



Welcome!

This “Forum” intends to be just that, a place where members can learn about their union, and contribute to the larger debate about unions and their role in a working democracy. Join us in these important discussions!

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Challenging Contingency

Bret Benjamin, Chapter President

So as not to bury the lede, let me open with this: In the coming months, UUP Albany will be urgently seeking member engagement to analyze the crisis of contingent labor in higher education and to develop a set of specific policy recommendations for UAlbany. We have circulated a survey to contingent academic employees to gather data about your experiences and priorities. *Please take the time to complete this survey; your feedback is essential.* We also plan to host public events and discussions in which we will invite all of the university community to participate. We urge anyone who is interested in this issue to join our Contingent Concerns Committee and consider playing an active role within our Chapter. Even if you can only commit small amounts of time or energy, there are places for your participation. Please contact me <bret.benjamin@gmail.com> to get involved.

No single issue highlights the class relation within contemporary higher education more starkly than the role of contingent labor in the university. No issue tells us more about the structural transformations of public higher education over the past three decades. No issue crystallizes the antagonism between a university’s commitment to an academic mission and its commitment to a bottom line. No issue has greater potential to divide the employees of a university. And no issue has greater potential to galvanize university workers into a shared struggle for its future.

UUP defines contingent employees as those who have no pathway to a permanent, tenurable position. Our focus on contingency, as opposed to terms such as “adjunct” or “part-timer,” highlights the common feature of jobs where the employee is permanently expendable. The ranks of contingents vary widely, including academics and professionals, full- and part-time employees, casual academics who enjoy teaching as a supplemental activity and adjunct instructors who scratch together a living teaching at multiple institutions. Even with such heterogeneity, contingent faculty are undoubtedly the most exploited, most vulnerable employees at the university. Their compensation is unconscionably low. They have little or no job security. They are perpetually disenfranchised from participating in the decisions that most affect their own work-lives. And in many cases, they have no prospects for exiting this cycle. Moreover, contingent labor has ossified into a structural requirement of the contemporary university. Universities have so come to rely on contingents—both the necessary services they provide, and the low costs at which they provide them—that we have a hard time imagining how it might be done differently. Contingency appears, then, as the necessary precondition for contemporary higher education; it appears to be the form that some (rising) percentage of

See: **Contingency**, page 14

President's Column

Strengthening Faculty Governance

Bret Benjamin

One recurring feature of recent *Forum* issues has been UUP's stated commitment to building strong institutions and practices of faculty governance, where academic and professional employees along with students have a meaningful say in decisions about the University's priorities, directions, and operations.

An important development has just occurred regarding faculty governance that may have profound implications for our campus. President Jones sent a memo on November 14, 2014 to the leadership of the University Senate recommending that they amend the Senate by-laws to revoke voting privileges from administrators who serve as ex-officio members as well as those who serve on committees and councils in an administrative capacity.¹ This recommendation comes in response to the findings of the Faculty and Professional Staff Survey on Shared Governance, which documented a widely shared perception among faculty that Senate works largely in the service of the Administration, "rubber-stamping" administrative initiatives and providing the necessary façade of faculty consultation and participation.² The President's memo concludes, "[w]e hope that the University community will view this request and other initiatives we have and will introduce in the coming year as tangible evidence of the Administration's commitment to the principles of transparency, consultation and shared governance."

This is welcome news. We believe that the Senate can become a far more effective institutional voice for faculty concerns and initiatives if it maintains a degree of autonomy from University Administration. UUP applauds the Senate for surveying its members as part of an assessment of its performance. We likewise applaud President Jones for taking the bold step of recommending a voluntary curtailment of administrative power in the interest of building a stronger University.

A Senate by-laws amendment requires a 2/3 majority vote to pass, and requires that at least 30% of eligible faculty (both professional and academic) vote to produce a quorum. In the recent past it has proven difficult to reach this 30% response-rate. Although no details are yet available, we assume that an amendment will be sent to voting members early next spring. If so, UUP urges our members to vote so that a quorum is achieved, and strongly endorses an amendment of the sort recommended by President Jones. We will send reminders when more details are available, but please be on notice for any by-law amendment announcements from the Senate.

Strong institutions of faculty governance produce more intelligent, more democratic, and more humane universities. A colleague recently reminded me that democratizing institutions does not produce positive change in and of itself; these institutions still need active, principled members to chart a course that moves the University in the directions that we hope to see. Very true. Nevertheless, a move such as this represents an important step towards making that change possible.

1. The memo is available on the Senate website:

http://www.albany.edu/avail/files/2014_1114_Pres_RJJ_Memo_to_Senate_Re_Proposed_Amendmt.pdf.

2. Results of the survey are posted here:

http://www.albany.edu/avail/files/2014_Faculty_Staff_Survey_Shared_Governance_Final_Report.pdf

Corporatization: By the Numbers

1.3 Millions of US students with student loan debt

71 Percentage of 2012 graduates of four-year colleges with student debt

\$9,450 Average student loan debt in 1993

\$29,400 Average student loan debt in 2012

\$61,000 Average student loan debt for those with advanced degrees

88 Percentage of 2012 graduates from for-profit colleges with student loan debt

\$32 Billions of dollars in Education grants and loans to for-profit colleges in 2009

\$7.3 Average 2009 compensation, in millions of dollars, for the five highest paid CEOs of for-profit higher education companies

\$490 2014 first quarter spending, thousands of dollars, by the Apollo Group, which runs the University of Phoenix, in their successful lobbying to weaken new regulations on the for-profit college industry

\$3.7 Billions of dollars spent on 2014 elections

44,000 Number of ads run in battleground states between Jan. 2013 and Sept. 2014 by groups funded by the Koch Brothers

\$60.62 Dollars spent per vote by Andrew Cuomo in the 2014 Democratic primary

\$1.57 Dollars spent per vote by his opponent Zephyr Teachout

\$45 Millions of dollars Andrew Cuomo raised for his re-election campaign in the last four years

\$4.5 Estimated millions of dollars raised by his Republican opponent Rob Astorino

Milestones 11/6/2014

Professional Vice President's Report

Thomas Hoey

Some years ago, I found myself at a conference held out of state, which I attended for my job and I also found myself in a deep funk about my life. Maybe it was caused by the travel or being away from home and family and being alone in a strange city. I am sure many of us go through deep reflection about how our life has evolved from the hopes and dreams of our youth and whether we have reached the level of success that we set out to achieve. Luckily, I happened to run into Mike, one of my former student assistants at the University from the early '90s and we agreed to meet for lunch after the morning conference session. At lunch, Mike happily talked about his career and how he was now a certified Cisco Engineer passing the highest level test that is necessary for that certification, which is a very impressive accomplishment in our field of Network Engineering. During the conversation I told him about my feelings of failure and not reaching my goals and making a difference in the world that I had set many years before. Mike stopped eating and said, "Tom don't you realize how much you have influenced my life and the other students that have had the opportunity to work for you?" His words had an instant effect and I started to think about the many students over the years that I have had the privilege to supervise and help with the development of their careers. There was Ben who was recently elected to the New York City Common Council, Justin who was made Director of Computer Operations for the New York Giants, Gavin who was made Chief Network Designer for Commerce Hub, Josh who became a State Policeman and the list goes on and on.

