

General Union Meeting
Minutes
Sept 12, 2012

Approval of the July 25 GUM Minutes

Meeting called to order. The minutes of the last General Union Meeting (July 25) were voted upon and approved.

Rich Wolfson greeted Ken Brook on his birthday.

Contract Ratification Voting

All the ballots were mailed out Friday, Sept 7, to full-dues paying members at the current addresses on record with the university. However, some people have not received the ballot. At the Senate meeting there was a question about the Local's position on ratification. Our Local negotiations team worked very hard to get a contract, and we did the best we could under the circumstances. However, the decision to support (or not) the ratification is yours. Please consult the informational material, included with the ballot, in making your decision.

Jennifer pointed out an error in the informational material. Among employees with multi-year contracts, only those hired after the ratification will be affected by the new language. Employees who started before October 3rd, 2012 are grandfathered with the old contract language.

Rich asked that if someone did not receive the ballot, s/he should contact him. Replacement ballots are being sent by Council.

A question was asked about what would happen if the contract failed ratification. Rich said that the state could impose their proposal. In other words the "last best offer," made by the state, would be the basis for the contract. On the other hand, if the contract was ratified local negotiations can start on those items requiring it and the Local's team is ready to do that.

Bill Sullivan said that in the event that the contract was not ratified, mediation would precede the imposition by the state of a contract. If this situation arises, the Local will survey the membership about what should be done

A question was asked about how long it would take for the changes (related to increments, etc.) to go into effect, if the contract was ratified. Rich said that the faculty would get raises they were due Sept 1, retroactively. It is hoped that HR would take approximately two paychecks to implement the changes. Everyone should keep in mind that HR can make mistakes, and, therefore, check their paystub for accuracy. You can find out about your range and step from HR. Linda can also provide this information. Everyone should wait until after Oct 3 before they begin

looking for changes in their paychecks. Please find out your anniversary date, range, and step, and if you can't, we will try to help you get the information. Also, keep in mind that the medical deductions for most would also likely go up.

Ken said that this contract was negotiated under the most offensive conditions we have encountered in the last 30 years. That said, we are unlikely to get something better if we go back to the negotiating table. Rich added that if someone votes against the contract, s/he should be willing to stand with him on Normal Avenue (in a picket line).

Negotiations Update (Professional Staff)

Dana Natale provided an update on the local negotiations. The professional staff negotiations committee is in place. The committee is working with Ken Brook to schedule meetings. The items on the agenda include the most pressing items: the day after Thanksgiving, Winter Closing, locally negotiable items on the state contract. Ken asked everyone with suggestions about negotiations to contact him.

Negotiations Update (Faculty)

Ken Brook gave an update. He noted that he is working with the librarians on the issue. The team is awaiting a response from the administration on the sabbaticals issue. The window is closing on that, so we need to move on it soon. The administration has not said "yes", but they have not said "no," either.

Mei Ling is heading the librarian negotiating team. The library has no personnel procedures. Growth promotions for librarians are also missing, with the result that there is no path for professorhood. Another issue pertains to the holiday break arrangements for librarians.

Rich said that negotiations are a crucial part of what the Local does. The magnitude of the task can be gauged from the fact that there are thirty items on the negotiations list. If you know negotiations team members, you should thank them; they provide a valuable service.

Emerging Local Issues

Parking

Rich said that parking is becoming a big problem. Especially in Lot T1, it's often a "Wild West" type of situation. People have complained that there are no spots available after 8:15 am. Lots 1 and 2 also fill up and parking is scarce. The Local is in contact with Tim Carey to make sure that only authorized personnel are using the lots for parking. If anyone sees a sticker that does not belong in a parking lot, please send me a picture.

Construction

Construction is a source of inconvenience, but the administration is doing its best. There are regular Web updates about construction. There was an incident involving suspected explosives last week, but it was resolved. Several of those present spoke about the traffic buildup that results from people walking from CarParc Diem.

