

Myth Versus Reality

As the saying goes, “We are entitled to our own opinions, but not to our own facts.” Ethical managers share facts. Rutgers management spins myths. Here’s a little myth-busting, courtesy of your local union:

Myth: In an attempt to inflate the severity of the fiscal crisis, Furmanski claims that “*deferred salary increases negotiated with the unions amount to \$30 million*”

Reality: The \$30 million number combines both years of contracted raises into one fiscal year, and then adds non-negotiated raises for non-unionized employees. It’s bad arithmetic. It is also an unfair labor practice to hold negotiated raises hostage to discretionary raises for management.

Myth: *Rutgers cannot afford to pay the deferred raises.*

Reality: In meetings with Rutgers unions in 2009, VP Furmanski conceded that Rutgers had enough money in the FY2010 budget to pay the originally negotiated raises. He told us that the big problem would be FY2011. Old Queens has many options for spending their \$1.9 billion budget and managing their \$1 billion portfolio. For example, Rutgers reported \$30 million cash on hand at the end of FY09, after just holding onto our deferred raises. President McCormick could write a check tomorrow to cover all the salary increases if he wanted to. Each of us in the Rutgers workforce has a story of wasteful spending that does not serve Rutgers’ core mission.

Myth: *VP Furmanski is trying to save jobs.*

Reality: All the staff unions who signed MOA’s with Rutgers (URA-AFT, EOF Counselors, AFSCME) gave up raises in exchange for a no-layoff pledge. We tried to extend the no-layoff pledge into 2011, but management refused. VP Furmanski is not extending the no-layoff pledge; he’s only keeping the money.

Myth: *“The unions are being unreasonable/greedy/shortsighted/fill-in-the-blank”.*

Reality: Workers at Rutgers gave back MORE than the state workers in 2009, and MORE than the Legislature required. We negotiated for a two-year agreement in order to save jobs. We devised a “springback” provision that would leave all employees at the same salary point by July 2011 as they would have been under the original contract, to make it easier for Rutgers to budget for FY11 and FY12.

Myth: *Old Queens is just doing what they have to do.*

Reality: When Gov. Christie campaigned for office, he promised to break the agreements Gov. Corzine made with the state unions. Once he was elected, he conceded that the law required him to honor the agreements. With record-breaking enrollments, soaring grant and contract income, and agreements with its unions that deferred raises over three fiscal years, Rutgers is NOT in the same financial crisis as the state of New Jersey.

Myth: *If the unions would only “talk” to management again, management would listen.*

Reality: We negotiated in 2007, and again in 2009. Management broke both agreements. “Third time lucky” is not a realistic policy.

Myth: *If we just wait for an arbitrator to decide our case, we’ll get what we are due.*

Reality: Rutgers management works diligently to delay every proceeding and contest every decision. If we wait for arbitration, our original contracts will run out and we’ll be negotiating from our 2008 wage base.



ethical

Definition

eth·i·cal[[éthik'!](#)] ADJECTIVE

1. conforming to accepted standards: consistent with agreed principles of correct moral conduct

Rutgers requires employees to work hard at keeping high ethical standards – disclosures, training, reporting...

We say that it is unethical to make a promise you won't keep. It's unethical to force lower-paid workers to sacrifice their paychecks while you hire and promote executives. It's unethical to cry poverty and hide your wealth.



Wear a “Got Ethics?” button to work.



Send your concerns about the unethical way Rutgers is breaking our agreements to ethics@oldqueens.rutgers.edu



Rally at Brower Commons at 12:00 noon on Thursday, July 15 and march to Old Queens to deliver our ethics complaint.

Around later? Join a delegation to the Board Of Governors meeting to demand the BOG reject any budget that breaks contracts and lacks ethics.

Thursday, July 15, 4:00 p.m. Winants Hall.

