



**April 28, 2025**



**UUP Oneonta at the Spring Delegate Assembly:**

**Seated: Rich Tyler, Loraine Tyler, and Penina Kamina; Standing:**

**Jessie Simpauco, Jeri Anne Jerminario, Achim Koeddermann, Ed Wesnofske, Shirley Clark**

### **Spring Delegate Assembly**

#### **April 4-5 2025 Report**

***by Ed Wesnofske, Oneonta Academic Chapter Delegate***

The Spring Delegate Assembly, one of two yearly governance meetings, of United University Professions took place at the Crown-Plaza Desmond Hotel in Colonie. There were 241 Delegates from thirty-one of the thirty-two Chapters in the State University located around the State.

Attending from Oneonta were professional delegates Shirley Clark, Chapter President, Jeri Anne Jerminario and Jessie Simpauco as observer. Academic delegates from Oneonta present included Penina Kamina, Achim Koeddermann, Mike McAvoy, Rich Tyler, Loraine Tyler and Ed Wesnofske. UUP chapter delegation size is determined by the number of professional and academic employee Chapter memberships on a ratio of one delegate per 75 members. The number of professional employee members at Oneonta in the membership reports shows an entitlement to 6 professional delegates revealing an opportunity for more participation in UUP Statewide affairs from the professional ranks of the Oneonta Chapter. Academic representation is numbered at 7 delegates.

The business of this Spring 2025 Delegate Assembly centered on three features: the officer reports and discussion, breakout meetings for Committees with business and for workshops on information and union tactics at the State and Chapter levels, and plenary actions of the Delegate Assembly.

Officer reports, led by President Kowal, outlined the threats from Federal decisions to cut and freeze financial support and grants for education, particularly higher education. Complicating the financial picture is threatened cuts in Federal support for New York State in programs like Medicaid and education which could bleed planned resources for public higher education in the State Budget. Federal financial threats, it was noted, are also targeting Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness activities on campuses in employment, programming, teaching and research. UUP leadership called for vocal protest and advocacy in response to Federal efforts to exercise political control of research and teaching content in the nation's educational sector.

UUP President Kowal also called for member activity to advocate for UUP budget priorities in New York's budget which are increases in operating aid to financially distressed campuses; State support for SUNY hospitals to cover employee benefits and debt service in the manner of other state agencies; capital funding for Downstate and Upstate hospitals above what the Governor's budget proposed and an increase in EOP funding.

The appointment of the UUP Negotiations Team for a new contract was announced with Brett Benjamin of Albany as Chief Negotiator,

In break out sessions for Committee work, delegates discussed issues in Disability Rights and Concerns, Diversity-Equity-Inclusion, Membership, Women's Rights, Veterans Affairs, Academic Medical Programs and the Solidarity Committees. Workshops on Academic Freedom, Anti-Discrimination Law, Taylor Law, Student Opinion on Teaching were presented by UUP State leaders and Labor Relations Specialists from NYSUT and UUP.

In the session for Academic Delegates, the topic of UUP's December 2024 statement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) was raised. Comments of concern were made about its generality and lack of substance. The statement can be found at: <https://uupinfo.org/resources/>. Also discussed was the effect of NIH cut offs on medical research at the University of Buffalo Medical School. Suspended and canceled research left researchers from abroad suddenly without employment and an immigration status requirement of finding a position within 30 days or otherwise leave the United States. The program head solicited from those present help to find employment to some of the affected researchers.

UUP was also seeking talks with SUNY management about implementing a temporary solution for interrupted service for academic and professional employees occurring from grant suspension and cancellations under Trump Administration directives. That temporary solution would involve not counting the period of interrupted SUNY service for the calculation of time for consideration of permanent and continuing appointments. Professional records involved in research projects, including publications, are often a requisite for achieving those appointments. A similar program was agreed to by SUNY and UUP during the disruptions from the Covid-19 era.

In plenary action, the delegates approved the 2025-26 budget for the fiscal year beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>. The budget, prepared by the Finance Committee and reviewed by the Executive Board, amounted to \$30,672,000 covering statewide operations, support for campus Chapter operations including reimbursement to the NY State for UUP Statewide officer and Chapter leader release time, and affiliate dues to NYSUT and AFT. Besides the approval of the budget, delegates also approved clarifying action related to the nomination, election and certification of delegates found in the UUP Constitution and the UUP Operations Manual.

