



# The Cortland Cause

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## Six Paragraphs between Joseph Chamberlain and Alice in Chains

To paraphrase Joseph Chamberlain, who is said to have originally made his quip in a letter in 1936, we here at Cortland and across the globe are experiencing life in an interesting age. Though the story is probably apocryphal, Chamberlain would be correct, were he speaking of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Since March, members and our intercontinental brothers and sisters have been rising to the challenge of working and teaching remotely to prevent the spread of this virus, and we continue to do so today. We have been meeting the needs of our state and of our country, from those working at our hospitals, to those working in our information resources areas, to those providing student-facing services, and those teaching using new and temperamental virtual platforms.

Armed with recommendations from the Center for Disease Control, Cortland folks stood together. We have completed a spring semester fraught with unprecedented hardships, and we have begun a semester full of uncertainty, changing rules, and frightened students and colleagues.

We are watching with heavy hearts and bated breath as Oneonta has experienced a record-setting surge in infection rates and was forced to close their campus. We are also keeping in our thoughts our brothers and sisters at Oswego as they move into a “two-week pause” as infection rates reached their “100 cases in two weeks” threshold. We empathize with their struggles and prepare to support them, should spread of the disease have long-lasting personal, financial, and collective consequences. We hope we here at Cortland are doing enough to avoid a similar challenge. And we grieve: we grieve for the brothers and sisters who have led the charge, put themselves in harm’s way, and devoted their lives to helping the ill. We grieve for lost colleagues, family members, and friends; we cast about searching meaning in the tragedy, and we prepare to continue on in their stead.

UUP supports the work of our Cortland members in many ways, both locally and statewide. UUP has held a series of Open House events and will continue to hold virtual events monthly where members can share their concerns, fears, and frustrations. Please do reach out to your union. **In UUP, you will always have a voice and be recognized.** UUP has maintained constant and plentiful communication with members of Management at Cortland, in order to represent the interests of our members, as the Return to Work plan was being drafted and implemented. UUP Cortland leadership has continued its monthly Labor Management meetings all summer, in cooperation with Management, and we have continued to have our monthly Executive Board meetings throughout the summer. UUP continues to ask about the financial footing of our university and the SUNY system. We keep a close watch on our campus and statewide COVID 19 Dashboards. UUP has been in contact weekly with our statewide leadership, sharing concerns and issues at all campuses in an attempt to normalize and strategize our efforts.

Continued on page 2



**Jaclyn Pittsley,**  
Chapter President  
English

At the statewide level, UUP has negotiated a Telecommuting Agreement that is in effect through October, and UUP continues to advocate for its extension until December 31. UUP advocates the wide and flexible interpretation of this document in order to do our absolute best to prevent the spread of COVID 19. UUP has also negotiated a Memorandum of Agreement regarding mandatory surveillance testing of all employees, working with our various hospitals (Cortland is working with SUNY Upstate) to help identify asymptomatic individuals, who can then be quarantined while the virus runs its course, so that others are not infected. This is an important step in keeping members who are working on campus and students who are learning on campus safe.

Every member has been putting in extra time, doing extra work, and acting in a greater capacity; we have all been doing our part to make certain that young people can attend and live at SUNY Cortland, so they can have a college experience this fall that is as similar as possible to a normal college learning experience. I am very proud of our members and of our UUP leadership. Without your long nights, superhuman effort, and estimable character, SUNY Cortland would not be in the cautiously optimistic position we are today.

In their 1992 album, Alice in Chains sing, in their largely acoustic song Got me Wrong, that “Something’s gotta turn out right,” and in this Chapter President’s humble opinion, I believe we can feel positive and hopeful about several things. One, we are still here. Our campus is open today, and our students are in class this morning. And, the longer we are open, the more likely it is we will remain open, even if we have to “pause” at some point. Two, our COVID 19 testing procedures and protocol are underway, and so far, no employee pool has been found to have tested positive. Three, everyone, and I mean every single person, at Cortland has risen and continues to rise to the pandemic challenges of social distancing, teaching, socializing, meeting, doing research, conducting business, comforting others, wearing a mask, answering questions, asking questions, being patient, being kind, being mindful, and being brave.

