

UUP Albany Chapter Labor Management Meeting Minutes

April 22, 2014

Attendees:

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

Management: R. Jones, B Hedberg, J Mancuso, C Threthaway, JD Hyde

1. DRP Follow-up

Denise Szelest will prepare a memo regarding the increase in pay over the summer and reduction in fall related to DRP. Raises are coming too, but the Division of Budget hasn't informed HR when. DRP payback implementation is not clear unless someone terminates, then they file for DRP, which comes with the vacation payout as a separate lump sum after termination (the final paycheck should be followed 2 weeks later by the final payout). OSC is reviewing every major payout before releasing it. System administration has had to make some calls to get OSC to release funds. Kowal and Dinaopoli have had discussions about how long this has been taking. Contingents differ. They are non-renewed now, then go off the payroll and get hired again in August. HR will rely on Departments to provide a best guess about whether the contingents' appointments will be renewed in the fall in order to assess when "termination of service" occurs for the purposes of paying back DRP funds.

2. Provost Search

The provost search has an aggressive timeline, running over summer to get someone in place by January. The committee will have co-chairs (one faculty and one administrator) and under 15 members. The co-chairs and committee finalists are already identified. Next week RPFs for the search firm are going out. A firm is necessary to create a good pool of national and international candidates. Firms know the potential pool, weed out the unqualified, make reference checks, draft job descriptions, create a university profile to promote the university to candidates, and provide a short list of candidates' strengths and weaknesses. President Jones wants the search done well and transparently, understanding that in the last decade there have been some concerns, but prior to identifying the 3-4 finalists the search must remain confidential or candidates will not apply. The firm is not the hiring authority, the President is, but he does not make decisions in a vacuum. Benjamin volunteered UUP assistance, including getting word out when candidates are here and encouraging active participation. Jones appreciated the collaboration.

3. Senior Leadership Evaluations

It is the president's job to evaluate those who report to him. Jones understands this may not have been done consistently in the past. Believing UAlbany needs to be more strategic and systematic about evaluations, Jones initiated the leadership evaluation pilot currently underway. In this transparent process where faculty and staff provide input about the performance of academic leaders, anonymity and candid input are critically important. Two weeks ago the response rate of the pilots was 30% (many remain concerned about the confidentiality of their input--for participation rates to increase they need reassurance that participation will have no negative consequences). Information is being compiled offsite at U Minnesota (Jones has worked with them before) and will be shared with the individual reviewed, not punitively, but as professional development. Administration is working on the best way to disseminate outcomes respectfully for those reviewed as well as to participants

giving input so they know they've been heard. Benjamin stated UUP advocates the value of robust, holistic evaluation processes where results are not based on a single measure, and applauds in this assessment culture the opportunity for input from those most affected by the decision-making. Benjamin asked that his appreciation for the deans' willingness to participate in the pilot be conveyed to them. Benjamin looks forward to seeing the published results of the surveys so that faculty and staff are assured that their input has been received and considered. Jones plans a process similar to that of U Minnesota with regular assessments and direct reports providing work plans for review.

Jones met with all department chairs and intends to meet with faculty from all departments by the end of December to hear their concerns and get to know the faculty better.

4. Family Leave Policy

There are family leave policy issues we need to return to in the coming months. It would be good to develop a fuller, clearer set of family-friendly policies. In COACHE surveys UAlbany scores low on family leave, below other SUNY centers that have the same contractual framework. This says something about how our campus has communicated or implemented leave policies. The provost, during a recent discussion of COACHE, indicated that the campus's capacity to develop better family leave policies was constrained by the union and the contract. We have heard similar statements from the CAS Dean. These statements are misleading. The union has pushed for the last decade for improved family leave options. The union welcomes the support of the campus in advocating to SUNY and the State about the importance of better family leave plans. The campus cannot, we understand, simply institute a program that goes far beyond the contract. But the campus has considerable authority and flexibility at its disposal to help extend the contractually negotiated options. We need to make sure that options are available, flexible, and have clear guidelines for individuals in crisis. We can do much more to communicate the range of options available to members, so that individuals do not have to negotiate by themselves in a vacuum. UUP will be sending members a survey on questions like this and gender equity and will return with policy proposals/recommendations to begin to work toward developing a more robust, comprehensive policy. Seidel stated supervisors may not know what some of the leaves are and suggested training would be helpful. She and Tretheway could offer trainings including information on reasonable accommodation, FMLA, etc.

