

BEACON



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Upcoming Events

- ◆ Office Closed Dec 25th-29th
- ◆ Classes Resume Jan 22
- ◆ MiniVan App Training Jan 26 & Feb 1
- ◆ Exec Board Feb 7

President's Message

Joe Torre, President
Brockport Chapter UUP



Best Holiday Wishes

First of all, let me thank you all again for the opportunity to serve you. It is a great honor and privilege to be the president of our union. I would also like to extend my thanks to my colleagues in the Executive and other Committees of the Brockport UUP who give so much of their time and effort to the union. The selfless commitment of these members to our communal project is key to its success. Finally, I would like to extend a special thanks to our UUP secretary, Brittany Profit Rheinwald. Her commitment to the union makes our efforts and our community possible. As we gather with our families and friends this holiday season let's take stock of everything we have to be grateful for, even as we square face the challenges ahead.

Prosper

We live in a world of meaningless words and acronyms designed to belie intent and undermine reality. The development of this world was predicted by George Orwell in his great book, *1984*, written in the crucible of his experiences with fascism in Spain specifically, and in 20th century Europe more broadly. Orwell created a new "language" for his imagined *Oceania* in which the slogan for the ruling state was *WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH*. As Orwell explained it in the novel, *Newspeak* and *Doublethink*, the concepts which gave logic to this language, had a purpose:

"...you see, the whole aim of Newspeak and Doublethink is to narrow the range of thought.... Has it ever occurred to you, Winston, that by the year 2050, at the very latest, not a single human being will be alive who could understand such a conversation as we are having now?... The whole climate of thought will be different. In fact, there will be no thought, as we understand it now.

Orthodoxy means not thinking-not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness."

Of course we are all too familiar with this problem and our effort, living as we do in a world where the President of the United States derides reality as *fake news* and promotes conspiracy theories as reality. By now we should know, I hope, that when he says *fake news*, it means *real news*, and that when the President says something is great, it is usually disastrous for most Americans. The only question really left to answer is does he understand the difference? Is he a lunatic or a [liar](#)?

Regrettably his rhetorical practices seem to have "trickled down" or perhaps "showered" across government. Take, for example, the *Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity Through Education Reform Act*, or the *Prosper Act*, as it is known, which emerged from the House Committee on Education and the Workforce into daylight on [December 13](#). The *Prosper Act* promises to undo much of Lyndon Johnson's transformative 1965 Education Act and the more recent Obama-era restrictions on for-profit colleges. As education professionals, public servants, and UUP members we should be aware of the great harm wreaked by for-profit colleges on the lives of students, the government student loan system, and the idea and ideal of higher education and its value to society. We are often told that college is too expensive, that students are drowning in a sea of debt, and that many of them graduate to poor prospects therein ensuring default on their loans, and further impoverishment in their lives.

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Together We Can...We Will... Make a Difference!

Sharon Belle-Render, VP for Professionals

To the UUP members who voted "NO" to a NYS Constitutional Convention we thank you!

We thank you for believing in the process of collective bargaining rights, which allow us to negotiate for terms and conditions of employment, academic freedom and tenure protections, among others. This will also affect those that do not believe in the "UNION". We still must represent "You" when concerns arise and you have no one who will listen. Pensions for public employees who have worked and committed to an institution of higher learning as well as free public education for all children.

Let's continue to make a difference by volunteering our service, by representing our members at UUP meetings, participating at Delegate Assembly meetings, taking advantage of attending "Free" workshops that are offered during the semester, as well as calling our office and asking how you can be an active participant representing UUP. If you are a new hire, and you were active with your union at another college. We need your expertise and involvement "Now." Please notify Brittany Profit-Rheinwald and let her know of your interest in UUP. Remember, together we can...we will... make a difference.

