The KFT Voice

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Kean Federation of Teachers – An Association of Professors, Professional Staff and Librarians • Kean Univeristy, Union, NJ 07083

Bill Requiring Voting Union Reps on Board Moves to Full Assembly

A bill pending before the New Jersey State Assembly would, if passed, require that each public college or university (except Rutgers) have ***two full-voting-rights*** members, employed at that institution, who are ***selected by the labor organizations*** that represent the institution's employees. The bill, A-2795, has been endorsed by the Senate Education Committee and is now ready for adoption by the full Assembly.

At the April 8 meeting of the Council of New Jersey State College Locals/AFT, this bill was singled out for active endorsement, along with another, that would ***prohibit public employers from unilaterally changing the terms and conditions of employment prior to reaching a collective-bargaining agreement***. The second bill is now in the Assembly Labor Committee as bill number A-693, and in the Senate State Government Committee as S-1838.

Both of these bills have a reasonably good chance of becoming law.

The KFT has been on the front lines of the fight for representation on University Boards. The KFT Executive Committee strongly endorses the State Council's call for an active campaign on these two bills. It views the Board Reprensation bill as an essential tool to redress the increasing imbalance of power in Board-Union relations since state colleges and universities were granted autonomy in 1994. The second bill is important in that it would prevent the state from imposing a contract upon us if an impasse were to be reached at our next statewide contract negotiations.

The initial step in the campaign to pass these two bills is to encourage legislators to support them by taking advantage of *CAPWIZ*, an easy-to-use Internet-based letter generator. The KFT Executive Committee urges each of our members to go to www.cnjscl.org and click on "political action." A draft letter will be available for you to change, if you so wish, and submit to legislators.

In addition, the KFT and other State Council affiliates will be contacting various legislators in person. The KFT will be asking our members to volunteer to participate in this process by visiting legislators in their district offices, supporting or participating in lobbying in Trenton, and possibly inviting them to visit us on campus. Further details will be provided as the campaign develops. In the meantime, KFT members are urged to immediately send letters through *CAPWIZ* urging support for these bills.

Jon Erickson
Public Administration

Emily Filardo
Psychology

Acting President's Message

The other day, I was helping my son with his schoolwork. He had to write an essay about significant heroes in his life. He mentioned his grandfather and "Notorious Big" as the two people topping his list. The next day as I was driving to work, I continued to reflect on that same question. A memory came to my mind: my father, war veteran, political prisoner while serving in the military, dedicated father, husband, son and amazing friend. He always welcomed an uninvited guest to our home with no hesitation. His greatest message to all his children was threefold: help others, do your best in your work and be unified. I wonder how many of us live by this vision of collaboration, pride and interdependence right here at Kean.

The working conditions at Kean University are extremely challenging for all members of our unit. These are some of the issues that we are faced with: 1) insufficient supplies to do our teaching (lack of chalk or markers, etc); 2) inadequate compensation for faculty chairs; 3) no-limit work hours for professional staff; 4) disproportionate advisement hours for full-time faculty given the unbalanced ratio between adjuncts and full-time hires; 5) lack of opportunity for meaningful input by professional staff on changes applied to their evaluation forms (used for reappointment and promotion processes); 6) lack of promotions for most librarians; 7) elimination of range-adjustment program for all members; and 8) lack of parking (common stressor for all who work/study here). To make our working conditions more challenging, when the Administration comes to the negotiating table, it does so without applying its best effort. More disturbingly, however, is that a number of scheduled meetings have been cancelled without warning.

To address these challenges in a responsible manner, it is imperative that the University Administration discloses a complete budget, not a watered-down version available on the University Web site. It has been already documented from local newspapers and projected statistics used by the University that for the AY 05-06, Kean would suffer another budget reduction. Even before these cuts, Kean is already at the bottom on state funding given to public universities. The most important goal of this Administration is to secure funding for Kean comparable to the funding level of sister institutions.

President Dawood Farahi is trying to demonstrate commitment to students by volunteering hours at the Center for Academic Success. If Farahi wants to spend part of his time doing this service, it is fine. But we expect this Administration to take care of their primary responsibility first: securing adequate funding for Kean University. Our message is simple: correct the inadequate funding that Kean has received and will continue to suffer during the Farahi term. Secondly, as a public institution, full disclosure of the institutional budget must be readily available. Thirdly, coming to the negotiating table with our local representatives with concrete, reasonable proposals and openness to reaching a middle ground would be advantageous not only to us but to the whole institution. When negotiation happens this way, it is a win-win situation for both parties. All KFT members take pride in doing our jobs as best as we can. We expect the same from this Administration.

