

General Union Meeting
May 1, 2013
Minutes

The meeting started at 2:30 pm

Copies of minutes of the previous GUM and agenda were passed out. A motion was made to accept the minutes and approved unanimously.

Jennifer, chair of the scholarship committee, introduced the members of the scholarship committee. The names of the scholarship winners were then announced, with each winner coming to the podium and saying their name and talking about their life goal. Mike Peters took the group photograph of the recipients with the union officers.

Summer Work Schedule

Dana reported that she and others in the union have met several times with the administration about the summer schedule. Yesterday they met for the last time. Some headway has been made, but there is no written agreement yet. Dana said that the administration is not willing to meet with the union half way, and that nothing has been heard from them. She said that we would eventually have a summer schedule, and she would, hopefully, be able to report back the good news.

Further, Dana said that we came up with six specific and different ideas. We were willing to give up 15 minutes and one Friday. Rich said that it is clear that Governor Christie wants the institution to remain open. We can have satellite offices to keep do the necessary work. Every office can make their arrangement, although the administration has dismissed the idea as impracticable.

The proposal we put on the table yesterday about tuition waivers has been accepted. As long as a program is covered, all courses, up to a maximum of 24 credits per year, would be covered as well. One does not have to be matriculated into a program to qualify for a tuition waiver. Ken said that Judy Hain assured the union that although the administration is taking a hard line on tuition waiver, there would be flexibility on other issues. That, said Ken, gives him the feeling that something would materialize.

Dana said that the union is trying to negotiate an 8:00-5:30 schedule four-days-a-week in lieu of Friday closure (for a total of 10 Fridays during the summer). The aim is to get a summer schedule contract for three years (instead of a year).

Jennifer said that the administration wants a uniform set of rules for everyone, because it does not trust the middle managers to oversee options appropriately.

In response to a question about tuition waivers, Ken said that he is reluctant to talk about it since the administration wants a package deal for the summer schedule and tuition waiver, and that in the absence of an agreement it can impose a policy.

Treasurer's Report

Mike said that there is one item that is under protest with the university. This concerns the 12 hours of release time for the union officers. The administration wants to count the release time in the Fall towards the new limit. The union is arguing that since the agreement stipulates a start date of January, 2013, the Fall 2012 semester does not count. In the past, the union paid adjunct rate for release time. Under the new contract, anything over 12 credits a year would be charged at 9% of salary as opposed to \$3900 as in the past.

Rich said that in the spirit to fairness to all the officers, and for the purpose of parity, we have decided to convert the release time, which would now be cost prohibitive, into supplemental salary. We have also adjusted some honoraria to make them compatible with the workloads. There have been two new officer positions created, while one position has been eliminated, leading to a net increase of one position. However, there have been no raises for any officer. In the next few days the updated information would be posted on the Local's website. One of the principles we have tried to adhere is that union officers should be compensated for work done.

Mike said that the Local is currently financially solid, but our precise financial situation depends on the dues we pay to the Council and the National, and our expenses, which are variable. Bill said that the Local joined the State Fed due to arm-twisting by the National. Currently the dues we pay for the AFT-NJ membership are below the full rate and subsidized by the Council. We have ongoing discussions at the Council about the membership in AFT-NJ. Bill said that the Council would vote soon on the issue of membership to AFT-NJ.

Rich announced that Bill has won the election for the position of the External Vice President of the Council. He then congratulated him on his win.

Librarian's Report

Mei Ling presented the report. The DPAC guidelines were revised three years ago, but have not been implemented.

Personnel Matters

Kathy reported that a faculty member who was denied payment for work she had done would be paid in full. She had been doing this work for the last twenty-five years, and was turned down for payment after she had already performed the work.

A Step-1 hearing took place about the professional staff member that had been assigned the wrong supervisor. Kathy said she would find out the result in about a month.

There are several other ongoing issues related to Comp Time and sabbatical process.

Ken spoke about the various problems with the sabbatical process. For instance, in cases where more than one person applied for a yearlong sabbatical from the same

department, the Dean can go to the committee and ask for the duration to be reduced to six months. The problem arises when the applications go up to the university committee. If the length of the sabbatical is reduced to six months (from a year), the applicants should have the opportunity to revise their applications. Another issue pertains to the joint research projects. How are these to be judged for the purpose of awarding sabbaticals? The guidelines will have to be framed to deal appropriately with these cases.

Ken reported that he has received a seven-page document—a .pdf that does not allow editing—about patents from the administration. He and Rich are working in concert with faculty members who are patent holders to come up with an appropriate framework for patents and copyrights that would protect the rights of the faculty.

In response to a question about class capacities and compensation, Ken said that the latter is negotiable, but the former is not. Ken talked about the need for enrollment management at the department level to help devise a fair and equitable approach to assigning teaching responsibilities.

Dana reported that a whole host of issues are on the table and are under discussion with the administration.

Betsy said that several cases have come to light where time sheets have been altered. Reporting a piece of good news, she said that Sharon Bellum has been approved for a performance-based promotion.

Wrapping up the meeting, Rich said that it was the last regular meeting of the year. There may be one more meeting during the summer, before the new academic year starts in September.

Under “New Business,” Jennifer announced that she had Barbara Buono stickers available for anyone who wanted them. Bill added that the upcoming gubernatorial election was an important one, and that we can have an impact with labor walks and other kinds of participation.

Rich said that Barbara Buono has a real chance due to several reasons. One, she is a complete contrast to Christie, and as such offers the voters a real choice. Two, there are approximately 700, 000 more registered democrats in the state (turnout among democrats is therefore critical).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm