

The Forum

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Your Albany Chapter Newsletter

Issue 149

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By the Numbers:

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| 27.8 | Average pay of the top 350 CEOs in the United States in 2021 in millions of dollars |
| 11% | Increase in CEO pay from 2020 |
| 339-1 | Ratio of CEO pay to typical worker compensation |
| 40% | Corporate profits as a share of price growth post-COVID |
| 13% | Corporate profits as a share of price growth, 1979-2019 average |
| 21% | Labor costs as a share of price growth post-COVID |
| 40% | Labor costs as a share of price growth, 1979-2019 average |
| \$7.25 | Federal minimum wage |
| 2009 | Last year the Federal minimum wage was increased |
| 27.4% | Decline in value of Federal minimum wage since 2009 due to inflation |
| 40% | Decline in value of Federal minimum wage since its high point in 1968 |
| 118% | Growth of worker productivity, 1948-1979 |

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| 107% | Growth in worker pay, 1948-1979 |
| 62% | Growth of worker productivity, 1979-2022 |
| 15% | Growth in worker pay, 1979-2022 |

All figures from EPI:

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

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Budgets

Aaron Major, Chapter President

UUP, in general, and our Chapter, in particular, have long maintained that the only solution to the seemingly chronic budget deficits that impact our campus and many campuses across the SUNY system is a dramatic increase in state support to the SUNY system. Years of cuts to SUNY under Governor Cuomo deprived the SUNY schools of billions of dollars of resources that they have had to make up by raising tuition and fees on students and reducing spending on vital programs. This is not fiscally responsible and it is not ethical. Our public university system is here to provide education and opportunity to all who want it. That promise has been undermined by the rising cost of attendance created by state budget cuts.

We were extremely happy to see Governor Hochul and the Legislature restore some of that funding in last year's budget. But that is only a small

portion of the cuts that our campus has sustained. We will be working hard again this year to push for more public funding for SUNY.

But how we face these budget shortfalls is very much a local problem and on this front we have some real concerns. Over the last two years the campus has generated some \$8 million a year in payroll savings¹ from the loss of roughly 90 UUP-represented employees and 150 other employees working on this campus. These are the professors, librarians, financial aid officers, advisors, counselors, ITS support and athletics staff that are crucial to providing students with the education and support that they need and maintaining our grounds and facilities.²

Rather than use these savings—savings which have required our members to put in more hours and take on more responsibility with little or no recognition—to help shore up the budget, campus administration has diverted funds into expensive "strategic investments" that were justified on the grounds that they would increase enrollments and revenue from tuition. That has not happened and not simply because, as is often claimed, there just aren't enough students to draw from. The three other SUNY research center universities have seen their enrollments grow over the last five years. Between 2016 and 2021 Binghamton's enrollment grew by 4.4%, Buffalo's by 7.1% and Stony Brook's by 3.8%. Ours **fell** by 1.7%³.

¹ From the 20-21 midyear budget update and the 22-23 midyear budget update. Salary and fringe in 20-21 was \$219 million; \$211 million in 22-23.

² From the "Historical Budgeted FTE" data (filled), prepared by the Office of Finance and Administration.

³ From SUNY Institutional Research, <https://system.suny.edu/institutional-research/resources/>, "SUNY Campus Fact Sheet Dashboard."

No senior administrator—the President, Provost, or VP for Student Affairs—who championed these investments has acknowledged this glaring discrepancy. Instead, what I have seen over and over again is our leadership deflecting criticism and shifting blame downwards. Academic departments are now being held to the standards of obscure budget "metrics" by the Provost's Office but senior leadership resists every effort to measure or evaluate their own work. Librarians and ITS staff who may never interact with a student are being criticized for failing to do enough to recruit and retain students. Our single largest new investment is the \$51 million dollars a year that we now spend on scholarships. That is more than three times the size of our current deficit and it has not moved the needle on our enrollments. But rather than acknowledge this, the head of Student Affairs is forcing his employees to work on holidays.

