

THE KFT VOICE

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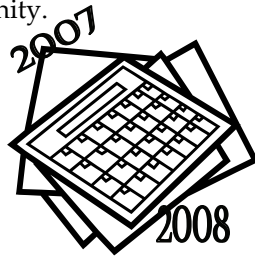
KEAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS - AN ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSORS, PROFESSIONAL STAFF AND LIBRARIANS - KEAN UNIVERSITY, UNION, NJ 07083

What We've Accomplished Together!!

María del Carmen Rodríguez, KFT President

Every December is a good time to assess individual as well as collective goals and aspirations to see how close we've come to meeting them in preparation for a new life cycle or year ahead of us. The KFT under my leadership in close collaboration with the union Executive Council worked diligently to defend the working conditions and terms of all union members while dealing with the many challenges we confronted within and external to the campus community.

A significant challenge of the year 2006-07 was the imposed and non-negotiated managerial proposal for evaluation of all faculty in all courses. *The most important lesson we learned from that obstacle was the significance of a unified reaction voiced by the KFT executive council, the rank and file, and the State Council - all committed to university governance, our labor rights and the common good.*



Another significant issue embraced by the KFT was a proposal for a university evaluative tool for top administrators which has been successfully developed and defended by an ad hoc committee. Two essential characteristics of the proposed evaluation tool for administrators are that it is based on the best research practices in higher education and that it meets assessment standards to grant the administrators the respect plus all the scientific checks that we would like for our own performance-based evaluations.

The administrator evaluation tool was presented to both the Executive and the General State Council meetings (fall of 2007) and both bodies overwhelmingly endorsed the concept. During the December general State Council Meeting, the Council staff was urged to organize a state coordinating committee to lead this effort. The intention is to allow for at least a unified tool that would facilitate comparative analysis of the data collected by the nine locals. KFT members will be kept informed as new developments may occur.

More recently, the KFT defended our terms and working conditions when the Administration tried to impose unilaterally a new smart card ID system without proper negotiation and consultation. *A first meeting to make discoveries about this so called safety system was held on November 14, 2007, and from this meeting, the Administration postponed implementation so that both the full time and adjunct local presidents could meet to discuss the implications and offer recommendations to the Administration regarding this card system and other campus safety issues. A formal letter summarizing our basic concerns, requests and recommendations was sent to the Administration on December 10, 2007.*

The most important discovery the union made at the November 14th meeting was that these cards can be used for tracking faculty time within each class and the possibility that this tracking capability be used for disciplinary purposes against union members. In [See page 2](#)

KFT OPENS DOORS FOR YOU

James A. Gustafson, KFTVP, Grievance Chair



As part of our work to defend and advance the terms and conditions of employment of our members, your KFT strives to see that all faculty, librarians and professional staff are provided the resources necessary to do their jobs well while helping them to achieve their professional aspirations.

One clear example of this is the recently negotiated increase in the number of sabbaticals available and increase in sabbatical compensation. For many faculty, to take a half year sabbatical even at 75% salary was not economically viable. Now, with half-year sabbatical compensation at 100% of salary, these professional opportunities are accessible to everyone.

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What We've Accomplished Together!! *Cont'd from page 1*

addition, the Union argues that despite the high costs associated with the installation and maintenance of this system, it leaves us basically without real answers to the safety threats we confront in this campus and it imposes on our terms and working conditions. *The KFT has officially requested a time to negotiate to ensure that any safety system developed for this campus is compatible with the terms and working conditions of all members of the union.*

Another significant accomplishment of this academic year was working together with all unions on campus to develop a survey that will give unionized employees a chance to comment on the university strategic planning process at Kean University for the years 2007-2012. It has been rewarding to exchange concerns with these labor leaders especially Kathleen Henderson (KUAFF), Andy Rettberg from CWA, Kathy Hernandez, state CWA leader and Steve Pinto (IFPTE).

