



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

9/15/2021

3:30 – 4:43 pm

J-100 and Virtual (Zoom)

I. Introductory Remarks.

A. *Welcome.* President Castiglione welcomed the members back, and:

1. recognized and thanked the current officers and members of the KFT Executive Council
2. acknowledged and thanked members who recently left service as officers and Executive Council members
3. reminded members that a mask policy is in effect in the KFT Office
4. recognized and thanked Dr. Jacqueline Keil for her work done as KFT Grievance Officer and Dr. Fred Fitch for taking her place
5. thanked Tom Abraham for recently attending the AFT-NJ endorsement of Gov. Murphy's re-election bid in his stead
6. recognized Carey Brown for his re-election to the PERS Board
7. thanked and acknowledged AFT-NJ President Donna Chiera and the work she did to help create a positive relationship between the KFT and President Repollet.
8. thanked and acknowledged the efforts of AFT National President Randi Weingarten for coming to campus to meet with President Repollet to jump-start the "labor-management reset" at Kean.

B. *Working with President Repollet.* Pres. Castiglione stated that Pres. Repollet has established themes of safety, educational excellence, and equity. He noted the following:

1. Safety: Policies and terms were negotiated with us, not imposed, and the Administration has been very responsive to member feedback.
2. Educational excellence: About 50 faculty members were hired for this Fall, and another 45 may be hired next year. This tremendous infusion of new personnel will help Kean move towards R2 status and bodes well for us all.
3. Equity: Pres. Repollet has followed through with hiring ProStaff for mission-critical offices such as CAPS and Passport that support our first-generation college students. Some offices are still understaffed, but we are working on this. Pres. Castiglione reminded members that the KFT will continue to support ProStaff.

4. He also reminded everyone that the previous administration was in office for 17 years, and there are many issues built up over that time that cannot all be solved at once.

C. *Uncertain Future.* Pres. Castiglione reminded members that we don't know how events will unfold in the coming pandemic year. Enrollment is down, and while there is no immediate cause for concern, the KFT is pressing the University to become more transparent about Kean's finances so that we will not be taken by surprise. There are layoffs happening at William Paterson University and possibly at NJCU, so we should not assume that the pandemic's impact is done.

D. *KFT Victories.* Pres. Castiglione stated that the KFT has been very busy during the 14 months since Dr. Repollet became Kean's President, and he thanked everyone for their hard work. Then he presented a record of successful action items that the KFT achieved by working with Pres. Repollet. The KFT:

1. saved the jobs of 21 colleagues who were on the layoff list
2. saved the jobs of all 3 Art History colleagues for this year
3. reduced faculty office hours from 12 to 5 hours per week
4. eliminated faculty time sheets
5. eliminated Winter and Spring Break Professional Development Days
6. negotiated ~\$2,500 compensation for each course that was converted to remote format for Fall 2020
7. negotiated ~\$1,250 per course plus a reduced workload for Spring 2021 conversions
8. created and then extended the retirement incentive program for KFT members
9. made Wenzhou-Kean faculty evaluations voluntary and negotiated compensation for them
10. secured 2-year appointments for Senior Lecturers
11. secured 0 non-reappointments of Lecturers and ProStaff who applied for reappointment for the past academic year
12. increased promotions by a factor of 2.5
13. secured 100% approval for all sabbatical applications
14. secured the cancellation of all 28 outstanding disciplinary actions
15. signed an LOA to remove written reprimands from personnel files

E. *Union Power.*

1. Pres. Castiglione reminded members that although our successes were partly due to the fact that we have a new and responsive University President, we also succeeded because of Union power. When we have strength in numbers, we have the power to negotiate. He encouraged members to reach out to recruit new colleagues.
2. Pres. Castiglione said that we also have power as part of a national organization: The AFT has access to the halls of power in Trenton and elsewhere, which can make a big difference in our work lives at Kean.
3. A member requested that the KFT create a sheet of Union successes and talking points to help members recruit new faculty and staff.

- F. Diversity Fellows.** Pres. Castiglione highlighted the Diversity Fellows program that the KFT helped create. The program will diversify Kean's faculty as well as the scholarship they do.

