

THE

# Echo



Vol. 5, No. 4

## REACHING OUT TO PROMOTE UUP

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navigate student debt



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in NYSUT teaching summit



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union events



## THE Echo

Volume 5, Number 4

The Echo is an online publication of United University Professions (UUP), bargaining agent for the more than 37,000 academic and professional employees of the State University of New York.

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### The union makes us strong

UUP MEMBERS GET INVOLVED IN THEIR UNION IN A NUMBER OF WAYS. WATCH THE VIDEO [HERE](#).

## WHAT'S INSIDE this issue



COVER PHOTO BY  
MICHAEL LISI

### On the cover

**4**—Buffalo State Chapter members—including outgoing Chapter President Dean Reinhart, left—walk around campus to engage members and talk up their union. Here, Reinhart offers a UUP membership card to coach Mike Kroll.

### 6 Student debt clinics

Binghamton UUP members get a sneak peek into a new app that will help them navigate student loan repayment options.

### 7 NYSUT teaching summit

UUP partners with NYSUT to encourage interest in teaching, and to find strategies for increasing the diversity of teaching ranks.

### 8 Sticking with the union

A UUP member and his wife take on a solicitor from the anti-union New Choice NY.



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# Linda Drake

## Oneonta Chapter

Linda Drake has lived a life of social justice and service.

As executive director of SUNY Oneonta's Center for Social Responsibility and Community, she helps place students in what are known as "service-learning settings." Service-learning is a teaching method that combines meaningful community service with classroom instruction and reflection. The goal is to give students a richer academic experience in college, learn about civic responsibility and help the community.

Drake is also director of community service for the Oneonta Chapter. In that capacity, she has organized volunteers to work at soup kitchens, on flood relief and hurricane cleanup, in locations ranging from Otsego County to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Earlier in her career, she ran a women's shelter.

"Helping others is what we are on this planet to do," Drake says.

Drake is also treasurer of the Ninash Foundation, a nonprofit international service organization founded by her husband, Ashok Malhotra, in memory of his late first wife, Nina Judith Malhotra. Ashok Malhotra is a native of India and a distinguished professor emeritus of philosophy at SUNY Oneonta. Several of the foundation's projects have been in India, with an emphasis on cultural and educational efforts.



### **What is your work at the Center for Social Responsibility and Community like?**

I'm in the student development side of the house in this position. I help place students in service-learning situations, which is applied learning done outside of the classroom. Our students work in 70 to 100 nonprofits every year, and they have an average of about 53,000 volunteer hours per academic year. About 1,500 students a year do this.

### **What in your background directed you to a career of community service?**

My family gets total credit. This is how we were raised—if you had a dollar, give a dollar. If you have two, give two.

### **What lessons about service has union membership taught you?**

One thing I've learned about our union on our campus is that they are all there for you as a team when you need it. Our officers are like a family that is there for you when you really need someone in your corner. I think always being available for people who are in need is certainly intertwined with my job on campus and certainly the mission of our Ninash Foundation.

### **How did you become the chapter's director of community service?**

I might be the chapter's first director of community service. After Hurricane Katrina, I was organizing groups of students to go down and help. One person was unable to go, and a lightbulb went off. I called (Chapter President Bill Simons), and he came instead. He was terrific, and he worked hard. So that was the beginning of Bill and me really working together. The title? I got that somewhere in the middle. It's my honor to be a member of the chapter, because UUP does so much for everybody.

### **What would you say to someone who questions the mission of international aid or relief organizations, when so many people in this country live in poverty or deal with natural disasters?**

If someone needs help in their own backyard, then one should most certainly help as much as one can. There are people in need around the world, everywhere one travels. One of our charges for the Ninash Foundation is, each one teach one. Well, if everyone paid it forward, and each one helped one, without passing any judgment, we could all change the world in our own little way.

— DARRYL McGRATH



# Doing the hard work

Locked doors, empty offices don't deter organizers from spreading the union message

BY MICHAEL LISI

**T**aking two steps at a time, Buffalo State Chapter President Dean Reinhart charged up a flight of stairs in the Houston Gymnasium building that led to a set of black metal doors.

