



Welcome!

This “Forum” intends to be just that, a place where members can learn about their union, and contribute to the larger debate about unions and their role in a working democracy. Join us in these important discussions!

Table of Contents

Equitable Contribution	1
Editor's Column	2
Corporatization	
by the Numbers	2
Milestones	3
Selfless Professionals	3
Academic Affairs	4
Are you being served?	5
Performance Programs	6
The End of a Program	7
Total Surveillance	8
Chapter Hosts Open Forum	11
Carbon Footprints	12
Open SUNY Fact Sheet	13-17

Equitable Contribution

Bret Benjamin, President

Beginning last semester and escalating over winter break, the chapter officers were approached by a number of academic members concerned about possible efforts under the aegis of an “equitable contribution” workload plan to raise teaching loads for tenured faculty whose research output had, for whatever reasons, flagged. Faculty were most vocal about what appeared to be a new and aggressive initiative within the College of Arts and Sciences, although faculty in other colleges approached us with related concerns about review mechanisms being contemplated in their schools.

The union takes such matters with the utmost seriousness. Workload is a subject of mandatory negotiation, and no increase in workload can be unilaterally imposed by management. We have reprinted Ivan Steen’s article on the O’Leary Memo in this issue of *The Forum* to clarify the union’s position on academic workload.

Beyond enforcing the contractual protections, however, the Union is committed to promoting sound, smart, constructive policies that work in the interests of both our members and the university. We embrace our identity as employees at a public *research* university, and welcome the chance to develop not only this or that initiative or project, but also the structural conditions to encourage, value, and support faculty research at UAlbany. In this effort, boosting the quality and impact of faculty research should be our top priority. Secondly, though still importantly, we should strive to raise the research output of both individual faculty and the campus as a whole. These are worthy objectives, goals that we at UUP fully endorse.

We believe, however, that such an objective cannot be achieved through the heavy-handed threat of punitive measures or with one-size-fits-all assessments. While the lore of the oft-cited “deadwood faculty member” who has abandoned research (or teaching or service, though these are less frequently flagged) may have a kernel of truth, these mythical figures amount to a tiny fraction of the campus’ faculty. Neither the explanation nor the solutions to Albany’s comparatively poor research ranking among other SUNY research centers will be found by targeting this small group of individual faculty. As one member wisely put it in an email to us, “one way of glossing over structural or systemic problems and inequities is to focus solely on the individual.” If we are seeking to raise the research profile of the university, this member rightly suggests, we must approach the problem structurally and not individually. This means identifying and addressing the barriers to faculty research productivity (chief among them time, exacerbated by the relative dearth of full-time, tenure-track faculty

See: **Equitable Contribution**, page 4

■ Editor's Column

The O'Leary Memo and Academic Workload

Ivan D. Steen

President, UUP Albany Chapter, 1989-2001

Vice-President for Academic, UUP Albany Chapter, 2001-11

Teaching faculty, especially in the College of Arts and Sciences, often are told that their teaching obligation is governed by the "O'Leary Memo," which states that three courses each semester is the normal teaching load. What is the "O'Leary Memo"? What are its origins? Are we bound by its provisions?

On May 31, 1989, the day before I officially became president of the UUP chapter on the Albany campus, I met with then President Vincent O'Leary at his request. At that meeting, he gave me a copy of what he stated was the university's "Policy on Faculty Teaching, Service, and Research," which was dated May 10, 1989. Among other things, that document indicated that faculty were responsible for teaching three courses each semester. I pointed out to President O'Leary that workload, which includes teaching, was a subject for mandatory negotiation under the terms of the Taylor Law, the law governing NYS public employee collective bargaining. His policy, I told him, was issued unilaterally, and did not result from any negotiations with UUP, the sole bargaining agent for SUNY faculty. The policy, therefore, was not binding on anyone. President O'Leary agreed. He told me that he had been asked by SUNY system administration to provide them with a statement on faculty workload at the Albany campus. After surveying faculty teaching, it appeared to him that most faculty were responsible for three courses each semester, hence the number used in his policy statement. He assured me he had no intention of altering any faculty member's teaching obligation. I made it clear to him that if the policy resulted in an increase in the number of classes taught by anyone, he would be hearing from UUP. Since then, I have made it a practice regularly to remind management that the "O'Leary Memo" was never negotiated, and, therefore, was not binding in any way. Campus administrators have been repeatedly informed of UUP's position.

