



# Plattsburgh UUP Chapter Newsletter

## Table of Contents

- page 1 - Upcoming Events
- page 2 - Open Positions
- page 2 - Join UUP!
- page 3 - Article from President Michelle Toth
- page 4 - Article from VP for Academics Dan Gordon
- page 4-5 - Article from VP for Professionals Matt Salvatore
- page 5-6 - Article from At-Large Exec Board Member Kim Hartshorn
- page 7-9 - Officer Biographies
- page 9-10 - News/Notes from UUP Central

## Upcoming Events

- **Chapter Membership Meeting** Thurs. Feb. 17th at 4pm (Zoom)  
Link to the zoom meeting will be emailed out the day before.
  
- **NEOs at Noon** Next upcoming NEO at Noon will be on February 23, 2022.  
[Link to register.](#)
  
- **Joint Labor/Management Workshop – Workplace Civility** Full-day workshop (9am-4pm) offered on March 2, 3, or 4. Limited to 25 people per day. Must submit registration by Feb. 23rd Register by filling out [this](#) form.
  
- **UUP’s Week of Action** Amite Plaza, Friday. March 4<sup>th</sup>, 12-1pm
  
- **Professionals Meetings**
  - Thursday March 31, 12-1pm
  - Thursday May 5, 12-1pm

## Open Positions

If you are interested in either of these positions please contact Chapter President, Michelle Toth at [tothmm@plattsburgh.edu](mailto:tothmm@plattsburgh.edu)

### Chapter Contingent Officer

We are looking to fill this position so that part-time / contingent issues are fully represented in our chapter and on our campus. While it would be very valuable to have a contingent member serve in this position (we know you are all very busy), you do not have to be a part-time or contingent member to fill this position.

What this position involves:

- Attend chapter executive board meetings when you are able. (currently zoom meetings one Wed afternoon a month)
- Per the UUP Contract: “the campus president or designee shall meet with local UUP representatives once a month to discuss matters of interest pertaining exclusively to part-time employees raised by either party”.
- Outreach and communication with part-time / contingent members.

### Chapter Membership Development Officer

If you are a social person this is a great job for you. What could be better than meeting new people, talking about their work, and sharing with them the great things UUP provides to members?

What this position involves:

- Assist with new hire welcomes and orientations and provides UUP info to new hires.
- Attend chapter executive board meetings when you are able. (currently zoom meetings one Wed afternoon a month)
- Coordinate our Building/Dept. Reps to assist with communication to members about workshops, benefits, events and other issues.
- Serve on the UUP State-Wide Membership Committee, which shares ideas and programs on member outreach. (Typically monthly Zoom meetings).

## Join UUP!

<https://uupunion.org/myuup/Membership/>

UUP represents the academic and professional faculty at the SUNY state-run campuses.

Being a member makes you part of our efforts to:

- Advocate for public higher education in New York State
- Protecting employment security
- Negotiate contractual raises and health and prescription benefits
- Provide dental and vision benefits
- Provide grants for research, and conference attendance and presentations
- Ensure workplace safety
- Be heard as part of our collective bargaining with the State of New York
- If you have any benefits-related questions, please email Associate Director of Member Benefits Karen Dombrowski at [kdombrow@uupbenefits.org](mailto:kdombrow@uupbenefits.org).

## Article from President Michelle Toth

### UUP Heading into Contract Negotiations

Our current contract is up as of this summer, specifically July 2022.

Myself as chapter president and our ad hoc negotiation committee reps Rohit Rampal (academic) and Deb Brunner (professional) submitted our campus report summarizing the issues from our campus to the negotiations team. We also participated in the negotiations committee meeting Feb. 4 and 5, where reps from all the campuses meet to discuss and help prioritize member issues for the UUP Negotiations Team.

While the UUP Negotiations team will meet with the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) to start negotiating the new contract this spring, as it has happened in the past, we will likely not have a ratified contract by the time our current contract expires. When this happens we continue forward with our current salaries and healthcare. What is affected is the funding for joint labor/management programs and grants (PDIA, Dresher, etc...).

We will provide ongoing updates as we move through this process.

While the formal negotiation process gets started, we all have a role to be active and vocal about the issues we will be negotiating for including: better compensation, broader telecommuting options, pathways for contingents for full-time or permanent positions, better access to needed healthcare - including mental health, and so many more. We will be sharing ways you can participate as we move forward in this process.

