

**New Jersey Conference of the American Association of University Professors
Executive Committee Meeting, at Labor Education Center
January 27, 2010
Meeting Minutes**

Members present: Bahruth, Boccabella, Fung, Gilroy, Johnston, and Kesselman
Also attending: Guzzo, Witkowski

President Bahruth called the meeting to order at 1:05 in Room 115, Labor Education Center.

Minutes of 12/9/2009 were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Fung distributed the 12/9/2009 – 1/27/2010 report. For the Checking account he reported a beginning balance of \$503.58, total expenses of \$3,998 and a closing balance of \$2,505.58. The Money Market account opened with \$37,748.43 and closed at \$37,314.33. Total closing balance of both accounts: \$39,819.91. He noted that Rutgers University had sent in Conference dues of \$20 for 10 of its members. The Treasurer agreed to check the dues payment procedures for St. Peter's College, to inquire if the SPC chapter is remitting dues to both national and to state Conference from its chapter members.

Report: Peter Guzzo, Government Affairs Agent

The Government Affairs Agent reported the new Christie administration has very threatening positions concerning higher education... He distributed documents from the Office of Legislative Services which displayed the dire condition of New Jersey's fiscal affairs. *State Operating Aid to Institutions of Higher Education* charts the movement in state operating aid as a percentage of the state budget. It has been decreasing continuously from FY01 (4.7%) to FY 09 (3.0 %.) The *Mid-Year State Budget Update* prepared for the Assembly Budget Committee displays an expected revenue shortfall of \$1.2 billion in the FY 2010 Budget... Income tax's revenues are quoted as the worst in the history of state income tax (-18%) and the sales tax is described as having "tumbled in FY 2009." And finally, the document *2010 Mid-Year Revenue Trends Remain Poor*, displays a serious downturns in revenues from such sources as corporation business taxes, inheritance taxes, casino revenues, realty transfer taxes. These decreases range from 17.8% to 25.1%. In the face of severe fiscal problems it appears that the newly installed Governor Christie plans to solve them with cutting services, freezing existing regulations, and reshaping public education.

In the area of labor relations, Guzzo points to some flashpoints in the report of the new administration's transition team on NJ Department of Labor and Workforce. Statements in that report include: "Change the name of the Department. The present name suggests a bias toward labor, and a change in the name will help the Department more closely align with all stakeholders." His new Commissioner "should have no connection to organized labor –and should have a background in business." "Limit or cap the amount of punitive damages that can be awarded against employers in New Jersey," and "Replace current civil service/merit system with a new

resource delivery system." And Guzzo included a paragraph that reveals that the transition team recommends a strategy "that will avoid placing the Administration in a position of appearing harsh or anti-union before building its case and gaining wide and bi-partisan support."

In view of the probability for objectionable actions from the new governor, Peter Guzzo urged the Exec. Comm. to begin quickly to plan strategies which will present a strong AAUP response to the new administration's pronouncements. These presentations should also go to the legislature, to the state's AAUP Chapters, and to the public.

Various views and ideas were discussed by the Committee and an action plan was formulated.

1. On Friday, Jan. 29, Judith Johnston will participate in a planning session with other concerned organizations.
2. It was deemed essential to prepare for a press conference with the probable date, Tuesday, Feb. 23, 1:00 pm.
3. The Christie budget will be presented March 16. The AAUP's response should be made known in the hearings which will follow.
4. Sheets containing talking points will be created and sent to leadership in each of the New Jersey AAUP Conference Chapters.
5. College students can be appropriate voices in the forthcoming debates about these topics.

Next Executive Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 10, 1:30.

Meeting adjourned, 2:10 pm.

Submitted by:

Devienne Gilroy

Conference Secretary