

**UUP Albany Chapter Labor Management Meeting Notes
May 17, 2016**

Attendees:

Labor: B Benjamin, B Trachtenberg, P Romain, R Tolley, J Harton, M Seidel

Management: R Jones, B Hedberg, R Stark

1. **Contingent Committee Follow-up:** Hedberg created an oversight committee (seven members, including R Tolley) which he chairs that is meeting every other Friday to implement the recommendations of the contingents panel. There are three working groups under it: compensation, professional environment and pathways to permanence. J Collins inquired about Senate's role in reviewing membership and Senate's recommendations are being included. Meetings are being scheduled. President Jones is glad to see UAlbany, UUP and Senate sharing goals here to advance UAlbany. Committees are planning a progress report in the fall semester regarding what was accomplished in spring and summer with a second progress report at the end of fall. Benjamin stated that the campus initiative on contingent faculty is among the signature accomplishments of President Jones' tenure as President and noted that the other SUNY campuses are watching UAlbany to see how this unfolds. Improving the stability and compensation of contingent employment and in turn bolstering the academic quality of the institution means a lot to members. Jones noted that the current path was not sustainable, that UAlbany could not be world-class without addressing fundamental human resource issues such as fair compensation and commitment. Benjamin noted enrollment and retention rest on good faculty with good compensation. Benjamin will share pathways from contingent ranks being used on other campuses such as conversion to instructor positions and Lecturer rank systems.
2. **UAlbany Hiring Data:** Benjamin requested copies of hiring data back to 2007. At the last meeting Hedberg indicated Bruce Szelest's office had been working on this data. Hedberg will meet with Benjamin and Szelest, and share with President Jones. Benjamin requested the information be sent to him in advance for review/to prepare for the discussion.
3. **Critical Conversation on the Humanities:** Benjamin applauded the president's plan to have critical conversations on the Humanities in fall. In advance of the meeting, Benjamin had circulated a chapter from Christopher Newfield's book, *Unmaking the Public University*, which argues that contrary to popular belief Humanities and Social Science departments may actually be subsidizing hard science and Engineering programs rather than the other way around. Benjamin recounted that at his first meeting with Jones, Benjamin had raised the issue of a real and perceived decline in support for Humanities at UAlbany, and discussed the need for more hiring in these fields. As a necessary framework for a critical conversation on the Humanities, we need to have firm data about faculty hiring and attrition across the University for the period from 2008 (when faculty losses began to increase sharply) through the current period of faculty hiring and expansion. The data we have seen thus far (2011-2016) indicate that there has been a net loss of faculty in Arts and Humanities departments during this period, and that there has been virtually no tenure-line faculty hiring in these fields through NYSUNY2020 and Compact Planning. Benjamin asked to work with Management to further analyze the data, and to inquire about whether Newfield's thesis on the relative costs and revenues of different schools holds true for UAlbany. These two strands should be among the issues considered in next Fall's Critical Conversation. Jones agreed with Benjamin's arguments, and noted that he would also like to have a careful look at the hiring data. He stated UAlbany needs a deep conversation and strategy before rolling out the strategic planning process and added that while people have voiced concern about UAlbany's focus on homeland and engineering, he has assured people that a university

expansion cannot happen without simultaneously bolstering the liberal arts, social sciences and the humanities; these areas must be thriving in order for UAlbany to be a comprehensive university and attractive to students. He proposed using academic expansions to think differently about stable, anchor academic programs, noting there are implications for how we teach students and interdisciplinary opportunities. He noted most of world's problems can't be solved by science alone; there's a human element. Jones stated the conversation won't be scripted, that input is needed from faculty in all disciplines. Jones appreciated the article Benjamin sent, noting all disciplines are subsidized via multiple sources in contemporary higher education. He will think over summer about how to frame the conversation and whether it might be helpful to bring in "thought leaders" in the field (though he expressed a general preference not to use consultants when possible). Benjamin stated that faculty involvement in the dialogue is welcome and indicated that the Chapter would be pleased to participate. He added that the conversation would ultimately need to include Deans, who make important decisions about resource allocations. Ultimately, he noted, the University's rhetorical support for the humanities and liberal arts is going to have to be backed up through the investment of resources. Benjamin noted that the NYSUNY2020 and Compact Planning processes, which ask departments to align themselves with the resource-generating priorities of the President, have placed these disciplines at an insurmountable disadvantage (which appears to be confirmed by the hiring data from the past five years). This is particularly difficult because, at least in CAS, there has been a general prohibition against hires to replace faculty who leave or retire. This has led to an erosion of tenure-line faculty in the arts, humanities and in many cases the social sciences. Benjamin argued that the Compact Planning process should be asking departments to identify the resources needed to become nationally competitive programs in their disciplines. The process needs to take into account departmental priorities in addition to university priorities; indeed the University will only be successful if departments are able to offer nationally competitive degree programs. Jones again agreed with Benjamin's premises, and noted that the reason that he had such faith in the critical conversations, which are designed to tackle complex, challenging issues, is that he trusted that the faculty organizations on campus such as UUP and Senate were approaching these issues in good faith as serious intellectual partners. He agreed to look more closely at the hiring data and to consider with his staff how best to frame the critical conversation. He also agreed to take back our concerns about the Compact Planning process, and indicated that all of these issues would be folded into a serious strategic planning exercise that would consider resource needs and allocations across the university. Benjamin noted that the Chapter looked forward to being involved in these conversations and initiatives. Finally, he offered to bring a copy of Newfield's book to Jones, indicating that he had found it to be helpful both historically and analytically.

