

UUP Albany Chapter Labor Management Meeting Notes
October 20, 2015

Attendees:

Labor: B Benjamin, T Hoey, B Trachtenberg, J Harton, R Tolley, M Seidel

Management: J Stellar, B Hedberg, D Szelest, C Tretheway, R Stark

1. **Changes in HR Leadership:** UUP welcomed and looks forward to working with Stark and thanked Szelest for her work in the interim.
2. **Contingent Employees:** UUP requested updates on the University's Contingents Task Force and its report. Stellar stated the graduate stipend report will be done first. The contingents report is finished and submitted, but needs the President's approval. Some of its recommendations are already implicitly public and the compact plan was submitted on the basis of a draft submission of that report. Some funds were awarded, but administration is looking for additional funding. Stellar is meeting with programs to address the first graduate priority, graduate lines (not enough lines and stipends are too low). Humanities also want longer duration of funding for TA lines. Stellar indicated the need for conversations with departments about shortening time to completion (he believes 5 years is reasonable for humanities, 4 for sciences) and is looking for efficiencies, is developing a multiyear plan and anticipates all will be organized by January so that departments can begin recruiting then. Stellar is counting on additional enrollments to campus to help fund this. Benjamin stated the \$400K proposed only begins to raise contingent salaries, but over \$1M is what is needed to a prorated full-time lecturer salary of \$5,700 per course. Benjamin asked where the funds are coming from for the increased salary and whether there are additional funding sources to supplement the Compact Budgeting allocation. Benjamin also raised the issue of the campus' eleven SUNY Excels proposals, and suggested that if those funds were granted, perhaps currently planned allocations from the university might then be re-directed. Stellar stated comparing some funds is like comparing apples and oranges (some funds are one time, others are recurring) and with 64 campuses applying for the funds it is unclear what UAlbany will get. He understands the need to raise contingent per-course compensation, but urges some patience in allowing the university to implement this change over time. He stated that it took us a long time to create this problem, and we won't be able to solve it overnight. His principle is to start by raising the minimum salaries, meaning that the lowest-paid contingents will be boosted first. He expects deans to help (CAS has raised the base to \$3K without tapping into the \$400K). This small increase will be supplemented with increasing respect for contingents via pathways for promotion, their names on websites, and other things that don't necessarily involve funds. Benjamin commended the initial efforts to increase salaries, but stated this is small and more is needed.
3. **SUNY Excels and Performance Based Funding:** Benjamin thanked Hedberg for the 11 program proposals he received. Administration is relying on the Senate for formal faculty consultation (i.e., they do not feel that they need to formally consult with UUP on the proposals themselves). Hedberg sent proposals to the Senate councils via the Senate chair and requested quick turnaround to communicate input back to the writers of the proposals. Benjamin stated the deadlines (3 days) prohibit consultation. This is notification, but not consultation. The timetable and areas of emphasis were set external to UAlbany. Benjamin stated he doesn't blame UAlbany administration, but asks them to communicate to SUNY that initiatives over summer and with short deadlines put administrations in difficult situations related to curricular matters, terms and conditions, and obligations for substantive consultation. Outcomes are expected to be announced, perhaps in December. If terms and conditions are involved, they will come back to UUP. UAlbany submitted 11, other campuses submitted 2-3 each. Stellar wants feedback about the compact plan process in

order to do it better next time. Stellar will be doing strategic planning which is designed to be consultative.

4. **UUP Notification of Qualified Rank:** It was agreed in summer that a memo was to be sent to chairs, deans and directors (unit heads are expected to share with lower level supervisors) that UUP should be notified each time there is a change to title for faculty (academic and professional). Szelest drafted a notice, but it was not sent. Management apologized for the oversight. Hedberg reread the notice before this meeting and found it adequate. There are many new people in these leadership roles who need this guidance. The process should be systematized and explicit to all parties. The contact renewal and tenure clocks should be reviewed together. Hedberg believes that the simplest procedure is to routinely alert UUP to all changes in status, regardless of whether the request was initiated by the Administration or by the candidate. Those in the bargaining unit don't understand the nuances, something UUP can help explain, but UUP does not tell people what to do. Benjamin asked Szelest to resend him a copy of the memo.
5. **Albany Med Data in ITB:** Benjamin requested an update on concerns. Stellar shared that UAlbany made a proposal and the State will decide what is needed. Albany Med's deadline is in December. Stellar indicated there are finger scans, card swipes and cameras now in the server room but is not aware of additional security; however with medical information on site more security may be required. Office space should not require this. Szelest checked with SUNY system counsel regarding surveillance and they said this is within UAlbany's purview. Security would not monitor employees, but materials. Benjamin will discuss with UUP if there are specific concerns. Stellar stated UAlbany gets from this rental income and is trying to lead Albany in urban revitalization. Jones and Barba are co-chairing a \$500M grant and he imagines additional grants obtained together, hiring techs together and boosting the economy. Stellar also envisions faculty being able to do research on the data housed here which could positively impact faculty recruiting and research. Seidel clarified that once the decisions have been made about the security features, an MOU could be drawn up to clarify the limits of how that security can and cannot be used regarding the evaluation of employees.
6. **Albany Law Updates:** At least one Albany Law faculty member is now teaching a UAlbany course; however that faculty member is being hired as an adjunct on a per-course salary. There are no "joint faculty" at present, and no immediate plans to merge the faculty. UAlbany is encouraging students to study prelaw. Barriers are being addressed. Tuition is lower with a scholarship to all SUNY students (not just UAlbany). Bus routes were changed to make the walk shorter to Albany Law. Both schools are looking at joint grant and joint program possibilities. Academics and budgets are being reviewed, such as joint library use, shared registration systems and looking into sharing Blackboard. UAlbany gets improved degree completion rates with students going to law, and recruiting possibilities. Good ideas have come from faculty. This is a public/private venture, which poses significant logistical problems for a full merger. If Albany Law were to fully merge with UAlbany, the SUNY BOT would need to approve this relationship and Buffalo (currently the only SUNY law school) might object. Other public/private models have not fully merged. Stellar envisions a social justice component in the law faculty. Benjamin asked to be kept up-to-date on staffing and employees at both facilities. Stellar may need to discuss with Benjamin scenarios of working more closely together. Adjuncts could be UAlbany employees. Trachtenberg pointed out these are two different cultures and that it would be worthwhile to discuss matters such as expectations of classes in departments, workload issues and graduate students.
7. **Compact Budget Decisions:** Benjamin heard from roughly 40 faculty over the last month, who were universally angered and dismayed by the release of the Compact Budgeting figures. While it was promised to be transparent and consultative, it seemed to them another UAlbany initiative masked in language of the collaboration, but effectively a means to pursue administrative priorities. Faculty