All committees of the KFT have been working diligently and continuously to provide the best services to all members. The grievance, negotiation, membership and untenured faculty, professional staff, human/labor, public policy and legislative committees have coordinated various events and initiatives for the betterment of our mem-

bers. I personally attended two legislative breakfasts with two assemblymen in a concerted effort to educate legislators about what our labor perspectives and needs. Honorable Upendra Chivukula from Middlesex graciously addressed our general December meeting giving us an opportunity to hear of his efforts in becoming a public officer, his various legislative initiatives and his vision for higher education. What impressed me the most about Assemblyman Chivukula was his persistence in confronting prejudices as he pursues his dreams. He is the first Asian-Indian American elected to the NJ State Assembly and the fourth to be elected to state office. Similarly, public employees and especially, active union members in this campus community confront many odds and we can certainly learn from the persistence and clarity of vision demonstrated by the Honorable Chivukula.

As this 2007 year comes to an end, *let us reaffirm our commitment to the KFT, our labor rights, our mutual interests, the students we work and relate to in so many meaningful ways, and to strengthen the democratic governance process that should represent the university we deserve and work so hard for.* May all of you have a pleasant and healthy holiday season and a blessed and productive new year. Namaste.

KFT OPENS DOORS FOR YOU

Continued from page 1

How generously our Administration awards sabbaticals at Kean now depends upon how strongly you support KFT negotiations. Because of our new contract, you can now afford to take a much-deserved sabbatical. Your support for Union advocacy is needed to make a sabbatical award a reality for you!

The Union has a role to play at the local level in ensuring that university resources be focused in the classroom as this most directly benefits the work our members do and hence our students. To that end the KFT consistently advocates for:

- the hiring and retention of more full-time tenure-track faculty;
- the hiring of professionals in sectors critical to our mission such as the library and student services;
- the expansion of opportunities for professional advancement such as promotions and reclassifications;
- increases in support for professional development such as travel monies;
- technology upgrades such as new office computers, functioning smart classroom equipment, and so on.

In recent years, the impact of state budget cuts has often fallen hardest on the academic side here at Kean. A budget is a statement of priorities. With budget cuts looming for the coming fiscal year, the Union is prepared to stand with the University Presidents in advocating for budget restoration (as was done successfully in 2006). But we will all have to be vigilant so that, locally, any cuts come from non-essential, non-academic departments.

**Sabbaticals
accessible
to all**

See page 5

KFT OPENS DOORS FOR YOU *Continued from page 2*

Even at times of stable state support, the administration has a responsibility to see that funding for each new initiative and program comes from additional revenues or non-classroom-related expenses, not at the cost of existing graduate and undergraduate programs. This is especially important as Kean does not have the established resources, such as state-of-the-art research facilities, equipment, research budgets, support personnel, etc., of an R-1, PhD-granting research university.

Should senior faculty be sacrificed?

My personal experience offers some perspective. When I was a graduate student at Ohio State University, new physics faculty were typically given up to \$300,000 for starting-up their laboratories, and with inflation, that amount would be considerably higher today. The amount invested in one faculty member at OSU over a decade ago is greater than the total spent by Kean annually in direct support of all research and scholarship via RTR, UFRI, TRFI, etc. at the present time. And now we have become aware of the Farahi administration's attempt to disband the TFRI program, harming senior faculty who need institutional support to restart or redirect their scholarship programs.

Is the Kean Administration up to the task of responsible leadership when:

1. adjunct numbers have risen to over 900 for Fall 2007
2. more than 50% of all classes at Kean are now taught by adjuncts, a figure that approaches 70% in some departments and even higher in freshman and sophomore level courses
3. the University reduces support for academic advisement and other core student services
4. the University stands willing to spend \$1500 per door to place an ID card reader on every classroom, yet tells faculty there is no money to replace 9-year old office computers
5. no Performance-Based Promotions for Professional Staff in several years
6. one promotion in the library in the past 17 years.

Doors close out professionals.

The low number of promotions is especially egregious as their cost, a few thousand dollars per promotion, is so minimal as to represent a rounding error in the University's \$140 million budget, whereas, \$1500 per door for surveillance represents a potential expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The University can do better with the resources that it has if it would simply reprioritize its budgeting in the way our sister institutions have. Most already have the 3-course teaching load in place, which the Farahi administration still refuses to negotiate. Our sister institutions have continued to hire and retain full-time tenure-track faculty extremely successfully. From Fall 2003 to Spring 2007, the institutions' own numbers show that Montclair's full-time faculty went from 470 to 521, Rowan's from 400 to 458 and William Paterson's from 382 to 406, while Kean's dropped from almost 400 down to 382. Kean's faculty size has returned to 398 this fall, but only if you count the 23 non-tenure-track instructors on staff.

