

# Connection *uup*

Binghamton Chapter, United University Professions

*From the Chapter President*

## What I've learned as Binghamton's UUP Chapter President

by *Benita Roth*  
*Sociology Department*

This is my last column as UUP Binghamton's Chapter President, as some of you may have noticed from looking at the ballots mailed out to you in March. I will be stepping down from that post in June, and wishing the new Chapter President the best of luck. I will be serving as the Academic Vice-President for the chapter, and plan to take the knowledge I have accumulated in the past four years with me into that role.

I have learned a lot. I've learned that the university mostly functions, but that there are deep pockets of dysfunction in both departments and units which are difficult to eradicate. I've also learned that it never helps to assume bad intentions on anyone's part, because people's intentions are usually a minor part of entrenched problems. More commonly, problems for members emerge from sometimes twinned, sometimes separate circumstances: not-so-benign neglect and sclerosis.

I'll take the second problematic circumstance first. Many of us are resistant to change. We work in an institution that values the transmission and endurance of knowledge, and we all need to consider whether we are doing what we are doing in a fair and reasonably effective manner. Too often I and other UUP Chapter officers hear from members—and from management—



that things have always been done in a particular manner, or that circumstances can't be shifted without cataclysmic effects. That kind of institutional sclerosis has to be fought because we should have good reasons for doing the kind of work we do the way we do it. On a more individual level, I have also seen problems arise when supervisors—whether professional or faculty—get too invested in a particular style of leadership that is manifestly not working. I'll just observe here that it is hard to be a good leader, and that a supervisor who has a leadership style that fosters cooperation and collaboration in a unit/department is working much harder than a leader who relies on rank to order folks around or who neglects the role of leadership while wearing the supervisory title.

That brings me to the second circumstance that I see as leading to dysfunction at BU: not-so-benign neglect. The university mostly functions, but it is not a self-winding watch. It takes real effort to make sure that we are doing the

things we need to do and communicating with the constituencies with whom we need to communicate. I've learned how to recognize units/departments where supervisors are not exercising responsible leadership; where second-line supervisors have washed their hands of their "problem children" and stopped trying to have things run better; where upper management has disinvested. It actually takes a while to recognize where neglect is a problem, but once one recognizes it, it's easier and easier to see.

So that's my overly broad analysis of why we have pockets of dysfunction at BU. I do want to go out on a positive note, though. I have really been impressed over the past four years at how hard folks at this university work, and how many of them deeply care about doing the best job they can. Often, in fact, it's been my counsel to individuals to not work so hard, to not take up every new task that seems like an absolute emergency. Among the hardest working members are those who are active in our chapter. I've been very happy to have the support of excellent executive board members and very wise chapter officers. Everyone who is active in the chapter in whatever capacity is doing so by their own volition, giving up time that they could be spending doing other things. Those members who act as chapter delegates at the UUP Delegates Assemblies (DAs) are especially

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The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors or of the Binghamton Chapter and are not necessarily the opinions of United University Professions.

The editor welcomes letters and other comments of interest to the Binghamton Chapter.

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to be commended, as they give up all or part of their weekends up to three times a year to schlep to Albany, or Buffalo, or Rochester, or Saratoga to sit in over-heated rooms with spotty Wi-Fi and do the work of being part of a labor movement. Not that DAs are no fun at all; where else can you sing "Solidarity Forever" with 300 people and mean it?

I also want to thank two people who some of you know but more of you should know. First, the chapter would not be able to run at all without our Chapter Assistant, Linda O'Branski. Many of you know Linda from her many years of work at BU. I've only known her since becoming Chapter President, and I can't thank her enough for her institutional knowledge, her strategic thinking, her attention to detail and for her ability to show a kind and thoughtful face to the membership. I also want to thank

our NYSUT labor relations specialist (LRS), Darryl Wood, for being such a great teacher over the past few years. Some of you may not know that for UUP-represented campuses, NYSUT, our parent union, provides an LRS who is an expert on our contracts and who provides much needed guidance about how UUP can formally or informally help in any given situation. Darryl was Chapter President here at BU for many years, possesses scads of information and has a fine-honed moral compass. We are lucky to have him working on our side.

I also want to thank all UUP members here for helping me learn about the university through our dialogues and encounters in real life and online. I hope I have served you well these past four years, as it has certainly been my privilege to do so.

