

GSU-UPI

The Communicator

January 2016

Volume 1, Issue 2

Save the Date

**UPI Members – Negotiations Kick Off
Pizza Party Meeting**

Thursday February 17, 2016

2:30 PM

Hall of Honors

Meet YOUR GSU-UPI Negotiating Team!

Ask Questions and Be Informed

(Read about negotiations below.)

Food and Beverages

Executive Board Meetings

Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday, 11:00 AM, G261

Next meeting is February 18th

All members are welcome to attend!

Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) Filed with IELRB

An ULP has been filed with the Illinois Labor Relations Board regarding a workload form administration has independently created and required us to sign. We do not oppose the form because most all of us do want something in writing that is signed by both parties. However, we have the right to memorialize the form and deadlines in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by negotiating it into the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Since August, administration has refused to bargain this issue and has left us no choice but to file the ULP. Remember, administration originally wanted the AOD removed from our contract and won that issue at the bargaining table during the last contract negotiations. Now, however, they have decided to add an AOD requirement but call it "Workload." They seem to want to have it both ways: Administration must live with the results of their bargaining decisions, just as we do (e.g., allowing graduate courses to be changed from 4 CUEs to 3 credit hours), until the next contract is negotiated OR until both sides agree in a Memorandum of

Understanding about the issue.

SEI Security Breach Discovered

In December, we discovered that SEIs were being reviewed and even copied by at least one college dean **PRIOR** to data processing by ITS. This practice may have been going on since drop-boxes were removed from hallways and placed in deans' offices. It is our position that this practice breaches SEI security and comprises the process. It also provides an opportunity for impropriety. We are working with Administration to find a solution.

Also, know that it is illegal to have more than one personnel file for an employee. Faculty members' official files are held in the Provost's office. No one is legally allowed to have a second file about you. This raises the question of where the copies of SEIs going to be stored? Perhaps more importantly, what was the purpose of copying SEIs in the first place? If you know of any "second" files, let us know immediately.

Civility Policy vs. Freedom of Speech

GSU has a Civility Policy that has been flagged by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE).

Recently, there was an incident at GSU when two faculty members exchanged words and thoughts during a meeting. One filed a complaint with HR based on a violation of the Civility Policy. That complaint triggered an investigation by HR that included hearings conducted by an HR employee. All witnesses were interviewed. UPI Grievance Officer accompanied the accused for her hearing. HR concluded, after a six-month process that there was no Civility Policy violation. However, HR refused to allow the accused faculty member to make the exoneration public in order to clear his/her name and reputation. This is due to HR's understanding of "confidentiality."

A tenured, full-professor was fired just a few years ago because of this Civility Policy, which does not appear in the University Policy Handbook and was never approved by the Faculty Senate. Therefore, we are seriously concerned about this policy and HR's actions. Questions we have include: Where does freedom of speech end? Who determines what is "civil"?

This situation is exactly why FIRE has flagged the GSU Civility Policy, along with some other GSU policies. You can read all of the GSU Policy ratings at <https://www.thefire.org/schools/governors-state-university/>

Negotiations

Our negotiating team has been working very hard to prepare. There were hoops to jump through before UPI Local 4100 would approve the filing of an Intent to Negotiate. We held meetings with each Unit, distributed surveys, and then analyzed resulting data. In preparation, the team attended three days of training; in addition, some attended three days of training in August in Springfield.

We have agreed to do Modified Traditional Bargaining (MTB). If that doesn't work, we can always default to Traditional Bargaining. Our first session at the table is tentatively set for February 10th pending the availability of a mediator.

In MTB, the Federal Mediation Services provides us with a mediator at the table. Simply put, her/his job is to unbiasedly keep both sides on point and move the process along expeditiously.

It is still our hope to NOT have this contract extended into the next school year. The current contract expires in August. Our hope is to have a new contract by then and a smooth and uninterrupted start of the new school year. Our team is committed to meeting as often as necessary, even during Spring Break, to do everything possible WE can to avoid an extended contract.

In light of the State budget impasse, we are all aware of the dire financial situation. This context will make this aspect of the negotiations challenging for the team, but we are prepared to meet those challenges. Of course, we hope that Illinois will have a budget soon.

Finally, know that we will NOT sign off on a non-disclosure rule for our negotiations. We will be free to convey information to our members about negotiation progress. Although there will be some things we cannot legally disclose during negotiations, we will have more freedom than teams have had in the past.

Negotiating Team—A Two-Tiered Approach

In the spirit of transparency and maximum faculty involvement, we have a very large negotiating team that is divided into two Tiers. Tier 1 will sit first-row at the table. Tier 2 will sit silently in the 2nd row at the table. Tier 2 will advise and caucus with Tier 1 and will be fully participating members of the negotiating team.

Do not hesitate to talk to members of the team. As time goes on, please send them some messages of support and encouragement. This is long process and the Team will need to know that you support and appreciate their time and hard work.

The administrative team includes the following members: R. Hill (Chair), A. Vendrely, C. Balthazar, J. Coleman, K. Lambert-Thomas/J. Slovak.

UPI Team:

Tier 1 Team				
1	Jeannine	Klomes	A	COE
2	Paul	Blobaum	A	Lib
3	Daniel	Cortese	A	CAS
4	Sandi	Estep	A	COE
5	Melanie	Ellexson	A	CHHS
6	Michael	Hart	B	CAS
7	Shirley	Comer	B	CHHS
8	Steve	Hyzny	B	CAS
9	Carla	Johnson	ASP	COE
10	Michelle	Sebasco	ASP	CAS
Tier 2 Team				
1	Linda	Samson	A	CHHS
2	Emmanuel	Alozie	A	CAS
3	Stephen	Wagner	A	COB
4	Michael	Larson	B	COB
5	Glenna	Howell	A	COE
6	Walter	Henne	A	CAS
7	Ben	Almassi	A	CAS
8	David	Golland	A	CAS
9	Kelly	Robinson	ASP	CHHS
10	Carlos	Ferran	A	COB
11	Pam	Stipanich	ASP	CHHS

Grievance Update

We had a negative outcome to the grievance for a 5th year non-retention. Therefore, we have filed to take this to arbitration.

