

UUP/stony brook

NEWSLETTER

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WAKSHULL AT STONY BROOK

Sam Wakshull, President of the UUP, the statewide University professionals' union, met with union members from the SUSB campus on September 29th, and discussed the issues of retrenchment as they are currently being applied by the University. In particular, Wakshull cited the unprecedented firing of the members of Stony Brook's Education Department as an example of the arbitrary methods being applied by University administration. In a policy statement for UUP, Wakshull cited two principles which guide the Union's action: First, that retrenchment as specified by the present faculty contract, clearly states that it is functions, not individuals, which must be eliminated in retrenchment. At the same time, Wakshull reaffirmed UUP's philosophy that public education must be maintained as an institution of the people of the State of New York, to serve their needs, and not serve the whim of local administrators who have abolished nursing programs, education programs, schools of social work and speech therapy programs which provide the professional training for youth of the State. "Education must be provided at the cost and location which makes it available to all citizens of the State, young or old", Wakshull concluded.

On the first issue, Wakshull reported to the group that although individuals had been retrenched, no evidence had been presented, as in the case of the SUSB Education Department, that the functions of these faculty members would not be continued; that is, that instruction in teacher education would probably continue in other academic departments. This condition is clearly prohibited by the existing contract which guarantees that tenured faculty members will be relocated to like and similar positions in the University. On the second issue, Wakshull declared the Administration of the University to be sacrificing the needs of the youth of New York, and that, against the public interest, the Administration at Stony Brook has forced Long Island students to either pay the high cost of education at private institutions on Long Island, or else bear the equally high cost of relocating to SUNY campuses upstate. "This denies the principle of public education", Wakshull maintained.

In the sequence of events since the announcement of the firing of the Education Department, UUP has met several times with members of the Education Department, and has made available to the Department the grievance machinery provided by the contract. The faculty Senate, earlier this week, met to discuss the inroads the administrative decision on firing has made in the concept of faculty governance. Monday of this week, the Senate proposed a compromise solution to University Administration, but little hope is held that this will resolve the present crisis.

"TIP OF THE ICEBERG"

Kevin Berry, legal counsel for UUP Central (Albany) reported to a group of faculty members that, according to high officials in the State's Division of the Budget (DOB), that the University cuts for this year are 'only the tip of the iceberg', and that the next University budgets would impose massive cuts in the public higher education program in the State of New York. Berry, Rex Trowbridge, and other members of the permanent staff at UUP Central accompanied UUP President Wakshull on his visit to Stony Brook. Trowbridge reiterated the need for immediate support of the faculty for the approaching negotiations between University professionals and the University. "Arguing to University officials that we represent your interests, when UUP membership is only at 30%, weakens our strength at the bargaining table. We are forced to accept poor contracts under these conditions. When faculty criticize the Union or the contract, they would be told that, unless they are willing to join themselves and recruit their colleagues, there is no power. We need 100% membership. Negotiations are based on bargaining from power and membership is power. The University will listen when 15,000 united professionals are facing them at the bargaining table. As proven at Stony Brook, faculty governance cannot solve the problems of University professionals. In spite of your faculty Senate, the very principle of tenure is being abolished by your administration". Trowbridge pointed out that the Union contract had provided a 6% increase in salary this year, when other employee contracts were forced to accept small or no increases. Trowbridge also noted that the 6% was a significantly higher increase than the 2.3% increase usually found in contracts using increment or step clauses.

UUP MEETINGS

The Stony Brook Executive Board meets every Wednesday at 12:00 noon in Room 2635 (Core area), 2d floor, of the Library. The meetings are open to everyone.

JOIN UUP

For membership cards for UUP, contact Alan Wildman, membership chairman, History Department, or any UUP officer.