



Alfred UUP News

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UUP Issues Safety Guidelines for Spring Semester

United University Professions has released spring semester safety guidelines to stem the spread of coronavirus on campus and in area communities once classes restart in February. In its report, "United University Professions – Guidelines for Spring 2021: Keeping Our Campuses Safe During the COVID-19 Pandemic," (available at <https://uupinfo.org/resources/covid19/pdf/UUPSpringReentryPrinciples.pdf>) the union calls on SUNY to impose stringent testing mandates as students arrive on campus; dramatically increase surveillance testing; ensure that campuses have sufficient on-campus contact tracing capabilities; and to improve air quality, filtration and ventilation in campus buildings.

"Our report offers the strongest possible set of guidelines for SUNY to keep students, faculty and staff, and surrounding communities safe during the upcoming semester," said UUP President Frederick E. Kowal. "The recommendations are built upon lessons learned from the fall semester and the excellent work that SUNY has done since the arrival of Chancellor (Jim) Malatras.

"Let's hope that this is the last semester we must prepare for in this fashion," he continued. "But until a vaccine has been widely distributed, UUP will continue to push for measures that we believe will protect our students, our members and our communities."

The 10-page report recommends that returning students get two mandatory baseline polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests four to seven days apart at the start of the semester. Students should be quarantined until they twice test negative. Students with documentation of a negative PCR test within 72 hours of returning to campus would only have to be tested once, four days after their return.

Once classes begin, the campus population—students living on campus or in the local community, and any employees working on campus—should be tested every two weeks through the end of the semester. Students who test positive for COVID-19 should be quarantined in housing separate from residence halls.

The union, which represents 37,000 academics and professional employees at SUNY's public hospitals and four-year campuses, also wants minimum 90-day stockpiles of Personal Protective Equipment—including N95 masks, isolation gowns, face shields, booties, gloves and head coverings—available for front-line workers at SUNY's academic medical centers in Brooklyn, Stony Brook and Syracuse; Buffalo-area hospitals; and the Long Island Veterans Home.

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SUNY's hospitals were beset with severe shortages of PPE at the start of the pandemic in March. SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University in Brooklyn was designated as a COVID-19-only facility by the governor. Stony Brook University Hospital was also inundated with COVID-19 patients in the spring.

UUP also wants SUNY to provide housing to hospital employees who have contact with the public, such as emergency room reception workers, who request it to protect family members from possible exposure to the coronavirus. UUP paid for hotel rooms for dozens of front-line workers who were afraid of infecting their families due to possible exposure at work.

"At our academic medical centers, our health care workers face additional risks which must be addressed," Kowal said. "Our hospitals and nursing home must have sufficient PPE to truly protect our members, our co-workers, our patients, and our families."

In the report, the union lays out possible actions to improve air filtration in campus buildings, including upgrading heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) filtration to the highest possible level (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value 13); adding portable HEPA/MERV filters in student health clinics, dorms and other areas where high-level filtration isn't possible; increasing airflow to occupied spaces; and opening windows and doors to bring in fresh outdoor air.

UUP also recommends that campus administrations:

- Stage on-campus flu vaccination clinics so students and faculty can easily get flu shots;
- Work with Employee Assistance Program (EAP) committees and EAP coordinators to promote mental health resources available to employees;
- Require everyone on campus to wear face masks indoors, unless they are in private residences or offices; and
- Limit visitor access to campuses.

"There is a light at the end of the tunnel, but there is a long and difficult journey to that relief," said Kowal. "The work that we do is necessary to ensure the safety of our students, our members and the communities that host SUNY campuses."

Since March, UUP has been outspoken about the need for wide-ranging safety precautions to stem the spread of the coronavirus. In June, the union released safety guidelines for the fall semester; SUNY ignored the recommendations until Malatras became SUNY chancellor Aug. 21. Those guidelines included mandatory and recurring COVID-19 testing for on-campus students and staff, contact tracing and isolation plans, and social distancing mandates.

SUNY has enacted a number of UUP's guidelines, including requiring baseline and surveillance testing for students. In November, UUP and SUNY agreed to extend free, mandatory coronavirus testing for UUP-represented employees through the end of spring semester.



**United University Professions Alfred Chapter
Labor Management Meeting
Wednesday, January 13, 2021 -- 3:00 p.m.**

UUP Representatives: Joseph Petrick (UUP Chapter President), Jamie Guilian (Labor Relations Specialist), Linda Panter (UUP Chapter Vice-President for Academics), Bill Schultze (UUP Chapter Vice-President for Professionals).

