



At *The Forum* we write about the pressing issues our members face on campus. We do so from the perspective of labor, connecting our local concerns to those of the statewide agenda of UUP, the national crisis facing public higher education and the issues of working people in the US and beyond.

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Unions Work

Bret Benjamin, Chapter President

Unions are in trouble, folks. Union density in the US workforce, which peaked at about 30% in the 1960s has experienced a steady decline, dipping to a meager 11.1% today and only 6.4% in the private sector. Despite the overall drop, the percentage of unionized public employees has remained consistently strong since the 1980s, hovering between 35% and 40%, and even experiencing a small increase last year. Robust public sector union membership, however, has barely slowed the overall trend of decline since the private sector employs about five times as many people as the public sector. Nevertheless those consistently strong membership numbers helps explain why the political right has made public unions such a target. In addition to so-called "right to work" laws (now in place in 25 states, including recent defeats in Wisconsin and Michigan), and a relentless public relations assault, public sector unions such as ours now face another threat in the pending *Friedrichs v California Teachers Association* Supreme Court case (see page 2), a case that threatens to erode the financial basis for union operations. Why this assault? It's simple, really. Unions work.

Unions have been effective at winning higher wages for workers. According to 2014 statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics unionized workers earn on average 27% more than non-unionized workers. Doug Henwood, editor of *Left Business Observer*, has usefully highlighted in his analysis of the BLS data that while nearly all unionized workers receive higher wages than their non-unionized counterparts, the upward effect on wages is even more pronounced for those groups who traditionally face the highest degree of exploitation in labor markets. For example, younger workers (ages 16-24) earned a 28% premium, which declined as cohorts aged. Women age 25 and older earned a 27% premium, compared to a 15% premium for men. White women enjoyed a 32% premium, compared with a 20% union advantage for white men. The premium for black women workers was 34%, compared to 29% for black men. Hispanics saw even greater premiums, with women gaining 46% and men 44%. In other words, unions consistently provide better wage earnings for workers, and hence provide a much-needed counterbalance to rising economic inequality; moreover, they work to correct for social inequalities based on age, gender and race. (For details see: <http://lbo-news.com/2015/01/23/union-density-erodes-again-and-why-bosses-hate-unions/>).

The other arena in which unions have been relatively effective is political mobilization and advocacy. Unions still have the ability to turn out votes. On this front, unfortunately, I tend to believe that unions have too often thrown good money after bad, helping elect politicians who, once elected, do little or nothing for organized labor or workers. However, unions remain a potent political force not only within electoral campaigns, but also in legislative advocacy. For example, the advocacy efforts of UUP have

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Editor's Column

Friedrichs Vs. California Teachers Association

Paul Stasi

Sometime next year, the Supreme Court will decide a case that will have a direct impact on the structure of all public sector unions: *Friedrichs vs. California Teachers' Association*. Filed on behalf of ten California teachers and brought forward by the Center for Individual Rights – a right-wing group partly funded by the Koch brothers and famous for opposing affirmative action and the Voting Rights Act – the case asks the Supreme Court to strike down two long-standing aspects of labor law. The first concerns the legality of agency-fee payers – those workers in a bargaining unit who do not wish to become members of a union but, nevertheless, are covered under the terms and conditions of its contract – the second, the mechanism by which such fee payers can be reimbursed for the portion of their union dues that goes for expenses not directly related to terms and conditions of employment. The two are tied together: if the court disallows agency fee payers the second issue disappears. Masquerading as a free-speech issue, the case is, instead, a direct attack on the bargaining power of public sector unions, as a simple examination of its non-existent logic demonstrates.

The Current Situation:

Established in 1977 by the Supreme Court case *Abood vs. Detroit Board of Education*, the law governing agency fee payers is relatively simple. Workers who directly benefit from the contract the union negotiates must pay their fair share for the labor entailed in such negotiation and enforcement. In return, the union must equitably enforce the contract's provisions for all members of the bargaining unit regardless of whether they are union members or not. Currently all bargaining unit members pay either union dues or an equivalent "agency fee." If someone is not a union member, they can ask to be reimbursed for that the portion of their dues that goes towards expenses unrelated to terms and conditions. To be clear: none of our dues, member or not, go towards actual political advocacy or electoral campaigns. Rather they fund the business of the union, which includes activities directly related to collective bargaining as well as various member events. When these events are not explicitly about terms and conditions – like, for instance, our recent co-sponsored workshop on the racial dimensions of the "school to prison pipeline," or our co-sponsorship of the Workforce Challenge 5K charity run – they can be construed as "political" in a broader sense and then become refundable for agency fee reimbursement. Current law thus makes a distinction between politics in the narrow sense – lobbying, direct action – and politics in the more broad sense, which we might understand to be the larger social world in which we all operate.

The Case Against Abood:

Such as it is, the argument against the current arrangement is relatively simple. Workers who disagree with the union's political positions shouldn't have to pay for its activities. If the suit is successful, it would turn agency fee payers into so-called free riders. These workers would get the same contractual benefits we all get and we, as a union, would be required to support their grievances and defend their rights under that contract. Only they would not be required to pay one penny towards either negotiation or enforcement. This situation was addressed directly by the *Abood* case, which argued that it would be unfair to force unions to directly support those who refuse to support the union.

It is remarkable, then, that the right-wing – which loves to disparage anyone receiving government moneys (except, notably, all Republican politicians) – would countenance such an obviously unfair arrangement. Indeed, the heart of capitalist

By the Numbers

- 297** Average number of people shot each day in the US
- 89** Average number of people killed by guns each day in the US
- 17,000** Average number of children and teens in the US shot by guns each year
- 108,000** Average number of people of all ages shot by guns each year in the US
- 644** Millions of civilian-owned guns in the world
- 42%** Percentage of those guns owned by US citizens
- 4.3** US percentage of World population
- 135** Mass shootings (defined as more than four people murdered by a gun) since 2009
- 11** Percentage of mass shootings where there was some indication of mental health issues for the perpetrator
- 6** Rank of NY State in terms of the strength of its gun laws, according to a 2013 study by the Center for American Progress
- 46** Rank of NY State in terms of total gun violence, according to the same study
- 25.8** Percentage of NY State workers represented by a union
- 1** Rank of NY State in terms of percentage of workers who are unionized
- 27** Percentage unionized workers earn above their non-unionized peers
- 3.2** Percentage the wages of all workers in so-called "Right to Work" states are depressed compared to workers in non-Right to Work states, when controlled for cost of living

Academic Affairs

Barry Trachtenberg, VP for Academics

All too frequently, our UUP chapter gets contacted by academic faculty who are undergoing renewal, review, tenure, or promotion and are concerned because it seems that the process is not going according to expectations. Sometimes external letters, votes, or recommendations don't go in the candidate's favor. Other times, policies and procedures aren't followed properly even though the candidate has done everything correctly. On too many occasions, it is not clear that the candidates fully understand their rights or that the faculty who sit on the evaluative committees and the various supervisors (such as Chairs or Deans) understand their obligations under the policies and procedures for tenure and review as established by the University Senate and SUNY Board of Trustees and the contract between UUP and the State of New York. While it is the purview of the University to determine and uphold the expectations for renewal, review, tenure, and promotion, UUP can be most helpful to our colleagues in those instances when matters have gone awry procedurally or when faculty members' rights have been violated.