This is the background to the launching of the "Artificial Intelligence Initiative" which, like our other recent strategic investments, promises—by focusing a lot of resources in a very narrow area—to pay for itself, and then some, by drawing in more students. We know from our own experience that this strategy is not likely to succeed in bringing in more students. Around 2012, our campus created two new colleges (CEHC and CEAS) with the promise that they would increase our enrollments and bring in the tuition dollars needed to make up for the cuts in state support. Those additional students never came. This is not a criticism of those programs. The academics and professionals that teach and support students in them are just as committed to providing a high-quality education as our colleagues in every other program. But they have not solved our budget problems or grown our enrollment. We should therefore be very skeptical of administration claims that yet another new program will be any different.

But there is a further reason to be concerned about this new initiative. Our campus is unique among the other SUNY research centers in that we serve

a much higher number of first-generation, poor, and under-represented minority students than they do. Our true strength is our commitment to educating students from all backgrounds, even disadvantaged ones, in the framework of a world-class research university. Few other universities in the country can do this well. Our Chapter's position is that supporting these students *requires* broad investments across the campus.

We should be deeply concerned about the impact that this strategy of focusing our resources on a narrow set of priorities is having on our campus's commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. 80% of our Black undergraduate students and 70% of our Latino/a students are currently majoring in 10 programs: Anthropology, Biology, Psychology, Informatics, Economics, Sociology, Communication, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, and Political Science. Only one of those programs, Computer Science, has seen any increase in the size of its teaching faculty in the last five years. Four of those programs have lost faculty and the rest have been flat.

75% of Africana Studies majors and 40% of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies are black students. 45% of Language, Literatures and Cultures majors (mostly in the Spanish program) are Latino/a. Those programs have lost a third to a half of their faculty in the last five years. No undergraduate program with a high proportion of Black or Latino/a majors has seen its faculty grow in the last five years.

Instead, faculty hiring has been concentrated in three undergraduate programs (Computer Engineering, Environmental and Sustainability Engineering, and CEHC) and two graduate programs (Information Security, Information Systems). Those five programs grew by 45 faculty between the 16-17 and 20-21 academic years. The 39 other programs on this campus lost 43 faculty over the same period. All three of those undergraduate programs enroll low numbers of Black and Latino/a students. CEHC, which has seen the greatest number of faculty hires in the

last five years, is 8% Black and 14% Latino/a compared to a campus-wide undergraduate rate of 22% and 19%⁴.

Again, the point is not to diminish the value of these programs. A world-class research university needs to be able to update and expand its academic offerings. But we will not succeed if growth and expansion come at the expense of giving students access to the full breadth of academics that allow them to be intellectually curious and to follow that curiosity wherever it takes them. We cannot do that when we are cutting resources from a broad set of programs in order to support a select few.

Moving forward, then, we need the following.

First, campus administration needs to show the same commitment to recruiting and retaining employees that it shows to recruiting and retaining students. This means not only putting money into hiring people to fill positions that have been lost, but also recognizing the additional work and responsibility that many employees working in short-staffed offices have taken on by compensating them properly. There are also some easy, cost-free steps that the campus could take, mostly around respecting employee's time and respecting their professional autonomy. Stop scheduling work on holidays and weekends which is burdensome to all and especially to those with young children to care for. Be more flexible and accommodating when it comes to telecommuting and remote work.

Second, we need campus administration to engage in real discussion and consultation with the faculty before embarking on a new set of "strategic investments." The AI initiative is a significant change to our academic

⁴ Number of faculty by department from "Historical Budgeted FTE" data (filled), prepared by the Office of Finance and Administration. Racial/ethnic composition of undergraduate majors from campus Business Intelligence data, "Ethnicity of enrolled home institution students."

mission and profile. It carries significant costs that are not supported by state funding and will have a serious impact on our curriculum. Its shape and character therefore fall fully under the purview of the faculty and its governance bodies. The Provost needs to present a complete, detailed plan to the faculty to review and that plan, after being modified based on faculty input, needs to be voted on and approved by the Faculty Senate.

No doubt these demands will be taken as hostile and adversarial by senior leadership. But they are simply the principles and practices that emerge when we are committed to respecting the dignity and professionalism of those who work to better our campus community and when we are committed to moving forward together in openness and collaboration.

