



The Forum



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 state-wide agenda of UUP, the national crisis facing public higher education and the issues of working people in the US and beyond.

Table of Contents:

Officer Candidate Statements:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----|
| President | 2 |
| Academic VP | 2-3 |
| Professional VP | 3 |
| Asst. VP for Academics | 3 |
| Asst. VP for Professionals | 4 |
| Secretary | 4 |
| Contingent Officer | 4 |
| Professional Delegate Candidate Statements | 5-6 |
| Academic Delegate Candidate Statements | 6-7 |

Welcome to the 2017 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, 2017 and ending on May 31, 2019. 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?

March 9th: General Membership Meeting & Candidate's Forum 12-2 in CC Ballroom. Candidates will have the chance to make a statement and answer questions.

March 8-10: Chapter election ballots will be mailed out to member's home addresses.

April 12th: Return ballots must be received (notpostmarked) at the UUP Central Office by 5:00PM

Your vote is important! Please make it count!

Officer Candidate Statements

President

Aaron Major,
Associate Professor, Sociology

Over the last two years, I have served as our chapter's Assistant Vice President for Academics and have been an active delegate to our statewide assembly. I am proud of the work that our members have done to make our workplace fairer and more equitable, to defend the promise of a public, affordable, liberal arts education, and to become a leading voice for social and environmental justice. Now, perhaps more than ever, our basic labor protections, freedoms and values are under threat. Faced with such a threat, some will advocate that we, as a union, take a defensive stance by narrowing our focus and concentrating our efforts on our members' "bread and butter" concerns. This perspective is understandable, but it would also be a mistake. What I have seen in the last few years is that by working to build an open, inclusive chapter that encourages the broadest possible participation, we can more forcefully fight for our members' interests as we broaden our vision and extend our reach. Now, more than ever, we need to build on this momentum by continuing the progress we have made on pay equity, by taking the lead in making ours a family-friendly workplace and in conversations around the fair evaluation of academics and professionals, and by advocating for our university to not only express the values of openness and inclusion, but defend them as well. If privileged to be elected as your chapter's president, it is in this spirit that I would serve.

Academic Vice President

Deborah La Fond,
University Libraries

As previous Officer and Academic Delegate for over 4 years, I have sought to insure that elections are fair and do not create a glass ceiling or prevent our union from engaging in "Invite Only" elections. In the previous 2 elections my candidacy offered the litmus test for healthy contested elections and for insuring that we have a better representation on the slate. I think I have contributed to this year's potential diversity. We'll see - as the Executive Committee does not openly discuss elections in our Executive meeting unless there is a move to give someone the advantage of being voted in from the Executive body -- not by the Membership. I opposed this action three times, particularly when there was NO call for nominations to all Exec members or to all MEMBERS when the seat for a temporary Academic Vice President became open. At that time, I was prevented from putting my name forward even though I ran in 2015.

I request your vote of confidence. I would not take a sabbatical upon being elected. As officer, I would work to effect fair and democratic processes and dialogic space that our membership would be proud of. I have been active in creating and working towards many of the goals of our chapter.

I initiated a successful Diversity Transformation Campus grant (<https://transformativeconversations.wordpress.com/>) and endeavored collaboratively with several faculty members and staff, to support transformative teaching and learning and assisted faculty and students in creating spaces of discussion on difficult topics.

* * *

Academic Vice President

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 continue to believe that the union remains the best place we, as academics and professionals, can resist this process and reassert 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. Over the past year I have been proud to serve as your Academic Vice President and while I think we've made some progress on campus a great deal of work remains to be done. I have found my work with the union to be some of the most meaningful work I have undertaken on this campus and I would be honored to serve for a full two year term.

Professional Vice President

Thomas Hoey, ITS

I am again asking for your vote for Vice President of Professionals and delegate of UUP at the University of Albany. Over the past 5 years that I have served in this position I have advocated for professionals on campus by holding workshops and seminars. We had over 90 members show up recently at our UUP pre-retirement seminar. I was instrumental in having a welcome back BBQ the past four Septembers and have pushed for co-funding for our professionals at the University picnic and holiday party. I have worked behind the scenes at Labor Management meetings for professional issues such as having up to date performance programs and evaluations. I am always available for our members when they need help with human resource issues and work closely with our grievance officer and labor relations specialist. As many of you may know, I was elected as a statewide membership develop-

ment officer and along with Philippe Abraham, who is Statewide Vice President for Professionals, we have been able to help our Albany chapter by having direct input in our unions leadership's decision-making process. I have been at UAlbany for close to 29 years and still find it a great place to work and we all have our union to thank for that. We may have some difficult times ahead but by working together we will succeed. My last request of you all is to vote in the upcoming chapter election; even if a position is uncontested it is important to vote as it shows our management that we are a strong union. And if you would like to serve on our exec board, write in your name as it only takes one vote to be elected. We are a friendly group who are very welcoming and we are active in our communities.

