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Rutgers Workers Rally to Ask Whether Management “Got Ethics?”

Calling on Board of Governors to reject budget that breaks contracts

NEW BRUNSWICK... Asking “Got Ethics?—university workers are rallying and marching on Rutgers main campus prior to today’s Board of Governors meeting. Rutgers Labor Coalition, representing more than 10,000 unionized workers at the state university, is presenting an ethics complaint about a contract breach, calling on the Board of Governors to reject the fiscal year 2011 budget until negotiated agreements are honored.

Rutgers executive vice president Dr. Phil Furmanski claims management is not legally obliged to honor recently signed memorandum of agreement. Even New Jersey Governor Chris Christie has acknowledged that the state worker agreements, which were based on the same economic conditions as Rutgers workers’ deals, are legally binding.

“Not honoring the agreed-upon raises means that our members will not have milk and bread on the table and clothes and shoes for their children,” said AFSCME local 888 president Mike Holland, whose membership includes the lowest-paid workers at the university. “Most of us in 888 have two jobs just to afford to live in New Jersey. We are not trying to rob anybody, we are just trying to survive,” said Holland, a carpenter who has worked at the university for 21 years.

The collaborating unions represent a majority of Rutgers workers ranging from professors and doctors to administrative staff, maintenance and janitors including Rutgers Council of AAUP-AFT Chapters (full and part-time faculty, graduate workers, postdoctoral workers and EOF counselors), Union of Rutgers Administrators-AFT (staff), AFSCME Locals 888 (maintenance and janitorial) and 1761 (clerical) and SEIU Doctors Council (health center doctors).

The state Public Employees Relations Commission has ordered the university to justify the contract breach. Union and university management attorneys are discussing an expedited path to arbitration, but union officials note that management can opt to change course at any time and honor the contracts.

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Union of Rutgers
Administrators-AFT



Doctors Council
SEIU



Locals 888 and 1761
AFSCME



AAUP-AFT
RUTGERS
Rutgers Council of
AAUP Chapters-AFT