Lacking a negotiated agreement spelling out any details of academic workload, how are the teaching obligations of faculty determined? The answer is past practice. That is, if someone typically has taught two courses each semester, for example, then requiring that person to teach an additional course would be an increase in workload. The only way management could do that would be if they reduced another part of the professional obligation (*i.e.*: service or research) by an equal amount. Components of the professional obligation may be rearranged, but the total workload may not be increased. Remember, when it comes to your workload, you are bound by your union contract, not by a pronouncement from a university administrator; and your contract does not indicate how many courses you should teach. If you are told that the "O'Leary Memo" requires you to teach one or more additional courses, contact the UUP Chapter Office as soon as possible.

Corporatization: By the Numbers

- #1** U.S. global ranking in Gross Domestic Product.
- #1** U.S. global ranking in number of billionaires.
- 34th** U.S. ranking in recent study of 35 Industrialized nations' child poverty rate.
- 73%** Increase in number of homeless children in US since 2007 recession.
- 11%** Percentage of children who lacked access to adequate food in 2012.
- >50%** Percentage of black children who are poor in KY, MI, MS, OH, OR, WI.
- 50%** Percentage of states that have black childhood poverty rates over 40%.
- 2.5x** Rate at which US states, on average, spend more to incarcerate prisoners than to educate public school students.
- 16** The number of child care workers that could be funded by what the US loses every minute in federal corporate tax breaks.
- 220,000** Children currently on US waiting lists for child care assistance.
- 17,500** Number of children that could be enrolled for a year in fully funded Head Start programs for the cost of 1 F-35 fighter jet.
- \$500B** Estimated cost of childhood poverty in the form of increased costs for education, health care, criminal justice and lost productivity.
- 48%** Percentage of nation's public school children who qualify for subsidized school meals.
- 85** The number of people, cited by OxFam, who own as much wealth as the bottom half of the globe's population (aprox. 3.5 billion people).

Milestones 02/07/14

Professional Vice President's Report
Thomas Hoey

After spending Super Bowl weekend at the Albany Hilton for the UUP DA, where among other things we heard great speeches from NYS AFL/CIO President Mario Cilento, NYS Comptroller Tom DiNapoli and AFT President Randi Weingarten discussing the plight of workers and the declining middle class, I was going to stay home this weekend and watch the Olympics with my family. I was shocked not by the brilliant pageantry of the opening ceremony nor by the sheer awe of the snowboarding and ski jumps, but by several of the corporate commercials that aired between events. The first one was the new Walmart commercial called "I Am a Factory," which can be seen here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7OQcoDQg3-o>. This is the first in a series; there are two more in the campaign called "Working Man" and "Lights On." While it is pleasing to know that Walmart is pledging to spend \$250 Billion to re-open American Factories, I wonder what type of pay and benefits they will they offer. We know that many of Walmart's employees use food stamps to keep their families fed and do not have health care, so what will their suppliers offer? Time will tell.

The new GE commercial "What my Mom Does at GE" –which can be seen here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Co0qkWRqTdM> --is even more shocking for us in the Capital Region. It makes no mention of the closing of the Fort Edward Plant or the PCB pollution of the Hudson River. Instead the ad shows how good GE is to the environment and the great innovations in medicine they are making. Not to be cynical, but with all these new medical devices has the cost of health care gone down? The unfair distribution of wealth and the discrepancy of wages are most likely behind the wave of corporate America's new ad campaigns showing the benefits that they bestow on us every day. Hopefully though, people will research what is being said to verify the validity of their arguments.

Also note: For the coming semester the chapter is planning three workshops; "On call and Recall-what you need to know"; "Civility in the Workplace" and "Programs and Evaluations." Look for emails with the dates and times of these events.

On the Selflessness of Our Professionals

Bret Benjamin

Each semester at a campus our size, we run into unfortunate situations where a member needs to take an extended leave due to illness, family obligations, or some other emergency, but does not have sufficient sick time or vacation accruals to cover the time away and remain on payroll. As you can imagine, these are extremely stressful times for the individuals involved.

A provision in our contract (Appendix 45) allows employees to voluntarily contribute vacation accruals to fellow employees in such situations. It's a wonderful provision, and it has proven enormously helpful to members in need. But because of the way the State defines their work obligation, academic employees only accrue sick time, which is not transferrable to other employees, and not vacation time. Hence academics are prevented from volunteering accrued time to colleagues.

This means that whenever an emergency of the sort I describe above arises, we can appeal only to our professional members, asking for them to volunteer vacation accruals. And you know what? **They come through every single time.** Whether the employee in need is an academic or a professional, whether it's someone they know or someone they've never met, the professionals on our campus always lend a hand.

So I take this opportunity to extend my sincere, personal thanks to those professional employees in our union who generously contribute vacation time to their colleagues in need. It's a wonderful act of union solidarity. You have my admiration and appreciation. The campus is a far richer place because of such everyday acts of kindness and collectivity.