5. Faculty Hiring

UAlbany is allowed to hire about 140 new faculty, including those coming in fall 2014 (Jones stated Provost Phillips would share specific data). The governor allowed tuition to rise, but the State did not provide negotiated salary increases which means UAlbany needs to tap revenues from other parts of the U, including 2020 tuition increases, to cover these mandated, unfunded salaries. Jones raised concern that Fred Kowal's message suggested salaries were covered in the budget; he disagreed. Benjamin stated that UUP members gave back two days of pay, funds that were supposed to help the campuses. SUNY, at least initially refused to request an additional allocation from the State for the raises, indicating that it could cover the costs with its reserves. UUP requests for a specific allocation was undercut by SUNY. Jones assured us that SUNY had requested money, stating he and two senators accompanied the chancellor to meet with legislators to ask for funds, specifically

two major items: 1) continuing support for what's working in NY2020, rational tuition strategy and maintenance of effort, and 2) more than doubling what the governor had put in the budget for critical maintenance. Benjamin will set up a conversation with Kowal for clarification.

Jones stated new hires were spread across all academic areas and going forward we need to expand our degree programs and become more comprehensive. The first priority the next two years is funding positions in high needs areas, ensuring we're keeping the core of the U strong. Opportunities to grow are in allied health and new high-demand areas with available jobs. It makes sense to expand these areas and use revenues from 2020 to hire faculty here.

Benjamin raised concern that the majority of University hiring was through NYSUNY2020, and the majority of those hires were in grant-funded areas. Hedberg stated the requirements of the hires were specific (generating revenues from grants or new students). Many appointments in the sciences and professional schools were to position the U to attract higher levels of federal funding. The majority of 2020 hiring was in CAS, but only a small number were in the humanities. Benjamin stated there is potential to erode the core of what a university is. Jones stated with attrition we need to hire regardless and that SUNY2020 is the best opportunity the U has had in the last 40-50 years. We need to consider the gaps, protect the core, and strategically invest. Programs that can grow into MA and PhD programs will drive the agenda. Benjamin asked for the numbers of hires, 2020 hires, and department distributions. Hedberg will provide the last four years and names of new hires this summer so that UUP can welcome them.

Hedberg clarified at Trachtenberg's request that individual 2020 faculty are not at risk if targets are not met—in this case units must give back funding or lines (perhaps via retirements).

6. Campus Smoking Policy

There was no status update on the smoking task force. The chair presented a summary to the president's office a few months ago. Mancuso stated it seems to be a dead issue in the legislature. He thought that the chancellor planned to have something in place in 2014, but nothing has yet materialized. The original policy came out of faculty governance. Benjamin will bring this up with faculty governance and UUP to get a clearer sense for the statewide UUP position. It seems the direction the campus should be going.

7. Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Tamra Minor and Geoffrey Gabriel (ODI) and Karyn Loscocco (Sociology, faculty facilitator) presented. ODI is responsible for overseeing, facilitating, and supporting the university's efforts to create a diverse and inclusive environment to ensure equal opportunity for all. Compliance responsibilities include oversight of federal and state mandates including affirmative action plans, hiring and recruitment requirements, mechanisms to investigate and respond to discrimination and sexual harassment, and trainings. ODI is responsible to contribute to the institution's efforts to identify strategies to achieve excellence.

Minor co-chairs the President's Council on Diversity with E Wulfert. Senior staff have been engaged in conversations regarding making progress in inclusive excellence. Forums were held on campus for faculty, staff and students to help identify problem areas and set goals. 17 professionals were trained and will be used to facilitate dialogues in fall. Meetings suggested a need and desire to discuss inclusion and matters related to mistrust, lack of resources, roadblocks, difficulty of some topics, concern that online ed may not be good for some groups, the need to know more about invisible disabilities, gender issues, and retention. ODI encourages dialogue across groups and welcomes collaboration. UUP is interested in collaborating and already has ongoing discussions in several venues.

Meeting adjourned 11:50am. Minutes submitted by J. Harton.