What It Is

To say that it’s been a difficult semester is to understate just how challenging this fall 2020 semester has been. I will not patronize you or fob you off by saying that it has been otherwise. Everyone has been working around the clock to try and deliver the education our students need throughout this semester. We are all exhausted. We are all worried about the financial health of Cortland and SUNY. We are worried about our jobs. We are worried about enrollment. We are worried about our students. We are worried about the safety of our families and friends, and, of course, we are concerned about our own well-being.

We have been dealing with difficult issues:

• Our members in essential positions and areas have been working tirelessly throughout the pandemic to keep the college operating;

• Our members in information resources have gone above and beyond the call to establish and maintain technology to accommodate our new hybrid and online classroom modalities;

• Our members in the counseling center have been inundated with students who have serious issues related to isolation, fear about the pandemic, worry about sick family members and friends — all in addition to students’ more general needs for their mental health;

• Our members working in facilities have been establishing, checking, and re-checking protocol to keep buildings safe;

• Our members working as Residence Hall Directors have been available on a 24/7 basis, their effort indefatigable and their work ethic irreproachable to take care of students;

• Our members who are teaching students have been forced to pivot many times as they have striven to provide a quality learning experience in their courses;

• Our members working in the library have changed the culture of the library to accommodate the burgeoning needs of students for quiet, useful study spaces while maintaining social distancing, in addition to modifying all of the other services they offer;

• Several of our members have been volunteering to deliver meals and doing other work to help students who are in isolation and quarantine;

• All of our members have been managing issues of isolation, childcare, illness, (sometimes) tricky technology, and increased workload.

And our members have been facing a multitude of other issues that, while too plentiful to list here, are in need of real recognition and appreciation.

Continued on page 2
As your UUP Cortland Chapter President, I want to thank everyone, most sincerely, for every thing you have done, major and minor, acknowledged and unacknowledged, to keep our students healthy and as happy as possible in such a restricted environment.

If our members had not risen to the occasion and voluntarily gone above and beyond the call of duty, without compensation of any kind, then SUNY Cortland would not have operated as successfully as it has this fall.

Some of our members who have been working at Cortland for more than a decade, have no position in the winter/spring 2021 semester. They will have no classes to teach, no athletics to coach; they will have no health insurance, and they will be facing personal financial crises that I can hardly imagine, but with which I absolutely empathize.

Some of you are struggling to cope with loss of loved ones, whether from complications related to COVID 19, from other illnesses, catastrophes, or accidents. You have my thoughts and prayers.

UUP has worked very hard to be sensitive to the issues you have all been facing, the fear and frustration you have been feeling.

In order to insure that your voice is heard and that you are receiving all the assistance your union can offer, we have been holding both open house virtual meetings, and targeted membership meetings. We want to thank our members who have participated in these meetings, as we need to be kept aware of your concerns so that we can continue to fight to maintain and, indeed, improve your terms and conditions of employment through our Labor Management meetings with the administration. If we are not informed, we cannot keep our dialogue with management progressing, and I thank you. Although most of our members are not comfortable visiting the UUP Chapter office, now located back in Moffett Room 001, our officers have been readily available using virtual platforms to meet and discuss individual issues and member needs.

We have been reaching out to our newly hired members and other non-members to continue to develop and increase our membership. We thank every member for remaining committed as a member of UUP, and we welcome new members every day. Please do consider signing up to be a member of your union, if you have not already done so. The benefits are immeasurable, and the downside nil. UUP is our union.

UUP has hosted an insightful Fall Membership meeting, at which we were able to have fellowship at a safe distance, and hear words of inspiration and friendship from our leaders statewide.

Our UUP Statewide affiliates have been working diligently with the Chancellor and in Labor Management meetings to keep us all safe with mandatory surveillance testing provided for free to UUP represented employees; they have worked to keep the aggregation of our scholarship, research, and work safe with the Agreement to Adjust the Tenure Clock; and they have worked to establish our ground-breaking Telecommuting Pilot Program to keep density on campuses at a minimum and prevent the spread of COVID 19.

