



Alfred UUP News

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Pause for Binghamton, Cortland

Binghamton University and SUNY Cortland are the latest SUNY campuses to pause in-person classes to ease a surge of COVID-19 cases on the campuses.

SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras announced Oct. 5 that Cortland will suspend in-person classes and activities for two weeks after the college charted 101 COVID-19 cases, exceeding the state's 100-case threshold.

In August, Gov. Andrew Cuomo ordered that colleges in New York must end in-person instruction and activities for two weeks if the number of positive COVID-19 cases on campus reaches 100; or 5% of resident students, faculty, and staff, whichever number is less.

Cortland has had 154 estimated positive cases during its current two-week testing window, according to SUNY's COVID-19 Case Tracker.

In Binghamton, the university announced "precautionary pause" on in-person classes and activities Oct. 7 after an increase in COVID-19 cases on campus and in Broome County, according to a SUNY press release.

The university was below the state's 100-case threshold when the decision to go to remote instruction was made; officials made the move after assessing case data and daily trends on the SUNY COVID tracker, the release read. Students will remain on campus during the pause, which started Oct. 8.

New UUP health benefits guide

UUP has a guide on how members facing retrenchment or non-renewal can maintain their health benefits.

The six-page publication, "Guide to Maintaining Your Health Benefits Due to Retrenchment or Non-Renewal from SUNY," is filled with information about COBRA and marketplace coverage.

The union put the guide together as a resource for members and in case non-renewals and retrenchments occur in the future. The guide is available at:

<https://uupinfo.org/resources/covid19/pdf/MaintainingHealthBenefits.pdf>

UUP Alfred State Professionals' COVID Campus Survey

Statewide UUP prepared a Professionals' COVID Campus Survey which was deployed at Alfred State. The survey was intended for UUP part-time and full-time Professionals (NOT Academic faculty). The questions were concerned with the COVID-19 pandemic-related impact on the work and workplace of UUP Professionals. Below is a **partial** list of results and comments from the survey. Within three days responses were received from 73 of the approximately 170 Alfred State Professional staff who were emailed the link to the survey. The Alfred Chapter off UUP thanks all respondents.

Has your overall stress decreased or increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?	Increased Greatly or Moderately	Increased Slightly	No Change	Decreased
	69%	18%	8%	4%

Related to COVID-19 have you experienced...	Yes, All or Most of the Time	Yes, Some of the Time	Infrequently or Never
A change in you work schedule?	18%	17%	65%
An increase in your workload?	47%	21%	31%
A decrease in your workload?	1%	4%	94%

Since March 2020, have you experienced...	Yes	No	N/A
A deferral regarding your permanent appointment	3%	65%	32%
A change to your performance program?	13%	79%	9%
A change in your work <u>schedule</u> with no accompanying change in your performance program?	10%	73%	17%
A change in your <u>workload</u> with no accompanying change in your performance program?	41%	45%	14%

Q11 Please explain if you have concerns about your workload, appointment status, or performance program. Details encouraged.

- Even though the contract allows it, it was unfair to non-renew employees at the same time management announces early retirement plans and reduction of duties. These non-renewals should have been given the opportunity to reduce their hours, take early retirement, or work somewhere else on campus. Non-renewing an employee at retirement age takes away their ability to say goodbye at an official retirement or going away event.
- I am expected to review my employees' COVID responses - I don't feel comfortable asking or knowing their health information. Additionally, I don't believe it is my responsibility to track where my employees go when they are not working to make sure they haven't travelled out of state.

