United University Professions New Paltz Chapter
2019 Chapter Elections
Nominations and Candidate Statements

If no statement appears, the candidate has not provided one.

President and Delegate

Wilson, Beth E.
It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your UUP Chapter President since 2015. In my first two terms, I have worked to improve our engagement with the membership, instituting two chapter meetings per semester (instead of the single one we used to have); we have reached out to work on re-activating our department rep structure, and encouraged participation on a number of our chapter committees. If re-elected to a third term, I will continue this work, as well as working to find ways that we can build solidarity between our bargaining unit, our students, and other unions to communicate and take action on behalf of high quality public higher education.

Vice President for Academics and Delegate (only Academics vote for this officer)

Parameswaran, Gowri

Vice President for Professionals and Delegate (only Professionals vote for this officer)

Saunders, Kevin
It has been an honor and privilege to serve my colleagues as Vice President for Professionals the last 4 years. I have been employed on campus since 1999. I grew up in New Paltz, have undergraduate and graduate degrees from SUNY New Paltz, and reside in New Paltz. I guess I’m just a New Paltz guy. I first got involved in the union in 2011 serving on the chapter membership committee. In 2013, I was elected as a Professional Delegate for the first time. I have served in this role for the past 6 years. I currently serve on the UUP statewide committee for The Future of Public Higher Education. If I am re-elected, I will continue to serve you to the best of my ability.

Vice President for Contingents

Sheridan, Robyn S.

Treasurer

Koop, Douglas
So why am I again soliciting your vote for Treasurer and Delegate of the New Paltz Chapter of the UUP? Because I’m grateful to present and former UUP officers who struggled to provide adjuncts and their families with medical benefits, even though the new UUP contract has increased the required teaching load threshold for benefits. Thank you! For these benefits, I will gladly serve another two-year term as Treasurer and Delegate. Individual New Paltz Executive Board members have complimented my performance and have urged me to continue. I need your vote! Thanks.
Secretary
Nancy Cooney (write-in)
I am a SUNY New Paltz graduate and I have been working here for 16 years. I am the union department Rep for Academic Computing and Computer Services. I am interested in learning more and being more involved in the union.
I hope you will write my name in on the ballot for Secretary.

Grievance Officer
Amanda Merritt (write-in)
Our Chapter needs a Grievance Officer able to work with members as they encounter difficult work situations, recognizing and evaluating contract violations, egregious workplace provocations, and illegal behavior affecting our academic and professional members, and keeping employee concerns in complete confidence.
Entrenched contract violations, harassment and improper exploitation of power differentials need to be evaluated carefully, with considerable thought dedicated to finding the proper solution, which may not always be a grievance. Victims of hostile work environments and bullying behavior on campus need a Grievance Officer to hear them and to use our contract to the best advantage to secure decent and respectful work environments for members. Our members need especially to be protected from heavy-handed administrative “correction” of toxic workplace situations.
One of my own strengths as Grievance Officer will be my membership on the Women’s Rights and Concerns Committee and participation in its work on ameliorating hostile work environments on SUNY campuses.
I also have the analytical skills and attention to detail to work with our Labor Relations Specialist and Chapter and state leadership to develop class grievances. I request the honor of your vote, and thank you. Please write in my name.

Membership Development Officer
Greene, Kiersten A.
Since joining our UUP chapter six years ago, I have had the pleasure of working with many of you on numerous campaigns related to family leave (Family Leave Teach-In), fair labor practices (Taylor Law Forum and lactation rooms), and funding for public higher ed (Austerity Blues talk and Defend SUNY rally). I have attended multiple statewide UUP Delegate Assemblies (DA) in that time, and hope to have the chance to continue to represent our chapter at future DAs.

My union experience spans nearly twenty years and four unions (one of which I helped establish), and I believe I am ready to take on a more expansive leadership position in our chapter. While my advocacy interests are many, a few of the issues that matter most to me include: fair and equitable pay (including a salary step schedule); inclusive workplace practices (fighting racism and sexism in all forms); and defending public higher education (#FundSUNYnow).

I firmly believe our working conditions are our students’ learning conditions. If you agree, please consider casting your vote for me for Membership Development Officer.
Barros, Cesar
My name is César Barros. I am an immigrant faculty member and activist. As Delegate I want to develop and support initiatives that will pressure the governor and the legislature to start funding our institution. As a union we need to visualize the fact that there are elected and non-elected officials who do not care about the education of our students and our neighbors. As many of you, every day I see how politicians who do not care about our university, our working conditions, or the education opportunities of New Yorkers, are dismantling our institution. We need a stronger union and a better standing in negotiations. Most importantly, we urgently need to mobilize and show Albany that without our work SUNY cannot exist, and that we will not stay silent.

