



The Bullhorn

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



ELECTION ISSUE

March, 2007

Unions and Democracy

Unions are among the most democratic institutions in society. While some occasionally criticize unions for not being more democratic (and such criticism is sometimes valid), by most standards unions are highly democratic. Ironically, such criticism often comes from employers who, in most cases, enjoy autocratic control over the workplace with no hint of democracy. We in academia are relatively privileged to have a shared governance system with vestiges of democratic decision making. But even here, faculty “decisions” are usually just recommendations that may or may not be accepted by the final unelected decision makers.

Despite our national commitment to democracy, real democratic processes are rare. Within our economy some speak of the “sovereign consumer” and our right to express our preferences by “voting with our dollars.” But we all know that dollars are not fairly distributed, and that the notion of one-dollar-one-vote is a twisted perversion of true democratic ideals.

And sadly, our national electoral system is infected with this type of corruption. Some presidential candidates have already withdrawn from the process, not because their ideas were unpopular with the voting public, but because they were unable to raise the money necessary to compete effectively in the increasingly costly run up to the primaries. In essence, those with the money to fund campaigns are already “voting with their dollars”, and ordinary voters will be left to choose only among those whom wealthy contributors have pre-selected.

Even many voluntary civil society organizations, from bowling leagues to social clubs to religious

institutions, lack truly democratic processes. Thus, relative to most social institutions, unions are beacons of democracy.

This is not to say that all unions are truly democratic or that we should not continuously strive to be more democratic. But fortunately for us, the United University Professions is a highly democratic union. As UUP members we vote directly for our representatives at the chapter level in an open, transparent and fair process. Elected officers and delegates from the chapter then vote for statewide officials at Delegate Assemblies where chapters are represented in proportion to their local membership.

While spending money to “campaign” is not forbidden, it is certainly not necessary given the size of a local chapter. Any member can be nominated or nominate themselves and then appear on the official ballot. The union even provides this free forum for any nominee to share their platform.

Democracy does not mean consensus, and there are bound to be policy decisions made with which not everyone will agree. But we can all agree that the opportunity to express our voice, to elect our representatives or even to run for office ourselves is preferable to the undemocratic alternative of autocratic rule. UUP members should be proud to be part of an organization that truly seeks to advance collective interests through democratic processes, and it is not just our right, but our duty to let our voices be heard.

We hope that the enclosed candidate statements will help you to make an informed decision and that you will cast your vote using the ballot that you will soon receive at home via US Mail.

-Brian Obach, Editor

Candidate Statements

Each UUP chapter candidate was allowed to write a 150-word statement regarding their candidacy. The statements below are listed alphabetically according to name within each office category. For some offices there is only one candidate nominated. Voters are allowed to write in candidates on the ballot.

Chapter President

Glenn McNitt

As it should be, UUP Officers run for election every two years, and I ask for your support for re-election as Chapter President. While I accept complete responsibility when things go wrong, I also am proud to be part of many union accomplishments made during the last two years, including:

- Protecting the work day for professionals,
- Ensuring fire and safety violations are addressed,
- Defending due process for term and tenure-track faculty,
- Addressing inequity issues for full- and part-time employees,
- Supporting an electronic newsletter,
- Placing HUM, JFT, & LC air-conditioning on the construction agenda,
- Urging protection from work-place harassment,
- Enforcing Contract compliance,
- Facilitating input to Negotiations,
- Coordinating Mid-Hudson Vote/Cope activities, and
- Securing essential state funds through advocacy in Albany.

UUP New Paltz works for every constituency, and I ask for your continued support. Thank you for permitting me to serve our members. I pledge my best efforts to each of you.

Vice President for Academics

Peter D. G. Brown

During my first term, I promised to represent ALL academics, including the majority of our teachers here who are part-timers and adjuncts. They are the lowest paid members of our union with no job security whatsoever. Working with colleagues from across the College, we capped the overall percentage of courses being taught by adjuncts, while now permitting them to teach more than the previous two-course limit. I also worked with members of the Part-time Concerns Committee to fashion a procedure whereby adjuncts can now have a fair chance at receiving discretionary salary increases (DSI). For most of the past decade, I have been advocating for the installation of central air conditioning in the Humanities building, which the College administration is now finally installing this year. If elected, my priorities include working at the local and statewide level toward salary equity for adjuncts and a wage step system for all employees.

Vice President for Professionals

Richard Kelder

As UUP Vice President for Professionals, I will work to strengthen the role of professionals within the union and encourage the active involvement of our members. Professionals need to establish a strong voice in order to ensure that their issues and concerns do not go unnoticed by the UUP leadership. To that end, I will advocate for more professional development and promotional opportunities, the creation of new job titles, the family leave program, and the use of our College Review Panel. Currently, I am working to improve the evaluation policies and procedures for professionals on campus. Finally, I will continue to be available to address issues and concerns of individual members and ensure that all professionals are treated fairly by supervisors and administrators and, if necessary, receive UUP representation to resolve issues or file grievances.

