

McLean Hospital Research Assistants' Union (AFSCME Local 1115)  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
August 30th, 2023 | 5:30-6pm

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- I. Call to Order
  - President Nigel Jaffe called the meeting of Local 1115 at 5:34 pm.
  - Roll call of officers: All present.
  - Attendance of members: 18 members present.
- II. Public Comments
  - Request to speak to agenda and non-agenda items.
    - None were raised.
- III. Reports of Officers
  - A. Secretary's Report
    - Distributed copies of 7/24/23 meeting minutes
    - Motion to approve minutes by Nigel Jaffe. Seconded by Eli van der Rijn. All in favor. The minutes were approved.
  - B. President's Report
    - This month's union wins!
      - a) We had our first Labor Management Committee Meeting with McLean HR and our Union Executive Board!
      - b) Four RAs reached out to Nigel individually to ask about promotions and work experience. We were able to help them get information about their promotion timelines and the amount of full-time work experience the hospital credits them with.
        - This is a common theme for a lot of folks as many are coming up on their work anniversaries over the summer.
      - c) We are working to address mold in the Oaks building.
        - Julia Cunningham is waiting on an email from the hospital to address it.
      - d) We worked with an RA to address the heat issue in the MIC earlier this month
  - C. Vice President's Report
    - Membership updates
      - a) Eli is now doing new employee orientations!
      - b) Since the last meeting, we have had three new union members join.
        - Things to keep in mind: Our contract is our guiding point for our union. Please email whenever you have questions, but you are always welcome to look at the contract yourselves to search for answers, too!

- Benefits and policies: There is a clause in our contract that says we have the same benefits and policies as all other employees, unless specified in our contract.
- We found out that not all RAs know they're in a union when they're oriented. Please remind new RAs in your lab of this! :)

#### D. Treasurer's Financial Report

- This month's expenses:
  - a) Snacks for this month's meeting were purchased by Nigel.
- Starting balance: \$1,095.37 as of August 19, 2023
- We received another dues rebate (we get them quarterly): +\$614.52 in August, 2023
- Expenses: -\$31.16
- Current balance: \$1710.40
- Motion to approve Treasurer's Report by Nigel Jaffe. Seconded by Eli van der Rijn. All in favor. The Report was approved.

#### IV. New Business

- We have a union website. How can we update it to make it useful to members?
  - A calendar for union events and meetings would be helpful
  - A Q&A section so that RAs could pose questions to the union or to their fellow RAs and see the answers to those questions.
    - a) This could also create a bank of questions and answers for new RAs to reference in the future
  - A contract fact sheet for folks to reference.
  - A link to the AFSCME discounts page to see what additional benefits we have!
    - a) This includes things like car rental discounts, moving trucks, etc.
- Report from first Labor Management Committee meeting (August 28<sup>th</sup>)
  - We have formed a Labor Management Committee, composed of representatives from the union and management. The committee will meet monthly.
    - a) Members: Lisa Pratt (HR), Brayden Alvarez (HR), and Dave Potter (lab manager who isn't in the union), Nigel Jaffe (union president), Eli van der Rijn (union vice president), Anna Tierney (union secretary)
  - Purpose of committee: to facilitate communication between employees and management and discuss concerns related to employee working conditions and safety.
  - Common theme lately: questions and issues around promotions

- a) One question we asked at the Labor Management Committee meeting was about merit increases when there are transfers from RA I to RA II. How do these work?
- (1) If someone transfers from RA I to RA II, and therefore they have 1 additional year of experience, do they also get the merit increase that comes from being here an additional year?
  - (2) The hospital's position seems to be that because transferring from RA I to RA II counts as a job transfer, you don't get the merit increase, but you get the greater raise which is to RA I from RA II.
  - (3) We would be inclined to agree with the hospital that the salary increase of the job transfer trumps the 2.5% increase. However, the contract is not entirely clear because of the use of the phrase "anniversary date." If this is the anniversary of the first hire into that position, you should get a 2.5% bump regardless of your job position. The only time this would really matter is if you move to RAI before or on your first anniversary, otherwise you would get the 2.5% bump in your old job title, and then the new rate of your new job title once you move.
  - (4) For anyone who was here before the contract was ratified (mid-September of 2022), you'll get your raise on the anniversary of when the contract was ratified.
  - (5) We are continuing to discuss this with the Labor Management Committee.
- b) Tuition reimbursement
- (1) In January of this coming year (2024), there will be changes to employee benefits all around McLean.
    - (a) The contract states that we'll have the same benefits as all the other employees at McLean.
    - (b) There are some pages on Ask My HR that says "This does not apply to unionized employees," etc.
    - (c) We want you to know: YOU DO HAVE THESE BENEFITS!
  - (2) Tuition reimbursement is essentially being doubled next year!
  - (3) PTO is also changing in January.
    - (a) We are changing from things like sick time and vacation time to one big PTO bank.

- (b) This time off can be cashed out at certain times throughout the year. As of now, our sick time cannot be cashed out.
  - (c) Right now, we get 32 days off / year. The new PTO will be 30 days / year.
    - (i) We are checking to see if they can do this without checking in with us. We are thinking perhaps they can because we have the benefits clause as listed above.
  - (4) Other benefits are changing! They're all listed on Ask My HR. If you have any questions about them, please feel free to reach out!
- c) Prior experience calculations for new hires
  - (1) Each job title has requirements. For instance, you need one year of relevant experience to get an RA II position.
  - (2) When you come in, the hospital has a pretty obscure process for determining how to credit you with prior experience.
  - (3) The hiring staff look at the resume you submitted, they talk to your PI, and they talk to you. Based on that, they have free rein essentially to give you as much prior experience as they deem appropriate.
    - (a) This means that you might not know how much prior experience you're accredited with. You can ask your PI to find out your "prior experience date," which determines when you'd be eligible for a promotion.
    - (b) There is not a lot of wiggle room around this, and there's also not a lot of transparency. At the Labor Management Committee Meeting, we asked them for more transparency regarding this process when new RAs are hired.
    - (c) Something that we learned: At hire, if you have 10 months of experience, you're rounded up to having one year of experience. If you have less than 10 months of experience, you're rounded down to having 0 months of experience, and you have to wait a year for your promotion.
      - (i) This is something we could potentially bring back up at our next contract negotiations!

(4) A number of our members indicated during this meeting that they did not have a conversation with talent acquisition about their prior experience.

V. Opened the floor for additional questions / concerns.

A. None were raised.

B. One member came up after the meeting and asked: if she was hired as an RA II 2 years ago, would she be eligible to be promoted to Senior RA now?

VI. Adjournment

A. President called for a motion to adjourn at 6:02 pm. Second by Eli van der Rijn. All in favor. Motion passed.