

UUP Albany Chapter Labor Management Meeting Notes October 21, 2014

Attendees:

Labor: B Benjamin, B Trachtenberg, T Hoey, R. Vives, J Harton, M Seidel

Management: B Hedberg, J Mancuso, C Trethaway, JD Hyde, T Mulcahy, D Mason

1. UUP thanked management for the updated membership list just received from HR. This will help ensure contact with all current members.

HR has now received about 70% of updated performance programs and more are coming in. Having these current is in the employees' and supervisors' best interests. While it is management's responsibility to inform supervisors of their need to complete these, if management can identify areas of chronic tardiness, UUP may be able to help encourage supervisors to complete performance programs sooner.

Not everyone has been notified of the initial DSA recommendations from Chairs and Unit Heads yet. Management is aware units are running behind. If this persists, UUP should let B Hedberg know. As long as people have the opportunity for appeal and flex time, UUP's ok with this. Some people may believe they're eligible, but are not and need to have this explained (e.g., eligibility requires being on the payroll 6/30 and on the payroll in fall). If part-timers were hired for spring and rehired for fall, they are on list. B Hedberg would like to hear about concerns as someone could have been missed.

2. UUP appreciated the memo from management related to part-time faculty and the DSA process. Since contingents were not included in the past it was important to clarify this. While DSA is small, it matters to contingents whose salaries are very low. The timing was problematic since the deadline was so close and chairs had already made decisions. UUP will push for departments to create processes for meaningful evaluations (all agree SIRF scores are inadequate) and appreciates management's support to help improve contingents' teaching. Management recognizes improvement cannot be expected without feedback.

Regarding the proposed committee on contingent labor which is to be appointed and charged by mid-November, T Mulcahy asked UUP to help draft a meaningful charge, suggest members for a broad representation and identify concern areas for example in the humanities vs the sciences so that information can be obtained from appropriate groups. All recognize one size does not fit all. B Benjamin asked for a formal UUP seat so that union and policy (not just individuals') matters were represented. T Mulcahy stated the members should not represent organizations, but campus units, otherwise some organizations will feel left out. The charge will include: 1) to look at right sizing of contingent faculty relative to full-time faculty, how that is determined, if there is an overreliance on contingents, 2) compensation, and 3) meaningful evaluation and professional development recommendations. UUP and management can work together. If UUP shares concerns, they can be better addressed. B Benjamin stated UUP defines contingents as those with no path to a tenureable position, arguing that part of the committee's charge should be to consider a pathway to permanence. He also asked if the panel included part-time professionals (such as directors with 1 year

contracts for 29 years), those with no path to permanent positions. T Mulcahy said that professionals will be part of the analysis, and stated these are the kinds of concerns UUP is needed to help flag and that UUP should provide key core concerns and definitions in writing. The charge should be set mid-November, members possibly sooner. B Trachtenberg asked if part-timers could be compensated for their participation since their input is necessary, but this work is not part of their obligation. Management will take it under advisement. The contingent dashboards (including Athletics) would be very helpful in these conversations. B Hedberg says he asks for the raw data in October and expects to compile the information in November.

3. Albany Law and Downstate Medical are being handled by Sue Philips in her new role and UUP may wish to invite her to present. T Mulcahy understands the current discussions to be preliminary, around affiliations, not mergers, and that their faculty will not be ours at this time. They are looking for academic alignments to reinforce UAlbany's offerings. B Benjamin spoke with downstate colleagues whose greatest concern is that the medical school will be severed from the hospital since the chancellor talks about SUNY not being in the hospital business. A medical center would have difficulty without a hospital. T Mulcahy shared there are models (like MN & WI) where schools do not own their affiliated hospitals, but continue to have a productive academic partnership. An academic health center consultant is on hand to help advise regarding the affiliation. A separate hospital raises concerns of severed privileges, affected medical training, lost control and employment issues.
4. Retention and recruitment are important at UAlbany. There are concerns that we are losing many good people with institutional knowledge (reasons range: salary/promotion, personal matters, retirement). Good data is not available on turnover rates across units, across types of employees or reasons employees left. There is no regular, systematic analysis. Exit interviews are not conducted by HR; those who volunteer information tend to be unhappy. Academic Affairs is concerned with the loss of teaching faculty and the investment in them. Deans likely have some informal sense of who has left and why. Better retention could save money, maintain continuity and excellence of service, and make employees feel more invested in the institution. Retention offers typically are requested in spring and the U tries to be proactive with the deans' assistance, but it is often too late to address concerns. There are efforts to make new teaching faculty feel welcome, but nothing is done for professionals. UUP recommends that the University might be well served by compiling more comprehensive data on turnover and retention. B Benjamin asked if the "Business Intelligence" database could incorporate such data to allow for queries and asked if this information is available at other schools. UUP suggests that more focused attention be given to this problem.
5. There are 2 Start-up NY companies and the announcements will be coming soon. A campus committee (including the Provost, VP for Research, VP for Finance, development, 2 faculty, 2 students, the Diversity Officer and the Chief of Staff—T Mulcahy will provide B Benjamin the committee membership) has been appointed to review applicants and met twice this summer. The committee provides applicant information to a group of faculty with expertise in the area for their opinion. UUP is named as a stakeholder in the initial review, but has no role in the ongoing oversight. UUP restates our offer to play a more formal role. Employees

