



# *the Downstate Update*

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

*By Rowena Blackman-Stroud*

### **NATIONAL NURSES WEEK – HONORING OUR FRONTLINE HEROS**

This week is National Nurses Week, and our Downstate Chapter celebrates our front-line health care providers and essential workers who put their lives on the line each day as they care for those stricken with the coronavirus.

Your hard work, your dedication and your sacrifices will always be appreciated and will never be forgotten. We believe the best way to thank our heroes is to secure personal protective equipment and advocate on their behalf with the Downstate administration and the state.

Through the generosity of UUP, our statewide affiliate New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), and other small—but just as important—donors, I and other Downstate Chapter leaders worked to coordinate and take delivery of donations of medical masks, gloves and isolation gowns to protect our members on the job.

Those items have been in short supply since March, when Gov. Cuomo designated Downstate as a COVID-19-only hospital.

### **THANK YOU, NYSUT**

I would like to thank NYSUT President Andrew Pallotta and Secretary Treasurer J. Philippe Abraham, for recognizing our need and sending the masks to us.

In April, NYSUT sent our Downstate members 42,000 surgical masks to use as they worked on COVID-19 patients. These donations came as our hospital was experiencing drastic shortages of PPE. A photo of one of the deliveries below.



We also received a generous donation of 900 hand sanitizers from the Carmel Teachers Association in April, as well as donations from a number of individuals.

### **UUP's CONTRIBUTIONS**

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank UUP Statewide President Fred Kowal, for his hard work to locate, purchase and deliver PPE that our members so desperately need.



On May 4, UUP delivered 2,000 N95 respirator masks to our Downstate Chapter members. Above, Downstate Chapter members take delivery of the masks.

A day later, a large, white tractor trailer pulled up to our hospital carrying 250 huge boxes, each packed with 1,000 isolation gowns. Besides the 25,000 gowns, UUP also sent 5,000 Nitrile gloves to Downstate.



Above, Derick Agbontaen, a Downstate Chapter Governing Board member and department representative, stands next to Mark Snow, who drove the truck from Alabama to Brooklyn.



A photo of the truck that transported the gowns and gloves to Downstate is at left.

Below, Downstate Chapter members Redetha Abrahams-Nichols, left, and Natalie Baker, pose in the truck. They are governing board members who assisted in the distribution of three appreciation lunches by UUP for front-line workers.



It wasn't easy to get the gowns. They were flown in from China, thousands of miles away. Once in the U.S., they were loaded into a truck in Alabama, and transported north to Brooklyn.

Our members will put them to good use, and we thank UUP for these desperately needed items.

Thank you to everyone who donated and helped us obtain vital protective equipment for our members.

### **FIGHTING FOR HAZARD PAY, BONUSSES**

The Downstate Chapter, working with UUP state leadership, has been strongly advocating to secure hazard pay and bonuses for our residents and fellows, and all of our front-line workers. At the chapter and statewide levels, we have been actively advocating for additional dollars to fund hazard pay and bonuses, which our members deserve.

I have exchanged letters and held discussions with Dr. Riley and campus administration about bonuses and hazard pay for our front-line workers. UUP Statewide President Fred Kowal has spoken with the SUNY administration and Gov. Cuomo's staff about obtaining funding for bonuses and hazard pay.



We are committed to continuing the fight for this well-deserved compensation for our members.

### **TELL CONGRESS: NEW YORK NEEDS HELP**

As the epicenter of coronavirus in America, New York State has been forced to spend billions to react to the virus and care for those who -have contracted COVID-19. Those expenditures, combined with an estimated loss in revenue as high as \$15 billion without emergency federal funding, could mean the continued viability of SUNY Downstate and the state as a whole.

That's why it's so important to join together and advocate for federal funding for New York and other states hit hardest by the pandemic.

You can do that by sending an e-letter to your congressional representatives telling them that New York needs their help. We are New York Strong but New Yorkers can't recover from the pandemic without federal aid.

**[CLICK HERE to send an e-letter to Congress.](#)**

### **SPECIAL UUP DELEGATE ASSEMBLY**

UUP's Executive Board voted April 24 to convene a Limited Special Delegate Assembly to vote on UUP's 2020-21 budget and to discuss temporary amendments to the UUP Constitution that would allow further outstanding business to be conducted.

