

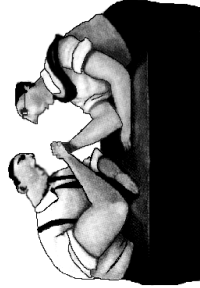
(Continued from page 1)

● In the old Article 10.1 under Standards for Notice of Dismissal a sentence was added making it clear that the termination of probationary staff members during their first year at the College is not grievable, as long as the current contractual procedures already in place are followed.



● In article 12.1 of the old contract (dealing with Retirement), language was added to allow employees to select other retirement programs (besides TIAA-CREF) made available by the Board of Governors.

● Language dealing with health insurance benefits was updated (old Article 12.5) to continue to ensure coverage under existing plans, with the right of the Board to re-open bargaining on health insurance benefits after January 1, 2000. Language was also added to give PSA the right to participate in joint bargaining over health care coverage with other unions.

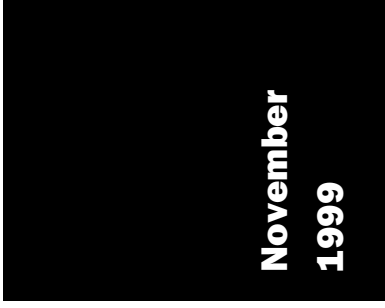


● A new Memorandum of Agreement was added that, for the duration of the contract, vests the families of PSA@RIC members (with seven or more years of full-time service) who die while in the employee of the institution with the right to have tuition remitted when pursuing courses

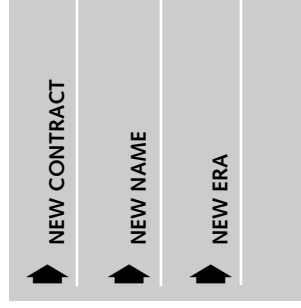
for credit at the baccalaureate level at the institutions under the jurisdiction of the Board of Governors. The Memorandum also provides for a study committee to report by March 30, 2000, on the long-term financial impact of this benefit. (Serving on the committee are Tom Bradley and Arthur Patrie for PSA and Steve Jacobson and Bob Tetreault for the administration.)

Conspicuous by its absence in the new contract was any merit or bonus pay plan. This is an issue on which our membership is clearly divided. Our poll last year prior to negotiations showed that of the nearly half of our members who responded, about one-third wanted to continue the bonus award program, about one-third didn't want it, and about one-third wanted it only if changes could be made to ensure fairness in selecting award winners. The negotiating team made every effort to implement positive changes, but when these were not accepted we concluded that no bonus program was better than one that could not guarantee that all employees would have an equal opportunity to benefit from the program.

Thanks to all of you who took time to provide input to our negotiating team. Keep the suggestions coming because now is the best time to prepare recommendations for the next contract.



555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001-2079



THE PSA@RIC REPORT

The Professional Staff Association at Rhode Island College

Negotiations: Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Like the Greek god Janus, members of the PSA negotiating committee are both looking back and looking ahead. While a one-year contract has just been approved after lengthy deliberations and is being prepared for distribution to the membership, the next round of negotiations is looming. The members of the negotiating team who worked long and hard on your behalf to negotiate the current contract are: George Aguiar, Rob Bower (chair), Mariam Boyajian, Gail Davis, Arthur Patrie, Mike Mullane (RIFT), and Brian Allen (ex officio). Here's a summary of the changes in the new contract:

- The new contract provides for a 3.5 percent salary increase across the board for the duration of the contract (1999-2000).
- A new article titled "Association Rights" was added as new Article II (old Articles II through VIII are renumbered as III through IX). It reads as follows:

The Board and PSA@RIC encourage periodic meetings between the President, or his or her designee, and PSA@RIC representatives for the purpose of discussing the terms and conditions of employment covered by this agreement and other such matters as fiscal/budgetary or institutional planning/reorganization, which may be of concern to either party. Such meetings shall be arranged in accordance with applicable circumstances at the mutual convenience of the President and PSA@RIC representatives. The parties shall have the obligation to share with each other the information necessary to facilitate these discussions.

- Confusing language in Appendix A.3 (dealing with Academic Year employees) of the old contract was re-negotiated and clarified. The new language was inserted as Article X of the new contract and the succeeding articles were re-numbered accordingly. The change makes clear that Henry Barnard School staff (whose calendar year is different from other College academic year staff) will be compensated on a pro-rated basis should the number of days in their calendar increase beyond 180.

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The PSA@RIC Report

Professional Staff Association at Rhode Island College
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
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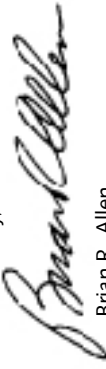
Message from the President

I'm getting used to "PSA." I only slip every third time now instead of every other time. The other new event on campus this year is PeopleSoft. Although we hear some nasty things about cost overruns and implementation and patches, it seems to work—at least the Human Resources module that I use to keep track of PSA membership. In the past, if I wanted a listing of members by seniority it would take three to four days. The other day I needed a list, so I e-mailed Karen in Human Resources. I got the list via e-mail in about five minutes. The list was on Excel so I could sort it, which I did in four different ways. I printed out the list, and in 15 minutes I had four meaningful reports. Maybe I need a new life but that kind of excited me.

