



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 Minutes
Wednesday, April 9, 2008, CAS-106

Business Covered:

President María del Carmen Rodríguez welcomed everyone to the meeting. She announced a special treat this afternoon as we waited for a certain individual to enter the room.

The meeting began at 3:34 PM.

I. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of March 5, 2008 were approved as presented.

III. President's Report

Labor Solidarity Day. María del Carmen Rodríguez reported firstly an announcement that on April 21, 2008 will be Labor Solidarity Day on campus. We are hoping that Local 195 and KUAFF will be joining us. It will be held at 3:30 PM. Activities will include presentations on the history of the labor movement in America in the Little Theatre. Other activities will be in University Center 226. One will include the representative of TIAA-CREF, another will be health care maintenance information.

Skoorka Lawsuit Report. There is ongoing litigation affecting the University and a certain Dean. The KFT was included at one time. A session was held in early April and questions were asked which were not responded to. Apparently, the judge in this case is very angry and extended the time but is very upset with the way the case is being handled by the party suing the University and the KFT.

Classroom evaluations. The Administration is planning to implement a new way of evaluating faculty at the university. There was a meeting with 17 Department Chairs at a

luncheon today. They shared their concerns with this process. They feel completely disrespected. The proposal went from a task force whose function was to gather information about curriculum. However, the form was exclusively about faculty teaching. María del Carmen Rodríguez urged all members of the KFT not to participate in the study due to the illegal nature of the evaluation tool. Members have the right to refuse to cooperate as it was not approved via negotiations. It was reported that the English Department will not cooperate. Faculty are being asked not to participate—If managers do not respect the contract, they should have an administrator pass the forms out and not a student. Charles Kelly reported that only one school has the forms so far. He suggested that all members take as many opportunities to delay this violation of the contract as possible.

Family Leave. The legislation has passed the legislature and is awaiting the signature of the governor.

Ethical Guidelines. This is under study and is being worked on.

Some of the officers went to the higher education conference. There is a proposal to increase the AFT national dues that are taken out.

Ceremony honoring Dr. Orlando Edreira. At this point, the KFT president paused from discussing the regular report and announced that the KFT pays extreme honor to Orlando Edreira. She reported that he contributed significantly to the forming of the Spanish Speaking Program and that School No. 26 has been named after him. We are a group of professionals who are recognizing great professionalism.

Dr. Edreira came to the front of the room. Myriam Quinones began by giving a few biographical notes for him. Angel Estrada of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders was present and related reminiscences of the days when Dr. Edreira and others were working to bring the right mix of students to what was then Newark State College and later Kean College of New Jersey. He noted that Dr. Edreira has been seriously committed to education and to giving students the opportunity to obtain the education that they deserve. He noted that as we make changes in this world, one important objective is to make a more level playing field for them. Students, faculty and associates expressed sentiments of great respect and esteem for Dr. Orlando Edreira.

A group of students were asked to write about what Dr. Edreira meant for their lives. From this collection, two were read, one by Edith Morales and the other by Beatrix Garcia. Alex Valencia from the music department played one piece on guitar for Dr. Edreira. “Serenity” by Vicente Acencio, a contemporary composer from Spain.

Barbara Wheeler of the Africana Studies program came forward and related a story about visiting Cuba and visiting Dr. Edreira’s family. They went to see the statue of Dr. Edreira and his grandfather in Havana.

Myriam Quinones then presented Dr. Edreira with a gift from the Kean Federation of Teachers of a Distinguished Service Award. Dr. Edreira thanked the membership of the KFT. He related the history of the Spanish Speaking Program and the development of the Program in Bilingual Education. He related in a short manner how these were created. He also thanked Myriam Quinones and Maria Obando for their efforts in helping the students in the program. He noted that he is proud of the things he has done in his life, but he is the most proud that he is the grandson of two African slaves in Cuba. His grandfather began the independence war in Cuba in 1895.