The Defense of President Trump

Merrill J. Melnick, Retiree, KSSPE

As predictable as winter snow, President Trump's media cheerleaders, congressional foot soldiers and legal team are mounting an aggressive assault on the FBI and special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of obstruction of justice by the president and members of his inner circle. As the heat intensifies on the White House, it is becoming increasingly apparent that their objective is nothing short of stopping Mueller's probe before it proceeds much further. The first sign of this campaign was witnessed recently when Deputy Attorney

General Rod Rosenstein was urged by Republican members of the House Judiciary Committee to fire Mueller and end his investigation. That is why we can expect, in the weeks and months ahead, greater deployment of conspiracy theories, alternate facts, diversionary tactics and character attacks. The increase in indictments, plea bargains and witness "flipping" will no doubt be countered by an all-out attempt to discredit Mueller and his investigation before it becomes too late for Trump's defenders to reverse its direction.



Thank you to all who attended the UUP Holiday Dinner. It was a fantastic evening with great company. A special thank you to the women from Delta Phi Epsilon who played Ellsworth and to the men and women of Brockapella for the spectacular performance.

UUP in the Community

Naomi Williams, African American Studies

I was very excited to see the great turn out for the UUP holiday dinner this month. It is exciting to see so many members bringing their families out to these events. Since I joined the faculty at Brockport, I have been an engaged member of UUP. Our chapter has been involved in a few community events, including the science march, the water walk, the veteran's day events, and other activities. On campus there was the May Day and Equity Week activities. These events and others go a long way toward building community on campus, making working and learning at Brockport the best it can be, and offering members opportunities to engage at work and in the community.

I know at a state level and here at Brockport, there has been a concerted effort to reach out more. To illustrate all the ways UUP isn't just an organization to provide service to workers at various campuses, but a group of workers committed to vibrant campuses. Recently, our chapter leadership met to discuss ways to engage members more directly. At the holiday dinner, there were opportunities for attendees to write down suggestions for events and activities that our chapter should initiate.

I think our presence and activities on campus and in the surrounding communities where we all live are valuable to building a strong union and a better Brockport. I encourage members to bring suggestions to our chapter leadership. What would you like to see the Brockport UUP chapter do? What issues do you care about? How can your colleagues work together to produce great results?

For me, the holiday dinner was great. I had the chance to meet the families of my colleagues and to say hello to people I only see on occasion. It was fun watching Ellsworth distribute gifts to the children. The entertainment was fun as always (well done Brockapella). Other things that I think our chapter can do include book clubs, healthy lifestyle activities, engagement with local social and political debates, and more family get-togethers. I also think it is vital to continue workshops on health and safety, issues of equity at work, best practices in our fields, and basic contract issues. Since we are UUP, we should shape the chapter environment to meet our needs here on campus. And in our communities.

“I think our presence and activities on campus and in the surrounding communities where we all live are valuable to building a strong union and a better Brockport.”

UUP Scholarship

We are pleased to announce the 2018 United University Professions College Scholarship competition.

The application deadline is March 1, 2018.

Among other things, eligible candidates will:

(Undergraduate)

- be full-time undergraduate students at a state-operated campus of SUNY;
- demonstrate a tireless quest for academic and personal excellence; and
- have completed at least 18 credit hours at any SUNY campus with a grade point average of at least 3.75.

(Graduate)

- be full-time graduate or professional school student at a state-operated campus of SUNY;
- demonstrate a tireless quest for academic and personal excellence; and
- have completed at least 9 credits at any SUNY graduate or professional school with a grade point average of at least 3.95.

Please email Brittany Profit-Rheinwald, bprofitr@brockport.edu for application.

UUP Steve Street Award

We are pleased to announce the 2018 United University Professions Steve Street Award.

The application deadline is May 1, 2018.

Among other things, eligible candidates will:

- be currently registered undergraduate students at a state-operated campus of SUNY;
- a dedication to and intellectual engagement with social justice; and
- have completed at least 15 credit hours at any branch of SUNY.

Please email Brittany Profit-Rheinwald, bprofitr@brockport.edu for application and additional guidelines.

