

Empire State University

Labor-Management Meeting NOTES

November 19, 2025

In attendance: Jason R., Emma B., Dianne R., Malongze F., Alley O., Sophia M.; Michelle C.; Sharon B., Rashmi P., Lindsey H.

Old business from the last meeting:

1. Outstanding performance programs post-reorganization. There are professional employees who still do not have performance programs (UUP).

Discussion: *The Chapter asks about this again. Management explains that PPs are tracked based on existing PP/PA cycles and ask that the Chapter identify specific members with outstanding PPs for HR to help move their process along. The Chapter asks specifically for the pre- and post- PPs for members on a restructured list that Sharon sent around. The purpose for this review is to identify and resolve issues. Sharon says that management will not provide that information but that individuals who are experiencing issues can come forward. The chapter will follow up.*

2. 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)?

Discussion: *Circling back to this topic. Sharon explains there's a mix-match between management's report of workload and the Chapter's report of workload; however, the Chapter explains we are looking at the same reports this group is being asked to use to track their loads. Management expresses that this is an area where we need to better understand how we're arriving at such different workload counts in order to identify a baseline. The Chapter identifies that "unduplicated registration" is only counted in their workload if they registered, even if an employee has spent hours communicating with that student while they are not registered. There is agreement that language around registered/unregistered situations like this need to be tightened/ cleaned-up to help the process on both sides. This conversation is also happening in the IP discussions and will continue in that circle.*

3. 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).

Discussion: *Diane circled back to the faculty impacted by this situation. The tenured faculty expressed that they feel comfortable approaching their dean, but untenured do not. Management understands and takes this as a point of consideration, and also encourages all faculty to speak with their Chairs and their deans. The Chapter suggests sending out a general reminder to deans about the issue of workload, and that issues of workplace climate are longstanding at Empire even though many deans are new. Open communication between deans and faculty is important.*

4. 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, and the union wishes to discuss those practices.

Discussion: *The Chapter asks what is the policy and procedure for who goes into a Brightspace course, when and why? Management explains there are circumstances and they will send that, and that the matter of 3 posts is not intended to be intrusive or measure engagement in any great detail but rather as a supportive tool or reminder to keep momentum going. The Chapter explains that faculty see this as an infringement on academic freedom, especially those who have designed courses to function in a certain way. Additionally, logins don't accurately capture all of the engagement faculty may have with students (e.g. email, phone, etc.) and relying only on one way to capture engagement with students can paint a distorted or incomplete picture. Rahsmi will take Diane's thoughts and points back to the deans group. Sharon encourages the Chapter to put forth alternative solutions for this matter. However, Rashmi also explains that engagement in Brightspace is a small part of the evaluation process and will get some clarity about this for the next meeting. Michelle agreed and that we need to identify to what extent this may need to be negotiated, since anything used for evaluation needs to be a negotiated part of the faculty handbook even if it is intended to be a small piece..*

5. 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)?

Discussion: *Management will look into this and come back with recommendations.*

6. 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).

Discussion: *Management will look into this and come back with recommendations.*

New business:

1. 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).

Discussion: *Rashmi will review and validate the data and send it to the Chapter.*

2. UUP requests an administration response to the 6 November 2025 letter sent to VP for Human Resources Butler regarding DSI distribution for 2025 (UUP).

Discussion: *Management states letters have already gone out, and distributions were allocated in accordance with the UUP contract. The Chapter explains that not all supervisors were aware the process had begun and received no notification to nominate employees, so we'd like more clarity and transparency about the process. Faculty Chairs expressed they were also not informed the process began and they, too, were not asked to identify individuals for DSI. Sharon will find out more info on her end and report back, but the intended approach was that supervisors at all levels would be included in the process.*

3. What is the status of the Spanish-language BBA program? UUP is aware that the program is experiencing enrollment difficulties, which in turn could adversely affect our members working in that program (UUP).

Discussion: *Sharon explains that this program is an important investment for the university and given its newness and niche audience, it will take time to build the momentum. There is no intention to end the program. The Chapter asks that these things be better communicated to the Empire community to alleviate issues and concerns.*

4. Administrative support for Department Chairs and IPRCs during the review/reappointment/promotion cycle. Department Chairs and IPRC chairs should not be expected to perform routine tasks like soliciting reference letters and then loading them into Watermark (UUP).

Discussion: *The Chapter explains that past practice has **not** had Chairs or IPRC Chairs to do this work. Admin support staff is requested to assist with this. Sharon explains that admin staff are assigned in each department to assist chairs, and they will look into the matter of roles and responsibilities assigned to each admin staff assigned to support and will circle back.*

5. Concerns about new dean unfamiliarity with the university's policies and procedures and other related challenges. These issues are impacting faculty work (UUP).

Discussion: *The Chapter expresses issues of practices that do not respect faculty time (e.g. meeting repeatedly running overtime) or existing practices. The discussion revealed that it can be difficult for new deans (and supervisors in general) to come in and adjust to existing, long standing processes and cultures. Coaching and support from both ends (Chapter and Management) could help shape the experience for new supervisors.*

6. As a point of information, it is an established past practice for UUP to invite members from our chapter executive board and/or from our wider chapter membership to attend labor-management meetings as observers. This is intended to help people better understand the labor relations process at SUNY Empire. Management can also of course invite observers to labor-management meetings. The union will inform management in advance if we intend to invite any of our executive board or other members to attend labor-management meetings; such notice will be provided one week prior to a meeting taking place.

Discussion: *Management expresses that group dynamics can be impacted by changing attendees and it could alter the what/how is discussed. The Chapter understands the concern, and explains that the benefit is to allow folks closer to impacted members to attend and help add context on particular topics. Diane explains that LM at other institutions are open meetings for any member(s) to attend.*

7. Is management willing to move the January labor-management meeting to the morning or afternoon of Wednesday, January 28 (UUP)?

Discussion: *Yes.*