



The Cortland Cause

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The opinions expressed within are those of the writers only

UUP CORTLAND CHAPTER, B-5 MOFFETT, CORTLAND, NY 13045, 607-753-5991
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Governance

That the UUP Executive Board encourage campus chapters to take whatever action is necessary on the campus to insure full governance rights for all members of the State University professional staff.

EB: 09/19/74

Privatization

That UUP is strongly opposed to any reduction or privatization of student support services; and, That UUP will publicize the potential dangers of such actions to New York taxpayers as well as use our influence with our affiliates to stop this proposal.

DA: 09/22/89

Source: Founding Principles of UUP, 1973-2011

**Bill Buxton,
Chapter President,
Literacy**



Which Way the Academy?

For the past decade our colleagues in K-12 education increasingly found their professional responsibilities diminished and their control over their professional lives curtailed.

Deprofessionalization became the cover term that applied to the many specific regulations, rules, and acts that curtailed the ability of K-12 teachers to fully exercise their professional knowledge and skills. The role of corporations, private foundations, and government regulations

increased by many times, and each extension of the power of those interested resulted in less professional autonomy for K-12 teachers. The most recent Met-Life survey of teacher attitudes (2012) showed dramatic decreases in teacher satisfaction that corresponded with dramatic increases in the percentage of teachers planning on leaving the profession. In my own department, Literacy, I have seen a dramatic increase in very good teachers who are not yet

near retirement enquiring about the possibility of obtaining full time employment at the college. None had planned on leaving the ranks of K-12 teachers for a number of years, but all were so discouraged by their increasing inability to teach in ways they knew would be most effective for their student learning.

**Bill Buxton,
Chapter President,
Literacy**

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Which Way the Academy? *Continued from page 1*

What began in K-12 education is now in higher education; there is a similar deprofessionalization of those of us in higher education. To what extent are professionals in the field able to use their knowledge? Instead of making professional decisions, are we in higher education following a pre-planned program and working in a system that makes decisions for us? Is the academy itself in a time of change that will forever redefine what we know as higher education? These are issues that we must grapple with as a union because they not only impact the quality of our work, these are issues that will impact the value of a degree from public higher education in New York.

I want to be clear that while deprofessionalization is occurring at Cortland, deprofessionalization is not unique to Cortland. While UUP is committed to maintaining the professional nature of all of its members in Cortland and is willing to fight for that status, it is important to recognize that deprofessionalization is a national phenomenon and must be fought on multiple fronts. In this article I am only going to address two of many issues we are facing. However, I will be returning to the theme of the direction in which SUNY and Cortland are going throughout this school year. I invite the participation of everyone in the work of maintaining a strong SUNY and a strong Cortland that provides affordable, high quality education for all citizens of New York.

Seamless Transfer

In this issue, you will see information from UUP's State Office about Seamless Transfer that was distributed to all UUP chapters. Our Cortland Faculty Senate has already discussed Seamless Transfer at one meeting, but it is important to know that we are not alone in discussing Seamless Transfer. It is a topic throughout the SUNY system. The information in this newsletter on Seamless Transfer was distributed for dissemination to all UUP chapters and is already a topic on several campuses.

I urge you to take the time to read about seamless transfer and consider the implications for your professional lives. Among the questions to consider are: Will standardizing GE courses lead to a standard syllabus that must be followed by everyone across the entire SUNY system? What does research on the completion rates of those taking online courses tell us? Will the schools that cater to the wealthy elites embrace MOOC and online delivery systems, or will they continue teaching courses in classrooms with live faculty? To what extent will faculty at SUNY Cortland control the curriculum on this campus? Who will benefit the most from Seamless Transfer?

Let me be very clear that neither I nor UUP is opposed to making college education accessible to all. What we are opposed to is creating a tiered education system that does not provide a quality education for all.

Why Downstate is Important

You have undoubtedly heard of the financial difficulties the Downstate Medical Center is enduring. You have probably not heard why it is essential for SUNY to keep this facility open as a source of health care for Brooklyn and as the largest preparer of minority medical professionals in the state. Let me list a few of the reasons for keeping Downstate open.

A teaching hospital is a necessity for the preparation of medical professionals.

Downstate provides needed medical care to low income people who have the most difficulty obtaining high quality medical care. Are we to turn our backs on those most in need of medical care?

