



# Alfred UUP News

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## Inside this issue:

UUP Policy Roundtables	3
Hospital neglect	4
Delayed Raises Coming	5
Tenure Clock MOU	6
NEOS at Noon	7
Veteran's Emblems	7

Read the Voice and Echo at <https://uupinfo.org>



## Fall 2021 Reopening

There is much concern across the state-operated campuses of SUNY about fall reopening. Questions about telecommuting, social distancing, vaccination, and other COVID-19 related issues are much on the minds of everyone thinking about the Fall 2021 semester.

At the present time Chancellor Malatras has not issued specific requirements for campuses, and statewide UUP had yet to issue recommendations for reopening. The Chancellor has however sent a message to campus presidents on April 12, excerpted here:

“The students, faculty and staff at the State University of New York (SUNY) have done an extraordinary job managing a pandemic. Given the work of the entire SUNY community, our positivity rate over the past week is 0.26 percent versus the statewide rate of 3.4 percent. Now that New York State has opened vaccine eligibility to the entire SUNY community and our continued advocacy has resulted in increased allotments of the vaccine specifically for our students, we are turning the page on COVID-19.

“As a result, SUNY is planning to allow in-person instruction for the Fall 2021 semester. Campuses must begin the planning stages now--and plan as they deem appropriate. Yet, given the changing guidance, we must be flexible as we plan to ensure that our college community is safe.

“We want to hear from our various shared governance and stakeholders on how to plan and establish the baseline guidance for the Fall 2021 semester.”

The fact that Chancellor Malatras is allowing “in-person instruction” is not much of a surprise, as he has allowed face-to-face classes at Alfred State, SUNY Fredonia, and other campuses. With changing guidance, how can campuses not be flexible? What are the current states of COVID-19 concerns that UUP members have as we progress toward the fall semester?

### Telecommuting

As Alfred State faculty and staff are aware, the only telecommuting that took place during the 2020-2021 academic year at Alfred State College was those who received medical or other accommodations. Other SUNY campuses implemented the Telecommuting Agreement “to the fullest de-  
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gree possible,” but telecommuting may be drastically reduced at other campuses, not because SUNY wants to reduce telecommuting, but because the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations (GOER) negotiated telecommuting with an array of public service unions in New York State and is not interested in negotiating the subject with single unions. As a result, campuses may no longer have as much latitude in allowing employees to work from home. There are also concerns about declines in enrollment due to lack of face-to-face classes.

### **Social Distancing**

It is not currently known what will be recommended for social distancing in the Fall 2021 semester. As of March 19, 2021, “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [updated] K–12 school guidance to reflect the latest science on physical distance between students in classrooms. CDC now recommends that, with universal masking, students should maintain a distance of at least 3 feet in classroom settings.” It is not known whether regulatory agencies will allow three-foot distancing on campuses, or the degree to which there will be universal masking. Whether distancing is three-foot or six-foot impacts classroom scheduling and will impact possible quarantine periods.

### **Vaccination**

SUNY is encouraging students, faculty, and staff be vaccinated as soon as possible. UUP had advocated that SUNY System Administration allow professional staff to be included in the earlier groups of employees allowed to be vaccinated, and has encouraged student vaccinations before the end of the Spring 2021 semester. There is no guarantee however that all students, faculty, and staff will be vaccinated before the beginning of the Fall 2021 semester, as the New York State Legislature has not legislated COVID-19 as a disease for which vaccination is required. Vaccination regulations coming from other state agencies may not be happening because of concern that vaccination requirements will be challenged in court by anti-vaccination groups.

UUP chapter presidents at some campuses (not Alfred State) have made statewide UUP aware that college administrations are complaining of austerity situations resulting from low enrollment and other financial hardships. The UUP response to this is that there is money in the state budget being allocated to campuses, as well as federal money resulting from the American Rescue Plan Act. UUP claims that there is no need for campus administrations to complain of austerity.

At Alfred State College a Fall 2021 Reopening Task Force comprised of the members of the previous Fall and Spring Task Forces has been asked to review the Spring 2021 Plan and make appropriate changes. Of the approximately 59 people currently on the Task Force, 38 are UUP-represented employees. A meeting of the full task force will take place early in May and a first rough draft of the plan will be discussed in mid-May. As we move into whatever summer brings we look forward to communication among stakeholder group about how to proceed with Fall 2021 reopening.