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- My workload has increased as a result of the all the different reporting requirements related to COVID but nothing that would require a change to my performance program in my opinion.
- It sucks to be considered an essential employee and not being able to receive any type of stimulus payment or pay raise. We have been diligently coming to work every day since the beginning of the pandemic.
- With the unknown that is happening with COVID 19, permanent appointments have been put on hold which I don't agree with. With the shift in departments because of the hiring freeze, more and more work has been added to others without any increased compensation or even talk of compensation.
- There has been some work added to my work load to cover remote teaching setups. The larger workload increase is due to the way that we need to do labs in order to ensure social distancing and keep the students safe. I am completely supportive of doing what we have to do and what we should do to keep everyone safe but it does create increase the amount of work that needs to be done.
- It is extremely taxing to have an online and in-person classroom running at the same time. I like to use different forms of media to engage my class. The technology in the classroom today was not working today and I nearly had to cancel class. I don't mind teaching virtually but both in person and virtual is so hard to plan for and the technology becomes an issue. Trying to keep track of attendance and participation with essentially 2 classrooms is exhausting. Knowing who is where and all the added steps of this hybrid model is adding hours to my week and makes me beyond frustrated at times.
- Our response to COVID has changed much about the nature and quality of my work. I estimate that I spend at least 25% of my time on new/extra duties resulting from the pandemic. I have had trouble keeping up with my 'normal' work as a result.
- Faculty on our campus are allowed to work remotely if they have a reason they should not be on campus due to the pandemic. ISAs, ASAs, and secretaries have been assigned to go to these classrooms and log in to the computer and set up the web cams. We were not asked, we were just assigned. Most of us have setups every day, putting us in rooms we would not normally go in, be around more people than usual (and people in different programs), and disrupt our work flow or scheduled work. We asked about adding the change to our work plan and were told it was not necessary. Whether it is necessary or not is certainly has not happened. We can ask others to cover for us if we have a conflict or maybe want a day off.
- Being a person who is working with many of the faculty and staff to coordinate remote and distance teaching and learning, my work load is non-stop. It is nearly impossible to keep up with the changes on campus and the additional work to assist faculty and students engaging in remote and online learning.
- I have no concerns about my workload or appointment or performance program, but I have concerns about being forced to do it on campus when I can complete 100% of it remotely without exposing myself to a pandemic, as Alfred State continues to refuse to honor the telecommuting agreement.
- I haven't had a new performance program in a long time, despite a change in job duties. I haven't had an evaluation in years.

Regarding mask wearing on your campus, when necessary are you comfortable...	Yes, Comfortable enforcing whenever necessary	Comfortable most of the time	Comfortable Some of the time	Rarely or never comfortable enforcing
Enforcing mask wearing of students?	27%	24%	24%	25%
Enforcing mask wearing of other employees?	13%	22%	16%	49%

Q6 Please explain if you have concerns about mask wearing on your campus. Details encouraged.

- Most wear them, but many do not, and many more wear them improperly. (continued next page)