Reinhart, followed closely by Buffalo State Chapter department representative Jim Fowler and chapter member Yves Gachette, figured he could reach an employee who hadn't yet signed a new union membership card faster by taking a shortcut.

On this day, the doors were locked—yet another symbol of the daily difficulties UUP organizers face in an unending quest to strengthen the union by increasing its membership.

Reinhart and company weren't deterred. They climbed down the staircase, clamored up a different set of stairs and walked through a set of glass doors into an office—where they were promptly met by a receptionist.

Fortunately, the receptionist was a UUP member and happily granted their request to talk to the employee—who walked from her office into the reception area with a look of shock on her face.

It was just another day of doing what needed to be done for the dozen or so Buffalo State Chapter members who volunteered to bring the union's message to their colleagues on a brisk, early April morning.

"Sometimes, people are confused as to why we're (visiting them)," said Reinhart. "Whether they realize it or not, collectively we're stronger."

## UUP: ORGANIZING STRONG

From bringing the union's message to employees working in secure research labs at SUNY's public hospitals to seeking out



MICHAEL LISI PHOTOS

UUP STATEWIDE VICE PRESIDENT FOR PROFESSIONALS TOM TUCKER AND BUFFALO STATE CHAPTER GRIEVANCE OFFICER JOSIE ADAMO, CENTER, TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING UNION WITH BUFFALO STATE ITEC EMPLOYEE GABRIELLE MACIEJEWSKI.

adjuncts who come to campus only to teach, UUP's organizing volunteers across New York state have been working hard to increase UUP's numbers by seeking out and signing up bargaining unit members as UUP members.

Since February, UUP has staged membership blitzes at Stony Brook HSC, Buffalo Center, Alfred, Fredonia, Binghamton and Buffalo State. Plans are in the works for a blitz at SUNY New Paltz.

The blitzes have been successful. So far, nearly 250 people have signed union cards or union recommit cards as a result of the events. Organizers had one-on-one conversations about the union with more than 1,000 people.

Other union activities—including workshops on workload creep, pre-retirement, student debt and UUP's new contract—were held on blitz days and drew hundreds of members and nonmembers.

At Buffalo State, volunteers hit the hallways, greeting members they knew, introducing themselves to people they didn't know, handing out gift bags with UUP pins, stickers and brochures, and asking employ-

ees to sign union membership cards.

Every volunteer had a list of people to visit; the lists included names of employees who haven't signed union cards and members who haven't signed UUP's new card, mandated under changes made to the state's Taylor Law in 2018.

And even though the Buffalo State Chapter has 98.8 percent of full-time employees signed as UUP members and about 150 people working as union department representatives, undertaking the membership blitz was a priority.

"We have learn-to-skate instructors who work every Saturday afternoon and it's very hard to get to them," Reinhart said. "It's worth the effort to reach all of our members."

## MEANER, NOT LEANER

UUP's organizing efforts began in earnest more than three years ago, spurred by a series of court challenges that led to a June 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision that barred unions from collecting agency fees from nonmembers. The ruling, in *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31*, declared the practice unconstitutional; unions must still

negotiate for and provide contractual protections to nonmembers.

The *Janus* case became a rallying cry for unions, which have seen many more membership gains than losses since the ruling.

In January, the American Federation of Teachers reported that it has added more than 88,500 members since *Janus*. NYSUT's membership has grown, as has UUP's membership; UUP has gained more than 2,300 members since last June and has more than 37,000 members in total.

And three members who quit the union changed their minds and rejoined; UUP has lost less than a quarter of a percent of its membership since *Janus*.

"People get defensive when you try to take something away from them, especially when it's their union," said Tom Tucker, UUP's statewide vice president for professionals. "We've changed the way we relate to members. The need today is to let members know that they are the most important part of this organization. Without them, we have nothing."

