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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Year in Review
Bret Benjamin, Chapter President

My “Year in Review” column has become an annual exercise of reflection about the Chapter’s activities. The opportunity to step back and consider the broader body of work is particularly helpful for me this year, as I have personally focused a great deal of time preparing for a new round of contract talks with the state as a member of the Negotiations Team. Good to remind myself—and all of us—about the important work that has been taking place right here at home.

First, however, I want to personally thank our Chapter officers for their exceptional work. Our Vice Presidents—Tom Hoey and Barry Trachtenberg—fight hard for members every day. Rebekah Tolley, our Contingents Officer, has done a tremendous job advocating for contingent faculty. Janna Harton and Rob See in their respective roles as elected Secretary and Treasurer work with astonishing competence and efficiency. Aaron Major stepped in as interim Assistant VP for Academics while Paul Stasi was on sabbatical and has proven himself invaluable. Patrick Romain recently took over as Assistant VP for Professionals from Linda Gallagher; I thank both for their exceptional service. All of these officer positions require a tremendous amount of time, energy, thought and commitment; these Chapter Officers deserve our collective gratitude.

I also thank the dedicated members of our Executive Committee, our Departmental Representatives, and those members who serve on our various Chapter Committees. The number of active members continues to grow, as does our attendance at events—all signs of a vital Chapter.

Three union organizing initiatives have risen as top priorities this year. First, UUP has been preparing to negotiate a new contract. The current Agreement expires on July 1, 2016. The Fall semester saw Philippe Abraham and members of the 18-person Negotiating Team traveling the state to listen to members on all 29 UUP campuses. In addition to Philippe’s formal visit to our campus, our Chapter also held five “listening tour” events, hoping to maximize member feedback. That feedback, along with thousands of member input forms and survey submissions have been collected and analyzed by the Team as we work to develop the conceptual proposals that will be submitted to the State as the opening salvo in the formal negotiations. The Team has been hard at work—this semester, we have typically met for three days a week, every other week, now increasing to three days every week—in preparations for negotia-
Standing on the Shoulders of Giants
Paul Stasi

The University administration has suggested, many times, that they are interested in building the humanities at SUNY Albany. As a member of the English department, I welcome this. It seems to me as important for a university to have thriving Humanities departments as to have a strong presence in the so-called STEM fields. In order to make good on this commitment, however, a necessary first step will be to eliminate the pernicious notion—maintained with conviction in CAS and perhaps in other Schools and Colleges—that “departments are not allowed to make replacement hires.”

This line has been a constant refrain in all recent rounds of strategic planning, compact planning. NY SUNY 2020 applications, etc., most of which come with the mandate that departments innovate. But to set innovation against replacement is to fundamentally misunderstand how academia in general, and the Humanities in particular, works. For academics—in all fields—proceed precisely by innovating within defined traditions. This is why there are disciplines, because each is founded on a set of assumptions, principles and bodies of knowledge that guide inquiry within that particular field. And, necessarily, if a scholar’s work is gaining recognition in his/her field it will be innovative, for the pressure to innovate is common across all fields. But innovation only occurs against a common discipline background. You must be recognized as an ecologist or a cell biologist or an addiction specialist or a Renaissance scholar before your interesting new work can be taken seriously. This means that the requirements for the composition of specialists in a given area of inquiry are not set primarily by members of the local department, Rather these requirements are set nationally and internationally by scholars who collectively constitute these fields or disciplines.

I will use my home department as an example. Recently our Miltonist was awarded an O’Leary Professorship. It is possible that in the next five years our Shakespeare scholar will retire. If it is true that we will receive no replacement hires, then we will find ourselves in the untenable, indeed laughable, position of being an English department without anyone whose primary research focus is Milton or Shakespeare—the latter, unequivocally the most venerated writer in the language, the former a close second. Clearly these scholars need to be replaced. Nevertheless, the idea that a scholar who receives his/her Ph.D. in 2016, say, would somehow replicate the work of either of these scholars whose training in the field came decades ago is absurd. Anyone who is working on Milton or Shakespeare today will necessarily be influenced by current trends in English studies. This is how scholarship proceeds, and this is true regardless of one’s discipline.

At the same time, however, the Humanities—and in particular the disciplines of history, philosophy and literatures of all languages—are not a second mandate and one that is as important as the need for innovation. This is the preservation of knowledge and culture. A contemporary historian of the American Revolution, say, will have both the scholarly responsibility

See: Standing on the Shoulders of Giants on Page 18
…overall, the tenure and promotion process is basi-
cally working fairly well, and is, in general, perceived
to work fairly well by stakeholders across campus.
However, there is significant variation and inconsis-
tency across the campus in some aspects of the process.
There are key areas in which changes could signifi-
cantly enhance and strengthen the tenure and promo-
tion infrastructure for the future.”

