



KEAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
An Association of Professors, Professional Staff and Librarians
Local 2187, American Federation of Teachers
Kean University, Union, N.J. 07083
Phone 908 737-3925 Fax 908 737-3929

KFT General Membership Minutes
Wednesday, February 6, 2008
CAS-106

Business Covered:

The meeting began at 3:45 PM.

President María del Carmen Rodríguez welcomed everyone to the meeting.

I. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of December 5, 2007 were approved as presented.

III. President's Report

President María del Carmen Rodríguez began with the serious budget cuts that will be coming forward in the next few months. She reported that the federal budget includes inadequate increases or cuts for educational programs in the United States. She mentioned a few examples of the pending cuts. Special Education state grants will be slightly increased as well as Title I funding for No Child Left Behind. Membership was asked to be alert for information from AFT national about these cuts. The State Council expects severe cuts to Higher Education in the year to come. When more information is forthcoming, we will be informed.

Finally she discussed a communication from the State Council dated February 1, 2008, regarding the decision to be in New Jersey Direct 15 or the two HMOs. An officer from the Council was invited to this meeting but could not come. For answers to specific questions, anyone can call the State Council office. María del Carmen Rodríguez noted that an employee of Horizon had a laptop with many files on it that was lost. We were assured that the information was encrypted however; there is always the chance that the personal information of members was compromised. The unions sent a letter to the Division of Pensions asking about security concerns. All members of the State Benefits Plan will be provided with a free one year of credit protection.

We have asked for better coordination between the Local and the State Council regarding the upcoming crisis. Graphs of information were distributed to membership. Council has

expressed concern about the inability of the current administration to negotiate in good faith. They had a meeting with the Secretary of Labor over the last two weeks. The chart compares the nine campuses. From 2003-2008, Kean University has a total of 53 grievances as opposed to lower numbers on other campuses. María del Carmen Rodríguez held up the diagram to show to the membership.

María del Carmen Rodríguez also addressed the SCI report. She remembered that the first SCI report distributed by the State had information concerning Rowan, Rutgers and Ramapo. The report has been forwarded to the Legislature. Action is expected. María del Carmen Rodríguez noted that the Legislature will not take action without hearing from the membership. Specific recommendations have been made. These include more autonomy for the Department of Higher Education to have more oversight of individual universities, and that this area of government may be given power to administer the various universities. The report highlights the abuses in fiscal and administrative terms. At the end of February, the State Council will represent us and ask that new controls be moved forward. AAUP and the state Nurses Union (HPAE) at Rutgers will be involved. This was included on the agenda as a consequence of a request by an individual member.

During discussion, Mervyn DeSouza noted that there was an attempt to water down Senator Lesniak's report. Jon Erickson noted that they are looking for something closer to the original report. Something stronger is hoped for in the Legislature. Mervyn DeSouza noted that the body in Trenton has no power and is not given information to disseminate. For example, they did not know that we plan to open a campus in China. María del Carmen Rodríguez noted that the KFT would like to see the documents regarding the planning for this project. She reported the President saying that it was sensitive diplomatic information that could not be shared. Jon Erickson noted that there will be meetings with the Governor coming up soon. María del Carmen Rodríguez noted that membership should write to the Assembly Higher Education Committee in the Legislature asking them to put teeth into the legislation that will defend the tax dollars that are paid to the State and reequest that these dollars are spent wisely in the university system by increasing administrative oversight.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Ellen Comerford presented the Treasurer's report. The latest financial statements were mailed to membership in September 2007. She noted that our income and expenditures are approximately what were predicted for this year.

V. Committee Reports

Negotiations. Charles Kelly reported that a LOA was signed regarding the out of state living stipend for out of state faculty. They would give \$200 for the first year to move to certain nearby towns. We had asked for a larger geographical radius but we agreed to the original five towns. We had also asked for it to apply to Librarians or Professional Staff but they were not included.

We have currently asked that the faculty loads be reduced from 4 courses to 3 courses. We are one of only three of the sister institutions still requiring 4 courses. Five already have 3-course loads. It benefits parking, scheduling, less time for student to graduate, and other benefits, but the administration has refused to discuss this item.

Regarding the transition from classroom to retirement, the administration had offered us a nice package but it was withdrawn because of the Master Agreement. So, we will ask for implementation of the Master Agreement.

We are trying to continue the range adjustment program as we worked on last year but there are roadblocks.

The question of observer status was settled for the promotion committee. Now they want the question settled in all committees. It was noted that, as the LOA has sunset, we behave as if it were still in force and remains that way until it is changed or renegotiated. The appropriate guidelines are the current ones that have just expired. We do not go back to previous years' agreements. So we plan to follow the program as it was last year.

Coming up will be the issue of evaluation. Chair evaluation is still up in the air. In the area of Faculty evaluations, the task force is preparing to make proposals to evaluate faculty. But, before it can be put in force, it must be negotiated.

During discussion it was noted that the Faculty Senate is responsible for administering elections however they cannot set or interpret election policy. It was noted that there is a problem with the representation of the School of Visual and Performing Arts on the Promotion Committee. Under the current interpretation, VPA would be disenfranchised. Administration is responsible for administering letters of agreement. The Senate should change the terms of the local agreement.