That's why Tucker, a Buffalo State alumnus, joined Buffalo State Chapter members in the organizing event.

## ROADBLOCKS AND DETOURS

But being a statewide officer doesn't automatically open doors.

Along with Josie Adamo, the Buffalo State Chapter's grievance officer, Tucker found only one employee on his list of people to visit in the Information Technology Exchange Center—located behind locked doors.

After talking to a pair of less-than-helpful students working as receptionists, the department's supervisor came out, listened to Tucker's request and retrieved the sole employee who was in and had time to talk: Gabrielle Maciejewski.

Maciejewski, a union member, hadn't signed an updated union card. Tucker told her about the importance of being union—fighting together for better wages, working

conditions and benefits—and she asked for a pen.

"I believe in the union and I believe in strength in numbers," said Maciejewski as she filled out her new membership card. "I believe that the union works on our behalf."

"Organizing takes a lot of effort, but if all this effort gets us just one new member, it's a success," Tucker said. "Would you like to be the one whose door wasn't knocked on? No one is left behind."

## SPREADING THE WORD

Back in the athletic complex, Reinhart, Fowler and Gachette weren't taking no for an answer.

Walking at a quick pace, they visited more than a half-dozen employees, including Buffalo State football team manager Cedric Richardson, who was in the hallway carrying his lunch back to his office. They handed him a union card, explained why it was important for him to be a union member, and asked him to consider signing the card.

A shortcut through a men's locker room led to the school's swimming pool and the office

of Mike Kroll, Buffalo State's new head swimming and diving coach. Kroll, looking a little surprised, quickly agreed to sign an updated membership card after a little nudge by Fowler, interim head coach for women's hockey and the ice arena manager.

"I don't give them a choice," Fowler said, jokingly.

The men then streamed into the office of David Dee, the college's assistant women's ice hockey coach. Dee, a little taken by surprise by the visit, also signed up.

Then it was back out into the hallway and past Richardson's office, when Richardson called out to them and handed them his signed membership card.

"The visibility of getting out and walking the campus is beneficial," said Reinhart before setting out on the organizing jaunt.

At the end of the day, the chapter's efforts produced 17 signed union cards. Not only that, volunteers met with dozens of members and potential members and spread the word about UUP and how important it is to be a union member.

"It's important for them to understand that unions created the middle class, and that every single person on this campus has the opportunity to be a member of this union and to benefit from that," said Reinhart.



BUFFALO STATE FOOTBALL TEAM MANAGER CEDRIC RICHARDSON, LEFT, SMILES WHILE TALKING WITH CHAPTER MEMBERS YVES GACHETTE, CENTER, AND DEPARTMENT REP JIM FOWLER. GACHETTE AND FOWLER TOOK PART IN A MARCH MEMBERSHIP BLITZ TO BRING BUFFALO STATE BARGAINING UNIT MEMBERS INTO THE UNION.





# UUPers 'beta test' new loan repayment app

BY KAREN L. MATTISON

**U**UP members have been taking advantage of chapter-based student debt clinics sponsored by UUP and its national affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers.

Now, they will soon have access to a new online app that makes it easier to check their eligibility for—and to enroll in—federal student loan repayment programs.

Close to 65 Binghamton Chapter members were the first UUPers to get a sneak peek at Summer, a start-up website created by a group of recent college graduates to help student loan borrowers navigate the complex repayment process. Summer, founded in partnership with Yale University, is working with colleges and employers to help borrowers manage their student loans.

The AFT tapped UUP to "beta test" the Summer app, which was integrated into a student debt clinic April 11 at Binghamton University. UUP members have been taking advantage of chapter-based clinics since mid-January; union leaders and professional organizers continue to be trained to conduct clinics around the state.

"The app is a more instantaneous way to get answers to what is often an overwhelming and frustrating application process," said UUP statewide Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee. "Summer will make a real difference."

The AFT has not formally announced a

partnership with Summer, and is currently deciding on the appropriate timeline for sharing Summer's web app beyond the in-person student debt clinics.