I believe we are seeing the best of ourselves now, in this interesting age, and that is most certainly right.

## 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, accuracy, etc.

Send contributions to the Chapter Office, [uup@cortland.edu](mailto:uup@cortland.edu) and to the editor, Amy Russell, [Amy.Russell@cortland.edu](mailto:Amy.Russell@cortland.edu)

## From the editor: Thank you, Student Employees

It is easy to generalize college student behavior, and it's a popular pastime during a pandemic, especially if you follow the Cortland County Department of Health on Facebook and see the daily stats changing. But what gets lost in that spiral is that many of our students are also members of the campus workforce, and their jobs are much less protected than unionized professionals.

A friend, and campus colleague, shared an anecdote about a student employee who expressed concern about a pause if our campus reaches the 100-case threshold in a two-week monitoring period. The student relies on an in-person student assistant position to afford tuition.

The peer tutors I work with can take their work with them on a pause, but we have no control of their work environments on or off campus, outside of their laptop screens. We are asking more of them than ever in their academic support roles. The combination of glitchy technology and sharing their personal spaces on webcam with us and the students they meet with are more than enough to distract from the work of helping others learn, but they are sticking to it anyway.

Overall, alongside faculty and staff, our students seem to be producing extraordinary effort to keep the campus functioning in unusual and uncertain times.



**Amy Russell,**  
The Learning  
Center





**Jo Schaffer,**  
Art and Art  
History Emerita

## UUP Announces Upcoming Holiday Food

Days are getting shorter, temperatures are dropping! Autumn is upon us. Little house gardens are getting frostbite. Many of our Cortland neighbors are having a hard time getting food on their tables. Local unemployment rates have soared and many small businesses have yet to open. The U.S. programs for unemployment insurance has floundered. According to the *New York Times*, nearly one in eight households nationwide doesn't have enough to eat, and families have been relying more than ever on local food banks to access the next meal.

Here in Cortland, the biggest growth number in anything around has been the number of food banks found, servicing a growing population in need of support.

So, once again UUP has planned a food drive beginning shortly. Our UUP activists will be placing boxes for non-perishable food items in departments and offices around campus in time for a pre-Thanksgiving donation to local dinner tables. Bring in your donations generously this year as you have in the past.

Thank you!



2019 Food Drive for Catholic Charities

Photo by Dawn Van Hall - Cortland Chapter Photographer, Library Emerita

## Health Care from UUP: Network Expansion Agreement

Dear Colleagues:

UUP has received good news for UUP-represented employees and retirees who are enrolled in the Empire Plan but live in states where they do not currently have access to in-network providers.

The Governor's Office of Employee Relations has announced that, beginning January 1, 2021, the Empire Plan is expanding its existing "network integration" to provide Empire Plan enrollees living outside of New York State with nation-wide access to participating providers. (Currently the Empire Plan's "network integration" provides access to participating providers in Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington DC, West Virginia, and the greater Chicago area.) This expansion will, for the first time, provide 252 out-of-state UUP-represented employees and thousands of retirees who currently don't have access to participating providers with access to participating providers in the states where they live.

This expansion (which benefits out-of-state Empire Plan enrollees regardless of bargaining unit) has occurred as a direct result of our advocacy in the UUP Joint Committee on Health Benefits (JCHB). Responding to inquiries from adjunct faculty who live in states without network integration, we raised this issue in the JCHB. In response to our advocacy, the Department of Civil Service agreed to review the issue (something previously resisted and long overdue) and has now determined that providing nation-wide access to in-network providers is justified.

The network expansion will be announced in the upcoming Department of Civil Service *Empire Plan Report* and in individual letters to those living outside of the current network. The expanded list of participating providers will be visible in the online directory after January 1, 2021. UHC will provide specific search results from the online directory, by mail or email, to enrollees who desire printed provider information. Paper directories showing the expanded network will be published starting in August of 2021.

