

THE Echo

uup
Summer 2021

#VaxUpUUP

*Reaching out to
unvaccinated
members*



Also
inside:



Statewide elections: Two new VPs,
plus Executive Board actions



DA, retreat: Members, leaders
eager for new semester



Member profile: Lizette Rivera
helps student veterans

The Echo is an online publication of United University Professions (UUP), bargaining agent for the more than 37,000 academic and professional employees of the State University of New York.

Contact UUP at P.O. Box 15143, Albany, New York 12212-5143. Telephone (518) 640-6600 or toll-free at (800) 342-4206. UUP's internet site is www.uupinfo.org. UUP is Local 2190 of the American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO) and is affiliated with NYSUT and the National Education Association.

UUP STATEWIDE OFFICERS



FREDERICK E. KOWAL
President



THOMAS J. TUCKER
Vice President
for Professionals



JAMIE F. DANGLER
Vice President
for Academics



JERI O'BRYAN-LOSEE
Secretary/Treasurer



THOMAS C. HOEY
Membership
Development Officer

UUP MEDIA AND PUBLICATIONS

MICHAEL LISI
Director of Media and Publications

MARK HEMPSTEAD
Graphic Designer and Writer

DARRYL McGRATH
Managing Editor, The Echo
Communications Specialist

ANGELL M. VILLAFANE
Communications Assistant



FRED'S MESSAGE...

Unmasked and back in the office, but not out of the woods, UUP President Fred Kowal urges all UUP members to get vaccinated. Watch the video [HERE](#).



Political action

12 Sen. Schumer a friend to UUP

ALSO:

- 4 Infrastructure bill could be good for labor
- 17 UUP a leader at Higher Ed Labor Summit
- 19 Members, Executive Board, support Prof. Hannah-Jones

WHAT'S INSIDE this issue

- 3 UUP officers resume chapter visits
- 4 Labor Notes
- 6 UUP launches campaign to encourage member vaccination
- 8 Spring DA looks beyond pandemic
- 9 Executive Board acts; UUP's fiscal health sound
- 10 ESF member helps student veterans
- 13 Member Spotlight
- 14 Members named Distinguished Faculty
- 16 UUP in the News
- 17 Higher Ed Labor Summit
- 18 New statewide VPs to be elected; chapter presidents gather
- 23 *UUPConnect Coronavirus* newsletter gets new name

**FOLLOW UUP
ON FACEBOOK, TWITTER
AND INSTAGRAM!**



Go to www.UUPinfo.org
to sign up today.

Enjoy reading *The Voice*
online at www.uupinfo.org

Then go ahead and opt out
of the print version at
uupinfo.org/voice/optout.php



AFTCN

Back to campus

Statewide officers to resume visiting chapters

BY DARRYL MCGRATH

Nothing beats an in-person conversation when members want to connect with their union. UUP knows that this tried-and-true method gives members a chance to offer ideas, concerns and questions, and that it also lets statewide officers learn about the membership. At the chapter level, one-on-one discussions have also enabled department representatives to talk up the benefits of UUP membership with bargaining unit members who have not yet joined. A personal greeting and a chat over coffee work better than an email or a note left in a mailbox, every time.

But this kind of outreach was almost impossible during the worst of the coronavirus pandemic, when thousands of UUP members had to work from home, and



For their first campus visit since spring 2020, UUP President Fred Kowal and Statewide Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee spent July 8 at Stony Brook HSC for a chapter celebration of UUP members. From left: members Kenneth Piorun and James Williams, O'Bryan-Losee, chapter President Carolyn Kube, and Kowal.



Stony Brook HSC Chapter member Michelle Torio, left, is congratulated by chapter President Carolyn Kube for winning the grand prize in the raffle at the chapter's Union Appreciation Day, July 8.

chapter social functions and activities halted. Statewide officers stopped their visits to chapters, and all the union's business unfolded over computer screens during virtual delegate assemblies, rallies and town halls with lawmakers.

Thanking SB HSC members in person

"Our first concern, always, was the safety of students, our members and the communities where campuses are based,"

UUP President Fred Kowal said. "So even when the state started to allow limited gatherings, we avoided travel to our chapters, however much we wanted to get back to this part of serving our members. We've just been very careful, and that was the right way to be."

Now, with the state's pandemic emergency restrictions lifted, with campuses coming back to life, and SUNY planning a fully in-person, on-campus fall semester, UUP officers are getting back in the field. Kowal, who tries to visit every UUP chapter at least once every year, kicked off his resumption of chapter visits with a day at Stony Brook HSC July 8. Statewide Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee joined him. Both welcomed the opportunity to thank those members in person for all that they did during the worst of the pandemic.

"It's great to be able to visit chapters again," Kowal said. "This is the best way for us to learn what's going on with members. We'll probably always do a mix of virtual and in-person communications with

members, because that can allow members to participate in union events in case of severe weather. And we are trying to reduce the use of cars. But in-person visits to chapters are extremely beneficial for all, and this is a part of my work that I genuinely missed."

A chance to learn about all UUP offers

Their trip coincided with Stony Brook HSC's "UUP's Union Appreciation Day." Chapter officers, including Chapter President Carolyn Kube—who is also statewide vice president-elect for professionals—staffed a table outside the hospital walkway, to distribute information about UUP, and also to let members enter a raffle for \$50 gift cards as well as a grand prize drawing of an Apple watch, which went to member Michelle Torio. "This was a way to reconnect with our members after the COVID crisis," Kube said. "We had 215 members stop by the table, and get questions answered about student debt and benefits we offer to our members."

Chapters announce officer visits ahead of time. Please watch your chapter website and email for news of an upcoming visit.

Infrastructure bill could be a boon for union workers

President Biden vowed to be a labor-friendly president, and so far, he's keeping that pledge. The president's leanings are seen in everything from how he's reshaping the National Labor Relations Board; to legislation with family friendly policies, such as the child tax credit that starts this month; to executive orders that clearly have a pro-worker tone.

So it's no surprise that the massive infrastructure bill that the president hopes to get through Congress has a definite union slant. As *The Echo* was being prepared for publication, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer had just announced a test vote on this bill, which cleared the House July 1 but has hit roadblocks in the Senate.

A small group of Democratic and Republican senators that reached a compromise on the bill is still wrangling over how to pay for it. The Democrats want higher taxes on the country's richest residents (an idea that New Yorkers heard about quite a bit during state budget negotiations) and Republicans are balking at that plan.

Still, the bill seems to be creeping toward passage, and now is the time when conservative-to-moderate examination of its fine print begins. The Biden administration did not even try to conceal the fact that this bill will favor labor. For starters, many of the jobs created for all the new construction will be in areas that tend to have union membership, such as the skilled trades. However, as the *Wall Street Journal* noted in its recent detailed analysis of the bill, the common perception that skilled trades are all union jobs is wrong; union positions are the minority of jobs in utility,



transportation, warehousing and telecommunications work.

Biden's American Rescue Plan went through Congress on speed dial; it was law well before the storied first 100 days of the new administration. The infrastructure bill? Not so fast. But it does appear to be moving toward its destination: President Biden's desk, for signature.

Read more about the bill [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

UUP encourages members to ask Congress to fund SUNY and all public higher education in The American Families Plan, which is the second part of the infrastructure package. This plan will provide funding for child care, education and other services to support families and working Americans. To write to your member of Congress, go [HERE](#).



Labor tackles exploitive "body shops"

The labor movement is known for taking on the cause of exploited people. Unions have done this for more than a century in the United States, as they fought for a five-day work week, the end of child labor and the introduction of the minimum wage.

Now, unions are tackling a problem many people have never even heard of: the so-called "body shops" in the construction industry which take advantage of former inmates who have just been released from prison and are desperate for work.

Unscrupulous employment services put these men up for hire in a practice that has been starkly described as little better than a

human auction. The men who work through body shops have few protections and no benefits.

A rally in May by the Construction and General Building Laborers' Local 79 of the Laborers' International Union of North America called attention to the plight of former inmates who find work through body shops. Laborers' Local 79 has joined with the Mason Tenders' District Council in New York City in a campaign called Laborers Fight Back to publicize this problem.

Read more about this problem and find links to information about the Laborers Fight Back campaign [HERE](#).

Not so fast!

Judges halt cutoff of unemployment in two states



Wouldn't it have just been easier to have run out the clock on the federal pandemic unemployment benefits?

The actions of governors in more than half the country beg that question, given that they eliminated all or part of the federal government's federally funded pandemic relief aid to unemployed people. In most cases, the federal programs would have stopped in early September anyhow. And as *The Echo* was being prepared for publication, state courts in Maryland and Indiana had at least temporari-

ly halted the cutoff of benefits.

As for the claims of officials in the states that cut off the benefits that they did this to get people back to work? They probably wouldn't say that if they'd ever been on unemployment. It would be vastly easier to just set your alarm clock and head out the door to a job every morning than to sign up for unemployment. But if your job used to be in an industry that stopped functioning during the coronavirus pandemic (think travel, hotels and restaurants), the choices have been limited in the last 15 months.

[HERE](#) is a list of the states that cut off unemployment benefits partially or entirely before the September expiration date of the federal programs.

University of Vermont staffers unionize

Welcome to the hundreds of University of Vermont staff members who recently voted to form a union – never an easy task, and especially difficult during the coronavirus pandemic.

Nearly 500 of the 650 staff workers voted in the election, and about 80% of them backed the formation of UVM Staff United in June. A month earlier, the clerical and technical employees at UVM had also voted to join AFT. The two groups of employees are organized as separate locals, but they expect to join forces at the bargaining table to negotiate their contracts, as representatives of the locals say they share many interests and concerns. Combined, the two locals represent more than 1,300 employees.

