

UUP ESC Chapter Labor Management Meeting NOTES

November 14, 2023

Budget and Initiatives

Regarding the Campus Business/Finance Plan required by SUNY to contribute to the Sustainability Plan, the chapter has the following:

- The chapter requests a copy of the plan. If the plan is not yet complete, what is the deadline? And we request we receive a copy of it at that time.
- Who developed the plan?
- Were any UUP members involved in its development? If so, what were the directions (i.e., were they told they were creating a sustainability plan)?
- How will the report be used at the campus level?

Discussion: *Management says they received the template from SUNY last Wednesday and info is due to SUNY November 26, and they will discuss it at the next Cabinet's meeting next week. The information that will be used is existing info— not new. It's possible that some UUP members will be doing some of this work, but that's not the lens through which the work is being completed. The request is for inputting existing data. The Chapter asks if the campus will use this data internally for any reason? Management states it's really just collecting data from existing sources. The Chapter requests to see the report when it's completed.*

Regarding Enrollment:

- Currently, enrollment for the spring term is showing a significant increase. What are the plans for serving this influx of students?
- What are the plans for departments or schools with lower enrollment and/or applications? Specifically, has there been any discussion of the elimination of any program or degree?

Discussion: *Management states that there are a number of current job openings posted for Student Success. Enrollment begets lines, and there are currently PE and faculty lines being advertised in areas where there's been growth, including adjunct lines. This all reflects the enrollment demands. Rob states he has not been part of any discussions concerning the elimination of any program or degree. The Chapter asks how quickly the university is ready to respond to enrollment increases in the context of all of the new partnerships and enrollment trends? So much depends on where the need is, and there seems to be a lot of support around this.*

Regarding the University Legislative Agenda:

- Will Empire have a legislative agenda, and when will it be available?
- If not, what talking points will the University have for this upcoming session?

Discussion: *ESU's legislative agenda aligns with SUNY's. Any talking points would be coming out in the next month, but there's nothing right now.* The Chapter requests that if there is something specific to SUNY Empire to please let them know and we will happily include it on our UUP legislative agenda.

CoreCraft

The chapter asks for University support in ending any purchases by SUNY from CoreCraft.

Discussion: *Management says that this was on UUP's May agenda and was under the impression that this was already resolved. SUNY Empire has not purchased anything from CoreCraft.* The Chapter let Management know that we are open to voicing our support of SUNY Empire to advocate against the use of CoreCraft. This could be something to be on the legislative agenda to fix the procurement rules to have it so that they are not a preferred vendor for NYS.

Extra Service

The chapter requests a schedule of rates for extra service for teaching. Do they mirror the adjunct pay rates?

Discussion: The Chapter inquired if the rates reflect the per course amounts for adjunct instructors? *Management states that the rates vary. Robert will send those to Pamela for review.* The Chapter asks if everyone teaching on Extra Service is being paid according to that schedule. *Management states that there are varying numbers which seem to be based on the difference in the work. For example, some are by headcount.*

University Climate

- The chapter requests involvement in discussions and plans for creating a positive climate at the University. Having us at the table is a way to advance the mutual interest of improving the work atmosphere.
- What initiatives are being planned?

Discussion: *Management says yes, of course. Kathleen would be happy to collaborate with the Chapter on all of the many workshops and trainings that are unfolding. Employees filled out the survey and there was a lot of feedback. The top workshop topics requested were Conflict Resolution, and Giving / Receiving Critical Feedback. Kathleen is working with multiple groups around the college on supporting employees in areas they (employees) have identified as being their top priority. The needs and demands are on every level. Some items in development is a "Supervisor's Institute". The college also has a need for a lot of leadership development as we design succession plans mandated by SUNY. Learning opportunities for employees need to be ongoing and not just remote but also face-to-face, to move towards being a more collective community.* The Chapter looks forward to working together towards a mutual positive goal for employees. The Chapter and Management agree that we share common goals

but that often times the path to those goals vary and by collaborating on climate workshop presents opportunities to better navigate the path towards those goals.