SUNY was founded on the principle of providing high quality education to all citizens of New York. When SUNY was established the privates of the state did not admit minorities including Hispanic people, Black people, and Jewish people. Closing Downstate now will negatively impact the possibility of many people of color pursuing careers in the medical field.

There is a direct impact on those of us in central New York. If Downstate Medical Center is closed, Upstate Medical Center will most likely close in a few more years. That will create an enormous hole in medical care in this region and impact all of us.

If Downstate closes, it is likely that in a relatively few years SUNY will be completely out of the field of medical preparation. What major state university system does not include medical preparation in its portfolio of degrees?

Continued on page 3

Which Way the Academy? *Continued from page 2*

In examining the issues of Downstate Medical Center, we begin moving from issues narrowly focused on academic freedom and the quality of the professional lives of those of us in the academy. Downstate helps us examine public higher education from a broader perspective that asserts the role of education is more than creating jobs for business. The measure of a successful education system is more than the yearly income of its graduates. The speed of obtaining a degree is not the end goal of a successful education system. (If 25% of the students in a successful education system receive degrees in 3 years, will an even better system grant degrees in 2 years?) Instead of the goals of seamless transfer, why not set a goal that SUNY helps create citizens who care about a just and democratic society? Why not a goal that SUNY produces citizens ready to engage in the practices of a democratic society? I would not just be proud to work for such a college, I would be excited to work for such a college. ■

From the editor

With the beginning of another academic year, our thoughts return to what we do best: share with each of our students, and our colleagues, the hope and encouragement of a life filled with knowledge and wisdom. It is often through the creation of community, such as that of SUNY Cortland, that collective wisdom and inspiration come.

The Cortland Cause welcomes all new and returning faculty and staff, and welcomes your own wisdom and inspiration to the pages of this newsletter. It is a time of profound change within the University, and within the world. Let us know what you think of all that is going on around you. Talk to your colleagues; share the discussion with others by writing about it in the newsletter. Long or short, wordy or spare of words, we appreciate hearing from you.

**Karla Alwes,
English**



“share with each of our students, and our colleagues, the hope and encouragement of a life filled with knowledge and wisdom.”



Del Janik

The SUNY Cortland campus celebrated the life of Del Janik at a memorial service recently. Professor and long-time Chair of English, British literature scholar, Study Abroad enthusiast, and past president of the Cortland chapter of United University Professions, Del Janik was an engaged and engaging member of the campus community, whose life of service to his students and colleagues and community will always be remembered and forever valued. We send our thoughts and remembrances to Vicki Janik and her family.

Joseph Westbrook,
Chapter VP for Professionals,
Facilities

Remembering the New York State Fair

Nothing announces the fall semester louder than the Labor Day crowds cheering on the parade of Unions marching on the Empire Expo Center grounds at the Great New York State Fair. A fairer farewell to summer's end is hard to come by and this year was no exception. Thousands of families were in attendance on September 13th to experience one of the only days of the year that local politicians stand together with workers as friends of labor. Set at the oldest and one of the

largest state fairs in the United States, the parade marched from the Iroquois Village to the Chevy Court where member groups gathered for a rally. Several speeches from local organizations ended with the singing of the nostalgic song "Roll the Union On." Labor Unions marched to show support for all American workers and to display pride for their contributions and positive attitude in the work place and in their communities. My family and friends

drifted through the remainder of the day enjoying exhibits and attractions from agriculture and horticulture to the 180 ton sand sculpture in the Center of Progress building. We sampled maple syrup, beef jerky, wine and apples produced by skilled craftspeople throughout the state. Please plan to join me in 2014 to celebrate in solidarity the work for which you, your brothers and your sisters have labored.



Joe Westbrook and Family



Cortland, Upstate & Oswego Members



Dave Ritchie



Cortland Members on the move!



Dave Ritchie & David Peckham



Academic Librarians as Canaries in the Academy?

Dave Ritchie,
Library



Has the college president sent a memo changing your department's personnel policies and, specifically, the departmental criteria for appointment, renewal, promotion, and continuing appointment/tenure relating to topics of scholarship? And done so without any consultation or discussion with the affected academic faculty?