Alfred State College Administration Representatives: President Skip Sullivan, Provost Kristin Poppo, Vice-President Greg Sammons, Chief Financial Officer Joe Greenthal, Chief of Staff Wendy Dresser-Recktenwald, Assistant Director of Human Resources Maria Bordeaux.

Representatives of the Alfred Chapter of United University Professions met with representatives of Alfred State College Management on January 13. Management had no agenda items. The Alfred UUP Chapter inquired about the agenda items below.

Matters of Interest – Labor

- Vaccination – Are there plans for Alfred State College becoming a vaccination site?

The University at Albany, Stony Brook University, the University at Buffalo, Binghamton University, and SUNY Potsdam have volunteered as vaccination sites. Alfred State College did not volunteer to be a vaccination site. The only non-hospital entity in Allegany County that requested to be a vaccination site in the original call for sites was Alfred Pharmacy. The College has been in discussions with Alfred Pharmacy and the Allegany County Department of Health about vaccinations, currently set for individuals who are age 75 or older. Alfred State College does not currently have a vaccination coordinator because it is not a vaccination site.

- What are the plans for COVID-19 testing moving forward in the spring semester?

President Sullivan discussed a January 12 conference call between SUNY presidents and Chancellor Malatras in which campuses were informed that residential students who attend face-to-face classes are now required to be tested once per week. Vice-President Sammons noted that this would quintuple the amount of testing that had been done at Alfred State in the fall semester. It was hoped that there could be dedicated testing locations (including Wellsville and Northland) as well as teams to conduct the tests. SUNY has not yet required similar testing of faculty and staff, and campus presidents await a clarification of intent from SUNY. [Greg Sammons provided an update on January 15, indicating that, according to SUNY, faculty and staff will also be included in weekly testing].

- Please explain the exemption of labs from Allegany County Department of Health 55-minute (or 80-minute) maximum for meetings (The question is not why labs run for extended periods, but why classes are limited to 55 minutes?).

Lab sessions are often required by curricula at Alfred State, and consequentially instruction labs cannot be limited to the maximum time of meeting in guidance from the Allegany County Department of Health. Because Alfred State College is no longer participating in the telecommuting pilot program and has a proportionately higher number of face-to-face classes in comparison with other SUNY units, the Allegany County Department of Health is concerned about the increased probability of infection. If a student or students are tested positive in a class, the members of the class are quarantined. In order to reduce the number of classes quarantined, duration of instruction has been limited. Class duration for courses whose classes have run over 55 minutes are now sometimes scheduled to run 80 minutes and can be run at that duration if it becomes possible to do so.

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The recommendation from SUNY Chancellor Malatras is that the college follow Department of Health guidelines.

- What is the status of COVID-19 Essential Employees (as opposed to pre-COVID-19 Essential Employees)?

A letter was sent to some professional staff at the end of the fall 2020 semester as notification that they have been designated Essential Employees. This letter was somewhat confusing, as it seemed to conflate being COVID-essential with pre-COVID emergency essential status, i.e. the requirement that essential employees report to campus during snowstorms and other emergencies. Administration assured that COVID-essential status would be clarified.

- What is the status of the 2020-2021 compression study, and when will DSI projected to be paid?

There will be a session on compression at the Academic Affairs Division meeting on January 19. It about the compression analysis. It is anticipated if all goes well that compression and across-the-board DSI will be paid in the February 17 payroll.

- Is there any change to the January 11 deadline for submission of Individual Development Awards applications, and have the guidelines for IDA submission been made available?

There has been no action on Individual Development Awards because the guidelines have not been distributed to campuses. The Governor's Office of Employee Relations had unilaterally changed the guidelines during the 2019-2020 cycle at the beginning of the pandemic. Statewide UUP has contested the change, which required that awards be made which would benefit the campus. The conflict between GOER and UUP has not been resolved and although the campus has been informed of the allocation IDA funds have not been disbursed.

In conclusion, President Sullivan noted the concerns on the part of SUNY System Administration about declines in enrollment, occupancy, and revenue across the system. The meeting adjourned at 3:50 PM.

