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Good morning,

I'd like to preface my remarks by letting the Board know that today marks 304 days without a ratified contract for the APA. While delays have occurred at every bargaining session in which I have been a negotiating team participant (four contracts including this one), this has been, by far, the longest time the APA has waited for parameters to be presented to our organization and for an agreement to be reached.

Article XVI, A - in the APA Agreement for 2014 – 2016 states: "... this Agreement shall expire at midnight of December 31, 2016. The parties hereby agree to commence negotiations for a successor agreement no later than June 1, 2016." The mutual understanding to begin negotiations 6 months prior to the expiration of the APA Agreement, is included in every contract. While the APA bargaining team is generally ready to commence with negotiations during the summer before our contract ends, the BHE's team is often not able to begin the process.

The reason why this happens is because the APA is 6-months ahead of every other Higher Ed union who bargains with the BHE for their contract. As an example, the current MSCA contract was in effect until June 2017. Our experience has been that the BHE begins its preparation to negotiate once the MSCA is nearing its bargaining period – leaving the APA in limbo for half a year. In 2017, we were over 15 months into the contractual process before the parameters were offered. While we wait and wait and wait – the bargaining process eventually gets stalled. We are forced to report to our membership that we cannot continue bargaining until we know the financial parameters (we even make our own financial offer somewhere in the process – hoping to initiate a response). The most common question our bargaining team and Executive Board members (the local chapter presidents of the 9 state college and universities) are asked by the membership is, "How can you continue to let this happen?" It is a very reasonable question.

Our union representatives have asked during negotiation periods, and whenever we get the opportunity, to be put on the same schedule as the MSCA, so that we can begin our contract negotiations in a timely manner. This request has either been ignored or denied each time by the BHE.

Believing that persistence is key to success, we are asking again. We have always made this request as an extension of the current contract at the effective 6-month increase rate, which

over the last few years has been 1.75%. This time, following the parameters offered by the BHE for 2017, we are asking for a 6-month contract at one-half of one percent (0.5%). That would be followed by a three-year contract under the current financial offer. Our request has never been so affordable!

APA members include most of the employees who are running the business of the colleges and universities. They are the professional staff, the accountants, financial directors, Registrars, IT professionals, etc. They are very aware of the financial status of the institutions and the state. This week I received tables from the Bureau of Labor Statistics from a member who was pointing out that the current financial offer from the BHE does not meet the State and Local Government average compensation increase (2.5% from June 2016 – June 2017) reported by the federal government. While I am not here to debate whether the current financial offer is a fair one, it has become obvious to APA members that we are not being treated respectfully.

We'd like to answer the question, "How can you continue to let this happen?" with the answer... we have made an agreement with the BHE for a 6-month contract, followed by a three-year contract, at a reasonable increase, to get us back on schedule with our sister unions.

Thank you for considering this request,

Sherry Horeanopoulos
President, Association of Professional Administrators