



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

March 24, 2021

3:30-5:25 pm

Virtual (via Zoom)

I. *President's Report: James Castiglione*

A. **Announcements.**

1. President Castiglione announced that the KFT has a new Grievance Officer: Dr. Fred Fitch, Communications. He welcomed F. Fitch to the position and thanked outgoing Grievance Officer Dr. Jacqui Keil for her many years of faithful service to members.
2. President Castiglione announced this year's faculty promotions.
3. President Castiglione reported that the KFT Committee Sign-up form was emailed to members and that members should select 4 choices in descending order of preference. President Castiglione encouraged everyone to get involved.
4. President Castiglione also encouraged members to self-nominate for Letter of Agreement committees whose elections are run with the Senate Committees by the Senate.
5. President Castiglione announced that the KFT Executive Council voted to endorse Senator Joe Cryan for his re-election primary campaign. He has been a strong supporter of ours and deserves our support in return.
6. President Castiglione also encouraged members to fill out a COPE card to start making COPE contributions for political campaigns. Walter Mack explained COPE to the members.

B. **Updates on Payments**

1. President Castiglione advised members who believe they were not fully or fairly compensated (for course conversions, WKU peer reviews, etc.) to talk to their ED and Dean first, and to contact KFT if they are not resolved. He added that Coordinator compensation issues for last summer have been mostly resolved.
2. Frank Argote-Freyre reported that Compensation issues for Spring 2020 are being reviewed.
3. F. Argote-Freyre also reported that furloughs will be May 10-21 for those teaching Summer 1, and May 17-28 for those not teaching Summer 1, and that furloughed employees will qualify for the enhanced unemployment benefit. President Castiglione added that President Biden's new plan will add \$300 per week to regular unemployment. He also warned that there could still be layoffs in the future with declining enrollment and a worsening economy.

C. **Social Justice Committee Report**

1. Sharon McKenzie thanked members who attended the Gwen Carr event.
2. S. McKenzie reported that the Committee will have 8 members going forward including one student.
3. S. McKenzie also reported that the Committee is reconsidering whether a brochure on Covid-19 and labor laws is preferred, or whether it should be about mental health or about social justice generally
4. S. McKenzie also announced that the Committee is working on plans for a Mothers' Day event for Kean student, faculty, and staff.
5. S. McKenzie asked the members to convey more ideas to the Committee.

II. **Fall Reopening Concern**

- A. President Castiglione asked members to voice concerns about the planned Fall opening. Members responded with concerns about the following:
1. Safety
 2. Accommodating students who do not want to return face-to-face. Some parents have expressed safety concerns as well.
 3. Vaccine policy – students in dorms must be vaccinated
 4. Labs, offices, and other close-contact and/or poorly ventilated rooms or rooms without windows that open are a concern
 5. Outdoor classes – need wifi hotspots
 6. Evidence suggests that new students who want a face-to-face campus experience may not register for the Fall if we are remote
 7. In-person events a concern
- B. President Castiglione added that as of now, all Fall classes will be F2F and that Fall registration starts April 6.
- C. President Castiglione explained that our understanding is that the law allows Kean to require vaccines of employees but not clear for students.
- D. Members suggested a Survey of students to get feedback directly from them.
- E. Several faculty expressed the sentiment that faculty understand the difficulty in making decisions around these issues and that faculty are willing to be flexible for the fall semester.
- F. Pro Staff members expressed an interest in flexible arrangements that would allow them to work from home at least part time.
- G. A member raised a question as to whether any rule prevents an instructor from teaching a class in a hybrid format as long as everything is available in both formats for all students. KFT will look into this.

III. **Local Negotiations' Report: Frank Argote-Freyre**

A. **Removal of Written Reprimands from Personnel Files.**

1. The KFT has signed a settlement with the University about the Reprimand policy: Reprimand letters will be removed from files after 3 years, with a few exceptions. President Castiglione explained this is better than the 5-year window negotiated into our last Master Contract.
2. Emily Filardo asked who is responsible for cleaning out our files. F. Argote-Freyre advised members to check their own files and not leave it up to others. President Castiglione explained that letters automatically lapse after

3 years, but people must contact HR and make a formal request to physically remove the letters.

- B. **Lecturers Negotiations.** F. Argote-Freyre reported that the KFT is working to get multi-year Lecturer re-appointments for the fall, and these negotiations are ongoing. He explained the timeline and the possible outcomes.
- C. **Diversity Fellows.** F. Argote-Freyre reported that a tentative agreement has been reached and the candidates are being interviewed now. He noted also that faculty will be compensated 3 credits/semester for mentoring incoming Fellows and that members interested in being a Mentor should identify themselves to their Deans and apply for the mentorships.
- D. **Professional Staff Promotions**
 - 1. F. Argote-Freyre reported that they are drawing up a proposal to make promotions for ProStaff more transparent, but it is still in the early stages.
 - 2. President Castiglione explained the existing and proposed procedures for new ProStaff members. Members raised many questions and concerns about the process (lack of clarity, confusing procedures, subjective evaluations vs. professional ones, etc.). President Castiglione asked that ProStaff review the current Letter of Agreement closely and make suggestions for how to improve it.
 - 3. Some members suggested that there may be gender discrimination issues involved in the evaluation process by certain managers: the demographics, the language used in evaluations, and more.

IV. *Professional Staff Concerns*

- A. **Reappointment Evaluations.**
 - 1. President Castiglione explained that Pro Staff reviews being diverted up the chain of command. There are reports that evaluations are rerouted to top managers who give input before direct supervisors have completed the evaluations. Also, Pro Staff may be being denied a chance to respond, and that this is a violation of the procedure. President Castiglione advised members to write a response and attach it to the review whenever they get it, to remind supervisors of the procedure in writing, and to keep all documentation of the procedural violation.
 - 2. Members added that some Pro Staff are being pressured to sign the evaluations without having time to read them carefully, and thus the timeline is being violated. W. Mack advised Pro Staff to email their supervisors and those above them documenting the date they received the evaluation and how many days they should be given to consider and respond. Again, documenting everything is key. President Castiglione advised affected Pro Staff to create a factual, detailed chronological record of exactly what happened and when and send it to the KFT.
 - 3. President Castiglione reported that the KFT had a meeting with President Repollet in January and that he is becoming aware of the scope of the issues.
- B. **Compensation Time.**
 - 1. President Castiglione shared with members a link to the Compensation

Time Letter of Agreement (#107) for Pro Staff, and he explained the basic rules of the agreement.

2. W. Mack added that some managers are not telling Pro Staff their rights, and so Pro Staff need to know their rights, ask for what is due to them, and document everything that is said and done.
3. President Castiglione advised Pro Staff to be proactive about when to take their Furlough days and to talk to their supervisors early.

V. Questions & Concerns

- A. OER: President Castiglione reported that, in a meeting about OER, Ken Green said that the university currently has no plans to force faculty to use OER in their classes. President Castiglione encouraged members to send information about anything we are doing to save students money on books/materials to Paul Croft in the Learning Commons

VI. Meeting Adjourned at 5:25 pm.