

Connection

Binghamton Chapter, United University Professions



From the Chapter President

A Spring Wind-up and the Need for Continuing Action

by Darryl M. Wood

We have faced a number of challenges this past year. We began with a major assault on the quality of the education we provide at Binghamton. The state had cut our budget, class sizes were increasing, student services were in jeopardy and all our futures were uncertain.



The state was also facing an uncertain future with deficits reported at over \$6 billion and health care costs rising significantly. UUP contract negotiations had stalled, pending better economic numbers. The very negative fall turned into a more moderate spring. State deficits decreased and contract negotiations got into full swing. While funding prospects for the campus appeared no better, signs in the Legislature have suggested growing support for public higher education. Even the chancellor heeded the call and requested an additional \$50 million from the Legislature – a call echoing UUP’s long-standing commitment for additional SUNY funding.

UUP proudly announced a tentative agreement in March calling for more than reasonable salary increases and very minor increases in health care costs.

Even though New York has missed

another budget deadline, it did finish the 2003-2004 fiscal year in the black. It is still unclear how SUNY, and Binghamton, will fare in this year’s budget. While no one can predict exactly how the budget will turn out, there is still time for each of us to affect it.

Your actions now can help all of us. Please contact your legislators and let them know how important it

is for them to support Binghamton. Only UUP can ask you do this – the University is prohibited from requesting your support in this way.

Each action you take will demonstrate to the state the power you have.

Collective action will bring results. As we end our spring and begin summer, please remember the importance of political action.

More Than 100 Participate in BU Advocacy Day UUPers are well represented in annual trek to Albany

Thirty-eight UUP members were among the more than 100 Binghamton University volunteers who traveled to Albany to meet with legislators during the third annual BU Advocacy Day on April 14.

UUP not only co-sponsored the event, but also had two tables among the University’s many displays throughout the Legislative Office Building. Teams of faculty and staff, students, alumni and community members met with legislators, aides and state agencies to share Binghamton University’s news and accomplishments.



UUP members Ingrid Husisian and Henry Eichelberger manned UUP’s table in the North Concourse of the Legislative Office Building during BU Advocacy Day in Albany April 14. They greeted visitors and gave out pens and literature promoting the Union.

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The editor welcomes letters and other comments of interest to the Binghamton Chapter.

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Leading the Leaders: NYSUT's Selzner Lends a Hand

by **Ingrid Husisian**
Harpur Dean's Office

If you're ever in trouble at work and need someone to turn to, Dennis Selzner is here to help. He can answer your toughest questions and help you through difficult situations. But Selzner is more than an advocate during grievances. He's really here to strengthen our chapter leadership so it can better serve the members of UUP's bargaining unit at Binghamton.

Dennis Selzner is one of UUP's best resources. As NYSUT's labor relations specialist for UUP, a position he has held since 1988, he divides his time among SUNY campuses at Binghamton, Cortland, Oneonta and Delhi, helping UUP chapter leaders work more effectively. He strives to increase our union's credibility and visibility by providing leaders with contractual and process information and helping chapters increase their memberships.

A native of Long Island, Selzner graduated from SUNY Oneonta and did graduate work at SUNY Albany in educational psychology and statistics. He worked at SUNY Oneonta for 14 years in housing, residential life and student affairs. During that period, he became involved in UUP, eventually serving Oneonta's chapter as vice president for professionals. He is now one of 10 labor relations specialists NYSUT provides for UUP across the state.

"My job is to prepare the chapter leadership to be able to respond to their membership with whatever their concerns are," he said. UUP members turn to their leaders with

questions about anything from state-wide issues like the union's political agenda to individual issues, such as performance evaluations.

Selzner does this by educating chapter leaders on a variety of subjects so they can provide their chapters with the most current information and the best possible service. He teaches workshops on a variety of union-related topics including UUP's contract, the terms and conditions of being a professional employee, performance programs, grievances, and workload.

