

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes  
UUP Albany Chapter  
August 31, 2015**

**Attendees:**

J. Aini, M. Aso, B. Benjamin, P. Breiner, J. Collins, V. Commisso, R. Dressler, R. Friedman, L. Gallagher, J. Gendron, J. Greiman, M. Grosshandler, J. Hanifan, J. Harton, T. Hoey, C. Jewell, M. Knee, D. LaFond, A. Major, M. Manjak, R. McClamrock, W. Mendez, R. Moslehi, D. Myers, A. Olin, G. Petry, L. Pyles, B. Pyszczyk, A. Richie, G. Robinson, P. Romain, R. See, M. Seidel, B. Shadrack, B. Sutton, E. Torgersen, B. Trachtenberg, C. Walcek, M. Weiss, L. Wilder, L. Wittner, B. Ziman, K. Thompson-LaPerle.

**I. Approval of Minutes**

The last meeting's minutes were moved by B Trachtenberg, seconded by R See. All approved, with 3 abstentions.

**II. New Delegate Orientation**

- a. Introduction: All were welcomed, the many new delegates were thanked for their willingness to serve, and materials including the schedule of fall meetings were provided. Upcoming highlighted items included: 9/10 12-2pm welcome back BBQ, the 9/21 3-5pm contract negotiators meeting (this year the union will begin negotiating a new contract), and the negotiations team survey of the membership which all should complete. A new UUP chapter website has been launched and all were invited to review it and find more information there. The Health & Welfare envelope was sent around and all were invited to give a few dollars to this fund, as they felt moved, to help the chapter with miscellaneous needs for individual members.
- b. Overview of bargaining unit, union structure, EC's function: All were encouraged to attend the monthly EC (Executive Committee) meetings where the UAlbany chapter communicates, shares concerns, puts forward and discusses proposals, and sets the agenda for where the chapter is going. The EC (approximately 70 members) welcomes engaged, open discussion. The bylaws give great authority to the EC. This is the policy making body of the chapter. Proposals from the officers or committees typically come to the EC, which votes to approve, reject, or amend initiatives. This body engages in both long-term priority development, and immediate decisions around funding requests, activities, etc. Chapter officers meet monthly with the university administration (including the university president/designee, provost/designee, HR director/designee) at Labor Management (LM) meetings to communicate concerns, discuss matters of importance raised by the EC, and resolve issues. Officers also meet regularly. Our Chapter has also built a departmental representative structure that aspires to have reps for each unit on campus. These reps convey important information to and from members. We have a very diverse bargaining unit, reflected in the EC and the Reps, including academics, professionals, contingents, often from different fields and with different relationships to the university. We are stronger with so many different people and jobs represented, but we must also patiently educate each other about the differences, and work closely to make decisions that are in the best interests of everyone regarding chapter priorities, resources, concerns, strategies and where we devote energies. The statewide union negotiates contracts with the State of NY on behalf of all members of the bargaining unit (the 29 four-year SUNY colleges and universities, about 35,000 members). EC members are elected every 2 years as delegates, either academic or professional (this includes contingents, those who have no pathway to a tenured/permanent position or continued appointment). There is one delegate for every 75 members to represent the campus at statewide Delegate Assemblies (DAs), gatherings three times per year of statewide chapter representatives to interact with SUNY colleagues across the state and conduct the business of the greater union. Delegates from campuses are selected to attend based on the number of votes obtained at their campus election—if unable to attend, the individual with the next highest number of votes in his/her category may attend as a delegate. Observers (those who are not delegates) may also attend DAs, but cannot vote. Whether you see you work more focused on the Chapter, the statewide union, or a mix, there are plenty of places for people to get involved and make a difference.

- c. Review of FAQ, Glossary, By-Laws. Materials were provided and discussed. The glossy is particularly helpful in understanding union terminology. The FAQ page covers a range of common questions we get from members. All members should review the by-laws and the contract (linked on the chapter website).
- d. Introductions from VPs for Professionals, Academics, and Officer for Contingents. All officers were introduced. The above gave summaries of their responsibilities and updates on the latest in their areas (Tolley was unable to attend, but will present next time). Officers are always available to help with any problems.
- e. Committees, Statewide and Chapter. All were encouraged to participate on at least one chapter committee each year. This is where the majority of the union's work is conducted and it is better for UUP to address and set policies and bring these to administration than to constantly be in defensive reaction to University initiatives. Chapter committees address specific issues to our campus and connect members across the many departments and units, meet a couple times a semester, provide a newsletter article and host at least one event each year. Chapter committees and their chairs will be listed on the website. B Benjamin is working to finalize committee chair assignments which the EC will vote on these at the next meeting. **B Benjamin moved that the EC authorize the constitution of the Academic, Professionals and Contingent Concerns committees this year (the chairs of these committees are the corresponding officers). J Hanifan seconded and all approved** Statewide committees address concerns related to academia and education across the campuses, nationally and internationally. In many cases they are parallel to our Chapter committees, but designed to direct the statewide union.

