



The Bullhorn

The Official Newsletter of
The SUNY New Paltz Chapter of the UUP



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Bread or Water?

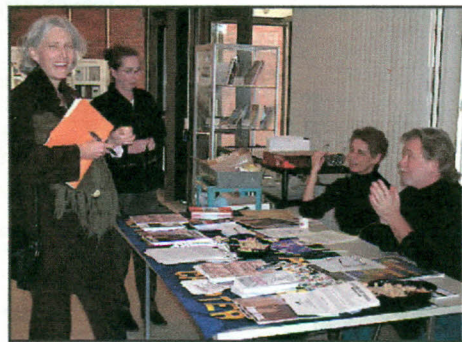
by Glenn McNitt, Chapter President

At the October 18th Faculty and Professional Staff meeting the President Poskanzer was asked about a rumor that the revenues used to cover a 20% base salary increase for part time instructors were generated through savings achieved by increasing class sizes. The President confirmed that the class size increases of 2 to 5 additional students provided the revenue to pay for the salary increase for part timers. In some programs, the class maximum was raised from 20 to 25 students, and in others the size was raised from 28 to 30 enrollees. Provost Lavallee substantiated the claim and provided a modest rationale for the increase in class size. At one point in this exchange, the President justified the class size increase by saying (and I paraphrase, since I do not have the exact quote), the choice facing the Administration was to have "either bread or water." The Bread or Water comment was meant, I believe, to indicate that if the

In politics, issues like these are called, "wedge issues," because they are used to separate natural allies from one another.

Administration were to increase the salary for adjuncts, it needed to raise class sizes in order to pay for it. Either/Or. The funds for a salary increase had to come from somewhere, and that "somewhere" was more students (2 to 5) enrolled in our classes. I find this assertion to be disconcerting on at least two grounds: the limited scope of where funds may come from, and the divisive nature of the claim.

The campus administration makes numerous decisions regarding how best to allocate the financial resources it has available. Literally thousands of decisions are made, and each one



UUP activists tabling in JFT to raise awareness about issues facing adjunct faculty

of these has consequences for the total expenditure of funds and on the resource supply. They are all, in a sense, interconnected, but not in a one-to-one deterministic way. Every decision

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is a choice, and thus it is disingenuous to claim that this particular choice—to increase the base salary for adjuncts—was directly connected to just one possible option—to increase class sizes.

There were many other options that could have been considered and used to provide the money for adjunct salary increases last winter. The state supported operating budget of this campus is over \$17 million, and the overall New Paltz budget for 2005-06 was over \$50 million. In fact, as I recall, the Provost indicated to others and to me that his ability to allocate the salary increase to adjuncts in the spring rather than in the fall of 2005 resulted from unanticipated state money that became available in January. These funds were one third of \$50 million that had been added to SUNY's budget by the Legislature the year before, funds that the

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Campus Equity Week More Than Peanuts for Part Timers

Peter D.G. Brown
UUP Vice President for Academics

Campus Equity Week, part of a campaign to build support for underpaid adjunct faculty, was launched on Halloween. UUP members tabled in the JFT lobby for the entire week distributing information and educating members of the campus community about the plight of adjunct faculty. In order to focus on the insufficient pay rate of our more than 400 part-time faculty members, UUP activists handed out free peanuts to give everyone a taste of what adjuncts work for. In addition to distributing materials calling for fairness and equity in the hiring of contingent faculty, we collected signatures on a petition demanding equity for adjuncts at SUNY New Paltz.

Almost 400 people signed our petition, which reads:

"We, the undersigned, support proportional compensation for part-time faculty (both academic faculty and professional staff) at SUNY New Paltz.

Part-time/adjunct faculty should be paid a salary proportionate to that paid full-time tenured faculty of the same qualifications for performing the same responsibilities, including such essential benefits as health insurance, life insurance, and retirement contributions.

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A Part-Timer's (Too Common) Tale

By Victor deMunck, Chair of Part-Time Concerns Committee

What follows is a story told to me by one part-timer, Doug, from a school in New Hampshire. While the details of Doug's experiences are specific to him, the tale for part-timers is all too common. Doug is in his early thirties and he is married. The story is told in the first person but it is not a verbatim transcription of the interview material, however everything below is taken directly from his interviews but is not a verbatim transcription, which I did not have time to do.