Ideally, each academic department should have two documents that are reviewed annually and updated as needed. The first of these is a set of expectations for faculty regarding the department's general expectations for faculty research, teaching, and service as they approach each of these evaluative stages. While these aren't formal contracts and they should have sufficient flexibility to contend with the various demands and expectations of faculty members' sub-disciplines, they should provide enough guidance so that faculty can have a reasonable sense of where they stand vis-à-vis departmental and overall disciplinary standards.

The second document should outline the procedures that are to be followed as faculty move through the renewal, review, tenure, and promotion processes. This document should include the timelines established by the Department, College, and University, the expectations of those charged

with evaluating the file, and the rights of the faculty undergoing the assessment. We were surprised to learn recently that many departments *don't* have such documents and follow practices that are guided as much by departmental tradition as they are by established policy.

For example, a document of this sort would include:

- Statements indicating that the procedures for renewal, review, tenure, and promotion are governed by SUNY and UAlbany policies, and have been negotiated with UUP. Links to the various policies and the relevant portions of the contract should be available.

- The document should indicate clearly the department's policy as to who constitutes the voting faculty for review, tenure, and promotion meetings.

- Per University Senate Bill No. 8384-07 (1983-84) which discusses this at length, teaching evaluations must be *more* than a record of SIRF scores & comments, and should contain a *full review* of the candidate's teaching materials.

- The candidate's materials (statements, publications, teaching and service portfolios) should be made available in advance of the Department vote so that the voting faculty have sufficient time to consider them.

- The record of the Departmental vote should indicate voting by rank.

- Candidates should be informed that they have the right to respond within a minimum of five working days to all levels of review. This includes the Chair's letter, Dean's letter, CPCA (if a continuing appointment or promotion case), Provost's letter and President's letter (if a continuing appointment or promotion case).

- Candidates should also be made aware of Article 33: the provision of the contract that concerns job security review procedures, providing a Chancellor's level appeals process for tenure cases. Article 33 matters are not subject to grievance procedures.

In addition, to help ensure that candidates get a fair hearing, the following steps are likewise crucial:

- Discussions of which faculty members should comprise the review committees should be made in consultation with the candidate and at minimum, should grant the candidate the right to veto the appointment of any faculty member whom they suspect as being prejudiced against his/her case (similar to the process with identifying external letter writers in tenure/promotion cases).

- Committee reports should be substantial documents that indicate that the members have followed the University guidelines that require a full assessment of teaching, research, and service. See http://www.albany.edu/senate/handbook_section1.htm.

It is equally important to remember that since procedures for renewal, tenure, and promotion are terms and conditions of our work, any significant changes to such departmental policies must be negotiated with UUP.

Although UUP can offer many services to members as they go through the renewal, review, tenure, and promotion cases, we do not have the legal authority to submit them for grievance. This unfortunately places limits on the extent to which we can offer assistance. Over the 2014-15 year, the Academic Concerns Committee explored an alternative avenue to assist faculty with such matters and formally requested that the Executive Committee endorse a proposal to President Jones for the establishment of a University Ombudsperson for matters related to renewal, review, tenure, and promotion. Many colleges and universities have Ombudspersons (including many within the SUNY system) and they serve a wide range of constituencies. Regardless of the model, all Ombudspersons adhere to a set of a shared principles of confidentiality, neutrality, informality, accessibility, and independence.

In our proposal, submitted last spring, we suggested the following:

The Ombudsperson would:

- report directly to the University President;
- provide independent, informal, and non-partisan counsel to faculty on matters relating to University academic renewal, review, tenure, and promotion processes;
 - serve as a wise, approachable listener, counselor, mediator, or fact-finder, and potentially provide the faculty member with feedback concerning questions, concerns, or complaints;
 - help mediate conflicts (including "shuttle diplomacy" within or between the various institutional levels of review);
 - when necessary, suggest referrals to other resources available to faculty; and
 - maintain confidentiality except in cases where there is risk of physical harm, or court order.

The Ombudsperson would not:

- be able to compel the University to action or to respond;
- constitute official notification to the University of problems or concerns;
- overrule decisions made by University officials;
 - be a replacement for formal grievance procedures of the University or UUP;
 - maintain permanent records of its interactions with faculty; or
 - provide legal advice.

The entire proposal is available at <http://uupalbany.org>. It is our hope that such a position can be another resource—in addition to UUP—that is available to faculty in those instances when the renewal, review, tenure, and promotion processes do not go according to procedure.

Update: I'm pleased to report that the grant jointly submitted by the Albany UUP chapter, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Provost's office to the the New York State/United University Professions Joint Labor-Management Committee was approved. This will allow us to enroll six new tenure-track faculty members in the "Boot Camp" mentoring program run by the National Center for

Faculty Development & Diversity (www.facultydiversity.org). The program provides intensive individual and group mentoring to enrollees, resources for establishing and maintaining daily and weekly productivity goals, and strategies for overcoming the hurdles that prevent many new faculty members from successfully making it through the review, tenure, and promotion processes. The grant will provide 60% of the funds and the administration provides the remaining costs.

Finally: my thanks to Aaron Major, Associate Professor Sociology for stepping in as Interim Assistant Vice-President for Academics for the present academic year.

Welcome to the Life of an Adjunct

Rebekah Tolley, Officer for Contingents

This semester, in addition to continuing to teach on UAlbany's campus, I am teaching the same studio art course on another SUNY campus for the first time, a course once taught by a tenured professor who, after retiring, was not replaced. Instead, the courses were piecemealed out to various adjuncts or dropped from the curriculum. This story is not new, but has become so routine that departments feel lucky when they are able to scramble to find an adjunct instructor to teach the class. The campuses are over an hour apart so I now teach everyday because high contact hour studio classes make it impossible to stack two in one day with a double commute.

