

# The Bullhorn

## The Official Newsletter of the SUNY New Paltz Chapter of the UUP

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### UUP President's Column

*Richard Kelder*

The budget crisis on our campus and other SUNY campuses looms formidably over all other issues and events. Given the uncertainty associated with the budget crisis, there is an atmosphere of high anxiety on campus. Teaching and professional faculty are worried and rightly so; positions and programs may end up on the cutting block. The recent events on the SUNY Albany campus with the elimination of some foreign languages, Classics and the Theater program have only raised the level of concern. On our campus the Interim President, Donald Christian and Jackie Destefano, VP for Administration, have begun a series of forums to update the campus on the budget and to request input from faculty and staff on how best to address the budget shortfall of 2.6 million dollars. The purpose of the forums is designed to provide transparency and openness about the process, encourage a campus-wide dialog, and seek input and solutions to the crisis from the college community. The administration should be applauded for its good faith effort and commitment to make this process transparent.

At the first forum, Interim President Christian mentioned that there were few places to cut the budget to address the budget gap except in the area of personnel. The President spoke of the importance of maintaining our core mission which left some faculty wondering what the core is and if their position is central to the college's mission. I am sure more information will be forthcoming on this. We should all remember that closing the budget gap will not be easy. The results of the early retirement incentive have yet to be determined since there is still time for individuals to make a decision.

The word on the street has it that these savings will not be enough to get us out of harms' way. The situation will become even more strained if the worst case scenario emerges in the form of mid-year cuts. At that juncture, SUNY may have to move to a life-support system or once again raise tuition. Or will the legislature bail SUNY out and restore funding to a level that will sustain institutions in the coming years? Right now we are faced with many questions and few answers. At an UUP Executive meeting on campus on October 5, Phil Smith, President of UUP stated that SUNY has reserves in the amount of 500 million dollars, some of which are not committed funds. In fact, it has been reported that at a Senate Hearing Chancellor Zimpher reported that she planned to release 147 million of the reserves to assist campuses. As of now, this has not happened.

Finally, it is only natural in a time of crisis for people to join together to solve problems and make contributions. However, as I mentioned at the first forum, the founding principles of UUP state that UUP members are not to serve on committees or participate in decision-making that will have a negative impact on personnel, positions or programs. President Christian has made it clear that faculty and staff will not be included in making decisions, and at the second forum, he drew a distinction between consultation and decision making. UUP member should engage in the consultative process, offering ideas, recommendations, and solutions to the budget crisis and we should all be thinking of ways to generate revenue. However, in the end it is management that has the ultimate authority and responsibility to address this financial exigency, and UUP members should not

be complicit in the decision making process as it applies to personnel or programs.

Finally, I encourage faculty and professional staff to communicate with their UUP department representatives and share information about the crisis. This will minimize the spread of rumors and misinformation. Also, we intend to have more chapter meetings, and I encourage you to attend.

### **Contract Negotiations Process Underway**

The current contract of UUP with the State of New York expires on July 1, 2011. The negotiations process for a new contract began in the summer with the appointment of members to the Negotiations team by UUP President, Phil Smith, followed by a team retreat at The White Eagle resort in Hamilton NY. The team consists of 16 UUP members led by Chief Negotiator Jamie Dangler, Associate Professor of Sociology at Cortland, and Associate Chief Negotiator, Mike Smiles, Professor of Biology at SUNY Farmingdale. In addition to the team, Article 19 of the UUP constitution calls for the creation of Negotiations Committee and an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee. The role of the Negotiations Committee is to prepare proposals for negotiations and submit the tentative agreement to the membership for ratification. Peter Brown, VP for Academics, has been appointed to this committee. The local ad hoc committee seeks input from our faculty and professional staff and will present those recommendations and findings to the Negotiations team at a meeting in December. Linda Smith, VP for Professionals and Mary Alice Citra, Associate Professor of Psychology, are the members of this committee. Smith and Citra have sent out a survey to the entire campus to gather suggestions and recommendations. Please take a moment to complete the survey. Also, during the Fall semester members of the Negotiations Team will visit all SUNY campuses to seek UUP member suggestions and recommendations. The New Paltz team visit is scheduled for November 15 at 11:45 in the Terrace. If you cannot attend this meeting please go the UUP Homepage at [UUP info.org](http://UUP.info.org) and follow the link to the negotiations Process and complete and email a membership suggestion form. Your input is important. As you know, negotiating a new contract in this political and economic climate will be a challenging and difficult endeavor