Maria del Carmen Rodriguez

Richard Katz's BOT Remarks

Good afternoon, members of the Kean community, the Board of Trustees. I am Richard Katz, a member of the English Department, an elected Faculty Senator and member of the Senate Executive Committee, [former President of our campus union, the Kean Federation of Teachers, and current member of our union's Executive Council and delegate to the New Jersey State Council].

I want to speak about the disheartening results of the university's budget priorities which shifted in 2000 from academic support toward marketing, public relations, campus beautification and its maintenance, and the expansion of administration.

In 2000, Kean's overall operating budget was about $106 million; today it is nearly $120 million, primarily the result of increases in enrollments and big increases in student tuition and fees.

Despite increasing revenues, student retention rates have dropped as the accompanying graph makes clear. Another graph shows that over that same four-year period, full-time faculty numbers fell from 383 to now 363, while adjunct numbers increased from 433 to a startling 784 this past fall. Adjunct instructors now teach the overwhelming number of courses in the freshman and sophomore years. Forcing full-time faculty to add office hours will not solve this problem. Look at the attachment comparing Kean's faculty and librarian ratios to our sister universities. The comparison is embarrassing.

Clearly, the increasing size of the operating budget and the bullying power of the leadership are being misapplied. Power, after all, is not just an expenditure of energy. There must be results. And the results are damaging for our students who now pay more for less.

This administration's plans for Kean's future are outdated and uninformed by current thinking. More graduate programs, more marketing, and more peripheral expenditures will only make the situation worse. We will need even more adjunct instructors, further eroding our central mission, which is educating first generation undergraduates in increasingly diverse New Jersey.

Chancellors and presidents at City University of New York, the State Universities of New York, of Virginia and Mississippi State Universities, the presidents of Temple, New York and Harvard Universities are moving their institutions in the opposite direction. They have, or plan to, cut back on graduate programs and demands for scholarship as they put their resources into undergraduate teaching by increasing full-time faculty and cutting back on adjuncts.

You will see in the attachments that in response to increasing undergraduate enrollments, Chancellor Goldstein at CUNY has just testified before the New York State Assembly Ways and Means and Finance Committees that he has cut adjunct faculty numbers and increased full-time faculty by more than 10 percent in the last two years. Their retention rates are increasing while ours are declining.

In New Jersey, we are turning our backs to our students, the majority of whom are minorities.

Recent books about the future of undergraduate education (see attached short reading list) all make a similar point about the dangers of peripheral expenditures while marginalizing undergraduate education.

I hope what you, the Board members, hear today will cause you to explore the administration's budgetary waste and consider ways to get Kean back on track.

The first step must to increase full-time faculty size by 10 percent in the next two years with special administrative support for recruitment of minority faculty.

We have a great mission. We have highly qualified and dedicated employees. Now, we need an administration willing to put its money where its students truly are, in the classroom. We who teach and work here need to be supported not devalued in our work.

Your Union @ Work For You

In July, we will be halfway through our negotiated 2003-2007 contract. Given the current anti-labor environment, it is worth considering the strengths of our current contract benefits. Certain misconceptions exist about the value of the existing four-year contract. The following is a comparison of our contract as it stacks up against other institutions of higher education.

First, our contract provides increases over four years between 15.77 percent to 34.45 percent depending on where on your step and range you are. Go to the www.njscl.org Web site to see this for yourself.

The lower you are in range and step, the higher your percentage increase. That's fair isn't it? These percentages include the negotiated 11.5 percent salary increase PLUS the cost-of-living increments that occur each year as you move up a step in the range. Those at the top of the range, step 11 go to step 12 on July 2006, which adds 4.27 percent to the 11.5 percent salary increase (hence the lower range 15.77 percent increase). Of course, those at the top step get paid more, so that lower 15.77 percent is worth more in dollar terms for someone earning $90,000 than a 30 percent increase for someone earning $40,000. In other words, our contract attempts to spread benefits in an equitable manner. In other institutions, like Rutgers, half their 11.5 percent pay increases (see below) are allocated by the administration as they see fit. This is inequitable and promotes favoritism and toadying to the administration. We have a more democratic and fairer contract. That's why they voted last month to affiliate with us! (See story elsewhere).