I have personally met Chancellor Malatras, and I know he is aware of our concerns, and our issues, and he is in daily contact with our UUP President Fred Kowal to try and balance the needs of the campuses and our communities with the needs of those who live and work there.

The Cortland Community is facing financial meltdown as well, their businesses having not been patronized by the campus community. This has resulted in the loss of uncountable jobs and income. In an effort to assist the local community, UUP has conducted a food drive to benefit customers at Catholic Charities of Cortland County, from November 4-December 4. We have collected non-perishable food items, hygiene items, and unwrapped gifts to be donated before the end-of-year holiday season.

UUP wishes the Cortland Community well and will continue to support its citizens in any way we can.

What else can we do as we look ahead to the spring, when we know, as it has this semester, the campus will not be able to operate successfully in the spring if we do not continue our heroic work?
First, take a break! Management has been very receptive in conversations with UUP about taking some time over the winter break for self-care and recharging for the spring semester.

Second, reach out. Please reach out to your UUP leadership with issues and concerns. We are doing and will continue to do our best to communicate with our members and work to protect their jobs and their interests. We will continue to reach out to others who need us more than we need them.

Third, remember what is good. I will not bore you with platitudes, and sometimes, some days, there is nothing good.

But, other times, there is. For me, there is putting on the outfit I picked out the night before and taking extra care with makeup. There is the one day I get home before dark. There is hugging my niece, tickling my nephew, petting a cat, and chasing my dog around the yard. There are my few close friends upon whom I rely, a lot these days, for solace and succor.

There is UUP, and the solidarity that binds us together. We will never stop fighting for you.

Be Safe.

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**IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER!**

We welcome articles and letters submitted by members of the SUNY Cortland Community.

Please share your thoughts with us— we want to hear from you! Opinions expressed in *The Cortland Cause* are those of the individuals and are neither endorsed by nor represent the views of UUP.

Please note: The Cortland Cause will generally not print anonymous submissions.

We reserve the right to edit submissions for grammar, space limitations, accuracy, etc.

Send contributions to the Chapter Office, uup@cortland.edu and to the editor, Amy Russell, Amy.Russell@cortland.edu
Taking Control of Our Financial Destiny: Three Concrete Steps

To protect workers, essential public services, and local businesses, UUP should urge the Governor and the NY legislature to immediately take three measures.

1. **Federal Reserve Emergency Money**
   
   The Federal Reserve currently provides emergency lending to states and municipalities. NYS and NYC are eligible for billions if the governor and the mayor of NYC choose to access them. This money is available immediately, doesn’t have to be repaid before 2023 or 2024, and could cover the entire 2020 budget shortfalls for both the state and NYC.

   Governor Cuomo and Mayor De Blasio need to act now because the emergency program (called the Municipal Liquidity Facility) ends on December 31, 2020. As union members, we should do everything we can to convince our elected officials that this cash infusion is necessary to protect us workers, our public services, and our local businesses. Banks regularly secure emergency funds provided by the Federal Reserve. As workers, we should do the same.

   Using Federal Reserve cash is a first step in the right direction. Additionally, ending a tax rebate for financial institutions can yield additional revenue.

2. **Reinstate the NY Stock Transfer Tax**

   UUP, the NYS Nurses Association, and the Black Nurses Coalitions currently urge the NY legislature to reinstate the stock transfer tax, a move that would yield $14-19 billion per year. A single year’s tax revenue is nearly enough to pay back the state portion of the Federal Reserve emergency funds when they fall due.

   Federal Reserve emergency funds and tax money will generate money beyond what we need to cover the budget shortfall. But we need to ensure that this money reaches the right people.

3. **Covid-19 Recovery Commission**

   [NY Senate Bill S8456](https://www.legis.state.ny.us/legislation/bill.aspx?BillId=447b4b92-cb3b-4e0d-a7b9-43b56e28170e) creates the Covid-19 Recovery Commission, a democratic decision-making process to distribute public money. UUP and our partners should support this bill and demand a seat at the table of the Covid-19 Recovery Commission. To protect workers’ interests, we should urge the governor to nominate Union representatives to the commission.