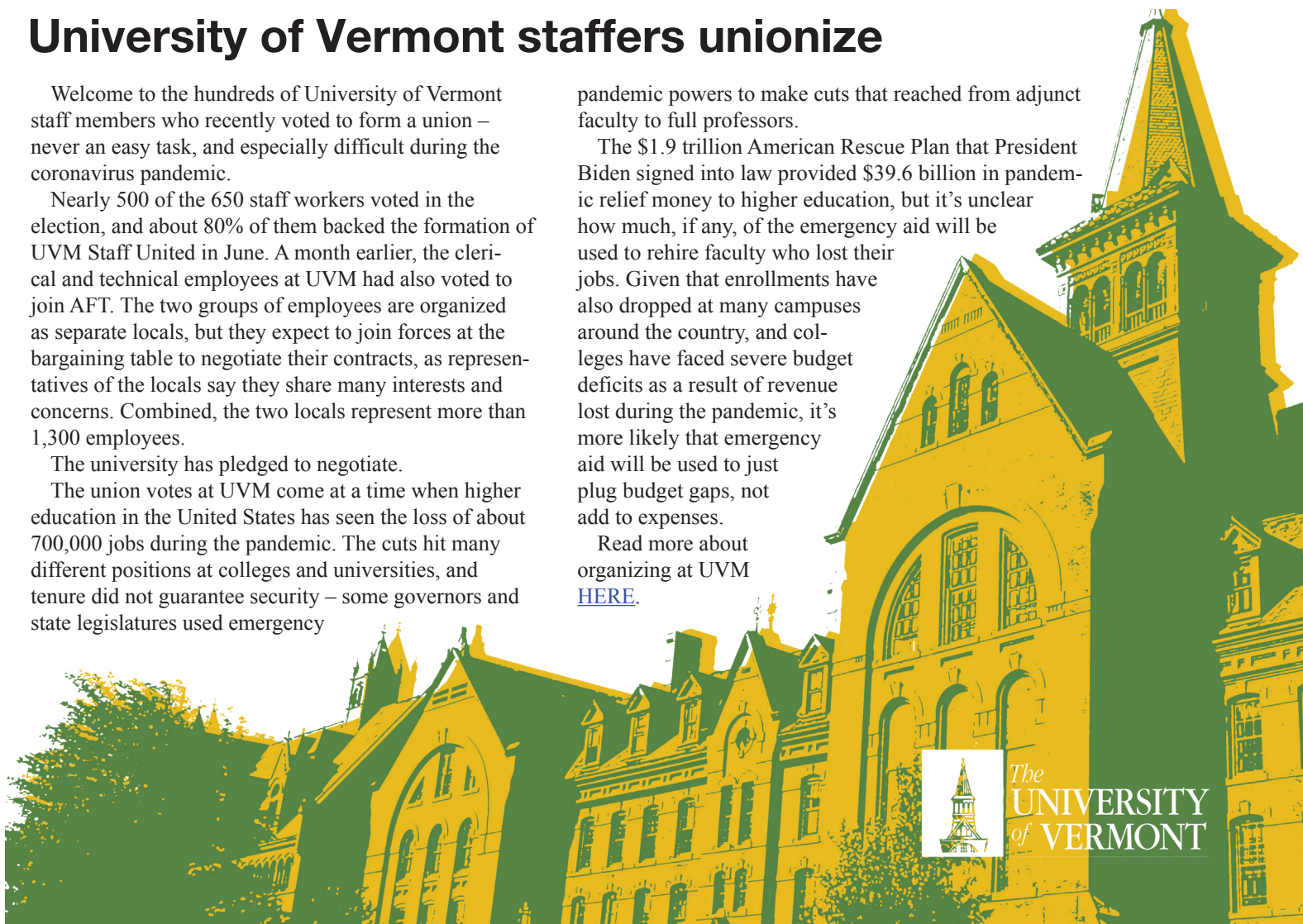
The university has pledged to negotiate.

The union votes at UVM come at a time when higher education in the United States has seen the loss of about 700,000 jobs during the pandemic. The cuts hit many different positions at colleges and universities, and tenure did not guarantee security – some governors and state legislatures used emergency

pandemic powers to make cuts that reached from adjunct faculty to full professors.

The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan that President Biden signed into law provided \$39.6 billion in pandemic relief money to higher education, but it's unclear how much, if any, of the emergency aid will be used to rehire faculty who lost their jobs. Given that enrollments have also dropped at many campuses around the country, and colleges have faced severe budget deficits as a result of revenue lost during the pandemic, it's more likely that emergency aid will be used to just plug budget gaps, not add to expenses.

Read more about organizing at UVM [HERE](#).



#VaxUpUUP

BY DARRYL McGRATH

UUP wants to have a conversation with its members about the coronavirus vaccine.

Toward that end, the union is reaching out to its membership with the message that the vaccine is safe and effective, and that the vaccine is also a good way to protect vulnerable members of society who cannot be vaccinated. Those would include children younger than 12, for whom the vaccine has not yet received emergency authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the relatively limited part of the population that cannot get the vaccine for medical reasons.

“We are very concerned about ensuring that all of our members on campuses are vaccinated, but we are just as concerned about our retirees all across the country,” UUP President Fred Kowal said.

Kowal reiterated that concern in a letter he sent to members last month as he announced the union’s campaign to encourage vaccination.

“UUP members have been on the front lines of the pandemic caring for patients at

“We are very concerned about ensuring that all of our members on campuses are vaccinated.”

— UUP President Fred Kowal

SUNY hospitals and supporting students through remote and in-person learning at campuses for over a year. Your commitment to our collective work of keeping our communities healthy and educating the next generation of leaders is vitally important,” Kowal wrote. “Let’s honor that commitment by doing everything we can do to protect our colleagues, students, families and communities. If you have not already,

I encourage you to make an appointment to get the COVID-19 vaccine, if you can, to ensure the health of yourself and others.”

Kowal said he also hopes that the campaign will simply get people talking, because just as one-on-one conversations can be an effective organizing tool in building union membership, so can conversations between colleagues help answer questions and allay doubts or fears about getting vaccinated.

A range of resources

The social media part of the campaign is built around the hash tag of #VaxUpUUP. UUP has set up a [campaign resource page](#) that contains social media graphics, sample social media posts and a link for making a vaccine appointment. It also includes digital resources—including email signatures and Zoom backgrounds—and links to websites with information about the coronavirus vaccine from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the New York State Department of Health.

The social media graphics use a range of eye-catching and colorful designs, including a contemporary take on the World War II poster heroine Rosie the Riveter with a rolled up sleeve, and flexing her arm muscles not to start welding a bomber plane, but to get the shot that could save her life. The slogans on the graphics encourage vaccination in a non-judgmental way: “Let’s do this together,” “Don’t hesitate: Vaccinate!” “Vaccinated and proud,” and “Follow the Science: Get vaccinated.”


Survey gets strong response

UUP has also developed a survey for members that the union has distributed to all chapters. The extremely short, simple survey asks respondents if they think the COVID-19 vaccination within the campus community is important for their cam-

pus to reopen safely in person in the fall, and it also asks if they have received the vaccine. If they have not, the survey offers nine reasons for them to cite why they have not yet been vaccinated.

So far, the response to the survey has been very good, with 36% of the bargaining unit having completed the survey by late June. Based on the survey results, UUP estimates that 90% of the bargaining unit has been vaccinated.

UUP does not have the authority to mandate that its members be vaccinated, and Kowal noted that such a mandate would not



**Reaching unvaccinated
UUP members with
encouragement
& conversation**

be an effective or democratic approach.

"We are a union; we do not dictate ultimatums to our members," Kowal said. "We reach decisions on important issues through a democratic process, with discussion and a vote by delegates or our executive board. But we will always encourage our members to take actions that we consider safe for our campus communities, and for the communities that surround SUNY campuses. Just as we are vigilant about making sure our members have a safe working environment, so we are being vigilant about strongly encouraging vaccination against COVID-19."

Nor does the state or SUNY administration have the authority to require UUP members to be vaccinated; such a condition of employment would have to be negotiated with the Governor's Office of Employee Relations.

So this very important effort for UUP comes down to dealing with members in the most respectful way possible, by encouraging discussion among colleagues, offering valid facts and credible information, and recognizing that members have many reasons for making carefully considered individual choices.

And the UUP membership is especially open to such an approach, said Phil Glick, president of the Buffalo Health Sciences Center Chapter. Glick is a physician who chairs the UUP statewide Ad Hoc Health and Safety Committee, which the union formed during the coronavirus pandemic to draw on the expertise of its members as it navigated a series of unprecedented situations involving a potentially fatal virus.



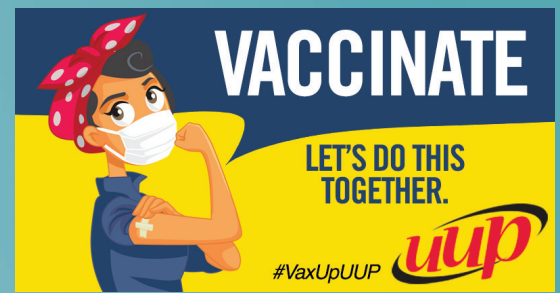
GLICK

"One of the really great things about being in a professional staff and faculty union is that we have a very intellectual and highly smart group of people, who will generally make good decisions," Glick said.

A marketing approach to the vaccine

Glick, who also holds a Master of Business Administration from Northwestern University, has read extensively about the best ways to persuade holdouts to get the coronavirus vaccine. In that research, he was particularly struck by the writings of Stacy Wood, a marketing professor at North Carolina State University. Wood gained national attention for her co-authored papers published in January and June in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, respectively, which argue that a marketing approach that uses several proven strategies can work better than a purely medical approach in convincing reluctant people to get the vaccine.

