



Getting to know...

Serdar Atav

Executive Board Member, Delegate, Grievance Chair, former VP for Academics, Department Representative, IDA Awards Committee Member

Professor, Health Policy and Research

DCNHS



Binghamton University has been my home for over four decades, a journey that began in 1982 when I arrived as a PhD student in Political Science right after completing my undergraduate studies at Bogazici University in Istanbul. I joined Decker first as an adjunct, and then as a tenure-track faculty member. Although I am retiring as of August, I will continue my faculty role as a Bartle Professor for the next three years.

QUESTION & ANSWER

Tell me about your job and why you love what you do?

Working with graduate students, especially PhD students, has been very rewarding in my career. I have closely worked with them as they conduct research aimed at improving people's lives. They are brilliant and enthusiastic. Their passion has always renewed my own dedication to meaningful research, teaching, and service with real-life implications.

How did you get involved with UUP?

I have always been a supporter of fairness, social justice, and equal rights for all. Knowing that UUP represents all these principles, I became a member as soon as I started working as faculty. When Darryl Wood and Jim Dix (two previous UUP presidents) approached me and invited me to the executive board, I became more deeply involved.

How do you make a difference?

I was a gay socialist who escaped persecution by a military junta in Turkey in the early 1980s. Since then, I have been a vocal advocate for inclusiveness and the fair treatment of my fellow faculty, staff members, and students throughout my career. At Decker, I led the effort to establish fair workload practices and favorable salary structures. In all the classes I taught, I wove social justice and fairness issues into the content. I believe my students left these classes with a different, more inclusive outlook on life than when they started.

What about your community engagement; any hobbies?

My husband Mac and I are avid world travelers. We have been to all continents of the world together except for Antarctica. Cooking, good wine, jazz, movies, dinner parties with friends, and long walks with our dog Pasha are some of my favorite pastimes.