In preparation for the upcoming semester, I drive the hour to the new campus to get a second ID card, buy a parking pass, get keys and copy my syllabi. Unfortunately I'm told that the copy center requires a ten day lead time and besides, I am not yet set up on that system.

Next I need to shop for classroom supplies at Home Depot and am told to bring a printout of my on-line shopping cart so that an order can be placed, but of course there's no computer in my shared office and so I have no way to print. In the

end it turns out that I need to drive out to the store and meet the administrative assistant with the department credit card and then shop for all the items myself. As terribly inefficient as this is, and though I receive no compensation for any of this work, I have no choice; I need the supplies for class.

Back at UAlbany I start working with no contract in hand. I guess they are just counting on the fact that I will show up to class even though they haven't yet given me the terms of employment with important information such as my salary. Last spring I was told that my department was going to request an increase in my pay to compensate me for all the extra work I do in the studio, but I don't know if this anticipated raise went through.

When I don't get my first paycheck from the new campus I learn one SUNY needs a special form signed by UAlbany so that I can work and get paid at another SUNY. In addition to being a hassle, this also means that the typical month-long lag time that I, like all adjuncts, go through waiting for my first paycheck will be even longer.

I show up to class on the new campus and learn that I do not have the student assistants to help orient me in the studio that I was advised I would have when I was hired. I am told after class by another adjunct that only full-timers can have "interns." I had also been told that I would have access to the undergraduate shop technician, but each day I arrive to class thinking I will have someone to help me run the lesson I've planned, I discover that he's been called away by one of the full-time faculty. This undergraduate TA is employed by the university, not as a workstudy student, but as a regular hourly employee. The pay rate for this work (with no advanced degree required) is \$12 an hour. My pay is 12.50 an hour. That's correct, an undergraduate student assistant in my class earns as much as I do to teach the whole class.

When I look at the roster of students for the class at my new campus I am surprised to learn that all of them are beginning students. At UAlbany my class has a mix of student abilities and I rely on the advanced students to help me in the studio, but I learn that at my new campus only full timers can have these 'split-level' courses.

Somehow my students all have card access to the studio before I do, so I must find another faculty member or student to let me into the space I need to teach in to prepare for class. Another thing I have to scramble to do before class.

These annoyances and indignities, each taken on their own, may seem slight, but taken together they reveal a clear pattern whereby adjuncts are expected to do the same teaching work as full-time faculty but under much more challenging and demanding conditions. When we consider the fact that adjuncts are often called upon to prepare a course at a moment's notice, navigate complex, often unfamiliar, bureaucracies with little assistance, and teach their courses without basic resources that seem inconsequential until they are absent, the meager pay that adjuncts receive for their work becomes all the more unconscionable.

The fight for pay equity for adjuncts does not come from a demand for pity or for altruism; it comes from a demand for basic fairness. As we approach campus equity week, October 26-30, I urge us all to consider these dual inequities that characterize adjunct labor. Adjuncts need much higher pay, but they also need departments and administrators to revise policies that perpetuate the unequal sharing of resources that cost adjunct faculty unnecessary time, mental energy and frustration--all of which impairs our ability to deliver the world-class instruction expected of us.

Contract Time What Matters Most to You?

Although it feels like we just ratified our last contract, it is, in fact, time for UUP to begin negotiating with the State. In preparation for the negotiations, UUP undertakes an exhaustive process of soliciting member input about priorities, needs, and arguments. We will be gathering member feedback through mid-December. Please take a few minutes to send your suggestions. The more participation, the better. There are MANY ways to voice your priorities or concerns:

Send feedback by email to <contract@uupmail.org>

Complete the form posted to the Negotiations page of the UUP website:

<http://uupinfo.org/negotiations/pdf/FillableMemberSuggestionForm915.pdf>

No campus has more members involved in Negotiations than Albany with five members serving on the Negotiating Team, Negotiations Committee and Ad Hoc Negotiations Committee. Please contact any of us at the following addresses:

Philippe Abraham <pabraham@uupmail.org >
Bret Benjamin <bret.benjamin@gmail.com>
Tom Hoey <tomtomhoey@gmail.com>
Rebekah Tolley <rebekaholley@gmail.com>
Greta Petry <greta.petry@gmail.com >

Additionally we will be holding a number of "listening sessions" on the uptown, downtown, and east campuses. Come out and help us understand your concerns. We want to hear about contract issues, of course, but we also want to hear about workplace concerns that the Chapter might be able to help address. Details of times/places to follow.

Finally, in order to participate in contract planning, and especially to vote on the contract *you must be a member*. Many of our current fee-payers mistakenly believe they are members. We will be contacting all fee-payers this semester. When we do, please take the time to sign a membership card so that you can participate in the contract discussions and in the chapter.

The stronger our membership, the stronger our chapter, the stronger our contract.
Get involved!

Why I am a Union Member

Tom Hoey, VP for Professionals

My late mom had a saying, "Show me your friends and I will tell you who you are." I am sure if my mom met all of you, my Union brothers and sisters, she would say, "Tom I am proud of you!" In

my interactions with long time members the constant theme most repeated is, "I am so glad I had the Union when I needed it." As we approach negotiations for a new contract next spring your Union will need your help. Please take time to answer surveys, attend meetings and vote when we settle on a contract. UAlbany is well represented at this round of contract negotiations with Philippe Abraham as chief negotiator and Bret Benjamin as a team member. Your chapter officers and executive board are working hard to make the University a great place to work!

Gender Identity

Carol Jewell

On June 26, 2015, I attended an all-day conference at the University at Albany, "Inclusive Excellence: Ensuring Inclusive Campuses for LGBTQ Students, Staff, and Faculty," presented by Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals. This was an excellent conference, and I would like to thank our Chapter for providing the funding for me to attend. One of the presenters was our own Courtney D'Allaird, who is the Assistant Director, Intercultural Student Engagement and Coordinator of the Gender & Sexuality Resource Center University at Albany, and a valuable member of our Chapter.

For me, the most important break-out session was the one which focused on gender identity matters. This is the "T" part of the "LGBTQ" acronym, about which I know the least, and so I thought it was very important for me to attend.

Maybe you've gotten an email message from me in the last three months, and noticed that, in my signature, I've now included "She/Her/Hers." This is to announce, to whomever is reading this, that those are the pronouns I use to self-identify. Wondering what pronouns to use when referring to, or speaking with, a transgender man or a transgender woman, or *anyone*, for that matter? Ask them. The pronouns they use to self-identify should always be used, once you become aware of them. If you are uncomfortable with this, that is on

you, not them. It is up to each individual to own their identity; it is not up to others to impose an identity on them.

