



# Alfred UUP News

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Volume 8, Issue 1

August 2020

## Rally for Safe SUNY Reopening

More than 4,000 people viewed UUP's Aug. 5 virtual rally, the union's most ambitious effort in its push to get the state to mandate a system-wide set of safety standards that campuses must meet before classes resume in a few weeks.

Those standards include ongoing testing and contact tracing; social distancing; mandatory mask-wearing in all settings, whether indoors or outside, wherever students congregate; and telecommuting for faculty and staff, to reduce density on campus.

UUP President Fred Kowal hosted the "Rally for Safe Communities," which brought UUP members, students, elected state officials and environmentalists together to urge the state to find the funding to keep campuses safe.

"We all need to continue to raise our voices," Kowal said. "Here in New York, the governor and the Legislature can wait no longer."

Participants who took part in the virtual noon rally called on SUNY and the state to provide the necessary funds to ensure that these protective measures – which exceed those in individual SUNY campus reopening plans – can be put in place before campuses reopen for the fall semester.

SUNY students spoke at the rally, as did UUP members from campuses across the state, community leaders and state elected officials, including:

- UUP President Fred Kowal
- State Senator Monica Martinez (D, District 3)
- State Senator Robert Jackson (D, District 31)
- State Assemblymember Pamela Hunter, (D, District 128)
- State Assemblymember Patricia Fahy (D, District 109)
- Rev. Emily McNeil, Executive Director of the Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State
- Stephan Edel, Coalition Coordinator, New York Renews
- UUP members Rowena Blackman-Stroud, Rebecca Bryant, and Alyssa Karl
- SUNY Albany student Yasser Teouri

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- SUNY Fredonia students Elizabeth M. Hahn, Ava Knapp and Brad Brown

A letter by the Fredonia Students addressed to SUNY System Administration and Governor Cuomo has been posted at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EBknnjkMxGiWl1tTAMkyGoQCA0Bm4Tjvvhde2PVGiSg/edit?usp=sharing>

“We have made our position clear: Resources must be found to allow for a *safe* SUNY reopening,” said UUP President Frederick E. Kowal, who welcomed participants to the rally. “Our actions must continue and escalate. We must prioritize the health and safety of our students, our members, and our communities.

“We have watched the devastating impacts of the coronavirus on our state and nation, and UUP members have been caring for patients on the front lines of the pandemic at hospitals in Brooklyn, Stony Brook, Syracuse and Buffalo, putting their own health and the health of their families at risk.”

UUP has created its Safe SUNY Reopening campaign webpage at <http://uupinfo.org/resources/reopen> to help members advocate for safe SUNY campuses. In June, the union released its own guidelines for the best way to safely reopen campuses. The United University Professions Guidelines for Reopening Assuring a Safe Working Environment during the COVID-19 Pandemic are available at its COVID-19 resource page: <https://uupinfo.org/resources/covid19>

UUP contends that the campus reopening plans do not go far enough. By and large, the campus plans do not provide for testing, either initially as students return to campus or on a surveillance basis during the semester. Testing, coupled with isolation and contact tracing, is crucial to identifying and containing asymptomatic spread of coronavirus on campuses.

Additionally, most campus plans only require that masks be worn when people are within six feet of each other on campus, but not whenever people are congregated indoors. Scientists now know that the coronavirus can spread through airborne contact over distances of more than six feet. To prevent aerosol transmission, even a six-foot distance between unmasked students and faculty in a classroom is not adequate protection.

Several campuses are also not fully implementing a telecommuting agreement that UUP and other public service unions worked out with the state in March, which allows faculty and staff to work and teach from home. The telecommuting agreement is valid through Oct. 2, but many UUP members who can successfully work from home and have tried to invoke the telecommuting agreement for the fall semester have been told they must report to work on campus. Aggressive use of telecommuting can slow the spread of the coronavirus on campuses by reducing density.

