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Kean University Administration - Management Style Theory X

A Look at Kean's Ongoing Issues

by Charlie Kelly, Chair - KFT Negotiations Committee

Slow Moving Negotiations

Local negotiations for AY2008-2009 to date have been moving along slowly. Scheduling monthly meetings has become problematic especially with the new work rules and teaching schedule for the faculty. The administration cancelled at the last minute the monthly meeting scheduled for November and an alternate date for November could not be found. The KFT so far this semester met twice with the Administration, once in October and once in December.

The next likely meeting--given the holidays, semester break, and uncertainties of faculty teaching schedule for the Spring --will be in February. The new work rules and course scheduling unilaterally imposed on faculty and students this year has unfortunately created a very hostile environment for negotiations and very little movement on KFT issues is expected.

Modest Gains

Despite the coercive climate the KFT has made some progress in December on Performance-based Promotion for professional staff and the Range Adjustment Program. Thanks to the hard work of Tim Sensor and others, the Performance-Based Promotion Agreement is nearly complete. The administration has also agreed to extend the Range Adjustment Program negotiated last year for another year. The KFT has also pressed for discussion this semester regarding the best way to achieve representation for all faculty on the promotion committee, in-

cluding the School of Visual and Performing Arts and the Nathan Weiss Graduate School.

This modest progress is the result of the stifling legalistic context for bargaining with the Farahi administration.

Legal Obstacles Remain

It is clear that the number one negotiation priority for the Administration is the implementation of SIRII student evaluation of course instruction. This issue has prompted a KFT Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge that has yet to be settled. The ULP stems from the Administration's attempt to impose unilaterally a so-called pilot test of SIRII last semester. The normal process for dealing with ULP's is to first

have a pre-hearing conference with attorneys representing the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (OER), the Attorney General's Office, representatives of Kean Administration, all representing management, with representatives from the KFT and State AFT Council representing faculty, staff and librarians. This pre-hearing meeting takes place at the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC), theoretically a neutral state agency established to promote the public interest of good labor relations in public employment.

At the initial meeting with PERC, the agency representative (who is neutral) attempts to resolve the issue by mediation, i.e. assisting the parties to settle the dispute by mutual agreement. Mediation is a process frequently used when negotiation fails. **Generally negotiation can fail for many reasons. The primary reason why it fails at Kean is the managerial style of the President, i.e. scientific management (theory X). Scientific management purports management knows best. In the extreme, as it is at Kean, only the President knows best.** This approach leaves little or no room for local negotiations. The Administra-



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The President's Message

Adjunct Abuse Hurts Students and Full-Time Faculty

by KFT President, James A. Castiglione

Faculty and staff are no doubt aware of the tremendous shock students are experiencing as they finally feel the disruptive effects of President Farahi's new class schedule during registration for Spring 2009. Already, reports are pouring in of students who are transferring to other colleges or plan to do so after the spring semester. And why wouldn't they? When other universities are bending over backwards -- to accommodate students work schedules, family obligations and increased commuting costs -- by reducing the number of trips to campus, the Farahi administration is making their lives more difficult.

Farahi likes to recite slogans; one of the new ones, "blue goes green", touts the university's attempt to become more environmentally friendly. How will forcing students, faculty and staff to drive to campus more frequently help the environment? And this policy will have a negative affect on another form of "green" - revenue - as enrollments drop, a trend already in evidence for this fall.

The new schedule is also making life harder for our chairpersons in their struggle to schedule adjuncts to fill holes in their programs created by the shrinking size of the full-time faculty. The increased trips to campus for both day and evening classes in the new schedule interfere with adjuncts' other commitments. Many of our most experienced, reliable adjuncts will opt to quit Kean, leading to increasing churn and instability in the classroom.

But Farahi has already thought of a "solution": he has *changed University policy to allow adjuncts to teach 9 credits per semester. In effect, adjuncts can be treated as three-quarter-time faculty.* This semester there are about 50 adjuncts with 9 credits, a number likely to rise to 100 in the spring and well beyond that in the future.

Even with this new policy, adjunct numbers are up again: from 915 in Fall 2007 to 934 in Fall 2008. The utility to Farahi is that *this policy will mask significant increases in the percentage of classes taught by adjuncts.* Already, adjuncts teach well over 50% of all Kean's classes, a number that creeps upward each year and is way out of scale with national norms.

A recent study by the AFT, shows that 38.4% of classes at Public, Four-Year Colleges are taught by contingent instructors. The study gives the figure for Public Community Colleges at 57.5%, further evidence of Kean University's transformation into a community college under Farahi's leadership.

What does Farahi get in return? Cheap labor that is much more easily controlled than full-time faculty with tenure. **Over-reliance on adjuncts represents bad academic practice and undermines the quality of a Kean education, underwriting the continued expenditure of gargantuan sums on non-academic projects.**

Increasing adjuncts has other useful consequences for Farahi. We all know that adjuncts do not engage in curriculum development, democratic self-governance (such as it is under Farahi), student advisement, research and scholarship, grant writing, or any of the other myriad activities and responsibilities of full-time faculty. Perhaps most significant, **adjuncts do not have offices and do not hold office hours.** They are not paid to do so.

The result is that students complain to the administration that they cannot find their (adjunct) faculty -- few such complaints exist for full-time faculty. But the administration makes no such distinction when addressing this with the Board of Trustees. Full-time faculty are accused of being lazy, unresponsive and uncaring to students. This, in turn, provides Farahi with a convenient excuse to justify unnecessary, punitive increased office hours for full-time faculty.

