

BEACON



President's Message

Joe Torre, President
Brockport Chapter UUP

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Upcoming Events

- ◆ Holiday Dinner, December 1st

New Day, New Way

First, let me again thank my predecessor Gary Owens for his many contributions to the union over his years of service. Leading the union is a tremendous responsibility and for a long time it fell squarely on his shoulders. Second, let me again thank you for this opportunity to serve the body. My service as UUP president is a high point in my professional career. I hope that I will be able to help us negotiate the rough terrain ahead.

In my brief speech to the faculty and staff on August 27, I described the UUP as one of the most powerful "brain trusts" in the country. More than 35,000 members strong, the overwhelming majority of us have college degrees, and a huge percentage of us have terminal degrees of some kind, mostly PhDs. On the College at Brockport campus, we are almost 1000 dedicated, hardworking and intelligent people of diverse backgrounds, avocations and training. The one common denominator that holds us together is that we are grossly over-dedicated to the greater good expressed in public higher education. Our dedication has not, however, received the recognition it deserves - especially in Albany, where we face a combination of apathy and disdain that threatens our efforts and students' education. The tremendous irony, of course, is that our greatest enemies are not libertarian fanatics holed up in empty spaces masquerading as states - but the leadership of the "empire" state, and the federal judiciary to whom we entrust our greatest liberties.

What are our immediate challenges? 1) The governor has, for a variety of sometimes confounding reasons, mobilized against UUP and SUNY repeatedly. His current toying with the "maintenance of effort" legislation passed by the NY senate and assembly is only the

latest of his many efforts to hobble SUNY. For those of you less familiar with the issue, the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) negotiates SUNY contracts with the UUP but recently has refused to fund them - making our gain essentially SUNY's loss. This of course then becomes our problem as we struggle to maintain the quality of student education, and the vitality of our campuses and professions. 2) Legislators treat SUNY as a political toy, effectively controlling both tuition rates and state funding; we have thus been squeezed at the middle for decades. On the ground this means that academic lines and staff positions go empty even as classes remain full, driving up our workload and again diminishing students' education. 3) On the federal level, the UUP now faces a new challenge of unprecedented proportions, the *Friedrich v. California Teachers' Association* case. *Friedrich* is a conservative think tank-funded challenge to union infrastructure. It threatens to allow any union member to quit a union, and allow non-members to stop paying a fair share fee even as the union continues to negotiate the worker's contract and adjudicate for him or her in workplace issues. Such a decision would cause all union members to foot the bill for contract negotiations and enforcement. It is geared specifically at public sector unions and has the potential to decimate the entire union movement.

(<http://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/friedrichs-v-california-teachers-association/>)

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Post Baccalaureate Scholar: Amanda Dunn

Sharon Belle-Render, Counseling Center



Post baccalaureate scholarship recipient Amanda Dunn with Scholarship Selection Committee Chair Ivan Steen of Albany and UUP President Fred Kowal, right.

Amanda Dunn is earning her master's in school counseling at The College at Brockport. She said her experience as a UUP member through her job as a graduate intern resident director at Brockport has taught her that "collaboration towards a common goal is much more effective than forging the path alone."

Dunn, who is fluent in American Sign Language, was working as a sign language interpreter for an elementary student after graduating from the Rochester Institute of Technology in 2013, when she realized that she wanted to expand beyond that role to become an advocate for children.

"I had a voice, but mine was on loan every day to the student I interpreted for," she wrote in her application. "That was when I decided to change my path to counseling."

She enrolled in a master's program for school counseling at Brockport, where she has a 4.0 grade point average and works as a resident director, supervising a staff of resident assistants in campus housing.

"Amanda manages multiple roles, including student, administrator, role model, advocate, community builder, counselor and mentor," wrote UUP member Sara Kelly, director of residential life/learning communities and student conduct at Brockport.

What to Ask for in the Next Contract?

Dawn Jones, VP for Academics, Mathematics

We are in the process of Contract Negotiations and UUP needs to hear from you. There are online forms where you can give input into what you want. The most important part of this form is the personal story related to the items of need or want you are speaking to. This article discusses some possible areas to consider writing about.

