



Spring 2026



Plattsburgh UUP Chapter Newsletter

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Spring 2026 Delegate Assembly: April 24-25, 2026

Negotiations Update

By: Michelle Toth and Jesse Decosse

At the spring delegate assembly our **chief negotiator Bret Benjamin** did a quick review of the topics that have been brought to the table.

Key negotiations items this time around include issues around discipline, grievances, and pay raises. Although momentum has been achieved in several key areas already, as of the time of the delegate assembly, issues around pay and health benefits remained largely unresolved, but negotiations with state legislatures are ongoing. Other issues that are part of contract negotiations this time around include protections around AI and protections for employees against losing jobs to AI.



As the state legislative session ends on June 4th, if we want an on-time contract we will need to have a tentative contract by the end of May so a pay bill can be voted on by the legislature.

All UUP chapters have been asked to have a day of contract action (march, rally, tabling, etc.) in support for an on-time contract. We need to make it clear that we are serious in meeting this deadline and the UUP membership supports the team and our demands.

Statewide UUP Elections

This spring the President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Membership Officer state-wide positions were up for election along with half the seats of the state-wide executive board. Chapter delegates are responsible for electing these positions.

Election Results

Officers:

Frederick Kowal – President (incumbent)

Jeri O'Bryan-Losee - Secretary-Treasurer (incumbent)

Patrick Romain - Membership Development Officer (incumbent)



Fred



Jeri



Patrick

Executive Board:

Redetha Abrahams-Nichols, SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University. (incumbent)

Bret Benjamin, University at Albany. (incumbent)

Rebecca Bryan, SUNY Cortland. (incumbent)

Mindy Heath, Upstate Medical University. (incumbent)

Pamela Malone, SUNY Empire State University. (incumbent)

Samuel Marquez, SUNY Downstate. (incumbent)

Brendan McGovern of Binghamton University. (new)

Matthew Smith of SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. (new)

Notes, News, and Updates from our Delegates

From Professional Delegate Ben Wright:

- We have 42,000 members
- We had elections. There was one open exec board seat. Otherwise, all incumbents ran unopposed except for one, who lost their seat.
- Go to student loan forgiveness workshop – folks are saving tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars:
<https://uupinfo.org/calendar/>
- **Donate to Vote-Cope:**
<https://uupinfo.org/siteforms/VCForm.php>
- Micro videos of you demanding a fair, on time contract are wanted by leadership. Send them to Amy Sheldon, asheldon@uup.org
- Apparently if you use AI to help your writing, you no longer own it.
- The LOADing Act, which provides some protections in NY State government, expires in two years
- UUP told NYSUT, our parent union, that they should not have entered into a \$23 million contract to integrate AI into schools
- Telecommuting is under discussion in the contract talks
- Make sure you have an updated address with the Union. You wouldn't want to miss out on your death benefit 😊
- Medical care is in a state of emergency due to Medicaid cuts
- **Solidarity Forever**
- Thank your family



From Professional Delegate Jesse Decosse:

Job Security in Uncertain Times: An Overview of Contractual Protections

The main takeaways from this session are the importance of members knowing their rights, knowing their appointment type, and having a copy of their appointment letter. Members who have any questions regarding their appointment type, or pathway to permanency, should consult with campus UUP leadership, Human Resources, or the campus labor relations specialist.

Professionals Meeting

The biggest takeaway from this meeting is the importance of a member's performance program accurately highlighting their job responsibilities. **A staggering 70% of surveyed professional members statewide who are supervisors say that serving as a supervisor is not listed in their performance program.** At its core, a performance program is a listing of the job duties that a member will be evaluated on, and should accurately reflect key responsibilities, especially if the member is a supervisor and responsible for managing other staff.

Article 39 - Health Insurance

This workshop highlighted the importance of members knowing their benefits. Although benefits are part of ongoing contract negotiations, labor relations specialists shared during the workshop that health insurance premiums for members are expected to rise about 9.5% in 2027 to offset rises in overall health insurance costs to the state.

Increased use of Alternate Assignments/Alternate Work Location

We have seen a significant increase in HR's use of Alternate Assignments this spring semester.

In most cases members are told to work from home and given a list of responsibilities they can complete there.

Article 19.8.c Alternate Assignment requires no communication from HR about the nature or reason for the reassignment. There is also no required timeline for when the issue will be acted on or resolved. There is no contractual restriction on how long an alternate assignment can last.

If you are put on Alternate Assignment:

You should contact UUP through our intake forms:

[For Academics](#)

[For Professionals](#)

A reminder that you must be a signed-up member of UUP to receive UUP representation.

While you are on Alternate Assignment:

- You are still getting your full salary
- You still have access to all health benefits
- You still accrue sick and/or vacation days

If your office/department is affected by someone being on Alternate Assignment:

If you are being assigned all or some of the work of the person removed it needs to be done with appropriate compensation or workload adjustment. Reach out to a chapter officer for assistance with this.

Looking Back at Recent Chapter Events...

Spring 2026 Membership Meeting

We gathered on Feb. 11th for our chapter membership meeting.



Spring 2026 Coffee & Breakfast Bites

Breakfast bites are held the first Thursday of the month at various campus locations. One of our stops this spring was in the Learning Center hosted by chapter secretary Regan Levitte. We invite all to stop by for comradery and conversation.



First UUP-FA Trivia Night

Thanks to Whistle Stop Barbecue for awesome snacks and to Sarah Cohen for hosting the First Annual UUP-FA Trivia Night, and congrats to winners Mary Ann Lake and John McMahon!



Contract Action March

On Wed. April 29th the Plattsburgh chapter of UUP held our campus action in support of our contract negotiations.

The march took us from the front of Sibley Hall through campus to the Amite Plaza and then on to Hawkins Hall and the pond. Our small but mighty (and vocal) group was joined by our state-wide organizers Rob Trimarchi and Michael Abreu and Leigh Hornbeck from UUP's Communications Department. We were then featured in the UUP Connect email newsletter on May 1st.



A shout out (pun fully intended) to Regan for working the megaphone and leading the chants: "No contract – No peace," "Who are we? – UUP!", and "What do we want – A fair contract / When do we want it – Now!"

The spring mixer at Merons with pizza and wings followed the march.



Upcoming Chapter Events

SAVE THE DATE: Fall 2026 UUP Mixer

DATE: Thursday, Sept. 3

TIME: 4:00-6:30pm

WHERE: Valcour Inn and Boathouse, 3714 US-9 in Peru



VOLUNTARY BENEFITS for UUP

Please take a moment to see what voluntary benefits are available to you through payroll deductions because you are a UUP member.

Please click on the QR codes below from AFLAC and Colonial to see details of all the voluntary policies offered.

AFLAC offers a variety of supplemental insurance plans designed to meet diverse needs. These plans include:

- Accident Insurance
- Cancer Insurance
- Hospital Indemnity Insurance
- Short-Term Disability Insurance



Visit the website for detailed information.



semler_miller@us.aflac.com

Colonial Life Insurance offers distinct types of supplemental insurance plans:

- Critical Illness
- Whole Life and Term Life
- Disability



Visit the website for more information.



Request4colonial@outlook.com

You may sign on to these benefits at any time. Keep in mind applications need to be e-signed by the 15th of a month for effective dates to be the first of the upcoming month.

Reach out by email with any questions:

AFLAC inquiries: semler_miller@us.aflac.com or **Colonial inquiries:** request4colonial@outlook.com