



**United University Professions  
Albany Chapter**

**Labor-Management Notes**

**October 26, 2020**

**Attendance:** (L) Aaron Major, Zakhar Berkovich, Paul Stasi, Michelle Couture, Maureen Seidel, Greta Petry, Anne Wolfe

(M) **Brian Selchick**, William Hedberg, Keiffer Peralta, **Steven Galime**, JoAnne Bocchino

1. Increased Surveillance Testing Protocols: We applaud the campus for engaging in more frequent surveillance testing for Covid-19. We note, however, that it is not clear how the plan to test all employees once per week fits with our members' current Telecommuting Arrangements and the frequency with which they are on campus. We would like to discuss how these new procedures will work with the campus's commitment to keep the density of employees on campus as low as possible, and how we can effectively communicate this to our members.

*The new guidelines have been shared with the campus via email on October 23. It is now understood that UUP members will need to submit their tests only once per week preferably on the day when they are assigned. However, if the member does not come on specified day, the sample can be dropped off on the next day when they are coming. Campus does not want members coming to campus solely to drop off the test. It is fine to drop it off on the next day that a member is coming to campus. If the email notification is being sent too frequently, the members can reach out to the number and explain that they come to campus infrequently. Another note was made that the sample collection should be done only on the day that sample will be dropped off. The sample can last for a few days, so it is ok to drop it off on Friday for Monday's pick up. UUP members can pick up the kit on the same day, register it, and drop it off. There are 9 drop off locations and they are open during normal business hours, however, drop off in Campus Center open until 11:00 PM.*

2. Covid-19 Issues in the University Libraries: We have been approached by several of our members employed in the University Libraries who have raised issues with respect to the campus's Covid-19 procedures and policies.

- a. Per the new “Pause” procedures circulated by VP Wilcox, many library employees are now being designated as “essential employees.” We believe that this designation violates the spirit of Appendix A-33 of the Agreement which allows the campus to designate employees as “essential.”

*The “essential employee” designation is a managerial right, and management determined that library staff should be considered essential. The library chooses to designate the staff who may be needed during the “Pause”. Being deemed essential does not preclude members from maintaining the telecommuting agreement. The library staff that needs to report to staff circulation desk, restock the shelves, and to provide supervision to the CSEA staff. Management will reach out to the Dean and supervisors and to clarify the definition of the “essential” so that it can be cleared to the employees. Management noted that the status quo in terms of telecommuting policy and those who are already reporting in person will remain in place unless specific situation will occur.*

- b. Libraries staff in both the Main and Science libraries have observed many students in the building (reports of one third to one half of students), often in small groups, without masks. We believe that the campus needs to develop a clear procedure to enforce compliance with the mask mandate for the libraries.

*Management reported that the library makes regular announcements reminding users of the restrictions due to COVID and about that masks must be worn at all times covering both nose and mouth. Only one chair can be at one table. No food or beverages in library. The classified staff conduct routine checks for compliance. They observe and report. That information goes to the Community Expectation Group that analyze the data and make changes, if appropriate. The front line and supervisors can ask students to comply with the rules or leave the library. IF student does not comply, the UPD is being called for assistance. UPD also does regular walkthroughs of library. The walkthroughs have been increased recently. The members are provided with PPE. The signage has been increased as well as Plexiglas has been broadened. The materials can be self-checked out with computerized machine. Library has hosted a Town Hall. All returns are done via book bin. Student Assistant positions reduced from 50 to 8. No cash transactions any longer. There is an increase in traffic in the library. When it is necessary, the buildings are being closed, for example Science Library was closed around 6:00PM when staffing is insufficient.*

- c. Some members report issues with scheduling and staffing. There appear to be issues where the scheduling of service hours is not calibrated to staffing levels affected by the need to reduce employee density on campus.

*There are competing needs: there is a need for more staff, but at the same time there is a need to reduce population density. Management is trying to sort between the need to add more staff to assure equitable distribution of workload at the same time keeping minimum density.*

3. Budget report follow-up: We appreciated the opportunity to hear more about our campus's budget situation from VP Foreman. We did have a few follow up questions and requests for clarity on some aspects of the presentation.

- a. The budget model for future years anticipates 3-4% annual increases in total expenditures (p. 18 of presentation). Given all of the cuts and other cost savings that the campus plans on implementing, why are expenditures not projected to decrease?

*The expenditures continue to increase because the placeholder was added for the contractual increases and undergraduate scholarships. It the campus expectation that those increases will be paid out at some point. But the reductions in the expenditures are not high enough to offset by the cost savings.*

- b. What are the specific units, or functional areas, where we are expecting staffing reductions due to retirements and leaving lines unfilled?

*Management is working on the spreadsheet and information will be shared for 2020-2021. There is not enough information for 2021-2022. The list will be done by division.*

- c. What impact will there be on funding for graduate students' lines (GAships, etc.)?

*The university is trying to protect as much GAsing as possible. It is a substantial account because covers both tuition and assistantship. There may be some reduction because some of the international studies did not come to US, but that may mean that additional reductions may come from other areas.*

- d. During the presentation VP Foreman indicated that, currently, the campus was looking at generating savings without layoffs or retrenchments. However, we know of several recent non-renewals in our own bargaining unit and one retrenchment. Can the campus explain this discrepancy?

*Management noted that the only retrenchment/layoff was specific to the 2020-2021 year only. That retrenchment was under discussion pre-*

*COVID and is not caused by COVID. It was also noted that a lot of them were in the works prior to COVID and were part of the efficiencies structures.*

Additional Items:

DSI:

*The guidelines are being finalized. There is recommendation is to offer as much time for completion as possible before recommendations will be sent to the upper echelons. The date will be 12/4/2020 for departments to make recommendations. The guidelines will be the same as last year. It is critical to be prepared for the distribution of funds. UUP Statewide is doing analysis on the compression money.*

Academic Workload:

*The review of the “six bin” is still on going. Some of the categories are more closely related to the School of Public Health, but need some editing to allow for CAS and other professional schools to fit better. Management will get the draft to UUP chapter in a short while.*