Doug, a friend of mine, is a part-time teacher in New Hampshire. He and his wife, Jenna, have two children. Jenna has a ¾ time job as a secretary; Doug also works at two different colleges; one in New Hampshire pays less than \$2000 per course, and the other is in Massachusetts (a one hour commute) and pays around \$4000 per semester. He also does survey work on weekends. Doug is an extraordinary teacher who, on his Student Evaluations consistently receives a 1.00 to 1.20 overall rating in large (40 to 60 student) introductory classes. Hard to believe. Though immensely popular with students, Doug did not have warm relations with members of his Department. He had been teaching at the New Hampshire college for about 4 years, having started the year before he finished his dissertation in 2002. Doug likes to hunt and his manner is not professorial in his demeanor. He is rough in manner, he taught a one credit, unpaid, course on Chomsky, and has a terrific sense of humor and a gift for story telling.

Now let's let him tell the rest of the story...

"I'm looking for jobs only in this area, with my parent's help Jen [his wife] and I bought a house outside of Rochester and my daughter started first grade. My boy stays with my mom or Jenna's. I never go to department meetings, though I've been here for three years. Nobody's invited me. So, last year one of the professors, my only friend in the department, told me that there was a tenure track job opening up in my field. I went to the Chair and asked him about it. At first, I thought he was

going to tell me not to bother applying. I explained to him that I wanted to apply because the job description was a perfect fit for me...I asked him whether I had a chance. Well, he became real friendly and implied, in fact, that I already had a foot in the door, so to speak. I talked to another professor, a Marxist, who said, "The job is yours, no one else's." So I felt real good about all this.

I gave my application to the secretary and I saw her put it at the front of the file. We had over 50 applicants within a month. Some time passed and I asked the Chair about my status; he told me that they were still poring over the files. I was told, by the secretary, that they had already divided the files according to candidates that they were not going to invite and those they were considering inviting. Later, I found out, again from the secretary, that I had been put in the pool of candidates that they were not going to invite. I couldn't believe it. Even if they weren't going to hire me, they should have at least invited me. I was pissed and depressed at the same time. Jen told me to calm down and I waited about a week before I saw the Chair, because he was, it seemed, never going to tell me I wasn't going to be invited for an interview, even though it wouldn't cost them anything. He was friendly as ever and I asked him about the Search, stroking his beard he said, "Well we got some really good candidates" then he started telling me about this candidate from Boston University who had already published two books in academic presses. I'd heard of the guy and couldn't believe he was applying for an entry level job. I was screwed. I couldn't compete. He'd apparently not gotten tenure due to some infighting. Turned out that he later got a job at an ivy league school. Anyway, I figured that was that. I was really irritated at how they handled it, not even telling me or even just inviting me to give a talk. But whatever.

It turned out they ended up hiring the husband of a professor who was a big shot in her field and had been threatening to leave. The hiring took place in the early summer. What was the worst part about this is that the guy wasn't a specialist in the field that they had been advertising for. I knew him and his wife, matter of fact, we were friends. But it was like someone in archeology getting a physical

Anthropology job, they know something about the field, but they are not experts in the field. I couldn't talk to him after that, though he used to come into my lab and we'd chat and have lunch frequently. I was apoplectic, but decided it wasn't his fault (the new hire), and okay; I can live with this. But my loyalty to the department and the school had reached a new low and I couldn't wait to get out of here. I felt humiliated and furious at the same time. But, hold on, it got even worse.

It was still early summer, and I was at school working in the lab, the Chair called me in and told me about the hire and then asked me my opinion. I don't know why, but I said something negative; in effect that the person was nice and intelligent, but didn't know anything about the field that he was supposed to be teaching. I said that I had talked with him and mentioned a recent study that he had no knowledge of whatsoever. The Chair stiffened and dismissed me. About a week went by and he called me into his office again; this time he told me that he didn't think there would be any part-time work available for me the next semester and advised me to look for jobs elsewhere. I'd been teaching there for four years, I was the best professor in the department and even received an award to that effect by the students. I felt like someone had thrown me out of a plane without a parachute. My stomach sank, I felt tense and my face flushed. I was completely upset. For the next few weeks I was totally angry and frustrated and bitter and made life unpleasant for everyone at home. It was not only that I got canned, but it was an almost impossible time to find work. I decided I'd do survey work with my dad. My dad was thrilled. He had always been against me going to school in the social sciences because he'd say, 'You gotta look out for your family, you can't get a job doing that crap except working at the Hannaford bagging groceries.' Maybe he was right.

Two weeks before the semester started, I got a call from the Chair who told me there were two classes for me if I wanted them. Can you believe it? I took them and felt relieved, even happy to be exploited and humiliated.

