



The Bullhorn

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



October, 2006

Volume 2, Issue 1

We Did It: More Tenure-Track Faculty

By Glenn McNitt, UUP Chapter President

The year 2005-06 was an interesting one. In a refreshing development, the newly appointed Chancellor John Ryan and the Board of Trustees endorsed the UUP's call for more tenure track faculty—"to make a good University Great." The UUP Legislation Committee, which I chair, established the union's number one priority to be hiring more tenure track faculty. Campus presidents around the State, including Stephen Poskanzer, asserted that hiring new tenure track faculty is essential to improving the quality of instruction and research. The New Paltz Chapter, which for years has urged the Campus Administration to increase the number of tenure

track faculty rather than relying on more part-time or non-tenure faculty members, continued to push for more tenure track positions. This consistent and fundamental theme pushed by all these groups and actors was acknowledged and fully supported by the Legislature.

We got just what we asked for—more new faculty at New Paltz and other SUNY campuses. After a challenging year of great lobbying work by UUP members in Albany and in local legislative districts around the State, the New York State Legislature added \$25 million specifically for "enrollment

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Salary Gap Has Grown Adjuncts Down, President Up

By Peter D.G. Brown, UUP Chapter Vice President for Academics

Over the summer, I conducted research into how adjunct wages, when adjusted for inflation, have evolved over the past 35 years at SUNY New Paltz. With the assistance of the late Dennis O'Keefe, who helped me to locate the historic records hidden deep within the bowels of the Sojourner Truth Library, I compared what an adjunct without a Ph.D. was paid for teaching a three-credit course back in 1970 to what was paid in 2005.

Using a standard inflation calculator, I then converted the 1970 salary into 2005 dollars. I also looked at how annual salaries, adjusted for

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The Logic of Lectureships

Peter D.G. Brown, UUP Chapter Vice President for Academics

The rank of lecturer is something to which a large number of our members aspire. Indeed, for many of our part-time adjuncts it represents something of a holy grail: a full-time position albeit without tenure, often with a multi-year contract, full benefits and a minimum current starting salary of \$32,380. Full-time lecturers teach a heavier course load than their tenure-track colleagues. However, they are not usually expected to provide any advising, research or service, unless granted course release time for such extra activities.

Lectureships are ideal for anyone who may be waiting for a tenure-track position to emerge, or who may not be interested in, or fully qualified, for one. Unlike the near-poverty level compensation paid to part-time adjuncts, currently around \$2,500 per three-credit course, full-time lecturers actually make a modest living wage. Lectureships promote stability within the faculty, they strengthen institutional loyalty, improve continuity and greater out-of-class access for our students. Ask any lecturer how s/he feels when finally able to move up to one of these prized spots after languishing for many years as an underpaid, part-time adjunct.

Lectureships are ideal for anyone who may be waiting for a tenure-track position to emerge

Unfortunately, the number of lectureships at SUNY New Paltz is currently limited to no more than sixty for the entire campus. Why is there such a strong reluctance to expand the number of these positions? What is there *not* to like about lectureships?

It seems that the administration, instead of creating more full-time lectureships, would rather economize by employing hundreds of part-time adjuncts, since they receive far less per course than lecturers do. In the past, the UUP has been reluctant to push for expanding the number of lectureships, focusing instead on increasing the number of tenure-track positions.

While this goal is certainly laudable, the practical result has been an ever-growing number of courses taught by part-time teachers, who until recently were limited to teaching only two courses per semester. Now that the two-course limit has been lifted and the percentage of courses taught by part-time faculty has been capped at the current level, it makes sense to gradually reduce the number of part-timers by hiring more tenure-track faculty *and* increasing the number of full-time lectureships.

It is important to work toward policies that best serve our students and the members of the bargaining unit. The data that have been collected thus far clearly show that a substantial number of adjuncts are interested in obtaining full-time positions, with or without traditional tenure. A 2005 survey conducted by Russell Karasik, Ph.D. (Psychology), which polled almost one-fifth of the adjuncts teaching here, indicated that 64% of them “desire a full-time teaching position at SUNY New Paltz if one were available.” Similarly, a statewide survey conducted by the UUP in January of this year, which polled 4% of its part-time members throughout the SUNY system, showed that 47% would accept a full-time teaching position if offered one. Clearly, there is a strong desire on the part of our adjuncts for more full-time positions, even if they are lectureships without traditional tenure.

