



Alfred UUP News

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UUP: More protections needed to reopen SUNY campuses

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The state's "Reopening New York" guidelines for reopening colleges and universities in New York state is a crucial starting point, but more must be done to protect students, faculty and staff from COVID-19 on SUNY campuses, according to United University Professions, the union representing faculty and professionals at SUNY state-operated campuses.

UUP President Frederick E. Kowal noted that the state's recommendations include plans for COVID-19 testing and retesting of students and employees returning to campuses this fall and encourage use of telecommuting to maintain physical distancing.

The state's recommendations echo many of the minimum standards in UUP's guidelines to safely reopen campuses, released June 1. However, the state's guidelines leave to SUNY campuses the final decisions about whether comprehensive testing will occur and whether telecommuting will be used. UUP listed these precautions as mandatory in its reopening guidelines.

"The state's guidelines for reopening SUNY are on the right track, but I am disappointed that they don't go farther in mandating comprehensive testing and liberal use of telecommuting," Kowal said. "I call on the state to ensure that its university system models its guidelines after the same standards the state is recommending that private campuses adopt."

Kowal pointed to campuses across the country that have announced plans for comprehensive testing as students return to campus this fall, and periodic surveillance testing once classes start. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Brown University, Syracuse University and the University of California at San Diego are some of the schools that have testing plans in place.

Kowal said the state and SUNY should fully adopt and embrace the recommended best practices in the state's guidelines, as well as the requirements in UUP's safe opening plans.

"SUNY needs to step up to the plate and demonstrate that everything that can be done is being done to ensure that our students, our members, our families, and the communities we live in are safe as campuses reopen," Kowal said. "We are prepared to be an active partner with SUNY in protecting the safety of our members and our students during this public health crisis. We remain hopeful that SUNY shares the same commitment."

**United University Professions Alfred Chapter
Labor Management Meeting
Wednesday, June 17, 2020 -- 3:00 p.m.**

UUP Personnel present: Joseph Petrick (UUP Chapter President), Bill Schultze (UUP Chapter Vice-President for Professionals), Jamie Guilian (Labor Relations Specialist).

Alfred State College Administration present: President Skip Sullivan, Chief of Staff Wendy Dresser-Recktenwald, Vice President Kristin Poppo, Chief Financial Officer Joe Greenthal, Interim Associate Director of Human Resources Maria Bordeaux, Assistant Director of Human Resources Brett Talbot.

Representatives of the Alfred Chapter of United University Professions met with representatives of Alfred State College Management on June 17. Management had no agenda items. The Alfred UUP Chapter inquired about the agenda items below.

Matters of Interest – Labor

- **What health and safety protections are being taken by the campus because of the pandemic (for example, COVID-19 testing, temperature taking, and contact tracing)?**

Faculty and staff are required to complete mandatory NY State COVID-19 training. As of June 15 the state also is requiring employees who report to work to perform COVID-19 self-checks and provide daily attestations about those checks. Other means of attestation are available, but for the sake of a simple, uniform document the campus has opted for the form provided to it by the state. The attestation form was designed not to have HIPAA implications, and no questions would be added to it.

Discussion of safety measures the College is taking related to reopening include:

- * Making masks available to those without face coverings
- * Provision of self-cleaning stations
- * Provision of microfiber cloth and small refillable bottles of hand sanitizer
- * Plexiglass panels in point of contact areas
- * Square footage calculations are taking place to reduce seating and increase physical distancing in classrooms
- * Provision of thermometers to employees in high traffic areas
- * Face shields are currently being produced in Engineering

Specifics discussed by Alfred State College Administration about preparations for reopening will be reported by the College in a soon-to-be available communication.