Although the Planning Group did not contend with standards as articulated in the Agreement nor the review and rehiring practices of contingent academic faculty, several of its findings are echoed in this report. We note with disappointment that, four years since it was issued, most of the recommendations suggested by the Planning Group have not been implemented. These include in particular the suggestions to provide academic faculty with clear timelines for contract renewals and continuing appointment and to provide clear, if broadly constructed, expectations in all three areas of professional obligation for faculty under consideration for continuing appointment and promo-
tion either to the rank of associate or full professor. Other suggestions, such as increasing data collection, enhancing mentoring of academic faculty, establishing a formal family leave policy, and lowering institutional barriers to promotion have, sadly, also not been fol-
lowed.

Questions/Methods of ACC Review:

This review is based on an analysis of departmental documents relating to RTP policies. ACC members re-quested from their departments the documents relevant to RTP, including any by-laws, procedures, and
disciplinary criteria. The chair of the ACC reviewed these documents, guided by the following questions:

1. Do academic departments provide contingent,
tenure-track, and tenured academic faculty with easily
accessible documents that state the procedures and expec-
tations for RTP?
2. Does the RTP information that is provided to ac-
demic faculty by their departments correspond
correctly to the policies and procedures as established
by the University, the SUNY Board of Trustees, and the
Agreement between the State of New York and UUP?
3. In the areas where there is latitude for departments
to interpret RTP policies and procedures, are those
departmental-specific practices clearly communicated
to academic faculty?

We recognize that one of the limits of this review is that the departments sampled for this review are not necessarily representative of all departments at the University. However, they do comprise 25% of all University de-partments, which makes it possible to draw preliminary conclusions about RTP in depart-
ments across the University.

See Below for Summary of Survey of Departmental
RTP Documents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>By-laws</th>
<th>Departmental Procedures</th>
<th>Criteria for Evaluation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dept. 1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dept. 2</td>
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<td>Dept. 4</td>
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<td>Dept. 5</td>
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<td>Dept. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dept. 10</td>
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<td>No</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings:

1. The table above shows the departments surveyed for this review and whether or not ACC members were able to obtain documents relating to RTP in three
categories. We were surprised to find that in some
de-partments, members of the ACC could not find any
documents relating to RTP. In some instances, policies
such as criteria for research, teaching, and service, the
composition of review committees, the composition-
to the voting faculty, and timelines for the candidate’s
submission of relevant materials either did not exist
or were present only informally, such as in emails to
faculty having recently undergone these pro-cesses.

2. Only one of the departments surveyed—English—
has formal documents relating to the workload-
evaluation, or contract renewal procedures for con-
tingent academic faculty members. The lack of such
documents increases the precariousness of contin-
ting academic faculty members’ employment and
demon-strates disregard for the education provided
to UAlbany students. See Woven Into Its Very Fabric: A
Re-port on Contingent Labor at the University at Alba-
ny, Survey Data Analysis and Policy Proposals (Alba-
ny UUP, 2015).

3. 20% of departments surveyed have no by-laws
whatever, and therefore are unable to provide ac-
demic faculty with information regarding exactly which
department members will evaluate their applications
for RTP. It should be noted that, according to the
Agreement (§31.6a), only academic faculty have the
right to evaluate, vote, and recommend on RTP cases
of other academic faculty.

4. 60% of departments surveyed do not have a formal
document outlining departmental-specific processes
for RTP. Thus, academic faculty undergoing tenure and
promotion do not have easy access to clear and ac-
curate information regarding a) which materials are to
be submitted, b) by what date they are to be submitted,
c) who will be evaluating them, d) their contractual
right to submit a written response to the department
Chair’s recommendation, and e) the fact that their file
remains “open” throughout the evalu-ative process,
which allows faculty to submit new material (such as
evidence of research productivity, grants, awards) as it
become available.

Note: some departments justified the absence of RTP
documents by declaring that they follow either the
University’s or their College’s guidelines. While adher-
ence to these guidelines is to be expected, it does not
provide academic faculty with the full details of when,
by whom, and according to what standards their cases
will proceed.

5. 30% of departments do not have a formal document
indicating the broad criteria (disciplinary and depart-
mental) for academic faculty who are under consid-
eration for RTP. Without such written criteria, fac-ulty
are left to seek out such expectations from a variety
of sources, which may provide them with con-flict-
ing information on how best to shape their research,
teaching, and service. Furthermore, faculty risk being
placed in situations in which they may be subject to
shifting expectations based upon inappropriate evalu-
ative factors such as gender, race, sexual orientation,
ability, national origin, religious beliefs, family make-
up, marital status, political affiliation, or “collegiality.”
Additionally, the lack of clear expectations is in direct
conflict with University policies that state “Decisions
will be impartial, thorough, and based on clearly artic-
ulated expectations” (Procedures for Promotion and
Tenure Review: see http://www.albany.edu/academics/promotion_tenure/
introduction.shtml).

6. In those instances in which by-laws, procedures, and
criteria are present, such documents are often out of
date (in two Departments by more than 20 years)
and make reference to policies and documents that are
likewise out of date.

Recommendations:

Academic faculty are at a significant profes-
sional disadvantage when they do not have ready
access to the criteria and processes by which they will
be evaluated for RTP. The absence of such departmen-
tal-level documents leaves faculty members vulnerable
to shifting expectations and mechanisms for evaluation
and at risk of being evaluated on inappropriate criteria.
Therefore, the ACC makes the following recommenda-
tions: 1. Departments should establish clearly articulated
workload expectations and evaluation procedures of
contingent academic faculty. These documents should
be provided to contingent faculty and periodically re-
viewed with them so as to ensure that their rights and
responsibilities are clearly articulated.