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Bad Faith

In recent years, the chapter has been engaged in a series of conversations about academic workload. We have, in each of these moments, reiterated our basic position: Academics are stretched thin, many taking on extra work in order to compensate for our reduced numbers; if management believes that a faculty member is not meeting their full professional obligation, they should consult with that faculty member, explain the problem and develop steps to remedy the situation; there is no need to increase surveillance of academic faculty's workloads or to add more tasks to overworked department chairs and under-staffed professional units. Nevertheless, workload is a mandatory subject of negotiation and though we will never be party to any scheme to increase our members' workload, we felt it was helpful for us to engage in discussions to push the conversation in positive directions. In particular, we hoped to push past the

damaging reliance on an outdated, unnegotiated policy, the famed O’Leary memo.

On Friday, March 11th 2022, we were given a draft document of a new workload review policy, one that had been worked on by the administration but was, depressingly, a thinly disguised revision of the O’Leary framework. We met with representatives from the Provost’s Office on Monday, March 14th, to give some initial feedback on these draft guidelines and then provided a formal written response on Wednesday, March 16th, which we reproduce in full below. The expectation—explicit in our Labor/Management meetings—was that the administration would get back to us and that we were still negotiating the details.

For months we heard nothing. Then we find, early this Fall, that the document itself is now published on the University’s website, virtually unchanged! Thank you to the member who brought this to our attention.

Here it is for your review:

<https://www.albany.edu/provost/work-time-allocation>

As always, if anyone tries to use this non-negotiated procedure to raise your workload—or if you are a department chair being told to implement it—contact your UUP representatives immediately. Our written critique of the policy follows.

* * *

Dear Glynne Griffith (Associate Vice-Provost for Faculty Success), Steve Galime (Chief of Staff to the Provost) and Brian Selchick (former Acting Director of Human Resources):

I am writing to provide the Chapter's response to the "Full-Time Tenured Faculty Work/Time Allocation Guidelines" that we received on Friday. I shared the document with Paul Stasi and Meredith Weiss, our Academic and Assistant Academic VPs, and Michelle Couture, our LRS. I have also shared these comments with Senate leadership.

We are surprised and disappointed that this document, which supposedly builds on the years of conversation that we have had around this issue in Labor Management, reflects none of the progress that we had thought that we were making during those conversations. The document is, in essence, a minor re-working of the so-called "O'Leary Memo," which, when written by then-President O'Leary in 1989, established a workload norm for teaching faculty of a 3-3 teaching load with a one course reduction for the supervision of graduate students and a one course reduction for scholarly research. The Chapter's position on the O'Leary memo has been stated and restated for three decades (!) and was first articulated by former Chapter President Ivan Steen. For your reference, I have attached a copy of the Spring 2014 edition of our Chapter newsletter, *The Forum*, which addressed this issue directly when increasing teaching loads was being pursued by CAS (notably also under the language of "equity").

Once again, we want to state our objections to the O'Leary memo and its use (either in full or as a guiding framework) for describing academic faculty workload. First, both the memo and this document use the word "normative" in describing workload expectations in a way that is inconsistent with the Taylor Law. As you know, the Taylor Law relies heavily on the concept of "past practice" when assessing claims around workload. The norm, in other words, is not established by documents but by what individual employees actually do. Furthermore, these new guidelines, as did the O'Leary memo, conflate two dimensions of workload. There is the professional obligation, outlining the types of work that employees are expected to perform, and then there is the question of

workload, which sets how much work is to be conducted within those categories. We agree that it is appropriate and desirable to have a document that clearly outlines our members' professional obligation, but how that translates into workload (and, therefore, whether an employee can be said to be performing at, above, or below a full obligation) is largely determined what individuals do in practice.

Second, the guidelines (and the O'Leary memo from which they are taken) conceptualize the academic faculty professional obligation in a way that is inconsistent with how the professional obligation is typically understood for UUP employees. The professional obligation encompasses the full mix of activities and obligations that employees are expected to perform and fulfill. According to these guidelines, the academic faculty obligation is 100% teaching, and then the employee gets "released" from this obligation if they perform other tasks. This, frankly, makes no sense for our bargaining unit. Our understanding, which we believe is consistent with what the campus' own understanding and practice has been, is that all academic faculty are expected to teach, engage in service at various levels, and be research-productive. What that looks like concretely in terms of both the "mix" of activities and their substantive content will vary by department and—crucially—by individual employee.

