

UUP Buffalo Center
General Membership Meeting
Friday, February 19th, 2021

Welcomed state wide representatives, Fred Kowal, Jeri O'Bryan-Iosee, Tom Tucker, Jamie Dangler, Tom Hoey

New committee Members: Contingents – Matt Dimick, Academic Grievances – Carine Mardorossian

Per Fred Kowal Updates (statewide union president).

Budget: We are now approaching 6,000 contacts with our federal government to press forward on the 1.9 trillion dollar rescue package. Looking to hit Biden's desk first week of March. Will be signed before unemployment runs out in March. Public sector nation wide is leading the way. Information from Senator Schummer – are are going to have a virtual town hall with the senator – for UUPers only. Contrary to what the governor is saying.....\$15 billion deficit in NY state budget (per governor) – reality is more like \$12 billion – this fiscal year \$4 billion, rest is for next year. NY State has already gotten \$12 billion. Governor will get \$12 billion to use at his discretion. An additional \$10 billion going to local governments, additional \$8 billion going to mass transit. Separate \$9 billion for K-12 NYState. Higher Ed \$1 billion just to CUNY and SUNY -- \$400-500,000 to SUNY. Biden and congress are already working on the next waive of relief. If NY State gets \$12 billion, we are getting a lot more than that. If we get that money, SUNY would be looking at flat budget, as well as raises and back money due to us. We have grievances and improper practices filed (on hold) until we see what federal funding we get. The democrats taking control of federal government has benefitted NY and SUNY. This is one year's worth of bail out money. The state is going to face budget challenges next year and the year after. That is why our state advocacy continues – so that we can address these budget shortfalls. Millionaires and Billionaires tax have the means to pay for the budget shortfall (marginal increases in their rates?).

Advocacy days -- last week most successful – close to 100 uup members took part in virtual meeting with legislators. They liked our ambitious plan. Chancellor announced a great new program – Pre-op. Medical education EOP program. Series of events coming up in early March – EOP advocacy day – Fed wants us to take on the whole issue of access – TAP funding, and funding in general, with appropriate taxes on the wealthy and get legislators to meet with us. All big unions and allies in social justice community working on this. # of vaccines and opportunity to get vaccines are improving.

Vaccine: Continue to pound away on professionals on front line being eligible for vaccine is not getting traction. No hearing back from governor.

Retirement Incentive: No state legislation moving on retirement incentive. (only defined benefit program – not ORP – ORP would need a severance plan). No movement on that. Campuses could provide a retirement incentive if it wanted to.

Contract negotiations – Brett Benjamin will serve as chief negotiator. He was deputy chief negotiator in last negotiations. Very well prepared for this role. We will reach out to members for input (like last time). Membership committee will be asking members to be involved in taking action if the state negotiations grind on for years like they did last time. CSEA goes to table in april. PEF without of contract without 2 years, we don't go to negotiations right away because we got a 6-year contract.

Membership – Fred just wanted to add: in these circumstances that we have faced for a year, remember we have not faced anything like this, it is the most challenging circumstances ever, and we need to be aware that anyone in leadership, staff and volunteer positions are doing the best we can, and working our butts off. Please keep that in mind. Thank you for the work you are doing in very tough circumstances.

Alex Desha: UB Heals legislative agenda:

<https://uupinfo.org/legislation/pdf/UUP21StateLegAgenda.pdf>

Write a letter to Washington!

You can still send a letter to Washington! <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/pass-president-bidens-covid-19-stimulus-bill/>

Social Media Toolkit (send your tweets):

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lqT8ZT16LjpI3FgNxZuKrMUnStF40yE_/view

Contact Alex Desha if interested in political action. alexander.desha@gmail.com

COVID Updates -- UB doing much better than last semester.

Testing site -- 4 sites, 1 downtown, 1 south campus and 2 north.

Processing site (March) -- UB working on that – not sure whether a state or county site.

Vaccination site – South Campus, Harriman Hall, State Site. Have to sign up under the “Am I eligible”, state site. Notified membership that there is a food service being offered just down the hall from the vaccination site – so if having concerns about eating where vaccines being given – just consider.

Fall 2021 semester -- President is optimistic of “back to business” by fall 2021. Let's just wait and see. Optimistic goal. We have a long way to go between now and August 2021.

