

The Forum

January 2024

Your Albany Chapter Newsletter

Issue 150

Table of contents:

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| By the Numbers | 2-3 |
| Members Speak Out | 3-4 |
| St. Rose | 5-6 |
| Labor Management Digest | 6-10 |
| Fatalism | 10-14 |
| Mergers | 14-26 |
| Budgets | 26-33 |
| Contingent Gains | 33-36 |
| Workload Creep | 36-43 |

By the Numbers:

| | |
|-------|---|
| 3.4 | Percentage rise in prices for consumers in 2023 |
| 1 | Percentage rise in input costs for producers in 2023 |
| 53 | Percentage of price increases due to corporate profits rather than increases in supply costs |
| 171% | Wage growth of the highest 1% of earners from 1979-2022 |
| 344.% | Wage growth of the highest .1% of earners for the same period |
| 32.9% | Wage growth of the bottom 90% of earners for the same period |
| 72 | Percentage of non-unionized private sector workers with access to paid sick leave |
| 86 | Percentage of unionized private sector workers with access to paid sick leave |
| 39 | Percentage of all workers in the bottom 10% of wage distribution with access to paid sick leave |

| | |
|----|--|
| 67 | Percentage of non-unionized private sector workers with access to health care benefits |
| 94 | Percentage of unionized private sector workers with access to health care benefits |

"Greedflation" stats can be found here:

<https://shorturl.at/zAIL5>

All other figures from EPI:

<https://www.epi.org/>

* * *

Note: Because of what members describe as a persistent fear of retaliation and intimidation for voicing disagreement with the administration, we are printing most of our articles without attribution.

Members Speak Out!

Paul Stasi, Chapter President

Over three days in November, UUP Albany made a concerted effort to reach members and non-members in their workplace. The goal was to sign members—and we did just that, adding thirty-one new members to our ranks. But we were also hoping to increase the visibility of UUP and to

gather information from colleagues about their working lives. This latter has been an ongoing project. Beginning at the general membership meeting in October, we asked members to write down their concerns on index cards and speak out about their working conditions. The results have been illuminating and we intend to produce a thorough report from our findings.

What we've discovered so far is distressing. We have essential student support offices—Student Accounts, Financial Aids, Advising—that are unable to guarantee that correct and timely information reaches students because they don't have the staff to cover the phones. Members in multiple offices describe the difficulty in processing basic paperwork for students due to under-staffing and nearly everyone reports working uncompensated overtime on weekends and after-hours. In many units and departments—including all of CAS—there is no travel money for professional development (outside of that offered by the joint labor/management IDA process), meaning members have to pay for professional development out of pocket or, more often, forgo it. Some academic departments report major load-bearing holes in their curriculum with core courses in bachelor's and master's programs staffed by adjuncts. Morale is low and our members are at a breaking point. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

To help with this ongoing work we encourage all members to get in touch: pstasi27@gmail.com is the best way to reach me. I welcome any and all feedback as we try to paint a picture of the working conditions across campus. The more we all understand what our working lives are like, the more we can work together to fix them.

* * *

St. Rose

As all of you are no doubt aware, The College of Saint Rose announced it will close at the end of the Spring semester. The announcement was not much of a shock—the college had been struggling for years—though it came after vociferous denials from its leadership that plans to close were in the works. Shortly afterwards, in a University Senate meeting on December 15th, the University Senate approved three new programs in the School of Education. And just last week, the Provost announced that we have signed a Teach-Out agreement with St. Rose, allowing their students to complete their degrees at Albany.

This situation is too new for us to cover it with any comprehensiveness in this issue of *The Forum*. But a few points are worth mentioning, quickly, at this early date. From our perspective, here at UUP, there are many good reasons to support the Teach-Out and to develop comparable programs here at Albany. Helping out the students and the employees at St. Rose is a good thing to do for the community and for our fellow academic colleagues. Furthermore, a Bachelor's in Education is a great thing for a public university such as ours to offer. We are, then, largely in favor of these additions to our curriculum.

At the same time, from conversations we've had with members in the School of Education, it seems that the consultation process that led to the development of these programs has been uneven. Some members report being well informed about what was happening, while others report otherwise. We will not attempt adjudicate the percentages. Given the speed of events—and the fact that the State Department of Education agreed to an expedited approval process—it is not surprising that such a quick procedure led to some unevenness in faculty awareness. For this reason, we were pleased that the Senate approval added a stipulation that a more substantive review of the approved programs must occur and that it must begin in the School of Education itself.

We have also been told, quite clearly, that we shouldn't expect additional resources for these programs, meaning that they will need to be paid for out of existing budgets. This continues the worrying trend of new initiatives being created at the expense of existing programs. Given the number of new initiatives—Nursing School, Engineering, A.I., Game Design—that the University has committed to funding with promises for new faculty hires and startup resources, we need to think collectively and seriously about what all this means for the University as we know it.

The closure of St. Rose is a real loss for our city, and particularly for the students and employees of that college. UAlbany is right to do what it can to fill the gap left, and it provides us with growth opportunities in public-serving disciplines such as teaching and nursing. To do this well, however, will require a holistic assessment of the University's resources and plans for growth. Adding new programs at the expense of existing ones is a recipe for failure; indeed that is one of the lessons that St. Rose's rapid decline should teach us. The entire university community must be involved in setting the priorities, direction, and timeline for UAlbany's evolution. We will continue to work with the administration to protect our members' rights and to do whatever we can to help facilitate a thorough and productive consultative process.

* * *

Labor Management Digest:

(note: having learned that many UUP chapters, in addition to including the Labor/Management notes on their website, as has long been our practice, also send out reports to members about the meetings. We think this is a great idea and lets you all know the issues we bring up with management each month. This digest represents the first summary of our most recent meetings. Detailed notes can be found [here](#)).

August: We raised a series of issues concerning the workload for members at CEAS and CEHC, particularly concerning summer work for academics on 10 month appointments. We also noted that a few members—21 by the University’s estimates—did not receive the 7 year raises they were owed in the last contract. This should either have been rectified or will be rectified soon. Contact us if you are in this category.

We were also told that the University will replace computers that are 5 years old but that the tracking and requests must be handled through departmental communication with the Provost’s office.

September: We had a lengthy conversation with the administration (including the interim Deans of Public Health and Social Welfare as well as Dean Altarriba from CAS) about the mergers. We suggested that the process concerning SPH/SSW is working backwards: asking affected departments to provide the rationale for a merger they did not desire or implement. We also pushed back on the idea that senior faculty are “intimidating” junior faculty to critique the merger, suggesting, to the contrary, the substantial number of junior faculty expressing fear of the administration if they disagree with its actions.

The University confirmed that extra-service pay for courses would rise with the increased per course minimums, as has been past practice, and that appointment letters for lecturers and contingents that are renewed for AY 23-24 would reflect the new, negotiated three and one year service appointments.

