

# *Rutgers Council of AAUP Chapters*

American Association of University Professors - American Federation of Teachers

Bargaining Bulletin 3  
June 25, 2007

## **Rutgers Administration Chooses Brinksmanship over Serious Negotiations**

### **General Topics about Negotiations for FT, TA/GA & PTL**

#### **Brinksmanship**

**Economic Proposals for FT faculty, TA/GA and PTL**

**Rutgers Administration Running Behind State Employees**

**Timeline**

**Come show your support**

### **Specific Issues By Constituency**

#### **Non-Tenure Track Faculty**

- **NO to** multi-year contracts
- **NO to** promotion guidelines
- **NO to** visa support for international employees

#### **Tenure Track Faculty**

- **NO to** streamlined grievance procedure
- **NO to** work-family improvements
- **NO to** offset of the 1.5% increase in health insurance costs
- **NO to** Phased Retirement Program

#### **TA/GA**

- **NO to** workload protection
- **NO to** regulation of ½ TA appointments
- **NO to** health insurance for ½ TAs
- **YES to** an ambiguous contract, unenforceable in arbitration or in court

## Part-Time Lecturers

- **NO to** a partial health benefits contribution
- **NO to** PTL attendance at pedagogical discussion of courses they teach
- **No to** strengthening the grievance procedure
- **Withdrew** their own proposal extending the break-in-service from 3 to 4 semesters for union representation
- **No to** any increase in the minimum salary
- **Proposed to eliminate** service adjustments (longevity increases)
- **Proposed 1% increase** per semester (e.g., about 12 dollars per credit or 36 cents per hour in PALS), unless you already make \$1,800 per credit in which case you get nothing.
- **NO to** a more appropriate sum of money in the Professional Development Fund

## Brinkmanship

The bargaining teams of the Faculty-TA/GA and Part-Time Lecturer units of the Rutgers AAUP-AFT have spent several months bargaining in good faith with the Rutgers administration. Though negotiations have varied from collegial to contentious, both union bargaining teams believed that genuine progress was being made and that negotiations might be concluded by the expiration of our contracts on June 30. Unfortunately, during negotiations on June 21 (FT unit) and June 22 (PTL unit), the Rutgers Administration reversed the direction that negotiations had been taking on several key issues and introduced radical proposals on other issues that threaten to weaken shared governance, job protections, and the financial security of our members. With a little over a week remaining before the expiration of our contract, such behavior at the bargaining table demonstrates a brinkmanship that clashes with the timely and serious negotiations that the state of New Jersey has engaged in with all other state employee unions.

## Tenure Track Faculty

After months of engaging in Interest Based Bargaining over the FASIP program and the Faculty promotion and tenure grievance procedure, the administration walked away from

what we believed to be genuine progress toward more streamlined and equitable procedures. Instead of improving the FASIP program, the administration has proposed a new “Faculty Compensation Program” that would radically increase the discretionary power of the administration in determining faculty pay raises. The money for salary increases would effectively become a fund through which the administration could punish or reward faculty at their discretion.

### **Non-Tenure Track Faculty**

The Rutgers AAUP-AFT presented a comprehensive and thoroughly researched Non-Tenure Track Faculty proposal that guarantees multi-year contracts, provides promotion guidelines for a clear career path, and improves support for international employees obtaining visas. Rather than engage the NTT proposal at the bargaining table, the administration proposed forming a task force to consider NTT issues outside the scope of the contract. This stance is a direct challenge to the union’s legal right to negotiate the terms and conditions of our members’ employment, and it is directed at some of the most vulnerable members of our unit.

### **TA/GA**

Previous class action TA/GA workload grievances, filed by the TA/GAs of Mason Gross School of the Arts in 1986 and the Writing Program in 1994, lost before an arbitrator because our contract language was judged too ambiguous to define clear workload limits. In March 2007, after several months of researching TA/GA contracts across the nation, our bargaining team proposed language to correct this weakness, which the union has repeatedly tried to remedy in past negotiations. The administration refused to discuss our proposal until repeated protests by dozens of TA/GAs over the past month pressured them to give us a counterproposal on June 21. However, they have admitted that the language of their one-sentence counterproposal (i.e., encouraging those making TA/GA work assignments to be “mindful of the TAs or GAs primary status as students”) would have no legally binding or enforceable meaning. Rather, the language they propose would actually

weaken TA/GAs by undercutting our status as employees at the bargaining table. Though members of their team conceded that workload abuses are occurring, they believe there should be NO upper limit set to TA/GA workload, conceding that this is "not something most TAs would be happy to hear." They also rejected the union's proposals to regulate the assignment of ½ TAships and fund health benefits for ½ TAs.

### **Part-Time Lecturers**

The administration proposed a ridiculously low salary offer: no increase to the minimum salary; a percentage increase, instead of a flat amount, which widens the salary gap; no automatic increase for those who make more than \$1800 per credit, and elimination of service adjustments (longevity increases). The administration is only willing to consider an increase in the Professional Development Fund from the current \$5,000 to \$8,500, but this proposed amount is totally inadequate to promote the professional development of our unit's approximately 1000 members. The administration refused to encourage PTL attendance at departmental meetings that involve pedagogical discussions that bear directly on the courses we teach. They refused to contribute part of the cost of health care for PTLs, who are allowed to purchase the state health care plan but it is prohibitively expensive. Proposals made by the union to strengthen PTL job security protection were also rejected, including a modest change in language giving PTLs more ability to question reappointment decisions. They refused to improve due process protection, which included the number of grievance cases that could be taken to binding arbitration. They withdrew their own proposal to slightly expand union representation for PTLs.

### **Economic Proposals**

After several months of negotiating, the administration finally provided economic counterproposals to the Faculty-TA/GA unit June 21, and to the PTL unit June 22. The administration made ridiculously low salary increases for both the full time faculty and the TA/GAs. These salary proposals will not keep up with increases in the cost of living over the next four years, and they are only slightly more than the 1.5% of salary that all

full-time faculty and TA/GAs will pay for health coverage under the new state health plan. Further, these proposed raises would be less than half those negotiated with the state's other employees. The administration demonstrated even more contempt for the financial well-being of Part-Time Lecturers by proposing 1% increases per semester in each year of the contract. For virtually all PTLs, this translates to a \$12 raise per credit, when salaries need to move at pace with rising costs of living and also to increase substantially in order to reach competitive levels. Any PTL whose salary has already reached \$1800 per credit would receive no raises.

### **Rutgers Running Way Behind: Time Line of State Employee Bargaining**

While the state of New Jersey has negotiated contracts with its public employees in a timely and serious manner, Rutgers is running way behind! Contracts were completed with CWA on February 21, 2007; with AFSCME-State in April 2007; and with IFPTE in May 2007. The CNJSCL-AFT-State Colleges is not yet done, but completion is expected in the final week of June. In what we all hoped might be the final week of negotiations, the Rutgers administration still has a lot of work to do.

### **Come Show Your Support**

You are invited to show your support for the Full Time, TA/GA, and PTL faculty bargaining teams on:

**Wednesday, June 27 from 11:30 AM-1 PM**  
**Labor Education Center, outside Room 115**

The Labor Education Center is located on the Cook/Douglass campus in New Brunswick at 50 Labor Education Way, which is off Ryders Lane.

If you come to show your support, you will also be able to learn more about the situation we are facing in negotiations.