United For a Fair Contract

Michael Lisi, UUP Director of Communications

As posted in the "Voice" December/January 2017 edition

It's been nearly 17 months since UUP's contract with the state expired, and members aren't too happy about it. And their discontent is starting to show. More than 100 Albany Chapter members held a Nov. 16 rally on the UAlbany campus to urge the state to come to terms with the union on a new bargaining agreement for UUP members. That same afternoon, nearly 100 New Paltz Chapter members marched for a contract settlement. New Paltz members carried homemade signs with slogans like "Fair Contract," and "Living Wage for Adjuncts." Eleven members held posters with letters that spelled out "Contract Now." In late November, a group of Downstate Chapter members posed for a photo after a chapter meeting, holding up signs that read "United for a Fair Contract." Earlier that month, more than 70 Cortland Chapter members and over 30 Empire State College Chapter members did the same, displaying signs as they showed support, for their union negotiators.

RALLY 'ROUND

"We held a rally because our members are growing increasingly concerned about the fact that we haven't concluded our negotiations with SUNY and the state," New Paltz Chapter President Beth Wilson said during an interview with MidHudsonNews.com. "We have a number of open issues that are well-known, and we're hoping to bring a little bit of pressure to make the state talk turkey with us." Like their New Paltz sisters and brothers, Albany Chapter members held up handwritten signs that said "Sticking With the Union," "We Are UUP" and "Quit Stalling" during their hour-long rally, which featured speeches by statewide Membership Development Officer Tom Hoey (an Albany Chapter member), UUP Negotiations Team member and former Albany Chapter president Bret Benjamin, and Chapter President Aaron Major. "When we ask for modest salary increases for all of our members, affordable health insurance, job security and a living wage for part-time employees, and the ability to take leave to care for family members young and old, we can say we are asking for a fair contract," Major said.

"None of these demands is unreasonable, all of them are what we deserve." The grassroots demonstrations, planned and put on by the chapters, is more evidence of the union's waning patience for a new contract, said UUP President Fred Kowal. Most contract protections and benefits—including medical, vision, and dental insurance—remain in place during negotiations under state law; members will not get a raise in salary until a new contract is ratified. "Our members are growing impatient over the lack of a new contract, and that restlessness is what prompted the chapter rallies and other public shows of support," said Kowal. "I fully expect that more campuses will join in and express their sentiments in the coming weeks. "UUP is determined to deliver a contract that is fair and equitable to our members," Kowal continued. "Our members deserve nothing less, and we will settle for nothing less." UUP's Negotiations Team is set to meet with state representatives over the next few weeks.

STAY ENGAGED

In the meantime, Kowal and UUP's statewide officers have been making visits to chapters to meet with members and provide contract updates during chapter meetings. Members can also get the latest contract updates by going to UUP's Members Only web portal at <https://uuphst.org/myuup/MembersOnly/check.php>

Members are also urged to:

- Post a Fair Contract sign on their office doors, bulletin boards or car windows, and ask family and friends to put bumper stickers on their cars, too;
- Wear Fair Contract buttons or stickers while at work;
- Get a "United for a Fair Contract" sign, button or decal from their chapter offices; and
- Attend UUP chapter meetings to discuss the contract and other union issues.

"UUP is determined to deliver a contract that is fair and equitable to our members," Kowal continued. "Our members deserve nothing less, and we will settle for nothing less."



Visit <http://uupinfo.org/ImageFlow/voice.php> for all current and past issues of the voice.

President's Message cont'd

If we look closely at the system of for profit colleges, however, it becomes obvious that this is reflective not of higher education overall but of this sleazy little corner of it.