Pool Testing: If vaccinated, still be required to be included in the weekly pool testing. It was reported that there are a number that are not getting any results at all. Contact Mark Coldren if you have not gotten results. Might be because of delays with Upstate NY this week. Not sure whether students have gotten their test results.

Vote on the Chapter Budget -- budget shared on screen. Budget for next year – has some flexibility due to covid. We are expecting budget surplus because of not meeting on campus, not having meetings, expect it might be higher if we don't return to campus. No budget cuts from statewide office. Executive board approved a spending of \$1500 for equipment (Ipads). \$4751 budget surplus could be utilized next year – good position to maintain workshops, etc. Motion to approve, Ezra Zubrow, seconded by Tim Tryjankowski, budget voted on and approved/passed. Jeri says no head count is necessary.

Labor Management Items Review -- officers meet monthly with Labor Management meetings, meet with Satish, Laura and Scott Weber once a semester.

UB Distinguished Professor is a rank above full professor – given by SUNY – you cannot apply for it (requires a dossier preparation etc.! It is a high honor and why it is so offensive to choose that moniker for visiting professors in this program -- nomination of the finest).

Visiting “Distinguished” Professors – new program – Distinguished visiting scholars program (people should be aware that this program is distinguished visitors – some of which are assistant professors – many applications because of the recognition and \$\$\$. Targets diversity. Some of these faculty are going to be asked to stay employed at UB. Are these visitors being selected by fellow faculty members, or deans/chairs – nominated by departments or units, (Does not emerge out of departments as they usually do, but rather emerge out of application). Having a program that is entitled distinguished scholars program is a slap in the face to faculty who have received the rank of Distinguished professor, as well as pay discrepancy. Some coming into the program are making more money than professors. Per Tara, goal is seek to retain them and move them into 10 year track line after they complete their visiting. Distinguished would have to be taken out of title once they move to a different rank. Response from administration – I guess that’s all how you interpret the term ‘distinguished’. That response is unfair, but that is their response.

Member Recognition: We have some UUP members that have done some outstanding work. Ken shared info that we received from the 2020 Stanford ranking of all researchers in the world. Member was able to pull out the top 10 UB researchers, 3 we have identified that are active. We will send something out to the membership to recognize the 3 members. As general membership, if you want to identify someone to be recognized, send it to the UUP office and we will make sure that we get it out to our membership. Deborah Chung joins us today as top researcher! If anyone wants to forward more information to Shirley Bennet or Carine Mardorossian, we will follow up on it.

Lack of contact at Human Resources to help us with questions, like retirement, paternity/maternity leave. We are continuing to voice our concern about having no one to talk to at Human Resources. Chris Putrino has indicated, contact him directly. If you do reach out to Chris and get a response, please let the union know, so they have up-to-date information. Please let us know about continuing concerns, etc.

Tara-Singer Blumberg -- Labor Relations Specialist reviews questions she has received.

Individual Development Awards -- a number who applied in 2020 and have not seen their rewards (180 across the state had their awards denied). We have litigation pending at the governor's level. This year's IDA, trying to work out guidelines, is on hold. Committee will not process until we have guidelines – message went out on listserv until statewide decisions have been made.

Data Preservation – spring 2020 a number of students filed lawsuits from students not getting their bang from their buck for tuition. If you taught in spring 2020, there is a data freeze, you cannot get ride of email or materials – so the state can prove they provided adequate service to our students. UB went a step further and sent a specific message to those that taught, asking that all communication/materials be uploaded. This requires time – it was to be done by February 25th. It is an ask, it is not a mandate. SUNY is not willing to pay extra \$\$\$, since it is an ask, and not a mandate. You are legally required to preserve are not required to upload.

DSI and compression – will be paid in March 17th paycheck. We will be notified as to who got what, along with variations. Chapter will share the specifics on the chapter website.

Surveys – UUP provided a survey last year a survey about compression by April 1st (look for survey!).

Will send out reminder to complete survey. Will be added to base.

Raises – litigation pending on the 2% across the board. Current delay is until April 1st.

Working remotely after pandemic crisis – hopefully part of the learning over the past year is that people are able to work from home and do their jobs. Next round of contract negotiations members should identify this as a concern, if it is for them. – per Jamie Dangler.

H/R concerns: If people have H/R concerns, please contact Tara so she can help with specifics.

Testing positive for COVID. If you have covid when are you okay to come to work, etc. – questions are clear on campus Q&A about this.

