



**United University Professions  
Albany Chapter**

**Labor-Management Minutes**

**April 24, 2023**

1. Remarks from President Rodriguez: We welcome President Rodriguez to this meeting and look forward to his remarks and a chance for conversation.

President Rodriguez remarked on recent events for the campus: "Out of the Darkness" walk for mental health; Academic Achievement Awards; Alumni Excellence Awards; reunification of CNSE will double faculty in School of Engineering, a master plan has been submitted to the SUNY Board of Trustees regarding the reunification with a scholarship to help students pay the higher cost of UAlbany. Regarding the State budget, there have been many meetings with legislators and Chancellor King has been very active at the Capitol. His request for a 3% increase in tuition has met with opposition.

L. Thanks. A reminder that although some ambitious programs like AI have benefitted, other programs have lost faculty and been reduced, along with services for students. Everyone is feeling overworked and in need of more hires.

M. Acknowledged the problems which were not created but exacerbated by Covid. Planning for 50 faculty hires with 27 to AI. There's a lack of operational funds because of lower enrollment. One new program across disciplines is Social Equity and Health Institute.

L. Statewide UUP is fighting for SUNY funding. Depts. like Africana Studies/Women, Gender Studies/Latin American, Caribbean Studies help with diversity and are watched by alumni.

M. We understand the importance of these programs. An idea of creating a school devoted to diversity programs received pushback for fear of ghetto-izing them. Lack of funding for these programs make them difficult to sustain.

L. An assumption by faculty is that these programs are being phased out.

Communication is key for dispelling these worries.

M. We'll continue to look at how these programs can be sustained, but unless we get funding, we can't move forward.

2. Reorganization of the Libraries. We have learned through our Librarians that an effort to affect a significant reorganization of the University Libraries is underway. We would like to learn more about what this re-organization entails, specifically as it pertains to the job duties and obligations of our Librarian members. We appreciate Dean Hatch being available to address these questions.

Library changes were discussed. They include going to digital journals and more digital books making room for people. The new model will be dividing librarians to those who do physical work like cataloguing, and those who are specialists/academic success librarians, each group reporting to a separate director. Because directors have left, no one is losing their director title. Everyone keeps their academic title. New hires are needed. There has been some pushback on sharing circulation duties.

L. How do we protect time for academic research? What are the promotional opportunities?

M. Time for academic research won't change. More current skills will need training and promotional opportunities are possible.

3. Academic workload / summer work issues in CEAS and CEHC. We have heard from our academic faculty members in both CEAS and CEHC that they are taking on excess workloads during the academic year and being asked to do work over the summer while they are off professional obligation. The increase in workload stems from significant increases in enrollment into Masters programs without the hiring of additional professional faculty support, which has generated very large advising loads and the requirement to do summer advising. In addition to the specific concerns coming out of these departments, we are generally concerned about the Provost's announced plan to double student enrollment in some programs without a plan to hire additional support staff.

M. This is the first we've heard of it. There will be 7 new hires for CEAS, and 3 more related to AI. Will talk to the Deans.

L. Advisors are needed for a more systematic approach to working with summer internships. We need to separate the obligation period from the summer period.

4. Mandatory training. Our members continue to be frustrated by the large number

of annual training videos and the time commitment that they entail. It is our understanding that some SUNY campuses require as few as five (5) training videos for UUP members. We are requesting information on which trainings are mandated by NYS/OER, which are mandated by SUNY, and which ones the campus has chosen to mandate.

M. Supplied a chart of where requirements for each training is coming from (SUNY, UPD, NYS, etc.). What might be better is to have short refreshers for those who've taken the mandated courses. We can whittle the list down from 8 to 4 hours of training. There may be better tools that consolidate trainings or create more variety. We're on the same page.

5. Feedback on academic concerns. Members of our Chapter's Academic Concerns Committee met recently and raised several comments and concerns regarding the process for the searches for the academic faculty currently underway. They also raised concerns regarding the merger of the School of Social Welfare with the School of Public Health. We would like to provide this feedback to management and to get an update on the status of this merger.

M. We're going to do a debriefing in the summer to see about problems in the search approach. We need to develop our search training to show how to increase diversity, and override biases. Twenty have already been hired and we're moving along. Generally, depts. are getting their top candidates.

6. Chapter feedback on DSI process. We appreciate management's solicitation of feedback from the Chapter on the DSI process. While the Chapter fully supports UUPs position at the negotiations table calling for the replacement of the DSI system with a system of longevity, or service, awards, we also recognize the value of putting good processes in place now should we have a DSI program to implement in the fall. From that Chapter's standpoint, the DSI process is improved when we:
  - a. Have transparent, well-communicated criteria for eligibility that value work done within the scope of an employee's professional obligation.
  - b. End the practice of using DSI awards to fund promotions or retention packages.
  - c. Use mechanisms to distribute DSI awards broadly, which include unit-level allocations of funds on a per capita, rather than salary, basis and a cap of \$1500 on awards.

- d. Develop a process to ensure that a proportionate share of DSI funding is allocated to full and part-time contingent faculty.
- M. DSI should be discretionary and is meant to reward especially great service. A person who doesn't receive it should be able to get a clear explanation as to why.
- L. Academics have FARs to make a case for their work, but professionals don't have the same kind of reporting. There should be an appeal process with a deadline. Also, there should be a cap on how much a person can receive.
- M. Perhaps we should extend the DSI window to May and get out an appeals deadline that works with that schedule.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Strum