From Academic Affairs

Academic Vice President's Report

Barry Trachtenberg

Over the past few months, I have spoken with faculty from several departments within the College of Arts and Sciences who believed they were targeted by a new mandate in the name of "equitable contribution" (and who feared they would see their teaching loads increase). Through recent conversations with CAS, we have been assured that the annual evaluation of faculty workload is not new, nor is it intended to be punitive or hostile. However, something in the fall semester *did* change, if only in how the message was conveyed to those Associate Professors whose records were called into question. Rather than being invited for conversations to explore ways to increase or accelerate their research, many colleagues expressed that they had felt bullied and unfairly singled out by administrators who were seeking to make an example of them.

Despite assurances from CAS, the faculty with whom I spoke remain angry. They are angry because they feel that their contribution to the university is unrecognized and undervalued. Among those targeted for what seemed to be a new evaluation were faculty who gave much of the past decade or more to university service. They directed departments and programs, were widely recognized as excellent teachers, and had active scholarly or creative portfolios. As word began to spread of what seemed to be an initiative that would place Associate Professors under a new evaluative process, many colleagues in CAS questioned whether, in their efforts to be good university citizens, they had taken on too many service obligations and were therefore setting themselves up to be counted among the "unproductive" members of the faculty down the road.

This mishandling of what could have been a fruitful opportunity for professional development only gives further credence to the findings in the COACHE survey on Faculty Satisfaction that was recently released by the Provost's office. This survey, conducted in 2011, revealed that there are deep fissures between faculty and senior

administration. Relative to peer institutions around the country, UAlbany faculty ranked as "high" their level of satisfaction with their union-negotiated benefits, tenure processes, and departmental relationships. Less positively ranked were many of those categories that affect research productivity, such as research, teaching, and service obligations as well as resources, mentoring, and deans. Ranked lower still were faculty members' assessments of UAlbany's personal and family leave policies, appreciation and recognition, and the university's senior leadership. These findings, when coupled with the recent events outlined above, reinforce the argument that conversations and expectations for review, tenure, and promotion are best begun within departments, who collectively have the expertise to establish disciplinary standards. New mandates for increased productivity, when brought down on the heads of professors, will only backfire and create a more embittered faculty who will be more disaffected with senior administrators and less likely to give up their time to university service.

We are only now emerging from an extended period of economic contraction which was used to justify unwise administrative decisions and which resulted in great damage to the university's academic mission and reputation. We are faced with a hostile state government that insists on forcing so-called "deficit reduction days" (furloughs) upon state workers, denies faculty members basic cost-of-living wage increases, and raises our health care costs. We have no family leave policy at our university beyond what is written into law. We have no formal mentoring program for Assistant and Associate Professors. There is little if any assistance for faculty in overseeing research grants. Our class sizes are growing. Library resources diminish every year. Expectations for review, tenure, promotion, and sabbaticals are ever-increasing. These are the structural barriers that need to be at the front and center of any conversation about faculty research and productivity.

Finally, it should be remembered that the university relies on the good will of academics (as well as professional staff) to volunteer for many, many assignments that go beyond our basic work obligations. We are petitioned to donate money; we

are asked to chair departments and run academic programs; we sit on committees far from our field of expertise to enhance student life, the environment, campus safety, and diversity. Most of this work gets little or no compensation. Even in those rare moments when compensation is offered, it does not match the increase in workload, and it does not help us in our reviews, tenure, promotion, and sabbatical requests. This work is voluntary and done out of our concern for the university, our colleagues, our disciplines, and for our students. Unless something is done to improve the climate and to support faculty to meet their research goals, I expect that much of this charitable work will come to an end.

Are you Being Served? Professional Concerns about OPENSUNY

Marty Manjak

In Chancellor Zimpher's recent 2014 State of the University address (which I urge all readers to review), she devotes much attention to OpenSUNY, the on-line initiative intended to offer degree programs to non-traditional, as well as traditional students.¹ To support students in their efforts to complete an entire degree program on-line, she offers a novel concept: the student concierge.

OpenSUNY students will be supported by a student concierge — a 24/7 helpdesk with tutoring, mentoring, degree planning, and advisement services, as well as financial aid information. We will also engage in recruiting more students, focused on the population of 6.9 million undereducated adult New Yorkers.

This statement should raise some eyebrows, particularly among professional employees.

First, I think it's fair to assume that students who will avail themselves of this concierge service will only be nominally affiliated with an existing SUNY campus. That is, they will not have physical access to these support services in the manner that

students enrolled in traditional campuses do. This raises some interesting questions about which campus will have oversight over these students' degree programs and the fulfillment of their academic requirements.

