

Management Association Committee for Employee Relations (MACER) Meeting Notes – 16 April 2020

Present for Union: Linda Giampa, Louise Michaud, Tom Greene, Kathy Holmes, Steve Russell, Liliana Brand.

Present for Employer: Mike McCarthy, Bill Heineman, Lane Glenn

The meeting through ZOOM started shortly after 3:00 PM on Thursday 16 April 2020

- 1. Services to Maintain Computer Equipment** – Linda Giampa said that given that everyone is using their own computer equipment while working from home, what help can the college give to assist employees in making sure that they are able to do their work effectively from home. Mike McCarthy replied that whenever possible, if requested, the college is providing laptops to employees. Mike advised that an employee should contact their supervisor for any equipment needs that they have.
- 2. Contact Tracing, COVID-19** – Mike indicated that cases so far reported at NECC were from the police academy, which operated in a very concentrated area. The bottom line is that if we do not hear anything we should assume we have not been in contact with anyone infected on campus.
- 3. Contingency Planning for Faculty** – Bill Heineman and Linda discussed possibilities if a faculty member is too ill to teach classes, even remotely. Ideally a plan should be in place to make sure the classes are covered. They agreed that this was best handled through divisions and departments on their own rather than through a blanket policy. Bill said that he would ask deans to work through this with department chairs and coordinators.
- 4. Incomplete Grades** – Linda and Kathy Holmes brought up that some students who are deployed in the National Guard or who are health care workers may need to take Incomplete grades for spring semester classes. Bill indicated that there are efforts in place to ensure that students with those concerns will be held harmless. For example, they would not have to pay for courses they need to take again. Bill indicated that a professor has wide latitude to offer Incompletes; this is done in the usual manner when grades are due. He did not suggest that anyone end the semester early, as accreditation and financial aid standards must be adhered to.
- 5. Distance Education** – Linda indicated that the local Distance Education Committee needs to be involved in decisions relative to the conversion of face-to-face classes to remote learning. Under the current NECC Distance Education Agreement, ordinarily when a faculty member begins offering a new on-line class, there is paid training through CIT. This was not possible during the current conversion to remote learning, but we need to be cognizant of it going forward. Bill responded that there are conversations at the state level which he hopes will provide direction in time for the summer sessions. Bill added that more classes have been put on-line for the summer. While some colleges have declined to run any face-to-face classes this summer, Bill did not think that was a good idea for NECC classes that have labs and other experiential components, particularly in the Allied Health Division. Some face-to-face classes may be shifted from the first to the second summer session.

- 6. Professional Staff Reporting** – Linda reported that some professional staff members are concerned that with members working remotely, extra reporting might be required. She said that so far, the reporting requirements are similar to what would be required if staff were on campus. She expressed hope that while it is reasonable for members to record students they interacted with, reporting by minute, etc., was not reasonable. She asked that any new reporting requirements or templates be reviewed by the Union. Bill agreed. Linda added that the reality is that working from home is more difficult and takes more time, and that should be a consideration.
- 7. Staffing Concerns** – Linda asked if there was information on hiring and layoffs. She was concerned that there are still pending positions, like a Dean of Students. Mike responded that there is a lot of uncertainty and it will take time to sort things out, especially given that the state budget for FY 2021 will most certainly see reductions. It may be, he added, that certain positions are critical to be filled. Lane Glenn added that an across the board hiring freeze does not make sense.
- 8. CARES Funds** - Linda asked if the allocation of CARES money from the Federal Government will be accounted for in a transparent way. Lane said that the college stands to receive \$3 million of that money. Much of it will be allocated directly to students. Mike added that there will be a substantial audit trail for these funds.
- 9. Hearings via ZOOM** – Linda asked that important hearings, meetings between Human Resources and staff be handled face-to-face rather than through ZOOM. Mike responded that he would take that into consideration for important personnel actions. Beyond that he is working on plans to get personnel back on campus as soon as possible and consistent with guidelines from the Governor.
- 10. Observations on Conversion to Remote Work** – Linda observed that in the current crisis people have embraced the technological solutions rather well and that people are working well together. Mike added that we have found opportunities to work smarter that we can carry forward once the crisis is over.
- 11. Thanks** – Lane thanked everyone for their extraordinary efforts during the COVID-19 crisis and conversion to remote operations.

The meeting concluded at about 3:45 PM.

Next Meeting: Thursday 21 May, 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Russell
NECCPA Secretary