COMPARISONS:

Rutgers settled for 11.5 percent over four years with NO cost-of-living increases at all. That's why they recently voted 2-1 to join the AFT. Professional staff at Rutgers has no union representation and no negotiated contracts at all.

State University of New York settled in 2003 for 10.25 percent plus an $800 bonus over four years. Go to the AAUP- AFT Web site for SUNY, www.uupinfo.org, to read the specifics of their contract.

Temple University just settled for 15.22 percent over four years for all employees. No-cost-of- living increases at all. This appears on the AFT Higher Education Web site on Feb. 22, 2005.

Illinois University settled for 14 percent over four years. AFT Higher Education Web site, Dec. 2004.

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Local Negotiation Report

Unfortunately, there is no progress to report regarding local negotiation. Of the five scheduled meetings agreed to at the beginning of this semester, only one occurred on the date specified. One of those scheduled meetings is for Friday, April 29. The Administration, as represented by Vice President for Financial Affairs Philip Connelly, stormed out of the last meeting when questioned about his failure to show up at an alternative meeting scheduled through his office.

Before abruptly ending the session, the Administration representative declared that there would be no further letters of agreement in general and no further discussion of chair's compensation, range adjustment, or the tenured faculty research initiative (TFRI).

The Administration and the KFT have discussed the issue of chair's compensation for more than a year. The Administration initially gave the KFT the impression that there would be additional compensation, but the amount and the form needed to be negotiated. The Administration insisted that any additional compensation needed to be in the form of overload, and the chairs would be barred from taking it in the form of release time. The KFT argued for the right of the chairs to determine the form, but made it clear that it would not negotiate to impasse over this right.

Having removed the issue of form, the KFT pressed the Administration for a written response to its formal proposal on chair's compensation. The Administration's response was a formal list of faculty duties, chair's responsibilities and a three-credit reduction across the board. The Administration's proposal called for individual chair's negotiating with his or her respective dean for any additional compensation beyond the proposed three-credit compensation.

The KFT rejected outright any reduction in the current release time for the chairs and proposed a three-credit across-the-board increase for all chairs. The KFT reminded the Administration that chairs are faculty, and asked for word changes to the Administration's proposed list of chair's responsibilities that referenced them as supervisors. The KFT also reminded the Administration that the Master Agreement defined the faculty duties, and that any changes to those duties would need to wait for the next round of statewide negotiations.

The Administration communicated its last response on chair's compensation by e-mail. It stated: "all overload compensation will be at the discretion of the Deans and Provost; therefore, we cannot agree that all chairpersons have a 15 credit load per semesters." The e-mail also restated the Administration preference to have an agreement that "memorializes the Faculty responsibilities" and its belief that "the use of 'supervision' in the Department chairpersons responsibilities [proposed] agreement does not violate the master contract". The Administration concluded its statement on chairs by declaring that "we do want chairpersons to supervise the policies and programs."

In regard to the range-adjustment issue, the Administration's behavior at negotiation has been contradictory. Prior to our second meeting this semester, the Administration e-mailed a request to change our agenda to discus range adjustment. The Administration expressed its preference to offer a range-adjustment opportunity for this year. It is general that the KFT policy is not to stand in the way of faculty accruing benefits. Consequently, we agreed to the Administration is proposal to put range adjustment next on our agenda. At the following negotiation session, the KFT proposed streamlining the existing requirement of student evaluation and peer observation to make it practical for faculty to apply. Given the four-year student-evaluation and peer-observations requirement for range adjustment, and the irregularity in the Administration's offering of range adjustment, KFT wanted to make the range-adjustment opportunity as inclusive as possible. The KFT also indicated that it would favorably consider any reasonable range-adjustment schedule prepared by the Administration so long as it remain consistent with the principle of inclusion.

Prior to the last meeting, the Administration e-mailed the KFT its intentions regarding range adjustment. The e-mail stated: "there is no possibility on conducting the range-adjustment program this academic year". It further stated that the Administration would present a calendar for the 05-06 year at our next scheduled meeting. Immediately after receiving this e-mail, Provost Vinton Thompson e-mailed the faculty [not the KFT] that there would be no range adjustment for 05-06. At the last negotiation session [the stormy one], the Administration demanded to see the KFT proposed range-adjustment schedule. When reminded that the Administration agreed to present one, the Administration representative responded by stating "don't expect me to do your work for you."

