



The College at
BROCKPORT
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

United University Professions

BEACON



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President's Note

Gary Owens, President
Brockport Chapter UUP

A New Day or Just a New Way

I know that many of you are sitting on the edge of your seats just waiting to hear what I have to say or even anticipating what I might say. Well, like many of our students often say, "Don't worry, it's all good!" Now there is much I could say about the fact that those of you that did vote have elected someone as the new president of UUP who, by the way, has never had anything to do with and I mean nothing or knew anything about UUP at The College at Brockport. He has never attended any meetings or participated in any activities in any way, shape or form. Maybe I am not supposed to say anything like this but I will because it is the truth. Also, by your voting this way, it sends a message that those of you who cast a vote for the new president were in all actuality not voting for him but were really casting a vote against me as your president. Well, like many old wise men have said, "you'll get what you asked for." My sincere desire is that he will be able to maintain, if not surpass, anything that has been accomplished the last few years. Oh! By the way this "Arrogant Black Man" as some of you have called me, will still be around continuing to help those that need it, as I have done for the past 14 years. Even those of you who would, in ignorance, disrespect or slander me, yes, I have and will continue to assist even you.

Ok, now that I've gotten that off my chest, I want to thank all of you who have supported me as well as assisted me in building one of the most respected local chapters of UUP in New York State. As I have expressed to you in the previous edition of the Beacon, we are at the edge of many changes and challenges that will require a strong, cohesive UUP. Not only will we face many challenges state-wide, but many challenges are ahead here at The College at Brockport. We are faced with the introduction of a new college president this fall, who can by themselves bring many changes on how we do business as a union here at our college. Changes are occurring throughout our campus that can impact both faculty and professional staff, changes that will require an active and strategic union leadership. A leadership which includes not just a president and those few officers we do have, but an active membership to include both faculty and professionals who will step up to the plate, use good judgment, and do their part.

As I close, I again want to express my gratitude to those of you who have appreciated all of my efforts and what we have accomplished. I hope that you also see that whatever I've done was done because all of you matter. I thank you. Again for the record, I will still be here helping and assisting our professionals and faculty who are in need and advocating for what is good and right on our campus. You really don't have to hold an office to do what is good and just right.

When Democracy Died in the New York State Assembly

By: Mark Naison, Fordham University

Something inside me died tonight in the New York State Assembly. Democratic legislator after Democratic legislator, some who claimed to be lifelong friends of public education, some who were once teachers themselves, caved in and voted for a bill that was going to add to the test burden on the already over tested children of the state, subject teachers to more scripting and more intimidation than they already had to endure and strip power away from principals and local school districts.

Many knew what they voted for was wrong. Many said so in their remarks. But they caved in and voted for a measure that was going to make the lives of their constituents miserable, out of fear, cowardice and a refusal to consider how their actions might look in the broad sweep of historical events

And their actions alerted me to something I had feared for some time. That the voices of ordinary citizens had become so smothered by the power of great wealth that all social policies were now held hostage to the pursuit of private gain. That political leaders, irrespective of

political party, no longer felt a moral imperative to consider the "public good;" that they could pay lip service to that ideal in communicating with constituents, but when the chips were down, they would always vote for the interests of the rich and powerful.

I had used certain language, I once thought loosely, to describe our current predicament. Words like "Oligarchy" and "Plutocracy."

Tonight, I realized that those terms were rather precise descriptions of our current political arrangements

The interests of the children, the families, the teachers, the principals and the elected school boards of our state were treated as impediments to a vision of educational transformation that handed power and funding over to private interests whose contributions filled the campaign coffers of officials of both parties. That such a giveaway of power and money took place in a budget bill that included "ethics reform" made it all the more ironic

This was one of the most blatant displays of political cynicism and political corruption that I have seen in my lifetime.

It was quite literally sickening

I mourn for the children. I mourn for the teachers. I mourn for the principals. I mourn for the schools that will be closed; the school districts that will be taken into receivership.

And I mourn for the democratic spirit, which has disappeared from the political culture of the state and nation in which I live.

I will never accept this as the norm. I will never accommodate cowardice and evil

And I will not be alone.