Next, the range of services and hours of operation proposed by the Chancellor is reminiscent of a 24-hour call center. One can't help but wonder where such an operation will be located and who will staff it. It may be that employees who act in the capacity of concierge will work out of their existing offices, but be tied together via a call management system which will be needed to answer, queue, and deliver calls to the appropriate specialist. If text or chat based communications are an option, this adds yet another technical requirement.

Professional employees with highly developed, specialized knowledge and experience will be needed to provide these services. Advisement and degree planning will present some special challenges if the degree program is cobbled together from courses offered by multiple SUNY campuses. Concierges dispensing financial aid information are in a similar situation. Will on-line degree programs have their own set of financial aid packages independent of individual SUNY campuses? Or will financial aid be drawn from each campus that contributes a course to the program?

The concierge cohort will need access to student records. Again, this will require a centralized repository of academic records to allow the various support staff access without needing to have account privileges on various, individual, enterprise enrollment systems (e.g., PeopleSoft, Banner).

Mentoring and tutoring present their own challenges. Tutors will need access to work samples, or students must be given some method of submitting assignments to tutors for their suggestions and evaluations. All this is going to be available to students 24//7, presumably because that's when students will be interacting with the teaching material; another clue to the Chancellor's vision for how OpenSUNY is going to operate, i.e., asynchronously.

All-in-all, the Chancellor's plan is an ambitious one that should garner the attention of professional

¹http://www.suny.edu/chancellor/speeches_presentations/SoU2014.cfm

employees. Providing services 24/7 will necessitate adjustments to professional obligations and performance programs, perhaps adding a salary differential for work during evening or night hours. A technical infrastructure for handling calls and providing access to financial aid information, academic records, degree program requirements, and course work will be needed to facilitate communication between concierges and students, as well as among the concierges, since students will not be dealing with the same employee each time they call. As with many of the elements associated with OpenSUNY, the details are left to our imaginations...and negotiations.

Performance Programs: The Importance of Employee Participation

Greta Petry, Grievance Chair

Each year your supervisor is required by the State/UUP agreement to provide you with a written performance program outlining the duties and responsibilities to be achieved during the coming year. At the end of that year, you are required by the same agreement to be evaluated, in writing, on how well you met those goals. Supervisors may not be familiar with this process. You can help your supervisor and advocate for yourself by learning what the process involves.

It is the policy of SUNY, contained in the agreement, that employees are evaluated on the duties and responsibilities outlined in their current performance program. You cannot be evaluated without a written performance program. For example, if your performance program was written five years ago and ended four years ago, you can't be evaluated.

Be aware that if you want a promotion in the long run, your performance program should be used to document a permanent and significant increase in your responsibilities. The contract anticipates that duties can change; therefore, a performance program can be amended. For example, if you agree to do two jobs because your colleague left and they

are not replacing him, you do yourself an injustice if you fail to get those new duties added to your performance program. You will also want your evaluation to account for these changes and for the success you've achieved in those new duties.

Make sure the time lines for achieving your objectives are reasonable. If additional duties are added to your performance program, ask for others to be removed, or ask for a salary increase. It's important to know that a performance program is designed to be a consultative process between supervisor and employee, so you should know what is expected of you. Throughout the year, your supervisor should let you know which goals you are meeting and which need more work so you are not taken by surprise during the evaluation.

As your performance program is being developed:

- * Ask questions and request clarification on anything that you are unclear about.
- * If you are assigned a new task for which you have no training, ask that training be included.
- * Know who your immediate supervisor is.

This is the person responsible for writing your program and evaluating you.

Avoid accepting the following:

- * Statements of duties that are not described, such as "any duties as assigned." You cannot be evaluated on something you are not specifically told about in writing.
- * Duties or responsibilities that you have no authority or resources to carry out.
- * Duties or responsibilities that are controlled by someone else.

Call us if you are asked to sign a "backdated" performance program, one that says you were retroactively responsible for duties that you were not informed of. Call us if you are retroactively assigned secondary sources, i.e., colleagues whose opinion of your work will factor into whether you get a positive or negative evaluation.

You *do* need to sign the performance program, but your signature only acknowledges that you received it. You can write "signed under protest" or "signature does not constitute agreement - I will be writing a response," should your supervisor add duties that seem way out of your job title or for

which you will not be trained. If you object to any part of your performance program, you should attach a written statement to it within 10 days of receipt. Call Grievance Chair Greta Petry at 437-4986 to review a draft of your response.

