

**UUP Albany Chapter Labor Management Meeting Notes**  
**March 31, 2015**

**Attendees:**

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

Management: R Jones, J Stellar, B Hedberg, J Mancuso, C Trethaway, JD Hyde

1. B Hedberg checked this morning on **SUNY Excels** and there is no final printed legislation yet to evaluate. 10% of funds could be withheld without a plan. Benjamin asked how a UAlbany performance plan will be developed in the event that one is required by law. J Stellar will consider options, but suggested that administration create a first draft and ask for consultation in response. UUP statewide has concerns about experiential learning. J Stellar suggested this could have a positive effect on recruitment and retention and could start in earnest in the sophomore year. If students wanted to stay another semester for experiential learning or take time off to work in a company and come back, J Stellar stated this should be possible and students should not feel like they failed by missing a metric. If this becomes a graduation requirement it must go through campus governance and policy committees. Benjamin that administration clarify the chancellor's expectations so campuses can respond effectively both to NYS and SUNY mandates.
2. J Stellar reported the **contingents committee** (which he is chairing) held a focus group last night and a survey is coming out that will add quantitative data to the focus group stories. The committee has sub groups looking at best practices, identifying areas of concern--some serious issues some relatively simple to correct (e.g., adding names to websites), meets weekly and reports findings. B Hedberg is working with B Szelest on profile data. B Benjamin asked if B Hedberg could compile the data before the next LM meeting and was told he would have some. Contingent faculty working conditions impact student learning conditions. J Stellar agreed, and further stated that we have an ethical obligation to the people we employ as well. We're here to educate but need to meet the needs of faculty so they can best teach. J Stellar expects something written from the committee by the end of the term. B Benjamin will provide J Stellar results of the UUP contingents survey and can present to the committee. J Stellar will bring this up at the next meeting. UUP has been working 10+ years to address contingents' concerns.
3. R Jones thinks the **ombudsperson proposal** (drafted and passed by the UUP Academic Concerns Committee and approved by the UUP Executive Committee) is an interesting idea and will ask J Stellar to look at it. Other university centers see value in it and UAlbany needs to consider gaps in oversight for policies and procedures. The Academic Concerns Committee discussed many details. Binghamton and Stony Brook's practices are much broader than this proposal. Faculty need someone to turn to who is not in the chain, partisan to the process, not partisan to either the candidate or the university. President Jones agreed, and expressed preliminary approval for the idea, pending a more detailed review.
4. B Benjamin stated there were concerns among some faculty that we violated the university's Responsible Use of IT policy by sending around a joint statement about an **amendment to revise Senate bylaws**. Those critics are most focused on the Senate's role. Benjamin stated that UUP does not agree with the CIO's interpretation of the policy, we believe that "political purposes" refers specifically to partisan and electoral politics. A conflict of interest was identified and the university has an obligation to resolve it. The Senate amendment vote is to fix broken structures. Both Jones and Stellar agreed. Stellar stated, "content matters." From the University's perspective, power was voluntarily being ceded, not grabbed. B Benjamin will send another email this week reminding all to vote. Both Jones and Stellar agreed that this was appropriate. The UUP chapter endorses the amendment.