### Morale, Stress, and what UUP can help with

In the short time since taking on the UUP chapter president role in Nov., I have been increasingly aware of members' dissatisfaction and frustration with working conditions, shifting and increasing workload, and inconsistent approval of leaves and telecommuting options. Unfortunately we are hearing of these issues after members have reached their limits and have already decided to resign, leave campus and take other jobs, or retire.

While UUP does have limits on the scope of what we can do, (much of this is the purview of Management), we are here for our members and we encourage you to reach out to us when these sorts of changes are being made. We are here to help.

- It is appropriate to reach out to UUP when there are changes to your workload - preferably before it is a done deal and you have signed off on it.
- If you have any questions about the performance review processes.
- Concerns about use of leave time.

You can reach us through our online intake form found here:

<https://www.uuphost.org/plattsburgh/intake-process/>

Or the contact info on our Officers page:

<https://www.uuphost.org/plattsburgh/plattsburgh-chapter-officers/>

## Article from Vice President for Academics Dan Gordon

Since this is our first newsletter, allow me to introduce myself. I am Dan Gordon, VP for Academics for UUP's Plattsburgh Chapter. I am also a professor of music and have been a member of the faculty since 1994.

I wear a number of different hats in my role as UUP VP for Academics, but I spend most of my time dealing in some way or other with performance reviews (evaluations). I am engaged in several aspects of the evaluation process to assure that it follows policies and procedures properly. In collaboration with management, we have made a number of recent changes to the evaluation procedure for academics. Among them are that part-time faculty are now evaluated only by chairs and deans; and departments that cannot provide the minimum number of members for its Peer Review Group (PRG) now choose members from within their division rather than depend of the External Review Panel (ERP) to supply them. These changes have streamlined the evaluation procedure and have taken a considerable burden off Peer Review Groups and the External Review Panel. If you serve in either of these capacities, you likely have noticed that your workload in them is considerably less than in the past.

Covid has posed a number of challenges for academics. Statewide meetings with VPA's (Vice Presidents for Academics) have addressed them in weekly meetings since the beginning of the pandemic. The most significant covid-related change to evaluations is that all tenure-track academics had their tenure clocks extended by one year in 2020 unless they opted out of the extension. While the extension was only on a one-time basis, I advise anyone whose teaching, scholarship, and/or service has been affected by covid to discuss these issues in their next file submission.

We are also working on the transition to electronic evaluation files. We are in the process of choosing a vendor and hope to have upcoming evaluations completely electronic. Education and implementation of these will be a project for all of us. But the time has come for electronic files.

Remember that the union is here to work on your behalf. If you have any questions about anything I've written here – or any other academic issue – feel free to contact me at [ADKWinds@gmail.com](mailto:ADKWinds@gmail.com).

## Article from Vice President for Professionals Matt Salvatore

What I've learned as VP:

After almost three decades as a professional staff member and semi-involved member of UUP, I thought it was time to give back. So I raised my hand. After all, I figured I must have a pretty good sense of how things work by now and could use that institutional knowledge to help fellow members. I quickly learned that I didn't know as much about our union and the organization as I thought I did.

Job #1: Take a deep dive into the contract; Job #2: Spend as much time as possible getting to know our chapter president; Job #3: Attend Delegate Assembly, statewide vice president

for professionals meetings, UUP Executive meetings, UUP General meetings, pre-retirement meetings (this was for me but I thought I'd sneak it in), Labor Management meetings, schedule and conduct professionals meetings, and plan member workshops. Did I mention Zoom calls? Calls with members (my favorite part), calls with our Labor Relations Specialist and calls with Human Resource Services.

I kind of felt like I had taken on a part-time job. I'm glad I did. The level of organization and seriousness by which fellow union officials take their work and role is most impressive and it reassures me that our union, UUP, is strong and a force to be reckoned with. The opportunity to work with a team of dedicated individuals who are singularly focused on making members' working situations better is empowering and rewarding. No, we don't win every battle or skirmish with management, the chancellor, or the state, but we are in the ring advocating for our members and working to hold leadership to account.

By far, the best part is the one-on-one conversations with members. If I can help, I will. If I can't, I'll be honest about it but I'm always happy to have a conversation and offer support to the best of my ability. I've learned that many of you have a much deeper understanding of matters that are meaningful to you than I may ever have and I'm grateful for your patience in educating me along the way. Thanks to former VP's for the mentoring and thanks to you for your support as we work together to further our interests to improve our pay, benefits, relationships, and work-life balance.

