

## Labor/Management Meeting

Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2021

1:30PM via Zoom

**Attending:** Alexander Enyedi, Kim Hartshorn, Kathy Briggs, Dan Gordon, Erin Campbell, Oscar Torres, Anne Hansen, Anne Herzog, Michelle Cromwell, Lizzie Wahab, Josee Laroche, Gerianne Downs, Michelle Trombley, Greg Withrow, Sarah Reyell

### 1. Budget Update

**Josee** reported that there is some change to higher education in nation and state; same as shared in campus communications in early January after executive budget. Federal stimulus funding approved in December was \$23 billion. SUNY Plattsburgh was slated to get \$8.3 million; \$2.6 million would be allocated to our students like last spring for emergency CARES grant; remaining portion available to institution for lost revenue COVID costs, things of that nature.

While we have been earmarked for that fed funding, the department of budget and SUNY have yet to provide guidance; we don't have access to the funds yet. We can't do anything with it; can't process stimulus funds for our students. Governor's executive budget presented in January had a caveat different from other budgets done. Stipulated that so long as NYS receives a min of \$6 billion of fed funding to leverage toward current \$15 billion deficit, budget as presented by governor could proceed as such. Included 5 percent reduction to state agencies, including SUNY.

Josee said it's better news than what SUNY was predicting what might happen; the 5 percent reduction goes into effect for this fiscal year and permanent going forward. The governor's budget also included a continuation of predictable tuition program, increase of \$100 per term. That's good news as well. But there are a lot of moving parts.

**Kim** asked if there is any indication when purchasing restrictions will ease up.

**Josee** said no, executive orders put spending constraints in place back in April along with hiring freeze still in effect. Cash position NYS not where it needs to be. We're still governed by those exec orders. She said she would speculate there will be no release of those spending constraints until after the new state fiscal year April 1, predicated of the receiving of federal stimulus funding at min or equal to \$6 billion. Following that, needs to be an evaluation of SUNY and ability to cover key expenditures. At this point she said the expectation is through the end of this fiscal year those would stay in effect.

**Kim** wanted to know about L/M IDA grants. Josee said there has been no information from the state.

**Dan** asked if we are to assume lines vacated will remain vacant for the foreseeable future. Josee said yes but campus leadership continues to evaluate the criticality of positions; have proceeded with key recruitment as necessary for campus operations.

### 2. DSI/Compression

- Request for Information: Sarah shared the draft 2020 Campus Compression Report Form. Discussion took place. Kim asked about the timeframe for checks. Sarah reported they would be dated March 17.

### 3. VRWS: Voluntary Reduction in Work Schedule

- Appendix A-46

- Tool beneficial to management and employees, academic and professional

**Kim** discussed how the effective use of the VRWS can help both administration and employees, having used it himself. He suggested that it is a good opportunity to use this mechanism in order to preserve a valuable academic part-timer but suggested part of the problem is the way it is written that it works more conveniently for UUP professionals. Benefit is not meant to be professionals only; for all UUP employees.

- Workload calculation

**Kim** shared his “white paper” to clear up the interpretation of teaching load and workload, that there needs to be an understanding of overall workload as a place to start mutual understanding of the issue. He said he would share with management.

Professional performance programs sometimes identify service; others don’t. A FT professional is also obligated to have a service component/obligation. That should be taken into account: committees for instance. They end up doing that as extra or work that is not clearly identified in the PP.

The VRWS is a tool that can be used more strategically; also think it might be a way or alternative to phased retirement. Could be done as a VRWS plan. Also it might be in a period of time when sabbatic leaves going to be difficult where faculty might be interested in receiving partial time off if sabbatical is not available. Will be having an excess capacity of PT instructors. Doubt there will be an issue finding people to pick up the load.

