

UUP Albany Chapter Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
June, 13, 2012

Attendees: B. Benjamin, J. Collins, S. D'Alessandro, S. Dearing, R. Friedman, L. Gallagher, J. Gendron, M. Grosshandler, J. Hanifan, J. Harton, C. Jewell, D. LaComb, D. LaFond, G. Landsman, D. Lewis, M. Manjak, C. Merbler, A. Olin, G. Petry, B. Pyszczymuka, R. See, B. Shadrack, P. Stasi, I. Steen, R. Vives, E. Warnke, L. Wittner, B. Ziman, K. Thompson-LaPerle

Meeting started 12:25

Benjamin acting as Secretary for today's meeting.

Merbler moves to waive approval of minutes from 5/12 and 1019/11. Seconded by Petry.

Vote unanimous in favor.

President's Report (Merbler)

- The most recent negotiations update has been circulated. Dangler not yet ready to call the Negotiations Committee to discuss; contract does not go to the membership unless it is approved by Negotiations Committee first. Merbler serves on that committee, so will keep EC posted when it is called.
- Carol Jewel and her partner Becky recently got married. Congratulations from all.
- Summer hours posted for Kelly Thompson.
- Chancellor wants SUNY campuses totally non-smoking. Task force appointments from President recommended by UAC (?) of Senate. Not sure if task force has yet been constituted.
- Merbler out of town from 6/20 through 6/26 at Library conference.
- Need to fill Secretary Position. Lafond volunteers. Hoey moves that Lafond be appointed for the remainder of Jewel's term. Unanimous vote in favor. Lafond notes the debt we owe to Jewel for her longstanding service in that position.
- Merbler having serious health difficulties since December. Announces resignation as President as of August 31st. Bylaws give options for how to proceed in such a case. After 8/31, it automatically falls to VP for Academics Collins. It is possible to have elections to fill the slot as well.
- Collins remarks that he understands the stress of health difficulties. He thanks Merbler for her exceptional service to the Chapter. Sustained, standing ovation for Merbler.

- Collins asks whether we need to call elections. Discussion. Collins willing to stand as interim for the remainder of current term (from 8/31/12 through June 2013), but not beyond.
- Hoey moves that Merbler ask for clarifications from UUP Central (Landy) about whether we need to have a special election immediately or whether we can wait until January, as well as any other pertinent information. Merbler will contact statewide and respond by e-mail to the EC asap. Discussion about logistics of an election. Do the bylaws specify that it needs to happen immediately or can we hold off until normal elections? Hoey makes an argument in favor of a full election. Hanifan raises concerns about two campus-wide elections plus a by-laws revision. Lafond asks about the value of continuity. Merbler recounts her experience as acting President, suggesting that there was no difference in her treatment as an *acting* President, suggesting that Collins will be able to effectively operate in such a role. Considerable discussion about whether to call for elections now, or whether we wait until January, our normal election cycle. Several members raise the issue of what happens to Collins as VPA under bylaws if he stands as acting President. Would he have to maintain both roles? Arguments in favor of continuity of leadership with Collins as acting President, and then having an election at the normal time. Several comments supporting the quality and capability of Collins' leadership. Are there mechanisms that we could develop to help Collins if he has to assume both roles? Collins talks about the importance of recruiting new members into elected positions. Members ask about the possibility of release time for course reductions if Collins steps in as Acting President. Merbler indicates that other academics have received release time in the form of course reductions, and she suggests that this would be the best course to pursue. Vote Unanimous in favor of Hoey's motion.

VPA Report (Collins)

- Ongoing conversations with faculty from language programs about workloads in the wake of the program transformations – raised at Labor Management Meetings.
- Get items for Labor Management Meeting to officers by 6/28.
- Collins will prepare minutes from last LM. A brief overview of highlights follows here:
 - Albany not yet approved for NYSUNY2020 proposal. Concerned about "administration by drift."
 - Appointment of Vice Chancellor for Transformation in charge of shared services.
 - 14+ construction projects around campus. If anything appears unsafe let officers know.
 - SIRF evaluations problematic if only measure of evaluation, especially given the low reporting rates.
- It appears that there may be some movement on contract negotiations. As EC, we need to plan to set up fora for members to discuss the contract specifics when it is legally possible.