### **Identity Matters: Are you a UUP Member?**

It often happens that when faculty and professionals bring their individual development or Drescher applications to the UUP office they discover that they are not UUP members. Once an application is submitted we double check to see if the applicant is a member and, if they are not, we ask them to fill out a UUP membership card. In fact, there are a considerable number of teaching and professional faculty who believe they are members of the Union when

in fact they are agency fee payers, meaning that dues are simply deducted, and union representation compromised. To check to see if you are indeed a UUP member examine your paystub and just after the tax deductions item, it should read "UUP Member 26P." However, if it reads UUP Agency Fee, you are included in the professional service negotiation unit, but you are not a member of the Union. What are some of the benefits of being a member? First of all you can vote on the contract, attend Union meetings, hold Union office and elect Union leaders on campus and representatives at the state level. When you retire, you can maintain membership and remain eligible for benefits such as vision and dental. Check that pay stub!

IN UNION,

Richard Kelder

### **Adjuncts get Unemployment Benefits over the Summer**

*Peter D.G. Brown, VP for Academics*

The New Paltz UUP chapter's Part-Time Concerns Committee organized an Unemployment Insurance (UI) workshop in May. About a dozen part-timers showed up, were treated to some pizza, and discussed the ins and outs of applying for UI with Yvonne Aspengren, the VP for Part-Timers and myself. These adjuncts decided to form an active support group and share their experiences as they moved into the summer. Some were applying for UI for the very first time, while others had regularly been receiving benefits during teaching breaks for years. More than half of the group received benefits without a hitch, while others needed to appeal a negative verdict before being awarded UI payments. The last person to win an appeal was notified in October, with benefits being awarded retroactively to May.

The New Paltz chapter plans to organize a similar group next May. We hope that more adjuncts will join and benefit from the experience gained from this year's group. There is a certain amount of ignorance about applying for unemployment benefits, as well as a fear among adjuncts that they might be vulnerable to retaliation from their employer. We therefore asked UUP headquarters to explore the possibility of providing us with more informational support. On October 5, UUP President Phil Smith attended a meeting of the New Paltz chapter's departmental representatives and assured us that he is exploring how NYSUT or AFL-CIO could assist our adjuncts as they negotiate the UI maze.

Below are excerpts from individuals who formed this year's support group e-mail list:

"I followed your advice and I'm into my third week of receiving unemployment benefits. It's only about \$100 a

week in my case, but it helps. They told me that I have to go online 1x a week for unemployment re-certification in order to get the week's \$. It only takes a few minutes. I've been in receipt of unemployment benefits since the first week of June."

"If I am approved, I will get \$152 per week."

"I am one of those "permanent adjuncts" (and have been for 10+ years); I have a history of always getting 2-3 classes per semester (and am always on the website listed with such), However, right before each semester there is a flurry of great uncertainty as the final class counts are calculated and tenured Professors are then first taken care of... These are all issues of contingent job security and I therefore have applied for UI and I expect to get it..."

"I have been at SUNY for 10 years and every semester it's the same. It's very stressful worrying every semester if I might lose my benefits. Also, we are so poorly paid for what we do, I feel I deserve the unemployment compensation, even if it is small."

"Thank you all for sharing your experience. I was denied, but kept claiming. I sent an appeal and in my letter used some of the language that I borrowed from this email list, like 'non-enforceable contract' and I just noticed that I received my first UI payment. I thought an appeal would be harder than that but as far as I can tell, I was approved. Don't be discouraged, appeal!"

Here is some basic information on how to file from the NYS Department of Labor website ([http://www.labor.ny.gov/ui/how\\_to\\_file\\_claim.shtm](http://www.labor.ny.gov/ui/how_to_file_claim.shtm)):

Your claim should be filed in the first week that you have become totally or partially unemployed. It is important to file timely because your first week is an unpaid waiting week, commonly referred to as the "waiting period". A delay may cost you benefits.