Vice-President for Part-Time Concerns

Yvonne Aspengren

For the past two years I have served as Academic Delegate and member of the Part-Time Concerns Committee. I am asking for your support to continue in the position of Delegate; in addition, I am a candidate for Vice President for Part-Time Concerns.

Attending Executive Committee and chapter meetings, Delegate Assemblies and Leadership Training, I have become increasingly aware of the unique as well as common concerns of our membership. As Delegate, I intend to represent the needs of all our members as best I can.

As an adjunct instructor I fully appreciate the issues with which our part-time members struggle: low wages, lack of job security, little opportunity for advancement and a feeling of invisibility. If elected Vice President for Part-Time Concerns, I will continue to bring attention to the plight of adjuncts and, with the help of the dedicated committee members, build on the good work already begun.

Secretary

Jeff Crane

I have been teaching as an adjunct in the Art and Art History Departments at New Paltz since the fall of 2000.

The past two years, I have served on the Executive Committee as an Alternate Delegate. As a member of the Part-Time Concerns Committee, I worked to eliminate the two-course cap and to make DSI available to adjuncts. I have attended several Delegate Assemblies, two UUP Leadership Training Workshops, and am an active member of the Steering Committee of the Statewide UUP Coalition for Contingent Faculty. I am committed to the goal of equity for all faculty members.

I will continue to work toward building a more responsive and inclusive Chapter and Union. As Secretary, I will be punctual, attentive and will provide an accurate record of proceedings. As Delegate, I will do my part to build a union that fights for the interests of ALL of its members.

Linda K. Smith

I am asking for the opportunity to serve as Secretary for the New Paltz Chapter of the UUP. The duties of the secretary focus on taking minutes at Executive Committee meetings and notes at Labor Management meetings. Although not elected to be your UUP secretary, I have been serving in that capacity for much of the last Fall's semester and will be providing that service for the rest of this semester. I have the flexibility to arrange my schedule so that I can attend all of these meetings where I will take impartial and accurate notes. I have served on many UUP committees and if elected as your UUP Secretary I will have the opportunity to serve locally and to attend the UUP delegate assemblies which are held several times a year. Thank you for considering my candidacy.

Treasurer

Alan Dunefsky

As a UUP member for many years, I feel that it is time for me to give something back to the union that was there when I needed it. It is so easy to complain about the dues and never attend meetings. But when one needs help, and most of us do at one time or another, the union is there to help. Now that I have a little more free time in my life, I can't think of a better way to help others than by running for the Delegate Assembly and serving as treasurer of our chapter. I've always been an advocate for the rights of the professional faculty, and this will give me the opportunity to continue in a new venue.

Grievance Officer

Larry Fialkow

I have served as Grievance Chair since Fall 2002, as a way of contributing to UUP and serving the membership. I have attended statewide UUP training sessions for Grievance in Fall 2002, Spring 2003, and Spring 2004. I work closely with Glenn McNitt, Chapter President, and Susan Jones, our campus UUP Labor Specialist, who are very knowledgeable about the contract. I see my role as Grievance Chair as trying to help professionals and academics who believe they have not been treated fairly, primarily in the reappointment process for professionals, but in a variety of other areas as well. I am committed to devoting as much time as necessary to listening to the difficulties members face and to helping members navigate the contract's appeals procedures. For the many issues which the contract does not address, I work with Glenn and Susan to seek informal resolutions based on discussions with the Administration.

Delegates

Delegates are people elected to serve on the chapter Executive Committee where chapter policies and priorities are set. The New Paltz Chapter also gets to send 11 delegates to the statewide Delegate Assembly (DA) where participants set statewide union policy. Based upon our membership make up we get to send 8 delegates representing academic faculty and 3 delegates representing professional faculty. The chapter president (currently an academic) and the vice presidents for academics and professionals are automatically delegates to the DA, leaving 8 additional delegate slots to be filled. Depending on whether you are an academic or professional faculty member your ballot will indicate the appropriate candidates for whom you can vote.

Candidates can run for an officer position and a delegate position simultaneously. If they win their officer election they will automatically be on the chapter executive committee. As indicated above, the chapter president and two of the vice presidents are also automatically delegates to the DA. If they do not win their officer position, they can still receive enough votes as a delegate candidate to qualify to represent New Paltz at the state level. Statements from candidates running for both an officer and a delegate position have their statements published under their officer candidacy only as indicated below.

Academic Delegates

Yvonne Aspengren

See statement under Vice President for Part-Time Concerns

Jeffrey Crane

See statement under Secretary

Victor deMunck

No statement received

Maryann Fallek

As a former union president, I am committed to all members and the UUP. No one person or constituency is more important than another. The strength and the value of the Union are determined by the degree to which the needs of the entire membership are addressed.