Has your department chair sent a memo changing the amount of time available for scholarship, research, and intellectual inquiry, to the academic faculty – reducing it to the equivalent of six (6) days per calendar year? Can you conduct any meaningful research within just six days a year?

Both of these events have happened at Cortland – to the academic librarians in Memorial Library (who are judged by the same broad criteria for academics in the SUNY Policies of the Board of Trustees as classroom faculty, although they are on 12-month contracts, not academic-year contracts) in the past four months, following the end of the 2013 spring semester.

On June 14, 2013, Director of Libraries Gail Wood issued the following statements as part of a memo to academic librarians, titled “Changes in the Scholarship Criteria and Research Leave for Academic Librarians”:

...Dr. Bitterbaum is directing the librarians to focus their scholarship on the depth and breadth of librarianship; contributions to the body of knowledge should focus on librarianship and relate to a librarian's role as a librarian. In addition, the President is stating that the weight given to scholarship be a modest amount. In my discussions with the President and Provost, the weight given to scholarship should be no more than 10% of a librarian's work obligation. This change is effective at the beginning of the fiscal year, 2013-2014 (i.e. July 1, 2013).

He further directs the Library Personnel Committee (LPC) to review the LPC policies and procedures and make the requisite changes. Scholarship should no longer be a weighted criteria, and a review of the scholarship criteria and examples should also be part of the deliberations in order to ensure that the document aligns with the vision of scholarship focusing on librarianship.

...

Research/Study-Leave

Memorial Library has a unique and long-established custom of granting research/study leave to librarians to pursue their scholarship and adequately fulfill the scholarship criteria. The customary allocation is one day per week. However, the longstanding custom has never been revised to take into consideration subsequent union-negotiated and campus leaves. In addition, with this change in vision, the need for a large amount of research/study leave is no longer needed. Therefore, the number of research/study days available to academic librarians will be six days per calendar year...

Attached to her memo was a memo dated May 20, 2013, from President Erik Bitterbaum to Wood titled “Librarians – Scholarship Criteria,” in which he stated:

Librarians on tenure track at SUNY Cortland should focus their research and creative output on the scholarship of librarianship... The scholarship produced by librarians at Memorial Library should relate to their jobs as librarians.

When reviewing librarian applications for reappointment, promotion and continuing appointment, I will consider scholarship that is related to librarianship as described above. Due to the rapid changes in the field of librarianship and the College's focus on teaching and providing services to students and faculty, scholarship should represent only a modest portion of the librarians' total obligation.

Please advise the Library Personnel Committee to revise the Personnel Policies and Procedures accordingly.

Both of these memos reflect decisions made by the administration with absolutely no consultation with any of the academic librarians at our college.

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Academic Librarians as Canaries in the Academy? Continued from page 5

DE-LAMINATING SHARED GOVERNANCE & HIJACKING FACULTY PREROGATIVES

Note that the content of these memos runs contrary to:

(a) the College Handbook section 220.06 C.1.a., C.2, & C.3.b&c, which give responsibility for departmental specifics for the criteria – including Scholarly Ability – to the academic faculty; and

(b) the College Handbook section 220.06 C.2 & C.3 on the process for changes to the criteria; and

(c) the joint position statement concerning academic librarians by AAUP (<http://www.aaup.org/report/joint-statement-faculty-status-college-and-university-librarians>) and the Association of College and Research Libraries (<http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/jointstatementfaculty>).

The AAUP/ACRL joint statement emphasizes the important roles that academic freedom and doing research encompassing their own professional interests have in allowing academic librarians to benefit the students, faculty, and institution.

By dictating – rather than requesting consideration of – changes to areas which are the agreed responsibility of the faculty, by disregarding Cortland's College Handbook and statements of practice by the academic library's professional body, the administration has seriously undercut the concept of shared governance and caused this academic librarian to question whether the administration respects the faculty.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

For nearly 40 years – since soon after the SUNY Board of Trustees designated librarian ranks as academic with faculty status – and approved by two Directors of Libraries (including the current Director), countless Faculty Senate (Academic) Faculty Affairs Committees, and at least five Cortland Presidents (including Erik Bitterbaum), the Scholarly Ability criterion in the Library Personnel Committee Policies and Procedures for academic librarians has stated that it “may be demonstrated by endeavors in the area of assigned responsibilities, or by endeavors in a related or unrelated area outside of assigned responsibilities.” Cortland's academic librarians have received promotion and continuing appointment with portfolios including research on varied topics, often in their subject liaison areas.

