

# THE KFT VOICE

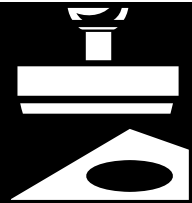
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Kean Federation of Teachers - An Association of Professors, Professional Staff and Librarians - Kean University, Union, NJ 07083

## Master Contract Overwhelmingly Approved by 91.5%

By Richard Katz, Contract Negotiation Team



The newly negotiated 4 year Master Contract was approved by 91.5% of statewide voting members. Out of 3367 total statewide members, 1584 (47%) cast ballots: 1450 voting yes and 134 voting no. **At Kean there was a similar 90.2% approval percentage**, with a better turnout than the state average. **Of 452 total KFT members, 256 (57%) cast ballots: 231 voting yes and 25 voting no.** The overwhelming approval of the state contract makes clear what tough, open, transparent, good faith negotiating can accomplish. **Your Local Negotiation team is committed to the same quality of negotiations.**

Highlights of the contract include preservation of increments with every step in the salary scale and raises in each year of the 4 year contract, totaling 13.65% compounded: 3%, 3%, 3.5%, 3.5%. With the 1.5% healthcare premium charge, those at the top step of their ranges will see total increases of 11.94% over the four year contract. By 2011 full professors (range 30) at the top step will earn over \$120,000. Those not at the top step, the bulk of the membership, will see total compensation increase by 15% (for range 30, step 11) to 33 % (range 18, step 2) over the four year contract..

Our excellent Prescription Drug program remains unchanged (\$3 for generic and \$10 for non generic) except for a slight increase for brand name drugs where a generic is available. In-network medical co-pays increase from \$10 to \$15. Our excellent Intellectual Property Rights, negotiated in 2003 remain unchanged. Overload and summer session rates will increase by 23.8% or \$250 per credit by 2011. The number of annual statewide sabbatical leaves will increase from 160 to 190 by the end of the contract. Sabbatical compensation will increase from ¾ of full salary to full salary for a half year sabbatical and from ½ to ¾ of full salary for a full year sabbatical. For more contract information, the new salary scale, and answers to FAQs, go to the State Council website "cnjscl.org."

### Contract Negotiation Team:

Linda Bradbury, James A. Castiglione, Jon Erickson, Richard Katz, Eleanor McKnight  
Maria del Carmen Rodriguez

## Two Bills To Watch In The New Jersey Lame Duck Session

By Jon Erickson, Vice President of the Council of New Jersey State College/ University Locals and KFT Political Action Chair

Two pieces of legislation that have long been priorities of the KFT and the Council of New Jersey State College Locals may be approved in the lame duck session of the New Jersey Legislature. **The first bill would prohibit public employers from unilaterally changing terms and conditions of employment after an impasse has been reached in negotiations.** This bill would **level the playing field between management and the union by preventing the employer from stalling negotiations and imposing their position.** The bills (A-2752 and S-1584) are priorities of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO Public Employee Committee. The Senate

version has been voted out of the Senate State Government Committee and is now before the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

**The second bill would provide paid family leave (A-3812 and S-2249).** The bills would provide **12 weeks of paid family leave per year for workers to care for sick family members or children during the first year after birth or an adoption.** The program would be financed through a small increase in the employee tax for Temporary Disability Insurance. If enacted New Jersey would become the second state in the United States to have adopted paid family leave. The bill has the support of the Governor and many legislators. The bill has been voted out the Senate Labor Committee and the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee and is now before the full Senate. If you are interested in supporting this bill go to the [www.njafcio.org](http://www.njafcio.org) web page and send a letter to your legislators by going to the "e-activist" link. We have and continue to actively support both bills.

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## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES STRENGTHENED IN NEW CONTRACT

James A. Castiglione, Sherrell Holderman & Mary Wuethrich, KFT Grievance Officers

The Kean University administration is infamous statewide. ***The number of grievances resulting from contract violations at Kean exceed the total from all the other eight state colleges combined*** in recent years. At this summer's Master Contract negotiations, the college/university presidents proposed language to weaken the grievance process, including the 45-day window for filing a grievance. ***In all cases the proposals were beaten back and our members' rights preserved.***

During both internal deliberations of the State Council and the Master Contract negotiating sessions, the KFT fought for and achieved several changes that strengthen the language of the grievance procedures. We believe that these changes will aid all AFT members statewide, but ours in particular, in helping to preserve our contractually stipulated rights. These changes are summarized below, followed by an update on recent sabbatical grievances:

**Lengthening window for filing certain grievances:** In most cases, a grievance must be filed within 45 days of when the employee became aware of the violation. Again, that clause does not change. The window for filing a grievance on a violation by a promotion or retention committee, however, is now increased from 14 to 21 days. We anticipate that fewer grievances will be denied on the basis of timeliness under this more extended regime.