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Lectureships: Hardly the Ideal

Maryann Fallek, UUP Delegate

Every campus needs some contingent labor: part-timers and lecturers with invaluable expertise and backgrounds that enrich the academic environment and experience. The vast majority of part-timers on any campus neither wants nor needs to work full-time. But a small percentage of part-timers seek full-time employment as lecturers. According to a statewide survey conducted by the UUP in January 2006, only 21% of the part-timers are “pursing [sic] a full time academic position.” Nevertheless, the efforts of those seeking full-time work are understood, appreciated and supported. But their exploitation is not.

Currently, there are 60 lectureships on this campus—47 of which are not tenure-track. What does it mean to be a lecturer on most campuses?

Lectureships are another level of exploitation:

- Course load

On this campus, lecturers can be assigned 5 courses EACH semester. Full-time tenure track instructors typically teach 3 courses each semester.

- Salary

Lecturers are a source of cheap labor for the administration. Yes, their starting minimum salary is \$32,380, but look at their job description. The Administration exploits contract and other non-tenure track employees to lower their costs. On this campus, lecturers generally earn between \$3,238 and \$4,000 for each of the 8-10 courses assigned. For the same course, a beginning full-time tenure track instructor characteristically would earn between \$7000 and \$9,000. Lecturers usually have service requirements, as well. Thus, a lecturer is doing similar work for less than half the money

- Diminished job security, professional respect and due process rights.

Lecturers, like part-timers, are contingent labor, experiencing a continuous probationary status that takes a personal and professional toll on them. When do lecturers further develop their professional expertise and interests? When do they advise their students? When do they plan their lessons? When do they keep current in their disciplines? Beyond a few general procedural rules governing sequence, contracts of contingent employees can be voided without explanation or justification.

UUP advocates on behalf of all workers—contingent and tenured/permanently appointed faculty. In fact, UUP’s promotion and protection of tenure/permanent appointment for full time workers benefits everyone. Studies from the

As a union, UUP must not stand idly by as tenure and permanent appointment dwindle to become the prerogative of a privileged few.

National Education Association (NEA) Resource Center conclude that the existence of tenure attracts quality candidates for open positions primarily because it offers both job security and due process, protects academic and intellectual freedom, promises reasonable course loads and provides better salaries. Permanent faculty generally are shown to be more fully credentialed, more engaged in the life of the institution and more involved in professional research and publishing. According to NEA

Hardly Ideal continued on Page 10

Compensation for UUP Members

by Glenn McNitt, UUP Chapter President

Compensation is the word today. There are complaints of unfair compensation from many quarters within the University-- from part-timers, both long- and short-, from new academic and professional faculty, from librarians, and from senior faculty and professional faculty. Let's look at the situation.

One of the primary responsibilities of any union is to advance the financial well-being of its members. Surely, there should be greater salary increases for all within the union—professionals, academics, librarians, junior and senior members, and part-timers too. Everyone wants and deserves more money, after all.

Compensation is not unrelated to tenure, of course. Over the last two decades, tenured faculty who retired were replaced not by other tenure-track

faculty as had been the practice for decades, but instead by part-time adjuncts. The percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty fell to its current level, about 50%. Over the years, the salary levels of both tenured and non-tenure faculty fell also. For the UUP membership to advance, each of us as members accepts the notion that we collectively should provide job security and advance financially together. Pitting each of us against one another works to the advantage of management, and it disadvantages UUP employees. Let's focus on New Paltz compensation problems.

Let's face it. SUNY employees are under-paid. All of us have been pushed to do more, to do it for a longer day and week, and to do it without complaint or additional compensation.

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Develop Yourself!

