



WAVELENGTHS

UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS * OLD WESTBURY CHAPTER

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Lisa Cuccia, Martha Livingston;
additional contributions by
Carol Quirke.*

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SAVE THE DATE

**JUNE
9
2020**

ADJUNCT MEMBER MEETING

**Tuesday, 6/9
2:30 pm
Virtual Meeting**

UUP-OLD WESTBURY IN THE PANDEMIC

by Martha Livingston, President, UUP-Old Westbury

A visit to UUP's website, <https://uupinfo.org>, will quickly provide you with information related to the Covid-19 crisis. In addition, UUP held several Town Hall meetings this month.

UUP is launching a Twitter campaign for members to reach out to U.S. Senate Republicans to persuade them to include support of public higher ed. as part of new crisis funding initiatives. We're also doing a statewide letter-writing campaign.

Our chapter has been holding Virtual General Membership Meetings as well as special Adjuncts' Concerns meetings. These are a vital source of information-sharing and gathering, and will help us advocate for our members. And being socially distanced hasn't stopped us from holding Virtual Happy Hours!

We've faced enormous challenges, and UUP statewide continues to negotiate with SUNY nonstop to protect our members as well as to assure that members are appropriately compensated for the vast amount of extra work that we've taken on.

Three particular categories of employee have been identified by UUP in these talks:

- (1) Our hospital-based members at SUNY Health Science Center at Brooklyn (Downstate,) Stony Brook Health Science Center, and Upstate Med, in Syracuse;
- (2) IT – we know how our own IT staff have stepped up and provided remarkable support to all trying to get through the semester (more later in this issue), and
- (3) our adjunct faculty, who signed up to teach a course and took on an extraordinary additional workload to educate our students remotely.

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OLD WESTBURY DURING THE PANDEMIC *(continued from page 1)*

UUP-Old Westbury has responded to numerous member concerns and issues, and we continue to address ongoing concerns. One example: the process of reviewing faculty for reappointment, promotion and tenure, in which our ARPT committee reviews members' physical files, was upended. Members worked very hard to migrate their files either completely or partly to a digital format. ARPT hearings were held virtually, but final votes have not yet been taken. In future semesters, we will work with administration to examine options for migrating to all-digital files.

THE CHALLENGES OF WORKING FROM HOME

All of our members deserve kudos for stepping up, turning on a dime to work remotely, and successfully completing the Spring, 2020 semester.

Our professional members endured changing demands of management, including, at the start, a demand to "clock" in, make note of breaks, and keep meticulous records of their hours. As our kids were sent home from school before we were on shutdown, members faced the issue of how to keep their kids at home when they were still expected in the office. What to do? Bring kids – who were potentially exposed to the virus – on campus, threatening the health and safety of coworkers? Or take vacation days?

These questions were put to rest when the Governor's order sent all but "essential" workers home. But some members continue to be told that they can be considered "essential" at any time depending on the changing needs of the College.

Some of our members, deemed essential, have continued to work on campus, often in a physical environment that leaves much to be desired. We pay special tribute to our IT members, who have earned the admiration and gratitude of everyone on campus for stepping up and making it possible for the entire campus community – professionals, academics, and students – to do our work.

Our academics, full-time and part-time, tenured, tenure-track and contingent, have done an extraordinary job of migrating their courses to a remote format – whether "synchronous," on platforms such as Zoom or MS Teams, in which the class was learning together remotely, or "asynchronous," in which lectures and other course materials were made available online for students to access whenever they could.

All faculty stepped up and did what we would normally consider "extra service;" but special recognition needs to be given to our adjunct faculty, who have gone way over and above what they were contracted to do – teach one course, period. Adjuncts commented on their experiences: "Transitioning to online learning was certainly challenging, even with all of the help and support that the college provided....I spent hours with tech support to learn how to hold lectures online...". "One of the greatest challenges was providing the constant compassion, reassurance, and leadership to our students so that they knew that our community stood with them." "Students don't care if you are an 'adjunct' or not. They expect and should receive the same level of support and quality education from every faculty member....I am proud of the work that I did. I hope the college recognizes our contributions."

UUP statewide, alongside UUP-Old Westbury, continues to advocate that our adjuncts receive additional compensation for the extra work they've performed; on our campus, this could mirror the one-time \$1000 per-course payment that faculty migrating courses to an online format have routinely received. On Friday, May 15th, the Faculty Senate passed a resolution in urging such compensation.

