

Rutgers Council of AAUP Chapters

American Association of University Professors ~ American Federation of Teachers

Media Release

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Will the Board of Governors Listen to its Faculty?

Members of the Rutgers AAUP-AFT will speak at the Board of Governors meeting taking place today in New Brunswick. The Board of Governors has attempted to restrict and exclude comments they will hear, if those comments relate to the status of negotiations between the faculty of Rutgers University and the administration currently in progress.

The union is negotiating successor faculty union contracts for two bargaining units—full time & teaching/graduate assistants (FT) and part-time lecturers (PTL)—with the Rutgers administration, both of which expired June 30.

Rutgers faculty members seek to inform the members of the Board of Governors about the impact of the Rutgers budget on the quality of education for undergraduate and graduate students as well as on the well-being of full time faculty, teaching and graduate assistants, and the part time lecturer faculty at Rutgers.

The key issues are:

Contingent faculty are facing the greatest difficulty at the bargaining table.

Contingent faculty (NTT and PTL) currently represent 49.7% of Rutgers University faculty appointments, not including teaching and graduate assistants.

Rutgers AAUP-AFT

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(1) **Non-tenure track faculty** feel that the administration's proposal to form a study taskforce is an attempt to side-step negotiations over the terms and conditions of their employment. Non-tenure track faculty are a growing segment of the faculty that have little job security because they are typically hired on one-year renewable contracts. This can go on year after year, always looking elsewhere for employment. This has a negative impact on the quality of student/teacher interactions. Although a policy change allowing optional multi-year contracts was approved by President McCormack in February 2007, Rutgers administration has not yet implemented it university-wide. As allowed for under New Jersey public sector employment law, the NTT faculty seek to negotiate the specific terms and conditions of these multi-year contracts, but the University refuses, proposing instead a taskforce to study the issue further.

(2) **Teaching and Graduate Assistants** have made some progress in getting the administration to take seriously the need for contract language that would protect graduate workers who are experiencing abuses in terms of excessive workload, but the issue of half assistantships in some areas, such as Mason Gross School of the Arts, is still unresolved. Some of those graduate workers hired part time are expected to work full time, while only receiving half the salary, half tuition remission, and not being eligible for the health insurance plan.

(3) The **Part-Time Lecturer Faculty** (PTLs) are another sector of the contingent work force at Rutgers. They are lacking job security because they are hired course by course, semester by semester every year. The PTLFC bargaining team reports that the administration continues to disrespect the valuable contribution PTLs make to undergraduate education because they have proposed a ridiculously low salary offer. The administration proposed:

- (1) No increase to the minimum salary, which is \$1200 per credit,
- (2) No service adjustments ("longevity" increases),
- (3) No increase at all for those who already make more than \$1800 per credit,
- (4) No contribution to health insurance coverage, and
- (5) No tuition remission.

PTLs are responsible for about 30% of courses taught at Rutgers University, and yet they remain underpaid and lacking in benefits, especially in comparison with similar institutions.

Rutgers AAUP-AFT is the recognized collective bargaining agent at Rutgers University to represent over 5,500 full time faculty, teaching and graduate assistants, part time lecturer faculty, and Equal Opportunity Fund counselors.

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