

FA Newsletter

December 2017

Not All Budgeting Philosophies are Created Equal

In case you hadn't heard, the administration has been pressuring departments to offer fewer sections and increase enrollment per section. This led to the FA leadership asking the administration how they determined what the "break even" enrollment total in a section was. The administration's response took the form of a document, "2017-18 Budget Enrollment & Class Section Methodology Report," prepared by VP (Finance) Michael Sullivan, that included a series of calculations meant to show how many students were necessary per section to "break even." This document has subsequently been shared with deans and chairs around campus.

The SBFA's Budget Subcommittee of the NRC, under the leadership of Kennie Leet, has examined this document and has crafted a response. In a nutshell, the budget and the class size minimum methodology is based on achieving the goal of reducing the number of sections offered by more than 300 sections. All of the rationale is intended to achieve the goal of reducing the sections to FTE ratio. Rather than restating some of the detailed observations of the problematic budget methods put forward in the BECSM Report, here we'll just say that if you are interested in finding out more about this response, contact your SBFA Representative or check out the SBFA web page (fasunybroome.org) where we hope to have a copy of the statement soon.

Going beyond the official statement from the subcommittee, Kennie Leet has some additional observations based on her experience in accounting. She emphasizes that the philosophy of budget preparation at SUNY Broome has recently changed. She points out that "we are facing a type of Strategic Budgeting approach where the budget is created to achieve a particular goal, in this case, reducing [spending on faculty]. [...] Strategic budgeting is problematic at an organization such as ours because decisions are not based on the number of seats we can 'sell' [...]."

This cart-before-the-horse approach to budgeting can have a litany of negative effects, including adversely affecting educational effectiveness, morale, institutional reputation, and even hindering our mission as an institution of higher learning. The SBFA thanks Kennie Leet and the Budget Subcommittee for their work illuminating what lies behind this set of budgetary talking points by the administration.

**Part-Time Adjunct
Faculty Meeting**

**Second session on
Thursday, December
14 @ 5:00 PM; BB 110**

FA President: David Michalak

Vice President: Fred Loveland

Secretary: Tera Doty-Blance

Treasurer: Rob Woods

Send your stories to
Tim Skinner.
skinnertj@sunybroome.edu

SUNY Broome Adjuncts Win Summer 2017 Unemployment Compensation!

PT Faculty are consistently told that they are NOT eligible to collect unemployment benefits between semesters. It turns out: **this is not necessarily true**. Join NYSUT Representative Mike Lynch on Thursday, December 14 at 5:00 PM, BB110. Learn about the *successful unemployment claims* of some of your adjunct colleagues this past summer (including what Mike describes as one important “BREAKTHROUGH!” claim), and what you need to know to claim successfully.

With Janus case, labor faces another court challenge

Author: Matt Smith

Source: NYSUT Communications; September 2017

The nation’s labor movement dodged a bullet last year when the U.S. Supreme Court split on *Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association*, a case in which plaintiffs challenged the legal right of public-sector unions to collect member dues to cover the costs associated with collective bargaining.

An unfavorable ruling would have decimated the solidarity and finances of public unions by allowing members to become “free riders” — meaning they would no longer have to pay dues to the very unions that negotiate and secure their salary, health coverage and retirement protections.

Yet, while the nation’s labor movement breathed a collective sigh of relief following the court’s deadlock on *Friedrichs*, there was little time for celebration. That’s because a new challenge from anti-labor forces was already on the horizon, despite decades of settled law.

The latest threat facing unions is known officially as *Janus vs. AFSCME*, a case being bankrolled by the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation and the right-wing Liberty Justice Center. Lawyers for the two anti-union groups, who in June requested the Supreme Court hear the case, represent Mark Janus, an Illinois health care worker who argues he should not be forced to pay monthly union fees. The court could hear arguments in *Janus* in October.

The *Janus* challenge has already failed in the lower courts. A March ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit upheld the Supreme Court’s 1977 *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education* decision that said unions have the right to require the payment of dues by workers represented in collective bargaining.

As was the case in *Friedrichs*, *Janus* argues that the mandatory payment of union dues equates to forced political speech, which therefore violates First Amendment rights.

It’s important to note: While the *Abood* ruling upheld the right of unions to collect dues to cover the costs of bargaining, that same decision also determined public-sector union members had the right to opt out of contributing toward a union’s political-action activities. In other words, unions cannot take anything for granted, especially in today’s political climate. And, as with *Friedrichs*, a loss in the *Janus* case could devastate the ranks and finances of public unions nationwide.