



Excelsior

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Looking Ahead

While the Guild has accomplished quite a bit in the past few years, there is still room for improvement in the terms and conditions of employment for all our members. One issue that needs to be addressed is the College's perceived need to constantly re-organize. We have suffered through "re-organizations" of one sort or another, that have added confusion about responsibility and lines of authority, and this has to stop. While re-organizations are allegedly initiated as cost saving measures, every new administrative structure we have endured has cost the College money. The Guild has made this point crystal clear to everyone involved. Nevertheless, despite our best efforts to thwart proposed re-organizations, the College has consistently moved forward with each of their plans. David Greene, until recently the County's Director of Labor Relations, once said that, "the County could not afford more re-organizations at the College." Let's all hope that our next college president understands the true costs of re-organization.

We can all be proud of the fact that not one Guild member has lost their employment here at SCCC as a consequence of re-organization. Your union is effective when jobs are at stake.

Future contracts need to address the disparity caused by the two Guild salary schedules. The current system now allows two individuals, who have the same title and perform identical tasks to be paid drastically different salaries. This is beginning to cause a morale problem within our ranks and needs to be addressed soon. In addition, the insistence by college officials to force all new Guild members on the management pay scale acts as a disincentive for internal candidates to apply for Guild

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Grievance Corner News

by
Lowell Kleiman
Guild Grievance Officer

Most people prefer to grieve in private. We in the Guild are no exception. However, no one should have to grieve alone, especially when it comes to a violation of a professional agreement.

As you know, our contract spells out in detail the procedure for filing and pursuing a formal complaint that a contractual infraction has occurred. Can't emphasize enough the importance of that part of our contract. Without a formal mechanism for redressing grievances, nothing else in the contract is of immediate consequence. What good is an agreement on working conditions, hours, compensation, vacation time, if there is no recourse should the agreement be ignored? The procedure helps to insure that free and open bargaining, our birthright, is possible.

Of equal importance to having the procedure is utilizing it when the time comes. We are fortunate that those moments are not numerous. However, they

do occur. What to do then? Many of us are reluctant to bring formal complaint. Understandable – if it be felt that complaining does more harm than good. That's where we, officers of the Guild, come in. There is much that we can do, *short* of instituting formal procedures, to mediate differences of opinion, eliminate misunderstandings, quell misinterpretations, or just help our members better communicate, especially with those above us in administration.

Discretion and confidentiality are the guiding principles in all of this, to insure both privacy and swift resolution of the problem. And if all else fails, there remains the formal procedure which allows us in the end to bring our grievance to an independent professional arbitrator. Not to blow our own horn (though some of you know that I play tenor saxophone with the college jazz ensemble) or give us a *kinan a hora* ('evil eye'), thus far the Guild record on winning arbitration settlements is spotless.

So keep up the good work and the good relations you have with all colleagues. But if a problem comes up, feel free to contact me, Tom, or George, and we will insure that you are not alone.

Member Services

This year your officers have endorsed two new ways to quickly deliver information to the membership: our Guild website (www.guildscc.org) and Excelsior (our newsletter). Both forms of communication have been developed by George Tvelia, Guild Vice President. The beauty of this form of communication is twofold: information is quickly delivered to all our members, and since we are communicating electronically, printing and development costs are avoided.

Vice president Tvelia also just completed a Guild database. We now have the ability to accurately track seniority, titles, and rates of pay. This database will be invaluable when the Guild prepares for future contract negotiations.

Finally, and as a reminder, our new contract provision on disciplinary procedures grants greater protection than ever before for each of our Guild members. Please make yourselves familiar with this new contract provision.

How To Be a Good Union Member and Supervisor At The Same Time

The Guild is a union of whose members must struggle with the responsibility to supervise others, including other Guild members, and our responsibility to be good Union members, as well as to supervise members of other labor organizations. Let me begin with the easy part; supervision of the members of the College community who belong to other labor organizations. Our goal here is to lead, to mentor, to provide ample opportunity for professional growth. In this manner, we create a positive, nurturing environment where people feel secure, to try innovations that may produce a superior College for our students. The overwhelming majority of people respond positively to such an environment, grow, and pass that positive attitude on to our students, who are, after all, our “raison d’etre”.

