

UNITY

UUP Cobleskill Chapter Newsletter

July 2021



UUP Members Only Student Debt Clinic

Student Loan Stress?

Join us for the UUP Student Debt Clinic, a workshop exclusively for UUP members. This workshop will help you understand the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and Income-driven Repayment plans.

Join us at an upcoming Student Debt Clinic:

August 4, 2021 from 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

August 18, 2021 from 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Virtual events will be held every payday, but if you would like a chapter-specific clinic, contact your Chapter President.

**Sign up for the next virtual clinic at:
go.aft.org/StudentDebtClinicRSVP**

CONTACT US

SUNY Cobleskill
UUP Chapter Office
125 Schenectady Avenue
Old Gym 001
Cobleskill, NY 12043
(518) 255-5250
Cobleskill@uupmail.org

Visit us on the web at www.uuphast.org/cobleskill/

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DCAA Grace Period Extension and Increase to Dependent Eligibility

Age

I have some good news. UUP received word from the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) that the grace period for the Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAA) 2020 plan year has been extended. This is a change that UUP and other state employee unions pressed for in an April meeting with GOER representatives.

The current grace period ended March 31, 2021. Employees can now submit claims for expenses incurred between January 1, 2020 - September 15, 2021 for reimbursement from their 2020 DCAA. The grace period will temporarily expand the ability for employees to utilize any unused amounts in their 2020 DCAA that would normally be forfeited at the end of a plan year. The grace period is applicable for the DCAA only, as

long as the employee had a DCAA as of December 31, 2020.

Employees also can seek reimbursement for children who turned 13 during the 2020 plan year from their 2020 DCAA.

The last day to submit DCAA claims is September 30, 2021 for expenses incurred through September 15, 2021.

GOER sent an email notifying all employees with a remaining 2020 DCAA balance, but please feel free to distribute this message to colleagues. Employees can e-mail fsa@goer.ny.gov or call Wage-Works/Health Equity at 1-800-358-7202 with any questions about the grace period. Visit <https://goer.ny.gov/dependent-care-advantage-account> to access the IRS guidelines of covered services.

Thank you,
Fred

American Families Plan Social Media Toolkit

Colleagues,

As you know, UUP has launched a letter-writing campaign focused on advocating for key provisions to be included in the American Families Plan. This work is part of the ongoing joint efforts with our coalition partners that we met with last week during the Higher Education Labor Summit. If you haven't already, please join me in sending a letter to New York's congressional representatives [here](#).

To increase awareness, **UUP has developed a social media toolkit with graphics and sample posts that can be used to easily share the letter via personal and chapter social media pages. You can view that toolkit [here](#).**

Thank you for your continued support as we advocate for SUNY and public higher education at the federal level.

In Solidarity,
Fred



Help support
NYSUT-endorsed
candidates and
campaign
committees that
are pro-public
education and
pro-labor.

Click onto the link
below for more
information:

[https://
uupinfo.org/
votecope/](https://uupinfo.org/votecope/)

Or you may
contact:

Dr. Salvador Rivera
Vote-Cope
Coordinator
(518) 255-6238
rivas@cobleskill.edu

Virtual Student Debt Clinics— August dates

Over 12 million people in the United States are struggling to make their monthly student loan payments, and millions more see economic and personal opportunities pass as they prioritize paying down their debt. Does this sound like you or someone you know?

Many of these people may qualify for free federal programs that can help reduce their monthly payments and eventually lead to student loan forgiveness, but these lifeline programs are significantly under-enrolled. In an effort to help our members get access to these programs, United University Professions and the American Federation of Teachers are proud to host a Student Debt Clinic which will provide information on how to enroll in Income-Driven Repayment

plans and Public Service Loan Forgiveness.

We will be offering virtual Members Only Student Debt Clinics on the following dates:

Wednesday, August 4, 2021 from 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM via webinar.

Wednesday, August 18, 2021 from 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM via webinar.

To attend one of the virtual **Members Only Student Debt Clinics**, you must pre-register here: <http://go.aft.org/StudentDebtClinicRSVP>.

From the “student debt clinic” drop down menu, please select the UUP clinic that you are interested in attending – they are labeled “UUP [Virtual Student Debt Clinic] [date] [time].” In the affiliate field, type in the full name of our local (United University Professions), and it will autofill after a few keystrokes.