There was some discussion clarifying the difference between Governance and the union in the context of university business and climate. For example, the union will have a different perspective on mandatory trainings and such because the focus will be on work time (unpaid, especially), whereas the Governance perspective may not be on that. The Mission and Vision of an org. is Management. When it affects employee hours, wages, terms and conditions of employment, it involves the union. For example, it's better to have discussions about the unintended consequences of a new policy or requirement *before* something is implemented so that both sides are getting ahead of any conflicts.

Peer Reviews in the Faculty Evaluation Process

Clear and consistent processes are of utmost importance to the union, as they speak to due process, member rights and protection, and mandatory subjects of negotiation. The chapter would like to discuss the presence of administrators in the discussion meetings of APC, to ensure the processes of faculty evaluations.

Discussion: Anastasia explained that clear and consistent processes are of utmost importance to the union, as they speak to due process, member rights and protection, and mandatory subjects of negotiation. For those reasons, we are seriously concerned about the provost's attempts to attend deliberative sessions of the Academic Personnel Committee (APC), which is not allowed per the negotiated section of the faculty handbook. Although the committee is jointly constituted by our shared governance system and the chapter, that negotiated handbook supersedes the standard governance practice of including the OAA liaison in every meeting and dictates when the provost should be involved in discussions. *Management requests for clarification about what the "ask" is.* The Chapter states that the request is to make it clear that the Provost should not be involved in APC meetings when they are *discussing* individual candidates and voting. The Provost should only come to a meeting to hear recommendations *after* APC has made votes. *Management understands the Chapter's explanation that a Provost should not be attending deliberation meeting of APC and agrees to talk with Nathan Gonyea to make this clear.*

Negotiated signed agreement with the union trumps any university policy or bylaws. When a university policy, bylaw or such is in conflict with a negotiated and signed agreement, the negotiated and signed agreement wins.

Part time faculty

The University has stated that the elimination of nearly 30 part time positions was done in order to create full time positions. The chapter has the following questions:

- It seems that the number of full time faculty who have left (retirement, etc.) is equal to or very close to the number of new faculty hired. How many new full time positions were created from the nearly 30 part time renewals?
- With how many of the non renewed faculty members did the administration have a conversation regarding the possibility of a full time position?
- What is the plan for the upcoming year? What positions is the University planning on adding? Are there plans for the elimination of any faculty positions (full or part time)? If yes to either, in what departments?
- Is there a process by which part timers can be assigned to or apply for these positions?
- What efforts has the University made to ensure that part time faculty are able to use their vacation time?

Discussion: *Katheleen sent a chart with this info to Pamela several weeks ago. The numbers seem to be around the same right now. It's not clear if a script was given /used with employees being non-renewed to inform these employees that they can apply for full time positions. Many applied to be adjuncts and were hired. Their adjunct employment of 1 course was equivalent to their teaching load on their former line. The number of these employees who applied as adjunct employees seems to imply that it's possible a conversation happened occurring encouraging them.* The Chapter re-asks if the reason that people were non-renewed is to make room for full time lines. *Management states that we have many open faculty searches and new ones underway. Personnel funds have been diverted in that way.* The Chapter reiterates that many of the impacted members stated they were notified about their non-renewal from their Deans very hastily and after their courses were confirmed and enrollments in the courses confirmed. Then there was a scramble to find staffing for those courses so many of those impacted members came back as adjuncts to staff courses that were theirs prior to being non-renewed,

Grades in Gradebook and SALES

Anastasia introduced a new agenda item with approval of the group. The issue is that when instructors keep their Gradebook visible to students in Brightspace throughout the term, a student can see their final grade before it's posted and before the completing of their SALE. This may influence a student's feedback about the instructor in a negative way, which can then impact their employment review. *Management suggests there might be some way to mitigate this through timelines and cutoffs, or instructor practice regarding the Gradebook.* The Chapter states that the negotiating team has been proposing that the SALES not be used during high stakes times, like they did during COVID and the Brightspace conversion, as a way to mitigate this. Anastasia and Rob will speak further to better articulate the problem and potential resolutions.