In the course of many conversations I find myself talking about "my students" and the question that often comes up is "do you teach?" My answer is yes I teach and I am professional faculty at the University at Albany. Today I have seven students working for me; they help keep the University's network running and we also work with Rensselaer County Questar III program offering

weekly internships to High School students to give them a taste of what it's like to work in a large organization. While it does take time and energy to work with and mentor our students the payback to the University is many fold. One benefit is that we get exposed to new ideas for the workplace because many of our students are "early adopters" of new technologies that helps with the evolution and improvement of our operation. We also get feedback on what student services work and don't work and they bring back feedback from their peers. And we also get help in getting our jobs done, which helps in these days of doing more with less. Of course, there are downsides to student assistants and the hardest to deal with is the fact that they graduate and leave just when we are getting to know them and to depend on their work. For many years we used to hire the best and brightest of our students to work at the University after graduation, but we don't seem to do that anymore and no one seems to know why, but it is a great loss to UAlbany.

Part of the mission of a comprehensive research University is to educate the future workforce in order to enable them to develop the skills and knowledge to change the world and to earn a living. Many believe that critical thinking is key to innovation and having the ability to communicate ideas to others using skills that include the knowledge of different languages and cultural practices that will give our students the edge needed to succeed. For example, to the north of us French is spoken and to the south Spanish is widely used and as trade increases between our neighbors the ability to converse with them will be necessary. We have been given the opportunity to work for the students attending our University and even though many of us will not change the world in our lifetime, we have the opportunity to train the next generation to do so and give them the ability to make a difference, whether it be finding a cure to cancer or writing an essay that influences changes in our society. We should make sure that we not only offer our students the opportunity to learn from us while they're here, but that we also remain one of those places that benefit from the expertise of those we train by hiring them to work here.

Academic Affairs

Academic Vice President's Report

Barry Trachtenberg

In October, the Academic Affairs Committee held a forum on the issue of Workload Creep. We were fortunate to have an in-depth review of its contractual and policy implications by our chapter's Labor Relations Specialist, Maureen Seidel. This was followed by an insightful panel discussion that included Susan Cumings of the Program in Writing and Critical Inquiry, Jamie Dangler, who serves as the UUP Statewide VP for Academics, Nancy Denton, Chair of Sociology, and Robert L. Miller, Jr. of the School of Social Welfare.

The Forum was a valuable reminder that the issue of one's professional obligation ("workload") is, in some instances, a mandatory subject of bargaining. It is the University's responsibility to determine our academic obligation and to define the appropriate mix of research, teaching, and service. However, it cannot unilaterally increase a faculty member's overall workload in a significant way. That is, something cannot be added to your plate without something else being removed, unless that trade-off is negotiated. A faculty member should not be assigned, for example, to head a major committee or become a departmental leader without an equivalent teaching, service, or research expectation being reduced. How is the size of one's workload to be determined? The most useful means to assess this is by looking at one's historic workload obligation. If a faculty member, for example, has been teaching 2 three-credit classes each semester and then is asked to teach a four-credit course that would replace one of the three-credit courses, something from the remainder of that person's obligation needs to be removed for that semester. If nothing is removed from the overall obligation, the faculty member can either ask for extra service pay or decline the work. Significant changes in one's workload must be the consequence of a decision taken together by the faculty member and the supervisor.

The most effective means by which faculty—both tenure-track and contingent—can maintain

(and protect!) a consistent workload is by keeping meticulous records of the work that they do. Although it often seems like a burden at the end of the Spring semester, filling out one's Faculty Activity Report (FAR) regularly is an important mechanism for determining one's historic workload. Consider making monthly updates to it rather than having to reconstruct your activity at the end of the year. Beyond documenting your steady teaching, research, and service requirements, it is important to register your other contributions as well. So much of the work that faculty do is unrecognized but necessary to the functioning of our university—your FAR is the one place to get credit for it. Whether you agree to conduct an Independent Study, give a public talk, serve on an ad-hoc committee, guest lecture in a colleague's class, serve as a UUP representative to your Department, represent your department or college at a function, attend an ITLAL training, host an event, engage in fundraising, participate in Student Success initiatives, attend candle lighting or commencement ceremonies—all of this should be documented as part of your workload.

During the panel session, it was eye-opening to hear just how multifaceted workload creep is. Tenured and tenure-track faculty spoke how in their departments, the dramatic escalation in contingent faculty and the subsequent loss of tenure-track positions has meant that the seemingly ever-increasing number of service expectations falls on an ever-declining number of people. Adding to this problem is the loss of support personnel, leaving faculty in the position where they have to assume many of the administrative tasks that were once handled by professional staff. At the same time, those contingent faculty who are hired exclusively to teach face workload creep of their own in very significant ways. In this case, the issue is very often *more* egregious than that faced by tenured faculty. Contingent faculty are regularly asked to write letters of recommendation, serve on committees, participate in department functions, attend department meetings and to do all of it without compensation. Since all contingents by definition do not have permanent appointment, they often have to rely on the good will of their chairs to rehire

them. Given that most contingent faculty do not get meaningful evaluations of their teachings, and are overly reliant on SIRF scores, they are put in an awkward position of not being able to decline those "requests" for additional service outside of their teaching obligations. Associate faculty too spoke of the heavy demands for service that are placed upon them the moment they receive tenure, and that this can serve as an obstacle preventing accomplishing their research goals, which in turn delays their appointment to full professor.

By the end of the forum, it was clear that the paradox of workload creep is that while it is experienced as a very personal and individual matter, it is in fact a university-wide phenomenon and should be addressed as such. By documenting our experiences, by knowing our rights, and by insisting upon them, we can work to achieve a healthy balance in our professional and personal lives.

With this matter, as well as with all workplace issues, your local UUP Chapter is here to help. If you have questions, please contact the chapter at uupalb@gmail.com or, for all academic concerns, email me directly at barryct@me.com. We will always treat your situation confidentially and will never act on your behalf without your consent.

Degrees and Debt: A Personal and National Liability

Martin Manjak

Try to imagine you are a recent college graduate in your early to mid-twenties. You're on the threshold of your career facing an uncertain future. You don't own a home and you paid cash for your car. You have next to nothing in material assets, and not much in the way of monthly income. From a financial perspective, you're a relatively high risk proposition, and you would likely have a tough time getting a mortgage or personal loan. Despite all these financial obstacles to being credit-worthy, there's a 70% chance that you're already deeply in debt.

At least 40 million Americans are saddled with student loan debt totaling more than \$1.2 trillion in

principal alone. To put those numbers in some perspective, 55 million Americans receive Social Security benefits. Student loan debt now exceeds credit card and auto loan debt—combined.

