



**United University Professions  
Albany Chapter**

Executive Committee Minutes, October 28, 2021

Attendance: Aaron Major, David Banks, Albert Maya, Kate Coddington, Penny Strobeck, Monica Bartoszek, Meredith Weiss, Andrew Lyons, Janna Harton, Bret Benjamin, Zina Lawrence, Casey Kobler, Alexander Dawson, Jennifer Carron, Michael Dzikowski, Paul Stasi, Mark Kuniholm, Lauren Casertino, John Leiry, Sandra Vergari, Alison Olin, Anne Woulfe, Mike Grosshandler, Laura Tetrault, Sheena Loughlin, Greta Petry, Rob See, Deborah LaFond, James Collins, Samantha Rider, Michelle Couture, Elizabeth Strum

1. Approval of Minutes: The EC Minutes from 9/30/2021 were approved.
2. President's Report, discussion on L/M meeting of 10/25/2021.

Telecommuting: 197 people have applied for telecommuting, including CSEA members. Five UUP members were not approved.

Discussion ensued. There is concern of selection bias because some managers are more amenable. That was confirmed by D. LaFond who also questioned whether a librarian is considered a teaching academic or professional. Informal conversations indicate some who are considering telecommuting just haven't gotten around to it or feel uncomfortable. Messaging wasn't encouraging and onerous paperwork with bi-weekly reporting is a burden. M. Bartoszek gained 2 days of telecommuting but staffing shortages force her to come in anyway. It was noted that ITS is creating its own ground rules and days for work from home. ITS is asking that employees prove an increase in productivity if they work from home. This was considered inappropriate and demonstrates unequal application of telecommuting expectations depending on supervisors. It was suggested that if unequal treatment becomes systemic it should be addressed in the contract. Z. Lawrence felt the administration seems unconcerned with losing people or work/life balance, and are putting priority on enrollment numbers.

B. Benjamin noted that the negotiations survey for our campus has the data for telecommuting. No need for another survey. He proposed a townhall to get anecdotal information on telecommuting and create a working group to rewrite the policy.

Winter shut-down: Management clarified that this has nothing to do with telecommuting. Most campus buildings will shut down and some employees will be moved to other spaces on campus.

Downtown campus concerns: Management gave a pre-written, unsatisfactory response. There is no plan to address the heat/ventilation of that campus. Z. Lawrence suggested employees should record when offices are unbearable. G. Petry said supervisors are also UUP members and can help. L. Casertino posted that OSHA only recommends, but doesn't require 68-76°F. M. Couture said it was PESH that sets rules for UAlbany, and she recommended collective action.

Requested changes must come from the employees; it won't come from management. J. Collins concurred. S. Rider offered a website for complaints.

Tuition waivers: Management admits they made a mistake by not talking to UUP or GOER about broadening tuition waivers. A memo will come out saying it's just UAlbany campus and not UUP statewide. It's a local control issue and just a trial. It boosts enrollment numbers and application fees especially for graduate courses.

Course Modalities: Management said there was no policy on modality choice. There is little consistency or solid information. It seems more managerial control than individual needs. Aaron said we would need to move forward strategically because it becomes managerial control over faculty control. A. Major will collect data on bargaining units, job titles and numbers.

3. Officer reports:

Contingents – D. Banks met with Fredonia's Anne Fearman and statewide contingents who are interested in gathering contingent concerns with specific asks. He needs a list of contingents to contact and hopes that concrete steps can be made for contract negotiations. Regrets that Campus Equity Week slipped by without much happening. B. Benjamin said solid asks like salary and promotions will be important. Statewide reach is uneven and our campus should take the lead.

Treasurer – there is now a \$7,500.00 balance which is great, a result of no in-person meetings.

4. Delegate Assembly follow-up and contract negotiations:

We need to improve/expand program successes on our campuses (e.g. UAlbany's FT Lecturer promotion program). Gains made with local administrations can come up in contract discussions and help other campuses.

All were encouraged to participate in the know your contract workshops. Understanding the contract helps everyone ask better questions and propose solutions.

5. GSEU requests:

We support their campaign to reduce graduate student fees. GA/TA tuition waivers don't cover fees. Fees continue to rise even when tuition does not increase. Grad student employees pay 1/10 of their salary, a month's paycheck, back to the U. This is particularly difficult for international students whose fees are even higher. There have been some victories on other campuses (Buffalo eliminated fees, Stony Brook is working on this). M Dzikowski motioned, M Weiss seconded that we redraft, revise and update our 2019 resolution on this to support GSEU and also encourage members to sign the GSEU petition. All approved.

6. The General Members meeting: scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> week of November. Topics will include telecommuting and course modalities updates (the EC was asked to send other suggestions to A. Major).

Members should ask questions in administration Q&A sessions so administration knows members, not just UUP officers, are concerned.

7. New Business: The provost has been meeting with departments. Meeting purpose and expectations have been unclear. Budget metrics were cited. With the current budgets, only seven lines granted this year across UAlbany (despite losses of faculty), and loss of administrative support and difficulty ordering supplies, departments should not expect much. Despite the University having the largest freshman class size ever, it lost students to the tune of \$9 million. The University is hoping for federal funds. The provost mentioned the University is starting a nursing program.

The CSEA chapter president is leaving the University after working here 20 years. Other CSEA members are leaving too, pursuing advancement opportunities not afforded by UAlbany. With many retirements last year, there are openings at the state. With faculty and support staff not being replaced, we need solutions and need to nurture synergies between CSEA and UUP.

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Strum