In other words, the assumption that people will get a vaccine simply because they are told they should clearly did not work in the rollout of the coronavirus vaccine, once the first crush of people who did not need convincing had received their shots. Wood encourages an approach that identifies the different reasons that other people have waited, tailoring a marketing approach to those different scenarios, and viewing the vaccine as a product that



UUP offers its members various social media pieces as part of its #VaxUpUUP campaign.

needs a successful marketing campaign.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not yet granted full approval to any of the three vaccines in use in the U.S.; all three are still operating on emergency authorization. Given that the FDA will soon have six months of data on the first two vaccines to go into use—the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines—full approval for those two most commonly used vaccines may not be far behind.

As for the people who have raised concerns about the emergency authorization, Glick said, "I think we have to legitimately recognize their concerns. As soon as there's FDA approval, we expect a large number of our members who have not been vaccinated will get vaccinated."

As a doctor, Glick understands the temptation of other medical professionals to feel exasperated by anyone's reluctance to be vaccinated against a disease that has killed more than 600,000 Americans in less than 18 months. As a student of business practices, he takes a more nuanced view of the vaccine holdouts.

"I have to say, having an MBA helped me be more empathetic to them," he said.

» UUP, SUNY reach COVID testing agreement for fall semester

Unvaccinated SUNY employees who are part of UUP's bargaining unit will be tested weekly for COVID-19 throughout the fall 2021 semester under an agreement between SUNY and UUP.

The Memorandum of Understanding, dated June 29, directs SUNY colleges, universities and hospitals to conduct mandatory weekly surveillance testing of all unvaccinated employees. Fully vaccinated employees who show proof of vaccination will be tested "less frequently on a sampling basis" to monitor for COVID-19 cases, according to the agreement. Campuses, after consulting with UUP chapter leaders, will determine how frequently vaccinated employees should be tested.

The MOU expires Dec. 31.

"An important distinction in this new agreement is that unvaccinated individuals will be tested weekly, with less frequent testing for employees who are fully vaccinated," UUP President Fred Kowal said in a [July 1 SUNY press release](#). "The key to making our campuses and our communities safe is for everyone who can,

to get vaccinated. We join with Chancellor Malatras in urging all SUNY employees and students to get the COVID-19 vaccine as quickly as possible, so as to stop this pandemic in its tracks."

"While we hope the worst of the pandemic is behind us, the last 16 months have taught us to remain cautious and prepared," Chancellor Jim Malatras said in the release. "Thanks to continued collaboration with our partners in labor, we can continue to test a large segment of our employees when classes resume in the fall."

Since August 2020, SUNY has conducted nearly 2.5 million COVID tests for students, faculty, and staff. The overall system-wide positivity rate is 0.39%.

» Read the Memorandum of Understanding between UUP and SUNY [HERE](#).

» View a video in which UUP President Fred Kowal urges UUP members to get the COVID-19 vaccine [HERE](#).

— Michael Lisi

On the rebound

Spring DA marks shift as UUP emerges from pandemic

BY DARRYL MCGRATH

UUP is ready to get back to campus. That was the tone of the UUP Spring 2021 Delegate Assembly, as delegates came together for what UUP leaders hope will be the last all-virtual DA. Although UUP opted for the fully virtual event in what marked the final weeks before Gov. Cuomo lifted the coronavirus state of emergency, the union is clearly looking toward the fall semester and a shift back to campuses.

Challenges remain, as UUP President Kowal noted during the DA, held June 4-5. They include an academic year that will be almost but not entirely “back to normal,” along with upcoming contract negotiations that will reflect needs that surfaced during the pandemic, such as telecommuting, workload and child care.

But Kowal focused throughout the DA on the incredible and often life-saving work of UUP members through the 15 months of the coronavirus pandemic.

“Throughout this year of COVID, I have been moved so often by the work of many of us to literally save the lives of COVID victims, to re-create a learning environment so that our students could continue their education and bring their dreams into reality, and

“Throughout this year of COVID, I have been moved so often by the work of many of us.”

— UUP President Fred Kowal

to conduct the life-saving research that has led us out of the COVID nightmare,” he said.

Testing agreement since DA

Four days after the DA, on June 29, 2021, the state announced an agreement for continued COVID-19 testing of SUNY employees, including those in the UUP bargaining unit, with more frequent



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LSI

UUP President Fred Kowal opened his remarks at the virtual 2021 Spring Delegate Assembly by acknowledging the sacrifices and life-saving work of members during the coronavirus pandemic.

testing for unvaccinated employees. To read more about the testing agreement, see Page 7 of this issue of *The Echo*, and go [HERE](#) and [HERE](#) to read the SUNY press release on the testing agreement, and the memorandum of understanding between UUP and SUNY.

Delegates approved a temporary constitutional amendment to allow mail ballots instead of in-person voting for the statewide election, which was underway as this issue of *The Echo* was produced. The candidates for statewide vice president for professionals and vice president for academics ran unopposed.

Since the DA, the statewide Executive Board authorized Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee to cast a single ballot to elect Stony Brook HSC Chapter President Carolyn Kube as statewide VP for Professionals, and Brockport Chapter President Alissa Karl as statewide VP for Academics. O'Bryan-Losee will cast those ballots July 30. Both candidates ran unopposed.

Go [HERE](#) to read candidate statements

posted through July for seven open UUP Executive Board positions.

A leaner but strongly focused Negotiations Team

Albany Chapter member Bret Benjamin, the chief negotiator for upcoming contract talks, told delegates that negotiations will involve close work with chapters throughout the process.

In addition to Benjamin, Negotiations Team members include Redetha Abraham-Nichols of Downstate Medical Center, Jennifer Drake of Cortland, Mindy Heath of Upstate Medical University, Shoshana Hershkowitz of Stony Brook, Jude Jayatilleke of Buffalo State, Aaron Major of Albany, Pamela Malone of Empire State College, Jackie Pittsley of Cortland, Benita Roth of Binghamton, Idalia Torres of Fredonia and Bill Tusang of Cobleskill.

The current contract runs through July 1, 2022.

Actions to Executive Board; VPs tackle issues

Because the virtual format of the DA

created a tighter schedule, delegates voted on sending special orders of business and resolutions to the statewide Executive Board instead of voting on such actions at the DA. See Page 18 of this issue of *The Echo* for a summary of the Executive Board's vote on those referrals.

Telecommuting figured strongly into the June 4 Professional Delegates Meeting, where delegates said they hope to see it extended. While the original pilot telecommuting agreement ended July 2, campuses are allowed to operate under the pilot agreement's terms to allow for phased return to in-person work through September 7. Beyond that, under new guidance from the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, telecommuting may continue under specific COVID-related circumstances related to Americans with Disabilities Act requests and child and elder care needs. SUNY and all state agencies can submit telecommuting plans to address these circumstances to GOER for approval by July 31. UUP has been in discussions with SUNY about what the plan may include. For more details on the new telecommuting agreement, see [HERE](#).

At the Academic Delegates' meeting, led by outgoing statewide Vice President for Academics Jamie Dangler, concerns about bias and validity problems in student evaluations of teaching dominated the discussion. Some chapters have made gains in this area, but not all campus administrations are open to suggestions. UUP is developing a tool kit to help chapters to continue tackling this issue; that will be ready in July.

In other business, members heard reports by Vice President for Professionals Tom Tucker and Dangler, as well as Membership Development Officer Tom Hoey. O'Bryan-Losee presented a 2021-22 budget with \$10.3 million in operating funds that delegates overwhelmingly approved. (See the sidebar at right for a story about O'Bryan-Losee's budget presentation.) Delegates also heard from member Gwen Kay, outgoing president of the SUNY University Faculty Senate and a strong UUP ally.

Also at the DA, UUP honored the outstanding work of chapter journalists for their newsletters and websites in the annual journalism contest. You can read the list of winners [HERE](#).

UUP members can go to the UUP [Members Only page](#) of the UUP website to see the DA agenda, officers' reports, the 2021 statewide election calendar, and the UUP 2021-22 budget.

The 2021 Fall Delegate Assembly is tentatively scheduled as a hybrid event Oct. 15-16 in Rochester.

UUP's post-pandemic fiscal health is sound

BY DARRYL MCGRATH

As UUP emerges from the 15-month coronavirus pandemic, it does so in excellent fiscal condition.

That was the encouraging news that statewide **Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee** delivered to delegates at the virtual 2021 Spring Delegate Assembly, June 4-5.

"UUP is fiscally prepared to meet any challenges we may encounter," O'Bryan-Losee stated in her supplemental written report, which included additional information on the union's current financial statement for 2020-21. In her main report to the membership, she singled out for special thanks the Finance Committee members, "...who have done extraordinary work during the pandemic to recommend the budgets you will be voting on at the DA."

Delegates resoundingly approved the proposed 2021-22 UUP budget, which has an operating budget of \$10,311,219. The budget can be reviewed in the Delegate Assembly section of the [UUP Members Only page](#) on the UUP website ([uupinfo.org](#)), along

powers during the pandemic to slash budgets and staff, and to consolidate campuses.

But not at SUNY, where UUP went to considerable lengths to work with the SUNY administration and the Governor's Office of Employee Relations to adjust

to changing conditions with as little harm to members as possible. There were some non-renewals of adjunct faculty—a situation that UUP tried as hard as it could to avert whenever possible—and at first, campuses seemed fated to get hit with painful budget deficits. But the work of the Biden administration and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer

to steer a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package into law helped avert massive cutbacks.