Additional Delegate engagement and information was provided by the presence of the UUP Benefits Trust platform where about 20 vendors and service representatives were available for questions and friendly chats.

The Fall 2025 Delegate Assembly is scheduled to take place at the Albany Hilton October 24-25. Delegates and officers elected this March and April for the two year term will be certified in the coming days for participation.

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### **President's Report- April 2025**

*by Shirley Clark, UUP Oneonta Chapter President*

#### **Spring 2025 Delegate Assembly**

President Shirley Clark, Vice President for Professionals Jessie Simpauco, Treasurer Richard Tyler, Officer for Retirees Loraine Tyler, and Delegates Ed Wesnofske, Penina Kamina, Michael McAvoy, and Jerianne Jerminario represented Oneonta at the **Spring 2025 Delegate Assembly** held in Albany from **April 3–5, 2025**. The event saw a commendable level of participation from the Oneonta chapter. Notably, this was Vice President Simpauco's inaugural attendance at a Delegate Assembly. With new Professional Delegates appearing on this year's ballot, it is the chapter's intention to encourage broader participation among Professional members at the upcoming Fall Delegate Assembly, thereby ensuring continued and robust representation of Oneonta UUP.

#### **Panel Discussion on Student Engagement**

On another note, we unfortunately had to delay the panel discussion on the issue of **Student Classroom Engagement and Attendance**. The session, titled "*Confronting Disengagement and Absence*," will be moved to the Fall 2025 semester and we will announce a date closer to that timeframe.

#### ***Oneonta UUP Visibility Week – April 28 to May 1***

Under the leadership of our dedicated **Membership Development Officer, Matthew Unangst**, we're proud to announce **Oneonta UUP Visibility Week**, taking place from **April 28 through May 1**. This week-long

celebration of union solidarity and campus community will kick off with a warm welcome from **Oneonta UUP Chapter President Shirley Clark** on April 28.

Throughout the week, we have an exciting lineup of events and activities:

- **April 28**

We're especially excited to welcome **Fred Kowal, UUP Statewide President**, who will be joining us to discuss the **Current Political Climate and UUP**.

**12:00 PM – 1:00 PM** in **Le Café, Morris Hall**

That same day, join us for a screening of the film *"Union"* from **4–6 PM** at the **Red Dragon Theatre** in **Hunt Union**.

- **April 29**

**Academic Freedom Workshop**

Led by **Chris Sielaff**, Labor Relations Specialist

**11:45 AM – 12:30 PM** at the **Waterfront Café, Hunt Union**

Later that day, we'll be teaming up with the Athletics Department at the **Oneonta Baseball Game** (4:00 PM) for a fun, spirited event featuring **hamburgers and hotdogs**. Wear your union colors and show your pride—**CSEA** will be joining us for this event, too!

- **April 30**

**Art & Labor Discussion**

Bring your lunch and gather in the **Art Gallery** for a thoughtful conversation on the intersection of creativity and labor.

- **May 1**

**Professional Workshop**

Presented by **Carolyn Kube**, UUP Statewide Vice President for Professionals

We'll wrap up the week with a **solidarity rally on the IRC Quad**, in collaboration with **CSEA** on **May 1<sup>st</sup> from 3:30-4:30**. Let's show the campus that it's **union workers who keep SUNY Oneonta running strong!**

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to **Matthew Unangst** for his tremendous effort and coordination in organizing this week of events.

This is our moment to stand together, build unity, and demonstrate unwavering support for all Oneonta workers. Let's make this week one to remember!

### **New Oneonta UUP Chapter Website**

I'm excited to invite everyone to check out our brand-new Oneonta UUP Chapter website:

<https://uuphost.org/oneonta/>. The site will officially launch on **May 1st**, but we welcome you to explore it now and get familiar with its features.

As you browse, if you notice anything missing or have suggestions for content you'd like to see added, please don't hesitate to reach out. You can contact Jessie Simpauco at [jessie\\_simpauco@live.com](mailto:jessie_simpauco@live.com) so we can make any necessary updates before our upcoming Chapter Meeting.

