**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Supervisors and Counseling**

UUP is one of the few unions that includes some supervisors as members, but is not a "company union".

If you are a supervisor of employees, whether fulltime or part time, or whether fifty or one, there may be situations when counseling is necessary. As a union member, you will want to do counseling correctly so that all the rights of the employees are guaranteed.

*When counseling is done correctly, it makes the whole discussion easier for the supervisor and the staff member and can make it a positive experience for both.*

Unfortunately for supervisors and their staff, many supervisors at UB have not been trained in the importance of counseling employees. As a result, many don't know when counseling is appropriate, how to prepare for and conduct a counseling session, the purpose of counseling memoranda, and how to prepare such a memo when necessary. As a result, the exercise provokes a lot of anxiety for staff members and often for supervisors as well.

There is a lot to know about counseling. For instance,

- A counseling session need not result in a counseling memo
- Counseling memos should not be written *before* you actually speak to your staff member
- A counseling memo should include the responses made by your staff member to the concerns you express in a counseling session. This will reduce misunderstandings, cut resentment off at the knees and facilitate future communication
- Counseling sessions and/or memoranda are not, as some assume, *disciplinary* in nature and their tone and language should reflect this
- They should discuss *specific* methods the employee can take to improve his or her productivity or behavior, and *present a clear means to measure that improvement* so that the staff member clearly understands what you expect.
- Finally, many of our members do not know that a staff member can petition the supervisor to have a counseling memorandum *removed* from their Official Personnel File (OPF) after a specific period of time (three months to one year is typical).