However, there is an AFT [webpage](#) about the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program on the Summer website.

"This (app) is manna from heaven," said 54-year-old Kimberly Peabody, a Binghamton Chapter member who was part of the Summer pilot during the April 11 student debt clinic on campus. She currently owes \$68,000 for her doctorate at Texas Woman's University, and is hoping to enter retirement "financially free."

"I have been trying to find out more about what's available, and to find the time to fill out all of the paperwork," she said. "I am really excited about the app. I can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel."

Will Sealy, Summer co-founder and CEO, said Summer combines innovative technology and policy expertise to serve student loan borrowers across the country. The app helps borrowers track their loans in one place, and recommends the best repayment plan for their individual situation, such as the PSLF program that enables qualifying public workers to discharge their loans after 10 years.

"In an industry known for misinformation and bad actors, we promise to stand on the side of borrowers," noted Sealy.

## WELCOME INFORMATION

UUP member Kaitlin Maynard, a 2012 Binghamton University graduate, said she "went immediately into deferment" following graduation, and feels lucky to have enrolled in an income-driven repayment plan about four years ago. That decision may end up putting her on a path to being debt-free in fewer than 10 years.



KAREN L. MATTISON PHOTOS

BINGHAMTON UUPER KIMBERLY PEABODY SAYS SHE LOOKS FORWARD TO TRYING OUT THE SUMMER APP, WHICH SHE HOPES WILL HELP HER NAVIGATE HER LOAN REPAYMENT OPTIONS.

"I would have been much better off if I had looked into the PSLF program right after college," she said. "But it was too intimidating."

## A RIGGED SYSTEM

Many of Maynard's union colleagues around the state have faulted their loan service providers for not informing them about all of the available repayment options.

A scathing Feb. 12 report by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Inspector General (OIG) exposed an alarming lack of oversight of nine student loan giants responsible for handling \$1.4 trillion in federal loans to tens of millions of American student loan borrowers. Among the litany of disturbing findings, the report reveals how the system is often rigged to mislead borrowers to boost profits of student loan service companies.

With its student debt clinics, UUP is taking a lead role in doing what the OIG has shown the student loan servicers are not: telling members about the federal programs that can significantly lower monthly payments or completely forgive their debt.

"I could end up with several thousand dollars back in my pocket every year to help pay for my future," Peabody said. "I'm thrilled."



BINGHAMTON CHAPTER MEMBER KAITLIN MAYNARD ASKS A QUESTION ABOUT THE PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM DURING A UUP-SPONSORED STUDENT DEBT CLINIC.

# Teaching summits seek to tap future educators

BY DARRYL MCGRATH

**T**he New York City public school system has 12,000 vacancies for mathematics teachers.

Last year, the Potsdam teacher education program graduated three math education majors.

Figures like these are why UUP has worked with its statewide affiliate NYSUT and K-12 systems around New York to present the Take a Look at Teaching summits. The summits seek to introduce the teaching profession to students in college and high school, to develop ideas that might make it easier for teacher education candidates to complete their programs, and to encourage a diverse mix of high school and college students to consider entering a profession where the rewards can be many but so can the challenges,

## UUP SEIZING INITIATIVE

"We are seeing some positive shifts in admissions to teacher education programs, both nationally and statewide, but we also know that the teaching profession cannot take a passive approach to this trend," said Jamie Dangler, UUP's statewide vice president for academics. "We are very happy to partner with NYSUT to encourage interest in teaching, and to find strategies for increasing the diversity of teaching ranks. This was a wonderful effort by all, and attendance at the summits shows it was timely."

About 100 people attended the fourth summit in Potsdam, and about half were college and high school students. Rural districts in the region also sent representatives; the teacher shortage is not just affecting large urban districts, and smaller districts are looking for ideas to increase their applicant pool.



GUINEY

within 100 miles."

Brouwer, along with his colleague and fellow UUP member Amy Guiney, organized UUP's role in the summit. Guiney directs Potsdam's Center for School Partnerships and

Teacher Certification, which provides guidance to teacher candidates on certification exams and placements for field experience and student teaching.

