



# The Cortland Cause

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## Your Chapter President Welcomes You to Work for Your Union

Welcome Back! I am very excited to see so many new faces and long-time friends on campus as we gear up for another exciting and busy year together. At the Welcome Back Picnic held at Yaman Park on Friday, September 6, we gathered together to celebrate our union, our membership, and our friendship. Our union is the mechanism through which organized workers, standing together, protect our rights, work, and way of life from poor working conditions, political and public anti-union attack, and from the ambivalence that keeps our membership at less than 100%. UUP needs your help in advocating for the solidarity every person in our bargaining unit needs, whether that person recognizes it or not. I know we're busy with our work, our lives (the carpool, the publications, the visit from the plumber, the dog, the kids, our mothers, our fathers) but I must still ask you to spare some time for our union. Every member – active folks on campus and those retirees who've shouldered our union before us – are a part of this family, and you all have an equal stake in driving our union forward. We have a responsibility to support each other. UUP must join together with other unions to protect our rights and privileges as the educators of the guardians of democracy, education, family, and community. UUP must also heed the call for help, move beyond the boundaries of the Cortland Campus to the struggling and beautiful Cortland community. We have to find ways to win the support of the citizens and make them collaborators in the fight to protect our human rights to a living wage, job security, a sustainable environment, and a positive relationship with our workplace. I think we have a big job ahead of us in the coming year, and I cannot achieve these goals alone. Together, our growing numbers can allow UUP to extend the hand of friendship and partnership to the town, county, and state of New York, to continue to be the shepherds of public higher education.



**Jaclyn Pittsley,**  
Chapter President  
English

I would like to take a moment to thank special guests Tom Tucker (UUP Statewide VP for Professionals), President Erik Bitterbaum, Ms. Ellen Howard Burton, Greg Sharer (Vice President for Student Affairs), Anna Addonisio (Vice President for Finance and Management), Jordan Helin (AFT Regional Organizer), and Virginia Levine (Chief of Staff and Vice President for Policy and Accreditation), who were able to join us at the park to enjoy the beautiful weather and have fellowship.



*Dawn Van Hall - Cortland Chapter Photographer*



**Jaclyn Pittsley,**  
Chapter President  
English

## McSweeney's Exposes Truth about CTEs

A concerned member recently shared with me the August McSweeney's entitled *10 Tips for Selecting Courses Based on Things You will write on your Professors' Course Evaluations at the End of the Semester*, which offers some deplorable, yet imaginative advice to students who are considering courses for their next semester. While most readers know, I hope, that McSweeney's is meant to be lighthearted, their advice in August really gets at the heart of the problematic design of the evaluation instrument.

Evaluation is vitally important to educators. We are continually evaluating our own work, revising materials we incorporate into a course, discarding activities that have proven to be unsuccessful, and seeking out opportunities to develop new methods to teach and learn. We readily undertake to be evaluated by our peers working both in and outside our department to insure that our colleagues can agree that our methods and materials are worthwhile;

mentorship is one of the educator's greatest resources in our desire to continue our evolution. We want our supervisors to concur in these evaluations and concur that we are a valued member of the institution. And of course, every educator is concerned that he or she is meeting students' needs, and we trust that Course Teacher Evaluations can be a formative way for us to engage in self-reflection and personal improvement.

Unfortunately, Course Teacher Evaluations, not necessarily the instrument itself, but the application of its results can also be a major source of stress and frustration for faculty each semester. Nearly the entirety of one's teaching effectiveness in the classroom relies, it seems, upon what the students comment on their Course Teacher Evaluations. This can be problematic for several reasons. First, the instrument seems to be designed, despite some recent revisions, to be more of a "one size fits all" instrument, rather than one coordinated for specific programs, courses, or environments. Additionally, the comments or lack thereof in them can have serious repercussions for hard-working faculty.

For example, tenure track faculty may be wondering if a minor comment will be utilized to deny a key promotion, and contingent faculty may worry if the dearth of written comments will be determined evidence of inferior teaching. This worry is also contingent upon what the averages reveal, based upon what bubbles have been filled in by the students. Some students read carefully and take their time to fill in the bubbles, while others, regrettably, fill in the bubbles as fast as possible in order to leave class afterward, often forgetting the pencil they are using was lent to them by their professor's department.

