

PUUP General Membership Meeting

Monday, Nov. 14, 2022

Noon

Via Zoom

Attending: Gerianne Downs, Michelle Toth, Dan Gordon, Matt Salvatore, Oscar Flores, Kim Hartshorn, Shawna Mefferd Kelty, Sarah Hackett, Cody Dulaney, Ed Smith, Ray Carman, John Locke, Jake Avery, Cody Dulaney, Erika Guay, Jean Ann Hunt, Gordon Muir, Erin Campbell, Jill Folsom, Ben Wright, Cathy Kaleita, Faith Leach, Ed Romanowicz, Bob Christopher, Rohit Rampal, Tonya Cribb, Carrie Woodward, Lauren Currie, Justin, Sarah Cunningham, Eli Remillard, Dan Lake, Kelly Theisen, Sally Urban, Rob Keever, Christy, Jill Folsom, Beth Glover, Julia Devine, Jess Lashway, Ray Guydosh, Amy Sotherden, Jim Sherman, Jamie Winters, Bernie Grabczewski, Michelle Howard, Julia Devine, Jackie Vogl

Michelle: Shared UUP website, talked about the news conference held last week

Michelle discussed the "Changing Our Workload Narrative from "I" to "We."

In Fall 2017 we had 756 UUP employees on this campus. In Fall 2022 we have 590. There are 166 fewer of us.

We are all doing more. We are all stressed. But we are in this together. We need to acknowledge that while we may not see the additional work our colleagues in different positions, departments, or offices do, we need to stand together.

Conversations or complaints that 'others' are not doing as much gives management fodder for further cuts, increases, and policy changes. Management is starting to use this rhetoric against us. Yes, the campus has financial problems. But we are all here working together.

Read from a prepared statement on the topic. These types of statements reached president's ears. Shocked last week when president to my face said my VPs said our members are not doing their fair share. Fact that management would say other members are saying about other members and the lack of work they're doing. That is management's job to manage workload.

Supple Memo other example: only shows up when we're in a budget crisis.

Two recent cases are harming ourselves by pointing to others, not looking to selves, or looking to selves to be helpful. Related to this: UUP is rolling out a new process and document. "Workload Issue Intake Form," way for us to start documenting changes that have impacted our workload. My own workload, my job has changed significantly, and I haven't done a great job documenting that. Suggests filling out the form to see how each of our jobs have changed. Forms for both academics and professionals.

Tied to this document: in February our two statewide VPs will come to campus to provide workshop on workload. New ideas on addressing workload creep and increases.

Shawna: I echo everything you've said, in terms of invisible labor for both, and those of us who have invisible labor being asked to do more in terms of our jobs, whether administrative portions or student support portion of our jobs, my own observation is the absolute creep into the weekends. I can speak for my own colleagues, the amount of labor with reduced or non-replaced lines has become unbearable. Trying to figure out ways to work better together is one step, but it has to be campus wide. Intake form is great, but it means time to document. It is really important as well.

Sarah Cunningham: Another thing goes along with workload creep is pay issue. Most of us have had many duties added on. Oh, sorry, that's what you negotiated when came on, or we'll throw you a couple hundred bucks. Most of us would feel better if we were being paid appropriately. Private sector paying more and we could easily leave if we wanted to.

Michelle Toth: When form shared at DA, did suggest, as a strategy, the idea that any time any of us are approached for extra service, in theory it's direct dealing. We could make them go through bringing in UUP for extra service.

Sarah: we're not even doing extra service; they'll ask can you help us out with this, can you help us out with that, and next thing you know it's what you're doing now.

Sarah: sneaky. If you help us out and you do this thing we'll reward you with other things. They never give it to you. Total losing game if you ever want to be taken seriously. We don't have any mechanism for getting any more money, at least that's what HR is telling me.

Kim: multiple issues; on professional side have different answers than issues on academic side. Professionals more vulnerable for creep. Administration is not aware to the extent that people are keeping the college functioning. A lot of this is because of people setting aside certain amount of scholarship because workload has increased in the process of keeping the campus functioning. Becoming harder and harder as the numbers decrease. A certain element to keeping a place running despite number of students we have. Workload point of view, it's not one-to-one. Lot of work to do regardless of number of students that are here. Students we have require a greater amount of staffing, and that's going to increase in the future also.

