

THE FORUM

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Your UUP Albany Chapter Newsletter

Issue 132



Dedicated Election Issue

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Welcome to the 2015 “Election Edition” of *The Forum*.

The Albany Chapter of UUP is pleased to present to you this opportunity to meet the candidates through their statements and encourages you to participate in this year’s election.

All candidates of record who are running for officer or delegate positions were given an opportunity to submit their statements for publication.

Elected officers and delegates will serve a term beginning on June 1, 2015 and ending on May 31, 2017.

You are receiving a copy of this newsletter because you are a “duly signed” member of UUP.

Any candidate running for office can call the Chair of the UUP Elections & Credentials Committee or UUP Statewide Secretary Eileen Landy at (518) 640-6600 to make an appointment to observe the counting of any election in which they are a duly nominated candidate.

Election Information: What happens when?

- Feb. 17th: General Membership Meeting & Candidate’s Forum 12-2 in CC Ballroom. Candidates will have the chance to make a statement and answer questions.
- Feb. 18th-20th: Chapter election ballots will be mailed out to member’s home addresses.
- Mar 18th: **Return ballots must be received (not postmarked) at the UUP Central Office by 5:00 PM**
- Mar 18th-21st: Ballots will be counted and results will be sent to chapter Presidents soon after.

Your vote is important! Please make it count!

Officer Candidate Statements

President

Bret Benjamin
Associate Professor, English

I am pleased to run for a second term as Chapter President. The experience of working in this capacity with members over these past two years has been both gratifying and edifying. I took on the Presidency knowing that public higher education is in deep crisis, and that the project of rebuilding our chapter would require patient, dedicated organizing. Much work remains, but I am proud of what we have accomplished. I say "we" because I have worked closely with many members, particularly my fellow officers: Tom Hoey, Barry Trachtenberg, Roberto Vives, Janna Harton, Rob See, Eloise Briere, and Eric Warnke. I run on the merits of the record we have compiled, including:

- expanding substantially the number of active chapter members serving on our exec. committee, chapter committees, and as department reps.
- establishing a relationship with UAlbany administration, that is constructive, collaborative, and, when necessary, critical.
- securing benefits for members during the contract implementation period.
- foregrounding contingent issues, and broadly fighting for those employees whose labor is most exploited and who are most vulnerable.
- advocating for strong faculty governance through collaborations with University Senate.
- partnering with the Graduate Student Employees Union (GSEU) and the Graduate Student Association (GSA).
- producing high-quality newsletters that advance forceful arguments from the perspective of labor.
- sponsoring dozens of workshops and campus events that address member concerns.
- improving communication with members.
- participating in political and legislative campaigns, advocating for public higher education.
- working with individual members, insisting upon due process, procedural compliance, and employee solidarity.

V.P. for Academics

Barry Trachtenberg
Associate Professor, History

At the statewide level, UUP is increasingly showing itself to be a potent instrument in the fight to preserve and strengthen public higher education in New York State. Faculty and students face a regular barrage of proposals from the Governor and Chancellor that seek to privatize SUNY in the name of educational "reform". Programs such as START-UP NY, Open SUNY, and EdTPA are thinly-veiled efforts to hand over public resources and student dollars to corporate interests at the expense of SUNY's educational mission. The sharp rise in contingent faculty is part of a systematic attack on tenure and academic freedom whereas Seamless Transfer and SUNY's contract with the MOOC producer Coursera erode the democratic mission of our schools. UUP is leading the fight against these efforts and proposing instead to restore SUNY to a public trust that furthers the goals of equality, education, and opportunity.

At UAlbany, our chapter has fought hard to preserve and protect fair practices for review, promotion, and tenure. We've lobbied the legislature for increased funding for our campus. We've successfully resisted efforts to punish faculty who were unfairly deemed "unproductive." We are working with the administration to identify lasting solutions to the low pay and job insecurity of contingent faculty as well as the problem of the "glass ceiling" that is the experience of many Associate Faculty.

It is for these reasons that I would be proud to continue serving as Vice President for Academics for the upcoming term. Thank you for your support.

