



**United University Professions
Albany Chapter**

Labor-Management Minutes

March 6, 2023

1. Holiday work hours in Student Affairs: Members in departments under Student Affairs continue to report being directed to work on holidays on a “volunteer” basis. This is contrary to the understanding that we believe that we reached with Management after raising the issue in our November 2022 meeting. Given this, we believe that it is important to codify a set of principles and best practices with regards to work on holidays in an MOA. We are also requesting that Michael Christakis, VP for Student Affairs, join us for this Labor-Management meeting so that we can better understand the issues that are preventing resolutions that are worked out in this forum from reaching the departments that he supervises.

L. In or out of session, employees expect to have a holiday, and are experiencing 10 days or less notification. There needs to be longer notification and fairness in how staffing is chosen. Do offices really need to be open on holidays?

M. Offices are now closing on Labor Day. This year, we articulated to units that some offices need to be open on certain holidays. Enrollment requires access for may during holidays. MLK Day requires staffing for students on campus at that time of year. Holiday work needs standardization for student services since students are our priority.

L. Volunteering compels non-permanent employees to step up. A set-schedule would create standardization. Employees should be able to trade, but every worker should know well in advance. Also, is in-person work always necessary? What jobs can be remote? MLK Day is of particular importance to Black employees, and there should be sensitivity to that. And is the comp time fair to all?

M. We will revisit the scheduling approach. Comp time and pay is according to contractual language.

2. Improper restriction of vacation usage in Student Affairs: We have learned from

members in Student Affairs that they have been told that they will not be able to use their vacation accruals during the summer unless it is for “major events.” We believe that this is an improper restriction on our members’ ability to use their accrued vacation time, both because it places a blanket restriction on entire months of the year (months, we note, which are when most employees plan on using their vacation time) and because it does not ground that restriction in a specific operational need.

M. The discussion has been to make sure everything is staffed, not that we control vacations. It's important to talk to teams now about scheduling for the summer.

L. An employee has the right to request a vacation. Denials must be in writing and legitimate.

M. We need clearer guidance to units.

3. Follow up on the David Carpenter case: While it is not our usual practice to discuss individual member issues in these meetings, the recent case involving the placement of Dr. David Carpenter on alternate assignment raises broader concerns for the Chapter. Our understanding is that the campus took this step based on an information request (a FOIA request) filed by an outside party that had a clear interest in hindering or stopping Dr. Carpenter’s teaching and research. While we recognize that management acted within the bounds of its managerial rights in this case, the way that the campus responded to this request threatens the academic freedom and job security of all of our members. We are interested in learning more about the steps that management is taking to ensure that, in the future, outside interested parties cannot act against our members in this way again.

M. Had the case been about academic freedom, it would have unfolded differently, but this was not a case of academic freedom. A spin in the press and by the individual made that appearance. There were other issues that are inappropriate to make public.

L. Still, there must be a way of keeping outside interests from influencing teaching and research. This case hurt the University's reputation.

M. What could we have done to improve the reputation?

L. Recognize the dilemma publicly, and that a thoughtful approach was being applied. It would be helpful to circulate what department leaders can or can't say publicly.

Private/public partnerships at the University may make these issues more prevalent.

4. Reorganization of the Libraries. We have learned through our Librarians that an effort to affect a significant reorganization of the University Libraries is underway. We would like to learn more about what this re-organization entails, specifically as it pertains to the job duties and obligations of our Librarian members.

M. The interim Dean of the Library is looking at different scenarios for restructuring and is involving his unit.

L. The concerns are broad and involve knowing whether there will future changes in duties.

M. The interim Dean is aware of staffing concerns and may be available for the next L/M meeting.

5. Budget Advocacy: With the release of the Governor's proposed budget we would like to discuss the possibilities for joint advocacy around funding for SUNY and for our campus in particular. Three key UUP priorities that go beyond the Governor's budget are:

- a. \$160 million fund for financially distressed campuses
- b. \$175 million for SUNY hospitals
- c. \$110 million for "campus transformations" to build programs and retain students.

We are interested to hear what priorities the campus is focusing on and hope that we can find common areas for joint advocacy efforts.

M. We are waiting to determine our own priorities. They may be unchanged from last year. We should have a joint meeting to share ideas.

L. A good relationship with Assemblymember Pat Fahy and a full-term Governor may change things for the better.

Added item from Management: It's important for management to know of any employee concerns with the move of Polytechnic (CNSE) especially regarding the status of individual employees. Also, we don't want to interrupt any cross-campus research grants.

L. There's been no recent communication. Reach out if you need clarity on employee status.