In Solidarity,

Fred



**Forwarded by**  
**Henry Steck,**  
Officer for Retirees





**Dan Harms,**  
Chapter VP  
for Academics  
Library

## What Will the Spring Personnel Process Look Like?

We live in a time of uncertainties, with the pandemic, the election, and the horrendous budget situation, but some questions are easier to answer. One of these is how faculty portfolios for personnel actions, the bulk of which are due on February 1, should handle the chaos that befell us last March. We don't know everything, but we have a good starting point.

On April 30, representatives of SUNY and UUP signed a memorandum of understanding, which Statewide UUP President Fred Kowal sent out on May 8. This document takes precedence over departmental procedures for the time covered. It describes two major changes: the "clock stop" and the handling of evaluative materials for the spring and summer of 2020.

To be clear- this is my take on how this can and should be applied. I am open to discussion or correction on any of these points. It will also take some time to explain.

We have two major changes:

- A. The continuing appointment timeline has been automatically extended for all tenure-track faculty by adding a year after their last year of tenure-track status, in order to make up for the disruptions to ordinary business posed on campus and across society. A faculty member may choose to opt out of the clock stop by sending a letter to their chair, copied to their dean and provost.

*Should a faculty member opt out?* The right answer will differ based on the situation. Opportunities for conference presentations, book publications, speaking engagements, etc., may be less likely to come by in some instances and require additional time. I would also encourage people to keep informed about the NYS budget and its impact on our campus. In brief, I think that it's best to make the decision as close to the campus deadline as possible. Once a faculty member opts out, they can't opt back in.

*What principles should evaluators follow?* I think there are two items to bear in mind. A faculty member who opts out and one who does not should be treated equally in the personnel process. Although faculty will be working normally through the "clock stop," evaluators should not be expecting an additional year's worth of accomplishments from them, or hold their decision to remain in against them.

- B. Any person who was teaching in the spring semester of 2020 may choose not to include CTEs, curricular material, or peer evaluations for that semester. In addition, they may list any planned research and creative activities that were to be performed in the spring or summer, noting those that were disrupted due to COVID.

*How should a faculty member handle this in their portfolio?* Any or all of the above instructional materials may be excluded, but once removed, it may not be added again for subsequent reviews. In any case, a narrative about the challenges COVID created and their impact may be helpful in .

*What principles should evaluators follow?* Any material of the above instructional material that is omitted should not be included in the judgment, including making decisions based upon its absence. Some faculty have had greater challenges than others, and evaluators should be aware that not every faculty member will want to share their personal circumstances during the spring and summer.

This is only a starting point, however. These are good questions for us to think about:

*Will portfolios be electronic in the spring?* This was the case for those who went up for renewal in the fall. Such a transition might raise special challenges, such as faculty who would like to include a book in their portfolio.

*How do we keep everyone on the same page?* These changes may impact evaluations for years to come, well after our present situation has passed. It's important that we think about how we want to be reminded, whether via campus announcements or explicit statements in our policies. A single solution might not fit everyone's needs.

*How will the increase in workload in the fall, especially for people teaching Tuesday/Thursday classes that were shortened due to Health Department coverage, be handled?* It is hoped that the administration will be responding to this challenge with the same speed and creativity it expects of its faculty in finding a solution to this situation.

I hope that these changes, although it does make the process more uncertain, will allow our faculty the flexibility they need to succeed. Let's try to find ways to help them.

