



UNION WIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION / NOVEMBER / 2019

Classification Project Update Highlights Membership Meeting

Much of the Oct. 22 membership meeting focused on the classification project known as Career Paths, which was negotiated as part of the current UCPEA contract and aims to update all job categories and job descriptions for professional staff for the first time in decades.

UCPEA President Michael White noted that members received an update on the classification project in mid-August, when a complaint was filed with the State Labor Board against the University for extending contractually established timeless and as well as failure to be in consultation with UCPEA, as required in our contract.

The UCPEA group attending classification meetings now includes six members and Executive Director Elizabeth Sullivan and updates about the meetings are being emailed to members and posted on our website. White said that areas under discussion have included holding to established timelines to make progress in project, adjustment of salary bands, inclusion of Subject Matter Experts in job description evaluation process and a clearer setting of proficiency levels so members can advance in their careers.

“Some of the data that comes out of these meetings is extremely frustrating,” White said. “We were told about 60 percent of our

membership has an internal job description; the other 40 percent works off of the university job specifications. A job template should look very similar to the old University job spec; in fact it may be the old University job spec.”

White added that UCPEA also has requested a full equity review of our membership that will eliminate the salary discrepancies in the new system that have existed for many years.

“We have pushed for a full salary equity review. We have not gotten an answer to it yet,” he said. “I think it is being taken as a serious request. I think a full equity review of our membership is drastically overdue.”

White also noted that the state’s annual request for proposals (RFP) for health care plans will be going out soon. State employees throughout Connecticut have the opportunity to change their health coverage each year, based on their changing needs.

Currently Anthem and UnitedHealth Group are the two companies that provide coverage for state employees, including UCPEA members. Health care plans are going out to bid and it is expected that both companies will again make bids. Dental plan coverage will also go out to bid.

New Horizons Skills Program Renewed through 2020

New Horizons, the on-demand e-learning platform for members to improve their professional skills, was renewed through September 2020 by the Executive upon the recommendation of the Professional Issues Committee.

The platform assists members with proficiency in Microsoft Office, Adobe, Sharepoint and Google Apps. Members were sent an e-mail directly from New Horizons on Oct. 30 regarding signing up for this professional development opportunity. Members who accessed this training last year will need to renew their participation, notes Angela Rola, vice president for professional issues.

New Horizons provides both self-paced video learning instruction and real-time, focused classes throughout the day. The New Horizon Go Library covers the basics of tools such as Office 365 and Adobe In-Design from start to finish in 250 self-paced videos. The Power Hour sessions include 50 real-time on-line classes for more experienced users of programs like Microsoft Technical led by instructors who can answer student questions.

Among the most popular Power Hour classes in Microsoft Office training are Pivot Tables Beyond the Basics, Getting Started in Office 365 with One Drive, Analyzing Excel Data with Lookup Functions and Office 365 Getting Started with Skype.

NOTE: If you did not see the Oct. 30 e-mail, please check your Spam folder. Also, you should keep the email so that if you decide later to sign up for one of the programs, you have the details. For additional information please contact the Professional Issues Committee at professionalissues@ucpea.org



RALLY AGAINST RACISM: UCPEA members (L-R) Michael Roberson, Nishelli Ahmed and Nisha Hardnett at the Oct. 21 Rally Against Racism in Storrs that followed the arrest of two UConn students after they shouted a racial slur outside Charter Oaks Apartments.

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Seeking Additional Union Representatives/Stewards in 6 Areas

The UCPEA is seeking nominations to fill Union Representative/Steward vacancies in the following areas:

Area 6 – Information Technology

Area 7 – University Library

Area 14 – Benton, Hall Building, Storrs & Wood Halls

Area 15 – Psychology

Area 23 – Stamford Campus

Area 31 – Depot Campus (No IT)

The duties of a Union Representative/Steward are formally outlined in the UCPEA Constitution (Article VI, Section 12), as noted below. At its core, however, the role of a Union Representative/Steward is simply to listen to your colleagues and to be an advocate for the area you represent. It does not require a huge commitment of time, and it can be very rewarding.

Article VI: Duties of Officers and Union Representatives (Section 12):

“UNION REPRESENTATIVES: “The Union Representatives shall: attend Union Representatives trainings and meetings; advise the Executive Board of their constituent members’ views on Association policies and practices; communicate Executive Board decisions, contract interpretations, and the results of meetings to their constituent members; assist the Grievance Team in handling grievances; elect one member from among

themselves to serve as Chief Union Representative, who shall be a member of the Executive Board and chair Union Representative meetings. Union Representatives shall handle other matters as assigned by the Chief Union Representative.”

Please consider nominating yourself or another interested member for one of these positions. To do so, please send an email to chiefunionsteward@ucpea.org by Friday, Nov. 15, 2019 indicating the area, or areas, which you are interested in representing. If only one member expresses an interest in representing an area, that member may be appointed to the position by the Executive Board. If multiple members express their interest, an election will be held in accordance with the UCPEA Constitution.

National AFT Dues Increases, AFT-CT Holds

Effective Sept. 1, our AFT National Per Capita dues increased by 30 cents per month for members with a salary more than \$40,000 and 15 cents per month for members with a salary less than \$40,000. While we have been working with the UConn Payroll department to institute the increase as close to the effective date as possible, members will not see the increase in their dues deductions until the pay period ending Nov. 7, 2019 (check dated Nov. 22, 2019). There will be no dues increase for AFT-CT this year.

Dates, Deadlines, and Things To Do

Nov. 6, Wed., Union Rep meeting, SU304B

Nov, 7 Thurs., Executive Board meeting, SU410

Nov. 11, Mon., Veteran’s Day – UCPEA Office closed

Nov. 12, Tues., New Member Luncheon – SU304B

Nov. 18, Mon., Union Steward Training, SU310

Nov. 20, Wed., Professional Issues event – Tentative

Nov. 21, Thurs., Executive Board Meeting, SU410

Nov. 22, Fri., Executive Board Workshop – All day – SU104

Nov. 28 & 29 – Thanksgiving holiday – UCPEA office closed

All events and meetings are at noon, unless otherwise noted

- **Professional Development applications are reviewed at the beginning of each month**
- **Childcare Deadlines: Jan. – April (Due May 15); May – Aug. (Due Sept. 15); Sept. – Dec. (Due Jan. 15)**

Dependent Tuition Waivers

The benefit applies to Fall & Spring semesters only

Deadlines

Fall Semester – June 1

Spring Semester – Nov. 15

Employee Tuition Waivers

The waiver applies to the Fall and Spring semesters only.

Deadlines

Fall Semester – Oct. 15

Spring Semester – Feb. 28

Tuition Reimbursement

Reimbursements apply to summer, fall and spring course work

Summer: Sept. 15

Fall Semester: Jan. 15

Spring Semester: June 1