Assistant V.P. Academics

Deborah LaFond
Associate Librarian
University Libraries

Determining strategies for actions is one of the many roles officers perform in collaboration with the members and the Executive Committee of the Chapter. It is unjust for a President, Vice President or Officer to discourage any union member to run for office. One of my goals has been to advocate for fair election procedures and transparency within our chapter based upon questioned practices in the 2013 election. This year we have a new chapter election committee. A new approach has been forwarded. Executive Committee members were not informed of who our Officer/s encouraged to run so that there is no open advance knowledge in the EC of who might run. Therefore, as we do not know if we have candidates for this position, you are welcome to write in any person's name you feel would be committed to the position. I am willing to serve.

 Paul Stasi
 Associate Professor, English

Public higher education is, as ever, under attack, both because of the chronic under-funding that has plagued SUNY for decades and, perhaps more insidiously, by an instrumentalized way of approaching education in terms of financial outcomes, streamlined paths to degrees and consumer satisfaction. I believe the union remains the best place we, as academic and professionals, can resist this process and re-assert the importance of a public, comprehensive research university, one that fulfills the original mission of the SUNY system: to bring an affordable and high quality education to the citizens of New York. Given recent changes in the administration on campus, I think there is an opportunity for the union to effect some lasting change – but it will require a dedicated and activist union, mobilizing all of its members, to achieve our goals. I have been proud to be a part of the union as it moves in this direction and will continue to work, as newsletter editor, and, if elected, Assistant V.P for Academics to try to improve our working lives and the education of the students we serve.

V.P. Professionals

Tom Hoey
 Sr. Data Communications Analyst
 Data Communications

Dear UUP Chapter Members,

I am again asking for your vote for Vice President of Professionals and hope you can support me in the upcoming chapter elections. The Chapter Officers and I have been working these past two years on making your career here at the University a better one and I would like another two years to continue that work as there is always room for more improvement.

During my term we started up the two A-28 committees and had some success with salary appeals. Currently I am serving on a Statewide A-32 committee with Marty Manjak which is reviewing professional job titles, which we hope will lead to better career paths. I have set up workshops for our members for various topics such as Performance Programs and Evaluations and Anti-Bullying and will continue creating new ones for professional development. I have been working closely with our Grievance Chair and Labor Relation Specialist when members have problems to ensure that they are given due process. While we currently have a very strong and committed Exec Board, part of our job is to bring in new faces and prepare the next generation of union leaders for the work down the road and I have been actively reaching out and recruiting. I have to tell you that being an officer is much more work than I previously imagined but that effort is so rewarding when I can help a member through a difficult period.

Thanks for your support!

Assistant V.P. Professionals

Linda M Gallagher
 Administrative Manager
 Economics

I have worked for the University at Albany since 2007 as the Administrative Manager of the Economics Department and I am currently the Co-Chair of the Employee Assistance Committee. I

have been a member of the UUP Executive Committee since 2011. I strive to develop excellent relationships within my Department and throughout the University. I am active within the University and often assist with commencement, open houses and orientations for new students and parents. I am active in generating ideas for seminars and lunch time programs to benefit employees through the Employee Assistance Program. In addition, I am active in the community and participate in the Leukemia Society's team in training as a runner, fundraiser and mentor. I feel that my background and commitment to excellence would be beneficial to this position.

Secretary

Janna Harton
Administrative Manager
Languages, Literatures & Cultures

I write as a candidate for the UUP Chapter officer position of Secretary for the coming term. We are completing an amazing two years coming out of a period of deep fiscal crisis, academic stress and years of interim university leadership, all weakening our institution. Your UUP officers have been working closely with our new university president and his leadership team to improve communication, increase transparency, address campus concerns, and resolve union issues. Building relationships and understanding in Labor Management meetings has resulted in a growing sense of trust, accelerated progress, and results.

We are in a time of unparalleled opportunity working cooperatively with the administration, Senate leadership and UUP. While we each have particular objectives, we share a common vision that we can all agree to pursue: a strong, comprehensive, academically focused, and competitive UAlbany serving our state and coming generations. To be successful we need every UUP member. Now is the time to be forward-thinking, confident, and enthusiastic. We still have much to do and many challenges to make UAlbany the best it can be, but with relationships cemented and your support, moving successful initiatives forward will lead to

exponential growth and great opportunities for all.

I've been honored to serve you as Secretary these past two years and am excited to be part of developing this new vision. I would be honored to serve you all again, seeking continuous improvements that benefit our university, our union, our students and each one of us.