Operating expenses under budget

And that, in turn, contributed to UUP emerging from the pandemic with its membership intact. As O'Bryan-Losee noted in her supplemental report, all but one of the categories of operating expenses were within budget as the fiscal year closed. The exception was chapter release time—a reflection of the unusual demands placed on chapter leaders during the pandemic.

When the SUNY system abruptly shut down in March 2020, a number of terrible scenarios seemed possible: massive budget cuts, retrenchments, the loss of programs and majors. As UUP faced

many uncertainties that spring, it prepared for the worst and worked hard to make sure that the worst didn't happen. At the Spring 2020 Delegate Assembly, delegates authorized UUP to move money from its reserve fund to help the union face the unknown.

As O'Bryan-Losee noted in her supplemental report one year later, UUP had yet to touch that emergency money as of the 2021 Spring DA. In this case, planning for the worst turned out to be simply that: planning.



O'BRYAN-LOSEE

"UUP is fiscally prepared to meet any challenges we may encounter."

— UUP Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee

with O'Bryan-Losee's report to the DA, and her supplemental written report.

Pandemic hit higher ed hard

This good news comes as many public and private sector organizations, which were hit hard during the pandemic, continue to struggle. Unionized faculty at public colleges and universities in various parts of the country were not immune, as some state legislatures and governors took advantage of extraordinary emergency

A personal mission

ESF's Dr. Lizette Rivera draws on Army background to understand, help student veterans

BY DARRYL McGRATH

Dr. Lizette Rivera has only to look back at her experience as a former Army Reservist who returned to graduate school after deployment to understand the special issues that veterans face in college.

Whether these students are just entering higher education, or they're returning to a degree program that was interrupted by deployment, the transition to campus and civilian life can be lonely and even isolating. They know there may be other veterans in their midst, but it's not always easy to find them.

So when Rivera started at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in January 2020—unaware that the SUNY system would shut down in two months during the coronavirus pandemic—it didn't take long to identify one of her first challenges.

"Our students were very adamant: They wanted ESF to be more inclusive and more welcoming to veterans," said Rivera, who is a UUP member; the director of student inclusion initiatives; and special assistant to the chief diversity officer in the ESF Office of Inclusion, Diver-

Lizette Rivera is an Army Veteran who served at Guantanamo Bay, and has drawn on her own experience as a student veteran to help veterans at SUNY ESF.

sity and Equity. She served in the Army Reserve from 1998 to 2004, including a year-long deployment to the U.S. Navy base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and earned her doctorate in education after returning to civilian life. She also holds a master's in public administration.

At ESF, she helps a range of students, not just veterans. But as an Army Veteran who remembers how much it meant to finally connect with other students who had served, she knew how important it was to reach this often-marginalized part of the student body. Her outreach to veterans at ESF caught the attention of Justin Culkowski, a fellow ESF Chapter member who co-chairs the union's statewide Veterans Affairs Committee along with ESF Chapter retiree William Borgstede. Because Rivera had quickly become a UUP member—she comes from a union background—they were able to recommend Rivera for membership on the statewide committee, where her ideas could help an even broader group of students.

"I became acquainted with Dr. Rivera when she invited SUNY ESF alumni who were veterans to participate in a virtual meeting about initiating a student veterans club at ESF," Culkowski explained in a written comment. "One of her driving forces for the club was to assist veterans at ESF transition to civilian life. I was impressed with her insights and enthusiasm and am looking forward to her bringing these qualities to the UUP Veterans Committee."

Fulfilling the mission, from here to Guantanamo

Rivera's journey began 18 years ago when she deployed as an Army Reservist to Guantanamo Bay, two months before she was to have graduated from her master's program in Chicago. Her deployment took a circuitous route to Cuba: She was ordered to report first to a unit in Indiana, then to a mobilization site in New Jersey. From there, she went to Minnesota to help soldiers prepare legal paperwork prior to leaving for their assignments. And then she headed to Guantanamo Bay—not her original destination, but an example of the sometimes-abrupt changes that soldiers expect in fulfilling a mission.

"I think one thing that's important to know about reservists is, we are called up to fill in gaps," Rivera explained. "I'm OK with change; I embrace change—that's the military way. Once we finally arrived in Cuba, I



Rivera proudly displays her honor cords on her academic regalia. UUP provides the cords to members to signify their military service.

think I was there a month before the shock wore off."

She is proud of her service, but she talks honestly about her adjustment to civilian life when she returned.

"I knew that I just wanted to dive back into my civilian life," she said. "When I came back, the number-one goal I had was finishing my master's degree. But emotionally and mentally, I was just not in a good spot."

A staff member on campus who worked as a liaison to veterans helped her obtain credit for prior work, an accommodation that enabled her to graduate sooner at a time when she wanted to move forward in her personal life. She never forgot the understanding she received, nor the time she spent at a campus veterans' center in Massachusetts where she worked on her

dissertation after moving from the Midwest.

"I loved it," she recalled. "There I was, among other veterans. It was that sense of camaraderie, 'Oh, OK, everyone here is a veteran.'"

Wide outreach at ESF

At ESF, Rivera has started a Veterans' Initiative, which provides outreach and support. In addition to helping form a student veterans' club, Rivera also helped the students organize the first Veterans' Day program at ESF. She oversees the work of a student veteran coordinator, a newly budgeted part-time position staffed by a student, and a Veterans' Employee Resource Group is one of several such resource groups that her office has started.

When she started at ESF, only four employees identified as veterans, but Rivera suspects the number is much higher. She hopes to establish greater outreach to those employees as ESF returns to full in-person instruction in the fall.

As a woman veteran, she also brings to her work an understanding of some of the special concerns that women face in the military. Among the plans for the ESF Veterans' Club this fall: a screening of the documentary "The Invisible War," about the sexual assault of female service members.

She said that SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras has made this a great time to achieve positive changes for veterans, of which there are thousands, both as students and employees, in the SUNY system.

"One of his goals is to make the SUNY system more inclusive for veterans," said Rivera, who's well on her way to making that happen at ESF.

» UUP members interested in learning more about the UUP Veterans Affairs Committee can go to the committee's webpage [HERE](#).



Rivera helped expand membership at the ESF Veterans Club (left) and she has sought to recognize student veterans for their service to the country through gestures such as this presentation of a Veteran Appreciation Coin to mark Veterans Day 2020.



A friend indeed

Sen. Schumer proves a steadfast ally to UUP

BY DARRYL MCGRATH

Some people forget the friends who were there for them at the beginning, before they had a national and even international name as a mover and shaker.

Fortunately for UUP, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer has, if anything, paid even more attention than ever before to the labor movement in general, and his longtime home-state stalwart of UUP in particular, during his first six months in his powerful leadership position. Now one of the most closely watched politicians in the world, and the subject of numerous headlines and news analyses, Schumer has nevertheless made solid time for his friends in the labor and social justice movements.

“UUP has had the privilege of watching Majority Leader Schumer’s rise from a state lawmaker to a national dealmaker who is helping change the way our country thinks and acts for the better, with a strong focus on helping people who need it most,” UUP President Fred Kowal said as he reflected on the union’s close relationship with Schumer, which has included phone conversations with the senator on key funding issues for public higher education.

“He is an excellent advocate for President Biden’s agenda, an agenda that matches UUP’s goals of building a strong middle class, with equal representation and equal opportunity for everyone in this great, diverse country. We’re proud that Sen. Schumer is advocating for us.”

Tackling major efforts to help working people

And so far, Schumer has built an impressive track record, during a period that’s been compared to the hit-the-ground-running approach of FDR in his first months in office.

President Biden signed the bill for the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan into law March 11, after Schumer skillfully steered it through a challenging pathway in a Senate with a 50-50 split that left no margin for error. The bill has been likened to a modern-day version of President Johnson’s Great Society because it addresses so many social



SCHUMER

issues, including child poverty and relief for low-income and working-poor Americans.

UUP Executive Board members heard about the accomplishment from the senator in an exclusive March 29 meeting in which Schumer also delivered a memorable quote as he promised UUP leaders that federal aid to public higher education was forthcoming and abundant. SUNY received \$915 million through the American Rescue Plan.

“Do not let the governor or anyone tell you they don’t they have the money for SUNY,” Schumer said at the time. “As we say in Brooklyn, we have the eff’ in money. Tell ’em Uncle Chuck said that.”

And then it was on to the next challenges: voting rights, and infrastructure.

On the right side of history

Schumer has spent a great deal of time since his exuberant March meeting with UUP on two ambitious bills: The For the People Act, which would strengthen voting rights; and a major infrastructure package that encountered resistance in the Senate, but which now stands a chance at passage, albeit in a pared-down form. Senate Democrats announced a bipartisan deal shortly before the Fourth of July. The House has not yet taken up the bill.

The voting rights bill has been more problematic, as it touches on philosophical

differences between the two parties, not differences on how to pay for the legislation. But Schumer exuded confidence that he’s on the right side of history in this effort, as he addressed nearly 1,500 voting rights advocates June 16 in a virtual Town Hall hosted by the New York Working Families Party and co-sponsored by UUP.

The “For the People Act” has passed the House but could fail by a single vote in the Senate. Time is of the essence; Schumer wants the bill signed into law before the 2022 elections, so that the U.S. Department of Justice can wield its power against dozens of new state laws or pending state bills that aim to restrict voting rights.

“These bills, sadly, are aimed at people of color,” Schumer said in that event. “I don’t have to tell you how critical this legislation is to defending our democracy.”

Since Schumer spoke in that event, two notable shifts have occurred: The U.S. Supreme Court upheld one of the newer, more restrictive voting laws, in Arizona; and the U.S. Department of Justice has signaled its intent to go after individual new state voting

“...we know that he has our back.”