Kowal assured members that UUP will continue to press SUNY, the office of Gov. Andrew Cuomo, and state lawmakers for both the funds and the plans to make campuses as safe as possible. The situation is urgent, he added, as hundreds of thousands of students, faculty and staff are about to arrive at SUNY campuses, and the campuses face the very real possibility of an explosion of COVID-19 cases and forced closures unless they strengthen their precautions.

“We are fighting to protect our communities,” Kowal said. “Our concerns and demands must be heard.”

The Alfred Chapter of UUP is currently planning on holding a webinar for Alfred State College faculty and staff to be held early during the fall 2020 semester.



Speakers at the rally included (clockwise from top left): Rev. Emily McNeill, Yasser Teouri (U Albany), State Senator Monica Martinez, UUP President Fred Kowal

## Listening Sessions Webinars

UUP invites you to attend a webinar to discuss issues in appropriate employee groups pertaining to campus reopening and other concerns in the COVID-19 context. Over the summer Statewide UUP has conducted listening sessions/webinars related to reopening of SUNY units for Department Chairs, Residential Life employees, and Librarians. Statewide UUP will be host reopening-related listening sessions via webinar for the following employee groups:

- Monday, Aug. 10, 11:00-12:30 – Educational Opportunity Centers
- Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2:30-4:00 – Athletics
- Wednesday, Aug. 12, 11:00-12:30 – Contingent Employees
- Thursday, Aug 13, 3:00-4:30 – Student Activities

These statewide webinars are giving members an opportunity to address questions to and get responses directly from Fred Kowal. They give UUP officers first-hand information about what's happening on the ground at campuses and members get accurate answers to their questions and hear from and forge connections with colleagues in similar jobs across campuses. After every one of these webinars, we follow up with all participants by providing notes/Q&As, and we help facilitate connecting members back to chapter leaders and other colleagues. The information we've received on previous webinars has led to follow-up on many specific items at chapter Labor-Management and in our state-level work with SUNY and GOER. Members are asking for more of them, so we're doing our best to keep up with the demand. Participation has been very high, with more than 100 members on each of the webinars we've had so far. Thanks to Jeri for all her work in setting them up and overseeing follow-up with members.

For more information for those interested in joining these sessions, please contact Joe Petrick at [petricja@alfredstate.edu](mailto:petricja@alfredstate.edu).

## Worker's Compensation

Members who are diagnosed with COVID-19 who believe their infection was due to work related exposure should be encouraged to file a claim for workers' compensation benefits. At this time, potential long term effects of COVID 19 are unknown. Given this, it important that our members protect their rights to medical care and wage replacement through New York's Workers' Compensation system. Documenting on-the-job exposure to COVID 19 now can prove critical to protecting their rights to receive Workers Compensation benefits in the future.

Members who are exposed to COVID-19 at work should be encouraged to: document the exposure; report the exposure by following their campus process for filing an accident or incident report; report the exposure to the state Accident Reporting System; and, if they become ill, file a Workers' Compensation claim. To assist members in this effort, we have prepared an information flyer on Workers' Compensation and COVID 19 and a COVID-19 Exposure Tracking Form which members can use to create a written record of their exposure. Both the flyer and the tracking form are posted on the COVID 19 Resources page on the UUP website at <https://uupinfo.org/resources/covid19/>.

These flier and form are also available at the Alfred UUP Chapter website at [http://uuphost.org/alfred/?page\\_id=1763](http://uuphost.org/alfred/?page_id=1763) for the message on Workers' Compensation with links to a UUP flier on the issue and a tracking form, or go to the COVID-19 Updates link at the Alfred UUP Chapter website <http://uuphost.org/alfred/>.

## JLMC Grant Opportunities

Five NYS/UUP Joint Labor-Management Committees, negotiated in the 2016–2022 Agreement between the State of New York and United University Professions, address mutually identified issues affecting employees of the Professional Services Negotiating Unit and provide funding opportunities to employees in various programs. Each committee has an equal number of representatives appointed by the State and United University Professions (UUP). In addition, a Labor-Management Executive Committee approves all funding recommendations for joint labor-management initiatives. A neutral staff serves the committees.