**Strengthen timeliness of Step-1 Hearings:** New language restricts the conditions under which the administration may extend the window for holding a Step-1 Hearing.

**Quicker progress to arbitration:** Language was added to allow a quicker path to arbitration when the Step-1 Hearing of the grievance process is not held in time, an unfortunately common occurrence at Kean.

### **Sabbaticals**

A Step-1 Hearing was held this summer for another grievance regarding the University's inequitable treatment of faculty in the sabbatical granting process.

This spring (2007), eleven faculty applied for sabbatical, two withdrew their applications, two were denied by the administration, leaving seven sabbaticals awarded for the 2007-8 academic year. The two faculty not receiving sabbaticals, were told they were denied because University policy prohibits more than one faculty member from the same department from receiving a sabbatical, despite contrary administrative action in 2006. Of the five sabbaticals granted then, two were from the same department. The KFT is concerned that this heretofore non-existent limit to one sabbatical per department per year will have the effect of punishing faculty from departments that are the most active in research and scholarship.

The KFT is pleased that the number of sabbaticals denied by the Farahi administration dropped from ten the year before to two this past year. We believe that this is due, in part, to our members' forthright pursuit of their rights through the grievance process.

One of the prime achievements of the new contract is the increase in the number of sabbaticals offered per year and the increase in pay from 75% to 100% of salary for half-year sabbaticals and from 50% to 75% for full-year sabbaticals. ***To ensure equity and fairness and that the granting of newly enhanced sabbaticals takes place according to merit and does not devolve into cronyism, the KFT will aggressively pursue the pending sabbatical grievances.***

Working for the expansion of sabbaticals and the meritorious dispensation of those opportunities, the KFT strives to protect and advance the professionalism of our members.

In closing, the KFT Grievance Committee wishes to remind our members to be ever vigilant of the terms and conditions of our contract. If you believe that your rights may have been violated, please contact the KFT Office or one of the KFT Grievance Officers immediately. ♦

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James A. Castiglione - 908 623-6020  
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All Americans share a basic faith: a universal identification with personal freedom. Each generation has defined this freedom in particular ways. It is this emphasis on personal freedom that inspires Americans to classify their presidents into two groups: those who “free” their countrymen through government and those who “free” countrymen from government. Regardless of all the facts we know about the USA its land, many resources, government and presidents, there is a fundamental assertion that we cannot deny: the most important resource for this nation and especially for our children is education. When citizens of a nation are truly educated, they can best exercise their freedom and its associated responsibilities and privileges.

Public employees working in all lines of duty strengthen all institutions in which they work, especially those responsible for educating the American workforce. Our work is essential to the sustenance and betterment of all communities. “Whether we are providing patient care or social services, whether we are protecting air and water quality, or auditing tax records, or teaching students at all educational levels, our AFT members provide countless services day in and day out which strengthen our communities and build together this nation”.

[Ludwig, B. 2007 Public Employee Advocate. Aug/Sept Issue. Pg. 4]

Despite these powerful contributions made by all unionized employees in the public sector, the American public is adversely influenced by an insidious negative portrayal of public workers in the American media. The press simply thrives on stories that depict public workers as criminals who commit fraud, fiscal waste and abuse of power. Also, whenever the media interviews candidates running for public offices, many aspiring subjects run on platforms to “privatize”, “downsize” or simply “eliminate” public services. Mr. Patrick Bresette (assoc. director of the Demos Center for the Public Sector) documents how most Americans equate government with politicians. They cannot see government for what truly is: many public services, programs and regulations necessary for any society to function on a regular basis.

Kean Federation of Teachers endures great challenges and opportunities as a labor organization at this particular juncture.