I also want to take a moment to recognize the tremendous effort that went into creating this fresh, user-friendly website. This was a major undertaking, and it came together so smoothly thanks to the hard work and dedication of our Communications Committee. Special thanks to Committee Chair **Matthew Unangst**, along with members **Jessie Simpauco**, **Ethan Fox**, and **Anthony Nicols**. Their technical skills, creativity, and teamwork were essential to bringing this project to life, and I'm deeply grateful for their contributions.

Finally, a heartfelt thank-you to **John Bugyi**, Associate Director for Marketing, for generously sharing high-resolution springtime images of SUNY Oneonta. His contributions significantly elevated the visual appeal of the site.

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## Appreciating Diversity in Communication

*By John Chiang and Penina Kamina*

How many ball games were there in 2024 Olympics? Football, basketball, tennis ball, volleyball... Broadly outside the Olympics, how many games are there that use a spherical ball? Take a few minutes to consider a familiar ball game versus one you are not well acquainted with i.e., softball versus netball or squash versus racquetball. All these ball games have some commonalities and differences.

Taking time to notice and wonder about issues or things like ball games, do often lead to appreciation of what is different and unfamiliar. The same is true for several other tangible and intangible things that exist in life, or at home, or in the workplace. An example that comes to mind is language i.e., Spanish, English, Swahili, Arabic, and much more. Google says there are over 7000 languages spoken in the world. Just as every game has its rules, so is every language rule governed. We use language as a primary means to communicate, and thus communication is also rule-governed.

Communication matters in every dimension of our social life. It matters when, where, and how we produce an utterance with certain words to express a particular meaning, to perform a social action, and to achieve mutual understanding. Most language theories maintain that people who are brought up in the same linguistic and sociocultural milieu can naturally communicate and that, mutual understanding is a natural occurrence.

Conversely people from different linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds often fail to understand each other even though they use a common language, for example, English as a lingua franca to communicate.

In today's globalized world, the English language is most widely adopted in business, education, entertainment, politics, and technology. In many Asian countries, to go global is to acquire the English language skills. The global practice of English often evokes communicators' sense of language ownership and language attitudes. For example, there is always a perceived hierarchical structure in the interaction between native speakers and nonnative speakers. Native speakers of English are often associated with the powerful group due to their linguistic status whereas nonnative speakers are perceived as disadvantaged. Thus, within a campus community, nonnative speaking, be they employees or students face biases due to their linguistic backgrounds, which is often the case under discussion in the United States.

The United State is a country of immigrants as it is taught in every public school. There should be an expectedly wide range of variations in the daily use of the English language as the first language of speakers influences their practice of the second language. Deborah Tannen (1989), for example, showed that all the dimensions of communication could vary from one culture to another. Communicators do not simply stay on the linguistic variations, and they make all sorts of interpretations ranging from individuals' personal traits to broad social and ethnic identities. For example, some foreign accents are perceived as dull or rude and they are often associated to the speakers' social and economic status. These stereotypes often ignore the complexity of language acquisition, and the social, cultural, and historical context related to linguistic variations. They can contribute to prejudice and discrimination, leading to challenges in employment, education, and social integration. Hence, it is important to approach linguistic variations with openness, understanding, and appreciation, recognizing that they reflect the rich cultural backgrounds of communicators.

Promoting cultural awareness and linguistic diversity is key in addressing these stereotypes and fostering more inclusive environments in a diverse society.



## **Confronting Implicit Bias: Fostering Inclusivity and Appreciation for Diversity**

*by Ashley Rincon*

Implicit bias refers to the unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that influence our perceptions and decisions, often based on characteristics like race, gender, or language. These biases can shape how we interact with others, even in diverse environments such as campuses and workplaces, where they may hinder collaboration or create barriers to inclusion. While implicit bias is not a matter of personal fault, it can unintentionally perpetuate inequalities, even when individuals aim to be fair and inclusive.

Addressing implicit bias requires self-awareness and intentional action. By reflecting on our assumptions and seeking diverse perspectives, we can begin to challenge these biases. Practicing active listening and fostering open dialogue are key steps toward creating environments where everyone feels seen, respected, and empowered. In doing so, we not only reduce bias but deepen our appreciation for diversity, fostering more inclusive and equitable spaces for all.

