



the Downstate Update

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Rowena Blackman-Stroud

Published by SUNY Downstate Chapter of United University Professions - FALL/WINTER 2021

NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

The agreement (contract) between UUP and the State of New York expires July 1, 2022. It's crucial that every UUP member participates in the Negotiations process. Please use every opportunity provided by the Negotiations team and statewide Leadership to express your wishes.

All members were invited to participate in the Nov. 4 Town Hall meeting. There are several upcoming meetings that we would like you to register for and attend:

Dec. 2: HSC Professionals
Constituency Negotiations Town Hall, noon to 1:30 p.m.

Dec. 3 - Schools and Colleges,
Professionals Constituency Negotiations
Town Hall: noon to 1:30 p.m.

Dec. 6 - Downstate Chapter Town Hall:
Session 1 - 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.;
Session 2 - noon to 1 p.m.; and
Session 3 - 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Dec. 8 - Contingents Constituency
Negotiations
Town Hall: noon to 1:30 p.m.

Dec. 9: HSC Academics
Constituency Negotiations Town Hall, noon to 1:30 p.m.

Dec. 9 - Contingents Constituency
Negotiations Town Hall: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Dec. 10 - Schools and Colleges, Academics
Constituency Negotiations Town Hall - Noon - 1:30 p.m.

We would like to highlight the **December 6th meetings** scheduled specifically for our Chapter. Please try to attend at least one of the three scheduled sessions. Speak up and advocate for benefits and terms and conditions of employment that would be beneficial to you and your colleagues.

Also, please respond to the negotiation survey to express your demands for the new contract. Your chapter leadership needs your voice in the negotiations process!

The negotiations survey [HERE](#) covers a range of topics likely to come up in bargaining.

Please use the survey to prioritize issues you most want to see our contract address and list any other concerns. A high participation rate for this survey gives us leverage at the table.

Many of your colleagues requested that we ask you to advocate on behalf of new hires by including the following:

Eliminate or reduce the wait time for health insurance eligibility for new employees.

Finally, Downstate's chapter leadership has held several meetings with our Department Representatives to mobilize members and encourage them to engage in the negotiations process.

Representatives in your department will soon be reaching out to you and your colleagues to get involved in UUP's contract negotiations process.

SAM MARQUEZ, ELLEN MCTIGUE TAPPED FOR AD HOC NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE

Two Downstate Chapter members, Sam Marquez and Ellen McTigue, have been appointed to serve on the statewide Ad Hoc Negotiations Committee.

The committee, made up of one professional and one academic member from each UUP chapter, compiles and presents the concerns of the membership at each chapter for consideration as potential UUP proposals. Committee members will present oral and written reports on their findings to the Negotiations Committee and Negotiations Team.

Sam is a member of UUP's statewide Executive Board, which approved the committee

appointments earlier this week. Ellen serves as secretary for the Downstate Chapter and represents the chapter on the “Back to New Normal Committee”.

NEGOTIATIONS TEAM READY TO ‘FIGHT LIKE HELL’ FOR MEMBERS

UUP’s Negotiations Team brings experienced negotiators and dedicated unionists to the table as the union prepares to hammer out a new contract with the State of New York.

The 12-member team, which includes 7 new members, will fight for the best interests of UUP members and won’t give up until they bring back a fair and equitable contract that members will support. “This team is going to be exceptional,” said Chief Negotiator Bret Benjamin. “Collectively, the bargaining team reflects the diversity of UUP’s bargaining unit. Individually, team members are smart, dedicated, principled unionists, who have demonstrated track records of UUP activism.”

Members of the Negotiations Team are: **Redetha Abrahams-Nichols, Downstate;** Jennifer Drake, Cortland; Mindy Heath, Upstate; Shoshana Hershkowitz, Stony Brook; Jude Jayatilleke, Buffalo State; Aaron Major, Albany; Pamela Malone, Empire State College; Jaclyn Pittsley, Cortland; Benita Roth, Binghamton ; Idalia Torres, Fredonia ; and Bill Tusang, Cobleskill.

Benjamin, a past president of the Albany Chapter, was tapped by UUP President Fred Kowal to serve as chief negotiator. Benjamin was a member of the 2016- 22 Negotiations Team.

“Bret is a good man and the right man to lead us as we begin the process to negotiate a new contract with the state,” said UUP President Fred Kowal. “We have a strong team, one of our strongest teams ever. These are dedicated activists and unionists who will fight like hell at the bargaining table for our members.”

