



## **President's Report for UUP Binghamton Chapter Executive Board / General Meeting - September 11, 2024**

Good afternoon, everyone. As we begin the 2024-2025 academic year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the significant work we have accomplished over the past few months and provide an overview of where we stand as a chapter. It has been a productive period for our chapter, filled with organizing events, strengthening partnerships, advocating for member benefits, and continuing to build a robust union community on campus.

### **Summer 2024 Activities**

**UUP Chapter Retreat:** In July, we held our annual UUP Binghamton Chapter Retreat. This retreat was a valuable opportunity for our executive board and active members to come together to plan for the upcoming year. We engaged in discussions on our key goals, including increasing member engagement, enhancing our advocacy efforts, and improving communication within the chapter. These discussions provided us with strategic direction and helped focus our efforts on union organizing and member outreach. I want to extend my gratitude to everyone who participated for their insightful contributions and dedication to our union's mission.

**Collaboration with GSEU and CSEA:** Throughout the summer, we continued to build our partnerships with fellow unions on campus. I've had the pleasure of working closely with GSEU leaders Camille and Andrey, and CSEA leaders Ray and Jeff. Together, we aim to strengthen our collective voice and improve working conditions for all employees. Our collaboration continues to grow stronger, and we will keep working on joint initiatives this academic year.

**UUP Welcome Back BBQ (August 22, 2024):** One of the highlights of the summer was the UUP Welcome Back BBQ. I'd like to extend a special thanks to the committee members—Franziska Reichert, Alexandra Messersmith-Mars, and Meghan McCarthy—for their hard work in organizing such a successful event. We were honored to have **UUP Statewide Vice President for Academics Alissa Karl** and our former colleague and current **New York State Senator Lea Webb** as special guests. Lea Webb gave an inspiring speech about the importance of organized labor, reinforcing the essential role unions play in advocating for workers' rights.

I also want to give a special shoutout to **Fran Reichert** for her hard work in creating a Labor Day-themed trivia that was incredibly well received by everyone at the event. The trivia added a fun and engaging way to celebrate the spirit of Labor Day while building solidarity among our members.

### **UAW 2300 workers at Cornell University**

We also stood in solidarity with UAW 2300 workers at Cornell University, who were on strike for a fair contract. Our chapter proudly supported UAW 2300 ahead of and during their recent successful strike. Their victory serves as a reminder of the power of collective action and solidarity.

### **Advocacy for Member Benefits**

**Faculty and Professional Raises & Lump Sum Bonuses:** I am pleased to report that, after a hard-fought contract campaign, our faculty and professional members have received raises as per the terms of the UUP-NYS contract. Additionally, members received the negotiated lump sum bonuses, which was an important milestone in our ongoing efforts to secure fair compensation for our members. These financial gains underscore the critical importance of our union work and negotiations, and we will continue to advocate for further improvements.

### **Visibility and Engagement**

**Shoutout to Chris Sielaff – Labor Relations Specialist:** I also want to take a moment to give a special shoutout to our **Labor Relations Specialist, Chris Sielaff**, who is in Albany today attending a conference. Chris has been doing incredible and tireless work addressing member issues here at Binghamton University. His dedication to resolving complex matters and advocating for our members is invaluable, and we are fortunate to have him on our team.

**Shoutout to Courtney Ignarri – New Faculty Orientation:** I'd like to give a special shoutout to our new Membership Development Officer, **Courtney Ignarri**, for her excellent work at New Employee Orientations (NEOs), particularly during the recent New Faculty Orientation. Her efforts have been instrumental in engaging new faculty members and introducing them to UUP's mission.

**Recognizing Alexandra Messersmith-Mars– Coffee and Breakfast Bites:** I also want to recognize **Allie** for her incredible work in organizing the Coffee and Breakfast Bites events. These gatherings have been so well-received and attended that we've had to move to a larger venue—the Old Champlain Atrium—to accommodate everyone. The success of these events is a testament to Allie's efforts to foster community among our members.

