



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

October 06, 2021

12:30-2:01 pm

Miron Student Center 228 and Virtual (via Zoom)

I. President's Report

- A. Resources – Statewide.** Pres. Castiglione showed members the website for the statewide union, the Council of NJ State College Locals, pointing out the Nov. 2021 election endorsements, the link for the Master Agreement, and more.
- B. Resources – Local.** Pres. Castiglione also showed members the KFT website, the new Master Contract, the Salary Guides, and a new Memo explaining how to use the salary guides to make sense of the pay increases that are happening now and over the next 12 months.
- C. Pay Increases.** Pres. Castiglione highlighted the following points:
1. Junior colleagues will have received a total of about 14% in increases in pay over this time period.
 2. The overload rate is increasing dramatically in this contract.
 3. Lump sum payments will be given to those who have been stuck at the top step of their pay grade. (See Article 21.G of the contract.)
 4. In the labor-management reset that saved 21 jobs, the furloughs were key. As it worked out, our sacrifice in taking the furloughs played a key role in helping us save the jobs of our colleagues. Pres. Castiglione thanked members for their commitment and sacrifice.
- D. WPU Layoffs:** Kean's finances turned out to be less bad than feared. Enrollment declined but not as much as at some of our sister institutions. William Paterson is a stark case: Enrollment is way down, and the furlough agreement that protected our colleagues from layoffs there expires at the end of this year, so in Jan 2022, about 13 faculty colleagues and 15 pro staff colleagues at WPU will be laid off. Their local got the initial figure of 100 faculty reduced to 13, but it's still bad. WP will let us know how we can stand in solidarity with them and assist. In the meantime, we must stay vigilant here, as the future is hard to predict.
- E. Fall Reopening Concerns.** Pres. Castiglione stated that he attended a Leadership Forum on Thursday (Sept 30), where he presented a series of questions about the University's response to the pandemic and reopening concerns. He reported the following from that forum:
1. He urged the University to improve the information provided on Kean's website. For example: the Kean community should be given statistics on positive COVID tests among us.

2. He raised the issue of not everyone knowing when a person near them has tested positive. The University responded that it is following CDC recommendations for contact tracing, which means that not everyone is contacted when a positive test appears.
3. He raised the concerns of faculty and ProStaff who work in communal offices. He was not able to finish conveying the issue due to a technical glitch but will revisit it soon.
4. He learned that third parties can report a positive test and that we are to report our own test results to HR.
5. He urged the Administration to provide clearer and more frequent COVID-related instructions overall.
6. A member asked: If student is quarantining, can we Zoom the student in? Pres. Castiglione replied that we can, although faculty cannot teach fully remote classes.

II. COPE Report – November Elections

- A. Walter Mack made the following points:
 1. This is a major election year in NJ: Every state senator and assemblyperson is up for election. COPE has made a list of endorsed candidates who will support legislation helping labor and higher education. It is crucial that we elect people who will support the Responsible Collective Negotiations Act and other action items that matter to us.
 2. Members should get involved in the political process: Volunteer for the AFL-CIO phone banks, go on labor walks, and vote.
 3. Members should support COPE via a regular payroll deduction. COPE is not paid for by regular Union dues; our union must fundraise independently and uses those funds to support candidates who support us.
- B. Dennis Klein (History) is running for Teaneck BOE and spoke about the need for political involvement in a democracy and particularly in his district.
- C. **Ryan Case** from AFT-NJ gave information about phone banks and labor walks (NJAFCLCIO.org). He stated that AFT National has made this election a priority and has organized phone banking across the state.