- Collins and Hanifan plan to activate the Contingent Concerns committee in future meeting. Discussion: make sure we put professionals on this as well as academics.
- Hoey asked whether parking problems were raised at the LM meeting. Collins reports from LM: No net loss of parking, but some spots have been moved. A lengthy discussion ensued: Issue raised about special permit spots being taken by contractors. Need to look at contractor parking practices. Net neutral parking is not the issue--some people need special permits because of the nature of their work. Clarification about the ongoing negotiations between facilities management and Parking Management on contractor permits. Many contractors need those close spots because of the nature of their work. Do we have good data? Ask the parking committee to get better data, and suggest better priorities for parking. GSEU members may need to be consulted/included in such discussions as well. Perhaps this is just an issue of too few spots for too many people; not much to be done. How do we consider priorities without pitting groups against one another. 2000 additional students and 500 more faculty – where are they going to park? Collins noted the heated tenor of the conversation and indicated that it would be something to raise again at LM so that we could be part of a rational decision making process about limited parking spots on an increasingly crowded campus, but that it also was something we should get further clarifications about from our own Parking committee and work to better understand the various constraints and constituencies.

VPP Report (Abraham) traveling, no report.

Secretary (Lafond). Elected only an hour earlier, no report.

Treasurer's Report (Olin)

- Received April allocation of \$9000+. Exact figures in office which is being renovated.
- Full report next time

Contingent Officer (Hanifan)

- Highlighted the difficulty of contingent faculty who face student complaints.
- Concerned about contingent faculty being renewed based wholly or largely on SIRF scores, which are a flawed evaluation measure (low reporting rates) even according to the University's task force report on student evaluations.
- How can contingent teaching be evaluated holistically without overly relying on suspect data from SIRFs or student complaints? Contingents have been threatened with non-renewal based on these two factors (student complaints and SIRF scores). Hanifan considers this the erosion of academic freedom and integrity.
- She also reports problems with the upgrade of Blackboard (Safesubmit) that removes proof of student participation that can help provide a record of student activity (helpful as evidence in student complaints).
- Discussion: Freedman raises his concerns about the SIRF scores that go beyond low reporting rates. Freedman states that such issues involve all academics, but

tend to be most pressing for contingents who have apparently been threatened with termination. Lewis asks: How can full time faculty provide better evaluations for contingents? Can Contingent Concerns Committee provide some guidelines to help? Hanifan suggests Depts. work with ITLAL. She will publish some of this in newsletter. Lafond raises the issue of students becoming penalized vs. educated on plagiarism complaints.

- Hanifan echoes Collins to say that she intends to reactivate the Contingent Concerns Committee, and that group can help to shape a response to these issues.

Manjak moves to revise the meeting agenda to take up the Newsletter funding resolution immediately before he has to leave. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Manjak: requests additional funding for newsletter (\$2000, up from \$1850). We have received free printing from statewide, which is wonderful; but there are times where we need the newsletter to be out quicker. More lead-time needed when using statewide (10-days to 2weeks). Remains an option, but sometimes we do not have enough time. This allocation is designed to use if needed. Discussion: clarification about the costs of 3 printings – more than \$1850. Olin suggests that such discussions are valuable, and perhaps best taken up during the budget planning cycle (Feb/March) when we project our annual expenditures. Arguments offered in favor of paper printing (Collins, Wittner), and in favor of additional allocation: extremely valuable tool for talking with membership. Committee will work to use statewide printing whenever possible, and do its best to get the newsletter out promptly. Merbler suggests using NYSUT ads to help defray costs. This has already been done, but there are space limitations. Unanimous vote in favor of additional allocation.

Other items tabled until next meeting. Meeting adjourned at 2:05pm.

Respectfully submitted, Bret Benjamin