



**United University Professions
Albany Chapter**

Labor-Management Agenda

Thursday, February 21, 2019

1. IDA review process: With Individual Development Award money now available, we would like to clarify the process by which applications for funds will be taken and the process by which applications will be reviewed.

The Provost's office will support this again this year, though may shift to HR in future years. We can send applications to Hedberg in the Provost office. The committee hasn't met yet; they will set the application process in motion. There is money from last year and money for this year. Will try and distribute the funds as far as possible. It's rare for awards to be at the maximum. They are always scrounging for applications from PT faculty. Higher priority is given to conference presentations than conference attendance. The award information is sent to accounting to set up accounts. UUP has their committee people identified and will send those along to Hedberg. UUP could use an updated member list. Next year it will be done much sooner.

2. Request for information: Policy on Policy Development, Stakeholder Review Plan. The University's Policy on Policy Development (printed here: <https://www.albany.edu/risk-management/policy/policy-development-institutional-policies>) references a Stakeholder Review Plan, described as: "The plan for obtaining advisory input from identified stakeholders that may be impacted by proposed institutional policy and procedures and/or amendment to existing institutional policy and procedures." Given recent experience where the University has sought to create, or revise policies that are (in whole or in part) mandatory subjects of negotiation with the UUP bargaining unit or, more broadly, directly impact the terms and working conditions of UUP members we are concerned by the fact that the administration consistently refuses to include The Albany Chapter of UUP the statutory bargaining agent in these matters. We would like the opportunity to review this Stakeholder Review Plan and suggest ways that it might be modified to allow for the inclusion of the Chapter where appropriate.

The members of the committee should be clear on the website. A more formal process to ensure UUP engagement on any of these types of committees would be relevant.

Send suggestions about how to improve the process as the purpose of the policy is to create more transparency in the process. UUP could be like an ex-officio member.

3. Clarify University's position with respect to the benefits eligibility of part-time academics.

The new Agreement signed between UUP and the State contains new language pertaining to the benefits eligibility of part-time employees, which went into effect on January 1, 2019. That language reads as follows: "part-time academic employees, whose professional obligation is primarily teaching classes, who teach six or more credits, contact hours, or credit equivalents shall be eligible for health insurance."

- a. We are concerned that the University is not following the language of this new provision and continuing to follow the older, "two-course" standard for determining benefits eligibility.
- b. We are requesting information on which part-time academic UUP members, formerly eligible for benefits, have now been deemed ineligible under this new language (for example, we know that there have been discussions around this regarding lab assistants in Chemistry)

SUNY's interpretation of the language is different than UUP's. Given that it is unclear, why aren't we erring on the side of giving them the fullest expression of benefits? People who had benefits under the old contract have lost benefits under the new contract. In the Dept. of Chemistry there are teaching assistants and then they exhaust their eligibility and are appointed as PT lecturers; they staff lab sections, but there is only one credit attached to it, though the contact hours are the same; under the old agreement they qualified and now the issue is how to manage it so they continue to have access to healthcare. A grievance is being filed (in the Art department) for someone that teaches 2 courses (4 credits) but meets the contact hour criteria. Even though it's a state-level issue, we should put pressure on SUNY from the UAlbany side. Part-timers are not gaining any salary increases during the contract period, and some of them are losing benefits. UUP sees this as a moral imperative. What can we do locally to work our way around this too?

4. Update on University Budget Situation with respect to Strategic Initiative Funding.

In our Labor Management meeting of October, 2018, we were given a budget overview that suggested that the campus was facing a significant structural deficit (roughly \$4.5 million a year for the next three years) that would be paid for out of cash reserves, savings on personnel costs, and reductions in academic affairs. Recently, the President has announced new, one-time spending tied to the implementation of the Strategic Plan which includes: \$583,000 of accelerator funding, \$1,626,000 of new funding through reallocations, and recently announced \$500,000 of StAR funding, for a total of roughly \$2.7 million of new funding for fiscal year 2019.

- a. How does this new funding fit into the current budget deficit situation?
- b. How are the reallocations budgeted? (i.e. where is the money reallocated from?)
- c. What was the process by which these funding initiatives were selected?

Todd Foreman discussed the difference between budgets and actual; the university plans conservatively so revenue is probably a little higher and expenditures may be a little lower. At the end of the year, there is usually a positive margin; this is one-time cash, because it won't be replenished. Departments don't spend all their budgets and then they do "sweeps" and the money goes back centrally and creates cash. They want to re-invest this one-time cash in accelerators and initiatives.

The re-allocations aren't always taking away from something else. Moving things that are existing in someplace to somewhere else. In Oct., \$1.5 million was cut from Academic Affairs, but what's paying down the deficit? In 18-19, there was a \$4.5 million structural deficit. What are they doing to fix those things? They are trying to increase revenue – fill more beds, dining plans, more graduate students, etc. That's easier than making cuts, but also looking to cut expenses (e.g. workforce planning – looking at every vacancy and whether it has to be filled at the same level). A Secretary II position becomes vacant and then hire a Secretary I position. Workforce planning has saved over \$600,000 (mostly from turnover savings, only a few from position elimination).

Academic Affairs negotiated a 3-year plan to reduce spending. Last year there were 40 searches and this year we are at 17. We are 10 years later after the recession, and we are doing worse in terms of recruiting faculty. President will allow access to additional one-time cash to make them whole until they bring expenses in alignment with allocated resources. Faculty travel has been cut back significantly. When will we be in a place to hire a more normal amount of faculty (replacement, etc.)? Workload has gone up in places like English where faculty are down from 30 to 20. When it is tied to a simple enrollment number, it misses much of the work of what faculty do.

How much of the one-time funding could have been put back into units? Hedberg: there are priorities vis a vis the strategic plan that we have chosen to put money into. It will take time to put money back into Academic Affairs. Would like to have a stabilized budget for academic departments. They are trying to get there with the departmental data profiles. Elga will be polling deans with respect to needs for next year. UUP is hearing from members in CEAS who are stressed out because they don't have the people to do the work. But, what is the plan to address these problems?

UUP clarified that from their perception there was not necessarily a consensus achieved in the Strategic Planning process. Foreman noted that the STAR process helps people who think they might have missed the mark to propose new initiatives. The committee includes workgroup chairs and Senate representation, UPPC, and presidents of student associations, etc. There has been no communication about this to the committee; they also weren't told that the name has changed. Foreman will relay it back to the leadership. We did this before with Compact Planning when there was \$40 million. UUP believes that if this is where the administration wants to target the money just own it but don't pretend it's a collective process to legitimate the program. Don't go through the song and dance of soliciting the proposals. How could we improve the process where

people apply for money? It's a problematic endeavor because it creates competition amongst departments rather than collaboration.