In considering the scope of librarian research, it is necessary to understand the unique work demands of librarians in higher education. Academic librarians are caught in two competing pressures: BOTH (1) to be the best general information consultants so that they can successfully assist the next research query – via chat, email, phone, or in person – from any patron on a not-yet-known topic; AND (2) to be deeply conversant in the subject content as the specialists assigned to one or more departments to select resources for those disciplines, teach research course sessions to students in those majors, and be the librarian resource for the faculty and students in those departments. If academic librarians do not have the credible background, experience, ability, and scholarship to be conversant with the specific disciplines they are supporting, they will have limited success as academic librarians. Recognizing the multiple demands librarians must meet in fulfilling their duties at SUNY Cortland, librarians were always given latitude in choosing research topics.

NICKEL-AND-DIMING READING AND RESEARCH TIME

In her June 14th memorandum, when citing the long-standing practice of Memorial Library administrations that a day per week has been available to academic librarians as only (in her words) “to pursue their scholarship”, the Director of Libraries has mistakenly conflated the tradition of “reading and research time” with just “research/study leave.” That day per week has been the agreed-upon time available to academic librarians to keep up with their fields of expertise, explore new ideas, and, yes, also pursue intellectual inquiry and scholarship.

So, in drastically reducing the days available from one day per week to six (6) total days per year, the Director is not only drastically reducing the opportunity for academic librarians to pursue scholarship and attain continuing appointment and advancement, she is eliminating the time traditionally allocated for those librarians to read, connect, and stay current in their profession.

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Academic Librarians as Canaries in the Academy? Continued from page 6

That time is important to academic librarians, because their academic positions in an administrative hierarchy require that there always be a balance between (a) the position obligations outlined in their position descriptions and (b) the academic obligations outlined in documents from the Policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees down through the College Handbook to the departmental Library Personnel Committee Policies and Procedures. The Association of College and Research Libraries' "Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians," reaffirmed in 2012, states that academic librarians should develop their own criteria for evaluation, that the criteria and standards should be similarly rigorous and follow the same channels as for classroom faculty for approval, that academic freedom is essential to their roles, and that their research may encompass "their own professional interests" and need not be limited to librarianship. And until these memoranda dictated otherwise in May and June, those practices were true of Memorial Library and SUNY College at Cortland.

The Director of Libraries makes another mistake in indicating that "subsequent union-negotiated and campus leaves" make the traditional day-per-week unneeded for librarians' scholarship. When queried about which leaves she is referring to, she cited the NYS/UUP Individual Development Awards (IDAs) and the NYS/UUP Calendar-Year Employee Leaves. The IDA program does not include leaves, only monetary grants. And the Calendar-Year Employee Leave program requires a substantial campus contribution (a 40% salary match), which has prompted the Director of Libraries to use other resources to support a librarian's request for research leave instead of the Calendar-Year Employee Leave the librarian was requesting. In addition, this leave program requires considerable lead time and sometimes is not available. Campus leaves are infrequent; in the case of sabbaticals, they are obviously not available until after the librarian has achieved continuing appointment.

The Director of Libraries has further specified – in a memo dated July 15, 2013 – that the reduced available research/study time of a paltry six (6) days per calendar year must be applied for in writing at least a week in advance, and

- is only for pursuing research out of town, or preparation of publication or presentation materials, and
- is to aid in fulfilling the scholarly ability criterion for promotion and continuing appointment.

Since the allowed uses for the six days are only uses at the middle or tail end of the research or scholarship process – how can the librarian ever get to that point in their process without the time to read and consider topics, do literature searches, develop a proposal, apply for some grant support, collect any information needed, analyze results, ruminate and make conclusions? And there must not be any false starts or blind alleys taking up additional time.

INCENTIVES INSTEAD OF LIMITS?