Third, we share the campus' commitment to maintaining faculty research productivity. But, in following the O'Leary framework, these guidelines present teaching as a sort of punishment for declining research productivity which we hope is not the message that the campus wishes to send. We contend that if the campus wants to improve faculty research productivity it should restore cuts made to departmental travel funds, expand institutional support for grants applications and management, and offer more opportunities for research leave. We are also puzzled by these guidelines' insistence on a minimum 1-1 teaching load that can not be reduced through course buyouts. Surely this will limit our colleagues'

access to funding opportunities and hamper our efforts at retaining our R1 status.

Fourth and finally, we observe that these guidelines, like the O’Leary memo, do not address one of the three major components of the academic faculty member’s workload: service. The mix of elements in the professional obligation is described entirely in terms of teaching, research, and Ph.D. supervision. Only “extraordinary” service obligations (like graduate director) are referenced. But we know that faculty perform wide-ranging service at the departmental and university level and, crucially, that there is a great deal of variation in the amount of this service performed by individual faculty members. Per these guidelines, faculty bearing these heavy service loads—many of whom are women and people of color often tasked to fill diversity roles on committees—will not have their work recognized.

While it is not our place—nor is it in our interest—to help the campus devise an instrument that will be used to increase faculty workload, we do think it would be helpful if we tried to restore some of the progress that we had made in this area in recent years. That progress was based on a labor-management agreement around three key points.

1. Recognition that the O’Leary memo is outdated, deeply problematic and thus needs to be discarded as a framework for defining the academic faculty members’ workload.

2. What management sees as problems with respect to academic faculty workload can already be addressed through mechanisms that are consistent with standards for defining UUP members’ professional obligation and the Taylor Law. Concretely, this means addressing workload issues on a case-by-case (i.e., individual) basis through existing tools like

the FAR and documented conversations with supervisors (chairs and Deans).

3. The first step in addressing cases where individuals are felt to not be meeting their full professional obligation is to provide opportunity and resources to allow that faculty member to become research productive. Indeed, it was in working towards an understanding of what such a process might look like that occupied our last labor-management conversations around this issue with Bill Hedberg. In those conversations the campus recognized that simply requiring a so-called unproductive faculty member to teach more courses was not going to be good for the students, will not help that faculty member become more productive and therefore will not help the campus maintain its R1 status, and will result in time consuming labor-management conflict.

We hope that we can continue this conversation on a more productive footing.

Aaron Major
President, UUP Albany Chapter

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Making the Union Work for You **David Banks, Officer for Contingents**

October was a great month to be a member of UUP. We began with our membership week where we tabled outside of the Campus Center and had some great conversations with members. We concluded October with Campus Equity Week—a time where we focused on the concerns and needs of contingent faculty.

Your union has done a lot over the years for contingent faculty: some of the best health benefits for non-tenure track faculty in the country, a minimum per-course salary for part time academic contingents, and eligibility for travel reimbursements and discretionary salary increases. There is still plenty to do though, and that is why your state-wide negotiating committee is working tirelessly to secure a new contract that prioritizes contingent issues like per-course pay rates, minimum salary increases across the board, and more. I strongly encourage you to go to <https://uupunion.org/myuup/MembersOnly/>, sign in using our new –much more user-friendly—login process, and look at the extensive negotiations bulletins to learn the details of what is on the bargaining table. We want to see \$7,000 per course for lecturers, maintain our excellent health benefits, and create clear and consistent pathways to promotion. (See “Negotiations Update,” pg 19).

At the campus level, we are moving forward with Lecturer promotion tracks. Our chapter has a memorandum of understanding with administration that after six years of uninterrupted service to the university Lecturers are eligible for promotion to Lecturer II and after an additional six years are eligible for promotion to Senior Lecturer. We are well aware—and it is a consistent topic of labor management meetings—that after all the hard work of applying for promotion, the Administration has been very slow to act on these applications and has missed many key deadlines. This is disrespectful to the work of lecturers, and we continue to pressure administration to prioritize these applications. We are also working to make sure that the promotion clock to Senior Lecturer is not further delayed by slow approvals of applications to Lecturer II. I encourage anyone facing difficulties with this process to contact me so we can document them.

