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## Overseas Campuses: Collective Bargaining, Labor Relations, and Tax Compliance

James Castiglione  
*Kean University*

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# Collective Bargaining Issues Concerning International Programs:

## Challenges and Successes in Organizing & Bargaining at a Branch Campus Overseas

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JAMES A. CASTIGLIONE

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PHYSICS, KEAN UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT, KEAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

# Wenzhou-Kean University Background

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- ❖ Announced 2006
- ❖ First students in FA 2012
- ❖ A cooperative venture between Wenzhou/Zhejiang government & Kean University
- ❖ Agreement calls for KU to supply the curricula and all of the academic personnel (faculty) while China provides facilities & administrative staff & reimburses KU for faculty
- ❖ Faculty demographics: two-thirds US citizens, one-third foreign nationals; 90+% western educated; 95 total instructors – 36 tenured & tenure-track and 59 non-tenure-track Lecturers on one-year contracts
- ❖ KEY: faculty were deemed by the university from the beginning to be in the same collective bargaining unit as USA faculty



# Collective bargaining unit & agreements

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- ❖ Kean Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 2187
- ❖ Statewide unit: Council of New Jersey State College Locals (CNJSCL)
- ❖ Statewide Master Contract & local Letters of Agreement (LOAs)
- ❖ WKU covered by all existing LOAs from main campus and a handful of new ones negotiated specifically for WKU

# Successes

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- ❖ Saved jobs of two non-reappointed Lecturers
- ❖ Negotiated LOA to restore home travel allotments
- ❖ Procured back pay for new faculty orientation
- ❖ Negotiated reimbursement for a member's medical evacuation flight

# Institutional challenges with internal organizing

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- ❖ 25 members out of 95 in WKU unit – membership rate of 26%
- ❖ High faculty turnover – roughly one-third leave each year
- ❖ Recruiting & retaining Union Reps
- ❖ Inability to send a union delegation from USA seen by WKU faculty as lack of support from the union
- ❖ Climate of intimidation & fear

# Legal Constraints

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- ❖ VISA - KU refuses to provide letters of invitation to procure visas for union officials to travel to WKU
- ❖ Chinese Communist Party
- ❖ Cooperation agreements call for legal disputes to be resolved in Chinese courts
- ❖ Foreign nationals not eligible for certain benefits (also taxes a problem)
- ❖ Still unclear how grievances would be arbitrated
- ❖ Lack of support from NJ Christie administration



# Logistical Constraints

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- ❖ 12/13 hour time difference: holding Skype meetings; delays in email communications; engaging members
- ❖ Lack of a union office & secretarial support
- ❖ Expense and delay with shipping materials
- ❖ Training Union Reps

# Cultural Constraints

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- ❖ Many faculty have no experience with unions
- ❖ Chinese students' approach to student evaluations of faculty (lower scores) impact institutional reappointment decisions
- ❖ Constraints on academic freedom
- ❖ Different conception of labor-management relations
- ❖ Language barriers between Chinese side and faculty

# Looking Forward

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- ❖ Continued member & Union Rep recruitment
- ❖ Creation of WKU union committee structure
- ❖ Acquiring a KFT office
- ❖ Sending an AFT delegation – new NJ Governor changes dynamic