are wondering if bringing these businesses onto state properties means using state utilities (electricity, phones, facilities support, etc.), where the boundaries are, how the finances work. B Benjamin shared that it is very difficult to find current information about Start-up NY on the Albany website. There are outdated draft plans (marked “confidential”) that have been posted. All the links to a central information page appear broken. UUP suggests that a clear web presence with information for Start-up NY would be helpful for feedback and explain concerns. It might also be a place to solicit faculty feedback about applications.

6. There are reimbursement issues related to the new travel cards. Expenses must be paid on these cards to be reimbursed. Some departments have not issued cards, some employees prefer not to have the cards, some departments feel unable to carry the balances (if most department faculty need to attend their discipline’s annual national meeting this creates a large financial burden on the department to cover all those costs), faculty notification of travel awards comes too late, some faculty are unable to cover one-time large expenses which they would usually pay off in installments with their own credit cards (junior faculty with lower salaries are particularly impacted since conference participation impacts tenure review) and travel over fiscal years is problematic. D Mason responded that the travel cards are required by NY State for using state funds for booking flights which must be made through the approved travel agencies and reconciled later (exceptions can be made for emergencies and noncontract fares saving >\$200). If funded for a trip, but not all costs are covered with that funding, travelers should put meals and lodging on personal cards and get reimbursed from those. The advantage to the card is no out of pocket costs, but there is a reconciliation later. Department accounts are tied to card expenses and department accounts get reimbursed later via award funds or faculty repayment of uncovered expenses. Department account debt will not stop department purchasing abilities. Expenses are applied at the time of purchase so crossing years should not be a problem. UUP requested the U clarify these things to departments. T Mulcahy and B Trachtenberg will discuss how best to convey information to departments. The contract states nowhere that travel cards are required—this is an OGS compliance matter. If travel cards get in the way of OGS guidelines and that does not comport with the contract, it could be a problem across the system. If travelers do not get reimbursed, cannot get a card, cannot attend conferences, this interferes with the employee getting work done and is a problem.

Concerns related to use of personal vehicles were raised. If on state business, the U reimburses for mileage and tolls via travel voucher; reimbursement must be requested and approved by a supervisor. Some departments won’t reimburse for travel and faculty are not aware they can be reimbursed for shuttling guest speakers, recruits, going from campus to campus, etc. There is liability using personal vehicles. If a state vehicle or rental is used and charged on the travel card and there is an accident, U insurance is used (for rentals it is recommended insurance is taken at the time of the rental). If a personal car, generally the driver’s insurance covers it and personal premiums rise.

B Hedberg will convene a group to address travel concerns and draft a guidance statement.

7. UUP asked that the report on SIRFs from B Szelest be made available to campus decision makers. T Mulcahy will send a memo to department chairs, college level committees, CPCA

and others making evaluation decisions with this information. The document assessed the SIRF and made recommendations and concerns about its use as a sole evaluation tool. This is also the time to encourage departments to evaluate and improve their evaluation systems and consider other approaches to evaluation.

8. B Benjamin thanked T Hoey and K Trethaway for their work together on reestablishing employee recognition. There has been no recognition program since 2008 so HR plans to publish a list in January of all who've reached 25+ years of service (it is too difficult to weed out those with breaks of service and it is better to over-reward than miss people) and also post it on the web. The process can be refined in the future to break out smaller milestones.
9. There will be an 11/13/14 event in honor of Nuala Drescher and the Drescher Award. She has worked tirelessly to ensure access to higher ed for women and employees of color. A list is being prepared of past awardees and winners are being invited to attend and share what the award has meant for them. T Mulcahy has agreed to make introductory remarks. All are invited. B Benjamin commended B Hedberg for his instrumental role in UAlbany's very successful application of this award.

Meeting adjourned 12:00pm. Minutes submitted by J. Harton.