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**United University Professions
Albany Chapter**

Labor-Management Notes

November 16th, 2023

L: David Banks, Marco Varisco, Paul Stasi, Patrick Romain, Michael Dzikowski, Michelle Couture

M: Steve Galime, Justine Ochs, Keiffer Peralta

1. Global Tech. We are inquiring into the “global tech” initiative that is described here: <https://www.globaltech.albany.edu/> This appears to be a private company, offering online courses called internships that are taught by people not in our bargaining unit. These courses seem to bear Albany credit, but also cost \$1800 (in addition to tuition). The website and emails from the instructors are all version of albany urls and email addresses and emails have been received by students that say “Program Advisor, University At Albany” at the bottom of them (attached), despite the fact that the senders are employees of the private company “Podium Education.” We have many concerns about this, including potential bargaining unit erosion, but also ethical concerns about what seems a conscious attempt by Podium Education to mislead students about their private company’s relationship to the University. We would like to know what the business and financial arrangements are between Podium Education and the University. We are also asking what forms of governance approved this arrangement.

M: Pilot program for experiential learning opportunities for students. They offer students the experience - the students are responsible for the fees. M is trying to ensure that it is something that the students are liking it. Experiential learning experiences are not approved through the senate.

L: Addressed concerns written in the initial note.

M: These are not looking to replace UUP labor with privatized labor. This is meant to give students opportunities.

L: Credit hours paid to the university for those students who are looking to enhance their education, but this appears to be a means of outsourcing. Coding for data science and other topics are taught by the University UUP employees.

M: There is no agreement on "scam" as language. If the bargaining unit were to discuss this after the initial pilot and the bargaining unit were to file an IP, we can sort it out there.

L: This looks like a University site, including albany.edu URLs.

M: We can look into the means of marketing.

M: Would like to bring in other individuals to discuss public/private interactions.

L: Podium Education appears to be starting with UAlbany in the Spring

M: That is correct.

L: Credentials - who is reviewing these credentials - what are these credentials that the vendor is passing out and who recognizes them (industry-wide claims). It seems problematic that these elements of this program were not noticed by whatever vetting process got them approved.

M: To review language that is written on the GlobalTech site.

2. Mergers and Re-structuring. We are asking about whether the campus has any plans in the work for further mergers or re-structuring. We ask, in particular, because the President said at his address that previous and ongoing mergers were created to "preserve limited administration resources," offering a financial incentive for the mergers which we understood the University to disavow. At the same time, we have heard that CAS is creating a committee to examine its organizational structure. We are curious to know what this committee's charge is and where the idea originated. This is of particular interest to us since we continue to get conflicting messages about, for instance, the origins of the LACS/AAS merger.

L: What is the charge of the committee?

M: There are no other planned mergers or re-structuring. While this has a side-effect of saving money, the main reason is for synergies. The full quote includes "while encouraging program growth"

L: Our professional staff is concerned that their charge will grow without additional personnel.

L: The concern is that the Provost and administration suggest that there would be no additional funding.

M: The plans that the departments give should include requests for additional resources and personnel. There are some similarities and research with LACS/AAS that would allow them to work well together. It's a different way of doing things.

L: Departments are feeling the long term absence of resources. Unclear why a merger would give additional resources and people to help these programs thrive.

L: What of the committee?

M: As soon as M has the charge for the committee, it will be shared with L so that they know what the dean is doing. Dean talks with Provost, Provost talks with President, so the discussions are fluid to look at the organization - a self-study of the colleges. Feedback, ideas, and other good information can come through self-studies.

L: Agreed.

L: Can you ensure that there will be no program deactivation in LACS/AAS.

M: There will be no LACS/AAS deactivations as a result of this combination.

3. Intimidation. We continue to hear that senior administration has suggested the union intimidates members on campus to disagree with the administration's activities. We find this disingenuous at best. The union has little to no power to harm a member who disagrees with us; the administration has every ability to do so. It is nearly impossible for us to understand why this charge seems to keep re-surfacing and wish to refute it on the record.

L: We would like to formally disagree with this. This has been told to us a number of times.

M: If there are members of the university administration who are suppressing union membership or speech, please discuss with HR as it is their duty to review and act upon.

4. Safety. We have received a series of concerns from faculty members about their safety leaving campus late at night. We have been told that the escort service offered often takes an incredibly long time to arrive and that many areas are poorly lit in the late evenings (specifically paths to faculty lots), a matter of concern as some classes end at 10 PM. We also understand that with the removal of the indoor track, some of our student-athletes are having to travel late at night to other facilities, which creates further late-night safety problems. Relatedly, members have asked about the snow removal plans for the campus which they have said were inadequate last year.

M: We are aware as to the services that are being made. Chief of Police is being asked to provide the amount of time between when the call is made and when the person dispatches. If there are concerns with the snow work, M can share with L.

M: Please put this back on LM meeting agenda for next meeting so that UPD and Facilities has time to compile information.

L: Academic department of Planning could potentially have a studio on the public safety at the University.

5. Corecraft: At the Spring DA last year, UUP passed a resolution (attached) calling on SUNY to end its reliance on Corecraft, a company that profits off the backs of prison labor and therefore violates SUNY's DEI action plan which explicitly states that "Public institutions should reduce—rather than exacerbate—race-based inequalities and advance the public interest." We are asking what, if anything, our campus currently purchases from corecraft. We are also asking whether the campus invests in the prison industry through private equity investments, hedge funds and other means of investing and whether it has plans to divest from these instruments.

M: Last PO with the Corecraft was in 2012 for supplies - since then there has been no additional interactions.

L: What is the university's stance on investment in prison industry?

M: Zero (as in none)

6. Workforce Planning Committee: In our continuing conversation about hiring on campus, we are asking how decisions about the approval of hires are now made. At one point in time, there was a workforce planning committee which had a somewhat broad membership. Our impression is that it no longer exists so we are asking what has replaced it.

L: What process has replaced this?

M: This predates some in HR at the meeting.

M: The VPs divisionally would have more knowledge and call about the workforce needs. The perception at the time was that it was an unnecessary centralization. ?
(characterization of the concerns)

L: It makes more sense that it is within the division but then internal promotional concerns are common among professional members.

M: Managers paint a picture of the needs for their departments. Ex. Gary in HR is better aware of what is needed within HR to discuss with Todd.

L: Workforce Planning appears to be an existing system.

M: It is still being used to submit information and get it through the approval process. Workforce Planning is the name of the system as it was designed back then. Confusion could be between the old committee name and the system name.

7. New Employee Orientations. We understand the University is working on developing a new structure of new employee orientations. We want to maintain

UUP's role in these orientations. I've also been in touch with our financial advisor Robert Laferriere, who has expressed interest in being a part of these orientations to explain the retirement benefits to our members.

M: No changes to UUP participation. May not be the same time-slot, but they are in the process of revamping the orientation process. The current orientation process isn't a real "orientation" process. However, they are working to include other components.

Submitted by Michael Dzikowski