Relevant comments, questions, and concerns about fall reopening and other issues can be addressed to Joe Petrick ([petricja@alfredstate.edu](mailto:petricja@alfredstate.edu))

## UUP Policy Roundtables: Your time to make a difference

As a member of UUP, you have a chance to help effect change, not only at SUNY, but in your community and society at large. UUP is committed to crafting positive social change, through the work of its members, and through laws and policies that make New York a more inclusive and diverse state.

You can make a difference. Find out how, by participating in UUP's upcoming series of policy roundtables.

You will be joining colleagues, UUP coalition partners, lawmakers and advocates for serious discussion of how your union, public higher education and you can work toward a more equitable, sustainable and just place to live, through positive social policies that benefit all. This opportunity for an exchange of great ideas will take place in April and May, at three policy roundtables sponsored by UUP, and built around UUP's progressive legislative agenda, NY Heals. Read more about NY Heals at <https://uupinfo.org/legislation/pdf/UUP21StateLegAgenda.pdf>.

Roundtable participants will talk about key agenda items: sustainability, health care and the vital role that properly funded public higher education can play in the state's policies and communities.

The hour-long roundtables begin at noon, on the following dates:

- Sustainability, April 22
- Health care, May 6
- Higher Education, May 20



Join UUP members, coalition partners, elected officials, and advocates for a series of virtual **roundtable discussions**.

**SUSTAINABILITY ROUNDTABLE**  
April 22, 12 PM

**HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE**  
May 6, 12 PM

**HIGHER EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE**  
May 20, 12 PM

**Register at:**  
[bit.ly/UUP-roundtable](https://bit.ly/UUP-roundtable)

## **Kowal: New state budget ignores life-saving work of SUNY teaching hospitals**

Frederick E. Kowal, president of United University Professions, the nation's largest higher education union, said today that he was "bitterly disappointed" over the lack of funding for SUNY's public teaching hospitals in the new 2021-2022 state budget.

Kowal said SUNY's academic medical centers in Brooklyn, Stony Brook and Syracuse—where thousands of essential SUNY health care workers have been putting their lives on the line each day to care for COVID-19 patients—received no state funding in the budget.

"It's shocking to me that when the state of New York needed a COVID-only facility in New York City, it turned to Downstate to fill that role," Kowal said. "But there is no money in this budget to cover the necessary costs the hospitals face: debt servicing and fringe benefit costs. Other state agencies don't have to pay these costs. How can the governor and Legislature ignore the work these hard-working, dedicated health care professionals have taken on to defeat COVID? It's unconscionable."

Stony Brook University Hospital and Upstate Medical University in Syracuse also dealt with an influx of COVID-19 patients during the second and third waves of coronavirus in New York, and continue to treat COVID patients even as they provide the education and training for the next generation of health care professionals.

Unlike the SUNY four-year campuses, the hospitals received very little federal aid in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act.

The new state budget does include dollars to close the TAP Gap—phased in over the next four years—more funding for SUNY's successful opportunity programs, and enough operating aid to avoid any potential budget or staffing cuts being considered by campuses to close budget gaps.

Thanks to the work of Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, SUNY got \$915 million, which brings the total amount of federal pandemic aid to SUNY since last year to \$1.7 billion.

Kowal also warned SUNY campus presidents that they will have no excuse if they make any budget or staffing cuts over the next year.

"Campus presidents should know that between the federal aid and increased funding to help shrink the TAP Gap, there is plenty of money available to get us through this crisis," said Kowal. "There is no reason to even consider cuts, let alone make them."

Kowal applauded the inclusion of tax hikes for people making more than \$1 million, and corporate tax increases in the budget; they are expected to generate an additional \$4.3 billion each year. UUP went further in its advocacy, pushing strongly for taxes on the ultrarich, a pied-a-terre tax and the reinstatement of the stock transfer tax. Those initiatives could have provided more than \$20 billion in new revenue yearly.

"We welcome the new revenue," said Kowal. "It's a start and it's moving us in the right direction."  
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Kowal said UUP's advocacy efforts, which are year-round, will center post-budget on the union's [New York HEALS](#) (Healthcare, Education, Access, Leadership, Sustainability) legislative agenda. UUP has slated a series of policy roundtable events in April and May on sustainability (April 22), health care (May 6) and higher education (May 20).

"Our work has just begun," he said.

Read the UUP news release on the budget at <https://uupinfo.org/communications/releases/210407.php>

Read about goals for the SUNY hospitals in the New York HEALS agenda at <https://uupinfo.org/legislation/agenda.php>.

### **Delayed raises coming**

Now that the 2021-2022 state budget is approved, UUP members will soon get pay raises that were delayed last year because of the pandemic.