While he works mostly with chapter leaders, he stresses it is for the benefit of the entire union. "While



Dennis Selzner

three or four people might have the skills to do negotiation, it's the 27,000-member organization that actually comes to the table and prevails or not," he said.

As much as he does for chapter

leaders, Selzner is still best known for holding members' hands during difficult times at work. When someone perceives a violation of the collective bargaining agreement, known as a grievance, Selzner is available to listen confidentially without judgment. "Sometimes they're situations where people just need someone to talk to, ears to listen, or some suggestions," he said.

When an issue is more serious, such as a disciplinary meeting, Selzner will accompany the employee

continued on page 7

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a grievance, Selzner
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without judgment.**

Common Errors Concerning Administrative Discretion in the Award of Salary Increases

by **George McKee**
Library

I just had a long talk with Darryl Wood about so-called “discretionary” salary funding and related measures in the currently proposed UUP contract.

There’s been complaint about the lack of any special provision for “discretionary salary increases” during part of the period covered by the proposed contract. It has even been said that University administrators at Binghamton blame UUP for the idea that no funds are available for the reward of merit, promotion, etc., simply because the contract does not stipulate them.

Academic and professional colleagues, alike, need to recognize that this whole issue is a total fiction. Salary increases for merit at the discretion of the University administration are not a subject of — nor are they subject to — the UUP contract. This document neither limits the amount of awards based on merit, nor does it require them. Administrators will continue to have, as always, the authority to exercise their discretion in making awards on other grounds than merit (longevity of appointment, for example), to define merit at their convenience, and to recognize it in any period, past, present or future, that they choose. So-called “guidelines” for the deliberation of “discretionary salary increases” and other awards of merit are an administrative artifact, indeed, a managerial device.

It’s that simple, and statements to the contrary simply obfuscate this truth. In principle, the funding allocated to the campus is available for expenditure entirely at the discretion of the campus administration. The UUP contract is not a constraint on its purview, except in regard the University’s legal obligations to those of us who are represented by the contract. Consequently, while

our individual wages cannot be reduced without cause, there is no contractual limit to the amount that they can be increased. And while funding which the contract designates for discretionary salary increases must be applied to this purpose, there is no constraint on the additional funding that a campus may make available for salary increases along with this amount.

The statement that there is no money for discretionary salary increases — or, for that matter, promotions — implies that there have been no recent resignations from the campus workforce (resignations free up salary funds for other purposes), no supplies and equipment expenditures of any kind, no snow removal, heating, lighting, etc. Of course, the evaluation of these and other oper-

ating priorities is what an administrator does, and there are hard decisions to be made when funding is tight, as is usually the case at Binghamton.

What an administrator should not do, in any case, is blame UUP for the circumstance that more money is not available for raises in consideration of merit, promotions and other deserving circumstances.

And administrators should not imply that UUP advocates the recognition of mediocrity over merit simply because its negotiations with the state have not always resulted in a dedicated allocation for discretionary salary increases.

Administrators need to ... administrate, not play politics with those whose interests they represent through administrative channels.

From the Vice President for Academics

Following the Money

by **James A. Dix**
Chemistry Department

In 1985, the state passed legislation that delegated some financial authority to the local SUNY campuses. This, coupled with additional flexibility legislation of the mid 1990s, has given the administration at Binghamton University quite a bit of say on how it spends its money. Taking my cue from Deep Throat of the Watergate era, I thought I would follow the money to see just what the administration is up to.

Following the money has proven difficult. We asked the administration at several Labor/Management meetings last semester to provide us with a copy of BU’s budget for this academic year. We were told that the final numbers weren’t ready yet. We are still waiting. (Are we really

like New York State, operating without a budget?)