Registration is first come, first serve, and we must cap attendance for a single clinic at 75 participants in order to ensure that we are able to provide maximum assistance to attendees. Registration will close 48 hours prior to the virtual clinic. Webinar login information will be provided prior to the clinic to all who register. [If you can’t make one of these virtual clinics, don’t worry – we’re planning on offering them every payday. If you want to help host a chapter-specific virtual clinic, please let us know!]

Managing your student loan debt is the first step in taking on the inequities which plague our system of higher education, and we look forward to seeing you at the virtual Student Debt Clinic and working together to find a collective solution to the problems of student debt and college affordability! Register now!



*News from the desk of
Dr. Frederick E. Kowal, President*

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of myself and UUP's Chief Negotiator Bret Benjamin, I am pleased to announce UUP's Negotiations Team for the upcoming round of contract negotiations.

I am grateful to each and every one of them for their willingness to serve. This is one of the most demanding and important volunteer positions in our union. The team will begin its official work next month, followed by a series of campus visits (both virtual and in-person) during the Fall semester to solicit member feedback on priorities for the coming round of negotiations. As we move forward, expect to see a member survey as well as a dedicated area for 2022 negotiations on UUP's website which will be updated on a regular basis.

Negotiations Team:

Bret Benjamin, Chair
Redetha Abraham-Nichols
Jennifer Drake
Mindy Heath
Shoshana Hershkowitz
Jude Jayatilleke
Aaron Major
Pamela Malone
Jackie Pittsley
Benita Roth
Idalia Torres
Bill Tusang

Albany Chapter
Downstate Medical Center Chapter
Cortland Chapter
Upstate Medical University Chapter
Stony Brook Chapter
Buffalo State Chapter
Albany Chapter
Empire State College Chapter
Cortland Chapter
Binghamton Chapter
Fredonia Chapter
Cobleskill Chapter

In solidarity,
Fred

Pre-Retirement Workshop: July 20th and 22nd

We still have some open spots for this month's Pre-Retirement Workshop on Tuesday and Thursday July 20th and July 22nd from 12-1pm. We split the workshop over two days so we could cover the items covered in an hour so it can be done at lunchtime. Part 1 deals with Medicare and trading in sick days to pay for health insurance and Part 2 deals with the available benefits such as Vision and Dental care that staying a member of the union provides. The Chair of the Retiree Membership Committee Charlie McAteer usually attends this session and will give you information on maintaining membership when you retiree and why it is important. You may take these workshops as many times as you like as the information is rather complex especially with Medicare. Also you can take these two workshops in any order as they don't depend on each other, also next month we will be doing the work-

shops in the evening. These Workshops have been very popular over the past year and we have had over 2,000 members attend and I encourage every member to attend, even new members so you understand the great benefits we have negotiated for you over the past 45+ years. Walter Apple does a great job at running these workshops and is able to answer individual members questions. We **do not** record these workshops because of privacy concerns and because the information does change and we want to make sure you have the most current instructions. Let me know if you have any questions.

To register for the workshop use the below link:
<https://forms.gle/45YM8aSKBc1EmYKu6>

Tom Hoey
State Wide Membership Development Officer
United University Professions



UUP Executive Board Members

Bill Tusang, President

(518) 255-5205

Christina Trees, VP Academics

(518) 255-5119

Wendi Richards, VP Professionals

(518) 255-5870

Candy Hofmann, Secretary

(518) 255-5015

Emma Paden, Treasurer

Kevin Moore, Officer for Contingents & Part Time Members

(518) 255-5767

Thomas Hickey, Grievance Chair

(518) 255-5106

Mitch Tomaszewicz, Membership Chair

(518) 255-6244

TBA, Affirmative Action Officer

Salvador Rivera, Vote-Cope Coordinator

(518) 255-6238

Cliff DaVis, Officer for Retirees

Joseph McCarthy, Professional Delegate

Michelle Couture, Labor Relations Specialist

michelle.couture @nysut.org

Bulletin Newsletter Editor, Patricia Lepore Moody

Chapter Assistant, Patricia Lepore Moody

UUP Chapter Office

001 Old Gym

Monday & Tuesday

8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Thursday

8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.