

Political action tops Winter DA

UUP President Bill Scheuerman and NYSUT Executive VP Alan Lubin made one thing perfectly clear to delegates to the 2006 Winter DA in Albany: Political action is vital if the unions hope to beat back the attacks on public higher education.

According to Scheuerman, UUP wants members, faculty, staff, students, parents and other SUNY supporters to call their lawmakers, asking them to reject the governor's Executive Budget proposal and to include more money for the state university and its hospitals. He hopes to ring up more than 200,000 calls to — (877) 255-9417 — during the last week of February. The phone number is also prominent in the union's "Make a Good University Great" TV advertising campaign, which airs the week of Feb. 25 in Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, Long Island, New York City, Rochester and Syracuse.

Throughout the DA, Scheuerman emphasized how the Executive Budget shortchanges SUNY and completely disregards the chancellor and trustees' call for an extra \$221 million for the state-operated campuses and hospitals. Included in the chancellor's request was \$25.5 million for more academic and professional faculty, which is the cornerstone of the union's legislative agenda.

"This year, the chancellor came to UUP and asked, 'What is your agenda?' We told him, and he



NYSUT Executive VP Alan Lubin addresses the delegation.

Photo by Karen L. Mattison

said, "OK, that's our agenda." Scheuerman said. "Unfortunately, the governor responded with a slash-and-burn budget for SUNY." He noted that the tax money the governor plans to spend on SUNY is one-third of 1%, or a mere \$3.6 million. "It sends a message that improving the state university system is a low priority," Scheuerman added.

Keynote speaker Lubin echoed that sentiment. He said it's obvious that "the governor doesn't think public education is worth the investment."

Delegates later adopted eight resolutions dealing with universal health care and Medicare, the Patriot Act, retiree issues, the war in Iraq, voting rights, U.S. Supreme Court nominations and special recognition to longtime UUPer José Feliciano

UUP blasts Pataki budget

Gov. George Pataki's Executive Budget provides only a fraction of the funds SUNY needs to grow.

"SUNY's budget request would have allowed the university to grow from a good higher education system to a great one, in part by increasing the number of full-time faculty so SUNY could enroll more eligible students and not turn them away," UUP President Bill Scheuerman said.

Scheuerman noted that the governor's budget does not allocate any funds to hire additional full-time teaching faculty, despite a clear need for more academic and professional faculty.

"SUNY's student population has grown by 44,000 at the same time it's lost 1,000 full-time faculty. Unless that shortage is corrected, thousands of students will continue to be closed out of classes or denied access altogether," Scheuerman emphasized.

UUP also opposes the governor's proposal to turn SUNY hospitals into private, not-for-profit corporations.

The union is working with state lawmakers to revise the budget to better reflect the needs of SUNY.

of SUNY Stony Brook. Delegates approved a constitutional amendment to change the name of the Central Administration Chapter to System Administration, and opted to re-examine a constitutional amendment to establish a Retiree Chapter, which is expected to again come before delegates at the 2006 Fall DA.

Check out the March issue of *The Voice* for more detailed information on the DA and UUP's political response to the governor's flawed budget proposal.

Reminders/upcoming meetings: February

- 7—UUP Legislative Luncheon, LOB, Albany
- 14—University Center/HSC/Optomety Advocacy Day, Albany
- 15—Proposed constitutional amendments due to the UUP Administrative Office by 5 p.m.
- 15—Technology Sector College breakfast, Albany
- 17—UUP Executive Board meeting, Albany
- 20—UUP Administrative Office closed for President's Day
- 24—Candidate statements for elective statewide office due to UUP by 5 p.m.

28—NYSUT Higher Ed Lobby Day, Albany

March

- 1—Deadline for UUP Journalism Contest
- 2-5—AFT Higher Education Issues Conference, Orlando
- 7—University College/EOP/EOC Advocacy Day, Albany
- 10-11—UUP Leadership Workshops, Cooperstown
- 17-18—UUP Chapter Presidents Retreat, Bolton Landing
- 20-21—NYSUT Committee of 100, Albany
- 31—UUP Executive Board meeting, Albany

Nursing conferences scheduled

UUP and NYSUT will host back-to-back nursing conferences scheduled for March 31 and April 1.

For more information on the UUP conference, contact UUP Secretary Eileen Landy at elandy@uupmail.org or by telephone at (800) 342-4206. Registration forms are due Feb. 28 and are available on the UUP Web site at www.uupinfo.org.

Registration forms for the NYSUT conference are due March 6.

Call (518) 213-6000 for more details.