

Clinton, labor leaders boost Gillibrand campaign

With 12 days remaining until Election Day, former President Bill Clinton came to Albany Oct. 26 and urged more than 1,000 supporters of Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand to pull out all the stops to help her win a seat in Congress.

“Get out there and talk to people and look them in the eye and tell them what a great person she is and why we need her in Congress,” Clinton said.

The former president told the audience they can help the Democrats take back Congress on Nov. 7, by talking about the issues with all voters, including registered Republicans.

“Even some Republicans are fed up with what’s going on in Washington and they may be ready to switch to our side.”

UUP and its affiliate NYSUT are doing their part in efforts to help Gillibrand win the House seat in the 20th District. In his remarks to the



UUP President Bill Scheuerman tells a crowd of Gillibrand supporters that the U.S. congressional candidate is a proponent of public education.

—Photo by Karen L. Mattison

supporters, UUP President Bill Scheuerman cited the attacks on education and higher education as reasons to support a change in Congress.

“They have been cutting aid to help students and families pay for college,” Scheuerman said. “It’s time we had someone in Congress fighting for higher ed and our other issues, and that someone is Kirsten Gillibrand.”

NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi and Executive VP Alan Lubin also addressed the crowd, echoing the union’s support for the Hudson attorney in her bid for Congress.

UUP and NYSUT members have also been staffing phone banks and participating in other get-out-the-vote activities on behalf of Gillibrand and other Democratic and Republican union-endorsed candidates.



Left to right: Pat Chakalis, Brockport and Loraine Kotary, Minnie Jenkins and Jim Engle all of Morrisville, discuss issues at SUNY’s EOCs.

UUP committed to EOCs

Members of the statewide Educational Opportunity Centers Coalition met last week at UUP headquarters to address the issues that affect both students and faculty at the state’s 12 EOCs.

The coalition includes members of NYSUT, UUP and Professional Staff Congress/CUNY, and is chaired by UUP Executive Board member Lorna Arrington of SUNY Buffalo.

UUP President Bill Scheuerman listened as coalition members discussed many of the issues at SUNY’s EOCs. He then promised the union’s legislative and financial support in implementing strategies to confront the mounting challenges.

“UUP will stand hard and fast with the EOCs,” Scheuerman said.

Support for the EOCs is in tandem with other UUP efforts to promote ethnic diversity within SUNY. At last month’s Fall DA in Rochester, Scheuerman said the union was instrumental in gaining SUNY’s assurance to create a diversity office, and that he recently named a statewide task force to study racially based pay inequities at SUNY.

UUP helps lead successful voter registration drive

The SUNY Voter Empowerment Challenge, a nonpartisan voter registration drive involving all 64 SUNY campuses, registered more than 11,000 students to vote in this November’s election.

“Registering these thousands of students gives them a key to the future in helping to determine who their elected leaders will be, getting them active in molding the future of their communities and our nation,” said UUP president Bill Scheuerman. UUP joined with the New York Public Interest Research Group, NYSUT, the SUNY Student Assembly and Rock the Vote! in the SUNY

Voter Empowerment Challenge.

Each campus competed to register the most students to vote during the five-week drive. SUNY Albany led the way, registering more than 2,500 students. SUNY Optometry in Manhattan registered the highest percentage, signing up nearly 35% of its student body.

“Students eagerly registered to vote so they have a voice and can make a difference,” said Jerome Garrett, a statewide coordinator for the SUNY Voter Empowerment Challenge and a UUP/NYSUT intern. “They want a say in what’s going on.”

The SUNY Albany campus will be rewarded with a concert. SUNY Optometry will be honored with a ceremony and a plaque.

Reminders/Upcoming meetings

November

- 10-12—Community College Conference, Lake George
- 17-19—AFT Special Leadership Conference, Washington, D.C.
- 23-24—UUP office closed for Thanksgiving

December

- 1—Executive Board
- 8-10—Negotiations Comm./Team Retreat, Lake George
- 25-Jan. 1—UUP and NYSUT offices closed

(excerpts of selected newsclips)

Oct. 25

TIMES UNION—New leader weathers trial by fire at UAlbany

University at Albany Provost Susan Herbst successfully opened the school year in the wake of President Kermit Hall's death, and weathered a recent firestorm of publicity from three football players being charged with raping a fellow student.

Along the way, she won the respect of the University Council and John Ryan, chancellor of the State University of New York.

Ryan officially named Herbst officer-in-charge of the university Tuesday after weeks of assessing her skills. Though many on campus believed that Herbst was already serving as officer-in-charge, she had not formally been given the title to lead the multi-discipline university with more than 17,000 full-time students. She will serve in the post until a permanent president is hired.

Herbst, 43, was hired as provost and executive vice president in September 2005 and was Hall's second in command. Previously, she had been a professor of political science and dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Temple University.

Being officer-in-charge means that Herbst has the responsibilities and authority of a campus president. Ryan said he chose that designation instead of "interim president" because it does not require a vote from the SUNY Board of Trustees, and it also gives Herbst the option of applying for the president's job. Interim presidents are not allowed to apply for the permanent position.

On Tuesday, Herbst said she was honored to be the officer-in-charge and she appreciated the opportunity to apply for the permanent position, but said she wasn't sure yet if she would.

