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New Models: Progressive and Innovative Contracts

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35th Annual National Conference

National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions

New Models: A Joint Management/Labor Meeting

Negotiating Progressive and Innovative Contracts

University of Hawaii (Manoa):

Mary Tiles, Professor, Philosophy, former UHPA President, UHPA/NEA

Deane Neubauer, Political Science (Emeritus) and Globalization Research Center Fellow, former Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, University Negotiator

Ventura County Community College, California:

Connie Jenkins, Chief Negotiator, AFT Local 1828

Patricia Parham, Associate Vice Chancellor, Human Resources

Rutgers University, New Jersey:

Lisa Klein, Professor, Materials Science and Engineering, President, AAUP-AFT, and Moderator

Karen Stubaus, Associate Vice President for Academic Resources

Moderators' Comments: We have three schools represented on this panel. For each school, we have a representative from the faculty union and a representative from the administration. The purpose of this panel is to present both sides, or rather, both perspectives on progressive and innovative contracts. I emphasize these descriptions, and I have asked our panel members to select one or two aspects of their current contracts that best fit these descriptions.

We will begin with brief introductions, where each of us will introduce ourselves and our institutions, define our role in negotiations, and our length of experience in this role.

After the introductions, each team will address the topic of our panel “Negotiating Progressive and Innovative Contracts”.

We will try to keep our comments on the topic of this panel to less than 10 minutes each. We want to have time for a lively and inclusive discussion. After we present our topics, I will ask for questions. If they are to one specific presenter, we will have that presenter respond first. If the question is to the panel as a whole, I’ll ask the panel members to raise their hand if they want to respond and we will respond in order, so everyone has their say before any follow-up comments.

I’ll use the discretion of being the moderator to lead off the introductions, and then I will ask the panel to introduce themselves. I am Lisa Klein, professor of Materials Science and Engineering at Rutgers University. The School of Engineering is on the Piscataway Campus, near New Brunswick. I have been at Rutgers for 30 years. Six years ago I was a member of the negotiating team, but I only participated behind the scenes. Currently, I am the President of the Rutgers Chapters of AAUP-AFT, finishing the first year of my second term. We represent full-time faculty, non-tenure-track faculty, graduate and teaching assistants and EOF counselors, for a total of about 4,500 people. Our part-time faculty have a separate contract. We have about 50,000 students at Rutgers, in New Brunswick, Newark and Camden.

The topic I want to highlight is our Faculty Development Fund (by ‘development,’ I mean a fund to increase the number of tenured and tenure-track faculty. There was confusion at the Meeting with our use of the term. I did not mean to use it in the sense of a professional development fund for attending scholarly meetings, hosting workshops, or special training). Our contract began last July 2007, and runs for four years. I am an officer, but I was not a member of the negotiating team. As is the usual approach, our negotiating team came up with a number of dollars that needed to be added to the salary base over the course of the contract. Exactly how the amount is divided up is then the creative part of the contract.

In the current contract, we have given large percentage increases to our graduate employees, 8% per year, to bring Rutgers to parity with schools we consider our competition for the best graduate students. This means, of course, that full-time faculty collectively are being magnanimous, and not every faculty member is happy. In the long run, I think it is best for all of us.

In this contract, we also wanted to address a nagging feeling, which most faculty share, that the number of full-time faculty is shrinking. I look around my department and my school and I see fewer young people. I know there have been retirements, but I do not see the young faces that should be replacing the engineers that used a slide rule instead of a calculator. I know this nagging feeling has some substance, because for 30 years I have been the only woman in my department of 25 faculty, and I am beginning to think I will be the last.

To get this process moving forward, AAUP-AFT took some of the salary dollars, 3 million to be exact, and used this as a challenge to the administration to increase the number of full-time tenure-track faculty. The net goal is 100 faculty by the end of the contract (at steady-state, we replace retiring faculty and faculty that leave). At the end of the four years, if the faculty number is not 100 greater, and the money is not in the salary base, then the money is distributed to the existing faculty. In other words, the money cannot be saved or used in any way other than salary. The administration has assured us that all benefit by restoring the ranks of the faculty; our Executive VP agrees that hiring fantastic, energetic, productive faculty is the way to move Rutgers forward.

The state budget released in January indicated a cut to higher education, so these are not easy times to be at Rutgers. Nevertheless, with this contract, we have a basis to keep working with the administration, to see to it that Rutgers stays on track, and that in four years we have made progress. There are other parts of our contract that I consider innovative and progressive. However, to me, the Faculty Development Fund is by far the most significant.