It has been my experience that a higher level of professionalism and performance is delivered, when people want to be here, want to do more work, than if you stand over them, and threaten them. True assessment of the productivity of people is one of our greatest challenges, and is especially difficult when the supervisor is not in the same building, as the supervised employee. I suggest a cooperative spirit offering many carrots is the key to good management. There will always be situations where carrots don’t seem to work; what do you do in that case? I’ll ask the question to you, why do we need a Community College? Is it not to provide a second chance to people, who, for one reason or another, need a second chance? Don’t those we supervise also deserve a second chance? Maybe a transfer might benefit all concerned. Perhaps utilizing our contractual right to re-training might benefit all concerned. When I see a supervisor who never can find anyone “good enough” to supervise, who has a steady stream of “failed” people leaving their supervision, it’s clear to me where the problem is. When I see a totally negative B-1, B-4,

or B-5, with virtually no positives, I see a supervisor who does not know how to manage people.

So, now what, at first glance appears to be the hard part; how can I be a good Union member, and fulfill my obligations to be a good supervisor, particularly if that person is also a Guild member? Easy! Don’t treat your Guild brother or sister ANY DIFFERENTLY than the way I’ve described above. I’ve been a supervisor for over ten years, and I’m extremely proud of the environment that has been created in the Physical Sciences Department. Students rank 90% of my full-time faculty as way above the average for teaching faculty at our college. I’ve achieved this success largely because I work with an incredible group of professionals; rarely has the use of a stick been necessary. Far more frequently the use of carrots is the key. Supervision should center on professionalism, positive guidance, and simply noticing when people do a superb job, thinking no one was watching. We are a College; let’s show our colleagues, Guild and otherwise, some collegiality.

In closing, the College faces some very difficult financial times. I need to hear what you hear, if the

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Guild is to “weather” this storm without losses. I

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Looking Ahead

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openings. We have tried very hard to correct this obvious strategic error that has been imposed on us, but our arguments have fallen on deaf ears.

Tooting our own horn we can be proud of a number of new contract provisions that have helped many of our members. In the past Guild stipends were not retroactive. For several contracts now, stipends have been made retroactive, resulting in a modest windfall for our members with each new contract.

No Guild member, to our knowledge, has failed to advance up the salary scale and have their salary “capped” prior to reaching top step. The new Guild salary plan allows personnel with vast amounts of work experience, but no bachelors degree, to advance to top step of that salary schedule. We added three steps to that salary schedule in our most recent contract. In addition, personnel in this group gain all the rights and privileges of tenure, as they enter their sixth year, with no oversight from the Board of Trustees.

Many of you should recall the time when the County Executive regularly posted about twenty Guild positions that should be abolished. This usually happened

in late August, forcing the Guild to fight for the restoration of each position. This no longer occurs, and Union action is the only reason this has stopped. As you know, our most recent contract was approved, in these terrible economic times by a vote of 18 to 0. It hasn't been easy, but our Union now enjoys bipartisan support.

The recently signed “bridge agreement”, guarantees that the County is not allowed to even ask for any health insurance premiums in negotiations for ten years. If, God forbid, you or I die today, our surviving spouses keep the coverage for life. This is a new benefit, as of the past year, and is an entitlement, unless we stupidly give it away in future negotiations.

So, while there is still room for improvement in our contract, we can still take pride in what has been accomplished. In the year ahead, SCCC will have a new college president, and perhaps a relatively new executive staff soon thereafter. We are prepared for the changes that lie ahead and look forward to working with a new administrative team as they advance their objectives for SCCC's future. During this time let's not lose sight of our objectives as a union and how they are consistent with the long-term success of the institution.

How To Be A Good Union Member And Supervisor

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expect ALL of you to attend the Suffolk County Legislative meeting on our budget in early August. United, we are a force to contend with on the County level. As Ben Franklin said, “we must hang together, or we shall surely hang separately”.

Tom Breeden

Sabbaticals

Current Rules

Sabbatical applications are reviewed by a committee, with four members appointed by the president and four members by the union, and recommendations to award shall be made by a majority.

Recommendations are made based upon merit, with all applications reviewed “blindly”.

Types of leaves

The committee shall make a recommendation on the period of the sabbatical, with two (2) four month sabbaticals to be at full pay, two (2) eight month sabbaticals at 75% pay, and two (2) one year sabbaticals at half pay; alternatively, the sabbatical can be awarded with released time of up to 50 days with the expectation that the Guild member would maintain primary responsibility for carrying out his/her duties.

Sabbatical Review Committee

The sabbatical review committee consists of equal numbers of Exempt and Guild representatives and the committee is co-chaired by the VP for Academic Affairs and the Guild Vice President. Each committee member receives “blind” copies of each application and they are freely discussed, on their merit, by the committee.

Deadline for applying is October 15th of each year.