If changes occur in your duties throughout the year, you can be directed to perform them, but you cannot be evaluated on them. If you receive an evaluation that has "Unsatisfactory" checked off, you may, upon written request, ask for a review by the Committee on Professional Evaluation. You should also seek a committee review if the characterization summary is "satisfactory" but the content of the evaluation is overwhelmingly unsatisfactory. To appeal an unsatisfactory evaluation, you must notify the chair of the Committee on Professional Evaluation, your supervisor, and the college president or designee, in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of the evaluation. Your UUP chapter leaders can guide you through this process. Do not let an "unsatisfactory" evaluation go by without contesting it.

Source: UUP Guide for Professional Employees

The End of a Program: Reflections on Deactivation

Eloise Briere, Asst. VP for Academics

The Provost's certified letters arrived in mid-summer 2011. Eight months earlier, on Friday, October 2010, the administration had deactivated the French B. A., M.A. and Ph.D.. The Provost had determined the Program's termination date would be May 2012, never offering guidance to faculty about how students would complete their respective programs within that time frame. Now, the blow of her unexpected letters made all seven faculty -from the newly tenured to the full professors- profoundly vulnerable. Dean Wulfert's plan, the letter stated, would maintain the French minor, staffed by "one full-time faculty member." All remaining courses would now be taught by "part time lecturers," enabling President Philip to assert that language instruction was still available at UAlbany, in the hope of assuaging the thousands of

irate protestors on campus, across the US and abroad who had expressed their profound disappointment with his actions.

The stated objective in the Provost's letter was "to reduce and realign the University's allocation of resources." It was not based on the professional judgment of language experts or the interest of students and it resulted in a dramatic reconfiguration of the Department of Languages Literatures and Cultures, cutting into the curriculums of the French, Italian, and Russian programs, leaving only that of Spanish intact. Adding insult to injury, the Provost stipulated that faculty were to respond to her request for credentials within a 2-week deadline: "[...] present your credentials and qualifications for consideration to perform the duties and responsibilities for appointments in other languages... in the Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures." Each faculty member to whom she wrote had more than enough credentials and qualifications to teach in other departments, where, in some cases they already taught, or had been invited to join. Nevertheless, French faculty were not to be allowed outside of the confines of LLC, no matter the potential contribution of their expertise to UAlbany.

As she had eight months before, the Provost invited faculty to consider "transition opportunities" including retirement. The justification? Low French enrollments. But the Provost had been misinformed, as MLA data demonstrate. At the time of deactivation the French program at UAlbany had the highest enrollments of any campus in the SUNY system in 2009 (Albany=437, Binghamton=217, Buffalo=396, Stony Brook=296). In the period 2002-09 its enrollments grew from 291 to 437 whereas, for example, Buffalo declined from 458 to 396, and Stony Brook grew much more modestly from 230 to 296. In the face of such evidence, on May 29, 2012 at a joint meeting hosted by SUNY Vice Provost David Lavalee and the MLA, the Vice Provost was prompted to publicly state that the manner in which UAlbany enacted the deactivations was "regrettable" and that he did not want to see this happen again.

Where are they now? Dean Wulfert's "plan" radically altered employment circumstances for all

seven faculty members. It was, however, only partially implemented, thanks to the departure of five LLC faculty members. Three finally ceded to the offers of 'transitions to retirement' made by the Provost's representative; two moved to other universities. The two faculty members who remain at UAlbany report that French still manages to thrive, with 100 minors, several interdisciplinary majors and high enrollments in all courses. To their chagrin, the new minor does not enable students who come to the University with advanced standing in French to minor in the language. Both remaining Professors have seen their teaching and research drastically affected. Teaching has shifted to more general topics at the introductory level and no longer includes advanced undergraduate and graduate courses in their fields of expertise. One Professor adds that the deactivations have left her *with a permanent sense of insecurity*.

Two former colleagues heeded the Provost's advice to seek employment elsewhere and are now teaching at top NRC-ranked schools. After giving up tenure at Iowa State to come to Albany, Brett Bowles, tenured in 2009 at Albany, accepted the position of Associate Professor of film and cultural history in the Department of French and Italian at the Indiana University, Bloomington. David Wills was invited to join the leading scholars at Brown University. Reflecting on the actions of the administration, David writes of *the absolute break in my trust in the institution* which, as for Brett Bowles, disrupted not only his partner's career at UAlbany -- Branka Arsić, formerly of UAlbany's English department, is now at Columbia University-- but family life in general.

