

NYSUT, UUP advocacy days make headway in Albany

UUPers are personally taking the union's call for more full-time faculty and an appeal to save the three SUNY hospitals directly to state lawmakers. UUP members visited the offices of 60 state lawmakers in Albany during the union's first two legislative advocacy days — NYSUT Higher Ed Advocacy Day Feb. 27, and University Center/Health Science Center/Optomety Advocacy Day March 6.

Glenn McNitt, SUNY Outreach Committee chair, said the response from lawmakers was "overwhelmingly positive." The union's advocates fanned out across the Capitol and the Legislative Office Building, hammering home the need for an additional \$25 million in the state budget to hire as many as 350 new full-time faculty. They also made the case for keeping the SUNY hospitals in Brooklyn, Syracuse and Stony Brook in the public sector.

"If we privatize (Upstate Medical University), we lose the burn center, the trauma center, and beds in the children's hospital because they don't make money," UUPer Dave Peckham of UMU told Assemblyman Darrel Aubertine. Aubertine said he agreed with the arguments against privatization, saying, "You're preaching to the choir."

Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples lent her strong opposition to privatization. "It doesn't make sense to privatize a state institution," she told the UUP advocates. "I think we can work with you on this."

The SUNY hospitals were well represented by UUP. Nearly 20 union members from the Brooklyn HSC, including UUP Treasurer Rowena Blackman-Stroud, showed up to advocate along with the delegation from Upstate.

But the advocacy on behalf of the hospitals extended beyond the issue of privatization.



Photo by Don Feldstein.



Photo by Tim Raab

Above, SUNY Outreach Chair Glenn McNitt, right, talks with the Rev. Assemblyman Karim Camara about the threat to privatize Upstate Medical University in Syracuse. Upstate UUPers Phil Smith, left, and Violeta Cuenca join in the discussion during NYSUT Higher Education Advocacy Day.

Left, UUPers, Bill Borgstede of ESF and Dave Peckham, right, and Brian Tappen, left, explain to Assemblyman William Magnarelli, second from left, the importance of keeping SUNY hospitals in the public sector. The UUPers met with several lawmakers during a recent UUP Advocacy Day.

"For years, the hospitals have been running at an operational deficit," McNitt said. "That needs to be addressed."

"Our budget is only 8-10% state money. We generate the rest ourselves," Mike Lyon of Upstate pointed out.

The UUPers asked lawmakers for a \$22 million increase in the state subsidy to the SUNY hospitals, \$35 million to begin closing the hospitals' annual operating deficits, and \$5 million for Buffalo HSC.

UUPers will have more chances to drive home the need for passage of the union's legislative priorities during three remaining advocacy days, each Tuesday through the end of March.

"The next three weeks are crucial," UUP President Bill Scheurman said. "This is the year where we really have to turn the corner."

The new state budget is due by April 1, the beginning of the state's new fiscal year.

- Reminders/Upcoming meetings**
- MAR 9-10** —Chapter Presidents/VPs Retreat, New Paltz
 - MAR 13** —Librarian/Part-Timer/Univ. College/EOP/EOC Advocacy Day, Albany
 - MAR 19-20** —NYSUT Committee of 100, Albany
 - MAR 27** —Retiree/NYSTI Advocacy Day, Albany
 - MAR 29-31** —AFT Higher Education Issues Conference, Portland, Ore.

- APR 13-14** —Spring Leadership Workshops, Cooperstown
- APR 20-21** —2007 Spring DA, Albany
- APR 26-28** —2007 NYSUT RA, Washington, D.C.
- MAY 7-8** —NYSUT Committee of 100, Albany
- MAY 28** —UUP Administrative Office closed for Memorial Day

(excerpts of selected newsclips)

TIMES UNION — March 6

SUNY extends enrollment record

Enrollment in the State University of New York system reached nearly 418,000 students in the fall, the largest total since SUNY's creation in 1948.

The figures, part of final fall enrollment data released Monday, represented the ninth consecutive year enrollment has increased. Minority and full-time student enrollment in particular are at all-time highs.

The 64-campus SUNY system's growth has been cited repeatedly in recent weeks, as both SUNY Chancellor John Ryan and the union that represents 32,000 faculty members urge legislators to add millions of dollars to Gov. Eliot Spitzer's proposed SUNY budget for next year.

"Because of long-term insufficient funding for enrollment growth and ongoing structural deficits, SUNY administrators cut full-time faculty," William Scheuerman, president of United University Professors, said in a recent statement. "The lack of sufficient faculty threatens institutional quality and access. That's no way to run a university."

Among the highlights of the fall data released Monday was a 2.6% increase in minority students. SUNY enrolled nearly 82,000 in the fall, almost 20% of total enrollment.

