



## Higher Education Advisory Committee Meeting January 9, 2007

Committee members Lakesha Harrison (Chair), Christopher Olsen, Lois Murray, Charlesetta Bynes, Howard Deck, Ed Alcock, Mike Bandy, Thomas Kosek, James Lamonoco, Paulette Feld, Thomas Beasley, Dorinda Miller and Toni King were in attendance. Paul Booth, Kerry Korpi, Dalia Rizk and Marion Williams staffed the meeting and Mike Carvalho from AFSCME's Public Affairs Department provided technical assistance.

Kerry and Lakesha welcomed the group and discussed the Higher Education Network including its origins, logistics and how it will function. The Network will be a forum for members to get updates, ask questions, discuss issues and concerns and organize activities. It is intended to build a broad and ongoing community of higher education members within AFSCME. The network will be chaired by Lakesha Harrison and staffed by Dalia Rizk. Committee members got fliers to be used to promote the network among their membership.

Paul also welcomed the group and explained that the network is meant to achieve maximum input from the AFSCME members, provide a space where we can support each other, and build a vast community of interest. Higher education members have a strong identity within AFSCME as the union represents over 100,000 university employees nationwide. The intention is to grow the group from the bottom up to build activists. Paul also mentioned that membership participation and buy-in will determine whether this group is successful.

Mike Carvalho provided an online orientation to the Network and explained how to sign up. Members signed up at the meeting. Mike also explained how membership will be confirmed and the archived pages feature within Google Groups. The network will have Network Rules to govern communications and ensure that discussion is positive and constructive. The group recommended that we include a disclaimer on emails stating that comments are the opinion of the writer and that members should check their contract, local laws and so on as these vary across the country. Dalia will serve as moderator of the group.

The group discussed possible ways to get this information out to higher education members including:

- Mailings from IU to affiliates
- Higher education caucuses at affiliate conferences
- Advertisements on affiliate web pages
- A Higher Education Caucus at the AFSCME Convention
- Affiliate Higher Education Coordinating Committees
- Emails
- Distribution of fliers at local meetings, in workplace, etc.

Ideas for on-line activities and content:

- Posting Higher Education contracts
- Organizing caucuses/round tables
  - AFSCME convention
  - Local conventions
- Organizing Webinars:
- Wikipedia type of reference
- Posting pictures, photos, videos, etc
- Sharing information and experiences on, eg:
  - Health benefits issues including premium sharing, guided health care and wellness programs, various ways of paying for health care
  - Identification and background checks
  - Organizing worker recognition days
  - Mobilizing political and member volunteers
  - Privatization (linking to Privatization Update on AFSCME website)
  - Students and temp workers eroding bargaining units
  - % based dues structure
  - Trades Apprenticeships/Journeymen Programs
  - Relationships with other unions
  - Relationships with student governments on campus
  - Scientific surveys for bargaining
  - Interest-based bargaining
  - Workplace change initiatives
  - Strategic politics
  - Removal of Tort Caps and impact of malpractice costs on University Hospitals
  - Higher education funding - Pell Grants, tuition, etc.
  - Safety and health including MRSA staph infection
  - Member participation on the local level
- Sending out Alerts for grassroots lobbying
  - Pell grants and other funding issues
  - Links to members of Congress
  - Retirement and pensions
  - Position statements from candidates
- Stories of members accomplishments that deserve recognition

Other logistical topics:

- Need to address agency fee payers as the network is intended for members only
- Also need to make sure names are removed when members leave the union
- Need to get young people involved
- Consider creating sub groups such as community colleges, medical schools, and state colleges
- Participation of non-English speakers. Dalia is conversant in Spanish and can translate emails sent to the group for posting. There will also be a link on the page to the AFSCME bi-lingual webpage. But communicating with bi-lingual members remains a challenge.

Recognition for Joining. Ideas included:

- Once a year send out incentive, possibly at Convention this year
- Send incentive to local leadership and they can give it out
- Possible incentives:
  - o Certificate
  - o Button
  - o Pin
  - o Lanyard
  - o Bookmark