

Plattsburgh Chapter UUP
General Membership Meeting
Thursday, Sept. 30, 2021
4 p.m.
Via Zoom

Attending: Gerianne Downs, Kim Hartshorn, Dan Gordon, Matt Salvatore, Oscar Flores, Kathy Briggs, Michelle Toth, Mark Kaiser, Ray Guydosh, Mark Mastrean, Ray Carman, Barry Brown, Ben Wright, Brian Savard, Carol Bleaux, Connie Oxford, Eli Remillard, Erin Campbell, Julia Davis, Mila Su, Patrick S Cori Jackson, Gordon Muir, James Sherman, Rohit Rampal, Terrence Vance, Thomas Matthews, tom Higgins, Wendy Gordon, Melissa LaMere, Deb Brunner, Andrew Krug, bob, Sandra Rezac, Catherine Kaleita, Cheryl Datkun, Connie Oxford, Joshua Beatty, John McMahon, W.E. Nicholas Jones, Kerry Chapin-Lavigne, Ken Baldwin, Amanda Suriel, Brook Layhee, Ellen, Levi, Elizabeth Bernat, Kameliia Petrova, Marty Frost, Melissa LaMere, Thomas Landon, Tonya Cribb, Shawna Mefferd Kelty, Sally Urban, W.E., Gary Kroll, Walter Early

1. Academic Workload Survey

2. COVID issues

Not a lot to report.

a. Campus numbers

Not a lot to report; problem getting # vaccinated individuals on campus; admin can't ask directly. HR said 72 percent employees have informed HR fully vaccinated. But they don't have ability to actually request that information from people directly. Assume it's from the opt-out list for opting out of testing. UUP believes over 90 percent of employees are fully vaccinated, from voluntary information they've received. Not particularly accurate. State believes 64 percent of state is fully vaccinated. Students have very close to 100 percent vaccination rate and/or approved exemptions. I don't know if any students have been dismissed for not being vaccinated. Ray: I heard 10 students trying to track down, but other SUNYs in the 100s. Kim: and other SUNYs have high quarantine rates. So far, we're doing pretty well.

3. Exit Interviews

Discussion about exit interviews being conducted; many members are saying they either didn't have one or didn't see any form suggesting one. Kim asked recently retired Barry Brown if he was notified for an interview. Barry said he did not recall seeing any form and no one reached out to him. Kim said HR has said they do exit interviews, and people do request them. Once a year they summarize them and report results to cabinet. Exc Board will bring up at Labor/Management. Will also suggest recent retirees write a specific letter to the president.

4. Separations and Open Positions

Discussion about exodus from campus beyond retirement. Kim said administration is hearing about this during regular L/M meetings and asked if it's brought up at Faculty Senate. Ray Carman said that yes, it is. Kim said it's a start and as concern grows on campus, the voices get bigger and louder. He mentioned how the Strategic Plan has yet to be released and suggested members bring up questions at the budget town hall being held by Josee Larochelle.

He also asked what is happening to the Personal Service Regulator, budgetary term to identify source/type of funding, which may include positions funded from IFR and DIFR as well as FTE state positions. Kim said from Sept. 1, 2020 to Sept. 1, 2021, there were 61 UUP separations. FT UUP 1 year ago, 455.35; current FTE 445.30, drop in 10 FTEs.

Part-timers academic, almost totally adjuncts, count as .1 FTE per 3 credit course. Full adjunct FTE, equals 10 courses of instruction over a year. Numbers seem low to me.

Strategic Plan is coming out; there will be indications in plan in terms of enrollment. Staffing questions should be raised at budget meeting.

John McMahon asked if CSEA is seeing the same staffing decreases occur on same level.

Kim said CSEA staffing problem is more extreme; they are close to breaking now, and we can see it across campus. More work with fewer people to do it.

Carol Bleaux said she spoke to Ethel Facticeau, who said they are down 20-plus people in the last year.

Kim suggested an academic workload survey similar to one done recently by professional staff.

5. Leave Time and Approvals

a. Numbers

Long discussion about leave accruals and approvals for vacation and holidays. Kim said how most academics don't accrue leave time; professionals accrue leave at the same rate as sick time. Senior employees accumulate 21 leave days a year and 12 holidays. HR said over 50 percent have more than 40 days leave accumulated. That's 30 days not including liberal leave. Vacation days roll over. Over 75 percent have over 30 days. When you separate from college can cash out 30 days.