As reported in a Special Announce, the Executive Summary of the College's Reopening Plan has been submitted to the SUNY Chancellor for review. The recommendations of the campus Reopening Task Force will be reviewed on June 18 for submission to SUNY and the Governor's Office. Recall that the campus was asked for three plans for reopening – best case scenario, worst case scenario, and something in between. The campus has worked towards providing those plans to SUNY and is awaiting direction on reopening from Governor Cuomo. Although some campuses have announced reopening plans (including Binghamton University and the University at Buffalo), whether SUNY units open as fully residential campuses is not a campus decision but will be a response to an Executive Order from Governor Cuomo.

In response to the UUP inquiry about baseline testing for all students and employees at reopening, it was noted that hospitals and labs are currently overloaded and that testing of everyone on campus will probably not be possible. There is no state expectation of COVID-19 testing of K-12 students. It is anticipated that there will be random testing with an increase in testing of target populations if a case is found of COVID-19 on campus.

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Regarding masks for students, there will be an expectation of the use of face coverings included in the Student Code of Conduct. Masks will be available to students if they do not provide their own. It is not yet clear how face coverings for students will be enforced.

As stated in the campus policy, Human Resources will enforce the use of face coverings for employees.

- **Possible workweek changes (Evening/weekend classes, etc.)**

There are currently no plans to change the workweek. The question arose because of an idea expressed at a Reopening Taskforce subcommittee meeting about holding evening classes to possibly increase social distancing. In an earlier meeting with management, Joe Petrick inquired about a pay differential for evening classes. Although there are some faculty who work evenings (overloads and adjunct) there is no record of the college having paid shift differentials. Volunteers would be solicited if the College should happen to implement more evening classes. Labor Relations Specialist Jamie Guilian informed administration that if the College should happen to broadly schedule evening classes it would be a mandatory subject of bargaining and would have to be negotiated with UUP. The College is currently not at the point at which it is considering evening classes.

- **Reassignments, workload, and professional obligation / Job security concerns.**

The college is committed to ensuring employment for current employees, and as a result is reassigning some employees. As has been stated by administration on other occasions, it is the interest of the College to "protect all full-time employees in all unions across the board." That said, there is a three-pronged approach to personnel decisions at the College.

- 1) There is a state bulletin imposing a hiring freeze (see for example Budget Bulletin B-1182 (Rev)). That the College is not hiring is "better than letting people go" in accord with contractual job security rights.
- 2) Employment is dependent on enrollment and state support. There may be a further spending reduction plan, but the College is "not there yet."
- 3) A critical situation concerning the College budget would require a different conversation and the College is "not there yet."

Again, the conditions concerning reassignments, workload, and professional obligation depend on the Governor's decision regarding whether SUNY units can open as residential campuses in the fall.

- **Distance learning and other effects on instruction (including prep).**

At the end of the spring 2020 semester department chairs were asked for information regarding time spent by faculty in shifting from face-to-face classes to online instruction. This was done in case of availability of Federal Emergency Management Agency money for disruption of classes.

At present there are no plans to increase online offerings. Chairs will however be contacted about the possibility of hybrid (a combination of online and face-to-face) offerings depending on Governor Cuomo's decision on reopening.

- **Availability of final schedule of classes.**

There are currently no changes to the schedule of classes. Adjunct contracts are being held until enrollment figures are available in July.

- **Communications from administration.**

As reported above, it is hoped that there will soon be a message from Alfred State College Administration about making the campus safe for reopening.

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- **Continuing/permanent appointment notification.**

Candidates seeking continuing or permanent appointment were not notified on May 1 per the campus Promotion and Continuing Appointment timeline. The rationale for this was that there had been a Payroll Bulletin issued from the state saying that there should be no promotions or contractual increases related to promotions or appointments. Although this situation was unusual due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was suggested to Administration that it consider either changing the timeline or making candidates aware that there may be a delay in announcement of promotions and continuing or permanent appointments.