Malone, Empire State College Chapter President and a member of UUP’s Executive Board, brings the most experience to the table. She served on the past two Negotiations teams and was assistant chief negotiator for the 2016-22 contract Negotiations Team. Along with Malone and Benjamin, three other Team members— Drake, Torres and Tusang—were on the 2016-22 Team.

Still, more than half of the UUPers on the Team have never been Team members before, a fact that Benjamin sees as a positive. In late August, Team members met in person at a working session in Geneva to learn about and discuss UUP’s negotiations process.

“We have a great mix of negotiations veterans, who can bring continuity and experience, and first-time team members, who bring new perspectives and ideas,” said Benjamin. “I couldn’t be more excited about working with this amazing group of colleagues to help bargain the best contract we possibly can for UUP members.”

Even though UUP’s contract expires next summer, the Negotiations Team is already gearing up to get as much input from members as possible before drafting its first set of proposals with the state.

Only UUP members can offer suggestions for and vote on a new contract; go to www.uupinfo.org/join to join UUP.

The Team, along with Kowal and Elizabeth Hough, UUP’s counsel to the president, are taking part in a series of fall regional meetings and Town Hall events about upcoming contract negotiations.

Negotiations Team members are scheduled to visit campuses through the end of the year, talking with members about what their contract negotiations priorities are.

An online contract survey for members to offer their input is available in this edition of the newsletter. A dedicated site for negotiations news will be set up on UUP’s website, at www.uupinfo.org

The information gathered from the regional meetings, Town Hall events and chapter visits will help the Team and the Negotiations Committee draft the union’s contract proposals.

The Committee—made up of one member from each chapter and an additional academic part-timer and professional part-timer—is constitutionally charged with preparing proposals for negotiations and submitting the tentative agreement to the membership for ratification.

“This is one of the most demanding and important volunteer positions in our union, and I am grateful to each and every one of them for their willingness to serve,” Kowal said.

UUP REACHES DEAL WITH STATE ON VACATION ACCRUAL EXTENSION

UUP and the state have reached an agreement to once again suspend the annual 40-day vacation accrual cap for UUP-represented employees.

Under the Memorandum of Understanding signed Oct. 22 between UUP and the state,

UUP bargaining unit members who delayed vacation because of the emergency conditions of the pandemic can now carry their vacation days which exceed the normal 40-day cap past the Dec. 31, 2021, deadline. They can retain those accumulated days until the close of business on Dec. 31, 2022.

Without the extension, employees would have lost those vacation days—which normally expire at the end of the year.

You can read the MOU by clicking [HERE](#). UUP President Fred Kowal discusses the vacation accrual cap in a new video; watch the video [HERE](#).

PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM - ENROLLMENT NOW OPEN!!!

UUP members have until Nov. 26 to enroll in the UUP 2022 Productivity Enhancement Program, which allows eligible UUP-represented employees a chance to exchange vacation leave in return for a credit toward their share of New York State Health Insurance Program premiums.

Under this negotiated benefit between UUP and New York state, UUP-represented full-time and part-time employees who earn vacation leave can 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.

Read more about this benefit [HERE](#).

FLEX SPENDING ACCOUNT – ENROLLMENT NOW OPEN !!!

UUP members have until Nov. 26 to enroll in the Flex Spending Account, a state employee benefit that saves members money by allowing them to pay for certain expenses with pre-tax dollars.

The enrollment deadline for 2022 ends at 10 p.m. Eastern Time on Nov. 26, **and it is strictly enforced**. Members who are enrolled for the 2021 plan year must re-enroll to continue their benefits in 2022.

Online enrollment is available at goer.ny.gov/FSA or by calling 800-358-7202. Members will need their New York state employee identification number, located on their paystub, to complete their application.

Read more about this benefit [HERE](#).

ENROLLMENT OPEN FOR DELTA DENTAL, METLIFE PLANS

Enrollment periods are open for the DeltaCare USA DHMO dental plan and MetLife legal plans.

The enrollment period for the DeltaCare program began Nov. 1 and runs through Dec. 30. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

The enrollment period for the MetLife legal plans started Nov. 1 and ends Dec. 30. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD PROGRAM

Funding for the Individual Development Award Program (“IDA”) is provided under the 2016-2022 Agreement between UUP and the State of New York.

Revised IDA Program Guidelines: The IDA Program Guidelines for the period July 2, 2021 through July 1, 2022, have been revised as follows:

Employees may be awarded a maximum of \$2,000 for the award period. Funding may be awarded for up to two projects or activities for the award period not to exceed \$2,000.