*From the Interim Vice President for Academics*

## Academics and International Students Negatively Impacted

*by Malcolm Gunter  
and  
A. Serdar Atav  
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Much has been written about President Trump's two attempts to restrict travel from certain targeted countries. The first ban was aimed at Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. The second order removed Iraq from the list and exempted current Green Card holders. Both bans were placed under temporary restraining orders (TROs) with the judges making reference to the discriminatory nature of the ban in targeting the countries for religious reasons, namely their predominant Muslim faith. The fear generated from these badly executed orders has left many people from the targeted and other Muslim countries fearing for their security when travelling.

It is an understatement to say that the current U.S. administration's failure



to assess the immediate effect of a targeted travel ban was short-sighted! Perhaps the greatest impact of the restrictions has been the one felt by academics and international students throughout the U.S. Many scholars and students were blocked from entering the U.S. to continue their work as faculty, researchers, or participants in academic exchanges. Many others feared leaving the U.S. due to the possibility they would not have a right to re-enter.

In the pursuit of excellence, most colleges look both nationally and in-

ternationally for potential candidates to strengthen and enhance their academic goals. These ventures take many forms including student exchanges, collaborative research endeavors and faculty hiring. Eighty-one members of the Binghamton community, both faculty and students, were personally affected. Here are just two BU stories that exemplify the impact of the travel ban.

- The day the executive order was signed, two of BU's academics went to JFK to meet a family member arriving from one of the targeted countries. The arriving family member was not only visiting but looking to explore graduate study opportunities and she had boarded the plane prior

to the executive order. Upon disembarking the plane, the family member was detained for over twenty-four hours. She was being ushered back to a plane to go home when the federal judge issued the restraining order that allowed the ACLU to take over and allow her to enter the US to be with her family here in Binghamton.

- Three of BU's academics have been accepted to present a research paper in the Netherlands. Two of them are from one of the targeted countries and are very wary of traveling to the conference. They have decided they should not go for fear they may

have difficulty returning to their work/studies here at BU.

Although the executive orders that restricted travel from the targeted countries are under a TSO, President Trump's administration has instilled a high level of insecurity among immigrant academics and international students, especially those who are from Muslim countries. It is incumbent upon us to support our fellow academics and students who are under stress at this time. It is also important for us to support organizations such as the ACLU and other initiatives that aim to give a sense of security to those in academia who are being unjustly targeted by the Trump administration.

## Equal Pay Day

*by Fran Goldman  
Asian and Asian American Studies*

April 4 was Equal Pay Day, the day when women's average earnings in the United States finally caught-up to the men's average earnings from the previous year. Yes, it takes women this much longer to achieve the same pay as men. For other races and ethnicities, the timeline is longer. Despite the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Pay Act of 1963, women continue to lag behind men in terms of wages. In fact, on average women continue to earn just \$0.80 for every dollar earned by men. In New York State, the typical earnings are a little higher at \$0.88.7 for every dollar earned by a man and it takes a woman until age 65 to have earned as much as a man did at age 60. The most disheartening thing about these numbers is that the wage gap persists no matter the location, occupation or educational level. However, for women who belong to a union, the pay gap is a bit narrower since, by and large, unions have been more inclined to fight for equal pay for women.

There are instances where a small number of SUNY colleges and universities have put practices in place that



will help alleviate these differences by ensuring that monies are set aside specifically for this issue. Unfortunately, for Binghamton's UUP professionals the gap continues to exist and while UUP has broached this subject at Labor/Management meetings, the focus seems to be more on the salaries of academics than those in the professional ranks. I have recently heard from some UUP members that in some instances, those they supervise are earning as much as they are even though they, as the supervisor, have been at the university longer. Another reported instance was where a temporary service increase

for both men and women resulted in the men keeping more of the increases than did the women even though those tasks were no longer being done by either employee. There is something inherently wrong with these pictures and especially when women continue to get the short end of the stick. In the first instance, the closeness of wages could be attributed to salary compression, but in the second instance it seems that gender might have played a role in the outcome.

There is a lack of promotional opportunity for many professional staff, and when they do occur, there is a much smaller salary increase than for academics, making it difficult to alleviate the problem. In addition, discretionary salary increases were not a part of the last contract negotiations. Even when they could be used as a means to aid in the narrowing of the wage gap, they were not always applied for this purpose.

UUP will continue to bring issues of salary compression and equity to the table with management. If some SUNY colleges and universities can do it, why not Binghamton!