2. Departments should develop documents that clearly
articulate the policies and expectations for RTP for
faculty in academic rank. These should pay particular
attention to those aspects of RTP that are de-
part-ment-specific, such as determining which mate-
reria-les are to be submitted, by what date they are to be 
submitted, and who will be evaluating them. These 
documents must correspond with the Agreement be-
tween the State of New York and UUP, the Policies of 
the SUNY Board of Trustees, and University Proce-
du-
res for Promotion and Tenure Review.

Note: When forming these documents, we recom-
dend that timelines should be given in terms of 
semesters in academic rank, not in years. Given that 
some academic faculty members begin in the Spring 
seme-s ter-or are placed on Qualified Academic Rank 
(e.g., for fellowships, on medical leaves, for the Dr. 
Nuala McGann Drescher Affirmative Action / Diversity 
leave), timelines in terms of semesters in academic 
rank are not applicable. As departments prepare to 
review their bylaws or RTP documents into line with the 
expectations out-
lined above, our Chapter is happy to provide guidance and 
consultation.

See Page 18 for Documents and Websites Referenced

A Brick and Mortar Union
Tom Hoey VP for Professionals, Statewide MDO

Growing up most of us heard the popular story 
of the three pigs and the types of houses they built 
using various building materials. The houses that 
were built of straw and wood were able to win the low 
and weak quickly, but they had a serious drawback: 
they could not stand up to the harsh envi-
ron-
ment of the big bad wolf’s breath. The house that 
was made of brick and mortar took longer to build, 
and it was more expensive, but when the destructive 
wind came it was able to protect those within 
and survive.

Our union is constructed like a brick house; we 
are the bricks and our contract is the mortar holding 
us together. Unfortunately for us, there is more than 
one big bad wolf. The biggest wolves by far are the 
Koch brothers and the many front organizations they 
spend money on. They fund. We stand up to the winds of change that are 
constantly attacking us trying to chip away the mortar 
that holds us together. We do have holes in our 
walls however, and those missing bricks are called 
campus agencies. These are people who pay dues 
and who get the advantage of our collective bargaining 
strength when we negotiate our contract yet do not 
choose to step up and be members with us. There are 
different reasons folks don’t sign the membership card 
and by far the largest reason is that they forgot to and 
soon won’t remember their membership status.

I am often asked why does our Albany UUP 
Chapter want to achieve 100 % membership, when we are 
approaching 85% and collecting 100 % dues.

My response is that our union is all about fairness—
we believe in a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work—so we 
need 100 % membership to be fair. Full membership 
also gives strength to our 35,000 member bargaining 
unit as we negotiate from a position of 100 % con-
sensus. At the same time, membership is required to 
have input and vote on our contracts as they come up 
for renewal and we are currently working on our next 
contract, which only comes up for renewal every 4-5 
years. It is not too late to become a member and have 
input on this upcoming contract. UAlbany will have a 
strong voice in this new contract: the chief Negotiator 
is our own Philippe Abraham and our Chapter Presi-
dent Bret Benjamin is on the Negotiation Team. They 
both believe in building a strong working relationship with 
New York working out the terms and conditions of our next 
contract. Many of you might not know that we actu-
ally work for and negotiate with the Governor of New 
York, not the State University of New York.

We are asking for your help. Be a union 
member and sign up free pay slips! Surprisingly we are 
finding that close to 80% of those asked to sign their 
union card truly believe that they are already mem-
bers. We need to find and talk face to face with our 
co-workers and explain that they are not members and 
ask them to sign the card. Of course, there are those 
who will refuse to sign the card. The sentiment that 
I often hear is that unions are greedy and not good 
for society as a whole. Really! This sentiment is far 
from the truth, with a little extra work you can find 
that primary departments are required for the 5 day work 
week and 8 hour work day, they are responsible for child 
labor laws and minimum wages and so many other 
protections that we enjoy today. Closer to home, in 
New York it is far easier to be a UUP member if you 
don't have a union until that was changed in 1967 with the passage of 
Taylor Law. Here at the University, our union UUP 
negotiated permanent appointment for Professional 
faculty in 1974, health benefits for part-time employ-
es, 30 days of family leave as well as all of the other 
benefits you enjoy. Look around and you will find 
that the members of our union are, in fact, the 
good people of our society. They are active in communities, 
serving on PTAs, coaching sports teams, feeding the 
homeless, to name a few. In addition we are a Faculty 
Union consisting of both Academic and Professional 
members and by working together we are changing 
the world one student at a time.