Assistant VP for Academics

Rebekah Tolley,

Adjunct Instructor, Studio Art

For the past two years, it has been an honor to serve as the officer for contingents. During this time, I have worked to raise awareness of contingent faculty issues on campus, I have chaired the contingent concerns committee, served on the contingent implementation team oversight committee and served on the statewide contingent employment committee. The great progress that we have made in beginning to address the issues faced by contingent faculty has made it clear to me that the core issues that we face--pay equity, job security, a fair and transparent system of reappointment, and ensuring that our voice is heard in shaping the future of the university--are those faced by all academic faculty. I hope to build on the perspectives and insight I have gained from working closely with my union colleagues over the past two years by continuing to serve as an officer in the role of Assistant VP for Academics.

Assistant VP for Professionals

Patrick Romain, EOP

My UUP brothers and sisters, can I count on YOU for your support?

Unions are being attacked nationwide. It is our duty as a unionists to take a stand and fight for fair wages, health insurance, and numerous other benefits which were gained through the actions of our predecessors in the Labor Movement.

Now more than ever, we are in need of experienced leadership. I am seeking your vote to continue to serve as your Assistant Vice President for Professionals on the Executive Board for the Albany chapter.

Currently, I serve on the Statewide Outreach Committee and as the Statewide Co-Chair, of the Opportunity Programs Committee (EOP/EOC). In the past, I served in the following statewide committees- Co-Chair EOP, Co-Chair Affirmative, Action, Task Force on Pay Equity, Legal Defense, Finance, Black Faculty, and Staff Association.

During my tenure in UUP, I have served as the Albany treasurer and Affirmative Action Chair. I took the lead to sign up members for Vote Cope. Do you want a fair contract and better benefits? Please sign up for Vote Cope now!

I have also participated in the following activities: "NYSUT RA", "AFT Civil & Human Rights", "Black, Puerto Rican, Latino & Asian Caucus", "Somos el Futuro Conference." I humbly ask for your vote

Secretary

Loretta Pyles

Associate Professor, Social Welfare

I am honored to be running for Secretary of UUP. I am doing this because I am inspired by the ways that our union has played a meaningful and effective role at our university in recent years. Having served 2 terms on the UUP Executive Committee, I have played a modest part in a movement led by committed and active leaders toward a university that is more transparent, inclusive, and just. The times have been and will continue to be challeng-

ing, but with deep commitments to solidarity, critical inquiry, and action, together we can make UAlbany a public university that is fair and supportive of its workers and students.

I joined the UAlbany faculty in 2008 and am an Associate Professor in the School of Social Welfare. From 2008-2012, I was the Director of the Community and Public Service Program, a university-wide initiative administered by the School of Social Welfare, which creates service-learning opportunities by connecting students with community organizations. I have extensive experiences as a board member in other organizations, such as the New Orleans Food and Farm Network, CommunityLAB (Troy, NY), and the University of Kansas Graduate Teaching Assistants Coalition. Throughout my career, my work has continually focused on asking tough questions, building networks, and creating change. I am inspired to engage in projects that will help to make the work and lives of professionals, academics, and students, more humane.

Officer for Contingents

Joe Creamer

Lecturer, WCI

I am a full-time contingent for the Program in Writing and Critical Inquiry, where I teach UAlbany's first-year required writing course and serve on a number of departmental committees. I began teaching at UAlbany in January 2015. I am currently UUP department representative for WCI and a member of the UUP Contingent Concerns Committee. I helped plan a number of the Contingent Concerns Committee's recent events, including the adjunct office hours at Collins Circle and the contingent recognition ceremony. Previously, I worked as an adjunct New York City. I live in Delmar with my wife and four children. Contingents are UUP's most vulnerable members and I would be honored to represent you as your Contingent Officer.

Professional Delegate Candidate Statements

Jack Gendron

I have served as a Professional Delegate for the UUP Albany chapter for many years. I was a member of the LGBTQ/SOUL committee and attend the monthly Executive Committee meetings at UAlbany as well as attending the Statewide UUP Delegate Assembly through the years. As a retired member, I am now focusing on attending more outreach events for worker rights and solidarity support to other unions. I have recently attended the picket lines and rally for Momentive Co. in Waterford and Honeywell Co. in Green Island. The current climate in our society against unions has increased my desire to be a support for UAlbany and other local union issues.

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Carol H. Jewell
Instructional Support Technician
University Libraries

I've been a member of the Professional faculty at UAlbany for over 30 years. I've been Chair of our Disability Rights & Concerns Committee for fifteen years; I am Co-Chair of our LGBTQ Rights and Concerns Committee, as well. 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 20+ years ago, UA employees with disabilities still face barriers: improper snow removal, lack of digital accessibility to campus websites, and attitudinal problems, which undergird all. As a person with disabilities, I understand the issues. I married my wife in 2012, thanks to a change in NYS laws. However, LGBTQ people still face discrimination. Considering the political turmoil our country is in, the need for action remains. I want to continue the fight; please re-elect me. Thank you.

