



TCNJ's Local 2364 is affiliated with the **Council of New Jersey State College Locals**, the bargaining agent for more than 7,000 professional staff, librarians and full-time, part-time and adjunct faculty at the nine state colleges/universities of New Jersey.

Dear TCNJ Campus Community,

Welcome to our Union local's monthly newsletter. We are hoping to share information about what your Union is doing to further education on campus and positive relations with the greater community.

Meeting Schedule

Our local meets monthly on the third Wednesday of each month at 3:00pm in the Social Sciences Building, Room 326. Our last meeting of this semester is December 18.

President's Column

Dear AFT Brothers and Sisters,

Our members' response to the union's call for participation in our Day of Action was overwhelming! Thank you all for participating in our demonstration. The publicity generated from the nine college locals working together in this way can only strengthen our position at the bargaining table. Our next activity will be on December 9 at 1:00pm when we picket the President's annual holiday party. You have all indicated you will be there, outside of the Brower Student Center. Let's think of it as our very own picket party and let's continue to send the message that what we want is a fair contract now!

Our union stands for wages, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment. Of those terms and conditions, a small yet very important clause in our master agreement provides us with the ability to donate our sick leave to our colleagues who are ill and have exhausted their own reservoir of sick leave. Many of us have accumulated sick time that we hope to never need. Some of our brothers and sisters require more sick time than they have. This clause (Article XXIV, Section E) demonstrates to me what unions stand for—compassion, companionship, and standing together in good times and bad. This right was gained through bargaining at the negotiating table, because so much of what we do is fight for the rights of each other.

When I donate my time to someone in need I think "I hope someone doesn't need to do this for me

someday but if I need it, my union brothers and sisters will be there for me." Given the coarseness of so much in our society today, the warm feelings I get from this one contract clause, and my ability to help others through this clause, gives me a great feeling.

So, as we enter the ninth month of negotiations and our sixth month without a contract, we can at least feel satisfied that we continue to be there for each other.

In Solidarity,
Nancy Lasher

President TCNJ Local 2364

Strike Authorization Vote

After the Day of Action protest on November 20, a huge number of members attended the regular meeting. A strike authorization vote was passed, supported by 86% of those present. This gives our union bargaining team the leverage at the bargaining table of being able to threaten a strike. The vote passed by similarly high margins at all colleges reporting votes so far. Ramapo passed the measure by 88%, William Patterson by 96% and Stockton by 97%.

Local Actions Planned

As our President Nancy Lasher told us at the protest and November meeting faculty and professional staff at all nine state colleges are now planning ongoing protest actions because of the state's failure to negotiate in good faith. At TCNJ we voted to boycott the Annual Holiday Party for TCNJ Faculty and Staff on Monday, December 9 from 1:00 to 3:00pm in the Brower Student Center, Room 100. Members are invited to make signs for this protest on December 3, from 2:00 to 4:30pm in Library 123. The union will also organize a non-perishable food and toy drive to make sure that we do not miss out on this important holiday tradition.

Many members continue to boycott admission events and wear their blue AFT shirts and buttons in protest at our continued lack of a fair contract. If you have other ideas for protest actions, as always, please feel free to share them.

Community Outreach News

On Tuesday, November 26, our members and many TCNJ students volunteered at the Eastern Service Workers of America (ESWA) Thanksgiving Food Basket Distribution. In all, we helped pack and deliver Thanksgiving meals to about 70 families of ESWA members. Each family received a turkey, side dishes, pie, and an abundance of fresh produce donated by local farms and markets. The ESWA was extremely grateful for our support.

Please stay tuned for upcoming initiatives to benefit the ESWA. These include another Holiday Food Basket Distribution on December 20, and a toy collection for the ESWA holiday party on December 14.

AFT Benefits: Southwest Airlines

Did you know? AFT members can receive discounts on flights on Southwest: an 8% discount off Business Select® fares, 6% discount off Anytime fares and a 3% discount off select Wanna Get Away® fares for travel.

Standing Together: The Power of Unions

Unions lift wages and benefits and reduce inequality finds an August 2019 report by the Hamilton Project. The report goes on to link the decline in union membership to the rise in income inequality and the stagnation in middle class wages. However, there are three recent bright spots in this weakening of unions and decline in the power of labor.

The 2017-2018 wave of teachers strikes which started in red states won significant victories for education in states from Arizona, Nevada, West Virginia, Kentucky to Indiana. The 11-day Chicago teacher strike earlier this fall also paid off, with \$30 million extra spending on public schools. To be sure, in many states teachers and public schools are still suffering but teachers' newfound willingness to strike has

powerfully refocused many states on the need to fund public education properly. "The reestablishment of strikes as a form of direct action is a welcome development," said Leo Casey of the Albert Shanker Institute explaining teachers' power to create change. The ability to strike is the core leverage that unions have according to the Hamilton Project report.

Interestingly, the highest number of strikes in years has also raised approval of unions to a fifty year high in the US. Two thirds of Americans support unions and the right to strike according to Gallup for Labor Day 2019.

The other new development is the number of Democratic Presidential candidates who have bold plans for labor. In 2016 only Bernie Sanders had a major labor platform; he proposed a \$15 minimum wage and wanted to make it easier for unions to organize. In the 2020 campaign Warren, Buttigieg and Booker all support measures that would help workers unionize and strike. The most ambitious labor and employment policy is something that has worked well in Europe, sectoral bargaining. Workers bargain with employers on an industrywide basis rather than employer by employer. This policy is a recognition of the power in numbers. It's why all nine colleges in New Jersey want to continue to negotiate with the state rather than at the local level.



**"They said he had to post his office hours,
but they didn't say where."**

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Contact Us

TCNJ AFT E: AFT@tcnj.edu P: 609-771-2694
Office: Social Sciences Building, Room 242
Monday through Friday mornings until noon.