Back to Ken Kern:

“Roadshows” -- Ken and officers reviewed recent roadshow to athletics, received well – couple members joined– reported that people wanted to know what they are receiving for their union dues. IF you are interested in having UUP join your department for a roadshow, just let us know and we’d be happy to join your department for a zoom meeting! Roadshows are a lot of fun.

If you don’t have a department rep in your department to consider hosting a roadshow, consider being a department rep yourself! Send Kathleen Kielar, kmkielar an email if you’d like to join our department rep meeting(s) next Monday and Tuesday.

Follow us on social media.

Here's the links for our social channels follow and like us! Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/UUPBuffaloCenter>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/uupbuffalo>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/uupbuffalo/>

Buffalo Center Chapter Contacts:

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Moriah Hegmann (Grievance Officers Professionals) - hegmann@buffalo.edu

Tara Singer-Blumberg (Labor Relations Specialist)- tsinger@nysutmail.org

Statewide Officers

Fred Kowal (President) – fkowal@uupmail.org

Tom Tucker (VP Professionals) – ttucker@uupmail.org

Jamie Dangler (VP Academics) – jdangler@uupmail.org

Thomas Hoey (Membership Development) THoey@uupmail.org

Jeri O’Bryan-Losee (secretary-treasurer) jobryan@uupmail.org

Chapter elections closed yesterday (2/18 – 5:00), but there is still time to write in. If you are interested in being more active with the union, write in! Need 5 votes to be a seated delegate, 10 votes to serve on board! Looking for an extension due to weather concerns, etc. to be voted on.

Jeri provided link to state wide committees – don't have to be a delegate.

<https://uupinfo.org/committees/>

Committee Updates

Health & Safety -- condition of the buildings that we work in is of great concern. Cleaning as well as heating and cooling. We follow up on concerns, and ask some very pointed questions. We have experts on the committee that can ask appropriate questions to get answers. Looking for transparency and protect our people. We know we are making an impact because we have seen a change to university communication after our continuing questions. Please continue to raise your concerns to your department rep, join the committee or contact Don Erb, erb@buffalo.edu.

RESJ -- Racial Equity and Social Justice report. Working up a set of demands of UB through the committee and student groups. Meeting of coalition next Thursday evening.

Surveys– academic and contingent coming out. Last year's campus survey results were sent to membership. We were one of the first chapters to respond to survey results. Just last week or the week before, overall survey results were discussed and whether we should do a follow up survey this year. We will sending survey results out to everyone via Mary Talbert – Tom Tucker will alert us to when we can share.

UUP wide concerns – workload creep, student evaluation of teaching (not going well for all students learning remotely), on line teaching remotely, growing concerns about bias in student evaluations of teaching.

Upcoming Dates

Thursday, March 18th – Workshop #2/3 – EAP, Neil McGillicuddy and Susan Bagdasarian will be presenting. This would put us at about the 1 year anniversary.

Friday, April 9th – Membership Meeting

Wednesday, April 14th – Workshop #3/3 – If you have a topic you would like us to present on a particular topic, please let us know. Possibly virtual retirement workshops. <https://uupinfo.org/calendar/>

Federal Legislative Agenda: <https://uupinfo.org/legislation/pdf/UUP21FederalLegAgenda.pdf>

- Students managing student debt! Statewide executive board.
- Information from SUNY Central (Jamie Dangler and Jeri O'Bryan:
 - UUP Family Leave guide: <https://uupinfo.org/reports/reportpdf/FLWLSguide2019.pdf>
 - UUP Virtual retirement workshops coming up: <https://uupinfo.org/calendar/>

UUP Guide for Professionals has performance programs information:

<https://uupinfo.org/reports/reportpdf/ProfessionalsGuide.pdf>

Intellectual property links all academics should familiarize themselves with:

<https://uupinfo.org/reports/reportpdf/IntellectualProperty.pdf>

<https://uupinfo.org/reports/reportpdf/IntellectualPropertyPiracy2019.pdf>

<https://uupinfo.org/reports/reportpdf/IntellectualPropertyBulletin.pdf>

Per Deborah chung: TA's are not getting enough tuition credit for teaching – this is a real impact, students not able to graduate because tuition credit has been reduced – Jamie – this seems to be a very chapter specific issue. **Jamie suggested that we look at campus specifics.** Shirley and Carine to look at. Academics workload survey might be important to address this.