We, as many other public employees, have been criticized as being “too expensive”, “lazy” and “disposable”. Our invaluable contributions to the state government and stability are easily dismissed or taken for granted by the powers that be. We are led to believe that we need to complete “somersaults” and extraordinary leaps and bounds in order to support our workplace and the state. In reality, ***it is our daily and consistent work for this nation that sustains students, colleagues, administrators, community members, politicians, legislators, and university trustees and makes the functioning of this state possible.***

We just completed a long process of contract negotiation for a new four-year contract. All you need to do is compare the initial proposal submitted by the state team and the proposal you are considering now to comprehend that in order to close this significant gap, it took considerable effort, human intelligence and will. Negotiating in this unique anti-labor climate was an uphill battle. We live in a time where many NJ residents consider public, union workers a liability. Many public officials and administrators take our work for granted. Regardless of these obstacles, we come to work everyday with great optimism and conviction. We navigate every day with insufficient or inadequate resources. We deal with students whose academic, health and social difficulties are demanding. And we perform our work in spite of the insufficient respect we receive for committed and excellent service.

The nine teams of the public universities that are part of the Council of State College Locals fought consistently to ***ensure wage increases in all four years of the contract for the first time in several contracts.*** Salary increases and health benefits contained in this proposed contract are comparable to the ones already secured by the other public sector unions that settled with the State. There were increases negotiated for summer session and overload rates of a \$100 for the first year and of \$50 for the next three years. These new rates for summer session and overloads will mean a 24% increase over the past rates over the 4-yr contract.

(continued on page 4)



## KFT President's Message

*María del Carmen Rodríguez*

### **Welcome Back Address - September 10, 2007 continued**

AFT members in line with the other NJ public sector employees will contribute 1.5% of their annual base salary for their health state benefits. This 1.5 % health deduction as well as the negotiated salary increases will be applied retroactively to July 1, 2007. There are new stipulations regarding our retirement benefits for all members who accrue 25 years of service AFTER July 1, 2007 (those in PERS and those in ABP- TIAA CREF programs). One key feature of the contract is that the State has agreed to WAIVE the 1.5% contribution if the retiree participates in a retiree wellness program slated to begin in 2008. We hope to make a wellness program part of a future contract for all members. There are increases in the number of half year sabbaticals (from 160 to 180) during the first two years and an increase to 190 during the last two years. Sabbatical pay increases to 100% for ½ year sabbaticals and 75% for full year sabbaticals.

One of the key issues that members have inquired about lately is the 1.5% deduction for health benefits. Please remember that over 71% of our unit will receive additional steps during the life of this contract and will net more than 15%. New faculty can expect increases of about 30%. Also remember that the 1.5% deduction will be calculated before your pay is taxed. This actually means that in net money (\$ that gets into your check), the **real cost of healthcare for members will be about 1%**. Also included in the contract is a tuition waiver program for children, spouses and domestic partners in civil unions, language to negotiate locally performance-based promotions for professional staff, range adjustments for instructors and librarians, and a donated leave program for professional staff and librarians. ***In sum ,the contract ensures us good wages each year, makes modest concessions and protects our excellent health benefits and pensions for the future.*** Considering the adverse political climate we confront and the budget problems confronted by the State, the contract proposed to you presents a fair and fiscally responsible agreement. ***The fundamental rights of all members were upheld and our unity was solidified despite the pressure used by state reps to pit one sub-group against the others during negotiation.***

The union also takes seriously its role guiding educational policy and as stewards of New Jersey's higher education system. We know a college education is not simply a

tool for accessing all the markers that we associate with educated people (i.e., a house, a good looking car, a nice vacation, a good investment portfolio and many other items that signal status and prestige). Education is perhaps the most powerful tool for: reducing poverty, improving health, promoting healthier economies here in New Jersey and beyond, and providing peaceful and productive opportunities for young people around the globe.

However, out of the 22 richest countries in the world, the USA is ranked 20<sup>th</sup> for its level of commitment to funding education. In these current times, education is treated as a commodity devoted almost exclusively for profit making purposes.

***What we can do.*** Spread the word to your students about this critical issue via an audio-visual presentation, a class discussion, the creation of a poster, a fundraising event or contacting the media. There is already bipartisan legislation presented in both chambers in Washington. Ask your legislators to support this cause immediately. Donate whatever you can. Establish a scholarship if you can. Motivate others to help out.