- **Satisfactory evaluations concurrent with non-renewals.**

Alfred State College sometimes issues non-renewals to term employees who have received satisfactory evaluations in the same year as the non-renewal. Labor concedes that the College contractually has the right to issue non-renewals and does not have to give reasons for non-renewals. In the event of an unsatisfactory evaluation, however, the employee may request an Appendix A-28 review by the College Committee on Professional Evaluation (CCPE). A satisfactory evaluation concurrent with a non-renewal precludes a request for review by the CCPE and may leave the employee unsatisfied or confused about performance issues. It is hoped that Alfred State College Administration will reconsider the practice of giving satisfactory evaluations to those who are non-renewed.

- **Draft Capstone and Studio Policy.**

This refers to a compensation for faculty supervising students in capstone projects and studio/lab settings. The Deans of the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Management and Engineering Technology will discuss the issue with potentially affected faculty during fall Professional Development Week.

- **Mandatory SUNY trainings.**

Alfred State College Human Resources is investigating options for compliance training in the fall but has not yet chosen a provider. The College had considered building its own courses in Blackboard which would then be approved by SUNY but was instructed to delay such action. In the meantime, alternatives to GO1 are being considered. Administration hopes that the modules will not be administered all at once but will instead be phased over the course of the semester.

- ***Policies and Procedures Manual.***

The Alfred Chapter of UUP expressed interest in the updating of the *Policies and Procedures Manual*. Work remains to be done, but Interview Exchange will be used to add policies. There is a guide as well as a template for all policies. Provost Poppo expressed hope that the Academic Affairs portion would be updated and expressed an interest in the creation of a Faculty Handbook.

The "Guide to Alfred State College's Policies and Procedures" with a link to the *Policies and Procedures Manual* is available:

<https://portal.alfredstate.edu/forms/AS%20Forms/Policies%20and%20Procedures%20Landing%20Page.pdf>.

The Policy Procedure Template is available in the Human Resources section of Documents and Forms section of myalfredstate.edu.

Part-Time Matters of Interest

- **Plans for adjunct/part-time employment.**

This issue had been addressed in the "Availability of final schedule of classes" section, above.

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Although not on the agenda, Joe Petrick inquired about the extension of the telecommuting agreement. The response was that if employees had a legitimate reason not to return to work for the fall semester, they could apply to Human Resources on a case-by-case basis.

Statewide UUP has also expressed an interest in determining if campus administrations would work with chapters in using Voluntary Reduction in Work Schedule (VRWS) to augment personnel costs in specific departments. Management declined participation with the Alfred UUP Chapter in targeting VRWS funds.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 PM.

Statewide Telecommuting Pilot Program Extension

The Statewide Telecommuting Pilot Program has been extended. Please point to the updated "UUPCOVID-19: Questions and Answers" page at https://uupinfo.org/resources/covid19/pdf/UUP_COVID19_QA.pdf for details.

Although the program has been extended, it is worth recalling the original agreement, which reads in part:

Telecommuting is not an employee entitlement and is not operationally feasible for all job functions. Management determinations as to which job functions are eligible for telecommuting are final and cannot be appealed. Full discretion to either approve or disapprove an application for telecommuting rests solely with management, but applications should be widely granted so long as they are consistent with operating need. An individual's participation in the Pilot Program can be suspended or cancelled at management's sole discretion with 48 hours' advance written notice to the employee.

Telecommuting is not operationally feasible for all job functions. The University determines which job functions are eligible to participate in this program. Such a decision by the University is final and cannot be appealed.

The original Statewide Telecommuting Pilot Program agreement is available:
<https://uupinfo.org/resources/covid19/COVID19TelecommutingPilot.pdf>.

Governor Cuomo's Higher Education Reopening Guidelines

Governor Cuomo has released his higher education reopening guidelines which are available at the following urls:

Summary Guidelines:

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Higher_Education_Summary_Guidelines.pdf

Detailed Guidelines:

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Higher_Education_Detailed_Guidelines.pdf

Reopening Plan Checklist:

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Higher_Education_Reopening_Plan_Checklist.pdf

UUP is reviewing the guidelines and will continue to advise chapters concerning reopening.



