

UUP Albany Chapter Labor Management Meeting Minutes August 20, 2013

Attendees:

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

Management: J Mancuso, C Tretheway, B Hedberg

1. **Contract Implementation:** UUP proposed that, for the first year of the new DSA program, funds be distributed equitably to all employees, knowing there have been three years of no raises and a big pay cut in September. There needs to be careful review of the new category of contingent money since there is no established procedure for how to distribute it. If processes are to be in place by December with a 12/31 first round deadline, we need to get information to chairs. Mancuso will share with the president. Administration is not ready to roll this out. Hedberg will find a calendar from last time about the DSA process. **Benjamin will send proposal to the President** and will answer questions from anyone concerned about an across the board distribution—this is not added to base so it will not produce any long-term financial burden for the University.

On-call/recall is to be at the Campus President's discretion. UUP requested it be consulted/involved in the decisions, offered assistance, and suggested an annual review of categories. UUP can poll and talk to members who consider themselves in this category. The PeopleSoft database and time cards may need to be modified to accommodate changes.

Last spring there was discussion about the professional programs/evaluations still incomplete. **UUP requests a copy of the current report on this status.** With the new contract we have a process that's grievable. It's best to have evaluations in on time for both sides—employees have good feedback and administration has more power to require supervisors get this done. UUP suggested a yearly supervisor workshop on evaluations. Supervisors are ineligible for DSA if they have not completed programs/evaluations for their employees. Mancuso agreed to work on this report, and he will respond to us with a feasible deadline by when we might get it after consulting with his staff.

UUP proposed deficit reduction days for professionals be at the discretion of individuals in consultation with their chairs (like CSEA did, similar to floating holidays) so this does not disable a unit and is of benefit to members. In the case of academics this is more difficult and a different plan may be needed.

Hedberg is waiting to hear more about professional development opportunities, possibly reintroducing the Drescher Awards.

2. **OpenSUNY:** Hedberg spoke with the provost and shared there are no plans locally to create committees. SUNY Central announced an OpenSUNY advisory team. The next year is focused on educating departments regarding the opportunities and inviting the willing. ITLAL is to be involved in the conversations.

Hedberg shared the SUNY website has documents addressing seamless transfer and gen eds. From a recent president and VP training, it seems SUNY VP Lavalee has plans for an aggressive program for expanding seamless transfer/standardized Gen-Eds across the system. Statewide UUP believes that SUNY plans to require campuses to submit campus-specific proposals by August 2014. Faculty are likely to object strenuously to external force and insist on faculty control of the curriculum. Hedberg knows of no such plans. He will follow up with the Provost for more information and share that UUP statewide leaders are concerned and believe this is imminent and will be pushed on campuses this year. UUP wants to be involved in such conversations with governance, UPPC, faculty, etc. This is a serious threat to academic integrity. Hedberg agreed with UUP's concerns, and suggested that he believed the campus would oppose such standardization as it has in the past.

3. **Sabbatical Leaves:** In response to a negative newspaper article on sabbatical practices at UAlbany and UUP not being informed about the release, UUP asked for more information. Hedberg shared that the Controller's Office did an audit three years ago. When preliminary findings were presented, UAlbany mounted a forceful response including its assertion that findings weren't about auditing practices but about changing State and SUNY policies. Changes were made in the final report reflecting UAlbany's concerns. The auditors wanted UAlbany to give money back. UAlbany refused on the grounds that it acted according to its policies and that discipline was not warranted. Hedberg shared there have been fewer sabbaticals lately probably due to trying to meet student needs, but no leaves have been denied for budget reasons. UAlbany expects auditors to return to see new procedures, but it is unclear when. Protocols around the leaves and documentation have been tweaked, HR is doing trainings, and spot checks to reduce clerical errors and ensure there are no missing reports. Administration was informed three hours before the article went public—and UAlbany was working with media to address it. There is no plan for follow-up letters to the editor. Faculty need to be reassured that UAlbany is defending these important leaves. The provost plans a series of messages to the campus highlighting positive achievements/accomplishments. Title F leaves don't have the same requirements—they are not sabbaticals and are subject to a different set of criteria and reporting mechanisms. Benjamin appreciated the Provost's response to the news reports defending faculty sabbaticals—as a research institution it is absolutely essential to maintain these. He expressed concern, however, at the Provost's reported statement suggesting that the University's hands were tied because of UUP contractual obligations. UUP negotiates the framework and policy for granting sabbatical leaves. The individual discretion for granting those leaves lies entirely with the University. All of the alleged abuses have to do with the University's application of the procedures, not the procedures themselves. Benjamin asked Hedberg to convey this concern to the Provost, and requests that she be more careful in the future.
4. **CNSE Updates:** Hedberg shared that the university has started a year-long process with the provost and Vince Delio co-chairing a group sharing perspectives from IT, enrollment, residential life, etc. to identify all that UAlbany currently does for CNSE and discuss how these will be managed by CNSE later—should UAlbany continue or will these be done elsewhere? Task forces will be convened. Hedberg appreciates UUP's interest in being represented on such groups and that these changes have implications for the chapter.