Please note, there will be no reimbursements for consumables, non-consumables, technology, course fees, books, licensing/exam preparation or licensing/exam fees.

Application forms for the period July 2, 2021 through July 1, 2022 will be available after January 17, 2022. You will be able to access the guidelines and application on-line through our website or you can also call the chapter office at (718) 270-1519 to get a copy.

PRE-RETIREMENT WORKSHOPS

UUP is holding a series of virtual pre-retirement workshops in November and December. The two-part webinars will cover health care and Medicare, followed by union benefits, such as dental and vision coverage.

Nov. 22: 7-8 p.m. Part 1 - Register [HERE](#)

Nov. 24: 7-8 p.m. Part 2 - Register [HERE](#)

Dec. 7, 2021, Noon-1 p.m. Part 1 - Register [HERE](#)

Dec. 9, 2021, Noon-1 p.m. Part 2 Register [HERE](#)

2021 UUP SALARY COMPRESSION ANALYSIS AND DISTRIBUTION

A Message from President Fred Kowal

The 2016-2022 NYS/UUP contract established four annual salary pools, each one-half percent (0.5%) of total basic annual salaries at each campus, for distribution to eligible UUP-represented employees to address salary compression.

Generally, salary compression exists when the salaries of more experienced employees have not increased sufficiently relative to the salaries of colleagues hired later. The first two pools were distributed in 2019 and 2020. The remain two pools will be distributed this year and in 2022. A joint SUNY/UUP executive-level committee has reviewed the 2019 and 2020 results and updated the 2021 guidelines on the methodology for identifying salary compression and distributing the 2021 0.5% pool.

As was true in 2019 and 2020, we anticipate that the extent of identified salary compression in 2021 will again significantly exceed the resources available for 2021 to remediate it. However, the process is a critical step forward in addressing a problem that plagues both SUNY and higher education nationally.

Salary compression is identified using multiple regression analysis, a statistical technique that measures the relationship between salary and several factors that potentially impact it. The guidelines specify the data used to complete the analyses. Generally, each employee's data include basic annual salary (excluding stipends, differentials, also receives, and prior DSI), state budget title, academic rank, campus title for professionals, professional SL grade, years of service, academic discipline, professional functional area, and a market benchmark salary for the discipline or functional area.

Using those data points, campuses must run regression analyses to identify the extent of compression among UUP-represented employees. These analyses identify the extent to which the salaries of more experienced employees may be compressed relative to the salaries of less experienced employees in their academic disciplines or professional functional areas on each campus. The guidelines must be followed to the greatest extent possible.

However, it is impossible to anticipate every campus-specific variation which may require campus-specific deviations. When such deviations are made, they must be consistent with the intent of the guidelines and the goal of remediating salary compression and be reviewed with SUNY at the state level.

Once the regression analyses are complete, each campus must determine the distribution of their 2021 0.5% compression pool. The 0.5% pool must be used to address identified compression and cannot be used for any other purpose, including but not limited to merit or addressing other perceived inequities. The vast majority of UUP represented employees must be included in the regression analyses and are potentially eligible for compression adjustments.

However, clinical academic physicians who participate in clinical practice plans and certain part-time coaches, part-time EOC faculty, and part-time college physicians are excluded from regression analysis and are instead eligible for base salary adjustments utilizing alternate criteria. In addition, in certain circumstances management may choose to exclude other types of employees from the regression analyses and from receipt of compression adjustments.

These include:

- Employees paid on a fee basis whose income cannot effectively be annualized who earned less than \$2,500 in the prior year.
- Employees who have been off payroll on leave without pay for two years or more. Visiting academics with less than four years of service.
- Division 1 athletic directors and Division 1 head coaches who have individually negotiated, market-based contracts which include performance incentive payments.

Certain unusually highly compensated faculty (primarily at the University Centers and Health Science Centers) whose salaries deviate significantly from expected salary given academic rank, market, and years in rank.

Once the regression analyses are complete, management discretion to determine how the salary compression pool will be distributed is also expressly limited. Campuses are strongly encouraged to provide proportional adjustments to all employees identified as compressed. While campuses may choose to remediate certain departments/functional areas more rapidly, no department may be excluded from remediation entirely.

Campuses may also choose to:

Establish a dollar threshold of identified compression for full-time employees, pro-rated for part-time employees, below which employees may not be remediated (such a threshold may not exceed \$2,500 and must be uniformly applied).

