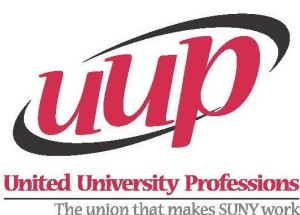


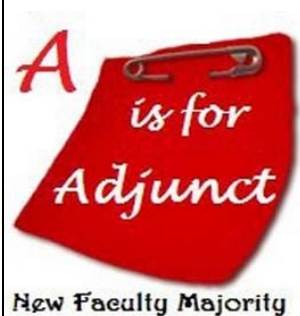
# Alfred UUP News

Volume 1, Issue 3

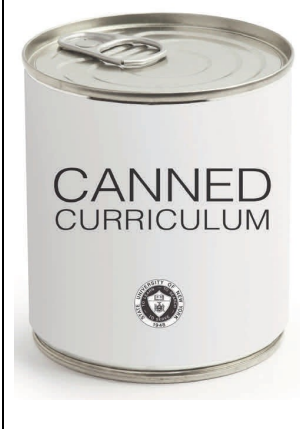
January 15, 2014



Class Warfare in Academia — See page 3



Open SUNY: Let's Do It Right! — See page 4



## Adjunct Pay at Alfred State

The adjunct pay rate at Alfred State College must be increased. Budget constraints notwithstanding, there are three primary reasons for such an increase:

First, the pay rate for adjuncts at ASC is the lowest in the College of Technology sector, and is perhaps the lowest of the state-operated campus of the State University of New York. Secondly, not only is the ASC base rate for adjuncts low, it has not followed the increase in the cost of living, nor has it also followed pay increases obtained by other academic staff. Third, especially given the interest across the nation for organizing adjunct faculty and bettering their working conditions, it is the right thing to do.

When asked about a compensation formula at the Spring 2013 UUP Delegate Assembly members of the Contingent Concerns Committee reported the following representative amounts:

Alfred: \$2100  
Albany: \$2800.00  
Buffalo State: \$2700.00  
Canton: \$3000.00  
Cobleskill: \$2436.00  
Cortland: \$2590.00  
Geneseo: \$2800.00  
Morrisville: \$2350.00  
New Paltz: \$2800.00  
Oneonta: \$2725.00 approximate

Although it can be argued that Alfred cannot be compared to colleges in other sectors, or colleges in geographic areas whose adjunct pay may reflect cost of living differentials,

it can be seen that the upstate colleges in the Tech Sector, all of which are in rural locations, have higher pay rates per course than that of Alfred.

The adjunct pay rate at ASC has not followed cost of living increases, nor has it also followed pay increases obtained by other academic staff. For example, over the period of the 2007-2011 UUP contract the minimum salary for the position of Instructor over the course of an academic year was incrementally raised from \$29,859 to \$32,945, a ten percent increase over the length of the contract. Other ranks saw similar proportional increases. Adjuncts however have not seen any increases to the per credit hour rate over the duration of the 2007-2011 contract. Increases in the current UUP/State of New York contract are meager.

There have been a number of calls across the nation for adjunct pay to be increased, including the Mayday Manifesto originating at SUNY New Paltz (see page 3 of this newsletter). According to the Mayday Manifesto, adjunct faculty "are paid poverty wages, earning an average of \$2,700 per three-credit semester course. Most adjuncts make \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year, often working more than 40 hours per week. An estimated 80 percent lack any health or retirement benefits, and academic freedom is meaningless in the absence of any job security." Although it will not fully address the situation of adjunct faculty at ASC, an increase in the amount paid to adjuncts will be a step in the right direction.



# Gertrude Ann

“Trudy”

# Butera

(1920 - 2013)

**Gertrude Ann “Trudy” Butera** – 93 – of State Route 21, Almond, died (October 29, 2013) at the Wellsville Manor, following a brief illness.

Born in Leetonia, OH on July 23, 1920, she was the daughter of Joseph & Mary (Perry) Butera.

Trudy was a graduate of Leetonia High School (class of 1938). Following high school, she worked as a cashier for Mutual Discount Company for 1 year and from 1939-1951 was employed as a cashier and assistant manager for Capital Finance Corporation. From 1951-1959, Trudy served as Vice President of the Union National Bank of Youngstown, OH. She later served as Administrative Assistant of Marketing at Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company.

