

AAUP IRSC Chapter Meeting

Minutes December 17, 2019

Call to Order

Special meeting called to order by President Fraser at 12:30 p.m. 80 present.

Business

Faculty Non-Renewal, Enrollment & Pay

Several faculty reached out to the Chapter after their contracts were not renewed for next year, or they were provisionally renewed with daunting contingencies. They were notified by email at approximately 5:30 p.m. on November 26, the day before the Thanksgiving Break.

In the two cases the Chapter has been watching most closely, there were no performance issues and both faculty members were in excellent standing. (In one case, it appeared to be an enrollment issue, but this could have been resolved through the alternative credentialing process last year.) The Chapter appealed to Dr. Massey to reconsider the decisions, and he refused.

This has been a dismal year for enrollment and for our budget:

- 40% of the faculty took a pay cut by losing the 1% bonus this fall.
- We have people in line for promotion pending a change in enrollment/financial position.
- Enrollment looks very poor for the spring.

So it is natural to conclude that the cuts are based on finances. Except Barry Keim told Fraser yesterday that these non-renewals were not financially driven, and he said he could be quoted as such. Yet, in the case of John Adams (Accounting Dept.), the Chapter was also told it was not a performance issue.

Two years ago the Chapter negotiated the terms of faculty evaluation, and we established—at least for continuing contract faculty—that if there is a performance issue, a faculty member needs to be notified and given an opportunity to address the issue. Although by law the College does not need to give any reason for non-renewal of annual contract faculty, one could reasonably expect the same conditions should be met for annual contract faculty—if there is a problem, then the person needs to be notified and given a chance to correct the issue (as a matter of basic decency if nothing else). Otherwise, non-renewals are arbitrary or the result of administrative preference or prejudice.

The Chapter does not know why these five people were non-renewed, but if their positions are advertised moving forward, we know it wasn't financial. Also, the manner in which these colleagues were notified is outrageous.

John Adams wrote and asked for a letter to be read into the record:

Dear Colleagues,

Recently I have received the news that my faculty contract here at IRSC has not been renewed. You can imagine that news saddened me greatly.

I have spent over 10 years at IRSC building my reputation. I started out as an adjunct faculty teaching for the business program over 10 years ago. Later, I served on the business program advisory board, and was an integral part of bringing our Bachelors of Accounting program to IRSC. I have now taught in our growing bachelors of accounting program for four years full time. During my time I have had the honor to watch many of the students I taught be successful in our program and career. I have served the college working with adjunct faculty committee, working as a faculty Leap program mentor, and a co-advisor to our DECA business club. I have received flawless evaluations, and recently ended my one year role as a Faculty Mentor. I have dedicated my life to being the best faculty I could be at IRSC.

After all these accomplishments, you can imagine how surprised I was to receive a non-renewal letter. Recently, I had an opportunity to work with [the Chapter] to find an answer. [the union officers have] worked tirelessly to reach out to members of administration on my behalf. I am thankful for all [their] hard work. Through our meetings we had it confirmed that I had done nothing wrong, and it was not a performance issue. The administration hid behind the contract language to avoid any justification or answers. We have a very weak contract in terms of equitable outcomes or rights for employees that work hard. Quite frankly they can let you go because they don't like the sound of your voice or the color of your shirt. [The Chapter] has been an exceptional ally in trying to get me a renewed contract. [The officers] along with senior faculty have made me feel welcomed and that my work here has been worthwhile. I explained to Bruce we need to fight for a Just Cause language in our annual contracts, or find a better solution to the current system.

I will leave you with this...as much as it hurt me to hear I was let go... it devastated my children. My daughter was up and helping me at 4am to get the DECA bazaar ready. My children have waited up several times in the evening to ask how my and my students' day went. To say they were emotionally invested in IRSC is an understatement. When a decision like this is made I am not the only one to suffer, and that's what really hurts the most.

I am asking you all as my fellow IRSC faculty and family to stand up against injustice. Even if my contract cannot be saved, I hope that no other person has to look into their

children's tear-filled eyes with them saying you worked so hard how did this happen, and not have an answer.

Thank you all for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Adams

Spring enrollment numbers as of December 13, 2019:

- Associate registrations are down 209 FTE, or 6.5% compared to last year
- Baccalaureate registration is down 33 FTE, or 5.7%
- CTE is up 177 FTE, or 106%, but this is due to timing/reporting
- Our enrollment is trending down, as is true across the state and the nation

The Chapter's analysis of enrollment trends during negotiations showed that our drop was more than would have been predicted by the state and national trends. Fraser shared with Keim that there are countless stories being shared about how Workday is still very difficult to work with where student access is concerned, and there is a very real possibility that Workday is putting significant downward pressure on enrollment. Tot that, it has been confirmed that Workday was cited as a factor in the downward trend in a report to the Florida Department of Education, although exactly what language was used in that report has not yet been revealed (the Chapter is still looking into this issue).

Summary of the facts:

- Faculty are being let go in a way that seems arbitrary but might reasonably be connected with low enrollment.
- There are conflicting accounts of the reason for non-renewals.
- Workday is a likely factor in driving enrollment down.
- Enrollment looks poor for the spring.

Discussion about supplemental payments to Enterprise Systems staff members who have worked on the Workday project were then discussed. Additional information is being requested of administration, but it appears at this time that significant supplemental payments were made to select members of the Workday project at a time when faculty salaries were reduced and promotions withheld.

Negotiations

Capers provided a quick update on the negotiations process. The full roll-out of collaborative bargaining was being held until we could complete the training with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. It has been difficult to schedule that training due to administration's schedule/canceling dates. The training is currently scheduled for January 13.

Questions & Comments

Faculty Non-Renewal, Enrollment & Pay

The Chapter does not know whether there was any “rubric” or evaluation criteria on how the decisions were made as to who was not renewed. To understand that, Administration would have had to give the Chapter some reason as to why these individuals have been laid off.

Continuing contract faculty are generally safe. None of the non-renewals were continuing faculty. The financial emergency clause that could affect continuing contract faculty is not defined in the contract. Also, Human Resources has said there is precedent in relocating/retraining faculty.

Non-renewal spread was 3 from AA side and 2 from the AS side. All deans were asked on the Friday and Monday before Thanksgiving to justify all annual contract faculty positions. Some deans could; some deans seemingly couldn't.

While some staff and administrator have retired or left the college and not been replaced, the Chapter is not aware of anyone on the staff/administration side being “let go.”

Member inquired as to the percentage of faculty that are on annual contract at this time was and whether that number includes temporary full-time faculty. That is unknown to the Chapter at this time.

Negotiations

Concern how the Chapter can be having difficulty obtaining information when we live in the Sunshine state. Fraser noted that we could use a more direct freedom of information approach; however, that would really be a final step because it would end our open conversation, which is occurring...just very slowly.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at _____.

Respectfully submitted,

James Dinsch
Secretary