Two Percent Salary Increases

UUP has received notification from the Governor's Office of Employee Relations that the state is again delaying implementation of the 2% across the board salary increases that were due to our members on July 1 or Sept 1, 2020 (depending on obligation). At this time, the state has indicated that this delay will extend through the end of March 2021. Once again, the state has indicated that this is a delay in payment, not a cancellation of the 2020 2% increase. This delay of the July 1/Sept 1 2% increase also mirrors an additional delay of the 2% increases that were due to other state employees beginning April 1, 2020.

As we know, the July1/Sept.1 2% increase is contractually provided for in the 2016-2022 State/ UUP Agreement. After GOER notified us of the initial delay in payment in June, UUP filed class action grievances covering the delayed raises and related delays in minimum salary increases, including minimum salaries for adjuncts, scheduled to take effect in 2020. UUP also filed an Improper Practice with the NYS Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) on behalf of residents working in facilities associated with SUNY's academic medical centers. Given the repeated delays in implementing our negotiated raises, we are continuing to pursue all appropriate avenues for enforcing our contract and protecting our terms and conditions of employment, including raising revenue.

For information on revenue go to: [UUP Campaign for Revenue Raisers \(uupinfo.org\)](http://uupinfo.org)

Open Forum Recap

The Alfred Chapter of United University Professions held an open forum via GoToMeeting on December 4, 2020. The purpose of the open forum was to hear the concerns of members concerning spring 2021 semester scheduling, accommodation requests, COVID testing, and other issues of interest to those in the bargaining unit. Fifty-two people registered for the event. UUP Chapter President Joe Petrick began the meeting by noting that there are people who have been reporting to administration what has been said in Faculty Senate and other meetings and warned participants that what was said during the Open Forum may be reported by an attendee or attendees to campus administration. Individual members expressed concerns about the following:

- There is a lack of transparency about accommodations
- There was limited shared governance regarding the Reopening Task Force
- Administration is not doing a good job of communicating with faculty and staff
- Some members expressed interest in a vote of no confidence
- There was no faculty input on scheduling which led to evening classes
- There is a culture of fear on the campus and the college is losing talented faculty

Dr. Petrick explained what has UUP done to protect faculty and staff during the pandemic. As a point of information he said that the options available to UUP were limited because of the Taylor Law, which makes it illegal for employees in public service unions in New York to protest by going on strike or engaging in slowdown actions.

Chapter President Joe Petrick responded to member concerns about accommodations by stating that HR had been asked to clarify the timeline for accommodations, after which HR made an announcement that accommodations would be determined before the beginning of the spring semester.

In response to questions from those in attendance at the Open Forum concerning the Reopening Task Force (for example, how many faculty members had been on the Task Force?) it was pointed out that there was faculty representation but member input had been limited. Communication regarding administrative decisions relating to the pandemic could be improved.

As for a confidence vote, the chapter president mentioned the August 2020 confidence vote against the SUNY Board of Trustees because of the appointment of Jim Malatras as SUNY Chancellor. SUNY University Faculty Senate, the SUNY Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and the SUNY Student Assembly voted no confidence in the SUNY Board of Trustees because of the appointment was made without a nationwide search. Meanwhile, Statewide UUP released a statement saying that though it did not agree with the process, it welcomed working with the incoming Chancellor. There are some within UUP membership (specifically, the Member Action Coalition) who disagreed with the statewide UUP position and endorsed the governance opposition to the appointment. According to Statewide UUP, since his appointment Dr. Malatras has worked more closely with UUP than any other chancellor in recent memory. A good working relationship with SUNY is important to UUP, which is concerned with the terms and conditions of employment of its members. Governance bodies may have been right in condemning the selection process, but it does not benefit UUP members for UUP to be antagonistic to the Chancellor. Instead of a confidence vote, Joe Petrick pointed out that he is on record in supporting the SUNY University Faculty Senate visitation process, which would lessen publicity. No confidence votes may have a negative impact on enrollment.

UUP chapter presidents have been meeting with statewide UUP officers on an almost weekly basis since the beginning of the pandemic. The vice-presidents for academics and vice-presidents for
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(professionals have also been meeting with their respective groups. The Alfred Chapter of UUP had expressed concern to Statewide UUP about the Alfred State College administration's refusal to continue participation in the Telecommuting Agreement after June 6, 2020. Concerns of the Alfred Chapter regarding lack of participation in telecommuting have been passed along to Chancellor Malatras. SUNY System Administration has opted to not impose uniformity about telecommuting at the state-operated campuses.