Wavelengths asked faculty and staff working from home with kids to send us photos of what that looks like. We were completely unsuccessful! Here are three representative replies:

"I can't do synchronous teaching because I have to get my classes in when my partner is at home or the baby is asleep!"

(continued on page 3)

(continued from page 2)

“Honest answer? Working and parenting full time has been endlessly chaotic and humbling, but also full of joyful moments: watching my 5-year-old son grow as a reader, and my 1-year-old daughter speak in full sentences. Balance in life and work has been more of a farce than ever before.”

“A photo? Definitely not! My remote work looks like 1) turning on the TV while I lock the door to my bedroom during meetings or 2) working when she is asleep!”

As Spring, 2020 comes to an end (thank goodness), we are faced with enormous uncertainty about the future: will we be teaching face-to-face in the Fall, or will we need to teach remotely? Will we be working from home? Will our kids be schooling from home? Will the “alternate care facility” taking up our gym and athletic fields be operational? Will it go away, and when? Old Westbury UUPers, please stay in touch, let us know what you are hearing, and let’s work together to assure the best possible outcome for ourselves, our students, and our community in the coming months. Solidarity forever!

SAVE THE DATE

**JUNE
4
2020**

UUP HAPPY HOUR

5:30 pm

Virtual Bar

in a location of your choice.



UUP Virtual General Membership meeting, May 19, 2020 with 60 members in attendance.



I.T. LEADS THE WAY TO OLD WESTBURY'S RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

Q&A WITH FACULTY, ADJUNCTS AND STAFF

by Kyle Anderson

The global pandemic has drastically altered our spring semester, and will surely have impacts that will be felt long into the future. One of the most amazing things about this whole ordeal is how people deemed “essential workers” have answered the call and allowed the rest of us to carry on during these trying times. At Old Westbury, it is the dedicated professionals in the IT department who have done much of the heavy lifting to help us transition to all-online instruction.

When faculty were first learning of the decision to transition to online learning, Instructional Design professionals worked to create all the documentation needed to provide faculty and students reference guides for the basic use of instructional software platforms. Initially, they also held face-to-face workshops, which were soon replaced by all-virtual sessions as the pandemic spread. IT professionals have been holding four virtual workshops per day, many of them led by Chandra Shehigian, as well as Q&A office hours and special sessions covering specific topics addressing faculty requests. Finally, IT has been diligently responding to Service Desk tickets, troubleshooting issues for all of our software platforms, while working with consultants to design documentation that covers more complex features in Blackboard.

Lisa Cuccia, an Instructional Design professional, described her experience during this transition, noting, “there is a lot of positivity that has come from all of this: we are adapting to new routines, new processes, people are working together to help each other, share ideas, and learn something new. Everyone is scared to go out of their comfort zone for fear of how to use new technology, but when we have no other choice, and our backs are against the wall, we do what we need to do to get the job done. It may take multiple attempts, and baby steps, but we are all learning it together.”

by Ryan Baker, Desktop Engineer | I.T. Services

Since the beginnings of modern Computer Science, when history's first computer programmer Ada Lovelace created programs for Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine in 1843 despite the actual machine itself never having been built, those who work in the field of Information Technology have always been tasked with innovating creative solutions quickly where previously none were believed possible.

From the day that SUNY Old Westbury was asked to transition to remote learning and both faculty and staff were ordered to work from home, the department of IT Services has had to develop entirely new skillsets: learning to use, administer and leverage new software programs to enable remote support; prepare and distribute dozens of laptops to those in need; provide faculty, staff and students all with reliable methods of accessing the tools and materials necessary to complete their work from the safety of their homes; evaluate and release countless new software packages for suddenly-discovered campus needs, as well as countless other tasks, all while working under enormous, near-constant pressure.

The experience of actually living and working through this massive undertaking has been interesting albeit stressful, and the accomplishment of having achieved so much in such a short time demonstrates that the programmers, engineers, technicians and administrators who make up IT Services are made of some very tough stuff indeed. Throughout the COVID crisis, ITS has worked tirelessly and surmounted innumerable challenges - technological, psychological, social, financial, and otherwise— yet we all still find ourselves always ready to share a smile, lend a friendly ear, or show up at a UUP Happy Hour. In this “new normal” of social distancing, teleconferencing and working remotely, the talented staff of IT Services strives to ensure that we keep people connected, whether stitched together by the streams of TCP/IP and UDP packets flowing through miles of optical fibers and copper wire, switches, routers, and modems, or by the bonds of UUP solidarity - we are all most assuredly in this together.