spent much time working on proposals seeing this as their only source of new university funding, but it seems very little will come of the effort for most. The results are disheartening for many faculty, which sours them on participating in future initiatives. In particular, Benjamin noted that 25% of funds the CEAS, and a considerable portion of the remaining funds also go to new initiatives. This is inconsistent with the guidelines set forth by the university which claims an emphasis on incremental growth to existing programs. CAS, the largest College and the College with the largest undergraduate teaching mission, had only one initiative funded for 180K, less than 3% of the total Compact Budget allocations. More money is allocated for retention software (200K) than for CAS. Benjamin listed other disparities in the funding. Only \$400K was designated for raising contingent salaries. Benjamin asked if this is the total budget for raising contingent salaries or if there are other funds. Stellar indicated the compact budget was not the base budget and stated administration was overwhelmed with the approximately 245 proposals submitted, the limited review time and the inability to provide substantive comments. He indicated the strategic plan will be an opportunity for honest discussion, will be consultative, involving all and will drive the budget, that this is how we will adjust who we are for the future. He liked the SUNY Excels process of a short application for review with more details provided if there is interest, but recognizes the process needs to start earlier. He believes good feedback could benefit writers in submitting proposals elsewhere and indicated that administration was trying to develop some proposals with seed money to collect initial data to strengthen proposals. Benjamin stated it's clear that funds were never intended to address needs perceived by departments; rather to be eligible for funds, departments needed to propose new, "transformative" and imaginative programs. Administration didn't ask what departments needed to make them successful, nationally competitive, or nationally ranked. This scheme appears to faculty to be the tail wagging the dog--proposal are written to what the funder wants, not what's best for the department or university. We have seen this repeatedly (2020, SUNY Excels, the compact plan), with disproportionate funds going to limited parts of the university. The distribution needs to be across the whole university to keep all areas afloat. Stellar suggested faculty have more longevity at universities than provosts or presidents and can reinforce their fundamental priorities, or that they do so simply by being part of the base budget expenditures. He argued that the University's commitment to all parts of the university was evident in the base budget, and the proportion of funds spent on faculty salaries. The Compact Budgeting was simply supplemental to this base budget. Benjamin reiterated the importance of tenure and tenured faculty who are doing innovative work; who are not a drain on resources, but rather who are the driving intellectual force of the university. Stellar added that retirements to units cannot go unanswered unless the intent is to make a unit smaller. Benjamin agreed but noted retirements were not replaced in the last 6 years and that departments cannot respond to departures. The provost no longer reviews dean hires, believing their decision are closer to the professors who know the needs best. Benjamin indicated that he did not believe that this was necessarily true. Stellar proposes we get bigger to increase tuition funds to undo some of the cuts and restore funding for more faculty hiring among other priorities. A conversation about the core mission of the University is needed as part of this growth, and will be part of the new strategic planning initiative. Benjamin stated tenured faculty see programs eroding for lack of investment, that funding only goes to ancillary new initiatives. Stellar stated we have not recovered from the budget cuts and need more funding, that innovative faculty with new ideas are at the core of his vision, that the compact plan is an innovation funds, that as provost his job is to get more funds to invest and reinvest.

8. **DSA Process:** There were many questions regarding the DAS process. Benjamin stated that he was mystified at administration's decision to require departments to go through such a work-intensive process to rank colleagues for merit with such a small amount of one-time funds. Stellar indicated that he and the university are committed to emphasizing the principle of merit at all levels of the institution. UUP noted that, once again, the deadline was short, notifications were not made; this fosters aggravation, not merit. If this was to be used as an incentive for getting performance programs, the deadline (before the memo was sent) made it impossible to comply. Benjamin asked

how allocations were made to departments, that there were concerns that this was unevenly done. Szelest indicated allocation were at the vice-president level. Campuses had the same allocations per head count from SUNY. \$300 was the campus minimum, not SUNY's. UAlbany could have made across the board allocations and vice presidents were told this. Szelest heard complaints from full-time staff that 28% was taken for part-time staff. Hedberg was not aware what individual schools and colleges did. Making this process better and more timely should be on the agenda for LM in spring.

Meeting adjourned 12:00pm. Notes submitted by J. Harton.