With a Professional Development Award

The Development Awards Program is designed to support a variety of professional development projects or activities by assisting eligible employees to develop their full professional potential and to prepare for advancement. All full or part time SUNY employees in the UUP Bargaining unit are eligible for awards of up to \$1000. These awards can be used for a variety of development purposes including:

- \$ Registration fees for conferences or workshops
- \$ Travel and related expenses (includes lodging and meals)
- \$ Research support (e.g., computer time, network access or support, clerical support)
- \$ Equipment lease or purchase
- \$ Tuition costs (at the maximum allowable SUNY rate at the time of application)
- \$ Supplies such as books or software

Applications and more details are available on line at
<http://www.uup.lmc.state.ny.us./development/individual.html>
 Deadline: October 19th



The Challenge Is On!



REGISTER STUDENTS TO VOTE

In 2004 the UUP collaborated with the SUNY Student Assembly, the New York State Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), and Rock the Vote to sponsor a statewide SUNY student voter registration competition.

Guess who won: WE DID! 1,772 new student voters were registered at SUNY New Paltz and 20,000 were registered statewide. New Paltz was recognized for our victory with a free concert and a celebration event that brought State Senators, Assembly members and Congressman Maurice Hinchey as well as representatives from the Governor's office and the SUNY Chancellor's office.

Our level of political mobilization brings not only recognition for the campus, but it makes elected officials aware of the power we have. It is perhaps not surprising that, following this impressive showing, New Paltz has done very well at securing funding for campus infrastructure projects.

Now, the 2006 SUNY Voter Empowerment Challenge is on, so...LET'S DO IT AGAIN!!!

Here's what you can do:

- ✓ **Allow a NYPIRG representative to make a brief presentation in your class**
Call the NYPIRG office at x3085 and let them know that you are willing to have a representative come to class and register voters
- ✓ **Make students aware of their right and responsibility to participate in the political process**
This year is the 35th anniversary of the passage of the 26th Amendment to the Constitution, which gave 18-20 year olds the right to vote. Let your students know that their predecessors fought for the right to have a voice and to honor their struggle by exercising their right to vote.
- ✓ **Educate students about the importance of exercising political power through voting**
Two things motivate elected leaders: financial contributions and votes. Given that students typically lack financial resources, the best way for them to have their voices heard is by voting. Even if students don't all vote the same way (this is a non-partisan campaign) by registering en masse they send a message to all political candidates that SUNY's needs must be addressed.
- ✓ **Encourage your students to register and vote locally**
Students have the right to register and vote locally, even if they live in the residence halls on campus. Registering locally makes voting easier and thus more likely. It also concentrates their power as SUNY New Paltz constituents as opposed to diffusing that power to locations scattered around the state. Of course, some may have particular reasons for voting in their parents' district, but in general, it is preferable for students to vote locally.

The UUP and the Student Leader Suspensions

By Brian Obach, UUP Delegate

There has been some debate regarding the role of the UUP in light of the recent student leader suspensions. The positions taken correspond with competing strategies in American labor history. One, often referred to as a “business union” approach, corresponds to the first position presented below, one in which unions should remain focused on the specific interests of their members and in which union officers and staff handle the “business” of defending member interests through bargaining, negotiations and grievance procedures. This is the model adopted by most unions in the United States for most of our history. It served a segment of workers very well for several decades, although some argue that the decline of unions today and their failure to raise standards for workers more generally can be attributed to this narrowly focused strategy. The second perspective, a “social union” approach, is a broader class based strategy in which unions serve as the leading political voice for workers and oppressed people in general. This strategy typically corresponds with greater grassroots participation, engagement with a wider range of issues and alliances with groups other than labor organizations. I present both of these perspectives below in relation to the student leader suspensions.

Unions Should Focus Exclusively on Defending the Interests of Their Members: A Business Union Perspective

The role of unions is to protect the interests of their members at the workplace. Unions are designed to advance the interests of the members who belong to and who fund the organization. This mission is carried out primarily through the collective bargaining and grievance procedures. We bargain to secure a contract that provides us with the greatest possible compensation and we utilize contractually negotiated procedures to ensure that our rights at the workplace are protected. Unions should also engage in political activity when the issues they address are directly tied to our work related interests, but broader issues should be avoided. Engaging with issues that extend beyond the specific interests of our members risks creating divisions among members who may not share exactly the same views.

