

UDMPU Board Meeting

11/09/2010

Present: Mike Canjar, Cindy Gillham, Mary Higby, Stephen Manning, Katherine Marshall, Kris McLonis, Gilbert Sunghera, Prasad Venugopal, Kate Walters, Mike Witkowski, Joanne Yastik, Larry Zeff

Excused: Rob Berg, Doug MacDonald, Lorri MacDonald

I. Agenda and Minute-Taking

A motion was made and seconded to approve Canjar's proposed agenda for the meeting. The motion was passed.

In the absence of D. MacDonald, McLonis volunteered to take the minutes for the meeting.

II, Announcements

Canjar announced that the UDMPU is getting a new UNISERV officer, replacing Aaron Sheposh who is being reassigned.

III. Treasurer's report

McLonis reported \$31,159.14 in checking and \$70,086.77 in savings for a combined total of \$101,245.91 in the Comerica accounts. New activity since the October 26 meeting was an interest payment of \$5.95 to the savings account on October 29.

McLonis reminded the Board members of the upcoming November 30 membership meeting and the need to purchase pizza for the meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve up to \$200.00 for refreshments. The motion carried.

Finally, McLonis mentioned receiving a message from John Heilman, the treasurer of the Region 2 union of which the UDMPU is a member (Region 2 is also a member of the Michigan Education Association and the National Education Association). The message was a reminder of the dues that the UDMPU pays to Region 2. [Dues are assessed at the rate of \$1.00 per member; at the meeting McLonis had mistakenly remembered the assessment as \$2.00 per member.] There was some discussion as to whether, after making this payment for the current year, the UDMPU should look into being removed from the membership of Region 2 and hence not being billed these dues in the future. Canjar suggested that this question could be taken up with the UDMPU's new UNISERV officer.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the treasurer's report. The motion carried.

IV. Grievance report

Manning reported that a violation of 3.3d of the contract had occurred in one of the colleges. In particular, a member of the bargaining unit was not offered an overload course before it was offered to a non-member of the bargaining unit. In the attempt to handle this situation as a pre-grievance issue, Manning will be meeting with the dean of the college in question later in the day.

A second new issue stemmed from an off-campus meeting where emotions got out of hand and several faculty members at the meeting were accused of behaving inappropriately. One bargaining unit member in particular is expected to issue a sincere apology.

Manning also gave an update regarding an issue he had reported at the October 26 meeting: a faculty member alleging wrongful dismissal. Since that meeting, facts have been collected. There was a meeting on November 4 with the administrator involved in the situation. A question had been raised regarding faculty members currently performing the duties of the discharged faculty member. One of these persons has requested compensation for the extra work, and the specifics of that compensation are being worked out.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the grievance report. The motion carried.

V. MEA Fall Representative Assembly report

Walters reported that there was an extensive financial report at the MEA Fall RA. One particular agenda item that will have a major financial impact on the membership of the UDMPU in the future is the proposed raising of the cap on MEA dues. In order to cover the shortfall in the retirement fund for the employees of the MEA, one proposal that will for certain be voted upon at the Spring Representative Assembly is the raising of the cap by \$150.00. The current cap is \$630.00; if this proposal passes, the cap for 2011-2012 will be \$780.00. (McLonis speculated that there will be more than one proposal at the Spring RA, each with a different suggested cap and possibly one to eliminate the cap altogether.) Even if this proposal passes, future increases in the cap would be necessary in order to continue replenishing the retirement fund.

Walters pointed out that this proposal (and any other similar ones) place the burden of funding on those MEA members earning the most – in particular, college and university professors. But professors make up a very small portion of the MEA membership and, due to their small numbers, don't have much voting power.

It was suggested that this might be the time to start planning a switch in affiliation from the MEA/NEA to the American Association of University Professors. Timing the switch itself is a delicate issue. For one thing, a switch in affiliation cannot occur within the first three years of the contract between the UDMPU and the University administration. Also, if the UDMPU were to dis-affiliate with the MEA/NEA, there would be a brief period in which the UDMPU would not be under the protection of any union (in other words, it wouldn't be like rolling over a retirement fund). During that brief period, the University administration may wish to implement certain things that are forbidden under the current contract. There would have to be some agreement that the contract as it now reads would continue to be honored regardless of the UDMPU's current affiliation (or lack thereof), until such time that the contract itself needed to be renegotiated.

It was agreed that the issue of seriously considering a change in affiliation should be on the agenda for the November 30 membership meeting.

VI. Chemistry building renovation issues

Venugopal reported that later in the day Katy Snyder (Associate Dean), Diane Praet (Associate Vice President, University Registrar) and Jane Schley (Administrative Assistant in the Chemistry department) are meeting to check out proposed facilities for holding the chemistry classes and labs while the Chemistry building is undergoing renovation. A major problem is that the lab classes require special equipment and safeguards (ventilation systems, for example). Some of the equipment and safeguards are large and cumbersome and cannot be easily moved.

Of special concern is the situation of two tenure-track faculty members in the Chemistry department who depend on lab facilities for their research. If they have no access to lab facilities, that is one year of their tenure track in which they will be unable to do much of the research required to make them eligible for tenure.

Venugopal reported that the question had been raised by the Dean of the College of Engineering and Science as to whether the tenure clock for these faculty members could be stopped for the duration of the renovation of the Chemistry building. Traditionally the UDMPU has opposed stopping the tenure clock; but in the past requests for stopping the clock have been because of personal issues of the faculty members in question. (In many of those cases, the faculty members were ultimately able to apply for, and receive, tenure within the timeframe of their tenure track.) But this is a situation in which plans by the University itself are interfering with the ability of faculty members to meet the criteria for tenure.

It was suggested that there could be some internal mentoring within the Chemistry department or within the College of Engineering and Science. In other words, tenured faculty could enlist the help of these two untenured faculty members in their own research. In this way, the untenured faculty members could continue to build up a record of conducting research and thus improve their chances of achieving tenure.

VII. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The motion carried with adjournment at 1:51pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris McLonis