## **DEIB Talk on Religious Inclusivity**

*by Erin Francisco*

On March 4th during the lunch hour in Craven Lounge, Morris Conference Center, Erin Francisco delivered a talk on Religion and Inclusivity. The presentation emphasized religious and spiritual traditions as a rich and important part of many people's lives and sense of belonging and explored best practices for creating inclusive classroom, workplace, and community environments through the lens of religious diversity.

The benefits of religious diversity are many, including promoting empathy and enhancing the quality of life for all. Research suggests that an awareness of and/or study of various religious traditions increases appreciation for difference and mutual respect within communities. Inclusive environments also bring greater benefit to communities, such as boosting feelings of acceptance and value among members of the community which results in more engagement and commitment to the work each person does. Religious inclusion and being flexible when it comes to accommodation for religious observances (such as time off for religious holidays not observed by the dominant religious culture of a region or providing appropriate space for prayer during the workday) are about creating an environment where employees can practice their faith without fear of discrimination or prejudice. Supportive practices for religious inclusivity, like many aspects of inclusion, are

connected to improved productivity, higher retention of students and employees, higher morale, and a more positive organizational culture overall.

The presentation also shared a number of resources in support of religious diversity and inclusion, particularly the NYS Attorney General's **guide to Religious Rights** in the workplace, the Office of Equity & Inclusion's homepage where the **policy about observances of religious holidays** is housed, as well as Harvard Divinity School's diverse **multifaith calendar**. Attendees were invited to reflect on their own personal histories with religious and spiritual traditions and consider how religious diversity and inclusion manifests in their own work and personal spaces.

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**New Disposal System Optimizes Dining Hall Food Waste**  
***by Rachel Kornhauser, Associate Director of Sustainability***

*(Note: This article originally appeared in the Winter 2025 Reflections Magazine)*

A new food waste management system introduced last fall has reduced the amount of material sent to a landfill from SUNY Oneonta's two dining halls by 50%, supporting the University's core value of sustainability and positioning the institution as a pioneer. It's the first college or university in New York state to deploy the Grind2Energy system, manufactured by Whirlpool Corporation.

"Sustainability is integrated into all aspects of the University, and we aim to make decisions that reduce the University's environmental impact," says Associate Director of Sustainability Rachel Kornhauser. "I am so pleased that we finally have a solution to recycle food waste from our dining halls. Grind2Energy is enabling us to meet the requirements of the New York State Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Law and other waste reduction initiatives."

The Grind2Energy system was identified and obtained for the University by Oneonta Auxiliary Services (OAS), a not-for-profit corporation that oversees campus dining, retail operations, catering, and laundry services, as well as Red Dragon Outfitters, ATMs, and textbook sales, among other services.



**The Grind2Energy Machine is simple to use and lightens the workload of the dining hall staff.**

OAS is a longtime sustainability leader on campus, says Executive Director Diane Williams '84. "In our dining facilities, we stopped using trays because they had to be washed. We've eliminated all single-use items, with the exception of napkins. This includes straws, but we offer compostable straws for people who absolutely need them," Williams says. "When purchasing new equipment, we look for products that use the least amount of water and energy. We recycle cooking oil."

How best to handle food waste generated by Mills and Wilsbach dining halls has been a longstanding challenge, Williams says. "We've done a lot in the last few years to cut down on the amount of food waste by encouraging students to take only what they can eat, and we give our pre-consumer food scraps to a local pig farm (Field of Stones Farm in Davenport, New York). But at the end of the day, we still have a lot of waste.

"People say, 'Why don't you just compost?' We're talking about 4.5 tons of food waste per week, which is an inordinate amount to try to compost. And our county doesn't have a facility capable of handling that large of an ongoing amount."

This is where Grind2Energy comes in. Over the summer, the equipment was installed, and dining hall staff were trained in its operation. The system was up and running in August and saw its first full month of use in September.

**Pre-Consumer vs. Post-Consumer Food Waste**

The dining halls' pre-consumer food waste consists of anything that is trimmed from a piece of food before it's served. Examples include fruit or vegetable skin, ends, or seeds, all of which are transported to Field of Stones Farm to become pig food.