Resolution in Support of Contingent Employees

The following resolution was passed by the Stony Brook West Campus Executive Board on May 19, 2020. It is a model other chapters may use to help advance union efforts in support of contingent employees.

Whereas, contingent employees at **[SUNY campus name]** comprise all Professional Staff and Academic Faculty with an appointment for which continuing appointment or permanent appointment is not prescribed, meaning that contingent employees have little to no job security, and

Whereas, this precarious employment status of our contingent colleagues means that their access to healthcare benefits is continually unstable and, especially in this public health crisis, a source of profound anxiety, and

Whereas, despite their insecure status, our contingent colleagues have created and sustained programs, established new courses, served on key campus committees and task forces, and in general supported students in all facets of their educational experience at **[SUNY campus name]**, and

Whereas, the work of our contingent colleagues has added tremendous value to our institution, in the form of unique courses and programs, thoughtful and innovative pedagogy, and, most notably, enrolled, retained, and successfully graduated students, and

Whereas, despite its profound value, the work of these steadfast contingent employees has typically been insufficiently compensated – save for occasional verbal expressions of appreciation or the bestowal of additional (unpaid) titles, and

Whereas, as our campus, our state, and indeed our nation quickly approach the precipice of a large, perhaps unprecedented economic recession, the time is now for **[SUNY campus name]** to address this long-standing inequity regarding our contingent employees.

Therefore be it resolved, that **[SUNY campus name]** Administration publicly join with the UUP **[campus name]** chapter in an aggressive campaign to secure more funding for SUNY and for **[campus name]**, not only through federal aid, but also through increased tax revenue for our state,

And be it further resolved that the SUNY **[campus name]** Administration commit now to rehiring all contingent employees for the fall, and/or to take all possible measures to ensure continuity of health care benefits in this COVID19 pandemic,

And be it finally resolved, that SUNY **[campus name]** administration commit to working in transparent collaboration with key stakeholders to identify all possible fiscal alternatives and revenue generating options.

March 2020

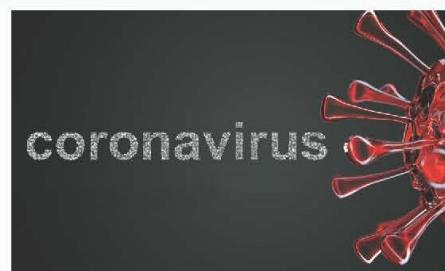
SPECIAL BULLETIN

from UUP President Fred Kowal

Protect your intellectual property if you transition to remote instruction

In response to the COVID-19 virus threat, SUNY has directed all campuses to develop plans to transition courses to remote instruction whenever possible to reduce campus density. UUP is in continuous discussions with SUNY and the Governor's Office of Employee Relations to address the plethora of issues confronting the University as it begins shifting to a mostly online learning environment.

While the safety of students and staff is of utmost importance, SUNY's academic quality and UUP members' intellectual property rights must be maintained.



Please follow these basic steps to begin to protect your intellectual property:

1. Make sure all your work—including course syllabi, PowerPoints, exams, and other course materials—includes a copyright notice. In the United States, the copyright notice generally consists of three elements:

- The © symbol, or the word 'Copyright' or abbreviation 'Copr.';
- The year of first publication of the copyrighted work;
- The name of copyright owner.

2. Tell students that posting your course materials without your permission is a copyright violation.

3. Add the following to course materials: "Reproduction of this material is prohibited without the author's consent."

NOTE: Be aware of the need to check specific copyright rules if using third-party online course materials/resources.

For more general information about your intellectual property rights as a SUNY employee, check out the UUP facts sheets by scanning the QR code at right or go to <https://uupinfo.org/resources/>



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Visit the Alfred Chapter of UUP on the web at <http://uuphost.org/alfred/>

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