COVID-19: The Numbers

These are cumulative numbers collected since the start of the pandemic:

437,107 confirmed cases in New York state
32,974 total deaths; 75,203 people have recovered
6,137,974 cases in the U.S.; 186,467 deaths; 2,231,757 people have recovered
Globally, more than 26.1 million cases; more than 865,000 deaths

From Johns Hopkins University (as of Sept. 3)

Not on the list? We can fix that

If you’re reading this newsletter and it’s not being emailed to you, that’s a problem.

Fortunately, it’s a problem we can fix.

To receive the UUPconnect: Coronavirus newsletter, email UUP Media & Publications Director Mike Lisi at mlisi@uupmail.org. We will add your email to our distribution list.

If your chapter has a coronavirus-related news item or an event, please share it with us so we can share it statewide. Please email your news items to Lisi at mlisi@uupmail.org.

You can email questions and concerns to mlisi@uupmail.org and/or jdangler@uupmail.org.
UUP backs SUNY’s move to close SUNY Oneonta

In a Sept. 3 press statement, UUP President Fred Kowal said he supports a decision by SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras to end on-campus instruction and activities at SUNY Oneonta to stem the spread of recent coronavirus outbreaks there.

“UUP supports holding on-campus classes, but only when those classes and activities can be held safely,” Kowal said. “Keeping our students, our members and host communities safe is paramount.

“With the recent coronavirus outbreaks at SUNY Oneonta, the risk to students, faculty, staff and the Oneonta community has become far too great,” he continued. “The only way to contain the virus and stem its spread is by sending students home and providing instruction remotely. This is the right move.”

The college went to a two-week “pause” period Aug. 30 to test everyone on campus after 105 COVID-19 cases were discovered on campus. That number rose to 389 cases on Sept. 3. According to the college, 54 students on campus are under quarantine and 100 more are in isolation.

“While this is sudden news and something no one wanted, the risk to our campus and Oneonta community is too great,” Oneonta President Barbara Jean Morris said in a Sept. 3 letter to students, faculty and staff. “I know the vast majority of our students have been diligent in protecting our campus since day one. We committed to do everything we could to mitigate this situation, and today, that means ending residential housing for this semester.”

Morris, in a Sept. 3 news report by the Glens Falls Post-Star, said “super-spreader events” caused the outbreak on campus. Six students and three organizations have been suspended for holding parties.

Read UUP’s press statement HERE.

Read SUNY’s press release HERE.

A special way to commemorate Labor Day

The usual parades and rallies through which UUP celebrates Labor Day cannot be held this year, because of the coronavirus pandemic.
But that doesn’t mean that UUP members won’t be able to pay tribute to all workers, and most especially their own colleagues and essential workers who have sacrificed so much during this difficult time.

UUP members can participate in car caravans at Buffalo Central, Buffalo HSC, Buffalo State and SUNY Fredonia, in events organized by their chapters. The caravans will show support for all workers, but especially those workers dealing directly with the coronavirus pandemic, and the communities and campuses that they serve.

To register, go to these links:

- Buffalo HSC
- Buffalo Center
- Buffalo State
- Fredonia

Members in the Syracuse area who wish to participate in a virtual rally organized by the Greater Syracuse and Central New York labor councils can contact Wendy@cnylabor.org.

Regional UUP tele-town halls to gauge coronavirus response, progress

UUP members will have new opportunities to ask questions and share concerns about campus operations during the coronavirus pandemic, when UUP convenes a series of six regional tele-town halls for members.

The tele-town halls will take place from Sept. 15 to Sept. 24, by region. Each event will be held at noon:

- Sept. 15 – Western NY (Alfred, Brockport, Buffalo Center, Buffalo HSC, Buffalo State, Fredonia, Geneseo and Empire State College)
- Sept. 16 – Capital District (Albany, Cobleskill, Polytechnic Institute, System Administration and Empire State College)
- Sept. 17 – Central NY (Binghamton, Cortland, Delhi, ESF, Morrisville, Oneonta, Upstate Medical University and Empire State College)
- Sept. 22 – Long Island (Farmingdale, Old Westbury, Stony Brook, Stony Brook HSC and Empire State College)
- Sept. 23 – Hudson Valley/Metro-Downstate (Downstate Medical Center, Maritime, New Paltz, Optometry, Purchase and Empire State College)
- Sept. 24 – North Country (Canton, Oswego, Plattsburgh, & Potsdam)
The regional tele-town halls will provide an overview of the political and economic landscape related to public higher education, as well as an opportunity to hear about the progress that UUP has achieved through coordinated member, chapter, and statewide actions to address COVID-19 reopening issues.

Each meeting will begin with a brief presentation, but the majority of the time will be devoted to member participants so that they can ask questions and share concerns.

UUP has used tele-town halls throughout the pandemic as an effective way of communicating with members in real time and giving members a chance to get the latest updates on the union's efforts on their behalf, to ask questions and speak directly with lawmakers.

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**Hey! We’re popular!**

Americans like labor unions again.

According to a Sept. 3 Gallup poll, 65 percent of people surveyed said they approved of labor unions. That's the highest it’s been since 2003.

Public support for labor unions has been on the upswing since dipping to an all-time low of 48 percent in 2009.

You can read a Gallup.com story about the poll [HERE](#).

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**Questions about voting this year? Read this.**

One thing that most everyone agrees on is that the Nov. 3 election will be one of most important in the country's history.

But the election is complicated this year, in large part due to the coronavirus pandemic. In New York, voters have two options: voting in person and voting with an absentee ballot.