- I disagree with being forced to wear a mask at this stage in the pandemic. However, I understand that this is a requirement for now and I will abide by this mandate. Fortunately, I have not been in a situation where I have seen students or staff not following the mask protocol since I rarely leave my office.
- It would be nice to have a box of disposable masks available for students or employees to use, if they have forgotten theirs.
- Students often make jokes about mask wearing or have a very flippant attitude about it. They will eat or drink in class, pulling masks down around their chin. Many students do not cover their nose with the mask only their mouth. My supervisor is very inconsistent wearing her mask. I know she doesn't believe they are important. She has said "just let me know if you want me to put my mask on" which then means I have to be the one to hold her accountable. I have to ask my own supervisor to do something that will keep us safe which puts me in an uncomfortable position.
- I have no clue if we are supposed to "enforce" the wearing of masks on campus for both students and fellow employees. If we do say something and the other party refuses, what are we supposed to do then?
- For the most part, students are doing a good job with mask wearing in academic areas where I work. I have seen some improper mask wearing by both students and employees but attempts are being made to comply. I only responded with a number 3 above for the campus providing masks because two masks were provided for a five day work week. I am able to provide my own so it is not a problem for me, but if someone were dependent upon those provided by campus, it may not be enough.
- I am very comfortable confronting students not wearing masks, however, I am not comfortable confronting employees. However, it is pretty infrequent that employees are not wearing masks.
- There is at least one staff member that will walk through our building and is sometimes wearing a mask and sometimes not. I am not comfortable confronting faculty/staff if they are not wearing a mask - how are we to tell if they have a medical issue? And how they might react being confronted. Not a situation I want to be in when I have to work with them and see them regularly.
- I do wonder about classrooms where the professor is remote and the students are present. I am doubtful that students are policing these rooms nor do I completely feel they should have that responsibility.
- As everywhere, there are a lot of "mask everything except the nose." Generally though, on campus is much more mask compliant than anywhere else in the community.
- I believe that mask-wearing and other Covid-related restrictions and regulations are beyond unconstitutional at this point. The data that has been collected over these many months suggests a significantly LESS lethal virus than was originally thought. The government's actions appear extremely out-of-line with the corresponding threat; our NYS leaders in particular are guilty of this. I am disgusted that there was NO room/allowance for a dissenting opinion in the latest UUP regional town hall meeting. I am disgusted that I am now required to provide bodily fluid in order to keep my job (forced testing). I guarantee that I will NOT get a vaccine to keep my job, which seems to be the direction my union and campus are headed. So yeah, question #1, I'm STRESSED. Obviously, those who are at higher risk should take precautions to protect themselves, but I think the level of regulation imposed on EVERYONE, for the sake of a few, REEKS of more sinister intentions, whether political or otherwise. Wake up!!
- My concerns about mask wearing on my campus stem from the CDC's acknowledgement that COVID is airborne and can linger in the air in a room where a person has been and spread at a distance greater than 6 feet. Leadership on this campus only barely enforces mask use and only within 6 feet. It is their position that masks do not have to be worn indoors if you are more than 6 feet away. It is their position that you can talk to someone in their office without a barrier or mask between you as long as you are 6 feet apart. I feel this reckless and stupid to be perfectly honest. There are small suites where employees will work all day without masks just because they are six feet apart. If COVID is airborne and can travel more than 6 feet why are we not required to wear masks indoors regardless of distance when not in a private office alone? Senseless. The policy also states that if you don't have a mask on indoors (which in my opinion is stupid) you should expect to don one when passing someone. However, I have personally walked past several members of senior leadership in hallways who did not don a mask upon passing me and even spoke to me, releasing respiratory droplets, without a mask. The mask policy on this campus is a facade. It is generally followed, but not taken seriously and many issues exist within it.
- I am not sure I would go up to students and tell them to wear their masks. I would feel more comfortable telling co-workers to wear their masks.

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- There is no cohesive messaging, with the exception of Announce.
- I've seen near-universal mask wearing in indoor spaces on campus, particularly in instructional buildings. I haven't been asked to enforce mask wearing of other employees but I haven't seen a need to, either.
- I am not the mask police, nor will I be.
- If it was put out there that Employees should be enforcing students and other employees to be wearing them, then it wouldn't be as uncomfortable. I will tell a student if they are within 6 feet of me that they need to mask up but I don't feel comfortable telling another employee as I am not a supervisor.

Q8 Do you have concerns about the COVID-19 testing protocol and process on your campus?

- I believe they are re-testing known negative people in an attempt to keep the numbers low.
- I completely disagree with the mandated testing of employees and students who have no symptoms.
- While they are testing all employees now, they are only test 12 people a week which seems insufficient... those who are tested could contract COVID shortly after being tested, so only being tested once seems insufficient as well.
- As an employee, I have never been tested or have known of the availability of being tested, since being mandated to report back to campus in July. We received an email advising employees would start being tested but nothing since that email.
- I am concerned that when there is a positive case, we are not given any information as to what buildings the individual was in. Contact tracing isn't going to show if I was in the elevator or bathroom at the same time as the person. This is my biggest concern. As an individual with a compromised immune system that cannot work remote, I try to be very careful around students and staff. At the very least, I would like to know where infected individuals have been so I can take proper precautions.
- I don't think they are doing enough testing. I think students should have been tested before they even came back to campus
- Really, we're testing the kids' shit now? When the latest figures support that they are 99.99%+ safe from this thing? I do not want to consent to forced testing, but will have to keep my job I presume. Why have I never seen the MOU between the union and campus? Why am I being given no options here but to COMPLY? Let the frightened among us stay home and watch their fear-mongering news outlets all day while the rest of us carry on with business.
- I do not want to be mandated to participate in COVID testing. I have other (non-COVID) related medical conditions and am not interested in additional testing. I do understand the need for testing and tracing but as an employee who rarely comes into contact with others throughout the day I believe I should have the choice to participate.
- There is no baseline for testing. Not everyone was tested and still some people are tested over and over while some have never been tested. I am convinced that this campus is actively trying to keep COVID cases from being detected and reported.
- Just concerns that people aren't really doing their daily screenings. I think the random pool testing helps with this as you never know when you are going to get asked to test. I know there are many many people working day and night to make sure we stay safe.
- This is mostly being resolved with increased pool testing, but I was concerned that we didn't have baseline testing before the campus reopened to students, and was also concerned that we didn't test enough overall compared to some other campuses. Now that we have increased pool and wastewater testing I'm less concerned, but I hope that we continue testing a large enough sample of all campus populations in order to ensure that all positive cases and their contacts are identified and isolated/quarantined as quickly as possible.
- One person I know was told they did not have to get a test after being exposed to a person with COVID-19, and that they must come to work if they had no symptoms.
- I doubt that waste water from non-residential buildings is being tested and I've never been tested for COVID. I realize testing is being done on a random basis, but that's not very reassuring. I am non-symptomatic, but I would feel much better if I could be tested at least once, and being tested every few months would be greatly appreciated.

