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The

In Box

AFT Local 1839 Professional Staff Newsletter



Tackling issues and concerns that affect us all.

During the spring semester, Union representatives surveyed a number of our professional staff members and collected data on the concerns that affect us most.

The Professional Staff Advisory Committee (PSAC) has been working diligently to address the issues and concerns expressed in these meetings. Take a look inside this newsletter to see what we've accomplished and our plans for the year ahead.

Save the Dates!

Promotions

November 1, 2013

4 promotions are available this year, to be effective as of July 1, 2014.

Workshop

December 6, 2013

PSAC will offer a workshop on how to build your portfolio.

Deadline

January 31, 2014

Portfolio submissions due to supervisors and Review Committee

Dear Colleagues

The "In Box" newsletter is being published with you in mind by the Professional Staff Advisory Committee (PSAC) to serve as your own AFT personal navigation system. If you are looking for guidance, hopefully the In Box can assist you by providing the information that will point you in the right direction.

This knowledge will empower you by:

Introducing you to peers who are making a difference on campus.

Providing opportunities to get involved in the union and be a more active participant in the university community.

Helping you understand our contract and your rights as an AFT member.

Addressing issues our members face and giving you insight about what's happening on campus.



Welcome Orientation

Local 1839's PSAC recently held an informal welcoming orientation for Pro Staff employees who have joined NJCU over the past 18 months.

Sharing Information

The Committee shared some of the latest news and events happening on campus and provided attendees with an overview of AFT's efforts to improve their work experience here at NJCU.

Our Newest Colleagues

We welcomed a number of new professionals and answered their questions about resources available to them on campus, shared the results of the survey conducted last spring, and gathered feedback on how to improve communication among AFT members.

Networking and Collaboration

Attendees made professional connections and shared ideas on how to build a stronger community at NJCU.

Pictured at right, top row, from left: Gehan Abreu de Colon, Asheenia Johnson, Cynthia Vazquez, Dean Brianik, Farah Pelissier, Beatrice Keseru, Sachie Tsumura-Tmart. Bottom row, from left: John Smith, Jamie Rudolph, Queen Gibson, Matthew Caulfield.

An Annual Affair

The idea for this informal orientation evolved out of discussions held by the Committee and a survey conducted last spring that found improved communication to be among the top concerns of our members. We hope to make this an annual event to welcome our new members every fall.





Pro Staff Workshop: Conflict Resolution and Opportunities for Promotions

A Professional Staff workshop was held on Wednesday, October 23rd that featured Ms. Jennifer Higgins, Professional Staff rep. from the Council of New Jersey State College locals and Mr. Anthony Surratt, current chair of the Promotions Committee at NJCU.

With dozens of pro staff members present in the stately confines of the Gothic Lounge, Ms. Higgins talked about several different types of conflicts common on NJ college campuses and how to resolve such conflicts. She answered questions our members had about issues like bullying in the workplace and performing tasks outside of your job classification.

Mr. Surratt, chair of the Pro Staff Promotions Committee, provided attendees with a detailed look at what it takes to get a promotion here at NJCU. After distributing the University's guidelines and timetable for promotions this year, Mr. Surratt fielded questions about building a portfolio and encouraged all attendees to document their professional achievements, even if they do not plan to submit a portfolio this year.

Here's an eye-opener: last year, the Promotions Committee only received 6 portfolios for 3 open slots. That's a 50% success rate!



Jennifer Higgins

Ms. Jennifer Higgins is a Professional Staff representative from the Council of New Jersey State Locals (CNJSCL) and Vice President for Internal Affairs, Advancement Services, at Montclair State University. She visited our campus in October and delivered a presentation on conflict management in the workplace. Pictured at left are Queen Gibson, AFT Local 1839 VP for Professional Staff and Librarians, Jennifer Higgins, and Bill Calathes, President of AFT Local 1839.

Professional Staff Promotions: Why You Should Apply

On November 1, the Associate VP for Human Resources announced by email the opportunity for four (4) Professional Staff promotions effective July 1, 2014. Though we would like to have seen a higher number of opportunities given the low percentage of promotions available to professional staff in comparison to faculty, this is still one more promotion than the previous year.

PSAC urges every qualified Professional Staff Employee to apply.

Applying is important on many levels. Apart from the extra salary that goes to the individuals who receive the promotions, the Peer Review process tells the administration how much value Professional Staff Employees contribute to New Jersey City University. In addition, when many Professional Staff Employees apply, the Union can then turn to the Third Floor and make a case for additional promotions in the future because so many people are applying now.

It does not matter whether this is the first time or if you have applied before. Each year has a different dynamic, depending on how many promotions are available and how many people apply. But most of all, each year, there is a different makeup of the Committee as new members come on and others rotate off.

The applicant not selected in one year, might very well be the one chosen the following year.

Professional Staff Employee promotions are NJCU's way of recognizing the talent and dedication of all the professionals who work behind the scenes. Apply so that Professional Staff get the long-overdue recognition we deserve. Apply so we can get more promotional opportunities in the future. But mostly, apply for yourself.

- Professional Staff Advisory Committee

Build Your Professional Portfolio

On December 6th, the PSAC will offer a free workshop designed to help Professional Staff members create a successful application (portfolio) for performance-based promotions.

The workshop will be conducted by colleagues who have successfully earned promotions at NJCU in recent years. Even if you haven't worked here for the requisite three years, or plan on submitting a portfolio this January, this is a great opportunity to start building your portfolio.

Come find out the minimum criteria for selection, what committee members look for in applications, and what successful portfolios have in common.

Keep an eye out for an email announcing the exact time and location of this important workshop taking place on December 6th.

See you there!

The In Box

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Editorial Board

Queen Gibson – VP for Professional Staff and Librarians

Jamie Rudolph – Committee Chair

Sachie Tsumura-Tmart – Vice Chair

Dean Brianik - Editor

Contributing Writers and Photographers

Sam Platizky



A Message from AFT President Bill Calathes

In the Spring of 2013, AFT Local 1839 undertook a comprehensive face-to-face survey campaign in which almost all Professional Staff members were personally interviewed about their work-related issues and concerns. The survey found that members raised their voices to indicate that there is a great need to begin to aggressively address lack of communication, physical space, promotion/reclassification, no recognition/no appreciation/no respect, unethical practices/remarks, expanded job description, under-staffing, greater salary/benefits, more department budget, and supervisor harassment that permeates their "professional" daily lives.

Under the leadership of Vice-President of Professional Staff and Librarians, Queen Gibson, concrete steps have been taken to begin to change things for the better. A Professional Staff Ad-hoc Committee has been mobilized to define projects and tasks, organize volunteers, and vote or appoint project managers per topic. The creation and use of a Professional Staff listserv, and the greater use of a more user-friendly Local website has enabled Professional Staff members to be better informed about Local leadership analyses of issues, and has led to increased staff mobilization. Additionally, Professional Staff workshops and luncheons are now a regular part of the Local's calendar.

We all need to support and directly work with the Professional Staff constituency in its work. It is clear that they are all well on their way towards developing and promoting a clear mission and vision, saying and standing up for who they are, what they do, what their goals and aspirations are, and how they plan on successfully focusing on their efforts. Professional Staff are trusted and valued members of our Local and we all need to continue to support their advocacy, communication, education and professional development, and representation, both within our Local and throughout our greater university community.

