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500 Rally for a New Contract

Nearly 500 Temple faculty, staff and students rallied for a contract in front of Sullivan Hall as the Board of Trustees met on Tuesday. Despite the administration's assertions, union leaders told their members that months at the table have seen little in the way of progress. TAUP's contract is set to expire on Wednesday. Members of Temple's AFSCME Local 1723, whose contract expired a year ago, participated in the rally as well.

When President Hart came to Temple two years ago, said TAUP president Art Hochner, it seemed like the start of a new era. Yet in negotiations, "this administration has not shown respect for the union, not for the faculty, not for the employees, and not for human needs."

TAUP Vice President Joyce Lindorff noted, "We hoped for a collaboration toward mutually beneficial contract language. But Temple's negotiating team took a decidedly hardball attitude on many important proposals we made. This has dragged out the entire process."

Based on public statements made by the administration to the media, TAUP sees a vast disconnect between where management believes contract negotiations are and where we actually are. "What we see in Temple's emails and publications," says Hochner, is "misinformation, distortions and untruths."

Although the administration claims that the current contract is "too new" to change with more than minor modifications, their salary proposal promotes a radical new concept for pay increases based on performance, without any guidelines in place. Temple has rolled out an elaborate public relations campaign to appeal to the public and you, but is bypassing the union. Their message is, "Trust us," without any contract language to back them up.

If an agreement is not reached by tomorrow, it seems the university's public relations machine will be ready to blame TAUP. But it takes two sides to negotiate. TAUP put forward proposals that were carefully crafted in response to members' concerns with the current contract. But Temple has made minor modifications in response.

Last Thursday, just six days before the contract was set to expire, Temple finally put specific financial terms on the table. President Art Hochner termed this "unacceptable." TAUP wants a reasonable amount of time to discuss and analyze Temple's drastic change in approach to pay increases.

“We don’t want a university that is run in a corporate way, with top-down management. We want a university that is run in a collegial manner with shared governance that doesn’t shut out its faculty and staff from important decisions,” Hochner said. He told the crowd that the administration is claiming their overhead expenses have gone up. “Our expenses have gone up as well,” Hochner said. “Our faculty and staff deserve to be treated fairly and with equity. This rally is only the beginning. There will be more. We will not be quiet,” to which the crowd responded in a chant of “No Contract! No Peace! No Contract! No Peace!”

Other local, state and national union leaders assured TAUP that they were not alone in their negotiations, and pledged their full solidarity. Speakers included 6 union presidents, including Art Hochner, TAUP; Paul Dannenfelser, Temple AFSCME; Cathy Scott, AFSCME District Council 47; Ted Kirsch, AFT-PA; Jerry Jordan, PFT; and Pat Eiding, Philadelphia Council AFL-CIO. Other speakers were Joyce Lindorff, TAUP Vice President; Pat Hansell, Anthropology faculty; Matt Ryan, Temple student and member of SLAP and Jobs with Justice; Marc Bostic, National AFT; and Andrew Dixon, TUGSA.

Check the TAUP webpage, www.taup.org, for frequent updates on negotiations. You will find the latest news, previous updates and copies of the TAUP *Bulletin*.