For-profit colleges are of course not new or novel in their efforts. [What is new is the explosive amount of money they absorb on an annual basis.](#) In the first decade of the 21st century, for-profit colleges exploded 225% in enrolment to more than 2 million students, 96% of

whom took out student loans. In 2010 the industry relied on a whopping 32 billion in federal student loans. That amounted to 25% of all student loans. In addition, more than a third of post 9/11 GI Bill funds, and half of the Department of Defense tuition assistance funds went to for-profit colleges. In many cases, this meant that the federal government supplied the majority of the college's operating funds, despite Congress's efforts to limit this exposure.

Currently, as a function of reforms put in place by Congress in 1998, most for-profits are restricted from having more than 90% of their revenue come from the federal student loan program. Alarming, this does not include federal programs for veterans. [The Brookings Institute estimates](#) that the 11 for-profits that have revenues exceeding \$600 million per year rely on federal aid for 60 to 80% of their total revenue. The same study also found that there are at least 200 for-profit institutions that, if you include aid to veterans, are entirely funded by the federal government.

In a perfect neo-liberal world, this would not matter. The market would shift resources to great for-profit institutions, etc. that would result in optimal performance, etc. resulting in highly trained students going to the workplace and making lots of money. The reality is very different: students at for-profit colleges are more likely to need student loans, are on average 50% more indebted than their not-for-profit college graduates, and more likely to default on their debt; students of for-profit colleges make up almost half of all the students that have defaulted on their student loans. They pay almost 60% more in tuition than comparable 4-year degree programs in public universities, over 100% more for 2-year degree programs, and many multiples more in select examples. At the same time, they fail to complete their degree programs at much higher rates than their not-for-profit counterparts; almost 2/3 of Associate Degree program students in for-profit colleges abandoned their education in 2010. The reasons for this are not unclear: for-profit colleges spend more on advertising (more than 20% of operating revenue) and dividends to shareholders (19%) than they do on instruction (17%). In 2009, the CEOs at the five largest for-profit institutions averaged more than \$7 million in annual compensation. In the end this means that a lot of well-meaning hard-working people insufficiently prepared to distinguish between educational institutions invested their time and student loans in a for-profit college only to have their career prospects downsized after graduation, if they graduated. Further, graduating with impossibly bloated loans that became dividend checks for investors and funded marketing schemes designed to bring in more customers, many eventually defaulted.

As noted above, current regulations prevent some of the worst excesses of this system (!). Not surprisingly, the *Prosper Act* severely diminishes even these fig-leaf protections. The current version of the *Prosper Act* removes the so-called 90/10 provision, and other Obama-era reforms.

A story in the [December 13 New York Times](#) announcing the committee's completion of their work on the bill concluded: "It is somewhat surprising how brazen the bill is in terms of reducing accountability and providing more taxpayer dollars to for-profit colleges without any strings attached," said Clare McCann, a higher education expert with the New America think tank. "The bill went out of its way to limit any kind of accountability for profits." Needless to say this is a massive waste of resources. The estimated 40 plus billion public tax dollars that went to for-profit colleges in 2010 would certainly have improved public higher education across the country; this should matter deeply to us as tax payers, as educators, and as public employees.

The *Prosper Act* should also matter to us as citizens of the republic interested in knowledge and truth and the values associated with higher education. The creation of the "*Prosper*" acronym to describe an abominable piece of legislation designed to impoverish the people it claims to help is not accidental. The creation of the "*Prosper*" acronym to describe an abominable piece of legislation designed to impoverish the people it claims to help is not accidental.

The *Prosper Act* should also matter to us as citizens of the republic interested in knowledge and truth and the values associated with higher education. The creation of the "*Prosper*" acronym to describe an abominable piece of legislation designed to impoverish the people it claims to help is not accidental. *Prosper* is, of course, an extremely Biblical word, easily recognized by evangelical Christians, Yeshiva students, and those like me who fell victim to a Catholic education. It is most often used as the outcome of a series of conditions met or fulfilled or, vice versa, denied as a result of such. The King James version of the Bible translates 2 Chronicles 20:20 to read: "*believe his prophets and ye shall prosper.*" Perhaps most cruelly, the New Standard American Bible translates Proverbs 28:25 to tell us that "*The greedy stir up conflict but he who trusts in the Lord shall prosper.*" And there are many, many other equally obvious meaning for the more secular minded or those of different spiritual traditions, and its corruption is equally transgressive to them. [In an essay on the relationship of politics to language](#), Orwell noted that "if thought corrupts language, then language can also corrupt thought." resonant passages based on *prosper*. . It also holds