There's more to learn and much to accomplish.

## **Article on Political Action from At-Large Chapter Executive Board Member Kim Hartshorn**

Years ago I was sitting in my office when the phone rang, it was Patty Bentley our UUP Chapter President. She asked me what I was doing the next day and quickly told me that I was going to go to Albany with her for Higher Education Advocacy Day. That was the day that I first learned that in addition to everything that UUP does for its members in terms of 'Terms and Conditions of Employment' it is also the single biggest advocate for SUNY in New York. As a public university system, SUNY is highly dependent on political advocacy to fight for our share of the state budget, and it has not been an easy fight...especially over the last 20 years.

I strongly encourage all of you to pay more attention to the budgetary implications of political advocacy and offer here several ways, from simple to more involved, in which you can take action in your (and our) best interest to protect higher education in New York State.

**-Visit <https://uupinfo.org/>**

**-Send an 'AutoLetter' to the Legislature**

<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/sunys-campus-and-public-teaching-hospitals-need-your-support/>

Although it may seem pointless to send an auto-generated letter to a legislator, the legislators themselves tell us that they don't bother to read them after the first few...they weigh them. And the weight counts heavily in their decision making. Additionally they identify you personally as a constituent who is paying attention.

**-Participate in our PUUP Chapter 'Rally for SUNY' Friday, March 4th at Noon- Amite Plaza**

We will rally at noon in the Amite Plaza to support the UUP Legislative Agenda <https://uupinfo.org/legislation/pdf/UUP22StateLegAgenda.pdf>. The UUP Legislative Agenda uses the acronym HEALS for Health-Education-Access-Leadership-Sustainability. I am looking for members who are willing to speak at the rally in regards to any of the points in our legislative agenda. Personal stories are always wonderful. The new UUP emphasis on Sustainability may be of particular interest to many of our members. UUP has a goal of creating media attention for this event so lets make it look good!

**-Finally- Contribute to Vote Cope**

Vote Cope is the NYSUT PAC. You can contribute to Vote Cope through payroll deduction either as a one time contribution or weekly deduction. Even a bi-weekly contribution of 50 cents adds up. Our chapter has always been a strong contributor to Vote Cope but many of the past contributors (like me) have recently retired and it is time for our younger members to take the hand-off. Click this link to visit the Vote Cope page!

<https://uupinfo.org/votecope/>

Please contact me at [w.kim.hartshorn@gmail.com](mailto:w.kim.hartshorn@gmail.com) for more information regarding our Rally or other ways to become more involved with UUP Political Advocacy. We can make a difference. In fact it was UUP that was instrumental in bringing attention to the TAP-Gap accounting gimmick that had been short changing SUNY for over a decade and our pressure on the Legislature and Governor that finally forced movement towards its elimination. We can make a difference, especially as we make ourselves heard!

## **Subscribe to UUPconnect**

To receive the UUPconnect: Coronavirus newsletter, email UUP Media & Publications Director Mike Lisi at [mlisi@uupmail.org](mailto:mlisi@uupmail.org). We will add your email to our distribution list.

## Meet Your Chapter Officers

### President – Michelle Toth



I am an Associate Librarian at Feinberg Library. I came to SUNY Plattsburgh in 1999. My professional focus is on information literacy instruction, active learning, and assessment. I am a long-time member of the campus General Education committee.

I have been active in UUP on campus from the very beginning, especially as Patty 'Ma' Bentley was both a colleague in the library and the chapter president for many years. In 2001 I received a UUP grant to set up mutual support meetings for those on the tenure track. I have benefited by receiving a number of the Professional Development Individual Awards over the years to attend or present at conferences, and also was awarded a Drescher Leave.

Over the years I have served the Plattsburgh Chapter as a UUP Delegate, Chapter Treasurer, and Membership Officer. And of course, a regular attendee of the chapter mixers, hopefully we can get back to hosting them someday soon.

UUP has supported me professionally, engaged me in the issues surrounding Public Higher Education, and shown me how when we work together and advocate for each other we all can benefit.

I hope every one of you is grabbing the opportunities to get the most out of being members of UUP.