The most important item, consistent across UUP, is a significant increase in salaries. Instead of asking for DSI/DSA, we should make a strong case for a significant percent increase for all of our members. Some have made the argument that we need to ensure that the DSI system, where money is added to your base salary, be discussed at the negotiating table, as opposed to the DSA system which was given in the last contract. There are many issues with DSI/DSA, but the largest is the fact it is discretionary, so it isn't given to everyone who should get an increase. Many who are qualified to receive DSI/DSA don't make the cut, for a variety of reasons.

Instead, I'd like us to suggest that we make the case in the next round of negotiations that we have a significant percentage increase added on to our base

salary for everyone. There is a Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) that SUNY uses to help determine the cap on the percent increase we can raise the student fees each year. One of the HEPI indices is for faculty. If we take the difference in that index and the contractual salary increases over the last 10 years, we see a huge difference. In fact it's about a 9% difference. Of course, that is unrealistic, but we can and should make the case for a 5% across the board increase.

Another area of need is to have Paid Family Leave. In their last negotiations, the PSC (union for CUNY), got Paid Family Leave, and we are in a good position to negotiate. However, again, the Union needs to hear from you on this issue, and other issues. THE PSC also negotiated for an 80% salary when on sabbatical for a year, and we should ask for that as well. Many faculty who cannot afford to go on sabbatical for a year choose a semester when it might not be the most appropriate for the project they are working on. So again, please send your personal story related to these to help us make a strong case.

Whatever your request is, please take a moment to fill out one, or many member input forms. We should make a strong case for each of these items, and any others that are of interest to you.

"Whatever your request is, please take a moment to fill out one, or many member input forms."

Presidents Message, *continued*

Thus we have many problems before us and many enemies who would sacrifice the promise of social opportunity inherent in public education on the altar of neo-liberal ideology. Fortunately, we are not without means; we have each other, and our tremendous collective problem solving potential. What then are some of the possible solutions to these problems? How do we as the UUP mobilize to defend our professional autonomy and integrity, and public higher education at the same time?

Our first answer is engagement. If we do not join the union at near 100% full participation we diminish our own efforts. Currently, full-time membership is close to 90% of full-time faculty and staff. Part-time faculty and staff, however, are majority (almost 60%) agency-fee payers. This should not be surprising. As a class, adjunct faculty and part-time staff are amongst the most exploited of American workers. Further, with the exception of health care, the UUP has had little success negotiating for them. But why is this important? The union's legitimacy as a representative of the faculty and staff is measured by membership rates. Put simply, the UUP will be in a weaker position as a result of the number of agency fee payers. Of course, membership is the first step in engagement. A vital union with active members is clearly in a stronger position to negotiate better contracts.

The second solution is advocacy. The UUP has many opportunities for advocacy and I encourage you to investigate these possibilities (<http://uupinfo.org/legislation/index.php>). Advocacy can take many forms but at the recent Delegate Assembly in Buffalo, I was greatly impressed by NY Assemblyman Sean Ryan and several staffers for Buffalo area senators who took time to meet with us. Repeated questions about the effectiveness of various advocacy strategies produced one clear message: contact your legislator and staff directly at their local office. Going to Albany is great, e-mails are great, phone calls also work - but overwhelmingly, Ryan and the senators' representatives suggested that visiting elected officials and their representatives in their district offices was the most powerful advocacy tool at our disposal. Make an appointment. Bring and leave a summary of your talking points. E-mail a follow-up. Call again to make sure you have been heard.

What is there to say? Please support SUNY. Please support an equitable contract for the UUP. We make huge economic and cultural contributions to our communities. Public higher education is the single most dynamic engine of social opportunity ever created. ETC. The UUP website provides a detailed discussion of talking points relative to the issues [we face: http://uupinfo.org/legislation/pdf/2015PostBudgetLegislativeTalkingPoints.pdf](http://uupinfo.org/legislation/pdf/2015PostBudgetLegislativeTalkingPoints.pdf).

So join the union; act in your union; talk to your elected representatives; stand up for our economic and political rights; defend the integrity and dignity of our professions; support public higher education.