"Administrators are always trying to prove that we are doing a good job," she said. "I'm used to having a huge amount of responsibility."

Herbst said she wants to carry Hall's plans forward and "hopefully force some new paths."

Candace Merbler, president of UAlbany's UUP chapter, said she has worked well with Herbst.

"We are happy that Chancellor Ryan has made this announcement official," Merbler said. "I look forward to working with her in the coming months."

Oct. 23

TIMES UNION—Best and brightest invited to excel at UAlbany

University's Honors College welcomes its inaugural class of 125 freshmen, who have a live-in director

On a warm October evening, a half-dozen young scholars drank Perrier from wineglasses in a dorm room at the University at Albany and discussed German board games and the potential of alien life.

The students were not your typical freshmen, and the dorm room was not the standard undergraduate residence.

The freshmen belong to the university's new Honors College, a program for the best and brightest students. They earned grades of 91 or above

during their high school career and scored at least 1,300 on their SATs.

The invitation-only Honors College welcomed its first class of 125 freshmen this fall. Jeffrey Haugaard, a psychologist, was hired away from Cornell University to run it. Haugaard said he wants to create an enriching atmosphere for the students, both inside and outside the classroom, which brings us to his dorm room.

"There's a sense of seriousness about these students," he said. "Academically, they push themselves."

They are the type of students who read their assignments before class and participate in discussion and ask questions. They thrive on deep discussions and thought-provoking ideas.

"I want to challenge them over the course of their four years at the university to continue their development as a student, as a scholar and as someone who creates knowledge," Haugaard said.

Oct. 16

The Legislative Gazette—High SUNY enrollment spurs debate on hiring new professors

Last month, SUNY Chancellor John Ryan announced enrollment for SUNY colleges is continuously and rapidly increasing.

According to Ryan, enrollment has increased every year since 1997, and starting in 2003, the rate at which the enrollment climbed each year was record-breaking.

UUP President William Scheuerman responded to the news by calling for new faculty to accommodate the new students.

Scheuerman said that over the last 10 years, SUNY has grown by 56,000 students and lost 11,000 full-time faculty members in the state-operated campuses alone. With this new resurgence of students, Scheuerman is calling on SUNY to factor more faculty members into their next budget.

SUNY Media Relations Director David Henahan pointed out that the University is in the process of hiring new professors, but UUP says the number of planned hires will not be adequate.

"In public higher education across the nation, one of the greatest challenges we face is maintaining a sufficient level of full-time faculty," Henahan said.

"In the budget recently enacted, SUNY has requested and received an additional \$25 million to support the enrollment of 7,400 students, which will enable SUNY to hire approximately 300 new faculty members," he said.

In addition, 35 new full-time faculty members and 19 adjunct faculty members will be hired for New York's specialty programs, such as engineering programs, nursing and other health care programs, according to Henahan.

"That's a start," said Denyce Duncan Lacy, UUP director of communications. "That's going to help accommodate the enrollment level that we had before they announced an increase."

SUNY also received \$6 million to enable SUNY to hire 33 new research faculty members for the

Empire Innovation Program.

"We are not disagreeing with SUNY at all; it's very good that they got that money and that the Legislature approved it," Lacy said. "We are saying, however, that in light of the increased enrollment, we would hope that SUNY would again request additional funds to meet the needs of the increased enrollment."

For the fall of 2006, SUNY enrolled the highest number of students in its history; 291,451 students. That equals a 2.4% increase since last year and a 25% increase over the past 10 years, according to SUNY's report.

Scheuerman predicts that if SUNY doesn't hire more full-time faculty to coincide with the higher enrollment, students would be forced to attend colleges outside of New York. According to SUNY, more than 80% of SUNY graduates enter the workforce in New York state after graduation, making it possible to send educated young people into the working world in the same state.

Oct. 15

Newsday—SUNY's new boss

In his 15 months at the helm, SUNY Chancellor John Ryan has acquired a reputation for getting out and about among the 424,000-student, 64-campus SUNY system that stretches from upstate Plattsburgh to Stony Brook on Long Island. The idea, he says, is to get to know college officials and the particular needs of their institutions.

Most important, key legislators say Ryan also was a familiar presence at the state Capitol, especially during budget deliberations. In many ways, the effectiveness of Ryan's predecessor had suffered in Albany because he previously had served as the governor's budget director. In Ryan, lawmakers say, SUNY has a more independent figure at the top, and that has translated into powerful advocacy for SUNY.

That leadership has helped SUNY win its biggest budget in about 20 years — \$135.7 million in new state funding that helped boost SUNY's total core operating budget to \$2.26 billion, \$1.22 billion of which comes from state taxpayer funds, according to SUNY figures.

"I think the important message is we had our best budget in two decades," Ryan said, expressing gratitude to legislative leaders Assemblman Ron Canestrari (D-Cohoes) and Sen. Kenneth LaValle (R-Port Jefferson) and Gov. George Pataki.

Carl Wiezalis, president of SUNY's University Faculty Senate, said Ryan's previous roles in many arenas — as a military commander, as president of SUNY Maritime College, acting president of the University at Albany, then interim chancellor and now chancellor — have enabled Ryan to get a good handle on the complex SUNY apparatus.

Wiezalis said Ryan brings an "air of high character and truthfulness, such that I really believe legislators believe that he is describing real need ... and not hyperbolizing."