You should apply for UI benefits using the Benefits Online Page between the hours of 7:30am to 7:30pm Monday through Thursday (Eastern Time), Friday, 7:30am to 5:00pm, all day Saturday, and Sunday until 7:00pm.

Federal and New York State laws prohibit discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age or marital status. Your claim for unemployment insurance benefits will be evaluated and an eligibility determination will be made without regard to any of these factors.

What you should have available before you file your claim:

- Your Social Security number
- Your New York State driver's license or Motor Vehicle ID card number (if you have either one)
- Your complete mailing address and zip code

- Telephone number where we can contact you between 8am – 5pm, Monday through Friday
- Your Alien Registration card number (if you are not a U.S. Citizen and have a card)
- The names and addresses of all employers for whom you've worked within the last 18 months, including those employers in another state
- Employer Registration number or Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) of your most recent employer (FEIN may be found on your W-2 forms) (if you have either)
- Your copies of forms SF8 and SF50, if you had federal employment within the last 18 months
- Your copy of your most recent separation form DD 214, if you are an ex-service member claiming benefits based on your military service
- If you are unable to print, have a pen and paper available to write down important information
- If you are choosing to have direct deposit of your weekly benefits, you must have a check handy in order to enter your bank routing and checking account numbers

If you do not have all of the documents listed above, you may still file a claim. There may be some delay, however, in receiving your first payment.

You may also file a claim by calling our Telephone Claims Center at 1-888-209-8124 for New York State residents (or 1-877-358-5306 for out of state residents) between 8:00am and 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. This is a toll-free call. Listen to the choices carefully and enter the appropriate number on your telephone's numeric keypad to file a claim. If you have never filed a claim for benefits in New York State, you will be asked to create a Personal Identification Number (PIN). This will be a four-digit number that you must keep confidential. ▲

## Our Part-Time Concerns Committee

*Yvonne Aspengren, VP for Part-Timers*

The Part-Time Concerns Committee (PTCC) of UUP at New Paltz is a standing committee charged with the responsibility of monitoring the concerns of Part-Time members. It reports to the Chapter, the Chapter President and the Executive Committee. It is chaired by the Vice-President for Part-Timers, and its members are appointed by the Chapter President. The PTCC meets monthly; in addition, a team from the Committee meets with the Provost and other members of the Administration at least twice a semester to discuss matters of interest to Part-Timers. Recently the committee has expanded its scope to include Lecturers, who, although full-time, are also contingent, and have no job security beyond the two or three years of their contract.

*What issues has the Committee been working on?*

- DSI. For some time, the PTCC has been working with the Administration to increase the amount of the award for adjuncts. We are also working to have guidelines written specifically for Lecturers.
- Unemployment insurance. Most part-timers do not have reasonable assurance of work between semesters and are qualified to apply for unemployment insurance. Last spring we held a workshop and the group in attendance has been sharing their experiences applying, receiving, being denied, appealing, winning, or not. We will have another informative workshop this semester – stay tuned.
- We are looking at the process of reappointment for Lecturers, advocating for simplification and for much longer contracts.
- Requests for salary increases! This is a top priority and on every agenda.
- Timely contracts; the possibility of multi-year contracts for adjuncts.
- Assuring that incumbent Part-Timers who are qualified will be fairly considered for full-time positions as they become available.
- Pre-contract talks. The PTCC will advocate for part-timers to the Negotiations Committee.
- Increasing UUP membership among Part-Timers – sign your union card!

Until you sign your union card, you are not a member of the union, even though dues are deducted from your check. Until you sign your union card, you cannot obtain professional development funds or participate in the life of the union, like voting in elections or ratifying the new

contract about to be negotiated. If you aren't sure, look at your pay stub: under "After Tax Deductions" if you are a member it will say "UUP Member 26P". If it says "UUP Agency Fee" you are NOT a member. Call our chapter assistant, Mary Thompson, at 257-2770 or stop by the office in LC 06 to join.

The PTCC monthly meetings are open to all; your participation is always welcome! We currently have four committee membership positions that we would like to fill, if interested please contact any one of us.