Since my election to the Executive Committee two years ago, I have worked hard to strengthen UUP and to improve the work and workplace for all members. For example, I have:

- participated actively in Chapter, State, National and Part Time Concerns Committee meetings
- met regularly with campus administrators to discuss and resolve concerns of Part-time employees, such as their de facto exclusion from DSI
- helped organize various campus events such as the presentation about the recent historic split in the AFL-CIO.
- written informative articles for the Chapter newsletter

Hopefully, you agree that I have earned your vote and that my participation is beneficial.

John Hain

Since I retired from SUNY New Paltz, I have been politically active in Lobbying the Legislature for funding the State University. I go to Albany several times a year to speak to members of the Legislature on behalf of the State University. As a New Paltz Delegate to the UUP, I have served on committees which further the interests of our union.

Joel Lefkowitz

I research and teach about the labor movement and political participation in the United States, and have been active in the union over the past six years, attending campus executive board meetings, statewide delegate assemblies, and leadership training sessions. I have met with legislators in Albany and in the Hudson Valley to urge increased funding for higher education, organized visits by other union members to local legislators, and organized telephone calls by union members to union members to provide information about candidates for office. In 2006, I helped get the union's early endorsement of John Hall for Congress and worked hard on a wide variety of tasks in his successful campaign. I think my academic and union experience will help me continue to serve effectively as a union delegate. I am grateful for your continuing support.

Susan Lehrer

I am running for Academic Delegate this year because I want to continue to make the union a positive presence in our work lives. I have been active at the local and state level as Academic Delegate for many years, and Statewide Labor/Management Health and Safety Committee, Women's Rights and Concerns Committee, and UUP's Solidarity Committee. I helped found our campus Labor/Management Health and Safety Committee, and was its first co-chair.

I've recently written you about threats to academic freedom, because I'm alarmed that some members now fear repercussions if they become too outspoken. I believe that through our union, we can support each other effectively, so we won't face these challenges alone.

You know me as a person who does not cave in to attacks, and who will stand up and defend our rights.

For these reasons, I again seek your vote as Academic Delegate.

Susan Puretz

No statement received

A. J. Williams-Myers

A. J. Williams-Myers wishes to submit his name for a position of Academic Delegate to represent the New Paltz Chapter of UUP at the periodic Delegate Conventions. I feel I can best represent the college and its varied interests given my long tenure and knowledge of the mechanics of how the institution functions. During my tenure I have served on a number of college-wide committees as well as administer a state-wide SUNY affiliate, and am presently a member of SUNY's Academic Senate Undergraduate Education Committee. I am now a non-voting member of the college's UUP Executive Committee, and in that capacity have attended a "hands-on-workshop" for the union's future leaders up at Fort McHenry. I stand ready to represent, in the most professional way possible, the diverse interests of a highly professional and diverse group of faculty and staff.

Beth Wilson

I have worked at New Paltz as an adjunct, a professional, and a temporary full-time lecturer, since 1994. As a result, I am well-acquainted with the concerns of many constituencies on our campus, all of whom I will seek to represent on the Executive Committee. I have been active with the union in various capacities, serving at one point on the statewide UUP Part-Time Concerns Committee, and currently as a member of our Executive Committee. I feel that we can do a much better job of organizing here at New Paltz, of communicating with our fellow members, and opening up the union to greater participation within our chapter. As a Delegate and a member of the Executive Committee, I will pursue these goals, while using my personal experience to bridge the gaps of understanding that exist between full- and part-timers, and between academic and professional faculty.

Professional Delegates

Alan Dunefsky

See statement under Treasurer

Donna Goodman

I am seeking my third term as UUP delegate representing professional faculty. As a delegate, committee leader and union member, I have advocated for policies that benefit professionals, while also promoting unity among all members.

On campus, I have advocated for clearer professional performance programs and for supervisor training. I also participate in UUP's effort to update job descriptions and criteria for promotions.

As co-chair of the local and statewide Women's Rights and Concerns Committees, I have

contributed much time, information, and organizational expertise to campaigns for gender equity and family leave. I also serve on UUP's new statewide Task Force on Pay Equity Based on Race.

I have worked hard to bring our members into union activism and to make UUP more responsive to its members. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as your delegate and will continue to work for fairness and equity in our workplace.

Richard Kelder

See statement under Vice President for Professionals

Linda Smith

See statement under Secretary

How to Vote

Official ballots will be sent out during the third week of March via US mail. Detailed instructions will be included with your ballot. Ballots must be received by UUP Central in Albany by April 11.

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.

Editor: Brian Obach x3447

Staff: Donna Flayhan
Linda Smith