We also initiated a series of conversations about hiring practices on campus with the ultimate goal of understanding the relationship between internal and external postings and the desire to regularize the rules and, in particular, the ODI requirements across all types of searches.

October: We asked about the AI Plus Initiative and were assured that though it hopes to infuse AI into the curriculum, no one will be required to teach using AI who does not want to. The administration suggested the President's new strategic plan (delivered at his Fall Address) did not represent a shift in priorities from the previous one.

We asked about the status of compression analysis on campus and were told that while the University has no plans to broadly address the problem, they do take compression into account when making salary adjustments.

We also offered chapter feedback into the DSI process (developed in the EC), suggesting, in particular, that DSI be allocated to units on a per capita rather than salary basis, that there be a hard cap of \$1,000/award, that the process be clearly articulated and provide meaningful time for supervisors to consider awards as well as for members to appeal the process and that, in cases where a higher level rejects the immediate supervisor's positive recommendation the reasons be provided to the member in writing.

November: We asked a series of questions about the University's "Global Tech" Initiative, a "pilot program" offered by Podium education whose employees recruit students to sign up for an "experiential learning" program that consists of an asynchronous online course that costs the students an additional \$1800 and results in UAlbany credit. These emails list the employees as "University At Albany Advisors" and many of the "courses" cover content taught by UAlbany faculty. We continue to investigate all our possible responses to what seems a relatively clear case of bargaining unit erosion.

We were told that the administration has no plans for any new re-organizations, mergers or re-structuring and, in particular, that the CAS committee convened for the purposes of an external evaluation is not intended to re-organize CAS.

We put, on the record, our insistence that the union is not responsible for intimidating faculty to critique the recent mergers and that, in fact, we hear, consistently, from members the opposite: a large number of members have told us of the intimidation they feel from the administration when they disagree in public with them.

We asked a series of questions about safety on campus and were told the campus is undertaking a thorough review of the situation.

We also learned, happily, that the University no longer purchases anything from Corecraft, a company that profits off the backs of exploited prison labor, the last purchase being made in 2012.

December: We spent much of the meeting discussing the St. Rose closure and its implications for Albany. It became clear that no additional resources will be forthcoming from the state to help us take on the new programs. Management was cautious in its estimate of initial enrollments. They similarly expressed interest in the possibility of Instructor titles—essentially tenurable teaching lines—for faculty. If St. Rose faculty are brought on board they will likely be given visiting lines.

In the context of the various restructurings and mergers on campus, we were told again that if departments need resources all they need to do is ask. In our view, this does not seem to be the case.

We also discussed the external review of CAS that was happening in the last weeks of December, pointing out that the timing was difficult, the time for consultation brief.

We were pleased to hear that the retro-pay calculations, which required 1700 manual changes by HR, had a remarkably low error rate.

In a follow-up from a previous meeting, we were told that progress is being made to in regularizing the ODI procedures for internal and external hires.

Finally, we raised the issue of the new chair selection process in CAS, which, in our view, erodes what little faculty autonomy is left in the process, demanding an unranked list of at least two candidates even in situations where an existing chair wishes to continue serving. We were told, first that the policy wasn't changed (it was) and then that our concerns would be forwarded along.

* * *

Fatalism

A few years ago, I was working on my department's self-study and seeking to revise a section that quoted the University's mission statement. To my great surprise, the earlier statement—which emphasized the importance of “an intellectual climate” in order to create “literate, informed, and compassionate citizens,” who would both assimilate “the inherited wisdom of the past” and participate in “the creation of new knowledge”—was replaced by advertising copy: “The University at Albany is an engine of opportunity. Fueled by our unique mix of academic excellence, internationally recognized research, and world-class faculty, we relentlessly pursue possibilities, create connections, and open opportunities—locally and globally—with a single-minded purpose: To empower our students, faculty, and campus communities to author their own success. This is the University at Albany.”

The language of citizenry is replaced, here, by personal achievement, and though I'm sure many of our students feel themselves, rightly, empowered by their education, it is ironic, to say the least, when the statement is

applied to the workers on campus, who are, more accurately, prevented from succeeding due to their inability to have any ownership over the process.

I have spent the last month talking with various “stakeholders” on campus, including those from Criminal Justice who were forced to merge with Rockefeller College, the Schools of Public Health and Social Welfare, who are on the verge of being combined and those in Africana Studies and LACS, also about to be united, and two things have become abundantly clear. The first is that no one seems to have received any particularly clear reason for the mergers, outside of the empty promise of “synergies” and “opportunities.” This absence of intellectual rationale is stunning. More to the point, the corrosive way in which these mergers have been planned has itself been destructive to the very collaborations they hope to produce. And this process, in turn, has produced a kind of fatalism. Many faculty expressed dissatisfaction with the process, if not entirely with the possibilities of new combinations of units. But nearly all of them expressed a fatalism about engaging in the process. “What’s the point of trying to shape these proposals,” runs a characteristic response, “if the administration is uninterested in listening to us.”

Each of these situations is, of course, unique. The merger of Criminal Justice and Rockefeller was announced as a *fait accompli*, without consultation with the affected units. The merger of SPH and SSW, in contrast, was offered as a possibility, followed by a year-long consultation that produced a report with very clear objections and concerns from the faculty, particularly those in SSW, but also from colleagues in SPH. This was followed by a letter from the SSW directly to the Provost to which she never replied. Then the merger was announced and followed by a town hall in which the Provost only took prepared questions and during which the Deans prevented the Senior Faculty of SSW from reading a statement. No wonder no one believes in the process, a dissatisfaction evident in the

unanimous—50-0—Senate resolution critiquing the practice, asking for a response (in writing) to the existing objections and asserting its right to vote up or down on any proposal that emerges.

The administration has responded with a veneer of concern without addressing any of our members' substantive concerns. This now represents a pattern to which the history of Senate resolutions eloquently attests: a resolution on the Criminal Justice/Rockefeller merger, a resolution asserting the importance of shared governance through COVID, a resolution critiquing the top-down nature of the AI hiring process and now the current resolution. None of them have seemed to make a meaningful difference.

There is now an external consultant working on the SPH/SSW merger. Many members are gamely participating. Others have checked out not seeing the point in an increase in uncompensated work to develop a plan for a merger they feel neutral about, at best. And it's not clear why this consultation process will turn up a different set of objections than the previous ones or why anyone would believe it would address them.

The story at LACS and Africana Studies is similar. A series of ideas and proposals were all shot down, because they all required resources. As the report about SSW and SPH eloquently asks: what forms of collaboration are going to spontaneously emerge in the absence of resources? A colleague in SPH suggested to me that there are no barriers to collaboration now between the two schools. So why is the administration refusing to get into any specifics about what they hope to achieve here?