Post-consumer waste is any leftover, uneaten food that comes to the dish room—including bones; grease; and meat, fruit, and vegetable scraps—and dining materials that cannot be recycled and must be disposed of as garbage.

### **Grind2Energy: How it Works**

Two Grind2Energy units have been installed on campus—in the dish rooms at Mills Hall and Wilsbach Hall. When plates are sent to the dish room, food scraps are scraped into a grinder and mixed with water to create a slurry, which is piped into an outside tank.

Once a month, Casella Waste Management empties and transports the mixture to an anaerobic digestion facility, Wagner Farms in Poestenkill, New York. The methane created through the digestive process is captured and turned into renewable energy, the water from the mixture is separated for reuse, and the remaining compost becomes fertilizer.

According to Grind2Energy, 14 pounds of repurposed food waste translates into a pound of fertilizer, and one pound of food waste can power a 10-watt LED light bulb for 17 hours. When those pounds become tons, the impact of the repurposed material becomes substantial.

### **Impressive Results**

After the system's first full month of use, in September 2024, collected data showed a total of 7.89 tons of nonrecyclable dining hall waste—such as plastic wrap, foil, and used paper products—went to landfill. That's a whopping reduction of 57% from the previous September's 18.53 tons.

“This is my favorite sustainability initiative that I've seen in a long time. It is easy to use and has made the handling of food waste much easier,” says Rebecca Molloy, general manager of Sodexo Dining Services. “The system lowers the risk of a work-related injury, as it lightens the load and frequency of garbage runs. And it reduces the likelihood of garbage bags splitting due to heavy contents that need to be lifted.”

Molloy says buy-in from the dining hall staff was immediate. “They love that they don't have so much garbage to take out multiple times a day,” she says. “They're happy that they went from 20 to 30 bags of garbage to one or two bags of paper waste.”

And less material heading to dumpsters means fewer garbage truck trips to campus to empty those dumpsters—yet another sustainability benefit.

**Group Effort**

Many hands were involved in bringing the Grind2Energy project to fruition. Williams cites the University's Office of Facilities, Safety and Physical Plant and Office of Sustainability, as well as Sodexo, which operates the campus dining program, Casella Waste Management, and Allison Plecki, commercial operations manager of InSinkErator/Grind2Energy at Whirlpool, who came to campus to train the dining hall staff and ensure the newly installed equipment worked properly. "It was a truly collaborative effort," she says.

**Spreading the Word**

Handling food waste is a challenge for every university and college that wants to be sustainable, Williams says. She looks forward to sharing Oneonta's success with her compatriots across the state in January at the SUNY Auxiliary Services Association annual conference. Williams will lead a panel discussion featuring several individuals who've been involved with the Oneonta project.

"I think a lot of my colleagues will be very interested in what we've been able to do," she says, "and will follow our lead, viewing Grind2Energy as a viable, sustainable solution for handling their food waste."

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**UUP Oneonta Chapter Meeting- Discussion on Current Events and the Effect on****Higher Ed: Wednesday April 2th, 12 PM: Otsego Grille, Morris Complex**

*By Shirley Clark, Chapter President*

Attending- in Person and by Zoom: (26)

Shirley Clark, Teresa DeSantis (CWA Chapter Assistant: non-voter), Penina Kamina, Achim Koeddermann, Grazyna Kamburowska, Jeri Anne Jerminario, Michael Woytach, Mary Lynn Bensen, Sravan Perisetty, Yan Lang, Jessie Simpauco, Alayna Vander Veer, Ethan Fox, Loraine Tyler, Rich Tyler, Matt Unangst, Michelle Lopez, Sarah Dunlap, Michael McAvoy, Sean Shannon, Barbara Hein, Gary Wickham, Maria Wyman, Ron Bishop, Melissa Lavin, and one other.

The April 2nd Chapter Meeting was an informal gathering focused on the increasingly tense political climate. A faculty member reported a troubling incident: while traveling, they were detained at an airport and interrogated

about a grant that included language on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Although they were eventually allowed to re-enter the country, the situation was deeply unsettling.

