

The Bullhorn

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



Unionists young and old enjoyed food and camaraderie at the annual year-end Chapter gathering at Bacchus on May 7.

A Message from the new UUP New Paltz Chapter President

This month I will assume the responsibilities and duties as UUP President at SUNY Paltz. In doing so I have set a number of goals to make our union stronger and more effective. First, it is important to improve communication between the UUP leadership in Albany and local chapters. I will make every effort to listen to our members and encourage other UUP officers to do likewise in order to gather information on current work conditions and the state of morale on campus. This will also permit us to monitor the current budgetary situation and develop a proactive approach in light of any impending reductions in faculty lines, programs, or non-renewal of contracts. I will encourage UUP officers to visit academic departments and administrative and supportive units to gain an understanding about the issues that are of concern to members. In addition, when appropriate, members will be invited to participate in Executive Board meetings and attend the UUP Delegate Assembly in Albany. Hopefully, some

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What you should know about Unemployment Insurance for Part Timers

- Under current law, many part-time faculty working in colleges and universities in New York State are unable to receive unemployment insurance when they become unemployed between semesters.
- These employees have no “reasonable assurance” that they will have a job when the next semester starts as that decision rests entirely with the employer and is often based on contingent factors such as enrollment, funding and programmatic changes.
- This legislation levels the playing field for employees by amending the current practice of allowing letters from administrators that stipulate an “intent to hire” based on contingencies such as enrollment, funding, or program changes to be offered as evidence of reasonable assurance of continued employment.
- This measure changes the current unfair practice by stipulating that such contingent offers of employment do not constitute reasonable assurance of continued employment and rightfully places the burden of proof on the employer to provide sufficient documentation, on a case-by-case basis, to overcome this presumption.
- These bills do not cost New York State anything as SUNY and CUNY bear the financial liability on any costs associated with this legislation.▲

“Adjunct Faculty Deserve Unemployment Insurance!”

Sisters & Brothers,

UUP has been working diligently with NYSUT and the Professional Staff Congress to pass unemployment insurance legislation that would change the current practice of allowing letters of “intent to hire” that are conditioned on enrollment, funding, or program changes to be offered as evidence of the federal “reasonable assurance” standard. This bill would place the burden of proof on the employer to provide sufficient documentation, on a case-by-case basis, to overcome the presumption of contingency established in these letters of “intent to hire.”

Adjunct Faculty Deserve Unemployment Insurance! This bill would remove a serious impediment that prevents adjuncts from collecting benefits. Adjuncts would still have to meet other eligibility requirements and be available for work. And, they would not be eligible for unemployment insurance if their employer establishes “reasonable assurance” of employment in the following semester. Help your part-time colleagues by faxing your legislators via the NYSUT website to pass this important legislation!

In Union,

Phillip H. Smith
President, UUP

2009 Spring Delegate Assembly Highlights and Resolutions

Peter D.G. Brown, Vice President for Academics



Part of the New Paltz delegation to the Spring Delegate Assembly at the Desmond in Albany on April 25, (l-r) Peter Brown, Yvonne Aspengren, guest David Halvorsen, and Richard Kelder await the beginning of the election plenary.

The UUP's spring Delegate Assembly took place April 24th and 25th in Albany. The event was attended by a dozen members from New Paltz and over three hundred others from the 29 State University of New York campuses, plus System Administration, Empire State College and the New York State Theatre Institute.

A number of delegates running for UUP positions participated in a Delegates Forum, among them Beth E. Wilson from New Paltz, who ran for Membership Development Officer, and F. Glenn McNitt, who was re-elected to the Executive Board.

Delegates adopted a Special Order of Business acknowledging the work of the UUP Outreach Committee, and in particular its co-chairs, Glenn McNitt and Tom Tucker. President Phillip H. Smith also recognized outgoing Chapter Presidents, including F. Glenn McNitt of New Paltz.

The Delegate Assembly adopted a resolution condemning the closure of the Nursing Department at New Paltz from the Nursing Professions Work Group, which has been working statewide to support nursing-related issues through the union. Citing the longstanding service of the nursing program and its essential contribution to education of nurses throughout the Hudson Valley,

the resolution calls upon the UUP President and the Outreach Committee to press President Poskanzer and the legislature to rescind the closure of the program, and to secure congressional funding for SUNY.

The Solidarity and Labor and Higher Education Committees presented a resolution calling upon UUP members to become fully aware of the reasons for the current escalation of the war in Afghanistan and the potential consequences of that escalation, in preparation for a discussion of the issue (in a forum or other appropriate venue) at the fall '09 Delegate Assembly in Rochester, and at the chapter level.

Finally, delegates also adopted a Resolution from the Women's Rights and Concerns Committee congratulating Adelphi University Professors on their successful class action suit to gain pay equity. Thirty-seven women faculty members have finally been awarded over \$385,000 in back pay and raises to resolve this inequity, and the University itself will be monitored to ensure that it will maintain and enhance equitable pay for women faculty members.