The refusal to engage with the substantive concerns of the affected members corrodes the entire process and creates suspicion and distrust among them. But it is important to recognize the origins of this suspicion: a competitive environment cultivated for decades during an ever-present austerity. We have said this time and again: there is no unit or department

on campus that is not starved for resources and this includes the new initiatives the University is set on developing as well as the long-standing programs that they fail to support. We as unionists need to see our common lot in this austerity-driven competition, but we are so regularly pitted against each that it becomes difficult to do so.

Consider, for instance, the budget metrics, which hide a set of clear subjective decisions about what to value on campus behind a show of objectivity. But the numbers these metrics create only represent the priorities of the administration: external grant funds, above all, majors rather than minors or enrollments or second-majors—even though all of those minors and second majors and general education courses require academic faculty to teach and professional faculty to support the teaching. And given that the metrics determine funding, it makes sense that departments use them against one another. If the metrics under-value the research of SSW and they merge with SPH, then does SPH suddenly look worse? Is it any wonder that some faculty in SPH might worry that their funding stream will be cut off if that occurs?

Given the administration's penchant for performative consultation and its near refusal to engage with the reasoned critique of its academic and professional faculty, it is entirely understandable that people feel fatalistic. Our job, as unionists, must be to counter this fatalism, providing the opportunity for critique and the space for faculty to voice their concerns, not to obstruct or simply refuse every idea that comes down the pipeline, but to insist that the concerns of people who are, after all, experts in their professional fields might be to relevant to the restructuring of those fields. A wise administration would listen to the concerns of those it attempts to manage, rather than ignore them in favor of donors and recycled marketing slogans. We do not expect to win every argument or to override the judgment of the administration in all cases. But we do expect to have a meaningful role in the process, as members of the University community,

as members of the University Senate and as unionists. Perhaps then the ideas in the new mission statement might actually be given some content.

I urge all of you to talk to your department representatives and your representatives in the various governance bodies that exist on campus and ask all of them to take up the mantle of shared governance. Speak up. Voice your concerns. We are stronger when we do this together.

* * *

Mergers:
We print here a series of reflections
on the various mergers occurring on campus.

A view from the School of Social Welfare:
Solidarity in Crisis: A Pathway through Moral Injury

Last year, my colleagues and I were informed that the university was intending to merge the Schools of Social Welfare and Public Health, along with a new nursing program, to create a “brand new” college. Sadly, from the university administration’s perspective, they believe the last year has constituted a “participatory” and “collaborative” process. After all, there have been town halls! consultants! surveys! focus groups! reports! committees! But by and large, opinions about the merger and process have not been heeded. The administration had already made their decision ahead of the “consultancy” processes. It is also notable that a major constituency has been left out of the process almost entirely – students!

Besides yearning for authentic participatory process, what most of us have wanted is actual transparency about why they wanted to do it in the first place, an intellectual and academic rationale. First, we heard it was to

“create new synergies,” then it was to “create new opportunities” and “new programs,” then it was to “raise the profiles of the schools.” Most recently, President Rodriguez acknowledged that it was to preserve limited administrative resources.

At the recent fall address, the President referred to this new entity as “the new college of health sciences.” Thankfully, there are excellent health sciences at this university, and they are trying to make the university even stronger by introducing a nursing program. But social work is not a “health science.” I know professors are always saying this, but I wish the administration had done their homework.

Besides the tainted process and lack of fit, the other main concerns center around downgrading the School of Social Welfare’s national status (the top schools of social work, of which we have historically been one, have a dean, not a department director or chair) and the loss of titles for many of our professional staff, including Associate and Assistant Deans.

What is happening here is also a form of moral injury to faculty, staff and students across the university. Moral injury is a distress response from exposure to events that violate one’s moral beliefs. When we are repeatedly gaslighted by leaders of an institution, harm is caused. I think what breaks my heart the most at the end of the day is that the university does not value the talented, creative and productive people they do have, the life changing programs that are already here, and the students of this great state who don’t need a shiny new object to bring them here. What if the university supported, celebrated and leveraged its existing people and programs? There’s a new opportunity for them.

The university administration keeps trying to console us in our declarations that we have not been heard. “But wait,” they say, “faculty will get to decide the new name for the college!” That’s insulting. It feels like going to

the most disappointing of Halloween houses and being presented with a bowl of disconsolate choices -- dental floss, travel size toothpaste tubes, lip balm, raisin boxes. Raisins, I guess? But we always have more choices than are presented to us.

At the October Senate meeting, the most amazing thing happened. Through intentional, solidarity action by members of the Senate, we voted unanimously to adopt a resolution condemning this fiction and demanding that the university honor its policies around shared governance and bring the proposed college to the Senate for a vote. They say getting faculty to agree on something is like herding cats, and what happened there was remarkable – no votes against, no abstentions. It is clear that many of us see through the double speak and stand ready to let our voices be heard, and take action. Unfortunately, the administration is moving forward in spite of this unequivocal vote, without missing a beat, sending a clear message about their beliefs about shared governance.

If there is one positive outcome here though, it is the unity and allyship I have felt with colleagues in the School of Social Welfare, the School of Public Health, and across the university through the Senate and UUP. In crisis, there can be solidarity. That much I know. Our next steps though, I do not know. But there are always more options than meets the eye.

* * *

A view from the School of Public Health: For the faculty and staff of SPH and SSW, it started with an unexpected announcement and hastily arranged town hall meetings. Provost Kim had asked the interim deans of our two schools to explore the possibility of combining the two schools into one larger college, which would then include social welfare, public health, and the recently established nursing program. At town hall meetings for each school in November 2022, the Provost mentioned the synergies in research and education between our two schools, but offered no other

rationale for considering a combined college and no grand vision for the possibilities such a college would create. Instead, she indicated that, although her decision was not yet final, the new college would move forward unless significant concerns were identified that countered her plan.

Throughout the rest of the academic year, meetings, focus groups, and surveys were coordinated by an external consultant with various stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, community partners, university officials, and our respective accrediting bodies, and many significant concerns were raised. Potential challenges and barriers that were identified included the lack of a clear rationale for the new integrated college, the elimination of the social welfare dean position given public health accreditation requirements, threats to the identities and reputations of our respective schools, and potential impacts on staff roles and job titles. These concerns were communicated to Provost Kim in a letter from the SSW faculty and staff in April 2023 and in a joint report by the interim SPH and SSW deans in June 2023. Without addressing these concerns, responding to specific questions, or allowing for additional discourse on the findings of the exploration period, on August 30, 2023, Provost Kim announced that the integration of the two schools would be moving forward and a year-long implementation planning process would begin, guided by another external consultant.