**Memorandum of Understanding  
Between  
The State University of New York  
And  
United University Professions  
Regarding  
Mandatory COVID 19 Testing of Employees  
In the Professional Services Negotiating Unit**

Due to the unprecedented public health crisis presented by the COVID 19 pandemic and the critical need to quickly identify and control the spread of COVID 19 infections on state-operated SUNY campuses, and in the best interest of the entire SUNY community, the State University of New York and the United University Professions hereby reach the following agreement:

- 1) Effective immediately and continuing through December 31, 2020, all state operated colleges, universities, and hospitals shall conduct testing of Professional Services Negotiating Unit (PSNU) employees who are required to report in person to campus to conduct some or all of their work obligation.
- 2) The campus will consult with their UUP chapter representatives in development of the testing protocol of the PSNU.
- 3) Testing of PSNU employees shall be conducted in concert with regular surveillance testing in campus plans required under the Chancellor's September 3, 2020 directive, no less frequently than testing that occurs for the student population, utilizing self-administered saliva tests, short swab rapid tests, or other short swab tests selected by the campus. If a campus elects to utilize long swab testing employees will not be mandated but may be asked to volunteer for the test. Employees to be tested in each testing cycle shall be selected to best ensure that potential outbreaks across the campus population can be identified.
- 4) The campus testing plan and associated information regarding how samples for testing are constructed, including such things as the size of pools and the number and demographics (e.g. which departments or units are represented) of employees to be tested in each testing cycle shall be provided to UUP chapter representatives on each campus.
- 5) Procedures must ensure that:
  - a. The identity of individual employees selected for testing each week remains confidential and is only accessible on a need to know basis.
  - b. The testing is conducted in manner which protects the privacy of the employee being tested to the extent possible.

- c. The identity of any individual employees who test positive remains confidential to the extent possible.
- 6) Employees subject to testing shall be tested during their regular work hours. The testing shall be conducted without cost to the employee.
- 7) Test results shall not be retained in personnel files or other personnel records and shall not otherwise be retained by the campus any longer than is necessary to comply with public health requirements associated with the COVID 19 pandemic or used for any purpose other than compliance with such public health requirements
- 8) Employees who are quarantined or isolated following a positive test at public health, medical or campus direction shall be allowed to telecommute to the greatest extent possible. If telecommuting is not possible, the employee shall be permitted to use applicable statutory leaves in accordance with state and federal law and leave accruals as contractually appropriate.
- 9) Any conflict arising from this MOU may be raised by a campus or a UUP chapter representative to the signatories of this agreement, or their designees for prompt response and resolution.
- 10) This agreement shall expire close of business on December 31, 2020 unless extended by mutual agreement between the parties.

For the State University of New York:

For United University Professions:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Malatras  
Chancellor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Frederick E. Kowal  
President

Dated: September \_\_, 2020



**United University Professions  
Labor-Management Agenda  
Thursday, September 17, 2020**

**Items of Collegiality:**

1. UUP would like to thank Erik Bitterbaum and Dr. Charles Lambiotte for his assistance in communicating pool testing protocol.
2. UUP congratulates President Bitterbaum and members of management on a successful opening meeting.

**New Business:**

1. UUP understands that there are materials to test 240 students, and the targeted start date for pool testing was early the week of September 7; UUP requests an update on the implementation of pool testing protocol:
  - a. What results can management provide regarding the initial pool tests?
  - b. At what point will UUP, CSEA, ASC, and MC employees be included in the test pools?
  - c. What are the next steps after the initial test pool process?
  - d. Given the new directives from Governor Cuomo regarding outbreaks, has SUNY Cortland determined its specific metrics for moving all courses online, either temporarily or for the remainder of the semester?
2. In what ways is the college preparing to assist RHDs in enforcing mask wearing and social distancing?
  - a. If management is adding to the performance programs of RHDs, such as through requiring “group rounds” or other new or additional services, will there be additional compensation provided?
3. Under what specific circumstances has the college obligated UPD to respond to gatherings of students?
  - a. For example, in groups of less than 25 in which there is no mask-wearing, will UPD respond to assist in enforcing the policy of the college?
  - b. Will UPD be obligated to help disperse a gathering of more than 25 people?
4. A twenty-minute curtailment of the in-person Tuesday-Thursday classes indicates that faculty may be expected to re-plan up to 25% of their lessons or more. Further, due to scheduling and travel times for students, this may mean a switch from synchronous to asynchronous instruction for that material, which may create issues for classes that require in-person activities, labs, and the like. UUP has some concerns related to workload and safety in implementing this mandate:
  - a. What will members who are impacted by this be expected NOT to do, while they are working to plan for this substantial change?
    - i. For example, will management be altering requirements of scholarship, or the amount of service, for the fall or spring semesters?
  - b. Will there be additional compensation for our part-time lecturers being asked to do this work?
  - c. What accommodations will be made for faculty in terms of personnel decisions?
  - d. Teaching decisions: will affected faculty be able to choose to move their sections entirely online as a result of this change?
  - e. For Faculty and Students who have back-to-back courses together, such as cohort classes, lab-attached courses or workshop-attached courses, and who have been grouped so that they attend each one in person on the same day, will they have to discontinue this structure?
    - i. It seems that simply moving to another room may not be sufficient, yet asking students and faculty to re-organize themselves may prove problematic.