SUNY OLD WESTBURY RALLIES FOR HIGHER-ED FUNDING!

On February 25th, Old Westbury UUPers rallied to demand increased funding for higher education. With signs saying “Support our Students!” “Fund SUNY Now!” and “Make the Billionaires Pay!,” we marched, with some of our students, in the last in-person UUP action on our campus before the shutdown. Photos courtesy of Martin Schneider, SUNY Farmingdale retiree.



Photo credit to Martin Schneider

Top left: VP for Professionals Eliliana Martinez and Chapter Assistant Mary Navarra signing in members, CSEA members, and students.

Bottom Left: SUNY Old Westbury on the march!

Right: UUP-Farmingdale Chapter President Vicki Janik (below right) joins our rally.

THE ROAD TO TENURE IN TWENTY-ONE RINGS OR FEWER

by Ryan Baker, Desktop Engineer | I.T. Services

****NOTE**** This article was written whilst our campus was still open and the day-to-day operation of SUNY Old Westbury was essentially “business as usual.” Given the recent move to remote operations, the necessity of modernizing and transitioning the tenure process to a fully electronic form has never been so glaring. Old Westbury remains committed to the development of its faculty; please stay tuned for news about how the tenure process may be updated and reshaped for the age of COVID-19.

A German inventor named Friedrich Soennecken filed a patent in Bonn, Germany in November of 1886 for what he described as Papierlocher für Sammelmappen, or “paper hole maker for folders.” This was the moment of creation for the three-ring hole punch familiar to students and office workers everywhere, which Soennecken created to facilitate widespread use of his earlier invention that same year of the three D-ring binder, or as its inventor called it, the Drei-Ring-Bindemittel. Little did Soennecken know at the time of filing his patent that the die was cast to set in motion a long train of events that would culminate in the well-attended “To Tenure and Beyond” Workshop held on Valentine’s Day. During this workshop, two hours’ worth of fascinating and informative content was presented over sandwiches and Valentine’s chocolates by Professors Chris Hobson, Martha Livingston, and Ashok Basawapatna that left everyone in attendance better equipped to navigate the six-year-long process of acquiring tenure.

The importance of thoroughly documenting one’s accomplishments in Teaching, Campus/Community Service and Scholarship were all made clear by cautionary tales told by already tenured faculty members of their own memories of going through the process, complete with vivid descriptions of seven two-inch thick D-ring binders stuffed full of published papers, syllabi, lecture

librettos, thank-you notes, conference agendas, student feedback forms and other documents all designed to serve as a well-organized, thoroughly indexed and comprehensibly demonstrative testimonial of the work of the tenure-seeking academic. Of course, it was also reiterated that faculty seeking to participate in University Service have many avenues available to them to do so, such as becoming active in the Faculty Senate or serving on various campus committees. What seemed to be little known by those in attendance was the key fact that union service counts as university service - therefore, being active in UUP serves to not only be of assistance to our union brothers and sisters, but as a worthy addendum to the Campus/Community Service files of any academic seeking tenure as well.

As the workshop came to a close, in a wonderful demonstration of union solidarity, the tenured faculty in attendance offered help and wisdom privately to any more junior faculty who may find themselves with questions or concerns about the process that came up after the workshop concluded; by the end of the afternoon, the assembled group of academics and professionals filed out of the room armed with a solid understanding of the tenure process ... and perhaps, a desire to head to the nearest office-supply store for a few Drei-Ring-Bindemittels.



UUP PRE-RETIREMENT WORKSHOP Planning for Retirement

by Lisa Cuccia, Instructional Designer | I.T. Services

On December 11, 2019, UUP members enjoyed a lunch together and welcomed UUP's Retiree Member Services Coordinator Walter Apple, who came to visit from Albany to present a Pre-Retirement workshop.

The presentation was informative, addressing planning for retirement, actions to take prior to retirement and benefits members receive post-retirement.

During the one-hour workshop, Walter's presentation covered the following topics:

- Eligibility
- Costs & Planning
- Sick leave credit
- NYSHIP/Medicare/Non-NYSHIP HMOs
- Dental/Vision
- Social Security & Other Benefits
- Post-retirement and continued employment

Walter discussed the steps to take and who to contact for employees who are ready to retire. He answered many of the members' concerns about sick time, medical coverage costs and benefits eligibility when employees are no longer receiving salary from the payroll.

Walter offered a wealth of information, addressing many of the common errors and misconceptions about Social Security benefits and Medicaid, and clarified many of the questions presented by the UUP members who were in attendance.



