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Alfred UUP News

Volume 3, Issue 4

January-February 2016

Less than the Bare Minimum

Governor Cuomo has increased the minimum wage for SUNY workers, to be phased-in over a five year period beginning with a hike to \$9.75 per hour this year.

As Governor Cuomo raises the minimum wage for SUNY, it's important to note that he is doing less than the bare minimum for public higher education in New York State. The governor has provided no means for SUNY to pay for the mandatory increases. Immediately after her State of SUNY address SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher said that increasing the minimum wage for SUNY workers is "the right thing to do," but did not know when SUNY would figure out the funding formula to pay for the increases.

The minimum wage increase affects SUNY state-operated campuses, but does not automatically take effect at community colleges because of the nature of their bargaining units. The increase in the minimum wage for SUNY workers also does not affect adjunct faculty, who are not hourly workers. UUP President Fred Kowal said he hoped the wage increase for staff members and student workers might

also eventually be extended to adjunct faculty in the system, who he said were shouldering an increased workload on many campuses. "These individuals make up a third of the faculty at SUNY and many have terminal degrees," Mr. Kowal said. "However, their compensation is not commensurate with the important work they do."

The increase in the minimum wage also does not apply to the City University of New York (CUNY). Failing to include CUNY in the executive order was derided by leaders of two unions representing CUNY workers, with one leader calling it a "monumental failure of progressive leadership."

Raising the minimum wage for SUNY employees, while laudable, may merely be a gubernatorial public relations ploy. Instead of being the altruistic gesture it should have been, it is a means of glossing over the realities of funding public higher education in New York State.

An increase in state aid would have helped
(continued on page 2)

Membership Meetings

The UUP contract with the State of New York expires on July 1, 2016, and contract negotiations with the state will begin sometime this year. Chapter President Joe Petrick is a member of the UUP Negotiations Committee which met with the Negotiations Team in Syracuse on January 19-21, 2016, and will discuss the contract negotiations process at meetings at both the Alfred and Wellsville campuses. Chapter officers will also update members on the items of interest to UUP, as well as the chapter budget. Member concerns will also be addressed.

Meetings at the following two times and locations are open to all UUP members:

Wellsville Campus: February 11, 11:30-1:00 — Council Room, Culinary Arts Building

Alfred Campus: February 15, 11:30-1:00 — Allegany Room, Central Dining Hall

Lunch will be served at both locations.

The Bare Minimum, continued from page 1

defray the cost of the mandatory increases. The Maintenance of Effort (M.O.E.) legislation, had it been approved, would have provided additional and ongoing state funds for SUNY and CUNY operating costs. These include supplies and equipment, utilities and rents, as well as contractual pay increases. The M.O.E. legislation was passed last year with near-unanimous votes in the state Senate and Assembly. In November of last year the legislation was actively supported by signed postcards from more than 35,000 SUNY and CUNY students, including hundreds of Alfred State students. The postcards were delivered to the governor's office in November 2015 by a coalition including the CUNY University Student Senate and the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG). In the face of bipartisan near-unanimity and active support of tens of thousands of students, Governor Cuomo refused to sign the legislation.

Union response varied to Cuomo's not signing the M.O.E. legislation. Barbara Bowen, President of the Professional Staff Congress (the CUNY faculty union), said Mr. Cuomo's veto "will damage the quality of education CUNY can offer and reduce students' access to the top quality faculty and staff they deserve [...] If the aim of the veto was to hurt New York's low and middle income communities, that aim has been achieved [...] New Yorkers who count on CUNY need to know that the Governor has made the political calculation not to invest in their children's college education and in the future of their communities."

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Meanwhile, in regards to the M.O.E. legislation UUP President Fred Kowal said he was "disappointed" but confident Mr. Cuomo was aware of the "untenable situation." Mr. Kowal continued, "We remain hopeful that he will take steps in the near future to find an innovative solution to provide the necessary funding to resolve this dilemma, once and for all. UUP will continue to push for passage of this important initiative." It is not yet clear that the legislation will come before the legislature, however, as sponsors have not yet decided whether to reintroduce it.

