

UUP Albany Chapter Labor Management Meeting Notes
February 24, 2016

Attendees:

Labor: B Benjamin, T Hoey, B Trachtenberg, R Tolley, J Harton, M Seidel
Management: B Hedberg, R Stark, C Trethaway,

1. **Contingent Committee:** Hedberg has started to form the oversight committee (7 members including Tolley, a mix of Blue Ribbon Panel and others, Hedberg chairs) and three workgroups: compensation and benefits, professional environment (to review leaves, duration of appointment, recognition, department culture, listing on websites, office space, evaluations, etc.), and pathways to permanence, composed of those who know these areas (ex: K Gersowitz-CAS, D Edelson-Engineering). Hedberg welcomed Benjamin suggesting names and Hedberg will share committee membership with Benjamin when these are constituted. Members will not be redundant and will include contingent faculty. Anyone in part-time status will get a small stipend for this service. Hedberg envisions this as a 12 or 18 month project.

2. **SUNY Excels and Performance Based Funding:** Hedberg stated information has come slowly from SUNY. Following the initial competition fanfare there has been no big announcement. There is additional support for EOP (EOP grew the beginning class from 150 to 200 last summer and expects to grow to 250, hired additional lecturers for instruction and an additional counselor for advising). A consortium of 4 University Centers' deans of undergraduate education's proposal for a STEM-specialized curriculum was funded. UAlbany Advantage was funded and Hedberg has seen a draft budget for this program, onboarding new staff in service/applied learning and advising to enhance the undergraduate experience. These are all one-time funds to be spent over 3 years. We initially submitted 14 and, after a first round of vetting, were asked to submit 11 final proposals (one of the 11 was an online global language proposal). Benjamin linked the Excels process to the compact planning process on campus, arguing that they both suffered from a similar last-minute quality, and a lack of clear process. Faculty are very skeptical, feeling disappointed and dissatisfied the first time when the proposed guidelines did not mirror what was finally funded (they were initially to enhance existing programs but ended up supporting new programs). Administration asked deans this time for brief "preproposals" to evaluate before asking for more fully developed proposals. Proposals were to related to the 4 stakes/strategic focus for the campus. Value was placed on collaboration. Faculty are scrambling to get proposals out, having had very little time to craft something. When asked if there would be new proposals for contingent salaries, Hedberg stated that has always been the plan. He asked for \$1M last year and got \$400K. Benjamin recommended that he ask for \$2 million this year.

3. **Reasonable Accommodation Policy:** In Fall 2013 UUP reiterated UAlbany's obligation to clearly post its accommodations policy. Management agreed to post the policy clearly on the HR site and in MyUAlbany as well as at ODI. It was also agreed it should be regularly circulated by email to employees along with other important policies. A recent search indicated the HR and MyUAlbany links were removed or are very difficult to find. UUP requests the policy be re-posted in these locations and easy to find. The UAlbany search

does locate the policy now, an important improvement. Stark will get this corrected and send the link to Benjamin. It will also be in the A to Z index.