Participants in the summits throughout the year worked in small groups to develop ideas for increasing enrollment. One example: Sending student ambassadors from teacher education programs into area K-12 districts to speak to their barely younger peers about the rewards of teaching.

Potsdam's teacher education program saw about a 40 percent decrease in enrollment in the last five years, in keeping with statewide trends. Nationally, enrollment has just started to increase after a stunning period of decline—there were 418,573 students enrolled in the 2014-2015 academic year, an increase of nearly 23,000 students from the previous year, according to U.S. Department of Education figures.

## CHANGE A LIFE: TEACH

At the lowest point in New York, five and six years ago, when the deeply flawed state teacher certification exams resulted in failure for even high-achieving students, and the teaching profession was a public punching bag on social media, "We actually sent some students out in schools (for field experience) and teachers would say, 'Why do you want to be a teacher?'" Brouwer said.

Brouwer has an answer to that question, which, he is glad to report, is being asked less and less often.

"As a teacher, you can influence future generations," he said. He would urge young adults considering the teaching profession to "look in their heart and see what really drives them, think about what sparks their imagination, think about being a role model.

"That's really powerful," Brouwer said.



EL-WISE NOISSETTE PHOTOS

MATH EDUCATION MAJORS HAVE MANY CAREER OPTIONS OTHER THAN TEACHING, SO THE TAKE A LOOK AT TEACHING SUMMITS HELPED PROMOTE THE PERSONAL SATISFACTION THAT COMES WITH SHAPING YOUNG LIVES AS A TEACHER, SAID UUP MEMBER AND PROFESSOR PETER BROUWER, LEFT, CHAIR OF SECONDARY MATHEMATICS AT SUNY POTSDAM.

as recent declines in admissions to teacher education programs attest.

The four summits held this academic year began with Syracuse in October, went on to Western New York in January, Rochester in early March and Potsdam in late March.

## A STRONG RESPONSE

"I think it went very well," said Potsdam Chapter member Peter Brouwer, a professor and chair of secondary mathematics. "A lot of the districts up here are small; they don't have a lot of resources to draw on. We're really the only teacher education program



# Knock on door leads to lesson in labor history

BY DARRYL MCGRATH

**T**he visitor at the front door of Michael Kankiewicz's home was right out of central casting—deceptively polite, low-key and careful to not reveal her real agenda.

However, the response by Kankiewicz, a Buffalo Center Chapter member, and his wife, Merry Jeffers, a retired NYSUT member, was right out of the labor movement's best practices for dealing with an unsolicited visit by a member of the anti-union New Choice NY.

New Choice NY is one of the many opportunistic union-bashing organizations that has sprung up around the country since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31*. That decision overturned longstanding precedent by decreeing that people in a bargaining unit who had never signed a membership card could stop paying fees in lieu of dues—fees that helped unions represent everyone in the bargaining unit, including those who take a union's great benefits, higher pay and strong job protections but don't want to give back a modest 1 percent of their salary to support those efforts. Groups like New

Choice NY, backed by national and monied anti-labor individuals and coalitions, are paid to get as many union members as possible to quit.

Much of New Choice NY's activity has targeted members of UUP's statewide affiliate NYSUT, and other larger state unions, through ads in print publications and on Facebook.

## BE PREPARED

UUP members have not reported frequent contacts by the group. A few have received emails at work that urged them to quit UUP, but the canvassing by anti-union organizations that specifically targets UUP has not been widespread. Even so, that doesn't mean that they won't appear in your neighborhood.

Kankiewicz and Jeffers were momentarily caught off guard when they opened the door of their home in the Buffalo suburb of Williamsville. But they quickly deduced the purpose behind the woman's introductory remarks. Politely, but firmly, they confronted their unwelcome caller, who had tipped off the real reason for her visit by asking the couple if they were union members.