We need to elect at all levels of government public officials that support the work and livelihood of all AFT members. Ask all candidates whether and how they plan to support our union values, principles and ideals. I also want to repeat an old message that is vital to our continued growth and livelihood: BUY UNION. By doing so, we protect our jobs and quality of life. Teach students the value of union work. Guide students to know the achievements of professionals who are union people (i.e., AFT member Albert Einstein). Expose students to the need for being politically involved and being informed of the political process at all levels of government.

Whether it is for a fair contract, for local negotiations, for sound educational policy, and so on, your Union will always be working hard in your best interests. But the leadership cannot do it without your help. I invite you to become involved in the Union in the many ways that we offer. It is positive, fulfilling work. Have a healthy and productive academic year. ♦

## Kean Federation of Teachers Annual Scholarships

By Jacqueline Keil, KFT Scholarship Chair

Applications for the KFT annual scholarship competition awards have been steadily increasing. In 2002, a total of 11 students submitted applications and last year that number had increased to 36. During the 2002-2007 period, there have been 3 special award categories – one in 2002 about union worker involvement in the September 11<sup>th</sup> rescue and recovery efforts, another in 2007 in memory of the late Dr. Karen Stern (2005-2006 KFT Scholarship Chair) focusing on a faculty member who had made a difference in the life of the applicant, and, forthcoming in 2008, a special category about global education and children. The focus of the main essay has changed over this period as well. Originally, students were to write an essay about the growth and development of a specific union for a particular industry, including a personal commentary on the value of the union’s contributions to that industry. For recent competitions, students have addressed the theme *responsibilities of the educated* by reflecting on past and present experiences with service and social involvement as well as how their experiences at Kean University have impacted their personal

perspective. Students also have the option of addressing this issue from a more academic perspective by concentrating on how the theme of service figured prominently during the course of their studies.

Changing the topic of the main essay, as well as adding special categories, has made the application more accessible to a larger a number of students. While the quality of the essays varies widely, those selected for scholarship awards are very thoughtful and well written. The special essay category in memory of the late Dr. Stern was particularly memorable - it gave us the opportunity to honor the memory of a colleague, and it was so pleasant to read about the various ways Kean University faculty have made a difference in the lives of students by helping them to work towards achieving their academic and professional goals.

**Applications for the scholarship will be available after Thanksgiving, and the deadline for submissions is February 20, 2008.** ♦

In addition to the KFT Annual Scholarship Competition, the Kean Federation of Teachers has another scholarship which is entrusted to the Kean University Foundation. It is the *Kean Federation of Teachers Endowment Fund.*

In 2004 the Kean Federation of Teachers committed to a \$50,000 endowment fund. This endowment provides for scholarships to full-time or part-time undergraduate or graduate students with a minimum 3.0 GPA and financial need.

The endowment fund provides several benefits, both to the KFT and to Kean University in that the monies are invested, the initial funds are not invaded and the interest returned provides continuing scholarship support for Kean students. As the fund grows in value, so can the amount of the awards. This scholarship lasts in perpetuity.

**KFT Annual Scholarship Competition Statistics: 2002/2003 - 2006/2007**

|                             | 2002-2003 |          | 2003-2004 |          | 2004-2005 |          | 2005-2006 |          | 2006-2007 |          |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|
|                             | AP        | AW       | AP        | AW       | AP        | AW       | AP        | AW       | AP        | AW       |
| Graduate                    | 5         | 4        | 3         | 3        | 3         | 3        | 11        | 3        | 15        | 3        |
| FT                          | 3         | 2        | 2         | 2        | 2         | 2        | 8         | 2        | 10        | 2        |
| PT                          | 2         | 2        | 1         | 1        | 1         | 1        | 3         | 1        | 5         | 1        |
| Senior                      | 1         | 1        | 1         | 1        | 4         | 0        | 5         | 3        | 3         | 0        |
| FT                          | 1         | 1        | 1         | 1        | 3         | 0        | 5         | 3        | 3         | 0        |
| PT                          | -         | -        | -         | -        | 1         | 0        | -         | -        | -         | -        |
| Junior                      | 3         | 2        | 7         | 3        | 4         | 4        | 4         | 0        | 8         | 3        |
| FT                          | 3         | 2        | 7         | 3        | 3         | 3        | 4         | 0        | 6         | 3        |
| PT                          | -         | -        | -         | -        | 1         | 1        | -         | -        | 2         | 0        |
| Sophomore                   | 2         | 0        | 1         | 0        | 3         | 0        | 2         | 0        | 4         | 0        |
| FT                          | 2         | 0        | 1         | 0        | 3         | 0        | 2         | 0        | 4         | 0        |
| PT                          | -         | -        | -         | -        | -         | -        | -         | -        | -         | -        |
| Freshman                    | -         | -        | 1         | 1        | 3         | 0        | 5         | 2        | 6         | 0        |
| FT                          | -         | -        | 1         | 1        | 3         | 0        | 5         | 2        | 6         | 0        |
| PT                          | -         | -        | -         | -        | -         | -        | -         | -        | -         | -        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>11</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>6</b> |
| <b>TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED</b> | \$9,400   |          | \$9,750   |          | \$7,950   |          | \$9,750   |          | \$7,400   |          |

