



# Unifier

UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS



FARMINGDALE CHAPTER



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## Good News TRS & ERS



Let me get straight to the point. The New York State Pension Fund is safe and secure.

I don't know how to make this any more clear—there has been no raid or money taken from the Fund. The retirement security of members, retirees and beneficiaries is not compromised. And your pension fund cannot be used for budget relief by the Governor or the State Legislature. As Trustee, I would never let that happen.

Despite this reality, rumors are circulating about the Fund, and I want to put an end to that misinformation right now. I think the confusion began last month, when we announced a \$50 million investment in a program that has been making money for the Fund since 1987. The program is part of a longstanding relationship with Pursuit Lending and is low-risk, with a return similar to a fixed income investment, and guaranteed by the U.S. Small Business Administration. It is a win-win investment because it benefits the Fund and also helps some New York small businesses struggling to survive the economic fallout from the COVID-19 crisis. That's it.

The misinformation you may be hearing stems from the fact that many people may not fully understand how the Fund works and how we pay for your benefits. We invest the Fund to ensure we have the dollars required to pay out over \$1 billion a month to our retirees and beneficiaries. Over the past two decades, investment returns alone have paid for over 70% of pension benefits.

So, that's the story. The Fund is secure. There's no raid. Anything you hear to the contrary is false.

The New York State pension plan is recognized as one of the best-funded plans in the nation. You have my assurance, as Trustee of the Fund, that I am here only to continue to safeguard the Fund and to provide you a secure retirement. That's what I've always done. That's what I'll always do. ◆

Have a say in developing your new normal. Send UUPF your questions or concerns regarding any and all aspects of remote service to Farmingdale State College and SUNY. Click the mailbox at [www.uupfarm.org](http://www.uupfarm.org)

Unsure of your active membership? Click here and enroll today:  
<https://uuphost.org/myuup/Membership/RegForm.php>



# Farewell Lynda



UUPF is facing some serious challenges pretty soon—and not because of viruses or politicians. It’s not only that our two superstar members and past presidents, **Mike Smiles** and **Bob Elgart**, are retiring. That’s bad enough. It’s that our always clever and always prepared Labor Relations Specialist, **Lynda Larson**, is retiring. Obviously, we wish her well and know that she will surely continue to be a wise counsellor and strong advocate to some other lucky people. But sadly, it won’t be us.

Lynda's job title is Labor Relations Specialist, but she is much more: She's *Lynda*--always on the go, always there with the right answers, always *there*. She knows everything about our union, she understands our campus, and she's ready to help, talk to us on weekends, and remember the most parochial hidden corners of the Farmingdale world.

Lynda’s no shrinking violet; she can be one tough lady, especially with us, the Executive Board. How often have I heard her pause one of my earnest arguments with, “Now wait a minute, Vicki [eye roll]. I’m not sure that you’re remembering...” In other words, she’s right; I’m wrong.

But Lynda always appears to respect us. *And* she respects her (so-called) adversaries. She is an unwaveringly trustworthy negotiator. Lynda betrays no one.

She has the right answers for all of us. Her explanations make sense, often with her own analogies: “Now if my job is to mow the grass in the front of the building and now my boss wants me to mow the grass in the back of the building.... Or, “If my job is to wrap candies and now I’m supposed to put them in the box...” And thus we learn about not overstepping Performance Programs.

I will miss Lynda’s grass mowers and her candy wrappers and her toughness and her well-thought-out skill. Most of all, though, I will miss Lynda’s unwavering commitment to serve each and every single member of UUPF.

We wish Lynda our very best wishes. We’ve had one good run.

In solidarity,

*Thank You*

Vicki Janik



# President's Message

Between March 18 and April 28, over two weeks ago, 30,000,000 people applied for unemployment insurance. Unemployment may reach 20% by June.

During those same few weeks, according to The Institute of Policy Studies, the wealth of our 630 American billionaires grew 14%, to an aggregate total of \$3.4 trillion. From January 1 to early May 2020, the world's richest man, Jeff Bezos, watched his personal wealth grow by \$27.5 billion, to a grand total of \$142 billion. Then there's Elon Musk, who has been outraged that California's Alameda County has a required industrial lockdown. He threatened to move his whole Tesla operation to Nevada or Texas. Meanwhile, since January, Mr. Musk's personal fortune has grown by \$11.4 billion to \$39 billion (L. Wittner, *Press and Journal*, May 8, 2020).

These are the people who are now renting billion dollar yachts staffed with tutors for their children and concierge physicians, far from the virus's threat. How did so much concentrated wealth accumulate so quickly amidst so much struggle? Two of the reasons: 1) the provision of direct subsidies to the wealthy and their corporations in the March 2020 economic bailout legislation 2) the 2018 tax cut legislation that gives exaggerated

tax breaks to the rich. As the U.S. economy slides downward, certain stock prices plus these government gifts make the wealthy become ever wealthier.

