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Union News

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President's Corner By CSU-AAUP President Elena Tapia:

About the status of our collective bargaining agreement:

On April 13, 2017, I gave a video-taped update on the status of our CSU-AAUP/BOR contract negotiations as well as an update on the SEBAC talks. (These are "exploratory talks" until formal proposals are exchanged.) The video update was posted on April 18 and announcements sent out for members to watch it. At the time of this writing, the video has had 281 views (out of our over 2000 members). *If you want to know more about these things, you should watch the video.* Here is the link: <https://youtu.be/PNbfhGmhspg>

After our negotiations slowed due to budget problems in spring 2016, we ended up extending the CSU-AAUP/BOR contract last July 19, 2016, following a provision in CT state statute (CGA Stat. §5-278). [This extension agreement is posted on our website](#). If the General Assembly does not approve our contract during this session or during a special session this summer, we will again extend our contract for another year. See the [Q & A](#) that is also posted on our website.

But, before that, we have other options...

SEBAC and the State have been in exploratory discussions about a possible concession agreement since [November 2016](#).

Step 1: If the exploratory discussions between SEBAC and the State suggest a fair agreement might be possible, I will present the proposed SEBAC Tentative Agreement to the CSU-AAUP Council for its recommendation. For the process to continue beyond that, the Council will need to be supportive of any changes that might take place in pension or health care. If the Council recommends positively, then the proposed SEBAC Agreement comes to you, the membership, for a ratification vote. If the Council recommends the proposed SEBAC Agreement, then the CSU-AAUP bargaining team will meet with the BOR team to finalize tentative agreements on any outstanding issues in our contract.

Step 2: In addition, the Council will also recommend for ratification of our CSU-AAUP/BOR contract. **Both the SEBAC Agreement and the CSU-AAUP Contract would be subject to ratification by the members. Members would be presented with two separate voting issues: whether to support any changes in the SEBAC Agreement; and whether to approve CSU-AAUP's Collective Bargaining Agreement. If all state employee bargaining unit contracts are worked out, only then will the SEBAC leaders reach a Tentative Agreement.**

Step 3: Once this process is completed, the SEBAC Agreement, and all the ratified collective bargaining contracts would be presented to the General Assembly for a single approval process by the General Assembly. The General Assembly's only choices will be to approve the SEBAC Agreement and all ratified bargaining unit contracts, or to vote down the SEBAC Agreement and all of the ratified contracts.

Voting Early This Summer:

It's likely that we will be asking the membership to vote to ratify our contract and a SEBAC Concessions Agreement **late May to early June**. You will receive notices via email and a lot of reminders. Prior to voting, you will also receive information about our contract and a proposed SEBAC Agreement. Don't hesitate to contact your CSU-AAUP officers, your local officers, council members, or staff for information. And feel free to contact me at any time.

It's summer! Now you have more time to contact your legislators:

Support for collective bargaining in the General Assembly has gone down considerably. The Democratic majority in the House, once 114 to 37, is now 79-72. The State Senate, once 24-12 Democratic is now 18-18.

Over 70 Republican-sponsored bills to curtail or eliminate collective bargaining for state (and sometimes for municipal) employees received public hearings for the first time this session.

Republicans are working hard to create an alliance with conservative Democrats to pass one or more of these bills, *especially if there is no agreement with state employee unions*. This threat to collective bargaining is a threat not just to public employee unions and not even just to the labor movement in general. At a time of great income inequality, any chance for progress for working families and the middle class depends upon a strong and vibrant labor movement. Income inequality is the problem – and the labor movement is an essential part of the solution.

- Elena Tapia, CSU-AAUP President

If there are changes to pension and health care, should I retire?

By Steve Grestorex, CSU-AAUP Business Manager

The Governor stated in his budget address that he was seeking \$700 million in "labor savings" each of the biennium. Absent the labor savings, the Governor included the layoffs of 4,200 state employees in his budget. In an effort to avoid the state employee layoffs, the fifteen SEBAC union leaders entered into exploratory discussions in an attempt to find an equitable solution resulting in minimal changes to pension and healthcare benefits and the least amount of financial pain for the middle-class employees of the State.

If the exploratory discussions result in a "fair agreement", the SEBAC leaders will brief their respective union executive committee members, local leaders and negotiating committees on any changes to the pensions and healthcare plans. There will need to be support for the changes in pension and health care in order for the process to continue. Assuming the union committees are supportive, each bargaining unit negotiating team would finalize their local agreement.

