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Special points of interest:

- Facing Tough Times
- Professionals Workload Creep & Performance Program Issues

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GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED 2010-2011 BUDGET:

An additional \$118 million cut to SUNY

If passed, this would result in total cuts to SUNY of \$562.5 million in a two-year period — equivalent to the loss of the total combined operating budgets (state aid plus tuition) of Albany, Binghamton, Brockport, Cortland, Geneseo, & New Paltz!

UUP **opposes** SUNY flexibility provisions in the Governor's budget that grant SUNY the authority to

- raise tuition without legislative approval;
- allow differential tuition across campuses; and
- lease SUNY land or enter into public-private partnerships without sufficient legislative oversight.

See more about SUNY Flex on page 2

S.O.S.

Save Our SUNY!

UUP/NYSUT is the main voice for SUNY Funding and Preservation of Public Higher Ed in NYS

Go to www.uupinfo.org and www.savesuny.org

Fax your legislators TODAY!

SAVE SUNY RALLY — March 9 in Albany

See back page for details



UUP-WORKING FOR YOU

President's Messages

—Jamie Dangler

SUNY "FLEXIBILITY" PROPOSALS:

THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

Shaky Claims of Revenue Generation

The Governor's proposed budget includes the Public Higher Education Empowerment & Innovation Act, which incorporates SUNY's quest for greater flexibility and is being promoted as key to revenue generation. While UUP is not opposed to a rational tuition policy or components of SUNY Flex aimed at allowing more timely purchase of goods, there is grave concern about the following aspects of the Governor's proposal:

1) SUNY would have full authority to raise tuition without legislative approval and to allow differential tuition across campuses.

SUNY could raise tuition at 2 ½ times the five year rolling average of the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI). Tuition could increase by 10% next year and continue increasing in subsequent years. SUNY would be given authority to exceed the HEPI cap for any specific campus or program.

Concerns:

- Paves the way for further reduction in state support for SUNY; gives state government the rationale to walk away from its obligation to provide NYS citizens with affordable, accessible public higher education.
- No limitations on tuition increases other than guidelines SUNY creates.
- Sets the stage for destructive competition for students among SUNY campuses, especially as the traditional student-age population dramatically decreases over the coming decade.

2) SUNY could lease campus properties and enter into contracts and variations of public/private partnerships with limited oversight and inadequate employee protections.

Approvals for leases and public/private partnerships would no longer be subject to oversight by the full Legislature.

Concerns:

- Outsourcing could be possible.
- Many of SUNY's current public/private partnerships are money-losers for SUNY. Removing legislative oversight will weaken protections against "bad deals" that serve private purposes.

3) SUNY's claims of revenue generation are unrealistic

SUNY asserts that flexibility will produce 10,000 new campus jobs and over 64,000 construction jobs. We see no realistic basis for this assertion.

Concerns:

- SUNY Flex focuses on tuition as the main source of revenue growth.
- Tuition would have to be doubled to support 10,000 new jobs at SUNY institutions.
- SUNY's record of financial loss in public-private partnerships provides little foundation for revenue growth predictions.

The Assembly Ways & Means Committee reported that if the Governor's proposals stood in the 2003-04 academic year, tuition would be \$8,346 in 2010-11, an increase of \$3,376 or 91.9%. Under the current model of legislative oversight tuition went up \$620, or 14%. The Governor's proposal does not present a model for rational, affordable tuition increases. ■

BUDGET SITUATION SUMMARY

Cuts in NYS Funding for SUNY

- \$118 million proposed for 2010-11 budget (plus various additional cuts)
- \$148 million – FY 2008-09
- \$172 million – FY 2009-10
- \$ 90 million - 2009 mid-year cut

If the Governor's proposed budget is enacted:

- SUNY will have lost \$562.5 million in a 2-year period.
- SUNY will have lost 25% of its current annual operating budget in a 2-year period.
- SUNY will have accounted for over 25% of the total cuts to state agencies imposed by the Governor in a 2-year period, even though SUNY's budget accounts for 2% of state funds to all agencies.

Other components of the Governor's budget proposal:

- SUNY hospitals hit with an unfunded State imposed mandatory cost increase of \$74.5 million
- Funding for the New York State Theatre Institute (NYSTI) phased out entirely by 2011-12.

COALITION-BUILDING

UUP Meets with Faculty Senate, Department Chairs, and Other Groups to Address Budget Crisis

UUP chapter leaders have had a series of meetings with Faculty Senate Steering Committee members, department chairs, and other groups/units to discuss continued budget cuts that will impact students, employees, and the quality of Cortland's programs in all areas. A key goal of these discussions has been to explore ways to work together to facilitate campus-wide communication and dialogue with the administration.

UUP's intent in setting up these joint meetings is to motivate all segments of the campus community to work together to advocate for SUNY funding and address the immediate problems caused by substantial resource reductions on our own campus. Preserving jobs and maintaining the quality of our programs have been among the most pressing concerns voiced by meeting participants.

A starting point for our joint work is to obtain information about cuts that have already been imposed on departments/units and to clarify the status of various proposals and ideas for addressing resource constraint.

UUP represents close to 800 professional and academic employees on our campus. The Faculty Senate represents the entire campus community. Chairs from all three Schools – Education, Professional Studies, and Arts & Sciences – as well as representatives from various professional units have participated in our meetings and subsequent communications.

A letter signed by the UUP Chapter President and Faculty Senate Chair and endorsed by numerous department/unit heads has been sent to President Bitterbaum. The letter informs the President of our coalition-building efforts and asks for information about the administration's responses to the budget cuts to date, the status of suggestions received, and proposals under discussion.