The first step is the same for people who will vote in person or by absentee ballot: Make sure you’re registered to vote. You can do that [HERE](#). If you’re not registered, you have until Oct. 9 to do so. Go [HERE](#) to find information on how to register.

Then, put on your face mask, go to your polling place on Nov. 3 and vote. Click [HERE](#) to find your polling place.

**Absentee voting**

[Link to absentee voting information]
On Aug. 20, the governor signed a law allowing all voters to immediately request absentee ballots; a second law allows ballots to be postmarked the day of the election.

You can apply for an absentee ballot online, by email, by fax or by mail. The state is still working on setting up an online portal for ballot requests; it is coming soon, according to the State Board of Elections website. You can also apply in person at your local county board of elections.

If you don't want to wait, you can download an absentee ballot application HERE and mail, email or fax it in. Make sure to mark the box that says “temporary illness” if you are requesting the ballot because of coronavirus concerns.

The deadline to apply online or by mail for an absentee ballot is Oct. 27. You can apply for a ballot in person up until Nov. 2. Ballots will start going out in the mail in September.

Once you get your ballot, make sure that you vote and sign it before mailing it in. Detailed information on how to submit an absentee ballot can be found HERE.

New York travel quarantine continues

New York continues to join New Jersey and Connecticut in requiring that people traveling into New York from certain other states and U.S. territories enter quarantine for two weeks. Quarantined people are permitted to venture out only to seek medical care, or to obtain essential items such as food and medication.

The quarantine applies to people who have been in states that have a coronavirus infection rate of 10 percent or higher during a seven-day average, or more than 10 positive cases per 100,000 residents during that span.

Travelers and residents who are returning from designated states and territories can self-quarantine at home, a hotel or other temporary housing. The quarantine is largely voluntary, although New York City has randomly posted authorities to enforce the quarantine at entrance points into the city, and anyone found to have violated the quarantine order does face a fine.

The states and territories on New York’s travel quarantine list are:

Alaska, Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi,
Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, Nevada, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Virgin Islands and Wisconsin.

Support farm workers hit hard by pandemic

The United Farm Workers is asking union members around the country, including UUP members, to support the workers at Primex Farms, a major nut producer in Wasco, Calif.

Workers at Primex who have spoken out against the company for failing to protect its employees against the coronavirus have been fired, even as more than 100 Primex workers have contracted COVID-19. UFW has filed charges against Primex with the National Labor Relations Board.

Union members can support the Primex workers by signing this petition, which you can access by clicking HERE. The petition demands that Primex rehire the fired employees and take needed steps to ensure its employees’ safety.

In writing to UUP members to ask them to support the Primex workers, Tom Tucker, the UUP statewide vice president for professionals, thanked members for all that they have done during the most difficult time imaginable to serve students and patients. That same determination and strength, he said, can help other union workers who are struggling during the pandemic.

“Our faculty and professional staff have gone above and beyond the call of duty during this unprecedented time to make sure that we can supply the vital services it takes to continue educating our students and caring for our patients,” Tucker wrote. “Once again, labor has proven how vitally important it is to the health and well-being of our society.”

Urgent update: Congress needs to act

UUP is asking its members to continue to press their congressional lawmakers for passage of the HEROES Act, a coronavirus relief bill, and their state lawmakers for an ultra-millionaires’ tax and a billionaires’ tax, so that New York state can address a budget deficit approaching $20 billion, and SUNY can get the funding it so desperately needs.

To take action, go to UUP’s website and click on the links in the Take Action box on the right side of the
This is not only a matter of aid to public higher education; it’s a matter of racial justice. It’s already established that the coronavirus has hit low-income communities of color especially hard in the United States. So, it’s unfortunately no surprise that the economic crash caused by the pandemic is marked by a racial divide, as well.

That’s because there are sharp disparities in the unemployment benefits among states, and many of those disparities most deeply affect Black workers, who disproportionately live in states with the lowest unemployment benefits and the highest barriers to qualify for them, as reported in this New York Times story.

In April, the federal government started providing most workers with an additional $600 a week in unemployment benefits, in addition to their state benefits. That additional payment was a lifeline for millions of Americans, and especially so for Black workers who lost their job because of the pandemic. However, it has long since ended.

The House passed the HEROES Act May 15, but the bill has languished in the Senate.

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Drescher application deadline extended

The application deadline for the Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Leave Program has been extended to Sept. 16.

The application is for leave in the 2021 spring semester. Applications will be accepted electronically.

Go to the NYS/UUP Joint Labor-Management Committee’s website for more information.

Click HERE to access the website.

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Register now for Sept. 9 online accessibility, learning webinar

The Northeast ADA Center will hold a Sept. 9 seminar on virtual learning.

The hour-long forum, titled “Back to School and Virtual Accessibility,” is set for noon. It is free; registration is required.
Led by Joe Zesski, Northeast ADA program manager, the webinar will provide a basic overview of the legal need for online accessibility in the education setting, review key elements in accessible online learning, and discuss how schools and educators can address planning for an accessible online classroom.

Click [HERE](#) to register.

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**UUP In Memoriam webpage**

UUP remembers the active and retired members of our union family that we’ve lost to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you know of a UUP member who has died due to COVID-19, please click the link below to enter their information on UUP’s In Memoriam webpage.

[CLICK HERE](#) to fill out the In Memoriam form.

Enter the decedent’s name (first name, middle initial and last name), select their campus from a pull-down list, and include your email. You may also leave a short personal note about the deceased.

We will never forget our colleagues who were lost to COVID-19.