While in her late 40's, Trudy decided to further her education and in 1969 she received her B.S. / B.A. Degree in Advertising and Public Relations from Youngstown State University. In 1971 she received her M.B.A. Degree in Marketing from the University of Akron.

From 1971 – 1973, Trudy served as a part-time instructor at Kent State University – Trumbull Campus, Warren, OH. In 1974 she was hired as an Assistant Professor of Business Technology/Business Administration at Alfred State College, retiring in 1990 as an Associate Professor Emeritus with Alfred / Business Administration. For many years, Trudy owned & operated Butera Business Services, specializing in marketing, communications & management services. For the past 31 years, she also served as a marketing representative for Bon Chance, LTD of Depew, NY and for the past 4 years served as a sales consultant for National Business Promotions, Inc of Albany, NY.

Trudy was a member of both St. Jude Chapel of Alfred and St. Brendan's Church of Almond. She was an Honorary Trustee and served as Chairman of the United University Professions Development Committee while affiliated with SUNY Alfred. Trudy played an instrumental role in the fund raising efforts of the UUP "Donor Wall of Hope." She also received the UUP Eugene P. Link Award for Outstanding Devotion and Service to the Cause of Unionism in Higher Education. Upon retirement from SUNY Alfred in 1990, she remained active in the academic union, serving on its Statewide Legislation Committee. In 1996 she received the Nina Mitchell Award for Distinguished Service in recognition of her efforts on behalf of United University Professions. She was also a member of the Allegany County Women's Republican Group and was recently awarded the “2013 Ronald Reagan Award” by the Allegany County Republican Committee.

In addition to her parents, Trudy was preceded in death by her sister, Evangeline “Babe” Butera.

Surviving are her cousin, Rita Michalak of New Waterford, OH, along with many friends in the Hornell and Allegany County communities.

# Class Warfare in Academia

By Peter D.G. Brown

Much attention has been focused lately on the tragic death of Margaret Mary Vojtko, an adjunct professor who had taught French at Duquesne University for 25 years. She died in extreme poverty September 1st at the age of 83, following a massive heart attack she had suffered two weeks previously. Despite good teaching evaluations from her students, Vojtko had recently been laid off, a possibility faced by hundreds of thousands of other non-tenure-track faculty members.

Unfortunately, there will be many more tragedies like Vojtko's in the years to come. Contingent faculty members today make up three-quarters of the workforce in higher education. They are not on any tenure track leading to permanent employment. Underpaid and typically without benefits, they lack the academic freedom that comes with job security. They lead precarious lives, never more than one small step away from disaster for themselves and their families.

Contingent faculty, whether part-time adjuncts or full-time lecturers, can usually be non-renewed for any reason or no reason at all. Even if they are union members, they are generally not afforded any due process in a non-renewal, such as would be the norm when laying off a janitor, a secretary or similar union worker. As is typical with most adjuncts, Mary Margaret Vojtko received no severance pay or retirement benefits.

"Duquesne has claimed that the unionization of adjuncts like Margaret Mary would somehow interfere with its mission to inculcate Roman Catholic values among its students," according to an article in The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette by Daniel Kovalik, senior associate general counsel of the United Steelworkers

union. Kovalik twice wrote to Duquesne to inform the university of Vojtko's plight, but never received a reply. Duquesne's president, Charles J. Dougherty, makes over \$700,000 with full benefits. So much for Catholic values at that institution, whose website describes Dougherty as "a nationally recognized scholar and expert in health care ethics."

Unfortunately, this situation is not limited to Catholic or even to private institutions. Things are just as bad at public institutions of higher education. Take the State University of New York, for example. Its top academic officer, David Lavalley, recently stepped down from his position as executive vice chancellor for academic affairs and provost. Lavalley is currently on a six-month "study leave" while continuing to receive his full salary of \$316,000 per year. Despite repeated Freedom of Information Law requests, SUNY has been unable to produce a single document detailing the purpose of this "study leave."

Lavalley, age 66, will return next spring to his former campus at SUNY New Paltz and receive ten-twelfths of the \$199,000 salary he had previously received when he was provost at that college. As the second-highest-paid employee on campus, Lavalley won't be working either as a teacher or as an administrator. Instead, he'll be conducting a few leadership workshops, mentoring one lecturer and "building candidate lists for senior leadership positions." This is one example of the extremely generous packages that many senior system administrators arrange to take with them when they return to their home campuses.