Brown, Peter D.G.
It has been my privilege to have served our UUP Chapter and its members in a variety of capacities: for six years as Vice President for Academics, then for four years as Chapter President and for the last four years as Grievance Officer. Throughout this time, I have been a strong advocate for ALL members, including the full-time and part-time contingent faculty. Their work is the least compensated and their job insecurity is greatest. I see their precarious employment as a direct threat to the entire educational enterprise: to our underpaid and overworked tenured staff, to the quality of education our students receive and to the bedrock concept of academic freedom, which cannot exist without job security.
I plan to continue working as a UUP delegate and with my colleagues on the New Palz Chapter’s Executive Board to strengthen the union and to help it serve the needs of our diverse membership. Our latest contract, which was ratified last summer by a huge majority, includes some significant improvements for ALL our members. I look forward to even greater gains we can achieve in the next contract, working together in solidarity with our membership and newly active delegates.

Bryant, Karl

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Bryant, Karl

Decker, Merci

Grazier, Colleen L.
My primary reason for seeking to be a delegate is to advocate for our members on such issues as fair and equitable wages, transparency, and labor/management coordination. If elected, this will be my second experience serving as a union delegate and I hope to continue to learn more about the concerns and issues that exist on our campus. I have been a member of UUP for 14 years and served as the UUP representative for the Library. I worked previously at a private college with no union and so I know that an active union and a strong faculty governance are critical to a successful and rewarding employee experience. It is a time of challenges for higher education and I will advocate for a fair and effective working environment to meet those challenges.

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Koop, Douglas

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McNitt, F. Glenn

Minkoff, Scott L.

Noel, Andrea M.

Andrea Noel joined the SUNY New Paltz School of Education in the fall of 2001 and currently serves as Professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning. Prior to 2001 she was a member of the Department of Psychology at Marist College. She has served as Department Chair of Teaching and Learning, served as a Fulbright Scholar in Hungary, and taught/conducted research internationally in Germany and Australia. As department chair, Andrea considered advocating for the faculty an important part of her job. She is proud to be the first generation of her family to graduate college, the child of an immigrant, and the daughter of a father whose union roots go back to the early struggles to unionize sailors in the shipping industry. She would be proud to serve as your delegate.

Obach, Brian K.

I have been involved with the UUP since I arrived at New Paltz almost 20 years ago. Prior to that I was active with the successful drive to unionize graduate student employees in the University of California system, and I was an officer in my graduate employee union at the University of Wisconsin. Within a few years of coming to New Paltz I helped lead a faculty-student coalition in support of food service workers in their successful unionization drive. I have been a delegate for the UUP at various times, but in the past I have preferred to take on other positions with an action focus. I am currently the legislative outreach coordinator for the union. My research on social movements has convinced me that political mobilization is key to advancing our collective interests and public higher education generally. I opted to formally run for a delegate position at this time, because I am inspired by the energy brought by a new generation of progressive union activists who share my belief in the need for active political mobilization. I welcome the opportunity to work with others to build a stronger, more progressive, and politically active union.

O’Sullivan, Meg Devlin

I joined the faculty at SUNY New Paltz in 2012 (Departments of History and Women’s Gender, and Sexuality Studies). Since that time, I have supported the union as a member. Now that I am ensconced in the campus community, and familiar with our strengths and challenges, I am prepared to serve as a UUP delegate. As an historian who hails from union families, I have long studied and experienced the transformative power of unions and labor organizers in the lives and workplace conditions of working people. I am excited to be a part of a strong and revitalized campus chapter that reflects the will and needs of its membership—which I believe includes a clear focus on funding SUNY with support from the state.
Pampinella, Stephen M.
Plumly, Vanessa D
Puretz, Susan L.
Rietsma, Carol S.

I would like to continue representing your interests on the UUP Executive Committee at SUNY New Paltz and the state-wide UUP Women’s Rights & Concerns Committee. In addition, I have advocated for the needs of SUNY New Paltz with legislators and want to continue to do so. At the top of my list is an increase in funding for the college.

Rock, Melissa Y.

You work hard. You put time, energy and care into the work you do on this campus-for the sake of our students and our community (local, national, and global). You deserve better than the current mode of austerity-status quo provides you to do your work while also meeting your everyday needs (that may include taking care of family members young and elder stately, or through dealing with ongoing or unexpected health care needs, paying off your own student loans!, or a myriad other circumstances). With a strong Union, I believe we can effectively work towards better (and on time!) contracts and more supportive working conditions. You deserve it. I am a feminist geographer whose research and teaching analyzes the ways that personal and collective agency can work to resist and disrupt structures of oppression. I would be honored to serve as one of your UUP delegates. #fundSUNYnow!