Would you like to see our Chapter present a workshop on gender identity? Please let me know, at cjewell@albany.edu

For more information, please see <http://www.lgbtcampus.org/>

Update on Professional IT Titles Survey

Martin Manjak, EC Professional Delegate

In the summer of 2014, President Fred Kowal and VP for Professionals, Philippe Abraham, convened an A-32 subcommittee to develop a process whereby UUP could collect data about the SUNY Information Technology titles applied to IT professionals. (The A-32 designation refers to an Executive Level review of the titles authorized in the current UUP/SUNY agreement.)

The review was charged with determining the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the existing set of titles. Additionally, UUP was curious whether IT professionals charged with the management of enterprise level services and systems (e.g., course management systems, email, Banner, Peoplesoft) should be considered for the higher salary grades (SL-5, SL-6) that are traditionally reserved for staff with personnel management responsibilities.

That subcommittee created a survey that was administered to 10 campuses during the 2014-15 winter season. Here are some of the salient findings of that survey.

Scope and Statistical Validity

There are approximately 1,521 Information Technology (IT) UUP members. The survey collected 313 valid responses from the 10 campuses polled. This number represents 21% of the information technology membership. If one required a 95 percent confidence level and desired a confidence interval of 5 (+ or -), the necessary sample size would be at a minimum 307 respondents.

Methodology

The survey identified 18 job categories such as Desktop Support, Instructional Support, System Administration, Identity and Access Management, Information Security, and so on. Respondents were asked to select one category as their primary campus responsibility. Within the category selected, they were presented with a list of skills, tools, and tasks that characterized that function. Respondents were asked to check each item in the list that was relevant to their work. The tasks were designed to distinguish the categories from one another, help define potential new SUNY titles, and identify tasks within a category that were most common to the respondents who selected that category.

Results

The majority of respondents (205) identified the following 8 of the 18 proposed categories as their area of primary responsibility.

1. Application/Programming Design & Development (45 respondents – 13 titles & 1 unknown)
2. System Administration (30 respondents – 12 titles & 1 unknown)
3. Desktop Support (29 respondents – 11 titles & 3 unknown)
4. IT Project Management (26 respondents – 9 titles & 1 unknown)
5. Instructional Technology Support (22 respondents – 14 titles & 1 unknown)
6. Application Management/Maintenance (Dev/Ops) (22 respondents – 12 titles & 1 unknown)
7. Data Analytics (17 respondents – 11 titles & 2 unknown)
8. Database Management, Design, Development, Support (14 respondents – 11 titles & 1 unknown)

A category such as Application/Programming Design and Development would appear to be a fairly homogenous function that would align readily with a limited set or family of titles. Yet this was not the case. The 45 respondents who identified this as their primary responsibility, reported 13 different SUNY titles for this rather easily defined job. If we approach the data from the opposite tack, looking first at the titles, in the case of the SUNY Senior Programmer Analyst, the 42 respondents who identified that as their official title chose 12 different work categories as their areas of primary campus IT responsibility. And each of those 12 responsibilities contain different sets of tasks, require different skill sets, and work with different technologies, with little or no overlap. Anomalies such as these were found throughout the survey.

Conclusions

From this we conclude that it is difficult to identify correctly an employee's title based on their primary responsibility and associated tasks. The corollary is also true; i.e., an employee's title is not particularly useful in identifying their primary work responsibility nor in describing the tasks they perform.

This preliminary analysis indicates a need for further examination by UUP and SUNY of existing titles, their relevancy and/or realignment, the potential need for new titles, and the relationship between salary levels and principal responsibility for campus-wide IT functions.

Debt-Free College

Paul Stasi

By this point we probably all know the numbers: the total of all student debt in the United States is approximately 1.2 trillion dollars. That's larger than the GDP of all but 13 countries in the world. We are also familiar with the effects of this debt: students who are so busy working in order to pay tuition that they don't have any time left over to study or afford textbooks for their classes; in other words students who find themselves sinking

slowly into a debt that will follow them for their entire lives for an opportunity they are barely able to take advantage of. And we understand its cause: rising tuition, itself a reaction to the astonishing reduction in state funding for public higher education over the last 20-30 years. Here at SUNY, for instance, our operating budget was reduced by nearly 30% during the period of 2010-2013. Despite surpluses in the current state budget, funding has yet to return to its pre-recession levels. By some accounts, state support provides only 17% of the operating budget of SUNY Albany.

And so we live in a University that has been shaped by the reality of chronic underfunding and crippling student debt. Nearly 50% of our students are transfer students, and many of them live at home. At the same time our university, like many others, has increasingly turned to adjunct teaching, staffing its courses with low-paid lecturers who have no job security and, at many universities (though not ours, thanks to our union) no benefits. The four-year residential college, filled with expert teachers who are respected and reasonably compensated members of their profession still exists. But it is increasingly out of reach for millions of working and middle class students. Indeed, the average public university student in 2015, lives at home, spends two years at a community college, two years at a four-year school, works two jobs and has up to 70% of her courses taught by lecturers who make roughly the same wage as a worker at Wendy's. SUNY, in this respect, is more or less the same as other public universities across the nation. Is it any wonder people think our system of higher education is broken?

And yet, perhaps, there is a reason for hope, as the three top Democratic candidates for President have offered various plans to mitigate these problems. Of course, the plans differ from one another in their details. Not surprisingly, Bernie Sanders goes the farthest, calling for free tuition at all public universities and colleges, but each seeks to significantly reduce the financial burden on students by making tuition cheaper, providing greater support for non-tuition costs and increasing aid to states to help make college affordable. Often the state support is tied to further policy initiatives – in

Clinton's case, states need to maintain in-state and low- and middle-class enrollments; for Sanders, universities must reduce their reliance on adjunct labor.

