

Empire State University

Labor-Management Meeting NOTES

for the 17 December 2025 meeting

10 December 2025

In attendance: Jason R.; Dianne R.; Aley O.; Malongze F.; Janet A.; Sophia M.; Michelle C. (LRS); Sharon B.; Rashmi P; Lindsay H.

Old business from the last meeting:

1. Extra service for advising and full-time mentors. There are professional mentors who are at full load. When will they begin to receive extra service for exceeding mentee targets (UUP)?

- *The Chapter summarized the current ongoing situation and previous discussions. Current spreadsheets with mentee loads are confusing faculty because there are multiple columns with multiple numbers in the sheets; some columns show mentors are over their load while others show they are not. Sharon explains that to her knowledge, census dates are what's confirmed for workload so those numbers are the most accurate. The Chapter's concern is that if the numbers indicate as early as January that they will be over their load, then there should be something in place to get the extra service conversations happening earlier. Sharon and Rashmi will speak with Seana about this and circle back.*

2. College of Education faculty advising numbers and College of Education faculty workload. There are faculty in the College of Education who have exceeded their mentee expectation, and there are also faculty who are working in excess of the workload specified in their annual plans (UUP). Has the Education dean met with the faculty?

- *The Chapter explains that the issues are ongoing. There have been discussions for how AI can help support some of the workload issues, but the turnaround time for set up is a year. In the meantime, there needs to be extra service pay discussions. Additionally, EdD faculty have explained that dissertation committee work is not counted in their workload, despite the incredible amount of academic work that goes into this type of work. There have been suggestions of bringing in faculty from other disciplines onto dissertation committees to offset some of the workload, but that then leads to workload issues for those faculty. One EdD*

faculty currently chairs 24 dissertation committees (for 24 students). Rashmi asked for clarity on this matter and Dianne explains that students count towards workload if they're in a faculty's course, but if they are chairing dissertations then it currently isn't counting, even though there is an equivalency in academic work given the level of academic direction being provided to doctoral students. Rashmi acknowledges that chairing 24 dissertation committees is a lot and there are fewer opportunities for flexibility in leveraging other faculty to assist given the specialization of research expertise that is required at that level, and the dependency on students' areas of research, and asks for some context about prior discussions on this issue. Rashmi will do some research and meet with the dean to get a fuller picture and to think through some of these issues, then circle back to the Chapter. The desire is for the program to be sustainable.

3. Brightspace login monitoring. Are deans being told that faculty need to login to each of their course sites at least three times per week (UUP)? UUP is also aware of unofficial practices being used in Empire Online when it comes to accessing course sites. What procedure is currently being followed?

- *The Chapter (Dianne) summarizes prior LM discussions and faculty concerns on Brightspace monitoring. The concerns amongst faculty continue and they will continue to log in when it makes sense to them for their courses because three times can be arbitrary. Additionally, inaccuracies do exist. There is at least one case where an adjunct's activity was not correctly monitored by the system. Additionally, reactivations are not counted as new logins. Rashmi states that accurate data is important. The university's position is that the three-login framework is a part of our Financial aid compliance (Title 4). There is an aspect of it that is about engagement. Currently, everyone who has access to courses are data-collection (such as decision support), instructional design, and student-facing services whose role is to support students through multiple means of interventions. Dianne explains that Brightspace is not the only place where learning/instruction happens between faculty and students. Rashmi concurs (saying Brightspace logins are "necessary but not sufficient" for measuring engagement) and explains that this is something we need to be thinking about in terms of compliance.*

4. Faculty extra service rate. A majority of SUNY campuses pay the regular adjunct rate for extra service teaching. SUNY Empire is one of few campuses that pays a reduced rate yet is one of the most financially solvent. What is the rationale for this policy (UUP)?

- *Sharon explains that there are ongoing discussions. The university is aware that they've been doing things this way for a long time and that there needs to be some*

change. Sharon noted that other SUNYs operate on a 10 month calendar rather than a 12 month calendar like Empire, which complicates benchmarking. They will come up with proposals and circle back.

5. Department chair compensation. The department chairs object to their low stipend and increasing workload. The stipend -- \$4,000 -- has not been raised in close to ten years (UUP).

