

UUP ESC Chapter Labor Management Meeting NOTES

July 19, 2023

Data requests in **bold**.

Chapter Attendance: Pamela, Kelly, Anastasia, Sophia, Janet, Malongze, Dianne

Management: Lisa, Nathan, Kathleen, Brian

Funding and initiatives

1. Update on the University budget and enrollment.

Discussion: **The Chapter states that according to Power BI dashboard, enrollments are up. What kinds of things can we expect with enrollments, especially with such a significant increase from last year?** *Management states that the enrollment can change at any point. To address growing enrollments we're moving to full time faculty hires. 12 new faculty hired (2023), and 2 ongoing searches. Will be announcing eight (8) new faculty searches coming up and 3 that are currently ongoing but weren't filled in the last couple of years. The Chapter asks how many of these faculty are replacing lines that were vacated and how many are in response to the increased enrollments? Management states that faculty numbers have been increasing over the years and outpace retirement. There's no 1 to 1 vacancy and filling; all vacancies are to fill need with available resources. Hiring is a long term vision. Hiring is outpacing retirement (more hiring than attrition).*

The Chapter provides the following information regarding Non-Renewals and Line Decreases:

- Grad: 1 nonrenewal (20%)
- Social/Behavioral Sciences: 4 non renewals (25-50%) and 1 line reduction (was 100%)
- Human Services: 2 non renewals (30 and 60%) and 3 reductions (all were 100%)
- Science, Math and Technology (SMT): 5 non renewals (16-60%) and 2 reduction
- Arts and Humanities: 3 non renewals (25,25 and 35%) and 2 reductions OR renewals (weren't on Gonyea's list)
- Business: 1 nonrenewal (50%)
- Van Arsdale: 1 line reduction

Discussion: **The Chapter asks: If enrollments are up but we are cutting many part-time lines, how will we be able to serve students when many of those faculty were teaching a high volume of high demand courses (many with wait-lists)? What is the rationale for the non-renewals?** *From the labor relations standpoint (Brian), mission related decisions are up to management. Part of these decisions are to increase the amount of FTE (faculty and professionals) to meet the needs of the university and strengthen the university and provide a continuity of service. Some of it is also looking at the institutional structure, which is a part of the conversation today. Management (Nathan) states that a lot of factors come into focus. Over*

the years, the trend has been for us to move into more FTE lines and fewer PTE lines. To do this we need to give up some of our part-time lines. There were some percentage adjustments made on lines as well where the FT line was a temporary bump up and employees were being returned to their original part-time status. Brian states they will provide better retirement numbers in the coming weeks. **The Chapter asks Management what the expectation is for the remaining faculty to pick up the workload, specifically Math where 7 part-time lines were cut?** Management (Nathan) states that Deans figure out the workload components, that we'll be able to continue serving students, and in the case of Math there are two additional new faculty joining the department. **The Chapter asks if any of the part-timers were invited to apply to the FT lines?** Management (Nathan) states they were, one was already hired onto one of those lines. Moving forward, some departments will allow only a Master's degree to qualify for these FTE faculty positions which will create additional opportunities for those who may not have completed a doctorate. **The Chapter will send a request for a list of departments where new faculty are being hired for the follow-up discussions. THE CHAPTER DEMANDS RESCINDING THE NON-RENEWALS. The number of PT lines cut in some departments is causing an incredible amount of stress on those impacted employees and the faculty who remain.** Brian states no and that these decisions are within management's rights.

2. Update on SUNY funding from the NYS budget. Has there been any change to Empire's allocation of the operating funds?

Discussion: **The Chapter and UUP have been working hard statewide on advocating to SUNY and legislators on funding for Empire.** Management states that they, too, continue to advocate for funding allocation. It's an on-going process where we don't have much power, but we continue to advocate and make our case.

Institutional Change

1. There have been several moves and changes to the organization of Empire. For example, recently accessibility and media learning were moved to OAA. What additional changes to the organization or functions at the University are in the works?

Discussion: Management states that there are no updates at this time about anything in the pipeline. A note will go out collegewide about a discussion happening in OAA about the structure of our Academic Affairs, but no decisions or anything concrete.

2. Are there any academic department changes planned?

Discussion: Management states that the answer is the same as the previous question.

3. Are there discussions or plans to close additional locations, especially given that Lisa stated on a podcast that we are an online institution?

