

UUP New Paltz Chapter – Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

11:00 am May 9, 2012

Attendees:

Executive Committee: Peter Brown, Linda Smith, Jeff Miller, Rachel Rigolino, Glenn McNitt, Richard Kelder, John Hain, Alan Dunefsky, Donna Goodman, Maryann Fallek, LRS William Capowski, Chapter Assistant Mary Thompson, Ed Hanley

Chapter members/guests: Irwin Sperber, Corinne Nyquist, Nancy Schniedewind, Julie Gorlewski, Rosemary Millham, Sue Books

Proposed agenda adopted as submitted. Minutes of the 041112 Executive Committee meeting approved as submitted.

Officers' Reports: (distributed via email before the meeting)

President Brown: reiterated his appreciation all the support he's received during this first year of his presidency; Fallek, Kelder, McNitt, and LRS Capowski were specifically mentioned by name. Fallek commented on an item (UUP's role in the College's budget process) in Brown's report. Specifically - in view of the extremely poor response by our members to an emailed request for their input on this subject, we need to think about how we go about soliciting member input in the future. Nyquist then raised the ongoing office space situation affecting full time librarians. Nyquist noted that, while the library staff had previously been told that office space was not union issue, it was clear from Part-Time Labor-Management (PTLM) Notes that the issue of adjunct office space had indeed been raised and addressed in recent PTLM meetings. Brown pointed out that when Miller looked into the issue he was informed that decisions about the librarian's office space had been based on what were supposedly "best practices" for library facilities.

VP Smith: reported that all requests for permanent appointment known to be "stuck in the system" had finally been approved and the affected professionals notified of their appointments. Capowski asked if the actual appointments were late or just the related notifications. Smith stated the appointments themselves were late, not the notifications.

VP Miller: briefly summarized the workload committee's recent efforts. He broached the idea of awarding some sort of incentive – perhaps an iPad – to help stimulate a better response rate to the next workload survey. A brief discussion ensued on the advisability of using incentive for this purpose. Fallek made a motion that the (executive) committee authorize a drawing for a prize or prizes to be determined later for all participants in the chapter's workload survey to encourage participation. Motion was seconded by McNitt and, after some further discussion, voted on and passed.

Grievance Officer Rigolino: has a grievance-related meeting scheduled for later in the day and another one tomorrow.

Secretary Hanley: nothing to report.

Committee Reports:

Communications: Rigolino indicated she will no longer be able to assist with layout of “The Bullhorn” and again pointed out the need to make alternative arrangements.

Legislation/Political Action: Per McNitt, the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) issue is being actively worked. Though members of the Assembly’s Governmental Operations Committee seem supportive of moving the issue forward, the committee chair does not.

Membership Development: Dunefsky reported that the next phase of the ongoing membership drive – direct mailings to fee payers - had been implemented. Responses were being received and would be analyzed to determine how to proceed further. The committee is also considering an initiative that would be geared towards professionals.

Old Business:

Resolution on Opting Out: by way of reintroducing the resolution for the committee’s consideration, Gorlewski briefly summarized the underlying issues behind it.

“Resolution Regarding School of Education Call for Action

Whereas numerous educators have identified the need to take a stand regarding the effects of standardization and privatization on schools; and

Whereas it is widely believed that a critically educated citizenry is essential to sustaining a meaningful democracy,

Therefore, be it resolved that the New Paltz Chapter of the UUP endorses the following Call for Action and agrees to recommend that the statement be shared with related union organizations as well as leaders in state government, particularly those in the New York State Education Department.

CALL FOR ACTION: EDUCATORS UNITE!

As public educators committed to democratic principles, we are charged to:

- Advocate for authentic reform initiatives that support public education to ensure PK-12 students develop the critical thinking and process skills necessary to become informed citizens capable of supporting an effective democracy,
- And, in support of this goal, resist, and support resistance of, forces that seek to connect standardized testing to teacher evaluation.

The current political climate is marked by powerful attacks on public institutions, including schools, colleges, universities and public employee unions. These attacks are dangerous because public education is an essential component of an effective democracy:

for citizens to self-govern, they must be able to engage in the process of recreating society in meaningful, intentional ways.

Today, neoliberal policies threaten the ability of public institutions to foster critical, thoughtful, active citizens. Education is being viewed as a commodity and the labor of teachers and students – at all levels – is being exploited as a means to generate data for private entities which then, more often than not, use those data to confirm the perceived ineffectiveness of the public institutions themselves.