   An accountable and transparent Covid-19 recovery commission will ensure that the money flows to critical public institutions, to workers’ bank accounts, and from there, to the businesses and communities in which we live.

   What we need to do now: Convince NY lawmakers that this three-part plan is doable. Get the money (1) from the Federal Reserve and (2) from taxes, and (3) distribute it to the people and institutions who need it and spend it locally.

   The solution is right there in front of us. This plan is doable, and we will not accept unnecessary pain.

   New York is a model for how to battle Covid-19; we can now become a model for how to mobilize public money.
UNION STRONG…UNION COMPASSIONATE

Union Strong is our call to members to remind them that we all win when we hang together. It also reminds them, more subtly, that we are only as strong as our weakest link, and as such, we need to support the weakest among us.

So it was warming and heartening to see that not only were we UNION STRONG but UNION COMPASSIONATE during this past year's call for donations to the Holiday season Food Bank. This year UUP worked closely with Catholic Charities of Cortland to be the distributor of the boxes of food and personal items donated.

Not only were there boxes at sites across the campus but two off-site locations, at Henry Steck and Jo Schaffer's homes, for drop off for retirees and others who did not feel comfortable coming to campus because of the pandemic.

According to past drives, this year's contributions were the largest ever received. Many of you were extraordinarily generous and thoughtful in your anonymous contributions. Some donated mittens and gloves, hair products, plush toys, games and much more than cans of beans and tuna, boxes of cereal and spaghetti. These contributions will make some families enjoy moments of joy beyond the necessity of food.

UUP thanks to all of you who made this year's FOOD BANK drive so successful.

To all, have a warm, healthy and happy holiday season.
Winter is Coming: COVID-19 at Cortland

Last week, I had no idea what I was going to write about in the newsletter. So much uncertainty and change has swirled around us in the nation, state, campus, and home – what would be relevant by the time you read this?

One fact is evergreen: UUP employees work hard and pull through. We have had the messiest, most chaotic semester in living memory, and academics and professionals, tenure-track and contingent faculty, all pulled together to teach and assist our students under grueling conditions hitherto-unimagined. Further, not one employee at Cortland has, according to our dashboard, been hospitalized or lost their life to this disease. So, first, let me offer my congratulations on our survival and success.

Dan Harms,
Chapter VP
for Academics
Library

Most of us haven’t had an opportunity to ask how our fellow campuses are doing. Let’s take a look.

The New York Times created a nationwide map of college campuses to show the number of COVID cases reported on each (https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/covid-college-cases-tracker.html). It seems most of the data is self-reported as of November 19, so we should take the numbers with caution. Also, there’s considerable variation in certain metrics, such as whether the campus counts number of positive tests or number of positive individuals, and county health departments might make different requests of the campuses within them.

If you zoom in and out of the map, the names of different campuses appear and disappear. When zoomed out entirely, however, only one campus’ name appears over our state: SUNY Cortland. To be fair, this seems to be a product of how the map is generated; on the list further down the page, SUNY Oneonta edges out Cortland for the most reported cases in-state. Yet according to the SUNY COVID dashboard (https://www.suny.edu/covid19-tracker/), we have had more cases than Oneonta, ranking first in the system. This is in a state with colleges of staggering size, some of which have been in veritable COVID-19 hotspots.

Have our colossal efforts to repeatedly test the campus ratcheted up our numbers? Positivity of tests administered may be a better indicator of spread within a population. We do not have figures for colleges across the state, but as of today, Cortland (2.7%) ranks at third on the SUNY dashboard, behind Upstate Medical (3.9%) and Oneonta (3.5%).

I am not any sort of specialist on health or statistics. Some sources of data are contradictory, and many colleges may not be as forthright as ours about their numbers. We will certainly see an accounting later detailing how accurate or representative these measures have been, or if any measures we took as a campus might have made a difference.