According to the Project on Student Debt¹, nationally, 71% of graduates in 2012 left school with student debt loads averaging \$29,400 per borrower. Closer to home, 69% of UAlbany students had an average debt of just over \$24,000 at graduation.

At the graduate level, the numbers are much worse. Nationally, graduate students owe an average of \$57,600, with a quarter carrying debt loads of close to \$100,000. A recent study by the Graduate Student Association's Wages and Benefits Committee to UAlbany's Senate Executive Committee, individual students reported debt of \$72,000, \$100,000 and, for a single term, \$10,500 (see article on page 6 below).

These are figures for students in a public university system whose mission states it will "provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access." Further, SUNY must establish "tuition which most effectively promotes the university's access goals." It's difficult to see how rising tuition costs and decreased public support promote "the broadest possible access."

Mushrooming student debt is a relatively recent development in the US. In fact, in less than 10 years, student loan debt has quadrupled to reach its current, unprecedented level, both absolute and relative to other forms of debt. Why are so many young Americans just starting out their adult lives burdened by tens of thousands of dollars of debt?

The most direct cause for this debilitating increase in personal debt is a one-two combination of tuition increases and reductions in public support for colleges and universities. Nationally, on average, tuitions have increased \$1,282 while public support for students has declined by \$2,394 per FTE. That's a swing of \$3,600. In Arizona, the number is \$7,000. In 1980, a PELL grant covered 77% of tuition at a 4-year-school. By 2014, the figure dropped to 31%.²

¹http://projectonstudentdebt.org/state_by_state-data.php

²<http://higherednotdebt.org/>

But there is another fairly recent economic development that is driving up tuition, and that is debt service costs on the ledgers of colleges and universities that borrowed money to either offset lost public subsidies or to invest in capital projects (stadiums, dormitories, student centers, etc.) to compete for the higher paying, out-of-state, international student market.¹ In short, higher ed went gambling, chasing after Wall St. dollars to finance capital projects that it hoped would attract a higher paying clientele. But with the financial retrenchment on the part of the states and feds, schools had only one way to recoup their costs and pay their debt service: increase tuition.

The full weight of these financial demands fell squarely on the shoulders of students and their families. The only way to bridge the gap between ballooning tuition, and available aid and individual means was to borrow. And borrow we did, with a vengeance. In 2012, more than \$34 billion was spent on interest for student loans.

The numbers themselves are shocking, but they don't tell the whole story. Unlike other personal debt, student loan debt is extraordinarily difficult to discharge through bankruptcy. You must pass an added court test by demonstrating that paying the loan will create "undue hardship." Basically, that means you live at the poverty level and you have little to no prospect of ever improving your financial situation. In some cases, even death won't eliminate the debt. If the loan is from a private lender, and has a co-signer, or you live in a community property state, the debt will pass to the co-signer or member of your family.

The number of Americans carrying student loans, the average size of those loans, the onerous payment requirements, the average repayment time (19 years), and the default rates (1 in 8 borrowers) all add up to a national financial emergency.² The \$1.2 trillion in student debt represents an enormous lost economic opportunity for a generation of Americans. With a significant

¹http://debtandsociety.org/publication/borrowing_against_the_future/

²<http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2013/08/06/2418351/one-in-eight-student-loan-borrowers-is-in-default/>

portion of present and future earnings already committed to paying existing debt, there is little credit or money left over to generate new economic growth or demand. Student debt is a drag on the entire American economy, and unless we're willing to examine our national priorities with respect to higher education, we will all be paying for it.

The recently created, federal Consumer Finance Protection Bureau has published a set of guidelines to help borrowers take full advantage of repayment options, including those that can lower monthly payments without risking default, and in some cases fully discharge their loans prior to repayment. The guidelines are available at: <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/paying-for-college/repay-student-debt/>

Wages and Benefits: Report from the Graduate Student Association Wages & Benefits Committee

Nicole D'Anna, GSEU Chief Steward

Since Fall 2013, the Graduate Student Association's Wages and Benefits Committee has researched economic issues that graduate students face during their time at the University at Albany. Our overall goal is to bring attention to, and call for redress of, those graduate student issues at the University level. We thank UUP for offering us this space to share some of our research and recommendations with its members.

The accompanying infographic (page 17 below) highlights the significant findings of our research. It includes the fact that financial stress profoundly affects nearly half of graduate students and is a substantial impediment to degree progress. Similarly, assistantships and adjunct stipends are well below Albany's cost of living. This is reflected in the fact that over a third of graduate students report relying on loans to pay for basic needs and expenses. This is especially burdensome to students within the current context of dwindling academic job prospects post-graduation. All of these factors

contribute negatively to graduate student's mental and physical well-being. Additionally, communication about workplace conditions and rights, as well as professional development training, varies widely by department. Some students are not aware of work expectations, hours, length of contract, average time to completion, or availability of future funding.

These graduate student issues clearly have significant implications for the University at large, particularly with respect to overall retention, recruitment, and research goals. Awareness-raising is an important step, but we also need action. We hope that we can count on UUP members to take active roles in advocating for graduate students at departmental and university levels. Some suggestions include: expanding the amount and length of financial support; reducing or eliminating administrative fees; providing more transparency of information for incoming students; including graduate students in decision-making processes; and engaging more graduate students in their respective bargaining units. Together we can create a more positive and supportive work environment for all!

Start Up NY at Ualbany

Gail Landsman

Through creating tax free zones at SUNY schools, the Start-Up NY program "brings academia and business together like never before, creating an entrepreneurial 21st century college campus" (<http://www.suny.edu/impact/business/start-up-ny/>). So proclaims the SUNY website. But what does such a plan and vision mean for our university? In an earlier issue of the Forum, Paul Stasi presented key findings of the Fiscal Policy Institute's reports on what was then called "Tax Free New York" and later evolved into "Start-Up NY." The reports raised serious concerns about the potential negative impact on the state's tax base, and on existing businesses in the state that would now have to compete against companies receiving the huge tax

break. In this article, I focus on the implementation of Start-Up NY at UAlbany. What is our campus's plan? How are decisions being made? What issues might we want to consider as we participate in this plan to transform UAlbany into Governor Cuomo's vision of an entrepreneurial campus?

Brief History of UAlbany's Start-up NY Plan

Start-Up NY offers the opportunity for a business and its employees to pay zero state taxes over ten years. In order to participate in the program, a business should relocate to or expand within New York State, align with a college or university's academic mission, create new jobs and contribute to the economic development of the local community. The legislation allows Start-Up NY status to be designated to any site that is within a mile of any property owned or leased by a school.

Implementation of Start-Up NY at UAlbany is under the direction of Michael Shimazu, who one year ago was appointed to the new position of Associate Vice President of Business Partnerships and Economic Development. Associate VP Shimazu generously offered his time to discuss the Start-Up NY process with me, and some of the information in this article derives from that conversation.

