

General Union Meeting
Dec 10, 2014
Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 pm by Rich.

The minutes of the Nov GUM were presented. A motion was made to approve the minutes, which was adopted unanimously.

Scholarship Opportunities (Domine)

An announcement would go out in January's newsletter regarding the application process for the Local's BKMUW scholarships. The Local's scholarship is targeted at students with financial need. The deadline for Essex County Labor Scholarship would not be finalized until March-April of next year. High school seniors, who are offspring of union members, are eligible for the scholarship.

The Pizza Party organized by the Outreach Committee is scheduled for Jan 13. Care packages would also be distributed to students at the party.

State Issues (Sullivan)

Bill Sullivan spoke about the ongoing revision of the Council's constitution. A spirited, "first reading," of the new constitution took place last Friday.

Bill reported that a questionnaire about the important issues for the upcoming negotiations would be mailed out in January.

The healthcare provisions which were imposed by NJ State Legislature would sunset on June 30, 2015. The NJ Health Commission, which would be playing a role in determining the terms of the health insurance for the state employees, has Debra Davis of the Council as one of its members.

A new person was hired at the Council to replace Mark Heter. Bill served on the search committee for the new hire.

Rich said that the Local would be interested in supporting a healthcare committee to look into the health issues. David suggested that it could also provide members information about what is or is not covered. Rich asked anyone interested in coordinating this effort to contact him. There was some concern expressed that the committee could be doing what is HR's job.

Faculty Issues (Gregory)

Maughn reported that the recent reappointment, tenure and promotion workshop was successful. There were some lingering questions about the FMLA workshop, and he has spoken to Vice President of HR, Jerry Cutler, who promised an FAQ section on the topic.

Twenty-three people would get tenured at tomorrow's BOT meeting. There is a provision for "tenure by exceptional action," according to which tenure can be granted after two years. Rich said that there is no clarity about the process in such cases, and the union would like to see published procedures to ensure transparency in this matter. The union's position is that tenure should be earned, and lack of clarity about procedures for granting tenure would diminish its value.

In response to a question about whether Instructional Specialists should be evaluated, Rich said that it was an entirely different matter from tenure.

Professional Staff Issues (Hagen)

Susan announced the Professional Staff Luncheon, which is scheduled for next Wednesday, in the Student Center Ballroom.

The next reclassification workshop would take place in Spring 2015.

Grievance Issues (Hughes)

Kathy reminded everyone that they have the right to respond to anything negative in their file.

Kathy worked with a member who suspected his increment was late. Debra Davis helped out with that. Another member noticed that MSU contributions never made it into his retirement fund. Kathy also fielded some generic questions from several members about tuition waivers.

Rich reported on the developments in a faculty de-tenuring case. The administrative law judge, overseeing the case, ruled in faculty's favor. In the event that the BOT decides to ignore the ruling and decides to terminate his position, the union is going to file an appeal. Even if the BOT were to take adverse action the person has to be informed at least fifteen days in advance.

NAL Representative Report (Benfield)

David reported that the Senate would be meeting next week. The Executive Board would be considering issues related to the union representation on the Senate, including a proposal to create a position for a union coordinator. Another idea being floated is to provide the adjunct union representation on the Senate.

Negotiations Update

a. Faculty/Librarians (Brook)

Ken said that the deadlines for internal grants, including SBR and Student-Faculty research grants would be coming up. Last year there were not enough applicants in several categories, including grant writing, Student-Faculty grant and Distinguished Scholar. If there is no interest in these categories, these awards would away.

Ken said that the union would try to get the administration to move more money into the SBR category, since the number of applications there has increased and the competition is stiff.

Ken said that several issues pertaining to reappointment process came to his attention. Mainly these involved adding materials to candidates' files after they were closed. Stewards would need to pay attention to these issues, and should help increase awareness about the need to adhere to the procedures in place.

b. Professional Staff (Higgins)

The Local Negotiating Team is ready to begin negotiations.

There will be a survey sent to the membership concerning items to be negotiated. If you have a question/concern that you would like to see addressed on the survey, please contact Jennifer Higgins.

The Winter Break Agreement is available for view on our web site. This agreement was negotiated as a multi-year agreement.

Treasurer's Report (Heller)

A budget was submitted and passed at the November 11, 2014 Executive Board Meeting.

The largest expenses for dues are from AFT National, AFT-NJ and the College Council.

A smaller surplus is anticipated - \$7000 vs \$60,000. The reason for this reduction is that the Local has had three big cases that resulted in large legal bills. We will submit for reimbursement from the AFT Legal Defense Fund to defray the incurred costs.

Expenses associated with state contract negotiations beginning in 2015 can be expensive if there are multi-day meetings in Trenton.

President's Report (Rich Wolfson)

The MSU Board of Trustees will meet on December 11, 2014. At this meeting, 33 faculty members will be approved for tenure and between 150-200 Professional Staff will be reappointed. The Board of trustees spent \$750,000 on legal fees this year.

A Happy Holiday was wished for all.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 P.M.