



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

Thursday, March 11, 2010

113 Hennings Hall

3:15-4:30 pm

President's Report

President Castiglione reported that a coalition of faculty and staff representing the public and private universities in New Jersey held a press conference on higher education that took place in Trenton on March 3, 2010. Representing the KFT contingent were President Castiglione, J. Erickson, and P. Pezzolo. All of the State Council affiliates were there in addition to all three AFT-AAUP locals at Rutgers and reps from the New Jersey State Federation of Teachers. This joint coalition called for a state master plan for higher education. Essentially, the coalition of groups in attendance will make up the state wide confederation of AFT New Jersey. There were both newspaper and television media coverage for this conference. This coalition of groups was able to share the cost of public relations services to organize this conference. The main speakers were Nick Yovnello (State Council), Judith L. Johnson (past president of NJ-AAUP), and Patrice Mareschal (Rutgers/Camden campus). The focus of the conference was accessibility, affordability, and accountability for higher education in New Jersey.

At the Board of Trustees meeting on Saturday, March 6, 2010, there was a lot of discussion about finances. President Farahi reported that the University funding was cut this fiscal year by 2.5 million dollars and Kean will deal with this cut by reducing spending by 1 million dollars this year and by 1.5 million dollars in deferred maintenance. President Farahi was quick to blame the KFT's Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and the impending raises and step increases for the University's continued budgetary problems. He also stated that there will be no stimulus money to support higher education in the upcoming year. To the contrary, there have been some signs that suggest Congress will present a stimulus bill that includes support for higher education. President Farahi went on to say that we have 2500 more students this year but fewer faculty.

In response to President Farahi statements, President Castiglione asserted that the major problem at Kean is the amount of staffing and the lack of resources directed into the classroom. President Castiglione stated that these problems can be fixed by reducing the amount of money that is not going into the classroom, e.g., delay or cancel construction projects, reduce non-teaching administrators, and increase the number of administrator's furloughs. Also, the academic reorganization conducted last year was done to fill in the 2 million dollar cut in funding. Nevertheless, the University is moving ahead with a five story building at Kean @OCC and a new Cougar's den. Further, imbedded in an email that was sent out a couple weeks ago was a statement of University priorities which implied there will be

cuts in University services and academic programs, yet nothing was said about cuts in administration, non classroom expenses, and/or construction projects. The KFT will try and combat these problems by working with the AFT National. In addition, the KFT will also try and get funds at the federal level and will continue to work politically at the State level to solve these problems.

President Castiglione reported good news in that Governor Christie conceded that he has to honor the agreement labor unions made with the State prior to him taking office. In the KFT case it is our Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

The hearing on student evaluations was postponed due to inclement weather (snow storm). It will be rescheduled during spring break.

Kean University was the only University that remained opened during the snow storm. There was no official closure for a snow day. Classes were officially cancelled as of 3:15 pm that day but the University remained opened. Faculty needing to take leave time for not attending classes that day, may use their sick leave in hours.

The KFT Human Rights committee has a box situated outside of the KFT office to place donations for Haitian Relief.

President Castiglione urged KFT members to check out Workers Independent News labor radio (see handouts).

Creation of AFT-NJ

President Castiglione provided background information regarding the proposal presented to the State Council affiliated unions to join AFT New Jersey. AFT National wants one unit to represent the state of New Jersey. The KFT via the State Council will be part of a 30,000 member unit. Our membership in AFT New Jersey will increase our political power. This membership will not change our bargaining unit negotiations process nor change the State Council's position. A unified AFT voice unit should work to our advantage.

The dues structure will increase our individual contribution about \$6.00 per month and \$72.00 per year. During the transitional period, The AFT National will pay 80% of our dues the first year, 60% the 2nd, 40% the 3rd, and 20% the 4th year. New Jersey is the only state that does not have a unified AFT State Federation of locals (see **handouts for pros and cons-** and email). A vote will be taken at the next State Council meeting that will decide whether or not we will become a member of AFT New Jersey. The KFT will conduct an approval vote on the AFT-NJ Affiliation and our State Council delegation will vote accordingly.

Election Committee Report

E. Comerford reported that there was approximately a 50% participation rate in membership voting in the KFT election of officers. This is an extraordinarily high turnout for a non-contested election and demonstrates strong support for KFT leadership. Chair Comerford thanked everyone for their hard work and participation.

Negotiations Report

C. Kelly reported that the KFT interim relief request in reference to the Administration's declaration of impasse on student evaluations and the Unfair Labor Practice charge hearing with Public Employee Relations Commission (PERC) has been rescheduled to mid March.

Faculty use of timesheets is still on the table. The Administration insists that faculty account for 35 hours of work a week via bi-weekly timesheets. The KFT revised the time sheet the Administration offered to reflect all the time worked by faculty. This discussion will continue at the next meeting.

C. Kelly stated the Administration may possibly see the value in scheduling overload courses for faculty and banking those classes for time off as oppose to overload compensation.

The Administration is planning on doing away with Summer Session II.

In regards to performance based promotions for professional staff, the Administration thinks that reclassification is performance based promotion. This point has to be clarified with the Administration, so the discussion to offer such promotions will continue.

The Administration proposed that any full time faculty member should be able to sit on the promotions committee and need not be a full professor with tenure.

The Administration refuses to negotiate changing the faculty four course teaching load to a three course teaching load. The Administration maintains that the course load issue is an academic one and should be the business of the Faculty Senate.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.

Respectfully submitted by

Eleanor McKnight, Secretary

Handouts:

Star Ledger news article "*N.J. Gov. Christie says he's stuck with bill for state worker 7 percent pay hike,*" by Claire Heiningering/statehouse Bureau, March 9, 2010.

NJ.Com article "*NJ Governor Admits He Can't Circumvent State Worker Contracts Like He Said In Campaign,*" 3/11/10.

Workers Independent News article "*Residency Requirements Bill Considered for NJ Workers Living Across State Line,*" 3/11/10

Email from KFT President, James Castiglione, *Subj: Creation of a unified AFT state federation (AFT-NJ)*, dated March 9, 2010.

Document packet, "WHY AN EXPANDED & UNIFIED STATE FEDERATION?"

Higher Education News Conference press release and speaker's information.