Exclude certain less-senior employees including new employees with less than two years of service and certain part-time employees with less than two years of service.

Exclude any full-time non-renewed employee serving in their final year of service or any employee working under a settlement agreement which includes an exit strategy.

Except for those employees specifically identified above, individual employees with identified compression may not be excluded from remediation.

Employees who receive salary compression adjustments are not disqualified from consideration for Discretionary Salary Increases (DSI). Receipt of DSI also does not disqualify employees from eligibility for compression adjustments.

By and large, our review of the 2020 process once again confirmed that, overall, the methodology worked as intended. Thus, much continues unchanged for 2021. Updates to the 2021 guidelines addressed issues of mutual concern to continue to improve the integrity of the analyses.

We have also entered an updated agreement for 2021 addressing the information and data that will be provided to UUP and to individual employees to improve transparency and our ability to review and analyze the results of the 2021 distribution. Individual employees who desire to do so, following request to their campus HR departments, are entitled to review their individual non-proprietary data points that were used in the regression analysis.

The salary compression distributions and discretionary salary increases will be paid In Pay Period 19 (paycheck dated 01/05/2022).

As was the case with the 2019 and 2020 distributions, both UUP and SUNY will review the outcome of the 2021 distribution and reconvene in Executive Level Labor Management discussions as necessary to make any needed mutually acceptable adjustments in the process for 2022.

UUP's ongoing goal remains ensuring that the salary analysis at every campus is done as accurately as possible, given the variation in employee positions across our campuses.

As we did for 2019 and 2020, UUP will establish a process to address member questions and collect input about the 2021 compression distributions.

We will begin that process after compression adjustments are made.

NEW EMPLOYEES, JOIN US FOR:
NEOs at NOON
Learn about your UUP benefits and receive expert tips on how to utilize and maximize them.



NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATIONS EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY AT NOON



Visit <https://bit.ly/UUPWelcome> for dates and to register.



Talk to your NEGOTIATIONS TEAM



AND TELL THEM WHAT YOU WANT IN THE NEXT CONTRACT!

UUP's Negotiations Team, which will negotiate a new contract for UUP with the state of New York, is coming to our campus to talk about the negotiations process and to ask you what you'd like them to fight for in the new contract.

Here's your chance to become part of that process.
You can ask questions and share information and issues important to you with Team members.

SEE YOU THERE!

DATE: **December 6, 2021**

TIME: **9:30 a.m.; Noon; 7:30 p.m.**

LINK: <https://aft.zoom.us/j/94910083515?pwd=em9aejBuUjJ0ZE9KWmxSd0xwVGN2dz09>

UUP Downstate Chapter

President: Rowena Blackman-Stroud

VP for Academics: Samuel Marquez

VP for Professionals: Hazel Williams

Secretary: Ellen McTigue

Treasurer: Fred Houston

Grievance Chair: Chantel D. Fuller

Officer for Contingents: Donovan Lorde

Membership Development Officer:
Khadijah Sikriti

Department Rep Coordinator:
Rowena Blackman-Stroud

Retirees Officer: Shirley Patterson

UUP/NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist
Lisa Mouscardy Willis

Chapter Assistant
Jacqueline L. Bourgeois

Chapter information
Chapter office: Room BSB 2-71P, Box 96
Phone: 18-270-1519
Fax: 718-774-0800
Email: brooklyn@uupmail.org
UUP website: www.uupinfo.org

DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

We invite all UUP members to get involved with their union. Here's how you can help.

If your department does not have a UUP Department Representative, please volunteer to serve in that role. Department Reps get up-to-date information on workplace issues. If your department has multiple shifts, each shift should have a Department Rep.

If you have not done so, please send your personal email to Brooklyn@uupmail.org so we can keep you up-to-date on what's happening.

*Wishing each of you and your loved ones a
Happy Thanksgiving and a healthy and safe holiday season!*

Downstate Chapter Officers & Staff

*Rowena Blackman-Stroud, President
Samuel Marquez, VP for Academics
Hazel Williams VP for Professionals
Ellen McTigue, Secretary
Fred Houston, Treasurer
Chantel D. Fuller, Grievance Chair
Donovan Lorde, Officer for Contingents
Khadijah Sikriti, Membership Development Officer
Shirley Patterson, Retirees Officer
Lisa Mouscardy-Willis, Labor Relations Specialist
Jacqueline L. Bourgeois, Chapter Assist.*



*United University Professions
Downstate Chapter
SUNY Downstate Health Sciences
University*