

CAPWIZ: The Shortcut to Your Legislators

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because they would mandate fair contractual negotiations procedures between the state and public employees. These bills would prohibit the state from unilaterally imposing terms and conditions of employment prior to reaching a collective bargaining agreement with the unions. In order for us to provide quality education for our students and practice our scholarship with professionalism, these bills must become law. To achieve this objective, we must contact the voting legislators in our districts and urge them to post this legislation for a vote in the Assembly Labor Committee and in the Senate State Government Committee as soon as possible.

To facilitate direct communication with our legislators, the CAPWIZ program of the State Council of New Jersey has organized links to legislators in our corresponding districts. The link provides a form letter that can be edited and submitted on your behalf either via e-mail or "snail mail." Go to the AFT State Council Web site at www.cnjscl.org and click on "legislative alert." This will take you to the page that has both bills listed <http://capwiz.com/cnjscl/state/maine/?state=NJ>.

Your participation is vital! This communication will only take a minute of your time, and yet, it could influence your employment conditions for the rest of your life.

Chrysoula Fantaousakis

Extra! Extra!

KFT Enters the 21st Century!

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computer. Therefore, you will soon be able to write from the comfort of your own home. "Blogger," a contraction of the two words, "Web" and "log," is a free service for easily communicating and sharing ideas on the Web. You will be getting an invitation via e-mail that you can reply to in order to establish a free account.

THE KFT VOICE

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CAPWIZ: The Shortcut to Your Legislators

Voice Your Opinion on Two Bills of Crucial Importance

The KFT strongly encourages its members to contact their legislators regarding two pieces of legislation that are designed to (1) give public employees fair representation on their institution's Board of Trustees and (2) establish greater equity in contractual negotiations procedures. **It is imperative that you contact your legislators directly and urge them to support this legislation.**

In 1994, the Department of Higher Education was dissolved and was replaced with the relatively powerless Commission on Higher Education. Since this office does not have the necessary force, universities/colleges have acquired an excessive level of institutional autonomy. Regrettably, with the elimination of a state agency to oversee the mission and accountability of state institutions, **some universities abuse this autonomy and systematically undermine commitment to quality education and scholarship.** Two bills are introduced that are designed to **rectify this situation** and empower public employees. To achieve this objective, these bills must become law. Therefore, it is imperative that we contact our representatives directly and urge them to support this legislation.

More specifically, the A-2795 bill requires each college/university to have two full-voting-rights members

who are employed at that institution and are selected by its labor organization. This bill has already passed out of committee, and we must urge the Assembly leadership to post it promptly for a vote.

The "companion bills" A-693/S-1868 are of crucial importance for us

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(l-r) Bert Wailoo, Maria del Carmen Rodriguez, Jose Menendez, and Orlando Edreira, at a meeting with Menendez on May 10.

President's BOT Remarks

Good afternoon, university trustees, President, and other distinguished members of the Kean University community. First, I would like to announce that I was chosen to be the KFT president for the academic year 2005-06. Recently, I attended a ceremony that named the New Academic Building where I work as Hennings Hall. This event pays tribute to Drs. Dorothy and George Hennings, both retired faculty members. Dr. Hennings described Kean as her home away from home. Today, I would like to reflect on the same idea. Is Kean "a home away from home?" For most union members, Kean is a true home. But a more interesting issue to assess is whether the Administration treats all workers as members of the same home or not?

In a home with a positive environment, there is room for intelligent dialogue and conversation. If a member of the family questions the leader's actions, his/her views are carefully listened to and acknowledged. On May 3, three KFT leaders met with Dr. Farahi and Vice President Philip Connelly. Dr. Farahi was presented with basic issues that are affecting the working conditions of KFT members. His overall reaction to all of these issues was very simple: "there is no room for negotiation." He went even further to say that he will not support any letter of agreement. Even when we proposed to discuss an issue that does not imply

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SLIPSHEET: Higher Education Conference



KFT Scholarship event on April 18.

Kean Federation of Teachers Presents Scholarships

As an example of its continued support for Kean University's students, the Kean Federation of Teachers (KFT) presented scholarship awards to seven students on April 18 in the presence of their families and friends, Dr. Vinton Thompson, provost/vice president for Academic Affairs, Robert Tupper, senior development officer in the Foundation, members of the KFT Executive Council, and the KFT Scholarship Committee. Based on the application criteria of writing an essay on the theme *The Responsibility of the Educated*, academic performance and financial need, Husna Ahmed, Daniel Chojnowski and Vanessa Mendoker, each won a \$1,200 full-time undergraduate award, and \$600 was bestowed upon undergraduate part-time student Marlene Pierre-Louis. In the graduate category, Lynna H. Cirillo and Nicole M. Lepore each won awards in the amount of \$1,500, while part-time graduate student Frances R. Gallicchio was presented with a check for \$750. The KFT Scholarship Committee chaired by Dr. Karen Stern, Department of Occupational Therapy; and committee members Dr. George Avirappattu, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science; Jappie King Black, Department of Fine Arts; Emanuel Emanouilidis, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science; and Laurie Knis, Department of Occupational Therapy, selected the winners.

