

THE KFT VOICE

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Kean Federation of Teachers - An Association of Professors, Professional Staff and Librarians - Kean University, Union, NJ 07083

LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

By Charles Kelly, Chair KFT Negotiation Team

At our last negotiation meeting on April 2, we reviewed the Administration's proposal entitled, "Transition From Classroom To Retirement." At the previous meeting the Administration provided us with an agenda that included this proposal as well as a proposal for the promotion committee, classroom evaluation, annual faculty activity report, chairperson evaluation, and university travel. As you know the KFT asked for a suspension of the classroom evaluation this semester and asked the AFT State Council to file an unfair labor practice charge.

The Administration's contempt of its statutory obligation to negotiate in good faith has now become legendary in New Jersey

Despite numerous warnings, the Administration refused to negotiate classroom evaluation in good faith. The Administration's contempt of its statutory obligation to negotiate in good faith has now become legendary in New Jersey. No other Administration has demonstrated over and over again that it has no regard for the New Jersey Public Employment Act. The Kean Administration's contempt for its labor relations legal responsibilities raises the question of whether it is fulfilling its other legal responsibilities of state and federal law.

The proposal for chairperson evaluation is another example of the Administration's contempt for its statutory obligation. The KFT brought the Administration to the Public Employment Relations Board over its approach in negotiating chairperson's evaluation. The Office of Employment Relations which represents the Governor's Office and state management settled the disputes on grounds mutually ac-

ceptable to the KFT and the Administration. The agreement required the Administration to enter into "good faith negotiation and conclude negotiations by July, 2006." After signing the agreement, the Administration did nothing until April, 2007.

Similarly, the Administration has an obligation to negotiate career development travel. The KFT has repeatedly asked for negotiation on this type of travel. The Administration has responded that it was developing its proposal.

On March 26, 2007, Maria Perez, Director of the Center for Professional Development (ironically Vice President of the KFT) sent out a memorandum to all chairpersons announcing there are new forms and procedures to complete for Career Development without any negotiations.

As anyone who has attempted to travel this year knows, there is complete chaos in the process and procedure for seeking approval. The KFT has recently approached the AFT State Council representative to file yet another unfair labor practice charge to address this matter. After agreeing to meet on April 30th to continue local negotiation on its proposal, "Transition From Classroom To Retirement", Faruque Chowdhury the new spokesperson for the Administration (replacing Phil Connelly) cancelled the meeting. Given the lateness of the academic year, optimism for a productive closing of this semester negotiations quickly fades. ♦

AFT HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE FOCUS - BATTLE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM

By James A. Castiglione, KFT Vice President, Grievance Chair

This year's AFT Higher Education Conference, "Solidarity in Action: How the AFT Can Shape the Future of Higher Education," took place on March 29- April 1 in Portland Oregon, which Jon Erickson and I attended.

I can report some refreshing and significant good news for academic freedom. The AFT and its partners have been 100% successful in beating back the so called "Academic Bill of Rights" in all 29 states in which it has been introduced. This Orwellian legislation, pushed by well funded right wing ideologue David Horowitz, would enable government interference in curriculum, teaching, grading, and student complaints. By disguising the politicization of academia under the banner of liberty and diversity, Horowitz and his allies hoped to legislate quotas of liberals and conservatives in university hiring, tenure and promotion decisions. When exposed for its political interference, support for the "Academic Bill of Rights" quickly evaporates.

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KFT President's Message

María del Carmen Rodríguez

The University We Deserve

As a professor at a public university, I show up daily to fulfill my obligations with enthusiasm and delight. I am confident that whenever my colleagues make decisions in the classroom, they primarily reflect the best pedagogical principles. I am confident that my colleagues always consider the long-term interests of the students we serve and uphold the highest standards of achievement and integrity for all learners in the classroom.

I would hope that the main reason why the faculty thinks and makes decisions with sound teaching strategies in mind would be because we, as professionals, will be honored and rewarded for excellent teaching by this institution. I know that professors teach in a conscientious and ethical manner because they are aware that they are preparing the future leaders of this community and nation, and care deeply about every class and activity they perform at Kean.

I know that the Kean full time faculty is inspired by basic values such as humility, solidarity, honesty, discipline, gratitude and generosity of spirit, as we share our knowledge and experience with students and colleagues. Whether we are teaching in the classroom, or via distance learning strategies, library services rendered by our librarians, or the many advisement services provided by our experienced professional staff, we all share enthusiasm in our teaching and in our collaboration with our students. I would hope that all administrators, as well, would place teaching process at the center of the many decisions they make for this urban university.