Business Union continued next page

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Unions Should Seek to Advance Social Justice Broadly Defined: A Social Union Perspective

The role of unions is to advance a more just society for all people. Of course unions seek to advance the interests of their own members through collective bargaining, but unions are also the main vehicles through which working people are able to challenge powerful corporate and state actors and to help create a society characterized by fairness and equality, not corruption, exploitation and inequality. This is why unions are very involved in struggles for policies such as universal health care and Social Security protection. Even though our own union members may already have health benefits and a retirement pension, we seek to improve the society as a whole and not to narrowly advance only the interests of our members.

Social Union continued next page

Business Unionism

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In regard to the recent controversy surrounding the suspension of the student government leaders the only role for the UUP is to ensure that our members are protected. Several UUP members report that they felt harassed by some student government leaders and one UUP professional brought charges against three of the students. Much like a lawyer hired to represent a client, it is not the place of the union to question the claims of a member who brings such charges, nor do we have any role in protecting the rights of the accused students. It is the union's role to pressure the administration to take any necessary action to ensure the safety of our own members.

The union has no formal role in enforcing campus rules unrelated to our contract nor does it have a role in the campus judicial process under which the harassment case is considered. That is an issue between students and the administration. If the students believe that they are not guilty or that there were irregularities in the process, they have appeals procedures and legal avenues to pursue their interests. But the union has no interest in involving itself or even commenting on the issue beyond insisting that our members are able to work in a safe environment free of harassment. If anything, the administration should be applauded for taking decisive action in defense of our members.

Social Unionism

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In regard to the recent controversy surrounding the suspension of the student government leaders the UUP should ensure that our members have access to the mechanisms designed to protect workers at the workplace, including the ability to bring charges and to have those charges adjudicated. But we also have an interest in ensuring that the judicial procedures used for our members, for students or for anyone else in the campus community or beyond, are transparent and fair. Of course we will defend the rights of our members to a safe work environment and for their ability to utilize campus procedures to ensure that protection. But if there is evidence that the students in question have been treated unfairly, we have a duty to speak out and to demand accountability.

The union has no formal role within the campus judicial process, but we must be vigilant in opposing any abuse of authority. If students can be unfairly targeted, then faculty can be as well. If any individual, be it a student, a faculty member or an administrator, engages in inappropriate or abusive behavior they should be held accountable and dealt with accordingly. But we must all ensure that the procedures used in reaching that conclusion are transparent and fair. The UUP must protect the interests of its members, and the best way to do that is to advance the cause of justice for everyone and to oppose the abuse of authority by anyone.

New Paltz Chapter UUP Officers 2005-2007

President:	Glenn McNitt	x2770
Vice President for Academics:	Peter Brown	x3492
Vice President for Professionals:	Richard Kelder	x2670
Vice President for Part-Timers:	Victor DeMunck	x2985
Treasurer:	Jeff Miller	x3934
Grievance Officer:	Larry Fialkow	x3536
Secretary:	Phyllis Sturm	x3136

Count Me In...How About You?

A Report from the American Federation of Teachers Convention

By Maryann Fallek, UUP Delegate

For a few days in July, nearly 4000 elected delegates met in Boston for the 79th American Federation of Teachers Convention. The "Count Me In," theme of the gathering advanced the AFT goal of activating its members. During the Convention, delegates were given information about and encouraged to address a variety of national and international issues and concerns. Frankly, it was impossible to leave Boston without caring more about one or more of those issues or concerns. Moreover, not only were the delegates energized to do more but they were also motivated to encourage others in their local unions to be more proactive. We were asked to consider more than ourselves, more than just our own backyards or communities; we were encouraged and empowered to be more involved with national and international issues. "Count me in..." How about you?

Three Highlights of the Convention for me...