No matter what we might find later, however, students will be returning to Cortland in less than two months. A cold Central New York winter will constrain more students to indoor settings, leading to greater possibility of transmission.

Cortland has been asked to submit a plan to SUNY for review for the February re-opening. I hope that whatever plan we present takes lessons from our campus, and successful efforts pursued at others, in order to preserve the safety of employees and students alike.
United University Professions
Labor-Management Agenda
Thursday, October 15, 2020
1:30-3:30 pm
GoToMeeting Invitation
Meeting Link: TBD

Items of Collegiality:

1. UUP acknowledges the instrumental role management and all folks at Cortland have played in maintaining a campus with fewer than 100 positive cases of Corona Virus during the period ending September 25.

2. UUP acknowledges inclusion of a UUP representative on the COVID 19 Coordinating Committee.

New Business:

1. UUP requests a report on the financial stability of the college:
   a. Where can UUP find SUNY Cortland’s 2020-2021 budget information to review?
   b. What budget shortfall, if any, is Cortland experiencing in fall 2020? Spring 2021?
   c. Precisely what amount of allocation has been allotted to SUNY Cortland? What amount has been received to date?
   d. Does the college anticipate any additional or supplemental allocation from the state at this point?
   e. Can management characterize any stresses placed upon particular budget lines, such as temporary services, also receives, or extra service?
   f. Are rank-to-rank promotions that are accompanied by an increase in base salary being honored at this time?
   g. Can you provide an update on student enrollment - e.g. how many students have withdrawn, what indications we’ve had about enrollment for the spring?

2. Draft Policy: Course Planning Cancellation Guidelines:
   a. At what point has/will the draft become official college policy?
   b. Can you provide some additional clarification regarding the purpose of the policy, should it be implemented, as it relates to the rationale briefly explored in the August 2020 LM meeting?
   c. How will the policy be implemented? Will every lower division course be cancelled if enrollment does not reach 20 students? Upper division undergraduate courses whose enrollment fails to reach 20? Graduate courses whose enrollment fails to reach 10?
   d. If exceptions can be made, as the draft stipulates, how and under what circumstances will an exception be made, especially an “additional exception” that is not directly related to students’ needs to graduate?
   e. Will exceptions be made if student need dictates, regardless of faculty member assigned to the course?

Continued on page 8
f. Under what circumstances will courses that have multiple sections be consolidated? Will this apply uniformly to all courses taught? If so, what considerations will be made for faculty workload and compensation?

g. Can you provide some clarification regarding what management means by “shared resources when appropriate” in the draft of the policy?

3. Curtailment of the in-person Tuesday-Thursday classes:
   a. Can management discuss the considerations you have given to President Pittsley's recommendations in her follow-up to 9/17 LM email (briefly outlined below):
      i. UUP asks management to empower their faculty, who would never make a cavalier decision about moving a course to 100% remote learning, to make those decisions.
      ii. UUP encourages management be flexible in empowering faculty to take a reasonable amount of time (perhaps including cancelling classes for a day or two) to modify their courses due to this new time restraint, and inform their Deans and Chairs of their need to do so;
      iii. UUP encourages management to hold widely publicized trainings for personnel committee members (present and future) and Chairs to be flexible in accepting and holding harmless faculty who must make alterations to their workload in order to meet the demands of the semester, and this academic year;
      iv. UUP asks for flexibility in documenting these changes in their annual reports.

4. April 30 Memorandum of Understanding on Tenure Clock Stops and Personnel Actions:
   a. How will the campus put into practice this MOU, in terms of communication and implementation?
   b. How will evaluators be advised to proceed if campus or departmental policies contradict the MOU?
      i. Faculty are required to perform CTEs on a timetable (e.g. once every third time they teach a course (Handbook 260.02, I.13), or more often based on departmental policies). If the person would have been required to perform CTEs in the spring of 2020 under ordinary circumstances, what will the expectations be for them?
      ii. The present crisis may have serious effects on scholarly activity, including publishers shutting down, delay of crucial fieldwork, and the like. If this has a long-term impact on a person's research, will the campus still require three scholarly achievements in that case?