For more information on planning for retirement, or if you are starting to plan for your retirement and still have unanswered questions, Walter can be contacted at 800-342-4206 x638 or Wapple@uupbenefits.org.

NYS Civil Service, Employee Benefits Division (EBD)
800-833-4344 (M - F | 9 - 4)

Additional resource links:

www.uupinfo.org

www.worklife.ny.gov

www.medicare.gov

www.suny.edu/benefits

www.unum.com/travelassistance

UUP Old Westbury welcomes Jocelyn Morales as our chapter's Officer for Retirees. She will represent our retiree members and act as liaison with UUP's Retirement Coordinator in Albany. Feel free to contact Jocelyn with any questions you may have.



GRADUATE STUDENT WORKERS LEAD WILDCAT STRIKE IN THE UC SYSTEM WORKSHOP

by Kyle Anderson

Before our present pandemic predicament began, Higher Ed unions were leading the way in fighting against inequality. Rising costs and stagnating wages are combining to put pressure on people all throughout the country, and in California, organized labor in the education sector is protesting and demanding these conditions and demand a Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA). Since last December, Graduate Student Workers at University of California-Santa Cruz have been refusing to turn in grades. In February, workers began an escalation and launched a “full strike,” declaring they would shut down the campus at UCSC. Campus administration responded by mobilizing riot police to break the pickets, and UC President Janet Napolitano—who served as the Secretary of Homeland Security in the Obama Administration from 2009 to 2013—dismissed 54 graduate students who participated in the strike. This led to a series of protest actions that swept across the University of California system, with students at Berkeley, Davis, Santa Barbara, Irvine, Riverside, Los Angeles, and San Diego all joining in solidarity with workers at UCSC.

The issue that graduate students are trying to address is real. Graduate Workers at UCSC make \$2,434 a month

before taxes, but the median rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Santa Cruz is nearly \$3,000, so that workers end up spending over 50% of their take-home pay on rent. Despite its proximity to gentrifying tech hubs like Silicon Valley, Santa Cruz is not unique. In a recent study by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, median graduate workers’ earnings failed to keep pace with the living wage for one-adult and two-adult households in five out of six major metropolitan areas. In UUP’s contract, the Cost of Living Adjustment for UUPers working downstate and in the Long Island area is \$3,026/year, but a cost-of-living comparison shows that you would need an extra \$3,800/month in order to maintain the same standard of living in New York City as compared to Albany.

Graduate workers at UCSC are fighting for all of us, and they deserve our support. The current pandemic has exposed the fragility of a society built on persistent inequality. Today, in Higher Education, it is our students, graduate students, and non-tenure-track faculty who are the most vulnerable. We need to stand in solidarity with them now more than ever.



UUP'S ACTION ON WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

by Carol Quirke, Vice-President for Academics, UUP-Old Westbury



If you've been the victim of workplace harassment, you know the limits of policies to address it. Old Westbury's harassment policies were established in 2006, as a result of state mandates: <https://www.oldwestbury.edu/sites/default/files/documents/workplace-violence-policy-procedures.pdf>. Buried in the policy against workplace violence is a prohibition against verbally harassing or abusing someone. Policies directly address violence or harassment against protected classes, such as women, racially marginalized groups, or religious groups. But hostile workplaces pit faculty against staff, or union member against union member, extending past traditional legal categories, making redress more difficult.

Hostile workplaces are the reverse of productive, affirming workplaces, and they can devastate members—psychologically and physically. As a result, UUP has organized a survey aimed at documenting member concerns as a first step in addressing this issue. The union has already received 2,500 responses, according to Vicki Janik, President of Farmingdale State's UUP chapter—a high response rate, indicating members' level of concern. Jamie Dangler, UUP's statewide Vice President of Academics, described the survey's rationale: "Members often describe their experiences as bullying, demeaning and unsupportive behaviors, and inequitable treatment of employees in many of our workplaces." You can take the survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WorkplaceConductUUP>.

As Dangler explains, "UUP sees the survey as a springboard for chapter work to get campuses to develop and enforce policies to foster a 'respectful workplace' and supportive work environment." She noted that UUP's Geneseo Chapter provided a model. "Working with other campus unions, our Geneseo colleagues were able to press the campus administration to develop a new campus policy. Through workshops and other collaborative activities, the entire campus community has been called upon to help ensure that the new [harassment] policy is implemented and enforced." https://www.geneseo.edu/sites/default/files/sites/admin_finance/Policies/Promoting%20the%20Respectful%20Workplace%206-667.pdf Janik saw multiple potential possibilities for union members (and administrators), including educating members about workplace harassment, developing a formal, written process to address harassment that includes a role for the union and worker representatives, and supporting the "Healthy Workplace Bill" sponsored by Long Island's Representative Steve Englebright, which would establish civil penalties for creating a hostile workplace environment.

