

General Union Meeting
Minutes
Nov 12, 2014

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

Rich congratulated the Union members who had successfully were elected to public positions in the recently-held elections: Diana Thomas and Mike Heller were elected to the school boards in Randolph and Bloomfield respectively, and Lenny Luciano (member of NJTU) was elected as a Freeholder in Essex county.

Rich had to leave the meeting, and Vanessa presided over the meeting in his absence.

The minutes of the October 8, 2014 GUM were circulated. A motion was made to approve the minutes, and approved unanimously.

General Election 2014 Results

Bill Sullivan described the election results as disappointing—the only silver lining being the three union members who won the races they were in.

Executive Board/Stewards Meeting, Nov 11, 2014

The Local has an Executive Board which includes Stewards, who serve as conduit between the Union and various departments and centers on campus. The November 11th Executive Board meeting included Stewards' training.

David Benfield thanked Bill for organizing the Stewards Workshop, and termed it a valuable experience.

State Issues

Bill said that our contract runs out in June 30th, 2015. In the last round of negotiations management suggested that each campus restrict the number of people on their negotiations' team to two. The Council said it would agree to the proposal, provided the negotiations took place in public. Needless to say, the Council's offer was rejected.

In response to a question, if there was a big contentious issue in play, Bill said that money issues are, as always, going to be important in the negotiations.

Jennifer talked about the wider political context in which the negotiations would take place. Governor Christie is unlikely to resign even if he decides to run for President.

Bill said the Council is working on a survey to elicit members' feedback on priorities for negotiations. The survey would be mailed out around mid-January. Jennifer added that members do not have to wait for the survey to have their voices heard; they can contact the Local to provide input.

Faculty Issues

Maughn announced the schedule for the upcoming three workshops on reappointment, tenure and promotion. Each of the workshops would cover all three topics.

Maughn suggested that one of the ways of communicating union issues to faculty could be through including the Union on the agenda of the department meetings.

Regarding opting for early tenure, the BOT can grant tenure with the approval of the university president. One has to be careful, though, about going for early tenure, because, in the event of a negative decision, there is no recourse.

Rich, Ken and Maughn made a presentation about the union at the New Faculty Program. The main message was that although many of the faculty may balk at thinking of themselves as labor that is how the administration views us.

Professional Staff Issues

Susan Hagen spoke about the Performance-based Promotion Workshop for professional staff held last month. In Spring there would be a reclassification workshop. A FMLA workshop, organized by Jennifer, Maughn and Susan, was held on Nov 3.

Jennifer reminded the professional staff present in the meeting to record on their timesheet if they worked on Veteran's Day.

Librarian Issues

Meiling said the library is conducting a search for a reference librarian.

Grievance Issues

Kathy said she is working with several professional staff members who are negotiating the personnel action process.

The Local has a grievance committee for the purpose of training and for discussion of grievance policies. Kathy asked anyone interested in serving on the committee to contact her.

NAL Representative Report

David said that the Senate is moving toward giving representation (*ex-officio* status) to all the unions on campus, adding that he doesn't oppose the move.

Regarding the issue of Ebola preparation on campus, the university made a statement but no details were provided.

The Senate is still trying to figure out what constitution is extant and current.

The Senate would soon be acting on making the campus smoke-free. Ken said that if a proposal for punitive action is made against violators, it would no longer be a governance issue, and the Union would ask for its input to be taken into consideration.

DT said that in the last meeting of the Senate it was mentioned that several proposed amendments to the constitution are in the pipeline. He asked David if there was anything in the amendments that was relevant to the union. David said that since the amendments are still in a draft stage he does not feel comfortable discussing them. He said he would not mind discussing the amendments once their content “firms” up.

Ken suggested that a Faculty Council be revived, and the concept of shared governance be thoroughly debated.

David expressed his unease at having to play the dual role of the NAL representative (a conduit between the Senate and the Local) to the Senate and being a member of the Senate.

Vanessa said the Senate’s call for nominations is highly selective and exclusionary.

Mike added that, as far as he knows, the Senate minutes have never been circulated. The Senate has not been very good with communication.

JS said that there would be major issues when the Senate revises its constitution. The future of shared governance is at stake.

David said that something should be done about the safety of pedestrians crossing Normal Avenue. Drivers are sometimes negligent and it is only a matter of time before rash driving leads to a serious accident.

Kathy asked for any incidents related to the safety of crossing Normal Avenue to be reported to her. Ken said that we have to be careful about how we present the safety issues, because the administration may take away Lots 1 and 2.

There was a general consensus in the room that traffic rules are not being adequately enforced on campus.

Negotiations Update

Ken reported that there still are unresolved issues related to Clinical/Instructional Specialists.

A Donated Sick Leave program would soon be implemented for faculty.

Each department would nominate an assessment liaison, who would receive one on-load credit/year.

The number of online courses a faculty member can teach in a semester is an issue that would have to be dealt with in near future.

The faculty who are assigned to centers, instead of departments, often find themselves in an uncertain situation because these centers lack suitable procedures for personnel action.

Regarding negotiations, Ken said he is still hopeful about having at least one meeting with Jerry Cutler in November.

Jennifer said she has received questions about the summer schedule for 2014. The current agreement is in force until 2015. It is the administration's right to set the operating hours. The union can help in defining the procedures, but cannot unilaterally create a summer schedule (e.g. a four-day work week).

Treasurer's Report

Mike announced that he had presented a detailed budget in the Nov 11 Executive Board meeting. He noted the extraordinary expenses in the 2013-2014 fiscal year, mainly due to the unprecedented legal expenses incurred. As a result there was a deficit in the last fiscal year.

In response to a question about moving to a fiscal year and moving from a cash to accrual basis, Mike said that the Local is working on making these two changes with the help of Gil Klajman and our accountant.

Outreach Committee

The Union had a table at the Homecoming. A lot of students signed up for the scholarship information. On Jan 13, 2015, the Union would be hosting a pizza party for students staying in the dorms during the intercession. Care packages would also be handed out.

Paul Martinez spoke about the book drive for Irvington schools. The books would be delivered Nov 21. The books would be given to the school libraries. In the future, other schools could also be included.

Vanessa informed that the November newsletter contained a video that explained pay stubs. The Union would like feedback on it so that it can prepare another informational video.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.