



## Plattsburgh UUP Chapter Newsletter – Special: Spring Delegate Assembly Edition

This was the first in-person Delegate Assembly (DA) in over two years. Delegates from all 37 chapters/campuses were present including the delegates from Plattsburgh. Along with business and plenary sessions there were both the Professional and Academic delegates meetings, and a number of state-wide committee meetings and workshops.

In addition, while at the DA the NYS budget was finalized and UUP has analyzed how this will impact SUNY.

Please read this special edition of our newsletter for the latest news and updates.

### **News from the delegates/attendees:**

The UUP scholarship program for dependents has increased its award amounts from \$500 to \$750.

The federal student loan forgiveness program has updated its guidelines and for part-time faculty (particularly adjuncts) the new calculation is that 1-credit hour is equal to 3.35 work hours for loan forgiveness calculations.

The current telecommuting agreement expires on June 30. UUP is already negotiating to get this extended. It is also an issue we are working on to have included more permanently within the UUP contract.

Action at both the chapter and state-wide levels is being called for regarding the SUNY mandate to change over to the D2L Brightspace LMS. Particularly there is a need to have contingent employees be compensated for the time to be trained in the new software. *(Note this issue is on the UUP Plattsburgh Labor-Management agenda for our April 20th meeting).*

From Chapter President Michelle Toth:

**Student Evaluation of Teaching (SETs) – Discussed at the Academic Delegates meeting**

- UUP and several individual campuses have done extensive research on the effectiveness of teaching/course evaluations.
- UUP has a bibliography that highlights the research addressing bias (gender, race, age, ethnicity), reliability and validity, and issues around evaluation in online courses. For a copy email Michelle Toth ([mmtlibrarian@gmail.com](mailto:mmtlibrarian@gmail.com)).
- Some tips discussed at the DA to improve evaluation questions:
  - Review each question by asking ‘How will this improve teaching?’
  - Switching to a frequency scale (all the time, some of the time, etc..) instead of agreement (agree, disagree, etc..)
  - Questions should not be focused on ‘customer satisfaction’
  - Focused questions at the department or program level are more likely to provide more specific or useful feedback.

From Officer for Retirees Ray Guydosh:

The chair of the RMGC (the retiree member steering committee) is a non-voting member of the Statewide Executive Board. A constitutional amendment was proposed that would extend Executive Board voting rights to the steering committee chair on a limited number of issues, excluding those issues involving contractual and financial related matters. The delegates voted 89 yes to 47 no in favor of the constitutional amendment. But constitutional amendments need to pass with two-thirds of votes cast, thus the amendment failed. The DA had a total of 226 registered delegates, but by the time the vote was taken late in the session only 136 were present.

From Chapter Assistant Patricia Downs:

Women’s rights/ reproductive rights are a union issue. In talking about reproductive rights we’re not just talking about access to abortion or a woman’s right to choose, it includes discussions on child care costs, intersectionality, fertility prevention and facilitation, and many other issues that come with being a female (cis or trans)/non-binary person/ person who can bear children.

In the workshop on outreach we discussed the ladder of involvement, getting members involved in small ways until they can commit to helping out in larger ways (sending a letter, coming to a meeting, joining a committee, leading that committee, running for office, etc.). We discussed meeting with legislators and strategies on how to keep them engaged.

From Chapter Secretary Gerianne Downs:

In addition to the plenary sessions, which included President Fred Kowal's "state of the state," and a report from Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee, and an update on the negotiations committee, I attended the workshop, "Reproductive Justice: Beyond Abortion," by the Women's Rights and Concerns Committee, a presentation on organizing facilitated by members of the UUP Outreach Committee, and a panel discussion on telecommuting by the Professional Delegates Committee. Besides being a great opportunity to meet with other UUP members, especially those in the same boat as you — in my case, fellow professionals who experience similar situations, etc. — and to catch up on state-wide issues, the workshops are always informative and helpful.

- Reproductive Justice: The discussion was important because it touched on the need for quality childcare on campus, the need to supplement the cost to members and the need for the state to help support those who provide the care; the need for quality reproductive health care before, during, after and instead of pregnancy
- Activism: The committee members handed out a Top 15 Tips for Virtual Advocacy, which were quite helpful if not common sense, a list of outreach committee members that showed Plattsburgh was woefully lacking participants, with Kim Hartshorn being the sole member listed and he's the regional coordinator at that. The question asked was: How do we make ourselves stand out to lawmakers, especially those in our district? How do we engage our members to be active in activism? We need to share our unique stories and experiences with lawmakers, talk about the reasons they need to be vocal in Albany — for instance, reminding them how many of our members are voters and constituents; support pro-labor and pro-education candidates, work on their campaigns, attend pro-labor rallies and marches; get involved in the political action committee. As delegates, we're part of the UUP leadership. We need to work with our building reps to get them involved in political activism There was so much more discussed that I'd be happy to share more in depth.
- Telecommuting Professional Concerns: Interesting fact shared was that we have 700 members who telecommute who are 100 percent working out of state. Their "duty stations" are home. If they make it work, others should be allowed to do so as well. PEF has telecommuting in its contract. They discussed the annual progress reports and how we have to document that our work, as telecommuters, needs to be documented in that report. One of the issues is that as state employees, there is a general public perception that we're not working if we're working from home, which is why we have to document that the work is getting done.

\*Interesting side note: Kat Kielar from UB mentioned in passing their Professionals Senate, something I followed up on via email. Interesting concept, maybe one we should pursue here

From Academic Delegate Shawna Mefford Kelty:

The Resolution to Formalize Relationship between UUP and HELU passed at the end of the DA.

Biggest takeaway is about the LMS transition - is our training mandatory or is it optional? If mandatory, will we be compensated to do the training? The CTE will be supporting faculty in this, but that doesn't speak to the larger concern - mandatory requires compensation.

## The NYS Budget and SUNY

### **Closing All Sorts of Gaps**

- TAP Gap Eliminated
- Excelsior Gap Eliminated – now reflects current tuition rate
- Part-Time TAP Expansion – eligible for between 6-12 credits per semester
- Restoration of TAP for incarcerated individuals

### **New/Additional Money**

- Full-Time Faculty Hiring - \$53 million for new full-time faculty, must also cover fringe benefits. Reporting requirement: SUNY needs to report to the legislature the number hired broken down by campus; number of un-filled positions at each campus; numbers of credit hours taught by full-time and part-time faculty per year.
- Operating Funds – \$60 million for academic programs, enrollment, student support services. (SUNY will likely decide how this is distributed) This is one-shot money, not ongoing.
- EOP – \$5.15 million increase in funding from last year.
- Nursing Faculty Scholarship - \$2 million more for licensed nurses to get their Masters or Doctorate degrees to become nursing faculty.

### **Child Care**

- SUNY Child Care - \$4.5 million in new funding to create child care centers on all SUNY campuses. (Plattsburgh is one of only 17 campuses that have on-campus child care).
- State-Wide Child Care – increased eligibility, this equates to free child care for a family of four earning \$83,250.00

**\* 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.**