In January 2014 Associate VP Shimazu's office submitted a plan to the NYS Commissioner of Economic Development and SUNY, which was approved in March. Relative to other SUNY schools, space on our campus is a particularly scarce resource; the decision was made to allow companies themselves to identify areas of interest *off* campus and request that they be added to the UAlbany tax-free area. After some companies expressed an interest in particular off campus properties, UAlbany amended its plan to include these sites. The amended plan was approved in July 2014.

The spaces designated under UAlbany's revised plan include some wet lab spaces on the uptown academic podium, 10,000 sq ft in the Schuyler School Building on the downtown campus, approximately 24,000 sq ft on the East Campus, and land parcels on both the East campus and on Fuller Road adjacent to CNSE; spaces beyond the campus boundaries include office space on Broadway in

Albany, and at Tower Place in Executive Park in Guilderland. Future additional land and spaces can be designated by the Start-up NY Campus Advisory Committee, with guidance from other campus committees.

How Does UAlbany Select Businesses for Start-Up NY?

The Office of Business Partnerships and Economic Development accepts applications from businesses and determines initial eligibility. Applications are then reviewed by the Start-Up NY Advisory Committee, whose charge includes determining if the proposals align with the academic mission of the university. The composition of the committee is, in Shimazu's words, "in transition." The approved plan calls for it to consist of "appropriate senior administrative officers, as well as faculty and student representatives." To date it has consisted of the past Provost, the VP for Finance and Administration, and the immediate past leader of the Faculty Senate and of student government; these representatives of faculty and students were invited by Associate VP Shimazu at the suggestion of the past Provost. In addition, an ad hoc academic review committee is consulted to advise regarding a specific proposal's fit with the academic mission. The VP of Research and the past Provost have put together a committee on a case-by-case basis.

UAlbany's first Start-Up NY project was recently announced: Classbook.com, an online provider of outsourced curriculum management, textbooks and other digital content to K-12 private schools, will move some of its operations from its current location in Castleton in Rensselaer County to 418 Broadway in downtown Albany. The location qualified for Start-Up designation because UAlbany rents space at nearby 99 Pine Street. Although whether it will further the academic mission of UAlbany is yet to be seen, Classbook.com is expected to provide jobs in a currently underserved area, a priority for consideration in the program. As Jason Conwall, a spokesman for Empire State Development, which administers Start-Up NY recently stated "At the end of the day, it's all about attracting new jobs" (quoted in

<http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/No-tax-plan-on-track-5838655.php>).

What if?

Associate VP Shimazu similarly describes the program as "a potential carrot," an incentive to attract to the area companies that both align with the university's mission and promise jobs. The cost of running the Start-Up NY program, he suggests, is not that great for off campus sites, and although companies are under no obligation to hire students, he points out the program may offer employment and internship opportunities for graduate students and the chance for them, and faculty researchers, to work on real world problems.

In testimony before the SUNY Board of Trustees earlier this year however, UUP President Fred Kowal expressed concerns about the effects of Start-Up NY on SUNY's campuses, in terms of both resources and focus. "The state has opened our campuses up for business – they will serve as hosts for businesses – including private, for-profit entities – with no guarantees that these relationships will improve or benefit campuses in the long run." Kowal argues that "START-UP NY may rob valuable space and resources from future academic needs, at a time when support for SUNY's state-operated campuses continues to decline and enrollments increase."

(<http://uupinfo.org/legislation/pdf/BOTtestimony140319.pdf>)

The program is new, and many issues and procedures are yet to be worked out. We don't know yet what the outcome of Start-Up NY will be for the economy of the state or the health of SUNY. But we can, and should, consider the road not taken. What if instead of luring companies to university property with tax breaks as bait, we directly supported public higher education? What if instead of training workers for the companies we lure, we invest in educating students to innovate, explore and create? Models exist in which vibrant, well-supported colleges and universities have brought together intelligent, curious, and motivated people with multiple areas of expertise, and nurtured their talents and research; and from their collaborations have emerged both homegrown startup companies and an ecosystem that draws to

it others with entrepreneurial spirit. What if instead of using it as a slogan, our state policymakers truly believed and invested in “the power of SUNY”?

A copy of UAlbany’s Start-Up NY plan can be seen here: <http://www.albany.edu/biz-ualbany/biz-ualbany-assets/ualbany-amended-campus-plan-APPROVED-2014-08.pdf>.

Who you gonna call?

Thomas Hoey, VP for Professionals

One of the darker aspects of my union work at the university is the “interrogation”—the process where University Administration directs employees to attend a session in which they are questioned about perceived violations of university policy, behavioral concerns, or other problems. This can be a terrifying process for employees. The University, as the employer, proceeds based on evidence it has uncovered. Typically this evidence is not shared with the employee beforehand. And employees must answer any questions during an interrogation or face disciplinary action.

Fortunately, however, you are entitled to have a representative with you, either a union representative or a lawyer. As you may know, lawyer fees start at around 250.00 an hour and they may not fully understand how the rules at SUNY operate, which could put you at greater risk. So who are you going to call? Most likely your volunteer UUP union. While many of us will never be called in for an interrogation during our careers it can happen at any time. Although an interrogation is meant to be simply a fact-finding interview to ensure that the employees have a chance to tell “their side” of the story, they often have an accusatory feel to them. They are not disciplinary, but they often feel that way to the employees who are summoned, whether or not they have done anything that might warrant discipline from the employer. The psychological effect of an interrogation is often akin to being accused of a crime on the spot, and being asked to defend yourself without having the chance to see the evidence. These interrogations hurt morale for

the member, the union reps and also management. I often think that the time and energy could be used in much more productive ways. Unfortunately our members do break rules either through ignorance or on purpose and these actions must be dealt with for the common good. I understand why the university must sometimes intervene. I just wonder if the way we do it is always the best way.

I believe the union, working with management, may be able to deal with minor problems in a more productive way before a situation escalates to a serious problem. I have informally sat with members and their supervisors working through difficult relationships, which are sometimes caused by a simple misunderstanding about their roles or a misinterpretation of our contract with the State of New York. There is no denying, in my opinion, that there is an adversarial but cordial relationship between labor and management both at the chapter and statewide level. Part of the problem I believe lies in the fact that management is paid to administer its employees and the union is a volunteer organization and, is, therefore not regarded as management’s peers. I have seen this same situation with paid fire departments dealing with volunteer fire departments not as peers; yet they are doing the same work and put their lives at risk.

So what can be done to improve the relationship, which would be beneficial to both labor and management? Ideally we should get together in a committee structure and discuss ideas and actions we both come up with. One Idea I have is to set up joint teams to deal with “situations” on an informal basis. Management would consult with the union about a potential problem and let us first talk to our member on a peer level to try to find out what is going on and whether we can defuse the situation. Of course this will not always work, in which case management would have to proceed with its normal procedures, but at least we could say we had tried.