As professional educators, teacher educators, and future educators, we must model the critical stance that we want school professionals and citizens in a democracy to embrace. We must not simply comply with policies and regulations that we know are unjust, flawed, and designed to undermine and destroy the power of the public sphere.

These actions may seem unnecessary and excessive; however, the actions of neoliberal reformers are, in fact, far more extreme and debilitating to our society – especially to those who are least powerful. Moreover, if we can lead a movement that involves educators throughout the state and nation, our efforts could have a significant impact by harnessing the power of education for social justice.

If these actions seem misguided, consider the following question: what would we expect our students to do? We hope to graduate educators who advocate for democracy and social justice; therefore, we must demonstrate our own commitment to these values.

The new teacher evaluation system exploits the labors of students, teachers, and administrators in an endeavor that

- shows no evidence of benefiting learners
- enriches private entities who develop and distribute the examinations
- is designed to prove that public institutions are deficient, setting the stage for privatization - a strategy that will deplete public schools and diminish the overall quality of education for all except the affluent, privileged classes.

In the new assessment system, the expertise and energies of students, teachers, and administrators are expended in order to provide data that enriches private entities and impoverishes public schools. This is not acceptable. Therefore, we recommend that school districts in states, (such as New York), that are subject to the damaging effects of evaluation systems based on standardized assessments should refuse to participate. Teachers and administrators should educate community members about high-stakes standardized assessments, and parents and their children should consider declining to provide data that only harm the quality of their education.

In New York State, this means that students in should not be subjected to the respective state examinations.

To encourage this action, we pledge to:

Promote United Opt Out (<http://unitedoptout.com>), a grass-roots movement to end punitive public school testing;

Petition political leaders at the local, state and federal level to end initiatives that do not benefit students;

Endorse the New York Principals APPR (Annual Professional Performance Review) Position Paper (www.newyorkprincipals.org);

Provide direct assistance to families and educators who wish to resist destructive reforms and advance positive, proven teaching-learning experiences.

Public education is the foundation for developing the minds, attitudes and values of students to become informed decision-makers able to engage in effective democracy in meaningful ways. A system organized around teaching to the test will not provide students with the skills and dispositions necessary to have a meaningful voice in a democratic and just society.

Please join us as we speak out against and boycott examinations that will be used only to reinforce conditions of injustice and corporatization and undermine the quality of our public education system. Education is neither a business nor a competition. People are more than data points; education is more than a number. Tell your school district officials that children should not take part in the destruction of public education, and encourage others to do the same

In solidarity,

Julie Gorlewski, SUNY New Paltz
Spencer Salend, SUNY New Paltz
Judith Dorney, SUNY New Paltz
Eileen Murray, SUNY New Paltz
Gowri Parameswaran, SUNY New Paltz
Rachel Mattson, SUNY New Paltz
Laura Dull, SUNY New Paltz
Terry Murray, SUNY New Paltz
Tom Meyer, SUNY New Paltz
Sue Books, SUNY New Paltz
Rosemary Millham, SUNY New Paltz
Nancy Schniedewind, SUNY New Paltz
Kate McCoy, SUNY New Paltz
Paul Thomas, Furman University
David Gorlewski, D'Youville College
Ken Saltman, DePaul University
Henry Giroux, McMaster University

Ira Shor, City University of New York at Staten Island
Susan Ohanian, Charlotte, VT
Jim Horn, Cambridge College
Jed Hopkins, Edgewood College
Ilhan Kucukaydin, Penn State Harrisburg
Ann G. Winfield, Roger Williams University
Barbara Madeloni, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Timothy D. Slekar, Penn State Altoona
David W Brown, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Anne Violanti, Orchard Park, NY
Siri Paolino, Orchard Park, NY
Sandy Grande, Connecticut College

Cathryn Teasley University of A
Corunha, Spain
Shawgi Tell, Nazareth College
Darren E. Lund, University of Calgary,
Canada
David Schultz, Long Island University at
Riverhead
Lynne Miller, University of Southern
Maine
Mara Sapon-Shevin Syracuse University
Richard M. Ryan, University of
Rochester
Ken Jones, University of Southern
Maine
Morna McDermott, Towson University
Shaun Johnson, Towson University
Sean Feeney, New York Principals
Andrea M. Hyde, Western Illinois
University
Peggy Robertson, United Opt Out
National
Brad Porfilio, Lewis University
Ceresta Smith, United Opt Out National
B L Buddy Fish, Jackson State
University
Michelle Fine, The Graduate Center,
CUNY
Alfie Kohn, Belmont, MA
Carrie Freie, Penn State Altoona
Mark Naison, Fordham University
Deborah Meier