UUP has also presented information about the SUNY budget cuts and their impact on the college and larger community to the Mid-State Central Labor Council. UUP has requested that the Council ask its constituents to help by sending letters and faxes to legislators and by informing the community about the impact of SUNY budget cuts on tuition costs, program availability at SUNY colleges and universities, and the impact of a downsized SUNY on local economies. ■

UUP STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS ABOUT POSSIBLE WAYS TO ADDRESS THE BUDGET CRISIS

The Cortland chapter of United University Professions endorses discussion and cooperation with the campus administration on ways to address the budget situation without loss of jobs for any of our members, who include part-time and full-time professionals and academics. UUP urges its members to refrain from offering recommendations that would result in loss of jobs or diminishment of employment for any employees. Cortland's UUP chapter has been committed to working with the campus administration as well as other groups on campus, such as the Faculty Senate, department chairs, and representatives of other units in order to facilitate discussion and advance collective efforts to handle the current budget crisis in ways that preserve SUNY's core mission to provide quality, affordable, accessible public higher education as well as maintaining employment for members of our university community.

DEFINING WORKLOAD:

A FULL PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATION SHOULD NOT BE EXCEEDED

The specific duties and responsibilities that constitute the workload of UUP members vary considerably. For professionals, those duties and responsibilities are specified in performance programs. For academics, those duties and responsibilities are outlined in appointment letters and grounded in the past practice of departments/units.

As we attempt to confront administrative changes that can increase the workload of academics and professionals, the SUNY Board of Trustees' definition of *Professional Obligation* is our reference point. The administration can be confronted by UUP if the specific content of a member's or a department's or unit's full professional obligation is exceeded. Here's how it works.

According to the SUNY Board of Trustees Policies "The professional obligation of an employee consistent with the employee's academic rank or professional title, shall include teaching, research, University service and other duties and responsibilities required of the employee during the term of the employee's professional obligation" (Article 11, Title H, Sec. 2).

The specific content of the employee's professional obligation is set at the time of hire. It can be changed by management at any time, but if there are increases in one area of the professional obligation, there must be decreases in another area. The bottom line is that the full professional obligation cannot be exceeded.

If individuals take on extra work that exceeds their full professional obligation, that work should be clearly identified as voluntary. Compensation for extra work through extra service pay or some other quid pro quo is common.



If a UUP professional's workload is increased, there must be appropriate adjustment of their performance program to specify how new duties will be offset by a decrease in existing duties. If a UUP academic's workload is increased by adding new required duties there must be changes in the other areas of the professional obligation. For example, if

course load is increased, there must be a substantive decrease in another area.

What is UUP's role in confronting workload increases?

If a member comes to UUP with a workload problem, the first course of action would be to review the specific content of that person's professional obligation. If there has been an increase we would advise and support the person according to the specific circumstances. This could involve seeking adjustments in a professional's performance program or working with an academic to address their workload increase at the department level or above, depending on the circumstances.

If UUP is approached by a work group because of a workload issue that affects the whole group (e.g., an academic department or professional unit), we can meet with the group as a whole to explore the problem and decide the appropriate course of action to take.

When increases in workload at the individual or department/unit level are not successfully resolved through informal efforts to adjust the components of the professional obligation, UUP may have to consider filing an Improper Practice with New York State's Public Employee Relations Board (PERB), but only after UUP's careful assessment of the facts of any particular individual or group-level case and exhaustion of all possible efforts to resolve the problem informally.

In 2009 UUP filed an Improper Practice on behalf of the Foundations and Social Advocacy Department when their efforts to work with the administration to develop a solution to an advisement load problem broke down. In the end, a solution was arrived at before UUP's Improper Practice (IP) went forward with PERB, so the IP was withdrawn.

The workload workshop UUP hosted for academics and professionals last November clearly revealed that "workload creep" has been a growing problem for our members for quite some time. As vacant positions remain unfilled and cost-cutting proposals seek to shift work from one department/unit to another, workload issues are likely to intensify.

While our commitment to our students, our professional standards, and the quality of our programs engenders a spirit of help and cooperation as we face the budget crisis, we should be mindful that "helping out" should not lead to permanent increases in workload that will jeopardize our health, professional well-being, and the quality of our service to students and the college. ■

**Remember:
If workload is increased by adding new required duties, there must be changes in other areas of the professional obligation.**

PROFESSIONALS' WORKLOAD PROBLEMS: FOLLOW-UP WITH CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION

At a February 10 Labor-Management meeting, UUP requested that mandatory supervisor training for all who supervise professionals be established as a necessary step toward addressing workload creep, performance program issues, the need for accurate information about use of compensatory time, and other problems experienced widely by professionals across the campus. President Bitterbaum accepted this request and authorized Human Resources (HR) to work with UUP to pursue this further.

John Driscoll, Chapter Vice-President for Professionals, and Jennifer Drake, Professional Delegate, met with HR officials during the week of February 15 to follow up.

Driscoll presented the administration with information that UUP obtained from Cortland professionals during workload workshops held in 2009. He also presented information and recommendations compiled by UUP's Professionals Advisory Committee.

While UUP continues to pursue these issues with the administration, professionals who are having workload and performance program problems are advised to contact John Driscoll (john.driscoll@cortland.edu; campus ext. 2926) or the UUP office (uup@cortland.edu; campus ext. 5991) to discuss possibilities for addressing their individual situations.

And - professionals—please note that UUP welcomes additions to our Professionals Advisory Committee. Please let us know if you are potentially interested.

For a fuller discussion of workload issues, see "Be Careful of Workload Creep" written by John Marino, UUP Statewide Vice-President for Professionals, in the December 2009 issue of *The Cortland Cause*. ■

VOLUNTEERING FOR EXTRA WORK DURING THE BUDGET CRISIS

At the January 21 spring semester Opening Meeting, President Bitterbaum sent a clear message that volunteering to do "extra" work would help the campus during the budget crisis. I urge UUP members to consider the following before volunteering to take on extra duties and responsibilities.

It's important to ensure that any "extra" work you do will not become part of your regular professional obligation in the long run. Failing to take steps to clearly differentiate between volunteer work and work that falls within the established professional obligation can set you and your colleagues up for a permanent increase in workload.

