

General Union Meeting
Nov 14, 2012
Minutes

The meeting began at 2:35 pm.

Rich described the discussion that took place in the officers meeting about the ways in which the Local can contribute to the post-Sandy rebuilding efforts. A decision was taken to monetarily assist the students in Moonachie whose school was destroyed in the storm. Rich said that a hat would be passed around in the room to collect money, which would be matched by the Local. Subsequently, the hat was passed around and funds collected.

The minutes of the Oct 10 General Union Meeting were distributed. A motion to approve the minutes was made, and was unanimously approved.

Essential Services Employees—Update

Jennifer spoke about confusion created by the contradictory and unclear messages regarding essential personnel, sent out by the administration following Sandy. Some of the messages were probably purposively ambiguous. The Union attorney is presently looking into it, and a letter would go out to the administration for a list of the essential services personnel on campus. There are state regulations that apply to essential employees. As far as the University administration is concerned, they didn't seem to have a plan. The determination of essential employee is the administration's prerogative. The definition of an essential employee can be found at the Attorney General's Office.

Rich said that although we will file the request for essential personnel info soon, the matter is unlikely to be resolved quickly. It is understandable that the administration wants certain offices to remain open, employees should be informed at the time of hiring if they are essential. For Nov 1 and Nov 2, the administration has assured us that no one would be charged vacation time. If you received the email from Karen Pennington at 3pm, Nov 1, about reporting to work, please let us know.

A member raised the issue of housing for employees called for essential service. The university sent a declaration about housing availability on Tuesday, much after the fact.

Betsy asked that everyone who is facing a comp time issue should get something in writing from their supervisor. Although Judith Hain has said that the managers have been asked to be flexible, it may not happen in practice. At the end of the day, if other measures fail we have the grievance process. Members should work out comp time issues with their supervisors as much as possible. Jennifer asked that people make a record by noting it on their timesheets if they worked on Nov 1, Nov 2.

Sabbaticals—Ken Brook

The administration's position was that since we have an agreement on Instructional Service Specialists/Clinical Service Specialists, we could have sabbaticals in the spring semester. A compressed schedule was adopted in view of the limited time available for the review process. Several members have expressed their dissatisfaction with the expedited timeline. The number of sabbatical units awarded is ten. The administration proposed to do away with the peer-review at the department level, but we did not agree to it. It is yet another reminder to us all to take peer-review seriously, since the administration is mounting a serious attack on peer-review.

Winter Closure—Dana Natale

An agreement has been reached about the Winter Closure. Instead of four days last year, there are six days that will need to be covered. If you are a new employee you can work with your supervisor. A question was asked if it is possible to borrow forward. Rich said that it could be done with the approval of the supervisor. A clarification was made: Only the library employees are eligible for comp time for Martin Luther Jr. day.

Personnel Issues—Kathy Hughes

There are a number of ongoing issues that we are dealing with. There is the case of non-reappointment of a professional staff. Also, we assisted a faculty member who had to provide information on covering for class in his/her absence. We also helped her with locating travel forms online.

Betsy announced two upcoming events: A comp time workshop and the professional staff luncheon on Dec 19. The applications for performance-based promotions are due in January. Members are encouraged to do that on their own. There is the requirement of having been employed at MSU for "a considerable period of time" for those wishing to apply for performance-based promotions. A question was asked if the administration has to respond to the applications. Rich said that the applicants should get a response. In the event that there is no response, please contact the Local.

Rich said that the University spent a significant amount of money on consultants and legal work in the first half of this year. In July, the BOT created two new types of positions: Instructional Services Specialist (ISS), Clinical Services Specialist (CSS). The appointment for ISS would be for the fiscal year (July 1-June 30). The teaching load would be 12 3 credit courses per year. A 36 hour fiscal year load. The salaries for these positions would be not be on the salary guide but would be negotiated individually for each contract. For those with MA's the minimum salary would be \$46,000, whereas the corresponding amount for those holding a doctorate would be \$56,000. People in these positions would be entitled to full benefits.

The Local feels that one of the reasons the administration created these new positions is to decrease the number of adjuncts. This would be helpful for accreditation and for improving the university's US World News and Report ranking. Until now we only had multi-year appointees for teaching, who were limited to a maximum of three years. After the completion of the three-year appointment and an interruption in service, the clock begins anew for them. This is done to skirt the state regulations regarding tenure.

The Local will undertake a comprehensive review of this agreement after two years following which a new state-wide contract would be negotiated. Before Jan 2015—when the current contract would expire—the Local's negotiation team would work on the issue.

The provost would soon be sending out an announcement about the internal awards. Career Development money would be available after a hiatus of one year.

Budget—Mike Heller

The Local's budget is in good condition. Our surpluses are down mainly on account of the expenses incurred in the last round of negotiations with the State that was concluded in the summer. We also have our own version of the fiscal cliff looming. From next year we would have to start paying dues for membership in the AFT-NJ. The additional dues would be approximately \$72 per unit member per year.

Rich announced that the checks for the retroactive increase would be mailed out this Friday, although there is still some uncertainty. If you have any questions about your increment, please contact the Council. This is one of the area where they are very helpful and knowledgeable.

Jennifer announced that the collection of CARE packages for students staying the dorms during the winter closure has begun. The goal is to collect 200 packages, which is the approximate number of students that stay in the dorms during the break. A message about this would also be sent through the newsletter.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.