



KEAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

An Association of Professors, Professional Staff and Librarians

Local 2187, American Federation of Teachers

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KFT General Membership Meeting

February 25, 2021

3:30-5:05 pm

Virtual (via Zoom)

I. *President's Report: James Castiglione*

A. Announcements

1. Dr. Orlando Edreira (retired) passed away today.
2. Upcoming meetings:
 - a) March 3, ProStaff-only meeting, 12:30 pm
 - b) March 24, General Membership meeting, 3:30 pm
 - c) April 22, General Membership meeting, 3:30 pm
3. Carey Brown has qualified to run for reelection as PERS Board of Trustees member. Current employees in PERS are eligible to vote. C. Brown stated that around March 29, all election materials will go out, with a deadline of around Memorial Day for voting. C. Brown said that one other person qualified to run against him: Katherine Quick, Treasurer of the Parole Association of NJ.
4. Deadline extensions successfully negotiated by KFT:
 - a) A-328 packets
 - b) Lecturer reappointment packets
 - c) Lecturers' mandatory HR training
5. With the new Workday software, there have been errors in the transfer of contributions to retirement and 527 accounts. President Castiglione spoke with people in Accounting and found out that the problem comes from the intermediary with whom Kean contracts to mediate between the University, the State, and the accounts. Hopefully, the issue will resolve by next paycheck.

B. Introducing new KFT Executive Council Members

1. Reva Narasimhan, KFT Treasurer
2. Shannon Case, KFT Secretary
3. Richard Harrell, filling the Member at Large vacancy of R. Narasimhan on the Executive Council. Harrell is Pro Staff, a transfer admissions counselor, and was based at Kean Ocean. He also is a Kean alumnus and thus "knows both sides of the desk."

C. KFT Social Justice Committee Report: Event Friday

1. KFT SJC Chair Sharon McKenzie encouraged all staff, faculty, and their students to attend the conversation with Gwen Carr Friday Feb 26.

2. S. McKenzie also stated that the committee is working on a brochure for the student body regarding job safety issues, especially with respect to COVID-1. The committee is planning other events as well.
3. S. McKenzie thanked Norma Bowe, Emily Filardo, and others for their work on the committee.
4. President Castiglione thanked Sharon and whole committee too for their energetic work and for this major event with Gwen Carr.

D. Cancellation of 12th furlough day

1. Dr. Repollet cancelled the 12th furlough day. President Castiglione requested that anyone who knows of an issue relating to this email the KFT office.
2. President Castiglione thanked Negotiations Chair Frank Argote-Freyre for his tireless efforts to get this 12th furlough day cancelled.

E. Wellness Day

Members expressed their appreciation for the Wellness Day and asked Pres. Castiglione to convey their thanks to President Repollet.

F. Senior VPAA Search Committee.

1. The committee has now been empaneled. President Castiglione said that he was asked to participate and agreed.
2. President Castiglione said that high-level searches require confidentiality, so he can't discuss any details, but he wants to represent the broad collection of opinions/thoughts that KFT membership has about the qualities, experience, and background we want in our next VPAA. He suggested that members email their thoughts to the KFT office with the subject line "Senior VPAA Search."
3. President Castiglione stated that once a new VPAA in place, we'll have the opportunity to address a number of issues that intersect between labor and academics and pledged to continue to work with the Senate collaboratively.

II. Local Negotiations' Report: Frank Argote-Freyre

A. Fall course conversion payments

1. Last Friday (Feb. 19), those who converted courses should have received a payment. F. Argote-Freyre said that anyone with a dispute should go through their dean first. The KFT will try to help with disputes only after they have failed to be resolved at that level.
2. WKU reviewers should get paid by end of March.

B. Lecturers' negotiations

1. F. Argote-Freyre stated that of the 12-15 items the KFT is currently negotiating, the Lecturers' agreement is the most challenging. It will take a lot of work.
2. F. Argote-Freyre mentioned the Proposal and the first in-depth meeting with Ken Green about it, which was Tuesday (Feb 23).

C. Other items

1. Promotions: S. Polirstok and C. Bellitto are working on a Proposal to reform the promotions process.
2. Diversity/Equity Fellows: Of the 40 final candidates, Kean will hire 8, and these will be announced by the end of the semester
3. Coordination Pay: The KFT will reach a resolution soon on disputes about that.