Simple Steps You Should Take if You Volunteer

If you volunteer to perform a new task/project beyond your normal professional obligation/performance program, you should compose a written understanding that will be signed by you and your chair/supervisor. Retain the document in your files.

The written understanding between you and your chair/supervisor should note the following about the performance of your voluntary task:

- It does not represent a precedent for purposes of future assignments to you;
- It does not represent a precedent for others on the campus;
- It has a specific start and end date;
- It may occur more than once without affecting any part of this voluntary understanding.

The written understanding should also note that the above conditions will be in effect whether or not financial or other compensation is offered and accepted. Financial compensation or a quid pro quo reduction in some other aspect of your work for the voluntary task undertaken is an effective means of underlining that the voluntary service was above and beyond your normal professional obligation/performance program.

—Parts of this article were taken from "Workload Creep," by Norm Payne, Oneonta VP Professionals (*The Sentinel*, December 2008). ■

From UUP President Phil Smith's

"Testimony on the 2010-2011 Executive Budget," presented to the Senate Finance Committee and Assembly Ways and Means Committee chairs on January 27, 2010

For full transcript of the testimony, go to www.uupinfo.org

"If the \$118 million reduction proposed in the Executive Budget is enacted, SUNY will have \$80 million less in State support next year than it had in 1990. This is an amazing, and very troubling, statistic since enrollment grew by more than 40,000 students over much of that timeframe."



**SUNY:
UNDER-APPRECIATED =
UNDER-REPRESENTED**

[SUBTEXT=WE NEED YOU!]

—David Ritchie
Library

Nobody seems to get it. The State University of New York prepares more New Yorkers for their future endeavors than any other single NYS agency – and 80% of grads stay in-state and contribute to the economic, social, and political future of NY. Yet does that protect SUNY from across-the-board budget cuts? Nope.

SUNY campuses are distributed across the state, with every county having a share of at least a community college. Some 30 counties also benefit from hosting a state-operated campus. In many of those counties the SUNY campus is the largest employer, and in all of them SUNY expenditures create a significant multiplier effect within those locales. In addition, SUNY’s very presence contributes to the development of businesses in their communities, with many campuses deliberately fostering entrepreneurial activities. Do those “economic engine” roles make it likely that SUNY will be spared at least some of the budget slashing? Nope.

Fact: SUNY has the dubious honor of having had 18% of its annual operating budget cut in the last 18 months. Add the \$118 million cut proposed for the FY 2010-11 budget, and SUNY will have been CUT 25% of its formerly \$2 billion annual operating budget if the cuts are approved. That’s half a billion dollars—more than any other state entity!

Does no one care at the statewide level? Barbara Lifton, our Assembly representative, says that most legislators she’s listened to in the past month buy the governor’s line that cutting budgets and raising fees is the only way out, and everyone must share the pain. [But don’t tax the rich for their fair share. – DR] Yet the state legislature is the only entity that can lessen or re-apportion the cuts, by modifying the governor’s proposed budget. So people from every constituency are visiting legislators to try to make their needs prominent enough to gain a roll-back.

UUP is there, too, making the points above, and more. But UUP is there ONLY if YOU contribute. Your faxes are important, but your presence makes the biggest impression! Legislators need facts, but they *love* anecdotes and stories that illustrate

those facts. Sounds like a college president I know. And in January that same college president encouraged us to tell SUNY Cortland’s stories to legislators, to parents, to the Cortland community – especially now that the college’s reserve funds have been exhausted by helping to absorb the cuts of the past two years.

Maybe you didn’t know that the “easy” savings have already been taken? In addition to zeroing out Cortland’s multi-million-dollar reserve funds (which were built by taking more students than the college’s enrollment targets over the past decade), 60-odd full-time positions remain vacant (academics, professionals, staff), and some class size caps have been increased for three semesters now.

Tuition increases? They have historically been a zero-sum game – whenever a tuition increase has been approved under the last four governors, the same amount or more has been cut from the state support for SUNY. “Differential tuition” – the carrot the governor has proposed this year that would allow each campus to charge what it thinks the traffic will bear – if adopted, would end the same way because the governor wants every dollar raised to help balance the state books. So, whatever the individual SUNY campus tuition increases might yield – in total extra revenue – that amount will be cut from state support for SUNY as a whole. (Would the state-support cut to each campus be apportioned as the tuition was increased by that campus? – that’s not a given, so some campuses may take a real cut, not just break even. Of course, students and parents would lose again, just as they paid more tuition last year for no benefit to their SUNY colleges. Even more disturbing, many students would be priced out of a college education altogether.)

Solution? We need YOU to personally tell SUNY Cortland’s stories of

- student successes / impacts on students,
- faculty and professional successes / impacts on faculty and professionals,
- campus successes / impacts on the campus.

Legislators NEED to hear from you both in Albany and locally. No experience? No problem! When you sign up to participate, you will join a team of UUPers who will carry the main messages, and your role will be to add a story from your perspective to illustrate the urgency of sparing SUNY and SUNY Cortland.

SUNY is New York’s best investment and the one green business that will never leave the state. The time is now for advocacy. Say yes! Today! (See next page for dates and signup information.) ■

SUNY NURTURES THE FUTURE

SUNY IS THE STATE’S BEST INVESTMENT AND THE ONE GREEN BUSINESS THAT NEVER LEAVES THE STATE!



**ADVOCATING IN ALBANY:
ROOKIE NOTES**

—**Marc Dearstynne**
EOP

Springtime in Albany is overdue. Soft sunny southern breezes and the odor of flowering trees in central park and down State Street makes us glad to be alive, makes us glad to be spending the day doing what we love. January 29th in Albany was nothing like this. Though not as blustery as central New York, the political wind of the capitol city was definitely swirling. The anticipation of freshness in the budget process was pushed aside by fear and worry regarding the life and identity of SUNY in the near future.