## Come to us for the savings...



## Come back for the insurance



To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](https://memberbenefits.nysut.org), call 800-626-8101 or scan the QR codes above.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.



**UUP CORTLAND CHAPTER — EXECUTIVE BOARD 2019-2021**

4-Digit phone numbers begin with 607-753-xxxx

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## UUP Cortland Chapter

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://uuphost.org/cortland/>



# Are You a Member?

<b>Thomas P. DiNapoli</b> New York State Comptroller				<b>J. DOE</b>				Total Gross    Fed Taxable Gross Current    3,456.78    1,234.56 YTD    45,678.90    34,567.89	
Advice #    123456789 Advice Date    11/10/2018		Pay Start Date    11/10/2019 Pay End Date    11/24/2019		Net Pay    1,234.56					
Department ID    1234				Pay Rate    56,789.10					
EARNINGS		Current		YTD		TAX DATA			
Regular Pay Salary Employee	3,456.78	45,678.90	2	0	Federal	State	NYC		
Location Pay	56.78	874.90			Yorkers				
						TAXES    Current    YTD Fed Withholding    3,456.78    12,345.67 Medicare    5,678.90    4,567.89 Social Security    3,456.78    1,234.56 NY Withholding    3,456.78    4,567.89			
						DEDUCTIONS    Current    YTD Regular Before Tax Health    456.78    1,234.56 Supplemental Ret. Annuity Prog    974.90    5,678.90 TAA Retirement Before Tax    99.78    1,234.56			

CHECK PAY STUB TO MAKE SURE

To be a member of the union, your paycheck **must** say "UUP Member" under "Deductions."

Please contact your chapter officers for a membership card or go to <https://bit.ly/1RYG65y>

### The Benefits of Being UNION!

Membership in your union goes well beyond fair and equitable wages, and quality, affordable health insurance. It's a statement: There is strength in numbers, and our collective voice will be heard.

Together, our voice is heard when bargaining with New York state and SUNY. Our voice strengthens our leverage in contract talks and enforcement, and in addressing problems in SUNY labor-management meetings.

Our voice is heard as the main advocate for SUNY campus and hospital funding, and for other legislative issues of importance to you—issues that help us better meet the needs of our students and our patients.

Being a member of UUP also means you maintain:

- Representation in interrogations or disciplinary actions, or in legal actions brought on behalf of members;
- Representation if Title IX harassment complaints are filed against you (for student or co-worker complaints);
- Access to benefits and services provided by UUP Member Services Trust, and discount programs and services provided by UUP's state and national affiliates: NYSUT, AFT and NEA;
- Access to UUP's vision, dental, and life insurance plans in retirement; and
- The right to vote on the union contract, and to provide input in chapter and statewide union elections.



## is us.

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## Executive Board Meetings Fall 2020 Schedule

October 8, November 12 & December 11

## Labor Management Meetings Schedule

October 15, November 19 & December 18