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Performance Program Evaluation Criteria: A Right, in Writing, for Professional Faculty Members

By Richard Kelder, UUP Vice
President for Professionals

Recently, the UUP executive committee has learned that there are professional faculty members who do not have a performance program. This is in violation of the contract between UUP and the State of New York. Here are the facts: If you are a new employee, your immediate supervisor must consult with you in the first month about the objectives, responsibilities, and duties to be included in your performance program and the evaluation process. Within fifteen days of that consultation (a total of 45 days), the supervisor is required to provide the professional faculty member with a performance program in writing, and the document must be co-signed by the employee and the supervisor as evidence of mutual consultation and agreement. Each year during the annual evaluation, this document must be reviewed and assessed to determine if there are permanent changes in duties and responsibilities. These changes are then incorporated into the updated performance program.

"the supervisor is required to provide the professional faculty member with a performance program in writing"

In addition to the contractual requirement and the evaluation process, why are performance programs important? Simply put: the performance program is the foundation for professional development and advancement. Each year professional faculty members are not only evaluated on the objectives included in the performance program, but also on the criteria established by the SUNY Board of Trustees: Effectiveness in Performance, Mastery of Specialization, Professional Ability, Effectiveness in University Service, and Continuing Growth. Each professional faculty member should know the substantive meaning of each of these categories. Without a performance program, there is no real evaluation and therefore, no documentation to support continuing appointment. As a result, you

could be evaluated on something totally extraneous to your duties, something you might never had agreed to. This may jeopardize the appeal process in case of an unsatisfactory evaluation or a termination of contract without just cause. Also, without an updated performance program, it is difficult to apply for DSI, salary increases, promotions and permanent appointment. For example, if there is no evidence to demonstrate continuing growth in your performance program and evaluation, you may drift into the limbo of career stagnation. Also, a lack of documentation will affect the development of a dossier, which must be submitted in the employees sixth year as a requirement for permanent appointment. So whose responsibility is it to ensure that this doesn't happen? You've got it, it's yours. However, you're not alone because you are a member of United University Professions and UUP representatives are available to provide support and guidance. Finally, don't forget that there is a good chance that your supervisor is a UUP member as well and can be reminded about the importance of doing a good job and the right thing for fellow union members. In addition, the college administration has made it clear that supervisors who do not provide performance programs or do annual evaluation are not eligible for DSI or promotions.

Equity Week (continued from pg. 1)

Failure to extend to all faculty fair and reasonable professional compensation compromises quality and risks the stability of the profession and the integrity of our standing with the public."

The local Campus Equity Week is part of a national campaign to address the growing problem of the exploitation of adjunct faculty. This event has been held annually since 2001. The Week is sponsored by a broad coalition of labor organizations including the UUP, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, the American Association of University Professors and the National Writers Union.

Bread or Water

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Governor had impounded, only to agree to release the funds over a three-year period.

It was those funds, rather than increased tuition revenue by increasing class size, that funded the adjunct salary increase.

The second issue for me is the divisive nature of the President's statement. Framing the issue in this manner divides the full time faculty from the part time faculty. In politics, issues like these are called, "wedge issues," because they are used to separate natural allies from one another. The full time faculty members are encouraged to conclude that the source of their increased workload (i.e., 2-5 more students in a class) is the adjunct faculty. If one accepted this line of reasoning, one may conclude that in order to raise adjunct salaries another \$600 (thus reaching the \$1000 per credit demanded by the UUP and supported in a Faculty and Professional Staff resolution passed last year), full time faculty would have to increase their class sizes by yet another increment of 3 to 7.5 students per class.

Thus, this fictitious link between adjunct pay and class size threatens to generate animosity and damage the relationship between adjuncts and full time faculty. Intentional or not, providing the rationale that the Administration utilized for the increase in class sizes, that is, blaming the part timers, has the effect of driving a wedge between full and part time faculty. But we refuse to fall prey to this division. Coalitions among faculty across disciplines and employment types are difficult to create, because they are sensitive to stresses and strains that are unique to each of our disciplines. They are even more imperiled when innuendo and false claims tear at the trust upon which such unity is built. We will not let this happen.

The Administration faces difficult decisions many times over the year, and some of what they do is appreciated and applauded. Other decisions are criticized. As they should, they can, and often do, take full credit for their popular decisions. They ought also to take full responsibility for decisions made that are unpopular. It is not to the Administration's credit to deflect criticism on to our adjunct faculty.