Professional Delegate Candidate Statements

Carol H. Jewell
Instructional Support Technician
University Libraries

I've been a member of the Professional staff at UA for over 30 years. I've been Chair of the Disability Rights & Concerns Committee for our Chapter since 2002, I am Co-Chair of the GLBTQ Rights and Concerns Committee for our Chapter, I serve on the Statewide SOUL Committee, and am Co-Chair of the Statewide Disability Rights and Concerns Committee.

Despite passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act twenty-plus years ago, UA employees with disabilities still face accessibility barriers: improper snow removal on ramps, among others. As a person with disabilities, I understand the issues. I married my wife in 2012, thanks to a change in NYS laws. However, GLBTQ people still face discrimination in many areas.

It has been my privilege to work for equal rights for all, by serving you as a UUP Professional Delegate. I want to continue; please re-elect me. Thank you.

Martin Manjak
Information Security Officer
OCIO

For the past four years I have been a chapter professional delegate. In that time I have served as chair and editorial member of our newsletter committee, managing production my first two years, and continuing to contribute articles under the direction of the current editor-in-chief. I'm proud to say that we have received numerous

awards for *The Forum* in the last four years, for both specific articles and general excellence.

I have also co-chaired the chapter Technology in Higher Education committee, working with my colleague to sponsor campus forums on OpenSUNY, MOOCs and other technological issues in higher ed. As a chapter member, I have attended every state-wide delegate assembly, visited the capitol every year to lobby for support for SUNY, and am currently working on a review of SUNY's professional IT titles.

I want to continue serving the Albany UUP chapter and ask for your vote this election.

Greta Petry
Asst. Director of Community Relations
Office of Communications and Marketing

I would like to ask for your vote to a two-year term as professional delegate. I am active in the union because I believe that people matter. I would like to serve another term as delegate because at the statewide level, delegates learn about issues occurring at other SUNY campuses. This prepares us to be proactive about advocating for you on our own campus. I am also honored to serve as chapter Grievance chair. I will do my best to assist you and make sure your contractual rights are protected.

Thank you.

Betty P. Shadrick, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean of Graduate Education
Director of Graduate Student Diversity

UUP is an effective voice of advocacy for its members. As a current elected professional delegate and Chair of Affirmative Action, I seek your vote for re-election.

Why? Because, I am committed to advocate and articulate your issues and concerns. Some of these, among many, include: fair and equitable wages, promotion and tenure, improved quality of work life, and proactive dialogue to address political and social issues impacting the academic community, our students, faculty and staff.

The Union matters. I want to be a part of the ongoing discussions that ensure our union remains that voice of strength and sound reason.

Academic Delegate Candidate Statements

James Collins
Prof. Linguistics and Cognitive Science
Anthropology

I have been involved in UUP for many years as Department Representative, member of the Chapter Executive Committee, and in several Officer positions. Believing in unions as a source of democratic power, I have worked to improve UUP by connecting our Chapter to its members, the wider labor movement, and the wider society. I currently serve on the chapter newsletter team, have joined a university-wide panel on contingent issues at the University, and support chapter activities to strengthen faculty governance at UA. As a member of UUP's statewide Delegate Assembly, I serve on the Labor and Higher Education Committee, which joins our academic union with the wider labor movement, focusing on actions and strategies to oppose war and the militarization of society; promote environmental justice; and strengthen contingent employees' organizations. I ask for your vote again as an academic delegate serving on the Chapter Executive Committee.

Ronald Friedman
Associate Professor,
Psychology

I am an associate professor of Psychology, who has been teaching at UAlbany for 8 years. I have been active in UUP as part of the Peace and Justice committee, working to raise awareness regarding the human costs of war here and abroad. At the statewide level, I have played a key role in developing and obtaining funding for a SUNY-wide student award for academic projects related to social justice and have recently been working to further union activism against

fracking and on behalf of environmental conservation more generally. In the coming years, I would like to continue working with my dedicated colleagues in UUP to ensure that UAlbany is able to provide an accessible, high-quality education to students while offering to faculty and professionals a workplace exemplifying fairness, nurturance, respect, and job security.

Deborah LaFond
Associate Librarian
University Libraries

I offer my continued commitment toward visions of UNITY that include collective action for Equity, Diversity, Dignity and Fair Play. This past 2 years, I initiated the Chapter vote for a new Women's Concerns Committee, and initiated the campus program "The Power of the Drescher Award" in collaboration with my committee members including those on the Statewide Affirmative Action Committee. On the Labor and Higher Education Committee (Statewide), I initiated the vision for a student award that supports creative projects which incorporate collective action and social justice. The new UUP "Steve M. Street Social Justice Project Award" was adopted for students as a result of our solidarity. On this committee and on the Statewide Women's Concerns Committee, I have worked to raise awareness of "civil rights" concerns while growing a labor and climate change project. I was named regional coordinator for the New York Climate Change march.