By talking to employees, we may be able to find out reasons for these problems and work

together hopefully to solve them. Creating a positive work environment is the ultimate goal of the union and hopefully also the University. I would really like to know what you think and if you have any suggestions please let me know!

Tomtomhoey@gmail.com

This article is an opinion piece by the author and does not reflect the ideas of the Albany Chapter of UUP or of Statewide UUP.

The Legacy of Nuala Drescher

(reprinted by permission of Darryl McGrath)

Labor activists sometimes talk about their “union moment” – an encounter or experience that illustrates the power of the union for its members. For former UUP president Nuala McGann Drescher, that epiphany came in a conversation almost 30 years ago.

Drescher was speaking with Shirley Brown, a tenured psychology professor at SUNY Albany. Brown had a career full of achievements, including appointment to the New York State Board of Regents, but had never advanced beyond associate professor. When Drescher—UUP’s first and only woman president—asked why, Brown’s answer pulled her up short. A lack of time to conduct research and publish in professional journals had stalled Brown’s academic career.

Thus was born the idea for what would become the Nuala McGann Drescher Affirmative Action/Diversity Leave Program – commonly and lovingly referred to by UUP members simply as “the Drescher Award.”

Albany Chapter members celebrated the program’s success with a Nov. 13 lecture by Drescher, a retired labor historian at SUNY Buffalo State. Statewide Vice President for Professionals Philippe Abraham and Secretary Eileen Landy were at the event, organized by the chapter’s Women’s Concerns Committee, particularly Chris Bose, Eloise Briere, Deborah Lafond, Louise-Anne McNutt and Julie Novkov.

Nearly 100 faculty—including a number of Drescher recipients—listened with expressions of

admiration and appreciation as Drescher, a Distinguished Service Professor and lifelong labor activist, reflected on what the award has accomplished, and what remains to be done.

“Your colleagues and your union said, ‘We want a diverse faculty,’” Drescher said in recounting the response to her proposal for a grant program to assist with academic leave for research. “We wanted this to be, ‘Who’s going to be with us for a long period of time?’ This is an investment in experience.”

The Drescher Award has been a formative experience for hundreds of young academics with its goal of nurturing a diverse faculty at SUNY. By providing paid leave for the pursuit of research through a joint labor/management agreement with the state, the Drescher Award has given hundreds of diverse faculty the gift of time to help them complete a thesis or book, secure tenure and share their knowledge with students and colleagues. Particular credit was given to Senior Vice Provost Bill Hedberg for his role in making UAlbany the leading campus recipient of the Drescher Award.

As Albany Chapter President Bret Benjamin and Timothy Mulcahy, interim senior vice president for academic affairs and provost, both emphasized: The world is a better place for the Drescher Award, and SUNY is a better university for the hundreds of careers the award has helped foster.

For her part, Drescher would like to see the award be used in the future to help young academics not only complete that first critical part of their research, but also to advance to full professorships once they attain tenure.

That seems attainable, even in an era when tenure is under attack and full-time faculty lines are fewer than they were when the Drescher Award began. Looking around the packed room just before the lecture started, Professor Julie Novkov, a political scientist and co-chair of the Women’s Concerns Committee, struck an optimistic note.

The turnout, she said, was “a real testament to the difference this award has made to people of this university. It’s a relatively small investment, but the payoff is tremendous.”

Interested in how to get a Drescher?

The Women's Concerns Committees is offering a workshop for candidates and chairs to help them take advantage of this important campus resource.

Wednesday February 4th, 3PM.

Room: TBA

UUP Fights for Better Certification for K-12 Teachers

Jim Collins

UUP has often worked with NYSUT and other education unions to defend work that K-12 teachers do and the conditions under which they do it. Our union has recently joined the battle over teacher certification in New York, in particular over the hastily implemented but consequential new certification program called edTPA (Educative Teacher Performance Assessment), recently imposed by the State Education Department.

A brief chronology: From 2009-2012, SED contracted with Pearson, the publishing and testing multinational, in order to develop an assessment program for New York. In 2012, the SED gave up this venture and decided to implement the edTPA framework, developed at Stanford University, owned and distributed by Pearson, and used in experimental pilot programs in fourteen states. Foregoing pilot testing, New York decided to take the plunge, joining Washington State in choosing edTPA as the new system for credentialing K-12 teachers throughout their states. Announcing its intentions in March 2012, the SED began implementing in the fall of 2012 an assessment framework comprising four new exams and a lengthy electronic portfolio of student writing and classroom videos, but with many materials still under preparation.

The results to date have not been promising. As the new system was imposed in Spring 2013, with most college education departments not having time to revise course content for that semester, many SUNY teacher education programs

began to report difficulties with the new array of content, tasks and technological requirements (for an informative account see pp. 6-7 at the following link:

<http://uupinfo.org/flipbook/EchoVol1Issue1/index.html#/6>). Based on field data from 2013, the in-house implementation group predicted that ultimately 40% of NYS teacher candidates would fail the certification exams.

Taking action: Aware of the likelihood of unprecedented high failure rates, in Spring 2014 UUP called for a suspension of the edTPA, and joined a political action campaign with the Professional Staff Congress of CUNY, NYSUT, students, and private colleges to press for alternatives. Among the shortcomings the political action campaign identified and brought to the attention of the legislature and the Board of Regents were:

- Final edTPA handbooks were not available until fall 2013 in some subject areas.
- Many campuses did not begin their final edTPA pilots until spring 2013, many ran into problems, and the SED did not address those problems.
- There is no evidence that the edTPA identifies quality teachers any better than existing certification requirements (<http://uupinfo.org/communications/2014releases/140326.php>).

The action campaign persuaded the NYS Board of Regents to direct the SED to establish a 'safety net' of retake procedures for those failing certification in the earlier period. The campaign also got the NYS Legislature to pressure the (reluctant) SED to establish an edTPA Task Force. This task force has brought rank and file educators and teacher educators as well as UUP, PSC, and NYSUT representatives 'to the table,' involving them in reviewing how edTPA is being unrolled and examining the teacher certification process more generally. Not surprisingly, the SED Commissioner John King has attempted to limit the Task Force, restricting it to providing input on handbooks and rubrics to the Stanford design team. UUP, PSC, and NYSUT have replied with Freedom of Information Filings for disaggregated pass/fail data and a call for

subcommittees to discuss problems associated with the 'safety net', clarify faculty assistance to teacher candidates, and commit to a Task Force final report including formal recommendations.

As of this writing, the labor partners in the Task Force are reviewing whether to resign under protest, or continue to press to give some teeth to this review mechanism. UUP is also preparing to launch a teacher ed action campaign for mobilizing constituents and articulating their concerns on this issue in preparation for the winter legislative session. Those wishing to find out more or become involved, please contact: Jamie Dangler, UUP Vice President for Academics and Teacher Education Task Force chair, jdangler@uupmail.org; [1-800-342-4206](tel:1-800-342-4206).