The March 27 federal CARES Act (Corona Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) brings \$2 trillion in assistance to state, local, and tribal governments to support public health and protect small businesses, workers, families, and jobs. It won't be enough, especially for those of us in New York State who have suffered over 25% of all US COV cases—over 330,000, and 25% of US COVID deaths, over 21,000. CARES brings \$6.1 to Farmingdale State College—helpful—although not even 10% of our annual budget.

Then there are all of us, some fortunate to have continuing income, some risking their lives to save the lives of others, some who work in unsafe workplaces, some working three times as many hours for the same or less pay, some out of work and on unemployment, some out of work with no money at all, and others--many others--who are very, very ill.

We need continuing federal assistance, another three trillion dollars' worth. Please sign the letter to our Congress members linked in the "What We Can Do" *Unifier* article to protect our state and our national economy.



And maybe tax rates, lowered for the wealthy in 2018, might be reconsidered. Those 630 billionaires then might have the chance to sense a brief moment of heightened ethical and moral virtue with a more graduated income tax structure.

Keep in mind the wisdom of the eighteenth century Scotsman, Adam Smith, the Father of both *Economics and Capitalism*:

*The subjects of every state ought to contribute toward the support of the government, as nearly as possible, in proportion to their respective abilities; that is, in proportion to the revenue which they enjoy respectively under the protection of the state.\**

*In Solidarity*  
Vicki Janik

\* The Wealth of Nations, quoted by John Chasse, UUPPAD, May 2020

# Adjunct Quality of Life

By Lou Scala

As you know, Farmingdale State College has an approximate ratio of 70% adjunct faculty to 30% full-time faculty. This fact motivated me to attend an AFT webinar about its “Army of Temps” report that revealed disturbing facts about the quality of life of contingent/adjunct faculty.

Some statistics from the AFT survey of contingent/adjunct faculty revealed the following:

- ◆ 33% earn less than \$25,000 annually, placing them below the federal poverty guideline for a family of four
- ◆ Only 15% report being able to comfortably cover basic monthly expenses
- ◆ Fewer than half of the survey respondents have access to employer provided health insurance; nearly 20% rely on Medicaid
- ◆ About 45% struggle with job security, reporting that they don’t know if they will have a teaching job until one month before the beginning of the academic year
- ◆ For 3 out of four contingent faculty, employment is only guaranteed from term to term
- ◆ 37% report that do not see a path for a secure retirement

The full report can be accessed at: [https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/adjuncts\\_quality\\_worklife2020.pdf](https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/adjuncts_quality_worklife2020.pdf)

## Intellectual Property Rights

UUP has posted a Special Bulletin entitled. “Campus Course Development Agreements That Relinquish Faculty Copyright Ownership: Know What You Are Signing”

As online education expands, some campuses are increasing their efforts to have faculty create courses that will become the intellectual property of the campus. SUNY accomplishes this through “work-for-hire” or course development agreements that are ***signed by faculty***.

While some faculty may willingly and knowingly agree to transfer their intellectual property rights in exchange for a fee, UUP is concerned about campuses presenting such course agreements without full disclosure of their implications and without providing the employee the possibility of discussing alternative agreements (e.g. an licensing agreement that identifies a course the campus wants developed and specifies conditions for campus use of the course without relinquishing faculty intellectual property rights.

Please consult with the UUPF Office if you are presented with a work-for-hire/course development agreement to sign and are not sure you are invol-

untarily relinquishing your intellectual property rights You can access the Special Bulletin by clicking <https://uupinfo.org/reports/reportpdf/IntellectualPropertyBulletin.pdf>

## Open Education Resources

OER refers to freely accessible educational resources for teaching, learning and research, with the advantage of low cost for students.

During the VPA virtual meetings some concerns were raised about the academic quality of OER and the corporatization/privatization of academic work. Perhaps we can explore these concerns and have a workshop in the future.

When the coronavirus forced us to leave campus in early March, I’m certain that many of our members were not fully aware of the challenges of transitioning from in-class to remote learning, and the significant impact Covid-19 would have on FSC, our society, and our economy.

Indeed, we are facing extraordinary times, but I’m pleased to report that our leadership in Albany and the UUPF Executive Board have risen to face the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Please be well, and stay safe. ◆

# Determining Community Impact

By James Daly

As the manager of the Geographic Information Systems Unit in the Suffolk County Department of Information Technology, I supervise a special team of employees trained to use and apply geospatial technology to a wide range of applications. With the COVID-19 pandemic upon us, our GIS skills are currently focused on the vital role we have in support of providing public health and safety in Suffolk County. These are the skills I teach in all my classes in the Geographic Information Systems major here at Farmingdale State College.