In opposition to the lack of true collaboration and substantive consultation that had characterized the decision to create this new college, the SPH and SSW Senators jointly authored a resolution decrying the administration's lack of commitment to shared governance and demanding written responses to our concerns and a Senate vote on the refined proposal for the new college later this year. The resolution was unanimously passed at the October 11, 2023 Senate meeting. However, the administration has not responded to any of the substantive concerns voiced by the faculty.

Planning for the new college is underway, with this year's goals centered on defining the college's name, vision, mission, and organizational structure. In the October Senate meeting and in a planning meeting with SPH/SSW faculty and staff, Provost Kim provided a revised rationale for the new college: increasing the visibility of our respective schools and programs. She declined to elaborate on how the mere creation of a new college would accomplish this, insisting that the attraction of new students and top faculty would "naturally follow." Although Provost Kim and the current SPH and SSW interim deans provided some reassurances in a September town hall meeting, including that existing tenure and promotion guidelines for SPH and SSW faculty would be maintained, they declined to acknowledge many other concerns, including the SSW loss of autonomy. Rather, concerns regarding the process or the plans for the new college continue to be waved away as "resistance to change," including by President Rodriguez in his Fall 2023 address.

This new college will be built through the time and labor of our faculty, staff, and students, whose concerns have been repeatedly dismissed and whose expertise and perspectives have been repeatedly ignored. We are acutely aware of the enrollment crises facing higher education and we recognize the need to be nimble and strategic. We are experts, not only in our respective specialty areas, but in the backgrounds and goals of our students, in the trends in our fields, and in the staffing, resources, and creativity needed for the success and visibility of our schools. Rather than harnessing our expertise and innovation, the administration has relegated us to a supporting role that reflects the bare minimum of shared governance. Our relief at having even this minor role in such a major restructuring of our professional lives is a testament to the disempowerment sown by this administration. We are this university's greatest resource; we deserve accountability from our leadership and full participation in the decisions that will shape the university's future.

* * *

LACS & African Studies: A view from Advising: As I sat in LC 24 listening to students about their perception of what was happening with the Africana Studies Department and Latin and Caribbean Studies program I could not stop thinking about my former boss. During that budgetary crunch she said “you never see a German program cut in Wisconsin despite how small its enrolment is. You just don’t do it. You find another way.” While reminiscing about my own understanding about how to manage an academic affairs budget, I couldn’t help but reflect on the pain, misunderstanding, frustration and even some anger that were palpable in the lecture center. It is likely not the actual act of merger but how it was developed; it was the lack of discussion, the absence of consultation, careful announcement and collaborative decision making that led to the outcry of the students.

I have been an administrator for almost 20 years in two public universities. I have never seen such a strong response from students regarding anything related to an academic program. In fact, it is hard sometimes to get a group of 15 students to come to provide feedback on the current program. One must serve food, carefully plan the time of the meeting and hope for 50% of the invited students show up. But the evening of October 3 at 7:30 PM the LC 24 was 80% full. A significant majority of participants were students who identified themselves as Black, Hispanic and Latino. But there were also a few white students as well as students from other backgrounds.

So I put on my numbers hat. I have done some course planning for small programs, as well as for a whole institution. I wanted to understand how this outcry related to the enrollment. BI clearly shows a decline in the majors by 44% (57 to 42 students) over 4 years in Africana Studies and 58% (31 to 13) in LACS; it also shows a decline in minors: 29% (156 to

111) in AAF and 21% (43 to 34) in LACS. But what this data does not show is the enrollments in the classes and the service they are performing to the college. In Africana Studies out of 30 available courses in the bulletin offered at the 100 to 300 level - 28 of them are general education; in LACS out of 63 available course titles from 100 – 400 level 61 of them serve a general education purpose. Furthermore, if one looks closely at the availability of the seats and sections, one will find that most courses are offered only once per year but the class capacity is set between 45-100 in LACS and 50-60 in AAFS. In addition, if one tracks the available seats in these classes by the time Sophomores and Freshman are registering for the next semester, one will see that pickings are slim. What this suggests is that these courses fill up quickly despite their relatively high enrollment caps. In fact, students who are majoring or minoring in these areas must sign up on time, otherwise they will likely have to either request override permission or wait until next semester to take a course. I have witnessed this problem numerous times per semester when I advise my students. Finally, AAFS comes up first in the search of schedule of classes. While some students review many courses, others just look for the easiest way to create their schedule. So if there are general education seats available through AAFS they will take it.

As I looked closely at this information, while hearing the voices of students in my head, I could see clearly why overall numbers might decline. The university is asking each department to work harder to recruit students, but we are not supporting our departments in these efforts. There is the lack of financial support; it is only, for instance, in the last two years that colorful banners were ordered for open houses. There is a zoom video of former chairs in AAFS describing the department and a voice over PPT for LACS that describes the prominence and importance of the program. But there is none of the high quality production or social media presence we have for other departments and colleges and the last news story written on the department was in March of 2023. The university barely recognizes

Hispanic Heritage Month and our celebration of the MLK day is a passive lecture held usually at the end of February. When our prospective students are looking at the University's social media and web sites, these programs are not able to compete with CEHC or Engineering. But there is a lot of value of pursuing degrees in AAFS and LACS, if only the University would support them.

Yes, there are likely benefits of service reduction on the faculty and staff members through the proposed merger. There are likely benefits of collaborative research that faculty members can work together on. But lack of investment in these programs bears fruit as well. If we are looking for efficiencies and leniency, we should not be surprised that one outcome is decreased enrollments. There are many things UAlbany can do to promote our excellent faculty who teach in these departments and provide care and a sense of belonging for our students.

UAlbany now has a center for Center for the Elimination of Minority Health Disparities that focuses on small towns and counties in NYS. It has fantastic opportunities to "identify community health concerns and sources of disparities, plan strategies to alleviate them, and test their effectiveness. Health care providers and other organizations can then adopt these strategies." But it seems to me that we may want to turn internally and identify our own spaces of disparities. UAlbany knows how to grow programs. We know that if we invest few dollars in a program we will likely see an increase in enrollment. Our students are telling us that they want to learn about AAFS and LACS. So we need to meet them where they are, otherwise how can we call ourselves the Most Diverse Research Public University?

* * *

Mergers: Best Practices: As a student of public administration and education administration I try to approach and review my personal actions from as many sides as possible. I have had great instructors who both studied and practiced their crafts for many years. I was given books to read by successful college administrators as well as theoretical thinkers. In public administration there is a whole section of the field that is devoted to mergers. In general mergers are seen as a business component, mostly identified as an acquisition but in the non-profit sector mergers are becoming more common as well. However, there is a difference between a hostile takeover that benefits shareholders and maximizes profits and a merger seeking proper economies of scale in order to maximize the efficiencies in service output for non-profit organizations.