— UUP President Fred Kowal

laws that the department deems discriminatory.

UUP is likely to hear updates on this effort directly from Schumer himself, given Schumer’s fondness for the labor movement and his admiration for what unions do to help underrepresented people vote. And UUP is grateful for this close connection, especially in a year when the union put forth a first-ever federal legislative agenda. (More on UUP’s growing focus on federal legislative efforts in the next issue of *The Voice*, to be published in late August.)

Said Kowal, “As we have told the senator, he knows he has our support in this and so many efforts, because we know that he has our back.”

member spotlight

Each year, hundreds of UUP members publish books and articles, and are recognized for accomplishments on campus and in their communities. *The Echo* is pleased to recognize three in this issue.

Simons scores award for sports writing

Bill Simons of the Oneonta UUP Chapter won the Simon Rockower first-place award for excellence in writing about sports from the American Jewish Press Association at its virtual annual awards presentation on June 24, 2021. Simons' entry, *Ballfield or synagogue: Hank Greenberg's High Holiday dilemma*, won in the category of weekly and biweekly newspapers and monthly newspapers and magazines.



SIMONS

The story originally appeared last year in *The Binghamton Reporter*, a weekly newspaper that covers the Jewish community.

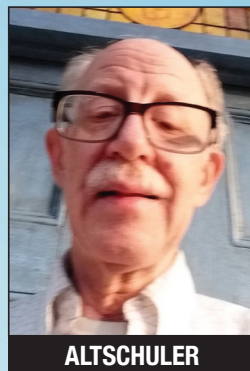
One judge commented, "Jewish sports fans know about Hank Greenberg, but this story gives the entire context and all the details that we never knew for a better appreciation of the all-time great Jewish slugger. Wonderful!"

The Simon Rockower award was created in 1979 by Rockower's sons to honor their father's love for Jewish journalism. The American Jewish Press Association, based in Chandler, Arizona, was founded in 1944 to support the English-language Jewish press in North America.

The AJPA today represents Jewish media organizations, individual journalists and communications professionals, as well as newspapers.

Altschuler vice-chairs peace group

UUP Oswego delegate **Bruce Altschuler** is now vice-chair of Brooklyn for Peace, a nonprofit community-based group that has sponsored forums on peace and social justice topics since 1984.



ALTSCHULER

As vice-chair, Altschuler has moderated recent virtual forums on the link between the military and the climate crisis, and another on the relationship between the labor movement and movements for peace and justice in the United States.

UUP co-sponsored the forum on the link between the military and the climate crisis, *Climate Crisis: the military and the Green New Deal*, which was held April 2, 2021, and which can be viewed [HERE](#).

Altschuler was a delegate and chapter grievance chair during most of the 37 years he taught political science at SUNY Oswego. He is also co-chair of the Solidarity Committee. In retirement, he has continued his scholarly writing. He is a co-author, with Oswego members Helen Knowles and Jaclyn Schildkraut, of *Lights, Camera, Execution! Cinematic Portrayals of Capital Punishment*, published in 2019 by Lexington Books. He and Knowles are also under contract with Lexington Books for a book on films about freedom of the press.

Sharfstein gains funding for development of bioengineered blood thinner

Susan Sharfstein, a professor of nanobiotechnology at SUNY Polytechnic Institute, has received \$250,000 in new funding from the National Science Foundation for work on developing a bioengineered version of the blood thinner known as heparin.

Her work could lead to a more cost-effective treatment and more reliable production of heparin, which is a naturally occurring substance in the body that is also produced as a prescription medication derived from animals. The NSF award will be applied to continued research on this project with TEGA Therapeutics Inc., and it will also support research at the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences'



SHARFSTEIN

Center for Biopharmaceutical Education and Training, which is based at the Albany campus of SUNY Poly.

Sharfstein received a Fulbright Global Scholar Fellowship in 2017 for research in Ireland and Australia, and has also been recently selected as a Fulbright ambassador in her field, to encourage research and collaborative efforts among other nanotech scientists.

Heparin is a widely prescribed anticoagulant that is often prepared in China, and some concerns have been raised about regulation of its production. Sharfstein's project aims to develop a production system with more reliable oversight.

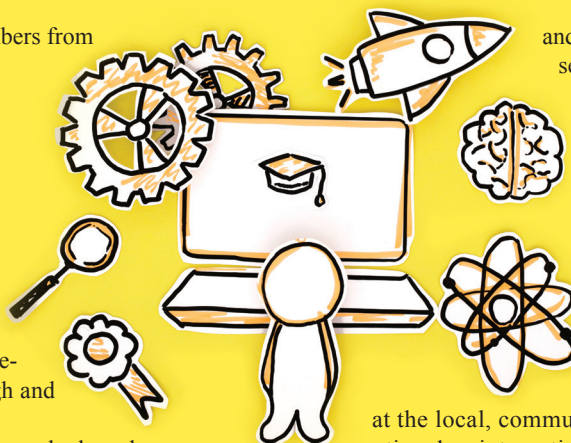
Distinguished UUPers

Congratulations to 15 UUP members from chapters across the state who were recently appointed to the Distinguished Faculty Rank by the SUNY Board of Trustees.

The Trustees approved the appointments—for distinguished professorship, distinguished service professorship and distinguished teaching professorship—April 6. The appointees are members of the Binghamton, Buffalo Center, Buffalo HSC, Cortland, Empire State College, Fredonia, Old Westbury, Oswego, Plattsburgh and Stony Brook chapters.

“We are extremely proud of our members, who have been honored for their service and dedication to the University, to public higher education, to vital research, and to the students they serve,” said UUP President Fred Kowal. “These talented individuals deserve our congratulations.”

To be appointed as a Distinguished Professor, a candidate must be someone who has achieved “national and/or international prominence



and a distinguished reputation within their chosen field, through extraordinary contributions to, and impact on, the candidate’s field of study, often evidenced by significant research and/or creative activity,” according to an April 6 memo to the Trustees from SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras recommending candidates to appoint.

The Distinguished Service Professorship honors and recognizes extraordinary service by SUNY faculty. To be appointed to this rank, candidates must show substantial distinguished service,

at the local, community, or regional levels and at the state, national or international levels.

To be recognized as a Distinguished Teaching Professor, candidates must demonstrate consistently superior mastery of teaching; outstanding service to students and commitment to their ongoing intellectual growth, scholarship and professional development; and adherence to rigorous academic standards and requirements.

— *Michael Lisi*

DISTINGUISHED FACULTY APPOINTEES

Jaimee Wriston Colbert, professor of English and creative writing at Binghamton University,



is a leading voice in eco-fiction and a master of the novel-in-stories format and has published seven books, including 2018’s “Vanishing Acts,” which won

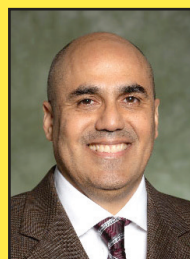
the Pinnacle Book Achievement Award for Best Family Saga and was a finalist for five other awards.

Gloria E. Meredith, professor of pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences at Binghamton University, is an internationally recognized neuroscientist who has made foundational contributions to the study of Parkinson’s



Disease and the understanding of psychostimulants on neural circuits.

Pedro Ontaneda, professor of mathematical sciences at Binghamton University, is considered one of the foremost geometers in the world. His



notable early-career discoveries concerning harmonic maps and dynamical systems led to his most recent and most profound discovery: the existence of vast

numbers of previously unknown spaces, or “manifolds,” of negative curvature.

Mark D. Poliks, professor of systems science and industrial engineering at Binghamton University, is founder and director of the university’s Center for Microelectronics Manufacturing. He has created new additive and semi-additive manufacturing approaches for the fabrication of sensors, thin-film transistors and RF devices and antennas on flexible plastic or glass.



Bianca Weinstock-Guttman, neurology professor at the University at Buffalo,



is the director of the University’s Jacobs Multiple Sclerosis Center for Treatment and Research and executive director of The New York State MS Consortium. Her research productivity

puts her in the top 1 percent of clinical neuroscientists worldwide.

Dr. Thomas A. Russo, division chief of infectious diseases at the University at Buffalo’s Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, is an international expert on bacterial infectious diseases. He has produced foundational research focusing on



gram-negative bacteria, including antibiotic-resistant *Escherichia coli* (E. coli), *Acinetobacter baumannii* and *Klebsiella pneumoniae*.

Dr. Frank A. Scannapieco, oral biology professor and chair at the University at Buffalo, was one of the first scientists to study the effect of oral pathogens on nosocomial bacterial pneumonia and chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases.



Gerard J. Puccio, professor and chair of creativity and change leadership at SUNY Buffalo State College, developed FourSight, a psychological measure of creative-thinking preferences.



John T. Foley, professor of physical education and rehabilitation at SUNY Cortland, pioneered the use of secondary data analysis and large data sets to analyze the health benefits of physical activity—methods that have extended to studies in public health, health education, obesity, exercise science, and disability studies.



Ian Reifowitz, professor of history studies at Empire State College, has established a national and international reputation as a subject area expert on the intersections of race, ethnicity, nationalism and politics.



James A. Davis, music professor and chair of SUNY Fredonia's Music History Area, is an internationally renowned musicologist whose research has been credited with single-handedly constructing the world's most nuanced and complete account of Civil War music's importance for American society.



J. Kirk Cochran, professor of marine geochemistry at Stony Brook University, is the world leader in the application of radionuclides as tracers for the ocean carbon cycle in the water column and sediments.



