

**UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS - BROCKPORT CHAPTER  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday March 6<sup>th</sup> 2024, Seymour Union 220**

4:30 PM - 6:00 PM In Person

Attendance: Danny Too, Susan Orr, Brittany Profit-Rheinwald, Sara DiDinato, Anne Panning, Jie Zhang, Adita Kulkarni, Joseph Cochran, Bob Schneider, Mike Smith, Patrick Walter, Tracey Feaster, Michael Ray, Frances Dearing, Elizabeth Martin, Tom McDermott, Brad Snyder, Matt Kotula, Jamie Guillian, Heidi Rademacher, Garrett Roe, Joe Torre

**I. Approval of the minutes from 2/7 meeting.**

- a. Motion to approve: Sara DiDonato, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brittany Profit-Rheinwald
- b. Yes: 17 votes, No: 0, Abstain: 0 (passed)

**II. Approval of Agenda**

- a. Motion to approve: Tom McDermott, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brittany Profit-Rheinwald
- b. Yes: 17 votes, No: 0, Abstain: 0 (passed)

**III. Opening Introductions – what’s good, what’s not so good?**

- a. Brittany Profit-Rheinwald: The survey sent out about the president is confidential for anyone who was wondering.

**IV. Old Business**

- a. Feedback from LM meeting (NB. below are condensed notes from Labor Management and also brief notes from Exec Board comments):
  - i. Discussion about trainings scheduled over breaks. Chapter President thanked Provost for responding to the request to give advanced notice for any training during semester breaks. Further, requested that in future to please try to make clear what is mandatory and what optional. Provost stated, this was the intention and no problem going forward.
  - ii. Discussion about scantron exams - **Chapter President** made the following points;
    - 1. Some faculty, with large intro level classes rely on convenient scantron exams. Understandably, the college is seeking to cut costs for scantron services – perhaps there is a win/win solution.
    - 2. Might we transition to a couple of small scantron machines that faculty operate – low-cost solution that provides a big benefit, the college saves costs and faculty get convenience of scantrons.  
<https://www.scantron.com/higher-education/>  
**Provost Responded:**
    - 3. This is already being discussed as a solution by KSSPE department. It’s possible for the departments to buy a machine and be able to

maintain and run them themselves so personnel won't be required to.

4. The transition is already happening, and Jeff Thompson is helping a department start. Things are open for discussion, and Administration is open to hearing ways to make this transition better.
5. For smaller departments that may not be able to get one, they could possibly use one in a different department if arrangements are made.

**Chapter President responded**

6. Could this be done at a collegewide level so that ALL faculty can be sure of access even if departments cannot purchase?  
Provost responded
7. Arrangements can be made for smaller departments to gain access via larger departments perhaps for a small fee.

**At the Exec Board Meeting:**

- a. Michael Ray explained that there is software available for use on computers to use a scanner to check scantrons, President of Chapter requested information on this to be shared.

**iii. Discussion about sabbatical applications (very brief summary)**

**Chapter President** made the following points:

1. This has been the decision that I have received most comments about – it has been hugely detrimental to morale across campus.
2. Faculty perceive a shift in evaluation criteria and perceive denials to be unfair – essentially the “goal-posts” were shifted.
3. Any possibility of reconsideration of this round of applications and changing criteria moving forward? This is something we strongly encourage – it would aide morale.
4. The language that the sabbatical must be “transformational” has caused anxiety – this is not what the policy requires, though the statement that applicants much show value to the college is in the BOT policy.
5. The denials have a ripple impact across departments as faculty “take-turns” to apply so that departments can meet student needs and allow faculty sabbaticals. Denials mean departments have challenges as multiple colleagues are eligible but cannot all be on leave at the same time.
6. Explanation of denials led to conversation about time allocated to various tasks – this has potential to encourage a culture of “time allocation” this seems to push faculty to divert attention to research over student focused tasks because they have been informed that they will not be awarded sabbaticals for projects they should be achieving in regular research time. Protecting any research time is a challenge in the current environment.

7. 10 hours a week for research seems out of touch with faculty experience – this is a workload and morale issue.

**Provost responded:**

8. “Transformational” was taken the wrong way, it was not meant as SCHOLARSHIP that is transformational, but Individual wise. Apology about the language and how it was perceived. But was merely about the individual on the sabbatical and the opportunity to develop new skills/begin new projects etc. It is agreed that clarification on this will be valuable to faculty in the future.

**Provost responded and College President reiterated.**

9. The transition to being more critical of sabbatical applications is meant to change the culture.
10. Pushing faculty to produce better proposals will help them with external goals such as grants etc.
11. Provost Martin Abraham offered to have meetings with applicants if they have questions, or need guidance on their applications.
12. There is now a precedent that applications must be of great quality, and demonstrate the applicant has a great understanding of what they are going to accomplish during their sabbatical.

**Chapter President and LRS reiterated:**

13. Because this “culture shift” wasn’t transparent faculty who applied and were denied feel the goal posts were moved in the middle of their application process and they were harmed since they didn’t know that their applications were going to be assessed by new criteria – that a culture shift was underway. Everyone has now received that message – reconsideration of denials would greatly boost morale.

**College President interjected**

14. We have had a long discussion – your message has been heard. The Provost and I will discuss the matter – no commitment on reconsideration of denials but will consider.