Benjamin volunteered to participate in the groups. Benjamin has conveyed his request for UUP representation to President Jones as well.

5. **Shared Services:** Hedberg stated system administration has given system-wide reasons for a shepherding process. He will share some links (already in the public domain) with information regarding next steps. The chancellor thinks this is important and wants to aggressively pursue this. Hedberg does not know the implications for our campus, but will keep us informed.
6. **Reasonable Accommodation Policy:** UUP is pleased to see that this policy for employees is now posted on the HR site; however the policy remains very difficult to find. The university's search engine does not provide the employee policy (the student policy is available) and it and other key terms do not appear on the university index. Since it is an obligation for the employer to post this information "prominently," it must be more readily available. Mancuso shared HR sends its annual memo soon regarding policies (such as smoking, domestic violence, etc.) and will include reasonable accommodation information. Mancuso will also work with IT to ensure the policy is properly indexed and appears in the search engine. Per the Disabilities Committee, very few people have unresolved issues—usually departments manage needs well. ODI can create a committee if needed for difficult situations. UUP has concerns about the current appeals processes; we believe there may be a conflict of interest with ODI's role. UUP also contends that the definition of "disability" need to be brought into compliance with both federal and state regulations. **Benjamin will convene a committee** to discuss such concerns including Merissa Mabee, Janet Thayer, Jim Mancuso, Cathy Tretheway, Maureen Seidel, Bret Benjamin, and Carol Jewell.
7. **Parking:** **Benjamin will schedule similar meeting with appropriate campus decision makers to address parking matters**, including signage issues, inconsistencies in documents, incomplete materials posted online, bus handicap parking, insufficient handicap spaces, etc. Kevin Wilcox ultimately manages parking and should be in the meetings. Additionally, Mancuso, Tretheway, and Barbara Abelman will attend, along with Benjamin and Eric Warnke.
8. **Professional Recognition:** Mancuso confirmed that HR is on track to begin professional recognitions this fall. HR will be busy through September with new appointments, but will address recognitions in October and November. Professionals are to be recognized for continuous appointment and everyone (faculty, staff, UUP, CSEA, etc.) who has served 20 years (at UAlbany, not at SUNY) and in 5 year increments beyond that will be recognized.
9. **Other:** The UUP Executive Committee meeting voted to provide funds for the new faculty orientation refreshments. There are 55 new faculty including 16 new full-time lecturers. **Hedberg will update the list and provide it to Benjamin.**

In the past there have been guest speakers on specific topics at this meeting. In spring there was a talk of inviting Bruce Szelest to discuss assessment and the data the Provost and Deans are using to make decisions. The reliance on SIRS scores remains troublesome and there are concerns about how faculty assessment and evaluation is done. **Szelest will be invited to**

present at the October or November meeting. Hedberg suggested Kim Bessette come to an upcoming meeting (perhaps September) to present an overview on financial matters. Tamara Minor from ODI could also be invited to present.

Meeting adjourned 11:20am. Minutes submitted by J Harton.