In meeting with members of Alfred State College administration, the Alfred Chapter of UUP was asked about faculty working evenings and weekends. The response from UUP for the fall 2020 semester was that it would be okay if faculty volunteered to work outside of official college hours. As it was anticipated that more faculty would have to work in evenings during the spring 2021 semester due to changes in the course schedule, the Chapter said that it was willing to negotiate changes to terms and conditions of employment. The campus did not agree to negotiate and arranged a spring schedule with an increase in the number of evening classes. Changes to the spring 2021 course schedule happened quickly, with little or no input from affected faculty. The Alfred Chapter of UUP is filing an improper practice charge with the Public Employee Relations Board on the issue. UUP cannot prevent the campus from scheduling evening classes in advance of the review of the improper practice charge by Public Employee Relations Board panel.

The Alfred Chapter of UUP is planning a membership-wide meeting early in the spring 2021 semester.

DSI, compression distribution on the way

The dates for distribution of the 2020 Discretionary Salary Increases and salary compression pools are expected in March, and possibly as early as February.

UUP will provide members with updated information as soon as possible.

Regardless of the date of payment, both salary compression adjustments and DSI will be retroactive to July or September depending on a member's obligation. But the money—added to base salaries—is coming.

Telecommuting into the spring

UUP's telecommuting agreement with SUNY has been extended through April 2, 2021.

UUP first negotiated the telecommuting agreement last spring, following the shutdown of SUNY campuses and the abrupt conversion to distance learning.

The unprecedented situation of operating the SUNY system during a pandemic has meant that telecommuting has encountered occasional hitches, mostly involving varying interpretations of the agreement among different campuses. Members have apprised UUP chapter and statewide leaders of such issues, and the union has addressed them as they have been raised.

"We will continue to advocate for its liberal interpretation so as to protect the health and safety of our campus communities during this most dangerous period of the COVID pandemic," Kowal told members in a recent message about the latest extension.

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

Statement by UUP President Frederick E. Kowal calling for priority vaccinations for all SUNY on-campus employees

“Our members across New York watched Gov. Cuomo’s Jan. 8 press conference and believed the governor when he said that ‘educational workers,’ ‘public employees’ and ‘unions’ should be included in Phase 1B of the state’s vaccine rollout. On Monday, thanks to the cooperative efforts of UUP and SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras, in-person instructors were included in the 1B classification, which means they are eligible for priority vaccinations. We welcome this addition.

“However, many of our professional members work in residence halls, registrar offices, libraries and many other operations open to the public at SUNY campuses. These crucial employees have not been included in the 1B classification – and that means they are not eligible for vaccinations as we begin the spring semester. This is unacceptable, especially when the number of professionals is far smaller than the hundreds of thousands of our K-12 colleagues being vaccinated as part of 1B – which we welcome and applaud.

“During the Fall 2020 semester, our professional members delivered food and essential items to COVID-positive students in quarantine. These front-line workers struggled with serious outbreaks on SUNY campuses during the fall semester. Their work and safety must be respected and valued as we prepare for the spring semester. Including them in the 1B group for vaccine distribution is responsible and smart.

“All of our members working on campus need to be vaccinated. They are committed to keeping our students, our campuses and our communities healthy and safe during this pandemic. Including them in Phase 1B will ensure that their health and safety is maintained and will allow us to continue to protect and to open our communities, our economy and our educational institutions.”

Pre-Retirement Workshops

UUP will hold a series of virtual pre-retirement workshops starting Nov. 30.

The two-part webinars will cover health care and Medicare, followed by union benefits such as dental and vision coverage.

The schedule of workshop sessions is as follows:

Jan. 26, 2021: Health care and Medicare, noon
Jan. 28, 2021: Union benefits, noon.

Please contact Joe Petrick at petricja@alfredstate.edu or extension 4311 for registration information.



Chapter Officers		
Joseph Petrick	Chapter President	587-4311
Elaine Burns	Chapter Assistant	587-4186
William Schultze	VP for Professionals	587-4033
Linda Panter	VP for Academics	
James Buell	Treasurer	
Jennifer Guthrie	Membership Development Officer	
Vav Vavrek	Affirmative Action Chair	
Alexandra Hoffman	Officer for Contingents	
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/>

Alfred UUP Chapter Office
 EJ Brown Hall
 Alfred State College
 Alfred, NY 14802