Please verify that you are a member of UUP. If the 
After Tax Deductions section of your paystub reads 
"UUP Agency Fee," you are paying the equivalent of 
union dues, BUT YOU ARE NOT A UUP MEMBER! It 
should read “UUP Member 26P " In addition to check-
ing your own membership status, please reach out to 
your union leadership and volunteer to make this 
a better place to work and live. Help us find the bricks 
needed to fill in the holes in our walls. We need you!
Compact Planning
Aaron Major, Asst. VP for Academics

A new round of Compact Planning has snuck up on us. No big announcement from the President's Office, and no mass email to the faculty soliciting proposals. This change in approach comes directly out of the rather negative experience that many departments and units had with the process last time around. Faculty had complaints. This change in approach comes directly out of the planning process explicitly stated that the University's financial position. Third, shared

July, and the campus would be given a full accounting transparent, funding decisions would be announced in the Compact Budget Process. First, incrementalism: the Compact Planning process by making it even less transparent than it was last year's process—culling through outline proposals for building that sense of shared mission that presents for building that sense of shared mission that has occupied so much of the campus' attention this semester.

Let's begin with the prison population. Afri-

can-Americans make up roughly 15% of the population at large and 38.7% of the prison population. 1 How are we to explain this statistic? The easiest—and racists—inexorable explanation is that African-Americans are simply more likely to become criminals. But let’s dig into the statistics a little bit. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, 14.3% of the U.S. population in 2007-2011 lived below the poverty line. For African-Americans the number is 25.8%. Perhaps more striking is the fact that for whites the poverty rate was 11% but for those

2 http://inequality.org/ethnic-inequality
4 VOS/03.19ed_5.6.htm
5 Stats from January 2016. https://www.bls.gov/about/stats/equil

of concern to the wider the faculty, about how the administration plans to achieve the goals expressed in President Jones' "four stakes." Funding for academic programming went almost entirely to newly created (CEAS) or fast-growing (Human Biology) areas of the University. This clearly fits with the administration's goal to expand the University and to generate additional revenue sources, but as a result units that have long been part of the University's core are left with the feeling that their contribution to the University and its mission are not valued.

Budgets have often been referred to as "moral documents" because they announce an organization's goals and priorities more powerfully than any statement of principles can. This is why the revisions to last year's process—culling through outline proposals for building that sense of shared mission that has occupied so much of the campus' attention this semester.

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can-Americans make up roughly 15% of the population at large and 38.7% of the prison population. 1 How are we to explain this statistic? The easiest—and racists—inexorable explanation is that African-Americans are simply more likely to become criminals. But let’s dig into the statistics a little bit. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, 14.3% of the U.S. population in 2007-2011 lived below the poverty line. For African-Americans the number is 25.8%. Perhaps more striking is the fact that for whites the poverty rate was 11% but for those
of "two or more races" it was 19%. Now let’s connect the dots, by the non-profit Prison Policy Initiative "in 2014 dollars, incarcerated people had a median annual income of $19,185 prior to their incarceration, which is 41% less than non-incarcerated people of similar ages." Poor people, of all races, are disproportionately represented in jail. And non-white racial groups are disproportionately poor. No surprise, then, that the prison population is racially skewed.

To make this point I have used statistics, which give us a snapshot of how a society functions outside of individual intention. No one individual is attempting to create this racially divided system. And yet our society, as a whole, has created a discriminatory social structure. When we add all the numbers together — when we combine all our individual actions — the result is undeniably a discriminatory social structure, which disproportionately doles out rewards and punishments to groups based on race (and gender). This is why we call it structural racism, because it occurs at the total level of society absent any intention.

Given the undeniable reality that we live in a society that discriminates — and given, further, that we are wise enough to reject either the "good luck" or "innately superior" arguments described by Reed above; and given that this reality creates certain attitudes and ideas in the people who live in it. Structural racism, that is to say, also has individual effects. If more African-Americans are in prison, than someone disinclined to look for larger contextual causes will say that the accusers' behalf (not without some vitriol spewed at them on social media), the second a more conflicted and complicated sense of outrage at the accusers' alleged dishonesty.

I would argue, there is no other way for anyone who cares about the conditions of structural racism to have proceeded. Simply put, to fail to take the student's accusations seriously would have suggested that such incidents don't happen. But incidents such as the ones

verse discrimination," for if these two figures were both in some ways victims of structural racism, only one of them was left dead. Matters, that is to say, if you are in the privileged position or the oppressed one. Indeed, it is often a matter of life or death, which is why the simplistic, yet true, statement that "all lives matter" is racist when marshaled against the more specific — and taking account of the total structure still not yet agreed upon — claim that "black lives matter.

All of which brings me to the Albany bus incident. The details of the story are, by now, well-known. A drunken fight happened on a bus. Initially, three women involved in the altercation asserted that they were the victims of racial slurs, that a number of white students collectively assaulted them, and that other onlookers did nothing to help them. Extensive video footage has complicated this narrative. The women seem, from the video, to be the initial aggressors, though it is unclear, due to the poor audio of the videos, what is being said. Racial slurs, in other words, might have been part of the story and may have precipitated the events. Nevertheless, the incident seems not to have transpired in the way it was initially reported. This event, and its aftermath, have generated, broadly speaking, two moments of public response. The first is the public-calling of the accusers' behalf (not without some vitriol spewed at them on social media), the second a more conflicted and complicated sense of outrage at the accusers' alleged dishonesty.