Compounding the issue of evaluation for members is the apparent disregard some personnel committees have for other methods of evaluation. This occurs despite the fact that the College Handbook states, "If a teacher does not wish to use a CTE form, an alternate procedure of visitation is possible" (260.02 COMPREHENSIVE TEACHING EVALUATION SYSTEM). Some departments even have language in their Organizational Plans stipulating the perhaps unmerited weight of Course Teacher Evaluations: "In the absence of such documentation, the Personnel Committee may conclude that the candidate has failed to demonstrate teaching effectiveness" (Chapter 2, Section A, "Course Teacher Evaluations," Item 10, English Department Organizational Plan). Other Department Personnel Committees also have advised faculty to add Course Teacher Evaluations to their portfolios, after they have chosen not to, as it could mean the difference between receiving a determination of effective or ineffective teaching. This seems to be in direct conflict with college policies which indicate that faculty have the authority to choose upon what documents they are considered for reappointment and promotion (See College Handbook 220.06, 220.07, 220.08) or that, "Only the candidate may add to their portfolio any material they wish to have considered in the decision-making process" (College Handbook 220.06, H, Item 2). While it is clear that departments may also choose to submit and have approved Organizational Plans that are uniquely theirs, it seems that such a counterintuitive policy can be fraught with issues. At most other SUNY campuses, UUP understands, course teacher evaluations are owned by the faculty member once they are presented to that faculty member, though they may be housed within a department, yet at Cortland it has been made clear to UUP that SUNY Cortland owns our Course Teacher Evaluations. Why this deviation? It should be entirely up to that member whether or not to choose to include CTEs in a professional review. And faculty who choose not to should not be advised otherwise or penalized for making such a choice.

It is possible to determine teaching effectiveness without using Course Teacher Evaluations.

Continued on page 3

Just as it is possible to determine quality scholarship whether or not students choose to read a faculty member's scholarship. For example, what might happen if, as McSweeney's (2019) suggests, students "find an instructor with a Ph.D. and several acclaimed books on the History of the Bildungsroman, so you can point out how they clearly don't know anything about the Bildungsroman when you're asked if the grading process was fair." In this case, not only would the student be providing an opinion irrelevant to the question asked, the opinion seems at best suspect. Instead of including an evaluation with such comments, a member of the faculty may determine that because it is irrelevant and speaks not to teaching effectiveness at all, it should not be seen by peers and other evaluators. Why can we not be trusted to make such a determination?

Before readers feel I'm unfairly judging my colleagues' ability to fairly and creditably determine what the feedback received from students on course evaluations really means, please note that not all students give fair feedback on Course Teacher Evaluations.

Some students seem to be perfectly aware, or at least hopeful that so much weight will be given to Course Teacher Evaluations that their usefulness as a guide for future course planning is overwhelmed by their use as a medium through which one can transmit sometimes spurious or personal, or even silly or racist claims about a teacher's effectiveness. McSweeney's (2019) advises, "If possible, sit in on a class before enrolling to make sure the instructor's accent annoys you enough to recommend they learn how to speak English when asked if the instructor provided adequate feedback on your work." Of course, McSweeney's is meant to be humorous, but it's not at all funny to think that colleagues and peers may not realize this comment is inappropriate on a Course Teacher Evaluation or to use in evaluation. In fact, perhaps both faculty and students might benefit from training regarding what is and is not appropriate to comment upon a professional evaluation. I am certain that a majority of our student body is more than capable of providing useful, measurable, supportable feedback as well. However, when members put so much faith in what is written on a Course Teacher Evaluation, and our hard work is broken down into "her CTEs average 4.5 or higher" or "concern that his CTE results are rarely above 3.5," it can be very oppressive. If, instead, faculty were permitted to share with students the true purpose of course evaluations, and trained faculty to see negative or hurtful comments for what they can sometimes really be, we would all be able to feel less stressed about distributing them and including them in a portfolio.

If rather than used as a guide for self-reflection and improvement, Course Teacher Evaluations are used as the definitive measure of ability and effectiveness, then faculty may see their jobs as to "get good CTEs" rather than to educate the guardians of democracy, family, community, freedom, and education. So, some teachers might feel pressure to create a "gut course," or a course in which he or she inflates grades or reduces academic rigor in the hopes of having more favorable evaluations.

This can be A DIRECT RESULT of their jobs relying so heavily upon what students say about their work, on that form, on that day, when they are feeling one hundred other things and thinking one hundred other thoughts, during the last week or so of classes before final exams.

Perhaps it might be more useful for students to fill out forms similar to these entitled "Learning Outcomes/ Goals Desired" at the beginning of the semester, which can then be reviewed at the end of the semester in a collegial, useful, and dare I say, face-to-face or direct way at the end of the semester. Of course, the anonymity of evaluations at the end of the semester is meant to encourage the student to feel free to reply honestly to evaluation questions, without fear of punishment or reprisal. It protects the students from a potential abuse of authority that teachers could undertake against these students who are only trying to speak fairly. It seems trust, trust of students to speak fairly and honestly in an open environment, and trust of faculty to hear and assimilate fair and honest feedback is impossible. The lack of trust may foster comments like "if you didn't like your instructor last semester, sign up for another course with the same person so you can repeat your previous feedback about how they shouldn't be allowed to teach at this school (but in all caps this time)" (McSweeney's, 2019). In an open environment, a protected one, based on trust, respect, and collaborative dialogue, students should feel free to share what they expect and say what they think in a respectful rather than hurtful way, and the teacher should be able to respect the student-teacher imbalance of power, and respond in a useful, inclusive way; so too the supervisor.

