



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 5, 2012

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College Council reaches tentative agreement for contract at state colleges and universities
Member activism helped achieve accord for full-time faculty, librarians and professional staff

EDISON... The Council of New Jersey State College Locals reached an accord late Monday that protects working conditions for more than four thousand full-time faculty, librarians and professional staff at all nine state colleges and universities, according to College Council President Nick Yovnello, the Assistant Director of Library Services at Rowan University. Yovnello characterized discussions as the most difficult in his 40 years of bargaining, but after intensive multiple sessions in June, the four-year accord grants pay raises comparable with other state unions, increases in summer session and overload rates and more stable funding for professional development.

Negotiations for a new contract for more than 4,000 adjunct professors will continue later this month. College Council members at The College of New Jersey, Kean University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, Ramapo College, Richard Stockton College, Rowan University, Thomas Edison State College and William Paterson University held demonstrations in April to call for fairness. "In a challenging bargaining environment, we were able to withstand demands that would have decreased our ability to attract and retain skilled faculty, librarians and professional staff," said Yovnello. "This tentative agreement gives our members funding for professional development to build skills and contains an agreement that supports sabbaticals for faculty."

College Council Executive Director Steve Young credited the patience and tenacity of bargaining team members from the locals for working through 14 months of extremely tedious negotiations. "The current contract expired July 1, 2011 so members were very concerned about the lack of stability working without a contract creates," he said. If members approve the tentative deal in a ratification vote, it would run through June 30, 2015.

The American Federation of Teachers New Jersey (AFTNJ) President Donna M. Chiera congratulated College Council negotiators on reaching the tentative deal. "Higher education in New Jersey is an important investment and being competitive in recruiting and retaining high-quality faculty, librarians and professional staff is critical," said Chiera. "Now it is time for the state to come to the table and bargain a new contract for the adjunct faculty members, who deserve a fair deal."

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The Council of New Jersey State College Locals, AFT, AFL-CIO is comprised of 11 locals and represents more than 8,700 faculty, adjunct faculty, librarians and professional staff at: The College of New Jersey, Kean University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University and the A. Harry Moore School, Ramapo College of New Jersey, Richard Stockton College, Rowan University, Thomas Edison State College and William Paterson University. Our mission is to protect the rights and privileges of the employees we represent, to help provide a quality, affordable and accessible education to students attending our State colleges and universities, to advance the interests of public employees and to act in solidarity with the labor movement.

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The American Federation of Teachers New Jersey (AFTNJ) is a statewide federation of unions representing education workers from pre-kindergarten through graduate school. AFTNJ represents the largest group of higher education professionals in the state with full and part-time faculty, college and university staff, graduate assistants and post-doctoral workers. The union represents 10,000 pre-kindergarten through 12 teachers and support personnel in several schools districts as well as private, religious and charter schools.