



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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APSCUF LEADERSHIP TO POSTPONE STRIKE CONSIDERATION UNTIL SPRING SEMESTER

Below is the text from an open letter from APSCUF President Steve Hicks to students at the fourteen state-owned universities:

Faculty know you are worried that your professors will go on strike. We know you are concerned about the impact a strike would have on your classes, your finals, and your tuition dollars. After thoughtful deliberation and consideration about how a strike at this time would affect our students, we have decided to postpone consideration of a strike for the rest of this semester.

APSCUF (Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties) and PASSHE (Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education) leaders have negotiations sessions scheduled for December. However, there is still a gulf between your faculty and the Chancellor. He still wants a separate pay scale for some temporary faculty. He is still proposing increases in payments for reduced health care benefits. He wants to cut our retirement health care and stop offering those benefits to new faculty. He wants to stop payments for distance education, but has not addressed our concerns about growing class sizes. The Chancellor continues to demand more concessions from your faculty than the Governor asked from our campuses' hardworking secretaries, groundskeepers and custodians. These negotiations remain about simple fairness.

All of the outstanding issues have a direct effect on the quality of education we provide, as all will impact who is in the classroom and the type of classes that are

offered. We know that you understand that the conditions under which faculty work are the conditions under which you learn. We know that you want your university to continue to attract and retain the quality faculty you deserve.

We have done our best to try to avoid a strike. We waited over a year and a half before even uttering the word. We gave the Chancellor several opportunities to settle a fair contract, including a two-year extension proposal and the offer of binding arbitration. We offered to pay more for health care and suggested ways for Chancellor to save hundreds of thousands of dollars in health care costs. He rejected them all.

We do not want to go on strike. We want to educate our students. However, the core meaning of “union” is one, and we cannot accept the Chancellor’s unsubtle attempts to divide and exploit segments of our faculty union.

The interests of our students are always on our minds. It is why we have waited and hoped that with time we could convince the Chancellor to be fair. With higher education comes the understanding that there are times when people must stand up for themselves. If the only way we can convince the Chancellor to be fair is to go on strike, then we must stand up for ourselves. It is what we would expect of you in the pursuit of fairness. But know that your faculty will only strike as a last resort. You can count on us to continue do all we can to reach a fair agreement.

The last two years, faculty and students worked together to turn back Governor Corbett’s historic budget cuts for our universities. We held rallies and met with legislators who know the value of public higher education. We have stood together for quality education. We can now use your help to avert a strike.

Please write to the Chancellor at jcavanaugh@passhe.edu and tell him to settle a fair contract with the faculty. You do not have to argue our side. Just tell him to be fair. The more he hears from you, the more likely he is to change the proposals even he knows APSCUF cannot in wisdom accept. We appreciate your support.

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