Delegates must approve emergency amendments to UUP's constitution before they can hold statewide nominations and elections and consider other business. A limited DA must be held to make constitutional changes that would allow such business to come before the body.

UUP officers are working with co-chairs of the Constitution and Governance committee and the Executive Board to

develop a plan to make necessary constitutional changes.

Delegates will receive temporary and emergency constitutional amendments—with explanations and supporting documentation—prior to deliberations during the Limited Special Delegate Assembly.

The Executive Board will resume discussions about the limited DA May 22.

### **UUP TELE-TOWN HALLS**

Participate in one of UUP's Tele-Town Halls scheduled to take place in May. This virtual listening tour is a great way to receive an update on the current state of our economy, its impact on higher education funding and to **have a voice** in the direction that your union takes when facing this crisis.

The tele-town halls will take place on the following days:

- [May 13, 2020 at 3:00 PM](#)
- [May 19, 2020 at 6:30 PM](#)
- [May 21, 2020 at 11:00 AM](#)

To hear from as many members as possible, we are asking ***participants to choose just one date to join*** in on the conversation. Registration for the May 13 tele-town hall has been closed.

**[CLICK HERE to register for tele-town halls on May 19 and May 21.](#)**

Follow the registration link and sign-up to attend one of these events. Information on how to log-in to the event will be sent the week of the tele-town hall. You can also go to the UUP website for further information - [www.uupinfo.org](http://www.uupinfo.org).

### **UUP-COMING EVENTS**

**UUP Tele -Town Hall** – May 13, 19 & 21

**NYSUT Virtual RA** – May 14

**DMC Department Representatives Meeting** – May 18

## Health Care Spending Account and Dependent Care Advantage Account changes

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the deadline to submit 2019 claims for the Health Care Spending Account (HCSA) and Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAA) has been extended to May 31, 2020.

The deadline was previously extended to April 30, 2020. Employees who are enrolled in either benefit now have until May 31 to submit claims for health care or dependent care services provided during the 2019 calendar year. Claim forms and instructions for submitting claims can be found on the Flex Spending website at [goer.ny.gov/FSA](http://goer.ny.gov/FSA).

In addition, the recently enacted CARES Act made several changes to the rules concerning eligible HCSA expenses. Specifically:

- Effective Jan. 1, 2020, the requirement that OTC drugs and medicines must have a written prescription in order to be reimbursed is eliminated. OTC drugs and medicines may now be reimbursed by the HCSA without a prescription from a doctor.
- Effective Jan. 1, 2020, menstrual care products are now considered qualified medical expenses and are eligible for reimbursement by the HCSA.

Employees will be able to use their WageWorks debit card when purchasing these items. Since the change is retroactive to January 1, 2020, employees are encouraged to submit receipts for previously purchased items for reimbursement.

## REMOTE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES MEETING

MONDAY, MAY 18, 2020

6 p.m.– 7:30 p.m.

DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE PROVIDED WITH CALL-IN INFORMATION

## UUP, SUNY agree on MOU

UUP and SUNY have entered a Memorandum of Understanding to address members' concerns about the potential impact of the COVID-19 crisis on teaching, research, scholarship or other work that could potentially impact upcoming reviews for tenure, permanent appointment, reappointment or promotion.

This agreement provides for clock extensions and possible exclusions of certain types of evaluative material from review processes.

[CLICK HERE to read the MOU.](#)

Key points of the agreement include:

- Academics serving in tenure-track academic positions who have not yet been permanently appointed and who are not up for review will receive an automatic one-year extension of their time to continuing appointment (also referred to as their tenure clock). Tenure-track academics who do not wish to have their tenure clocks extended may elect to opt out of the automatic one-year extension and be considered for tenure on their original schedule. This extension will not require a change in current academic rank.
- Professionals coming up for review in the next two years shall be granted an extension of their time to permanent appointment (or

permanent appointment clock) of up to six months if requested by the employee. Such a clock stop shall be granted by moving the employee to qualified professional rank for the time requested.

