were of concern. Benjamin stated that affirmative plans to boost scholarly research productivity will ultimately be more effective, by encouraging faculty to live up to the research mission of the university, reviewing and removing barriers to success, communicating transparently, and not appearing punitive in assigning more teaching which results in negative PR, poor morale and is generally counterproductive and disengaging.
- 7) **Handicap Access to Life Science Building:** Benjamin shared a member concern that there are no handicap accessible doors connecting the Life Sciences building to the podium. Mancuso stated Kerry Csontos was contacted and said the doors meet the less than 10 pound force requirement, but that he will look into funding for spring to see if a pad can be installed. Trachtenberg mentioned that the door in Social Sciences by the bus area (discussed at the previous meeting) has yet to be updated for accessibility.
- 8) **Other:** There are some upcoming campus grant possibilities requiring campus contributions that will be discussed with the chapter. Project ideas will be brought to L/M for discussion.

Meeting adjourned 11:00am. Minutes submitted by J. Harton.