



General Union Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2011
Student Center Room 419

President Richard Wolfson called the meeting to order at 2:42 P.M.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the October 12, 2011 General Union Meeting were distributed and approved.

Friday after Thanksgiving and Holiday Agreements

Lisa Ambrose spoke about the negotiations (which concluded on November 7, 2011) for the following agreements.

- Friday after Thanksgiving. The University will be closed and Professional Staff will work with their supervisors to work a holiday or use other appropriate leave balances.
- Holiday Agreement. The University will be closed from December 26, 2011- January 2, 2012. If you worked the Fall Holidays (Columbus Day, Election Day and Veteran's Day) you should apply those days to satisfy three of the four days that need to be accounted for that week. You can also use vacation time, comp time, or borrow President's Day 2012 to satisfy the agreement. This is usually worked out in individual offices with supervisors.

If you are a newly hired employee (from August on) it is difficult to use vacation time to satisfy the agreement. MSU Human Resources will work with you to satisfy the days you owe. Contact Judy Hain if you are having any difficulties working out an agreement with your supervisor.

These agreements are only for one year due to ongoing statewide negotiations.

Note that:

- The Library is open Tuesday and Wednesday of the Holiday Closure.
- Faculty that wish to go to their office during this time must contact the Campus Police in advance, not the day they come to campus.

Health Care and Pension Reform

Rich Wolfson noted that the Union has been sending update notices to the bargaining unit. Each member should determine their individual/family needs and plan costs in order to decide whether or not to change to different health plan coverage.

Rich mentioned that it was difficult to find information on dental plan providers. Dental plan coverage has changed so unit members may want to review their plan coverage. A phone call to Pat Kelly from MSU Benefits/Payroll directed him to the correct site for dental coverage information.

The deadline for any benefit coverage changes is November 11, 2011.

If you are no longer receiving coverage for things that were covered in the past, or if there is anything unusual occurring in your plan coverage, please contact the Union. We will keep a list of all items and will contact the State to get answers.

Officer Reports

Professional Staff Coordinator – Lisa Ambrose

- Members of the Professional Staff Negotiations Team were recognized and given appreciation for their work on negotiations. They are: Jessica Brandt, Milos Topic and Joe Kaczorowski.
- Professional Staff can carry over a maximum of 1 year of vacation time (154 hours). Any time above that amount will be lost. You are urged to use any vacation time that would be taken away towards fulfilling the Holiday Closing Agreement. Your Comp Time must be used within 60 days.
- Performance Based Promotions have had a very low application rate. Please consider applying, as there is time to put a packet together for the January 20, 2012 deadline.
- The Professional Staff Holiday Luncheon will be held Thursday December 1, 2011 in Student Center Ballroom A from 12-1:30 P.M. Remember to send in your RSVP.
- Negotiations are not over. There needs to be an election for members of the Professional Staff Review Board. If you are interested, please contact Lisa at (x4079) or by e-mail.

Secretary – Betsy Montanez

No report

Treasurer's Report – Bill Vincenti

Bill did not attend due to illness. However, his monthly report was available at the meeting for review.

Librarian Coordinator – MeiLing Chow

No report

Grievance Report – Kathleen Hughes

- Briefs for a grievance hearing are due in December, after which a ruling will be made. The arbitrator's final report will be received during the winter.
- Many unit members had questions and contacted the union. Among the topics for Professional Staff were: reclassification application status, general information on reclassifications, non-reappointments and responses, and health care issues. Topics for Faculty were: sabbaticals leaves and project participation.
- The Grievance Committee met on October 16, 2011 for a training session with Barbara Hoerner. Participants were Kathleen Hughes, Jennifer Higgins, Edina Renfro-Michel and Gina Balestracci.

Internal Vice President – Jennifer Higgins

- Professional Staff reclassification should take 60 days. Some Professional Staff do not want to ask for the Union to intervene if the deadlines are not being kept, but it may be necessary to do so. If you are reclassified, your pay is retroactive to the application date.
- As noted in our Newsletter, there is a scholarship offered by the Essex-West Hudson Labor Council open to full members. A link is provided to the application form. Rich Wolfson needs to sign off on applications for submission. Please note that this is a different award from the AFT Local 1904 Becker/Keenen/Moore/Uhia/Waller Scholarship offered each spring.
- Also noted in our Newsletter is the AFT National Everyday Heroes program. The nomination form is available at the AFT National web site. Those that make nominations are entered into a lottery to win a \$250.00 American Express gift card.
- Solidarity Walks are held each Wednesday. Please come to the Solidarity Walk on November 30 for a show of union support. Friday December 2 is the first contact negotiations session in a while.

Negotiations Coordinator – Ken Brook

- Sabbatical Leaves, Tuition Reimbursements and Career Development will cease while state contract negotiations continue. A notice has been e-mailed to the campus from President Cole per order of Governor Christie. The College Council has filed a ULP. However, there will not be quick relief as Governor Christie is in control of PERC.
- On-Line Courses. Faculty members have been hired for three Master's programs. Compensation has been low for those developing on line courses. Many faculty members have been working on projects for months but have not been compensated for their work.
- MA Thesis Supervision: The Provost has issued a statement, through Mary Colon, which declares that a faculty member who is supervising a student on the completion of an MA Thesis that is not completed in a single semester will not receive on-load credit for continuing to supervise that student in each and every subsequent semester. We are looking into this issue.
- Local 1904 has informed the administration of our intent to negotiate on-load credit for the Coordination of Academic Advisement. Second, In 1986, there was

a settlement agreement on the amount of on-load credit to be assigned for the Coordination of Academic Advisement. This settlement agreement has been revised and updated several times in the early 1990s. These agreements have not been consistently applied in each academic department. The coordination of academic advisement is an essential function that should be provided to our students and as result will enhance both retention and graduation rates.

- Librarian Range Changes are the next issue up for discussion.

External Vice President - Bill Sullivan

- As a result of the New Jersey Legislature elections on November 8, 2011, the Republicans did not gain any seats and the Democrats gained one seat. There were some interesting votes in the states of Ohio and Mississippi on labor issues.
- It appears that New Jersey Senate President (Steve Sweeney) and Assembly Leader (Speaker Shelia Oliver) will remain in their positions.
- We do not want the Senate or Assembly to open up the tenure laws to change.
- During the late October snowstorm, the Governor had his power restored quickly while thousands in the state remained in the cold and the dark for days.
- All who participated in the Trenton rallies, labor walks, phone banks, etc. were thanked.

President – Rich Wolfson

- Politics is driven by money and connections, but politicians need to treat middle class public workers fairly. It is important for those in Trenton to be aware of this fact.
- Be sure to review your health care benefits and make any necessary changes before the November 11, 2011 deadline.
- Thanks to everyone who participated in the Union's Homecoming information table. The Union's presence at the event was noticed.
- Thanks to everyone participating in the Wednesday Solidarity Walks. The MSU Administration has noticed that this is taking place.
- Our newsletter is the result of much hard work. Jennifer Higgins was thanked for her efforts to produce the newsletters for the bargaining unit.
- Montclair State posted their Strategic Plan today, two weeks after the document was given to the Board of Trustees. We need to look into the terms and conditions of work that the plan addresses. It is a ten year plan, so we will need to wait and see how the provisions are implemented.
- Invitations have been sent out to individuals asking them to consider becoming Department/Area Stewards.
- Rich Wolfson and Ken Brook attended the New Faculty Experience meeting and recruited many new members. Several also signed COPE cards.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Meeting adjourned at 3:55 P.M.