Expanding upon this anonymous commenting format, I wonder would it be useful to evaluate our supervisors with such an evaluation form. There is a power structure at work within higher education that might lend itself to the same potential abuse of authority between supervisors and the supervised. Not all supervisors allow for an open and honest dialogue about their effectiveness as supervisors. If there were a Supervisor Evaluation Form distributed to all faculty members each semester, accompanied by a pencil, which faculty completed by filling in the bubbles and using “their favorite expletive in the section for additional comments,” (McSweeney’s, 2019) would that supervisor’s position be predicated upon the quality of those comments; would a supervisor be removed or “approved with reservation” because there was a lack of unsolicited comments? Surely not. So, why do we use the same method to evaluate teachers?

Course teacher evaluations are meant to be *formative*; they should have a profound and lasting influence on a teacher’s life, but they should not be used as a *summative* way to air a personal or unreasonable quarrel with another human being, or as the primary determinant for promotion and reappointment. And those who view them must be diligent in examining the totality of not only the comments on evaluations, but the totality of the material that member chooses to provide as evidence of effective teaching. SUNY Board of Trustees Policy states in its criteria for Promotion of Academic Employees that, “Effectiveness in teaching [is] as demonstrated by such things as judgment of colleagues, development of teaching materials or new courses and student reaction as determined from surveys, interviews, and classroom observation” (2013, pp. 54-55). It does not stipulate at all in what ways or what form those evaluations and observations must take, for good reason: evaluations which provide irrelevant feedback, or mention a professor’s looks, accent, or “cool purple shirt” (McSweeney’s, 2019) provide no evaluation at all.

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## From the editor:

Since taking over the role of editor one year ago, I have been thinking about how our chapter can make the most of The Cortland Cause to enhance our membership engagement. It has been an exciting time to do this service on behalf of the campus because it has coincided with some of the most effective mass union demonstrations in the country’s recent past, and continues with the ongoing United Auto Workers strike against General Motors.

While all of these events are making headlines around the country, my thoughts have centered on how we can make our publication more readable and include more voices from around campus. And so, we are going to make some big changes this year—we are going digital. This will be the last regular print edition of The Cortland Cause. We have always made each quarterly edition available in a digital format as a PDF, emailed to members and archived on our website. But before the year is out, we are going to use our WordPress style website to publish articles. This will enable us to share news with our membership more regularly—no more print deadlines (!), with weblinks that are viewable across devices, while also sparing the expense of printing a copy of every edition for each member on campus. Personally, I may be most excited about the color photos.

We appreciate the readership who prefers a print edition, and we will continue to make those available to those who submit a request.

I don’t expect to perfectly nail this transition in our first round. We will be open to suggestions and questions; we would like to hear any of your concerns about the move. And we look forward to your continued submissions. Our main goal is to continue to serve you and share your voice with the campus.



**Amy Russell,**  
The Learning  
Center



**Dan Harms,**  
Chapter VP for  
Academics  
Library

## CTEs: Are They Worth It?

Course Teacher Evaluations (CTEs) have come up more and more often in my conversations across campus this semester. I've heard quite a number of views on how they are used on campus, with the overall trend being to emphasize their importance, especially with regard to decisions on renewal and promotion. Some feel that these evaluations are the only criteria used at some crucial junctures.

To be clear, I believe that students should be able to provide feedback on the professors who teach them. In many cases their comments can be insightful and provide faculty with opportunities to reflect and improve their teaching. Even general positive feedback can be welcome at the end of a long semester.

At the same time, I think we all acknowledge that the CTEs can also display other dynamics. Students might be upset that they are doing poorly in a class, or because of something going on outside the course. As with every other activity, personality conflicts can occur. Some students might see these evaluations as opportunities to write surrealist manifestos unconnected with the class. (Belated apologies to Vanderbilt faculty!) In short, they can be used in any number of ways that can be unproductive and unhelpful.

With this in mind, it seems best to use CTEs in conjunction with a number of other metrics for the effectiveness of teaching. This was the finding of this college's faculty. In 1982, the Committee on Teaching Effectiveness examined the use of CTEs for the purposes of evaluation. They recommended that "faculty members must be reassured that any data drawn from CTEs will be used as longitudinal data over a period of several years and several courses." Further, they should "comprise only one component of a multi-faceted approach to the evaluation of teaching."<sup>1</sup> To my knowledge, no further official statement has been forthcoming.

Still, that was 1982. Has anything changed in the meantime? As it happens, yes. We now have more research indicating that the use of student course evaluations for personnel decisions can be extremely problematic.