If all local agreements are worked out and the committees are supportive of the over agreement, the SEBAC leaders would then vote to reach a tentative SEBAC agreement. Both the tentative SEBAC agreement and each of the local agreements would be subject to a ratification vote by the members of each union.

Members would vote on two issues, whether to approve any changes in the SEBAC Agreement and whether to approve their local collective bargaining agreement.

Once the ratification process is completed, the SEBAC Agreement and all the local collective bargaining agreements will be presented to the General Assembly for a single approval process. The General Assembly will vote to approve the SEBAC Agreement and all the local agreements or vote down the SEBAC Agreement and all the local agreements as a package.

If a SEBAC Agreement and all local agreements are reached, ratified by employees and approved by the Legislature, employees will be provided ample time to retire prior to the effective date of any pension and or health care changes. As was agreed in the 2011 SEBAC Agreement and the CSU-AAUP CBA, Article 4.9.3 will be waived. That means that any CSU-AAUP bargaining unit member retiring and giving less than 60 days' notice before the start of the semester, will not forfeit two weeks' pay.

Consolidation plan sparks protests:

Already filed from a sweeping [consolidation plan for CSCU](#), which was voted on April 6 with no debate by the Board of Regents, CSU-AAUP members held a spirited protest at the May 11, 2017, BOR meeting.

On the heels of CCSU Faculty Senate [voting no-confidence](#) in the consolidation plan, the BOR meeting saw more faculty speaking out in opposition. Stephen Adair, CSU-AAUP member and [Faculty Advisory Committee Chair](#), [read a letter](#) from the FAC criticizing the way the consolidation plan was developed. According to Adair, the plan was presented to and voted on by the BOR with little to no deliberation and with next to no input from CSU faculty.

"I was expecting to see SUOAF members here. But there are so many faculty here and they are here not because they're afraid of losing their jobs. They're here because they are concerned about how this plan will affect the quality of higher education."

- Senator Beth Bye
Higher Education Committee Chair

Higher Education Committee Chair Sen. Beth Bye sat through the entire meeting and heard the impassioned statements from students and faculty.

"I was expecting to see SUOAF members here," Sen. Bye told reporters after she left the meeting, "But there are so many faculty here and they are here not because they're afraid of losing their jobs. They're here because they are concerned about how this plan will affect the quality of higher education."

President Ojakian claims his consolidation plan would bring the CSCU system a 20 percent reduction in administration and close a \$38 million budget gap next year. The CSCU deficit is expected to increase to \$55 million the following year and \$70 million the year after that.

Despite repeated requests by faculty at Town Halls to show the spreadsheets on how those amounts were derived, President Ojakian provided no such details.

[Click here to see an article and a short video published in the Hartford Courant about the protest.](#)

[Click here to read an article from CTNewsJunkie, which was also published in the New Haven Register.](#)

Faculty To Participate in Planning Teams:

Despite the vote of no confidence in the consolidation plan passed by the CCSU Faculty Senate and the ensuing protest at the BOR meeting, a statement from the CSU [Faculty Leadership Group](#) expressed a willingness to participate on planning teams. The majority of CSU-AAUP members agreed.

Faculty now have been assigned to their leadership groups, which will meet over the summer. The teams include faculty and staff from the four CSUs, the 12 Community Colleges and Charter Oak.

BOR President Ojakian limited the CSUs to six faculty.

[Click here to see a statement from the CSU Faculty Leadership Group on the consolidation plan.](#)

AAUP Summer Institute In Cincinnati:

The 2017 AAUP/AAUP-CBC Summer Institute is coming to University of Cincinnati in Cincinnati, Ohio. From July 27 to July 30, more than two hundred other higher education professionals from around the country will gather over four days of exciting workshops and special programs.

National AAUP brings in organizers, data analysts, seasoned campaigners, and issue experts to build your skills as an advocate for AAUP principles, collective bargaining, and higher education.

Additional information will be available soon. Stay tuned and save the date!

[Click here to see photos from the 2016 AAUP Summer Institute.](#)



AAUP members at the Summer Institute work together learning how to create silk screens to use in protest signs and other organizing efforts.

Read About Faculty On CSUConnects:

CSU-AAUP continues work to support ongoing contract negotiations by promoting a wide variety of faculty research endeavors, publications, innovative courses, and community projects via our [CSU CONNects blog](#) and [Facebook page](#).

[Click here to check out latest stories!](#)

If you would like your research, curriculum or writing featured on our CSUConnects blog, please email [Liz Newberg](mailto:Liz.Newberg) and she will get the ball rolling.



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