I have worked at a college where disciplines like Political Science, Economics and Geography or Sociology, Anthropology and Social work lived together under one department title and one chair. It is possible to find commonalities and there are benefits to sharing both human and financial resources. But these larger colleges also create stagnation, competition, and plenty of disagreements. Time helps to determine whether a merger was successful but it is very hard to run a good experiment on mergers, as very few things can be held constant, especially in a higher education non-profit.

UAlbany has excellent programs in Public Administration, Management and Policy and the School of Business with its management faculty and Higher Education and Leadership program. However, it seems that sometimes we forget to seek the advice of our colleagues and plunge headlong into action. The most recent SSW/SPH and Rockefeller/CRJ mergers are examples of this problem. It does seem that SSW/SPH merger is being done a bit more thoughtful than the previous merger, with the support of some of the affected members, but there are still a lot of missing parts that

could make the process smoother. Schnackenberg (2018) identifies 6 reasons for merger:

- * Economic – where respite from a financial concern is assumed.
- * Service Diversification – where a diversification to the service model is assumed to enhance mission and service delivery.
- * Founder/Executive Succession – where a founder or Chief Executive seeks to retire, and the organization lacks an adequate succession plan.
- * Going out of Business – when a NPO cannot reasonably continue, its assets and liabilities may be assumed by another NPO.
- * Service Saturation – where service redundancy erodes organizational effectiveness.
- * Strategic Synergy – where organizational strengths are assumed to offset respective weaknesses vis-à-vis the merger, among others.

It is hard to pin point any particular benefit of either of the mergers that took/taking place at UAlbany currently. I would say that as a member of one of these units, I was never give a clear answer to why the mergers were even considered and who is considering them.

Gifford and Dina (2003) point out the effects that mergers have on staff who are involved as well as aspects that are useful to consider during the process of mergers:

1. Integration of Personnel and Programs
2. Merging Organizational Cultures
3. Building Trust
4. Communication
5. Development of Shared vision
6. Finding the Right Mix

Again I will leave the details to the authors, but I can say that as a member of one of these units, I do not feel that any of the steps were carefully considered

and taken. In fact, though the Rockefeller/CRJ merger occurred on paper and has found (finally) a permanent Dean, none of these other changes have occurred for the more than 3 years since the merger happened. Both units are functioning on separate but parallel rails. In fact, even the university treats both units separately in all outgoing communications and measures. It is not that long that a Graduate School of Public Affairs was formed that included Social Welfare, Criminal Justice, Political Science and Public Administration. Likely there were good reasons for keeping programs together under one roof and in one geographic location. Synergies can occur when folks are interacting on daily basis and see each other in the hallways. Granted that zoom and other technological advances assist us in long distance communication, they are no substitute for casual chatter and stopping by each other offices.

But the most important aspect of any merger is building trust which requires good communication and an understanding power dynamics. This seems to be lacking in both mergers. The decisions have been made at the top, communicated abruptly, and on short notice, meaning that building trusted relationship has been put on the back burner. It clear that we are coworkers and in some cases peers, but the fear of losing one's position (financial and personnel) as well as one's status is real and little has occurred that has addressed this concern.

I would point out the very first lesson that Gifford and Dina note from their experience: "Deciding to merge is but the beginning of merging. Signing on the dotted line does not automatically produce a well-oiled, single focused team. It takes lots of time and work" (89). I would also add that it takes resources. So in the time of financial strain, is it useful to spend limited

resources on external consultants when the financial outcome is questionable? Perhaps we should listen to our own experts—both those who study mergers and those who have endured them—to guide our path forward.

References:

Elissa D.Giffords & Richard P.Dina (2003) [Changing Organizational Cultures](#), *Administration in Social Work*, 27:1, 69-81, DOI: 10.1300/J147v27n01_05

Chen, Bin, and James Krauskopf. (2013) [Integrated or Disconnected?](#) Examining Formal and Informal Networks in a Merged Nonprofit Organization. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 23:3, 325–45. EBSCOhost.

Nathan Schnackenberg (2018) [Facilitating a Nonprofit Merger](#): Identifying the Benchmarks and Success Indicators of a Nonprofit Merger. Capstone Research Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Nonprofit Administration Degree.

* * *

Budgets:

Many members have commented on what seems to be a shift in how the University understands the allocation of resources. We print here two reflections on budgeting trends in higher education. As each piece notes, we have no evidence that these exact models are being used by the administration (though we know the RPK group lists SUNY as a client).

Nevertheless, these models seem to align with much of what has been happening on campus.

Responsibility Centered Management: There seems to be a shift going on in how the University understands its budgeting, from the flawed but serious attempt to grasp the complexity of the work we do through the budget metric process to a simpler model driven almost entirely by the idea of attracting new students to the University, measured as majors. This newer model seems to correlate with a broader movement in higher education more generally, one called “Responsibility Centered Management” (RCM) and associated with the RPK group that is known to have consulted with the SUNY system. To be clear: no one in the administration has referenced this idea to our knowledge. It is possible that what we can observe between the two is simply something like the general neoliberal ideology which is common to the upper administration in higher education these days. As such, it is instructive to see how the consultants that push the RCM model describe their work. It helps see some of the logic behind the decisions that are driving higher education in general.

One of these groups—Kennedy and Company—have produced a handy primer on the topic, which can be found [here](#). When looking at the RCM model, what emerges is quite clear: a relentlessly market driven approach to higher education that is so far removed from any model of civic good or intellectual quality as to literally never mention either thing in any of their materials.

There are many elements to the RCM model and it is defined by a “decentralized” notion of budgeting. This might immediately make the model seem irrelevant to Albany, since the clearest changes in budgeting and hiring under President Rodriguez’s administration has been their increased centralization.

Nevertheless, the “decentralized” model is one that asks units to account for their own expenses through the revenues they generate. The central principle of this model, then, is “to create a set of incentives that grows overall institutional revenues” by incentivizing units to “pursue enrollment growth.”

Here is Kennedy and Company’s elaboration of the idea:

In base budgeting models, academic units are not empowered to generate their own enrollments at the undergraduate level, thus creating a structure with no financial incentives for them to grow or strategically target new markets.

We see, here, a familiar mantra at the University at Albany: that only programs that can target new students will receive funding. Kennedy and Company, though, seem to understand the most obvious problem with this model, arguing that “senior leaders must set up a governance structure that ensures a sharing and coordination on the courses within the core curriculum to avoid cannibalization and competition within the institution for the same students.” It is hard to see what governance structures Albany has in place that might avoid this outcome, particularly since our total enrollment numbers have been flat for the last ten years. Units on campus continually feel that in starting new initiatives they are simply taking students from other majors, or indeed from themselves.