- We listened to several political candidates for the House of Representatives. At first glance, those of us here at SUNY New Paltz, might not be interested or care much about Congressional campaigns in Connecticut or Colorado. But as we learned in Boston, we should be interested and involved, because the political leadership in Washington impacts us all. We heard from two especially impressive House of Representatives candidates: Democratic Candidate for the 4th District in Connecticut, Diane Farrell (<http://www.farrellforcongress.com/>) and Democratic Candidate for the 4th District in Colorado, Angie Paccione (<http://www.angie2006.com/>). Visit their websites to find out more about these two candidates. While you certainly won't agree with them on every issue, you might actually become motivated to help their campaigns in some way.
- We listened to Han Dongfang, who spent 22 months in a Chinese prison cell for his participation in the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests. He continues his struggle to inform others about labor rights violations and to achieve freedom for "prisoners of conscience" in China and other parts of the world. One of the poignant moments in Han Dongfang's presentation came as he told us when he first understood the importance of support from others. He talked about finally realizing why he had not been killed in prison: precisely because so many other people in the world had made it known that they cared about what happened to him. We can and do make a positive difference.
- Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy and others spoke to us about supporting an increase in the national minimum wage. It is unconscionable that in this country, a person can work full time and still be poor, that someone who works full time does not make a living wage.
 - A person working full time earning the current federal minimum wage of \$5.15/hour, earns about \$10,712 annually.
 - The 2006 federal poverty line is \$16,660 for a family of three. According to the Economic Policy Institute, a single parent with two children needs an annual income of at least \$14,177.
 - The federal minimum wage has not increased in nine years, not since September 1, 1997. During that same period a Congressional representative's salary has increased by \$32,000.
 - Over 20 states have minimum wages that are higher than the national minimum wage. New York State will increase its minimum wage (currently \$6.75/hour) to \$7.25/hour on January 1, 2007.

Count continued on next page

Count

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There is proposed national legislation that calls for a gradual increase in the national minimum wage to \$7.25 by 2008. This legislative bill cannot get the necessary support in Congress to become federal law. But we can change that: tell your (and other) representatives in Washington that this issue matters to you and that you want them to support this bill to raise the minimum wage. We cannot let them get away with this.

The AFT Convention underlined the fact that there is much about which to care and to act on. In addition to the above issues, our support was

sought for: withdrawal of all troops, bases and military operations in Iraq, the campaign for free exchange of ideas on campus (our opposition to the so-called "Academic Bill of Rights"), Darfur victims in the Sudan, Gulf Coast victims of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, the Special Olympics, striking nurses at Englewood (NJ) Hospital and Medical Center, the boycott of Wal-Mart and patronization of union stores, expanded health care, reasonable means for achieving permanent residence for current undocumented workers, and workplace rights, including the right of all workers to organize...

Count me in...How about you?

Tenure

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growth and creation of full-time tenure track faculty" at state-operated campuses. Those funds were targeted for additional faculty lines, over and above the \$150 million for the operating budget, a \$30 million additional energy appropriation, and the return of appropriations that had been diverted from some campuses, including New Paltz, a few years ago.

As anyone who knows New York state politics could attest, the successful budget increases for SUNY came largely as a result of the efforts of UUP and its participating members. Indicative of the growing power of the UUP, the budget increase proposed by the Governor, originally a paltry \$4.2 million, was replaced by a non-capital budget of over \$200 million. The Legislature's overrides which enacted the Legislative budget favorable to SUNY, reflected the influence, prestige, and enthusiasm of UUP's leadership and members.

During a normal year, the number of tenure track

faculty hired at New Paltz is typically 17 or 18, largely for the replacement of faculty leaving the college. This year, 32 new faculty members were hired, including four lecturers, and two additional tenure line faculty who will join the college in the spring. It is likely that more tenure-track faculty will be hired next year, with an estimated 50 new lines under consideration. These plans will begin to restore the imbalance between tenure track and non-tenure track faculty at New Paltz, moving toward the UUP goal of 70% full-time, tenure track faculty. Moreover, nine new professional faculty, four hired in the summer and five more to be hired this fall, are joining our staff as well.

This may be the beginning of a new period for SUNY, one in which employees can regain the full protections job security, academic freedom and due process in employment contexts. These protections accompany tenure and are supported by UUP's negotiated contract and they can only be secured through our diligent effort to protect our members' security, health, fair treatment and labor rights. Come join us this fall and spring as we, once again, work on behalf of our members and SUNY.