I wonder why the administration isn't using incentives to encourage our own academic librarians to investigate and analyze Memorial Library's services and programs, instead of dictating to them that they must limit themselves to investigating some aspect of librarianship as their research subjects and then reducing the time they can use to a few days per year? The Associate Provost for Information Resources in 2011-12 was willing to spend thousands of dollars to bring in an outside librarian to evaluate the library's reference services. (But, as you may remember, the Associate Provost and the library administration were unwilling to share the outside librarian's report and recommendations until after their plans had been finalized, and it took protests about lack of consultation to result in the campus community eventually being offered the opportunity merely to comment.) In contrast, the University of Rochester libraries hired an anthropologist who involved their librarians in conducting now-famous studies of the library's environment and services and in the process involved their whole campus community in re-imagining and modifying that environment and those services.

RESTRICTING RESEARCH TOPICS—TO WHAT END?

In the past summer (2013) other librarians and I individually corresponded with both the Director Libraries, Gail Wood, and President Erik Bitterbaum. Despite assurances that the previously-mentioned memos were meant as the beginning of a conversation, the exchanges that have occurred between administrators and librarians on these issues were decidedly short and one sided. As a result, the memos remain unchanged; a meaningful conversation has not yet begun; academic librarians at Cortland could, in the end, have limited time for research and a limited range of research topics.

Academic Librarians as Canaries in the Academy? Continued from page 7

At the same time, the college is left with two questions: Why would the administration of an institution of higher education have any desire to set severely limited restrictions on the scope of research in any academic department? Why would the administration of an institution of higher education write a memo limiting the research of academic faculty to 10% of their time? In pursuing knowledge, the scholar pursues that knowledge wherever it goes and does not stop the pursuit at some artificial disciplinary border.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- For academic librarians, receiving an acknowledgment that returning to the existing Scholarly Ability policy and the long-standing "reading and research" time allotment would be a good-faith, proper due-process place to start the "conversation" between the administration and academic librarians.
- Raise awareness of the issues and what has occurred. Might something like this occur with other academic departments? Is it already happening?
- Also, promote discussions within the Faculty Senate and the Academic Faculty Affairs Committee about the meaning and practice of shared governance, academic freedom, and faculty rights and responsibilities, to list just a few relevant topics, with the intent to educate the faculty and the administration.
- Promote a discussion within the Cortland Chapter of United University Professions, perhaps at one of the Union Matters venues, about how these issues concern academic employees.

A month and a half after my conversations with the Director and the President, the administration has not taken the initiative to begin the public conversation with academic librarians. ■

Governor signs UUP pay bill: Contract implementation to proceed



Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed UUP's contract pay bill Sept. 6, paving the way for full implementation of all provisions in the new contract.

Now that the pay bill is signed, SUNY will proceed with an implementation memo that gives direction and clarification to campus administrations. UUP has been informed that SUNY System Administration has a meeting scheduled for early October with campus human resources personnel to discuss contract details. UUP will announce

specific implementation dates for each contract item once they have been set. Monetary items that can now be implemented include the following:

- 2013 \$500 on-base salary increase for all UUP members, pro-rated for part-time employees.
- On-base \$500 Service Awards for permanent appointment and continuing appointment (tenure) or a second five-year term appointment for professionals in Appendix A titles, from 2011 forward.
- On-base \$500 Service Awards for members who have reached seven years

of service in full-time lecturer, Appendix B-4 Division III athletics, and Appendix C fundraising titles (to continue going forward).

- \$500 not-on-base Service Award for part-time employees who reached eight years of service from 2011 forward.
- Discretionary Salary Awards for full-time and part-time members that must be distributed by December 2013.
- UUP grant programs, such as Individual Development Awards and other programs.

Mayday Manifesto – A Call to Action for Faculty and Students

As Campus Equity Week approaches, the time is NOW to sign on to the Mayday Manifesto! Faculty and students are urged to visit the website and sign on to the project, which was started by Peter Brown of SUNY New Paltz in the spring of 2013. You can see from the figures in the Manifesto that SUNY Cortland has below-average wages for their contingent faculty, with our typical \$2590 per 3-credit course.

Around the state, many adjunct faculty are eligible for public assistance, and many are forced to become “road warriors,” driving from campus to campus to cobble together enough courses to move their families from below the U.S. poverty line. Students are shortchanged by the system, which deprives them of valuable extra assistance from the professors who need to leave campus and drive to the next college to teach – if the professors are lucky enough to have secured employment at other institutions.