**Venturing into Uncharted Territory:** As a chapter, we are venturing into uncharted territory with unprecedented engagement levels with both existing members and non-members. There is no template or established path for what we are doing. We are making this up as we go along, but our approach is rooted in inclusivity, adaptability, and openness. If anyone is interested in getting more involved, we will find a role for you—and if that role doesn't exist yet, we will create one. Everyone's contribution is important, and I want to recognize the hard work and dedication of every single member who has helped us get to this point. We are actively working to establish committees and positions with defined roles, codifying all the efforts we are putting into outreach and engagement. This will

ensure that the important work we are doing today will continue to benefit our chapter, long after our current leadership.

### **Political Engagement and the Importance of Having a Voice**

As members of UUP, we work for a public entity that is funded by public officials. This makes it crucial for us to have a voice in politics and actively engage in political advocacy. The decisions made by elected officials directly affect our funding, contracts, and the resources available to support the work we do. By participating in the political process, we ensure that labor-friendly candidates, who understand the importance of public higher education and workers' rights, are elected.

**AFL-CIO Convention & Labor-Friendly Endorsements:** Recently, UUP attended the **AFL-CIO convention in New York City** alongside our allies at NYSUT. Together, we worked to secure endorsements for labor-friendly candidates who will stand up for workers' rights and protect public services. Our involvement at this convention reaffirms UUP's commitment to supporting candidates who will fight for better funding, better working conditions, and stronger labor protections.

**Upcoming Labor Walks – September 14, 2024:** I want to encourage everyone to participate in the upcoming **Labor Walks**, which we are organizing in coalition with the local AFL-CIO Broome Tioga Central Labor Council. The next labor walk is scheduled for **Saturday, September 14**, and anyone interested in joining us should reach out to me directly. This is a great opportunity for us to show solidarity and support labor-friendly candidates in our area.

### **New Initiatives and Chapter / Statewide Improvements**

**Solidarity Summits & Labor Movement Guests:** This year, we are excited to continue our Solidarity Summits, where we will bring in individuals who are key to the labor movement. Last year, we were privileged to host **Alex Press**, a labor journalist with a deep understanding of worker organizing, and **Jax Brisack**, who played a significant role in organizing Starbucks workers. These events have helped to inspire and educate our members on the importance of labor activism, and we look forward to bringing in more influential voices this year.

**Webpage for New Adjuncts:** We are currently working on creating a new webpage for adjunct employees to provide them with the information and resources they need to join UUP. This includes links to sign up for benefits, which will be included in an attached letter from Binghamton University HR. Our goal is to streamline the onboarding process for new adjuncts and increase our adjunct membership.

### **Upcoming Professional and Academic Concerns Meetings – October 1, 2024**

Looking ahead, we have our **Professional and Academic Concerns Meetings** scheduled for October 1, 2024. These meetings will be critical as we engage in serious discussions about the pressing issues facing our chapter. The goal of these discussions is to identify

two or three specific issues for both faculty and professionals that our **Academic and Professional Concerns Committees** will focus on throughout the year. These are important meetings where we will develop actionable plans to tackle these challenges, and I encourage everyone to attend and participate.

### **Upcoming Priorities**

**Labor Day Events:** As we celebrated Labor Day recently, we were reminded of the historical importance of the labor movement. Our chapter continues to honor that legacy by advocating for fair wages, better working conditions, and stronger contracts for all employees at Binghamton University and beyond.

### **Vision for the Future**

As we look ahead, our vision for this chapter is filled with optimism and ambition. We are building a chapter that is inclusive, strong, and sustainable. Together, we are forging a future where our outreach and engagement efforts will outlast us, ensuring that the foundations we lay today will support future generations of UUP members. We are committed to tackling the toughest issues, advocating for every member's voice, and creating lasting change. Let's continue to work together to build a chapter that reflects the values of solidarity, equity, and shared purpose.

Thank you!

Brendan McGovern  
President, UUP Binghamton Chapter