Taken together, these plans present us with two large issues that are worth paying attention to as they move forward. The first concerns the general attempt to "make colleges accountable" for the economic success of their students. Here, for example, is the language from Hillary Clinton's website: "Too many colleges are loading up students with debt for programs that don't let them climb the economic ladder."¹ Here, it seems, the criteria for a successful degree is purely defined in economic terms. This is problematic in itself – does a degree in Art History, for instance, help one "climb the economic ladder," and if it doesn't, should it not be pursued? – but a further problem arises when you attempt to measure such economic benefits. When do you measure it? Many studies have suggested, for instance, that Humanities majors make more over their lifetime than those in other disciplines, though their immediate post-graduation earnings are often less. Or what about the inverse situation, when a student graduates with a degree in a field immediately relevant to the job market, only to find her skills rendered obsolete by social and economic changes five-ten years down the line? Which of these moments will determine future funding for colleges and how will this impact the kinds of subjects students choose to study? UUP has raised these concerns in regard to the Performance Based Funding program—adopted tentatively by the NYS Legislature this year, and enthusiastically amplified by SUNY—which likewise seeks to establish metrics for post-graduation success.²

Another facet of accountability concerns cost cutting, which comes in many forms, but often contains some element of shortening time to degree. This is a key plank of Martin O'Malley's plan, and though it makes some sense, such streamlining must not come at the cost of educational integrity and rigor. Time to degree is,

¹ <https://www.hillaryclinton.com/p/briefing/factsheets/2015/08/10/college-compact-costs/>

² <http://uupinfo.org/legislation/pdf/PBFunding615.pdf>

ultimately, unrelated to intellectual quality and should not be mistaken for it. The same applies to the fetish for online education, which might be a solution for a small group of motivated students, but is hardly the panacea it's often been touted to be. Instead, making colleges accountable should mean ensuring, as Clinton's plan does, that increased funding is directed to instructional expenses rather than bloated administrative costs or frivolous campus amenities than have little to no bearing on the academic mission of the university.

But there is a further issue here which is that though all these plans provide some mechanism for reducing student interest rates and easing the burden of repayment, many of them are most helpful to future students and can, in fact, hurt graduates (and current students) laboring under already existing loans. The most popular plan, for instance, involves a cap on monthly payments, tied to the annual income of the payee. This has the immediate effect of easing the monthly burden a former student might face, but it also has the long-term effect of lengthening the term of the loan and, thus, increasing the amount of interest the student will ultimately pay.¹ Clearly loan forgiveness needs to be considered alongside efforts to rationalize repayment plans. That's why UUP's proposed debt relief legislation would refinance loans to a lower interest rates for all students who have graduated since 2008 while at the same time offering debt forgiveness for adjunct faculty at public institutions.

It is exciting to see these issues take center stage. As always, the devil will be in the details, and so it behooves all of us involved in the business of higher education to pay close attention to how the debate develops so that we might be able to influence its outcome.²

¹A helpful summary of this issue can be found here: <http://www.goodcall.com/news/democratic-presidential-candidates-seek-to-move-the-needle-on-college-affordability-and-debt-01994>

²<http://uupinfo.org/legislation/pdf/2015LegAgenda.pdf>

Merit at Our Discretion: Concerns about DSA and the Evaluation of Contingents

Bret Benjamin

Editor's Note: We have decided to reprint with minor revisions the following column, which originally ran a year ago in the Sept/Oct 2014 Forum. The University's process for handling DSA has not changed, nor have our objections. Likewise we remain concerned about the lack of substantive evaluation procedures for our contingent members.

The University administration has made the unfortunate decision that the entire pool of money allocated to this year's Discretionary Salary Awards (DSA) will be distributed on a "discretionary basis referenced to merit." I won't go through the details of the campus procedure here or recount the many problems our members have raised about the timing, criteria, and instructions for this year's nomination process. I will, however, explain why the Chapter objects to the discretionary nature of the awards, and to raise one primary concern about contingent faculty.

In contrast to the model adopted by the Administration, the Chapter proposed, once again, that the one-time monies be distributed equitably to all members. All of us have been hurt financially by the State's ill-conceived Deficit Reduction Program, by rising health-care costs, and by several years of stagnant salaries (only slowly changing now as our negotiated raises begin to kick in). When everyone feels economic pain, programs such as the DSA provide a way to mitigate that hurt for everyone without any long-term economic impact for the University. Furthermore, the considerable amount of work involved in the process—always done in a rush to meet last minute deadlines—seems entirely disproportionate to the amount of money awarded, especially now that the funds do not go to base.

More broadly, however, we object to the principle of "merit at our discretion." "Merit" in the abstract is one of those lovely words like "freedom," "civility," or "democracy" about which it is hard to

say anything bad. Who wouldn't want to reward those people who deserve it? In practice, however, merit presumes clear and objective measures of evaluation. We know that such measures don't exist in the university (nor could they). Perhaps in one department, strong service records are rewarded. In another the sole priority is research dollars obtained; in another extra job duties assumed becomes the primary criterion. In most cases those criteria, where they exist at all, are never made explicit to employees. At the end of the day, the core feature of this process is *managerial discretion* rather than merit. As unionists we should always look with suspicion on such a structure.

Do some units do this process fairly and conscientiously? Undoubtedly, and I understand why members of those departments are so invested in the discretionary awards. Will some very deserving employees get raises? Yes. Will most managers handle the process conscientiously? Probably. Will some employees get raises because they are likeable, because they are "team players," because they have good personal relationships with their supervisors? Of course. And will some very deserving employees who have fallen out of favor with supervisors fail to be rewarded despite fine work? I have no doubt that some will. I see it every year. Likewise, I am certain that a system based on "merit at our discretion" invariably has a corrosive effect on departments and colleges.

You are familiar, no doubt, with the dictum that, "Justice must satisfy the *appearance* of justice." It is not enough for justice to be done; the process must ensure that the outcomes look just to all involved. Suspicions of impropriety undermine even the fairest of decisions. When bonuses are offered entirely on the basis of managerial discretion, the outcomes can never appear fair, impartial, or merit-based; concerns will inevitably arise that the awards are subject to personal relationships and to the unavoidable tendency of even the best managers to reward ideas that conform to their own. Academic freedom, of course, is based on a very different principle: the notion that employees of a university can and should pursue ideas critical of social or institutional

norms. "Merit at our discretion," by definition, runs contrary to the principle of academic freedom.

On principle, then, we object to the University's plan. But in practice we have a very specific concern as well, which in turn speaks to our collective responsibilities as UUP members. As is so often the case, contingents, especially contingent academics, will be the group of employees most impacted the most negatively by this proposal. While I have concerns about the objectivity of evaluating merit for tenure-line academics and professionals, we at least have robust structures of review in place to assess the performance of those members. Academics complete FARs and submit CVs in line with their professional obligation; professionals should have up-to-date performance programs, and the University is using the DSAs as an incentive to get those programs completed. To my knowledge no equivalent structures of review for contingent academic faculty exist. What often happens in practice is that departments, if they use any criteria beyond anecdotal evidence derived from hallway interactions, evaluate contingent academics solely on the basis of student evaluations. This is an entirely inadequate measure. It locates the evaluation of faculty performance with students rather than with faculty; and, indeed, given the pitifully low response rates of online SIRF evaluations, it locates that responsibility in a small handful of students. The University understands this problem, and in its report on course evaluation it states that student evaluations provide "useful but limited data for evaluating teaching, courses, or instructors."¹ Our Chapter has been developing a broader critique of the invalidity of SIRFs (see Aaron Major's column in the May 2015 *Forum*) about which we'll print more in future editions. Unfortunately, at present our University has little in place beyond SIRFs to which we can turn. Most departments, to my knowledge, do not conduct regular teaching observations of contingent instructors, or substantive reviews of syllabi, assignments, grading practices and so forth. They

¹See the "Report of the Course Assessment Advisory Committee" <<http://www.albany.edu/ir/CAAC%20FINAL%20Report.pdf>>

do not have mechanisms to document teaching innovation, professional development, mentoring, advising, and instructional effectiveness for contingents. Under such evaluative structures, how can “merit” be determined? We believe that it cannot.