According to the U.S. Health and Humans Services (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.cfm>), the 2013 poverty guideline for a family of four is \$23,550.

A contingent faculty member would need to

teach approximately nine courses annually to make that much, and colleges have limits as to how many courses may be taught by contingents. Consider also that full-time non-contingent faculty generally teach fewer than nine sections or courses per year, but make much more than \$23,550. The numbers are far from equitable.

The following information is from the website, bit.ly/Xeta7u. Please visit the website and sign on TODAY.

“The Mayday Manifesto is part of the national Mayday \$5K! campaign that was launched in the spring of 2013. Its goal is to ensure educational quality, fairness and equity by improving the wages and working conditions of all contingent faculty in higher education. They are the majority of college teachers and currently number about one million, including part-time adjuncts and full-time lecturers not on tenure-track lines.

The campaign welcomes the support of everyone, whether they are students, members of the general public or teachers, regardless of their employment status.

The campaign goals of the Mayday Manifesto are

endorsed by a variety of unions and other organizations, including New Faculty Majority: The National Coalition for Adjunct and Contingent Equity.

Please add your name to the list of supporters!”

Signed:

Peter D.G. Brown
Mayday \$5K! Coordinator
UUP Chapter President
(of SUNY New Paltz)

The petition, from the web site—

MAYDAY MANIFESTO

Mayday! This is an emergency call for help! We face a dangerous crisis in higher education. It affects almost every university, college and community college. It is not limited to any city, region or state. It is called contingency: the majority of teachers in higher education today are grossly underpaid, at-will employees, lacking any meaningful job security and the academic freedom essential to quality education.

The tenured jobs of the past have been outsourced to a contingent academic labor force. Many so-called “part-timers” teach twice as much as their “full-time” colleagues.

Nancy Kane,
Performing Arts



Mayday Manifesto – A Call to Action for Faculty and Students

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Similarly, many “temps,” whose short-term contracts typically extend for a year or less, have been teaching for decades—often longer than permanent teachers on continuing appointments.

The effects of this crisis should be known to everyone. Contingency has been a dirty little secret for nearly half a century, in plain sight but almost totally ignored, and nothing will change until the facts are widely understood. The majority of college teachers in the United States today—over a million individuals—are contingent. Most of them are so-called “adjuncts.” They are paid poverty wages, earning an average of \$2,700 per three-credit semester course. Most adjuncts make \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year, often working more than 40 hours per week. An estimated 80% lack any health or retirement benefits, and academic freedom is meaningless in the absence of any job security.

The conditions under which contingent teachers are forced to work undermine the quality of higher education.

Their miserable working conditions adversely affect student learning conditions, thus short-changing our students and threatening the future of our nation. This is no way to prepare the next generation for an increasingly competitive global economy! Funding education on the cheap has resulted in most American students no longer being competitive with those in dozens of other countries.

To reverse this disastrous trend, the undersigned urge that the following steps be adopted on a priority basis:

1. Increase the starting salary for a three-credit semester course to a minimum of \$5,000 for all instructors in higher education.
2. Ensure academic freedom by providing progressively longer contracts for all contingent instructors who have proven themselves during an initial probationary period.
3. Provide health insurance for all instructors, either through their college’s health insurance system or through the Affordable Care Act.
4. Support the quality education of our students

by providing their instructors with necessary office space, individual development support, telephones, email accounts and mail boxes.

5. Guarantee fair and equitable access to unemployment benefits when college instructors are not working.
6. Guarantee eligibility for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program to all college instructors who have taught for ten years, during which they were repaying their student loans.
7. With or without a time-in service requirement, allow all college teachers to vote and hold office in institutional governance, including faculty senates and academic departments.

The signatories urge a comprehensive, cooperative effort to end the staffing crisis in higher education for the sake of all our students and all our citizens. Mayday! Mayday! Mayday! ■

2013 Annual Chapter Picnic...

....Thanks again this year to Bob's BBQ for a great meal, and most especially thanks to our members for coming and making this yet another successful and fun event!

"A good time was had by all!"

—Photos by Dawn Van Hall (Library)



Partnerships Thrive!