Without its four hundred part-time lecturers and eighty full time lecturers, this institution would fall to its knees. And regardless of how state-wide negotiations turn out or even what happens on our own campus, our

bosses will soon have to face a simple truth: SUNY would fall apart without its contingent faculty, but contingent faculty—especially in the Albany Area—need SUNY less and less. The Capital Region union family has grown these last few years with Siena College, The College of Saint Rose, Schenectady County Community College, and most recently Skidmore College forming unions with the help of SEIU Local 200 United. That means the contingent faculty at these institutions are getting better pay, longer contracts, and more comprehensive benefits. **Even the non-union RPI offers more generous pay and year-long contracts that have enticed many long-time adjuncts away from SUNY.** As faculty across the region take control over their lives and their livelihoods, the administration is going to find it increasingly difficult to find faculty willing to pick up a few classes at the last minute. With concerted effort across institutions, we can put an end to faculty poverty. I truly believe the collective power of a union can be just as powerful as the individual protections of tenure--but we have to make it that way.

If you are tired of being treated like a second-class academic, you need to be willing and brave enough to wield the power of a union. A union is not a service you pay for, it is a tool that you must pick up and use to the best of your ability. The first thing you can do is get involved in your union, UUP. That can mean volunteering to be a department representative, helping hand out literature, turning out to events, or even talking to a union officer about a problem you are facing. Even better: join your local central labor council. These are organizations comprised of delegates from all the different unions in your county who come together to update each other on the goings on of their union and coordinate their actions. Contingents in particular can benefit from participating in a labor council because that's how we can coordinate with our union family at other colleges and universities. If you live or work in Albany county and would like to join the Albany Labor council email council@albanylabor.org and if you live or work in Rensselaer county send a message to info@troylaborcouncil.org.

A union is not a service you pay for; it is a tool that you wield. Better yet, think of the union like a cast iron skillet: the more you use it the better it gets. Keep it well seasoned with activism, solidarity, and care and it will serve you well for years to come. Better per-course pay for part-time adjuncts, promotion pathways for full-time lecturers, and better benefits for everyone. That's what a well-seasoned union can achieve, but only when you get cookin'.

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Supporting our GSEU Colleagues:

In the Fall of 2019, our Chapter's Executive Board passed a resolution supporting our graduate student colleagues in GSEU, who, for several years, have been urging our campus leadership to abolish the fees that graduate student worker pay.

We print, here, that resolution as well as the most recent petition from GSEU. If you wish to sign onto their petition, calling for "the immediate abolition of all broad-based fees for all graduate student workers at the University at Albany," you may do so here: [petition](#)

Resolution of Support for GSEU Fees Campaign

Whereas in their work as instructors, graders, researchers, and staff, graduate student employees are essential to the life and work of the university; and,

Whereas Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assistants across the SUNY system earn an average assistantship of \$15,000 and are required to pay

back to the University, on average, between 14%-25% of this amount in the form of University fees; and,

Whereas as educators and University professionals, UUP is committed to supporting graduate student learning and professionalization. As Union members, we recognize that this includes being committed to the quality of life of graduate students.

Resolved that the Albany Chapter of UUP believes that University fees pose an excessive burden to graduate student employees as they fight for a living wage and offers its full support of the Graduate Student Employees Union campaign to abolish fees for graduate student employees at the University at Albany (SUNY).

GSEU Petition:

Dear President Rodríguez, Provost Kim, Dean of Graduate Studies Williams, and Vice President of Finances Foreman,

Graduate student employees in the State University of New York (SUNY) system are the labor backbone of the entire institution. On campuses across the state, graduate students teach a majority of classes, grade most of the coursework and exams, and perform essential research and administrative functions every single day. Yet we are some of the most poorly paid among SUNY employees. Our members who receive the minimum stipend for GA/TA graduate employees only make 29% of the income they need to live on, given the average cost of living in the Capital District area of New York State (as per the Economic Policy Institute Family Budget Calculator, 2022). This is down from 38% from last year's calculations, given that there has been no effort to accommodate inflation or the rapidly rising cost of living. To add insult to injury, the university (our employer) requires us to give back a portion of our already meager

salaries to them for the privilege of working and studying there. These fees, which can cost 15-20% of our take home pay per year, are quite literally a pay-to-work scheme that would not be tolerated in any other industry.

