



**United University Professions
Albany Chapter**

**Labor-Management Notes
November 30, 2020**

Attendance: (L) Aaron Major, Zakhar Berkovich, Greta Petry, Michelle Couture, Anne Wolfe, Paul Stasi
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1. Surveillance testing overview: We are requesting information on the compliance rates with the mandatory surveillance testing program since the program was expanded to include employees and increase the testing frequency to once per week. Specifically, we are requesting information on the compliance rate (i.e. how many tests are being submitted on a weekly basis) broken down by: students living on-campus, students living off-campus, all employees, and UUP-represented employees. What, if any, plans does the campus have to increase compliance with the surveillance testing program for the spring semester?

The only way to track this if members registered and then failed to submit the test. However, it is possible that members just never came back to campus once that test was picked up and registered. It is very hard to track and figuring out the compliance rate. On employee side there is a great compliance. There were some issues, but they are being dealt with. On student side, there were some issues. Requirements were put in place and students were notified if they were not to participate in the testing, their ID cards will have deactivated. Management started to plan on Spring testing and plans regarding vaccination. Immediately prior to Pause, there campus initiated surge testing, which resulted in Pause. The campus implemented partial Pause, which allowed for greater testing of students and compliance was very good. That also allowed for broader testing of students prior to their departure home. There was a lot of lessons learned and changes are being put forward. A lot of focus will be placed on the off campus students.

2. Follow-up on staffing reductions: We are again requesting information on the specific units, or functional areas, where we are expecting staffing reductions due to retirements and leaving lines unfilled? We are referring specifically to the over one-hundred positions noted in VP Foreman's October budget presentation that were identified as going unfilled or lost due to attrition.

Management sent the list in early AM, but once we review it, we will go over it.

3. Term renewals for contingent and pre-tenure academic faculty: We are disappointed that the campus has chosen to reduce employment terms for contingent faculty to one semester (for part-timers) and one year (for full-timers). We have also been hearing from our members that the Provost is contemplating putting all pre-tenure academic faculty on one year terms. We would like to register our strong objection to these actual and contemplated changes to our member's employment terms. Further eroding the job security of our employees during a time of general economic uncertainty is demoralizing and shows a lack of care or consideration for the wellbeing of these members of our campus community. We also note that it creates more work for other employees on campus who have to process term renewals on a more frequent basis (especially onerous for tenure-line faculty) at a time when the campus has repeatedly said that it would find ways to *reduce* unnecessary job duties. We urge the campus to restore the historically normal terms given to our contingent faculty and to not change the term renewal cycle for tenure-line faculty.

The changes to the renewal for pre-tenure academic faculty are not being pursued. The drawbacks are high at this point and are not going to be useful nor beneficial. The management will take a look at the process and see if there is a need to be changed, or adjusted back.

4. Information request on non-renewals: We are requesting the following information about non-renewals.

- a. For professionals: Number of non-renewals as of January 1, 2020, with information on their title and unit.

The management noted that the list is being compiled and will get back shortly.

- b. For academics: Number of non-renewals of part-time contingents who were placed on one-semester terms in the Fall of 2020 (i.e. how many have not been renewed for the spring?).

The process is being reviewed and feedback will be offered in few months.

5. Clarification on building access policies during intersession: We are requesting information on building access policies during the intersession. Can academic faculty access research spaces (i.e. labs, cold computer terminals) and their offices?

There is an email went out about details of the "shut down". The email detailed every building and FAQs. It is hopeful that this closure will generate a lot of savings. The buildings are available to access, but the buildings ventilation and lighting will be turned off. Staying in the building for more than 15 minutes may not be safe. The building's ventilation can be turned on, but it must be requested and could be granted. Swipe access is granted to appropriate buildings. The reduction of heat and ventilation use produces significant saving. There are about 58 students who are staying on campus during intersession.

6. Respondus software: We would like to have a discussion about the Respondus software and its implementation. While we recognize the need for teaching faculty to have a way to give exams and reduce violations of the academic dishonesty policy, we have also had concerns brought to us regarding the protection of privacy (both for faculty and for students), accessibility, and equity. In addition to learning more about how this software

works and how it will be implemented, we are asking:

- a. Will faculty need to go through some kind of training in the program before using it for their class? The RespondUs site, for example, strongly encourages users to do a practice test with their classes.
- b. How are issues of students without access to the needed technology for the "stay in your seat" (i.e. webcam) feature being addressed? On the website it says that students can go to other "testing centers," but presumably that's out.
- c. General privacy and equity concerns from students: Are faculty being made aware that there are these potential issues (i.e. I'm taking a test at home and I've got a loud family in the background) and being given appropriate tools and guidance on how to address them?

Students contacted numerous venues, Dean's, Provost, UUP chapter. Violations of Academic Integrity went up 3 times. ITS reviewed the software after other SUNY schools have recommended it. The software is not a malware or a spyware. The software asks for a copy of the ID. If students do not have access to the cameras, they must reach out to their advisors and connection will be made with the DOS and cameras will be provided. The software is not a mandated. If faculty are choosing to use it, they can and will be trained. This is a pilot. Students can choose not to use the software and be proctored live or take tests in person. There will be assessment of the experience.

Labor recommended that additional guidelines be posted about access to this type of technology, students' needs and abilities, and privacy concerns.

The Campus will be using both LockDown and Monitor versions of the software.