Indeed, the initiative to transform SUNY, perhaps to a more, less-public university system appears to be gaining ground. I have often wondered about how the faculty and staff of SUNY Cortland might feel about a less accessible institution? UUP is certain that the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act as written is not good for the employees and students of SUNY, but there seems to be some confusion as to how the bills benefits to the fiscal health of the SUNY system. Some college Presidents have spoken out in favor of creating a differential tuition structure, selling or leasing college property, and entering

into private contracts in hope of slowing or stopping the money drain resulting from increased state budget deficits.

UUP stands on maintaining legislative oversight of the SUNY system and thereby questions the growing movement of our institutional leaders for increased autonomy. Certainly, as the bill stands, the eventual shift of financial burden will end up on our students and families. This will may also certainly mean a reduced student population as they look for even less expensive educational alternatives. This will certainly mean that, as the financial burden to the student is increased, the support from NYS will decrease (cause that's the way it goes). This will certainly mean that there will be less money to employ and maintain our current employee numbers. There already has been a significant drop of contingent faculty at Cortland as we look to increase both teaching load and class-cap numbers. When you look at all this occurring around you, what do you feel? Do you feel fear and uncertainty? What will happen to your job and livelihood? I feel these feelings and have these thoughts. I have taken some action by doing what I can to help UUP convince our state leadership that SUNY is not a liability, but a current and future economic engine. Where do you stand?

If you are interested in voicing your opinion and doing the footwork with our outreach efforts, please call or write me. I'm in the directory. ■

**UUP ADVOCACY IS CRITICAL IN THE FACE OF THE BUDGET CUTS!
PLEASE STEP UP AND JOIN US!**

UPCOMING UUP ALBANY ADVOCACY DATES*

- **Tuesday, Feb 23**
- **Monday-Tuesday, March 1-2 - NYSUT** Higher Education Day (overnight accommodations provided)
- **Tuesday, March 9 - Student/Faculty Higher Education Day with Rally at the State Capitol** — see right for more
- **Monday-Tuesday, March 15-March 16** (overnight accommodations provided)
- **Tuesday, March 23**

Can you PLEASE join us for any (or several) of these dates?

We'll arrange transportation and UUP will provide training and lunch.

To sign up or inquire, contact the Chapter Office, Tel. 753-5991, e-mail uup@cortland.edu OR our Outreach Chair, David Ritchie, Tel. 753-2818, e-mail david.ritchie@cortland.edu

*See UUP 2009 Legislative Agenda on page 8

IMPORTANT!

TUESDAY, MARCH 9

**STUDENT/FACULTY HIGHER
EDUCATION DAY**

RALLY AT THE STATE CAPITOL!

**Cosponsored by
UUP, NYPIRG, and other unions**

WE NEED TO FILL A BUS FROM OUR CAMPUS!

**TO SIGN UP CONTACT
THE CHAPTER OFFICE
753-5991
uup@cortland.edu**



"Get on the bus so you don't get thrown under the bus!"



UUP LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR 2010

Budget Priorities

- **Reject** the governor's proposal to eliminate an additional \$118 million from the SUNY operating budget
- **Add** \$74.5 million to the state subsidy for SUNY hospitals and health science centers to compensate for mandatory costs
- **Reject** the governor's proposals to reduce Medicaid funding for SUNY's teaching hospitals
- **Restore** \$1.6 million state funding for the New York State Theatre Institute (NYSTI), keeping the institution public

Flex Legislation

- **Oppose** the governor's proposal to grant SUNY the authority to raise tuition without legislative approval
- **Oppose** the governor's proposal to grant SUNY the authority to impose differential tuition
- **Oppose** the elimination of state appropriations for SUNY's expenditure of tuition, fees, and other campus revenues
- **Ensure** sufficient oversight over SUNY's proposed authority to enter into contracts, leases, public/private partnerships and joint ventures

CHAPTER MEMBERS IN ALBANY—FEBRUARY 2

Cortland UUP members Jennifer Drake, Paul Luyben, and John Suarez traveled to Albany to Advocate for UUP on Tuesday, February 2. At left, Suarez participates in pre-advocacy training at UUP headquarters. At right Drake and Luyben talk with Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton (left-right: Drake, Lifton, UUP Outreach Chair Glen McNitt, and Luyben).

—Photos courtesy of Brian Tappen, Upstate Medical University





TEACHING AND THE SECRET OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

—Karla Alwes
English

Nineteenth-century poet Matthew Arnold wrote a poem titled "The Scholar Gypsy." It's the story of a 17th-century Oxford student who left the University to join a band of gypsies. Arnold's poem is one that imagines the scholar, and his passion for learning, as an apparition appearing not only within the University, but all across the countryside. The scholar has achieved immortality in the poem because of his "serene pursuit of the secret of human existence." (from *Norton Anthology of British Literature*, p. 1359).

Almost 200 years later, in 1994, the Cortland Chapter of UUP publishes its newsletter with the focus on one overriding topic: **WORKLOAD**. Faculty believed at the time that the College was slowly and insidiously attempting to increase the teaching load, to the detriment of teaching and scholarship. That "secret of human existence" which the poet speaks of, and which the Oxford student sought, continues to elude us. Now, 16 years later, we are again embroiled in a dilemma that can only come up with the same solution as before—an increase in workload, and a decrease in academic excellence.

While reading Bob Spitzer's article (see pages 10-13), I am struck by how cogently he lays out the argument against increased workload. The tenure-track faculty have three areas that must be addressed if they want to continue to be tenure-track faculty: teaching, service, scholarship. Participation in each area must be of the type that produces the academic excellence for which we strive to be known.