Instead of state support, SUNY has been hoping to continue the so-called "rational" tuition increases. In 2011, the SUNY2020 law enacted \$1,500 in tuition hikes over five years with the stated purpose of enhancing education

at CUNY and SUNY, but not to cover unfunded operating costs. Now, with the law set to expire in 2016, CUNY and SUNY are calling for more tuition hikes. Chancellor Zimpher has been seeking a five-year extension of the SUNY 2020 plan, which allows the four-year colleges to raise tuition up to \$300 a year. In his recent State of the State message Governor Cuomo announced an extension of the SUNY 2020 program for another five years. But the state legislature has already expressed concerns about another round of tuition increases.

"Rational tuition" may not even go towards education. Soon after the Governor's State of the State address, the Editorial Board of the *Albany Times-Union* complained, "it appears that \$400 million of the extra tuition money – half of the \$800 million more than students are paying – ended up in the state's coffers. That's nothing but a tax hike, targeted just at SUNY students." The editorial continued, "New York has not held up its end of the bargain. Mr. Cuomo has even vetoed legislation that would require the state to better maintain its financial commitment to higher education. And Mr. Cuomo talks of yet more tuition hikes, even as he proposes a cut in state funding?"

Sources:

CUNY University Student Senate, et al. "35,000 Students to Governor: Invest in CUNY and SUNY Bill Passed with Huge Bipartisan Vote Would Improve Quality of Public Higher Education." Press release, November 20, 2015.

McKinley, Jesse. "Cuomo to Lift Minimum Wage for Workers at New York Universities" *New York Times*, January 4, 2016.

Redick, Geoff. "Chancellor: \$15 Minimum Wage 'The Right Thing' for SUNY." <http://www.twcnews.com/>, January 11, 2016.

Rosenblum, Dan. "Cuomo Vetoes Bill To Lock in University Aid and Sanders Objects" *Chief Civil Service Leader*. <http://thechiefleader.com/>, December 21, 2015.

Spector, Joseph. "SUNY presses ahead with tuition-increase plan" <http://polhudson.lohudblogs.com/> January 11, 2016.

TU Editorial Board. "Bait. Switch. Repeat." *Albany Times-Union*, January 14, 2016.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors or of the Alfred Chapter and are not necessarily the opinions of United University Professions.

UUP's new ad campaign focuses on adjuncts

UUP's new television ad is all about adjuncts.

The ad, titled "Ph.D.," calls attention to the poverty-level salaries of SUNY adjunct faculty. The ad emphasizes SUNY's overreliance on adjuncts, who struggle to earn a living wage.

The ad is running on cable television systems in the Capital Region, Buffalo, Long Island, Syracuse and Ulster and Dutchess counties starting Jan. 10. The run ended Jan. 23.

"Our highly qualified adjuncts make up a third of the faculty at SUNY, yet they are grossly underpaid for their experience and performance," said UUP President Fred Kowal.

"Often, they are forced to find employment at different colleges to earn a living wage. The ongoing fight to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour would not be complete without addressing the economic injustice adjuncts have been suffering for years."

Three SUNY adjuncts appear in the 30-second TV spot; they talk about their academic qualifications and experiences on camera. An announcer follows with the union's concerns.



"Nearly one-in-three highly qualified SUNY faculty are adjuncts. Many paid so little, they struggle to make ends meet. Yet students pay more than ever before. SUNY adjuncts deserve better."

The campaign's goal is to raise public awareness of the precarious situation adjuncts face and to generate support for pay increases and improved working conditions.

The ad can be viewed at <http://goo.gl/DvTLkF>.