Union communications. At the conference in late March, there was a report that the NLRB made a decision that sets a negative precedent. An employer went after an employee for using emails to distribute union materials of a very specific content. It was stated that that type of communication is not relevant in the workplace. This decision would have to be followed closely.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Ellen Comerford presented the Treasurer's Report. She noted that every time we get a salary increase, the State Council and the National AFT raise their dues rates. About 30 of the 105 agency members have joined the KFT leaving only about 75 in agency status. Membership were encouraged to get them to join the Local. María del Carmen Rodríguez added that an advantage to being a member is to get the free professional liability insurance.

At the end of the year we have an outside CPA do a financial review. It is expected to be done by the end of August. Ellen Comerford noted that we also have a COPE fund that is the only source of monetary contributions to local political candidates.

V. Committee Reports

Administrative evaluations. Bryan Lees noted that work is progressing on the idea for evaluation of administrators. In February, it was presented at a State Council meeting. As a result, the State Council has testified at the Assembly in which our recommendation was included that performance evaluations of Presidents, Provosts and Deans be conducted at each institution over four areas on a regular basis.

Our colleagues at William Paterson tried to implement something of their own. However, it failed as the local there was trying to protect the confidentiality of the administrators. Once they correct these minor issues, it is expected that their administrator's evaluations would proceed as planned

Chrysoula Fantaousakis reported on the Higher Education conference of AFT in March. The topic was building an alliance. She attended seminars on evaluations. She got a great number of insights that can help us both at the local and state levels.

Diversity. Chrysoula Fantaousakis reported that she attended seminars on diversity education last week. In those, the program policies committee of the council of higher education had an presentation concerning affirmative action and related topics. She asked them about implementation of ADA regulations on campus. She reported that many conference-goers volunteered to advocate for disability issues as diversity issues. She is also the chair of the educational policy committee. She reported that the implementation of ADA at Kean University is not appropriate. A survey will be sent to members to determine the status so as to formulate concerns about member and advocate for them.

Negotiations. There were two meetings this semester. One was over scheduling (which is not a term-and-condition of employment) at which time the proposed schedule change for Spring 2009 was given out. It is not something that is subject to negotiations. Charles Kelly reminded us that President Farahi changed the old schedule back before he became president. Now, we are now in a fix caused by his making the current schedule in the first place. Fears are that required courses will be offered on Fridays, students will not register, classes will be cancelled, and it will take them longer to graduate or they will leave.

We need to have negotiations about how to make the evaluations work. Confidentiality of the data must be maintained. We are also pushing hard for faculty to have a three course load. The idea is to change 3-credit courses to 4-credit courses. He reported that the Administration considered it to be too much work when it is not so.

We have been pressing hard for the faculty of SVPA to stay on the range adjustment committee and the promotion committee. The Administration is reluctant to accept our proposal in that regard. The other issue that just came up is the effort to do away with the four-day work week in the Summer. C. Kelly noted that the idea must be that if we are here, people will come. He suggested that the Administration must bring the crowd in first, then we will come.

We asked for \$2500.00 for career development. We were told that less money is available this year and even less will be available next year. For what little is available, he noted that a faculty member has to ask for the money early enough or they will not get it. He suggested that members keep applying. If they receive an insulting response, tell him about it. He also suggested that membership go to their Dean and Chair to complain that the available money (\$1000.00) is not enough.

Grievance. James Castiglione noted that the *Tower* has collected negative student feedback on the Schedule. A couple of cases regarding mis-counting of sick days were settled. Recent arbitrations for faculty in one-year appointments whose offers were rescinded were heard by arbitration yesterday. Also, the sabbatical grievance that was settled may be back. He has been contacted by faculty who were denied sabbaticals. Apparently the Administration is in violation of their own settlement agreement in this case. It was suggested that we obtain numbers of who applied and how many awards were given out.

There were three Step I hearings this semester. The first one we have not heard about in violation of the time frame. The second one was denied. The third involved a faculty member whose pay was not correctly calculated when they were promoted. It may be denied on a technicality that the timeliness of the grievance was too long.

Membership thinking that they have a grievance should contact the union immediately and should act assertively.

There was no other business after this point.

VI. Old Issues

VII. New Issues

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Osborne, Secretary

Handouts:

Agenda with attachments

Report of Task Force on Student Evaluations of Courses—Preliminary Recommendation

Sample 2004 Student Instructional Report from Nicholls State University