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President's Message cont'd

In the *Prosper Act* we see the horrifying elegance of that process. *Prosper* here really means impoverish; or, more accurately, it means investors and executives prosper while students are impoverished. Orwell would have recognized the logic of this *Trumpian* rhetorical strategy: call something bad good often enough and people soon believe that it is good, and even that BAD is GOOD and GOOD is BAD; and REAL is FAKE, and FAKE is REAL. . In the for-profit education world, once you convince enough people that if they trust you they shall *prosper*, you secure for them billions of dollars in student loans, pay the money out in dividends and bonuses, short them of an education, and wait for the students to default and stiff the federal government for their debt. If you are really clever you can then deride the impoverished students for their lack of thrift and American get-up-and-go and cut social welfare programs that largely serve the people you have now further impoverished in order to lower the debt to cut taxes for the original for-profit investors so they can create more for-profit colleges to *stimulate* the economy to greater *prosperity*.

The logic of this process was made clear by [Speaker of the House Paul Ryan in a recent radio interview](#) when he declared that the only way to fund the tax cuts in the most recent GOP tax *reform* efforts will be to slash entitlements, specially Medicare. It was made clear by Trump's Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos who publicly derided students who were defrauded by the for-profits she champions and will no longer be protected under the *Prosper Act* or by the Department of Education. DeVos recently picked Julian Schmoke Jr. to oversee the fight against fraud in higher education. Mr. Schmoke, a former dean at DeVry Institute, a for-profit "school" recently ordered to pay back students \$100 million for false advertising, seems an unlikely choice for that office. Of course, [since DeVos also recently ordered the Department of Education to stop processing fraud claims by students at for-profits](#), perhaps he is the perfect person to reach her objectives. *Prosper*.

UUP Mourns Passing of Former President Wakshull

Sam Wakshull, UUP's second president and one of its founding members, passed away Dec. 12.

Wakshull, 95, was UUP's president from 1975 through 1981, and guided the fledgling union during its early years. UUP made many gains during Wakshull's time as president, including securing minimum salaries for full-time employees, guaranteed salary increases, term life insurance, and a stipulation prohibiting unilateral decisions by SUNY presidents.

"He was one of our union's founding fathers and he set us on the path to become the nation's largest and most powerful higher education union," said UUP President Fred Kowal. "We owe him a huge debt of gratitude for his service. He will be missed."

"Everybody needs a union, and one of the biggest problems today is that unions are losing membership," Wakshull said in a [2013 interview with The Voice, UUP's membership magazine](#). "We need to educate our members and the community about unions, to talk about what unionism really means. Otherwise, everyone is going to suffer."

Growing the union

Wakshull's goal was to build UUP's membership and it was one of his greatest successes as UUP president. Spurred by

the union's focus on winning better wages and benefits for part-time employees, the union's membership nearly tripled—to 11,500—by the end of his time as president.

"The only way I thought you were going to build a union is to have everyone feel as though they are included," said Wakshull in a [1992 interview, part of "Our Voices," SUNY Buffalo State's oral history project](#). "You also had a means of getting to the membership."

Wakshull, who served in the U.S. Army during World War II, was on UUP's first Executive Board and served as vice president for academics in 1974. He also helped form the State University Federation of Teachers, which represented academics on five SUNY campuses from 1968 until 1970, when it lost an election to the Senate Professional Association to be SUNY's primary bargaining representative.