In support of these important efforts, I am pursuing a number of initiatives to better serve you and to create a more transparent, democratic and participatory union.

First, I am putting in place processes to handle any complaints, issues or queries that members have. When you contact me I will open up a case file, keep adequate,

confidential, and anonymous paper work in the UUP office: by law there are only two keys to that office - the UUP secretary has one, I have the other. Second, after an initial contact has been established I will discuss your case with the Labor Relations Specialist, Pat Domaratz, whose technical expertise on all matters labor is the backbone of our organization. Pat Domaratz knows the contract and works hard to make sure you are treated equitably in the workplace. Third, having established protocols and processes, I will move to revitalize the committee structure and engage the body in the important work of maintaining the union. In the past couple of months we have made progress towards that goal and filled a number of vacant leadership positions: I am happy to welcome Sara DiDonato as the new VP for Membership development, Chris Pedersen as the new VP for Part-Time Concerns, Brittany Profit-Rheinwald as the new VP for Publishing. As well, I am happy to welcome new representatives from Brockport REOC, Lisa Gerst and Diana Wong.

Finally, why does any of this matter? We are all talented people who could pursue careers in a variety of places. Why bother going to meetings, fighting for our professional integrity and the vitality of the institution to which we have dedicated ourselves? Because WE matter; because WE make a difference; because SUNY matters - because without publicly funded higher education, America is a caste society. Outside of the publicly subsidized state university systems, a college education is an unobtainable dream for many Americans. My own experience as a first-generation college graduate and child of working immigrants is a good example of this reality. We landed on the hard tarmac of a frozen nation when I was 8 years old. Not speaking English and without a particular set of specialized skills or a college education, my parents worked incredibly hard to put my brother and I forward but could never have accumulated the huge sums necessary to send us to private colleges. Luckily, between Ontario's subsidized university system and New York's SUNY Binghamton I was able to get a PhD in History and pursue a career in my chosen vocation. My brother is similarly gainfully employed and pursuing his professional interests as a function of his education. Imagine a world in which these opportunities did not exist. Families arriving on our shores with nothing would have a brief few years to save the hundreds of thousands of dollars necessary to put their children in college. Working people across the nation, regardless of their backgrounds, would be locked into a caste order wherein birth determined your access to higher education and thus your future earnings, quality of life, and personal satisfaction. Access to higher education and the social and economic benefits therein derived would be reserved for a small percentage of the population. This is NOT an individual or idiosyncratic problem. We would ALL be diminished by this lost opportunity: our economy would not grow as quickly; our citizenry would be stupefied; our human experience degraded.

Public higher education and the professionals who push it forward and maintain its vitality contribute to a greater good. The UUP is dedicated to this project. Your participation in the UUP strengthens all OUR efforts and benefits all of US. To paraphrase Muhammad Ali: It's not ME, it's WE. JOIN. ENGAGE. ADVOCATE. THRIVE.

Substitution of DSA for DSI: A Destructive Change for UUP Members, the College at Brockport and SUNY

James Haynes, Environmental Science & Biology

Karl Marx's famous dictum, "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs," is a wonderful sentiment that does not accurately reflect the nature of most humans. Indeed, while the causes were varied, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the movement of China from a state-controlled to a market economy provide some support for the idea that without economic incentives many workers are not motivated to be highly productive. What do these statements have to do with the future of UUP, the College at Brockport, and SUNY? The answer is in the huge difference in lifetime earnings for UUP members granted merit awards, either in the form of Discretionary Salary Increases (DSI), which are added to our base salaries, or Discretionary Salary Awards (DSA), which are one-time bonuses.