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# How to Avoid the Worst Retirement Planning Mistake of Them All

by *John Wojcio*  
*Certified Career Coach Manager*  
*Binghamton University*  
*Dual Career Program*



Through the years I've heard hundreds of people contemplating retirement say, "I'll be perfectly satisfied doing nothing for the rest of my life," or, "Beats me; I'll figure it out eventually." Most of them do figure it out, eventually. Yet, wouldn't it be smarter to do a little planning in advance, so you can get the most out of your retirement years—starting day one? Why spend the first few retirement years being unhappy, bored, or worse?

Research has shown that a majority of new retirees take one to three years to move from full-time employment to full-time happiness in retirement, often because they don't take the right steps to ensure a smooth transition. Here's what you can do to avoid that trap.

For starters, stop thinking about retirement as though it means lying down and dying. Second, stop thinking solely about financial matters—savings, investments, pension, IRAs, social security benefits, health insurance. I don't mean to imply that financial matters aren't important. Rather, start thinking about retirement planning as a multidimensional process, involving a host of non-financial issues—such as attitude, aspirations, lifestyle goals, values, emotional well-being, physical health, and relationships, to name a few.

Yes, the number one question remains, "Will I (we) have enough money to retire?" and others of that nature. Proper retirement planning, however, doesn't stop there. Consider:

- How will you spend your time—day after day—especially once you're past the euphoria of 24/7 bushels of freedom and fun?
- What will keep you motivated (mentally alert, physically active, emotionally rewarded) so that you're eager to get up each day?
- How will your spouse (partner, family, et al.) react to your not working (or, starting a new career, a new lifestyle, etc.)?

Not too long ago we thought of retirement as the golden years and the winding-down period, and saw ourselves riding off quietly into the sunset. Fuhgedaboutit. The world is changing before our very eyes (okay, maybe behind our backs and without asking permission), and there's a whole new retirement landscape.

- Many of us are living longer and enjoying good health well into our 70s and 80s.
- Since the "retirement" period is lasting longer, the non-financial aspects of retirement have a greater impact on each retiree's happiness and overall quality of life.
- More and more retirees are working in their retirement years, either because they want to or because they have to.

Done well, retirement planning should unfold like vacation planning. When you're planning a two-week vacation, for instance, you take steps to ensure it runs smoothly. You look at the budget first. After that, though, you attend to the details: What will you do each day? Where will you stay? What exactly will you do to make the experience enjoyable and memorable?

Just as the money part isn't enough to guarantee a fun-filled vacation, it's not enough to guarantee a happy and fulfilling retirement experience.

How do you envision your retirement years? What do you dream about doing while you still can do what you're dreaming about?

- What's really important to you, and what isn't?
- What do you want to do in retirement, and what do you not want to do?
- What are you doing now to ensure it turns out the way you want, and not the way you don't?

Sometimes it helps to look back in order to more clearly see ahead. Think about your work and career, about your coworkers, about the sense of accomplishment you get from your work.

- What are you going to miss about working? What will you do in retirement to replace what you may miss about working?
- What are you going to miss about the people you work with? What will you do to accommodate that?
- What are you going to miss about the kind of work you do? What will replace that for you?

Dig deeper into these retirement planning ideas in one-hour workshops being offered on campus this summer. Or, request a confidential one-on-one coaching session, at

[jwojcio@binghamton.edu](mailto:jwojcio@binghamton.edu).

"It's never too late to be who you might have been." – *George Eliot*

"Here is a test to see if your mission on earth is finished. If you are alive, it isn't." – *Francis Bacon*

"Most of us go to our graves with our music still inside us." – *Oliver Wendell Holmes*

# Reducing Your Carbon Footprint



Photos by Jonathan Cohen

“Riding a bicycle is the summit of human endeavor — an almost neutral environmental effect coupled with the ability to travel substantial distances without disturbing anybody. The bike is the perfect marriage of technology and human energy.”

– Jeremy Corbyn

by *Julian Shepard*  
*Biological Sciences*

Would you like to significantly reduce your carbon footprint? What if you could get some physical exercise while accomplishing a necessary activity? How about avoiding the parking melee on campus while keeping in touch with the outdoors? I fulfill all these aims by commuting to campus and doing other errands by bicycle. I’m writing this not to advertise myself, but to encourage you to do the same.

