



Associated Faculties of the Universities of Maine

12/21/2023

On behalf of all involved with AFUM I wish you a joyous, peaceful, and renewing Holiday and Break.

1. The last few days have been challenging as many of us recover from Monday's storm while preparing for the Holidays I will endeavor to keep this note brief and start with some good news; health insurance rate increase will be a tiny bit lower than we anticipated during open enrollment.

Special thanks to Cheryl Spencer, a long time ACSUM union leader, who first spotted the problem with the calculations, Neil Greenberg, who took lead on resolving this issue with UMS, and UMS leadership who readily agreed to fix the error. The circumstances are such that this error is unlikely to repeat itself.

While my intent was to include the reduced charges and provide some minor good news, my review of the numbers raise some concerns. I removed the table that filled this space and will review the numbers with UMS to ensure that I am giving you correct information. So, like the Grinch, I tell you that there is a small savings and then cannot tell you what they are or even ensure that there is a savings in all cases.

2. AFUM & UMS had day 1 of a Fact Finding hearing associated with past practice payments for on-line classes. UMS seeks to end all such payments and have nothing in the contract about on-line classes. AFUM seeks to protect members with appropriate contractual protections.

Testimony took longer than anticipated and did not conclude during the 1-day allotted for this process (three Fact-Finders from the State Labor Board are the Panel making recommendations to the parties). We conclude January 5th with 3 AFUM witnesses.

As the process is ongoing I will hold my thoughts until it is completed.

3. UM Faculty were recently informed that UM adopted a new misconduct policy. In the UM letter were statements that UM recognizes the rights of AFUM to represent our members and to advocate for our members and about the policy.

Those comments should not be taken as AFUM endorsement of the Policy or how the Policy was implemented. My concerns expressed in previous communications remain. The UM words are included as part of a settlement in which I alleged a previous interim UMS General Counsel made inappropriate and false remarks about me, threatening me with disciplinary action for my advocacy of our member and for my continued attempts to get UM to follow the approved procedure.

I do want to acknowledge, and publicly thank, President Ferrini-Mundy did ask for my feedback on a draft of the policy. I met with her for about an hour and still did not have time to finish my review of the multiple flaws in the draft Policy. I had referred to that draft, as well as previous ones, as “garbage”, a position I stand by. As some of the worst written garbage that UM has ever produced, it was very difficult and time consuming to provide written comments.

I remind everyone that the “subject matter expert” failed to follow the UM policy as required, attempted to influence the faculty panel with his, and the rest of the Rio gang’s, opinion. Among the absurdity was his position that publishing from your dissertation without citing the dissertation was “self-plagiarism”. As I outlined previously, many of the charges he brought forward were equally absurd and showed no understanding of self-plagiarism.

He and the others avoided all accountability for their actions and were instead rewarded with drafting the UM Policy.

The drafts, and the process that created them, are an embarrassment to UMaine and an assault on shared governance.

I was not sent the final policy to comment upon.

Given the time of year, and Monday’s storm, I have not yet reviewed the Policy. I do intend to review the Policy with other AFUM leaders early in the new year. I will keep you updated.

In closing,

I wish you a wonderful holiday.

Jim