One study, published in 2009, assessed the contents of over 31,000 student evaluations at a research institution in the South, comparing them to the race and gender of the instructor. The results were as follows:

The data indicate that there was a tendency for Black male faculty to receive the lowest mean score on the overall items under investigation, overall value of course and overall teaching ability... The final trend was toward female faculty receiving lower mean scores than male faculty whereby female faculty identified as "Other" and Black female faculty received lower mean scores than White female faculty.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.cortland.edu/dotAsset/279477.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Bettye P. "Student Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness for Faculty Groups Based on Race and Gender." *Education* 129, no. 4 (June 1, 2009): 615–24.

One of the most recent studies covered a similar number of evaluations from a Southwestern college of business. Here's a quick summary of what they found:

- Teachers of required courses score higher than those teaching electives;
- Those teaching larger courses will receive lower scores than those teaching smaller ones;

- Students who expect a good grade will rate their instructors more highly than otherwise; and
- There was no correlation found between gender and course evaluations – except for large classes, in which women scored significantly lower than men.

The authors conclude that, “Utilizing information such as [student teacher evaluations] to influence personnel decisions should be examined, and used at least in conjunction with other measures of teaching effectiveness.”<sup>3</sup>

These are only two of the studies that have been written on this topic. True, they indicate that more research needs to be done, especially on colleges that might have different geographies, demographics, missions, and methods. Nonetheless, what we have seen so far indicates that many factors which have absolutely nothing to do with the instructor’s effectiveness may affect the results of these evaluations. Indeed, unless we are careful, they might even endanger our commitment to the diverse campus that is so vital to our future.

With that in mind, the time is overdue for faculty and administrators on this campus to have a conversation about measuring the effectiveness of teaching. Working together, we can find a solution that provides faculty with needed feedback on their teaching while delivering the best possible learning to our students.

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<sup>3</sup> Miles, Patti, and Deanna House. “The Tail Wagging the Dog; An Overdue Examination of Student Teaching Evaluations.” *International Journal of Higher Education* 4, no. 2 (January 1, 2015): 116–26.

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## Welcome Back Picnic



*Dawn Van Hall - Cortland Chapter Photographer*

### 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@cutland.edu](mailto:uup@cutland.edu) and to the editor, Amy Russell, [Amy.Russell@cutland.edu](mailto:Amy.Russell@cutland.edu)



**Gigi Peterson,**  
History

## Class [temperature] Struggle: The Essential Role of Activism

On Friday, August 23, 2019, faculty working in Old Main received an email from the Building Manager, Dean Bruce Mattingly. After wishing everyone well, he noted:

“We often have concerns about elevated temperatures in Old Main classrooms at the beginning of the semester, particularly in the rooms on the northwest side of the building that get the brunt of the afternoon sun. To address this concern, the Facilities Management Office has installed portable air conditioning units in Old Main G-08, G-09, G-10 and 209. These will not remain permanently, but we will leave them in place as long as the weather warrants them. In addition, we have asked the custodial staff to check the classrooms in the morning to ensure that the window blinds are lowered to help block out some of the heat.”

After tips on what faculty could do to keep rooms cool, the message closed on an appropriately appreciative note:

“I would like to thank Zach Newswanger, the Associate VP for Facilities Management, Dan Dryja, Assistant Director for Building and Grounds Services, and all of the Old Main custodians for their assistance on this issue. I would also like to thank each of you for all that you do on behalf of our students. If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.”

This was a most welcome message on the eve of classes. Some faculty expressed their happiness in emailed responses, including those who had clamored for years to remediate overheated rooms. As it turned out, a change in leadership (in this case, Facilities Management) aided the cause, and the new leader was rightly recognized. Like so many episodes of “reform” in history, however, the announcement contained no clues about unseen entities who had pressed for needed changes. These included faculty members, students, and UUP. How does the process of change happen? People need to speak up, gather evidence, and apply pressure.

Though it had longstanding roots, the struggle to address Old Main’s unsafe environment heated up in August 2018. With my students in an evening class in Old Main 209, I recorded a temperature of 100 degrees in that room. Only because of a query I had made in the morning was there a fan in the room; a construction fan that made the room sound like an airplane hangar but did not dispel the heat. The next day, many of the same students had me in another Old Main room. We recorded temperatures in the nineties, and I collected short written pieces about “classroom environments” and how these affected their experience of some first-day class. My class: misery. Those in air-conditioned rooms: fun, welcoming, exciting. Building memories for CTEs from Day One.

My emails to administrators, about “Dangerous Classroom Temperatures” received troubling brushoffs, even as I started to send student testimonials, OSHA guidelines, and more. Initially I was denied a room change. Outdoor temperatures cooled, but a small team of my students took on the issue as a “Community Action Project” for the class, and they distributed a survey in November. Many faculty in Old Main responded with eloquent descriptions of those hot, hot classrooms and their impacts on health and learning way back in the beginning of the semester. The snow started to fly.

