

MSUFT Local 1904
General Union Meeting held on September 15, 2010
Location: Student Center, Room 419

Meeting called to order by President Jennifer Higgins at 2:35pm.

President's Welcome

Jennifer Higgins welcomed everyone to the first general Union Meeting of the fall 2010 semester. Briefly discussed the resignation of Julian Keenan and that the Officer board is continuing business as usual and is here to serve the interests of all Faculty, Librarians, and Professional Staff members as per our contracts. An Elections Committee will be convened and a special election will be held for the position of President.

Scholarship recipients

Elishia Ford and Lisseth Romero were present to receive the 2010 Becker/Keenen/Moore/Uhia/Waller Local 1904 scholarship. The scholarship recipients were joined by their advisor and unit member, Marie Washington. Both students are participants in the Health Career program and thanked the members for selecting them to receive this award. Ms. Washington also addressed the membership and updated those present about previous AFT scholarship recipients.

Marriage Equality

Richard Wolfson, Treasurer of MSUFT Local 1904, called on Cindy Meneghin to read the Resolution in Support Marriage Equality in New Jersey to the membership. C. Menighan moved to have the resolution approved and the motion was seconded. There was brief discussion and the motion passed. The vote was 28 in favor, 1 opposed and 0 abstentions.

Chris Aikin, Guest Speaker

Ken Brook, External Vice President introduced Chris Aikin, Political Director of AFT New Jersey, to the membership. Chris Aikin updated the membership about Governor Christie's toolkit and how it will affect our membership. The following points were emphasized:

- the breaking up of the collective bargaining unit
- student access to higher education by way of grants, EOF funding, etc.

C. Aikin discussed the key to gaining political support is by supporting our key political supporters with votes and financial support. AFT voters do turn out but they do not routinely attend for labor walks, phone campaigns, etc. and these activities are important to endorsing candidates and getting the attention of other political leaders. In order to get attention we must create a presence. Sustained communication and pressure on the legislature creates a strong presence.

Timing political advocacy is key. Linda Greenstein, a New Jersey Assemblywoman, is a strong supporter of the AFT. Supporting her in her run for New Jersey State Senate at this time will be crucial.

C. Aikin also provided examples of how Rutgers University raised their COPE Membership and their general membership by 10%.

C. Aikin stated that right now the legislature does not respect nor fear the AFT and they need to do one or the other. Although the Toolkit legislation is mostly geared towards public workers, many things apply to the State Colleges and Universities. Clarification was provided about the proposed increase to health benefit costs. It is currently 1.5% of an employee's salary; the proposed change would increase the subscriber's responsibility to 30% of the cost of the premium, which would equal 4.5% of an employee's salary.

Chris Aikin opened the floor for comments and questions:

Cindy Meneghin shared thoughts on getting advocates outside of the AFT and running a media campaign to counter the current messages in the media.

Grover Furr suggested that we involve our students more proactively. He also encouraged raising taxes in a graduated scale. He also stated that political funding should not be given to Democrats.

Rich Wolfson clarified that no Union dues are used for political purposes. Only funds that members separately contribute to the C.O.P.E. fund are used for political purposes.

Officer Reports

President:

Jennifer Higgins made the following announcements:

- There will be a program on Workplace Bullying on October 27th in Ballroom A at 12pm. The program is being presented by the AFT Local and the CWA Local.
- On October 13th, Jerry Collins Coordinator of Student Conduct for the Dean of Students Office will be presenting at the GUM on how his office can assist members with dealing with problematic students.
- On August 12th the first of a series of workshops was held for Professional Staff. This workshop addressed multi-year reappointments. A summary of the workshop will be distributed through the e-bulletin. There will also be a workshop on October 1 from 2-4 in the Courtyard Room in University Hall discussing first time reappointment process.

External Vice President:

Ken Brook acknowledged and thanked Bill Sullivan for assisting him in transitioning to his new role as External Vice President.

Dr. Brook acknowledged all members who participated in the legislative calling campaign held on July 28th. Although the call campaign was a success, we need more members to continue making calls to their representatives in regards to Governor Christie's toolkit.

He announced that there will be a spring C.O.P.E. drive.

Associate Vice President for Personnel:

Naomi Liebler discussed the following matters:

- During the period of May 3, 2010 through September 15, 2010 the Local received the following inquiries or requests for assistance 1 from a Librarian, 12 from Faculty and 17 from Professional Staff. Some of these arose from setting aside the four-day summer work week as a result of Bell Tower related contingencies.
- Two faculty grievances filed last semester have been withdrawn. One was satisfactorily resolved and the other the grievant decided not to proceed.
- The inquiry related to Librarians was about moving books, which was out of their job requirements, was withdrawn because the Librarians decided to voluntarily move the books.
- A grievance was avoided for a faculty member by securing a pay adjustment upward for his summer session course. The faculty member has chosen to accept this payment in lieu of filing a grievance.
- A professional staff member seeking to teach two courses on overload was told they could not teach during her normal workday and that they could only teach during their lunch hour or outside of the normal workday and was asked to give up one section. Management misrepresented the matter. The State-wide Contract, and an OER decision dated April 2007 confirms what is written in the contract, clearly does not permit such a policy. As a result, management reversed its decision and the professional staff member was permitted to teach the second course.
- Reminders went out to members that the deadlines for personnel actions are posted on the Provost's website.
- Reminders went out to Faculty, Librarians and Professional Staff to check the Academic Calendar for important dates and deadlines.
- Members were encouraged to contact the Grievance team if they feel they think they need assistance even if they are not sure. Members were also reminded to keep good notes and to keep a good paper trail. Dr. Liebler stressed that members should not let matters linger because there are certain time frames that need to be followed and any hesitation on the member's part can hurt the member's case.

Negotiations Coordinator:

William Vincenti discussed the following matters:

- Parking: There are continued conversations between the Administration and the Local in regards to parking. The Administration's position is that there are still the same amount of parking spots. Lot 7 will be back in service in approximately 7-10 days. It is suspected that there has been an increase in staffing resulting in less spots available.

Bill Sullivan stated that he drove around and by 9am only 10 spots were available in Lot 7, all other lots were full.

Another member stated that they suspected that student workers and SGA students are being provided with staff hangtags.

Serena Smith stated that at 2:43 p.m. she began to leave Car Parc Diem and did not make her way out until 3:13pm. She called the University Police Department and requested an officer be sent to Car Parc Diem to assist with the traffic.

Charity Dacey asked if there were any plans to update the Campus Emergency Plan.

Maria Washington expressed concern that in the event of an emergency the traffic would make it difficult to exit the campus and asked if this was being addressed in the Emergency response plan.

Cindy Meneghin suggested that all members subscribe to the campus alert system to receive text message alerts to the information quickly and timely.

- Donated Leave: There is a tentative agreement that will be posted on the Local's website for the membership to review and ratified along with other items being negotiated later this year.
- Bell tower: An Unfair Labor Practice charge has been filed.

Treasurer's report

Rich Wolfson made available and distributed an Income/Expense Report to all members. He spoke about how our income is distributed to the membership.

Secretary

Betsy Montanez discussed in brief a new incentive program being implemented to encourage current members to recruit agency shop members and new hires to become full paying members. A Nook from Barnes and Nobles is going to be raffled. More information will be made available in the next e-bulletin.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:06pm.

The minuets were approved as corrected on 10/13/10.