

February 16, 2012

CWA Local 1031 UMDNJ Update

Since the Higher Education Advisory Committee report was released on January 25, 2012, a lot has happened. The report, which you can read through a link on the UMDNJ website, makes recommendations to rename UMDNJ, break off parts of UMDNJ and give them to Rutgers and break off parts of Rutgers and give them to Rowan. All of this is supposed to make Higher Education stronger in NJ.

CWA Local 1031 is working with two coalitions of Unions. First, we have been working with the UMDNJ coalition of Unions which is called **UMDNJ United Coalition** (UUC). Secondly, we have been working with the coalition of Unions from UMDNJ, Rutgers and Rowan, which is called the **Higher Education Healthcare Coalition** (HEHC). The Higher Education Healthcare Coalition has an AFL-CIO representative on the coalition to work with us and is meeting weekly.

February 6, 2012 HE Hearing

Several of the HEHC members attended the hearing in Trenton before the Higher Education Senate Committee on Monday, February 6, 2012. The Chair of the Higher Education Advisory Committee, Dr. Sol Barer, testified, as did the President of Rutgers, Dr. Richard McCormick, and UMDNJ's interim President, Dr. Denise Rodgers. Dr. Barer testified that his Committee was not charged with looking at the costs of the realignments that the report recommends. Dr. McCormick estimated that Rutgers will need 40 million dollars to transfer the RWJMS, the School of Public Health and the Cancer Institute to Rutgers. Dr. Rodgers committed to a seamless transition, but stated that it will be "... unacceptable to everyone involved to have a process result in one institution moving from good to great while another moves from good to mediocre. If the financial decisions resulting from this process don't ensure equity and fairness between the institutions involved, UMDNJ risks moving to mediocre." Dr. Rodgers makes valuable points about UMDNJ's future and her remarks, in their entirety, can be read on the UMDNJ website.

It has been reported that the Senate and Assembly will hold joint hearings in Newark and Camden. As soon as we know the dates, times and locations, we will let our membership know and we encourage you to voice your concerns.

February 6, 2012 AFL-CIO Meeting with Senator Sweeney

On the same days as the Higher Education Meetings, the HEHC met in the AFL-CIO Office with Senator Sweeney. Senator Sweeney is Senate President and a Union member. We discussed with him our many concerns about the realignment of Universities in NJ and the impact on our members. We explained our concerns about contracts, hire dates, health benefits, seniority, etc., and we

explained that we are working on a bill to protect our members' rights. Senator Sweeney said he supports workers rights and would like to see the bill. The Senator has also been quoted in the newspapers as saying he does not know if the realignments would result in layoffs.

Senator Sweeney, who is from South Jersey, was extremely pleased with the Higher Education Advisory Report as it will strengthen South Jersey. He pointed out that the HEHC should be speaking with our Essex County representatives about the future of Newark.

February 10, 2012 meeting in Mayor Booker's Office and Continued Support from Senator Rice

The UMDNJ United Coalition (UUC) has been speaking with Senator Rice and Mayor Booker's Office. Senator Rice is one of the biggest supporters and defenders of UMDNJ in Newark. He has helped coordinate meetings with UUC and community supporters, as well as with Mayor Booker and Essex County Representatives. Senator Rice, with the input of the community and Unions, has put together a list of requirements that must happen in order for UMDNJ – which is slated to be called the New Jersey Health Sciences University (NJHSU) – to be made stronger.

Additionally, the UUC has met with Mayor Booker and his staff before and after the final report. In our recent meeting, the Unions made it clear that we have major concerns about **University Hospital (UH)** and the private partnership recommendations. UH is linked with the medical schools and, as we all know, provides the greatest amount of charity care in NJ. The Unions fear that having a private entity, like St. Barnabas, run UMDNJ could be a recipe to dismantle programs and services to the public and could mean layoffs of good paying jobs with health benefits and pensions. The UUC explained to Mayor Booker's Office it is not enough that UH will remain standing in Newark, it has to provide quality services to the residence of Newark and the surrounding areas that support the medical schools and provide skilled and trained employees who receive fair wages.

Additionally, the UUC explained our concerns about how the breaking up of UMDNJ will impact its future bond ratings and the debt that will remain with the new NJHSU. If NJHSU does not receive the appropriate funding, it will not be able to thrive. We have followed up this meeting with a list of written concerns for NJHSU to the Mayor. The Mayor's Office responded that they are planning to meet with the Governor's Office and will share these concerns and will fight to protect what is UMDNJ in Newark. The Mayor's Office will reach out to the UUC to meet again after they meet with the Governor.

Rutgers Camden and Rowan University

The Higher Education Advisory Committee recommended that Rutgers Camden be merged with Rowan University. This is as complicated as severing part of

UMDNJ and realigning it with Rutgers. Rutgers has a Board of Governors and a Board of Trustees. The students and faculty of Rutgers have been protesting and had a meeting on Wednesday, February 15, 2012. Senator Sweeney announced the day before that folding Rutgers Camden into Rowan University is not the goal, but that a partnership was needed. The HEHC has not supported this Higher Education Advisory Committee recommendation for many reasons. Rutgers is a public institution and Rowan is a State institution, there would be a strong possibility of layoffs that would not make either institution stronger, and changing the status of Rowan University to a public institution could be the opening of a door that destabilizes all State Colleges/Universities in NJ. The newspapers are stating that the public does not support the breakup on Rutgers.

Proposed Legislation

As reported in the January 25, 2012 CWA Local 1031 Update, the HEHC has been working on legislation to protect worker's rights to ensure that you are not new employees during any realignment and to ensure you continue to be protected by your contracts, etc. There are many other aspects of this proposed legislation that involve protections at UH, Rutgers and Rowan. The next step of the HEHC is to find supporters of this bill. Both the HEHC and the UUC have been talking with legislators and we are working on setting up additional meetings with the members of the Higher Education Committees in the Assembly and Senate so they will fully understand our concerns and we may gain their support. We stated earlier, that there will be hearings held in Newark and Camden and we will keep you informed of the dates, times and places so you can be heard too.

What's next?

As previously stated, we will be meeting with legislators and attending hearings to continue to fight for your protections. It is unclear still how the Higher Education Advisory Committee recommendations will be enacted. Will this be by executive order? Will it take legislation? Will this happen by July 1, 2012? Several legal opinions believe that it is not possible for the Governor to push the recommendations through with an executive order. If this were to happen, the HEHC does not believe there is enough support to stop the executive order. The good news is that we would challenge the legality of an executive order. Again, the prevailing legal opinion is that legislation is needed to make the changes and that means the proposed realignments can be slowed down until the financial impacts and all other concerns can be figured out. The public hearings are the next step and we hope that you will take part in these hearings.