I would argue, there is no other way for anyone who cares about the conditions of structural racism to have proceeded. Simply put, to fail to take the student's accusations seriously would have suggested that such incidents don't happen. But incidents such as the ones
nurse of the offense, rather than an imagined obli-
gation to answer the frenzied social media calls for
retribution. After all, if a University can’t take the
time to patiently explain the complexities of our social life
to its own students, what are we here for in the first
place?

Income Strategies for the Underemployed Adjunct

Rebekah Tooley, Officer for Contingents

We often think of unemployment benefits for those who recently lost their jobs and are without income. However, unemployment benefits are not just for those who are unemployed. New York State is one of 20 or so states who have a benefit program for those who are underemployed. Adjunct’s salaries fluctuate with changes of pay, changes of employer, and we often teach more courses in one semester than another, or have no employment during parts of the year. Because of these employment changes, we don’t always have as much employment at one point as we do in another, which helps to make a case for benefits. Adjuncts may be eligible to apply for partial benefits during the school year, so long as they are not working more than 3 days a week or earning more than $425/week. (And have earned at least $1900 in one calendar quarter, and have worked in at least two quarters.) Additionally, once you are qualified for partial benefits you will have full benefits when you are not working during the summer. Because of their particular sit-
uation, adjunct faculty should apply to find out if they are eligible, as the application is not onerous and is easily completed online at: https://applications.labor.
ny.gov/Individual/

Potentially hundreds of adjuncts at each SUNY
campus may be eligible for unemployment benefits even while they are working during the school year. Many adjuncts are, of course, eligible for food stamps, medicare etc. How ironic to be working for a state that compensates you so little, you are eligible for, one if not, more of its own assistance programs. Those teaching one or two, and even 3 courses in some cases, cannot only supplement their low income with partial benefits year round, but can also help to prevent the university to pay us adequately and with more stable contracts. More adjuncts applying for benefits for which they are eligible puts pressure on the university to raise wages and supply more stable contracts since they are responsible for paying premi-
ums for unemployment. More workers applying will
raise the premiums. Under the Taylor Law, we may not be able to walk out, but this is one way we can effect change if the hundreds of us who are eligible apply.

Many adjuncts report that they tried applying
for unemployment over the summer when they
were out of work and were denied, so they gave up.
This is a common mistake. It is much more difficult to apply over the summer months due to a specific law that was designed to prevent educators from “double
dipping.” NYS law §590.10 currently prevents educators from applying for unemployment over the summer months if they have reasonable assurance of re-emp-
loymen t in the fall for at least 90% of what they were
employed in the past. This law was originally intended to prevent educators who were otherwise employed full time and earning a full income during the school year from collecting unemployment income during the summer months as well. Unfortunately, it now serves to hurt adjuncts who truly have no income or em-
ployment over the summer months, and are not paid nearly enough during the school year to get by: NYSUT, UUP, and PSC along with other unions have been work-
ing to get this law changed.

So is summer an impossible time to apply?
Not necessarily. More and more adjuncts have been
successful, but it is certainly more difficult if you are required to supply documentation to satisfy the law. Some states, including New York, are now more
familiar with the working conditions of adjuncts and it has become easier; but why wait until summer when it’s more difficult to apply? Once you qualify for benefits you can continue to collect for your benefit
year (so long as you are not earning more than $425/week), so you are better off applying for partial bene-
fits now, and then you will receive full benefits during the summer months when you are not working.

Let’s say you don’t get around to applying before summer and you realize you are about to be
without income again. And what does “Reasonable As-
surance” mean anyway, and do I have it? “Reasonable assurance” could be in the form of a letter that must specify which courses you will be teaching. Again, specific courses are not listed in your letter then it does not count as “reasonable assurance”. If your course assign-
ments for the fall are any less than 90% of what you
had in the Spring then you are eligible because you do not have reasonable assurance you had in the past. For example, if you taught two courses in the Spring and are only assigned one course in the
fall, you are eligible to apply. “Reasonable assurance”
could also be your name in a course schedule to teach the following semester. However if your course is
under enrolled and may not run, you can use this evi-
dence of lack of reasonable assurance.

To initially file, it’s important to recognize that the intake questionnaire is designed for those who
recently became unemployed and there is not a sep-
ate one for those still working part-time. According to the NYS Department of Labor website: You will be asked to enter the date of your last day worked. Enter the last day you physically reported to work, regardless of whether this was your part-time work. You will also be asked to enter information about your last or most recent employer. The last or most recent employer is where you most recently reported to work, regardless of whether this was your part-time employer. If it was
your part-time employer, and you will continue to work part-time, enter “lack of work” as the reason for sepa-
ration.

You must keep a record of your work searches while on unemployment. This shouldn’t be as difficult as many adjuncts are constantly looking for, and actively applying for, full-time or better paying positions. You will also be need to attend three mandatory sessions at a local state career service center throughout the year where they will review your CV, make sure you have resources you need, and ensure that you are looking for work.