The three Professors who went on to retire are still directing dissertations and serving on their colleagues' remaining Ph.D. committees. Their research programs continue as before. Mary Beth Winn reports that, among other projects, she has a contract with Garnier for a critical edition of the first printed edition (1489) of the prose *Tristan*, and is co-editing with musicologists 2 other collections of 16th c. chansons. Historian, Jean-Francois Brière notes that his two remaining Ph.D. students were selected from an international pool of scholars to participate in Oxford University's summer seminar

on France's troubled youth of immigrant descent. The first of his two-volume project on the diplomatic relations between Haiti's Black leadership and France, now published, his work on volume II continues apace. In June, Eloise Briere will be reporting on her work on French colonial ventriloquism at the next international meeting of the French Colonial History Society in Cambodia; she continues to be involved in the Albany chapter of UUP and is a state-wide delegate. All three miss the teaching that once defined their semesters and the interaction and collaboration with colleagues at UAlbany. Speaking for all three, Mary Beth Winn says: *What deactivation did was deprive me of teaching and sharing my interests with students and Albany colleagues, but fortunately professional collegiality and support is strong outside UA*. Deactivation revealed the fragile and illusory nature of tenure that all French faculty worked hard to obtain. In this way, it provides a sobering lesson for us all.

Total Surveillance: Why you Might Have Something to Hide

Marty Manjak

The NSA's total surveillance operations, which consist of not just billions of phone records...daily, but every type of personal interaction that occurs in electronic form, presents a mortal threat to our democratic society. The breadth and extent of the agency's ability to collect, monitor, and review the activities of our lives is unprecedented and represents a despot's wet dream.

Every totalitarian state has understood the importance of keeping track of its citizens, and relied on its ability to do so to exercise and maintain its domination over them. A short list of 20th century dictatorships will confirm this: The Soviet Union (KGB), the Shah's Iran (SAVAK), East Germany (Stasi), Nazi Germany (Gestapo). But the practice is by no means new. All rulers recognize that knowledge is power, and intimate knowledge of both your friends and enemies is the best

knowledge you can have if you want to keep a firm hold on power.

Those who fail to understand the nature of the relationship between knowledge and power have dismissed the recent revelations about the extent of the NSA's spying, claiming they have nothing to hide, and therefore have no reason to fear or object to the government's collection and examination of their phone records, emails, credit card purchases, social network activity, and Internet searches and site visits.

What they don't appreciate is they won't be making that decision. It will be a bureaucrat, most likely an employee of one of the many private contractors earning millions in public funds to spy on you, who will decide whether you're worth investigating. And whether you are worth investigating will not be determined by your activities alone, but those of the people in your email contacts list, or your Facebook friends, and all of their contacts and friends.

The NSA is particularly interested in establishing associations, and its legal mandate allows it to pursue communications on a target within two degrees (or hops) of separation for content and three for metadata (date, time, duration, source and destination numbers). The Associated Press did the math: "If the average person called 40 unique people, three-hop analysis would allow the government to mine the records of 2.5 million Americans when investigating one suspected terrorist." Supposedly innocuous associations, such as membership in a not-for-profit, or activities like contributing money to an organization, or writing a letter to the editor, may be viewed with heightened suspicion in periods of political tension or instability.

If history has demonstrated that knowledge is power, it has also proven, in Lord Acton's famous dictum, that power corrupts. The possession of such a vast array of information that allows a government, or person, the ability to hone in on an individual and know everything there is to know about that person's life, will inevitably be exploited. Countless human temptation myths have illuminated this sad truth.

The defenders of the government's spying have vigorously claimed that it is necessary to prevent

another tragedy like the terrorist attacks in 2001 (while lacking any proof of such claims), and have characterized the disclosures of the surveillance programs as treasonous. I would personally prefer a state where the government has to defend its actions in public to an informed citizenry rather than one where individual citizens have to defend their activities to a government, acting in secret, that pries into every corner of their lives.

Equitable Contribution

from page 1

lines); understanding the differential workloads that faculty carry (including the role of contingent faculty in our university's instruction); respecting the disciplinary-specific and individually-specific nature of quality research; accounting for the systemic inequities that create different expectations, pressures and timelines for women, faculty of color, disabled faculty, among others; and fostering a campus culture that values academic work and scholarly research for the intellectual contributions it makes, over and above the dollars brought in or the publication numbers amassed.

Our chapter will continue to flesh out these broad ideas in the hopes of advancing such an affirmative research agenda with more specificity in the future. (See Barry Trachtenberg's column in this issue for one starting point.) In the mean time, however, we have met with the administration to discuss the goals and implementation of the equitable contribution initiative. We take this opportunity to summarize the content of those conversations so that members can be fully informed about and begin to plan for the faculty reviews underway.

