

News Item from State APSCUF

January 22, 2010

President's Message

Welcome to a new decade!

Isn't it good to be union now?

Isn't it good to be APSCUF?

Governor Rendell keeps talking about layoffs and furloughs, but we have a collective bargaining agreement that doesn't allow furloughs and makes our version of layoffs – “retrenchment” – a process that cannot be unilaterally and arbitrarily imposed. State APSCUF and your local chapter will take every step necessary to ensure that the state system abides by the CBA.

You should have seen the Government Relations department press release titled “Expansion of the Pennsylvania Transfer and Articulation System: Reasons to Reexamine the Law.” This is our latest statement on the problems in the Transfer and Articulation legislation enacted in October and another indicator of our fighting for the quality of PASSHE institutions. We are continuing to work on this legislation, on both the legislative and the regulatory fronts. Every arm of APSCUF will continue to press for academic integrity in every arena available.

We have also spent hours attempting to get the Office of the

Chancellor and the local institutions on the same page with the low-enrolled program review: often the messages as relayed through academic offices on campus have been more draconian than what was envisioned as the Chancellor's Office presented the program to our state M&D team. APSCUF and its members understand that program reviews are a necessary part of an active, functioning institution, but they needn't be heinous, burdensome or threatening. We will continue to fight for our academic programs and to demand that logic hold sway over any impulsive administrative dictate.

And remember we still have another year and a half left on our CBA, with a 4% across the board pay increase and steps due in September. The time is coming where we benefit from the backloading of the 2007 contract.

Over the past months, the state system has constantly been pushing an agenda that asks for us to either give up our negotiated, contractual wage increases or to reduce our numbers. Time and again we have asked, “show us the numbers.”

The system student body grew in August by 4%. The Board increased the tuition by 3.7% in July.

In October, the legislature, using tens of millions of stimulus dollars, provided the system with the largest E&G budget in history. At our October labor conference with PSEA, one plenary speaker, Howard Bunsis, an Eastern Michigan accountant, showed the public source data indicating the system has \$700 million in reserves.

The Harrisburg crowd is crying about “now is ok, but in 2011...” and the state system is following that mantra.

But until there's concrete evidence of financial disaster, not just the speculation based on improbable assumptions, and a series of managerial cuts as a beginning to PASSHE financial reorganization, APSCUF will hold PASSHE to the terms of the contract it negotiated while we carefully prepare for the next round of negotiations.

The new decade looks like an extension of the old, with constant movement to impinge on the CBA. APSCUF will continue our decades-long fight for quality working conditions and quality education in Pennsylvania.

In solidarity,