Lawrence S. Wittner, Ph.D.
Professor of History Emeritus

I am professor of history emeritus, having been a full-time faculty member at SUNY/Albany from 1974 to 2010. From 1979 to the present I have served as an Albany UUP academic delegate and executive committee member, including four years as Albany UUP vice president for academics. During my overall academic and scholarly career (which includes earlier teaching stints at Hampton Institute, Vassar College, and at

Japanese universities), I have written nine books, edited or co-edited another four, authored hundreds of published articles, and received numerous awards. I strongly believe that a union's job is to defend the rights of its members and, more broadly, to help create a just and better world. Accordingly, I was the first chair of UUP's statewide solidarity committee and have served on that committee for decades. In addition, I currently chair Albany UUP's solidarity committee and serve as executive secretary of the Albany County AFL-CIO.

James Searle
Doctoral Candidate
English

My name is a James Searle and I am a doctoral candidate in the Dept. of English. I am running for the position of Academic Delegate in order to foster closer and stronger links between UUP and GSEU. I am currently in my second term with GSEU here at Albany and have watched many of my members make the transition from a Graduate Assistant position to a contingent one. My hope is to highlight the importance of the working conditions of contingent faculty and their broader relationship to graduate and undergraduate studies on campus.

Resolution on Shared Governance

The University Senate, acting on a recommendation from President Jones, will soon be circulating a proposed by-laws amendment designed to remove voting privileges from ex-officio administrators serving as Senators or on Senate committees and councils. UUP Albany endorses this proposed amendment seeing it as an important step towards strengthening faculty governance on campus. A Senate by-laws amendment requires a two thirds vote to pass, and quorum rules require participation from at least 30% of the voting faculty (teaching and professional staff).

We will send reminders when more details are available, but please be on notice for any by-law amendment announcements from the Senate.

Make your dental & vision care a priority!

Well, another year has passed us by and the New Year is upon us! As you take stock of the various resolutions you've made for this year, now is the time to make your dental & vision care a top priority.

Dental Care



The NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Dental Plan features the MetLife PDP Plus Network.

The Plan offers easy to understand dental coverage that allows you to:

- Protect you and your family by providing competitively-priced dental coverage for most preventive and routine services that help promote long-term oral health.
- Choose the dentist of your choice at the time of treatment. You do not have to select a primary dentist and there is no ID card to show or referrals needed for specialty care.
- Save on out-of-pocket expenses by receiving services from thousands of participating dentist locations nationwide that agree to charge fees typically 15% to 45% lower than the average charges in your area.

With the MetLife Dental Plan featuring the PDP Plus Network, you'll receive a wide range of benefits that provide choice, savings and convenience to help make your dental health a priority.

Vision Care



The NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Vision Plan provided by Davis Vision ensures that you are able to obtain proper eye care.

The plan offers a variety of benefits, including:

- One complete eye exam (including glaucoma testing, and when professionally indicated, dilation).
- One pair of eyeglasses (lenses & frames) or contact lenses per benefit period – paid in full according to plan specifications from participating providers.

Once you've enrolled in the plan and you're confirmed, simply call an in-network provider, identify yourself with your name or NYSUT ID number (available on your NYSUT membership card), make an appointment, and use all of the plan benefits at that visit (exam & glasses cannot be split into two appointments).

The provider's office will contact Davis Vision and verify your eligibility for benefits. There are no claim forms or ID cards needed to use the plan.

February is Member Appreciation Month!

Don't forget that NYSUT Member Benefits is teaming up with its endorsed program providers for a special month-long event in **February 2015**.

Member Appreciation Month will feature a special prize drawing each day of the month in February, including a Bose Wave Radio, iPad Mini, several



Amazon Kindles, and a variety of gift cards. The winners of the daily prize drawings will be announced exclusively on the Member Benefits website throughout the month of February.

You **MUST** be a member of the voluntary Member Benefits MAP Alert email service to be eligible for these drawings!

For more details about these endorsed programs or Member Appreciation Month, 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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