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Zina M. Lawrence
School of Business

With our current political and economic climate, I foresee struggles to maintain the level of rights and liberties we have come to expect, especially in New York, and challenges to the type and scope of academic activity throughout the country. I also foresee us needing much from UUP. We will need UUP to fight to maintain freedom of thought and expression, and the open exchange of ideas within UAlbany and beyond. We will need UUP to challenge legislation and regulations aimed at stifling University-based research and analysis on climate change, healthcare initiatives, civil rights movements, and more. And, we will need UUP members to rally, protest, research, and write, if we are going to survive attacks on intellectual endeavors. I'm asking for your vote to become a UUP chapter delegate because during this period of heightened uncertainty and need, I want to increase my level of service to our Union.

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Alyssa Lotmore
School of Social Welfare

UUP represents a large group of academics and professionals and works hard to protect our interests. During my few years as a SUNY employee, I have realized the benefits of a collective voice. There are countless ways in which UUP advocates for each of us, and many ways in which every member can be involved. Involvement helps to connect each of us, brings us together, and makes our voice stronger and louder. From attending meetings and events to serving a delegate, we can each find our own way to show support and bring energy. Serving as a delegate is one way in which I can continue to be involved and share my voice, our voice – one voice.

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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.

Academic Delegate Candidate Statements

Mitch Aso
Assistant Professor, History

I'm an assistant professor in the History Department and for the past two years I have served as an academic delegate and a member of the Chapter Executive Committee. I have learned a lot about what UUP does at UAlbany and in the state of New York and I have been impressed by the passion and commitment of my fellow delegates. There will be many social and environmental justice battles to fight during the next four years and I will support UUP in these efforts. I will also work to continue the strong relationship between the union and the History Department and use what I have learned during the past two years to contribute to the well-being of UUP members. I ask for your vote as an academic delegate and I look forward to what we will accomplish together in the next two years.

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Bret Benjamin
Associate Professor English

Serving for the past four years as UUP Albany Chapter President has been among the most rewarding experiences of my professional life. It has been deeply satisfying to see the implementation of policy initiatives that afford academic and professional faculty greater compensation, security, and voice in the priorities of their work-lives. I am stepping back to take a sabbatical, but believe the Chapter is in a strong position to continue this important work. I wholeheartedly endorse Aaron Major, Paul Stasi, Tom Hoey, Loretta Pyles, Joe Creamer, Rebekah Tolley and Patrick Romain for their respective officer positions, and consider this to be perhaps the finest slate of officers that the Chapter has ever run.

* * * *

James Collins
Professor & Chair of the University Senate
Anthropology

I have been involved in UUP Albany for many years in many positions. Believing in unions as a source of democratic power, I have worked to improve UUP by connecting our Chapter to its members, the labor movement, and the wider society. I currently also serve as Chair of the University Senate, where one of my goals is to build connections between the Senate and the Union, supporting Chapter efforts to strengthen shared governance at the University, and Senate efforts to improve the situation of Contingent employees. On UUP's statewide Delegate Assembly, I serve on the Solidarity Committee, which connects our union to the wider labor movement and social justice movements more generally -- both essential for opposing the anti-democratic acts of the new federal presidency. I ask for your vote again as an academic delegate serving on the Chapter Executive Committee.

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Deborah LaFond
University Libraries

I am committed to visions of UNITY that include collective action for Equity, Diversity, Dignity and Fair Play. We must be empowered by leadership to do more than march - however, the national Women's march was so empowering! Our Chapter Women's Concerns Committee endeavored to work on an equity survey. The Committee was extinguished for over 16 months with NO good reason. Despite that I initiated a successful membership call and got the committee re-activated.

At Statewide, I have advocated successfully for increased UUP efforts on Family Leave, Title IX and Sexual Assault "equitable redress", sustainability and Academic Freedom resolutions. I opposed the very concerning potential "condition of employment" that we become "Campus Security Authorities" (mandatory reporters) as there has been little discussion amongst us and no proof shown to us that there is any law that directly requires this of us and therefore should not be part of our contract.

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George Robinson
Professor, Biological Sciences

George Robinson has been a member of the Biological Sciences teaching faculty since 1993. Next fall he begins an O'Leary Distinguished Professorship. He has served on the UUP UAlbany Academic Concerns Committee, and was elected as a chapter Academic Delegate last year. He is proud to be a third-time union member. Prior to becoming an academic, he was a member of a Teamster's Union local in Chicago, and also the American Federation of Musicians.

Curious about upcoming
chapter events?

Want to learn more about our
contract negotiations?

Check out our new and im-
proved website:

<http://uupalbany.org/>

The website offers information on:

How to Volunteer

How to Give to Vote/Cope

News from Statewide

As well as exciting chapter reports on:

Contingent Labor

Evaluation of Academic Faculty

Ombudsperson Proposal

Procedures on Tenure

Plus: minutes on Labor/Management
and Exec Committee Meetings.

Visit Us Today!

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