During most years from the early 1970s until 2012 contracts between UUP and the State of New York included pay raises of two types: across the board increases in base salaries on the order of 2-3% per year (a handful of years were 0% or 4%) and DSIs totaling 1% of the salary pool at each campus. Consider the 40-year-career (1974-2014) implications of three salary raise scenarios for an assistant professor or professional staff member hired in 1974 at a base salary of \$12,000 (a very realistic number) who received a \$2,000 increase in year 7 (e.g., promotion to Associate Professor) and a \$3,000 increase in year 14 (e.g., promotion to Head Librarian), both added to base salary:

1. 2.5% increase on base for 39 years: 40-year salary total—**\$1,027,792**
2. 2.5% increase for 39 years plus \$1,000 DSA in 37 years: 40-year salary total—**\$1,064,793**
3. 2.5% increase for 39 years plus \$1,000 DSI on base in 37 years: 40-year salary total—**\$2,063,983**

These data clearly show that one's career earnings at Brockport from 1974-2014 would have been nearly **one million dollars less** in a DSA than a DSI system—with exactly the same annual and promotion increases on base salary in each scenario. The data further show that there is only a miniscule difference in career earnings (\$37,000) between getting and not getting annual DSAs. Never underestimate the long-term power of compound interest, even at low rates, to which DSI has contributed greatly for many long-time SUNY faculty members! Importantly, the inflation rate in the U.S. from 1970 to 2009 averaged 4.53% annually

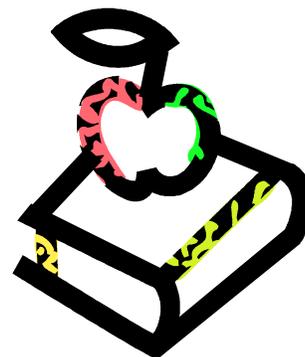
(http://www.inflationdata.com/Inflation/Inflation_Rate/Long_Term_Inflation.asp), which means that even with frequent DSI awards, in addition to promotions and annual increases on base salaries, real buying power for Brockport and SUNY faculty and professional staff members receiving intermediate-value DSIs every year has, at best, stayed even during the past 40 years.

What about future earnings of current Brockport and SUNY faculty and professional staff, assuming a starting salary of \$55,000 and the same conditions described above?

1. 2.5% increase on base for 39 years every year: 40-year salary total—**\$3,926,102**
2. 2.5% increase for 39 years plus \$1,000 DSA every year: 40-year salary total—**\$3,963,102**
3. 2.5% increase for 39 years plus \$1,000 DSI every year: 40-year salary total—**\$4,962,293**

Again, the same relationship exists—nearly **\$1,000,000 of lost career income in a DSA vs. DSI system** and a trivial difference between having and not having a DSA system. Why would anyone choose to work harder for family and the college in a DSA system?

Although inflation-adjusted income has declined for most workers in the U.S. since the 1970s, DSI has been the route for UUP members to stay even, more or less.



“Never underestimate the long-term power of compound interest, even at low rates, to which DSI has contributed greatly for many long-time SUNY faculty members!”



LEAD Institute

UUP is pleased to offer members and chapter leaders this free series of online based workshops as supplemental learning tools to introduce and reinforce union concepts necessary to maintain and grow a vibrant labor union, and assist members in developing their careers.

Workshops can be viewed at member's convenience, and are designed for chapter leaders who assist members directly, for prospective chapter leaders, or as individual workshops that are of interest to individual members.

<https://uuphost.org/leadinstitute/RegFormArchive.php>

Putting the "You" in UUP

Sara Di Donato, VP Membership, Department of Art

"I belong to a union that protects my rights and interests, and that has made it possible for me to become a member of the middle class, and also to remain one."

Many don't consider Labor Day beyond it being a nice day off from work, the last chance before fall for a good barbecue, or the seasonal cut-off date for wearing white pants. Today, more than 100 years after the first Labor Day was celebrated in 1882, it's important to consider the many ways that trade and labor unions have contributed and continue to contribute to our nation, and to remember the many ways that we benefit both individually and collectively because of the existence of unions.

American labor and trade unions fought long and hard for the rights and protections that we often take for granted today. The five-day workweek, minimum wage, health insurance, paid overtime, pensions, worker's compensation, and many other benefits wouldn't exist were it not for the power of the union to represent our needs. Beyond just workplace protections, labor groups have played an important role in the fight for civil rights, for equal pay for women, and for public education.

While watching the first of the Democratic debates the other night, I was reminded again about the importance of the union in my own life and in the lives of many like me. The candidates all referred to the growing problem of our nation's rapidly shrinking middle class, and as I listened to them, I realized how grateful I am to be part of a union, one that has fought and continues to fight for my job security and for fair compensation for the work I do. I belong to a union that protects my rights and interests, and that has made it possible for me to become a member of the middle class, and also to *remain one.*

We owe the rise of a prosperous middle class in this country during the 20th century in large part to the existence of unions and the huge gains they made for working people like me, but sadly, union membership is at a 60 year low.

