

General Union Meeting
March 19, 2014
Minutes

The minutes of the Feb 12 meeting were approved unanimously.

Elections

Paul, who heads the elections committee for the Local, announced the timeline for the elections. The elections are for the Local's officers group and CNJSCL delegates. The deadline for submitting the nomination forms is Monday, April 14. The elections would take place from April 28-May 2. Rich spoke about the responsibilities of a CNJSCL delegate. There are four meetings annually and if you are not an officer there is a stipend for attending.

Executive Board Meeting

At the meeting it was decided that the minutes of the General Union Meeting would be posted after a period of six months. A summary would be posted sooner. The Local's constitution requires two meetings of the Executive Board, annually.

Direct Deposit Legislation

A recently passed bill has made direct deposits mandatory for all employees. Although this would affect only sixteen members of the bargaining unit, there are several issues raised by some of the provisions of the legislation. One of the potential issues is that money can be both deposited and taken out of the account. For instance, money can be withdrawn without informing the employee (possibly triggering a fee, for example). Rich said he has had discussions with Jerry Cutler about maintaining transparency in this process.

The Scholarship Committee will be meeting next Monday. Winners will be announced at the April meeting. This year the pool of applicants was much smaller. Linda got a lot of calls, but many of those who called did not submit applications. Krystal suggested that weather-related closures may have affected the numbers.

Faculty Issues

Last month we had a question about deferring a sabbatical. Vanessa reiterated that department chairs cannot supervise professional staff who are member of the same bargaining unit. This is a labor law issue, which dictates that members in the same bargaining unit cannot supervise each other. Kathy said that this has not happened overnight.

Jennifer said that reclassifications could be initiated by supervisors or employees. The job description for the new title has to differ significantly, and has to be approved by HR. Reclassifications can be done any time during a year.

University Equipment Liability Policy

The faculty, librarians and staff who are issued computers have a 100% liability for the university laptop they are issued. The Local is trying to get the liability policy in writing from the university. Mike said that OIT has some liability information in its equipment policy.

Rules governing Distinguished Professor and hiring of faculty with tenure

Any tenured faculty can be nominated for a distinguished professor. The university is also interested. The Local has requested negotiations on both: the procedures for Distinguished Professor and for hiring faculty with tenure.

Professional Staff Issues

Krystal Woolston is going to be a finalist in the AFT National's Everyday Heroes contest. She is one of the four finalists, and one of two from NJ. Anyone can vote in the election.

Career Development Awards

The Career Development announcement, although significantly late, has been made. Career Development funds can be used for specialized training, expenses related to transportation and books for another degree and for attending conferences. The Career Development Committee currently does not have a professional staff representative.

The Library Dean started a conversation with the reference librarians about the possibility of working from home in case of emergencies when the university is otherwise closed.

Kathy reported that there have been a couple of inquiries related to the procedures for promotions. Partly, these are due to department chairs who are new to the university and not conversant with the relevant procedures. Kathy said she has spoken to VP HR about training. She would be speaking to HR again on the issue. Kathy also received questions related to Instructional/Clinical Specialists—the program just finished its first year. Also, she fielded some questions about Transition to Retirement. Bill said that the details of Transition to Retirement are being worked out with the HR department at the state level.

There have been some problems with certain retirees choosing to work after retirement and collecting benefits. One cannot simultaneously contribute and receive retirement payments. There has to be a break in service before one can start working again after retiring.

David reported that the Senate would have a report from the Academic Affairs Council about the Social Media Policy. A number of proposals, said to be consistent with the Responsible Computing Policy, have been made for inclusion in the policy.

Mike reported that the student email accounts are slated to be moved to Google.

Negotiations Update

Ken said that the Local had concluded negotiations on Instructional/Clinical Specialists, and the understanding was that there was a deal. The administration now wishes to change the nature of the deal. The union has asked for the changes in writing, but has not received no response. April 30 is when IS/CS people have to be informed about their contract renewal, told whether they will be teaching in the coming year and tended a new contract.

The Local concluded an agreement with the administration regarding patents.

Another issue is the new law about hiring faculty with tenure. A committee has been created to devise the criteria, which raises issues of negotiability. Another issue pertains to the criteria for the title of distinguished professor. The administration's position is that it is an honorific without any benefits or salary increase. The main problem is that the process proposed disregards the existing language in the LSPA.

Rich said that the details (i.e. criteria etc) of hiring with tenure are supposed to be negotiated locally. His interactions with union leaders from other colleges show an emerging consensus in favor of reducing the scope of local negotiations.

Rich reported that in response to a member's suggestion about changing the way agreements are posted on the Local's website, Jennifer reorganized the Contracts tab. A number of these agreements are not ratified.

Professional Staff Issues

There is legislation pending that in case of emergency closures in the state, professional staff would be held harmless if they cannot make it to their place of work. Jennifer would likely testify on the issue.

Mike thanked Linda for her help with facilitating the Local's financial review. The fiscal review was recently conducted and Mike thanked the audit committee members. There were no concerns about the Local's finances, and the only major recommendation was about changing the fiscal year to the academic year.

President's Report

Rich thanked Amy Krenzer, Louise and Alex for their help with the visit to the food bank. Rich provided an update on the faculty detenuring case, currently in progress. The faculty member has been put back on payroll. As part of discovery more than 400 pages of emails have been exchanged between the administration and the union.

Bill said that he has been following the upcoming mayoral election in Newark. Ras Baraka and Shivar Jeffries are the two major candidates. There is an active "get-out-the vote" effort in support of Ras. A phone bank has been established and labor walks would take place every Saturday.

There is an upcoming visit to the Mt Pleasant Animal Shelter on April 6, 8-12 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 pm