

Contingent Concerns Labor-Management Meeting Notes, April 16, 2013

By Beth Wilson, Contingent Concerns Committee Co-Chair

Administration Attendees: Provost Phillip Mauceri, Executive Assistant to Provost Deborah Gould, Human Resources Director Dawn Blades, Assoc. HR Dir. Jodi Papa

UUP Attendees: Chapter President Peter D.G. Brown, Contingent Concerns Committee Co-Chairs Ed Felton & Beth E. Wilson, NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist William Capowski

Before the prepared agenda was addressed, Blades asked to speak to a concern with the terminology being used to describe the meeting. Restating issues raised at a previous labor-management meeting, she complained that the agenda arrived with the title “Contingent Concerns Labor-Management Agenda,” despite the administration’s assertion that in the *Agreement between UUP and NYS*, these meetings are described as dealing only with “part-time issues.” She reiterated that the State does not recognize a category of employment called ‘Contingent.’ Whenever there is a question, the administration will revert to the language of the contract.

UUP pointed out that in accordance with the previous request, the content of the agenda did include only items related to part-time employees, although this venue had a long history of addressing both: part-time professional and teaching faculty, as well as the issues of full-time, non-tenure track (contingent) lecturers, since their issues often align. Within the union’s structure, the agenda for this meeting is generated by the Contingent Concerns Committee, and thus that is the way that we refer to the meeting. UUP is complying with the administration’s request at this point, but maintains the option to revisit this arrangement, depending on how well the lecturer issues continue to be addressed under the new division demanded by the administration.

1. Follow-up on Space Available Tuition Waiver course fees charged to adjuncts.

Blades reported that the Technology Fee currently paid by part-timers, but not by full-timers, was \$184. In addition, part-timers were being charged for a Health Services fee and an Athletic fee, which together total about \$75. Blades quoted the contract language describing the Space Available program, which states that the employee will be responsible for “all associated fees” beyond the tuition. In light of this, the administration has examined the whole program, and has decided to waive the Health Services and Athletic fees for all UUP bargaining unit members who take advantage of the Space Available program. However, henceforth the Technology Fee will be charged to ALL members who participate. This is a new fee to full-time members, who previously did not pay any Technology Fee.

Capowski pointed out that while this is an accurate reading of the contract language, it represents a significant change from past practice, at least as concerns the full-timers, and is thus a *policy* decision.

Felton said that our request to waive the fees for part-timers seemed like a positive action. It now appears that just because we raised an issue seeking equity for our part-time members, the administration has decided instead to penalize the full-timers.

Blades asserted that the administration needed to examine this issue—for which there is very little documentation regarding how it was established—with an eye to campus-wide policy. The administration makes access to taking courses available to many employees across the campus, and wants to maintain a consistent policy campus-wide.

Wilson pointed out that the Space Available program exists within the UUP contract as something quite different from arrangements made by other bargaining units. As Capowski had pointed out at a previous meeting, this is a benefit that is essentially provided by our members for our members. It seems to abrogate the spirit of the contract provision, which was established when such fees were nominal. Given the shift to higher and higher fees, many of which are charged in lieu of raising tuition over the years, charging these fees for technology access, which our members already have, seems both excessive and unnecessary.

2. Has there been any consideration of what will happen to the DSI dossiers submitted by part-timers for 2011 and 2012? How many such dossiers have been submitted for those years?

Gould stated that 24 DSI dossiers from adjuncts had been processed for the 2011 activity year. The dossiers for 2012 have not yet been received by the Provost's office, so that total number is not yet known.

Wilson pointed out that historically a very small percentage of adjuncts applied for DSI, and that the amount offered from the administration was very modest—a \$400 lump sum, with a subsequent \$100 per credit increase on base. In addition, virtually all of the adjuncts applying for the award received it. Could the administration take under consideration the significant effort made by those applying for DSI into account, and find a way to recognize their documented efforts to maintain and improve their teaching performance?

Brown calculated that awarding each of these 24 part-timers a \$400 award would cost the College less than \$10,000—a miniscule amount, given the overall size of the budget.

Mauceri promised to look into the matter further, noting that if he were entirely unwilling to consider it, he would have just said no. We should take this as an encouraging sign.

3. Follow-up on supported adjunct office spaces.

Following up on a topic raised at the previous labor-management meeting, Mauceri clarified that the renovated Wooster Science Building will have dedicated adjunct spaces in the individual departments housed there, but no 'group' space has been included. He will continue to speak with Deans and Department Chairs to encourage them to provide office space for their adjuncts.

Felton pointed out that in some departments, the chair may indicate that they do supply an 'adjunct space,' but that in reality these may be very minimal—sometimes just a desk in a corner of the department office that is used by student workers much of the time. Wilson raised the related issue that there is never an allocation made to purchase up-to-date computer equipment for adjunct use. Adjuncts are typically provided with older, cast-off equipment from the full-time faculty. She reiterated the need for at least some general adjunct support spaces on campus, perhaps somewhere in the renovated Library.

Brown suggested that if Mauceri could poll the department chairs, UUP could poll the adjuncts. Then we could create a bigger picture to know where there were the greatest needs, which could then be addressed on an expedited basis. Mauceri agreed, adding that it would be good to also know how these adjunct spaces are actually being used: how much time are the adjuncts spending in these spaces? Both sides agreed to follow through with this more specific survey.