"(Joining a union) was a new concept for the people we were trying to organize, and many had never been approached to form a union," Wakshull said. "Many faculty members figured that unions were for electricians, plumbers or people who built cars."

Wakshull spent nearly 30 years at Buffalo State, teaching in the Exceptional Education Department. He retired in 1991.

Thank You to all of our Academic & Professional Volunteers



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We're on the Web!
<http://www.uuphast.org/brockport/>

The Brockport Chapter would not function as well as it does without the numerous volunteers we have from our Officers, Delegates, Department Representatives, and Committee Members. When it comes to the union no job is too large or small, we thank you for them all.

Take time to recognize the following who graciously serve your union. If you'd like to get involved, please, contact Brittany Profit-Rheinwald, bprofitr@brockport.edu.

Officers & Delegates:

- Joe Torre
- Susan Orr
- Danny Too
- Charles Callahan III
- Herb Fink
- Sara Di Donato
- Naomi Williams
- Chris Williams
- Robert Schneider
- Tamala David
- Paul Schreiner
- Sharon Belle-Render
- Gary Owens
- Ben Wineburg
- Craig Ross

Campus Professional Dev. Committee:

- Sara Di Donato
- Mike Ziolkowski
- Janice Steward

- Jie Zhang
- Kim Myers
- Patricia Williams
- Joe Torre

UUP Salary Increase & Promotions Committee:

- Tom McDermott
- Heather Packer
- Alissa Karl
- Reddy Anugu
- Donna Napier
- Stacie Treahy
- Kim Myers

Chapter Action Committee:

- Susan Orr
- Sara DiDonato
- Alissa Karl
- Paul Schreiner
- Heather Packer

Campus Equity Week Committee:

- Dawn Jones
- Sara Di Donato
- Alissa Karl
- Susan Orr
- Paul Schreiner
- Barbie Clifton

And thank you to all of our department reps for your commitment to being a liaison between the union and your department.

PARKING TROUBLES?



Check twitter for parking & bus updates:

@bportparking

And sign up for text alerts:

www.brockport.edu/parking

BROCKPORT CHAPTER OFFICERS 2017-2019

- President.....Joe Torre
- VP Academics.....Susan Orr
- VP Professionals.....Sharon Belle-Render
- VP Membership.....Sara DiDonato
- VP Retiree Concerns.....Herb Fink
- VP Part-time Concerns.....Paul Schreiner
- VP Publishing.....Brittany Profit-Rheinwald
- VP REOC (Academics).....Diana Wong
- VP REOC (Professionals).....Lisa Gerst
- Treasurer.....Danny Too

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NYSUT Member Benefits... more than just insurance!

As an additional benefit to NYSUT members and their families, your union membership allows you to participate in more than 40 programs & services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits.

These offerings include crucial products that you may already purchase such as life, auto & homeowners insurance, unbiased financial services and expert legal advice. But your NYSUT membership also allows you to participate in a variety of shopping, travel and personal programs that can help you save on everyday purchases and those special occasions.



Our endorsed shopping/travel/personal programs offer savings on numerous online purchases, including:

**Theme Park & Movie Tickets
Hotel & Vacation Discounts
Car & Truck Rentals**

**Office Supply Discounts
Retail Store Discounts
Concerts & Sporting Events**

**Electronics Discounts
Ski Tickets
Car Buying Service**

Participation in Member Benefits-endorsed programs also gives you a trusted advocate ready to assist you with any issues or concerns with any of our programs.

Member Appreciation Month coming in February 2018!

As a show of thanks to the more than 600,000 NYSUT members that comprise this labor union, NYSUT Member Benefits will once again be holding our annual Member Appreciation Month celebration in February 2018.

Special prize drawings will be held each day of the month. To be eligible to win, you must be a member of our voluntary MAP Alert email service.

Sign up any time through the end of February 2018 to be eligible to win... but if you join MAP by January 31, 2018, you'll have the most chances to win!

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call **800-626-8101**.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.