

**UUP Albany Chapter Labor Management Meeting Notes  
September 22, 2015**

**Attendees:**

Labor: B Benjamin, A Major, T Hoey, R Tolley, J Harton, M Seidel

Management: J Stellar, B Hedberg, D Szelest, C Trethaway, JD Hyde

1. **Updated Membership List:** Benjamin thanked HR for their assistance providing this information reiterating its importance to UUP's ability to communicate with members. Updated membership lists were requested for the bargaining unit and contingent employees with specific data fields. D Szelest should have an updated list to share by the end of the week.
2. **Contingent Employees:** Benjamin requested an update on the Contingent Task Force report. Stellar stated the finished draft was presented to the compact planning process and that completion of the report has been a challenge due to the committee's attention to detail. A preliminary version was shared with the president. The release of the final document will depend on the president. A chief concern was salary, but fixing this instantly "would take millions." Some funds from the compact planning process were set aside to begin to address this by raising the base salary. Stellar stated that it took higher education several decades to create this problem, and it would likely take some time to correct it. He reiterated that there was a commitment in the committee to take a national leadership role in transforming the reliance on contingent employees. A second component identified in focus group discussions is the need to create a better climate in units, including adding contingents to websites, offering them two courses each semester instead of one to allow them to receive benefits, inviting contingents to faculty meetings, etc. The Contingent Task Force plans to continue to meet to work on the areas identified. Benjamin asked about pathways to permanency and longer duration contract. Both are included in the report. This fall, Deans were asked to try hiring contingents for two courses rather than one, and using year-long rather than semester-long appointments. Too early to know what the current data is, but Szelest reports seeing far more year-long appointments in HR. Benjamin asked Stellar to provide him a copy of the report as soon as possible.

Recommendations for the contingent faculty teaching awards are due 11/9. Applicants must have taught 5 years (half a full-time load for 3 years). Nominations include a 5-page narrative and materials. An awards committee is being constituted. UUP was asked to suggest committee members who will then be vetted by the Senate. Concerns were raised that chairs may not be familiar enough with contingents to nominate them. Stellar thanked Tolley for bringing this award to his attention.

3. **SUNY Excels and Performance Based Funding:** Benjamin asked for and has now received the 11 short proposals via email and will review these in detail. He asked what the next steps are with the proposals and when the Senate will see them. Stellar indicated the revisions are due this week and the president will review them this weekend. B Szelest is talking with SUNY about the metrics we might use. Administration wants data in tables and will take them to the Senate soon. The applications will be distributed to the Senate councils. This is being treated as an evaluation of the president and the campus. Benjamin

stated the entire process has been awkward from the 8/28<sup>th</sup> due date (during summer break when faculty are away thus not allowing the faculty's input) to proposals being thrown together last minute, noting the process seems to be the tail wagging the dog. None of the categories enable expansion or enhancement of the university's core academic mission, which needs to be bolstered. The nature of the university is being distorted. Stellar stated the process is helping SUNY determine how to present itself to the legislature to receive more funding. One of UAlbany's main arguments is this will increase enrollments. UAlbany is concerned with who's leading multi campus projects and how UAlbany will not be marginalized if it isn't the lead on the proposals. Stellar's primary focus is on the issue of student retention and the student experience. Benjamin indicated that he understands why the University wants to seize every funding opportunity available, but cautioned that the categories selected by SUNY may not conform to our campus's true needs. If moneys are available through SUNY for certain kinds of projects, other fungible moneys need to be redirected so that campus priorities are dictated by academic considerations rather than the availability of external funds.

4. **CIO Search:** Benjamin raised concerns that this position's requirements are lower than those of an equivalent HVCC position currently being advertised (BA at UAlbany, PhD at HVCC), stating the optics are not favorable to UAlbany. Stellar stated the committee would obtain a more comprehensive pool of applicants with the lower requirements. The plan is to have the first round of candidates in mid-October and to bring in 3-4 finalists 11/2-11/3. Public presentations are planned. UUP stated its belief that graduate education should be a requirement for someone who will be overseeing the information technology operations of a research university.
5. **SIRF Scores:** Benjamin asked to resume discussion from last fall around the use of SIRF scores for the evaluation of faculty teaching effectiveness and asked that the 12/8/14 memo sent last year from the Provost's Office to deans and chairs be reviewed and resent. Hedberg gave Benjamin a copy of last year's memo to review. Benjamin asked if the B Szelest Course Assessment Advisory Committee had resumed meeting, noting the Academic Concerns Committee has analyzed the Course Assessment Advisory Committee's recommendations and would like to recommend a member as a liaison to that committee. Hedberg stated the committee had not reconvened. UUP has heard reports of deans calling faculty in because SIRF scores are low and contingents being non-renewed for this single measure of evaluation. Hedberg stated Senate legislation from the 1980s put in place a requirement for active peer review of teaching with policies and expectations, but this has not been enforced. Hedberg will get an update from B Szelest on the Course Assessment Advisory Committee and get back to Benjamin. Major reviewed the 2012 data gathered from 5 years of SIRF scores, reviewed the original Senate legislation and wrote a preliminary report for the Academic Concerns Committee as well as a newsletter article on this. UUP will send that to Stellar once it is finalized. Stellar stated we need to promote better teaching and to better train instructors in teaching (particularly lower level instructors) and that SIRF scores are a crude measure of good teaching.
6. **Notifications about Changes to PeopleSoft:** In June HR moved to a new system for managing personnel data. This changed what appears in MyUAlbany. Members have raised concerns that information (such as appointment dates) is no longer available to them

and has decreased efficiency for those working on personnel matters. Benjamin asked that HR consider how best to communicate these changes to members and perhaps provide links to the missing information. D Szelest admitted communication had not been ideal in moving from PeopleSoft as the database for all HR transactions to the SUNY HR system which is system-wide and interfaces with the Controller's Office. HR was looking for efficiencies (previously data had to be entered repeatedly into different systems. The change has meant UAlbany can no longer draw the current information from PeopleSoft. The plan is to make the information available again. D Szelest asked that any employees needing information contact HR with questions. Benjamin will communicate this. Bio/demographic information and paycheck information will be accessible and D Szelest will share that in an email.

7. **Ombudsperson Proposal:** On 3/31/15 UUP shared the proposal for a campus ombudsperson devoted to tenure, promotion, and review cases. Given the number of difficult cases currently in these areas, UUP believes the proposal has real merit and should be acted on. Hedberg will email Benjamin and B Weaver to set a meeting to discuss this.
8. **DSA Process:** Benjamin asked if decisions had been made regarding DSA. The proposal to do what was done last year (entirely discretionary) is now with the president for approval. There were a series of communications last year to deans and chairs instructing them about the DSA process, particularly with respect to contingent faculty and clarifying what other measures could be used to evaluate faculty contributions other than SIRFs. This also included inviting eligible faculty to submit evidence of their work to help document their contributions. It is within the discretion of chairs and deans to make "equitable distribution." Benjamin asked this last term be clarified as "allocations across the board." Benjamin asked if there is now an update on the percentage of completed performance programs on file. D Szelest indicated she requested a data file yesterday to determine where we are. HR hired extra help to get caught up with these.
9. **Add-on:** Hedberg asked that work begin on the Individual Development Awards process. Benjamin will consult with possible committee members. Applicants will have until November to apply.

Meeting adjourned 11:20pm. Notes submitted by J. Harton.