

t u f t i m e s

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TUF PUSHES \$6 BILLION LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM FOR 1983.

TUF, cooperating with TFT and the AFL-CIO, is lobbying in Austin for a \$6 billion legislative program. Here are the main features:

- a 16.5% increase in salaries for the first year of the next biennium. This is 3% more than recommended by the Coordinating Board, but TUF points out that Texas salaries are at or below the national average, and a large salary increase is needed to attract and retain the best faculty. TUF is pushing also for a mix of across-the-board and merit, with 90% to be across-the-board. While recognizing the need for merit pay, TUF argues that 10% should be an adequate pool of money to allow administrations to reward the meritorious.
- improved fringe benefits. Retirement contributions by the state should be increased from the present 8.5% to 10% to make the program more nearly comparable to those in other large states with high quality public colleges and universities. The state contribution toward group insurance programs should be increased to \$110 per month. Legislation requiring meaningful faculty participation in the selection of insurance carriers is also desirable. Social security taxes should be absorbed entirely instead of only partially by the state.
- research and development. To make up for recent reductions in state and federal funding for research, funding for research should be sharply increased. Funding for faculty development leaves, travel, student assistance, and library support should also be increased.
- uniform grievance procedure. There should be a statewide, uniform grievance procedure, with arbitration as a possible final step.
- but where will the money come from? TUF/TFT propose to increase the severance tax on oil and gas to the same level as Louisiana's, 12.5%. Texas now has the lowest oil severance tax in the nation, though we have the most reason for taxing that resource.

SOME DANGERS AHEAD FOR US IN THE LEGISLATURE.

There is gloomy news about Texas' diminishing public funds; what once looked like a surplus seems now to be a deficit. Some legislators are proposing such "economy measures" as putting a freeze on all new hirings, ceasing to pay the state's share of social security for state employees, freezing all retirement benefits at present levels, and freezing

our salaries. Any of these measures would hit us hard; TUF/TFT is fighting them, BUT.....

WE NEED YOUR HELP.

All faculty at UH/CLC, not simply TUF members, are benefitting from the TUF/TFT AFL-CIO lobbying. But the more members we have, the more clout we have. Please join! Other professionals have organizations to see to their needs; we college professors have an equal need.

Besides, lobbying is not simply being done in Austin but here in the Houston area. A coalition of TUF members in this area organized to lobby Houston-area legislators while they are in Houston. So TUF is working in many ways to help all faculty.

THINGS CAN BE DIFFERENT.

Phil Dignam has taught English at Lee College in Baytown for 17 years. A member of TUF at Lee College, Phil is an Episcopalian minister, former member of the Goose Creek public school board, and past president of the Lee College Faculty Assembly.

But recently the Lee College administration tried to get rid of him. His sin? An effort to represent two of his colleagues in grievances with the Lee College administration.

In the Lee College grievance procedure, a faculty member does have the right to designate a representative. But when Phil accompanied two faculty members this spring to meetings with administrators, he was told that the meeting was a "personnel conference." In the following week, the Vice President told Phil that his interference in personnel matters would be considered the next time he came up for renewal of his three year contract. Phil filed his own grievance over this, but before it could be carried through, the administration informed him that his three year contract, one which he had had renewed for 17 years, would not be renewed for the fall.

This was Thursday, March 10. That night TUF members organized a petition drive among the faculty, and soon after the Faculty Assembly gave Phil \$2500 from its legal defense fund for a lawyer. A students' group and a citizens' group started their own petitions, and the Baytown Sun had five front-page articles on the situation.

Phil's lawyer pointed out to the President that he had violated Lee College's own policy, which dictates that nonrenewal decisions must be made by March 1 of the year in question. So the President reversed his decision. At a Board of Regents meeting on March 31, the Faculty Assembly President presented a petition, signed by 80% of the academic faculty, condemning the nonrenewal. Students and the citizen's group also presented petitions, and Bob Comeaux of the AFL-CIO Houston Organizing Project also spoke to the Board. In response, the Board promised to come up with a policy providing for faculty representation in "personnel conferences."

The TUF Guild started the ball rolling, organizing the first faculty response, and made the students and community aware of what was going on.

The Union can make a difference.

DISPUTE HERE OVER FACULTY TERMINATION PROCEDURES AND POLICY.

Just before the end of the fall semester, Dean Zelan of the School of Human Sciences and Humanities (HSH) informed Assistant Professor Neva Mikulicz that she would not be asked to return to teach in the fall of 1983. The decision shocked Prof. Mikulicz and the Humanities and Fine Arts (HFA) faculty. Everyone, including Dean Zelan, agreed that Prof. Mikulicz is a first-rate artist with an unquestionable commitment to her job. But over the three semesters that she had been here, a large number of her studio art classes had not made. Prof. Mikulicz and the HFA faculty know how important head count is. What surprised everyone was the abruptness of the Dean's action. Prof. Mikulicz inherited a print-making program and studio in serious disarray. Dean Zelan's decision to terminate her during her third semester meant that she had only two semesters to rebuild the program. She was on her way; all her classes made this spring semester.

Over the past five months the HFA faculty and the Dean have discussed the firing. The two central issues involved have been the length of time given Prof. Mikulicz to establish her area and the amount of faculty consultation involved in the decision to fire her. Dean Zelan did agree to reconsider her case in light of the HFA faculty's suggestion that Prof. Mikulicz had been given to understand when she was hired that she would have more time. He could not, however, find any proof that anyone in a responsible position had indicated to Neva that she or any other untenured faculty member had any more than a year-to-year-contract.

The Dean also stated that he consulted with senior faculty before acting. Other than the Program Director, it appears that the Dean consulted with only one faculty member, two days before the termination was made. This faculty member unsuccessfully asked the Dean that more faculty be involved in the matter.

The HFA faculty continues to disapprove of the way the Dean handled Prof. Mikulicz's termination. The Dean and the HFA faculty have agreed to meet next fall and draw up guidelines which, among other things, will address the issues of how much time an incoming faculty member has to establish him or herself and how many faculty members constitute adequate consultation in hiring and firing.

In the mean time, the Union wishes the best for our colleague, Prof. Neva Mikulicz, and her career.