After the New York State comptroller announced he is commencing an audit into SUNY Upstate Medical University, where President David R. Smith and some of his top aides received hundreds of thousands of dollars in extra pay from companies doing busi-

ness with the institution, the SUNY Board of Trustees belatedly passed a resolution on November 15 to make the compensation of campus presidents more transparent.

Meanwhile, thousands of adjuncts within SUNY, who deliver a substantial portion of our educational mission, continue to work for near-poverty wages. Adjuncts are the only employees for whom there are no minimum salaries in the contract between New York State and United University Professions (UUP), the nation's largest higher education union with over 35,000 members. My research shows that when adjusted for inflation, adjunct wages at New Paltz have plummeted by some 49 percent between 1970 and 2008.

The union pushed hard for a salary minimum that would have benefited thousands of part-time faculty throughout the system. However, top SUNY officials adamantly refused to accept any salary minimum whatsoever. At a recent meeting in New Paltz where SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher was confronted by demonstrators demanding a \$5,000 minimum starting salary for adjuncts, she went so far as to publicly deny that SUNY had even been present at the negotiating table.

When asked about SUNY's refusal to increase wages for adjuncts while doling out hundreds of thousands of dollars to a former provost who is still on the payroll, a SUNY spokesman said that "they're completely unrelated." Actually, nothing could be further from the truth: they are indeed very much related, and the sooner we acknowledge this relationship, the sooner we can begin to fix the staffing crisis in higher education. (continued on page 7)



# Open SUNY: Let's Do It Right!

[Adapted from a report available at <http://uupinfo.org>]

SUNY System Administration describes Open SUNY as the largest online, distance and open learning initiative in the U.S. SUNY's goal is to be the largest public online educator, growing online enrollment to exceed 100,000 by 2017. SUNY proposes to expand online degree programs and resources, prior learning assessments (course credit for life and work experience), competency-based programs and other alternatives to classroom instruction, including experimentation with for-credit Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

## Some Open SUNY components:

- 100 percent transferable General Education courses (through the Seamless Transfer initiative)
- Graduation in three years for 25 percent of SUNY students by 2015
- Electronic advisement through creation of a digital concierge to assist in providing advisement services such as planning, navigating and completing course and degree selection
- New online bachelor's degree programs
- Sharing of established courses across SUNY institutions through cross-registration, including General Education and elective courses that are part of majors
- Grants to develop open e-textbooks
- A systemwide electronic database to facilitate degree and transfer options within SUNY

**What is SUNY's timeline for Open SUNY? January 2014:** Unveiling of Open SUNY

**September 2014:** Prepare to launch Open SUNY "at scale."

## How does the Open SUNY initiative differ from the development and expansion of online courses at SUNY campuses in recent years?

Open SUNY is an administrative initiative, unlike faculty-led online course expansion that allows for high-quality online education and student success. It has been rolled out with limited input from SUNY academics and professionals with teaching and service delivery experience. The following Open SUNY goals are inconsistent with an educationally sound expansion of online education:

- Rapid expansion of online courses
- Increasing standardization of course content and interchangeable courses
- Delivery of courses and services by private, profit-seeking corporations such as Coursera and McKinsey Consulting

**Can SUNY meet its ambitious goals?** At this point, SUNY has not provided a clear plan for implementation and oversight, course and curriculum development, or funding for Open SUNY. While SUNY is engaged in an extensive marketing campaign aimed at securing support for Open SUNY, critical details have yet to be announced.

**Open SUNY, as currently planned, may compromise educational quality and access.** Open SUNY, coupled with the Seamless Transfer initiative, suggests that SUNY may be targeting students taking introductory and general education courses and/or low-income students seeking a "less-expensive" degree. Unfortunately, there is broad agreement that students of color, low-

income students, academically underprepared students, and first-generation college students benefit most from an educational environment that stresses social interaction with faculty and peers. According to "The 'Promises' of Online Higher Education: Access," an October study by the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education, these students run the most risk of **losing access** through online learning.