For years, the Graduate Student Employees Union (GSEU), a statewide union of SUNY graduate student employees, has advocated for the abolition of these "broad-based" fees for graduate workers on SUNY campuses. Two years ago, the University at Albany Chapter began its own campaign to fight the fees at our campus. So far, at the state level, our Union has successfully eliminated fees for graduate workers at several SUNY campuses: Stony Brook University during fall 2020, the University at Buffalo during the summer of 2021, and Binghamton University during during spring 2022. The University at Albany is now lagging behind other schools by maintaining an adapted fee scheme for its graduate workers; there have been and will continue to be consequences. The University at Albany will find itself unable to compete with other SUNY campuses for top graduate degree applicants due to the campus administration's obsession with systemic wage theft. As the cost of living continues to rise, we fear more graduate student workers at UAlbany may discontinue their studies, a sad reflection of campus administration's greed and short-sightedness.

Despite this, UAlbany persists in charging fees to its employees and continues to balance its books off the wages of its graduate workers. UAlbany has mastered the self-subsidy: hire graduate workers to conduct necessary teaching tasks for which they can charge tuition to undergraduates while simultaneously charging fees to these same workers. As if to assuage the corruption of this practice, in response to continued GSEU pressure, UAlbany has instituted a "fee scholarship" this Fall 2022. This "scholarship" offers only partial coverage of our broad-based fees and only to a select few graduate workers, which we consider a bad-faith gesture and an insult to GSEU unified graduate worker solidarity.

Paying back to your employer an entire paycheck every few months is brutal. Over the years, graduate workers have had to make major sacrifices to assuage the University's hunger for their wages: skipping meals or grocery trips, urban foraging, working second or even third jobs outside the University, taking on new debt, paying exorbitant late fees due the inability to afford paying a lump sum of fees, even having to donate blood plasma to be able to pay their fees.

We, community members of the University at Albany and allies beyond its walls, demand the immediate abolition of all broad-based fees for all graduate student workers at the University at Albany. We will continue to take further public action until our demand is met.

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Negotiations Updates

Bret Benjamin, Chief Negotiator

Below I've sketched brief overview of key contract issues to be bargained; however I urge everyone to log onto the UUP members' only portal (<https://uupunion.org/myuup/MembersOnly>) for more detailed information about the proposals set forth by both UUP and the State. We believe our bargaining team has put together an ambitious package of contract proposals that addresses pressing needs voiced by our diverse membership. Moreover, we are concerned about the harm our members will face if we are unable to fight off several the State's more aggressive proposals. The question is how we can achieve our principal demands. In short, to be successful at the table we need broad and vocal support from our membership. I hope by now that you have signed the UUP postcards with key contract demands. Beyond signing, however, please take cards

back to coworkers in your home department or unit. We also need to sign up new members. If you have colleagues in your units who have been hired in the past few years when on-campus presence has been restricted, please make a special effort to ask them to sign a card. This is the moment to have frank conversations about the value of working on a unionized campus. Lastly, we'll be going door to door in November with placards that read "UUP Starts With Me," asking members to pledge their readiness to show up and speak up when we most need collective membership pressure directed at SUNY and the State. We'll be trying to increase UUP visibility on campus, so contact the chapter if you would like to hang a poster or sticker in your office, car, or anywhere else. To get the contract that we all want and deserve, we need an informed membership that is ready to take collective action. Our best tool to build this preparedness is member-to-member conversations. We need your help in bringing those members who have yet to get involved in the union's contract negotiations process, whether because they are too busy, don't know where to look, or are cynical about the capacity for reach change.