**At Exec Board:**

- a. Matt Kotula asked if there is a possibility of getting quantitative data re. effects of these new policies, to see how many are denied, approved and to whom. Can UUP Ask for a report from the provost about who/what departments are gaining approvals and whom is being denied?
- b. NYSUT Rep Jamie Guillian responded that UUP can ask but it won’t change the fact the college still have the final say.
- c. Many members expressed that the provost invitation for individual meetings to go over applications feels like a “kiss the ring” scenario.
- d.

iv. Discussion about restructuring and mergers

**Chapter President** made the following points:

1. This project is causing a great deal of anxiety and mistrust.
2. Faculty believe it is a plan to merge departments and ultimately to disinvest in the liberal arts.
3. Faculty cannot see the point – why is there a need to “balance numbers” – affinities exist across many departments.
4. Is this a budgetary issue?
5. Faculty believe that the solicited input will make no difference – that decisions have already been made and there is a veneer of consultation.
6. General sense is that articulating a vision or purpose – direction forward for the college would be helpful – then faculty would know how to respond, how to assess models etc.

**Provost** provided the following comments:

7. Purpose of restructuring is “balance” and to help create equity for chairs in departments, and to focus/highlight programs for perspective students.
8. The task force has worked independently from the Provost Office, and the task force collects information, research and then the administration gets to make decisions based on their results. Administration decides what “if any” input to utilize.
9. Taskforce undertook extensive research and presented models. Provost responded with a hybrid – it was NOT a model he would have initially created. The current step in the process is faculty and department feedback to those ideas. This is the time for an opportunity to comment about those changes, so they make an informed choice.
10. Mergers are not on the table as of right now. Does not mean they could not be in the future

**Chapter President** responded

11. It would be very helpful for the administration to share vision and purpose for the restructuring and explain how the “balance,” “equity” and highlighting of programs is best facilitated by restructuring rather than via other means. Also, to share information about the impact of restructuring on budget/structural deficit.

**At Exec Board** meeting:

- a. A member stated: Women and Gender Studies are being asked if they want to merge, and offices are being moved. There is not much transparency about why all these moves are happening.
- b. A member commented: Could mergers be happening to get chairs back into teaching?

## V. Reports

### a. Officers

- i. VP for Academics: Sara DiDonato:
  1. AI Panel in Higher Ed is looking for help, if anyone is interested please reach out to Sara.
- ii. VP for Professionals: Brittany Profit Rheinwald
  1. Workshop on Performance, Evaluation and Salary increases is coming up on April 9<sup>th</sup> via Zoom from 12-1:30pm. To Register here is the link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1enSoSZqlgXVEa1T1BfvV5-O2a9p3-qUmLBbZuJHmaVU/edit>
- iii. Membership Development: Kelly Cary (unable to attend)
- iv. REOC: Steve Fugle
- v. Treasurer: Danny Too
  1. Audit is done, and the finance committee meets at the DA.
- vi. VP for Contingents: Matt Kotula
  1. VP is going to be working with our Lead Organizer from Statewide, Rob Trimarchi with contingent faculty outreach.

### b. LRS Jamie Guilian Report

1. If members in your department have any questions about Leaves, please reach out to the chapter. There is a lot of information and opportunity, so it is best to connect with the chapter for individual guidance.

### c. Presidents Report

- i. Faculty Annual Report Narrative Questions
  1. There is a proposal to amend the narrative questions for the Faculty Annual Report. UUP does not object to this idea, but wants to ensure it works to the benefit of faculty.
  2. The issue is somewhat challenging for the following reason. There is NO post tenure review of faculty – thus for tenured faculty the annual report is not meant to be evaluative, merely to document that a full workload has been met.
  3. However, for those without tenure the Annual Report is part of the tenure packet and is evaluative. Under the Taylor Law (NY Labor law) any change to evaluation tools (other than modality) must be negotiated.
  4. We scheduling meetings with UUP research team and with Provost Abraham to discuss this issue.

- ii. Organizing Efforts – Rob Trimarchi our UUP organizer will be on campus every few weeks. His next visit is Tues/Weds March 26/27. If anyone would like to help out and walk campus with him please reach out. Member to member organizing is very effective.
- iii. Legislative Season – attached to e-mail please see the Gov. proposed budget. This is early in the process, but looks positive. Please support UUP legislative efforts. The fight to save Downstate is especially important – does not directly impact us, but does impact a large vulnerable population. Resisting closure is the right thing to do and sends an important message. Legislative info here <https://uupinfo.org/legislation/agenda/>
- iv. The Delegate Assembly is coming up in April in Saratoga Springs, our Delegates are registered.
- v. Workshop on Retirement and Healthcare considerations is coming up on March 26<sup>th</sup> via zoom from 3-4:30pm, register here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Dhobp9d3JnnR1knFN9eGv1xo7sAXoFIC0Knqwxkj37Y/edit>

#### **VI. New Business**

- a. End of the spring semester budget request – last year picnic with food truck cost around \$3,500
  - i. Motion to Approve: Joseph Cochran, 2<sup>nd</sup> Patrick Walter, Yes: 20 votes, No: 0, Abstain: 0 (passed)

**Notes:** Next LM meeting is April 10<sup>th</sup> in person **Seymour Union 228** – 12-1pm. All are welcome to attend; attendance is on an observer-only basis.