AP = Applied    AW = Awarded    FT = Full time    PT = Part time

**KFT NEGOTIATIONS REPORT** By Charlie Kelly, KFT Local Negotiations Chair

Our first scheduled meeting for local negotiation is October 16. The KFT attempted to meet during the summer and September but the Administration, due to a reorganization of its team and the loss of one of its members to retirement, asked to put negotiations off to October.

Last Spring was a very contentious semester for negotiations. The Administration for one reason or another (Master Contract negotiations, challenges to the KFT observer status in the Promotion Committee, and a change of leadership in the Administration's Contract Administration Team) led to the most unproductive semester in recent years. Even when we mutually resolved matters such as the oral agreement regarding the "Transition From Classroom to Retirement", the Administration withheld final approval, i.e. signing a Letter of Agreement.

At our first scheduled meeting in October, the KFT and the Administration will negotiate an agenda for the year. It is clear that a priority of the Administration is evaluation. The Administration attempted to rush a plan for "every course, every section, every faculty, every semester evaluation" last semester. The faculty overwhelmingly and successfully opposed the implementation of this plan. The Administration is currently regrouping with a Provost Task Force. The Provost has selected Suzanne Bousquet, Chair of the Psychology Department, to chair this task force. The Administration has also selected every member of the group (faculty as well as students) with the exception of the KFT and Adjunct Union representative. In charging the Task Force the Provost took note that he consciously did not appoint any administrator to serve on the task force because he wanted it to be "a faculty and student" committee. The concept of the faculty and students selecting their own representative to serve on an evaluation committee apparently never crossed his mind.

The KFT's role in faculty evaluation, while limited by the courts dealing with public sector collective bargaining, is nonetheless significant. The Administration and Task Force have been put on notice that the number and frequency of evaluations are negotiable. The right of faculty to review, comment on and or respond to the evaluation is also negotiable as well as advance notice of evaluation. The Administration sees evaluation as a first step to improving

courses, instruction and curriculum at the University. It also sees evaluation as a way to respond to external reviewers such as accreditation bodies and elected officials.

The Provost did take note that the accrediting bodies raise the issue, i.e. "how will this data once collected be used to achieve the goals of improvement". When the KFT addressed this question with the President, he was adamant about not returning to an approach where a trained colleague would be available to work one on one with a faculty member in need of improvement. There will be "no release time", the University President stated unequivocally, in dismissing the suggestion that trained faculty work with other faculty to improve the quality of instruction. The President believes that the data may identify the 10 best teachers and the 10 best researchers and that these faculty should and could work with faculty in need of improvement as a collegial gesture. The President believes that 70% of the faculty will cooperate with evaluation and the Task Force should focus their efforts on designing an evaluation system for them. The President reassured the Task Force that his Administration will only use evaluation data in a collegial way.

In addition to course evaluation, the KFT negotiation team will face a number of other thorny issues this year such as faculty representation on the Promotion Committee, evaluation of chairs, and a review of all sunset clause Letters of Agreement negotiated during the life of the previous Master Agreement to identify a few.

This year the Negotiation Team will be comprised of Charlie Kelly, Chair, Irwin Nesoff, Tim Sensor and Caroline Geck, a librarian. Caroline's inclusion will help the team to be more knowledgeable of issues that may be of primary concern to bargaining unit employees working in the library. ♦

**Send to:**



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