Importantly, UUP negotiators took these concerns to Labor-Management meetings. UUP conducted a survey about classroom temperatures that reached across the whole campus and collected quantitative data. They provided the needed union muscle to shape a climate for change. The college was also going through major personnel changes in the divisions that handle facilities and environmental health.

On July 19, 2019, I visited Old Main 209 after working a hot and sticky summer advising session in the building. No changes had been made since the heat advisories of the previous year. At one p.m. the temperature was eighty-nine degrees and rising. I took photos and sent a new message to key administrators: "Dangerous Temps in Old Main – Still!" Attachments included the faculty testimonials as well the correspondence and evidence from early fall 2018. I dug out a physician's letter that had been languishing in my office and began the process of filing for an ADA accommodation. In followup paperwork, my doctor reiterated points made in the earlier letter: extreme temperatures were dangerous not only to me but to other individuals.

This time, pressure resulted in change. An AC unit was installed in the room and cellular shades are on order. Mother Nature assisted by refraining from heat waves for this start of the semester, which is fortunate as the lone little cooling unit does not affect much of the large room. But it's something, and now some key people on campus are genuinely concerned about seeing to a safe working environment.

A little investigation turned up some additional staff to be thanked for making these changes, including for the physical labor involved. Deserving recognition are: Tony Petrella, Joan Carey, Connie Uzailko, Kathleen Caughey, Stacy Rundell, Jeremiah Rawson, and Tom Hingher.

I sent a message to my former students, who have new classes in that same room, praising their contributions to the changes, and noting the additional actors who were crucial. Recent additions to national social studies standards call for preparing students to take "informed action" to address problems in their community. How activism actually happens is not usually taught, but this case provided an illustration. It also highlights the important role of unions, including our UUP. Thanks to their advocacy, no one should have to teach in a one-hundred-degree room again. Hot damn!

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## Welcome Back Picnic



*Dawn Van Hall - Cortland Chapter Photographer*

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**Jeremy Zhe-Heimerman,**  
Disability  
Resources

## CTEs and Accessibility

It's been heartening to hear the talk around campus about improving CTEs. It's important for the College to keep striving for the best ways to get student feedback while counteracting the gender and racial bias that has come through in past instruments. In this process, let's not forget our responsibility to ensure all students have equal access to evaluating their teachers and courses.

Think of students you have had in the past who have had accommodations allowing them to have test questions read aloud by text-to-speech software or, in the case of a completely blind student, a screen reader. You may have had legally blind students who must read their course materials in an enlarged font or with screen magnification software. Or maybe you recall a student who, because of visual processing problems, is allowed to answer test questions in the exam booklet rather than on a scantron.

Imagine being such a student when our current CTE bubble sheet is handed to you. How confident would you feel about your ability to accurately express your evaluation of your professor? How comfortable would you feel asking a peer for assistance and maybe sharing your thoughts about the instructor with a peer who could help you fill out the bubble sheet? Do you feel like your feedback is welcome when you are handed a survey you are unable to complete independently?

Of course, as an instructor, do you want to be evaluated by students who are not able to use their full faculties to comprehend the questions and make a response? Do you want students talking during the evaluation process so a peer can assist?

I have raised these concerns in Faculty Senate and have encouraged the adoption of electronic CTEs. These can be designed so they are accessible to all users. To keep response rates high in face to face classes, students can complete these in the classroom as they always have by using their cell phones. Those who need to listen to the questions can put on headphones and answer independently without distracting (or influencing) their peers.

The Disability Resources Office will work with Information Resources to ensure that any new CTE platform is fully accessible. I encourage faculty to help the College fulfill its mission and its legal responsibilities by embracing CTEs that are accessible to all students. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns you may have as this process continues.





**Gigi Peterson,**  
History

## Graphic Identity: Mean Dragons Only Need Apply

SUNY Cortland's 2019 "Opening 'Meeting'" highlighted how difficult our work has become. The Civic Ensemble performance and the presentation on student mental health underscored how much healing our society needs. Intimidation, anger, and violence are celebrated not just in many corners, but on some of the most public stages in the land. Actually, the world.

Many of us sitting at the tables recognized the stunning incongruity between presentations on the psychosocial challenges put to students and those who work with them, and the unveiling of revamped Red Dragon images, including the "secondary mark." This is the only non-text graphic allowed for non-athletic publications and similar purposes, as use of the college seal is restricted to diplomas and legal documents.