4. Research Initiative: F. Argote-Freyre asked committee members to make a stronger push to ensure that Kean provides real opportunities to do research and release time to do it. He encouraged committee members to make a clear stand on what we need to get us to R2 status. He said that negotiations are on hold until the committee has finished its review.
5. The 28 Disciplinary Charges: The previous administration had 28 faculty members up on various petty charges. Those charges have ALL been dropped thanks to KFT efforts.
6. F. Argote-Freyre responded to many questions in the Chat:
 - a) Kathleen Curran asked about 2020 Spring remote teaching transition compensation. F. Argote-Freyre: No word on that yet.
 - b) Dean Casale asked about people who went through the disciplinary process and have reprimands in their personal files. F. Argote-Freyre: We are working on agreement to get those removed.
 - c) Bebe Lee asked about whether conversion pay and overload pay are lumped together in our paystubs. There was some discussion of this and how to figure it out.
 - d) Emily Filardo asked about Spring conversion compensation eligibility. F. Argote-Freyre: We need a list of everyone who disputes not getting paid.
 - e) Dean Casale asked about changing the 4-day mandatory teaching schedule to a 3-day schedule since many faculty have increased productivity at home. President Castiglione assured Dean that this is on the KFT to-do list.
 - f) President Castiglione counseled all members to cc themselves and their ED whenever writing to their Dean about compensation, and to always give specific, clear details about which classes they were paid for and which they were not. Oversights, math errors, and other inadvertent problems are easily corrected; other disputes are more complicated, and that's where the KFT comes in.
 - g) Matthew Halper played a Negotiating-Hero Theme Song for F. Argote-Freyre on his keyboard, to the delight of the membership.

III. *Open Educational Resources*

- A. **Administration's perspective:** President Castiglione stated that in the Administration's view, the purpose of OER is to reduce college cost for students. The Administration wants to move to OER resources where feasible this Fall and then introduce more next Spring.
- B. **F. Agote-Freyre offered more background information.** He said that the University has a simplistic understanding of what OER means. Kean will have to invest money in this if they really want to do it. In the meantime, the KFT will gather information from members about what's lacking.
- C. **Comments:** There was much discussion of OER vocally and in the Chat. Members stated that many disciplines have no OER or bad OER; that many OER textbooks cannot be scaled to adjuncts; that faculty who write OER textbooks are not given publishing credit for that when up for promotion since it's not considered "real" publishing; students need access to journals in the Library, which must expand offerings; students don't all have broadband so KU must dedicate resources for students; certain disciplines, like literature, may need an exemption from OER requirements; we need a clear definition of OER - does it include homework/software systems?
- D. **Matt Halper** suggested that the State should step in, that it's a State-level issue: If Trenton is imposing this on us, they need to help by negotiating bulk purchases and creation of statewide OER materials.
- E. **Tom Abraham and F. Argote-Freyre** both asked whether Kean is moving too fast on OER and whether we need a university-wide committee on it.
- F. **President Castiglione** added that it's an academic freedom issue too. Faculty members lose discretion over which texts they are using. He said that makes it more of a Faculty Senate issue than an issue for KFT.
- G. **Susan Polirstok** suggested that faculty who publish OER get and keep a letter from publisher documenting what work was done and giving information about the publisher to keep with the manuscript.
- H. **E. Filardo** asked whether this is a social justice issue for our students, who are interested in cost but also in quality education. President Castiglione said that we should reach out to student government as a resource for a range of student opinions.

IV. *Questions & Concerns*

- A. **E. Filardo and others** asked about and discussed safety issues coming up this Fall, whether vaccinations will be required, how scheduling will work, and related concerns. Others asked in KU can give vaccines on campus. What about allowing faculty to do office hours remotely and finding other ways to minimize time on campus? C. Donovan noted that employers can require vaccines for employees.
- B. **President Castiglione** said that if any members identify other safety concerns they should email them to KFT office.
- C. **President Castiglione** gave the link for the KFT Social Justice Committee landing page for the Gwen Carr event and said that this is just one example of the gulf between the Farahi and the Repollet administrations. Unlike his predecessor, Dr. Repollet bent over backwards to help us with this event.

V. *Meeting Adjourned at 5:05 pm.*