How ridiculous is Farahi's office hour policy? Office hours at our sister institutions vary from 2 to 5 hours with none specified at Ramapo and Rowan. Kean is clearly way outside the mainstream. Our sister institutions strive to support their faculty with sound academic policies that provide time for the research, scholarship and service activities they want to encourage.

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT



KFT Professional Staff Luncheon Meeting

by Linda Bradbury, KFT Co-Vice-President/Professional Staff Committee Chair

In recent years, the KFT has scheduled Professional Staff Luncheon meetings each semester to reach Professional Staff members who find it difficult to attend the monthly KFT General Membership meetings on Wednesdays during the University Hour. This semester's luncheon meeting was held on Tuesday, December 9th in UC 337 A and B from 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm. The luncheon meeting was attended by approximately 65 Professional Staff members who were welcome to spend any part their lunch hour at the meeting and were free to leave when needed.

The KFT Professional Staff Committee members who planned the luncheon meeting are: Linda Bradbury, EEO; Al Brown, School of Visual and Performing Arts; Ethel Eaddy, Teacher Certification; Cathy Flynn, Office of Financial Aid; and Lindy Foreman, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. These committee members bring a wealth of experience to the group and are very much aware of the concerns and interests of their colleagues.

A large portion of the meeting was unstructured to allow the Professional Staff members freedom to ask many questions, make the KFT Officers and colleagues aware of any new difficulties, concerns or problems, as well as any compelling positive developments. Bennett Muraskin, Council of N.J. State College Locals staff representative assigned to KFT members was present to assist in addressing these issues.

One issue discussed was the *Performance Based Pro-*

motions Agreement. In 2001 the KFT was first among our sister local college unions to have an agreement awarding promotions to Professional Staff up to the next higher title in the series for those who demonstrated excellence over a number of years. Seven Professional Staff members received Performance Based promotions from 2001-January 2003. Those individuals at the highest level in the series of titles (Professional Services Specialist I, Assistant Director I or Administrative Assistant I) receive a two-range increase, but have their job title remain the same (Letter of Agreement X, page 119 of the current Master Contract).

In 2001 the KFT was first among our sister local college unions to have an agreement awarding promotions to Professional Staff up to the next higher title in the series for those who have demonstrated excellence over a number of years.

Since the creation of this agreement at Kean, all of our sister college local unions have formulated agreements with their administrations, with varying degrees of success. William Paterson University has been the most successful in procuring about seven Performance Based Promotions for their Professional Staff per year. Since 2003, at Kean University, no Performance Based Promotions have been granted by the current administration although some applications have been submitted. Article XVI, D of the current Master Contract (page 39), spells out the requirement for colleges to have such an agreement. The KFT negotiating team has brought this issue to the Kean administration, and the agreement is currently being renegotiated. In many ways this agreement is consistent with sections of the agreement at William Paterson University. This appears to be positive movement in a constructive direction. ♦

Students Work to 'Save Our Schedule'

Students going through registration this fall experienced a rude awakening as they tried, often unsuccessfully, to piece together a schedule that accommodated their work and family obligations for Spring semester using the new class schedule. While some students will decide to transfer to other colleges, others have decided to stay and do something about it.

Outraged students have formed a group called **SOS – Save Our Schedule** – whose goal it is to restore the previous class schedule that they feel has served so many generations of Kean

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tion only negotiates those things it deems “it has to negotiate” and only when OER and the Attorney General instruct the Administration to negotiate. Consequently, most negotiation takes place in Trenton where the Administration is compelled to come before PERC.

Compelling the Administration through legal means to negotiate is, from the KFT perspective, the least desirable basis for negotiation. Compelling people to do anything invites malicious compliance, i.e. complying minimally and in such a way as to subvert the will of the coercing party. The KFT Negotiating Team seeks principled negotiations not for idealistic reasons but for pragmatic reasons, i.e. negotiations works best when both parties embrace the process. Principled negotiation requires bilateral commitment.

It is in the spirit of principled negotiation that the KFT approaches all issues for AY 2008-2009:

- additional pay for additional office hours;
- closure on full representation of all schools/colleges on the promotion committee;
- additional professional staff performance based promotions;
- compensation for mandatory faculty training beyond the academic year;
- an increase in the maximum for professional development travel;
- flexibility in load scheduling;
- the transition of three credit courses to four credits (4 to 3 teaching load) and
- student evaluation of classroom instruction. ♦

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The KFT Negotiations Team has placed compensation for increased office hours for faculty and chairs on the negotiations agenda. Because the administration refuses to negotiate, we have followed up with another Unfair Labor Practice charge. We are also meeting with elements of state government to

pressure the Farahi administration to engage in good-faith negotiations on this and other negotiable issues.

Your KFT leadership will continue to take vigorous action and speak out publicly on your behalf in defense of your professionalism and in the best interests of our students. ♦

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students so well. They are organizing via campus networking and via the internet and are engaging politically to get their message out.

After putting together a strategic plan, the students then approached the KFT for support including a request for funding for the coming academic year. Impressed with their drive and commitment, the KFT Executive Council agreed to finance a series of initiatives starting with the creation of a website and a postcard campaign to New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine.

The website – www.SaveOurSchedule.org – lays out the students’ mission and ways in which students can participate and get organized.

The KFT has a long history as a staunch advocate for the needs of our students. When our students are marginalized and need our support, the KFT will be there for them. ♦



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