

General Union Meeting  
April 9, 2014  
Minutes

The minutes of the March 19 General Union Meeting were approved.

Ratification of Tentative Agreements

The first part of the ratification involves the reading, which would be done today. These agreements would be taken up as a package and not singly.

In response to a question about whether the LSPA would need to be changed after ratification, Ken said that the LSPA has to be made consistent with the agreements. Rich clarified that the LSPA does not expire with the contract. It is a list of procedures to implement the contract.

Rich said that there will be a simple yes/no vote on the ratification. Ken thanked the individuals who worked with him over the years on finalizing the agreements.

Higher Education Legislation

There are twenty pending NJ legislative bills relative to Higher Ed. These include many provisions, such as free e-textbooks, tuition freezes for particular circumstances and a bunch of other disparate goals. In his BOT statement, Rich said that he would like to work with the university on this issue. Also, he has received a lot of positive feedback from the Senate on the issue. On a number of bills there is a convergence of views with the Senate and the administration.

Bill spoke about the specifics contained in some of the bills. One of the provisions penalizes colleges that do not graduate more than 50% of their students in six years. Another provision is: no more than 120 credits required to graduate. Also, a movement toward Common Core is mentioned for the nine state colleges. Bill said that the leadership of the Council met two weeks ago to discuss the issues, including that of parity. Some of the state colleges get \$2500 per student, whereas others receive \$7500 per student in state aid.

Ken said that the overall trend is toward centralization of higher education. The issue of textbook standardization is a sensitive one, because it was this issue that triggered one of the only two strikes in our history.

Rich said the legislation is preliminary at this stage, and we would be working to change the bills to our advantage through our legislative liaisons and direct contact with key legislatures.

In response to a question about what might have motivated this, Bill said that it is the nationwide accountability movement and escalating costs, although the tuition at MSU is the second lowest in the state. Ken said that we have failed to effectively communicate our position to the public.

Officers/Delegates Election

April 14 is the last date for nomination for the officers/delegates election. If the election remains uncontested, it would be conducted electronically (April 28-May 2).

## Newark Municipal Election

The two main contenders are: Ras Baraka, a former AFT member, and Shivar Jeffries, former attorney general under Corzine.

AFTNJ has endorsed Baraka. A phone bank is being run, Mon through Fri, from 5-8 pm. You can participate in the phone bank or take part in the Saturday morning labor walks. The goal is for our Local to contribute members for a specific day. The election of Baraka would help check the power of Essex county power brokers. Jennifer said that Bob Braun's blog is very helpful on school-related information.

## Senate (NAL Report)

Tobacco-free Recommendation: A committee was established to discuss tobacco use on campus. A tobacco-free recommendation would soon be made. The problem with this approach is that there is zero support for smoking cessation programs on campus.

There is the issue of reorganization of the Senate. Should unions have representatives on the Senate? Reorganization and constitution committee reports would be consequential. There would be a new Senate Executive Board. The Senate has also made suggestions about the Social Media Policy.

Vanessa said that the Provost modified his position of the social media policy and has termed the document that was circulated a *Draft*. This recognizes the questions and concerns raised in various quarters about the proposed policy.

## Faculty Issues

AFT members cannot be supervising each other. Jennifer said that unit members cannot take action for/against other unit members. Members, therefore, should not sign the supervisor form.

There was a question if availing FMLA affected the tenure clock. Betty Paulino in HR should be contacted about any FMLA-related questions. The Provost also wanted to come up with a plan for snow recovery days. Ultimately, there was an informal instruction that faculty should come up with an appropriate response.

On May 6, there would be a tenure and reappointment workshop. Faculty, especially those who supervise and assess others, are especially encouraged to attend.

## Professional Staff Issues

Anyone considering reclassification should seek the support of his/her supervisor. If you are switching your job, your multi-year contract should stay if your position would remain unchanged. If you are going into a meeting with your supervisor and disciplinary action would be discussed, you can ask to be accompanied by a union rep.

## Library Issues

This summer the staff in the library would have the option of working four or five- day weeks.

## Grievance Issues

There are several ongoing issues, including a reclassification case and a disciplinary case. People have to keep us informed.

Rich spoke about the detouring case that is going on. Hearings dates are scheduled for May into June.

### Negotiations

Several Instructional Specialists' issues have come up. We are waiting for the new contracts, and would watching out for their content. Several multi-year contracts have been handed out. The other issue is that we have requested the administration to provide us with the departmental summer chairing data.

Other issues include: distinguished professor procedures, hiring with tenure, tenure calendar.

Bill said that he received an email inquiring about the results of a departmental DPAC election. These election results are supposed confidential.

Mike spoke about the membership numbers, which look good. At his time, we have twelve new members. An investment committee would be created. Also, Mike would enlisting an accountant's help in changing the fiscal year and other issues pertaining to our bookkeeping.

Mike said that are our main expense is incurred in defending our members.

### President's Report

Krystal Woolston has been nominated for the position of the AFT national everyday hero. She is running against two other people. We have sent out a link via Twitter, and the link has also been posted on Facebook.

Rich said that we are no longer confident that HR can get you paid accurately. A person who was considering retiring found out that he was not going to get paid for the three-days of furloughs owed to him in the MOA that granted the furloughs. The three days were supposed to be added to the personal leave bank, to be paid out upon the departure of the employee from the institution. It remains to be seen if MSU is the only institution to not have paid departing employees for the three days of furloughs.

The union has been consulting with the new VPHR on this issue, and there are some difference of interpretation on the agreement that was signed.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:52 pm.