

NYSUT RA delegates approve unification vote

Nearly 100 UUP members were among the 2,000 delegates to NYSUT's 2006 Representative Assembly voting in favor of the unification of NYSUT with NEA/NY. The constitutional amendment joining the two unions passed unanimously during the RA, which took place in Rochester May 4-6. The vote concludes an eight-year effort to unite the two labor unions.

"This is an historic day," NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi told delegates.

"Forty thousand educators will join us to speak with one voice for 570,000 members.

"Uniting with NEA/NY gives us a stronger, more credible voice for our professions, our students, our patients and the working families of New York, he added."

"Far more unites us than divides us," said NEA/NY President Robin Rapaport.

Pres praises UUP

In his first address to the RA as NYSUT President, Iannuzzi praised UUP as a great higher ed local, and noted the need to meet the challenges facing higher education.

"Online baccalaureate programs and the continued abuse of part-timers minimize the value of full-time on-campus faculty, which we know is critical to quality higher education," Iannuzzi said.

Among the other highlights of the 2006 RA was a vote to endorse Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton in her bid for re-election. Telling the delegates that they need to stand up and be heard in Washington for education, Clinton said, "The Bush administration has shown more hostility to education than any in modern history." She said higher education budget cuts for student loans and Pell grants are "a recipe for disaster," making it harder for families to send their children to college.

State Senate Minority Leader and Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor David Paterson and state Comptroller Alan Hevesi also spoke at the RA.

UMU's Smith honored

Phil Smith, VP for Academics at Upstate Medical University and former statewide VP for Academics, was honored as the co-recipient of the NYSUT "Higher Education Member of the Year."

Smith, a professor of cell and molecular biology at UMU, credited UUP with making his teaching career all the more rewarding.

"Teaching is what it's all about; I can't think of a better profession," Smith told the RA audience. "Equally exciting has been the opportunity to work with my colleagues in the union for the betterment of their working conditions."



Above, (from left) Harvey Inventasch of Cortland, and Lydia Johnson and Jeanne Galbraith of Stony Brook HSC, raise the banner in support of Sen. Hillary Clinton, who received NYSUT's endorsement during the RA.

UMU VP for Academics Phil Smith (left) addresses the RA after receiving the 2006 NYSUT Higher Education Member of the Year award.

Photos by Karen L. Mattison

Action on resolutions

RA delegates also acted on 118 resolutions, eight of which were sponsored or co-sponsored by UUP. Seven of the eight were approved, dealing with subjects ranging from support for fair trade products, to a salary study for part-timers, to opposition to the so-called Academic Bill of Rights. The

eight resolution regarding expanded Medicare coverage was referred to NYSUT's Board of Directors.

RA delegates also raised more than \$113,000 for the NYSUT Katrina Relief Fund, bringing NYSUT's overall collection for relief efforts to nearly \$634,000.

Reminders/Upcoming meetings

May

16—UUP Advocacy Day, Albany

22-23—NYSUT Committee of 100, Albany

29—UUP Administrative office closed for Memorial Day

May

30—AFT Higher Ed Program & Policy Council meeting, Washington, D.C.

June

1-2—AFT Higher Ed Program & Policy Council meeting, Washington, D.C.

- 6—Retiree Task Force meeting, NYSUT HQ
- 8—NYSUT Executive Committee meeting, NYSUT HQ
- 8-11—AAUP Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.
- 23—UUP Executive Board meeting, HQ
- 26—NYSUT Board of Directors meeting, NYSUT HQ