### VP for Academics – Dan Gordon



Dan Gordon has been a member of the music faculty since 1994. His first involvement with union issues was with family leave, which he invoked at the birth of his first child in 1999. Gordon is proud to have invoked FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) to a greater extent than anyone in the history of New York State. He has served on multiple statewide family leave committees through UUP. The first meetings of those committees, over 20 years ago, discussed and advocated for paid family leave – which is now a reality. Gordon has been a UUP Plattsburgh chapter delegate for well over a decade. He has been this campus's UUP Vice President for Academics since 2017.

## VP for Professionals – Matt Salvatore



Matthew E. Salvatore, a 1990 graduate of the College at Brockport, received his BS in Physical Education, with a concentration in Exercise Physiology and Adult Fitness. He received his MA in Leadership and Administration with a concentration in Management from SUNY Plattsburgh in 2002.

Salvatore is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (*CSCS*) with the National Strength and Conditioning Association and is certified as a Personal Trainer with the Athletics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA). He holds certifications in AED and CPR.

He is a recipient of the SUNY Chancellor Award for Excellence in Professional Service.

Salvatore teaches Management and Programming courses within the Fitness and Wellness Leadership Major in the classroom and online environment.

Prior to his appointment in 1994 at SUNY Plattsburgh as Fitness Center Director, Salvatore was a Corporate Fitness Specialist at the Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, New York.

## Treasurer – Oscar Flores

## Secretary – Gerianne Downs



I am the assistant director for communications in the Office of the President at SUNY Plattsburgh. I joined the professional staff of the college Jan. 3, 1996 when it was College Relations on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of Kehoe. Before that, I was a longtime reporter and editor at the Press-Republican. Originally from Buffalo — Go Bills! — I earned my degree in newspaper journalism from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University and moved to Plattsburgh for my job at the Press. After the birth of my first daughter, Margaret, I dropped to a part-time position at the Press to stay home with her. The College Relations position opened as a (very) part-time writing position when she was eight months old. Since I covered education as part of my regular beat at the paper, it was a natural fit for me here.

Prior to being elected to my first term as chapter secretary in spring 2015, my introduction to PUUP was serving as a building rep and member of the large exec board for several years. My father was a member of the motion picture operators union, now IATSE, in Buffalo, so I grew up in a union family. My husband, Jack, a PUUP member and lecturer in journalism, are the parents to daughters Margaret, Patricia and Brigid.

## Officer for Retirees – Ray Guydosh



Ray Guydosh has been involved with UUP since the mid-1970s. He has regularly served as a member of the Plattsburgh Chapter Executive Board, as a Plattsburgh delegate to UUP Delegate Assemblies, and has served a term as Plattsburgh Chapter Vice-President for Academics. At the Statewide UUP level, he had been a long-time member of the UUP Finance Committee and the UUP Elections and Credentials Committee and had served as Chair of the UUP Audit Committee. In addition, he has often been a delegate to the NYSUT Representative Assembly and the national AFT Conventions. In faculty governance positions, he had been Chair of the Plattsburgh Faculty Senate during three different time periods, had served as Presiding Officer of the Faculty, and had been a member

and committee chair of the State University Faculty Senate.

## News/Notes from UUP Central

### UUP celebrates Black History Month

UUP is observing Black History Month with a series of virtual events that will spotlight the history, culture, and contributions of Black Americans.

On Tuesday, Feb. 22, UUP will host the series' third event, "Black History Month: Health, Economic & Environmental Justice for Healthy Communities," a panel discussion about how these issues disproportionately impact communities of color. Panelists will talk about their efforts to achieve racial equity, the barriers they have overcome, and the new challenges they face. Kowal will moderate the panel.

The series is sponsored by the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee. If your chapter has planned events to celebrate Black History Month, please tag UUP on social media @uupinfo and follow our Black History Month events on Facebook and Twitter. Registration and Zoom links for events on Feb. 15 and 22 will be available soon.

Email Danielle Judge-Freeman, UUP's assistant director of social justice & mobilization at [djudge@uupmail.org](mailto:djudge@uupmail.org).

**Getting buried by student debt? UUP can help.**

UUP regularly offers virtual student debt clinics to help members navigate the federal public service forgiveness program and learn more about income-driven repayment plans. Statewide Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee leads the clinics.

All clinics are on Wednesdays. The next clinics are set for:

March 2, 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

March 16, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

March 30, 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

April 13, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

April 27, 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Click [HERE](#) to register for one of the above dates.

**\* The Plattsburgh Chapter Newsletter is a publication of the Plattsburgh Chapter of United University Professions. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Plattsburgh Chapter Executive Board or UUP.**