



**United University Professions
Albany Chapter**

Labor-Management Notes

September 24, 2019

1. Drescher Leaves: The Chapter thanks the Campus, in particular the Provost's Office, for encouraging our members to apply for Drescher leaves and for getting those applications in. This is a very important way to support our pre-tenure and pre-permanent appointment academic and professional members and the Campus's efforts to support the program are much appreciated.
2. Update on DSI Proposals: We are requesting an update to the DSI process as it has been unfolding since this year's guidelines were announced. Specifically, the announced timetable calls for "Unit DSA process/evaluation criteria document distributed by unit heads to all eligible employees with copy sent to Human Resources" by Monday, September 23. How many such documents have been submitted to HR? How are these documents being evaluated in terms of their compliance with the Guidelines? What mechanisms are in place to ensure compliance with this timetable?

Not really reviewing them. Of the 700+ full time faculty only about half of them have completed FARs. Reminder to people to complete FARs. Similar reminder to people to send in criteria. Both pieces – the equity and the DSI – will happen in December.

3. Remedies for part-line lecturers mandated to complete Skillsoft trainings: At our last meeting we raised two issues with respect to the impact of the new effort to ensure compliance with mandatory trainings. First, that while we agreed that employees would be given time and space to complete these trainings during their regular working obligation, we face the question of how part-line instructors, who have no work obligation other than those directly related to instruction, will be compensated for the additional time required. Second, we agreed that part-line instructors who complete these trainings at other SUNY institutions would be credited for them here. However, we have heard from members who have told (since our last LM meeting) that those trainings were not accepted by the Campus. We hope that we can address both of these issues.

- Question of work time available to part timers. Management suggests that class time or office hours can be used to do this. The issue is that part timers don't necessarily have offices, or hold office hours. And office hours are often used for working with students. Courses are mandated by GOER and SUNY. Courses that were not mandated were dropped. The hard deadline for the sexual harassment training per the state is Oct. 9. It is up to the discretion of the instructor to use either office hour time or class time. This poses difficulties as it suggests that instructors use class time, which nobody wants. Bill: we could see this as part of the on-boarding process, that it's expected that you have completed these activities.

We'll continue talking about this.

4. Posting requirement announcement: As part of a settlement to a grievance that we filed regarding the Campus's failure to meet its posting obligation, a notice was to be sent out to Deans and VPs reminding them of this posting requirement. Has that notice been sent? If not, we expect that it will be sent shortly.

Yes. It will be sent in a day or two.

5. Workplace violence and safety procedures for teaching faculty: The Chapter was recently brought into a discussion with a member who was having difficulty dealing with a student that the member felt presented a possible threat of violence to themselves and other students. While this immediate situation seems to have been resolved, it has also exposed a weakness in our workplace violence policies and protocols, particularly as they relate to teacher-student relationships in the classroom. We hope to review existing policies and, if need be, revise them to ensure that they are adequate for these circumstances.

If the student isn't employed hard for HR to do anything except refer the case to UPD and Community Standards. For us the issue is that the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy refers to students as a category covered by the policy. Faculty can report student as a threat through the workplace violence. Question becomes how is student handled. If an employee were considered a threat, there'd be an investigation but while that's going on they would be prevented from coming to campus; but if it's a student it's not clear what to do. The student, who might be a threat, can still come to class. The faculty member has to let them come to class. If it's an employee we privilege the safety of the campus during the investigation; if it's a student it seems that the student still gets to come to class. What exactly does Community Standards do and how are they trained to deal with this kind of potential violence? What is the goal of their intervention? Management noted that they are, in fact, highly trained for these

interventions but not clear exactly of their process. Perhaps someone from student affairs could come to our next meeting to help us sort this out. Agree that this seems questionable. It is important for these cases to make their way to HR even if it's student related.

6. Clarification of religious observance policies. What is expected of faculty. How far in advance – can it be denied by a chair? What happens if it is?

Management needs to report back. Looking into it to see what processes might exist. This issue seems not to have come up but they need to think about this contingency. We can encourage faculty to note it in syllabus ahead of time.

President Rodriguez came to report to the group: He has met with University Senate on the state of where we are and where we're going. Doing more Listening/Learning tours throughout the semester. Annual Reports like the one recently distributed will be sent out every year. It was a banner year in research funding – highest level of NIH funding, etc. as well as fundraising. We are at almost at 90% of our capital campaign goal. We were ranked #27 nationally in social mobility for students.

New initiatives: Raising stipends for doctoral students. Moving forward to set a floor at \$18,000 university wide and \$20,000 in sciences. The collective bargaining agreement with GSEU is being finalized and increases will be effective moving forward. They are also doing a comprehensive look at a variety of programs to see how competitive we are in doctoral programs to get funding up to national standing. All from the University not the RF. Hope they'll follow suit.

Will also be announcing a career promotional ladder for full-time lecturers that will come with salary adjustments. The goal is to have review process this year with promotions in place for Fall 2020. Terms can not be extended longer than three because of BoT policy.

The per-course minimum salary for part-time lecturers will increase to \$4,000 on January 1st, 2020. The campus wants to move it higher, but won't commit to \$5,000. \$4,000 makes us competitive with nearby colleges.

The campus did not hit its enrollment target for this academic year. We are not alone in this. 2.2% lower than we were last year. And about 2.6% lower than target. CAS, SPH, and Homeland etc all exceeded target goals. SUNY overall has a declining population, but other research centers had growth. We need to focus on recruitment and retention.

More STaR grants focused entirely on recruitment and retention. Comprehensive look at advising and possibly hiring some additional advisors. Admitting students directly to the major. Pilot program in SCJ and Business with the goal of increasing the yield rate. Also exploring "meta-majors": choose an area (Social Sciences or Engineering etc) and then specialize later.

We raised the issue of faculty by-in. There are a lot of things that we hear that are localized complaints but, together, speak to a general sense that the University is not doing anything to support faculty. We realize that money is tight, but the campus seems unwilling to even consider low-cost means of addressing faculty concerns.