

Minutes

UUP Veterans Committee 4 April 2025

Desmond Crowne Plaza Hotel, Albany, NY

Members in attendance: Justin Culkowski, Co-Chair; Lisa Maire Anselmi, Liaison to Exec Committee; Katherine (Kitty) Cummings, Patrick Doyle, William Giangarra, Stu L'Hommedieu, Michael Littman, Kevin Moriarty; Michael Canders; Charles Spector; Guests: Lauren Store-Garrett and Justin Neretich who would like to join the Veterans Committee; Darryl McGrath from the Communications Office

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by J. Culkowski

Reading of the September 27 minutes: motion to approve by P. Doyle, seconded by Stu L'hommedieu Approved.

J. Culkowski noted that the previous evening, at the Committee Chairs meeting, a major theme was how committees are formed and filled with volunteers. Those desiring to be on a committee must get approval from the Campus Chapter President and also from the Committee Chair(s). Memberships and committees expire on 31 May and the next cycle begins 1 June 2025 to 31 May 2027. A strong emphasis is being placed on members being active and contributing to the functioning of the committees. At this point, members introduced themselves and they were asked, "What are you going to do to help the Veterans Committee function for the benefit of others." Answers ranged from making sure honor cords are available on my campus to making sure the Veterans Counseling office knows there is a UUP Veterans Committee. Katherine "Kitty" Cummings suggested committee members research their campus Veterans Offices. **Action Item:** Members of the Committee are to 1. Make contact with their campus Veterans Counseling Office and determine if they can or are willing to help UUP members who are veterans with their concerns and 2. Make it known there is a UUP Veterans Committee and report at the next DA or ZOOM meeting with the status of their inquiries. A reminder of this action item will be included with announcements about future meetings.

The Budget was reported as \$5750 for the fiscal year (1 September to 31 August) but later it was ascertained the budget is actually \$7,000. To date, only \$952.79 has been spent. A lengthy discussion followed about how the Committee is assessed travel expenses for non-delegate members of the Committee and how meeting space is also an expense.

The Committee members took a short break to have their group picture taken by Darryl McGrath. This may appear in one or more UUP communications vehicles and veterans who read the article including the picture will be asked to identify themselves to Brittany Profit-Rheinwald.

J. Culkowski reported no veteran employment issues occurred since the September meeting.

Bill Borgstede and Barbara Warkentine were not able to attend the DA so UUP staff members, Cindie Bayley and her daughter, Samantha, were helping the Committee at the Veterans Table collect donations for Fisher House. (Update: A total of \$219 was collected and will be sent to the Albany Fisher House.)

Honor Cord distribution is being handled by Jeri O'Bryan Losee who will make an announcement at the Plenary session for campus leaders to contact her if cords are needed.

The need for website improvement/maintenance was discussed. Justin Neretich said he could help in this regard. "WordPress" is the software used. J. Culkowski asked if anyone had any knowledge of suicide prevention internet sites for veterans. Michael Littman pointed out there is a veteran crisis line on the Veterans Administration site.

Kevin Moriarty described his experiences at the Veterans Day Parade in NYC. He said it would be better for a UUP representative to get a credential to attend the Eternal Light Ceremony as he was prohibited from attending that ceremony even though our wreath was there. This will be a project for the Committee Co-Chairs.

Lisa Marie Anselmi gave her liaison report and suggested a resolution be prepared regarding the cuts for the Veterans Administration taking place now under President Trump. This was considered by the Committee but too little time was available to draft a resolution so it was tabled until the next meeting as the full extent of VA cuts is not known.

A discussion about ZOOM meetings was held. Kitty and Kevin suggested we could hold hybrid meetings and they would work on this for the next DA. A ZOOM meeting to be organized by ? could be held in June/July.

At the conclusion of the meeting, J. Culkowski stated he would be stepping down as Co-Chair at the end of this cycle, ie 31 May. He welcomed members to step up to Co-chair the committee.

A motion to adjourn was made by P. Doyle and seconded by J. Culkowski. The meeting adjourned at 11:46.

Respectfully submitted,

Justin Culkowski, Co-Chair