



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 Meeting
Thursday, February 6, 2020
3:15 – 4:30 pm
CAS 106

Announcements

President Castiglione stated that he and the State Council attorney, Kevin McGovern, attended both the February 5th arbitration hearing regarding faculty activity days and the February 6th arbitration hearing regarding faculty telemarketing calls. The next arbitration hearing date for telemarketing calls is scheduled for March. President Castiglione stated that he would keep the KFT membership informed of the status of both cases.

President Castiglione reported that based on media reports, including the recent article in *PoliticoNJ*, NJ Commissioner of Education, Dr. Lamont Repollet, is the leading candidate to be the next President of Kean University, though the reports say no decision has been made yet.

I. KFT Election Nominations Petitions

KFT Election Committee Chair, Craig Donovan, iterated that the election committee has solicited nominations from the membership. As a result, the Committee received nominations from two groups of candidates, therefore it will be a contested election. Chair C. Donovan asked for nominations from the floor—there were none, thus nominations were closed. Chair C. Donovan read the list of nominated candidates for office: President / James Castiglione and Patrick McManimon; Vice President / Walter Mack, David Joiner, Frank Argote-Freyre, Evros Vassilou, Maria del Carmen Rodriguez; Treasurer / Billie Bailey; Secretary / Eleanor McKnight; Members-at-Large / Norma Bowe, Matt Halper, Tom Abraham, Dan Gover, Lyn Schaer, Jacqueline Keil, Revathi Narasimhan, Shannon Case; AFT Convention Delegate / James Castiglione. KFT members will receive information about voting procedures via mail, which will be conducted by the American Arbitration Association.

II. Master Contract Ratification

Online voting for *Contract Ratification* will be conducted by the American Arbitration Association (AAA). All bargaining unit members should have received voting information via email. If you have problems voting send an email to AAA. Voting is open now and will continue until Friday, February 14th.

Regarding healthcare, the new Contract removes our members from the Chapter 78 rules on cost sharing, while keeping the exact same network. In general, the new PPO will save members who

use only in-network providers between 1-3% of salary. Members who use out of network providers will see smaller savings or perhaps none at all if they use mostly out of network providers. If any member has any questions or concerns about the healthcare program, there will

be a webinar on the State Health Care Program on Friday, February 7th. Registration for this webinar is required. If you cannot attend the webinar it will be archived, but only those who registered can access the archive.

President Castiglione iterated that in this *Contract* a major gain in the economic package is a guarantee that increments will continue to be paid after the expiration of this agreement. No more will the State be able to hold our increments hostage to force us into concessions. In addition to the 2% raise each year for the duration of the *Contract*, there will be bonuses given to members that have been at the top of their salary range for 24 months or more in October 2021.

Overload and summer rates for teaching are the biggest increases the bargaining unit has ever received and correlates with the increase the adjuncts will receive. Also, the tuition waiver waiting period was reduced from 5 to 3 years and the tuition coverage raised from 40% to 60%. Two additional important gains are that Local Letters of Agreement will now be subject to the lengthy PERC terminal impasse procedures and that compensation terms set by these agreements will be subject to binding arbitration.

Another major gain in this *Contract* is the inclusion of lecturers for the first time. There is a cap on the number of lecturers a University can have—the ratio is 35 lecturers to 100 tenure and tenure track faculty. If a University is over the cap, no new Lecturers can be hired until the University's ratio falls below the cap by attrition. Lecturers are now guaranteed by Contract to get: pension and retirement contributions, health benefits, sick leave, holidays, and many other contractual benefits heretofore not guaranteed. If anyone wants to review the entire *Contract*, go to the State Council website.

III. Art History Retrenchment

As a status update, President Castiglione reported that these faculty were notified that they were to be retrenched (laid-off) first before any possibility of working out any other options. KFT is working on an arrangement that may save their jobs. A grievance has already been filed in this matter. After reaching out to our colleagues throughout the State, we received several letters of support from other Art History faculty and programs.

In addition, Pres. Castiglione reported that a large delegation of faculty attended the January 29 town hall event of Governor Phil Murphy, handing out leaflets to demand that the Governor save the art history program at Kean. Leveraging the strong relationship that AFT-NJ President Donna Chiera and State Senator Joe Cryan have with the Governor, Pres. Castiglione was able to arrange a one-on-one meeting between himself and the Governor prior to the town hall. A dozen Kean Art History students attended the town hall, and one had her question read and answered by the Governor. The Governor committed to convening a cabinet meeting the very next day to develop a plan to address this issue. The University appears to now be open to a negotiated

settlement, but we, as yet, have no guarantees. Lastly, after the meeting, Pres. Castiglione and several students met with the Assembly Higher Education Committee Chair Mila Jasey, who reiterated her support for the offering of a broad range of programs, including Art History, for our majority-minority student body.

Pres. Castiglione opened the floor for discussion of possible follow-up actions that we can consider taking collectively. Ideas included: contacting parents of Kean students; starting a GoFundMe campaign; writing to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Kean Board of Trustees; going to the media; protesting at the March 9th Trustees meeting; seeking the support of the Boards of area museums; and other ideas.

Pres. Castiglione reported that outraged students had started a Change.Org petition and were hoping to get several thousand signatures in support of Art History. Pres. Castiglione urged members to sign it if they have not already and to forward the link to students for their consideration for signing.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Eleanor McKnight, Secretary