If you have questions, please contact me at re-
bekah@albany.edu. If you are denied unemploy-
ment you should contact the Workers Defense League (a free, non-profit) for help: (212) 627-1931

Why Faculty Governance

Matters to Unionists

Jim Collins, Vice Chair of the University Senate, Executive Board Member of Albany Chapter of UUP

The ideal and actuality of faculty governance:

Though it has many specific forms, faculty gov-
ernance in ideal represents an effort at self-governing, by and for ‘the university community’ understood as a community of learning. Students in such a community are engaged in something more transformative and lasting than acquiring job skills; faculty and students together are partaking in and contributing to a knowl-
edge commons, “a place where the cultural and intellec
tual wealth of the past is made available, where ideas are freely shared, and where ideas also grow by cross-fertilization from many fields.”

This ideal of self-governance, as opposed to corporate rule, is embattled in our era, in which private wealth and corporate authority are celebrated, and the idea of public obligation and mission (say, to provide access to education) is undercuts and ridiculed. But those of us who care about the university’s public mission have resources, including written rights and responsibilities, attached to our membership, as students and employees of a public university. The Faculty Bylaws of the University say many things about these rights and responsibilities, I want to focus on the definition given of faculty rights to consultation with administration, in order to illus-
trate what rights we have ‘in theory,’ how they can be
seized.

ignored in practice, and then to suggest some efforts underway to strengthen faculty governance and how we might continue this work in the future.

Section 2.2.2. of the UA Faculty Bylaws says the following about consultation:

"The Faculty shall be informed and given opportunity to discuss at the earliest possible stages in their formulation, and shall review and provide formal consultation on, prior to adoption, all proposals regarding:

(a) Creation, renaming, major re-organization, or dissolution of academic units and programs
(b) Goals and formal plans directing the future of the University
(c) Policies or standards governing speech and assembly on the campuses of the University
(d) Plans for development of new campus facilities, or major modifications or closure of existing facilities"

In the following subsection, 2.3, the rights and responsibilities of the faculty are embodied in and delegated to a University Senate: "To discharge these responsibilities, the Faculty shall create a University Senate and shall delegate its power to that Senate..."

This delegation of powers is important, because if not honored, rights of the University Faculty are eroded. This past summer and fall, for example, I worked with other Senate leaders in responding to a series of diverse initiatives, some driven by SUNY-wide programs (e.g. Performance Improving Planning), some by new university plans (e.g. the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland & Cyber Security), and others by affiliations with other institutions (e.g. the Albany Law/UA affiliation). We often felt we were receiving information very late in the planning and development of such enterprises. As we pressed the issue of consultation, consistent with the language of Section 2 above, it eventually turned out that university administrators thought that the selection of any faculty member of their choosing for an advisory or working group constituted 'consultation.' Such practice, however, completely ignores the significance of the faculty delegating its powers to the University Senate. It recalls the troubled period of program de-activations in 2010-2011, when deactivation decisions were attributed to a shifting cast of Deans, Provost, and President, and murky groups of 'consulted faculty,' consisting of Budget Advisory Groups and unnamed members of the CAS Council of Chairs. None of these were constituted or nominated by the Senate of that period. The point to stress is that the Senate is the faculty's representative, and Senate Councils and Committees are the organizational means for self-governance and consultation. Such faculty rights and responsibilities will not be respected, however, unless the Senate is aware and protective of its role in the governance of the university.

Efforts to improve governance:

There have been recent efforts to strengthen faculty governance. These include redefining voting rights within the Senate, assessing and strengthening shared governance, re-establishing strategic committees, communicating with constituents via Senate Forums, and working with UUP to improve the renewal, tenure and promotion processes at the university.

* In 2014, the Senate proposed a Bylaws amendment removing voting rights from administrators who held Ex Officio memberships in the Senate. The motivation for this action was a 2014 university-wide survey of shared governance, organized by both the Senate and the Office of the President, the results of which indicated that many perceived the University Senate as dominated by administrative interests. The proposed restriction of voting rights in the Senate was approved by a two-thirds majority in a referendum of the full Voting Faculty in spring 2015.
* The Senate recently distributed the 2016 survey of shared governance. Streamlined since its first appearance in 2014, it is an anonymous survey of all Senate constituents regarding their view of Senate performance and administrative consultation, which is jointly organized by the Senate and the Office of the President. There has been a large and encouraging increase in response rates this year, and the results will be analyzed and reported to the Senate and available to the public early next fall.
* Senate councils and leaders have initiated an ongoing discussion with the office of the President to define and enact an appropriate role for faculty in administrative review and evaluation. Faculty participation in review of administration is practiced on many SUNY campuses.
* The Senate's Governance Council is working with the University Policy and Planning Council to re-establish important subcommittees, which have been allowed to lapse, such as UPPC's Resource Analysis and Planning and Facilities committees. These will be populated and meeting for the 2016-2017 year and thenceforth.

For the first time in many years, the Senate is hosting a series of public forums during the months of March and April on issues of general university interest. Two of these, on Academic Freedom and Contingent Faculty Concerns, are jointly sponsored by the Senate and UUP.

Lastly, the Senate is considering a proposal for a University Ombudsperson for Renewal, Tenure and Promotion. The proposal was brought to the Senate for consideration by UUP based on work conducted by the chapter's Academic Concerns Committee. It proposes an office that can help solve problems arising at the RTP process at any level: departmental, college or school, or university. It is being discussed in two Senate councils.