UUP • NYPIRG • ICE

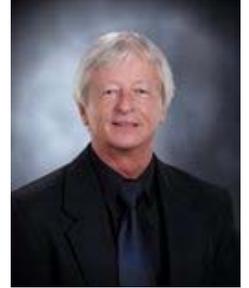
On National Voter Registration Day, September 24, 2013, UUP was again partnered with NYPIRG and the Institute for Civic Engagement to get-out-the-vote! This event, though somewhat conservative compared to last year, was a great success this year. Two tables were set up on campus where UUP, NYPIRG, and ICE membership met with students, both young and older, who wanted to register to vote. Local political issues, NYS constitutional amendments, and the New York City Mayoral race were of most concern to the new voters on this day.

Jessica Johnnes is the Regional Coordinator for NYPIRG. Her office is in the SGA suite, 2nd floor of the Corey Student Union. She reports the effort this fall has produced 668 new voter registrations, and 113 of these were gathered up on the 24th. Jessica is a highly motivated activist who is adept at organizing events such as Rock the Vote on our SUNY Cortland campus. We are certain we will see her more often as the spring legislative session approaches. In the meantime, please thank the following UUP members for their energy and enthusiasm as they volunteered to help make this day a success!!

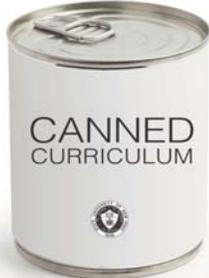
Karla Alwes, Ross Borden, Bill Buxton, Ricki McClure, Nancy Kane, Jen Drake, Michelle Kennedy, Richard Kendrick, John Suarez, Randi Storch, Lori Schlicht, Bill Skipper, Anne Wiegard, Marc Dearstyne

There is considerable need for an active union. The 14 members above are ready to help in many different ways. We need more members to be willing to carve an hour or two out of their schedules now and again to help with efforts such as Rock the Vote. If you would like to begin with some small projects, please contact anyone you see in this article. We can all talk with you to see how we can help get you going. Here's to a busy fall.....!

Marc Dearstyne,
EOP



Seamless Transfer



Seamless Transfer/Core Curriculum: Impact on Public Higher Education

What is Seamless Transfer?

Seamless Transfer is SUNY's plan to facilitate student transfer from SUNY campuses that offer A.A. and A.S. degrees to SUNY baccalaureate programs by mandating a university-wide General Education program. The Seamless Transfer process has restrained faculty oversight of curriculum. It has developed in the context of a narrow focus on more rapid degree completion, without acknowledging the full set of factors that affect student completion patterns. It is connected to a broader agenda to streamline, increasingly privatize, and drain substantive content from public higher education programs.

What are some of the primary components of Seamless Transfer?

- Standardized acceptance of GE courses across SUNY community colleges and state-operated campuses
- 64-credit limit on associate degrees; 126-credit limit on bachelor's degrees
- Course availability for transferred students within a prescribed timeline
- Majors declared by students after 30 credits in two-year programs; after 60 credits in four-year programs
- Submission of required program changes by campuses before Dec. 1, 2014



UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS | PRESIDENT FREDERICK E. KOHAL, Ph.D.
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Please contact the chapter office at ext. 5991 for additional copies of the Seamless Transfer handout



Concerns About Seamless Transfer Plans

◆ A SUNY-wide General Education curriculum threatens academic freedom and our ability to provide diverse educational experiences in tune with student needs and program specialties.

Pressure to standardize curriculum threatens the academic freedom of educators who design courses in concert with their respective disciplines and fields.

It compromises SUNY's ability to offer students the diverse curriculum they need to be prepared for a dynamic and highly differentiated society.

◆ Extensive curriculum standardization is not justified.

While the goal of facilitating timely student completion of degrees is important, Seamless Transfer goes substantially beyond what is necessary to improve student completion rates. It is part of a broader set

of SUNY goals, most notably to standardize curriculum in order to facilitate increases in online courses with large student enrollments.

◆ Seamless Transfer could lead to the further privatization of public education, which threatens educational quality and rigor.

Many aspects of Seamless Transfer are aligned with the educational reform agenda funded by private interests, including the Lumina and Gates foundations. This agenda is supported by corporations such as Pearson and Coursera, which have positioned themselves to take over functions that are the purview of

public educators and public-service providers. "College completion" has been emphasized as the measure of an academic institution's success, with little concern for quality education or the need to prepare students for an economy and society that demand flexibility and broadly defined career readiness.

