

Cortland Standard

Serving Cortland and surrounding communities since 1867

60¢ delivered
75¢ newsstand

www.cortlandstandard.net

2014 daily No. 275

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2014

CORTLAND, N.Y.

LOCAL

Budget officer may replace administrator

Cortland County officials are considering replacing the county administrator post with a budget officer who would handle all of the administrator's former financial duties. Another position would be devoted to handling the county's administrative affairs.

— Page 3

TC3 adjunct bid rejected by board

The college board of trustees rejected requests by the college's adjunct professors to recognize their union.

— Page 3

TC3 adjunct faculty deterred in union bid

College board rejects petition

By SARAH YABER
Staff Reporter

shullock@cortlandstandardnews.net
DRYDEN — Requests for Tompkins Cortland Community College to recognize an adjunct faculty union were refused at the college board of trustees meeting Thursday night, as the college continued to insist the group take the matter to a state labor board.

About 30 supporters attended the meeting with orange signs around their necks that read: "We are the 69.9%." Pat Sewell, an organizer of the TC3 Adjunct Association and an environmental science adjunct instructor at the college, said the figure referred to the percentage of adjuncts in the faculty body.

TC3 had already rejected on Tuesday a request from the New York State United Teachers union to recognize the adjunct association, citing concerns that the proposed union may not have the support of the majority of adjunct faculty.

The college urged the association to take the matter to the Public Employment Relations Board, calling for an adjunct vote on the proposed union.

"This is an entirely reasonable and understandable request," Sewell, of the adjunct association, told the college's board of trustees during the public comment session of their meeting. "But why would we hold an election when we're already sitting on the ballots?"

The association has not revealed how many union petitions were signed, but has said it has a strong majority of the roughly 250 adjuncts.

Every adjunct cast a vote for or against the proposed union when he or she signed or refused to sign a petition, Sewell told the board.

Adjuncts often work multiple jobs in different locations or teach off-campus at the TC3 Cortland Extension Center on Main Street, he said. If a standard vote was held for a specific duration of time at a specific site, there would certainly be adjunct instructors who would not be able to make it to the

voting booth, Sewell said.

In Shik Lee, an adjunct science instructor at the college for the last 14 years, urged the board and President Carl Hayes to voluntarily recognize the union.

"I am a teacher ... I want to get back to teaching," Lee said. "So please, let us move on. Do the right thing."

In rejecting the request, Haynes clearly urged the association to follow standard procedure by petitioning the relations board, John Conners, provost and vice president of the college, said after the meeting. It is only responsible to request the association go to the board when considering a union that would greatly affect the college, he said.

TC3 opted to free the association to petition the state relations board by rejecting the teachers' union's request in less than 30 days, Conners said. TC3 could have delayed the process for months by not

responding to the request.

"What we're not doing is dribbling out the clock," Conners said.

Union petitions are valid for six months, Julie Berman, a labor relations specialist with NYSUT, said Tuesday.

The association does not have to be certified as a union by the relations board this semester, but only petitions from adjunct faculty teaching this semester can be used since the process was begun this fall, Conners said.

TC3 has about 250 adjuncts, Conners said, and they likely make up an even greater percentage of the faculty body than 69.9 percent.

"They are certainly more than half by head count ..." Conners said, and teach about half of the college's courses. Conners did not have an exact figure for the percentage of adjuncts in the faculty body immediately following the meeting.

The association planned to file a petition with the relations board "immediately" if it was not recognized at Thursday's meeting. Once the petition is filed, the case is assigned to an administrative law judge who will conduct an investigation, hold hearings if necessary and issue a ruling.