The Path to Continuing Appointment

UUP has posted a new webinar in its LEAD series. Entitled "The Path to Continuing Appointment," it is a relatively short program delivered by NYSUT labor rela-

tions specialists on what academic employees should consider in relation to tenure. The new webinar joins other webinars, including:

- Permanent Appointment: Freedom after 7 Years of Indentured Servitude
- Performance Programs: How to Use Them to your Advantage
- Introduction to Collective Bargaining
- Dealing Effectively with Difficult People

To access the LEAD Institute offerings, it is necessary to register. To sign up:

1. Go to the UUP web site <http://uupinfo.org> and click on the Links tab on the top tool bar
2. Choose UUP LEAD Institute on the left-hand menu
3. Fill out the required info and you will receive an email with the link to view your selected webinar.



Completing SUNY's Completion Agenda

SUNY Provost Alexander Cartwright has, in a number of venues, presented his idea for increasing the number of graduates in SUNY by more than half again as many as now receive degrees. Referred to as the "Completion Agenda," the plan (outlined in the box below) may be a reaction to a national movement begun by politicians perceiving that the United States is producing fewer college graduates than other industrialized nations. Legislators also understand that the U.S. is forecast to not graduate enough students to support a knowledge economy. Part of the push for the nationwide completion agenda began with President Obama, who said in his first State of the Union Message that by 2020 the U.S. would "again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world." Although President Obama has taken steps to finance community college education, legislators have, for the most part, wanted to increase the number of students graduating from colleges and universities without allocating additional money to education.

A number of commentators have found that the completion agenda will adversely impact the quality of education. For example, Gary Rhoades, the former general secretary of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and a professor at the University of Arizona said,

If the goal is simply greater output with fewer production employees (faculty), the quickest paths are to drop standards, to replace full-time faculty with yet more part-time faculty, and to serve more and wealthier out-of-state students who are able to pay more and are more likely to succeed.

Debra Humphries, Vice President for Communications and Public Affairs at the Association of American Colleges and Universities, noted,

Obviously, no one involved in advancing the completion agenda is deliberately seeking to improve completion rates by lowering student achievement. Yet this is the likely outcome of many of the completion-only proposals, which raises the question: Is it really possible simultaneously to improve college completion rates *and* student achievement of essential learning outcomes?

Provost Cartwright did not tie SUNY's completion agenda to the national movement for completion, but in many ways SUNY is following the national trend which runs the risk of lowering standards, which, as Rhoades wrote, "will leave the United States behind educationally." The completion agenda also "effectively abandons any commitment to liberal education, which is central to professional em-

ployment."

At the Fall 2015 University Faculty Senate plenary Provost Cartwright said that if the completion agenda does not succeed, SUNY eventually may have to close campuses, begging the question, will the method to graduate more students providing them fewer opportunities?

Sources:

Humphreys, Debra. "What's Wrong with the Completion Agenda—And What We Can Do About It." *Liberal Education*, v. 98 no.1, Winter 2012.

Gary Rhoades, Gary. "The Incomplete Completion Agenda: Implications for Academe and the Academy." *Liberal Education*, v. 98 no.1, Winter 2012.

Provost Cartwright has been in discussions with campus leadership to help conceptualize how the System can best move ahead with the goal of increasing the number of credentialed learners from 92,000 to 150,000 per year by 2025. His office is now focused on four ways SUNY is going to serve our students better with high quality academic experiences to achieve this ambitious goal:

- Achieving "Best in Class" retention and graduation rates - This can be done by sector. If each campus aspires to best in their class, we believe we can graduate an additional 21,000 CURRENT STUDENTS. This serves the students we currently have better than we are at the moment.
- Increasing Credentialing - If students take courses that add up to a credential, we need to be better about ensuring they are rewarded with it. This includes using reverse transfer to ensure students get ALL of the credit they've earned. We also know that this kind of incremental achievement will help students remain focused on their academic progress and increase retention. We think we can give 12,000 additional credentials per year.
- Approaching Historical High Enrollments- Some campuses are well-below their historical high enrollment. If they approach their historical high again, in a sustainable way, we can graduate an additional 11,000 students per year.
- Strategic Enrollment of Non-Traditional Students -This is where Open SUNY comes in. There is still a large underserved population in NYS that we don't have the physical infrastructure to serve as well as we'd like to. High quality online programs that match the schedule of adult learners are the solution. We can graduate an additional 13,000 students per year through Open SUNY.