Yet, when economic hardship strikes, the first to fall is the linchpin of the other two: teaching. Without teaching, the other two categories have no power to attract us. As teachers, we all

stand on the shoulders of our previous teachers, who taught us through their own ability to see the world with wisdom and passion. That wisdom and passion become a part of our own repertoire, and the tradition of academic excellence continues. Teaching is the area that "remains the central function of SUNY Cortland...and excellence in teaching continues to be [our] primary goal," as the yearly SUNY Cortland college catalog attests. Yet, faculty who are contractually supposed to be teachers as well as scholars and servers may soon be asked to redefine "excellence in teaching" in order to make it a term that accommodates the warehousing of students into as many classes as each individual faculty member can cut the day (and the pie) into—either 4/3 or 4/4. (NB: As chair of English for six years, I am painfully aware that there are faculty on this campus who already teach four fully-enrolled separate and discrete classes per semester, every semester—the full-time lecturers. They are not contractually bound to produce scholarship or provide service to the campus, however, and therefore I am not including them in this specific argument. Any proposal that increases workload for some obviously decreases workload for others; thus, the argument at large could have a deleterious effect on non-tenure track faculty, especially the part-time faculty.) It is then that we turn the four-year liberal arts college into the two-year community college. And it is then that we will begin to excise all the pretty words from the brochures and flyers for prospective students and their families, words that have given our own students and ourselves the pleasure and the pride of calling ourselves a college, such as, "no matter what you choose [at SUNY Cortland, you may] be assured that your education will prepare you well for graduate study or a professional position" (Admissions Office brochure for SUNY Cortland).

The Romantic poet John Keats says, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." Maybe that is the "secret of human existence." Just in case it is, we need to fight for our students' ability to make their own experience with learning a joy forever, which means it will last not only throughout their lives, but throughout their own students' lives as well. Like any other thing of beauty, teaching needs to be nourished and protected, not mass produced at the expense of our students and, ultimately, at the dangerous expense of truths we (all) hold self evident. ■



UUP RALLY IN ALBANY FEBRUARY 5

Cortland UUP members joined more than 300 UUP colleagues, NYSUT members, and students from around the state at a rally at the State Capitol on Friday, February 5. At left, President Phil Smith urges state lawmakers to eliminate the huge cuts for SUNY contained in the governor's proposed state budget and to reject the Governor's proposed Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act (i.e. "SUNY flex").

—UUP Photo



WHAT WE SHOULD DO—
AND NOT DO—
IN THESE PRECARIOUS TIMES

—Robert J. Spitzer
Political Science

We live in precarious economic times – nothing new about that. Our college leaders are, therefore, obliged to prepare contingency plans for an uncertain future. Fair enough. But let us note at the outset that contingency plans are just that, contingency plans. The Defense Department probably still has on file somewhere its contingency plans for the invasion of Canada.

Planning aside, our institution has already implemented a series of cost-cutting measures, most prominently a continued hiring freeze on an ever-growing number of full-time faculty line replacements. Administrative decision-makers walk a fine line between economizing and retaining the essence of our institution's priorities. I believe that Pres. Bitterbaum's priorities have been the right ones: to preserve jobs; protect supported sabbaticals which, to his inestimable credit, he restored this past year after an initial decision to end full institutional support for one-semester sabbaticals last year; and emphasize the education of our students as the institution's central mission.

But as our institution begins 2010, we are still left with two key questions: how bad are things, and what must the institution do to adapt and survive? To this, I add a third question: what should we not do?

How Bad Are Things?

As commentators have incessantly told us, the country has been in the grips of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Only the energetic intervention by the federal government, beginning in 2008, staved off the kind of economic collapse that led to widespread bank closures and bread lines in the early 1930s. (Thank heavens for Keynesian economics; even the conservative Chicago School economist/federal court judge, Richard Posner, has reversed course, dumping Milton Friedman and embracing Keynes's work as "the best guide we have to the [current economic] crisis.") Multiple government interventions have had the desired stimulative effect: economic indicators are slowly turning up. For example, the index of leading economic indicators rose .7 percent last November, capping a 5.7 percent growth rate from April to September 2009; Wall Street's fortunes have revived; housing starts have risen significantly; unemployment, traditionally a lagging indicator, peaked this past fall at just over 10 percent; manufacturing is beginning to rebound, having expanded in December for the fifth straight month, including an increase in orders for big-ticket durable goods.

Our state's economic fortunes are, of course, closely tied to Wall Street, and at the end of 2009 the stock market was up 60 percent over its March 2009 low point. At the end of December, the *Wall Street Journal* said that in 2009, the stock market had undergone "a comeback of historic proportions." This bodes well for state

financial coffers. Like it or not, the billions in bonuses are back, baby, and that means more taxable income for the state. The recovery is arguably fitful, and may yet falter, but the economic pessimists are probably on the wrong side of this argument, not only because of the government's strong, if ham-handed effort in turning things around, but also because of the political economy of the election cycle: incumbents will fare better in 2010 if the economy is turning up both nationally and state-wide. The governor has been right to sound economic alarms, but the state, despite continued deep fiscal problems, is in significantly better fiscal shape today than the predictions from a year ago projected, and Gov. Paterson's precarious political fortunes hinge on the sincerity with which he can paint himself as a fiscal Paul Revere. His strident warnings of the state's imminent fiscal collapse are, at least in part, self-serving political theater. I don't mean to suggest that the state is out of the woods, by any means, but the economic and political indicators point up, not down. And as bad as things are in New York, about a dozen states (with California heading the list) have been and are in worse shape than the Empire State. But let's assume, for the sake of argument, that the state's fiscal fortunes will continue to be woe-ful.

What About Cortland?

As noted, our institution has been engaged in considerable belt-tightening, and the institution is obliged to assume that this will be the norm for the foreseeable future. But to get some perspective on long-term institutional trends, consider first our long-term personnel track record. In an important article authored by our previous UUP President (*The Cortland Cause*, Jan/Feb 2007), Larry Ashley examined Cortland's institutional personnel growth trends from 1991-2005 (a period of generally not-terrible times) and found "stagnation of the tenure-track faculty... accompanied by a startling rise in our administrative structure." Using College Handbooks as his data source, and noting that his counts if anything under-estimated administrative growth (Ashley wrote that "many people performing administrative tasks do not appear on the organizational chart"), he found across this fourteen year period on the Cortland campus a 3.1 percent increase (from 226 to 233) in tenure-track faculty; an increase in management confidential (MC) employees of 23.8 percent (from 21 to 26); and a 70 percent increase in "administration and directors" (from 60 to 102). These numbers make plain an important, if inconvenient, truth: the key friction point of our institution – that between student and faculty – has taken the biggest hit. The implication, if not the lesson, for the future: the pain of cuts, if they come, must be shared in a way that more accurately reflects our institution's main mission of teaching students. That mission is implemented by faculty, not administrators or directors (leaving aside those whose professional activities encompass both teaching and administration).