*The Part-Time Concerns Committee:*

|                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Yvonne Aspengren, Chair | aspengry@newpaltz.edu |
| Peter Brown             | brownp@newpaltz.edu   |
| Alan Dunefsky           | dunefska@newpaltz.edu |
| Ed Felton               | feltone@newpaltz.edu  |
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| Abigail Robins          | robina@newpaltz.edu   |
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## Individual Development Award

Linda Smith, VP for Professionals

The New York State / United University Professions Joint Labor-Management Committee's funds totaling \$26,234.00 has been allocated to SUNY New Paltz for the Individual Development Award (IDA) Programs for the period July 2nd, 2010 through July 1st, 2011. The UUP committee members are Jeff Miller, Director Honors Program; Rachel Rigolino, Instructor English Department, Linda Smith (Committee Chair), Academic Computing. Two members will be appointed by the Administration.

The IDA program is intended to assist eligible employees to develop their full professional potential and to prepare for advancement. Funding may be provided to enhance teaching, research capabilities, professional knowledge and skills. Funding may NOT be awarded to purchase equipment or supplies. All expenses for activities that occur July 2nd, 2010 through July 1st, 2011 must be incurred before July 1st, 2011. Awardees have 30 days after completion of their project/activity or notification of the award, whichever is later, to submit original receipts or other documentation for payment.

Listed below are the criteria that have been used in the past to help the committee determine who will receive an award.

### Criteria For Evaluation Of Individual Development Award

A completed application available at: <http://www.nysuup.lmc.state.ny.us/development/individual.html>

1. An updated brief CV
2. A clear budget with a detailed justification/ breakdown of expenses incurred or expected to incur
3. An applicant's descriptions must contain sufficient information about how the proposed funding is/was directly related to classroom performance or to one's job description at the college
4. Applications must reflect funding for the period of July 2nd, 2010 through July 1st, 2011. The award should be considered a reimbursement; no "up front" money is provided
5. Applicants seeking funding to deliver papers at a conference must have a letter of acceptance by the conference director or conference committee attached to his/her application
6. Applicants delivering papers at conferences will be given preference in funding over those asking for reimbursement for merely attending a conference or for presenting a poster session.

7.

8. Applications by untenured faculty or recent hired staff will be given preference.
9. Those who receive funding must make a formal report to the UUP Committee in timely fashion. If they do not do so, the committee will not fund their future requests.
10. Members of the UUP committee must recuse themselves from making a decision on their application. An alternate may be called to participate if needed.
11. No joint applications by 2 or more applicants will be fully funded. If the committee makes an award to a joint application, the applicants will have to share the funding or make an agreement between themselves that one would be funded.
12. Fifteen percent (15%) of the funding will go to part time UUP members.
13. As per UUP central: No funding will be provided for equipment or supplies. This includes art supplies, cameras, computers, etc. ▲

## Opportunities for Committee Membership

Linda Smith, VP Professionals

There are two committees in which you, as a Professional, can run for election.

- **College Review Panel:** This panel should serve as a venue for Professionals to apply for a promotion or to appeal a decision about a salary increase request. This panel "exists" but has not functioned for many years. The panel which is made up of five to seven Professional Faculty should make recommendations to the College President. We would like to reactivate this panel and need you to run in an election to be held in Spring 2011.
- **The Committee on Professional Evaluation:** This is a joint labor management committee made up of three Professional Faculty elected by our membership and two appointed by the College Administration. The purpose of the committee is to review unsatisfactory evaluations. After a thorough review the committee makes recommendations to the College President. ▲

## Save Energy, Save Jobs, Save the Planet

Brian Obach, Chair, Sustainability Committee

As you all know we are in the midst of a severe budget crisis. We currently have a budget shortfall of \$2.6 million, and job loss is virtually inevitable. One way that we can save money and potentially save jobs is by conserving energy, something that will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow climate change.

Last year the college spent close to \$2.4 million on electricity and almost \$1.8 million for other fuel. Saving energy WILL NOT solve our budget problems. But it WILL help. If we can reduce energy usage by just 10 or 15% it would reduce costs by over a half million dollars, enough to save several jobs. This would be an on-going savings, not a one-time stop gap measure.

This kind of energy use reduction would take much effort and some creative thinking. That's why I am writing to you. As chair of the Sustainability Committee, I am looking for input from the campus community about ways we can save energy.