The University has encouraged cycling by installing many bicycle racks and some shelters in recent years (at least one with a self-serve tire pump). It could do more in the form of bicycle lanes on campus roadways and more lobbying of the Dept. of Transportation for more direct access from off-campus. Nevertheless, in my experience drivers have almost always been more deferential than I would expect.

Bicycling is often thought to be dangerous, but in forty years of regular bicycling around Binghamton, I have never been hit by another vehicle (though I have done some self-inflicted damage!). The Vestal Parkway is often cited as a deterrent, but I find the wide shoulders more comfortable than a lot of more minor thoroughfares. Weather is often cited as a problem, but I can

bike on more than 95% of the days of the year with the help of a bicycle rain hood and warm clothing. I use BC Transit in deep snow or sub-zero cold. Bicycling requires some physical exertion, but with a quick “freshening up” and a change of shirt, I can be ready for public interaction during the day.

Some say that they don’t have time, and yes, bicycling isn’t fast. But I find that passing long lines of motorized vehicles at traffic lights (hey, I do obey the traffic laws) and being able to park right at my building saves some time that motorists cannot. I also admit that I live only four miles from campus and not up any 500-foot hills, but that is by design.

I have ridden many kinds of bicycles, but I find what suits me best is a simple “cross-bike” with slightly wider tires and horizontal handlebars rather than faster, lightweight bikes with drop handlebars. For equipment, a helmet is a must! Flashing lights are necessary at night and useful even during the day. I can carry an amazing amount of stuff in two saddlebags, augmented occasionally by a couple of bungee cords.

Please join me! I would love to see a flock of bicycles leaving the campus with me at the end of the day.



# UUP Calls Out McCarthyesque 'Professor Watchlist'

(Courtesy of The Voice February/March 2017)

by Darryl McGrath

UUP President Fred Kowal recently invited members to try to crash a website that's the latest wacky move by right-wing extremists emboldened by Trump's election.

At issue is the Professor Watchlist website (<http://www.professorwatchlist.org>), which solicits reports about "professors that promote a radical agenda in the lecture hall." The site is sponsored by the conservative group Turning Point USA.

Kowal encouraged academic members of UUP to register themselves on the site, an action taken by countless other academics around the country. The goal, as Kowal wrote to members, was "to literally jam up the website with so many entries that it is rendered

useless. It is also a step to take as a sign of solidarity with those who have been 'reported' to the site."

## OFFICERS REGISTER THEMSELVES

Given that Kowal warned members that placing their names on the list might subject them to "unwanted attention from right-wing groups," Kowal was quick to act on his own call for action. He registered himself on Professor Watchlist, as did UUP Vice President for Academics Jamie Dangler and Secretary Eileen Landy, the union's other two academic statewide officers. None of them ended up on the site's final list of professors to be watched, and none reported any repercussions of registering.

Kowal also encouraged members to sign an open letter sponsored by the American Association of University Professors that was sent to the creators of the Professor Watchlist in protest of the attempt to deter free speech and academic freedom.

As a final spoof on Professor Watchlist, a satirical version of the site also sprang up to proclaim that being listed is a badge of honor. That satirical site, Watchlist Redux (<https://professorwatchlist.blog>), contains a list of both current and past "radical thinkers." The list of living members of the Watchlist Redux hall of fame reads like a who's who of acclaimed critical thinkers and writers in academia today, while the list of deceased members includes Aristotle, Jesus Christ and Thomas Jefferson.

## Your new UUP contract is being negotiated. Will you be able to vote on it?



Once a tentative agreement is reached with the state, UUP members must vote to ratify a new contract. It's *our* union and *our* contract. **BE INVOLVED!**

Check your most recent pay stub. If it says "UUP Agency Fee," then you are NOT yet a UUP member.