Taken from Diane Ravitch's Blog, <http://dianeravitch.net>

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THE BEACON

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The Reluctant Activist

By: Sara Di Donato, Associate Professor of Art

As the parent of a 6th grader and an art educator, I have watched with interest and great dismay what has been unfolding on the state level regarding public education in all forms, from K-12 up to the State University system. What has been touted by our Governor as “reform” and as teacher and school “accountability” is, when analyzed from a more critical perspective, a very thinly veiled attack on students, teachers, labor unions, and the entire democratic institution of public education.

I’ve never really considered myself an activist, but in early April of this year, I finally did something I’d been contemplating for the past two years. I wrote a long letter to our school district (Brockport) informing them that my son would be refusing the high stakes ELA and Math state assessments, and explaining our family’s decision. While in some venues the growing and formidable opt-out or test refusal movement has been wrongly characterized as a group of parents/sheep pressured by unions to opt their children out of the tests, this couldn’t be further from the truth. In my experience, this has been a parent-led grassroots movement started by people looking out for the welfare of their children. These parents, like me, believe in taking a stand to uphold the mission and the institution of public education through this simple act of civil disobedience. For me, the last minute union support for the opt-outs did not “pressure” me to make my decision, it just opened the doors for me and for others like me who might have been worried that refusing the tests (especially refusals by bright kids like my son) might in the end hurt our teachers or our home districts.

Here is some of the thinking that led to our family’s decision to refuse the tests. First, the tests have no proven diagnostic value. The tests provide no item analysis, just a numerical score, which is only seen by teachers and parents months after the child has already moved on to the next grade and to another teacher. These corporate tests, written by Pearson, are secretive, poorly written, and riddled with errors. Teachers do not get to see how individual students did on individual questions and, therefore, the tests don’t provide any guidance in adjusting instruction. Not only are the tests developmentally inappropriate but, in addition, the American Statistical Association has labeled them *statistically unsound* for teacher or student evaluation purposes. Students in grades 3-8 are spending 6 days per year taking the assessments, and countless days and hours preparing for these flawed and developmentally inappropriate tests, crowding out other subjects like art, music, and social studies for tested subjects like ELA and Math. Student privacy is being severely compromised by data collection as well.

Finally, too much is riding on these tests. Teacher evaluations and school funding have no business being tied to flawed test results. Schools, stacked up against one another, compete for limited resources. The deck is stacked against less wealthy districts, and it is the education profiteers and privatizers who are the winners in this zero sum game, along with the politicians whose campaigns they fund. It’s our kids, our teachers, and the democratic institution of public education who are the losers.

Our governor has portrayed our schools as “failures” and has spoken about public education as a “monopoly” that “needs to be broken”. This is a self-serving and disingenuous stance that does not reflect the real stresses districts face directly related to devastating funding cuts from the state since 2008, the same draconian budget cuts that have also seriously hampered the SUNY system in its mission of making higher education affordable and accessible to all. (His portrayal certainly doesn’t take into account the very real effects of poverty on the achievement gap.) He would like to use this alleged “failure”, further “proven” by tests whose failing scores are set *after* the tests are taken and scored, as a way to further cut budgets, dismantle public teachers’ unions, demonize teachers, and privatize education.

As a professor, a parent, and a citizen who still believes in democracy, I fully support my son, his teachers, their union, and our district. Refusing the flawed assessments that are being used as political leverage to disempower unions and to dismantle public education in favor of a privatized, test-driven system that won’t enrich my son’s intellectual life but will instead line the pockets of testing companies and education privateers (reformer wolves in sheep’s clothing) is why I decided with my family that enough is enough.

Spring DA: Saratoga Springs April 17-18, 2015

By: *Herb Fink, VP for Academics*

Fred Kowal was re-elected statewide President in an unopposed vote by nearly 300 delegates. Delegates also re-elected Eileen Landy as Secretary and Arty Schertzer as Membership Development Officer. The DA also brought two new members to the statewide Executive Board. First, Pamela Malone of Empire State College as a representative of specialized colleges (Pam earned her bachelor's degree at Brockport). Second, Kenneth Lindblom of Stony Brook was elected as an academic at large member. Ken has been a union leader fighting the governor's atrocious proposals on teacher education. Delegates also approved the union's \$8.75 million dollar spending plan for 2015-16.