Dr. Maria del Carmen Rodriguez, KFT president, congratulated the winners, saying, "It is with great pleasure that I present these awards that honor several Kean

students. The seven recipients represent the best of our student body: four undergraduate and three graduate majors. These students stand out because of their stamina, dedication, discipline, excellence and desire to improve both their families and communities. I hope these awards will also ease their financial constraints," del Carmen Rodriguez said, sharing a personal account of her life as a student. "I still remember the support I received from my family, professors and support staff when I was a student. My days as a student were most precious because of these acts of encouragement and kindness. I am hopeful that these awards, as well as our good wishes shared with you today, will inspire you to excel beyond your imagination for years to come. This is the way our union strengthen our student body, the future of America and this fragile world of all of us."

The 2005 KFT scholarship presentation comes on the heels of last year's commitment of a \$50,000 endowment fund to the Foundation. "The idea of an endowment is never to spend the original amount of the gift, but instead to pay out a portion of total earnings each year," said Douglas Nelson, vice president for Institutional Advancement and president of the Foundation. "Typically, the payout is about 5 percent of the fund balance. By creating an endowment, you provide scholarship support this year and every year. Over time as the fund grows in value, so, too, can the amount of the awards," Nelson continued, praising KFT for its support. "It is always gratifying when a group like KFT wants to give and to help students. While some KFT members may be Kean alumni, most are not, so giving here is a very generous act."

Ellen Comerford, KFT treasurer, said that "the donation is part of the faculty, librarians' and professional staff's commitment to supporting the academic and financial goals of first-generation students at Kean University. The endowment fund was entrusted to the Foundation as evidence of the collective dedication to our students." According to Comerford, the money for the endowment was derived from KFT surplus.

Lastly, the KFT Executive Council and its committees applaud Norma Hall, KFT Office Manager, who processed all the necessary paperwork in her usual efficient and highly organized manner. Without her, the scholarship event would not have been possible.

Thank you, Norma!

Extra! Extra! KFT Enters the 21st Century!

As the Kean Federation of Teachers shifts gears with new president Maria del Carmen Rodriguez to guide the membership and the KFT Executive Council, the council has decided that one of the most important tasks before it is to engage the membership in an informed debate of the direction of the union. Several new initiatives have been taken. KFT Webmaster Janelle Alexander, updates the KFT Web



site www.kft2187.org on a regular basis. Board of Trustee meeting remarks made by KFT members are now posted, as well as PDF files of *The KFT Voice*. It is easier now than ever to stay current on the goings-on in YOUR union.

We're certain that some of you may have questions, concerns or opinions about the current state of affairs at Kean – some of which you may not feel comfortable sharing using your state-owned
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President's Message

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budgetary allocations (the tenured faculty research initiative), his answer was the same: "non-negotiable." This program, originally proposed by the KFT, has been unilaterally modified and imposed by the Provost's Office.

In a true home, there is respectful communication. Effective leaders treat members who disagree with the same respect as those with similar views. In a meeting, Dr. Farahi's treatment of Dr. Orlando Edreira was totally out of order. It is sad to say that the way Dr. Edreira was mistreated is not the exception but more of a rule. In a true home, members receive constructive feedback, praising them for good efforts and guiding them with concrete suggestions where there is room for growth and improvement. In the annual evaluation forms for professional staff, their supervisors were instructed to delete positive comments and include only negative appraisals. Most librarians have been in need of promotions for years, and no remedy is in sight.

In a true home, members are fairly compensated for their efforts. Program coordinators and chairpersons demand extra compensation for all the extra work they regularly do. These are the quiet members that keep this University functioning at its best.

After my presentation, all of the University trustees will be fully aware of basic injustices affecting most members of our local 2187. You are now fully aware of the lack of respect displayed by this administration to many of our

workers. You are aware that if you remain silent, you are colluding. You would not be acting on your basic obligation to oversee this public institution. You would not be protecting the best interests of all the people who make up Kean University.

We would go outside of these walls and ask public officials to step in and put our house in order. But you, Kean trustees, have a chance to correct this critical situation. Firstly, this administration owes an apology to Dr. Edreira, and this would be a first step in the right direction. Secondly, you can instruct this administration to sit down and really negotiate in good faith. This is the minimum element to build trust and collaboration within this institution.

If this administration continues to refuse to negotiate with our locals, and if this administration is unable to apologize (when an apology is long overdue); then we would know that Dr. Farahi is not suited for the job of president and cannot continue to pretend that he is one. In practical terms, with behaviors as rude as the ones previously described and an anti-labor climate as the one just described, the confidence of our local on this president's capacity to act as a university president is at its lowest point.

TRUSTEES, this is your chance to act on behalf of the best interests of all the people who constitute Kean University. Do not waste any more time. Act as trustees for all of us. BRING ORDER INTO THIS HOUSE IN CRISIS. And start at the top NOW!

Thank you very much!