On Jan. 28 we raised this issue with President Jones at our Labor Management Meeting (the minutes of which can be found posted on the chapter's website). We asserted the following four principles upon which any sound administrative policy of this sort that might lead to a re-assignment of faculty workload should be based; he agreed with all four principles. Any review of faculty productivity should include:

- * clearly stated criteria that are developed in consultation with the faculty and that account for disciplinary specificity.

- * a holistic review that considers the full scope of professional work done by any individual over a particular period of time.

- * an opportunity for redress. That is, if a faculty member has not been active as a researcher, that faculty member should be given a reasonable opportunity to restart a research program, including specific benchmarks to be achieved over a reasonable period of time, before any workload shift be assigned.

- * an affirmative, professional development approach, rather than a punitive or disciplinary approach.

Following this exchange, we met with CAS Dean Wulfert, Associate Dean Delano, and Assistant Dean Galime in mid February to inquire about the specifics of the CAS reviews. The CAS Deans described their review of faculty in the following manner:

- * They insist that there is nothing new about the CAS reviews this year. Faculty activity reports are reviewed annually. CAS follows up with department chairs and/or individual faculty when there is concern about productivity. The objective of the program is to ensure that everyone is meeting full employment obligation.

- * The reviews are done carefully and thoroughly by the Dean and Associate Deans.

- * This review is not targeted at Associate Professors; it includes all tenured faculty.

- * The number of individuals identified this year is quite small, approximately one dozen in a college with over 300 faculty. These twelve faculty are not currently having their workload redistributed; CAS is merely initiating a conversation about full obligation with the identified faculty members.

- * The review is not intended to be punitive. Meetings with faculty and chairs are intended to be constructive conversations, helping to provide support and advice about boosting productivity.

- * Department chairs should be informed first. Chairs can elect to discuss workload with identified faculty members themselves, or ask the

Dean or Associate Deans to discuss the matter with individual faculty members.

- * CAS reviews a ten-year window of work where possible.

- * Reviews account for discipline-specific differences (though they have not been developed in consultation with departments).

- * The principle criterion is that faculty are expected to show some indication of ongoing research output. During the ten-year window, Associate Professors need not meet the criteria for promotion to Full. They need only show ongoing scholarly activity in their fields (what both Dean Wulfert and Associate Dean Delano described as “a scholarly pulse”).

- * Additional criteria include the number of classes taught, enrollment figures, SIRF scores, individual work with graduate and undergraduate theses, dissertations, etc., and advisement responsibilities.

- * Factors such as extensive service obligations, new or exceptional family obligations, health difficulties, or additional extenuating circumstances will be considered in the review of productivity.

- * If a faculty member is identified as research-inactive, CAS will initiate a discussion with that faculty member. In this conversation, benchmarks will be established and the faculty member given a time period (typically one year) to meet the goals.

- * If the faculty member fails to meet the benchmarks, or if the faculty member volunteers to redistribute his or her workload, the faculty member may be assigned an additional course or additional service to compensate for the lack of productivity in research.

The union does not support every aspect of the plan sketched in this outline (for instance we would like to see more effort made to consult departments about the criteria for what constitutes ongoing productivity within different disciplines). Nor do we think that the time and effort expended upon such a process is commensurate with the results that it is likely to produce. Indeed, an inordinate emphasis on individual reviews may prove counterproductive. A broader agenda to boost research quality and

quantity as sketched above is, in our opinion, the necessary precondition for any sustainable augmentation of Albany's research profile. That said, the CAS plan as described to us largely aligns with principles that the Chapter articulated in our conversation with President Jones. The devil, of course, will be found in the details of implementation, so we will continue to monitor events to ensure that practice aligns with description. We offer these relatively detailed summaries here to educate our members about the sorts of expectations that have been established by CAS and the University. Assessment and review are within the purview of management. But transparency, consultation, and due process are essential features of any sound administrative policy. We'll continue to ensure that those ideals are honored in the "equitable contribution" review process. In the longer term, we'll advocate for structural transformations of the university's research culture, which we believe are more likely to be effective than any individual assessment projects.

Chapter Hosts Open Forum on Education Technologies

On Dec. 2, the Technology and Teaching Concerns committee of the Albany chapter of UUP sponsored an event in the Campus Center Assembly Hall entitled: [Is there a MOOC in my Future?](#) The event was designed to spark discussion about recent technological developments in education and the Chancellor's OpenSUNY initiative. A panel consisting of committee co-chairs Lee Bickmore (Anthropology) and Marty Manjak (Information Security), Chris Moore (Associate Director, Instructional Technology), Prof. Peter Shea of Educational Theory and Practice, and UUP Vice President for Academics, Jaime Dangler, provided several different perspectives on these topics, and responded to questions and comments from about 40 attendees.