**UUP supports high-quality online education, which Open SUNY may compromise.** UUP strongly supports online courses being designed and taught by faculty at SUNY institutions. Many SUNY professors already provide quality online education to their students, developing each course with the best teaching and learning practices in mind. The SUNY Learning Network, which launched in 1994, offers thousands of online courses, along with more than 80 online degree programs. Empire State College's Center for Distance Learning offers more than 500 online courses and includes support for students to work with faculty mentors, along with one-on-one communication with faculty and course instructors. However, Open SUNY may encourage the development of interchangeable courses and shift control and responsibility from campuses to for-profit consultants. These standardized online courses could diminish the diversity of campus missions and curricula, and restrict exposure to faculty with varying knowledge and perspectives. It could also limit the face-to-face advisement and mentoring that many students need to successfully complete college-level work. (See next page)

(continued from previous page)

## **UUP's Concerns and Perspectives Recommended Actions**

**Hold SUNY accountable for providing answers to the following questions:**

**1. How much funding will be made available to implement Open SUNY? Will there be additional funding or will existing funds be reallocated within institutions?**

**2. Will Open SUNY lead to a redistribution of funding within the system?**

**3. How will Open SUNY impact diverse student populations with different needs and access limitations?**

If SUNY does not obtain additional, adequate funding, it is possible that inadequately funded programs and services will see further resource reductions. Cross-registration increases the possibility that better-funded campuses will be able to increase online course offerings, drawing enrollments from resource-starved campuses. At a Nov. 18 meeting with UUP officers, SUNY officials indicated that for courses that draw students from multiple campuses, the full-time equivalent (FTE) would go to the campus hosting the course. FTEs affect campus budget allocations. SUNY's plan for robo-calls and email in place of in-person advisement could fail to adequately serve students with differing needs and levels of college preparedness. Open SUNY's "concierge" system could drain resources from financially pressed advisement and academic support programs with proven track records of success.

**How much money will SUNY allocate to private corporations and outside vendors as providers of a wide variety of online learning services, including course development, marketing, IT support, and textbooks?**

**Will faculty members' intellectual property rights be protected if they choose to use Coursera or any other contractor's platform to deliver online education?**

**Urge the chancellor to revise Open SUNY plans**

Open SUNY, in its current form, is based on very limited faculty input and lacks the planning, infrastructure and funding necessary to ensure current and future students a quality higher education. If not done carefully, Open SUNY has the potential to impede access, erode educational quality, and weaken academic standards.

**UUP urges the chancellor to slow down the Open SUNY initiative and require an assessment of current plans with the following in mind:**

**1. Any new initiative that will impact the educational services SUNY provides must include a substantive plan for implementation and oversight.**

**2. Course and curriculum development and support must rely on academic and professional faculty expertise and relate to the needs of students.**

**3. Resource needs must be accurately identified, including full-time teaching faculty, professional support personnel, and new technology.**

Open SUNY presently is dependent on two consultants: McKinsey Consulting for assistance with the implementation and communication of Open SUNY, and Coursera to develop a platform to deliver MOOCs across the SUNY system. SUNY has plans to expand private contracting to deliver additional educational services. Why is SUNY introducing profit-generation into the delivery of public education to the citizens of New York state?

Open SUNY has been given an "unveiling" date of January 2014 and a launch date of September 2014, but "details are still in development."

SUNY has not revealed specifics on how much funding will be made available to implement these broad and complex ideas, or how the funding will be allocated. The plan should also assess the impact of Open SUNY on diverse curricula and student populations, as well as on the overall public mission of SUNY. Academic and professional faculty, administrators and students should be involved in the planning and implementation of Open SUNY across the system.

Open SUNY's push toward a standardized educational process that stresses speed and transferability could jeopardize the quality of educational programs. A curriculum developed by faculty experts, as a matter of practice, moves students sequentially through preparatory classes and on to more advanced classes in a process based on student interests and faculty guidance. In contrast, what SUNY has made public so far indicates that, through Open SUNY, courses may be offered in a disconnected way, out of context and without a carefully developed, campus-specific curriculum. Research has shown that larger student-to-faculty ratios adversely impact student performance. In addition, face-to-face advisement and mentoring have proven to be indispensable for student persistence and success. As currently staffed, SUNY's teaching and professional faculty cannot support Open SUNY's planned increase in students. There is a need for additional technology, advisement and other support services. Advisement in the form of robo-calls and emails makes it more likely that at-risk students will not (continued on page 7)



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Jan./Feb. '14



## Class Warfare (continued from page 3)

The union pushed hard for a salary minimum that would have benefited thousands of part-time faculty throughout the system. However, top SUNY officials adamantly refused to accept any salary minimum whatsoever. At a recent meeting in New Paltz where SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher was confronted by demonstrators demanding a \$5,000 minimum starting salary for adjuncts, she went so far as to publicly deny that SUNY had even been present at the negotiating table.

