



United University Professions
Albany Chapter

Labor-Management Notes

October 16th, 2023

L: David Banks, Marco Varisco, Paul Stasi, Michael Dzikowski, Michelle Couture

M: Steve Galime, Gary Evans, Justine Ochs, Keiffer Peralta

- 1. AI Plus Initiative. We understand the University means to have AI incorporated throughout the curriculum. We have also heard reports that faculty will be “required” to integrate AI into the classroom. We are asking what this, concretely, means. In what specific ways will faculty be asked to integrate this topic into their syllabi and instruction? And we would also like to know if this has gone through the proper channels of faculty governance, since, if we understand it correctly, it would be a significant change in the curriculum.**

M: This appears to be a misunderstanding. The units can choose to do this. However, there are courses in AI from beginning to more advanced on integrating students into AI. It's a value-add to the students as a non-mandatory series. It's for faculty and departments who want to integrate it.

- 2. “New Strategic Plan.” We were surprised that the President is set to announce a “new strategic plan” at the Faculty Address. If this refers to an already developed plan we are asking why UUP was not part of the planning process (as we were for the last strategic plan). If it refers, instead, to the beginning of a new planning process, we look forward to our seat at the table.**

M: The priorities are the same, more of a refresh than a new strategic plan. Includes updates to initiatives.

L: There was specific UUP involvement last time, but not this time.

M: People were able to have their voices heard.

L: It would be better that the person was identified as UUP representative so we know who is involved to represent us.

- 3. Budgets and Enrollments. We have a series of questions about budgets and enrollments. We know that our campus received something like \$19 million in the state budget last year aimed at helping close structural deficits. We wonder how this affects the University's continued austerity measures. We have also heard that the University missed its enrollment targets again. We are asking if this is true and if there has been any sense of why this continues to be the case.**

L: Statistic that there is a high number of students on probation.

M: Have agreed to have the chapter discuss with Todd and Noelle

L: As resources are delivered for Majors, departments seem to be punished for enrollment issues. If enrollment is flat, but programs expand, some programs will decrease enrollment at the unit level.

M: We'd like to have this discussion before the president's address

4. Compression: The analysis that was part of the last agreement revealed significant compression across all units on campus. We understand that the absence of a statewide agreement on compression means campuses are free to try to remedy compression themselves. We are asking what the administration's plans are to do so, particularly as compression analysis is a concrete way to capture gender and racial inequities in pay.

M: The campus doesn't have intention to replicate the study. Compression is something that is being taken a look at when new positions are made. No specifics to replicating. However, there can be a commitment to attempt to address the issues resolved with the compression study.

M: There were issues in the implementation of compression. They are using the compression as a data point in determining pay, along with other compensatory factors. The study didn't include gender or race.

L: Yes, but the compression analysis – by looking only at salary differentials by job title and experience – then captured gender and race inequities in its analysis. .

L: People feel underappreciated or undervalued - it is an issue with retention of good employees who then become good employees elsewhere.

M: Understood that it is an issue and it becomes a concern on the budget.

L: We have some individual cases to bring to M's attention. It isn't just salaries, but opportunities for advancement. There are gatekeepers preventing from advancement. It appears deliberate in some cases against that person.

L: Employees that are here don't have opportunities to advance.

M: They are working with ODI to ensure that external and internal searches are both fair.

M: Leadership academy within AA - similar thing in AA for professional employees

M: People in this program wouldn't be a shoe-in for the positions, but it would be up to the institution to really say why.

M: Professionals would like to believe that they can work harder like Faculty (where there are opportunities to advance if they do additional research) to get promotions due to position restrictions.

Retention is a critical issue around the country.

5. Sabbatical and FMLA. We have heard of members being told that they are ineligible for FMLA in the year they return from sabbatical. Is this in fact the case? It seems that since the University requires reports of the work accomplished from all sabbaticals, that sabbatical years are, in fact, working years, which would keep members eligible for FMLA.

M: This is accurate that they are being told this. Sabbatical doesn't count for hours of eligibility for FMLA. Sabbatical is a paid leave, so it doesn't meet the requirements.

L: Where is this policy set?

M: Federal 1250 hours requirement, even sick days don't count

L: This is also an issue for Drescher Leave.

L: This would be an issue for Paid Parental Leave - it impacts a number of benefits.

M: We can be more clear up front about when you take leave, your eligibility is at risk.

6. Pay Discrepancy between ASRC researchers and DAES faculty: We are writing to address the pay inequities between the Research Associates and Tenure-Track Faculty associated with the Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences. The Research Associates are all

performing duties in excess of their job titles—including teaching courses and mentoring Ph.D. students—and these extra duties make their jobs indistinguishable from the tenure line faculty. But because the RAs are classified as professional faculty their promotional pathways are distinct from those of the tenure-line faculty. In particular, they receive a much smaller increase in pay at the point of permanency/tenure, which then cascades through the rest of their employment at the University. The ASRC faculty are interested in trying to rectify this salary imbalance, in particular by having an equivalent salary bump at the moment of promotion.

M: We know about this; however, we don't agree entirely with what they have found. The supervisor is doing everything he can to try and resolve this.

L: Maybe it's not being communicated?

M: Actual position titles are different (Research Assistant isn't being hired, Research Associate and Senior are the only two budget titles they can use. However, they could use research associate I, II, etc. Internal promotion.

M: Would like to wait until after PP16, so that their retros will hit.

L: Their funding opportunities have been requiring PhD mentoring that isn't included in the position description

7. Ethics Training for Contingents. We are concerned about the workload implications of the new mandatory ethics training for contingents. Unlike all other trainings that can be taken at the pace and time of the employee's choosing, this new ethics training includes a mandatory scheduled meeting. Contingent contracts do not contemplate professional obligations outside of teaching, and the ethics training is a significant time investment. It is the position of the union that contingents being paid on a per-course basis should get extra service pay for this training. But there is a further logistical problem: many contingents have day jobs to make a living wage, and the trainings are all scheduled during normal business hours (9-5) so many contingents are unable to attend them. We respectfully request at least two additional training options during a weekday between the hours of 6 and 9PM.

M: They'll look to get more times on the book. The timeline is smaller than it appears.

L: One-time agreement for extra service pay last time they had \$25

L: Would it require another IP to get extra service pay

M: They can't endorse extra pay for a lawfully required training. Need to speak to Todd.

8. DSI Feedback: The chapter is happy to offer its feedback on the DSI process and will do so at the meeting.

L: Gave feedback physical copy - it can be electronic

L: Some of these are basically the same

L: Fairly large percentage of members are getting awards SUNY-wide aggregate, but didn't get specific data for Albany - 80% of the members across the statewide bargaining unit are receiving an award (those who receive it at least once over the contract period)

M: What are our thoughts on allowing members to petition for their DSI (application for such)?

L: If it's at management discretion, management should be responsible for the review without adding extra work to the employee

L: Morale issues. There were issues an individual didn't receive a DSI for 21 years.

L: It seems to be a bit more documentation that would be extra. Should be meritorious - should be within the confines of what is in the program.

L: FAR should be the source of where to get DSI

Submitted by Michael Dzikowski