Our current grievance process by contract has only two levels: 1) Informal grievance hearing, 2) Formal grievance hearing. The first stage is heard by Associate Provost Ann Vendrely and the second is normally assigned to a dean. For obvious reasons, the odds of winning at either level are slim, especially if we are asking them to reverse the opinion of the President.

Be aware that the decision to enter the costly process of arbitration is not made by GSU UPI officers. It is made by UPI Local 4100. The issue is reviewed by a state-wide committee to determine if it is broad application. In the case of termination, of course, they agreed to go to arbitration.

Glenna Howell is our Grievance Officer. If you have a problem, need advice, or just need someone to go with you to a meeting with an administrator as a witness, please do not

hesitate to contact her at her private email address: glennahowell1173@gmail.com

If you do not call on Glenna, I urge you to take any officer, field rep, or a friend when you are meeting with an administrator about an issue that you suspect may have negative or controversial implications for you or your program. It is your Weingarten Right to have someone there.

Insurance

We have received messages from IFT about our health insurance. We know that CMS suspended payments for the self-insured plan (Cigna PPO) in September 2015.

IFT has filed a law suit. [Here is the IFT statement:](#)

*This situation is unprecedented in Illinois, and it is unclear exactly how the Governor's action to freeze health care payments will directly affect plan participants. **To ensure that workers' health coverage is not interrupted or compromised, the IFT, AFSCME, and other unions are taking proactive legal action.** Our union coalition has [filed suit](#) in circuit court seeking an order to compel the state to pay claims from health care providers in the group insurance plan.*

Most doctors are still honoring insurance plans, but if you have had a problem, please let me know. If your doctor is refusing services unless you pay the full amount upfront, we need to know.

Here is something that you may not know: There is a strong possibility that ALL health insurance programs will see a significant increase July 1. The guesstimate is that premiums and co-pays will double!! So plan for the worst and hope for the best.

Did you know or things that make you go hmmm . . .

Did you know that at the December Board of Trustees meeting, \$3.8 million was approved to remodel the entire café – from ovens to tables – the month before classes begin in the fall? The money came from the nearly depleted Contingency Fund. Seems ovens are so old that they are difficult to repair. But could remodeling have waited a year? One faculty member pointed out that it seems as if ovens are more important than supporting faculty travel for scholarship.

Did you know that we are going to build a second dorm? The BOT approved \$125,000 to begin the process for building a second dorm, planned to open in just a couple of years.

Did you know that although faculty travel is restricted, members of the administration continue to travel? .

Did you know that we are the only former BOG university on a 10-month contract?

Did you know that we are lowest of all the former BOG schools in pay for all levels of

promotion, PAI, and summer school?

Did you know that the president said, "MAP grants are not our priority," when she refused to sign a Save Our Future postcard. These are the postcards to State legislators about the effects of our crucial budget impasse. Some of the BOT members did sign the postcards, and we were most appreciative for their support.

Did you know that the difference between out-of-state and in-state tuition has become so inconsequential that 55,000 Illinois students are now opting to attend out-of-state universities? (*Source: IBHE*)

Did you know that at GSU HR lists everyone eligible to join the union as a member of UPI? That is ALL Unit A, B and ASPs are listed in their files as Union members. They do not distinguish between Fair Share and UPI Members. Why? Because the cost exactly the same. In fact, your Pay Advise (pay stub) the deduction shows UPI, even if you are Fair Share. This explains why some people think they are members when they have never signed a UPI membership card. So, if you are Fair Share and do not want your GSU records to reflect that you are a union member, you need to talk to HR. GSU has very few Fair Share people, but we still thought you should know.

We have been assured that GSU has funds that will carry us through the Summer, unlike most other universities. So, we all go back to our offices, close the door, and say, breathe a sigh of relief. But wait! What happens in the Fall? There is rumor that the university presidents are brokering a deal to accept a 20-30% cut in our state funding. If that is true, it will lead to job cuts! UPI is opposed to any cuts in funding and has been pushing the State to fully fund for now and for the future. The cycle of not appropriately funding higher education must stop. CSU will make March 1st payroll but will not make the March 15th. A closure to one of our institutions affects us all. We need to speak as one voice. Look for GSU to get involved in fighting the good fight.

Did you know that 99% of our GSU-UPI messages are sent to your private email? We have taken most union business off GSU email. If you discover that you are not receiving email, such as this newsletter, please contact Sandi Estep estep2001@comcast.net

GSU-UPI Officers, Committee Chairs, and Field Reps.
(All officers also serve as UPI reps.)

President: Sandi Estep

Field Reps: Stephen Wagner, Michael Larson, Walter Henne, Elizabeth Essex, Pam Stipanich, Kelly Robinson, Lucianne Brown, Paul Blobaum, Dwight Vick, Anthony Andrews, David Golland, Linda Samson, Bruce Wilson

Treasurer: Pam Stipanich

Communications/Website: Bonnie Gregg

Secretary: Jeannine Klomes	Membership: Walter Henne
Unit AVP: Carlos Ferran	Legislative Committee: Ben Almassi and Walter Henne
Unit B VP: Michael Hart	Event Chair: Robin Wyatt Medley
ASP VP: Carla Johnson	Bylaws Revision: Paul Blobaum and Walter Henne
Grievance Officer: Glenna Howell	GSU-UPI CARES: Shirley Comer and Dwight Vick