Lacking information from the horse’s mouth, I decided to use not lies nor damn lies, but statistics. The administration has often

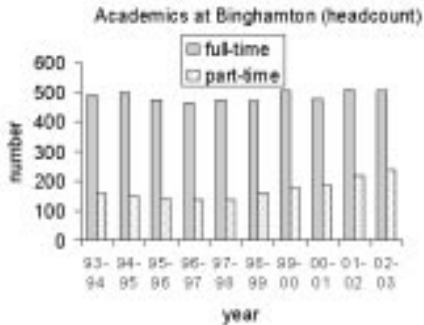
maintained that in the face of budget cuts, it has acted to preserve academics at the expense of other areas of the university. Let’s look at the number of academic faculty at BU over the past ten years (this and other data are from SUNY Central and UUP Albany):



continued on page 4

Following the Money

continued from page 3



It looks like the number of full-time academics has stayed at about 500 for the past ten years, while the number of part-time academics has increased significantly in the past four years. (Over the same time period, the student headcount has increased by 20%.) The corresponding graph for professional staff is:



(The data for professionals contains a one-time increase of about 50 a few years back due to reclassification.) One can draw one's own conclusions from these two graphs, but the data seem to belie, at least on a headcount level, the administration's claim that academics is favored over other areas of the university.

The administration could, given its flexibility in allocating resources at the local level, increase the number of full-time faculty. Let's follow the salary money to see what has happened. (The salary data we obtain follows a circuitous route: BU sends the data to SUNY Central in Albany, which sends the data to UUP in Albany, which sends the data to UUP Binghamton. Gee, I wonder if there is a more direct way to get

salary data.) Here's the total salary for UUP-represented professionals and academics at BU:

Date	Total Salary Money	Increase
11/98	\$47,375,430	
11/99	\$52,306,317	10.4%
11/00	\$57,025,091	9.0%
11/01	\$61,409,108	7.7%
11/02	\$64,827,048	5.6%

These data indicate that the administration has increased significantly the total salary pool allocated for faculty and professional staff, over and above the percentage increases negotiated by UUP. (The most recent data from Albany for 2003 was suspect and was not included in the study.)

How was this money allocated among academic faculty? To answer this question, I parsed the salary data to pull out academic faculty who had been full-time or part-time from 1998 to 2002. I eliminated faculty who were on sabbatical leave, retired, or had a change in full-time and part-time status, leaving 135 faculty in the data set. The total salary for these faculty was:

Date	Total Salary	Increase
11/98	\$6,833,214	
11/99	\$7,229,974	5.8%
11/00	\$7,706,530	6.6%
11/01	\$8,055,073	4.5%
11/02	\$8,565,212	6.3%

Assuming that the 135 faculty in the data set represents a random sample, the percentage increase in salary in all cases except 11/00 are above what was negotiated by UUP in our contract with the state. The data seem to indicate that the administration made a decision to increase the salaries of existing academic faculty over and above what was contractually required, rather than use the money to hire new full-time faculty.

As that felonious Martha Stewart used to say, that's a good thing, if the money was used to address inequity and truly reward merit. However, for the administration to plead poverty when the need arose for more full-time faculty is disingenuous: the resources were there to do so, but the decision was made, for better or worse, to spend the money on other things.



Jim Dix and Darryl Wood speak with State Senator Tom Libous at his Albany office on a cold day last January.

Arts for All Seasons: A Conversation with Floyd Herzog

by Cheryl Spiese
Library

At the end of a gray November day, I found myself sitting in the Anderson Center, thoroughly enjoying a performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, presented by Opera Verdi Europa. The singing was excellent, the acting was superb, and most impressive was the fact that the company traveled with its own full orchestra.

I did note a number of empty seats and thought it a bit puzzling — one would have thought in an “opera town” like Binghamton, enthusiasts would take every opportunity to enrich their experience of the repertory. Enrichment is what the Anderson Center is all about.

Looking back at the season — the superb training of the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, the sheer energy and subtle control of the Krasnoyarsk Dance Company of Si-

beria, and the technical brilliance of the Moscow State Radio musicians, soloist and chorus — I wondered at the knowledge and skill needed to identify and book such diverse groups, with their complex international schedules. “How do you do it?” I asked Floyd Herzog, director of the Anderson Center. What came through in the course of our conversation was the very significant degree of personal contact involved. Yes, performing groups usually are handled by booking agencies, but Floyd emphasized that the contacts one has with individuals in those agencies are the critical elements. “In this business, contacts are everything. And it’s not just who you know, it’s what they know about you.”