In an ideal world we could look forward to any new proposal presented by the Administration because we know that they would be open to the feedback and wisdom all faculty bring to the decision making process. Take for instance, the recent proposal that all faculty be evaluated in every course in every semester. Administrators should have been receptive when the KFT presented basic suggestions so that this proposal would really reflect the best interests of all involved, especially the faculty and students. Administrators should be open to suggestions from the rank

and file because critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving and student-centered planning is what the faculty are responsible for preserving at this University. Faculty concerns should not be casually or condescendingly disregarded; faculty concerns are meaningfully tied to the learning process so essential to a great university.

Finally, when the Union raises concerns about the multi-layered security issues connected to any faculty evaluation, the Administration must be willing to listen. After all, they should be equally concerned about student learning and progress.

Unions at this institution will continue to speak up for professional standards and labor rights. All faculty will continue to stand behind professional standards, best teaching practices and service. If we stray from these principles, we will continue to reflect, make necessary adjustments and correct our course, upholding the goals and duties associated with our institutional mission. We expect no less from the Administration.

This is our deserved goal: a university that is a collaborative, dynamic, ever changing institution of higher education which proudly promotes student learning and excellence. The voices of those closest to the student body (full time and adjunct faculty, librarians, and professional staff) should be fully heard. ***After all, it is to the faculty, not to the Administration, that a parent entrusts their child's welfare and their child's future.*** We deserve to be considered invaluable not only by Kean but by the general public. They must realize how essential we are to the preparation of the current and future NJ workforce.

Despite dwindling fiscal resources and other constraints, we proudly serve this state with dependability, innovative thinking, and unwavering commitment to the common good. Our vision and professional calling inspire us to serve against all odds. United we proudly stand for public higher education and professionalism! ◆

JON ERICKSON ELECTED AS STATE COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT

In its bi-annual election for Executive Officers of the Council of New Jersey State College Locals, Kean's Jon Erickson was elected without opposition as one of two Vice Presidents. Jon's duties are to represent the State Council in external affairs, at legislative and higher education hearings and at other public venues. Erickson replaces Vice President Ivan Steinberg of New Jersey State University, who did not seek re-election.

Elections results were tabulated and announced at the state council meeting on April 13. Delegates to the State Council from each of the 9 state higher education locals

voted in the election in February and March by mail ballot. Turnout was over 80%.

President Nick Yovnello was re-elected for a sixth term; Deirdre Glenn Paul of Montclair was re-elected as Vice President for internal affairs; Judy Matthew of William Paterson was re-elected as Secretary; Muroki Mwaura of William Paterson was re-elected as Treasurer; Faye Robinson of Rowan was elected as Librarian Representative; Iris Dimaio of William Peterson was re-elected as Professional Staff Representative; Sarah Ann Harnick of New Jersey State was elected as Legislative Action Chair; and Arlene Shor of Kean was elected as Adjunct Representative. ◆

AFT HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE FOCUS - BATTLE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM

(From page 1)

Free Exchange on Campus

The AFT achieved these state victories against the “Bill” by establishing a coalition with the AAUP, the ACLU, student organizations and other like minded groups to educate state legislators and the public on the true nature of these bills. The coalition is called “Free Exchange on Campus,” which can be found at www.freeexchangeoncampus.org.

In tandem with these efforts the AFT Higher Education Program and Policy Council is developing a 21st Century statement of the key principles of academic freedom.

Faculty and College Excellence

Building on these successes the AFT recently went on the offensive in launching its Faculty and College Excellence (FACE) campaign. The twin goals of FACE are 1) to establish full equity for adjunct faculty in salary, health and pension benefits and 2) to rebuild the depleted corps of full-time tenured faculty. Legislation to promote these goals has already been introduced in eight states with more to follow. More information can be found at www.aftface.org.

The AFT is also working to influence the reauthorization of the Federal Higher Education Act to expand access to and affordability of college; to increase Pell Grants to \$5,100; and to strengthen fraud provisions against “for profit” colleges. The AFT is finding Congress more receptive to these concerns since the last congressional election.

Activists for Congressional Education

To help move its wide ranging legislative agenda forward, the AFT is strengthening its grassroots political outreach in two ways. Activists for Congressional Education (ACE) committees, composed of local AFT members will meet with Congress people several times a year. Members can also make their voices heard instantly when there is pending legislation by becoming “E-Activists”. Currently there are 30,000 AFT members signed up. To join go to www.aft.org/e-activist.

After playing defense for so long, the AFT is taking a proactive role in advancing an agenda of access, affordability, accountability and academic freedom.