Erin Campbell: As a professional, this is frustrating because we've been beating the workload dump for years, way before pandemic. Goes back quite a ways. Form now; don't know why UUP as a whole decided to finally take this seriously now when it's been brought up many times, at least from professionals side; glad paying attention to it now. Professionals on this campus during pandemic, we were brought back forced back — to see this, great, but disheartening too. We haven't just had people retire as professionals; had people been here, 15, 20 years, who just left. Tons of institutional knowledge walk out the door. Those lines aren't being replaced. Whole departments that are still empty. Also are burned out. On process for promotion and raises: that's a Plattsburgh thing, not a union thing. SL-3 to 4, and you get \$1,500, that's a Plattsburgh thing. Should be a market amount. One of reasons we can't hire and keep people.

Michelle: We are putting forth in negotiations the idea of steps, builds a structure for longevity that bumps them up.

Ben Wright: Part of why it's now taken seriously, workload building every year and now it's just gone through the roof. Something can no longer ignore because it's so glaringly apparent. Maybe part of it has to do with people having a different view or expectation. Coming out of Covid, I came to realize I don't want to live like this. I'm over that. But you could tell Enyedi that there's one union member who thinks he's not doing his job. The captain goes down with the ship.

Matt Salvatore: on behalf professionals impacted significantly by workload issues, this is a subject we bring up at almost every L/M meeting, and I voice your concerns. Response we get is shrugged shoulders and no response. I'm frustrated by that. I don't know how we approach that any differently or come with ideas to turn the screws on management. Open to suggestions.

Shawna: not advocating a strike, but what if we had a work-in where we gathered. We had a rally for some sort of “enough.” We had a social justice teach-in and classified staff were not invited into the space, they had to get permission to attend. Speaks to what the culture is on our campus. I echo what Ben said; what is Enyedi doing?

Kim: We have issues, but we are in a funding crisis. There is a fundamental lack of money. One of the things we need to do is get more money into the campus; most direct way is to get it from the state, so advocacy at state level is excursion important. Demonstrations here are important. Demonstrations will squeeze more money out of the state. We’ve worked hard as union members to elect these people who support, and they owe us, big time. We have to make that clear to state politicians. Next best budget year was last under Hochul. It’s more than a good budget year we need; state needs significant restructuring in way it’s funding higher education; only serves the enemies of higher education for the campuses to turn it into internal warfare. There are significant complaints in direction administration is taking and how to address the budget crisis. I think the crisis has been especially hurtful to professionals across the system and our campus especially, and distraction of the Supple Memo is meant to be a distraction. To put on the table and make it look like they’re doing something but all it does is hurt the campus.

There may be a handful of employees who are working below their productivity level, and this is a management issue to address with particular employees and re-engage them. In this budget climate, the morale on campus is only going to disengage people to a greater extent. They need to step up, reengage the campus where they can, use a management style that is supportive of employees and do the best they can. We can, on our side, use the power of the union and NYSUT and restructure higher education that we need. As we go int other budge season, UUP will expand a call for advocacy; we’ll have plans for local and statewide demonstrations. We need to turn out. 12 people standing along broad street waving signs isn’t going to do anything. 250 people on Rugar and broad may have some kind of an impact; 600 standing, along with students, will have a bigger impact.

Kim: we’ve gotten to this point without losing a significant number to layoffs or non-renewals. I think that’s something that needs to be pointed out. Campus is in a significant budget crisis; it is so far we have done a little better than some of our sister campuses that have really botched things up and have had to fire people. we haven’t gotten to that point yet. There is real budget pressures administration is dealing with. The mistake they seem to be making is to give the impression they don’t feel people are putting in effort. Crisis is real; how is the administration going to deal with it without making it worse. And I feel they’re making it worse with their apparent attacks on employees.

Michelle: A lot of our members are managers and supervisors. No clear guidelines coming from management. As UUP members, we have to be careful with what we should be working with management on. If unclear, reach out to myself or our VPs, do the workload form to see where you stand. Stress again, we’re in this together; it may not feel that way. All are different, but we are all doing more. We have protected our students from this. We have been so successful; it has been seamless in losing 166 people. As we continue down this path, I’d like to think we’re all in this together. Please join us at mixer, stay in touch with officers.

Michelle: Asking that you join us Thursday at UUP mixer. 4:30 to 6:30. \$5 to good and welfare fund or food shelf donations for which you’ll receive tokens. Bring kids and family; all are welcome