Discussion: Management (Lisa) states that we are moving the Corning location to the community college. All location decisions are based on needs such as enrollment opportunities, on-site traffic, etc. Our eye is on co-location with some of our locations, which is related to enrollment oriented partnerships. Our sweet spot is community colleges. Looking at the expiration date on the leases may not tell the whole picture about a location. We need to be more strategic than when some of these leases are signed. For example, some of the leases have advertising restrictions, or have customer traffic or visibility, and other issues. We need to also think about how our locations and co-locations may allow us to have academic partnerships. We continue to talk about locations and co-locations and we continue to lean into that possibility. **The Chapter asks for clarity on if Empire has a touchdown point or actual office space at any of these co-locations?** Lisa states that Cheetanagua's co-location has office space. The Staten Island location serves the UFT Paras which are located directly downstairs. There are other examples of Empire locations co-located in high enrollment opportunities spaces.

The chapter requests a list of when current leases expire for all leased locations. Brian states that Julie will send the Chapter the list.

- 4. The chapter requests current organizational charts for all divisions and department levels. They are not currently on the website at the time the agenda was prepared.**

Employee Statuses

1. Reserving space to continue the discussion of the non renewal of many long-serving part time employees. With increased enrollment and SUNY funding, what is the rationale for the non-renewals? **This item was discussed earlier in the agenda.**
2. **The chapter requests a list of all vacant positions, to include the following items.** Since M/C and support staff vacancies impact UUP members, we are asking for all vacancies, not just UUP positions.
 - State title
 - Campus title
 - Department
 - Percent
 - Date it became vacant, or position was created
 - Status of the search

Discussion: Brian states they can provide a list of searches actively happening, those approved for searches, and will see what they can provide those that are vacant and funded; however, it's not clear why the Chapter would want to know about CSEA vacancies. **The Chapter clarifies that CSEA provides a lot of support to faculty and PE and vacant positions impact the workload of UUP members as it's often PEs who pick up that work for the duration of a vacancy.** Brian states that to the extent that this is CSEA bargaining work, then we need to have a discussion

*about this. The root problem seems to be workload and we need to have a conversation around this and to better understand individual circumstances so resolve these issues. **The Chapter agrees to follow-up discussions about all impacted members.***

3. In the beginning of the year, the chapter recognized the importance of working together to promote civility at the University in a message to President Vollendorf. In that message, we stressed the importance of looking for “meaningful actions to address institutional issues causing stress for employees.” The roll out of non-renewals and changes to responsibilities without input is a significant factor, and the chapter is reserving time to discuss. **Pamela spoke eloquently and passionately to the impact these non-renewals had on impacted members, many of whom have built their careers at Empire with most being here for many years with some being with Empire for 20, 30 and 40 years. The “courtesy” phone call these members received was an inhumane insult and not a courtesy or respectful appreciation for their time of service.**

Discussion: *Brian states that members who are experiencing a high level of stress due to non-renewals can seek out support service at EAP through member benefits. Additionally, Management finds it peculiar that the Chapter would mention civility or be concerned with civility given that the Chapter did not sign the civility statement. **Pamela explains that her email response explaining why we didn’t sign was civil, collegial and substantive. Tense discussion and back/forth ensued between the Chapter and Management around civility. HR has a role in shaping the discussions that have to take place, and how do we do that with care and respect for the person who is receiving that message. Pamela states that the Chapter is committed to civility and the climate at the university while maintaining the rationale for not signing the civility statement.***

Management responded that offering EAP services is their response to handling the concerns raised by a recently terminated employee. The Chapter mentioned that we currently do not have an EAP counselor assigned to SUNY Empire, and most recently, Kelly Mollica was in touch with their director to learn more about establishing an EAP joint committee. Human Resource agreed to meet and learn more about the process it entails to determine expansion of these services for all employees.

4. Reserving space to discuss changes to the professional mentors if needed. The chapter provided a list of questions regarding this group at the last meeting; however, we anticipate that we have received responses by this meeting. **N/A for this meeting.**

Course Access via Brightspace

1. This is a follow up from last month. In past platforms, everyone showed up as a participant. In Blackboard, they are anonymous. What did management find regarding the functionality of Brightspace in discussions with SUNY? *Management states they*

don't have the final answer from SUNY. The work is being reviewed and worked on. It's a continuing and on-going process in understanding functionality and what not.

Layout of 4 Park Avenue

The chapter requests information on the number of UUP members:

- In individual offices
- Shared with one other employee
- Shared with more than one other employee
- Are there plans to change this layout?

Discussion: *Management states that all employees have an office (shared or solo), and all employees who are required to maintain confidential files should have a file cabinet with a lock and key.*

The Chapter informed Management that we would like to exercise our contractual right to meet for a separate Labor Management for part time employees/issues. Brian states that he will review the contract and reach back out to us.