UUP achieved several major victories in the budget. Governor Cuomo's attempt to begin to privatize SUNY teaching hospitals was rejected by the Legislature. Legislators restored and increased funding to SUNY opportunity programs; they also turned back Cuomo's plan to hold 10 percent of funding appropriated to SUNY campuses until they complete a campus-specific performance funding plan. The Legislature also scaled back the governor's proposal to suspend or close teacher preparation programs whose students do not meet minimum performance standards on the state's deeply flawed new teacher certification exams, by limiting that punitive measure to graduate programs.

The budget does not provide the necessary resources to meet SUNY's growing needs and continues the University's dependency on students for the bulk of its funding. Students pay 63 percent of SUNY's operating costs through tuition and fees. Twenty years ago, the State funded nearly 2/3 of SUNY's entire budget. Declining state support has led to the loss of thousands of full-time faculty positions in SUNY. SUNY students have encountered increased class sizes, delayed graduations and reduced access to student services. More full-time faculty is urgently needed throughout the university system. Since 2008, CUNY and SUNY have lost \$1.5 billion in state funding.

That has threatened the quality of public higher education and has led to tuition hikes. The chaos created by Governor Scott Walker East has reduced by 1/3 students (in both public and private colleges) enrolling in certification programs in NY State between 2010-2013. 2013 is the last year we have data on this enrollment.

Threats still loom over faculty governance; the Governor wants to make internships/experiential learning a requirement for graduation.

Congratulations to Brittany Profit-Rheinwald, our Brockport Chapter webmaster, for winning an outstanding achievement in the category of Best Website, awarded at the Spring DA.



VP for Academics (right), Herb Fink, accepting the Best Website award on behalf of Brittany Profit-Rheinwald from Statewide President (left), Fred Kowal.

The Zipcar is Coming to Campus

By: *Johnna Frosini, Director of Parking & Transportation*

This fall, Zipcar is coming to campus for all 18+ The College at Brockport students, faculty and staff. Zipcar is a car-sharing service that gives members 24/7 self-service access to vehicles parked right on campus. Rates start at just \$7.50 per hour with gas, insurance, and 180 miles included in every reservation. Members can reserve cars online or with a smart phone for as little as an hour or up to seven days.

Enjoy all the freedom of having a car on campus without any of the hassle.

Find out more about how it works at zipcar.com/how and don't forget to follow us on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/ZipcarU>

Departmental Representative Selection

By: Dawn Jones, Associate Professor of Mathematics

It's that time of year where we ask each academic department or professional group to select representatives for the Executive Board. Our Chapter by-laws state that the "Executive Board shall consist of: ... Representatives of the academic departments and professional groups..." I would like to encourage each department or program to select their representative by the end of this academic year so that we can have a full Executive Board with which to start the next academic year.

We are now entering a **critical time** in union participation. Next year, our Chapter will begin its "Countdown to Contract". The Executive Board will be working to create a series of events to raise awareness of issues related to the contract, as well as to seek input from its members. Your Department Representative is a key link in the chain of information flow. Although the agendas and minutes are published, this is just a fraction of the information exchange that occurs at an Executive Board meeting. The Executive Board recently decided to make a change to the minutes to include the names of those department representatives who were, and those who were not, at the meeting. Thus, if your department representative misses a meeting, you can identify those who you can contact for more information.

There have also been some concerns raised about the time of the meetings. Thus, we surveyed the members of the Executive Board and found the majority would like to meet during the 3:30-5:00 Wednesday time period. This will be voted on at the next board meeting.

Although there are some representatives who have been on the board for a number of years, there are now many new members joining us. Thus, the board has decided to create a FAQ document for new department representatives. So as a representative, if members of your department come to you with concerns or questions, you have the answers or know who to contact to get the answers you need. Since this will be developed over the summer and in the fall, please feel free to share with us any items you think should be included in such a document.

Brockport Chapter Election Results Brockport Chapter Officers 2015-2017

Below are the official results of our Chapter election as tallied by the UUP Elections and Credentials Committee and filed with the UUP Secretary. This election report will be the only one recognized for all official organizational purposes. The ballots were verified, opened and counted on March 21, 2015

For the detailed election report please visit the UUP website www.uupinfo.org.