Floyd Herzog

At the Anderson Center, town and gown can co-exist, for a while, in mutual enjoyment.

Over his more than 30 years as a concert “arranger” — an impresario in every sense of the word — Floyd has built a reputation as an innovator and as someone willing to take on a challenge. Arranging the Anderson Center’s 1986 inaugural performance of the Central Ballet of China, with only six months’ lead time, was one such challenge, since performing groups are usually booked two to three years in advance. Floyd used his network of personal contracts to pull some strings, rearrange the group’s touring schedule, and we benefited.

Perhaps just as important, Floyd also is known for his ability to instill confidence in the performers, for assuring them that they “will be a success” as they prepare to take the stage. Booking agents know that the artists they send here will be treated well, and not just by Herzog but by the Center’s entire staff, “the finest staff with which anyone would want to work.”

Herzog engages in some fine juggling as he looks to future bookings — how to combine innovation with the tried and true. “Past successes ... require new ideas,” was how he phrased it, and he always has the audience in mind. As he put it, “The audience must trust you” to deliver excellence in a creative manner. The trust that he has engendered over the years has also allowed him to push the envelope on occasion, to bring in more avant-garde groups.

continued on page 8

Bill Scheuerman’s BU Visit



UUP President Bill Scheuerman (left, in photo at left) visited Binghamton March 30 to discuss the recently negotiated contract with New York state. Meetings included a talk with faculty and staff in the Anderson Center Reception Room and a more informal discussion with interested members of the chapter Executive Board afterwards, including a photo-op with BU faculty member Stanley Whittingham.



De Russy Decries Low Graduation Rates in SUNY...

(*Albany Times Union*, April 8) — SUNY has failed to act on poor graduation rates at some campuses that have wasted public money, a SUNY trustee said.

Recently released 2002 statistics from the state Education Department found: at SUNY Old Westbury, just 22.8% of students graduated within six years; SUNY Buffalo had 38.4% of students graduate within six years; and only 40% of students graduated from SUNY Purchase within six years. The six-year graduation rate for all SUNY four-year schools was 57.6% in 2002, up from 57% a year before, but down from 59.2% in 1997, the first year data was available.

"This is a squandering of precious public money, particularly in this climate of fiscal distress," said Trustee Candace de Russy. She has called for the data to be presented at the April 20 meeting of the Board of Trustees and for the trustees to take action. De Russy said the state has to determine what causes low graduation rates and suggest remedies, including possibly consolidating campuses to get more efficient spending of tax dollars.

SUNY spokesman David Henahan said SUNY's six-year graduation rate, which he put at 58%, compares favorably to the national six-year rate of 43% for public schools and for private four-year schools, which he said is 57%.

... Scheuerman Replies, and...

(Letter to the editor, *Albany Times Union*, April 8) — SUNY Trustee Candace de Russy has demonstrated once again how out of touch she is with the hardships faced by many of today's State University students by decrying the 'poor graduate rates' at some SUNY campuses. ('Lengthy stays at SUNY lamented,' April 8).

Last year's huge tuition hike forced many SUNY students to increase their hours on the job, compelling them to cut down on their hours in the classroom. As even Trustee de Russy must recognize, there's only so many hours in a day.

Consolidating campuses is not a 'remedy.' It's absurd to discuss downsizing when enrollments and student demand for SUNY are at a record high. And elimination of unique electives such as the fine arts courses offered at SUNY Purchase (a campus de Russy cites as 'wasting' public money) would eradicate a strength, not a weakness, of SUNY — the breadth of courses it offers its students.

It's also noteworthy that SUNY Old Westbury and the College at Buffalo — two of the three state-operated SUNY campuses Trustee de Russy says are 'squandering' public funds — have high numbers of minority students. What, exactly, is she implying?