There seems to be a breakdown in communication within the Administration. Shortly after the last negotiation session, Thompson sent to the departments a letter announcing "a range adjustment calendar for academic year 2005-2006." The calendar calls for the distribution by the provost of the range-adjustment calendar to all full-time faculty to be completed on or before April 22, 2005, and requires faculty to forward applications to the departmental ARTP Committee on or before February 8, 2006. In the announcement, the exclusionary student-evaluation data and peer-observations requirements remain. A disconnect between what's discussed at local negotiation and the behavior of the Administration clearly exists.

Another example of this disconnect is the announcement of the Tenured Faculty Research Initiative (TFRI). While the KFT is clearly in support of the principle of "release time" to revitalize tenured faculty scholarship and professional activity, this economic benefit has not been negotiated. The Administration's approach to bestowing economic benefits to the faculty reminds one of "the dollar on a string" joke, i.e., when one sees a dollar and reaches for it; the string holder quickly removes it from one's reach. In other words, if the KFT objects to the failure of the Administration to negotiate [citing behind-the-scenes discussions with the former KFT president with no written letters of agreements do not constitute negotiations], the Administration may abort the new initiative.

On achieving economic benefits for faculty, staff and librarians, the KFT is clear, we will do all that is reasonably possible and fair to acquire them. Therefore, we encourage faculty to avail themselves of TFRI opportunity, and we wish them luck. All those faculty who apply and feel that the procedures and processes have not been fair, need to contact the KFT and grieve the matter. The KFT has negotiated procedures and a process for release-time-for-research allocation in the past and stands by those agreements. The KFT does not endorse the unilateral implementation by the Administration of a procedures and/or a process pertaining to terms and conditions of employment, nor do we believe, does the New Jersey Public Employer/Employee Act.

Charles Kelly
Political Science

RUTGERS joins the AFT

The faculty, graduate employees and counselors at the three campuses of Rutgers University have voted 575 to 222 to form a joint affiliation with the American Association of University Professors and the American Federation of Teachers. This affiliation will bring more than 4,000 new members to the AFT. The affiliation is for a three-year trial period, after which Rutgers' membership will vote again on making the arrangement permanent.

The result of this vote is that one union represents more than 10,000 employees of senior public institutions of higher education in New Jersey. Although the state colleges will continue to have separate contracts from Rutgers, the joint affiliation should increase our political strength in Trenton. We now coordinate our legislative efforts. In the future, the Legislature will see us all as one united voice. In fact, the only united voice for higher education in the state of New Jersey will be the AFT.

Some Council of New Jersey State College Locals members have expressed concerns that Rutgers would dominate the AFT. This is not the case. The structure of the AFT at the state level will be that Rutgers will join AFT-New Jersey as an equal member with the State Council, the K-12 teachers' unit and the HPAE (nurses). Rutgers AAUP/AFT will not be a member of the State Council. Only representatives of the nine state colleges will continue to be on the State Council. And the State Council will continue to negotiate our labor contract.

Jon Erickson
Political Action Committee

Your Union @ Work For You

(continued from page 2)

Michigan and Pennsylvania settled for 14 percent over four years. This appears in an *AFT On Campus* article titled "New Higher Ed Agreements" in April 2002.

City University of New York has been working without a contract for three years and is still negotiating.

The AFT UFT New York City schoolteachers have had no contract for three years. They are still negotiating with 9 percent retroactive pay being offered by the city.

In addition, the national AFT considers our intellectual-property agreement THE BEST agreement in the United States. The agreement can be seen at the www.cnjscl.org Web site. In brief, we own everything unless the work is assigned to us by the University, such as paid for with grants sponsored by the University, or work done by professional staff as part of their jobs. For professors, all work is owned by the professor. Unlike other intellectual agreements, the University does not own scholarly work, professors do. If the University wants to claim it, it must negotiate it and claim it provided sole and complete support, not the other way around, i.e., the University owns it and the professor must ask for negotiations.

A discussion of health benefits will be continued in the May issue of *The KFT Voice.*

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Department of English

THE KFT VOICE

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May 4 in Downs Hall