Advancing the process begun years ago, to make the dragon "stronger, sharper, more ferocious,"<sup>1</sup> the revised Red Dragon images communicate threat and aggression. They represent our community as snarling at "the other," with teeth bared, claws ready to slice, and, spikes in place of a backbone. (The secondary mark is a simplified head of this enraged dragon.) At this same opening meeting, we learned that ten percent of our students surveyed last year reported "overwhelming anger." Is this the design for them?



These dragon images create a contradiction with the Campus Communication Guide's own statements:

"Brand identity" is defined as "the tangible, real-world system of design and copy we use every day to tell the world about ourselves," and "Our graphic identity — logo, colors, typefaces and design elements — represents SUNY Cortland and serves as a cornerstone for all of our communication efforts.... The graphic elements and standards will provide guidance and direction as you convey SUNY Cortland's brand identity<sup>2</sup>

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1. SUNY Cortland, "Athletic Logo Gets a Makeover," August 30, 2016.  
[https://www2.cortland.edu/news/detail\\_dot?id=b041906b-09c2-444b-8e6c-f4f2c8e7faa6](https://www2.cortland.edu/news/detail_dot?id=b041906b-09c2-444b-8e6c-f4f2c8e7faa6)
  2. See the SUNY Cortland Communication Guide and subsections at  
<http://www2.cortland.edu/offices/publications/communication-guide/the-suny-cortland-brand/#the-suny-cortland-name>

How does a menacing dragon represent the “brand attributes” seen in the Guide and presented at the meeting: “Kind (*Welcoming, helpful, friendly*); Outgoing (*Spirited, social, optimistic*); Welcoming”?

Angry images sell. Do we have to buy in? An online search for “aggressive mascots” yields a plethora of “generators” of fierce, enraged characters, some for as little as \$39.95.<sup>3</sup> The trend of ramped-up aggression in this imagery has caught the attention of journalists (“Who Pissed off All the Mascots?”) and others.<sup>4</sup> Those who raise questions can face disturbing backlash, as in the 2013 case of a young woman who contested a makeover of the UConn Husky logo. She faced vitriolic and violent targeting in all kinds of media, including rape threats.<sup>5</sup> Sadly, this may not be surprising, as social scientists have linked sports aggression and toxic masculinity.<sup>6</sup>

When I inquired about the increasingly “ferocious” dragon years ago, I was told “students preferred it.” Is this how decisions are made, or are we educators? And which students? My more recent requests of the Marketing Department yielded no responses about the involvement of students, faculty, or staff in the development of the secondary mark, but the response I received affirmed that “considerable time, effort and financial investment” went into the work of a “Marketing Team” and a design firm. This I can believe. I was also told that the President’s Cabinet approved the mark and, “there is no plan to revisit or rework the approved secondary marks in the near future.”

I believe we do need to revisit the secondary marks, and include those “represented.”

Why is an angry dragon image the only kind of dragon that campus clubs, departments, and programs can use? What about those students, faculty, and staff who oppose images that normalize anger and physical threat? Many of them go into schools and other parts of the community to promote collaboration, respect, and positive interaction. They have no approved graphic to bring with them to convey this.

At the opening “meeting” (I put this in quotation marks because no time was given to faculty attendees to respond to presentations), we heard the rationale for “unifying” the “brand” and yielding to the college’s longtime identity as a bastion of athletics. Other colleges have struggled with this, including the University of Northern Colorado, which used campus-wide input to shape a logo “consistent to [sic] the school’s academic, athletic and community-oriented programs.”<sup>7</sup> One of the designers of their logo put it well, “A growling, snarling bear works fine for athletics...but given the desired dual usage for academics, UNC was looking to move beyond an aggressive aesthetic and looking for something more intense but, again, not angry.”<sup>8</sup> The lead line for an article on the issue was, “The Northern Colorado Bears are growing up, checking their youthful temper and getting serious about their studies.”<sup>9</sup>

Images are powerful. Power does not have to involve intimidation and domination. Let’s promote maturity and focus, not viciousness and “temper”—the world has enough of that.

Let’s have an inclusive conversation about the images projected to represent our community.