III. Professional Staff Promotions & Reclassifications

- A. Ana Wetzel and Walter Mack stated that the ProStaff Committee is developing a KFT proposal to reform performance-based promotion procedures for ProStaff and is using language from a sister institution (Stockton) to help write it. We hope to begin negotiations this fall.
- B. Pres. Castiglione followed up with information about the existing LOAs for ProStaff and encouraged ProStaff members to review the documents and make suggestions.
- C. A member noted that a number of reclassifications were denied recently, with no reason given. Pres. Castiglione responded that, to his knowledge, 4 ProStaff received reclassification and only 1 was denied; it seems that the individuals cited by the member were Kean employees in the CWA union local on campus and not KFT. He noted that any members denied reclassification should contact the KFT,

and that our current LOA is online. W. Mack suggested that members should get feedback from supervisors when denied reclassification.

- D.** Pres. Castiglione also urged all members to apply for reclassification, promotion, and open positions whenever they have the chance. He added that the application for reclassification is online with HR.

IV. Local Negotiations Report. Frank Argote-Freyre reported the following:

- A. *Compensation for WKU promotion reviews.*** This has been negotiated and is being implemented.

- B. *ProStaff.*** The ProStaff have been treated shabbily in the past and are a current priority. The ProStaff Committee is reviewing the current guidelines for promotion and are developing a proposal that the KFT can negotiate.

- C. *Lecturers.*** Lecturers are a priority as well, and the Lecturers' Committee has produced a proposal to be negotiated soon.

- D. *Faculty Promotion Procedures Revisions – Updated Calendar & Big News for Untenured Faculty.*** The KFT signed the new agreement on Oct. 4. Its main goal was to get more people promoted. Highlights:

1. Faculty have more time to file for promotion
2. Henceforth, any person given tenure automatically is promoted to the rank of Associate Professor
3. Ranking will be 2/3 rather than 1/3 of all applicants.
4. Dr. Repollet will meet with the Promotions Committee after receiving rankings but before making his decisions
5. Kean will provide an annual workshop on the promotion process and an annual celebration of those promoted
6. Kean wants an external peer review process, but the KFT was able to delay this to 2023 to allow those impacted by the unprofessional environment of the previous administration and COVID pandemic to build their portfolios.

E. *Questions and comments from members:*

1. Lecturers need job security. F. Argote-Freyre noted this is in our proposal in the form of multi-year contracts.
2. The Promotions agreement institutes a mechanism for providing feedback to candidates who are not promoted, which is good.
3. Promotion is now a matter of fulfilling benchmarks, not competition among faculty, so departmental programs do not need to rank candidates within their program, which is also good.
4. There is a bottleneck at the Assistant Prof. level, which is an equity issue.
 - a) F. Argote-Freyre responded that we have presented a plan to promote those 40-45 tenured Assistant Professors to Associate level but it has to be negotiated.
5. Lecturers indicated they may want a separate meeting just for them in advance of negotiations for their LOA.
6. Some colleagues (~26) who applied (under Farahi) for promotion from Associate to Full were judged qualified but never got it, so they should get it now without reapplying.

- a) F. Argote-Freyre responded that this is true, but everything must be negotiated.
- 7. There has been a shortage of Full Professors to serve on committees and perform other needed service.
 - a) F. Argote-Freyre responded that this is an exciting opportunity to build a new Kean, and that the KFT welcomes all feedback that can inform our negotiation efforts.

V. **Questions & Concerns**

- A. *Update on Art History?*** F. Argote-Freyre responded that this is a top priority and the KFT is working hard to reverse their retrenchment.
- B. *Chris Ayala (organizer, State Council).*** C. Ayala stated that he works with all 11 locals in NJ, and that Membership and Engagement are the two main components of a successful union. He encouraged unsigned attendees to join the KFT and then get involved. He stated that he can help the KFT find solutions and actions, and he provided his email address (ayala@cnjscl.org)
- C. *Covid testing?*** Pres. Castiglione explained that testing is being done on campus and that he has asked the University to update its website with the information.
- D. *Contact tracing?*** Pres. Castiglione advised members to contact student health services, which is following CDC guidelines.
- E. *Timeline for the Lecturers' new LOA?*** F. Argote-Freyre responded that a new meeting should occur within the next few weeks but that negotiations are expected to take some time.

Meeting adjourned at 2:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Shannon Case, KFT Secretary