Kim said this can indicate a few things: employees are not being allowed to take their days; vacation being denied based on operational needs of the college. Those are days due to you in the contract. They can use excuse operational needs of college to say I need you on this particular day; but over the course of year they have to plan to approve 30 days. And they need to plan their department to do that. They can't expect the whole department work 52 weeks a year and only take a few days a year and do that work, that extra work, when you get back.

It amounts to unpaid overtime. People need time off. It needs to be considered part of the workflow.

The exec board has been bringing this topic up the last three L/M meetings; Kim said we will continue to bring it up since it's something they have to realize, that leave time in contract is part of the workload. If you're a manager or supervisor, you have to plan accordingly.

6. Special Election for President

One nominee for president: Michelle Toth; zero nominees for contingent officer (write-ins acceptable). Kim called Michelle an active UUPer for many years. She knows the UUP boat very well and has his full endorsement. Contingent officer can have five write-in votes. Lecturers and part-time employees included in contingent. Have to listen to their concerns even if you're not a contingent employee.

Patrick Schnell thanked Kim for all he's done and thanked Michelle for volunteering for this somewhat thankless position. He said how difficult it is for professionals to run for president because the use of release time for compensation for president creates a big problem for professional staff. We're stretched pretty thin. No such thing as release time. Kim said Josee said a president from professional ranks would be able to use money to fill the need. Kathy Briggs

pointed out that the money doesn't come from the college; it comes from UUP and paid for the cost of release time.

7. Plattsburgh Specific Contract Negotiation Team Meeting

Thursday 12/2

8. Member Organizer Opportunity from NYSUT

Looking for members willing to work as paid member organizers. Quick turnaround. Let Kim know asap. \$25 an hour paid. Non-obligation time. Questions, Kim will give you information.

9. Ad-Hoc Campus Negotiation Committee needs 1 Academic, 1 Professional

Ad hoc committee made up of president and 1 professional and one academic each campus serves as a sounding board and partial approval process as gets closer to finalization. Has a fairly informal but important role in negotiations process. Interesting way to get foot in door of negotiations.

10. Report from VPP Matt Salvatore

Started June 1; at all statewide VPP meetings, L/M meetings, immersed self in position, even after 27 years here have a lot to learn. Appreciate your patience. And thank Kathy, Kim and Erin for their mentorship. Listed committee members reviewing a file in October, gotten that group back together. Look to schedule a professional issues meeting soon. Professionals here interested in talking more about leave time, campus climate, spending restrictions, etc. Finish up, have opportunity Oct. 7 to ask Josee some tough questions. We don't always get clear answers; Jim Sherman, like you've said, we need to make a collective effort. Ask tough questions, it's different across all our sister institutions. What decisions are they making locally that aren't SUNY policy. Finally, reach out congratulations to Barry on his retirement. Sorry leaving earlier than you wanted to.

11. Report from VPA Dan Gordon

Fifth year as VP academics; Spent lot time summer and last semester doing work revising evaluation system. One big issue come up is e-files might not be available spring 2022 semester. Part-timers are only going to be evaluated by chairs and deans. Working out with provost office who's going to be point person with questions for evaluation process. Will be on their website. Please go there first if you have any questions so everyone gets the same answer. Before you come to ask me, look on provost website under evaluation tab.

12. Informational Picket

Discussed holding an informational picket since we can't strike. Could do one along the road for honks. Probably want to stand in front of Kehoe or Hawkins with signs, good messaging. We want for it to be positive but pointed. Kim said he doesn't think just a straight expression of anger would do what we wanted it to do. There needs to be an expression of real concern, that we're worried this place we like so much is sliding down into the pit, many of us are pushed to the edge, and we don't want to quit; we want to continue working here, but there are issues that need to be addressed. There would need to be messaging about the students that a sustainable institution would be attractive for the students and might be a place more conducive to growth in the long run. I think we wouldn't want to do it as a knee-jerk reaction. It would need to be strategic.

Ben Wright said he is really angry and objected to the idea that we can't be angry and express our rage. Kim said it's not that we're dismissing the anger; the action needs to be strategic. While the anger is real and the emotions are real, we have to ask if that will get us or accomplish what we want to accomplish.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:44