5. UUP raised concerns about **Parking** limitations for guests and visitors who come to campus for events. Signage is confusing, and visitors have been given tickets coming to campus. If we want our campus to be accessible to the community, there needs to be a policy allowing community visitors to come to the university's events without risk of tickets. J Mancuso stated K Wilcox is working on this and there is some limited free parking on Dutch south, but if students and state workers who take CDTA discover free lots it will cause trouble. B Benjamin asked if K Wilcox could come to LM to discuss this. Parking signage needs improvement. B Hedberg pays for artist receptions and Writer's Institute events. R Vives-shared concerns with track and field facility events where attendees were getting tickets--some meets are now not held on our campus because of these issues.
6. **Follow-up requests:**
  - a. B Hedberg has **associate professor** data now but has an obligation to share with the provost first and will get it to B Benjamin in a week. J Stellar stated all faculty should have the same opportunity for advancement and that all full professors should continue to be active.
  - b. C Trethaway stated **employee recognition** will now include a celebratory reception (as in past practice) as well as written recognition. She is working to get this on the president's schedule.
  - c. B Hedberg-will set a date shortly to share information **travel and accounting issues**.
  - d. **Handicap ramps and railings** at SEFCU are a concern. J Mancuso stated they meet the standards for accessibility even without the railings because of the design and slope. He acknowledged that snow removal can cause additional problems. Adding railings is a cost factor. B Benjamin stated this is a high traffic and high visibility area. Given its high use, the university should consider going beyond the minimum requirements to add railings. Mancuso will pass this recommendation along to facilities.
7. **Add-ons:**
  - a. R Jones will deliver his **Presidential Address this week, with a focus on advancing and expanding the academic profile** of the university and thinking comprehensively about how 1) to move the university to the next level (more focus on the undergraduate experience, more UAlbany top of mind, more applicants to the programs, higher enrollments, more graduates talking up UAlbany, better web presence) and 2) to expand the academic profile (types of degree programs offered--grad and undergrad—including Albany Law and Downstate medical, and rethinking the grad school structure and goals and strategies behind the East Campus (focusing on big data analytics initiative and the new college of emergency preparedness). He stated that this is a team sport. We collectively create vision and it takes our collective actions to move ahead.

B Benjamin stated the most effective way to improve the undergraduate experience is through the regular hiring of strong faculty. He also stated a mistake the university has made is seeing undergraduate education as a discrete sphere, rather than as integrally tied to all other aspects of a total university. Undergrad education cannot be conceived as separate from graduate education. If attention to the undergrad program means decreased funding for graduate studies, the university will suffer. Faculty come to UAlbany to work with graduate students. Graduate students make programs more competitive, graduate students do significant teaching and false competition between programs is not healthy. B Benjamin asked if a 5-year hiring plan instead of an annual one could work. It would help departments to plan on greater timeframes with commitment from the university down the road. If new degree programs need more resources now, might the university commit to returning resources to the current programs in a few years? Currently departments are scrambling to prepare proposals and modify programs as priorities keep changing. B Benjamin asked J Stellar and B Hedberg to review hiring patterns from the past four years under the 2020 program. There are concerns that hiring is skewed towards some disciplines and toward certain types of faculty hires. Although it has been the driver of faculty

hiring, it may not be ideal for the university. The 4 years of data should provide a good sense for what 2020 has done.

R Jones clarified that this is not an either or, one at the expense of other scenario. We need more undergraduates to sustain and advance our graduate education. Rethinking graduate education on our campus will link to advancing the scholarly profile, bringing in external funding. UAlbany has hired too many 3rd and 4th choices when we should more aggressively pursue 1st and 2nd choices. We need to tell our story more effectively. He agreed, however, that both graduate education and faculty hiring remain essential to the sort of growth he hopes to see.

The affiliation process with **Downstate Medical** is moving slower because of its complexity. We won't move forward until there is clarity about a firewall between the hospital and medical school finances. This affiliation is an opportunity to bring greater focus around the East Campus and Life Sciences and health sciences. R Jones wants UUP and faculty engagement and input moving forward on these projects. A short-term MOU is in process. SUNY Central is supportive. This is good for the capital region. We also have an opportunity to redefine how legal education is done and the **Albany Law** conversation is going well. Groups are meeting and laying a path for joint degree programs, improved enrollments, more seamless programs such that SUNY students can attend Albany Law at in-state tuition rates.

- b. Temporary no **smoking** signs at Earth Sciences and Fine Arts air intakes between the buildings came down and are not being replaced. Smoking there pulls smoke into the buildings. B Benjamin requested the no smoking signs be replaced. The campus smoking committee met a couple times with P Nasca chairing and he wrote a draft policy. UUP asked for a copy of that report. The committee was hoping the state would enforce no smoking on campuses. J Mancuso said it comes down to who will enforce the policy.
- c. B. Benjamin inquired if there was timeline for the **CIO search** underway. Administration wants someone in place by the end of June.
- d. UUP thanked **J Mancuso** for his many years of service and thoughtful partnership, congratulated him on his **retirement** and provided a small gift.

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