Do you have ideas about how we can reduce energy use on campus? Do you know of examples of energy waste at the workplace? Please be as specific as possible. You can include things that individuals can do as well as larger structural changes that facilities management can consider (some of which may already be under way). Some have already suggested things like reduced lighting in hallways, power strips for computer equipment that allow easy shut down at the source, more motion sensor lighting etc.).

Your suggestions will be assessed and compiled, out of which we hope to propose a series of measures that can be taken to start saving energy, jobs and the planet.

Please send your campus energy saving ideas to [obachb@newpaltz.edu](mailto:obachb@newpaltz.edu) by Monday, October 18. I look forward to hearing from you. 📧

## Dire

Ed Hanley, Academic Computing

"Have no doubt about it; we are in a dire situation." So states our local UUP Chapter President, Mr. Richard Kelder. Is he simply pointing out the obvious? We've certainly heard this before. We've even seen evidence of it; one need look no further than last year's layoffs or this year's attempt to furlough us. At first glance, it doesn't seem that he's telling us anything new. Times are tough. Money's in short supply. Everyone's tightening their belts. We hear you loud & clear. We already know this. We get it. Or do we?

If actions speak louder than words, then the answer is apparently "no." The administration certainly doesn't seem to get it. It had enough petty cash lying around to send some folks out to our last president's latest inauguration – on this college's dime. Not a particularly egregious display of extravagance perhaps, but a fiscal decision still touchy enough to require a consultation with the college's "fiscal hat." I suppose the really tough choices that lie ahead will require nothing less than the fiscal "8-ball."

We certainly could have had some good natured fun at the administration's expense over that one at our recent chapter meeting. You know – the one where we all enjoyed the "free lunch." On second thought, maybe we shouldn't throw that particular stone through the administration's window. Because, despite the fact that we all know there's no such thing as a free lunch, how many of us ardent unionists would still show up at these meetings if we weren't fed "on the house?"

Protest if you will but, so far, we've only talked a good game about sacrifice and feeling the pinch. How many of us will still soldier on cheerfully (or at least with a minimum of complaint) when it finally dawns on us that people like Richard aren't kidding? The end (of business as usual) isn't near – it's here.

The time has actually come to work in a much cooler, dimly lit office this winter. Sitting at furniture that long ago saw its best days. Having to trudge down the hall to retrieve a printout from the only printer still left in the entire department. A printout which would have printed if the department hadn't already exhausted this week's supply of paper (and it's only Thursday morning!). That new software package you simply can't teach without? Forget it – that purchase was cancelled, along with the order for your replacement PC. Sorry for the inconvenience, but we are in a dire situation. We told you many times. We thought you knew.

No – I don't think we get it yet. We don't get it at all.

The fun hasn't even started. 📧

## Hope Not Hate

Susan Lehrer, UUP New Paltz

I was one of over 100,000 people at the 'One Nation' Rally on Oct 2nd. Beforehand, I'd worried about the turnout, but as we got out of the Metro station the crowds were already gathering. Soon, the area was filled from the Washington Monument to the steps of the Lincoln Memorial – and it was a truly diverse cross-section of America. Unions which participated included UUP, NYSUT & AFT, NEA, United Auto Workers, Steelworkers, Electrical Workers, CWA, SEIU, Unite Here...and that's only those with signs or T-shirts to identify them. (I was also pleased to see that grey heads, like mine, though present, were only a small part of those who came to demonstrate their commitment to progressive change.) Over 400 groups participated, including Veterans for Peace, War Resisters' League, groups advocating immigration reforms, religious organizations... it was overwhelming.

Speakers included the famous (Harry Belafonte, Jesse Jackson) but also many others whose names are not so familiar, but whose lives and stories demonstrate the urgent need for progressive changes, away from a war economy to jobs and education.

Some banners and signs: **'Hope not Hate'**, **'Jobs not War'**, **'Education not Deportation'**, **'Seniors – Older and Bolder'**, **'Hope Will Never Be Silent – Harvey Milk'**, and a balloon aloft from the Veterans for Peace.

**'Jobs, Justice, Education'**, was a unifying theme of the rally. **'I VOTE'** signs clearly spelled determination not to let the upcoming elections be hijacked by a small rightwing minority. Apathy is not an option. ▲