The University can do better for its employees, its students and the state. The KFT will continue to advocate that it do so. *Win-win strategies are needed for budgetary balance and the KFT expends every effort to negotiate for your interests.*

*Win-win strategies are needed
for budgetary balance.*



Now You See It, Now You Don't

Charlie Kelly, KFT Negotiation Committee



In spite of serious KFT proposals, negotiations this semester have not been very productive. The Administration continues to stall, obfuscate and engage in histrionics. I once characterized the Administration's approach to negotiation as a dollar on a string approach. Offer you something and once you reach for it, yank it away. Putting the ethics of this approach aside, one could rationalize the approach from the amoral position as a win/lose, that is by yanking the dollar away the Administration keep its dollar. The recent decision to deny any agreement unless it signed off by everyone including the State is a classic lose/lose outcome. The Administration's behavior at this juncture can only be termed self-destructive (lose/lose).

Who's on First?

Similarly, the Administration takes the view that it has lost control over the administration of the labor agreements it has with the KFT. In regard to the Promotion Committee it maintains that the Promotions Committee Chair has sole authority to administer the Committee's process regardless of contractual and procedural violations. When reminded that it is the Administration's legal responsibility to administer the procedures mutually agreed to by the KFT and the Administration, the chief spokesperson for the President abruptly walked out of negotiations as a rebuke to the KFT's admonition. **So...who's on first?**

Abbott or Costello ?

At the meeting following the walkout, the Administration's chief spokesperson addressing the issue of identification cards told the KFT that requirement for public display of ID cards would only pertain to faculty and staff. The issue of requiring the students to display ID cards is "out of his hands" and belongs to another Vice-President. The Administration insisted that faculty and staff public display of ID cards was necessary due to the New Jersey Campus Security Task Force Report.

Room Service

The Administration reluctantly conceded that the ID cards could not protect us against a terrorist attack, but it would help with gathering forensic evidence after such a tragedy occurred. The Report does require the Administration to have an emergency management plan. The Administration provided us with a copy of Virginia Tech Review Panel's Report On the Mass Shooting at Virginia Tech to drive home its point. When the KFT asked what the connection was between campus security and faculty/staff public display of ID cards, the Administration argued that ID cards had many benefits beyond security to justify them. The ultimate benefit in the Administration's eyes would be a tracking system and a "keyless campus".

In other words, our ID cards could be a key to buildings, classrooms, offices, etc. Unfortunately for the Administration, this keyless system has tripled in price since 9/11/2001. It would cost the administration approximately \$1,600 per door to transform the campus. This system would allow the Administration to lockdown the University if ever there was a terrorist attack and contain the terrorists in certain buildings and classrooms. This keyless system would also provide data on the arrival and departure times of faculty in classrooms and offices. When questioned about whether the technology has such a capacity, the Administration stated that it may have to be augmented by video cameras with an additional cost of equipment and monitoring. The Administration is considering implementing video cameras in the student dorms soon as a pilot project to assure security.

Skidoo

The proposal presented in Spring 2006 for transition from classroom to retirement, the first positive proposal offered since the Farahi Administration began, has been formally withdrawn in favor of a less attractive Master Agreement program. Kean's classroom-to-retirement proposal modeled after the existing Stockton University program provided faculty the opportunity to make the transition in 3 to 4 plus years. In the first year, the faculty who applied and were approved by the Administration, would receive one course release time in one semester to develop a retirement plan. If the Administration approved of the plan, the faculty would commit to retire at the end of the first year and begin their plan which could include a 50% teaching reduction with full pay in the 2nd year and a 50% teaching load with half pay in the 3rd year. The fourth plus optional year (s) could include adjunct teaching at the adjunct rate of compensation. While the benefits are obvious to faculty approaching retirement, the benefits for the Administration were also significant.

President Farahi has recently claimed publicly that senior faculty at the top step cost the University up to \$230,000 total: \$130,000 in salary and benefits and \$100,000 in support services (chalk, erasers, etc.). Even if one makes a more modest cost assessment than \$100,000 for support, there is no doubt that full-time senior faculty costs the University nearly twice as much as a newly hired assistant professor at the lowest step. By encouraging senior faculty to retire with advance notice, the Administration could plan hiring and program as well as institutional development. Faculty who retire with minimal notice to the Administration (which is permissible currently) leaves programs and departments in a difficult staffing bind.