A Way Forward:

These actions work against the familiar notion of a 'separation of interests' in higher education, which assigns unions to attend strictly to contractual matters, and faculty governance organizations to attend strictly to curricular and program matters. In my experience with unions and student and faculty governance, such distinctions can easily lead to mutual ignorance, distrust, and disempowerment, on both sides of the presumed divide. There are good reasons instead to seek common ground between unions and faculty governance bodies. Their members and constituents are often the same people; and they share concerns, such as strengthening due process and organizational transparency while improving job security and workplace dignity. Effective faculty governance can be an ally to union struggles for better higher education. Both require self-governing organizations that count-erbalance corporate rule.

Tom Hoey Elected as UUP Membership Development Officer

Tomas Gomez

Albany UUP chapter member Tom Hoey has been elected to the position of statewide membership development officer. Hoey’s designation to the position follows several resignations before him, in a position that, according to Hoey, has been unstable for 15 years.

Hoey will not be receiving release time until next summer and says he is already working weekends. But Hoey is a tireless organizer with a long history of organizing workers. He has chaired UUP’s Solidar-ity Committee for 17 years. Hoey also fought for 911 dispatchers who had gone six years without a contract. He fought the privatization of an Albany nursing home, while working in collaboration with the nurses’ union. He also fought the privatization of several crossing guards, showing a willingness to organize even a small union of only around 200 instantly to get their pay raised by $1.25/hour by citing an Albany living wage law, managed to incorporate the crossing guards into the SEIU despite their small size, and got the city to back down on privatization. “I hear ‘privatization’ and the hairs on the back of my neck stick up,” Hoey said in an interview.

Hoey’s tireless work ethic is attested to by many of his friends and colleagues. “Having worked side-by-side with Tom Hoey in union campaigns for decades, I can say with confidence that he is an excep-
tionally energetic, principled, and effective organizer. He will make a terrific UUP Membership Development Officer,” said Larry Wittner, a longtime colleague of Hoey’s who endorsed him for MDO.

Hoey’s appointment was endorsed by UUP Albany chapter president Bret Benjamin in an endorsement speech. “As VP for Professionals at Albany he’s out grilling burgers at our homecoming tailgate, setting up tables for meetings, carrying our banner on picket lines. He leads by example. Membership work is about tireless face-to-face organizing. Nobody will work harder than Tom...Tom eats, breathes, and lives union solidarity.”

Hoey’s appointment to MDO comes at an important time. Despite the reprieve granted by the Supreme Court’s decision in Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association, several similar cases threaten the future of union agency fees. Hoey aims to reach 100 percent membership and wishes to organize Albany’s roughly 300 contingent agency fee payers into dues paying union members. Dues paying allows special privileges such as voting on union contracts. A report released last year by the UUP on contingent faculty found that many contingent faculty members are unaware that the agency fee they are paying does not make them members of UUP.

Hoey says his goals are not just increasing membership, but maintaining it, and regardless of which way the courts rule on anti-union cases, Hoey is optimistic. “I think most people will rally for the union. When people are attacked, most people tend to circle the wagons and unify,” he said. “We have to listen to
people. Being a member of the union is a good thing. We’re the good guys. We want to go out and help people.

When asked for a statement regarding Hoey’s designation as MDO, UUP president Fred Kowal said “Tom comes in as statewide Membership Development Officer at a crucial time for UUP. Our membership drive is in full swing and I will look to Tom to step up and lead UUP’s push to recruit and activate union members. I look forward to working closely with Tom to achieve this important goal.”

Forum on Academic Freedom
Carol Jewell

On Friday, March 25, 2016, the Chapter co-sponsored, with CAFECOR (the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression, and Community Responsibility), a forum on Academic Freedom. Panelists were Professor Barry Trachtenberg, Professor Rosemary Armao, and Professor Donna Young, of Albany Law School. The Forum was created because SUNY policy was directed to a review of all documents pertaining to Academic Freedom, per a resolution passed by the SUNY Senate in October 2015. I am Chair of CAFECOR, and we were tasked with this work. In our research and discussions we found that the concept of Academic Freedom was not universally understood by faculty at UAlbany, and even that new faculty members were not told anything about it in their orientations.

Approximately thirty-two people attended the Forum. Each panelist spoke for fifteen minutes, and then there was audience participation in the form of a lively Q&A. CAFECOR will use information learned here, in part, as we continue our discussions.

Prior to the meeting, we sent out some reading material on academic freedom. We included a evaluation sheet, because we want to know if the format was good, and also to ask what topics participants would like to see in the future. Unfortunately, as of March 29th, only 2 forms had been received.

Whether you were able to attend the forum or not, if you have concerns about your own academic freedom, I invite you to write to the Vice President, Academic, Barry Trachtenberg, barryct@me.com or Vice President, Professionals, Tom Hoey, tomtoomhoey@gmail.com.