To their credit, the University has recognized this problem and has indicated to Deans and Directors in a secondary memo that equitable distribution of DSA funds to part time employees would be acceptable. This recommendation was phrased rather delicately, so we hope that Chairs and Unit-heads picked up on this suggestion and elected to make such equitable distributions to all contingents in the department.

The problem of evaluating contingents, however, goes beyond this particular round of DSAs. It is incumbent upon the university, but also incumbent upon us as UUP members, to develop substantive methods of evaluation for contingents that directly address performance of a defined professional obligation. In recent years our Chapter has seen far too many contingent academics whose contracts have been non-renewed solely on the basis of low SIRF scores. I recognize that what I am asking will require more work for all of us, in a time when the demands for more work never cease. But when severely flawed evaluations become the basis for DSAs, course assignments, and most seriously, hiring and firing decisions, we need to recognize our collective responsibility to do right by our contingent faculty. Whatever happens in this round of DSAs, we urge all departments to study this issue and to revise departmental practice as needed.

From the perspective of labor the principle of “merit at our discretion” is irredeemably flawed, whether it issues from the Administration or from our fellow UUP members. It lends itself to decisions justified by the invention, on the fly, of inconsistent, incomplete and unjust measures of evaluation. Contingents, who are our most vulnerable employees, bear the brunt of this injustice, but “merit at our discretion” is a managerial strategy that is corrosive to all of us, even as we sometimes find ourselves complicit in its application. Let’s find a better way.

UUPers: Let’s Stop the Virtual Pipeline!

Ronald Friedman

After a hard-fought campaign in which numerous UUPers were actively involved, advocates for clean energy, clean water, and environmental justice recently scored a major victory by persuading Gov. Cuomo to ban hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in New York State. While this landmark victory should be celebrated, it is important to realize that fracking still endangers New Yorkers—our homes, workplaces, schools, farms, and waterways—because of what has been called the “virtual pipeline” of fracked oil traversing our state.

In recent years, fracking outside of New York, particularly in North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, has led to a boom in shipments of crude oil eastward across our state to Albany. From here, it has either been shipped down the Hudson River and out to refineries in Canada or transported via rail to refineries in the mid-Atlantic where it can be processed into gasoline and sold on the American market or abroad. The transport entails the use of hundreds of outdated tank cars in convoys that can carry tens of thousands of barrels of crude. This fracked oil is particularly volatile and the vast majority of existing train cars are not built to prevent spills and explosions in the event of derailment or collision.

How common are such adverse events? In the last three years, there have been over a dozen accidents involving these oil trains outside of New York, including one in Lynchburg, Virginia where burning Bakken crude was released from a derailed oil train into the James River, and one in Canada where a derailment of a train carrying Bakken crude destroyed the heart of a small city and killed 47 people. In addition, there have been at least three reported oil train derailments in NYS since November of 2012 and recent government inspections have identified numerous safety problems in NYS rail lines and tank cars. In Albany County alone, these cars pass close to schools and daycare centers, and quite troublingly, near a large

housing project in downtown Albany, raising serious issues of environmental justice.

The threat to New York of this virtual pipeline comes not only by land but by sea: Once the fracked crude is loaded on to a cargo ship, there is the possibility that the vessel may run aground. What are the odds of this nightmare scenario? Although it received scant media attention, it almost came to pass in late 2012, when a tanker carrying 279,000 barrels of crude down the Hudson River struck a sand bar near Schodack Island. Here, one hull ruptured and a backup hull prevented a catastrophic spill in this iconic waterway that supplies the drinking water for thousands of New Yorkers, as well a wealth of recreational opportunities, and which is vital to the diverse terrestrial and aquatic wildlife of the Hudson Valley.

It might be assumed that the risks of the virtual pipeline are outweighed by the economic benefits they provide to New York. However, as local and state officials would confirm, the virtual pipeline has had only a trivial impact on our economy, in terms of both jobs and tax revenues. This is especially true with respect to those who are being placed at most risk, including the residents of the low income housing developments in downtown Albany that lie at the intersection of the bustling railways and the shipping port.

As if these risks weren't serious enough, the virtual oil pipeline through our state contributes to what has been viewed as among the gravest threats currently facing our planet: human-induced climate change. By banning fracking, New York sent a message to the world that it is possible to say "no" to business as usual and reject the expansion of the fossil fuel-based economy that stands to wreck the climate, inundate cherished coastlines, decimate countless species of plants and animals, and incite unprecedented geopolitical conflict and mass population displacement. However, by allowing our land and waterways to serve as a transport corridor for the fracking industry, our state continues to play an active role in endangering the planet.

Responding to public outcry, on May 1st of this year, the Department of Transportation announced new rules regarding the transportation of volatile crude that will require the phasing out or

retrofitting of tanker cars, along with upgrades to braking systems and reduction of operating speeds. However, these requirements will take as long as a decade to come into effect, allowing the most dangerous trains to remain in service for years and failing to fully reduce speed limits in most areas of our state, including Albany and the Hudson Valley.

Given the enormous scale of the transportation of this oil through our state and the immediate and potentially devastating risks it poses to our communities and our planet itself, UUPers should take immediate action, urging the federal government to ban shipment of fracked oil by rail and by sea across New York and from its ports. Some might argue that a moratorium on shipments would be sufficient until the outdated rail cars that carry most of this crude oil are updated or replaced to reduce the risk of accidents. Yet, given the full scope of the risks—including the fact that no rail car will be sufficient to prevent accidents and that the only way to prevent the worst effects of global warming is to leave oil deposits (unconventional, or otherwise) in the ground—we should insist that transportation of fracked oil through our state is banned outright, just as fracking itself is now banned within our state lines.

