

Fellow Faculty,

I am writing this letter to respond to some things I have heard in regards to the Senate Meeting last Thursday. From what I've been told, there were accusations made about what the "union knew" about a couple important issues, specifically retrenchment and the recent changes in the College of Business. I am also concerned that there were questionable claims made about how the union is not supporting faculty. I've put a lot of time into communication this academic year in order to help make issues transparent to all faculty. It bothers me when people make false claims in public meetings. Those claims only harm us all and undermine the critical work we are doing as a union.

Retrenchment

The first issue I would like to address is the issue of retrenchment. Here is a timeline of what has occurred regarding this issue.

1. I have asked about retrenchments since the beginning of the semester given the state of the economy. President Cevallos consistently has stated that there will be no retrenchments for the 2010-2011 academic year. He did say that the proposed budget looked bad and he wasn't sure how the university would be until the budget was approved. However, he was insistent that there would not be any retrenchments.
2. There was a document sent to us from our State Meet and Discuss Team that was given to them by PASSHE. This document had low graduated programs that were highlighted by the state system. According to PASSHE, these programs were going to have to be looked at and justified by local campuses.
3. At local Meet and Discuss we questioned the administration about the low graduate programs document. The administration had no idea what we were talking about. We provided them with a copy of the document for their viewing pleasure.
4. At Legislative Assembly in September, APSCUF State President Steve Hicks mentioned that the Chancellor told him that the budget was bad, making retrenchments a very real possibility.
5. As soon as we returned from Legislative Assembly, I met with President Cevallos and questioned him once again about retrenchments given Hicks's statement. Cevallos still insisted that there were no plans for retrenchments this year. He stated again that nothing could be done until the budget was passed by the state government.
6. On Monday, November 2nd, there was a Strategic Planning Budget Sub-committee at which President Cevallos first stated that now that the budget would be set, we would be forced to look at certain programs within Academic Affairs, possibly leading to some program reductions and/or cuts for 2010-2011 and beyond. I reminded the President that he was past the retrenchment deadline for 2010-2011 academic year and he agreed that there could be no retrenchment of tenure or tenure-track faculty for the 2010-2011 academic year. Up until this meeting, there was no discussion of academic program elimination. President Cevallos also stated that he would like a small committee of APSCUF members to meet with Dr. Vargas and Ken Stewart to discuss the budget and its effect on programs in academic affairs. This was the first time that President Cevallos had ever approached APSCUF with such a proposal. I have decided to take him up on his offer.

This is the time line for the issue of retrenchment since the beginning of the school year.

College of Business

The next issue I want to discuss is the restructuring of the College of Business. Throughout the 2008-2009 academic year and into the current academic year this was a topic raised by APSCUF at local Meet and Discuss. Finally at the end of the summer of 2009, after pressuring the administration to develop a coherent plan that did not violate the contract and negatively affect faculty jobs, management agreed to meet with a small team of APSCUF members to look at the issue and develop a process consistent with the spirit of our CBA. The team was me, Kevin Mahoney, and Ruth Perkins. We met three or four times for two or so hours at a time to run through different scenarios. The Dean of the College of Business was proposing a plan that would dissolve all of the current departments and create two new ones: the Business Administration Department and the Professional Studies Department. According to the CBA, the administration has the right to create and dissolve departments as they see fit, as long as faculty are not forced to teach outside their qualified areas.

We argued that clear lines between the departments needed to be drawn, so that decisions regarding which faculty would be put in which department were not arbitrary and capricious. Since the whole purpose of this plan was to meet PASSHE mandated AACSB accreditation, we argued that the standards created by faculty regarding accreditation should be used. The Provost also agreed to put in writing that the Professional Studies Department was NOT a first step toward retrenchment. That is what was discussed, and we think that we positively affected the outcome. This issue has not gone undiscussed outside of the meetings with the Provost and the CoB Deans. This has been discussed at both the Executive Committee and Representative Council Meetings. It was discussed when it was announced to the entire College of Business, as well as in APSCUF Updates I have sent out to the faculty weekly.

I was told that the following claims were made at Senate yesterday. Let me address each one:

1. "Faculty in the College of Business are being rewarded with incentives for publications."

This is not true. There is a research committee in the College of Business that consists of faculty. When someone publishes a paper, they can approach this committee for funds to help them continue his or her research. These funds can be used to pay for conference travel, software, or other things of that nature used by faculty to complete their research. There is an application process and the decision is made by faculty based on the application provided. The money to fund this is given to Kutztown by Harrisburg for the purpose of helping support AACSB accreditation. There is a similar faculty committee in the College of VPA as well.

2. "Faculty in the College of Business are being given release time to work on their publications."

Again, this is not true. I have a list of all the release time in the university. I also have access to all faculty schedules through Profs Online. Everyone with release time in the College of Business has a valid justification for their release time, such as being a chair or helping with the accreditation process.

3. "Faculty in the College of Business are being given release time to help other faculty publish."

This is not true. (Same reasons as stated in 2).

4. Faculty in the College of Business are given two preps.”

This is true for NEW untenured faculty in the College of Business. The CoB Dean makes it a point to promise new faculty that they will not have more than two preps their first two years at KU. So what? It is also the goal of the Dean of the CoB, that nobody have more than two preps if possible. There are some tenured faculty with three preps, but it was either unavoidable or they asked for that particular schedule. This is a great practice for new faculty coming to Kutztown as well as everyone else in the college of business. It allows them to have an easier start toward there tenure. This is also a practice in many other departments across campus when possible. So in short, the Dean tries to keep everyone to two preps. However, when that is not possible, it is the tenured faculty that get three preps not the juniors. From my perspective, this should be standard practice across the entire university.

5. “New faculty in the College of Business are hired with a reduced load”

This is not true. There is, however, one case where a faculty member was hired very late, when classes were already distributed among others in the department. That new faculty member did not have enough classes to complete a full load, so he/she was given administrative duties until the following semester. At that point, his/her load was increased to a full faculty load. This was not an incentive for signing the contract and working at Kutztown, but a practical matter stemming from the late hire.

These are the facts of what has happened in the College of Business. If anyone has documented, contradictory information, I would love to see it. By the way, the Senate meeting yesterday is the first that I have heard of any perks or incentives being offered to faculty in the College of Business. In the future, I hope that faculty will bring these rumors to the union so we can investigate. The only way we can make Kutztown a better place is if we work together based upon facts not rumor.

I hope this clears things up. Any further questions please feel free to contact me. Thank you.

Paul
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