

General Union Meeting  
March 18, 2015  
Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 2:33 pm.

1. Approval of the February 11, 2015 General Union Meeting minutes

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

2. BKMUW Scholarship - Update (Domine)

Jack Gaynor, a member of the Local's Scholarship Committee, presented a brief report about the applications. Eight complete applications were received. There is one application for the scholarship for a single-parent, and the applicant is a single dad.

The MSU Foundation informs us about how many \$500 scholarships could be awarded. If the committee decides to fund more applicants, we seek funding from other sources. Members can contribute to the BKMUW scholarship. Additionally, the Essex-West Hudson Central Labor Council offers eighteen \$500 scholarships for one year. To be eligible for an award, the applicant's guardian must be a member of a local union affiliated with the Essex-West Hudson Central Labor Council. Furthermore, the recipient must be a high school senior and be accepted at an accredited college.

3. Conferences Update – (Wolfson)

Rich attended two conferences during the Spring Break. The first is the AFT National Negotiators Conference. Rich and Ken attended all the sessions, including one on avoiding words with unclear meaning (“weasel words”) in the contract language. Another useful session was on negotiation strategies in difficult times.

Rich and Mike also attended the AFT Higher Ed Conference in Orlando. The conference was a joint effort with the NEA. Rich presented on the topic of pending teacher education legislation. Rich was on a panel with Joyce Powell, former NJNEA President, who is currently on the Executive Committee of the NEA.

The AFL-CIO WILD conference took place in New Brunswick. Jennifer was the keynote speaker at the event. Her speech, which focused on Koch Brothers, was very well-received and AFL-CIO has asked her to take it on the road.

4. Sea of Blue (Higgins)

Hopefully everyone remembers how there was a large turnout in blue about one-and-half years into our contract, at the President's address. Please spread the word about wearing blue to the President's April address. It would be good to underscore our solidarity, especially in the context of the negotiations which are to begin shortly. The orchestra of the Kasser Theater is ideal for this purpose because it is most visible from the podium.

5. State Issues (Sullivan)

“Brothers on the Line”

The Essex Labor Council is sponsoring the screening of a movie, “Brothers on the Line,” next Thursday evening. This is a movie about Reuther brothers and their role in starting the United Auto Workers. If you would like a free ticket, please let us know. It's at 6 pm, Thursday, at Bellevue Theater in Montclair.

## 6. Grievance Issues (Hughes)

There have been two hearings since the last GUM:

- a. A Step-1 hearing took place about a professional staff member who was not recommended for rehiring. Debra Davis from the Council was there to present her case. Unfortunately we could not save her job.
- b. The other hearing was yesterday. It was about a multi-year reappointment, where a professional staff member was not reappointed. At issue are the new forms which are in violation of the tenets applicable to defining "supervisor." Evaluative statements are not a problem; the problem lies with recommendations.

A variety of questions have been received about payroll. A number of mistakes have come to light. It is important to check your pay stubs regularly

It is the reappointment season for professional staff and Kathy has been working on the issues that have come up.

The five-year assessment of faculty, which used to be perfunctory, is now being treated more seriously by the Deans. A member pointed out how there were procedural violations that occurred in CSAM related to five-year assessment. Ample time has to be given because student evaluations have to be collected as a part of the process. So far no one appears have to been harmed as a result of the assessment. Rich said that five-year self-assessment has been in the contract for a long time. The faculty write-up goes to the Dean who, however, does not write back. He found it hard to envision a scenario where it could be punitive. Ken said that he has every expectation that in the statewide negotiations, five-year assessment would be made more punitive.

In response to a question about the relevance of Local Selected Procedures Agreement, Ken said that it is good for us to keep these separate from the statewide contract. We have legal protections and, in Ken's view, the situation for faculty and staff is not as precarious as thought by some.

## 7. Faculty Issues and Faculty Workshop April 30, 2015 (Gregory)

There is an upcoming workshop on promotion, reappointment and tenure.

## 8. Professional Staff Issues and Upcoming Events (Hagen)

Couple of events for professional staff. On Thursday, April 23, from 12-1:30, there would be a professional staff reclassification workshop. On Thursday, May 2, there would be a New Hire Orientation.

## 12. Negotiations Update (Agenda item 12 was moved up.)

### a. Faculty/Librarians (Brook)

Professional staff members are being assigned to the OneMontclair project. The time sheets can be submitted electronically, but cannot be searched if they are more than six months old. It is important to be able to track this information if a dispute arises.

Rich said that in the Fall the university changed its policy on donated leave program to include faculty. Jennifer added that a professional staff or faculty member can donate five days or in multiple of fives, provided they have at least twenty days balance. Sick leave can also be used for FMLA. For the purpose of calculating days, seven hours equal a day. In response to a question, Rich said that the university provides a life insurance benefit to every employee, which is 3.5 times the annual income.

Time sheets are important documents and their falsification is tantamount to committing fraud.

#### b. Professional Staff (Higgins)

One of the important agenda items for professional staff negotiations would be “memorializing” the summer schedule and holiday hours.

The issue of bylaws remains an important one, and many departments and other academic units do not have bylaws or their bylaws are not up-to-date. The administration does not appear interested in departmental bylaws. In response to a question, Ken said that there are templates and models for writing bylaws. On the question of whether bylaws should be posted on the union’s website, Ken demurred saying that there may be downsides to posting them publicly.

Rich said that the union is approaching six months in negotiating the issue of compensation of an Instructional Specialist. In a week-to-ten-days we would find out if we are successful. If not, we would take it to arbitration. Either way, the resolution of this issue would have wider ramifications. We are hoping that there would be a statewide agreement on the issue of Instructional Specialists in the upcoming statewide negotiations.

#### 9. Librarian Issues (Chow)

Meiling said she hopes that the upcoming negotiations would take up some library issues.

#### 10. NAL Representative Report (Benfield)

The Senate will meet next week. Benfield reiterated his personal position that the Senate Executive Board should have members from different unions but he would argue for preserving the NAL position as it is outlined in the current Senate constitution.

David Trubatch brought up the issue of who, besides the instructor, has access to course space on Canvas. The issue of Canvas questionnaires and removal of students for non-payment of dues brought home the issue of access. A resolution has been passed in the Senate to maintain the integrity of the course space, so that it is not violated for non-instructional purposes by third parties.

Ken and Rich spoke about the need for a strong Senate. Since a strong contract and a robust governance structure are both needed, we need both the Senate and Union to be strong.

#### 11. Outreach Committee Upcoming Events (Sperling)

On April 25 (Sat), there would be a visit to the Community Food Bank from 9-11. The food bank also accepts donations of clothing. Children are allowed at the visit, but they have to be at least sixteen years old. The next upcoming visit will be to the animal shelter.

#### 13. Treasurer’s Report (Heller)

Mike would present a compliance report as a follow up to the budget drawn up and presented at the Stewards Workshop earlier this year.

#### 14. President’s Report (Wolfson)

Rich appealed to everyone to scrutinize their pay stubs. He said he is no longer confident that they are accurate. Deductions are particularly error-prone. The bi-weekly gross amount should exactly match the figure on the salary guide. The mistakes in payment can go undetected, until they are typically discovered during range changes.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 pm.