GIS information tools, in the form of web maps and dashboards, have been developed by us to assist the Suffolk County Departments of Health, Police, Emergency Management, Public Works, and the County Executive. These web-based GIS tools

have been critical in understanding which communities are most impacted and most at risk by COVID-19. The County Executive's strategic plan to combat this pandemic depended on GIS for the identification of community "hot spots". For example, locating the testing facilities in Suffolk County was based on GIS hot spot maps our unit provided.

One of the most popular publicly available GIS products being used today is the Suffolk County, NY: COVID-19 Cases dashboard map. This GIS map dashboard continues to serve as a critical component for reporting timely information to the public.

The dashboard's ease of use is a testament to the complex GIS programming and development performed "behind the scenes" by the staff in the GIS Unit. We work with departments, agencies,

and data at all levels of government to create this dashboard, from New York State Department of Health for case data information, to hospital emergency managers and data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The public COVID-19 Dashboard map aggregates anonymized positive case information so that it is HIPAA compliant and ensures the public's privacy. Yet, it reports to a deeper level to reveal case counts by community and normalized data by community population. The dashboard consists of three map tabs for three maps that report data at the town level, community level for total case count, and the community level normalized to cases per 1,000 persons.

The GIS Unit has created numerous internally secured COVID-19 web GIS products as well. For internal use we have created case-specific maps and analysis results for Health, Police, and OEM officials to have near real-time positive COVID-19 case maps of Suffolk County. These have proven vital in keeping first responders informed and safe. For hospital and OEM officials, we have created web-based editing applications and reporting dashboards that enable them to remotely report vital information about their facility location such as availability of hospital beds,

## What We Can Do to Help

Congress will soon be voting on legislation to infuse another \$3 trillion into the economy — \$1 trillion of which would be sent to state, local, and tribal governments. Every state needs this. According to Jerome H. Powell, the chair of the Federal Reserve and a Trump appointee, the country must have this in order to avoid permanent damage. He warns, "Additional fiscal support could be costly, but worth it if it helps avoid long-term economic

damage and leaves us with a stronger recovery" (*NYT*, May 14, 2020).

We can help by signing a letter of support that UUP will be sent on to our Congress members. Please see the UUPF email sent on May 15<sup>th</sup>, or open this attachment so you can sign a letter today in support of the proposed legislation!

**THIS IS IMPORTANT!** ◆

[actionnetwork.org/letters/uupcovid19letter/](http://actionnetwork.org/letters/uupcovid19letter/)

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# News for Part-Timers

## Unemployment Insurance Compensation

If you are not employed during the summer — and most adjuncts and many p/t professionals are not — UUP strongly urges you to apply for unemployment in New York.

As you may know, there are now two types of unemployment: traditional Unemployment Insurance (UI) and the newly created Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA).

UUP offered a webinar on May 5 explaining unemployment to our thousands of contingent employees across the state. But for detailed information about the application process, please go to *careeronestop.org*. On the screen, click on COVID 19 Unemployment Information, which leads you to a site where you can click on the process for New York.

You can also go directly to New York State Unemployment. The phone number is 1-

888-209-8124. To apply, you will need your driver's license, the school's phone number (934-420-2000), the school's address (2350 Broadhollow Road, Farmingdale, NY. 117350) and your W-2 form which has your Employer ID.

It is important that you apply as quickly as possible, ideally, during the first week of your unemployment, although because of immense traffic, you may need to try to contact the office many times. Don't let that discourage you. It will pay for you to persist. The site is user friendly. Also don't give up because you have been denied in the past; this year the rules are different because of PUA.

Presumably most of you receive health insurance over the summer for which you have prepaid. If you apply for unemployment, there could be money too. ♦



UUP is working with SUNY to negotiate additional compensation for additional work and hours spent by essential contingent staff members who facilitated the sudden transition of classes and services to remote venues. If you are such a UUP member, you are an essential worker, a worker who was required to continue offering services to the public throughout the emergency, possibly using a new venue. This means you made significant adjustments and increases in your responsibilities. Please note, for most of us, these changes affected our work itself, rather than our personal safety as it has for our UUP members (and others) who are healthcare workers.

In order to adequately argue for this compensation, UUP needs evidence for justification. Several days ago we emailed all UUPF members a table to list to describe the additional work you have done. We emailed it again on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Please complete it as quickly as possible and return it to [uupfdamato@gmail.com](mailto:uupfdamato@gmail.com). ♦

## UUP Webinars

### Online Learning:

**Policies, Practices, & its Future in the Face of COVID-19**

12-1:30 PM ♦ May 19 , 2020

**The Gig Academy & COVID-19: Implications for the Future**

12-1:30 PM ♦ June 09 , 2020

**Collective Bargaining and Online Technologies in the Age of a Pandemic**

12-1:30 PM ♦ June 18 , 2020

Register at [uupinfo.org](http://uupinfo.org)

# Remote Service

## Telecommuting

SUNY's COVID-19 Telecommuting Pilot Program has been extended through July 17<sup>th</sup> after UUP meetings with SUNY and GOER (the Governor's Office of Employee Relations). It applies to essential and some non-essential work.

