PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Nicholas C. Yovnello

The never ending budget crisis in New Jersey

A state facing difficult fiscal times is hardly news these days. Tough fiscal times are the rule in most states. However, things are especially bad in New Jersey because we experienced a double fiscal crisis last year. Governor McGreevey inherited a deficit budget that had to be balanced before the end of the fiscal year. As a remedy, McGreevey proposed huge cuts that turned out to be inadequate. Now, with New Jersey’s revenue projections down and one time quick fixes exhausted, he has proposed a budget in which, as he puts it, the major element is “shared pain.”

Despite the Administration’s claim that FY2002 and FY2003 budgets were balanced without layoffs, the fact is that layoffs did occur at Rowan. However, McGreevey did a great job considering the fact that he inherited a number of poor fiscal decisions from the previous administration, a downturn in the State’s economy, and had relatively little time to plan and implement new fiscal policies.

The budget for FY2004 is a different story. It does more than “share the pain.” It is a “budget of shame.” It neglects the state’s major social and cultural programs, its departments and agencies and its public employees who provide essential services to the people of this state.

Public higher education took a major hit in the budget. It is particularly harmful because of the previous two budgetary hits to our sector and because of the compounded hits in the FY2004 budget. While the announced cut is 10% for the institutions the Council represents, the cut is in reality 12 to 15% because of cuts to auxiliary accounts.

What does the FY 2004 budget mean for specific institutions and the employees we represent?

According to Arnold Speert, President of William Paterson, that institution will face a 15% reduction in its appropriation. In a memorandum dated February 3, 2003, Speert told the University that WPUNJ would freeze hiring, defer major purchases, repairs and improvements and seek more economies to cope with the loss of $5 million or more.

At Kean, Interim President Esposito told employees that KU lost $2.8 million in spring of FY 2002 and guessed that there might be a similar cut this spring, which will not be restored. In addition, KU’s appropriation for FY2003 was cut by $4 million and this year’s proposed appropriation cuts an additional $4.8 million. Esposito further anticipated that Tuition Aid Grants (TAG) would be cut and the University would have to make up the difference. These cuts, along with no money from the state to cover increases in fixed costs, would leave the University with a total loss of between $10-12 million.

A number of institutions are discussing the possibility of reducing enrollments and evaluating a host of other economies.

Budgetary cuts are really stopgap measures that do not address long-term fiscal woes. Past years of underfunding have already impaired the colleges’ and universities’ operations and their ability to offer quality programs and adequately address the problem of the outmigration of some of New Jersey’s best students.

(Continued on page 3)
**What's on the table**

**Demands finalized**

The Council has approved the UNION’s contract demands for both units. They were presented to the State at the first negotiations meeting held on March 21. Demands for the full-time/part-time unit will be offered in two phases.

**Full-time/part-time unit demands**

**Salary (XXI)**
- An across-the-board salary increase
- Additional steps at the top of each salary range
- Free tuition and fees for employees, spouses, partners and children at state institutions
- Improved compensation for department chairs
- 4:3 teaching credit hours for graduate instruction

**Health Benefits (XIX)**
- Extension of benefits to domestic partners
- New eye care plan

**Professional Staff & Librarians (XVI and XVII)**
- 35-hour week for professional staff and librarians
- Compensatory time for professional staff and librarians
- Professional staff employee option to switch from 12-month to 10-month status
- Administrative leave for professional staff and librarians
- Faculty status and rank for librarians
- Range adjustment programs for librarians

**A.H. Moore (Appendix III)**
- Bonus for perfect attendance for A. Harry Moore teachers
- Improved compensation for Student Teacher Program & Junior Practicum

**General**
- Additional compensation for development & teaching online courses
- Bereavement leave
- Binding arbitration of discipline of non-tenured employees
- Contractual protection for intellectual property rights
- Eligibility for sick leave injury when voluntarily performing additional duties
- Energy savings program
- Ergonomically appropriate equipment and practices
- Guaranteed free & convenient parking
- Increased release time for Union officers
- Increased summer and overload compensation
- Increased compensation for teaching laboratories, studios, etc.
- Increased reimbursements for travel
- No harassment clause
- Protection from extreme temperatures in the workplace
- Sabbaticals at full pay
- Semester updates of employment information
- Transition to retirement program

**Adjunct faculty unit demands**

**Salary (XII)**
- Increase in the per credit rate
- Additional compensation based on years of service
- Additional compensation for advanced degrees
- Tuition and fee waiver for adjunct faculty, their children, spouses and domestic partners
- Additional compensation for developing and teaching online courses

**Health Benefits**
- Partial reimbursement of health insurance costs

**Seniority**
- New seniority system for assignment of classes

**Recognition of adjunct faculty service**
- Titles (Instructor through Professor) based on years of service

**Employee Rights**
- Improved language on parking, ID cards, E-mail access, etc.

**Faculty Responsibilities**
- Definition of credit hours, compensation for labs and independent study, etc.

**General**
- Binding arbitration of all grievances, including discipline (VI)
- Contractual protection for intellectual property rights
- Increase in the penalty for cancellation of a course less than two weeks before the start of classes (XI)
- Right to reasons upon notice of nonreappointment
- Adjunct faculty locals have rights akin to those of integrated locals
- Creation of adjunct faculty handbooks in consultation with Local UNIONS
- Require college/universities to negotiate with Local UNIONS over evaluation procedures (XI)

*Items marked with an * are new articles, clauses or subjects*

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**News Flash**

The bills to expand the State Health Benefits Commission to include two union representatives have passed both houses of the Legislature. The Senate bill has merged with the Assembly bill, so it is A-2574 that is now on the Governor’s desk.