Turn Back the Clock

The Master Agreement, at the insistence of the State, bars any local transition to retirement plans other than those existing before the closure of statewide negotiations this past summer. Stockton University, in other words, keeps its program. Kean University could have had its own retirement program if the Administration agreed to the KFT's view that we had an oral agreement last spring. The KFT accepted the proposal without objections last semester but asked for clarification on certain points. This lack of finalizing the agreement and absence of signature is now cited as the reason for a denial of the agreement.

Meet the Baron

The last major issue dealt with at local negotiations this semester pertains to faculty representation on the Promotion Committee. The KFT and the Administration reached a tentative agreement in Spring 2006 on a proportional representation system that would assure representation for all colleges and schools based on faculty size. The Administration refused to sign this agreement due to a dispute regarding the role of the KFT observer. The State Council, the AFT State Council and the Governor's Office of Employees Relations signed an arbitration settlement this past summer resolving the issue. The KFT and Kean Administration also signed off on this settlement. The settlement lasted until the Promotion Committee met this year. The Administration has again taken the position that it has no control over the Promotion Committee and the total disregard of the agreement by the Promotion Committee Chair is not its responsibility.

All Gummed Up

The issue of promotional committee representation does not have to be tied to issues of the KFT observer role. They are two distinct issues. The Administration can sign the tentative agreement regarding representation reached last December in time for the Spring faculty election and separate the issue of the KFT observer's role from the agreement. In other words we can agree where we agree and maintain our respective positions on the issue we disagree. Mature bargaining parties do this all the time. Let's hope this Administration can rise to the occasion for the sake of the faculty in the school of Visual and Performing Arts in particular and fairness in general.

Editors comment: As revealed in the captions in the above article, local negotiations can be scripted with slapstick movie titles. Just how much is it worth to the University and the state taxpayers to support this tragic comedy?



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

KFT Professional Staff Luncheon Meeting

Linda Bradbury, KFT Co-Vice-President and Professional Staff Committee Chair

In recent years, in an effort to reach Professional Staff members who may find it difficult to attend the KFT General Membership meetings on Wednesday during the University Hour, the KFT has scheduled Professional Staff Luncheon meetings once a semester. A luncheon meeting was held on Tuesday, December 11th in UC 337 from 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm.

Bennett Muraskin, staff representative for the KFT from the Council of New Jersey State College Locals, was in attendance offering insight into our new Master Contract. He encouraged visits to the Council web site to make use of the electronic system for contacting legislators to urge their support of the Paid Family Leave bills currently in the legislature. Such legislation would provide up to 10 weeks of Paid Family Leave for employees to care for sick relatives and newborn or newly adopted children. Employees would pay for this benefit through a very small increase in their payroll deduction for Temporary Disability Insurance.

Professional Staff were encouraged to ask questions and share concerns. One major concern discussed at length was tuition waiver and reimbursement. In particular, the experiences of Program Assistants requesting application forms to apply for these benefits were shared. They related how Human Resources personnel advised that Program Assistants were ineligible for these benefits because their current job titles do not require a Master's degree. Therefore, the Administration would not offer this benefit for coursework considered not applicable to their present job.

Professional Staff expressed frustration since even clerical staff has received tuition waiver and reimbursement for coursework leading to Bachelor's or Master's degrees, neither of which are required for clerical positions. The inability to have advanced degree coursework reimbursed or waived hinders professional development of Professional Staff. Without advanced degrees, Program Assistants are unable to apply for vacancies in Professional Services Specialist positions specifying that Master's degree

are required or preferred. Bennett Muraskin, however stated that conversations with Human Resources management indicated assurances that no Professional Staff, regardless of title, will be turned away from applying for tuition waiver or reimbursement for Master's degree coursework. He encouraged Program Assistants to request such applications and to apply and that any reported difficulty in doing so would be followed up by the State Council.

In addition, the KFT has requested data from both Kean University and the State Council that would provide comparisons between how Professional Staff at Kean have fared with receiving awards for Tuition Reimbursement, Tuition Waivers, Career Development, and Performance Based Promotions, as compared with colleagues at our sister N.J. public colleges and universities. Watch for future KFT VOICE articles as this subject develops.