Funding for the pay raises is included in the new state budget. The question now is when the pay raises will end up in members' paychecks.

As of April 11, UUP had not received word from the Governor's Office of Employee Relations as to exactly when the raises will be triggered—or when retroactive pay raises will be paid.

Last week, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced that the state allocated \$600 million in the 2021-22 budget to pay raises due to state employees—including SUNY employees represented by UUP.

UUP-represented employees will receive 2 percent pay raises that were delayed in 2020, along with per-course minimum salary increases for adjunct faculty and 2 percent increases due on the PGY salary schedules for residents and fellows.

UUP has confirmed that the \$600 million state appropriation exists, but union leadership doesn't have information on how much of the allocation is coming to SUNY.

"We will continue to work to get clarification," Kowal said in an April 11 email to members. "But, again, this could be extraordinary news. It would mean that campuses would not have to bear the cost of the raises!"

Kowal said that the state has not yet announced the dates that salary increases and retroactive raises owed will be paid to members. UUP will announce those dates as soon as it gets them.

"We are, however, aware that the Division of the Budget and the Office of the State Comptroller have begun the process that is necessary to establish these dates," Kowal said. "As soon as we have additional information, we provide it to you. The machinery of the state moves slowly, but it does move. The money we are owed is coming!"

## Tenure clock MOU expanded

UUP and SUNY have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to expand the existing MOU regarding COVID-related tenure clock extension.

UUP statewide Vice President for Academics Jamie Dangler explained the new agreement in an April 8 email:

*“UUP and SUNY have entered a Memorandum of Understanding to expand the existing COVID-related tenure clock extension MOU to also cover tenure-track academics hired between May 6, 2020, and June 30, 2021. The MOU already covers tenure-track academics hired prior to May 6, 2020.*

*To implement that agreement, the SUNY Board of Trustees has authorized emergency rule making to amend the Board of Trustees Policies to incorporate this expansion.*

*The original clock extension MOU provided tenure-track academics who haven't attained tenure with an automatic one-year extension of their time to continuing appointment (also referred to as their tenure clock).*

*The new agreement extends the clock extension and the option to opt out to new tenure-track academics hired between May 6, 2020, and June 30, 2021.*

*Tenure-track academics may opt out of the automatic one-year extension and be considered for tenure on their original schedule. This extension does not require a change in current academic rank.”*

However, SUNY has not agreed to further expand the optional six-month clock extension for professionals within two years of permanent appointment, which was included in the original MOU.

SUNY also did not agree to a further expansion of the system-wide option to exclude certain evaluative materials from reappointment, promotion, or continuing/permanent appointment review materials (e.g., student evaluations of teaching, peer teaching observations).

While the original agreement remains in place for materials related to work performed during the Spring 2020 semester, there is no further extension of that agreement to cover work performed this academic year.

You can view the expanded MOU at <https://uupinfo.org/communications/docs/2021TenureClockExt.Signed.pdf>

You can view the original MOU at <https://uupinfo.org/resources/covid19/pdf/TenureClockMOA.pdf>

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and may not be those of the Alfred Chapter of United University Professions or of statewide UUP

# NEW EMPLOYEES, JOIN US FOR: **NEOs at NOON**

**Learn about your UUP benefits and receive expert tips on how to utilize and maximize them.**



**NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATIONS  
WEDNESDAYS AT NOON**



Visit <https://bit.ly/UUPWelcome> for dates and to register.

## **UUP veterans: Display emblems of your service at commencement**

The UUP Veterans Committee is continuing its tradition of providing Honor Cords to UUP members who have served in the military. The red, white and blue cords can be worn with commencement robes for members participating in graduation ceremonies.

Chapter presidents can order cords for their members from Tom Hogle by contacting him at [thogle@hotmail.com](mailto:thogle@hotmail.com), or by calling him at 315-456-8664. Please tell him how many cords are needed, and where they can be sent. Orders for cords can be placed up to a week before a commencement ceremony.

The Veterans Committee asks that chapters order only the exact number needed, as the cords are in limited supply and are provided as a service to veterans.

## **Pre-Retirement Workshops**

UUP is continuing a series of virtual pre-retirement workshops starting

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

Workshops for April are at capacity. If you are interested in future workshops, please contact Joe Petrick at [petricja@alfredstate.edu](mailto:petricja@alfredstate.edu) or the Alfred Chapter UUP office at extension 4186.

<https://forms.gle/LRvXH1Spt2quxsR7>



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

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