PLEASE CALL THE GOVERNOR AT 609-292-6000 AND REQUEST THAT HE SIGN A-2574.

*We’re almost there!*
The Council hires managing staff representative

After a national search, the Council has hired Steve G. Young as Managing Staff Representative.

Young will have a full plate. Not only will he direct and supervise the daily work of the Council staff and oversee the Council’s office operations, he will assist and advise Council and local leaders with contract administration and union affairs. Young will begin in April by participating in the negotiations for the new contracts. In addition he will oversee grievance handling and arbitrations, represent the Council before public bodies, and work with the staff in designing and carrying out development activities such as workshops. He is also expected to direct the Council’s publications activities.

Young is more than well prepared to assume his new duties. From 1995-2001, he served as President of the American Federation of Musicians International Union (AFM), which is comprised of over 250 locals and 110,000 members in the U.S. and Canada. As President, he negotiated and administered many agreements, oversaw finances, created programs to improve member services, and initiated policies to increase diversity within the AFM.

Young brings extensive experience in pension management and office technology to his new job. In defending the copyright interests of the musicians he represents, Young also acquired thorough knowledge of copyright issues. Before he joined the International Union, Young was President of AFM Local 9-535 in Boston, Massachusetts.

Young taught music for twelve years at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. While there, he used his position as head of the local musicians’ union to support the lengthy strike that led to the recognition of the AFT as the bargaining agent at the College. As a professional musician, Steve performed (on the bassoon and other woodwinds) with major symphonies, opera companies and star entertainers.

The Council welcomes Steve Young to his new job. Senior Staff Representative Barbara Hoerner will be acquainting him with the Council environment so that he is fully prepared to assume his duties when he retires in December.

Council wins victory for adjuncts in unfair practice settlement at Montclair

Perhaps the greatest advantage of belonging to a Union is that salaries are determined by collective bargaining between the bargaining agent and the employer. Salaries cannot be set by the employer alone. Salaries for our bargaining units are set through negotiations between the Council and the State. This means that individual colleges and universities have no authority to set salaries. Last semester, Susan Cole, President of Montclair State University (MSU), tried to end run both the Council and State, but the Council stopped her in her tracks.

During December 2002, MSU decided that it would increase adjunct faculty salaries for the spring semester by $50 per credit. MSU made no request to negotiate over the change. Rather, it acted as if the Council and Local did not even exist and ignored the fact that it would have to work with the employer, the State. The Council received one perfunctory phone call from the Administration stating that the salaries would be increased, effective spring semester 2003. The Montclair adjunct faculty local did not even receive that courtesy.

Although pleased that adjuncts at MSU would receive a salary increase, the Council filed an unfair practice charge with the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) to defend its collective bargaining rights. The Council, of course, insisted that the increase remain in effect, but it demanded that the University not act unilaterally in the future.

MSU tried to cover its refusal to negotiate by claiming that it Article XII A of the Adjunct Agreement gave it the right to change salaries unilaterally. It based its right to implement the increase on the statement “Each College/University has the right to pay employees above the minimum adjunct rate based on policies and practices established by the College/University,” deliberately ignoring the rest of the clause that contained clear language stating this right applied only to selected individuals.

The Office of Employee Relations represented Montclair State before PERC. It quickly realized that the University had no case and settled with the Council. Under the settlement, the $50 per credit increase remains in effect. The settlement also reminded the University of the fact that “Article XII A of the Adjunct Agreement does not permit any college or university to implement an across-the-board salary increase for all adjunct faculty in the unit.” As negotiations for a new Adjunct Agreement begin, our demands for higher salaries and other improvements will be presented in the correct forum: the Council-State bargaining table.

AFT adds more member benefits

AFT, as an affiliate of the AFL-CIO’s UNION PRIVILEGE PROGRAM, expanded its offering of member benefits in recent months.

In addition to their Supplemental Insurance, Car Rental, Hearing Care Services, Travel and Discount magazine offers that have been around for years, AFT now offers a Dental Plan, Vision Care Services, Pet Insurance and information on your FICO Score.

To learn more, go to www.aft.org and click on AFT PLUS Member Benefits to see the entire list of benefits and learn more about them. If you decide to avail yourself of any of the benefits, you will be asked to provide your Local’s number and proof of membership.