We do not have further information about the Governor's order after May 15, other than what we read in the newspaper.



## Reopening

As educators, we in UUP who work in SUNY are not included at all in Phase 1 of the reopening, although a few members are included. We do understand that the reopening will be a slow process comprising seven phases and described on the Governor's website. We do not know how the overall process affects us at a public higher education institution. When UUP has asked SUNY to explain, we received no clear answers, not because SUNY is failing to be transparent, but because SUNY, in fact, does not know ♦

# Healthcare Workers in UUP

Several days ago we sent an email asking if you would like to send a personal note or letter of gratitude to the over 4,800 UUP healthcare workers at Stony Brook HSC and 2,500 at Downstate Medical in Brooklyn. These UUP members, like *all* healthcare workers, are risking their lives each day; many have become sick; some have died. We can never show enough gratitude to these outstanding people.

Since we sent the email, we have received many notes and letters of personal thanks from

all of you. If you haven't done this yet, here's a second chance to show your gratitude to them. Please do this very soon. We will send all of these letters in one file to the UUP presidents at these sites and they will, in turn, forward them on to our members at these sites. Send your note to [uupfdamato@gmail.com](mailto:uupfdamato@gmail.com).

We thank all of you who have sent letters so far, and look forward to hearing from others. The dedication and courage of these UUP members is, in every sense, heroic. ♦

# Continuing & Permanent Appointment Changes

UUP and SUNY have reached an agreement on tenure and permanent appointment during this emergency. The tenure clock stopped this spring. It is important to understand that this is an *opt out* procedure, so affected members are automatically listed as opting out. Members must request to *opt in* order to have their tenure clock continue.

If you are seeking reappointment, there is no opt out, but you may elect to exclude various materials from your file *without penalty or any negative effect*. These materials include peer observations and student evaluations. Most campus Senates have presented this information to professional and academic staff, but it is important to repeat it here. ♦

# IDAP Update...

We have been informed that members' applications for Individual Development Award funding will be subject to additional scrutiny at the state level. Ordinarily, the local campus committees' acceptance of an application has been sufficient for a member to

receive funding. This year may be different. Also, when professional events have been cancelled, such as conferences or workshops, special considerations are given. We will send you further information about this as soon as possible. ♦





# Determining Community Impact

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## FARMINGDALE CHAPTER

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##### Women's Rights & Concerns

Dolores Ciaccio

ventilators and, unfortunately, morgue occupancy. These collaborative and secured GIS dashboards are then made available only to personnel involved with emergency management planning.

Among the many other applications created to support strategic operations is our GIS map application to identify site selections for temporary medical facilities should they be needed.

As the economy prepares to re-open, our GIS team is once again being called upon. We are preparing local business maps and applications to help government officials and the business community plan a coordinated re-opening. GIS will be used to efficiently identify local and regional resources to assist in the economic recovery.

Farmingdale State College GIS graduates will be on the front lines of this cutting-edge technology, synthesiz-

ing their knowledge with the professional application of science. Hands-on learning for hands-on public service.

GIS personnel play a significant role in the support of government operations every day and they are growing in demand. It is unfortunate, however, that a public crisis brings attention to the vital role they play and the special skills they have in supporting government operations. Residents rightfully demand government be timely in response to their community's needs and governments realize there is no better tool for this than GIS. It is now incumbent upon all levels of government, then, to ensure they have a workforce educated and trained in GIS to meet this demand. ♦

Jim Daly, MGIS, MAPP, GISP

Adjunct Assistant Professor GIS Coordinator

Suffolk County Department of Information Technology



♦ May 19, 2020 at 6:30 PM

♦ May 21, 2020 at 11:00 AM

This virtual listening tour is a great way to receive an update on the current state of our economy, its impact on higher education funding and to have a voice in the direction that your union takes when facing this crisis. In order to hear from as many

members as possible, we are asking participants to choose just one date to join in on the conversation. To participate, please register here: <https://uuphost.org/myuup/Registration/TOWNHALL/Register.php>

Please follow the registration link and sign-up to attend one of these events. Information on how to log-in to the event will be sent the week of the tele-town hall. ♦

The UUPF Newsletter welcomes articles and letters submitted by members of the Farmingdale community. Remember, this is your newsletter, share your thoughts with us, we want to hear from you. Persons who have material they wish to submit should contact Yolanda Segarra at youupf@gmail.com