Virginia Tech

April 16

IN MEMORIAM

2007

Blacksburg, Virginia

Ross Alameddine, Sophomore, University Studies
Prof. Christopher James, Bishop, German Professor
Brian Bluhm, Master's student, Civil Engineering
Ryan Clark, Senior, Psychology
Austin Cloyd, Sophomore, Honors Program, International Studies
Prof. Jocelyne Couture-Nowak, Adjunct Professor,
Foreign Languages
Prof. Kevin Granata, Engineering Science and Mechanics
Mathew Gwaltney, Master's student, Environmental Engineering
Caitlin Hammaren, Sophomore, International Studies
Jeremy Herbstritt, Master's student, Civil Engineering
Rachel Elizabeth Hill, Civil Engineering
Emily Hilscher, Freshman, Animal and Poultry Sciences
Jarret Lee Lane, Senior, Civil Engineering
Mathew La Porte, Sophomore, University Studies, Dumont, N.J.
Henry Lee, Sophomore, Computer Engineering
Prof. Liviu Librescu, Engineering Science & Mathematics

Prof. G.V. Loganathan, Civil Engineering
Partahi Lumbantoruan, Ph.D. student, Civil Engineering
Lauren McCain, Freshman, International Studies
Daniel O'Neill, Master's student, Environmental Engineering
Juan Ortiz-Ortiz, Master's student, Civil Engineering
Minal Panchal, Master's student, Architecture
Daniel Alejandro Perez, Sophomore, International Studies
Erin Nichole Peterson, Freshman, International Studies
Michael Pohle Jr, Senior, Biological Sciences, Flemington, N. J.
Julia Pryde, Master's student, Biological Systems Engineering
Mary Karen Read, Freshman, Interdisciplinary Studies
Reema Samaha, Freshman, University Studies
Waleed Mohammed Shaalan, Ph.D. student, Civil
Engineering
Leslie Sherman, Junior, Honors Program, History
Maxine Turner, Senior, Honors Program, Chemical Engineering
Nicole White, Sophomore, International Studies

CONGRATULATIONS - KFT 2006-2007 Scholarship Winners

The KFT Scholarship Committee headed by Dr. Jacqueline Keil of the Sociology Department, has selected six Kean students to receive this year's awards.

The scholarship competition is judged on the content of a 500 to 800 word essay, academic achievement and financial need. There were two essay categories this year.

The subject for the Main essay asked the students to address the *Responsibilities of the Educated*. The Special essay, in memory of the late Dr. Karen Stern, asked them to reflect upon a faculty member who has made a difference in their life and what plans they have for passing on this legacy to others. Dr. Stern was a member of Occupational Therapy department and was the 2005 – 2006 KFT Scholarship chair.

Full-time Undergraduate award of \$1200

Wendy Batson-Pasqua, Junior – Teacher of Students with Disabilities/K-5 (BA)

Catherine Gorbatuk, Junior – Early Childhood Education (BA)

Full-time Graduate award of \$1500

Naama Jakobov – Occupational Therapy (MS)

Heather Reiner – School Psychology (MS) and Professional Diploma

Special Essay Award of \$1000

Emily Olsen, Part-time Graduate – Education Administration/ Supervisor/Principal (MA)

Andre R. Turner, Full-time Junior - Management Science/ Management (BS)

Highlights from the winning Main Essays:

"The educator should be someone who strengthens the student's perception on education so that the learners can complete the cycle to continuing their education." *Catherine Gorbatuk*

"The ultimate goal [of the educated] is to facilitate change in another person's life by increasing their independence so that they can pursue their dreams." *Naama Jakobov*

+

"With every opportunity, I encourage them (her students) to become independent, free thinkers by providing them with the tools for critical thinking, teamwork and collaboration." *Wendy Batson-Pasqua*

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"I have seen the benefits of social service firsthand. I eagerly anticipate this new opportunity to apply my knowledge from books, research, class discussions, and prior service activities to continue to better the lives of children. I feel that by applying lessons learned in the classroom in another setting, one truly discovers the rewards of a successful education." *Heather Reiner*

Highlights from the winning Special Essays:

"[Mr. Lyles] would share stories with me that I could relate to and gave me advice whenever I needed it. "... [Mr. Lyles] became my mentor. Similar to Mr. Lyles, I plan to guide, empower and encourage other young men to become strong leaders for their communities. I believe that every young man should have a strong, male role model in their lives and I am glad that I found mine and one day I plan to do the same for others." *Andre Turner*

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"...I have encountered many people who have affected me academically, professionally and personally. One such person is Dr. Ann Walko. [Dr. Walko] didn't make us feel that we should be perfect in every action we take as administrators. Instead she eased any worries by assuring us that we would make mistakes (possibly even big mistakes.) The key was to learn from our mistakes and learn from those around us. Perhaps I can even leave my own legacy for others to follow which would be to set high expectations and strive to exceed them." *Emily M. Olsen*

MASTER CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

Master Contract Negotiations continued on April 13 and 20. Progress has been deliberate and steady, with the state responding with counter proposals to some of our demands. There have been no major surprises or breakthroughs. Both sides are committed to concluding negotiations by June 30, when the current contract expires. In mid May, when classes have ended, longer and more frequent negotiations are planned. ♦

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