William E. Scheuerman, UUP President, quoted by *UUP Connection*

...UUP Faculty Member Comments

(Ronald D. Smith, UUPer, Grand Island, to *The Buffalo News*, April 18) — The politically appointed bureaucrats in Albany are loose again, criticizing State University of New York students for not graduating fast enough to suit them.

continued on page 8

Corporate Censorship, Right Here in River City?

by Stanley Scobie
Emeritus, Psychology

If you read David Rossie's thrice weekly column in the *Press & Sun-Bulletin* you know that his topic often is President George Bush's administration and how bad it is.

Did you know that until recently it was syndicated in 30-50 Gannett papers across the country? According to Ithaca Times reporter M.T. Wolfe, syndication of Rossie's column was canceled sometime in late 2002, probably because of his harsh criticism of Bush. In other words, his politics.

The syndication ran for 18 years and, again according to Wolfe, a friend and former colleague of Rossie, there was no explanation for the cancellation.



If you read the columns in the *Press* and also read the response letters, you know that quite a few criticize Rossie bitterly for his fairly compelling analysis of the Bush administration and, in particular, the administration's handling of the war with Iraq.

Apparently neither Rossie nor Gannett are interested in talking about the reasons or possible reasons for the cancellation. It seems to represent another instance of the "unliberal media."

Of course, freedom of the press means that Gannett is free to print or not to print. But isn't it troubling that a nation so devoted as ours to overseas intervention in the name of freedom of expression is so intolerant of open debate at home?



From the Vice President for Professionals

Workload Creep – Can It Be Managed?

Here are some proactive mechanisms you can use to avoid the “other duties as assigned” syndrome.

**by Frances L. Goldman
Asian and Asian American
Studies Program**

Professional employees are being challenged to do more in order to meet job demands that are the direct result of continuing budgetary and hiring constraints in combination with increased student enrollments. Workload creep is too easily becoming an institutionalized way of doing business.

I have heard more than one story about professional employees who have been given added duties and responsibilities. These include, among others, being asked to take on tasks formerly done by colleagues who have left or retired.

In addition, some have reported new expectations that consist of working evenings and weekends with no apparent willingness on the part of supervisors to consider salary increases and/or promotion

or the granting of compensatory time. While the majority of professional employees are more than willing to go the extra mile, in a climate such as this workload and how to manage it becomes an issue of concern as does employee retention and morale.

It is important to remember that your job (workload) is defined by your performance program. It is this document that outlines your duties, responsibilities and objectives upon which your evaluation is based. The purpose of a performance program is not only to delineate the above, but it also lays out the parameters for what your supervisor expects you to do during the year.

Having said that, however, your performance program is not written in stone and can be altered as your duties and responsibilities increase or change over the course of the year. When kept up to date, it also serves as a guide for re-evaluating your job and as a means for an increase in salary or a promotion.

While your supervisor has the final say in defining your duties and responsibilities, there are some proactive mechanisms that you can use



to avoid the “other duties as assigned” syndrome. These include:

- meeting with and providing consultation to your supervisor prior to the finalized version of your performance program;
- reminding your supervisor to provide you with a current and accurate performance program that includes any additional assigned duties and responsibilities;
- keeping your supervisor in the loop about tasks you are doing that may not be reflected in your performance program;
- avoiding being placed in a “mission impossible” situation by requesting timelines for the year;
- clarifying where you have no authority to carry out duties;
- exercising your right to attach an addendum to your performance program.

In addition, when new duties are added, you should request that some be taken away or, alternatively, provide your supervisor with statistics on the increased demands being placed on the same or continuing duties.

Finally, be sure to put in writing requests for remedies for temporary and/or permanent increased assignments such as extra service pay, compensatory time, salary increases or promotion.

Selzner

continued from page 2

and act as the union’s representative on his or her behalf. “Then it’s a matter of working with that individual as he or she proceeds first through an investigatory phase conducted by the university, and then through an actual adjudicated disciplinary phase, which is Article 19 of your current contract.”

