

Getting to know...

Beth Polzin



Associate Director, External Scholarships and Undergraduate Research Center (ESURC)

UUP Executive Committee, and IDA Committee member

I have called Broome County home since 2009, when I arrived to begin a doctoral degree in Comparative Literature. I taught classes while completing my degree and served as a professional writing tutor at SUNY Broome. While writing my dissertation, I shifted into a staff role with Sponsored Programs, then served as Coordinator for the Translation Research and Instruction Program. In June 2023, I joined the office of External Scholarships and Undergraduate Research Center (ESURC) as Associate Director.

QUESTION & ANSWER

Tell me about your job and why you love what you do?

I support campus-wide initiatives for undergraduate students to gain research and creative experience, recognition, and externally-supported opportunities. I enjoy the wide range of responsibilities that come with collectively managing a list of our own programs and awards and the direct interactions with undergraduates, from our five student research ambassadors to participants in the Summer Scholars and Artists Program to regular advising that may involve one conversation or many to hone applications for external scholarships. Witnessing students learn and grow and thrive academically and playing a role in their success is really rewarding.

How did you get involved with UUP?

I've served as Vice Chair of PSS's Financial Impact Review Committee with Chair Brendan McGovern since 2018, and as Brendan moved into roles with UUP, he encouraged me to get involved, too. I already appreciated the difference a union makes since moving from graduate studies in a state where we had no union representation to one where we did. I enjoy being involved as a way to give back and participate in expanding equity and inclusion in the workplace.

How do you make a difference?

I hope to make a difference by being present. The general busyness of every day can make this apparently simple goal quite challenging, so I try to make it the centerpiece of my days. Listening well, finding ways to remember what has been said for future interactions, finding the humor in what's not always especially amusing – or truly is amusing – to help connect, and helping find connections that might illuminate what matters or a path forward. Also: thinking of ideas and questions to share that could be a spark for others – and maybe for me, too – by paying attention.

What about your community engagement; any hobbies?

These days, my community engagement activities are mostly here on campus: PSS, UUP, and opportunities to mentor and be mentored, such as B-First. My pastimes include writing, reading – the old-fashioned way and via audio, making meals, and all things gardening.