Links to Additional Information:

<http://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/10000003639391/a-danger-on-the-rails.html>

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/28/business/energy-environment/bakkan-crude-rolling-through-albany.html?_r=1

<http://www.riverkeeper.org/campaigns/river-ecology/crude-oil-transport/>

<http://www.dot.gov/mission/safety/rail-rule-summary>

Maps

Carol H. Jewell,
Chair Disability Rights and Concerns Committee

Is your Department (Division, Institute, Unit, etc.) creating wayfinding maps? If so, do these maps have an audio component for people with visual impairments? If they do not, please ask the faculty or staff responsible for the creation and implementation of the maps to incorporate an audio component.

Why am I suggesting this? The University at Albany campus has changed considerably over the years. Podium buildings have not changed much *externally*, but internally, there have been many offices which have been subdivided, walls put up or removed, wayfinding has changed, and so on. Imagine having to make a new map each time this happens. But a map that has an audio component can be updated as needed.

You may have been told that it is too expensive to add an audio component to maps. But according to the Americans with Disabilities Act, maps that are accessible to people without visual impairments, must also be accessible to those with visual impairments. In the case of changes to a facility, this is even more important.

Unfortunately, in today's society, there are countless examples of institutions not following the letter of the law in this regard, citing financial difficulties. Can you think of any others?

The older the population gets, the more people with visual impairments there will be. Consider how important it is to know where you are going, then consider how hard it is when maps are not accessible.

This summer, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). I read, and am sharing with you, a great article about the obstacles we still face. <http://tinyurl.com/oo249wa>

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, or comments about disability issues at UA, and your rights as a UUP member, please do not hesitate to contact me:

cjewell@albany.edu or (518) 442-3628

Unions Work

(cont from pg. 1)

frequently warded off the worst executive and legislative proposals targeting SUNY, as we do our best to ensure affordable, accessible, quality public higher education in New York. In recent years I have been heartened by the innovative legislative proposals issuing from UUP, advocating for workers, students, patients, and public higher education in general. Indeed, former NYS Assemblyman Jack McEneny made the strong case during a campus presentation last year that for decades UUP has done far more to advocate for SUNY than the SUNY administration itself. (It is worth emphasizing that such electoral and legislative advocacy is funded through VoteCope, NYSUT's political action fund, which in turn is funded from *members' voluntary contributions, not their dues payments*; this is why we urge members to set up a voluntary payroll deduction to VoteCope.)

Dues money for us in UUP, as in most public sector unions, goes overwhelmingly into bread and butter union work on the part of members and their terms and conditions of employment (for a more detailed explanation of this point, see "Friedrichs" on page 2). Most obviously, there is the process of negotiating the Contract, which expires in July of this year. When UUP negotiates with the State of New York, it does so on behalf of all the members of our bargaining unit. Contract negotiations make visible in a crystalized form the power of workers relative to the State (and ultimately to capital). The declines in union density have—we must be frank about it—eroded some of labor's power to act as a class and demand concessions from employers. However our contract, although surely conditioned by forces beyond the control of the individuals on either side of the table, is nevertheless negotiated by a specific union (UUP) and a specific employer

(the State of New York) in a specific political moment. Unions matter because they bring workers together as a collective body in order to maximize worker's power to wrest concessions from their employers. This means that contracts are crucial opportunities for unions to do what they should always be doing: listening to and mobilizing members. We need maximum membership participation in setting the agenda for negotiations. We need to ensure that our membership rates are higher than ever. We need people becoming active in chapter committees and initiatives. We need to act in unity, and we need to make some collective noise about the sort of contract we're willing to accept, and the sort of contract we'll reject: i.e., a contract that fails to protect not only UUP workers, but also SUNY and its students.

Lastly, our Chapter has consistently stressed that the work of unions extends beyond the contract. Of course UUP fights to get raises, benefits, and employment protections when it negotiates and enforces the contract. But in addition we also understand our job as the struggle to defend the academic mission of the university by giving clear voice to the priorities and needs of our academic and professional faculty. On this campus, our Chapter has been developing forward-looking policy proposals, drawn from extensive consultation with faculty, about essential issues such as our contingent faculty, tenure and promotion processes, retention processes, family leave, racial and gender equity, health and safety, student evaluations, workplace violence, and the privatization of the university. We meet regularly with the University Administration to address not only terms and conditions of employment, but all matters of interest and importance to our members. We have used this newsletter to educate members and spark debate about pressing issues. We host regular workshops and events on timely, relevant issues. All

of this is to insist on the principle—echoed repeatedly in these pages over the past several years—that employees of the university must play a central role in shaping those decisions that most directly affect our work-lives.

So when I say, “unions are in trouble,” what I mean is that they are in trouble—*unless we are prepared to collectively fight for their continued existence*. Those of us in historically strong union states have tended to take the presence of unions for granted. We do so now at our own peril. And when I say that “unions work” what I mean is that they remain the most potent organizational force for working people in the US, capable of delivering higher wages, mitigating social inequities, providing some political muscle, struggling for strong contracts, and affording workers a substantive role in their workplaces. Are unions above reproach? Absolutely not. They certainly shoulder some of the blame for their own declining influence, and they must continually be pushed to become more democratic, more class-conscious, and more outward looking. But unions remain, in my opinion, organizations well worth struggling both to defend in the face of attacks by their many and powerful enemies, and to transform from within through self-criticism and member engagement at every level.

What does all this mean for you? Please sign a card when we contact you in our membership drive. Please make your concerns and priorities known to the contract negotiations team (see page 6). Please join a committee (see page 18). Please attend chapter events and meetings. Please join us for political advocacy sessions. Please donate to VoteCope. And please be ready to play an active role in the contract negotiations process. I know this is asking quite a bit. But consider what your work-life would be like without a union or with a severely hamstrung union, and ask yourself whether this isn't an organization worth defending.

Friedrichs

(cont. from pg. 2)

ideology is the idea that you get what you pay for. Clearly free-riders should not be allowed to benefit from a union contract they won't pay for as even Justices Scalia and Kennedy acknowledged in the 1991 case *Lehnert v. Ferris Faculty Association*. And the alternative – which would force every single member of the bargaining unit who does not wish to be a union member to negotiate his/her own contract with the state – is obviously untenable. Since the case has almost nothing to do with the practical situation in which unions and those they represent find themselves, nor to consider the contradictions of the situation it would create, and since, furthermore, its premise, that workers shouldn't pay for politics they don't agree with, is already enshrined in the law, we must look elsewhere for its motivations. They are not hard to find.