Selzner says this is a less com-

mon part of his job, but still very worthwhile. “What makes this so rewarding is when you work with individuals and you feel like you’ve made a significant difference or have been a help at a time when they really needed some help, someone to represent them, listen or advise them,” he said.

Selzner also says he enjoys working with chapter leaders because

they are concerned with improving the quality of work life for someone other than themselves. “I think that this chapter and its leadership have developed well and has a presence now that it has never had before,” he said. “It has credibility, respect and visibility on campus that’s the best it has been, but that’s taken a lot of time and hard work.”





Parking, Redux

by Jim Dix and Fran Goldman

In the last issue of the newsletter, we reported on the Administration's decision to require hang tags to park in lot F3, effectively barring members of UUP from parking there. As part of that report, we claimed that there were no reserved spaces for administrators. Several alert readers of this newsletter pointed out that this is not quite true.

It turns out that of the approximately 5,300 parking spaces on campus, 38 spaces are reserved for specific people (or at least their specific cars). Of these 38 spaces, 28 are for the resident directors of the various student residence halls, three are for physicians associated with the student health services, and seven are for the deans of the five colleges, the director of the libraries, and the assistant vice president for Computing Services. We stand corrected.

Presumably, the high level administrators in the Couper Administration building park in the nearby parking garage.

Another interesting factoid: since 1999, the university has added about 700 new parking spaces to the campus. The UUP contract requires the University to negotiate with UUP about any change to the status quo of parking. We take this to mean that the Administration would have to talk with us if the number of spaces decreases over time. It doesn't look like that's the case here. It's still puzzling, however, why the Administration chooses to require hang tags in lot F3.

Most parking spaces on campus (with the exception of lot F3) have the restriction "campus registration and parking permit required." Hmm. UUP members just have to register their vehicles; we don't have to purchase a parking permit. We guess that a strict interpretation of the rules would mean that UUP members can't park anywhere on campus. We guess that means faculty and staff will just have to carpool with students.

Conversations with Herzog

continued from page 5

Herzog sees the Anderson Center, its offerings and the audiences all as parts of a reciprocal evolutionary process.

I said earlier that "enrichment" is what the Anderson Center is all about. But just as important as personal enjoyment and growth is the role the Center plays in the community. There is much talk of town/gown relationships. The Center is one place where the two meet and, for a while, co-exist in mutual enjoyment. The Center's subscribers now come from a radius of 100 miles, so the impact of Herzog's programs are extending far beyond the campus and Broome County.

And, as the area develops new strategies to move out of economic

doldrums by attracting new businesses, the Anderson Center may have a role to play as well. Increasingly, companies look to "quality of life" issues when they seek to establish or relocate, and the availability of cultural offerings is high on the list. The Center's programs add the spice of the international and the unusual to our existing operatic and orchestral strengths.

At the end of our conversation, I asked about the forthcoming season, but it was still a bit early — negotiations were ongoing. One slight hint, however — off the record, of course, and not for publication — promised that the coming season will bring more kudos for the Anderson Center, its director and his colleagues.

...UUP Faculty Member Comments

continued from page 6

At Buffalo State College, where I teach, most students have jobs, some full time. Many care for children or perhaps grandparents. Some interrupt school for military service, and others take time off to pay for the 40% tuition hikes the same bureaucrats imposed last year. Some fail or withdraw from courses because of illness or family problems; others switch majors. Some transfer to other schools. These are real students with valid reasons for choosing slow progress toward their degrees.

We could not appease the bu-

reaucrats by accepting only the brightest students with wealthy parents and no personal obligations, kids from only top districts and private schools. We could require a medical exam to screen out students with illnesses, and a psychiatric workup to eliminate anybody who might drop out. And let's make sure the 18-year-olds know exactly how they want to spend their lives, so they won't be sidetracked investigating new interests.

The bureaucrats need to hear that it's OK if students choose to take five years or even 10 to work on a degree. That's real education for real people.

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