In addition to the plenary sessions at which these resolutions were voted upon, the delegates from New Paltz also attended a variety of committee meetings,

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Regarding the Closure of the Department of Nursing

Eleanor Richards Ph.D, RN, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Nursing

I want to thank the *Bullhorn* for this opportunity to express my views on the administration's decision to cut the Department of Nursing. Many of you have followed the intensive discourse on the fac-staff listserv. I also want to thank the more than 150 faculty and staff who vocally stepped up, signed a petition and disagreed with the administration, those liberal arts and sciences departments who supported nursing, those individuals who for obvious reasons did not wish to openly express their support, and those individuals outside the department who were so eloquent and persistent in their support of nursing. They join the 175 nursing students, future students, The New Paltz Chapter of the International Nurses Honor Society, the New York State Nurses Association, the New York State Organization of Nurse Executives, the New York State Council of Deans and Directors of Baccalaureate and Higher Education Nursing Programs, United University Professions, Chief Medical officers and Vice Presidents of Nursing Services, the Director of Dutchess County Public Health Nursing (Public Health Nurses must hold the baccalaureate), and Republican and Democrat Hudson Valley state legislators who all disagree with

the administration's decision.

Additionally, in a letter dated 5/3/09 to the Nursing Department Advisory Board from SUNY Central Vice Chancellor and Secretary of the University John J. O'Connor it was stated "We do agree with you that it is important to have a program to provide Bachelor's degrees for Registered Nurses, and understand the shortage of nurses and faculty. It is our intention to investigate ways in which we can form partnerships to assure sufficient educational opportunities in nursing in the lower Hudson Valley". At least one sister SUNY school suggested a nursing partnership with SUNY New Paltz, which was not welcomed by the SUNY New Paltz administration.

You may not know that the SUNY New Paltz nursing programs are the only ones in the entire state slated to be cut- and to the best of my knowledge in the nation. The administration's decision flies in the face of impending health care reform. Of note is a May 11, 2009 press release from the White House **Remarks by President Obama** on Reforming the Health Care System to Reduce Costs, in particular the statement:

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At a union press conference and rally held in the Lecture Center on May 7, a student holds a sign to show her opposition to the announced cuts to the Nursing Department and master's level teaching programs in science and foreign languages.



Spring 2009 Election Results

As of June 1, 2009, the officers and delegates of the New Paltz chapter begin two-year terms for the offices listed. A total of 321 votes were cast. 217 by academic members, and 102 by professionals. The President and the VPs for Academics and Professionals are automatically designated as delegates to the DA; the at-large delegates are invited in vote-ranked order to attend and vote at the DA. (Our current allotment is 8 academic and 4 professional delegates.) According to our chapter bylaws, all at-large delegates receiving 10 or more votes are members of the chapter Executive Committee.

President

Richard Kelder, 186
F. Glenn McNitt, 125
Glenn Geher, 1

VP for Academics

Peter D.G. Brown, 165
Larry Fialkow, 3
Joel Lefkowitz, 2
Gary Kitzman, 1
Brian Obach, 1
Susan Puretz, 1
Schwarz, 1

VP for Professionals

Linda Smith, 54
Richard Kelder, 48
Sander (?), 1

VP for Part-time Concerns

Yvonne Apengren, 241
Maryann Fallek, 4
Larry Carr, 1

Secretary

Linda Smith, 250
Jeff Crane, 17
Colleen Bruley, 16

Treasurer

Alan Dunefsky, 276

Grievance Officer

Larry Fialkow, 262

Academic Delegates

Susan Lehrer, 140
Beth E. Wilson, 134
Yvonne Aspengren, 124
Susan Puretz, 120
John Hain, 117
Heather Whalen-Smith, 23
Jeff Miller, 22
Joel Lefkowitz, 19
A.J. Williams-Myers, 17
Brian Obach, 16
Jeff Crane, 15
Yoav Kaddar, 12
Maryann Fallek, 12
Larry Hauptman, 2
Adams, 2
1 vote each: Good, Sawyer, Kitzman, Nielson, Mimplitsch-Gray, Azari, Hofstetter, Sarrantonio, McNitt, Whitaker (Catherine), Heath

Professional Delegates

Donna Goodman, 82
Alan Dunefsky, 77
Linda Smith, 53
Richard Kelder, 53
Ed Felton, 9

...Closing of the Nursing Department (Continued)

“Now, none of these steps can be taken by our federal government or our health care community acting alone. They’ll require all of us coming together, as we are today, around a common purpose – workers, executives, hospitals, **nurses**, doctors, drug companies, insurance companies, members of Congress. It’s the kind of broad coalition, **everybody with a seat at the table** that I talked about during the campaign, that is required to achieve **meaningful health care reform** and that is the kind of coalition which – to which I am committed”.