Lecture Logic

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Cortland serves as a model in that their full-time lecturers are expected to teach only four courses per semester, as opposed to the oppressive requirement at New Paltz that our lecturers teach ten courses a year. The excessive course-load here inevitably results in diminished academic quality and an accelerated burnout rate for overworked lecturers.

Another model is contained in the new Professional Staff Congress (the City University of New York's equivalent of the UUP) contract that was agreed to in April by CUNY, New York City and the State. In what appears to be a national breakthrough, the agreement creates 100 new full-time lecturer positions, for which only experienced CUNY adjuncts will be eligible to apply. The application process will be as usual, through the department and college faculty committees, but the new lines mark the first time CUNY will move in the direction of converting part-time positions to full-time ones, instead of the other way around. Nationally, this makes their contract one of the few in higher education that creates new full-time positions and goes against the grain of increasing part-time labor.

Similarly, if New Paltz were to institute full-time lectureships for which only our currently employed part-time adjuncts could apply, these would function as promotions for those who have already proven their value to the institution.

It is time that New Paltz's contingent faculty stop being forced to teach either too few or too many courses. As long as hundreds of our courses are taught by teachers not on a tenure track, we should increase the number of full-time lectureships to improve the academic quality for our students, while reducing the level of exploitation for our contingent colleagues.

Hardly Ideal

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stated policy, "Tenure, academic due process, and faculty self-governance promote stability, continuity, and a scholarly environment on campus...The excessive use of academic appointments on temporary, non-tenure track, and/or multiple long-term contracts undermines academic and intellectual freedom, tenure, governance, and educational quality. Faculty who are subjected to lengthy or continuous probationary status are less likely ever to exercise freely their rights as citizens..." Tenure supports those who speak truth to power.

As Harold Meyerson has written, "devaluing labor" has become the essence of American economy, even in academe. Work does not pay; nor does it provide any security. Lecturers are no exception. Lecturers, like part-timers, are exploited: they lack job security and due process rights; their professional assignments are grueling and salaries substandard. While some may consider lecturers less exploited than part-time employees, lecturers are exploited nonetheless. They work full-time (teaching 8 to 10 courses per year and meeting departmental service requirements) without due process, job security and grievance rights. As stated in NEA policy, contingent employees work "...under conditions that often place at risk the value of the education being provided to their students."

Giving the work of this university to abused contingent labor must be resisted. Do we want to be the City University of New York (CUNY) and the Professional Staff Congress (PSC)—coping with the consequences of having over 72% of their faculty being contingent? UUP must continue its demand that all exploitation of contingent workers end and that all full-time workers on this campus have the opportunity to earn the rights and benefits of tenure or permanent appointment. As a union, UUP must not stand idly by as tenure and permanent appointment dwindle to become the prerogative of a privileged few.

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Hardly Ideal

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A union must advocate for continuing appointment for full-time workers; they should be doing the predominate work of the university. For example, if there are eight or ten courses that need to be taught, at least one, probably two, full-time tenure-track persons should be sought and selected. Why would the Administration create and hire full-time tenure-track faculty when they instead can hire instructors who teach more courses for less money and can be summarily dismissed? The Administration uses contingent labor to reduce tenure-track and permanent appointment lines. This divisive strategy also erodes UUP's solidarity and capacity to make a positive difference.

UUP is a union, a union that represents lecturers, as well as part-time employees and full-time tenured and permanently appointed faculty. UUP's priority is to unite these members in the struggle to obtain equal protection and equal opportunity. Bringing people together requires goals and means that are principled, visionary and equitable.

Salary Gap

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inflation, had evolved for a typical beginning assistant professor, as well as for the college president (see table below).

I was surprised by the startling results of my research, which showed that, despite occasional gains, real wages for part-time instructors at this college have plummeted by more than 50% in the past 35 years. During this same period, the starting salary for a tenure-track assistant professor fell by only 13%, while the SUNY New Paltz president's salary increased by 35%.

It should be noted that during this same period of declining real wages, the UUP was able to secure substantial additional benefits for adjuncts teaching at least two courses per semester. These include retirement and health insurance benefits, which are among the best in the nation.