When asked about SUNY's refusal to increase wages for adjuncts while doling out hundreds of thousands of dollars to a former provost who is still on the payroll, a SUNY spokesman said that "they're completely unrelated." Actually, nothing could be further from the truth: they are indeed very much related, and the sooner we acknowledge this relationship, the sooner we can begin to fix the staffing crisis in higher education.

We absolutely must find a way to pay the majority of college teachers a liv-

ing wage and stop squandering resources on overpaid college executives, expensive facilities, extravagant athletic programs and lavish services that do little to advance the true educational needs of our students. The quality of education will be enhanced by focusing our limited resources on instruction.

Our UUP chapter at SUNY New Paltz launched a \$5K campaign in May to raise the minimum starting salary for a standard three-credit course to \$5,000, about twice the current national average, but considerably less than the \$7,090 recommended by the Modern Language Association. This campaign has been endorsed by a growing list of unions and organizations around the country, including UUP and New Faculty Majority, the only national organization advocating exclusively for contingent faculty. The \$5K Campaign was one focus of Campus Equity Week during the last week of October and should become part of every union's legislative program next year.

Class warfare in the academy is unlikely to end any time soon. Meanwhile, we urgently need to connect the dots, to stop underfunding and

privatizing public higher education. At the same time, we need to put an end to wasteful spending and overly generous perks that top administrators dole out to themselves. Saddling our students with backbreaking tuition loan debt is simply unsustainable. They, their parents, taxpayers and legislators deserve to know where their hard-earned tuition and tax dollars are going. The quality of their education and thus the future of our country depend on providing a living wage, job security and benefits to those actually teaching in our classrooms.

[Peter D.G. Brown is a Distinguished Service Professor of German Emeritus at the State University of New York at New Paltz. In addition to being a founding member of the board of directors of New Faculty Majority: The National Coalition for Adjunct and Contingent Equity (NFM), he is president of the New Paltz chapter of United University Professions.]

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## Open SUNY (continued from page 5)

succeed. Faculty who design online courses need absolute assurance that they will maintain control and ownership of the content of the courses they create. Protections must be put in place to prevent the contracting out of faculty-created courses without their full understanding and consent.

Investment in infrastructure necessary to support expansion of online degree programs is critical. New York state tax dollars should be invested in public higher education, not in private consultants and for-profit corporations.

**Protect the mission of New York state's public higher education system! Faculty and staff must be involved** in all aspects of developing, implementing, delivering

and assessing expanded online courses and access through Open SUNY.

A comprehensive review of current online courses, prior-learning assessment and competency-based programs must be done to determine the most effective **current practices** and the feasibility of expanding those successful **student-focused approaches**—before turning to for-profit consultants.

The first line of SUNY's mission states "... **provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality.**" UUP calls on the chancellor to redirect SUNY to its essential educational mission and work collaboratively with our academic and professional faculty to ensure all new educational initiatives are academically sound and enhance

the mission of SUNY: to provide quality, affordable and accessible public higher education to all New Yorkers. Several SUNY campuses have developed and successfully delivered quality online education. Open SUNY will potentially shift the control and responsibility from the campuses to for-profit corporations such as Coursera and McKinsey Consulting. SUNY campuses are already successfully delivering online courses in keeping with their mission to educate the next generation; the mission of Coursera, and other private online higher education providers, is to turn a profit. The development of courses to fit multiple delivery methods requires training, skill, and academic and technical innovations. Additional time and resources, and investment in the technical support infrastructure, are necessary to deliver these services.

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#### WHAT IS VOTE-COPE?

VOTE-COPE is the Voice of Teachers for Education - Committee on Political Education, the non-partisan political action arm of New York State United Teachers and its affiliates. Funded entirely by voluntary contributions from members, VOTE-COPE is used to help union-backed candidates and campaign committees that support education and labor.

VOTE-COPE helps strengthen political action programs at all levels — national, state and local. To help on the local level, VOTE-COPE provides rebates to participating unions for local political action.

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