With that said, let me outline a few of the substantive demands that UUP is fighting for in this round of bargaining. We have been meeting regularly with the State since May, and we have now made detailed proposals at the table on each of the following priority issues. There is no fixed timeline to reach an agreement. Because any contract needs a Legislative pay-bill to fund its increases, one plausible scenario would be an early summer tentative agreement before the Legislature leaves town in early June. As we've said before, though, we won't trade a fast contract for a good contract. We know that everyone would like to have an agreement in place as soon as possible, but we won't bring a tentative agreement to our members until we feel that it is the best deal possible. What, then, are some of the key issues that we're fighting to achieve?

First, we are trying to move significantly beyond the compensation pattern established by CSEA's recently ratified contract. We are asking for larger across-the-board (ATB) increases than CSEA achieved. Compensation, however, must be understood to include more than just the ATB increases; we are asking for significant infusions of unit-specific money that would not only bring additional dollars to members' pockets, but also make structural changes in the way UUP employees are compensated and work. For instance, we have proposed major funding increases in the following areas:

- Establish a longevity pay structure that would dramatically expand existing service awards and replace DSI with more equitable, predictable salary increases over the course of a SUNY career.
- Increase the per-course minimum for part-time academic contingent faculty to \$7k, nearly doubling the current rate established in the previous contract. This would begin to pay our part-time contingent academics a living wage. As important, it removes the current incentive for campuses to hire part-time faculty to do the essential instructional work on our campuses, which should allow more secure full-time employment options.
- Establish a four-step Lecturer rank structure with guaranteed salary increases at each promotion.
- Fairly compensate our hospital workers with programs such as holiday pay, on-call rates, contractually negotiated shift differentials, and increased pay for Residents and Fellows.
- Expand location pay by increasing the rates of the Downstate and Mid-Hudson differentials.
- Raise minimum salaries for our lowest paid SL grades and academic ranks to ensure that all UUP members are paid a living wage

- Increase funding to essential programs such as IDA, CLEFR, Drescher leaves, and the employer contribution to pre-tax DCAA accounts.

Beyond compensation we have a range of other high-priority demands. These include,

- Job security gains, especially for contingent faculty, most notably progressively longer appointment terms, conversion options from part-time to full-time work, promotional ladders, and pathways to permanency for full-time Lecturers.
- A permanent telecommuting agreement that includes greater flexibility and autonomy for employees.
- Health benefits that expand eligibility, keep costs in check, and ensure exceptional health care for our members.
- Expanded Family and Sick Leave provisions.
- Ensure that professional titles more accurately describe job duties and provide pathways for promotion and career advancement.
- Expand access to the "space available" tuition benefit for members.
- Dozens of other proposals addressing concerns that our membership has raised to ensure that our working conditions are characterized by fairness, dignity, and respect.

Always bear in mind that contract negotiations are defined not only by the gains we are able to achieve, but also by the concessions we are able to fight back. The State, as always, comes to the table hoping to roll back

workers' protections and expand managerial authority. In this round they have concerning proposals about the following issues:

- Erosions in job security, most notably a proposal to strip Direct Patient Care (DPC) employees of their right to attain permanency and a proposal that would hire all new DPC employees on one-year temporary, at-will probationary lines.
- A post-tenure review system for tenured academics that would provide contractual backing to ill-conceived initiatives such as the academic workload guidelines recently recycled by our UA Provost's Office. (See "Bad Faith" pg. 8).
- A "reasonable suspicion" drug and alcohol testing program.
- A COVID vaccine mandate.
- And a number of other proposals that erode the ability of academics and professionals to control key aspects of their work lives.

In sum, the stakes of any round of contract negotiations are enormous. There is much to be gained, and much that can be lost. Our negotiations team will continue to fight on behalf of our members at the table. However, our efforts will be bolstered considerably if the State sees rising membership numbers and increased participation from our members. I know that those of you who have taken the time read this article are engaged and paying attention. Help us broaden our circle by convincing three of your co-workers to do the same. Solidarity and the struggle for common class interests remain not only the guiding principles of the labor movement, but also its most powerful tools for collective action—even, or perhaps especially, when hope can be hard to locate in the face of loss and decline, and when it can appear that our power to change entrenched

structures is limited. Our strength, as always, is in union. A good contract is an expression of that strength, not its source.

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Questions, Concern, Comments?

Email the editor at
pstasi27@gmail.com

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