- **Individual Development Awards Program**

The Individual Development Awards (IDA) Program is the largest of all NYS/UUP JLMC programs. Proportional allocations are assigned to each campus based on the number of UUP represented employees on a campus. Award decisions and deadline dates are determined by each Campus Professional Development Committee [The announcement to the campus about applying for the IDA award will be made in November, depending upon availability].

- **Grants for Employees with Disabilities Program**
- **Employment Coaching and Placement Program**
- **Retraining Fellowship Program**
- **Enrollment Enhancement Program**
- **Calendar Year Employee Leave**
- **Professional Development Grant Program**
- **Online Self-Study Courses**

For descriptions, guidelines and applications to each of these program, please point to <https://goer.ny.gov/grant-opportunities>.

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## 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](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](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](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.

## Post-Rally Actions

Now is the time to be aggressive in our pursuit for the resources necessary for a more just, equitable and humane society. We must work together and collectively call on members of the US Senate, state legislature, and the Governor to demand that action be taken now. Your help is needed so that we can pursue federal and state resources today. Join with us by writing to:

Your Senators to support the Heroes Act <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/tell-the-senate-dont-forfeit-our-future>  
 Your state legislators to push for an "Ultra-Millionaires' tax" and a "Billionaires' tax" <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/pass-a-new-covid-19-mitigation-package-that-provides-crucial-support-to-new-york-state>

By taking these two actions today, you are joining union members across the nation who are rising up together and demanding that their health and safety take precedent over the destructive economic self-interests of the richest in our state and nation. This is our time and we must continue to escalate our actions because our lives, our work and the communities where we live depend upon our ability to bring about this change.

## UUP Alfred State Members' Survey Summary

The survey conducted by statewide UUP on behalf of the chapters of the state-operated campuses has been closed and a summary of the responses has been generated. The summary of the COVID-19 Survey is available at the Alfred Chapter UUP webpage [http://uuphost.org/alfred/?page\\_id=1787](http://uuphost.org/alfred/?page_id=1787), or at the COVID-19 Updates dropdown from the main page of the website, <http://uuphost.org/alfred>. Those interested in the comments from the survey are invited to look at the July 2020 edition of this newsletter, available from the Newsletters link from the main menu.

We appreciate the opinions and responses from the 177 faculty and staff who participated.

## Pre-Retirement Workshops

Are you considering retirement? In the past the Alfred Chapter of UUP has invited statewide UUP Retiree Benefits Coordinator Walter Apple to campus to discuss retirement options with interested faculty and staff. With an increased interest in having events online statewide UUP is making the pre-retirement workshops available online.

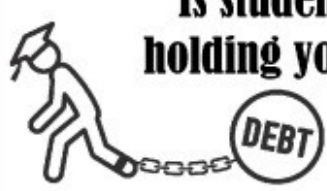
Pre-Retirement Seminars presented by statewide UUP Retiree Benefits Coordinator Walter Apple will be held on the following dates and times:

- Monday August 17 from 2pm to 3:30pm
- Tuesday August 18 from 2pm to 3:30pm

If you are interested in attending either of the online workshops please contact Joe Petrick at [petricja@alfredstate.edu](mailto:petricja@alfredstate.edu) for the webinar login instructions.

### Student Debt Clinic

**Is student debt holding you back?**



You may qualify for *free* federal programs that can help reduce your monthly payments and eventually lead to *student loan forgiveness!*


Learn more at the upcoming UUP Student Debt Clinics:

<b>August 12, 2020</b>	<b>1- 2:30 p.m.</b>
<b>August 19, 2020</b>	<b>12- 1:30 p.m.</b>
<b>August 26, 2020</b>	<b>12- 1:30 p.m.</b>
<b>August 26, 2020</b>	<b>5- 6:30 p.m.</b>

The clinic will be held via webinar. Log-in information will be sent to those who register.