Maurizio Del Poeta, professor of microbiology and immunology at Stony Brook University, is internationally recognized for his pioneering work in lipid-mediated infectious diseases; he pioneered the study of unique metabolic pathways in fungal infections and successfully identified several new enzymes involved in fungal pathogenesis, especially enzymes of lipid metabolism.



Yi-Xian Qin, professor and chair of biomedical engineering at Stony Brook University, is one of the world's leading bone biomechanists. He has groundbreaking research on bone biomechanics and mechanobiology, enabling improved treatment of disorders such as osteoporosis and delayed fracture healing.



Paul B. Shepson, dean and professor of marine and atmospheric sciences at Stony Brook University, is an internationally known atmospheric chemist focused on climate change, specifically on atmospheric chemistry and the air-surface interactions in Arctic, urban and forest environments.



STAYCONNECTED!

To receive the union's weekly **UUPConnect** newsletter in your in box, email UUP Media & Publications Director Mike Lisi at mlisi@uupmail.org.

If your chapter has a news item or an event, email it to us so it can be shared statewide.

Questions and concerns about the newsletter can be directed to Mike Lisi or to UUPconnect@uupmail.org.



UUP student debt clinic set for July 21

UUP regularly offers virtual student debt clinics to help members navigate the federal public service forgiveness program and learn more about income-driven repayment plans.

Statewide Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Lossee moderates the clinics.

The next session is scheduled from 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 21.

Click [HERE](#) to register.



Benefits webinars slated for July 20

A pair of "UUP Benefits 101" webinars will be held Tuesday, July 20.

The webinars start at noon and 5 p.m.



A ROUND-UP OF UUP MEDIA MENTIONS

BY MICHAEL LISI

In The News is a compilation of media (radio, television and newspapers across the state) spotlighting UUP. These news clips are from April through July 2021.

April 4: ["Budget deal freezes SUNY, CUNY tuition, expands TAP"](#)

Times Union, Albany

UUP President Fred Kowal is quoted in this story about the state Legislature taking action to benefit SUNY.

April 5: ["Will Higher Ed Be Short-Changed?"](#)

Spectrum News 1, Albany

This story, which appeared on *Capital Tonight*, chronicles UUP's fight for more funding for SUNY in the state's 2021-21 budget.

April 13: ["UUP says it's working with SUNY chancellor to find funding for SUNY hospitals"](#)

Capital Tonight, Spectrum News 1, Albany

President Kowal spoke with *Capital Tonight* host Susan Arbetter about working with SUNY to get COVID-19 hazard pay for essential workers at SUNY's public hospitals. This story appeared on Spectrum News outlets across New York, and on [Spectrum News 13](#) in Orlando, Fla.

April 13: ["Following pause of Johnson & Johnson vaccine Governor Cuomo says enough Moderna & Pfizer to keep up schedule"](#)

WTEN-TV, Albany

In this interview, President Kowal urges the state to aggressively continue its vaccination efforts despite the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's decision to pause the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in April. This interview also aired on Nexstar stations (WTEN's owner) across upstate New York.

April 14: ["Cuomo's New Tax Plan to Feed a Wealth of CUNY and SUNY Funds"](#)

The Knight News, Queens

UUP is mentioned in this story about the need for more funding for CUNY and SUNY, possibly by instituting higher taxes on corporations and the rich.

April 14: ["SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras on the book, the budget and the vaccine"](#)

Spectrum News 1, Albany

President Kowal is quoted about UUP's push for hazard pay for essential workers at SUNY's public teaching hospitals in this story about SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras.

April 20: ["Activists finally seeing movement on fossil fuel divestment"](#)

The Legislative Gazette, Albany

New Paltz Chapter member Brian Obach is quoted in this story about UUP's push to get TIAA to disinvest from fossil fuels and agribusiness.

April 22: ["Environmental bills being looked at in the NYS legislature"](#)

WTEN-TV, Albany

Speakers from UUP's April 22 virtual environmental roundtable are quoted in this news report on the viability of the Climate Change and Community Investment Act. This interview also aired on Nexstar stations (WTEN's owner) across upstate New York.

May 4: ["Unions Made A Difference During The Pandemic"](#)

WAMC National Public Radio, Albany

President Kowal talks about the many contributions made by UUP and labor unions during the pandemic in this radio commentary.

May 10: ["SUNY faculty leader considers COVID-19 vaccine mandate for students"](#)

The Capitol Pressroom, WCNY National Public Radio, Syracuse

In this radio interview, President Kowal talks about the need for as many SUNY students as possible to get vaccinated before returning to campus in the fall. *Capitol Pressroom* airs on NPR stations across the state, including in New York City.

May 10: ["SUNY and CUNY students must be vaccinated before returning to in-person classes this fall"](#)

AM Metro NY, New York City

President Kowal is quoted in this story about mandatory vaccines for SUNY students.

May 10: ["New York to Require College Students to Get Covid-19 Vaccine"](#)

Bloomberg Law, Arlington, Va.

President Kowal is quoted in this story about mandatory vaccines for SUNY students.

May 10: ["SUNY and CUNY to require all in-person students to be vaccinated beginning this fall"](#)

WKBW-TV, Buffalo

President Kowal is interviewed about SUNY's decision to require all in-person students to get vaccinated before returning to campus.

May 12: ["SUNY mandatory vaccination plan won't include SUNY employees"](#)

The Buffalo News, Buffalo

In this interview, President Kowal notes that more than 80% of SUNY employees are vaccinated against COVID-19.

SUNY tuition on three-year freeze

New York state's looming budget deal includes a \$56 million boost in state funds for public colleges and a three-year tuition

May 13: ["United University Professions President Fred Kowal on SUNY & CUNY Mandatory Vaccines"](#)

Empire State Weekly, WTEN-TV

President Kowal discusses mandatory vaccines for SUNY and CUNY students in this interview, which aired on *Empire State Weekly*. The show is broadcast on Nexstar stations (WTEN's owner) across upstate New York.

June 30: ["Vaccinations Key To Safe Return To Campus In Fall"](#)

WAMC, Albany

President Kowal urges UUP members and SUNY students to get vaccinated before classes start in the fall in this commentary for WAMC.

July 11: ["Tenured faculty at New York colleges still mostly white men"](#)

Times Union, Albany

President Kowal talks about UUP's push for more diversity in SUNY's tenured ranks in this news story.

July 12: ["What Academic Labor Wants"](#)

Inside Higher Ed, Washington, D.C.

President Kowal is quoted in this story about a July 9 virtual higher education summit of more than 75 higher education locals. UUP, the nation's largest higher education union, was one of the organizers of the event.

Higher ed summit

UUP has lead role as public higher ed unions demand action

BY DARRYL MCGRATH

With the end of the coronavirus pandemic, what's next for public higher education? UUP has a major role in helping to answer that question, as part of a coalition of public higher education unions around the country that say this is the right time to demand a stronger role for faculty and staff in the governance of their campuses.

All the more so, given that many administrations used the pandemic as an excuse to eliminate jobs and consolidate public college and university systems through the emergency powers granted to governors and state legislators during the 15-month state of emergency. Now, unions at many of these systems are saying they refuse to go back to "business as usual." And that stance is gaining national attention and national coverage.

The coalition is known as the Higher Ed Labor Summit, and it represents 10 national and international public higher education unions comprising at least 75 locals. UUP helped organize the coalition's inaugural event, a virtual summit July 7-9. Out of that event has come a platform, with a call for intervention by the federal government as the first goal. Coalition members say they are tired of watching as states surrender even the pretense of maintaining and properly funding their public universities, and that it's time for the federal government to set a national standard for funding and shared governance with faculty and staff.

National action needed

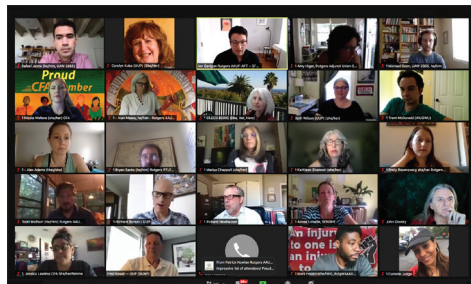
UUP President Fred Kowal, who was the first speaker during the summit and also during a media briefing at the summit's close, talked about the need for a national plan.

Kowal called the end of the pandemic an "urgent turning point for higher education" and added that the investment in higher education is an investment in the nation's recovery from an unimaginably difficult time. He evoked UUP's own legislative agenda, New York HEALS (Healthcare, education, access, leadership and sustainability), in telling the hundreds of participants that higher educa-

tion can and must be a leader in addressing climate change and creating a more diverse health care profession.

"Hopefully, we are learning from this terrible time," Kowal said. "You all know our nation is divided; each of us must be an instrument to foster a better society. As this coalition, we wield so much power to end racism, and to diversify our higher education systems."

"I really believe we need a national solution and strategy for higher ed, because we are a national asset," said Kowal, who was



joined at the summit by other UUP members from throughout the state.

Around the country, 700,000 higher education workers lost their jobs during the pandemic, according to statistics tracked by a number of higher education news sites and advocacy groups, which began compiling reports of job cuts as early as April 2020. The most vulnerable went first: adjunct faculty with few job protections, and low-wage non-academic campus workers such as food service positions. The cuts came as campuses converted to mostly or entirely on-line education, starting early in the spring 2020 semester and continuing through the last fall semester, a move which left campus dorms, stores and eateries mostly empty.

UUP members saw this happen first-hand, and they responded. At Potsdam, for example, about 130 of the 145 non-unionized workers who staffed campus dining spots and shops were laid off in 2020. The Potsdam chapter members and chapter staff collected enough money to purchase \$7,000 worth of gift cards to give to the suddenly unemployed workers of the Potsdam Auxiliary and College Services so that they could purchase

food, groceries or other necessities.