Now Kennedy and Company have a model to answer this problem as well, which might sound familiar to all of us. Given their investment in the idea of a “demographic decline”—one that UUP data suggests is false—they see “an increased demand for nontraditional credentials, short-courses, and online modalities.” There seems no apparent logical link between these two ideas—why would the remaining students want “nontraditional

credentials”? Nevertheless, it is clear that our University is invested in the idea that new students want online courses and microcredentials.

Despite the term “decentralized,” however, RCM starts with a centralization of budget decisions and a capture of overhead by a more centralized administration. Departments and units immediately are hit with reductions in their overheads which they need to manage. (Think about your own unit or department and think about how many basic services—people to answer phones, photocopying resources, travel money to attend conferences—that you no longer have). What follows is the University’s decision to count majors—rather than total enrollments—as the primary driver of economic revenue, a decision which has very important consequences for how the University is run. The most obvious is the devaluing of the general education curriculum of the University, which is deemed irrelevant to the allocating of resources. A department with low majors but high gen eds receives no resources; this is one way to understand the crisis in LACS and Africana Studies, for instance. In practice this means that the University at Albany has decided that its entire general education curriculum will be taught by its adjuncts. Of course, this has been true in fact for years, but it is striking to see it turned into a principle by the current budgeting regime.

At the same time, a model that ignores general education, minors and second majors by design, refuses to see the University as one thing, dependent for its working on all its parts something that the budget metrics, with all their flaws, attempted to capture. Similarly skills are understood to be discrete, no longer embedded in disciplines but capable of being measured and assessed outside of the context in which they are delivered. The “decentralized” budgeting falsely imagines that departments are islands unto themselves, able magically to draw new students to the University outside of the University’s reputation, location, price point and the rhetoric emerging from the upper administration and its marketing departments. And so this “decentralized” model also accounts for the basic fact that

enrollment declines are understood to be the fault of departments, not the fault of the University itself. The result is the competition for majors we all feel, which of course runs directly counter to the rhetoric of collaboration and inter-disciplinarity the administration tends to favor. Again the point is not whether or not the administration has been consulting with the various groups that push RCM or if they are even using the term themselves. What we see is that the principles involved in RCM seem to fit relatively neatly with what is happening on our campus and many other campuses as well.

* * *

Funding for Small Degree Programs: Cost cutting versus Return on Investment (ROI) Models

This brief note describes a new model for higher education funding that is being promoted by the higher education consulting firm RPK Group. RPK Group calls this new model the “return on investment (ROI) model.”

Recent news articles about higher education cuts across the U.S. sound a similar alarm: programs with a small number of majors are facing the possibility of elimination. Programs at West Virginia University and the University of Kansas, as well as our regional neighbors SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Fredonia, have all been targeted on this basis. Many faculty members recognize that this emphasis on number of majors as an isolated measure of the supposed “health” of a program ignores the value that a diversity of programs can offer at a college or university. Such programs frequently teach a significant number of general education “service” courses. They also enhance the educational opportunities of students by offering minors in their fields, and they provide the ability for students and faculty to have interdisciplinary collaborations. If programs are measured against their number of majors alone, these and other valuable contributions may disappear.

In the past, a reasonable response to an administration demanding that a program be cut because of a small number of majors would focus on such broader contributions. For example, if a program could show that its production output, measured perhaps as a relationship between its FTE and the number of credit hours taught, was such that it “paid for itself,” then that could justify its existence. The “pay your own way” model might make sense if the basis for cuts is to save overall expenses. The programs that survive such cuts are those that can show that they are efficient and do not cost an institution more than they generate.

The “pay your own way” model, however, is not the only way that funding is now being evaluated. RPK Group, a prominent Higher Education consulting firm, has recently been promoting what they call the Return on Investment (ROI) model. This model suggests that each program should be evaluated in terms of how much it maximizes the investments put into it, whether those investments are monetary or involve other costs like recruitment and staffing time or efforts put into marketing. Past cuts at many universities have been about cost savings, but the ROI model requires a university to reconsider the use of all resources. Even if a program is not costing an institution anything, and even if they more than pay for themselves in terms of their cost of faculty to credit hours ratio, they still represent an investment that could be put elsewhere. Every program must justify itself as offering a maximum return on investment or face the threat of their funding being reallocated and put to “better use.”

Here is an [example of this type of speech](#) from the mouth of one of RPK Group’s principals, [Katie Hagan](#), when responding to questions about a report that the firm prepared for SUNY Erie, a Community College in the SUNY system. Hagan states that such investments, no matter how small, are still “some investment” in terms of time, “faculty energy” to maintain a program, listing a program, educating counselors and advisors on program

requirements, recruiting students and so on. (Hagan identifies these costs as “not quantifiable”). All of these investments, Hagan asserts, could be put toward “growing” or “de-signing” a “new program.” The person who immediately follows Hagan in that linked video is the founder and senior partner of RPK Group (Rick Staisloff), and you will hear the same “better use” claim from him. Again, the point of the ROI model is not to cut costs. The aim is to view every part of a university’s effort as potentially better invested elsewhere. Staisloff elsewhere explicitly calls this the [ROI approach to education](#). Essentially, this model equates funding for education programs to buying a piece of investment real estate.

RPK Group has become influential on the national scene. This consultancy firm has been used by many institutions across the country to evaluate university priorities related to curricula and the majors that are offered. The [RPK Group client](#) list includes WVU (see discussion [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) and the University of Kansas System (see [here](#) and [here](#)), and the firm lists SUNY Central as a client on their website.

While there is no direct link between the recent threats of cuts at SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Fredonia, the ideological connections are clear. Indeed, the December 15th edition of the *Times Union* ran an interview with SUNY System Chancellor John King that echoes many aspects of the ROI model (see [complete interview here](#)). King said, “But not every campus may be able to keep all academic programs [...] There may not be a philosophy major on every campus but there will be philosophy courses, to prepare you to be a thoughtful citizen.” This sounds very much like what the RPK Group recommended to the Kansas System (see [here](#)); while the consultant for the RPK Group quoted in the Topeka Capital-Journal article (Mike Daly) was quick to note that they were not recommending any particular program be closed, saying “[the report is] a consideration for how to think about the overall health and energy of an academic portfolio across six very different and diverse institutions, and to understand where

the appropriate people need to turn their attention.” Nevertheless, the very language of “duplicate programs” communicates the point clearly.

UUP President Fred Kowal’s response, reported in the *Times Union* article mentioned above, captures the way in which the Chancellor’s vision deviates from SUNY’s mission of access: “This is about shrinking smaller campuses that don’t make money,” said Kowal. “And it flies in the face of SUNY’s own mission, to provide the highest quality educational experience with the broadest possible access through a geographically distributed system of diverse campuses.”

Indeed, the very use of consultancy firms like RPK Group and their ROI model of investment represents a fundamental shift in the nature of providing access to education in accordance with SUNY’s mission.