While this research was limited to New Paltz, I suspect that a similar trend exists on other SUNY campuses. I would hope that researchers at other colleges could ascertain whether this trend indeed extends throughout the entire SUNY system.

Historic wage statistics for SUNY New Paltz:

	1970	1970 (in 2005 \$)	2005	Change
Course by p-t Lecturer (without Ph.D.)	\$1,000	\$5,038	\$2,476	-51%
Starting Asst. Prof. (typical)	\$10,500	\$52,89	\$46,000	-13%
College President (actual)	\$32,300	\$162,727	\$220,000	+35%

[Source: New Paltz Salary Printouts, 9/1970 and 9/2005. Inflation Calculator by S. Morgan Friedman, <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>. The pre-1975 data are the Consumer Price Index statistics from *Historical Statistics of the United States*, USGPO, 1975. All data since then are from the annual *Statistical Abstracts of the United States*.]

Why Counter Counter Culture?

By Brian Obach, UUP Delegate

Much to the dismay of the administration, SUNY New Paltz was recently named among the top 10 “counter culture colleges.” It did not help that *High Times Magazine*, a publication serving marijuana aficionados, bestowed this recognition. The administration has long sought to distance the college from its counterculture roots, and the college’s public relations office sought to dismiss this dubious distinction.

But should we shun this image? The counter culture rankings were based upon drug reform activism, not drug use or availability. And we should be proud that we have a tradition of activism. It demonstrates engaged citizenship on the part of our students, something that we, in most cases, encourage. It is not uncommon for counter-cultural trappings (marijuana use, dread locks, piercings etc.) to correspond with political activism. There is no causal connection between political engagement and counter culture identities, but these two factors are not unrelated. The common variable that helps to explain this spurious correlation is critical thinking ability. Critical thinkers tend to be politically engaged because they are able to recognize the problems and contradictions within the dominant social order; problems such as persistent racism, the oppression of women, extremes of economic inequality, militarism etc.

Some (but obviously not all) students with these critical thinking capabilities occasionally challenge convention in other ways as well, and this is where we see resistance in the form of clothing and musical styles as well as, in some cases, drug experimentation. Just as critical thinkers are likely to challenge conventional beliefs about the causes of poverty, the motivation for the war in Iraq or the threats posed by immigration, in some cases, they may challenge the validity of claims regarding drug policy or drug use.

While I personally would prefer to see more activist energy directed towards causes other than drug policy reform, the arguments raised



by campus drug reform advocates are not without merit and they demonstrate the critical thinking capabilities of our students. Many people believe that the billions of dollars spent on the incarceration of non-violent drug offenders would be better spent on drug treatment for those who need it and on the pursuit of violent criminal offenders who represent a real threat to our social well being. Many respected thinkers support drug policy reform from, conservative commentator William F. Buckley to former Surgeon General, Joycelyn Elders.

In terms of our campus reputation, our counter-culture image is not only compatible with critically thinking, high achieving students, it may actually help to bolster our academic credentials. New Paltz was listed as a counter-cultural center along other prestigious institutions such as Brown University and the University of California at Santa Barbara. Smart people want to go where interesting things are happening and our counter-cultural attributes make New Paltz an interesting place. When I was deciding on where to enroll in graduate school, I visited several campuses. At the University of Wisconsin I encountered student protesters, dreadlocked street performers, coffee shops populated with leftover beatniks, food coops, vegetarian restaurants and, yes, even some stores selling marijuana paraphernalia. None of this deterred me and much of it convinced me that Madison would be an interesting place to study and learn. I suspect the same is true for many of our recruits.

Counter Culture continued on next page

Counter Culture

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We may not want to feature the student drug policy reform movement on the cover of our promotional material. And of course we should have policies and programs to address drug abuse (and alcohol abuse, which represents a far greater problem on any college campus). But we should not be ashamed of our counter-culture identity. Efforts to squelch this reputation are not likely to work. It is very doubtful that our relatively harsh campus drug policy has done anything to reduce drug use. And it has clearly served as a rallying point for drug reform advocates, making them even more prominent on our campus.