President..... Jose Torre
Vice President for Academic..... Dawn Jones
Vice President for Professionals..... *
Treasurer..... Danny Too
Officer for Contingents..... *

**Denotes no one was elected*

The new officers will take office on June 1, 2015

Not a Member?

Visit www.uupinfo.org

and click "Join UUP" or contact
Brittany Profit-Rheinwald in the

*UUP office, x2208 for a
membership form*



UUP has an agenda: Quality

By: Fred Kowal, Statewide UUP President

The National Council on Teacher Quality criticized United University Professions (“Our budding teachers deserve better training in New York,” March 30) for our positions regarding the State Education Department’s deeply flawed teacher certification process.

Hey, NCTQ, what took you so long?

After all, UUP has loudly voiced its concerns about New York’s teacher certification exams for the past two years. And for good reason: these tests are riddled with problems pertaining to content, their computer-based format—administered and scored by corporate education testing giant Person—the basis for cut scores, and lack of timely access to test preparation materials.

SED changed certification requirements for 2014 and 2015 student teachers well after they started their teacher preparation programs. And the department was two years late in making test preparation materials available for Educating All Students exam and Academic Literacy Skills Test.

SED’s latest imbroglio was its decision to require students to take the newly revised Content Specialty Tests before establishing passing scores for the exams. As of early April, graduates are languishing as SED figures things out.

SED says this is standard procedure. We disagree.

As for the NCTQ, well it has quite the agenda—an agenda that has zero to do with improving teacher prep programs that develop effective teachers through challenging coursework and rigorous certification exams.

The NCTQ’s defense of new teacher certification requirements serves to show its true colors—as an education “reform” operative funded by the Gates Foundation, the Searle Freedom Trust and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, among others.

The NCTQ was spawned in 2000 by the conservative Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. It received a \$5 million grant from the Bush administration in late 2001 to create the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, now an online teacher prep program; anyone can get certified through the ABCTE for \$1,990.

Chester E. Finn Jr., president emeritus of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, sits on the NCTQ’s Board of Directors. Michael Barber, chief education advisor for corporate testing giant campuses.

Instead, it relies on online searches, Freedom of Information and campus data requests. Georgia State University Professor Emeritus Jack Hassard called the research “junk science.”

Diane Ravitch said it best: The NCTQ “is not a research organization. It is an advocacy organization.” It’s about the money, and to so-called education reformers like the NCTQ, public higher ed is a cash cow ready for milking.

It’s little wonder that NCTQ President Kate Walsh chose to lash out at UUP now. At a March 5 press conference, UUP called for an investigation of the State Education Department’s deeply flawed teacher certification process.

Our message resonated with the Board of Regents, which is considering setting up “safety nets” for student teachers to secure initial certification without passing SED’s four certification exams as they currently exist. The Regents will discuss the issue at their April 13-14 meetings.

It’s simple, really; certification exams should be well-vetted before students are required to take them. They must be thoroughly tested, and teacher educators need to be part of that process.

What UUP is working to achieve is what the NCTQ purports to want: challenging, high-quality teacher prep programs that turn out passionate, prepared teachers who are ready to enter the profession.

That’s our agenda.

Article taken from “The Times Union”, published April 8, 2015.



Kowal is President of UUP, which represents 35,000 academic and professional faculty on 29 New York state-operated campuses.

UUP Individual Development Grant Awards Spring 2015

Part-Timers

Eunsuh Choi	Art
Manar Sabry	Modern Languages
Janet Winkie	Art

Full-time Faculty

Vishal Anand	Computer Science
Ralph Black	English
Michael Boston	African & African American Studies
Marcie Desrochers	Psychology
Douglas Feldman	Anthropology
Steven Fellner	English
Pamela Haibach	KSSPE
Jennifer Hecker	Art
Kristin Heffernan	Social Work
Huey Hing	Biology
Markus Hoffmann	Chemistry
Takashi Nishiyama	History
Steven Jurek	Political Science
Alissa Karl	English
Rachel Linville	Modern Languages
Joan Lucas	Computer Science
Mariah Maloney	Dance
John Marah	African & African American Studies
Sandeep Mitra	Computer Science
Jim Morris	Art
Mark Noll	Earth Science
Virginia Orzel	Communication
Alison Parker	History
Jacques Rinchar	Env. Science
Richard St. George	Theatre
Amuary Samalot-Rivera	KSSPE
Robert Schneider	KSSPE
Rebecca Smith	Mathematics
Janka Szilgayi	Education & Human Dev
Cesar Torres	KSSPE
Christine Wania	Computer Science
Hong Yin	Mathematics
Jie Zhang	Education & Human Dev