- Any employee (full or part-time) who taught or provided educational support such as tutoring or counseling during the Spring 2020 semester may elect not to include Spring 2020 student evaluations, peer teaching observations, and/or curricular materials from this semester in future reappointment, promotion, or continuing appointment/permanent appointment review materials. The agreement provides that the exclusion of these materials shall not reflect negatively on the individual's review.

The clock extension for tenure track academics requires amendment of the relevant Board of Trustees Policies. The Board of Trustees passed the necessary resolution to accomplish this at its May 6 meeting.

### **CONGRATULATIONS!**

I would like to congratulate all of our members who were awarded the Professional Development Award for their projects and activities for the period July 2, 2019- July 1, 2020.

Funding for the awards program was negotiated by UUP and is outlined in Article 42 of the 2016-2022 Union contract.

Awardees were selected by the campus PDA Committee whose members were appointed by both UUP and the Administration. Thanks to Anika Daniels-Osaze, UUP co-chair; Jeff Rosen, co-chair Labor Management; and members of the committee--Elizabeth Smith, Khadijah Sikriti, Angela Melton-Taylor, Dawn

Haggerty, Ellen McTigue and Milton Lewis-- for their efforts.

Special thanks to Yolanda Wilson and Milton Lewis, who served as staff and business liaison respectively.

All recipients of the Professional Development Award will receive a letter from the committee outlining the process to be reimbursed.

If you have questions or concerns, please email Yolanda Wilson at [Yolanda.Wilson@downstate.edu](mailto:Yolanda.Wilson@downstate.edu) and copy Anika Daniels-Osaze at [Anika.Daniels-Osaze@downstate.edu](mailto:Anika.Daniels-Osaze@downstate.edu) and copy Milton Lewis at [Milton.Lewis@downstate.edu](mailto:Milton.Lewis@downstate.edu) .

The list below provides the names and the amounts that will be funded.

Madina Abduraimova	\$425
Michele Adams	\$774
Youssef Ahmed	\$774
Grace Akpan	\$774
Olaitan Aladewolu	\$774
Nakia Alford-Saunders	\$774
Vitasha Ali	\$774
Avion Ambrose	\$600
Loraine Antoine	\$774
Jakema Armstong	\$774
Juliet Arthus	\$774
Jared Bienstock	\$774
Edison Bond	\$774
Phillip Bones	\$774
Brunette Bontemps	\$774
Howard Brent	\$774
Nicole Brown	\$774
Adam Burgman	\$774
Melinda Castillo	\$774
William Chirico	\$774
Carl Cohen	\$774
Yanique Comeau	\$774
Antoni D'Souza	\$774
Maryanne Daley	\$319
Anika Daniels-Osaze	\$774
Joshua Davidson	\$774
Irina Dekhtyar	\$774
Ankuri Desai	\$774
Bridgitte Desport	\$774
Senie Toure Doumbia	\$774
Douglas Dunstatter	\$774
Beth Elenko	\$774
Lauren Ellis	\$774
Jennifer Etheridge-Otey	\$774

Zerwa Farooq	\$774
Mohammad Faysel	\$774
Jeffrey Feola	\$774
Steven Friedman	\$774
Maureen Gelling	\$774
Nabil Gergis,	\$774
Emad Ghaly	\$1,000
Hossameldin Ghanem	\$774
Patricia Gil	\$774
Susan Gottesman	\$774
Lucille Grullon	\$774
Rishab Gupta	\$774
Ann Harris	\$774
Rivka Hellman	\$774
Sanford Herman	\$519
Chella Kamarajan	\$774
Leonid Krugolets	\$774
Paul Landsbergis	\$774
Christopher Lange	\$774
Kelly Lavin	\$774
Scott Lehto	\$774
Jun Li	\$774
Ronnie Lichtman	\$774
Chrissy Liu	\$774
Erik Liu	\$774
Aleida Llanes-Oberstein	\$583.29
Leyden Lozado-Jimenez	\$774
Aniju Lukose	\$774
Kenneth Lytte	\$774
Mary Madsen	\$774
Laura Martello-Rooney	\$675
Jogy Mathew	\$774
Arlene Mbonu	\$774
Scott McAfee	\$774
Jean McHugh	\$774
Angela Melton-Taylor	\$231
Gordan Moffat	\$774
Simon Nathan	\$774
Maja Nowakowski	\$774
Nikolaos Papamitsakis	\$774
Joy Yosefa Pessin	\$774
Michelle Pink	\$774
Dawn Qui	\$774
Michael Reinhardt	\$774
Clarence Renfore	\$774
Karelle Rice	\$774
Maria Rosario-Sim	\$774
Jeetendra Sah	\$774
Suzanne Schechter	\$774
David Schreiber	\$774
Audra Silecchia-Koenig	\$774
Richard Smith	\$774
Iryna Struk	\$774
Takiya Swaby	\$774
Sima Terebelo	\$425
Jasmin Thomas	\$774
Cecilia Thompson	\$774
Joseph Turkson	\$774
Ogie Umasabor-Babu	\$774
John Weigand	\$774
Rong Xia	\$774
Ming Zang	\$774

