

UUP Purchase Chapter Ambassador Meeting

On June 5, 2019
Minutes

In Attendance:

Kate Hageman, Joe Germani, Jeffrey Arroyo, Di Yu, Shirley Williams, Lisa Hockstein, Lenka Pichlikova, Paula Rankine Belgrave, Greta Silva, Christina Cipriano, Bill Capowski, Richard Burton

NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist, Bill Capowski, explained the contractual and labor-related details of the current class action grievance on behalf of PT'ers who've had their healthcare benefits denied. Bill referenced Article II of the UUP Constitution, concerning the vital purpose of our union and also cited the crucial contract language pertaining to part-time academic employees and benefits, i.e., with the key set of eligibility criteria, tied together with a clearly inclusive "OR" sentence construction. Bill cleverly used a short skit to help illustrate the issue. Bill said that this grievance is one of the largest since the possibility of a class action grievance was enabled in 2011. In the ensuing discussion, it was pointed out that one of the factors underlying this grievance is study done way back in the 70s regarding Arts & Conservatory work, resulting in discrepancies in workload between the latter and that of other departments and programs at the college. Bill emphasized that while the relatively legalistic grievance needs to go forward, it's vital that grassroots, organized pressure continues to be exerted on the administrative decision-makers.

The discussion then moved to a more general focus on contingents and adjuncts. We talked about the need to engage this sector of the bargaining unit- many of whom are not yet members. This requires, at a fundamental level, knowing who and where they are, e.g., who is scheduled to teach this fall (Di pointed out that the fall schedule is out already). It also requires having a plan to connect with them in person in a systematic way. Certainly one element of this is being a part of any new employee orientation. But it's also true that many contingents don't attend such NEOs, so it's also important to connect with them at their worksites. Perhaps most fundamentally, Lenka said, they need to be organized, brought together and encouraged to act collectively to improve the current system.

The meeting ended with various participants committing to deliver membership cards to colleagues in their departments.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Burton, UUP Organizer