In 1953, more than 1/3 of Americans belonged to a labor union. By 2013, only 11% percent of Americans were union members, and most of those workers, like all of us at SUNY Brockport, were employed in the public sector. Today, there is a war on unions that threatens everything that organized labor has worked for all these years. Labor unions are being demonized from California to Wisconsin to New York and all points in-between, and little by little, the gains made by unions are being chipped away by cynically named and misleadingly labeled legislation such as "Right to Work". Our hard-won union protections are under a constant onslaught by billionaires and corporate interests who would love nothing better than to undermine all the gains that unions have made for workers. We need to do more to ensure that the union is here to stay.

The first step in joining the fight to protect our unions is to make sure that you are signed up as a member of our union on campus, United University Professions (UUP). The second step is to become actively involved in the Brockport Chapter of UUP. The best way to protect our right to organize is to *use it*. This will help ensure that unions - and all the important rights that they fought for and won- are still around, not only for us, but for the workers of the future. Our union is only as strong as its membership, and I sincerely hope e that you'll all become active, informed, and engaged members of UUP.

Substitution of DSA for DSI, *continued*

It is unknowable how the U.S. and NYS economies will perform during the next 40 years but we face headwinds, including off-shoring of U.S. manufacturing and other jobs to find cheap labor and low environmental standards, union busting, flight of college-educated young people from NYS due to poor job prospects, antagonism toward government generally and taxes specifically, maintaining the viability of Social Security, Medicare and other programs designed to help the least financially secure among us, adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change, and so much more.

To my knowledge UUP opposes any merit-based salary increases on philosophical grounds and has never asked for a DSI provision in a contract. DSI has always been insisted upon by the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER)—in essence DSI has been a gift to our members from the State, which leads to important questions.

1. Is it any wonder, given the current and likely future state of the NYS economy, for the first time the State did not insist on a DSI provision in the last UUP contract? Is it likely the State would ever insist on such a provision again?
2. If not UUP, who will insist on a DSI provision in the next contract, without which our members will experience declining buying power (an average of \$25,000/year) throughout their SUNY careers?
3. Who among us, who could escape the disastrous economic consequences of the current contract's salary regime, would not jump at the chance to escape, especially if they had children?

What should UUP do to promote the best interests of its members and their families, the College at Brockport and SUNY in the next contract and beyond? In my opinion we have three options, none of which involves the DSA approach because it is virtually no different than consistent 2.5% annual increases on base salary:

1. Obtain a contract that adjusts yearly increases on base salary in relation to the Consumer Price Index the previous year. There would be any number of ways to structure this approach but it almost certainly would include a cap on raises during periods of high inflation. Over time we all would inevitably fall behind inflation and there would be no incentive for UUP members to better their families' financial situations by doing more work for/at Brockport. Long-term, I think this approach would lead to high faculty and staff turnover, little enthusiasm for the hard work needed to maintain the current vibrancy of the college, stagnation, diminished reputation and enrollment, failure of

the college as an academic and economic enterprise, and job loss for every Brockport employee.

2. Obtain a contract that relies completely on DSI raises. This approach would bring us in line with 21st century American business practices—to the winners go all the spoils. Those lucky enough to work in the right fields at Brockport would earn DSIs consistently, while the rest...? What kind of college community would we have with this type of financial reward system? Again, I think this approach would lead to high faculty and staff turnover, little enthusiasm for the hard work needed to maintain the current vibrancy of the college, stagnation, diminished reputation and enrollment and, ultimately, failure of the college as an academic and economic enterprise along with job loss for every Brockport employee.
3. Obtain a contract that re-establishes the long-time hybrid model of modest across-the-board raises on base salary that more or less keeps pace with inflation (at least at today's low rates) combined with DSI raises that each year reward those with exceptional productivity in one of teaching, scholarship, or service. This approach, which worked so well for so long, would keep most UUP members' salaries adjusted for today's rate of inflation over the long-term and reward those who choose to go beyond their job descriptions to better their families' financial situations.