4. **Strategic Enrollment Management Council:** On 5/5/16 the CAS Dean's Office emailed departments directing them to provide detailed accounts of their accomplishments, goals, and strategies related to enrollment and retention. The message came the day after classes ended and required a short turnaround. Jones was not aware of the request, however noted such data is needed and asked departments to participate to best of their ability. Jones and Stellar have created a strategic enrollment management council recognizing that the contemporary university can't be driven by admission alone, but must be integrated across financial aid, admissions, the academic side, scholarship, and communication. This can take 10-15 years to do well and can transform how the university thinks about bringing in future generations of students. Getting the right students in the right disciplines is strategic. Jones-noted we have missed enrollment targets for years, particularly at graduate levels. The request from CAS comes at the behest of this Council and its efforts to determine current enrollment initiatives and to identify gaps in our current models. Jones asked that faculty bear with administration and provide whatever they can,

that administration will roll out more timely and data driven material later. However administration cannot create the information without input from faculty and departments about what is currently in place. Hedberg noted that deans are collecting a baseline inventory, which will be compiled centrally. Benjamin noted that the information requested requires faculty conversation and planning which is not possible this time of year, thus effectively disinviting faculty from the conversation, frustrating and alienating some faculty. If faculty are to be held responsible for enrollments and declining enrollments affect program resources, excluding faculty from the conversation is detrimental. Asking faculty to create marketing plans doesn't work; faculty expertise does not include marketing. There must be support for departments to determine what is needed/effective. Departments don't have dedicated marketing staff. Big picture, long-term strategic planning is untenable in a short turnaround time and this model presumes enrollment numbers are the focus. Jones will provide feedback to deans and administrators. Benjamin likewise agreed to assure faculty that this request was only a first step of data gathering, and that university support would come as part of the larger initiative.

5. **Handicap accessibility in HU:** Benjamin inquired about swipe card access concerns. Stark spoke with Facilities who had no record of issues in HU and stated the doors are working correctly, that perhaps there was a glitch with the locked doors. He further noted Facilities is working on better securing the campus (including locking doors) to reduce liabilities. They discussed ways of refining procedures for determining who has building access, and improving communication when changes to building access might occur. Benjamin again indicated a general concern that the tightening security at building entrances, without any corresponding changes to the interior of podium buildings offered only the illusion of security. To the degree that such an illusion makes it more difficult for employees to gain access to their buildings, this seems counterproductive. This is particularly true for those with disabilities.
6. **Graduate Student TA/GA Stipends (repeated from last agenda):** Raised at the joint Senate/UUP forum on contingents, this has direct implication for contingent faculty. Benjamin noted a number of contingent lecturers are doctoral students and UUP represents faculty whose enrollments and retention depend on the scholarships. Has the \$500K from compact planning to raise the amount and duration of stipends been budgeted and what changes will departments see? Hedberg noted K Williams created a report about what is changing and will share that.
7. There is another round of **discretionary funds** this fall. Benjamin reiterated UUP recommends these be distributed across the board. Stark stated HR will "take a picture" June 30 and chairs will be asked to make recommendations early in September. Benjamin asked if supervisors would be required to complete performance programs and evaluations to be eligible for discretionary funds.
8. Stark noted the **Fair Labor Standards Act** could be passed any day and could have significant impact on professional employees (300-400 could be affected). HR is working on this and on communications. Once approved HR has 60 days to implement it.

Meeting adjourned 11:35am. Notes submitted by J. Harton.