In this connection, I would refer the reader to SUNY Potsdam's December announcement concerning cuts on that campus, where its approach has been wide-ranging, spanning the realm of attrition-based personnel cuts to the elimination of an inter-collegiate sports team (Potsdam sits toward the bottom among

the statutory colleges in terms of resources, the ability to meet or exceed student enrollment targets, and other measures). Even venerable private institutions including Hofstra and Northeastern have recently eliminated intercollegiate football as economizing measures.

As our college continues to struggle with limited resources, and assuming that the trickle-down for Cortland proves to be only a trickle, our leaders may continue to face difficult choices. But in the array of possibilities, our institution must continue to do what it has done successfully through past periods of economic trauma: balance economizing measures with academic values and principles. To this writer, that means one contingency should be a non-starter: moving us from a 3-3 teaching load to a 4 course load.

A 4-Course Load is a No-Go

As is well known, the standard teaching load at research-oriented (R-1) universities such as Cornell and Syracuse is 2-2. The reason, of course, is the express institutional emphasis on scholarship, coupled with reliance on graduate assistants to facilitate large-section courses. Smaller private, undergraduate-oriented institutions that emphasize both teaching and scholarship, such as Colby, Williams, and Amherst, are also at 2-2; aspirational privates like Colgate and Gettysburg maintain a 3-2 teaching load, again indicating a scholarship emphasis. Despite the far greater financial/endowment hits these institutions suffered over the last year, none to my knowledge has addressed their institutions' significant financial problems by moving to increase faculty teaching loads (see below). Predominately undergraduate public institutions have varying practices, but 3-3 is the norm when scholarship is valued as part of the academic triad of teaching, scholarship, and service.

No one would dispute that a 4 course load would increase course offering efficiencies. Here are the numbers as I understand them: pushing full-time Cortland faculty to a 4-3 teaching load would add 250 sections to the course schedule. By itself, however, this change would result in *zero* savings, because full-time faculty would be paid the same. Savings would, of course, arise only if adjuncts teaching those 250 sections were released – in other words, a one-to-one exchange. Assuming that were to occur, the projected savings would be \$650,000 (some of you may recall that the projected savings from the plan floated last fall to combine the schools of Education and Professional Studies was \$325,000 – a plan that proposed money savings without sacrificing teaching faculty). Yet it is clear at the outset that this cannot fully occur, and for two reasons: first, full-time faculty members' existing teaching obligations will limit the extent to which they can cover courses they formerly did not cover; and second, full-time faculty may simply not possess the necessary subject matter expertise to cover courses. To take one example from my own department, we have a very popular major concentration that requires two full-time faculty to deliver the program (plus added course support from existing full-time faculty). But we only have one full-time faculty member in this area, so it can only be delivered with the assistance of two adjunct faculty. If these adjunct positions are eliminated, our department simply will not be able

to deliver the program – at least not without pulling faculty who lack proper expertise from their current duties. But if we were to do that, we would perforce be pulling them from other course offerings that are instrumental to our other programs. So what would be the point of that?

On the other hand, if efficiency is the goal, then why not push our institution all the way and institute a 5 course teaching load, the norm in K-12 public schools and many community colleges? The short answer is what we would lose in the process -- first and foremost, SUNY Cortland's academic soul. At an institution like ours, where teaching is and should be our highest priority, we need to remind ourselves that we are an institution of *higher* learning. Unlike our K-12 colleagues, our curriculum is not mandated by a state board, and our institution and profession is one that values scholarship precisely because it is integral not only to who we are and what we do in the classroom, but to everything else we do, including, but not limited to, our teaching. This also separates us from our public school and community college colleagues. (I do not mean to imply that we are somehow better than these colleagues; rather, even though we share the label "teachers," our job descriptions, missions, and functions are significantly different. Scholarship is more than something we just do; it elevates and ennobles our institution; it improves the content of our teaching; it makes us better teachers, in part by keeping our curriculum both dynamic and current; it is what keeps us firmly in the realm of *higher* education, even as the work obligations of faculty (class enrollments, committee obligations, added administrative obligations, etc.) have steadily risen. Yes, there are colleges with 4 course teaching loads. How many of them can you name, and what are their reputations?

In my own field of presidency studies, I have some acquaintances who teach at 4-course institutions around the country. But I note as a past president of my scholarly organization, the Presidency Research Group, that very few of them have the luxury of participating in their scholarly specialty in the manner of faculty from R-1's or faculty from public and private 3-3's. That is a loss for them, for their institutions, and for their disciplines. A move to a 4-load would be, I argue, not only a game-changer for Cortland, but a deal-breaker in the compact between faculty and the institution. Its long-term effects would harm not only our institutional reputation, but recruitment efforts (both students and faculty), faculty morale, committee and other service activities (including extra or above-load teaching activities that receive little or no attention, like independent studies), and the teacher-scholar model that has served Cortland since it became the modern liberal arts institution that emerged in the 1960s. And suppose it were to be implemented even on a short-term or stop-gap basis. After raising faculty loads and releasing from service hundreds of adjunct colleagues, how, exactly, would the institution walk itself back from that higher load at some point down the road? More to the point, why should it do so, having already breached the 3-versus-4 wall? When/how, exactly, would the crisis be declared over, and even if a 3-3 arrangement were restored, how soon would a 4-load re-emerge the next time the economy turns down?

