**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Creeping Work Hours**

We want to document and stop any "creeping work week" problems you face. Some of our members are concerned that their workload is increasing along with the number of hours it takes for them to get their job done. This usually occurs for one or more of the following reasons:

- An increase in the number of students their department or school is servicing
- An increase or decrease in the number of faculty members in a school or department
- A change in *specific* work duties, especially an increase in those duties
- A demand that the same amount of work be done with fewer staff members
- Other demands placed on the department or school as part of UB reorganization, planning or expansion. We are also wary of more work being assigned to some employees due to the use of less skilled staff members.

Some professionals have been told that if they have to work 50 or 60 hours/week every week to get the job done, then that's what they will have to do; that it's "part of the job."

**This is not true.**

The SUNY/UUP Contract does not define the length of the "work week" for professionals. In the contract, the work one must complete is known as your "professional obligation," and is defined by your Performance Program. There have been discussions at the state level between SUNY and UUP, however, about the idea that a *professional employee's work week should, on average, amount to approximately 37.5 hours/week.* The State has stated this understanding in legal documents in the past, so this is not just a UUP stipulation, but a *SUNY stipulation.*

You are required to do what is commonly assumed to be your job – the duties, tasks and responsibilities spelled out in your Performance Program. Completing your professional obligation may require more hours in some weeks than in others, but when you work extra hours regularly (ex. 41.5 hours every week, which equals one extra work day every two weeks), or a lot of extra hours (ex. 50 hours) in a specific week, you must be permitted to work fewer hours at other times. If your hours are not regular, the number of hours you are required to work over the course of a specific period of time, should *average* approximately 37.5 per week.

Some departments are much more busy at some times of the year than others, and this may require an extra effort (i.e., more work hours) from members during that period. However, these extra hours should be balanced by fewer work hours at other times. This is the case even if you were hired with the expectation that you may, during certain periods, be working a longer work week.
This balance in work hours can be achieved in several ways:

- By working it out informally with your supervisor. In this case, it need not necessarily be documented anywhere.
- By requesting compensatory time (comp time). The contract specifically contemplates comp time (in Appendix A-29). Remember that comp time need not be given on a 1 hr. = 1 hr. basis. Departments differ in the way they handle these requests, but the contract says to request the comp time before you put in the extra hours so that you receive approval from your supervisor in advance. This prevents misunderstandings about just how many hours you are working and whether or not these hours extend beyond your professional obligation.

Ask for comp time by email so you have a record:

**Dear (supervisor):**

I will work until 7 p.m. Monday-Friday this week to insure that the project is completed on time. Since I ordinarily work until 5 p.m., this will mean 10 extra hours of work. I would like to take off next Monday as comp time (n.b., eight hours) unless you object or would prefer me to take it on another day. Please let me know.

Thank you for your consideration.

- If your supervisor does not reply, it is considered an affirmation of your request.
- If you are denied the right to work fewer hours at one time in order to balance a longer work week at other times, please use email to keep a record of your requests and replies so we can discuss them factually.

If you run into problems with your supervisor’s willingness to comply with your request (that is, comply with the UUP-SUNY contract) or you have any other questions about this, contact Moriah Bolinsky-Hegmann, UUP chapter grievance chair for professionals, or Tara Blumberg, our NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist, and they will address the problem with you.

You can reach Tara at 634-7132 or at tsinger@nysutmail.org and Moriah at 645-0898 or hegmann@buffalo.edu