(For the full story on this and other tremendous efforts by UUP members during the initial shutdown, click [HERE](#).)

Effort must be inclusive

Summit attendees say that their movement will be effective only if their coalition represents a broad category of higher education settings and employees, including community colleges, adjunct faculty, graduate teaching assistants, and tenured or tenure-track faculty at four-year research campuses. The coalition plans to focus on the passage of federal legislation, and policies and rules within the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education that support reduction of student debt and collective bargaining by higher education employees, and which aim to diversify higher education while recognizing its historic role in marginalizing Native people and communities of color.

To these goals, Kowal added in his remarks at the closing briefing that higher education cannot focus only on internal issues such as the balance between adjunct and tenure-track faculty; it must also be recognized as a valuable and beneficial part of society.

"It's my firm belief that for this movement to really revitalize higher education in the United States, that we create the means to have stronger, healthier communities," Kowal said. "It's a challenge I've offered to UUP—we have to take on the big challenges."

The coalition of unions that organized the summit plans to be a national presence that lasts long beyond the opening event. Watch for updates from UUP on the progress of this movement, in which UUP had a lead role.

» MORE ON THE WEB

See the Summit's platform [HERE](#).

Watch a video that summarizes the July 7-9 summit [HERE](#).

Read coverage of the event, which quotes UUP President Fred Kowal, in the national online news site Inside Higher Ed, [HERE](#).



UUP leaders tackle the business of the union

Executive board, chapter presidents, gather for actions and training

UUP leaders marked a turning point in the coronavirus pandemic during a two-day working session June 24-25, as the statewide Executive Board took several major actions

Executive Board actions offer honor, support to many

Instead of voting on resolutions and special orders of business at the 2021 Spring Delegate Assembly, which had special time constraints imposed by the virtual format, delegates voted on whether to refer them to the statewide UUP Executive Board for further action.

The Executive Board met June 24, and approved two special orders of business and three resolutions. Those actions are:

» **A special order of business in support of former University of North Carolina Professor Nikole Hannah-Jones** for her effort to attain tenure at UNC. An update since this Executive Board action: UNC offered tenure to Hannah-Jones (see page 19) but she decided to leave UNC and instead joined the faculty at Howard University, which immediately granted her tenure.

» **A special order of business to honor Dr. Barbara Bowen**, the longtime president of the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY, who decided not to run for re-election this spring. Bowen will return to teaching after 21 years as PSC president.

» **A resolution recognizing the long service of the late Cortland Chapter member Ann Gebhard**, who was a pioneering advocate for contingents;

» **A resolution that creates a Contract Action Coordinating Committee**, which will help members be more engaged in the effort to attain a fair contract; and

» **A resolution offering support by UUP for Amazon workers in New York** seeking to organize.

and chapter presidents gathered for training and solidarity. (Read about UUP President Fred Kowal's welcome to the chapter presidents, and see photos from their two-day retreat, on Page 19).

On June 24 the Executive Board voted on several resolutions and special orders of business that delegates had referred to the board during the 2021 Spring Delegate Assembly. Executive Board members also authorized UUP Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee to cast a single ballot each for two unopposed statewide candidates: Carolyn Kube for statewide vice presi-

dent for professionals, and Alissa Karl for statewide vice president for academics. O'Bryan-Losee will cast those single ballots July 30.

The Chapter Presidents Retreat, June 24-25, featured workshops and training in several areas, including how to recognize and deal with harassment and bullying, labor/management relations, coalition building, and developing an effective chapter structure that uses people's best talents and encourages people to want to join UUP. New leaders also got a quick overview of upcoming contract negotiations.

UUP vice presidents to be elected

Single ballot to choose each unopposed candidate

Two statewide Executive Board members who are both chapter presidents will become UUP's newest statewide officers Aug. 1.

Brockport Chapter President Alissa Karl and Stony Brook HSC Chapter President Carolyn Kube ran unopposed for three-year terms as vice president for academics and vice president for professionals, respectively. Both candidates submitted valid nominations before the union's June 23 nomination deadline.

Because they ran unopposed, the statewide UUP Executive Board voted unanimously June 24 to allow statewide Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee to cast a single ballot July 30 to elect Karl and Kube. Their three-year terms begin Aug. 1.

» **Statewide elections underway**

Also, the Executive Board accepted the nominations of 15 members who are vying for six Board seats, each with three-year terms. An additional member will be elected to fill Karl's unexpired Executive Board term, which expires in 2023. Kube's Executive Board term ends in August.

Those candidates are: Lisa Marie Anselmi, Buffalo State; Alex Bitterman, Alfred; Elise Bowe, Upstate Medical University; Stacey Finkelstein, Stony Brook; Kelly Keck, Delhi; Ron Keeney, Alfred; Kathleen Kiehl, Buffalo Center; Christopher King, Stony Brook HSC; Ken Lindblom, Stony Brook; Tom Melendy, Buffalo HSC; Ed Quinn, Stony Brook; Benita Roth, Binghamton; Andrew Solar-Greco, Stony Brook; Idalia Torres, Fredonia; Anthony Tracey, Upstate Medical University.

Melendy and Torres are the only incumbents running for a board seat. Longtime board members Ray Gleason (Alfred Chapter), Walter Kim Hartshorn (Plattsburgh Chapter), and Ezra Zubrow (Buffalo State) did not run for another term.

The delegates who were seated at the virtual 2021 Spring Delegate Assembly in June will cast ballots in the election. According to the UUP Constitution, the Executive Board consists of the statewide officers and 14 members elected by delegates. You can read more about the required make-up of the board, as written in the UUP Constitution, [HERE](#).

Statewide election ballots were mailed June 30. The ballots must be returned by July 28; they will be counted July 29 and July 30. Candidate statements were due July 9, and can be read on the [UUP website](#).

Click [HERE](#) for more information.



KARL



KUBE



Chapter Presidents retreat

Front line leaders welcomed, praised for serving

It takes a special kind of unionist to lead during a crisis, or to continue serving after such an exhausting tenure as the last 15 months have been for UUP chapter presidents.

That was the tone of UUP President Fred Kowal's remarks to chapter presidents at their annual retreat June 24-25 at The Crowne Plaza – The Desmond Hotel in Albany.

"It is with the deepest appreciation that I welcome you for the work you have done in the last year and a half," Kowal said. "Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you have done and continue to do."

Some of these leaders are first-time presidents; others have received their members' vote of confidence many times. Either way,



the retreat allowed them to make and renew acquaintances, and to know that their union has their back.

The retreat featured training in how to recognize and deal with harassment and bullying, labor/management relations, coalition building, and developing an effective

chapter structure that uses people's best talents and encourages people to want to join UUP. New leaders also got an overview of upcoming contract negotiations.

And they also got something that's been all too rare in the last 15 months: a chance to socialize and have a little down time.



Clockwise from top left: Harry Espaillat (chapter president, Farmingdale), Martha Livingston (Old Westbury), Beth Wilson (New Paltz), Bekkie Bryan (a member of the statewide UUP Executive Board) and Rob Compton (Oneonta). In addition to chapter presidents, UUP Executive Board members also attended the retreat.

— PHOTOS BY MICHAEL LISI —



UUP Executive Board backs Hannah-Jones

BY MICHAEL LISI

UUP's Executive Board expressed its strong support for Nikole Hannah-Jones, the embattled *New York Times* journalist who was denied tenure after accepting an appointment as the Knight Chair in Race and Investigative Journalism at the University of North Carolina.

The Executive Board approved a resolution in support of Hannah-Jones June 24 that recognized her struggle to win tenure and her right to practice academic freedom, and which condemned the UNC Board of Governors for its decision to not offer tenure to Hannah-Jones as part of the appointment.

This national story had additional twists and turns following the Executive Board vote. UNC did eventually offer tenure to Hannah-Jones, but she ended up leaving UNC and moving to Howard University, where she immediately gained tenure.

Earlier this year, Hannah-Jones, who founded *The 1619 Project* series in the *Times*, accepted a five-year contract with an option for tenure review at UNC. But UNC's Board of Trustees, pressured by conservative members of UNC's Board of Governors,

declined to vote on her tenure in May.

In June, Hannah-Jones told the university that she would not accept the appointment unless it included tenure. The Board of Trustees, by a 9-4 vote, voted June 30 to grant Hannah-Jones tenure — a vote followed by her decision to move to Howard University.

UUP Executive Board members agreed that they supported the resolution as an attempt to protect academic freedom and not as a wholesale endorsement of Hannah-Jones' work on *The 1619 Project*.

"I'm in full support of this resolution to protect academic freedom," board member Alissa Karl said.

[The 1619 Project](#), founded by Hannah-Jones, is an ongoing initiative by *The New York Times Magazine* that examines the legacy of slavery in America. According to the magazine, the series attempts to "reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of our national narrative."

Some historians, while supportive of the series, have complained of factual errors,

distortions and misleading statements in its presentation of history. *The 1619 Project*

has also drawn the ire of many conservatives, some of whom are seeking to ban it from being taught in schools.

Initially, Hannah-Jones was recommended for tenure by the university's tenure committee, chancellor, and the dean and faculty of the Hussman School of Journalism and Media, where she was set to teach. But UNC's Board of Trustees decided to

take no action, which resulted in her being denied tenure.

A number of news outlets have reported that Walter Hussman, a major UNC donor who donated \$25 million to the school and for whom the school is named, opposed Hannah-Jones' tenure appointment because of her work on *The 1619 Project*.