We are in a critical period for UUP, the College at Brockport and SUNY. What we achieve during negotiations for the next contract and those to come will influence the professional, financial and emotional health of UUP members, as well as the academic and financial health of the College and SUNY. What we achieve will determine whether we can afford to keep our jobs and, perhaps, whether they will even exist. Only clear thinking, realism and cooperation will give us a chance to help our younger colleagues enjoy the same quality of careers experienced by their older colleagues. Let's get started, always considering the best interests of UUP members to come, and do our parts right (collectively and individually) in the negotiations to come. Having bright professional and personal futures depend on it.

Note 1: The spreadsheet used to produce the numbers shown here is available on request: jhaynes@brockport.edu

Note 2: I thank Christopher Norment and Douglas Wilcox for their constructive criticisms of an earlier draft.

UUP Individual Development Award



The College at Brockport
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We're on the Web!
<http://www.uuphast.org/brockport/>

The Individual Development Award is a competitive grant that supports a variety of professional development activities by College at Brockport employees in the UUP Bargaining Unit to assist them in developing their full professional potential and in preparing for advancement.

Eligibility: Full-time and part-time Brockport employees in the UUP Bargaining Unit at the time of the award and during the dates of the proposed activity. The guiding principle of the Individual Development Awards Program is to affect as many members of the bargaining unit as possible. **Employees are eligible for one funded activity per award period.**

Part-time employees defined as eligible for professional development funds are those who meet the eligibility requirements for 26 week coverage for health benefits. Ex. A part-time employee who is eligible for health benefits during the summer would also be eligible to be funded for a

professional development activity that occurred during the summer whether or not he/she is on the payroll.

Amount of award: The maximum award is \$1,000, because of demand by eligible applicants, typical awards may be under \$500. Awardees can be reimbursed retroactively, but must have original receipts.

Activities must take place between July 2, 2015 - July 1, 2016.

Due date: Complete applications must be received by 5:00pm Monday, November 7, 2015 and Monday, March 6, 2016.

For more information and to view the application please visit:

https://www.brockport.edu/grants/docs/uup_individual_dev_award_guidelines_and_application.pdf



Brockport Chapter Officers & Delegates at the 2015 Fall Delegate Assembly in Buffalo, NY. Back (left to right): Chris Williams, Joe Torre, Robert Schneider, Dawn Jones & Herb Fink. Front (left to right): Danny Too, Sara Di Donato, Susan Orr, Amanda Dunn (scholarship winner) & Sharon Belle-Render.

BROCKPORT CHAPTER OFFICERS 2015-2017

President.....Joe Torre
VP Academics.....Dawn Jones
VP Professionals.....Gary Owens
VP Membership.....Sara Di Donato
VP Retiree Concerns.....Herb Fink
VP Part-time Concerns.....Chris Pedersen
VP Publishing.....Brittany Profit-Rheinwald
VP REOC (Academics).....Diana Wong
VP REOC (Professionals).....Lisa Gerst
Treasurer.....Danny Too

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Identity theft protection available for NYSUT members



TRUE IDENTITY PROTECTION™

NYSUT Member Benefits is excited to announce that its newest endorsed program – ID Watchdog – is now available to all NYSUT members & their families looking for protection against the growing threat of identity and credit theft.

What Do I Get When I Sign Up for ID Watchdog?

- Credit & Cyber Monitoring
- Credit Reports & Scores
- Individual, Individual/Spouse or Family Coverage Available
- Monthly Credit Score Tracker
- High Risk Monitoring

According to Javelin Strategy & Research, an estimated 13.1 million Americans fall victim to identity theft each year. These individuals are hit with approximately \$7,000 in fraudulent charges per person and spend about 330 hours each trying to recover from the effects of identity theft.

ID Watchdog (founded in 2005 as a theft protection service) uses proprietary monitoring technology that alerts members as soon as new or updated information associated with their identity is detected – allowing them to catch fraudulent activity immediately.

To learn more about ID Watchdog, call toll-free 866-513-0823
or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org.