4. **Campus Smoking Policy:** SUNY Central asked campuses to adopt a tobacco-free policy, including e-cigarettes. UAlbany's task force seems dormant. UUP's Grievance Chair was on the task force and raised UUP concerns and noted changes should be reviewed by UUP first, but the task force never got that far. What action is UAlbany taking to address the Chancellor's initiative? Stark will reach out to UAlbany's task force chair, Nasca. Other SUNY schools are taking action. At UAlbany air intakes in pedestrian traffic suck cigarette smoke into the buildings. Students, faculty and staff are distressed going to class through smoke and concerned for their health. A campus-wide solution is ideal. The Chapter wants to see UAlbany move forward to address this problem in a thoughtful and substantive way. CSEA has said before they oppose heavy restrictions. This could be a joint negotiation. Benjamin will reach out to the CSEA president.
5. **Retiree Notifications:** In the past the Chapter received timely notification of bargaining unit anticipated retirements and would like to reinstitute this practice for two reasons: if the retiree is not a member at retirement access to UUP vision, dental and life insurance benefits is lost, and they should be notified about the active UUP retiree groups in order to remain active within the university community. Stark indicated HR does not receive timely paperwork from departments and retirees can be missed on reports run for this information. HR is afraid someone will be missed and suggested the better time to capture data would be during retirement counselling when HR can tell the employee to contact UUP and leave it to the retiree to make contact with UUP. Stark was hesitant to relying on a list. Benjamin stated UUP is concerned most who aren't members don't know they're not members. Pay stubs say "UUP fee payer" suggesting they are a member and they get all the communications from Benjamin and statewide because they're in the bargaining unit. It's confusing. Benjamin asked that when HR gets notification of the intention to retire HR email the Chapter office with that person's name so UUP can reach out to them. A monthly report is unnecessary. Benjamin can also provide paperwork to HR for the retirement information package. Hedberg indicated there may be a couple dozen a year, usually over summer in December or during an incentive.
6. **MC Salaries:** UUP requested a list of the Management Confidential Salaries for 2015-16 instead of FOILING as in the past. Last year the university provided the list with the caveat that UUP not share this on the website. Management asked that UUP FOIL this.
7. **Internal Hiring and the Albany Plan:** UUP asked to reinitiate a discussion begun last year about the "Albany Plan," the university's commitment to offer professional employees opportunities for career advancement and development in balance with external hiring. Concerns in ITS suggest not all managers are aware of, understand, and/or comply with the established policies. Professionals regularly voice frustration about limited opportunities for professional growth. UUP would like to work with HR to help educate members and ensure policies are followed. Stark is coming up with an educational process to communicate the policy to all programs. There was some progress until there were changes in ODI. The new training person will resurrect this with ODI. Job ads can run up to 40 days, 10 internal and 30 afterwards. If urgent in the past the internal and external postings

could run concurrently with UUP approval, provided that the internal candidates were kept separate and considered first. Hedberg stated new deans and officers on campus should be given direction/guidance. It can take a year to determine what the position is and programs may need to rush to hire someone. Rushing is bad for ensuring good candidates and UUP can't undo inappropriately made appointments. Complacency on past mistakes and no repercussions has encouraged this, but staff sense this is unfair, are disappointed, sense the process is rigged and the environment is caustic so there is low employee satisfaction and minimum effort as staff feel burnt out and retention suffers. In addition to training, basic materials should be provided to every search committee clearly outlining this as due process. This would reduce errors, the need for A28 committees, and have a positive effect on morale and a sense of staff belonging.

8. **Employee Retention Data:** UUP would also like to reinitiate conversations from last year that the university keeps little or no employee retention data and has no method to examine areas of high turnover or address problems associated with loss of institutional memory, expertise and skill. HR and the Chapter could work together on questions that need to be asked and data that needs to be tracked to identify patterns. Stark will talk to Bruce Szelest about data and identifying anomalies. While exit interviews are ideal, these are a large undertaking. Hedberg noted when academics leave there's usually a conversation, but the university has no system to document this such as an online form department chairs or employees could complete. Not knowing overall who's leaving from which areas and why is an institutional problem we should be able to address.
9. **Employee Recognition:** Labor asked if Management had set a date for employee recognition. This was requested and has been in discussion at LM since 2013. Stark is going to work on this. Benjamin asked Stark to let UUP know what administration needs. It is more important to recognize the bulk of employees than hold off because a few may be missed. If a few employees are inadvertently missed, we can apologize and recognize them the following year. Hoey suggested that the University could even send emails asking long term employees to nominate or self-nominate. An event should be held this semester in May. This is important.
10. **Legislative Agenda:** Labor provided UUP's agenda to management with the agenda for this meeting and asked for UAlbany's agenda so that both groups can work together on joint advocacy. Sheila Seery was invited as a guest speaker for an upcoming LM meeting. Hedberg will share with her. Common ground could include: EOP, maintenance of effort, and loan forgiveness for adjuncts, and perhaps capital funding projects for the university. UUP asked to be informed of the university's agenda so if asked, UUP can respond appropriately.

Meeting adjourned 11:55am. Notes submitted by J. Harton.