Untenured Faculty Luncheon Meeting

Chrysoula Fantaousakis - Bryan Lees - KFT Untenured Faculty Committee

An enthusiastic group of untenured faculty met for lunch in the Blue Room on Thursday, December 6th. In a supportive and collegial setting untenured faculty met informally and had a chance to share insights with each other and seek information on pertinent issues in our new contract.

Steve Young, Managing Staff Representative from the State Council, joined us and he had the pleasure of meeting some of our untenured faculty. He guided us through the salary

steps of our new Contract, health benefits, and the status of imminent legislative action on a paid family leave bill. Steve's feedback was quite useful and we all appreciated it.

All in attendance enjoyed the atmosphere and expressed interest in having regular meetings next semester.

*A gift certificate was awarded as a door prize to
Morris Thai Restaurant.*

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Kean Federation of Teachers



2007—2008 Scholarship Competition



Up to eight awards will be granted in the following categories:

Full-time undergraduates (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)	\$1200
Part-time undergraduates (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)	\$ 600
Full-time Graduate students (masters' program or post baccalaureate)	\$1500
Part-time Graduate student (masters' program or post baccalaureate)	\$ 750
Special Essay on Global Education	\$1000

*Monies will be allocated at the discretion of the KFT Scholarship Committee
Dr. Jacqueline Keil, 2007-2008 KFT Scholarship Committee Chair*



Applications are available now at:

KFT website: www.kft2187.org

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One-Stop Service Center - Admin. Bldg. - 1st Flr Reception Desk

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University Center - Information Desk

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KFT Office - Hutchinson Hall - J201G

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Graduate Office T122

Application deadline is February 20, 2008



Federation of Teachers *An Association of Professors, Professional Staff and Librarians*
Local 2187, American Federation of Teachers
Kean University - Union, New Jersey

INTELLECTUAL LABOR IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Richard Katz
KFT Voice Editor, Council Delegate

Identification of oneself as intellectual labor comes easier these days. In fact, according to AFL CIO President John Sweeney, *higher education is the fastest growing segment of American organized labor.* In the past two years, Rutgers and the University of Vermont joined the AFT.

The KFT is active and politically engaged and right now under pressure from an unaccountable administration as are several of our sister locals. Indeed, the recent report of the New Jersey State Committee on Investigation into public higher education "has revealed an entire system vulnerable to problematic governance, serious shortcomings in oversight, accountability, and transparency and outright violations of public trust." (SCI Executive Summary, their emphasis)

The SCI report traces the roots

of this system wide negligence to the Governor Whitman's 1994 Higher Education Restructuring Act, which abolished the Department of Higher Education and permitted each campus unaccountable "local autonomy." The SCI report flatly states that "history has proven that the state's wholesale disengagement from higher education in 1994 was a mistake."

The statewide AFT union, the state Council, opposed the Act in 1994 and warned of the pernicious consequences we now experience. In fact, since 1994 our State Council has been the only statewide public higher education body. The Council's several reports and white papers over the past twelve years documented the system wide shortcomings and advocated for many of the recommendations now in the SCI report.

Indeed, when the state abandoned its oversight role The KFT, and

our sister locals became the only remaining oversight in the state. Given this continuing void in oversight, organized intellectual labor, the KFT, and the state Council have the serious task of demanding administrative accountability; raising questions about campus budget priorities, the disposition of resources; and actively opposing unchecked assertions of administrative autonomy.

If academics are uneasy with an activist labor union, we agree that is a sometimes unpleasant to have to call those with unchecked authority to account. But right now in the present climate, *that's our job.* The KFT remains unwavering in its commitment to protecting your professional integrity. The SCI report confirms we are right to criticize and to demand accountability.

ONLY AT KEAN

Richard Katz, KFT Voice Editor, Council Delegate

The salaries and benefits of all faculty, librarians, and professional staff employed in those nine institutions are negotiated statewide by the CNJSCL, which deducts .85% of employee salaries as an "agency fee." *Membership in the KFT, an additional .10% deduction, is the lowest percentage among the nine state colleges and universities.* Other institutions charge up to an additional .25%.

Since 1996 the KFT has the *highest or second highest membership percentage in the state.* And since 1998, we have the *largest political action fund.* Most recently among the nine state institutions, the KFT had the *highest membership voting percentage, 57%,* with over 90% voting in favor of the contract.

Your dollar goes farther and your vote is heard!



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