



the Downstate Update

NEWSBRIEF

By Rowena Blackman-Stroud

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Happy Thanksgiving!!

We wish each of you and your loved ones a happy, healthy, and safe Thanksgiving.



NEW VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMICS

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Prof. Sam Marquez, who was elected to fill the unexpired term as the Downstate Chapter Vice President for Academics. Prof. Marquez takes over for Dr. Karen Benker, who stepped down as chapter vice president for academics Nov. 16.

The Governing Board, at its Nov. 19 meeting, voted to elect Prof. Marquez to serve the balance of Dr. Benker's term ending May 31, 2021.

We would like to thank Dr. Benker for her service and advocacy to our chapter and to UUP. She is a dedicated unionist who truly cares about UUP. We will miss her and we wish her well.

UUP 2021 Productivity Enhancement Program

The Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP) is a negotiated benefit between UUP and NY State. PEP allows eligible UUP-represented full-time and part-time employees who earn vacation leave to exchange previously accrued vacation leave in return for a credit of up to \$1,200 to be applied toward the employee share of NYSHIP premiums on a biweekly basis.

➔ Employees are required to submit a separate enrollment form for each year in which they wish to participate.

**DEADLINE:
Nov. 30, 2020**

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible full-time employees with an annual salary of **\$70,947 and below** whose biweekly salary is within this range at the time of enrollment, who choose to enroll in the Productivity Enhancement Program for the 2021 plan year will forfeit a total of three days of annual leave at the time of enrollment in return for a credit of up to \$600, or forfeit six days of annual leave at the time of enrollment in return for a credit of up to \$1,200, to be applied toward their share of NYSHIP premiums.

Eligible full-time employees earning **more than \$70,947 and below \$101,385** whose biweekly salary is within this range at the time of enrollment, who choose to enroll in PEP for the 2021 plan year will forfeit a total of two days of annual leave at the time of enrollment in return for a credit of up to \$600, or forfeit four days of annual leave at the time of enrollment in return for a credit of up to \$1,200, to be applied toward their share of NYSHIP premiums.

Eligible part-time employees who choose to participate will forfeit prorated days and receive a prorated credit.

At the time of enrollment, employees must:

- ◆ Be an employee covered by the 2016-2022 New York State/UUP Collective Bargaining Agreement;
- ◆ Be employed on a Calendar Year or College Year basis;
- ◆ Be a full-time employee with an annual salary below \$101,385 OR a part-time employee whose biweekly salary is within this salary range at the time of enrollment;
- ◆ Be a NYSHIP enrollee (contract holder) in either the Empire Plan or an HMO;
- ◆ Be eligible to receive an employer contribution toward NYSHIP premiums (or be on leave without pay from a position in which the employee is normally eligible for an employer share contribution toward NYSHIP premiums); and
- ◆ Have a sufficient annual leave balance to make the full leave forfeiture without bringing their annual leave balance below eight days or a prorated balance for part-time employees, respectively.

Contact your campus Human Resources Department for more information or to obtain an enrollment form.



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MANDATORY COVID TESTING

UUP has reached agreement with SUNY to extend our mandatory surveillance testing agreement through June 30, 2021.

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the agreement.

As was the case with our first agreement, this agreement provides that academic and professional staff with campus obligations will receive surveillance testing at the same frequency as surveillance testing of students on campus. The agreement continues to provide that

mandatory employee testing must be short-swab testing and is free of charge to employees on work time.

The extension also includes provisions protecting employee privacy and clarifying that test results and test samples won't be used for any purpose other than compliance with public health requirements. Test samples will not be retained by campuses or labs any longer than necessary to meet public health requirements.

We are continuing to advocate with SUNY for health and safety protocols to best protect our members and campus communities as we move forward. Our priority remains the same: Protecting the health and safety of everyone in all campus communities.

Continued surveillance testing is a crucial part of this effort, and we will continue to press SUNY for all measures to ensure our collective wellbeing.

UUP ACTIONS TO ADVOCATE FOR SUNY FUNDING

UUP has mobilized members to advocate for federal and state funding through increased taxes on billionaires and passage of the stock transfer tax.

Additional funds are necessary to avoid a potential budget hit for SUNY. There will be massive cuts without new revenue.

The state budget deficit is around \$14.5 billion. UUP is advocating to bring the Legislature back to Albany to pass these measures.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view UUP's Campaign for Revenue

UUP STATEWIDE PRE-RETIREMENT WORKSHOPS

Monday, November 30: 7-8 p.m. (part 1)

Wednesday, Dec. 2: 7-8 p.m. (part 2)

Monday, Dec. 14: Noon -1 p.m. (part 1)

Wednesday, Dec. 16: Noon - 1 p.m. (part 2)

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021: Noon - 1 p.m. (part 1)

Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021: Noon - 1 p.m. (part 2)

[Go to uupinfo.org to register](http://uupinfo.org)

CDC, STATE URGES NO THANKSGIVING TRAVEL, LARGE GATHERINGS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is telling Americans to stay home on Thanksgiving and spend the day with the people they live with.

Doing so will help stop the spread of coronavirus, which is raging in dozens of states across the country.

Medical experts fear that Thanksgiving travel and large family gatherings will greatly increase the chance of spreading coronavirus and turn into so-called "super-spreader" events.

"CDC is recommending against travel during the Thanksgiving Day period," Dr. Henry Walke, Covid-19 incident manager for the CDC, told reporters in a Nov. 19 conference call.

Read the CDC's recommendations [HERE](#).

The CDC website has a list of recommended precautions people should take if they choose to attend or host a Thanksgiving gathering with people other than those they live with.

In New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo is part of a regional coalition of governors in the Northeast that has been delivering a unified warning about Thanksgiving: The safest way for people to spend the holiday is to stay at home and celebrate only with the members of their household.

Read more about New York's Thanksgiving precautions [HERE](#).

GET YOUR FLU SHOT!

UUP is urging members to get an influenza vaccination, which is especially important this fall because of the coronavirus pandemic.

It's important to do everything possible to lessen the strain on hospitals and other health-care providers, many of which have been overwhelmed this year by the pandemic. And if you are reporting for work on a SUNY campus, you can help protect your colleagues by getting the flu vaccine.

You can get your flu shot at your local pharmacy, health clinic or even a grocery store in your community.

You can find where to get a flu shot in your community by using VaccineFinder.org, a search site offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As the CDC notes, "Many people at higher risk from flu also seem to be at higher risk from COVID-19. If you are at high risk, it is especially

important for you to get a flu vaccine this year."

UUP Downstate Chapter

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