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- At least one student in a resident hall tested positive. When the wastewater from that student's residence hall showed traces of COVID, administrators seemed to assume that it was the result of that specific student's presence.

Q14 What reasons did you give for requesting to telecommute?

- The telecommuting agreement, which states that non-essential employees should be able to telecommute to the greatest extent possible. I was telecommuting 100% in the beginning of the pandemic, but since July Alfred State has refused to honor the agreement. I am non-essential and can complete all of my duties remotely. I also supplied medical documentation from my doctor and another medical professional, along with a request for the accommodation, and was denied because my job "was not originally posted as a work from home job" and "we are a residential campus and expected to be here with our students". I am a professional staff member and do not work with students whatsoever. They are simply excuses because they do not want to set the precedent of allowing employees to telecommute for no reason at all.

Q16 Please explain if you have concerns about telecommuting. Details encouraged

- The school has said no one is allowed to telecommute, even those UUP had/have the telecommuting agreement
- Alfred State refuses to honor the telecommuting agreement. This has been going on for months now, since July, and nobody has done a thing to help the employees on our campus with this agreement. We are all being forced to come to campus during a PANDEMIC and work even when we can do 100% of our duties from home with 100% success. Professional employees who do not work with students have shown from March to June that we could successfully serve the college while staying safe from the pandemic and reducing density on campus. But since July, Alfred State leadership has forced us all back onto campus where social density is as high as it ever was before the pandemic. This is an unnecessary risk and I feel disrespected, bullied, and helpless as a result of the stance Alfred State's leadership has taken during this pandemic. I feel they will not honor the telecommuting agreement because the health of their employees is not their number 1 concern. That is the only logical explanation, since they refuse to provide any excuse of substance. All they have to say is things like "we have to be here for our students". There is a pandemic that has taken the lives of 200,000 Americans including one of our own employees, and our administration refuses to take the simple step of honoring this agreement to ensure our safety. It is disheartening that this has been ongoing for months at our campus, through spikes across the nation, through positive cases on our campus and contacts with those cases, and now through a spike in our own state, and nothing has been done about it for the employees on our campus.
- My job can be done 100% remotely, but our entire department has been told that we are essential and therefore must report to campus. Not only is this frustrating, but entirely goes against the propaganda being distributed stating that the campus and SUNY are doing everything possible to reduce the spread of COVID.
- My concerns about telecommuting include lowered productivity due to poor (satellite) internet service, the inability to receive physical mail (from outside or within the campus), the inability to effectively interact with my colleagues, and not having access to tools such as the scanner/copier and large display screens (vs. my laptop). The internet service in particular is a challenge. In Teams meetings, I come across as delayed and choppy, which usually results in less participation on my part. Sending, receiving, and saving files is a nightmare - I have literally waited up to a half hour for important Excel workbooks to save to the network drive when attempting to work from home. PLEASE, give me the CHOICE to risk my life and health with Covid in order to continue on-site working.
- My concern is if campus goes remote (due to an increase in cases) and I'm still required to be on campus where COVID is clearly rampant even though I could do my job remotely.
- Reducing workplace density was not adhered to. We were made to return to campus full time at the end of June/Beginning of July. Requests to telecommute were denied often and quickly with statements along the lines of childcare not being an approved accommodation. Additionally, "It is what it is" and "It's hard to care for people and run a business." were also used. [I was not eligible for] remote work, due to my job "requiring" me to interact with students. However, I have been informally instructed to hold virtual meetings with people while physically in my office.
- Our policy has been to only allow alternate work schedules for those that complain or have extreme situations. Some staff and offices need to be on campus to function properly and the fear of being "unfair" has made administration not look for instances where an office could work from home or do a rotating schedule. If the goal is health and safety, then we know that the fewer people on campus reduces the risk of a possible exposure. It should not matter right now if there are no cases on campus or 1000. Other SUNY schools have offices that are still on rotating schedules of working from home and working in office. There are times when everyone needs to be here to handle student needs and there are times when we could rotate schedules and still meet the needs of on campus customers and complete all other work from home. Staff should not have to make this request, administration should be looking for opportunities to have people work from home as much as possible. As professionals we should be trusted to take ownership and to do our jobs