Some of the items addressed included questions about intellectual property for electronic course

material, the value versus disruption of emerging teaching technologies, various components of OpenSUNY and Seamless Transfer, the role of private consultants in the Chancellor's OpenSUNY plans, and the potential impact of on-line degrees on accreditation of SUNY units.

The session was marked by vigorous participation on the part of attendees who raised many questions and concerns about the impact that teaching technologies and the Chancellor's emphasis on on-line education will have on subjects that require face-to-face interaction or the development of physical skills such as the visual and performing arts. Others pointed out that assumptions about the technical and physical infrastructure required for students to participate may not be valid, particularly in many areas of the world where access to technology, or even a reliable supply of electricity, is questionable. More fundamental questions about the nature and goals of a college education were expressed when one participant stated that the academy was a place where young people came to learn how to be students and to learn how to be scholars, apart from any specific subject they may try to master.

On the whole, the forum highlighted the need for faculty to become more attentive and active in the debates that are shaping the academy's future, both from the standpoint of the delivery of instruction, as well as its purpose. The chapter Technology and Teaching Concerns committee hopes to continue to provide focus and fora for these debates. Faculty and professional staff who are interested in promoting these discussions are encouraged to contact co-chairs Marty Manjak (thechathambar@gmail.com) or Lee Bickmore (lee.bickmore@gmail.com).

Contract Posted:

The final text of the Agreement between UUP and the State of New York has now been posted to the UUP Website:

<http://uupinfo.org/negotiations/Contract2011to2016xx013114.pdf>.

Printed copies will be distributed as soon as they are ready.

Simple Steps to Reduce our Carbon Footprint at Work

Ron Friedman

In response to the escalating climate change crisis, many of us would like to take steps to reduce our “carbon footprint,” but often don’t know where to start. Fortunately, there are countless, fairly simple changes in our everyday workplace behavior that can make a big difference in our carbon emissions if we engage in them collectively. In this spirit of collective action, so central to what UUP is about, I’d like to suggest a handful of these easy, but powerful, ways of making our campus more environmentally friendly:

1. Turn off your computer and peripheral devices (e.g., monitors, printers, and scanners) each day when you go home. We often don’t realize that such devices continue to draw power when left in “standby” mode and this adds up to a considerable amount of waste when spread across the countless classrooms and workspaces on campus. When it comes to your own personal workspace, an easy way of shutting off all your devices simultaneously is to have them all plugged into to a single power strip with an on/off switch. Be sure to shut-down your computer before disconnecting any power source

2. Although it’s something we may never have considered, printing documents involves a lot of carbon pollution if you factor in the energy used and the number of trees felled to produce and ship paper. If you must print a document, print it double-sided. The best option would be to set your printer to print double-sided as a default so that you must make a deliberate decision to print using the more resource intensive method. (If we all do this, it would also stand to save the University thousands of dollars in paper costs!)

3. Don’t use bottled water. (I admit that this is a pet-peeve of mine). Bottled water, which is sold in countless vending machines throughout campus, is no safer than tap water. In fact, it may be less safe as it is not as strictly regulated as water from our public supply and because potentially hazardous industrial chemicals may “leach” into the water from the bottle itself. Marketing by beverage

vendors on campus suggesting that their water is contained in “plant bottles” amounts to a reprehensible form of greenwashing. These bottles are still overwhelmingly made from petroleum and further contribute to global warming through the emissions required for their transportation. The easy solution: Bring a BPA-free water bottle to campus. Although our aging water fountains could certainly use updating, I have never had trouble filling my own reusable container. If you’re concerned about the taste of our tap water, personal water bottles with filtration systems are cheap and readily available. Another solution is to pool resources with colleagues and buy a large filtering pitcher for collective use.

4. If you use a reading lamp at work, install an energy-efficient CFL or LED light bulb. Old-style incandescent bulbs will soon be prohibited and for good reason—they use far more energy to produce heat than light, leading to massive waste.

In any event, please spread the word and let’s continue to work together to make our campus a model of the type of sustainable community we wish to see in the broader capital region and beyond. For more workplace energy savings tips, go to:

http://www.albany.edu/facilities/energy/document/Save_Energy_At_workplace.pdf. For additional information regarding sustainability initiatives on campus, please visit the website of the Office of Environmental Sustainability (www.albany.edu/gogreen/).

Let us know what you think.

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EDITORIAL POLICY: The opinions expressed in *The Forum* are those of the writers and the University at Albany Chapter of UUP and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of United University Professions.



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