5. How many members of UUP are currently working in interim positions, and for how long have those members been working in those positions?
   a. Do those folks who are serving in interim positions have written performance programs, expectations, or duties?
Items of Collegiality:
1. UUP would like to inform Management of their Holiday Food Drive, a collaboration with Catholic Charities of Cortland County, going on now until December 4, during which we will be collecting non-perishable food items, hygiene items, and gifts to benefit needy families in Cortland County.
2. UUP acknowledges the continued communication and collaboration between us and management as we continue to navigate the COVID 19 pandemic in the SUNY Cortland and surrounding community.

New Business:
1. Precisely how many faculty have agreed to take an overload in fall 2020?
2. Taking into consideration the proposed hard hiring freeze, what is management’s plan for addressing the continual overloads taken on by tenure track faculty and junior faculty in the School of Professional Studies, particularly as it pertains to the Department of Physical Education?
3. With regard to the number of Part-Time Lecturers who taught at least one course in fall 2020, UUP requests an update on the following from the Dean of each of the three Schools for Spring 2021:
   a. Number of Part-Time Lecturers not invited back?
   b. Number of Part-Time Lecturers with reduced courses assigned?
   c. Number of Part-Time Lecturers with fewer than six contact/credit hours assigned?
4. Does management intend to complete the 2020 DSI process and distribute awards by December 31?
   a. Has any consideration been given to across-the-board awards for all employees?
   b. Has any consideration been given to an across-the-board award for part-time employees?
   c. What is the status of the inequity analysis for 2020?
5. UUP Survey of Professionals, Summary Results:
   a. Results indicate communication issues with professionals:

Continued on page 10
i. What is your plan for increasing accuracy of communications with employees before spring 2021?

   1. General responses indicate, for example, an understanding that residence halls have been operating at 100% capacity.

b. Results indicate concerns about increased workload without compensation of any kind:

   i. What plan does Management have to document this temporary work, so as to prevent an increase in performance obligations without compensation?
      1. 27% of respondents said there was a change to work schedule with no accompanying change to performance program.
      2. 33% change in workload with no accompanying change in performance program.

c. Results indicate some areas were provided with equipment to telecommute:

   i. How many and which areas specifically were provided with equipment to enable employees to telecommute?
      1. UUP has concerns about equity in providing equipment to enable employees to telecommute.

6. Campus Student Surveys: UUP has some concerns about reported issues with bias in the survey, reported in a Town Hall meeting held by the Concerned Faculty Committee and which were read out at Faculty Senate.

   a. Will the results of the survey be used to evaluate faculty, either generally or specifically?

7. Planning for Spring 2021:

   a. In what ways is planning for the spring semester being done?

   b. In what ways might the faculty and other employee groups on campus be consulted in the planning process?

   c. How soon will a draft plan be completed?
      i. Can you discuss any features of the plan at this point?

   d. Will UUP members be given an opportunity to provide feedback on the plan?

Old Business:
1. April 30 Memorandum of Understanding on Tenure Clock Stops and Personnel Actions:

   a. Aside from the email from Human Resources late in the summer, how will the

Continued on page 11
campus put into practice this MOU, in terms of communication and implementation?

b. Can Management provide an update on the tracking system being developed?

c. How will evaluators be advised to proceed if campus or departmental policies contradict the MOU?

- Faculty are required to perform CTEs on a timetable (e.g. once every third time they teach a course (Handbook 260.02, I.13), or more often based on departmental policies). If the person would have been required to perform CTEs in the spring of 2020 under ordinary circumstances, what will the expectations be for them?

