

General Union Meeting
Sept 11, 2013
Minutes

The minutes of the May 1 GUM were circulated. A motion was made to approve the minutes, which passed with one abstention.

Kathy spoke about the need to be careful in filling out time sheets for student employees that one may be supervising. These are legal documents and one could be called to testify about them in the court. Misrepresentation on timesheets could potentially have serious consequences for the person filling them out.

In response to a question about how to deal with the timesheets of part-time employees who may work variable hours, Kathy advised that these cases be forwarded to the Deans to be handled by them. Also, the amount available for payroll should not be dictating how the timesheets are filled out.

Ken said that the one should exercise caution not just in the case of timesheets, but also in matters pertaining to reappointment and tenure. The procedures in place should be followed and deadlines should be respected. In response to a question about per diem employees, Ken said that they should not be working for our unit. He also suggested that the relevant section of the LSPA be consulted for guidance.

Labor Walks

Bill Sullivan spoke about the upcoming labor walks in West Hudson, Essex, Bergen and Passaic counties. During these walks, teams of volunteers visit union households in a neighborhood and literature is handed out. These walks take place on Saturday mornings and there is research to show that they are effective in increasing voter turnout. Bill said that his experience with labor walks in the past has been positive. The only caveat is that due to the timing of these walks (Sat mornings), the response rate may be less than expected as people may be out running errands.

Jennifer mentioned the upcoming debate in October between Chris Christie and Barbara Buono will take place in Kasser theater. She said that it is as yet unclear what the rules are about asking questions (by audience members).

Jennifer said that she is a representative of professional staff at the Council of New Jersey State College Locals, and her team is preparing for the upcoming round of negotiations. The issue of comp time is an important one. She asked that if anyone wanted to provide input they should contact her or Dana Natale.

Community Outreach Committee

A book drive to collect books for the Irvington public schools is being organized. Paul Martinez is coordinating the drive and books can be dropped off in his office (Technical Services Department) in the library. The books would be for kids (Grades 3-5) and should ideally be non-fiction (soft cover and hard cover are both acceptable).

Jennifer spoke about the Local's outreach efforts, including at the Homecoming Day on Oct 12. A table would be set up and AFT swag would be handed out. Anti-bullying literature would also be made available. In January, during the Winter Campus Closing, a pizza party would be organized for the students staying in the dorms. Last year's pizza party and distribution of care packages was well received by the students.

Over the summer a team of Local members went to the Community Food Bank of New Jersey and volunteered for a few hours. Jennifer said that the Local is looking for newer outreach activities.

Jennifer announced that a professional staff workshop would be organized in the near future. Debra Davis, from the Council, would be organizing it, and we are looking for a time to hold the workshop.

Rich announced that Campus Rec is organizing a family SWIM on the last Friday of October (October 25). The event would take place between 5-7 pm, and faculty/staff member can bring in up to three guests.

Faculty Coordinator

Rich introduced Vanessa Domine, the new Faculty Coordinator. Vanessa would be organizing personnel workshop for reappointment and tenure. A faculty reappointment workshop is scheduled for Sept 24 in the ADP center (UN 1120). Following is the schedule for various workshops:

Promotions workshop—Oct 5; Tenure workshop—May 6.

We made a decision to separate reappointment, promotion and tenure.

Grievances

The summer was a busy period for grievances. The administration has indicated its intention to de-tenure a faculty member. Kathy said she received several reports of un-collegial behavior from union members. The case of a professional staff member who was improperly supervised by someone in his/her own unit has been sent to arbitration. The Local scored a small victory in the case of a sabbatical-related grievance. The Provost had changed the Sabbaticals Committee's recommendation from one year to a semester without providing a reason. As a result of the grievance filed, he provided the faculty member the reason for his decision, although the decision itself was not changed. Kathy said that she had hoped to work with a grievance committee on using software that would be useful for tracking grievances, but, due to the high volume of grievances, did not have the time to do it.

Rich added that the Local does not file grievances willy-nilly. Also, a large proportion of the complaints that the Local receives pertain to governance issues, which are outside the union's prerogative.

Ken provided an update on the negotiations. Judith Hain retired on Aug 31, but she would continue to negotiate with the Local to revise the contract (LSPA), which she has stated to be one of her main objectives in the next six months or so. The Local is also in the process of negotiating patents. An offer has been made to the administration, but we have not heard back from them in over a month.

Instructional Service Specialists (ISS)/Clinical Service Specialists (CSS)

The Board of Trustees was precise in how it defined positions to be created under the rubrics of ISS/CSS. However, a number of violations of the agreement have come to the Local's attention. For instance, some ISS were assigned non-teaching responsibilities, in violation of the agreement. Other violations relate to the number of courses some ISS have been assigned to teach. The Local asked the administration to fill out a spreadsheet about the ISS/CSS, but it has not been done. There is a plan to organize a session on these issues.

Ken said that he has been working with Naomi Liebler to come up with a Master's proposal. This would enable the faculty working in Master's programs to derive some benefit.

Dana said that she has been waiting with great anticipation to increase the size of the Professional Staff Negotiations Committee by adding new members. Among issues that this committee would be examining would be the issue of out-of-title work.

Mike Heller provided a summary of the state of the Local's budget. On Aug 31, the Local closed its fiscal year.

Rich said that the Local tried not to inundate the members with communication. However, once a month he sends out his address to the Board of Trustees to the unit members. He would again be speaking to BOT tomorrow. He asked those present to consider attending the BOT meetings. The members would find interesting how little actual discussion takes place at these meetings, and how important business is conducted and critical decisions made often without much transparency. Ken said that he disagrees with the idea that the BOT members pay no attention to the statement that is read by Local's President. On the contrary, in his view, the BOT pays careful attention to what is said.

A bill has been passed in the assembly stipulating six years, instead of the current five, to tenure.

Old Business

Jennifer said that the Local would be conducting dormitory house calls, and is looking for volunteers to participate in the effort.

New Business

David announced that he is the union representative to the University Senate.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 pm.