### III. Chapter Planning: Goals and Priorities for the Year

The officers held a retreat over summer and reflected on the last two years, what worked/didn't and how the chapter should proceed. At the next meeting we will discuss this as a group, engage in a chapter assessment and develop a strategic plan. Some areas cited as needing attention included:

- Contingents concerns—such as developing recommendations for salary and longevity of contracts
- Greater legislative advocacy—telling our stories
- Contract concerns—more money, better benefits, family leave, DRP, DSI vs DSA, on-call/recall, etc. (Phillippe Abraham from our chapter is on the contract negotiations team, B Benjamin and T Hoey are on contract committees.
- VOTE COPE—contributions toward UUP legislative advocacy (member fees cannot be used)
- Affirmative action
- Social justice

Chapters have been asked to increase membership to 99%. Currently 95% of our full-time academics and professionals are members, but the contingent rate is much lower (around 55%). Many don't know they're not members (ie agency fee payers)—many assume they are members because what looks like dues payments, and because they receive regular communications from the Chapter. We need to encourage non-members to consider membership. The Harris v Quinn Supreme Court case last year started to erode unions and the Freidrichs v California Teacher's Association case will be heard this year, which could undermine unions by challenging the right of unions to collect fees from all bargaining unit members (whether they have signed as union members or not). This could radically reduce the union's revenue stream. Currently everyone, member or not, gets all the union benefits and protections and full representation. In a worst-case scenario, the union could be expected to represent all members of the bargaining unit, whether they were dues-paying members or not. We have to do two things here. 1) sign up as many fee-payers as possible (which is good for contract negotiations as well), and 2) even more important, communicate with all our members about the value of being unionized, both the protections that come from the contract and those that come from our broader organizing efforts. We have been articulating this message consistently for the past few years, but it needs to be amplified and extended right now.

### IV. Appoint Interim Assistant Vice President for Academics

P Stasi, the elected Assistant VP for Academics, is on sabbatical leave this academic year. While on leave he will continue in his role as Newsletter editor, and will participate in officer discussions electronically; however he will not be on campus for day-to-day work. In light of this the officers recommended that an interim appointment be made to cover his responsibilities until he returns next year. Per the bylaws vacancies can be filled through an interim appointment or a special election of the full membership. Since this is a temporary position where the elected officer would return after a period of absence, B Benjamin recommended that the EC make an interim appointment. Although the process for appointment is not spelled out in the bylaws, past practice has seen the Chapter president recommend a candidate to fill the vacancy, which the EC voted to approve or reject. In this case, B Benjamin explained that he solicited nominations (including self-nominations) with the intent to give more authority and choice to the EC in making the interim appointment. Two nominations were received in advance (from D Lafond and A Major), and both submitted candidate statements to the EC in advance of the meeting. B Benjamin had circulated via email a procedure in the weeks prior to the EC meeting, which included a provision indicating that the candidates would recuse themselves from the meeting while the EC members deliberated. This has been past practice of the Chapter in analogous circumstances. D Lafond objected to this provision in advance of the meeting, arguing that this would disenfranchise the two candidates. After consulting Robert's Rules, B Benjamin corrected his earlier directive, and now clarified that Robert's Rules indicates that no member can be forced to leave the room during a deliberation. He indicated that the two candidates could choose whether they wished to stay or leave during the discussion. A Major recused himself and stepped out. D Lafond objected to the procedure for appointing an interim officer, arguing that the current process was undemocratic and that the matter should be sent back to the full membership for a special election. During the discussion, it was noted that a full election is a lengthy process, with expensive mailings and would require statewide action. Further, it was noted that this was a temporary appointment for an elected officer who would be returning, suggesting that an appointment was more appropriate than a second election. D Lafond asked that the entire process be tabled until a later date, after additional time for discussion and to clarify procedures, which she argued were confusing and manipulative. There was much discussion including the merits and costs of appointment and full election, necessity and benefits of appointing an interim, merits and costs of waiting to appoint, and policies and procedures.

**P Romain moved and R See seconded that the EC appoint an interim Assistant VP for Academics (B Benjamin clarified that approving this motion would indicate appointing an interim officer, while opposing the motion would indicate filling the vacancy through special election). After further discussion B Trachtenberg called the question. The motion to call the question was approved with more than 2/3 in favor. The original motion was then approved, with 4 opposed and 3 abstentions.**

**D LaFond moved and B Sutton seconded to table the appointment until a future EC meeting because no clear procedures were in place and there had been inadequate time for discussion. This motion was rejected. 5 voted to delay the appointment, 20 voted to make the appointment at the current meeting. There was 1 abstention.**

**P Romain moved and R See seconded to appoint A Major as interim VP for Academics. There was no discussion. Paper ballots were used. 23 voted in favor, 3 against, 1 abstention. A Major was appointed Interim Assistant Vice President for Academics.**

D Lafond indicated that she objected to the entire process.

## V. Funding requests

- a. Authorization to **fund all EC meetings for the year. B Trachtenberg moved, R See seconded, all approved.**
- b. Request for **\$200 from Peace and Justice for Marjorie Cohn event.** An eminent legal scholar will discuss drone warfare. The committee seeks additional partners to fund the event (Political Science

- and Women's Studies are contributing). There was discussion that this will be agency fee funds. **L Wittner moved, B Trachtenberg seconded and all approved.**
- c. Request for **\$200 for Debra Mayes Pane school to prison pipeline event.** Diversity transformation awardees are creating events to discuss racial and other concern and are seeking additional partners (School of Criminal Justice is contributing) to cover the remaining anticipated costs. **D LaFond moved and B Sutton seconded, all approved.**
  - d. **B Trachtenberg moved and T Hoey seconded that the EC approve paying for the two general membership meetings (one in fall and one in spring). All approved.**
  - e. **C Jewell moved and P Romain seconded that the president be permitted a \$150 spending limit without EC authorization from the chapter budget and good and welfare. Approved unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned 2:00pm. Minutes submitted by J Harton.