* * *

Contingent Gains and the Roadmap Forward

Contingent faculty were among the biggest winners in the new 2022-26 contract between UUP and New York State. That’s noteworthy, given that this contract brings significant gains to many segments of UUP’s diverse bargaining unit. It is also justly deserved. The fundamental divide between those who can achieve permanency and those who cannot has shaped the last three decades of higher education, creating a vastly uneven employment and educational landscape, one that impacts everything on campus from our student’s educations to shared governance.

The gains for contingent faculty are many. Most notably, the per-course rate for part-time academic faculty escalates in each of the next four years, reaching \$6000 per 3-credit course in 2026, a 60% increase. Additionally,

the minimum salary for full-time Lecturers escalates at rates higher than the across-the-board raises, meaning that those at the bottom of our pay scale benefit proportionally more. Full-time Lecturers along with other qualified academic rank employees (e.g., clinical faculty visiting faculty, etc.) are included in the new Retention Award longevity structure, so they will be getting on-base raises after 7 and 12 years of service.

The new contract also makes real gains in job security for contingent faculty. Part-time academic and professional faculty who have worked three consecutive years must now be reappointed on one-year term appointments, rather than the semester-by-semester contracts that were the norm for many. Full-time Lecturers who have worked for seven consecutive years will be reappointed on three-year term appointments, rather than the frequent one-year appointments. There is also a side-letter in the contract that provides for a continuation of discussions over Lecturer ranks, part-time to full-time conversion, and pathways to permanency. A system-wide lecturer rank system appears to be a real possibility, and offers hope of a promotional structure that exceeds the rather meager rank system established here at Albany. These job security provisions remain key objectives for UUP and offer an immediate post-ratification agenda at both the statewide and campus levels.

Contingent faculty won important gains in benefit eligibility as well. For the first time part-time contingent academics will be eligible for health benefits if they teach six or more credits per semester across multiple State-operated SUNY campuses. For example, an adjunct at Albany teaching one 3-credit course, could pick up a second 3-credit course at Cobleskill, Empire, New Paltz, Oneonta, etc., in order to earn more and become benefits-eligible. Moreover, graduate students who were previously represented by GSEU and who enter the UUP bargaining unit without a break in service (typically this means graduate students rotating from

Assistantships to Lectureships) no longer have to wait 42 days to become eligible for health benefits.

Part-time faculty who are eligible for health benefits and who have taught for at least one semester (and in the semester before requesting leave) are now eligible for the new Paid Parenting Leave (PPL) benefit. This means that many of our part-time contingent faculty will have access to twelve weeks of fully-paid parenting leave, a benefit unmatched by any higher ed contract in the nation that we are aware of.

What will this mean for contingent faculty on our campus? For the first time in recent memory, contingent faculty will begin to see gains that meaningfully claw back against the two-tiered academic model of cheap, precarious instructional labor. There remains a long way to go before this divide is fully breached, but this contract makes significant headway. For example, the gains in health benefits eligibility and PPL make it clear that, like the rest of us, adjuncts deserve access to quality healthcare and compensated time to bond with new children. These humane benefits recognize the whole person, rather than simply treating contingent faculty as disposable labor.

Consider, too, the implications of the new part-time minimum salary. Not long ago, our campus was paying \$2800/course. By the end of this contract, that rate will escalate to at least \$6000/course. When our campus last provided complete institutional data, contingent faculty were teaching vastly more courses, seats, and general education seats than tenure-line faculty. For the first time in decades, the instructors who are doing the bulk of the undergrad teaching at our university will make something approaching a living wage.

Moreover, by the end of the contract, the gains in the part-time minimum salary mean that there is no meaningful cost difference between hiring

part-time and full-time Lecturers. The university will no longer have a financial incentive to hire an army of adjuncts to teach its students; it will be just as cost-effective to hire faculty into full-time, more stable jobs. We have always maintained that full-time positions are better for faculty, better for students, and better for the institution. Full-time lecturers do service, participate in curricular decisions, are more readily available to meet with students, and much more.

At doctoral degree-granting institutions such as Albany, the need to fund some graduate students will almost certainly mean the persistence of many part-time positions (however, imagine, if you can, a university in which we were able to significantly extend graduate student Assistantship funding to doctoral students, enabling them to complete degrees without having to become adjuncts!) In many programs, however, long-serving adjunct faculty have proven themselves to be among the most effective teachers at our university. Wherever possible, departments should advocate for moving qualified part-timers into full-time Lectureship lines. Efforts to convert part-time faculty to full-time positions should be a top priority for UUP Albany, the new Senate Committee on Contingent Faculty, and for departments as they develop their hiring plans.

The gains for contingent faculty in this contract come as the result of decades of smart, fierce organizing by contingent faculty both within and outside of UUP. These gains, in turn, give additional momentum to this increasingly powerful movement within higher education. We cannot let this momentum wane.

Organized, unionized contingent faculty, working together with tenure-line colleagues, should do everything in our power to ensure secure, well-compensated academic careers for university employees, and by extension, higher-quality education for our students. This will also strengthen faculty's place in shared governance, as more and more of our full-time

instructors are able to participate in the decisions that affect them and their students. This contract makes essential gains then, for contingents and, therefore, for the University itself; moreover it provides a roadmap for the future struggles that now must be waged.

How to Fight Workload Creep

Workload of UUP members varies considerably across the academic and professional realms. For professionals, duties and responsibilities are outlined in performance programs. For academics, duties and responsibilities are outlined in appointment letters or department and program norms.

UUP members' workload is based on the concept of a professional obligation. This stems from the SUNY Board of Trustees' definition of *Professional Obligation*: "The professional obligation of an employee consistent with the employee's academic rank or professional title, shall include teaching, research, University service and other duties and responsibilities required of the employee during the term of the employee's professional obligation" (Article XI, Title H, Sec. 2).

An employee's professional obligation is set at the time of hire. It can be changed by management at any time, under the concept of the *scripted exchange*, but if there is an increase in one area there must be a concomitant and equivalent decrease in another area. Think of it as a pie equaling 100%. If a piece is taken out another piece can be added, but another piece cannot be added on top of the 100% already existing. Nevertheless, members often report being asked to do more without either an increase in compensation or a reduction in other duties.

How do you address workload creep?

DO NOT ALLOW Extra work and volunteer work to become part of your regular workload.

At times, your supervisor will request that you take on **temporary** extra work above and beyond your professional obligation. This work should be considered voluntary because it is beyond your full professional obligation. It should be clearly identified as either **extra service** (with the appropriate paperwork and forms completed *prior* to the start of the work) or as **voluntary**. If the work is voluntary, it's crucial to document in writing that the assignment is being done on a voluntary basis, so it does not become part of your workload. Documentation can take any form that is appropriate for the position that you hold including emails, correspondence to and from your supervisor and/or the department Chair or Dean. The most important part of the correspondence is that you do not consider the work as part of your professional obligation and that you will stop doing it at a specific date or only during a specific period of time. This process should be collegial and interactive with your supervisor or appropriate administrator.