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3. For example, <https://placeit.net/c/logos/stages/aggressive-animal-logo-maker-for-high-school-football-teams-120b>; <https://www.brandcrowd.com/maker/tag/aggressive>; <https://www.vectorstock.com/royalty-free-vectors/mascot-aggressive-vectors>
  4. See Andrew Heisel, “Who Pissed Off All the Mascots? An Investigation” Vice.com June 20, 2015. [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/ez33yk/who-pissed-off-all-the-mascots-an-investigation](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/ez33yk/who-pissed-off-all-the-mascots-an-investigation) for an overview of the issues that has links to more in-depth works. Heisel notes “in the culture more broadly, studies show product gendering is getting [more pronounced](#). Men today need their masculinity affirmed in their [soaps](#) and even their [sodas](#), so it’s unsurprising they’d also expect the logos on their hats to offer a macho assist.”
  5. [Soraya Chemaly](#), “Why Is UConn’s Mascot a Popular Rape Meme?” *Huffington Post* April 26, 2013. For the student’s original letter about the topic see <https://thefeministwire.com/2013/04/an-open-letter-to-uconn-president-susan-herbst/>
  6. Shereen Jegtvig, “Sports aggression may ‘spillover’ in teen relationships,” *Reuters Health News*, March 25, 2014. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-aggression-may-spillover-in-teen-rela/sports-aggression-may-spillover-in-teen-relationships-idUSBREA2O1MG20140325>. See also American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Communications and Media, “Policy Statement: Virtual Violence,” *Pediatrics* 138:2 (August 2016) <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/2/e20161298>
  7. Samuel Mustari, “UNC set to phase in new logo, updated mascot,” *Greeley Tribune*, June 10, 2015 <https://www.greeleytribune.com/news/unc-set-to-phase-in-new-logo-updated-mascot/>
  8. Michael Thurman, owner of Torch Creative, quoted in Paul Caputo, “Northern Colorado Bear is Less Fierce, More Serious,” *Chris Creamer’s SportsLogos.Net*, May 15, 2015 <http://news.sportslogos.net/2015/05/18/northern-colorado-bears-new-logo-is-less-fierce-more-serious/>.
  9. Samuel Mustari, “UNC Set to Phase in New Logo, Updated Mascot,” *Greeley Tribune*, June 10, 2015 <https://www.greeleytribune.com/news/unc-set-to-phase-in-new-logo-updated-mascot/>

# 2019 New York State Fair Labor Day Parade



Left to right: Tadayuki Suzuki, Bekkie Bryan, Henry Steck & Jen Drake



Matthew Madden and Family



Cortland and Oswego Chapters March Together



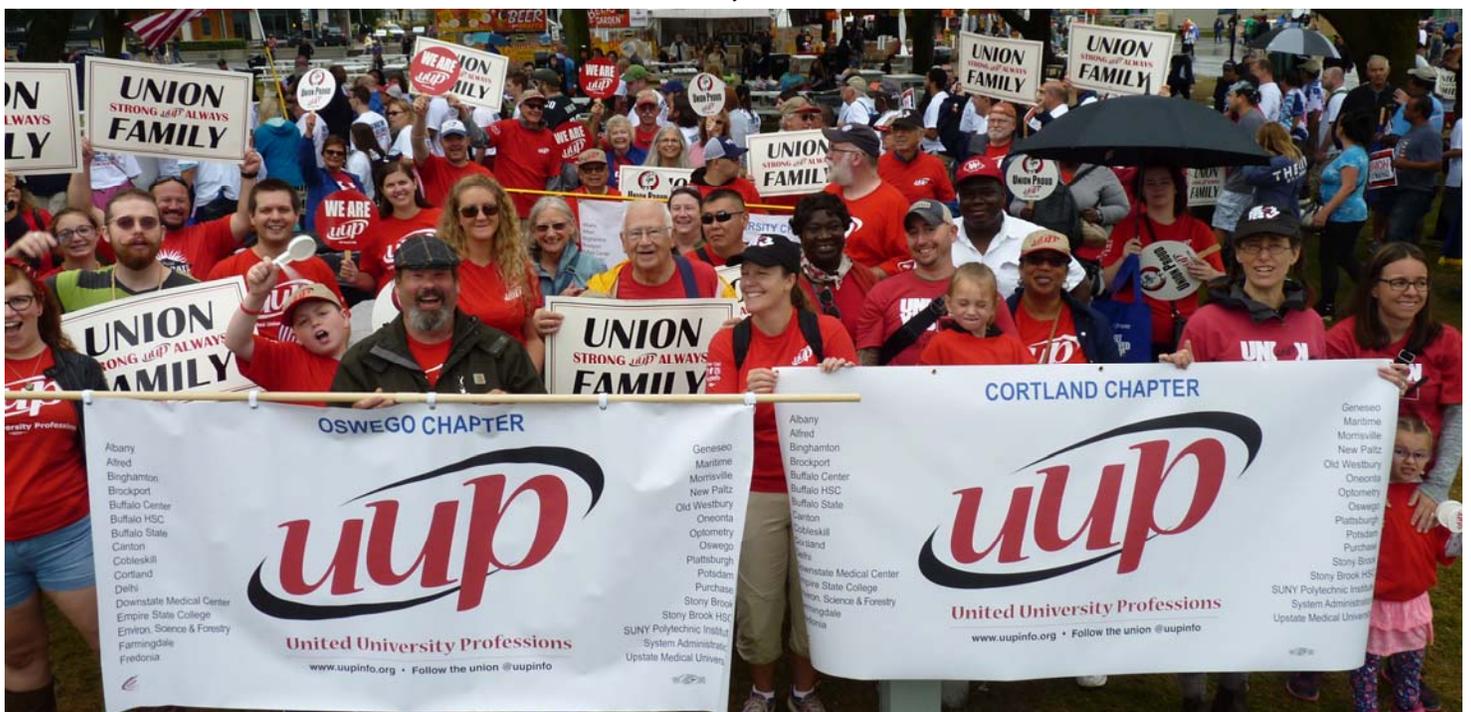
Left to right: Tadayuki Suzuki, Amy Russell, Rickie McClure & Henry Steck