This is a serious warning. If you plan to travel outside the United States, exercise extreme caution. The fact that airport authorities have access to this level of information about our employees is both alarming and unacceptable.

***Shirley A. Clark***  
***Oneonta UUP Chapter President***

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### **Chapter Events:**



The poster features a red header with the UUP Oneonta logo and the title 'WEEK OF LABOR POWER' in large white letters. Below the title, it encourages members to learn about labor activism history and build solidarity. A wavy black and white line separates the header from the event schedule. The schedule lists four days with specific events, times, and locations.

**WEEK OF LABOR POWER**

Join members across campus learn about the history of labor activism at SUNY Oneonta, and build solidarity across generations & unions!  
For more info and to RSVP, visit: [bit.ly/WeekOfPower](https://bit.ly/WeekOfPower)

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|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MON, APRIL 28</b>  | <b>Navigating The Challenges Facing Higher Education</b><br>12 PM – Morris Hall, Le Cafe<br>Featuring UUP President Fred Kowal<br><b>"UNION: The Movie" Screening</b><br>4 PM – Hunt Union, Red Dragon Theatre           |
| <b>TUES, APRIL 29</b> | <b>Academic Freedom Workshop</b><br>11:30 AM – Hunt Union<br>with NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist Chris Sielaff<br><b>UUP Supports the Red Dragons: SUNY Oneonta v. John Jay</b><br>3:45 PM – Clubhouse, Baseball Field |
| <b>WED, APRIL 30</b>  | <b>Art &amp; Labor Brown Bag Lunch</b><br>12:30 PM – Galleries at SUNY Oneonta (106 Fine Arts)                                                                                                                           |
| <b>THURS, MAY 1</b>   | <b>Professionals Lunch</b><br>12 PM – Morris Hall, Le Cafe<br><b>Rally with CSEA!</b><br>3:30 PM – IRC Quad A                                                                                                            |

# MAY EVENTS

## **WORKLOAD FOR PROFESSIONALS**

Tuesday, May 6th — 12-1 PM

Morris – Le Cafe

## **CHAPTER MEETING**

Wednesday, May 7th — 12-1 PM

Morris – Otsego Grille

## **SPRING PICNIC**

Sunday, May 18th — 11 AM-4 PM

College Camp — **RSVP REQUIRED!**

*get involved*

*uuphost.org/oneonta*

To RSVP, please send an email to Chapter Assistant Teresa DeSantis at [oneonta@uupmail.org](mailto:oneonta@uupmail.org)  
RSVP Cutoff is one week and 1 day before the event.



## **JOIN US FOR THE SPRING PICNIC!**

### **Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup> 11 am- 4 pm**



Spring has Sprung! Let's celebrate the end of the school year together! The UUP Oneonta Chapter Annual Spring Picnic will be held on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at the College Camp from 11 AM to 4 PM, with the food being served at 1 PM. RSVP required, but no deposit is needed for this year. You can bring up to 3 guests. Please let us know how many people you plan to bring to the picnic. **Spring Picnic RSVP cutoff is Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup>.** If for some reason you find you cannot come after you have RSVP'd, please let us know as soon as you can. Thank you for your support and we hope to see you at the UUP Oneonta Spring Picnic!

### **Disclaimer:**

The UUP Oneonta website and its publications, including The Sentinel and the UUP- Date! may contain views and opinions which are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any other author, agency, employer, organization, or affiliate, including but not limited to the UUP Oneonta Chapter or its officers, United University Professions (UUP) or its statewide or national affiliates.



## **UUP Oneonta Website:**

To go to the New UUP Oneonta Chapter website, go to the following link at <https://uuphost.org/oneonta/>

The UUP Oneonta Chapter website is constantly updating, evolving, and expanding. It contains information about member benefits and many other important topics.

The statewide UUP website is located at <https://uupinfo.org>

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## **UUP Oneonta Chapter- Executive Board Contact List:**

### **Executive Board Officers:**

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Membership Development Officers: Matthew Unangst [Matthew.Unangst@oneonta.edu](mailto:Matthew.Unangst@oneonta.edu) Campus  
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Penina Kamina- Member of the following UUP Statewide Committees: Black Latina Faculty and Staff  
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