Closing a 28-year-old highly respected, fully accredited, affordable and accessible nursing program that goes to the heart of public service for 8 Hudson Valley counties from the New York City border north to Plattsburgh, west to Sullivan County and east to Connecticut is a

a smoke screen for eliminating a program that does not “fit” administration’s vision of a “pure” four-year residential college. A budget analysis reveals that the revenue that is driven by student nurse tuition covers all full time faculty, staff, and adjunct salaries, (and benefits), with a surplus. According to the spring 2009 Argos student nurse enrollments the FTEs for BSN = 77 (including MSN = 88). This is significantly higher than the approximately 55 FTEs reported by administration. Additionally, in a five-year trend analysis admissions to the bachelor’s program has grown threefold in the past 5 years. This is a growing program. Financially it makes no sense to cut the programs. It is my understanding that if funding was found to support the nursing programs administration would most likely not accept it.

So then what is it? There are equally serious issues to consider. One, I believe, is the issue of social justice



Eleanor Richards (far right) with a group of students and others meeting with Assemblyman Kevin Cahill in his Albany office on April 21 to discuss the proposed cut of the New Paltz nursing program.

decision that has dire consequences for the delivery of health care in the Hudson Valley and is regressive in terms of the national forward movement towards health care reform. The consequences of the administration’s decision are far reaching.

Another perspective on this decision is the financial downturn, which has spread its tentacles far and wide and one in which New York State public and private campuses are grappling with – some campuses better than others. Decisions that are made because of financial pressure are understandable. However, it is my belief that the decision to cut the nursing programs was not because of budgetary constraints, but this issue was

for adult learners. The right to public education is a basic liberty and a means to social equality and equal opportunity. This includes a profession that is 94% women, many of whom are immigrants or first generation from Africa, East India, Asia, West Indies, Puerto Rico, Eastern Europe – they joined regional students, mostly women, who had been pursuing the now elusive American Dream.

The second issue, I believe, is likewise as serious, that is, one of shared governance, one that begs close scrutiny by the campus community. A serious discussion needs to occur at all levels of the campus organization in terms of transparency, consultation, and mutual

goal setting – discussions that are open and honest. This is different from a call to use a suggestion box with only follow up announcements– no serious follow up. The flawed decision process included criteria that were not prioritized, and one in which administration states “decisions must be “thoughtful and consistent” and that “communication (internal and external) must be a critical component of our plan”. The latter I find extremely disturbing since the parties directly involved were notified (4/15/09) of an irreversible decision 3 days before the press release. According to the budget decision path developed by administration item #13 states “give affected parties opportunity to discuss” by 3/30/09. The administration did not follow its own process. From my point of view the process was seriously flawed. True shared governance is at stake here.

At a recent celebration of the nursing class of 2009, I noted in my chair’s address to family, friends and students that this is the most unforgettable class in the 28-year history of the department. I also noted that the student body is a true mosaic, and borrowed from Reverend Martin Luther King - **You [as nurses] will be known “not by the color of your skin but by the content of your character” and the strength of your convictions.** Yes, I am proud of these students whose foundations in the liberal arts and sciences will serve them well in their chosen profession. We as a SUNY New Paltz community have taught them well. There will be no opportunity to do so in the future.

These students showed fortitude, determination, loyalty, strategizing, collaboration, and use of oral and written expressions which were unparalleled in arguing for a cause they truly believed in – education – theirs. Like so many women before them, they put others first and now it was their turn. However, when their fellow nurses knock on the door of educational opportunity, no one will answer at SUNY New Paltz. ▲

Editor’s note: As this goes to press, the decision to close the New Paltz Department of Nursing still stands. While there have been some discussions about moving the programs to another mid-Hudson campus (possibly a community college), at this time there has been no successful resolution to address the impact of this closing on the regional health care community.

...UUP New Paltz Chapter President (Continued)

of you will be willing to serve as UUP departmental representatives in your respective areas. Also, in the Fall semester, UUP will conduct a survey of teaching and professional faculty to determine and assess workload issues and structural shifts in assignments and duties. I encourage your participation in this initiative.

Finally, I invite your suggestions and ideas to make our union more open and more effective. From my end, I plan to develop academic forums on important issues such as academic freedom and the corporatization of the academy; career development opportunities for professional faculty; and other programs that will inform our members about the role of unions in a democracy; improve promotional opportunities; and build alliances with progressive labor and environmental organizations.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Kelder
UUP New Paltz Chapter President

...2009 Spring Delegate Assembly (Continued)

including the Outreach Committee, the Committee on Active Retired Membership, the Part-Time Concerns Committee, the Task Force on Contingent Employees and the Women’s Rights and Concerns Committee.

Our chapter Executive Committee voted several years ago to support non-delegate members of the chapter who wish to attend a Delegate Assembly as observers. Members interested in attending a future DA as observers should contact me or any other chapter officer for more information. ▲



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