

Labor-Management Meeting Notes, May 15, 2013

By Ed Hanley, former Chapter Secretary

Administration Attendees: Provost Phillip Mauceri, Assistant Vice President Michele Halstead, Chief of Staff Shelly Wright, Human Resources Director Dawn Blades, Human Resources Associate Director JodiPapa

UUP Attendees: President Peter D.G. Brown, VP for Professionals Linda Smith, VP for Academics Jeff Miller, NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist William Capowski, Secretary Ed Hanley

1. Technology Fee for Full-Time Faculty. For some time, the technology fee was waived for full-time faculty members taking courses in the Space-Available Program. When UUP asked that the fee also be waived for our part-time members, most of whom are in a financially weaker position, the result was that the technology fee is to be imposed on all our full-time and part-time members taking courses in the Space-Available program. Since the \$184 technology fee represents a substantial obstacle for all members considering taking courses and a significant change from past practice, we strongly urge that this and other fees be waived for members taking courses in this program.

Brown characterized the recent decision to eliminate the technology fee waiver as “rather disturbing.” Instead of improving upon an already favorable situation by extending the waiver, the union believes the College has instead taken a step backwards by eliminating it entirely. Brown urged that the fee be waived for all members rather than being levied on all. According to Director Blades, while the administration felt it best to waive other fees (e.g., health and athletic fees), everyone would be required to pay the technology fee. Noting that the practice of waiving the technology fee had been established years ago, Blades indicated it had never been revisited in light of changes in the academic environment. She observed that there is far more technology currently being utilized, and the burden of paying for that technology is currently borne by the students through the tech fee). Chief of Staff Wright and VP Halstead concurred with her observation. Blades went on to suggest that the tech fee for students might need to be increased if it continued to be waived for faculty. Brown asked if the administration had any data to support such an assertion. Blades indicated there was none, since that sort of information is not tracked. After some further discussion, Wright concluded by pointing out that the technology fee would now be fairly applied to all students.

2. Pregnancy Leave. In order to move toward a more family-friendly campus and better support members who become pregnant, UUP suggests creation of a joint labor-management task force to explore establishing a Pregnancy Leave program along the lines of what is currently available at UC Berkeley (<http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/worklife/policy.shtml>). Berkeley’s Pregnancy Leave entitles employees up to four months of leave for pregnancy. Pregnancy Leave may consist of leave without pay (during which employees may be able to receive

disability benefits, if eligible) and/or paid leave such as accrued sick leave, accrued vacation leave and compensatory time off.

Brown briefly recapped union views and concerns on the matter. Noting the issue was covered by Appendix A-42 of the contract provisions then in force, Blades stated that the administration had no authority to alter the contract language at the local level. Thus, she saw no value in creating a task force to examine issues that cannot be negotiated locally. Brown pointed out that the union was not suggesting such issues be negotiated locally. Rather, the purpose of the proposed task force would be to evaluate local procedures and recommend improvements. Blades stated the administration was already comfortable with its procedures and asked that the union simply continue to refer members to HR for assistance as it has in the past.

3. DSIs. UUP again emphatically urges the College administration to seriously consider distributing some form of salary increase to those meritorious employees who applied for and were approved for DSI after the previous *Agreement* between New York State and UUP expired on July 1, 2011. Aside from any contractual mandate or resources, the College should consider allocating other resources at its disposal to address the escalating problems of retention and low faculty morale. The College administration would do well to use its resources not just to hire new faculty, but also to reward and motivate existing employees who have been performing outstanding work here for many years.

Focusing on the morale aspects of the issue, Brown stressed the importance of doing something for those employees who should have and would have received DSI during the past two years had it not been for the expiration of the previous *Agreement*. Noting that DSI has been a part of the campus culture for a long time, Brown reiterated that the administration has options to address this issue; options it is not using. He opined that the issue really is not tied to the status of the contract. Provost Mauceri took the position that DSI is a contractual issue to be negotiated at system level. While local action might be possible, there were many competing requirements for funds at the local level. Thus, the administration's position was that DSI would be a matter for the contract to address.

4. Course Load for Lecturers. At previous meetings, we discussed the course load for lecturers, which UUP maintains is not only unusual within SUNY and excessive, but harmful to faculty and students alike. We were told that lecturers only rarely teach a 5-5 course load. UUP requested data from the College Administration on the actual course load of our current lecturers. We are still waiting and would appreciate receiving this data on the actual number of courses being taught by lecturers at SUNY New Paltz during the 2012/2013 academic year.

Brown asked if any of the requested data was available yet. Mauceri indicated that Executive Assistant to the Provost Gould was still in the process of gathering the relevant information. He speculated that data gathering might wrap up at some point early in the summer. He assured Brown that the process would run through to completion. Brown reiterated that 5/5 loads appear to be both unique to New Paltz and damaging to quality of

instruction. Mauceri noted that while 5/5 is the standard, it is subject to modification at department level by Deans and Chairs.

5. Limiting .99 Appointments. UUP opposes .99 appointments and asks that the College refrain from this practice for what instead should be full-time appointments.

Brown reiterated the union's opposition to such appointments. Blades stated that there were no longer any members on .99 appointments. If we had information suggesting otherwise, she asked that we provide her the name(s) of anyone on such an appointment. Noting that it was the union's position that .99 appointments should not be used at all, LRS Capowski asked Blades if the administration had any specific position on the matter. Blades stated that the administration did not see .99 appointments as being in the best interests of employees either. Capowski thanked her for her reply.