

General Union Meeting
Feb 13, 2013
Minutes

The meeting started at 2:36 pm.

Rich circulated the minutes of the Dec 12 GUM. He added that the structure of the GUMs has recently been modified, and the meetings are now organized around agenda items, as opposed to officers' reports. This is to make the meetings more topical and interesting as well fitting better into the scheduled time allotment.

The minutes were unanimously approved.

Essential Employees

Jennifer spoke about the Essential Employees issue. Everyone in Student Life has been declared an essential employee. The Union is pursuing the issue through the Council (CNJSCL). The Local has also contacted those designated Essential Employees and request information from them.

The criteria employed by the administration in determining Essential Employees are not clear. For instance, not everyone in SDCL should have been designated as an Essential Employee. It is for this reason that the Union is requesting information about the job description of designated employees. You can send us the information on our non-Montclair email account (AFTLocal1904@gmail.com). Only Rich and Jennifer would have access to the information provided. After we have collected the information, Debra Davis (at the Council) would follow-up with the administration.

A question was asked about liability in case someone who has been designated essential employee meets with an accident en route to campus. Jennifer said that there are lots of details that remain unclear. For instance, anyone driving during a declared state of emergency can be fined, unless they have an essential employee card of some kind. In case of injury, Workmen's Compensation would probably cover it but we are not sure. In response to another question, she said that, initially, middle managers were asked to identify Essential Employees in their unit. When several of them did not comply, a Vice-President designated everyone in that Division an Essential Employee.

Rich said that if everyone stands together and we get the information from those affected, the administration would not be able to single out individuals.

Rich also noted that the letter sent to those designated essential states that they should be in touch with their supervisors (and not the other way round).

Jennifer reiterated that the designation as essential has been applied indiscriminately, and is wrong for many reasons. We should collective stand

together, especially in SDCL, to contest this issue. Jennifer read out the email that has been sent out by the administration to those designated Essential Employees. It's interesting though that members who are certified Emergency Response Personnel were not specifically contacted before the snowstorm last week.

Rich said that the Union is committed to getting this right, but the stories from those affected would strengthen the case.

Release Time

Rich said that administration is asking for a lot of money—much more than what they have received from us in the past—as payment for the release time the officers of the Local receive for carrying out their responsibilities. There is a Step 1 hearing scheduled for Feb 25 to deal with this issue.

DREAM Act

A resolution was introduced in support of the NJ Dream Act which would provide students, who are undocumented because they were brought to the US at an early age, access to in-state tuition rates in the state colleges and universities. The resolution was passed unanimously. The Local officially endorsed the Dream Act.

Another resolution in support of the Federal Dream Act was presented. The resolution was adopted with unanimous support.

Scholarships

Applications for the the Catherine A. Becker, James P. Keenen III, Joseph T. Moore, Anita E. Uhia, and Connie Waller Local 1904 Scholarships are due to the office, CH314a, by 3:00PM March 1st.

The Essex-West Hudson Labor Council's scholarship is available to the children of full dues paying members of AFT Local 1904. In order to qualify, eligible applicants must be accepted at an accredited college or post-high school education program.

Career Development

The State used to stipulate a dollar amount for Career Development but now the amount is based on the number of unit members represented by the local. Members who are eligible should apply, since it's a use it or lose it proposition: funds not utilized go back to the University. Basically, Career Development funds can be used for purposes not covered by other internal grants. Three priority groups are identified:

Priority 1:

- a. Tenured faculty members who have been assessed and submit a current completed assessment with their application;
- b. Tenured librarians;
- c. Professional staff members currently on a multi-year contract.

Priority 2

- a. Tenured faculty/librarians prior to 5 years post tenure and not yet required to complete an assessment;

Priority 3

- a. Professional staff without a multi-year contract who have received appointment for the year following the application date;
- b. Non-tenured faculty members/librarians who have received appointment for the year following the application date.