**Anne Herzog** asked how we view it as “cleaner.”

**Kim** said phased retirement requires people to give up appointment and move to PT status, which we think is detrimental in a few ways. For employee, if under VRWS, any contractual raises would be based on their FT salary and prorated. If PT, contractual raise would only be based on their half-time status. Would also make it easier for people who had started phased retirement stayed on longer because they were needed. Think it would be a cleaner arrangement.

**Josee** said she appreciates Kim’s “white paper” as a tool to be used to be employee supportive. First thing is to share it with management; allow management to have an internal conversation. Workload calculations is a touchy subject on both sides. Suggested assessing management side, reaching out to others but said it’s helpful to understand as a way it’s been put forth. The VRWS is geared more to professionals because it’s easier. May be something UUP central wants to open up with SUNY to get better supportive language for faculty to better leverage the VRWS program itself.

#### 4. Performance Review Task Force

- Next step regarding platform selection

**Kim** asked if **Anne Herzog** had information, but she said she hasn’t gotten word back yet. Kim said we’ve looked at three platforms; one not great, other two doable. Can

customize their software to our agreement. Kim said we had permission to talk to them; never talked about money or any kind of contract, just to clear up that it was informal. Informational. Next step would be more formal and want to know how that will happen and when.

- Next step/timeline for clarifications to agreement

**Kim** said some of the tweaks made have already helped with PRG member issues, etc. Dan brought L/M up to date on the processes that were begun but COVID threw everything off the rails. But now, particularly because of COVID need some kind of electronic filing program. As a result of changes needed, we need a L/M agreement and we want to know when and how to move forward to make these changes.

Kim suggested he and Dan work with Anne Herzog and Greg W. Anne Herzog said she'll have Sue Bartlett set up a meeting. Answering Josee's question, Kim said they want to have the meeting to discuss policies and procedures for academic employees. Will most likely want to do on the professional side as well.

## **5. Updates regarding Affirmative Action and Search Waiver committees?**

- Request update to list of search waivers requested and granted since October 2020 (thanks for providing previous list Oct 2017-Oct 2020)

Discussion ensued about the search waiver and Affirmative Action committees — under whose auspice do they fall, who is on them and how are they operating now.

Formed under former President Judson at a time when the college did not have a chief diversity officer, issues are being addressed now that we do as well as the division of diversity, equity and inclusion. But because it hasn't been changed, it is still under the president's office. Kim requested the union be kept apprised about changes to procedures and committees. He will confer with Ethel about union representation during HR and DEI discussions.

## **6. Pool Testing Non-Compliance**

- Counseling Letters

Request made to make sure language on counseling letters that supervisors have to sign point out that they are coming from HR and not the supervisors themselves. Sarah said they are being changed prior to being sent. The same language to be used on CSEA employees as well.

- Disciplinary Procedures for Non-Compliance

**Kim** asked what discipline would occur, suggesting that whatever HR finds out from SUNY be sooner rather than later so the union knows what it will be dealing with for members being disciplined for non-compliance. He reminded management that UUP strongly advocated testing for everyone but we still have to be mindful of our members being disciplined, too.

## **7. Other Issues that May Arise**

### **Tenure Clock Opt-Out Deadline**

- Discussion ensued about the possibility of dropping the deadline on campus, understanding that it was meant primarily to accommodate people whose scholarship was derailed up by COVID.
- Discussion ensued about members concerned about not being able to volunteer during the COVID emergency but having that come back to haunt them during evaluation, especially since letters of merit are being issued for those who are volunteering. Josee said they are working on a standard letter to go to all employees who have volunteered and be part of their file but more as a recognition that part of their work time was reassigned for duties not on their performance program. To have a letter to say you volunteered and your volunteerism prevents you from spending the 37 and a half hours per week in your performance program, and your evaluation has to take into account your volunteerism.

**Anne Herzog** said it's not the case that faculty have an easier case volunteering because they might have been grading or preparing for a lecture or meeting with students. It takes it out of everybody. Kim said one of the biggest differences professionals feel is they're more directly under supervision and by and large the academics are self-supervised.

**Adjourned at 2:52 p.m.**