

KEAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
An Association of Professors, Professional Staff and Librarians

Local 2187, American Federation of Teachers

Kean University, Union, N.J. 07083

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KFT General Membership Meeting

30 March 2005

Center for Academic Success, Room 106

I. President's Report

*M. Rodriguez stated that it is a privilege to serve as Acting President of the KFT. She asked for a moment of silence in memory of those students recently killed in Minnesota by other students.

*She thanked Dr. Dean Casale for leading the Union and indicated that although we had serious disagreements with him, it is her responsibility to thank him for leading the Union. He surprised us by resigning, since we were not interested in having a new president.

*M. Rodriguez stated that her vision of Kean University is based on principles of equality and justice for all. She indicated that all members of the Union, with their commitment, energy and talent are necessary to make this Union a reality.

*She stated that the recent Supreme Court decision that allowed employees to sue if they are discriminated against due to the age factor was an important one, which may have repercussions here at Kean.

*M. Rodriguez announced that Rutgers Union approved joining the AFT in New Jersey. This brings many more members to our ranks.

*She stated that in the last 3 years, we have been struggling with a hostile labor climate. At this juncture, we need to fight back decisively and straightforward. We need to put all of our resources together. We need a critical voice in setting a climate that is labor oriented and based on equality and justice for all.

*On a national level, there is a pattern of apathy. To move away from this apathy, it requires commitment and enthusiasm. M. Rodriguez indicated that she has it and that she is committed. She encouraged members to come together and take a strong stance in order to bring about points of view that advance justice at Kean University. She pointed out that the greatest weight of the struggle is on tenured faculty and that they must take a strong stance because other members are more vulnerable. Our jobs are in precarious positions. One member, who authorized release of this information, wanted to have a certain number of credits over the summer. When the member went into the computer system, they found that the faculty couldn't have above a set number of credits. The system contains caps on overloads automatically. This is a clear contract violation. This issue will be brought to the negotiating table as soon as possible and a grievance will be filed too.

*M. Rodriguez stated that in an e-mail dated March 24 of this year sent by the Provost about the "The Teaching Research Faculty Initiative" referred to D. Casale as President of the Union. . This was not developed by D. Casale, but by E. Comerford in collaboration with D. Casale. That proposal must first come to the table for negotiation. Due process was not followed by the Administration. The administration will be told that there must be constructive dialogue and mutual respect, in order to move forward and that we need consultation and to be respected-all of us-faculty, librarians, and professional staff. Discussion ensued. Will this problem be dealt with?

This is the greatest challenge we face at Kean, as M. Rodriguez stated at the last Board meeting. The Administration betrayed the mission to provide a quality education to the

first generation of students going to college in their families. The ratio is about 2 to 1 for adjuncts to full-time faculty. An informal student survey was completed. The students feel cheated by having adjuncts because they are not available for advisement during office hours (as full-time faculty are). They indicated that some adjuncts seem stressed out and not prepared for classes. It saves money for the university to use adjuncts, money that is evidently going to the physical plant.

We need to continue pressing the university for more full-time faculty. The glossy magazine sent out to 55,000 alumni at 66 cents a copy costs a lot of money, yet there are no markers or erasers. The Graduate Student Council has provided supplies. This is atrocious. We also need to impact the way the members of the Board of Trustees are chosen. There is a bill out of committee in Trenton that would put 2 union appointed representatives on the Board of each of the public colleges. N. Yovnello of the State Council noted Montclair State University and Kean as those institutions that need 2 union appointed Board members. We need to apply constant, persistent pressure. Fund raising for politicians is a venue where we can exert some influence. We need to be attending these activities. Any member who wants to go as a representative of the KFT can contact M. Rodriguez.

Of all the NJ public colleges union locals, the KFT has the largest amount of money going toward the COPE fund for campaigns and other legislative endeavors, in order to get legislators respond to our labor issues. We have been actively putting out a lot of fires. In the last year, we have been proactive in our efforts to make sure that the Master Contract is adhered to. We need your cooperation. If you see job conditions that impact on the Master Contract, you need to make the Union aware. Whatever occurs, the Unions are in the same court, we have a relationship with CWA and other campus unions. We need to back the Union president as well. We also need to interact with the students who are confronting higher tuition for a lesser quality of service. We need to build connections with students on a consistent basis.

The real budget of the institution is unknown. We are demanding that budget. Something is hidden if they cannot make it public. What is made public is a watered-down version of the budget. Being civilized with the administration has not worked so far. Do we need to stop working to see the real budget? The Union has requested it repeatedly and we have received audited reports, but it is not published until 6-8 months after the academic year. In the past, when promotions were not given 3 years ago, the administration went ahead with construction projects before money had come in from the State in the following September. Some argue that the operating budget is being transferred to construction. Some of the construction is being funded with money now coming in, but needed expenditures got stripped down. A lot of money is spent on advertising. How are tenure

decisions made? Some of the faculty not re-hired by Kean got hired at Perdue and other prestigious institutions.