### UUP Downstate Chapter

**President: Rowena Blackman-Stroud**

VP for Academics: Karen Benker

VP for Professionals: Ellen McTigue

Secretary: Ellen McTigue

Treasurer: Fred Houston

Grievance Chair: Simon Abe Gerecht

Officer for Contingents: Donovan Lorde

Department Rep Coordinator:

Rowena Blackman-Stroud

Retirees Officer: Sandy Spier

**UUP/NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist**

Lisa Mouscardy Willis

**Chapter Assistant**

Jacqueline L. Bourgeois

**Chapter information**

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UUP website: [www.uupinfo.org](http://www.uupinfo.org)

Downstate Chapter website:

<http://uuphost/downstatemedicalcenter>

## Get Tested



Essential Workers in New York State can make an appointment

to be tested at one of our drive through or walk in testing sites

by calling the COVID-19 Hotline at **1-888-364-3065** or online

at **[covid19screening.health.ny.gov](https://covid19screening.health.ny.gov)**

Testing Sites located in Suffolk, Nassau, Queens, Kings, Richmond, Bronx, New York, Westchester, Rockland, Albany, Broome, Oneida, Monroe, Erie and Niagara Counties

Individuals who are employed as health care workers, first responders, or in any position within a nursing home, long-term care facility, or other congregate care setting, including but not limited to:

- Correction/Parole/Probation Officers
- Direct Care Providers
- Firefighters
- Health Care Practitioners, Professionals, Aides, and Support Staff (e.g. Physicians, Nurses, Public Health Personnel)
- Medical Specialists
- Nutritionists and Dietitians
- Occupational/Physical/Recreational/Speech Therapists
- Paramedics/Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs)
- Police Officers
- Psychologists/Psychiatrists
- Residential Care Program Managers

Individuals who are employed as essential employees who directly interact with the public while working, including but not limited to:

- Animal Care Workers (e.g. Veterinarians)
- Automotive Service and Repair Workers
- Bank Tellers and Workers
- Building Code Enforcement Officers
- Child Care Workers
- Client-Facing Case Managers and Coordinators
- Counselors (e.g. Mental Health, Addiction, Youth, Vocational, Crisis, etc.)
- Delivery Workers
- Dentists and Dental Hygienists
- Essential Construction Workers at Occupied Residences or Buildings
- Faith-Based Leaders (e.g. Chaplains, Clergy Members)
- Field Investigators/Regulators for Health and Safety
- Food Service Workers
- Funeral Home Workers
- Hotel/Motel Workers
- Human Services Providers
- Laundry and Dry Cleaning Workers
- Mail and Shipping Workers
- Maintenance and Janitorial/Cleaning Workers
- Optometrists, Opticians, and Supporting Staff
- Retail Workers at Essential Businesses (e.g. Grocery Stores, Pharmacies, Convenience Stores, Gas Stations, Hardware Stores)
- Security Guards and Personnel
- Shelter Workers and Homelessness Support Staff
- Social Workers
- Teachers/Professors/Educators
- Transit Workers (e.g. Airports, Railways, Buses, and For-Hire Vehicles)
- Trash and Recycling Workers
- Utility Workers



**STAY HOME. STOP THE SPREAD. SAVE LIVES.**

**CENSUS 2020** ✓

**EVERYONE COUNTS**

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