



**United University Professions
Albany Chapter**

Labor / Management notes 6/21/21

The meeting was set-up to discuss the return of employees to on-campus work-sites. The agenda changed because only a few days prior, GOER permitted SUNY to develop its own telecommuting policy subject to State guidelines. A new SUNY policy to guide campuses will need to be created by the end of July. The current telecommuting agreement will continue through July. Hence, the situation was new and in flux at this meeting.

M: Ultimately, the Governor's office didn't extend a semi-transition period past July. Management will work quickly. The entire playing field has changed.

L: The Governor's office stated the end of July as a deadline but July 6th is the date employees expect the telecommuting to end. Members have asked why the Albany campus is staying with July 6th when other campuses are being more accommodating. Is July 6th still firm? Are there conversations at the executive level?

M: Yes, there is work being done and there has been communication with other campuses, but UA is risk averse and in accordance with GOER. Everything is in flux at the moment.

L: Current information on vaccine rates?

M: There has been a 65% response rate to the vaccine survey? Of those who have responded, 97% have been vaccinated, 3% have not. Many people still haven't taken the survey. Also, there are non-state employees who wouldn't have received the survey (food service, Research Foundation, University Auxiliary Services and University at Albany Foundation). Only State employees were sent the survey.

L: Policy on student vaccinations?

M: Incoming students can provide vaccination records electronically and they are being managed like measles/mumps/rubella vaccines. As for enforcement, UA is waiting for guidelines. The rule has been, if a student isn't vaccinated, they can't live on campus. An aside, parents have been asking about faculty vaccination.

L: Are there issues with tracking vaccines for international students?

M: Will ask Ken Wilcox about those records. Also, management is aware of fake vaccination cards the use of which is a federal crime.

As for the campus, protocols such as cleaning, air filtration and hand sanitizer will still be in place. Room capacity will be looked into. Masks and social distancing are no longer required.

L: Clarify the processes and procedures for requesting reasonable accommodations.

M: Supervisors can no longer make accommodation decisions. All requests have to go to the ADA (American with Disabilities' Act) Coordinator to maintain consistency.

L: A member was denied accommodation with teaching mode because it was determined that teaching face-to-face is an essential function of the job. This seems contrary to what's been happening. Is a doctor asked to supply information? Is this undue hardship?

M: Each situation is case by case. Sometimes a doctor is asked for suggestions. For some requests the documentation is very clear while some requests are unclear or a stretch. As for teaching modalities, the schedule is set and there are student expectations to be met. We keep in mind the class action lawsuit against SUNY regarding remote classes during the pandemic.

L: The Provost was enthusiastic about online teaching and yet face-to-face teaching now seems to be the priority.

M: The context is important. Some students, such as adult learners, do well with more variable forms of learning. Core or gen-ed courses should ideally be face-to-face.

L: The hope is that the ADA process can remain consistent to what it has been traditionally. The mechanisms shouldn't change.

M: Agreed.

L: What about surveillance testing?

M: Surveillance testing is supposed to end 6/30 but it may continue in some form or fashion. Exemptions can be made with volunteer proof of vaccination. And that may be an incentive for folks to get vaccinated.

The following are Management items that were not on the agenda.

M: About DSI guidelines. They are similar to guidelines done in years past, but are getting started earlier than usual for supervisors to consider reviews and make units consistent. There are varying interpretations regarding discretionary salary decisions and there should be a consistent standard. The deadlines will not change, nor the payout date. The supervisor is not eligible for DSI if their review reports are not in order.

M: About Faculty Activity Reports (FARs). IRPE (Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness) sent out a report on FAR. There are no requirement changes but now all full-time faculty need to complete the FAR and that needs to be consistent. Part-timers are not required. Full-time lecturers are expected to do things beyond teaching and also might like to enter professional work outside of the school. The FAR helps to capture the full contribution of faculty and provides a document of activities.

M: About Covid specific language in faculty promotion materials generated by UA and other SUNY campuses. There will be two new paragraphs. Labor will get a copy of the language.

The first paragraph is a reminder of how Covid interrupted lives, research and teaching methods and that must be taken into account in evaluations.

The second is a reminder of the tenure clock stoppage and the extension of the probation period.

The new wording has not gone to the Faculty Senate yet. This is very new.

L: Will run the language past the UUP Statewide Academic VP.

The meeting concluded.

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Strum