Other Issues

A member pointed to mold/mildew problem in the University Hall, especially in several classrooms (on the second floor) where it presents a potential health hazard. Apparently the building suffers from water leakage and moisture problems. There is also the chronic problem of mildew smell on the fourth floor of University Hall, but nothing has been done in the last 2-3 years. The matter falls under the purview of PEOSH, and the member was asked to send a complaint to facilities, using their online form. Rich and Jennifer Higgins noted that reports need to be filed with Facilities and a copy should be forwarded to the Local. There may be options like mold strips available to document the presence of mold in the building.

It was also pointed out that Morehead Hall has a problem of abnormally low temperature, which can be a comfort issue. The concerned member was advised to put in a work order on the facilities website and arrangements were made to get one of the temperature loggers that the Local has to record office temperatures over time.

Professional Staff Issues—Betsy Montanez

A reappointment workshop was held for professional staff. We are putting together a survey to determine the staff preferences for services, and topics they would like to see covered in the workshops.

Jennifer added that the professional staff committee would be investigating the per diems. The committee would like to find out the departments that are most heavily using per diems and provide the information to Debra Davis.

Grievances—Karen Hughes

We have been busy with grievances. The committee met in May and there are several ongoing grievances.

In one case the release time provided was reduced and the faculty was not informed in advance.

Another grievance was filed on behalf of a person who performed a function over the summer, but was not compensated. A Step One hearing has been scheduled to resolve this.

Another grievance was filed about the university's failure to provide us with the personnel data related to hiring and promotion, which was supposed to be made available on July 1.

If you have questions about reclassification, or if you have not heard back from the administration on this issue, please contact me.

A professor ended up with a letter in their file about a student complaint about him. If you get contacted by Barbara Milton about a student complaint, please let me know. If there is a letter going into your file, do make sure to put in your rebuttal letter in there as well, so that there is a balanced story for the future. Rich noted that only the personnel file that is official is the one in HR. Also, if anyone is interested in helping Kathy, please let us know. Grievance work is very important and a valuable service to our members.

Outreach Committee-Jennifer

We have constituted an Outreach Committee. Members are encouraged to participate. The committee will be setting up a table on Homecoming (Oct 23) to hand out water. There will be a pizza party during the winter break for students still staying in the dorms. During the Spring there will be volunteer activities with the food bank and animal shelter. In response to a question about the possibility of volunteering sooner, Jennifer said that there is the perpetual food drive. Also, one can talk to Red Cross in Montclair. There is also the Inter-faith Hospitality Network of Essex County. Other organizations where one can volunteer include: Tony's Kitchen- the food ministry at St Luke's Episcopal Church in Montclair, St Peter's Episcopal Church in Clifton.

A Labor Day parade took place in Newark on Sept 7. Several members of our Local participated in it.

President's Report—Rich Wolfson

Rich said he has been working on bylaws, Local's election procedures, and procedures to deal with contingencies like resignation of officers. The revised bylaws will have lots of items that will need to be ratified by the membership.

We have had Wednesday Labor Walks on the campus since the beginning of the semester. The Walk, starting at Café Diem, takes place every Wednesday, at 12:30.

The Central Labor Council had been negotiating with the shipping lines for months, but the talks have broken down. The longshoremen are considering a strike. The shipping lines are betting on a Republican victory in the Presidential election, and a subsequent promulgation of "Right to Work" laws across the country. A discussion took place about the definition and meaning of "Right to Work" laws.

The full-dues paying members will be receiving the AFT calendar next week.

New Business

Jennifer announced that a workshop on Family and Leave Act would take place on Oct 24. The workshop will cover not only maternity leave but also other rights and obligations under FMLA.

A member asked a question about per-diem work. The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry is hiring a contractor for equipment maintenance work.

Jennifer: This is privatization in effect and much worse than per diem.

Rich: The Council can help in this regard. They have many resources and lots of experience in this area.

A member asked if the staff is required to make up for the time used in attending the union meetings. Rich: No. Also, if meetings are routinely scheduled during the union meetings, please let us know.

Meeting adjourned.