

UUP ESC Chapter Labor Management Meeting Notes

August 16, 2023

In attendance:

- **Labor:** Janet Aiello-Cerio, Malongze Foma, Pamela Malone, Anastasia Pratt, Richard Wells, LRS Michelle Couture
- **Management:** Kathleen Roberts, Robert Sanders, Brian Selchick. (Nathan Gonyea joined in the beginning to introduce Rob as the new liaison.)

Follow Up: Brightspace

Concerns over privacy have been on the agenda multiple times. The chapter requests that if there is no information regarding how to address this technically, then the chapter requests that a practice be put in place (and the University community notified of it) that anyone accessing a course should announce themselves in the course.

Management stated they needed to re-investigate as they were not familiar with the issue.

Organizational Charts: The chapter requests org charts for each division and departments within them to be provided at or before this meeting.

Charts are almost done.

Management provided the OAA chart after this meeting a few days after this meeting, and more updated Org charts are available from the President's page.

Designation of Saratoga as Official Work Site

Discussion of the official work site for employees who are either displaced due to a location closure or hired remotely, and how the work site impacts travel and Downstate or mid-Hudson Adjustments.

This was not an issue previously considered. We were advised to tell a member who was out of state who was mandated to come to Saratoga for meetings to submit a travel expense voucher, and to bring any future cases of denial of travel expenses to their attention. Management will look into this and seek guidance on official work sites.

Evaluation of Faculty and the Faculty Handbook

- The chapter confirms that the negotiated sections of the faculty handbook are still effective until new provisions are negotiated to completion, including faculty evaluation procedures.
- The chapter confirms the expectation that there be no changes to the negotiated sections of the handbook, in the document or in practice, until new provisions are negotiated to completion.

This agenda item was for the chapter to notify management of the above. No action/discussion needed.

Academic Reorganization of the University

The provost described a possible reorganization/restructuring/renaming of departments in a recent Academic Affairs update and stated that it will be discussed across the University.

- When will those discussions take place? Is there a communication plan?
- What is the estimated time frame of any changes?
- Who will participate in the discussions?
- How will feedback be reviewed?
- Will potential changes be reviewed with the University community prior to implementation? How will that feedback be incorporated?

The chapter indicated they have heard from many members who felt like the discussion and survey already indicated what changes would be made, and was just asking (for example) how many schools, rather than asking for feedback on the change. Management did not have a lot of info and it was agreed this would be a follow up.

Vacation Accruals: the 40-day cap has been waived in the last couple of years, and members may have significant vacation accruals that are in danger of being forfeited. Therefore:

- The chapter requests a list of any UUP member with more than 31 accrued vacation days to be provided at or before this meeting.
- What efforts will the administration take to ensure members can take their earned time and not lose it?

Management did not have the list at the meeting, but emailed it to the chapter after the September 20th LM meeting. They also indicated they would be reminding both members and supervisors of the limit; encouraging members to take time and supervisors to do their best to approve.

Professional Performance Programs

- Reserving time for a discussion of the electronic process. How is it going? Are there any issues?
- We had discussed a joint LM training on programs and evaluations. A date was selected but there was a conflict, so we are looking to identify a date during this meeting while everyone has their calendars.
- The chapter requests a list of all professional members whose performance programs are out of date or missing to be provided at or before this meeting.

There haven't been any issues thus far. Michelle and Kathleen will connect after the meeting for a date on the training; which was agreed on both sides to be beneficial.

Management did not have the list for the programs but it was provided to the chapter just prior to the September 20th LM meeting.

Presentation Regarding Part Time Members by the Chapter

The chapter has been working with each and every part time member who was non-renewed. Ana read some of the comments from these devastated members:

I appreciate the hard work of the union supporting us. I feel ESU is on a downward trajectory, one that doesn't consider student success but budgets only. I find this incredibly discouraging and now I have to plan for what I will do next in life. (From a member who has served over 20 years.)