UUP Hosts Local Take on National AFL-CIO Shakeup

Maryann Fallek

Are unions the only hope to save our country? Assistant Professor, Brian Obach says, "Yes!" Obach offered this view in his introductory remarks at the October 26th presentation on campus: "AFL-CIO Shakeup: Unionism Strengthened or Weakened?"

The presentation, sponsored by the United University Professions (UUP) New Paltz Chapter, focused on last summer's historic split in the main labor federation in the United States, the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). Several unions withdrew from the AFL-CIO to form a new federation, the Change To Win Coalition (CTW). The presentation featured the contrasting views of representatives from the two sides of the split: for the AFL-CIO, Bill Scheuerman, President of the UUP and for Change to Win, Theresa Hammer, President of the Local 471 of the Hotel Employee and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE).

Following a welcome from UUP Chapter President, Glenn McNitt, Professor Obach got the evening off to a provocative start with his argument that unions were the last hope for progressive change in America. He argued that uniting people for progressive change can only occur through workplace organization. The workplace brings people together in a context where they share common interests, which can then serve as the basis for broad progressive political mobilization. From Obach's perspective, other arenas offer limited opportunities for promoting such a collective demand for change. However, unions are under attack and on the decline. Their ability to lead is on the line and the jury is out as to whether this recent split and the formation of a new federation will strengthen or weaken organized labor's ability to promote a progressive agenda in this country.

The Change to Win representative, Theresa Hammer, argued that its break from the AFL-CIO will strengthen organized labor's effort to affect progressive reform. The AFL-CIO's

failure to organize a sufficient number of workers over the last decade has diminished organized labor's power to make a positive difference. Ms. Hammer argued that the time had come for a new approach for organized labor. She said that the AFL-CIO, was "dying on the vine" and that substantially more resources needed to be invested in organizing workers if the labor movement was to regain its strength. Hammer said that the Change to Win Coalition is ready to use its resources to organize new workers and to address the challenges of globalization.

"Professor Obach got the evening off to a provocative start with his argument that unions were the last hope for progressive change in America."

From her perspective, the dramatic action taken by the Change to Win Coalition has woken up the AFL-CIO.

UUP President Bill Scheuerman questioned the reasons why the Change to Win unions broke from the AFL-CIO. He said that the AFL-CIO in fact, already had adopted many of the changes advocated by the breakaway union leaders. Rather than substantive or ideological issues, he saw the split as a consequence of a bureaucratic battle over power and money. Scheuerman characterized the split as the "worst possible thing for the labor movement." He argued that Change to Win union leaders wanted more leadership influence and a significant reduction in their AFL-CIO dues. He questioned whether those resources now retained by the Change to Win unions will actually be invested in organizing new workers, as promised. From Scheuerman's perspective, the split weakens organized labor and increases the labor movement's marginality. It divides workers, especially at the state and local levels, where considerable collaborative and effective work occurs. Scheuerman also pointed out that conservative labor opponents see this split as an opportunity to advance their anti-union agenda. He also argued that a new political party (a labor party) advocated by some, simply wasn't workable in America's two party system. However, he urged continued discussions between the two federations and expressed hope that the UUP could play a constructive role in recreating that unity.

Audience members raised a number of important issues in the discussion that followed the formal presentations. Some questioned the AFL-CIO's continued support of Democratic Party candidates when Democratic office holders have offered, at best, inconsistent support for organized labor. Others raised questions about the decision making process that led to the split in the federation, particularly in terms of its lack of inclusion. The disputes between the Change to Win Coalition and the AFL-CIO occurred primarily at the national level and some argued that increased grassroots participation would have prevented the division that now plagues national union leaders. Such local level unity was evident at the forum. Despite their differing interpretations of the events taking place at the national level, UUP President Bill Scheuerman and HERE Local 471 President Theresa Hammer, friends for many years, shook hands at the end of evening and pledged to continue their cooperative state and local efforts.

Special thanks to Donna Goodman, UUP New Paltz Chapter Executive Committee Member, who organized the event.

Resolution on Part-Time Faculty

On November 11, the UUP Executive Committee passed the following resolution concerning part-time faculty:

Be it Resolved, that the Executive Committee of the New Paltz Chapter of the UUP advocates abolishing the limit of two courses that may be taught by part-time instructors at the College in any given semester, contingent upon a simultaneous limitation of the percentage of courses taught by part-time faculty to the current level.

Before any changes in policy can go into effect, the resolution needs to be agreed to by the college administration and details negotiated at future Labor-Management meetings.

