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Post-Confrontational Collective Bargaining Models Successful Negotiations: Successful Contracts - Facilitators Useful?

Jonathan Blitz
Eastern Illinois University Faculty Union (UPI) Bargaining Team Member
University Professionals of Illinois (UPI)

- Hierarchy – AFL/CIO > AFT > IFT > UPI
- UPI Local – Bargaining units on at least 6 state university campuses
- At Eastern Illinois University (EIU) 2 bargaining units: Tenured/tenure track (Unit A) and Annually Contracted Faculty + Academic Support Professionals (Unit B)
Collective Bargaining at EIU

• 1st contracts: Unit A (1977), Unit B (1986)
• Until 1996 multiple universities bargained same contract (Board of Governors, BOG)
• State broke up BOG in mid-90s. EIU chapter of UPI has bargained directly with EIU since then
Pre-2012 Bargaining at EIU

• Traditional bargaining ≈ 5 × 2 contracts (Unit A + Unit B)

• Beginning in 2002 (maybe earlier) a pattern developed:
  Start early
  Extend contract
  Rile up faculty
  Federal mediation
  Eventual agreement
2012 Interest Based Bargaining (IBB)

- EIU President Perry urges consideration at contractually mandated monthly meeting
- EIU/UPI leadership (President & VP) skeptical, committed
- EIU/UPI active members skeptical, not committed
- Political capital spent
IBB Experience

• Little things to foster improved atmospherics matter
• Absolutely clear rules/sound algorithm to reach agreement without gaming
• Patience
• Over time rapport rather than division
• In absence of secret agendas process works
Conclusions

• Successful IBB process: only possible if (nearly) everyone wants it to work
• Long term ±
• With highly structured process, little room for misunderstanding agreement after the fact
• Without competent, knowledgeable, experienced, neutral facilitator – little chance of success