When confronted in the media or elsewhere about our counter-culture image, we should emphasize the positive. Yes, we do have many critically thinking, politically engaged students. They are active not only in drug policy reform efforts, but also in fighting for environmental protection, gender equality, immigrant rights and many other important social causes. We need not deny our counter culture identity, but to embrace and be proud of its most important aspects.

Compensation

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By most standards, the New Paltz academic and professional faculty are not compensated adequately for the work that they do. Nor are part-timers adequately compensated, compared to the salaries at some other institutions in the Mid-Hudson region. In some instances, the increases in compensation should be ten thousand dollars or more for academics, for professional staff five thousand or so, and for adjuncts maybe two thousand or more per course. There is an unacceptable gap between the salaries earned by New Paltz employees and the salaries they deserve. It isn't just part-timers who are being paid unfairly. The State of New York has not been forthcoming in meeting its responsibilities to SUNY and its members for a decade or more. The New York State government has underfunded the State University.

This year, SUNY received increased funding, most notably for new tenure-track lines. But all of us must continue to encourage our local legislators to support increased funding for SUNY. Contact the Chapter Office to facilitate a meeting with our legislators. Let's continue to make our case with Albany.

Mark Your Calendar!

Upcoming UUP Events

Contract Negotiations Meeting

Learn about our upcoming contract negotiations and let the negotiations team know what YOU want.

October 16th Noon to 2:00
Terrace Restaurant

Benefits Meeting with Doreen Bango, UUP's Benefits Manager

What are your benefits? How can you make maximum use of them? Come find out from a UUP benefits expert.

November 8th Noon to 2:00
Terrace Restaurant

UUP's Year End Gathering

Have a drink! Meet friends! Celebrate the end of the semester!

December 12th 4:30 to 7:00
Terrace Restaurant

Lest we forget...

By Maryann Fallek, UUP Delegate

The following information about the New Orleans region, one year after the storms, is taken from an August 27 article in *The Washington Post* written by staff writer Catharine Skipp in Miami and researchers Rena Kirsch and Julie Tat:

Did you know...

- Less than half of the population of New Orleans has returned to their city.
- Today, only 20,000 people live in adjacent St Bernard Parish compared to the pre-storm's population of 65,000.
- 124,000 homes were destroyed or made uninhabitable by the storms. Fewer than 5% of these homes along the Gulf Coast have been rebuilt.
- While the federal government has spent \$5.7 billion on repairing New Orleans levees, these repaired levees are not expected to withstand the impact of Category 4 or 5 hurricanes.
- Jobs have disappeared. There are 30% fewer jobs available in the region.
- The federal government plans to spend more than \$107 Billion on the area's recovery. But a year after the storms, the clean-up, alone, is not complete. For example, one third of the trash caused by the storms in New Orleans still needs to be picked up.

The Washington Post looked closely at one typical middle class New Orleans East street, Beechwood Court, where 18 families, most of them African-American, had lived. Before the storms, there were nice homes with yards and trees, a community swimming pool and tennis courts, everyone worked and most had flood insurance. A year after the storm, this street and neighborhood remain devastated. There are few people, no stores, no gas

stations, few street lights, limited fire and police protection, no local rebuilding plan, closed public schools and widespread fear of another disastrous hurricane.

In talking to family members from 15 of the 18 Beechwood Court households one year after the storms, *The Washington Post* found that:

- Only five families plan to return to Beechwood Court before the new year
- The ten other relocated families have no plans to return and eight of those ten already have bought homes elsewhere or say it is unlikely that they will return to Beechwood Court. The other two families are still hoping for enough federal aid to rebuild their homes.
- Only one family has moved back to their home on Beechwood Court.

We cannot stand by and let this happen. Act as if it matters, because it does.

The Bullhorn

The opinions expressed in the *Bullhorn* are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the United University Professions.

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Article Submissions and Letters to the Editor

If you have an idea for an article please contact Brian Obach at obach@newpaltz.edu. All UUP members are welcome to submit letters to the editor. Letters should be no longer than 150 words. They should be sent as an attachment in Word format to the above e-mail address.