Professional Staff Review Board Election

Dana talked about the attempts to constitute a University Professional Staff Review Board (UPSRB), which would give the professional staff another opportunity to have their cases (for reappointment, reclassification and performance-based promotion) reconsidered. In case a staff member feels that their case was given inadequate consideration, the UPSRB would provide an additional level of review.

An election was organized to UPSRB, as per the current MSU Local Selected Procedures Agreement. A total of twenty-four ballots were cast. Out of the four people listed on the ballot, each one received at least twenty votes. None of the write-ins had more than two votes. The following individuals were elected to serve a three-year term on the UPSRB:

AJ Kelton
Amy Krenzer
Mike Peters
Carmen Reyes-Cuevas

Librarian Issues

There are some ongoing issues pertaining to the Essential Employee designation. The Dean informed several people that they were Essential Employees, but no written notification was sent.

Grievance Report

Kathy gave the report. Two Step-1 hearings took place and these are now proceeding to arbitration. The first case involves a salary dispute where a faculty member was not paid for work done. The second case involves the inappropriate application of sick time.

The Union is also assisting a faculty member whose application for promotion was turned down by his/her DPAC. We have also had several queries about increments.

The Sabbatical Leave applications are due Feb 15. Ken said that in the last round of sabbaticals (only for Spring 2013), nine out of thirteen applicants were funded. In response to a question he clarified that the Faculty-Student Research Grants were only for undergraduate students. Librarians who have faculty designation can also apply for these funds.

Ken said that two major faculty-related issues are gaining momentum:

a. Course capacity issue: Course capacities for many courses this semester were raised unilaterally by the Provost. It appears that course capacities are going to go up from 35 to 45. Although the Provost, in his discussion of the issue, says that it is past practice, Ken said that that is not the case. The main problem here is the reduction of faculty to piece-worker status and the neglect of pedagogical issues.

b. Patents and Intellectual Property Rights Issues

The Union would be putting together a committee to deal with the emerging issues surrounding patents. Many faculty members are in the process of filing patents and the rules for sharing the benefits from patents, among other issues, need to be framed appropriately.

There was a discussion about the newly created Instructional Services Specialists (ISS) and Clinical Services Specialists (CSS). Ken clarified that the hires in these positions would not have faculty status. Also, they would not have voting rights on personnel issues (in their departments) including for department chair.

Bill said that these new positions are not the brainchild of the Union. The administration insisted on creating these positions and the Union did what it could to get the best deal possible.

Ken said that the Union would keep a close eye on these positions and their numbers. If we sense that they are affecting new tenure-track lines, we would ask for reconsideration.

Rich said that certain departments have proactively said no to these positions. For instance, the language departments would like their students to have exposure to a

range of faculty, and have accordingly said no to ISS. These positions would have to be requested by the departments and the positions would be renewed annually.

Dana said that she is working on a number of different issues, including Essential Employees, Career Development, Tuition Reimbursement, and Summer Fridays.

The professional staff report was presented by Jennifer. She said that the big issue is the Essential Employees issue. She also thanked the professional staff members for filling out a ten-question survey about issues of concern to them. There would be a legislative workshop in the spring.

Mike spoke about the budget issues. He said that the Local is a little hesitant about handing out printed information about the Local's finances. Copies of balance sheet and budget were circulated in the room. He said he could meet with anyone to discuss details and provide information. The union's finances are in good shape and we had a surplus of approximately \$58,000 for last year. Last year was unusual because of statewide negotiations, which spiked our expenses.

Our recent membership in AFTNJ would result in a \$72/member/year fee, which would jeopardize our bottom line finances. The Council will be taking up this issue over the next year.

Our dues (to the National-AFT) increased by \$36,000 last year. The amount we spend on grievances would likely go up as well.

Rich asked that members make an attempt to attend the Board of Trustees meetings. These meetings do not have any discussions and things are done in a very cursory manner. Higher attendance may lead to a greater transparency at these meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 pm.