SPECIAL EDITION
May 2020

Contingent Faculty: Apply for Unemployment Insurance This Summer

Contingent faculty (e.g., adjuncts) who have completed their spring semester work obligation, do not have summer school employment, and who have not received an appointment letter for the fall semester should consider applying for New York State Unemployment Insurance (UI) this summer.

Your eligibility for UI depends on whether you have received an offer of employment for next year which provides you with “reasonable assurance” of employment that is substantially similar to your employment this year. Even if you have not previously applied for UI over the summer, it may be worthwhile to apply now.

When You Apply, What Will You Be Asked?

When you apply, the Department of Labor (DOL) will want to know if you work for an educational institution, and whether you are between years or terms. The answer is “yes” to both questions. You will also be expected to fully disclose all offers of employment, whether written, verbal or electronic. If there is reason to believe that a course offered to you may be canceled or given to someone else, include that information in what you tell the DOL.

How Is Your UI Benefit Rate Calculated?

The application will ask you where you have worked in the last 15 to 18 months, and to list all employers during that period. The DOL will calculate your weekly UI benefit rate based on your recent earnings and will inform you of the results by mail in a one-page Notice of Monetary Determination. Your weekly benefit will range from a minimum of \$100 to a maximum of \$504.

NOTE: During the coronavirus crisis, the federal government **enacted an additional benefit of \$600 per week** for anyone eligible for unemployment. This will be paid weekly—along with your allotted rate—through July 31.

What Determines Eligibility?

In New York state, people employed by educational institutions are NOT eligible for UI during the summer or during winter break if they have “reasonable assurance” of rehire for substantially similar services the following semester or year. When you apply, you will be asked what your campus has told and specifically offered you for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters.

You are most likely eligible for benefits if:

1. You have received a letter of nonrenewal; or
2. You have not been offered any classes for next semester or year; or
3. You are given an offer that represents less than 90 percent of the previous semester (e.g., you taught three courses in the spring and were offered only two for the fall).

**For more details, see UUP’s UI Guidelines
for Contingent Faculty at <https://bit.ly/2LH0IRd>**



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OLD WESTBURY UUP CHAPTER

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Office hours temporarily suspended

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Officer for Retirees:	Jocelyn Morales
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KNOW YOUR DEPARTMENT REPS!

Old Westbury UUPers are always welcome to contact the Chapter office with any concerns. But almost every department now has a department representative, and that person may be a more convenient and immediate source of information for you. If your department is not listed, let's figure out who'd like to be your Department Rep! Here is our proud list of UUP-Old Westbury Department Reps.

ACADEMIC

American Studies: *Jermaine Archer*
 Biology: *Christos Noutsos*
 School of Business: *Alireza Ebrahimi and Lingxiang Li*
 Chemistry/Physics: *Steve Samuel*
 School of Education: *Xavier Marechaux*
 English: *Jessica Williams*
 First-Year Experience: *Bonnie Eannone and Jim Shevlin*
 History/Philosophy: *Jingyi Song*
 Library: *Christa DeVirgilio*
 Math/CIS: *Nick Werner*
 Modern Languages: *Fernando Guerrero*
 PEL: *Kevin Ozgercin*
 School of Professional Studies: *Ed Bever*
 Psychology: *Lorenz Neuwirth and Ashlee Lien*
 Public Health: *Martha Livingston*
 Sociology: *Peter Ikeler*
 Visual Arts: *Fred Fleisher*

PROFESSIONALS

Academic Affairs: *Yves Magloire*
 Academic Advising Center: *Yumi Nicholson*
 Admissions/Enrollment Services: *Phil D'Angelo*
 Athletics: *Jeff Labiento*
 Budget/Finance: *Jennifer Jimenez*
 Bursar: *Susan Anderson*
 Counseling Center: *Oren Shefet*
 EOP: *Eliliana Martinez and Ana Martinez*
 Financial Aid: *Sandra Alvarez*
 Information Technology: *Ryan Baker*
 Institutional Advancement/Print Shop/
 Public Relations: *Danielle Collins Groner*
 OSSD: *Stacey DeFelice*
 Registrar: *Gerardo Espinal*
 Student Health: *Ellen Feit*