- The present crisis may have serious effects on scholarly activity, including publishers shutting down, delay of crucial fieldwork, and the like. If this has a long-term impact on a person’s research, will the campus still require three scholarly achievements in that case?

d. UUP requests a copy of the draft document generated by Andrew Fitzgibbon, mentioned at LM 10/15/2020, which Faculty Senate may adopt, which would outline hardships presented by COVID 19 to employee’s professional obligations.

e. Will there be a similar document drafted for professionals? UUP requests to review that document.
United University Professions
Labor-Management Agenda
Thursday, December 17, 2020
1:30-2:30pm
GoToMeeting Invitation

Meeting Link: TBD

Items of Collegiality:
1. UUP acknowledges the continued communication and collaboration between us and management as we continue to navigate the COVID 19 pandemic in the SUNY Cortland and surrounding community.

Old Business:
1. Planning for Spring 2021:
   a. How soon will a draft plan be completed?
   b. Can you discuss any features of the plan at this point?
      i. Testing Protocol?
      ii. Reporting?
      iii. Enforcement?
      iv. Screening?
      v. Residence Hall Density?
      vi. Staffing, especially for Q & I duties?
      vii. Server Capacity?
      viii. Designated learning and social spaces (besides dorm rooms)?
   c. Will UUP members be given an opportunity to provide feedback on the plan?
2. April 30, 2020, Memorandum of Understanding on Tenure Clock Stops and Personnel Actions:
   a. Aside from the email from Human Resources late in the summer, how will the campus put into practice this MOU, in terms of communication and implementation?
   b. Can Management provide an update on the tracking system being developed?
   c. How will evaluators be advised to proceed if campus or departmental policies contradict the MOU?
      * Faculty are required to perform CTEs on a timetable (e.g. once every third time they teach a course (Handbook 260.02, I.13), or more often based on departmental policies). If the person would have been
required to perform CTEs in the spring of 2020 under ordinary circumstances, what will the expectations be for them?

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d. UUP requests a copy of the draft document generated by Andrew Fitzgibbon, mentioned at LM 10/15/2020, which Faculty Senate may adopt, which would outline hardships presented by COVID 19 to employee’s professional obligations.

e. Will there be a similar document drafted for professionals? UUP requests to review that document.

3. Has the campus been given authorization by the Division of Budget to pay DSI discretionary awards, or to distribute award letters?

   a. If not, do we have a timeline when these items might occur?

   b. What is the status of the inequity analysis for 2020?

   c. Will implementation of awards be retroactive to December 31, 2020?

4. UUP Survey of Professionals, Summary Results:

   a. Results indicate communication issues with professionals:

      i. What is your plan for increasing accuracy of communications with employees before spring 2021?

   b. Results indicate concerns about increased workload without compensation of any kind:

      i. What plan does Management have to document this temporary work, so as to prevent an increase in performance obligations without compensation?

New Business:

5. UUP has some concerns about the reconfiguration of the President’s Council:

   A. How will the President’s Council “create a concentrated deliberative body that brings multiple perspectives from across all campus constituencies,” that “requires more diverse voices at the highest levels of decision-making,” without direct representation of the faculty, labor unions, and other underrepresented groups on campus?
B. Can management characterize the "opportunity for faculty and staff to offer agenda items for Council meetings," as stated in the message sent to employees?

C. Can you characterize what management means when it says the President’s Council will "have the ability to influence and enact policies that reflect those constituencies as well as our institutional mission," in the message sent to employees?

D. How will the President’s Council plan to collaborate with UUP on issues that are related to the terms and conditions of employment of its members?

6. UUP has some concerns about the planned suspension of graduate programs and its impact on the positions of UUP members:

   a. Has management consulted Deans, Department Chairs, and/or Faculty in making any decisions about suspending programs?
      i. UUP understands there was no consultation with Faculty or Chair in deciding to eliminate the MSED in Adapted Physical Education Program.

   b. Is there a formal process in which the college engages before programs are suspended?

   c. What other programs have been suspended 2019-2021?

   d. Does management further intend to begin the process to have those programs deactivated?
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Executive Board Meetings Fall 2020 Schedule
October 8, November 12 & December 11

Labor Management Meetings Schedule
October 15, November 19 & December 18