

Professional Issues Committee Meeting

September 5, 2012

9:00 – 10:00 am

The following people attended this meeting where President John Ettling and Mr. John Homburger were our guest speakers:

Barry Brown	Bernie Grabczewski
Gina Doty	Bethanne DelGaudio
David Curry	Kathy Falcetta
Margaret Stewart	Barbara Barry
Steve Gras	Kyla Relaford
Erin Campbell	Michael Caraballo
Susan Millett	Greg Withrow
Amy Sotherden	Amy Daniels
Sheila Murnane	Jonathan Chew
Eileen B. Allen	

1. **Welcome to our Guest Speakers:** Bethanne welcomed President Ettling and VP John Homburger to the first meeting for professionals to start the dialogue, which will be ongoing, for these two leaders to hear the concerns and ideas that professionals have on campus.
2. **Concern #1 discussed:** A committee member asked when a budget problem occurs there seems to be a lack of uniformity in communication for professionals and management. Academics seem to have a voice and the ability to contribute, but many professionals feel left hanging.

Responses from John Homburger:

- a. J. Homburger discussed realigning expectations to not hurt programs or the institution and be straight forward as possible. \$1.5 million is our deficit now. Some people look at things temporarily when the way things are will not return to the way they used to be, like in 2008.
- b. He explained the positive changes in the Financial Aid office where they lost one UUP member and two CSEA, and with the new technology moving forward, these slots will not be necessary. He is trying to maximize technologies where possible.
- c. He does not believe anymore in working 50 hours a week. People need to speak to their supervisor. Some people will not let go of the work they are accustomed to doing and not change. A number of things were reduced and this should have been communicated to others more clearly.

Responses from President Ettling:

- a. A broad overview of how we got to where we are now was explained. As an example: It should be that for every 2008 appropriated dollar we now receive about sixty cents. 80% of our operating budget comes from employee salaries.

- b. Mid-year cuts were problematic. Tuition has gone up, but the governor took a large amount of it. We encouraged the early retirement incentives. Some people have been replaced on a case-by-case basis.
- c. We still do not have complete funding, but the tuition has helped. So far nothing from the legislature has helped us. This year's budget is flat. There are no raises for the unions. We will never be back to where we were before. It is unlikely we will reconstruct the campus as it was in 2008. There are less students in the Education department taking courses and more in School of Business & Economics.
- d. Supervisors have been told to let management know when they are at a critical issue. The example of the SBE dean was told where the #1 wish list item is a staff position due to the increase of students in the division.

Response from John Homburger:

He explained how time lines of responses are largely due to people's capacity to absorb more work has been reduced. We all hold things precious and do our best work. We do not want anything to be interpreted wrongly. John explained how he has become more mindful of this issue.

- 3. **Concern #2 discussed:** A committee member asked about how politics and relationships may be involved in the decision making process. Is there mediation between departments in a formal way when conflict occurs?

Note: The details of this situation were never discussed in any detail.

Response from John Homburger:

- a. John said that the matter involved the State Department and the expectations were different than at the beginning of the conversation.

Response from Pres. Ettling:

- b. There are committees on campus available for mediation between departments, but the parties involved have to request this action.
- c. He did not feel that this particular issue was about politics, but more that personalities clashed and could not move forward to resolution. Due to this occurrence, the next component in the program was denied and only the first part is being done.
- d. Personality clashes happen and sometimes cannot be resolved.

- 4. **Concern #3 discussed:** A committee member asked what is taken into consideration when staffing is critically needed? The data studies have been performed to explain why the staff is needed and technology cannot fix the issue when over 300 students are needed help all in one day.

Response from Pres. Ettling:

- a. Convince your VP that it is the most important things to restore the "X", in this case more experienced staff.

Response from John Homburger:

- b. Technology will not address the need for first-line human contact needs with students and parents. Find out what is bringing 350 students in your office in one day? What is causing this to happen? This situation makes it difficult to give good customer service.
- c. We live in a world with assessments of the processes to solve issues and make departments/offices run better. If it is not a critical condition--- it will most likely stay that way. We have not analyzed all our processes. We have less people. How do we survive as an institution? We want to stay the way we are and adjust the margins only.

Committee member Response:

- d. A broader analysis of working more efficiently and smarter is needed campus wide.

Response from Pres. Ettlting:

- e. Right now shared services are a focus with the chancellor and the economic development is a focus with the governor.

In closing one committee member gave thanks to both leaders for doing their best to protect our campus and people's employment during the budget crisis. Everyone agreed in applause.

Bethanne thanked everyone for attending and letting Pres. Ettlting and Mr. Homburger know we appreciated their desire to meet with us and start the dialogue of what is on our minds. We would like them to return to another meeting to continue the conversation.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.

The next meeting is Wed, Oct 3, at 9:00 am in meeting room #8 in Angell Center.

Meeting notes taken by Gina Doty

UUP Chapter Secretary

Edits welcome