Those of you who attended the annual meeting in October should have a list of PSA members. I sent packets to those of you who didn't attend. The packet consisted of the membership list and the new By-Laws. I did that for two reasons. First, I would like you to check your personal data to ensure correctness; if you have a concern, e-mail Karen Zifcak in Human Resources. Secondly, look at the list to find out who the other PSA members are. I have been surprised over the years when members didn't know who was or wasn't a member. You will find this is a very diverse group. We usually associate unions by profession, for example, police, teachers, nurses. We have members in social work, purchasing, audiovisual, athletics, computer systems, admissions, library, academics, physical plant, student services, grants, auxiliaries, and so on. Our mid-salary range is \$43,877. Our median service to Rhode Island College is 15 years, age difference is vast, and education is up to doctorate level. That is quite a group to define.

The Executive Board has 16 members. If you add the various committee members, we have about 20 percent of our membership involved in PSA business in some way. Over the years, as we rotate those members, we find that 40 percent of our members have been on a committee or served on the Executive Board—another way of saying that about 60 percent of our members have never been involved. I think that number is too high. This is where I ask you to get involved. Most of our committees have three or five members. We now have three on most committees. That will get us through, but it would really be great if we had five on each committee. The more members involved, the more cohesion we have. I will be presenting the new committees to the Executive Board at our December 2 meeting for approval. If you are so inclined, please volunteer for a one-year term on one of the following committees: Elections, Grievance, Audit, Finance, or Negotiations. If I have more volunteers than positions, I'll be very pleased, but I'll have to choose an appropriate number. In January we will be electing a Compensation Committee. When the nominations are out you can self nominate.

Fraternally,



Brian R. Allen

From the Vice President . . .

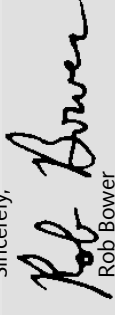
It's been a busy year for our union, with negotiations leading up to the ratification of a Tentative Agreement, elections, By-Laws revisions (including a name change), and the Annual Meeting. Even with the typical hiatus during negotiations, this newsletter is long overdue. My apologies for that. But the good news is that Gita Brown is back as newsletter editor after taking maternity leave to spend time with her darling little girl, Piper-Lauren.

Although I have said it in a number of meetings, I want to put in writing my gratitude to those who spent so many hours (literally over the years) cleaning up the By-Laws and giving us a document that is easy to read and provides a strong foundation for our Professional Staff Association. Much of the ground work for the latest revisions to the By-Laws was done back in 1995–96 by a committee chaired by Donna Konicki, including Betty Paroli and Shirley Rinehart (both of whom have left the College) and current members Diane Huling and Kristen Salemi. The more recent committee, chaired by Diana Mulberry and including Dave Wilson and Kristen, continued the work initiated by the earlier group and made great improvements in the organization of the document. Special thanks goes to Diana Mulberry for the many hours she spent typing and updating the manuscript (with well-documented rationale). And thanks to Kathy Sasso, who was involved in By-Laws revisions the last time around (did I count 12 years ago Kathy?), for her valuable input. I must be forgetting someone, so if I've left you out I apologize in advance. Often such tedious work goes unnoticed and unappreciated, but please know that our union and the College will greatly benefit from your work for many years to come.

As I conclude this note, Brian and I will be heading for the New England regional AFT meeting being held right here in Providence. George Aguiar, who was also to represent you at the meeting, took ill and is unable to attend. We'll take notes for you, George!

We have worked our way through some difficult times in recent years, both as a College and as a union, but it seems to me the horizon is brightening. I look forward to working with all of you as a new era dawns.

Sincerely,



Rob Bower

What's in a Name?

After many years your professional staff union has donned a new name. It's like wearing a new set of clothes—it takes a little getting used to but before long the fit is quite comfortable. And so far we've received a number of compliments and very few indications of regret for putting away the old suit for good.

The problem was that the old moniker just didn't readily identify us for what we are—the College's professional staff association. President Allen is quick to note that in his travels both in and out of union circles he was often asked, "What's a RICSA?" When he gave the full name, the next question was, "Are you the service or professional staff?" Our hope is that the new name will clearly communicate who we really are.

The name change was approved along with a host of minor "housekeeping" changes (as well as major organizational changes in the presentation of the By-Laws) in our official constitutional document that had not been amended for many years. You, our members, voted overwhelmingly to henceforth call our union the Professional Staff Association at Rhode Island College (PSA@RIC).

The new name is consistent with the way similar professional staff unions are named around the country. And the new abbreviated form of the name has a modern, hi-tech feel. We even have our e-mail address set up as PSA@RIC.EDU.

Given the diversity of our membership, the new name clearly describes our one common trait: we are all professionals. Wear it with pride.

There is a certain relief in change, as I have found in traveling in a stagecoach that it is often a comfort to shift one's position and be bruised in a new place.

—Washington Irving

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