\*Open to UUP Members\*

Sign up at [go.aft.org/StudentDebtClinicRSVP](http://go.aft.org/StudentDebtClinicRSVP)





# REOPENING SUNY

## UUP Outlines *Minimum Standards* for Reopening During the COVID-19 Pandemic

UUP's report, "*Guidelines for Reopening: Assuring a Safe Working Environment During the COVID-19 Pandemic*," outlines the union's core issues for reopening:

### Fundamental Conditions

Campuses cannot reopen safely without meeting two fundamental conditions:

- Mandatory baseline testing of all students and staff returning to campus, followed by recurring surveillance testing; and
- Employee telecommuting to the maximum extent possible to decrease density on campuses.



Other needed protections include:

### Maximize Social Distancing

- To support its social distancing mandate, UUP believes the telecommuting agreement between UUP and the state allowing employees to work remotely should extend at least through Dec. 31.



- Employees who opt to work remotely should be allowed to; workers who are high risk, who live with high-risk family members or who face COVID-19-related child care issues must be allowed to telecommute or be given alternate assignments.
- Common areas in buildings and residence halls should be closed; dormitories should be off-limits to all but students and staff living and working there; libraries should not be open to the general public; and limits must be placed on the number of people at one time in libraries, cafeterias, gyms and other common areas.

### Test, trace, isolate

The key to reducing the possibility of recurring outbreaks is widespread testing, tracing those in contact with someone with the virus, and isolating anyone who comes down with it.

- Symptom monitoring and testing of symptomatic individuals and their contacts is not enough. Waiting for symptoms to appear before testing is provided will miss asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic cases that could result in campus-closing outbreaks.
- All students and employees should receive diagnostic tests before returning to campus.
- Plans for surveillance testing throughout the semester should be developed.
- Employees testing positive for COVID-19 would leave work or stay home until they test negative. Students with the virus would be quarantined in housing away from residence halls and students.
- SUNY and UUP should work together to develop a plan to administer recurring COVID-19 tests to staff and students and to broaden the testing if there's an infection spike on campus.

# REOPENING SUNY

## Personal (PPE) and Workplace Protections

- Under UUP's plan, the campus would provide students and staff with cloth or surgical face masks, which would be worn in classes and common campus areas. Gloves should be provided to employees working with "high-touch surfaces," and hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes should be readily accessible.



- A cleaning schedule to disinfect and sanitize high-traffic areas like restrooms, door handles, stair rails, elevator buttons and vending machines must be in place, as well as criteria to close and disinfect areas where people with COVID-19 have been.
- All work areas must be evaluated for possible modifications to enhance social distancing, and HVAC systems should be adjusted to minimize infection.
- Work spaces must be cleaned and sanitized daily.

## Front-line Workers

UUP's plan also extends to the nearly 13,000 members it represents at SUNY's public teaching hospitals in Brooklyn, Stony Brook and Syracuse.

- Employees at SUNY's hospitals and nursing homes must be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE), including new N95 respirator masks, gowns, face shields and other gear as provided in historic CDC guidance.
- All patients set for elective surgeries should be tested for COVID-19 within 24 hours prior to being admitted.
- Current patient visitation restrictions must be maintained and enforced.



## Communication is Key



Protecting employee health and safety requires robust communication among management, UUP campus representatives and the broader campus community.

- Campus risk assessments to identify risks for exposure and possible responses to address the risk should be jointly conducted by management and union representatives prior to finalizing any return-to-work plan.
- Clear, transparent communication with campus employees is also critical. Campus employees need to know and understand that our and our students' health and safety is the campus's top priority.

Check out UUP's Reopening Guidelines at  
<http://uupinfo.org/legislation/pdf/UUPReopeningGuidelines200601.pdf>

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Gary Moore	Officer for Retirees	
Earl Packard	Delegate	
Ray Gleason	Delegate	
Laurie Dunn	Delegate	
Jamie Guilian	Labor Relations Specialist	

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

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