Full-time Professional Staff

Sharon Crews-Perkins	REOC
Brian Dickinson	Athletics
Charles Kuski	Res Life
Michael Militello	KSSPE & Athletics
Gloria Morgan	REOC
Fred Parker	Athletics
Emma Scholl	Dance
Adam Standish	Career Services
Susan Wielgosz	KSSPE

Thank you, Gary!

On behalf of the Brockport UUP Executive Board and Membership we would like to thank Chapter President, Gary Owens for his many years of dedicated service to the chapter. Gary has created a unique situation on this campus that has allowed for impeccable joint leadership and respect for our union. Without his hard work and dedication our chapter would not have the strength, or voice, that it has today.

We look forward to Gary working closely with the chapter in other roles and continue to welcome his experience and knowledge in further building our chapter.

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"To achieve acknowledgement by another entity, one must not authorize validity to the prospect of inherent discourse which has the potential to assume its own essential missive within the very milieu of the intrinsic delivery of the intended exchange.

That is the key to clear and effective communications!"

UUP offers free online workshops for academic and professional members that enhance member's professional development, leadership skills, and general union education. Please look into this opportunity at:

www.uuphost.org/leadinstitute



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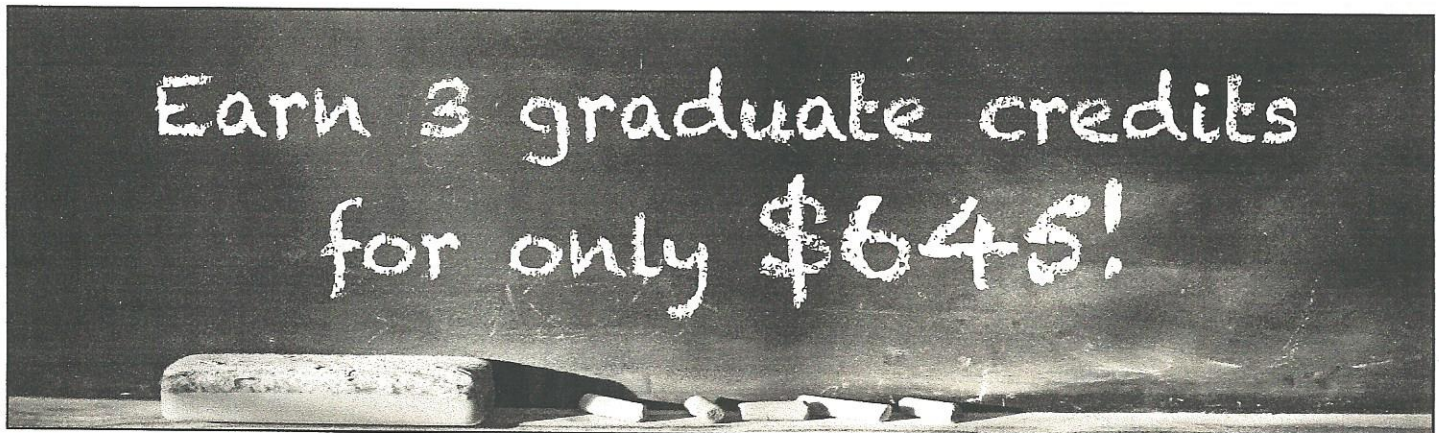
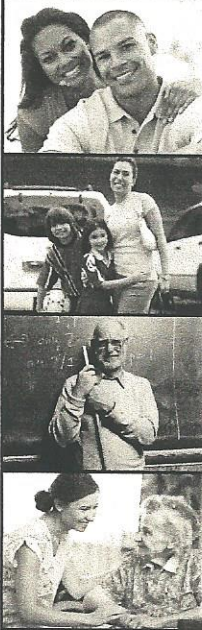
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