Parenthetically, Dangler is a sociologist committed to combining quantitative assessments with relevant contextual data in the service of providing fair and informative educator assessments (something all might hope for). In general, UUP works for rational, carefully implemented techniques of evaluation for education professionals, believing these should be reviewed and assessed by a wide range of stakeholders, including those from the ranks of higher education and K-12.

Drawing conclusions: A lesson to take from the recent messy history of teacher certification is that misdirection is still direction, and it can be part of a class strategy to dominate. When politicians (such as Governor Cuomo) and administrators (such as SED Commissioner John King) start kicking teachers for the failure of schools. "What are the real issues?" In a concise, informative essay entitled "Schools as Scapegoats," economists Mishel and Rothstein make the following argument:

"The singular obsession with schools deflects political attention from policy failures [in taxation, infrastructure, investments] . . . American middle-class living standards are threatened, not because workers lack competitive skills but because the richest among us have seized the fruits of productivity growth, denying fair shares to working- and middle-class Americans, educated in American schools, who have created the additional national wealth. . . . No amount of school reform [or teacher testing] can undo policies that redirect wealth

generated by skilled workers to profits and executive bonuses."¹

Their argument holds for blaming teachers as well as scapegoating schools. In an era that encourages worship of "profits and executive bonuses," we need to remember the importance of struggles for a public life, including public education, and to see them as part of a class struggle for a better society.

Confronting Climate Change: An Issue for Higher Education and Organized Labor

Ronald Friedman, Academic Delegate
Department of Psychology

On the night of November 10th, my colleagues Dr. Oliver Timm (Dept. of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences), Dr. Mary Ellen Mallia (Economist and Director of the Office of Environmental Sustainability), and I held a symposium on campus entitled "Perceptions of Climate Change: Confronting the Reality." Here, for an audience of approximately 400 students and faculty, the three of us gave presentations describing some of the contributions of our respective fields to understanding the emerging climate crisis.

Dr. Timm began the night providing a "crash course" regarding the evidence that climate scientists, including him, have painstakingly collected in recent decades to establish the origins and nature of global warming. With a captivating array of facts, figures, and images, Dr. Timm made vivid the potential effects of the crisis, for instance, showing how the climate of New York is projected

¹Lawrence Mishel & Richard Rothstein, 2007, *Schools as scapegoats: Our increasing inequality and our competitiveness problems are huge -- but they can't be laid at the door of our education system. The American Prospect*, October 2007, pp. 44-47.

to shift within a number of decades to that of a southeastern state, how glacial melting and thermal expansion of the oceans threaten to inundate some of our most cherished cities and coastlines, and how processes of ocean acidification due to atmospheric changes stand to disrupt basic biological processes essential for marine life. Perhaps most compellingly, Dr. Timm showed that scientists have accumulated data from ice core samples allowing them to infer the quantity of carbon in the atmosphere over a timespan of more than 800,000 years. The data clearly indicates that although there have been large-scale periodic variations over the millennia in atmospheric carbon, the levels have shot up beyond any historic precedent in recent decades, as the global carbon-based economy has ballooned. This belies claims by so-called “climate deniers” that the current changes are due to natural cycles as opposed to human activities.

Afterward, I turned to explaining some of the psychological barriers that have kept individuals from adequately confronting the climate crisis. Here, although I touched on the fact that much ignorance remains about the crisis (in part due to a shameful recent decline in news coverage and even more shameful corporate efforts to spread misinformation), my focus was on the ill effects of what has been termed “motivated reasoning,” the tendency to process information in a way that supports one’s preferred views. For instance, I discussed how recognizing the facts of the crisis might clash with individuals’ religious beliefs or political ideologies, or undermine the belief that the world is basically a fair place in which people get what they deserve—a notion very much at odds with the fact that climate change is already causing the most harm to people in developing nations who are least responsible for the problem. In short, as a result of the threat that climate change poses to beliefs and values that are essential to people’s feelings of security and well-being, individuals often resist the message of the scientific community regarding the emerging crisis, and ironically, their defensiveness may only grow as this message takes on increasing urgency.

Finally, Dr. Mallia highlighted a number of the policies that environmental economists have

proposed and helped put into practice to mitigate the climate crisis. These included the implementation of various corporate carbon trading schemes that harness market forces to incentivize reductions in carbon emissions, as well as the imposition of carbon taxation/pricing policies that would stand to increase the cost of fossil fuel use, again incentivizing the development and use of alternative, “green” sources of energy. Dr. Mallia emphasized that these types of solutions were not new and, indeed, had been used successfully in the past to help mitigate environmental problems such as acid rain and depletion of the ozone layer. Like global warming, these problems also cut across state and international lines and were exacerbated by corporate misinformation campaigns and political gridlock. The bottom line: Although the scope of the climate change crisis far exceeds that of these other challenges, there exist “tried and true” economic policies that should work effectively to mitigate anthropogenic global warming, provided that we muster the political will to implement them properly and stay the course.

Although I’m very pleased that we were able to organize this large-scale “teach-in”, I realize there’s much more that all of us can and should do to inform the university community about climate change and the imperative need to take action. Originally, I decided to organize this event because I routinely teach classes which enroll hundreds of first-year students. It occurred to me that the bulk of them know precious little about climate change and that we should open as many pathways as we can to building their interest in and involvement with the issue early on. I’m hoping that we can make progress along these lines by building on the initiatives already begun on campus by Dr. Mallia to expand undergraduate instruction regarding climate change, not just within the physical sciences, but in the social sciences and humanities as well. Beyond such expansion of the curriculum, students also need to be made aware of the ample opportunities available for them at UAlbany to conduct research on the issue of climate change and/or the implementation of sustainable practices. Much of this research can be done studying our very own campus building operations and practices.

I'd also like to express my belief that, as members of UUP, we should recognize climate change as a union issue. Labor activists have long realized that there is no point in solely negotiating for better conditions on the job if workers are left to return home to a contaminated and degraded environment, one that undermines their physical and psychological well-being. Restated, unionism is about more than negotiating fair contracts with management—it's about creating a secure, just, and healthy world within which to work and live. As such, we should each do what we can to inform other UUPers, as well as students and members of the community at large, about the climate crisis, to urge them to take political action (through their vote and, if possible, through contact with legislators and participation in rallies such as the recent People's Climate March in NYC), and to help find ways of transitioning to an economy that is based on clean energy.

If you would like to help us organize additional campus events on climate change or play a more active role in shaping the undergraduate curriculum to enhance education and research in this area, please feel free to contact me (rfriedman@albany.edu) or Mary Ellen Mallia (mmallia@albany.edu), and consider either joining the UUP Peace and Justice committee or volunteering to work with UAlbany's Office of Sustainability.

Contingency

(from page 1)

university labor must take in order for the university to offer its current range of degree programs and student services while still being able to balance its books.

However, we must be clear about the malignancy of this current structure. To maintain, let alone to expand, the contemporary university's reliance on contingent labor will be catastrophic for the individuals who work as contingents, for our students, and for the university as we know it. Contingency must be challenged. But dismantling contingency will be a task of enormous complexity and consequence.

