



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 & Holiday Social

Dec. 9, 2021

3:30-4:45 pm

CAS 106 and Virtual (via Zoom)

I. President's Report

A. *Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.*

- 1.** President Castiglione explained the program, who is eligible, how it works, and where/how to apply. He warned that applying is somewhat complicated but that AFT members have saved half a billion dollars in student loans, and that most AFT members in the program save hundreds of dollars per month upon refinancing their loans.
- 2.** Pres. Castiglione added that members who encounter problems should reach out to the KFT office.
- 3.** One member mentioned that using 2021 tax documents can help verify employment as they contain the employee ID number. Also, members may need their AFT member ID number, which they can get from the KFT if they cannot find it elsewhere.

B. *Recap of November 2nd Elections.*

- 1.** Pres. Castiglione noted that Dennis Klein (History) earned the most votes in the Teaneck BOE election and that he had attended the NJ-AFL-CIO Labor Candidate School. Pres. Castiglione urged that members who want to run for office should contact the KFT office about attending this one-day school.
- 2.** Pres. Castiglione mentioned that Gov. Murphy won reelection and that the vote, although closer than expected, was not "close." There was a comfortable margin.
- 3.** Pres. Castiglione added that Democrats retained control in both the Senate and the Assembly.
 - a)** Senate: The Democrats margin decreased by 1 (from 25 to 24 seats). Andrew Zwicker, a Princeton physicist who is pro-education, pro-higher-ed, won in the Senate and may become an ally for us.
 - b)** Assembly: Democrats are still in the majority but with 6 fewer seats.
- 4.** The main takeaway from the election is that we will have a labor-friendly majority and leadership, and the main piece of legislation we want to push is the Responsible Collective Negotiations Act (*aka* the "anti-Janus" bill). This would do 2 things to help us:

- a) It would eliminate imposition at the State level (whereby at an impasse with no settlement, the State has the legal right to impose its last, best offer on the statewide contract). This legislation would eliminate the State's right to impose.
- b) It would broaden the scope of negotiations: More issues that currently are not negotiable would become negotiable in future contract negotiations. This would be much better for us. Our next negotiations will start with the State in about a year; a strong KFT membership will strengthen our position.

II. Issues for Discussion

- A. **Class size.** Pres. Castiglione stated that the University wants to negotiate larger class sizes. This is not a fully negotiable issue. If a dramatic change in size changes the mode of instruction, then it becomes negotiable. The University wants to provide various supports and negotiate them.
 - 1. The Exec. Council expressed some thoughts on this in an earlier meeting:
 - a) Larger classes may work in some disciplines, not in others, so faculty of specific departments should decide.
 - b) There should be a tradeoff such that having larger classes means that necessary small classes can run rather than be cancelled.
 - c) Large classes should have extra support (more credits for faculty teaching large classes, TAs, more staff, more equipment, etc.).
 - d) Writing emphasis courses cannot be made larger.
 - e) Rein in abuse of independent studies
 - f) The "double section" method used in some science courses could be expanded.
 - g) Larger sizes might mean that full time faculty teach more students and departments use fewer adjuncts.
 - 2. Member comments:
 - a) Small class size is a selling point for Kean.
 - b) Faculty should be paid more than ¼ credit compensation for Independent Study.
 - c) There is great disparity between colleges in terms of class sizes.
 - d) There is a need for TAs in classes at their current sizes.
 - e) We should look at the issue from a student learning perspective; students in large classes lose individual attention.
 - f) Not only methods of instruction but methods of evaluation would change.
 - g) "Group independent study" must be abolished or negotiated.

- h) Developed pedagogy for larger classes already exists, and this research should be consulted.
 - i) Larger class sizes would be counter-productive for DEI goals.
 - j) There are some new Psychology classes with new class sizes.
 - k) There should NOT be a one-size-fits-all approach.
 - l) The open enrollment approach to incoming students should factor into this question because so many students are underprepared.
 - m) If we go to larger classes, we should use small recitation periods.
 - n) How does course load reduction (as we move to R2 status) fit in?
 - o) Research expectations for each discipline have not been clarified, but these will relate to class size.
 - p) What is the purpose of larger classes? (Pres. Castiglione believes it is to save money. Larger classes using fewer faculty will free up resources for other things, such as hiring more full-time faculty.)
 - q) Montclair State has a reduced teaching load and structure for teaching credits for progressively larger classes.
3. Pres. Castiglione urged members to email the KFT with other ideas.

B. Advisement load. Pres. Castiglione stated the following:

- 1. The Faculty Senate is currently discussing advising loads.
- 2. The Exec. Council discussed it recently and had the following thoughts:
 - a) Some faculty have a 200+ student advising load.
 - b) There is great variation in load between departments and between people within departments.
 - c) Reduced teaching load (release time) should perhaps go with taking on extra advising.
 - d) Perhaps we should return to the old system of college- or department-based advisors.
- 3. Member comments:
 - a) Why do ALL students need holds lifted? Target holds, and the need for advisors to remove them, for struggling students only. Holds for everyone make advisement more difficult than necessary.
 - b) Students should have the same advisor all 4+ years.
 - c) We have too many advising platforms, problems with software, and no training.
 - d) The Registrar's Office should run an exception report to identify students registering for courses they don't need; this would

eliminate the waste of resources involved in having PhD professors advising students who don't need it.

- e) Professional advisors should do the low-level advising (reviewing major guide sheets) and professors should do high-level advising (major options, career advice, internships, etc.).
- f) Campus Planning (?) can answer many of these questions.
- g) We need better communication between academic units, the Registrar, and CAPS.

4. Pres. Castiglione urged members to email the KFT with other ideas.

5. Pres. Castiglione added that he has discussed the need for cultural change with Dr. Birdsell and that Dr. Birdsell is aware of the persistence of old patterns of behavior but also the difficulty of cultural change of this kind. Pres. Castiglione added that, nonetheless, egregious Farahi-type behavior should be brought to the KFT's attention.

III. Local Negotiations Report. F. Argote-Freyre was unable to attend. Pres. Castiglione reported that the meeting on Tues. Dec. 7 between the University and the Local Negotiations Committee was the first in several weeks, and that the following were discussed:

- A. We presented our proposal for procedures for performance-based promotions for Pro Staff. The University is open to negotiating the issue.
- B. We presented our proposal for vacation time for 12-month Tenure-Track faculty. The University expressed concurrence with the concept and is reviewing the proposal.
- C. Extending the retirement incentive program. Under review by University.
- D. Re-negotiating the Lecturers' contract, which will be the focus of a dedicated meeting in January because it will be big project

IV. Holiday Social

V. Meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Shannon Case, Secretary