

General Union Meeting
Feb 12, 2014
Minutes

The minutes of the Dec 11 meeting were presented for approval. A motion was made to approve the minutes, which was adopted unanimously. Rich said that one of the topics for the upcoming Executive Board meeting would be to clarify the policy regarding the posting of the minutes on the Local's website.

Doug Martucci made a presentation about NJWELL, the new, incentive-based wellness program started by the SHBP. While the participation in the program is voluntary, members can earn up to \$100 in the first year. The amount for the second year increases to \$250 (for member and spouse). However, children of members are not eligible for participation in the program. The monetary rewards from the program are taxable. In response to a question Doug said that the members' personal medical data would not be shared with anyone. For additional information, members can go to: www.nj.gov/njwell

Rich asked Doug if he could arrange for a screening day at MSU. The PowerPoint that was presented at the meeting would be posted on the Local's website.

Tenure Bill

Rich said that the Tenure Bill passed in the legislature and is law now. Apart from the increase in duration-to-tenure to six years, the administrators can also now hire people with tenure. President Cole has constituted a committee to come up with the criteria under which individuals can be hired with tenure. The Local believes that the law provides that the procedures for appointments with concurrent tenure are negotiable and sent the administration an official request to open negotiations on the issue. The Local's position is that disputes arising on the basis of whatever positions the committee came up and implemented as policy by the administration would not be grievable.

Rich spoke about the grievance filed by the union last year about release time. The legal expenses amounted to almost \$20,000, and an arbitrator recently ruled against the union.

We are now in the process of organizing elections for the officers' positions and Council delegates. Uncontested elections can be held online, but contested elections will be conducted via mail.

There is an upcoming Higher Education conference in Baltimore in April. Most of the Local's officers would be attending the conference.

Students have been notified 2-3 times about the Local's BKMUW scholarships. The deadline for application submission is March 7. Scholarships are also available for

members' children who would be attending non-MSU institutions. For graduating seniors there are also Labor Council scholarships, as well as AFT-NJ scholarships. Vanessa talked about the sabbaticals process. Of the 29 who applied, 24 received sabbaticals. In one case the duration was increased from one semester a full year after our member met with and discussed her proposal with the Provost who changed his recommendation based on that meeting.

The Provost's email about the weather-related cancelation of classes has created puzzlement and anxiety. There was a question asked about the childcare issues arising out of snow-related campus closings. The new social media policy draft that has been circulated has raised many questions. The policy draft was discussed at the Chairs' Council.

Kathy reminded everyone that supervisors do not have the authority to promise anything in lieu of assigning of extra work.

Alex presented a report about the party for students who live on campus and didn't go home during the winter break. About 100 care packages were distributed, and the pizza and care packages were much appreciated.

Among the upcoming community outreach activities are: Visit to the Community Foodbank of New Jersey in Hillside (March 15), Animal shelter visit, Veterans BBQ.

Meiling spoke about the search for filling an open position in the library.

Kathy said that there are several issues that have been settled or are nearing settlement. There have been some problems related to reappointment and promotions in the Cali School of Music.

David reported that there were a number of hot issues discussed in the Senate. The Executive Board would discuss with President Cole the issues related to the Tenure Committee. David also asked that people consider endorsing the candidates for at-large positions.

Rich said that the election for the at-large positions starts tomorrow, and only faculty are eligible to vote.

Ken said that the Local has reached an agreement with the administration on patents. There is a discussion about what's negotiable, and the union would like to see all the language before it signs off. On the issue of the Specialists agreement, Ken said that he is not sure about its final status.

On the topic of negotiations, Ken said that notwithstanding the considerable efforts and investment of time on the part of the negotiations team, at the end there was no agreement. It came down to four issues: On-load credit for teaching (3 credits for up to 45 students; 6 credits for 46-100; and 6 credits for more than 101), compensation

for faculty supervising MA thesis; external letters of review; student evaluations of teaching. Ken said that on issues of reappointment/tenure, the administration wants to do away with a lot of the language in the contract that is the result of decades of negotiations and hard work on the part of the union. Another round of negotiations will commence with Jerry Cutler, the new VP HR.

Mike provided an update about the upcoming review of the Local's finances. A review committee has been formed. The committee was supposed to do a review tomorrow, but it appears uncertain in light of the expected inclement weather. The review is expected to be completed by the end of Feb, in order for the Local to be seated at the AFT national convention.

Rich mentioned that he had lunch with Jerry Cutler, and that he is very optimistic about him (primarily based on his extensive experience working with unions).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:02 pm