Year in Review
(Continued from page 1)

In 2015. I am Chair of CAFFECoR, and we were tasked with our Chapter’s concerted efforts to improve contingent faculty working conditions on campus. Our membership efforts have paid off. We’ve signed up over 300 new UUP members since August, 2015. As of April 1, 2016 we have 96% membership among full-time faculty, and 62% membership among part-time faculty. This is up from 94% and 49% at the start of the academic year. We continue to work with our campus activists to reach out to fee payers, and have every intention of improving these figures before the semester is out. We’re at 80% UUP members currently; we plan to push that over 90% by commencement.

The point of this membership drive, of course, is two-fold. We obviously want to get cards signed in order to maximize our negotiating power. But as important, we want to be talking with all our members, letting them know that they are part of a union that is working on their behalf on a range of projects and initiatives. Ideally, we also want to talk with members about ways of getting actively involved in the Chapter; we welcome participation from everyone. If people have questions, concerns, or ideas, we want to hear them.

Our third major priority for the year has been organizing for and with contingent faculty. The culmination of several years of work, our Chapter released “Woven Into Its Very Fabric: A Report on Contingent Labor at the University at Albany” < http://uupalbany.org/documents/pdfs/contingent_report.pdf> late last fall. Since then, we have made several public presentations about the report, including most recently at the joint Senate/UUP forum on April 5. Drawing from data collected in a survey of our own academic contingent members as well as data from the University, the State and other sources, we develop ten proposals to transform contingency on our campus and to make UAlbany a national leader in addressing what we consider to be among the principle challenges facing contemporary higher education. Our emphasis is on developing pathways to tenure, raising per-course salaries, extending health benefit eligibility, lengthening appointment, ensuring that all work is compensated, and pursuing a range of other issues to improve the working conditions of our contingent faculty. We have found a willing partner in the UAlbany Administration on this issue, and are pleased to be working with President Jones, Provost Stellar, Senior Vice Provost Hedberg, and the University’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on Contingent Concerns, which released its own report in the Fall. To my mind, the shared ground between these two reports is indicative of meaningful collaboration and commitment between University and Union. We’ve already seen some real improvements, and it is my great hope that the next two or three years will witness substantial material gains for contingent faculty.

In addition to these three major initiatives, our Chapter has continued to take the lead in initiating important policy proposals, and in generating solutions to address problems on campus. Our Academic Concentration Committee chaired by Barry Trachtenberg, has (or is soon to) publish three important policy reports this year. They have initiated a proposal for an Omnipedsonor dedicated to concerns around academic faculty renewal, tenure, and promotion. That proposal was taken up by the Senate and published in this issue of The Forum, advocating for a wholesale review of the renewal, tenure and promotion policies and procedures at the department level. Finally, a third report on the overemphasis placed on S&R scores in the evaluation teaching will soon be out. In each case we will be working both with University Administration and the Senate to implement the recommendations.

We have also pursued initiatives focused on professional work. In particular, we have been working closely for new HR Director Randy Stark and others in the Administration on two main issues: expanding internal promotional opportunities, and prioritizing the retention of professional faculty. In both cases, the systems in place are inadequate. Promotional opportunities are governed by what is known as the “Albany Plan,” <http://www.albany.edu/hr/promo tion.php>. This plan provides a workable framework, balancing the need to create opportunities for professional development and career growth among current employees, with the institutional needs to bring in new talent from outside. Our problem has been less with the framework than with the fact that so many units are either unaware of, or do not follow the guidelines. Likewise, we believe the University has not done enough to track departures on campus and has not prioritized the retention of professional faculty.

Again, we have found a receptive partner in HR, and are optimistic that we’ll be able to work with the new Director to begin setting up more robust systems of data collection, training, and oversight to help improve the work-lives of our professionals on campus.

The focused attention on the priorities above has been complemented by a range of Chapter events, activities and initiatives. We have had record attendance at General Membership Meetings. We’ve hosted a number of workshops and events, including a packed-house Joint Labor/Management training on permanent appointment for professionals, and two joint UUP/Senate forums, one on Academic Freedom and the other on Contingent Concerns. Indeed the increased collaboration with the Senate augurs well for strengthening faculty governance on campus over the long haul. We have raised important questions with the Administration about Compact Planning, Performance Based SUNY Excels funding, academic hiring patterns since 2011, campus accessibility, health and safety, water quality, and a host of other issues that affect members. We have strengthened coalitional relationships with student, labor, and social justice groups and campaigns in the Capital District and beyond. And, finally, we have helped press a strong UUP legislative agenda and earned funding, in addition to supporting other important campaigns around the Fight for $15, Paid Family Leave, and more. In all this work, we see that our Chapter is having a powerful impact both on campus, as well as on regional, state and national issues.

I am proud of the work we’ve done over the past year, even as I realize how much remains to be done. As always, we invite your active participation; we value all contributions, big and small. E-mail me directly bret.benjamin@gmail.com to get involved.

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants
(Continued from page 2)

ility to be current, and the more basic responsibility to make sure that the next generation of Americans
understands what actually happened in 1776, even if
their understanding is subtly (or significantly) different
from that of generations before us. As Isaac Newton—
himself a great innovator said—"If I have seen further
it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants." And I
know that he said this because someone remembered
it and taught it to me.

Let us know what you think.
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Review of Departmental Renewal, Tenure, and Promotion
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