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

On December 17, 2004 I became the proud and proper owner of an un-moderated listserv for adjuncts at SUNY-New Paltz. Since adjuncts have no voice on campus and little contact with each other, this listserv was a first, offering each subscriber direct access to the entire part-time faculty. It had the potential to connect and empower the nearly 400 diverse and dispersed part-time faculty, who have at least one thing in common: the right to a fair and equitable wage.

In my January 2005 welcome announcement, I described the listserv as a forum. It was intended to be used by contingent faculty for discussion, announcements, sharing resources, questions, concerns, and the like. A collection of informative online resources for adjuncts was included, as well as a reminder of an upcoming meeting of the Adjunct Faculty Association (AFA), the newly formed, independent organization, in which I am an active, vocal, and visible member.

The attention brought in the fall to the plight of adjuncts was encouraging for many disheartened part-timers. Adjuncts were activated. I expected that my un-moderated listserv, to which all part-timers with working email addresses were automatically subscribed, would be a big hit. Of course, it would take time, and many people would need to participate for a truly democratic exchange to be established. In the meantime, the already active adjuncts would do their best to develop an online

Article Submissions and Letters to the Editor

If you have an idea for an article, please contact the editor at obachb@newpaltz.edu. All UUP members are welcome to submit letters to the editor. Letters should be no longer than 150 words. They should be sent as an attachment in Word format to the above e-mail address.

Editor: Brian Obach, x3447
Staff: Donna Flayhan
Linda Smith
Adrienne Mora

community, continuing to address issues of vital importance to part-timers.

The actual use of the listserv during the spring 2005 semester reflected the nature of the group. Many, with limited time, contributed occasionally, while a few shouldered most of the responsibility. Simply having a structure for internal communication was enough; discussion was always a possibility.

At the beginning of this fall 2005 semester, the adjunct listserv was taken down by the Administration, without warning. The reason given was that the listserv was being used to organize the AFA. Since the AFA is not affiliated with or recognized by the College, it may not use state resources. Furthermore, the administration recognizes no group other than the UUP as having a legitimate role in acting to change the working conditions of adjuncts on this campus. In other words, my adjunct listserv was being used subversively.

The matter of a listserv being taken from a faculty member was brought to a Labor/Management meeting by the UUP leadership in October. It was reiterated that the administration felt this listserv was advocating for the AFA, and that it cannot provide resources for an unaffiliated organization.

In correspondence with the administration, I have been told that: if I promise not to allow any discussion of issues related to the terms and working conditions of adjuncts on campus, I can have my listserv back; the UUP could act as an umbrella organization and request another listserv for use by adjuncts; and, adjuncts can use publicly available discussion boards to continue to organize and plan.

Many faculty have listservs and for a variety of purposes, yet there is no written policy on listservs. Motivated by the controversy following the take-down of the adjunct listserv and the AFA website, the Academic Affairs Committee resolved to develop a recommendation regarding communication using campus-wide electronic resources.

The adjunct listserv and its removal has generated negative publicity and

confusion, as well as thoughtful discussion, both on and off-line, about freedom of speech, censorship, the use of electronic resources, and the role of AFA. The intention of the listserv, to connect and empower adjuncts, is, of course, an ongoing, evolving process, which has been served – ironically – by its removal.

Yvonne Aspengren

Editor's note: According to the Taylor Law, the state legislation that governs labor relations for public employees in New York State, the UUP is the sole bargaining agent for SUNY academic and professional faculty. This means that on issues regarding the terms and conditions of employment, the administration can only legally deal with the UUP. The Adjunct Faculty Association (AFA) is an independent organization completely separate from the UUP. The UUP negotiated the possible return of the listserv to Yvonne Aspengren on the basis of her status as a UUP member, not on the basis of her position within the AFA with which the UUP has no formal relationship. The UUP does not give access to distribution lists for any purposes other than official communications with members.

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily express the opinion of the United University Professions (UUP).

A Part-Timer's Tale

(Continued from pg. 2)

My family needed the insurance and because the Chair knows the person at the Massachusetts school, it helps me to keep my job there too. So, now I'm back to teaching at three schools, four classes a semester, making about \$10,000 thousand per semester. The survey work pays me \$150 a day so we're not doing too bad since Jen is also making money. But I'm no longer under the illusion that I'm anything more than cheap labor to the school. I used to think that I was working to build something and that I was proud to be part of the department and school. No more. Forget the teaching awards. Forget it. Funny though, the Chair and I are getting along. I just don't trust him at all. That's what I've learned as a part timer, don't trust nobody and just do your work, don't be under the illusion that your part of something special and that your important or valued. You're not."