Also talk to your colleagues within the department to discuss workload issues and make sure everyone is on the same page, because if some people are willing to take on more work without appropriate compensation or other reductions in their duties, the expansion of work becomes the new normal and it makes it more difficult for other people to stand up and fight for the challenges that face everyone.

Document your workload and workload increases.

Write it down. If you and others are being asked to do more work in specific areas in your department or being asked to complete projects that must be done due to state reporting requirements or university deadlines,

or do the work of people who are no longer employed at the university, how are you documenting it?

The best way to identify extra work is in relation to your **workload in previous years**. Academics should indicate the additional work in their FAR. Professionals should have the additional work documented in their evaluation but **not added** to their performance programs. If the supervisor will not include it in the evaluation, the employee should write a response to the evaluation that includes the additional work. This is especially important if the additional work can be the basis for requesting a contractual salary increase or promotion under Appendix A-28 of the New York state-UUP contract (CBA) for professional employees.

Once it is added to a performance program it becomes a part of the new **permanent** professional obligation and the baseline of the obligation has increased! This is only beneficial if the employee qualifies for a promotion or salary increase and is actively pursuing one. Remember a promise of a salary increase by a supervisor is **not** a salary increase.

What about working above a professional obligation and asking for comp time?

This type of comp time is addressed in the appendices of the CBA in A-29. Some employees are familiar with working on a holiday and getting a comp day which they have to use within a year; this day also appears on the menu in the time and attendance system.

This comp time is a little bit different. One, it is not in the time and attendance system and is "off the books." It is an agreement between you and your supervisor for time that you are owed for working above and beyond your professional obligation. It is not necessarily an hour for hour

exchange. This is something you would negotiate with your supervisor *before you take on the responsibilities* that led to the comp time.

How do you keep track of this type of comp time? Any communications that documents the activity and the amount of time the employee has earned will suffice. Also, the use of comp time is to be requested and *mutually* agreed upon. In this way it is like vacation time because it requires mutual agreement. You cannot call in and use a comp day, like you might call in sick. In Appendix A-29 of the contract there is a sample communication between a supervisor and an employee that outlines this type of communication.

Some offices will mutually agree to a specific day within the next work week to adjust a schedule. Some will establish a rolling tally of time the employee can use at their discretion, with supervisor approval. Both of these are acceptable. What is not acceptable is being told or being scheduled when you have to use comp time that you have earned or being told that it will expire during a specific time frame. Another important consideration is that comp time does not have a cash value until negotiated and you cannot cash it in when you leave the employ of the university. Consider this and use time that may expire under contractual terms prior to using comp time.

Employees are considered present and fulfilling their professional obligation while they are using their comp time, which is why the employee and the supervisor should both track the total amount of comp time earned and used.

If you are accruing comp time on a regular basis for the same type of work, consider asking for extra service. Extra Service is a stipend. It is also for temporary work. If you and your supervisor are contemplating using Extra Service, make the arrangements in writing

PRIOR to taking on the additional work (use the UP-8 form). Extra service is generally for work performed by employees at their own campus that is different from or in addition to an individual's professional obligations. This work may be performed provided that the additional services do not interfere with the individual's professional responsibilities. Do NOT accept a promise of being paid in the future or a potential promotion. Although well meaning, these offer no guarantees and are not binding.

What if our department is really understaffed and somebody has to help out?

You can ask for Also Receives (ALR) which is a temporary stipend that covers work that is in addition to, and substantially increases or expands the scope of the employee's normal professional responsibilities, but that **may be completed during their regular professional obligation** (although additional work hours may be necessary). **Written approval must be obtained prior to the start of the assignment.** The assignment is usually limited in nature or may be aligned with a responsibility where the additional compensation will end when the assignment and/or funding ends. Taking on additional (typically higher level) **assignments for a limited time in the case of employee turnover or leave of absence** (for example, the Director of Student Accounts leaves and the Assistant Director is asked to take on some or all of those duties while a search is being performed). Or performing additional assignments that substantially increase or expand the scope of the employee's responsibilities, are often anticipated to be **temporary in nature or for a specific project**, and will conclude when the assignment and/or funding ends (for example, a faculty member having additional duties in an administrative role during a program review or an employee's scope of responsibility being substantially increased due to a long-term absence of a co-worker with similar responsibilities). The campus has a documented process for review and approval on an ALR specific form.

What if none of that works?

REMOVE OTHER DUTIES

If the Supervisor is interested in adding new duties, and the new duties are meant to be potentially **permanent**; and **the University does not want to provide a promotion or salary increase***; then the best way to handle taking on new duties is to remove some existing duties that are equivalent is through the scripted exchange, “right sizing the pie.” This can be a challenging conversation, but also a productive one. It helps the dept/unit define what are the most important duties to keep attending to, and which ones (given limited staffing) need to be dropped for the time being. Starting the new duties and dropping some old duties should ideally be done at the same time. Put it in writing.

CHANGE THE FREQUENCY OF ATTENDING TO DUTIES

If the Supervisor does not want to remove any duties from your professional obligation, then another way to ensure that there is no increase in workload is to change the frequency that you are expected to attend to a range of duties. Perhaps moving to four times a year (instead of monthly) for one duty, or moving to monthly from another duty (that used to be weekly). Put it in writing.

IDENTIFY PRIMARY, SECONDARY & TERTIARY

If the University is reluctant to remove duties (which is ideal) in a context where they intend to add new duties, then at the very least the supervisor and subordinate should meet to identify some duties in the professional obligation as primary in importance. And other duties can be identified as secondary or tertiary. Put it in writing.

SAY NO, NO, NO.

If your supervisor wants to add new duties and is unwilling to make any other adjustments, consult with UUP. If the University is simply adding duties without making any other adjustments, it may be a unilateral increase in your workload. If so, UUP wants to discuss the situation with you. The first course of action is to review the specific content and circumstances of the employee's professional obligation. We would review all the above options, seeking adjustments in a professional obligation to address a workload increase at the department level or above, or exploring possibilities for extra service and other compensation. If UUP is contacted by a group of members because of a workload issue that affects the entire academic department or professional unit, a meeting can be held to explore the problem and decide the appropriate course of action.

When increases in workload at the individual or department/unit level are not successfully resolved through informal efforts, UUP may consider filing an Improper Practice with New York State's Public Employment Relations Board (PERB). Workload problems should be brought to the chapter for review as soon as possible.

*A-28 Outlines the process to seek a Salary increase and/or a Promotion for Professional employees

* * *

Questions, Concern, Comments?

Email the editor at
pstasi27@gmail.com

* * *