- *Sharon explains that there are ongoing discussions. The university is aware that they've been doing things this way for a long time and that there needs to be some change. They will come up with proposals and will hopefully have something more tangible by the next LM.*

6. UUP requests an administration response to the 25 October 2025 letter sent to Provost Kathuria regarding current teaching and mentoring loads for university faculty (full-time and part-time) (UUP).

- *Rashmi explains they are actively working on this and will circle back.*

7. UUP would like to know what criteria were used when determining DSI distribution and would also like to know if all supervisors were consulted about DSI awards.

- *The Chapter (Jason) asks if everyone who is in a position to make recommendations was informed. Sharon explains that she spoke with Cabinet and reviewed the distribution, and acknowledged the past practice of allowing employees to self-nominate. When staff are able to self-nominate, it de-emphasizes the importance of performance conversations that employees and supervisors should be having. At its core, "discretionary" is at the discretion of supervisors in order to acknowledge high or exceptional performance. The Chapter (Jason) explains that we can think about it, but the culture and practice has always allowed for that. He added that the plan is for the Chapter to release some interpretation of the data. The Chapter will not be releasing the raw data. Upon review, it's clear that the same people are not getting DSI every year, despite the longheld belief among members that this is the case. The distribution seems equitable across departments and member groups (faculty and PE). Where we have discrepancies is in salaries (ours vs across SUNY), and salary compression issues. Dianne adds to Jason's comments by saying that self-nomination creates opportunities for members who have new supervisors to really highlight themselves to a supervisor who is just getting to know them and their work. Sharon acknowledges that and emphasizes her view that the aim should be to have good records of performance management work.*

New business:

1. Concerns about the CHHS dean. Multiple issues have been raised by the CHHS faculty regarding the college's leadership. These issues are impacting faculty work (UUP).

- *The Chapter discussed ongoing concerns involving the dean, noting that certain behaviors and expectations have raised questions about workplace boundaries and power dynamics. Sharon and Rashmi acknowledged the concerns and suggested that while leadership development takes time, sensitive matters may be best handled in smaller or individual settings. Michelle acknowledges these comments, and explains that Chapter leadership speaking directly one-on-one to a dean about a union-related issue involving a member could be construed as violating the Taylor Law, so Chapter leadership has to be very careful about some of those conversations. It's sometimes a good option, but it's not always an option. Both the Chapter and Management emphasized the importance of maintaining professionalism and clear communication as these conversations continue. Rashmi suggests we could have smaller meetings to discuss sensitive matters, which might be an approach for us to take. Sharon and Michelle concur.*

2. Have administrative issues regarding the faculty review and reappointment process been resolved?

- *The Chapter (Jason) inquires about updates. Sharon acknowledges how stressful this process has been for faculty and she explains there's been significant effort and time put into understanding what caused the issues. Sharon and Rashmi explain that they are devoting a lot of resources into this process and will circle back with a cleaner product.*

3. Are changes in the structure of the Office of Advancement anticipated considering the change in leadership?

- *Sharon explains that aside from what was announced, she is not aware of any additional restructuring or changes. Lindsay concurred. Sharon explains that in the statement of Veronica's departure and in the job posting there is mention of there being a closer alignment between Communications and the Office of Advancement.*

4. UUP will provide a list of people who will participate in SALE tool change discussions on behalf of the union.

- *The Chapter (Jason) asks how many people Sharon and Rashmi would like to be involved. Sharon and Rashmi said they will meet to discuss and circle back. Jason would like to have representation from across the university, to get as much input as possible. SALE and Handbook committees and discussions should be different.*

Sharon proposes that she, Rashmi, Lindsay and the reps from LM for SALE discussions meet and get the process moving, possibly the week of January 5th.

5. Who is currently the president's designated first contact for labor-management issues?

- *The Chapter (Michelle, LRS) asks to confirm who the president's designee is for LM to ensure that correspondences are going to the appropriate people, especially when dealing with contractual issues. Sharon confirms she is the President's designee and that Rashmi attends to represent the Provost.*

6. Interview schedule for January: CIO, DCIO, AVPHR

- *Sharon explains that there will be one position per week for campus interviews. The anticipated weeks are as follows: CIO on campus week of January 12th; DCIO week of January 19th; VP of Advancement week of January 26; AVPHR the week of February 2nd.*