(continued on next page)

Finally, I recently conducted my own poll of political science colleagues at comparable SUNY institutions (Brockport, Buffalo State, Fredonia, Geneseo, New Paltz, Oneonta, Oswego, Plattsburg, and Potsdam), and at random (note to methodologists: I am not using the term “random” in any scientific sense) institutions in other states.* I asked not only if there were any discussions of moving to a 4-course teaching load on their campuses (or otherwise increasing their existing load), but also if there were any rumors of such an idea, even though I consider rumor-based information to be inherently suspect. Colleagues at eight of the nine SUNY institutions responded. (The one non-response was from Brockport; their load is 3-3.) I’ve reprinted below their exact responses, minus identifying names, with one exception. During his opening semester speech, Pres. Bitterbaum said that Oswego faculty had a 4-4 load. That is technically correct, but factually incorrect. I’ve identified the quote below from Oswego to explain why. Following these are responses from political science colleagues at other institutions. Taken individually and together, I believe they punctuate the meta-problem of 4-ism.

SUNY RESPONSES:

- “We’re 3/3 at [name withheld] with no talk/rumors of altering our teaching load.”
- “There has been no discussion whatsoever, so far as I know, about raising our teaching load from 3-3 to 4-4, or 4-3. This administration has been very forthcoming with information re budget and responses to it, so if increasing teaching loads is an option receiving serious consideration I would expect the VPAA [vice president for academic affairs] to put the idea in front of us. Rumors? No, none that I have heard.
- “We are not hiring on open lines (with limited exceptions). One of our deans will leave in June. A discussion is underway about rearranging our dean structure that will involve some savings. Some maintenance lines will remain open. No talk about retrenchment or program closings.”
- “We are 3/3. No rumor of a change with regard to that distribution. Seems likely we shall lose lines as a college. Last year there were no hires, this year a few will occur. We are looking at reducing the number of courses students need to receive a degree.”
- “Have not heard anything here about changing course load. My dept is at 3-3, which includes one 4-credit course each semester, for a total of 20 credits annually. There is no way we would tolerate a 4-4 load. Been there, done that - and not doing it again....”
- “Most faculty at [name withheld] had been 4/4. Starting in the fall of 2009, we moved to 4/3, or 21 credits per academic year.”
- SUNY Oswego: “On our campus the official teaching load has always been 4-4. However, the administration grants

released time for such things as large group instruction, advisement coordinator, research etc. As a result, no one in Political Science teaches more than three courses per semester and nearly every other department follows the same practice.

- “Everyone except tenure track and instructors will go to 4/3 next year. Those who are not doing significant research and/or exceptional service will go to 4/4. The 4/3 is expected to be a temporary palliative until the crisis passes.”
- “At [name withheld] the normal load is 4/4 and it is a major problem (though the clever Politics Department made each of its courses worth 4 credits and so Politics faculty have a 3/3 load). The 4/4 load defeats research and scholarship, burns people out, and makes it hard to hire qualified people. Two years ago the administration declared a workload adjustment, saying that the goal was to go to 4-3, but that the college could not yet afford it and would therefore temporarily go to 4-4 one year and 4-3 the next, staggered across the faculty. That lasted a mere two years, having just been cancelled in this budget crisis.”

RESPONSES FROM INSTITUTIONS OUTSIDE OF SUNY:

Fordham University:

“Fordham University just transitioned from a 3-3 to 3-2. Last year, while I was gone, there was some higher level admin talk about backtracking, but it raised such a ruckus that the idea of going back to 3-3 is dead. Unlike most schools, we’re not in such bad shape financially, and the move to 3-2 took some time to finally accomplish. Part of what is going on here too is that research is being given a much higher profile so higher loads are not in the offing. I think that if FU could afford it, we would move to a 2-2, at least selectively.”

University of California, Davis:

“Our load is 4 classes over 3 Quarters [equivalent of 2-2 in a semester system] and there is no talk at all of increasing that load; we’ve had salary cuts, furloughs and program cuts, but no talk or even rumor of increase in teaching

Colgate University:

“As you can imagine, this is a hot issue on campus. Our self perception is pretty complicated. For example, I would guess that most Colgate faculty assume we are more of a “scholarly faculty” than many of these other places [i.e. small privates], owing to institutional culture and size, especially size. “We” think it is difficult to recruit and retain faculty because the 3-2 is a disincentive. This view assumes that faculty would eschew research universities for Colgate if we were 2-2. That seems an iffy proposition to me, but there you have it. We are agitating for 2-2, but I don’t see it happening anytime soon. The administration has “costed it out” and claimed that we can’t pursue 2-2 and need blind admission at the same time.”

Univ. of California, Santa Barbara:

“There is talk about raising the teaching load (currently about 5 quarter courses a year; less for science & engineering, more for humanities and social sciences). This typically, including this time, comes from the state legislature. It's not clear where the discussion will go this time around, for a couple of reasons. First, the Governor has just come out in favor of a budgetary arrangement that would actually begin spending more on higher education than on prisons, reversing the pattern of the last decade. For the teaching load question, the hopeful implication appears to be that he is willing to put his term-limited legacy behind the notion that higher ed is worth investing in. Second, UC has begun losing good faculty to privates and even other publics (We took an 8% salary cut this year), and the signal that you can't get quality if all you care about is price appears to be penetrating at least some legislative offices.”

University of Illinois, Springfield (from a just-hired graduate student): “Wanted to let you know that I will start a tenure track position with the University of Illinois, Springfield Department of Political Science in August 2010. The job comes with a 2-2 load, a one course reduction every other year, and a support structure that will facilitate a high level of research productivity. I will be teaching courses mainly in elections and behavior, methods, and applied politics at both the undergraduate and graduate level.”

Drew University (NJ):

Faculty are either 2-2 or 2-3, depending on their degree of scholarly activity. No serious talk of increasing faculty teaching load [this is a paraphrase, not a direct quote].