Left to right: Jamie Dangler, Schaelon Davis-ESF, Ibipo Johnston-Anumonwo & Tayo Akinyele



Left to right: Jeri O'Bryan-Losee, Jamie Dangler, Bekkie Bryan & Rob Trimarchi





## UUP OPEN HOUSES



Due to the renovation of Moffett, the UUP chapter office has been relocated to the lower campus at 3718 West Road (Rt. 281).

Our chapter office will be coming to a location near you. Please plan to stop by one of our mobile open house sessions detailed in the schedule below.

We would love to see you and respond to any questions you may have related to your union.

### FALL 2019

**Wednesday, August 28**

8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Whitaker Hall

**Thursday, August 29**

1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Park Center

**Wednesday, September 11**

11:00 to 1:00

Student Life Center

**Thursday, September 19**

Time Change 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Professional Studies

**Wednesday, October 16**

9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Cornish Ground Floor Lounge

**Thursday, October 17**

12 Noon to 2:00 p.m.

Corey Union

**Tuesday, November 12**

2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Sperry Hall

**Monday, November 18**

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Library

## UUP Cortland Chapter Open Houses



Joe Westbrook, Chapter Secretary speaking with Amanda Tepfer, Associate Professor from Physical Education at our August 29<sup>th</sup> Open House

Joe Westbrook, Chapter Secretary and Randi Storch, Chapter Grievance Officer speaking with a student on September 11th about UUP





## 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.

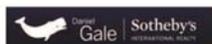


**UUP Member Services Trust Voluntary Dental and Vision Plans** include coverage for:

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



**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

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## UUP CORTLAND CHAPTER — EXECUTIVE BOARD 2019-2021

4-Digit phone numbers begin with 607-753-xxxx

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# Are You a Member?

<b>Thomas P. DiNapoli</b> New York State Comptroller				<b>J. DOE</b>				Total Gross    Fed Taxable Gross Current    3456.78    1234.56 YTD    45,678.90    34,567.89	
Advice #    123456789 Advice Date    11/10/2018		Pay Start Date    11/10/2019 Pay End Date    11/24/2019		Net Pay <b>1,234.56</b>					
Department ID    1234				Pay Rate    56,789.10					
EARNINGS		Current		YTD		TAX DATA			
Hrs./Days	Earnings	Hrs./Days	Earnings	Federal	State	NYC	Yorkans		
Regular Pay Salary Employee	3456.78	56.78	45,678.90	2	0				
Location Pay									
		Current		YTD		DEDUCTIONS			
		Current		YTD					
Regular Before Tax Health	456.78	1,234.56							
Supplemental Ret. Annuity Prog	876.50	5,678.90							
ThAA Retirement Before Tax	98.76	1,234.56							

**CHECK PAY STUB TO MAKE SURE**

To be a member of the union, your paycheck **must** say "UUP Member" under "Deductions."

*Please contact your chapter officers for a membership card or go to <https://bit.ly/1RYG65y>*

### The Benefits of Being UNION!

Membership in your union goes well beyond fair and equitable wages, and quality, affordable health insurance. It's a statement: There is strength in numbers, and our collective voice will be heard.

Together, our voice is heard when bargaining with New York state and SUNY. Our voice strengthens our leverage in contract talks and enforcement, and in addressing problems in SUNY labor-management meetings.

Our voice is heard as the main advocate for SUNY campus and hospital funding, and for other legislative issues of importance to you—issues that help us better meet the needs of our students and our patients.

Being a member of UUP also means you maintain:

- Representation in interrogations or disciplinary actions, or in legal actions brought on behalf of members;
- Representation if Title IX harassment complaints are filed against you (for student or co-worker complaints);
- Access to benefits and services provided by UUP Member Services Trust, and discount programs and services provided by UUP's state and national affiliates: NYSUT, AFT and NEA;
- Access to UUP's vision, dental, and life insurance plans in retirement; and
- The right to vote on the union contract, and to provide input in chapter and statewide union elections.



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**Executive Board Meetings Schedule**  
Aug. 8, Sept. 12, Oct. 10, Nov. 14 & Dec. 12

**Labor Management Meetings Schedule**  
Aug. 20, Sept. 19, Oct. 17, Nov. 21 & 19

**Part Time Service Recognition Luncheon**  
Oct. 23