And online news site *NC Policy Watch* has reported that powerful conservative groups with strong ties to UNC's Board of Governors—which the online news outlet described as a "Republican-dominated" panel—were "highly critical" of Hannah-Jones' work and against her teaching at UNC.



© JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

HANNAH-JONES

» UUP attendance at NYSUT Representative Assembly, April 30 - May 1

Albany

Philippe Abraham
Ivan Steen
Thomas Hoey

Alfred

William Schultze

Buffalo Central

Michael Formato

Buffalo HSC

Philip Glick
Thomas Melendy

Buffalo State

Lisa Marie Anselmi
Frederick Floss
Ramona Santa Maria
Richard Stempniak
Thomas Tucker

Cobleskill

Frederick Kowal
Joseph McCarthy
Martin Stahl
Gregory Young

Cortland

Rebecca Bryan
Jamie Dangler
Dianne Galutz
Harvey Inventasch
Jo Schaffer
Dawn Van Hall
Joseph Westbrook

Downstate Medical

Rowena Blackman-Stroud
Mahalia Clunis
Henry Flax
Frederick Houston
Milton Lewis
Shirley Patterson
Eric Russell
Annette Siegel

Empire State College

Jacqueline Berger
Mary Kolisnyk
Pamela Malone
Ashley Mason
Shaun Richman

Environmental Science & Forestry

Justin Culkowski

Farmingdale

Douglas Cody

Fredonia

Ziya Arnavut
Gregory Cole
Derrik Decker
Lei Huang
Idalia Torres

Geneseo

Thomas Matthews
Chi-Ming Tang
Jasmine Tang

Morrisville

Stephen Hinkle
John Thomas Hogle
Stephanie Lawhorne
Jeri O'Bryan-Losee

New Paltz

Maryann Fallek
Amanda Merritt
Glenn McNitt
Kevin Saunders

Old Westbury

Candelario Franco
Eileen Landy
Martha Livingston
Patricia Smith

Oneonta

Nancy Cannon
William Simons
Edward Wesnofski

Optometry

Robert Kasprak

Plattsburgh

Wendy Gordon
Raymond Guydosh

Potsdam

Laura Rhoads

Stony Brook

Charles McAteer
Kevin Moriarty
Ed Quinn
Jason Torre
Judith Wishnia

Stony Brook HSC

Sarah Battaglia
Doreen Day
Carol Gizzi
Julitta Jo
Christopher King
Amy Kretz
Bruce Kube
Carolyn Kube
Nand Relan

System Administration

John Schumacher
Michael Walker

Upstate Medical

Mindy Heath
Gregory Threatte



Coverage Overview

Budgeting for a pet's illnesses and injuries can be stressful for anyone. It's difficult to plan for a pet that's unlucky or develops a chronic condition, and treatment costs can be unexpected and fluctuate. So Trupanion is there to help you focus on your furry family instead of finances.



WHAT'S COVERED*

- ✓ Diagnostic tests
- ✓ Medications
- ✓ Surgeries
- ✓ Orthotic and mobility devices
- ✓ Supplements
- ✓ Advanced dentistry
- ✓ Herbal therapy
- ✓ And so much more

WHAT'S NOT COVERED*

- Exam fees and sales tax where applicable
- Pre-existing conditions¹
- Spay or neuter
- Preventive care²



WHO 14 Years and Under

All dogs and cats from birth to 14 years of age, regardless of breed, can enroll for lifelong coverage.



WHAT 90% Coverage

The only company that covers 90% of all eligible illnesses and injuries and can pay hospitals directly at checkout with no payout limits.



WHEN 5 – 30 Days

Coverage begins after applicable policy waiting periods: 5 days for injuries and 30 days for illnesses.



WHERE US, Canada, Puerto Rico, Australia

Visit any veterinary, emergency care, or specialty hospital in the US, Canada, Puerto Rico, and Australia, including US and Canadian military installations.

ENROLL TODAY

UUP members receive an 11% monthly discount. Please contact UUP Member Services Trust for your promo code: 800.887.3863.

Call 855.235.3134 to enroll (Mon - Fri, 10am - 6pm ET)

Your enrollment will go live on the first of the following month.

Premiums can be payroll deducted or directly billed through UUP. Please contact UUP with any billing questions.

¹ Conditions that show signs or symptoms prior to enrollment or during waiting periods.

² This includes vaccinations, flea and tick control, heartworm medications, etc.

*Terms and conditions apply. See the policy at Trupanion.com/pet-insurance.

Trupanion is a registered trademark owned by Trupanion, Inc. Underwritten in Canada by Omega General Insurance Company and in the United States by American Pet Insurance Company, 6100-4th Ave S, Seattle, WA 98108. Please visit AmericanPetInsurance.com to review all available pet health insurance products.

000000000



MEMBERS ONLY BENEFITS

UUP members are eligible to choose from a wide array of benefits and services. Join your union colleagues and sign up online at <https://goo.gl/g4AQYX> or scan the QR code at right to become a member today!



UUP Member Services Trust—Voluntary Programs



Aflac is supplemental insurance that offers coverage outside your medical insurance for short-term disability, accident, cancer and critical illness. Premiums offered through UUP are up to 40% less than market price.



Liberty Mutual offers a 10% discount off auto insurance and 5% off homeowners and rental insurance.



MetLaw (Hyatt Legal Plan) offers two options: A Family Plan (\$15.75 a month); and Parent Plus, which covers parents and in-laws (\$21.75). There are no deductibles, no copays, and unlimited use for covered legal expenses.

MetLife Group Universal Life offers one policy with two benefits: A life insurance policy with a savings plan.



UUP Member Services Trust Voluntary Dental and Vision Plans include coverage for:



- UUP retiree members
- Part-time employees who are UUP members
- Surviving spouses of UUP members
- Surviving domestic partners of UUP members
- Members' aged-out dependents (until age 29)



Mid-Island Mortgage Corp. offers two programs: The Union Direct Program is open to all UUP members. The Physician's Mortgage Program is custom-designed for doctors and other medical professionals; go to <https://goo.gl/tiUtV1> for a complete list of eligible professions. Both programs offer significant savings and flexible finance options for home purchases or refinances.



Real Estate Advantage Program through Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty offers rebates paid at closing on the sale and purchase of a home, apartment or condo.



Retiree members receive a \$1,000 death benefit and the Travel Assistance Program through Unum Life Insurance at no cost.

UUP Member Services Trust—Discount Programs

Apple—Discounts vary

AT&T—20% off your monthly bill

BJ's Wholesale Club—\$15 off annual membership and one month free

Brooklyn Nets—Up to 50% off ticket prices

Enterprise Rental Car—Discounted vehicle rentals

Goodyear—10% off all tires, maintenance and repairs

hp Academy—Discounts vary

Jos A. Bank—20% off all regularly priced merchandise

Madison Square Garden—Discounts on seasonal tickets for Rangers and Knicks, and the Christmas Spectacular at Radio City Music Hall

Mirabito Fuel—Home heating and gasoline savings

Sprint—5% off your monthly bill

The Walking Company—15% off exclusive footwear brands; chapter-based wellness programs

TicketsatWork—Discounts and special access to theme parks, shows, hotels, and more

Verizon Wireless—19% off your monthly bill, plus 10% in-store/25% online off eligible accessories



Doreen M. Bango, Director,
Member Benefits & Services

This time, change is good

BY MICHAEL LISI

On March 11, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic. Then, the world changed.

Across the country, offices and workplaces closed, with all but the most essential workers told to stay home and work from home. Trains stopped rolling and planes stopped flying. The country's economy ground to a halt.

People got sick. And many people died.

New York City was one of the early epicenters of the coronavirus; according to the

"It was obvious to UUP President Fred Kowal that he needed to open clear, immediate lines of communication with members."

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 203,000 laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported between March and May 2020. More than 54,000 people were hospitalized, paralyzing and overwhelming New York City hospitals; 18,679 people died.

While no one really knew what to expect during the pandemic's early, dark days, it was obvious to UUP President Fred Kowal that he needed to open clear, immediate lines of communication with members. He did just that.

On March 24, 2020, UUP launched *UUPConnect: Coronavirus*, a weekly newsletter—written and produced by the UUP Media and Publications



Department—dedicated to keeping you, our members, up to date on coronavirus-related news at SUNY, across the state, around the nation, and all over the world.

From interviews with our front line health care workers at SUNY's public teaching hospitals and the union's unrelenting push for hazard pay for these employees to publicizing UUP news and union-sponsored virtual seminars, workshops and roundtable events, *UUPConnect: Coronavirus* became an important source of news each week for thousands of UUP members.

Thankfully, the coronavirus pandemic is on the wane and America has begun its slow emergence from the pandemic. Vaccines are

free and readily available, and hundreds of millions of Americans have gotten at least one dose of the vaccine.

This positive news does not mean the end of *UUPConnect: Coronavirus*. It did, however, require a name change to the newsletter. In June, we shortened the newsletter's name; it is now called UUPConnect.

Certainly, *UUPConnect* will continue to report on coronavirus-related news, especially as it relates to SUNY. But this newsletter will also feature non-coronavirus items that we feel are important to share with the members of this proud union.

Another change: We will no longer provide state and national totals of coronavirus cases and COVID-19-related deaths. As a way to chart our recovery, *UUPConnect* will continue to offer running totals of vaccinations in New York and the U.S.

Speaking of vaccinations, if you haven't gotten a COVID-19 vaccine, please get the shot. The vaccine is safe, effective, free and widely available. If you haven't already, please get vaccinated and help keep all of us safe from this deadly virus.

If you don't receive *UUPConnect* and want to, just shoot me an email at mlisi@uupmail.org or UUPConnect@uupmail.org.

Thanks for reading.

In solidarity,
Mike