Betsy L Angert, Empathy and Education
Rosemarie Jensen
Marvin C Gentz
Candice Miracle
Noah De Lissovoy, The University of
Texas at Austin
Poonam C. Dev, Nazareth College
Rose Rudnitski, SUNY New Paltz
Jeanne Cameron, Tompkins Cortland
Community College
Leigh M. O'Brien, Shear School of
Education
Travis Vande Berg, Tompkins Cortland
Community College
Robin M. Smith, SUNY New Paltz
Mark Garrison, D'Youville College
Don Johnson, New York University
Teresa Y. Roberson, AISD
Mahsa Kazempour
Julie Westerlund, Texas State
University-San Marcos
Chris Cerrone, Hamburg Middle School
Don Bartalo
Bob Valiant, Kennewick, WA
Regina Weir, Indiana University
Bloomington
Janet Pfadt, Public School Educator,
Indianapolis, IN
Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro, SUNY New
Paltz

Goodman made a motion to adopt the resolution; motion was immediately seconded. An extended discussion of both the resolution itself and those underlying issues associated with it. Following this in-depth consideration, the resolution was voted on and passed by a narrow margin.

Resolution on Tier 6:

“Resolution Regarding Tier 6 Legislation and the Agreement between NYS leaders

Whereas, the NYS government leaders, Governor Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Skelos, and Assembly Speaker Silver without consultation with members of the NYS Legislature or with relevant union organizations representing public employees, including members of UUP and NYSUT, endorsed creation of Tier 6, and

Whereas, scores of members of public employee unions have expressed their concerns and objections to Tier 6 that will result in the diminution of benefits secured by numerous union contracts, and

Whereas, legislators in both chambers of the NYS Legislature were overwhelmingly in opposition to the creation of Tier 6 since any financial benefits perceived by the State could not be attained for many years in the future, and

Whereas, NYS recently created Tier 5, and any financial benefits to the State have yet to be assessed and reviewed, and

Whereas, public employee unions, including UUP and NYSUT, have created a procedure by which support and assistance for State politicians, both financial and otherwise, is determined by the cooperation and assistance such politicians have given to public employee causes and concerns, and

Whereas, the conservative political climate which threatens union workers, including public employees, puts at risk collective bargaining, and blames workers for the economic recession across the nation, has penetrated New York State,

Be it therefore,

Resolved, that the New Paltz Chapter of UUP endorses the proposal by CSEA that immediately all state political endorsements and contributions be suspended for re-evaluation, and, be it further

Resolved, the UUP Chapter urges that UUP statewide Executive Board to endorse the CSEA proposal and notify NYSUT of its endorsement, and be it further

Resolved, that New Paltz UUP Chapter President submit this resolution by letter to both UUP President Smith and NYSUT President Iannuzzi, and be it further

Resolved, that the Chapter President inform the New Paltz Chapter membership, the UUP Executive Board members and all UUP Chapter presidents of this resolution.”

McNitt made a motion to adopt the resolution; seconded by Rigolino. Fallek offered a friendly amendment which changed the wording slightly. Amendment accepted by McNitt. Brown then called for a vote on both the friendly amendment (passed) and the resolution as amended. Both passed unanimously.

New Business:

- Resolution on Teacher Education Task Force: Schniedewind briefly explained the purpose of the proposed resolution:

“Resolution on Teacher Education Task Force

Whereas in the past the UUP has supported the Teacher Education Task Force which enabled teacher educators from SUNYs around the state to meet in Albany several times a year to discuss and respond to issues of concern;

Whereas the professional integrity and academic freedom of teacher educators in New York State are being undermined by current State Department of Education policies regarding teacher education;

Be it resolved that the New Paltz Chapter of the UUP urge that the UUP reinstate the Teacher Education Task Force for 2012-13 and beyond.”

Pointing out two grammatical errors, Fallek made a motion to adopt the resolution with the requisite grammatical corrections. Motion seconded by Kelder. Resolution voted on and passed unanimously.

- **Party for retirees:** the committee discussed whether to host the party at someone’s residence in order to make it a more informal event or continue the tradition of holding it at a restaurant. Though no formal vote was taken, it was the sense of the committee that this event should be held at a local restaurant. Event was tentatively scheduled for May 21st, 22nd, or 23rd.

Upcoming events:

May 11 Part-Time Labor-Management meeting, 11:00am, HAB

May 11 Labor-Management meeting, 3:30pm, HAB

May 12 Strategic Planning Session, 9:30am, Mohonk Visitors Center

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Hanley
Chapter Secretary