|  |          |                |            |                             |           |                   |         |
|--|----------|----------------|------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------|---------|
| Thomas P. DiNapoli<br>New York State Comptroller |          | JOHN DOE       |            | Total Gross                 |           | Fed Taxable Gross |         |
|  |          |                |            | Current                     | 3456.78   | 1234.56           |         |
|  |          |                |            | YTD                         | 45,678.90 | 34,567.89         |         |
| Advice #   | 789      | Pay Start Date | 02/01/2017 | Net Pay <b>1,234.56</b>     |           |                   |         |
| Advice Date                                      | 016      | Pay End Date   | 02/15/2017 |                             |           |                   |         |
| Department ID                                    | 98765    | NYS EEMPLID    | N12345678  | Pay Rate                    | 78,910.11 |                   |         |
| <b>EARNINGS</b>                                  |          |                |            | <b>TAX DATA</b>             |           |                   |         |
| Current  |          | YTD            |            | Federal                     |           |                   |         |
| Hrs./Days  | Earnings | Hrs./Days      | Earnings   | Federal                     | State     | NYC               | Yonkers |
| Regular Pay Salary Employee                      | 3456.78  |                | 45,678.90  | 4                           | 4         |                   |         |
| Location Pay                                     | 56.78    |                | 678.90     | 2                           | 0         |                   |         |
|  |          |                |            | <b>TAXES</b>                |           |                   |         |
| Current  |          | YTD            |            | Current                     |           |                   |         |
| YTD  |          | YTD            |            | YTD                         |           |                   |         |
| Fed Withholding                                  |          | 3456.78        |            | 1,234.56                    |           |                   |         |
| Medicare   |          | 45,678.90      |            | 34,567.89                   |           |                   |         |
| Social Security                                  |          | 3,456.78       |            | 1,234.56                    |           |                   |         |
| NY Withholding                                   |          | 45,678.90      |            | 34,567.89                   |           |                   |         |
| <b>BEFORE TAX DEDUCTIONS</b>                     |          |                |            | <b>AFTER TAX DEDUCTIONS</b> |           |                   |         |
| Current  |          | YTD            |            | Current                     |           | YTD               |         |
| YTD  |          | YTD            |            | YTD                         |           | YTD               |         |
| Regular Before Tax Health                        |          | 456.78         |            | 1,234.56                    |           |                   |         |
| Supplemental Ret. Annuity Prog.                  |          | 678.90         |            | 5,678.90                    |           |                   |         |
| TIAA Retirement Before Tax                       |          | 56.78          |            | 1,234.56                    |           |                   |         |
|  |          |                |            | UUP Agency Fee              |           | 34.56             |         |

**Are you a UUP member?**  
Only UUP MEMBERS can vote.  
**JOIN TODAY**

- ▶ Go to [uupinfo.org](http://uupinfo.org)
- ▶ Click on "About UUP" at the top of the home page
- ▶ Click on "Welcome/Join"
- ▶ Scroll down to "Click here to sign up online"

# Constitutional Convention: Fact Sheet and Concerns

*(Courtesy of Farmingdale Unifier, February 2017)*

On Nov. 7, 2017, the people of New York state will be asked the following question on the ballot: “Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?” This question appears every 20 years under the New York State Constitution (Article 19, §2).

UUP says vote ‘NO’ on this question.



## **Here's why.**

The NYS Constitution establishes the fundamental rights we enjoy as citizens of New York state, as public employees, and as retired public employees. A Constitutional Convention would become the vehicle to further the attacks on public education, unions and collective bargaining, pension security for retirees, and other basic rights and protections.

**The following are some of the basic rights and protections under attack across our state and nation. A Constitutional Convention could further threaten them.**

- The right to a free public education (Article 11, §1)
- Prohibition of reductions in public pension benefits (Article 5, §7)
- Rights to workers' compensation (Article 1, §18)
- Rights pertaining to union membership and collective bargaining (Article 1, §17)
- Social welfare rights (Article 27, §1)
- Prohibitions on the use of state monies to assist religious schools (“Blaine Amendment” Article XI, §3)
- A budget role for the state Legislature
- Adirondack “Forever Wild” protections



# Support the political action fund of UUP and NYSUT

# Give to VOTE-COPE

VOTE-COPE is the nonpartisan political action fund of UUP and its affiliate, NYSUT. It coordinates the voluntary contributions of members and makes contributions to UUP/NYSUT-endorsed candidates and to UUP/NYSUT-supported general campaign committees.

Dues money is not used for political action.

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Effective no earlier than \_\_\_\_\_ (enter date), I hereby authorize regular payroll deductions from my earnings in the amount specified below as a voluntary contribution to be paid to VOTE/COPE, to be used in accordance with applicable law for the purpose of making political contributions in connection with Federal, State, and local elections. My contribution is voluntary, and I understand that it is not required as a condition of employment, and that I may revoke this authorization at any time by giving written notice to the Treasurer of United University Professions.

Contribution Per Pay Period (Circle One)    \$5    \$10    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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