◆ Seamless Transfer could weaken the curriculum, adversely affecting students from middle- and lower-income families.

Seamless Transfer plans imply a "core curriculum"—similar to that imposed in K-12—that may compromise diverse educational objectives and standards. Faculty direction of curriculum is threatened, and more and more curriculum content decisions may be turned over to profit-seeking corporations, compromising academic standards.

A "core curriculum" at SUNY will further erode educational opportunities in terms of quality and flexibility to meet diverse student needs and broad educational and career objectives. If Seamless Transfer is fully implemented, standardization of college courses could weaken the curriculum and foster a more sharply tiered public higher education system.

◆ Online courses may be imposed in areas where online delivery is not optimal.

SUNY's Seamless Transfer objectives depend on the expansion of online education. SUNY is looking to online courses with high enrollments—not the hiring of additional teaching and support faculty—to meet new directives for course availability under specific time-limits. There is nothing to stop SUNY from expanding online education in ways that are not consistent with high-quality online course delivery. Private corporations

that create curriculum and online service delivery systems stand to benefit as "contracting out" for these functions becomes more feasible. This could lead to further privatization of SUNY's educational functions, with potential consequences such as additional cuts in courses, programs and services, and faculty, and an increase in the use of contracting out for the for-profit delivery of courses.

◆ Seamless Transfer could lead to longer degree completion time.

The neediest students are less likely to succeed in the streamlined process that Seamless Transfer creates. At the community college and four-year college levels, students' time to completion is affected by multiple factors. These include the need for remedial and "college success" course work, uncertainty regarding educational and career interests, changes in initial majors as

interests and career objectives develop, the desire to pursue more than one major and/or minors, internship and study abroad experiences that may alter completion paths, employment demands, and personal and family issues that affect course load and scheduling possibilities (especially for the increasing nontraditional student population).

◆ Teaching and professional faculty have not been adequately consulted.

Consultation has involved campus presidents, chief academic officers, and some faculty governance leaders and committees. The extent to which academics and professionals at the department level have been consulted varies across institutions. On most campuses, there has been little, if any,

campus-wide discussion and analysis of its implications. The Seamless Transfer process thus far has relied on top-down directives that present SUNY's plan as justified and inevitable. There has been very little analysis of its full implications.

◆ Seamless Transfer runs counter to SUNY's mission.

SUNY was never designed to be a homogeneous institution across all campuses, nor is there justification for transforming its mission as dramatically as Seamless Transfer implies. SUNY's plans compromise its mission to "... provide the people of New York educational services of the highest quality ...". Course quality will be sacrificed in many cases as "cookie-cutter" curricular directives are imposed from above. Seamless Transfer plans

also contradict SUNY's mission that emphasizes diversity and providing educational services and activities through a system of "diverse campuses which shall have differentiated and designated missions designed to provide a comprehensive program of higher education, to meet the needs of both traditional and nontraditional students and to address local, regional and state needs and goals."

Alternatives

UUP urges all of its members—especially those involved in campus governance and curriculum review processes—to demand open review of Seamless Transfer plans and their possible consequences. Campus dialogue is critical.

UUP pledges to work with our members, campus administrators, and SUNY officials to engage in a full and open review of ways to facilitate transfer of students from community colleges and colleges of

technology to baccalaureate programs at our campuses. Accurate information, transparency, and problem-solving—rather than radical surgery that will remove the heart of our educational institutions—is called for.

UUP will call on the chancellor to redirect SUNY to its essential educational mission and work with us to collaboratively address problems.



UUP Contact Information

Members can contact their UUP chapter office for additional information and follow-up or they can contact UUP's statewide vice presidents at 1-800-342-4206 or via email:

- Vice President for Academics [Jamie Dangler, jdangler@uupmail.org](mailto:jdangler@uupmail.org)
- Vice President for Professionals [Phillippe Abraham, pubraham@uupmail.org](mailto:pubraham@uupmail.org)

SUNY's Seamless Transfer documents can be found at:

- <http://www.suny.edu/provost/MTPSeamlessTransfer6-14-13.pdf>
- http://www.suny.edu/provost/academic_affairs/SeamlessTransfer.cfm

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Sept/Oct. '13



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