What is most notable to me is the extent to which the raising of teaching loads is *not* occurring at other institutions - even in California! - whether public or private. All of the SUNY institutions polled above, with one exception, are either firmly 3-3 by policy, or have managed to carve out de facto 3-3 loads. Interestingly, one SUNY institution is moving in the other direction: from 4-4 to 4-3, even in the face of these difficult economic times. Nothing in these responses legitimates any notion of pushing Cortland to a

4-load. In fact, what this information hints at is this: no single gross institutional measure more immediately pigeon-holes an institution than faculty teaching load, which in turn suggests this corollary: after making notable progress to improve its standing among its peer institutions in recent years, no single action would do more to roll back Cortland's hard-won gains than a move to a 4-load.

During the Vietnam War, an American military officer was famously quoted by correspondent Peter Arnett as saying that American forces had to “destroy the village in order to save it.” The 4-course load idea treads the same ground.

POSTSCRIPT: The Provost has recently circulated a contingency proposal for trimming courses across all academic departments in Academic Affairs. It's a logical and probably necessary step, despite the over 30 faculty lines that have been lost to attrition in the last couple of years. But it is equally necessary to formulate similar new plans for possible future cuts to be apportioned to the rest of the college's areas: Institutional Advancement, Finance and Management, and Student Affairs. These areas have suffered cuts in the past as well, but that is irrelevant to this next step, because plans for future cuts must extend to *all* areas of the campus, and not be limited to the one division (Academic Affairs) that actually performs the primary mission of a university: **teaching**.

***NOTE:** These responses were solicited in late December 2009 and early January 2010. I polled only political science colleagues. At most institutions, teaching loads are not uniform; I am not claiming that the reports above are necessarily uniform for their entire institutions, but they do reflect prevailing practices of similar arts and sciences departments. For example, departments or schools like business and nursing sometimes have larger loads. Even here at Cortland, there are variations in teaching loads. Most of the sciences departments have some manner of four-course obligation owing to historical practices related to the necessity of offering lab sections; in a similar vein, the Performing Arts Department also operates at the four level because of its dance and other practicum-like classes. ■



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If any unit or department is interested in having a UUP chapter officer meet with your group to discuss the budget situation and related UUP activities, please contact the Chapter Office, campus ext. 5991, e-mail uup@cortland.edu



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ATHLETICS DIRECTOR SEARCH

To the Editor:

At first glance at a recent submission in the December 2009 UUP newsletter I was a little confused. Then after thinking about the letter to the editor and doing a bit of research I was more perplexed by the letter signed "A concerned Faculty Member." First, I would hope that the concerned faculty member would feel comfortable providing his/her name to their feelings/comments regarding the Athletic Director search.

Let's provide facts and then let people make an informed decision versus an emotional one. The Department of Athletics represents approximately 30 or more UUP members; it represents approximately 650 students, and virtually every academic department. So the assertion is absurd that somehow the request for a search committee to be developed for this department versus the Director of Dowd Fine Arts Gallery (how many people does this Director oversee??) is in some way inappropriate.

Let's take your assertion that the Dowd Fine Arts Gallery is one of the most distinguished art galleries in SUNY to be true. That's super and it should be applauded. The SUNY Cortland Athletics Department is just 1 of 6 colleges among 400 NATIONWIDE to finish in the TOP 20 in Director's Cup points for ALL-SPORTS success in the past 14 years. This accomplishment is by many students who do not receive Athletic Scholarships and are students first. So based on that I would assume finding a supervisor for that department would be paramount to SUNY Cortland. I would not agree that both positions are equally important, I would agree both positions are successful and regionally recognized, but until I see comparative numbers I would stop short of saying equally important.

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Brown
Head Baseball Coach

Editor's note: *The Cortland Cause* wants the discourse within its pages to be both free and accountable. At the same time, we realize that there may be instances when anonymous submissions are necessary to protect the writer. *The Cortland Cause* editorial staff has made the decision, however, not to print any more anonymous submissions unless there is a recognized compelling reason to do so to protect the safety of the writer.

Please visit UUP's new SAVE SUNY website!
www.savesuny.org

NEWS FROM SHATZKY

To the Editor:

The major issue today confronting the UFT, the NYC teachers' union, is the closing of public schools and their replacement with charter schools that employ non-union and non-certified teachers. I'm now writing a blog for the Huffington Post and invite readers to log on where you can read my opinions on the issues of education in the Bloomberg Era. Here's my website address: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joel-shatzky/educating-for-democracy-a_b_438347.html.

I wonder how many of our students who go into teaching will find themselves in NYC? I would advise that they try to find a "high-rated" school in which to teach. Even if the dubious test scores determine how well young learners can follow test-prep instructions, they often make the difference between a successful and a "failed" school.

Good luck with the budget cuts.

Joel Shatzky
Brooklyn, NY
Professor Emeritus, English

It's YOUR Newsletter!

We welcome articles and letters submitted by members of the
SUNY-Cortland Community.
Please share your thoughts with us—
we want to hear from you!

Opinions expressed in *The Cortland Cause* are those of the individuals and are neither endorsed by nor represent the views of UUP.

Please note: *The Cortland Cause* will generally not print anonymous submissions. We reserve the right to edit submissions for grammar, space limitations, etc.

Send contributions to the Editor,
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*List Updated 12/09

UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Tuesday, February 23
Thursday, February 25
Monday, March 1
Wednesday, March 3
Tuesday, March 9
Thursday, March 11
Thursday, March 25
Tuesday, April 21

Legislative Lobby Day in Albany
Executive Board Meeting, 11:30-1:00*
UUP/Faculty Senate/Chairs & Unit Heads Coalition Meeting, 1:00-3:00
Labor-Management
Legislative Lobby Day and Rally in Albany
Executive Board (optional meeting date if needed), 11:30-1:00*
Executive Board Meeting, 11:30-1:00*
Union Matters Meeting — Topic TBA

*Chapter Executive Board Meetings are open meetings and any chapter member may attend as an observer. Contact the chapter office for details if interested in attending.



SAVE SUNY RALLY

at the State Capitol in Albany

Tuesday, March 9

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