II. Treasurer's Report

*E. Comerford stated that it is important for us to speak with one voice. The administration is trying to divide in order to conquer. The Union President and the Executive Council are trying to speak with one voice.

*E. Comerford referred to the KFT income statement in a handout. We have the lowest rate of Union dues in the State, at .95% of salaries. The Union has tried to live within its means. We are \$435.20 in the black. Most of the dues goes to the AFT National and the NJ State Council. In July and August, we collect only \$2-4,000 a month based on who works during the summer. We don't think that we will have to raise dues, but we do not want to go into the reserve, which is for emergencies. The budget goes directly to daily expenses for running the office, the copier, etc, with an additional \$2,500 a year contributed to N. Hall's retirement fund. There is little "fat" in the budget. In the next couple of months, \$10,000 will go to scholarships and we will have that surplus for the next couple of months. We are trying to avoid raising the dues until it becomes necessary.

A copy of Kean's budget is on-line. It is listed in broad terms. Line items are not listed, but it satisfies the requirements of the State. We do not know what is spent from that budget until 6-8 months after it is already spent. Salaries are not broken down into faculty, administrators, etc. One line item is slated for research. There is also one line item for Student Services. It appears as though there are no public reports with line-by-line items. The KFT cannot submit a request for what we are not legally allowed to receive. There is an annual audit, but it occurs in August-September and the report is not presented until December when the fiscal year has already ended in June. In 2002 when there was a reported fiscal crisis, one and one-half years later, the audit showed that there was a \$2 million surplus at that time. At the University Planning Council it was announced that the President has denoted funds for certain initiatives. We do not have a voice in how the money is spent.

III. Negotiations Report

*J. Castiglione stood in for C. Kelly who could not be there. I. Nesoff was the grievance chair and is on sabbatical, so J. Castiglione moved to grievance from negotiations committee. C. Kelly is the negotiations chair has twenty-five years experience in labor/management negotiations. In negotiations, it has become clear the contempt the Administration has for Faculty, Professional Staff, Librarians and labor in general. Three meetings were cancelled by Administration this semester. This pattern started last fall. Over the winter break, D. Casale acted on his own and scheduled negotiations, but even these meetings were cancelled. The Administration also retracted range adjustment and Chair compensation offers. The meeting for range adjustment negotiations was cancelled and then we were told that there would be no range adjustments. An e-mail about this from P. Connelly was included in the handouts. The Chair compensation offers were retracted by the Administration as well. The KFT will proceed with forwarding ULPs for bad faith bargaining, open record requests and will continue to pursue negotiations in good faith. While the Chair compensations issue was being negotiated, the Administration came up with a list of faculty responsibilities they wanted in order to talk about Chair compensation. They view Chairs as managers and are trying to put forth a document that would have the Chairs act as administrators. A couple of more negotiation meetings are scheduled. The KFT is trying to build unity with Faculty, Professional Staff and Librarians to combat these excessive requests of the Administration.

IV. Committee Reports

Social

*B. Lees reported for N. Rodriguez who could not be at the meeting. The dining service is now charging a set-up fee and the cost of food has escalated. This may be the final year for an end-of-semester social at Kean. The cost has risen to about \$14,000. It would be cheaper to have it elsewhere. A flier will be sent to members about the end-of –the academic year party.

Membership

*B. Lees provides KFT membership information for new faculty and T. Sensor does the same for Professional Staff. “Agency” members, those who have not joined the Union, pay 15% less for the fees than full-fledged members do. Human Resources is not very timely in providing information to the KFT as to who is new at Kean. Members are encouraged to go back to their departments and see if people are full-fledged members. Some think they are, when they are actually not. If you know people who are agency members, submit their names to the Union so that they can be contacted. The KFT has

the highest percentage of members among the sister colleges in the State of NJ. Last August, the new faculty was invited for a meeting with the KFT. Out of the 36 people there, 28 signed up immediately to become members of the Union. The people hired mid-year may have been missed.

Political Action

*J. Erickson reported that there are two important bills that have been signed by the governor regarding the prohibition of outsourcing of higher education and raising the minimum wage. There is a bill for establishing an office of accountability of the Commission of Higher Education. Craig Stanley is supposed to sponsor it, but that has not yet occurred. His district is in Essex County if you want to let him know what you think and you live in Essex County. J. Cryan is interested in what is going on at Kean. He is having a fund-raiser soon. Handouts with this information were distributed.

J. Castiglione moved to adjourn at 5:00 p.m.; seconded by J. Erickson. Motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Bradbury, Secretary to the KFT.