whether it be from home or in the office and as long as our supervisors feel we are meeting our responsibilities and deadlines then it should not be an issue.

- During the time when we were all working from home it became clear that a lot of us could do most of our work from home. It would be wonderful if this could be further explored as a possibility for slower times such as student breaks as well as winter and summer times. For me personally, it helped out financially saving on gas money and flexibility. I can only assume that this could be cost saving for the college as well when it comes to utilities, etc.
- I have no concerns about telecommuting however I would request that my students join via Collaborate and not have to meet in a classroom. I feel most comfortable teaching with every student signed into their computer virtually. The only issue there is making sure every student has a computer to use. During this time that is really imperative.
- I have no concerns about telecommuting. I just wish we were trusted as professional employees to do our jobs well even when we are not physically sitting at our desks.

Q29 Please feel free to share any other concerns, thoughts, ideas, or information regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your work and/or workplace. Details encouraged.

- I am mostly concerned about the students. I don't know if they have enough supports in general or what else we can do for them. I know all staff are spread thin especially Health and Wellness and Administrative Staff. I just worry we are missing out on key factors for instance, are we asking the students these same questions. And if yes, are we asking them the right questions. What do they need and can we provide it? Are we (professors and staff) doing anything differently to assist the students at this time? While we are stressed, we at least have the maturity and stableness of our homes, etc. to deal with life right now whereby students are having to deal with a whole lot more (in my opinion).
- Across campus I see many people who really just need to see some compassion for flexibility and decompressing without needing to justify it (because many don't have a "good enough" reason). This is forcing many people who need a break or flexibility in their schedules because of the unprecedented times to push forward, increase stress, and lean toward burning out. Will there be an opportunity for staff who are able to work from home to do so after Thanksgiving when the students transition to remote instruction. It seems unnecessary for us to come to campus if we are able to do our work 100% remotely. It also seems like it would be a best practice to allow staff who can work from home to do so in an effort to decrease the chance of folks spreading COVID. There would also be many buildings that could be closed or taken off line for over a month which could save in energy costs.
- I get the impression that the students don't understand why they have to sit in the classroom when the professor is remote, or why they can't have lectures online. I understand some of why, but I think better communication with administration and students needs to happen as to why campus has to be open and they have to be in the classroom.
- The college has done a tremendous job with a plan for students to return, the testing capabilities, increased the cleaning of facilities, and overall communication.

	Yes, All or Most of the Time	Yes, Some of the Time	Infrequently or Never
Do you think your campus workspace is being properly cleaned/sanitized by others?	61%	13%	26%
Do you think your campus is providing sufficient cleaning supplies?	80%	9%	11%
Are you expected to clean/sanitize your own campus workspace?	41%	18%	41%

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

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