I felt bad for the dean for having to give the news to so many people. I could tell the decision was totally out of her control. I've always met or exceeded my target; I usually do 4-6 different individual tutorials and a study group each term. It's a lot of work, especially with the conversion to Brightspace last year. But I liked my students and my colleagues, and I've always felt like a valued member of the college and now university. I understand the financial challenges that Empire faces, but it does hurt to be let go so easily after so many years. The feedback I've gotten on my performance has always been good, and I think I've helped a lot of students over the years. I know my fellow faculty value my contributions, but I don't think the administration realizes how much the part timers contribute. I'm most concerned for the students who may be forced into large online sections when they might be most success in personal individual tutorials... just feeling very sad, insulted and angry. (This member has also served over 20 years.)

My rapport with students as well as my relationships with my colleagues and supervisors have always been excellent. When I met with my dean via facetime, she gave me the shocking news that I was not being renewed. When I asked for the reason for the decision, she assured me that the decision was not made by her. She went on to explain that upper administration decided not to renew my contract due to the need to make budget cuts. She told me she felt bad having to relay this news and she always appreciated how well I worked with students. Weeks later, I am still astonished over being

treated this way by the university after a quarter century of dedicated service to the institution and its students. The news was totally unexpected. I was assigned a fall schedule and students were enrolled in my courses. My name was attached to these courses up until the day I got the news. My enrollments the past academic year were over target. I understand that part time lines have no guarantee of renewal; however, I would have hoped that years of service and performance would be a factor in such decisions.

I was indeed taken aback by my non-renewal as I was continually being asked my opinion and input on all academic concerns pertinent to our offerings.

The loss of this job significantly affects my life. I enjoy teaching and will miss the stimulation of my students. Within one year I would have been eligible for health insurance in retirement, which would be a substantial financial benefit. I am immediately hurt financially, and this financial loss will continue.

The chapter presented management with a petition signed by nearly 250 members in support of our part time colleagues:

SUNY Empire University Administration: Save UUP Jobs!

We, UUP members at the Empire State Chapter, demand the University administration prevent the loss of jobs and upheaval in employees' lives and rescind the recent non-renewals and line decreases for our contingent employees.

In July, just after the tentative agreement was announced, the University hastily served nearly 30 part-time academics with notices of non-renewal or substantial decreases in their lines. These are long standing members of the University community, with more than 394 years of experience combined. In some cases, they had courses in the Term Guide for fall, and many serve as valued mentors for their students. Some had just received their summer contract line increases and within days received non renewal notices for August 31st! These valuable employees have been collectively responsible for over 7,000 credits of direct instruction (based on 2020-2021). This workload will now be placed upon other members.

UUP has worked hard to recognize the unique circumstances of our part time and otherwise contingent members, and are poised to ratify a successor contract with significant gains for these hard-working employees. They deserve to receive these hard-fought benefits to which the state and SUNY agreed, yet Empire management has DENIED and has sent a chilling message to all employees that dedication to academia and students means nothing.

With increased SUNY funding and enrollment, there is no reason for the loss of jobs, and changes can be implemented in a civil manner that is respectful of employees' work lives and careers.

We therefore call upon the SUNY Empire State University administration to:

- Withdraw any notices of non-renewal for all members. Provide part time members with priority opportunities to fill a full time vacancy.
- Demand a portion of SUNY funding provided in this year's NYS budget that will close any projected deficit at the University.
- Hold University-wide Town Halls to discuss the budget in detail and how the University otherwise expects to cover the projected deficit.
- Engage in conversations and planning with employees who will be impacted by a proposed change in organization or job responsibilities. Continue these discussions throughout the change.
- Provide all UUP members with the appropriate annual plans, performance programs, and evaluations.
- Treat all employees with respect for them, their careers, their often years (or decades) of service to the University, and contractual rights.

UUP members are the backbone of our institution and provide invaluable services to our students.

Management heard the comments and accepted the petition respectfully. They will review and follow up.