Roschelle, Anne R.

I was Vice President for Academics from 2014 to 2017. For me this position was about support; support for the union and support for individual faculty members. During my term as Vice President for Academics I helped several faculty members respond in writing to unfair or critical tenure letters during their reappointment and tenure process. I also advised faculty members on how to navigate problematic departments and create better relationships with difficult colleagues.

In addition, when I represented faculty members at Labor Management meetings, I represented them forcefully but with tact and respect. For several years (prior to becoming VP and after my term ended) I have been offering workshops on “Getting to Tenure” with our Labor Relations Specialist Bill Capowski. These workshops are intended to help junior faculty members make informed decisions about their careers, understand the nuances of SUNY New Paltz, and ultimately obtain tenure. In addition, along with Deb Gould and former Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Affirmative Action/Diversity Leave Award recipients, I have organized several workshops to help with the application process and prepare faculty to use their sabbaticals efficiently and productively.

Somerstein, Rachel E.

Professional Delegates (Vote for up to 5)

Please note: only Professional members vote for Professional Delegates

Felton, Edward T.

Over the years I’ve served in numerous capacities in our Chapter - officer, delegate, committee member, department representative. I take these commitments seriously and only step up when I intend to put time and effort behind the commitment.

As a delegate in the upcoming term, I intend to contribute to efforts at strengthening UUP’s position in relation to the State budget and the next round of contract negotiations. UUP must be an activist union to build the power necessary to decisively affect those outcomes.
Goodman, Donna
I am seeking your support for my election as professional delegate.
As a UUP delegate, I represent the union in the larger labor movement. I serve as UUP’s delegate to the Upper Hudson Central Labor Council, where I have been a voice for women’s rights, immigrant rights, and public sector unions. As a delegate and vice president of the Hudson Valley Area Labor Federation, I speak out for SUNY funding and for public sector unions, green environmental policy, women’s rights, fairness for contingent faculty, and the issues we promote in our legislative agenda. In both bodies, I have raised the profile of UUP in the regional labor movement.
As co-chair of the statewide Women’s Rights and Concerns Committee, I am organizing a campaign to educate our members to confront and change the hostile workplace, one consequence of budget cuts and insufficient funding.
I participate in rallies and phone banking for labor-supported candidates, and the Labor Federation's candidate interviews. This term I received the Nina Mitchell Award, UUP's highest award for service, and the Area Labor Federation's Mother Jones Award for union activism.
I am proud to serve as your delegate and will continue to work for your rights and to build UUP.

Lempka, Wayne W.

Merritt, Amanda
I have been proud to represent our chapter as a professional faculty delegate and encourage others to join me. Taking on the job of delegate allows a professional faculty member to be deeply involved with the future of UUP, a future which needs serious reconsideration in the current political climate. UUP must position itself as a strong advocate for generous funding for SUNY, perhaps re-evaluating relationships with other unions and State government. This need to reposition ourselves is one of my most serious concerns as a delegate.
I also participate in UUP’s outstanding Women’s Rights & Concerns Committee and the Teacher Education Task Force, a significant influencer in teacher education policy. I appreciate your vote to send me back to the Delegate Assembly, and I urge you to write in your own name, round up some colleagues to vote for you, and join our Chapter leadership and me as we work for the future of our Union and our own future contracts.

Ruffini, Frank

Scott, Rendesia M.

Simons, Joshua A.

Tobin-Flusser, Kathleen
I am the Associate Director at the Benjamin Center for Public Policy Initiatives where I am responsible for designing, managing, and producing research projects focused on regional issues and concerns. I am a graduate of SUNY New Paltz (Sociology, ’92), hold an M.S. in Social Research from CUNY Hunter, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from SUNY Albany. My research agenda focuses on equity, democracy, and sustainability. I examine civic engagement, government transparency, and women in politics. I have a particular interest in environmental and social justice. In addition to my work at the Benjamin Center, I am an affiliated lecturer in Sociology and the courses I teach include Introduction to Sociology, Social Inequality in the United States, Research Methods, and Women in Politics. I identify as a scholar-activist and am actively engaged on campus, in the New Paltz community, and across the Hudson Valley region. In 2018, I received a Chancellor Awards for Excellence in campus service. I am currently the Deputy Mayor of the Village of New Paltz and am a former New Paltz School Board vice president. I have actively participated in our campus union and look forward to formally participating as a delegate.