



**United University Professions
Albany Chapter**

Labor/Management Meeting Notes, 9/13/2021

M. Responded to the Open Letter with a general comment about UAlbany's proactive steps as it's navigated the pandemic creating policies, vaccine mandates and following State guidelines and recommendations of the CDC. There is a 90% vaccination rate and 1600 people per week are tested on campus. Data can be found on the University's Covid Tracker. The data there is accurate. There are no blanket denials of ADA or telecommuting requests. That would be illegal. Stressed the importance of collective cooperation and communication to solve concerns or possible misperceptions on campus.

L. Acknowledged good Covid numbers and denied any challenge to the Covid tracker dashboard. The Chapter was simply responding to concerns and frustrations voiced by members. The Chapter fully supports in-person learning but also wants to promote accommodation to employees on a case-by-case basis. Some employees have received broad statements of disciplinary action if they don't comply with the campus-wide strategy.

M. An open letter is not the best strategy to communicate individual circumstances. There has been no intent to threaten. And tenured faculty can switch teaching modes.

A reminder that just cause is part of the bargaining agreement. There are rules, and there could be instances where individuals are on notice under the rules. A point of fact might come across as a threat.

With regard to accommodations, the ADA Coordinator is required to work under a set of laws. An employee must be able to perform their job, whatever accommodations are needed for that individual.

Management appreciated the need for better language in communicating.

Agenda points:

1. L. Thanks were given for the Dresher Awards received this year.
2. Update on Enrollments and Campus Budget

M. Enrollments are up for first-year students. Unfortunately, every other category is down. 4.8% of the enrollment target was missed (697 students down). Transfer numbers are very down and retention took a hit. This puts the University at \$9 million under budget on enrollments. The good news is that the residence halls are practically full which was unexpected. This will help to balance the loss. Next year's budget is planned for full residence halls, so this is a one-time windfall with housing.

L. Will follow-up for more details.

3. What are the current budget metrics?

L. Chairs are reporting that 2020-2021 proposed metrics are being used to allocate resources.

M. Budget metrics were in place in May but are not fixed. Find the latest on the Academic Affairs Budget Metrics on MyUAlbany. We are looking at 11-12% reduction over 5 years which is a much better place to be than where the University was last Feb./March. There are 7 new faculty lines (EHC, School of Public Health, School of Education) which is not a lot, but looking for more in the future.

L. Expressed concern that the large CAS has no new lines.

M. Budget metrics and signature strengths determine strategies for the units.

4. Telecommuting guidelines implementation.

M. There are no numbers yet on approval or denials of telecommuting. Two offices have put together telecommuting plans so far. 27 requests for childcare/eldercare were made with 24 approved. No appeals yet. Training is available to supervisors on telecommuting and will continue into the spring. Management wants supervisors to own their decisions on telecommuting unit-wise. There is optional training available to employees on telecommuting.

L. Some folks are reading telecommuting as potentially raising workload expectations.

M. The training helps address this concern. M is flexible to the situation and an employee should have a conversation with their supervisor on the advantages of their telecommuting.

L. Telecommuting data will be of interest for members and for the contract negotiations.

M. It's very early days for collecting data.

5. Promotion pathways for full-time lecturers.

M. 5 cases have been approved. These promotions are set for this semester. Some applications were delayed for various reasons. 6 cases are in formation. Glyne Griffith (Provost's office) will be overseeing these.

L. Made a point that there are 110 full-time lecturers.

6. Workload concerns.

M. Supervisory training as well as work loads concerns are important to cover. In the past, a presentation was done regularly and jointly by Maureen Seidel and management for supervisors on workload. These should be done before Nov./Dec. when evaluations happen. Would Michelle Couture help with such presentations, either in-person or online. In-person was better for training.

L. There is agreement on the trainings.

Another concern raised is over workload for 10-month employees. Can we streamline people's jobs so they're not preparing on the off-months?

M. Agreed to think about that, but it's difficult to find a path forward.

7. Health and safety concerns with classroom instruction and other large gatherings.

M. Understands concerns. The fall began with mandated vaccines for students once the FDA approved Pfizer and everyone had one week to get a first shot. 800 students would have been deregistered if they didn't comply. Dozens were deregistered, but not 800. As of this date, 91% of faculty/staff are vaccinated, 98% of students have at least one shot. In three weeks' time, 100% of students will have both shots.

The University tries to afford flexibility on modality for both students and faculty, but changing from in-person to remote now would negatively impact many students, such as international students and veterans.

L. Two issues that come up for members are worry for the unvaccinated immunocompromised and under-12 children at home. There's concern of working in classroom settings with these at-home situations.

M. With vaccinations and masks, the campus is safer than most places. Contact tracing will follow any cases. Ill students go to health services to get tested. The test takes 3-5 days and during that time the student needs to isolate. So far 20 students have been confirmed with Covid.

L. We are not calling into question the Covid dashboard, but anecdotal stories seem to counter the data. Another concern is unmasking in the Campus Center.

M. During the first week of classes, volunteers helped to monitor the LCs and there have been no problems or refusals of masks. UAS is hiring to watch monitor the CC for mask-wearing.

Management concluded by asking for UUP's help in monitoring masking and following mask policy.

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Submitted respectfully by Elizabeth Strum