The number of full-time students increased 2.1% to 290,688. That's also a SUNY record and nearly 25% higher than a decade ago.

"Record levels of students studying at SUNY will lead to a better educated workforce for New York, a workforce ready to meet the challenges of today's knowledge economy," Ryan said in a written statement.



The Washington Post — March 6

In diversity push, top universities enrolling more black immigrants

The nation's most elite colleges and universities are bolstering their black student populations by enrolling large numbers of immigrants from Africa, the West Indies and Latin America, according to a study published recently in the *American Journal of Education*.

Immigrants, who make up 13% of the nation's college-age black population, account for more than a quarter of black students at Ivy League and other selective universities, according to the study, produced by Princeton University and the University of Pennsylvania.

The large representation of black immigrants developed as schools' focus shifted from restitution for decades of excluding black Americans from campuses to embracing wider diversity, the study's authors said. The more elite the school, the more black immigrants are enrolled.

"A lot of these institutions have been promoting the increase in their black populations, but

clearly this increase reflects a growth in their black immigrant populations," said Camille Z. Charles, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania who co-authored the study.

Black American scholars such as Henry Louis Gates and Lani Guinier, two Harvard University professors, have said that white educators are skirting long-held missions to resolve historic wrongs against native black Americans by enrolling immigrants who look like them.

In an interview, Guinier said that the chasm has less to do with immigrants and more to do with admissions officers who rely on tests that wealthier students, including black immigrants, can afford to prepare for.

"In part, it has to do with coming from a country, especially those educated in Caribbean and African countries, where blacks were in the majority and did not experience the stigma that black children did in the United States," Guinier said. "The fathers of these students tend to be much better educated. This is not just true of immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean, this is true across the board. We have an admissions system that prefers wealth, that rewards wealth and calls it merit."

Officials at several top universities, including Harvard, the University of North Carolina and Princeton, did not respond to calls or e-mail messages seeking comment on the study.

The University of Pennsylvania's dean of admissions, Lee Stetson, said that although the university takes note of students' backgrounds, "we do not focus specifically on whether students are Caribbean American, African American or African. We do not involve ourselves with exact roots.

"They bring diversity to the campus," Stetson said. "We try to find students from all walks of life, including African American students who have their roots in the southeastern United States."

The study relied on data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen, which included 1,028 black students, 281 of whom were immigrants. Black immigrants were defined as students who emigrated directly from Africa or the Caribbean, including countries such as Guyana that are on the South American continent and nations in the black diaspora or their American-born sons and daughters.

Stanford, Duke, Columbia, Vanderbilt and Harvard universities had the highest percentages of black students in their fall 2006 freshman classes, according to the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*. The percentage of black freshmen at elite colleges and universities ranged from a high of 12.3% at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to 1.4% at the California Institute of Technology.

The study's authors considered several possibilities to explain the large number of immigrant

students. They noted that black immigrants tend to come from the uppermost classes of their native land and tend to be highly motivated to succeed. The authors also considered that black immigrants posted higher grades and test scores, and that admissions officers were impressed by their work ethic.



The New York Times — March 2

House passes bill that helps unions organize

Defying a veto threat from the White House, the House of Representatives yesterday approved legislation that would make it far easier for unions to organize workers.

The bill, whose prospects for enactment are troubled at best, would enable employees at a given workplace to unionize as soon as a majority signed cards saying they favored a union. Under current law, companies have a right to insist on a secret-ballot election determining their workers' choice. Labor leaders and many Democrats say such elections are often poisoned by employer coercion and intimidation.

Yesterday's vote, which followed a fierce debate, was 241 to 185, largely along party lines. Thirteen Republicans voted for the bill, and two Democrats against.

The measure is organized labor's No. 1 legislative priority, and Democrats call it vital to rebuilding unions and bolstering the nation's middle class.

But several Republicans described it as little more than a Democratic reward for labor's help in last November's elections. The Republicans argued that the bill, the Employee Free Choice Act, was a betrayal of workers' access to a secret-ballot election. Some called it the "employee intimidation act," maintaining that the process of majority sign-up could well entail union organizers' bullying workers into signing pro-union cards.

Republican leaders are already prepared to block the measure in the Senate, and the White House said Wednesday that President Bush would veto it should it emerge from Congress. Yesterday's vote fell short of the two-thirds majority that would be needed to override.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi called the bill "the most important labor law reform legislation of this generation," adding: "But this legislation is about more than labor law. It's about basic workers' rights. It's about majority rule."

The measure has other provisions as well. Under one, federal officials would appoint an arbitrator to set wages and benefits for workers who did not obtain a first contract within 120 days of unionizing. The bill also calls for significantly increasing penalties when employers, contrary to law, fire workers who support a union.