The Real Issues:

The real motive, obviously enough, is profit. If unions lose this case, it will mean a vast reduction in dues revenue and, therefore, bargaining power. This will make it all the easier for corporations, who see the money spent on public school as an asset they can capture, to rush in to the breach. For the attempt to remove agency fee payers is part of the larger attempt to privatize our nation's schools: each is an effort to funnel public money into the corporations that run charter schools and test preparation companies and away from students and the educational professionals who serve them. *Friedrichs* is, then, best understood as part of the decades' long assault on any notion of the public good that is not immediately capturable by corporate interests, for if you remove the teacher's unions, it becomes that much easier to privatize schools. As recent events demonstrate clearly, unions—and the educators they represent—are the only institutions capable of halting the profiteering drive behind the so-called education reform movement. Whether its in Chicago, Washington

State or here at home, unions have been at the forefront of advocating for both members and students against corporate interests.

The logic of the case begins with the reprehensible view enshrined in the infamous *Citizens United* case: that money equals speech, a view that, obviously enough, accords more speech to those with more money. Union dues, then, are understood to be a form of political speech that undermines the First Amendment rights of those who don't agree with the union's positions. But this is wrong-headed in two directions: it fails, first of all, to distinguish between lobbying and bargaining. And secondly, it fails to understand that, when we think of politics in the broadest sense, there is no such thing as a politically neutral act.

This first idea is clearly established by decades of legal precedent: the state acts in distinct capacities when it acts as a sovereign and when it acts as an employer. Moneys directed towards it in its first capacity are called lobbying, in its second capacity they are called bargaining. And the same holds true for employees. Your first Amendment rights as a state-employee are distinct from, and more limited than, your first Amendment rights as a citizen. *Friedrichs*, then, asks us to abandon context in favor of a one-size fits all approach to government, which fails to account for how governments actually operate.

The second idea is more subtle but it goes to a basic misunderstanding of the nature of the public sphere, one that is, to my mind, one of the most pernicious aspects of our current political climate, namely the accusation, always leveled against one's enemies, that they are "politicizing" an issue. Take, for instance, gun control. Thirty-six people a day are killed by guns in America. But if, as happened after the most recent mass shooting in Oregon, some members of the public ask for stronger gun control legislation, they are accused of "politicizing" the tragedy. But to fail to address gun control legislation in the context of another mass shooting is also to "politicize" the tragedy. *There is no way to avoid politicizing a debate that takes place in the context of a democratic public sphere governed by laws instituted by representatives of the people.* If the government regulates an industry it is operating

politically. And if it doesn't regulate that industry it is also operating politically. There is no neutral action that the government can take, for it shapes the context in which our social and economic lives exist and it does this it regardless of the particular action it takes.

Unions understand this principle. But let's be clear: so do our enemies. Under the guise of protecting free-speech and under the false pretense of promoting apolitical, neutral policies, they are pushing a radical class war, one that seeks to undermine the union's political power and our ability to affect both our working lives and the larger political climate in which we live. They are, in other words, operating politically in the broad sense of the word – they are using all the weapons in their power to try to eliminate the existence of unions and their ability to do the work the law actually lets us do: negotiate the terms and conditions of our working lives. And this gets to my largest point, which is that unions exist to advance the interests of workers. Since all employees benefit directly from this foundational commitment, and since the union is obligated to represent all members of the bargaining unit equitably, all members of the bargaining unit should be required to pay for the services they receive.

Contract negotiations are coming up, as I'm sure you are all aware, and those negotiations don't take place in a vacuum. They, instead, take place in the political climate that produces cases such as *Friedrichs*. There is not such an easy separation between terms and conditions and the larger political climate as one might hope. But just because the two realms overlap does not mean that there are not important distinctions between politics in the broad sense – the public sphere in which our actions take place – and the more directly political action unions in which unions sometimes engage. The current law recognizes this distinction. What the Koch Brothers and their friends are attempting to do, under the guise of promoting the supposed neutrality of market interests, is to abolish it.

Friedrichs will not decide the fate of our union. We will continue to exist even if some members of our bargaining unit choose to benefit unfairly from

services for which they refuse to pay. But the larger point here is to recognize it for what it is: a direct assault on the middle class structures built by unions, the people who brought you the eight-hour day, sick leave, paid vacation, subsidized healthcare and the weekend.

New website!

If you haven't already, take a moment to explore our new UAlbany chapter website at uupalbany.org (or simply use www.albany.edu/uup as before, which now links to the new non-.edu site). Designed to be concise, helpful and easy to navigate, the Website Committee hopes you'll find whatever you need. A calendar has been added to facilitate planning, links are included to chapter documents and statewide information, and pages are available for committee postings. If you find something is missing, want to add a calendar item, or have suggestions or feedback for improvements to our chapter website, please email uupalb@gmail.com. Many thanks to the committee for their efforts and particularly to Eric Torgersen and site designer Jeffrey Knaack!

**Let us know what you think.
Send your comments to:**

The editor at:
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Newsletter Committee:

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Marty Manjak
Paul Stasi



GET INVOLVED!

This is YOUR union. We need active members to keep us aware of new developments, to shape our agenda, and to advocate for change.

Name: _____ Email: _____

I have interest in working on the following issues/committees:

- Academic Concerns
- Affirmative Action
- Contingent Concerns
- Disability Rights and Concerns
- Food Pantry
- Health and Safety
- Legislation/Outreach
- LGBTQ
- Membership
- Newsletter
- Peace and Justice
- Professional Concerns
- Solidarity
- Transportation and Parking
- Website
- Women's Concerns

I have interest in serving as my Departmental Rep:

Department Name: _____

I have interest in talking with Legislators and doing political outreach.

Please return this form to the UUP office in CS B21, or send an electronic version to Bret Benjamin <bret.benjamin@gmail.com>. Don't hesitate to contact us for additional information about the Committees, Department Rep duties, or political advocacy efforts.

Identity theft protection available for NYSUT members



TRUE IDENTITY PROTECTION™

NYSUT Member Benefits is excited to announce that its newest endorsed program -- ID Watchdog -- is now available to all NYSUT members & their families looking for protection against the growing threat of identity and credit theft.

What Do I Get When I Sign Up for ID Watchdog?

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According to Javelin Strategy & Research, an estimated 13.1 million Americans fall victim to identity theft each year. These individuals are hit with approximately \$7,000 in fraudulent charges per person and spend about 330 hours each trying to recover from the effects of identity theft.

ID Watchdog (founded in 2005 as a theft protection service) uses proprietary monitoring technology that alerts members as soon as new or updated information associated with their identity is detected -- allowing them to catch fraudulent activity immediately.

To learn more about ID Watchdog, call toll-free 866-513-0823
or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org.



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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