5 *Benefits Of Being a Union Member*



1. Higher pay & better benefits
2. A contract you can rely on
3. A strong voice at work
4. Professional learning

5. NYSUT Member Benefits

NYSUT members & their families can choose from a variety of insurance, financial, legal, and shopping & travel programs designed with the NYSUT member in mind -- including term life insurance, auto insurance, legal & financial services, car rentals, vacation packages, and much more!

Member Appreciation Month is back again this February!

Since it was such a big hit last year, we're doing it again! Member Appreciation Month is coming February 2016.

This year will be even bigger because it's a leap year... that means more chances to win even more great prizes!!!

Once again, Member Appreciation Month will be filled with a series of special prize drawings for items donated by Member Benefits and our endorsed program providers. Prizes will include gift cards, Beats headphones, a Go Pro camera and more.

To be eligible for these drawings, all you need to do is participate in our voluntary MAP Alert email service.



We will announce the winners of these special prize drawings exclusively on the Member Benefits website throughout the month of February.

It's the strength of the more than 600,000 NYSUT members that makes it possible for Member Benefits to offer more than 40 endorsed programs & services designed with you in mind.

For more details about this exciting event, visit the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

What Do You Get?

What do you get by signing a UUP union card and becoming a member of UUP?

You get the strength of more than 36,000 members, who speak out in a strong, unified voice for better pay, benefits and working conditions. You benefit from the union's collective bargaining power to negotiate with the state on your behalf. This basic right levels the playing field; you can negotiate for salary increases, benefits and job security instead of settling for what the employer is willing to give.

On average, according to the AFL-CIO, unionized workers' wages are 27 percent higher than their nonunion counterparts. Unionized workers are 60 percent more likely to have employer-provided pensions, and more than 79 percent of union workers have jobs with health insurance benefits. Unions also provide job protections and security, and give workers a say in improving their jobs.

In UUP, members enjoy the benefits, rights, and protections of the bargained contract, plus:

- **A voice in how the union is run.** Members decide the issues the union supports, including better pay and job protections for adjuncts, pushing for more funding for SUNY and improving the quality of education for SUNY students.
- **A say in shaping legislative and public policy.** With more than 36,000 members, UUP carries weight when it comes to advocating for legislation and policies that help our students, our University and our members. You can also take part in local, statewide and national campaigns as an activist, helping to elect quality candidates who support working families.
- **You get to be a part of a movement for positive, progressive change.** It's an opportunity to work with a dynamic, committed organization for initiatives such as a free public higher education for all, and providing working families with jobs that offer a living wage and dignity.
- **Be a part of a powerful force for good.** UUP members are good neighbors and community members. Our members volunteer to work

in church kitchens, and take part in walks to defeat breast cancer, community food drives and disaster relief efforts. It's an opportunity to join your sisters and brothers in a union dedicated to social justice issues.

- **The right to attend union meetings,** hold union office, and to elect union leaders on campus and representatives at the state and national levels.
- **Access to professional development.** From grants funded through money the union negotiates, support is available through the New York State/UUP Joint Labor-Management Committee to fund research costs, chapter-level conferences and professional development. UUP members have many options to choose from.
- **Financial savings.** UUP members can take advantage of discounted services provided through NYSUT and AFT member benefits, and discounts negotiated by UUP. They include discounts on car and homeowners insurance, car rentals, legal and financial services, travel and more. UUP offers discounts with companies such as Apple, Hewlett Packard, BJ's Wholesale Club, Liberty Mutual and Verizon Wireless.

How do I become a UUP member?

Step 1: To join UUP, you must be a State University of New York employee and belong to the Professional Services Negotiating Unit (PSNU, also called the 08 Bargaining Unit).

Step 2: Sign the card! We have been sending membership cards through campus mail, but if you need a card to sign and have not received one, contact Elaine Burns at the UUP Chapter Office or any of the chapter officers listed on the last page of this newsletter., and return the signed card to the UUP Chapter Office. Or sign up electronically, at <https://uuphost.org/myuup/Membership/RegForm.php>

Does it cost more in dues to become a UUP member?

