

APSCUF NEWS ITEM

April 8, 2010

President Hicks Speaks at PASSHE Board Meeting

(Note: Before President Steve Hicks spoke to the PASSHE Board this morning, Dr. John Lizza, chair of the Philosophy Department at Kutztown University, spoke in the public comment period. Dr. Lizza talked about the low-graduation review being pushed by the Board and argued the invalidity of that kind of simple numerical cleaver, especially in a program and major like philosophy, which reaches other disciplines. He attempted to put real conversation about these reviews before the Board and tried to put a face on the programs under pressure to be cut.)

Comments of State APSCUF President Steve Hicks

I thought this was a good time to talk about what may be the elephant between us in the room: the retirement package.

As you are aware, APSCUF has not agreed to the retirement package. Since you are not privy to our internal organizational communications, or I'm going to act like you're not, you may not be aware of why we have not yet accepted this package.

When we first heard of this proposal, which the Office of the

Chancellor's numbers indicate would probably capture about 5% of our members, our concern was replacement: we recognized that not replacing faculty meant a change in the quality of what we do.

There are only so many students we can fit in a class and serve them well; there are only so many advisees we can meet one-on-one and serve them well; there are only so many committees we can serve on and serve the university community well.

At the table, the Office of the Chancellor made it clear that the system was unwilling to make any type of commitment about replacement or reallocation.

We brought up, what seemed to us, the obvious connection with re-trenchment, and we were told that there was no connection and there was no reason to discuss the two as if linked in any way.

Given those barriers, and the massive benefit this plan would mean to the system — our estimate is you could be saving as much as \$35 million a year, depending on replacements, EVERY year — every wing of our Association's leadership believed it worthwhile to pursue some other security for our members, since there was no security of replacing their col-

leagues and no security against re-trenchment.

We put on the table a two-year contract extension proposal. The terms of this proposal were not excessive, we thought; in fact, they generally matched the projections being run by the universities and the Chancellor's office for 2011-12 and 12-13. This was our initial offer; we understood there would be bargaining over this so that the system might even save some millions of dollars against those projections — each percentage point of increase on the faculty contract is worth \$4 million — a start to filling in the multi-million dollar holes those projections show.

Instead of bargaining, we were met with "we can't." After multiple conversations and two sessions, we never received any counter offer from your side. None. We are still waiting. The only response we have gotten so far is a letter saying your proposal was off the table at 8 a.m. on March 19th.

I am here to both let you know what we were thinking, but to also say that the March 19th deadline was not ours. As we understand the timeline, we should have till the end of June to have potential retirees make their choice, and we need a 60-day window for people to do so. Unless my math is way off, that

President Hicks Speaks at PASSHE Board Meeting

means there's still time to talk and come to an agreement.

We are still willing to talk, but we are unwilling to just give in to a stand-alone plan that provides a bonus for maybe 5% of our most experienced members, leaving the

other 95% to pick up their work, undermining the quality of what we do.

Finally, legally we are both in a position where we only have to take a deal that's mutually acceptable - you can put forward an offer

that suits you and if we can't come to an agreement, then we both walk away with no harm done.

So, let's have that conversation and see if we can reach something of mutual benefit.

APSCUF: Faculty & Coaches Fighting for QUALITY EDUCATION!

APSCUF's priorities...

- Providing our Students with the Best Education Possible
- Increasing State Support for our Universities
- Stopping the Growth of Class Sizes
- Increasing Faculty Positions to Meet Student Needs
- Retaining ALL of our Degree Programs

IN THESE TIMES OF CRISIS, FACULTY, COACHES AND STUDENTS MUST WORK TOGETHER!

Join APSCUF in the fight for quality education by responding to:
qualityeducation@apscuf.org

We'll make sure the state's decision makers receive your remarks.