To their great credit, the UAlbany administration has signalled its willingness to confront this problem, establishing a committee to examine contingent labor at UAlbany and to develop specific policy proposals. The Administration has stated that it hopes UAlbany can become a national leader on this issue, working to reconceive the institution of contingent labor. The devil, as always, will be found in the details, and we stand today at the most preliminary stage of a long and complex process. Whatever happens, however, UUP applauds President Jones, Interim Provost Mulcahy and the administration for being willing to tackle one of the thorniest issues in contemporary higher education. UUP Albany is eager to contribute to these campus discussions, and we pledge to be active in contributing data, analysis, and concrete policy proposals during the process.

Below are a few ways to improve the working conditions of our contingents. Undoubtedly, if enacted, some of these will create new problems; their implementation will require careful deliberation, but all are worth considering.

- Create pathways to permanency for contingent faculty. This might mean the creation of a tenured teaching faculty alongside a research faculty. This is a vexed but essential issue that gets at the heart of contingency as a form of labor.
- Establish a step system that extends the duration of contingent appointments based on years of service at the university (e.g., after 2 years of service employees becomes eligible for year-long contracts; after 5 years they becomes eligible for 2-year contracts, etc.)
- Raise contingent compensation. UUP has endorsed the Mayday 5K principles, which include a demand for a per course minimum stipend of \$5000.
- Create robust, holistic systems of evaluation for contingents, in which employees have clear expectations and are afforded due process.
- Extend GA/TA support and additional Graduate student funding, which would reduce the number of contingents by keeping graduate students on funded lines for the duration of their degree program.

- Make appointments sufficient to ensure health insurance and benefits whenever possible.
- Some of our members have appointments of 95% or 99%, meaning that the University gets what amounts to a full-time employee without offering any pathway to tenure. In many cases this is nothing more than an accounting trick to skirt contractual protections. We should turn 90+% appointments into full-time positions.
 - Offer contingents priority for scheduling.
 - Ensure contingents have adequate access to space and campus resources.
 - Afford contingents a larger role in decision-making bodies on campus (including our union chapter).

Whatever the specific proposals under consideration, we must proceed from the understanding that contingency cannot be addressed as an independent issue that affects only one constituency within the university. Rather, contingency is woven into the very fabric of the university and touches nearly every aspect of our institution. For instance, as a research university, we have many contingents who are currently enrolled in, or recently graduated from, our own doctoral-granting programs. No review of contingency can proceed without a careful investigation of graduate student funding, completion rates, time to degree, placement rates, and their role in the undergraduate curriculum. Likewise, no review of contingency can ignore the foundational role that contingent faculty play in delivering instruction within the undergraduate curriculum; approximately 40% of all undergraduate sections at UAlbany are taught by contingents, including a large number of introductory and general education classes. This means, for instance, that initiatives such as Open SUNY, which aims to streamline general education through online courses, have a disproportionate impact on contingent faculty and must be re-thought with their working conditions in mind. A review of contingency must likewise account for the pivotal positions held by contingent professionals throughout the university, affecting student support services, faculty support services, and virtually every unit on campus (if some more than others). Ultimately a challenge to the

institution of contingency will require a thoroughgoing review of our University's finances. Budgets reflect institutional priorities. To transform the institution of contingency will require additional expenditure. This, in turn, will require both an assessment of how we allocate our resources currently, and what we collectively understand to be our core institutional values and priorities.

Contingents employees, of course, have a material stake in this assessment, hence we urge contingents to get involved so that your experiences and priorities can help shape the decisions that directly affect your work-lives. As I stated above, however, the institution of contingency affects all employees. The particular sorts of work performed by contingents—and the kinds of work they are prevented from performing—have a direct bearing on the work done by those of us who have tenure-line positions. The scope of our professional obligation—our job duties, service loads, teaching and advisement responsibilities, research expectations, and more—have gradually but dramatically shifted, often increasing as a rising percentage of contingents within the University's total workforce means that certain responsibilities are shared among a shrinking group of tenure-line employees. Recognizing this structural relationship highlights two factors: 1) it allows us to see the conditions of extreme exploitation under which contingents work as they perform many of the identical work duties as tenure-line employees; and 2) it makes clear that contingents and tenure-line employees have a common interest in challenging contingency, even if some particular demands may come at the other's expense. Both contingents and tenure-line employees will have to articulate their individual and programmatic needs and concerns, recognizing where genuine conflicts exist and looking for shared ground where possible. There are no easy answers here. If the institution of contingency is to be challenged, we will need genuine solidarity, intelligence, creativity, frank debate, and an appeal to our collective interest in a transformative vision of public higher education. That may not be enough, but it is where we as a university and a union must start.

UPCOMING UUP ALBANY CHAPTER ELECTION

The UUP Albany Chapter election for the 2015-2017 term will be held in **early 2015**.

Every two years, our UUP chapter holds elections for officer and delegate positions. The term of office for this spring's election is June 1, 2015 to May 31, 2017. Officer positions include President, Vice-President for Professionals, Assistant VP for Professionals, VP for Academics, Assistant VP for Academics, Officer for Contingents, Secretary, and Treasurer. UUP delegates attend monthly Executive Committee meetings as well as the statewide UUP Delegate Assembly held three times a year, usually in Albany. Delegates are eligible to serve on statewide and chapter committees.

Although contract negotiations take place at the statewide level, our local UUP chapter is actively engaged in a range of important issues that impact our campus every day such as ensuring the fairness of the tenure and promotion system and appropriate governance, defending the rights of women, persons of color, and those with disabilities, addressing workplace safety concerns, advocating for our campus and protecting your rights to a fair and equitable workplace.

Those who wish to be nominated to run in the election must mail their nomination form so **it is received by the UUP Elections and Credentials Committee by mail on February 4, 2015**. A nomination form and instructions will be mailed to each member in mid-January. Ballots will be mailed to all UUP members in mid-February and due mid-March. To learn more about the officer and delegate positions and deadlines visit: www.albany.edu/uup or for more information, contact the Chapter Elections Committee, Chair, Kate Latal at 459-1238. For detailed information about the election schedule: <http://uupinfo.org/elections/pdf/2015-2017ChapterElectionCalendar.pdf>

Nominees to the Executive Committee are invited to submit a statement of up to 150 words in length (250 words for chapter officers) to be published in the chapter newsletter. The deadline for submitting a statement for publication in the chapter newsletter is February 4, 2015. Statements may be submitted by email to pstasi27@gmail.com

Please consider running for a delegate or officer position!

Let us know what you think.