No. All Professional Services Negotiating Unit members pay an agency fee equal to union dues, whether or not they join the union. Signing a UUP union card will not increase or change the union deduction from your paycheck.



UUP: An Outspoken Advocate for SUNY Funding

Did you know?

UUP is the strongest, most dedicated advocate for the State University of New York, fighting since 1973 for greater state funding for SUNY's 29 state-operated campuses and three public teaching hospitals.

UUP is a potent political force that has beaten back continued efforts to defund SUNY as public university systems nationwide have been decimated by austerity budgets. UUP members have met with lawmakers in Albany and in their district offices—often with their students—to promote SUNY as a world-class university system that must remain affordable and accessible to *all* New Yorkers.

UUP presses for legislative advances and pursues legal action with one goal in mind: to *protect* our University, our students, our work and our union.

Year after year, UUP has pressed the Legislature to restore SUNY funding cuts proposed in Executive Budgets. Some of UUP's achievements include:

- ✓ Restored funding to SUNY by increasing personal service support by \$7.6 million—2014-15
- ✓ Fought to expand SUNY's Opportunity Programs and to increase SUNY capital funding—2015-16

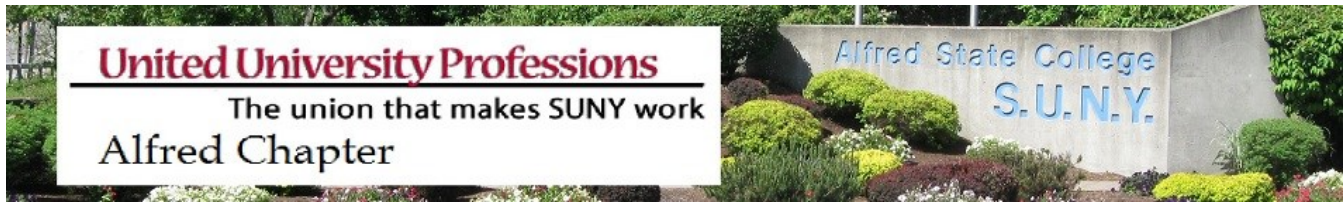
- ✓ Saved hundreds of jobs at SUNY Downstate Medical Center and fought off repeated attempts to downsize or privatize the Brooklyn hospital—2015-16
- ✓ Halted the governor's proposal to cut the SUNY Hospital State Subsidy by \$18.5 million—2015-16
- ✓ Defeated the governor's plan to de-register undergraduate teacher education programs based on faulty certification exam scores—2015-16
- ✓ Increased maximum TAP awards for college students to \$3,165—2014-15
- ✓ Restored the governor's proposed \$28 million cut to the SUNY teaching hospital state subsidy—2013-14
- ✓ Maintained SUNY funding levels when other state agencies were cut by 2.5 percent—2012-13
- ✓ Obtained \$75 million to preserve student access, full-time faculty, and other campus positions—2009-10
- ✓ Used legislation and litigation to defeat the governor's 2009-10 proposals to:
 - Eliminate contractually negotiated 3 percent salary increases for state employees.
 - Institute a five-day payroll lag.
 - Increase retiree health insurance premiums and Medicare Part B contributions.
- ✓ Made the agency shop fee for public employee unions permanent under the Taylor Law—2008-09
- ✓ Obtained \$10 million appropriation to hire as many as 150 more full-time faculty—2007-08
- ✓ Rejected the Berger Commission's directive to remove Upstate Medical University from SUNY—2007-08
- ✓ Eliminated the 3 percent employee contribution to the state's ORP—2007-08
- ✓ Obtained \$25 million in capital funding for new EOC facilities in Buffalo and Rochester—2005-06
- ✓ Rejected the governor's proposal to cut Graduate Medical Education funding—2005-06
- ✓ Passed a permanent cost-of-living-adjustment for all public employee retirees—2000-01



United University Professions

The union that makes SUNY work

President Frederick E. Kowal, Ph.D.



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