II. Local Negotiations Report.

- A. Current Issues.** Frank Argote-Freyre reported that the Negotiations team is working to resolve some immediate pending issues right now:

1. Promotions: The team wants to make the process more transparent, get more people promoted, and have an annual celebration of those who are promoted. Some points the team is negotiating are
 - a) considering external review letters for promotion
 - b) having the deans involved (members expressed concerns)
 - c) instituting an annual seminar to help those seeking promotion
 - d) limiting the number of SIR IIs required
 - e) ranking 2/3 of the faculty rather than 1/3 or all
2. Renegotiating the agreement from last year about compensation for Wenzhou-Kean faculty reappointment portfolio reviews
3. New LOA for lecturers. Negotiations to finalize this are in process.
4. A Labor-Management Committee for Grievances. Negotiations to create this are in process.
5. Art History Faculty. Negotiations are in process with the goal of permanently reinstating them.

B. Questions from members.

1. A member asked about the composition of the promotions committee and suggested looking at different models for how Humanities and the Sciences decide promotions differently. The member said that most universities don't have a university-wide promotions committee but rather separate promotion committees for different schools/colleges within the university.
2. A member asked why the university does not advise faculty on what to do to gain reappointment/promotion. F. Argote-Freyre responded that this is one of our points under negotiation.
3. A member wondered how tenured faculty can teach new faculty to use Interfolio when they aren't skilled at it themselves and don't know how to find things. Pres. Castiglione responded to this with information about where to find Interfolio help.
4. A member asked for an update on the early retirement package. F. Argote-Freyre said that it is in effect now and that members should speak to HR if they wish to retire by the end of this year.
5. A member asked when promotion changes will take effect. F. Argote-Freyre said that the changes will likely be phased in over several years.

- C. Master Contract & More on Negotiations.** Pres. Castiglione presented more updates.

1. Pres. Castiglione mentioned 3 new items posted on the KFT Website:
 - a) An electronic version of the Master Contract.
 - b) Salary charts.

- c) A memo on how to use the salary charts.
- 2. With respect to salary, Pres. Castiglione noted the following:
 - a) We will get three 2% raises over the next 12 months. With step increases added, this means that junior colleagues will see roughly a 14% increase in pay over the next 12 months.
 - b) Overload and summer rates have increased about \$200.00 per credit hour to \$1771.
- 3. Pres. Castiglione listed the following as priorities for negotiations this year:
 - a) ProStaff issues (including a streamlined reclassification process and performance-based promotions)
 - b) A new Lecturers' contract.
 - c) Research support for TT faculty
 - d) A new agreement for 12-month TT faculty
 - e) Art History
 - f) Promotions, as discussed above

III. Midterm Elections.

- A.** Pres. Castiglione reminded members that this is an important election year in NJ. Gov. Murphy's administration has been labor-friendly and education-friendly, so AFT-NJ voted to endorse Gov. Murphy for reelection and the CNJSCL will take up further endorsement votes at next meeting.
- B.** Pres. Castiglione explained that the Responsible Collective Negotiations Act was pulled from the vote docket this summer because there was not enough support for it in the State Assembly and State Senate, and this was because those who would benefit from it did not step up in large enough numbers to call their State Senators and Assemblypeople. Pres. Castiglione stated that if legislation is favorable to labor, we all must push to bring it to a vote. He said that the R.C.N. Act is the most important piece of legislation for public-sector labor right now, and members should get involved when it is brought back.

IV. Member questions.

- A.** There was a question about how ProStaff positions are classified. Pres. Castiglione said that local agreements pertaining to ProStaff are posted on our website.
- B.** A member asked when certain one-time payments will be paid. Pres. Castiglione said that he will look into it.
- C.** Some members asked about COVID policies and said that the policies should be broadcast much more clearly, frequently, and specifically. Pres. Castiglione referred members to the Administration's emails about this and added that the KFT is waiting to hear from the Administration about the list of questions we sent and will post the answers as soon as we get them.
- D.** A member asked about PERS and tier changes. Carey Brown responded that he has heard nothing about this but will look into it right away.

V. Unemployment Benefits Update.

- A.** President Castiglione advised frustrated members that persistence works. He told members about an employee who did not receive her benefits but whose

persistence got her results from the Governor's office. Pres. Castiglione recommended writing to the Governor as next step for those who have not received their benefits as per previously emailed instructions.

B. He reminded members that the Union cannot legally intervene on behalf of individuals re unemployment; all the KFT can do is offer advice and information.

VI. **Reception Update.** Pres. Castiglione reminded members that the new date is Wed. Oct 6 at lunchtime and that a hot lunch will be served. He encouraged members to attend.

VII. **Old Business:** None.

VIII. **New Business:** None.

IX. **Meeting adjourned at 4:43 pm.**