Regarding range adjustment, the LOA #111 had a sunset clause. It expired at the end of June, 2007. Once it did, we reverted to the Master Agreement. The Master Agreement notes that the procedure has to be negotiated locally. Until then, the current policy continues even though it expired. Membership was advised to not accept any oral interpretations of the contract. Interpretations should be in writing and reported to Charles Kelly and/or María del Carmen Rodríguez. Such action might be considered as grounds for action. There was also a discussion between Charles Kelly and John Valentine, Senate Chair, regarding interpretation of agreements. It was noted that the KFT notified the Senate about this two months ago while the deadline is this Friday. Charles Kelly noted that the VPA may be disenfranchised. They have asked for representation. To exclude them would be counterproductive to SVPA faculty. It was recommended to have a special election for the range adjustment committee so that they can be represented.

Grievances. James Castiglione reported that the arbitration hearing last fall for Sabbatical Leave was held. Ten applications were denied. Additional layers were added to the process. The grievance failed at Step I. The arbitration committee reversed the policy of adding additional layers to the process. So, membership asking for sabbaticals will be held to the same procedures that were always used compatible with past practices.

Also, in the new contract, we got better terms for the sabbaticals. Half-year is at full pay while full-year is at 75%. There are also more sabbaticals state-wide. At Kean, we could have up to 24 half-year sabbaticals each year. The last time, they only gave five. Now the number of available sabbaticals will increase.

There was a grievance for faculty who were offered tenure-track positions which were subsequently rescinded by the University. The first arbitration hearing required additional witnesses so the result will be delayed probably until the summer. We expect a positive ruling then to protect our untenured faculty in the future.

There was an untenured faculty member in fall 2007 who was denied reappointment for lack of publications. The candidate noted that publications have been made although not all in peer-reviewed journals. The step I hearing is expected shortly.

We recently had the step I for the KFT observer position in the Promotion Committee. Last year they were not allowed to speak. This year they were not allowed to see the files. This prevented the timely detection of violations. In the grievance hearing last week, Mr. Muraskin brought in witnesses who noted that in the past the KFT observer always had access to the files. We hope to get this resolved soon. It was noted that this grievance really has no connection to other committees as was noted earlier by Charles Kelly.

Then, a faculty member had a letter appear in their HR file without their knowledge. This is being investigated so as to get the letter removed.

Finally, we have become aware of a potential incorrect calculation of a member's pay upon receiving promotion. Right now, it appears that the claim has a great deal of merit and a grievance will be filed soon.

Evaluation of Administration. Bryan Lees noted that he and Chrysoula Fantaousakis have been working in this area. A proposal was presented to the State Council for evaluation of academic administrators state-wide. The State Council has continued to discuss this item. Right now, we are trying to implement this locally and state-wide. The next meeting this Friday will contain a report about this at the state level. The proposal was also taken to the National AFT Assessment Committee. María del Carmen Rodríguez noted that this puts the Kean Local in a leadership position to make administrators more accountable. Bryan Lees noted that our proposal leads to professional development for administrators that will lead to better management.

Untenured Faculty. Chrysoula Fantaousakis reported that there will be an untenured faculty luncheon coming up at which items of interest to untenured faculty will be discussed. It was noted that this activity will be helpful to this segment of the membership.

VI. Old Issues

Discussion of SCI report disseminated late Fall 2007.

VII. New Issues

María del Carmen Rodríguez noted that she is not running for re-election as President. Dean Casale noted that the presentation from the opposing slate has already been sent to membership.

Irwin Nesoff reported that petitions were sent in from two slates. They need to be certified. More nominations were asked for. None were forthcoming. Ballots will be mailed on Friday, February 15, 2008. They must be returned by Wednesday March 5, 2008 at 5 PM. Counting will be conducted at the American Arbitration Association in Somerset. Anyone wishing to be present can be accommodated.

There was discussion about candidates presenting their views. It was noted that in the past, there were discussions and debates held in the membership meeting. María del Carmen Rodríguez asked, one more time, who would like to address the body. At that point, James Castiglione rose and presented himself to the membership as candidate for President of the Kean Federation of Teachers. He thanked María del Carmen Rodríguez for her service over these years and her dedication to faculty, staff and librarians. After the applause, he made a statement reviewing her leadership of the KFT. He then reviewed his own qualifications for President and read the names of the candidates on his slate.

In his presentation, Dean Casale also thanked María del Carmen Rodríguez for her work as President. Then he presented his candidacy on the New Direction Slate. This team presented petitions to the KFT office today. Information will be sent soon to membership including the slate, position papers, and luncheons for untenured faculty, librarians, professional staff and tenured faculty. He read the names of the New Direction Slate and noted their dedication to the new direction.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:47 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Osborne, Secretary

Handouts:

Minutes of December 5, 2007

KFT Spring Calendar 2008

Memo from Steve Young Re: Horizon's laptop theft update

Memo from KFT Election Committee Re: Fair Election Practice and Ballot
Privacy Procedures