Send your comments to:

The editor at:

pstasi27@gmail.com

Newsletter Committee:

Jim Collins

Gail Landsman

Marty Manjak

Rob See

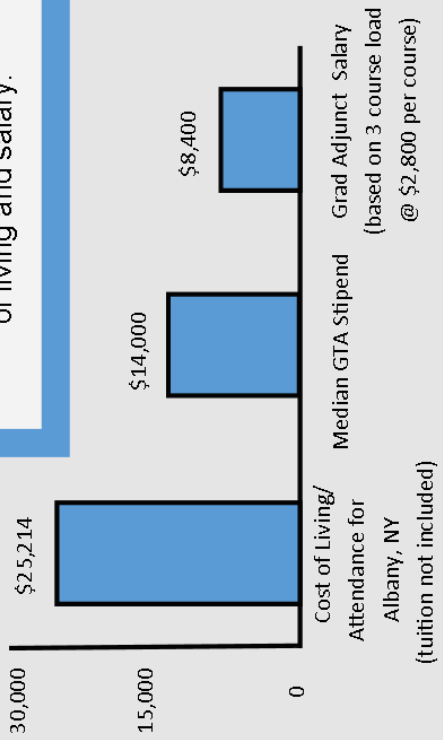


GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Wages and Benefits Committee

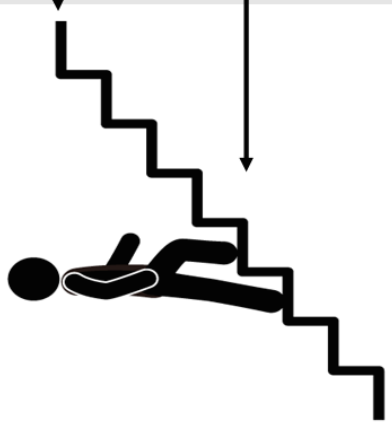
Infographic on Graduate Labor and Quality of Life at the University at Albany

Grad/PhD students are faced with an estimated **\$11,214-** **\$16,714 deficit** between cost of living and salary.



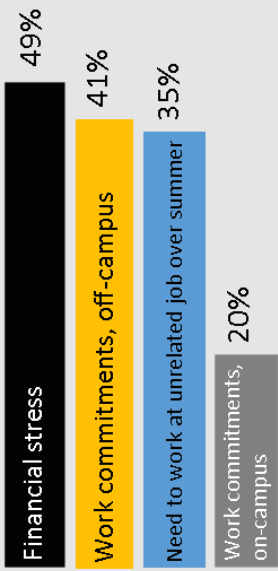
Between 2003-12 the average time to completion for doctoral degrees was:

6.73 yrs.



Most Grad/PhD assistantships only provide guaranteed funding for: **3-4 yrs.**

38% of all Grad/PhD students reported **relying on loans** to cover at least forty percent of their graduate expenses.



49% Of Grad/PhD students said **financial stress** is a major challenge to their progress.

UUP Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP)

FAST FACTS 2015

The Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP) is a negotiated benefit in the 2011-2016 agreement between UUP and NYS.

PEP allows eligible UUP-represented employees to exchange previously accrued annual leave (vacation) in return for a credit of up to \$500 to be applied toward the employee share of NYSHIP premiums on a biweekly basis. Full-time and part-time employees who accrue vacation leave may participate in the program.

ENROLLMENT DEADLINE—NOV. 28, 2014

The enrollment period for the 2014 plan year runs through Nov. 28, 2014. Employees are required to submit a separate enrollment form for each year in which they wish to participate.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible full-time employees with an annual salary of **\$62,998 and below**, and eligible part-time employees whose biweekly salary is within this range at the time of enrollment, who choose to enroll in the Productivity Enhancement Program for the 2015 plan year will forfeit a total of three days of annual leave at the time of enrollment in return for a credit of up to \$500 to be applied toward their share of NYSHIP premiums.

Eligible full-time employees earning **more than \$62,998 and below \$90,022** and eligible part-time employees whose biweekly salary is within this range at the time of enrollment, who choose to enroll in PEP for the 2015 plan year will forfeit a total of two days of annual leave at the time of enrollment in return for a credit of up to \$500 to be applied toward their share of NYSHIP premiums.

At the time of enrollment, employees must:

- ◆ Be an employee covered by the 2011-2016 New York State/UUP Collective Bargaining Agreement;
- ◆ Be employed on a Calendar Year or College Year basis;
- ◆ Be a full-time employee with an annual salary below \$90,022 **OR** a part-time employee whose biweekly salary is within this salary range at the time of enrollment;
- ◆ Be a NYSHIP enrollee (contract holder) in either the Empire Plan or an HMO;
- ◆ Be eligible to receive an employer contribution toward NYSHIP premiums (or be on leave without pay from a position in which the employee is normally eligible for an employer share contribution toward NYSHIP premiums); and
- ◆ Have a sufficient annual leave balance to make the full leave forfeiture without bringing their annual leave balance below eight days or a prorated balance for part-time employees, respectively.

**Contact your campus Human Resources Department
for more information or to obtain an enrollment form.**



Protecting your family for the future



It's important that your family members are financially protected throughout their lives. Have you stopped to consider what would happen to your spouse and/or children if you were to suddenly pass away?

Would your loved ones be able to continue to live in their home, pay regular bills and maintain a comfortable lifestyle? What about your final medical, burial or funeral expenses?

And it's not a question of just having a life insurance policy... make sure you have *enough* coverage to provide for your family. Find a plan that's right for you and your specific financial situation.

Plans designed specifically for NYSUT members

As NYSUT members, it makes prudent sense to look into the Term Life or Level Term Life Insurance Plans endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits. Both of these plans offer specific terms and rates designed exclusively with NYSUT members and their families in mind.

The **Term Life Plan** is available for NYSUT members and their spouses/domestic partners under age 85. If you are under age 65, you can apply for coverage from \$25,000 up to \$1 million at premiums negotiated specifically for NYSUT members.

Meanwhile, the **Level Term Life Plan** offers terms for 10, 15 or 20-year periods. The premium that you start with is projected to remain the same and the benefit amount will not decrease throughout the term – regardless of your age or health condition.

You can enjoy an **additional savings of 15%** on published rates if your local association has approved automatic deductions from your paycheck or pension check and you sign up for that benefit.

To learn more about the Member Benefits-endorsed Term Life or Level Term Life Insurance Plans, call **800-626-8101** or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org.

Member Appreciation Month is coming!

NYSUT Member Benefits wants to start the New Year off right with a celebration of the entire NYSUT membership.

These offers will continue into February 2015, which has been designated as Member Appreciation Month!

It's the strength of the more than 600,000 NYSUT members that makes it possible for Member Benefits to offer approximately 50 endorsed programs & services designed with you in mind.

This special celebration will be kicking off in January 2015 with the arrival of your new membership cards. This mailing will include a variety of special offers only available to NYSUT members.



This will be a month filled with a series of special prize drawings for items donated by our endorsed program providers. To be eligible for these drawings, all you need to do is be a participant in our voluntary MAP Alert email service.

We will announce the winners of these special prize drawings exclusively on the Member Benefits website throughout the month of February.

For more details about this exciting event, visit the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org or call **800-626-8101**.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

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