"After a few minutes of back and forth, and



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL KANKIEWICZ

MICHAEL KANKIEWICZ AND MERRY JEFFERS TOLD NEW CHOICE NY THEY'RE STAYING WITH THEIR UNION.

looking at the papers in her hand, I realized she was representing 'my choice' to opt out," Kankiewicz said. "My wife and I gave her a stern scolding and lectured her about the benefits that unions have brought to the middle class, the history of wages, and other topics. We were polite, but very stern, and adamant about our objection to her freeloading organization, and sent her away."

Their perfectly appropriate response earned them the gratitude of UUP President Fred Kowal, who promptly shared Kankiewicz's story with the other statewide officers.

## Domaratz named new UUP director of staff

Longtime NYSUT labor relations specialist Pat Domaratz was recently promoted to regional staff director assigned to UUP. He takes over for John Marino, who retired in February.

Domaratz was the UUP/NYSUT LRS assigned to the Alfred, Brockport, Geneseo and Morrisville chapters since 2011. Before that, he was assigned to NYSUT K-12 locals from 1997-2000, and again from 2009-2011. He was a NYSUT organizer from 2000-2009.

Domaratz was an adjunct instructor at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations from 1994-2017, and was an LRS with the Civil Service Employees Association from 1986-1997.

He earned his bachelor's degree in industrial relations with a minor in political science from LeMoyne College, and his master's in labor and public policy, with a concentration in sustainable worker cooperatives, from Empire State College.



DOMARATZ

"Pat is a great addition to our team," said UUP President Fred Kowal. "I look forward to relying on his counsel on a daily basis."

## OTHER STAFF UPDATES

Kenya Coleman is now administrative and field services assistant. In addition to her duties as an assistant in UUP Administration and UUP Meetings and Travel, she serves as administrative assistant to Domaratz.

Mary Becker is now organizing assistant in UUP Organizing.

## Vermont techs vote Yes! to contract



The technical professionals at the University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington who are represented by the Vermont Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals/AFT ratified a new three-year agreement with the hospital March 7.

Patient care was the biggest focus in the contract campaign for the techs, but they came



"Thanks for handling the situation so well!" Kowal wrote to Kankiewicz, after this 32-year member contacted Kowal to alert him that New Choice NY was showing up in the Buffalo region. "We are recommending that our members do exactly what you and your wife did: Be direct, strong, but polite."

Kankiewicz and Jeffers are also members of the American Federation of Musicians Local 92. Kankiewicz remembers how union membership elevated his parents to the middle class, with secure retirements.

"We feel very strongly that each generation should do better than the generation before it," he said. That's certainly been the case for him and his wife; both are part of the first generation in their family to graduate from college, and Kankiewicz, who was a member of CSEA at the time, received tuition assistance through his union contract that helped him attain his degree.

### PROACTIVE ON ANTI-UNION EFFORTS

UUP didn't wait for New Choice NY or others of its ilk to start bothering members before framing a response. Last fall, UUP joined a coalition of New York unions that purchased billboards in Albany, Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse to combat an ad blitz by New Choice NY. Ads by the coalition also ran on

Capital Region buses. At the same time, Kowal's [op ed in the Albany Times Union](#) noted that unions are gaining in popularity, and that the *Janus* decision did not lead to the mass exodus of union members that its supporters had hoped would occur.

A recent Gallup poll showed that 61 percent of Americans approve of labor unions. Certainly, UUP's membership has demonstrated that members approve of their union; they resoundingly ratified the new contract with the state, and only a handful of members left after *Janus*. Many UUP chapters are at or near 95 percent full-time membership of those eligible to join.

UUP's decision to hire a team of professional organizers in the year leading up to the *Janus* decision has produced positive feedback from members, and more members than ever are taking the initiative to become active. Each month, UUP's organizing staff schedules a selection of events that promote solidarity, provide valuable training on member engagement and allow for members to meet each other.

These efforts got a boost when the governor backed two significant measures that protect unions and became law as part of the state budget. One bars the state from disclos-

ing union members' personal information, such as their home address, personal email or cell phone number. The other stops nonmembers from suing their former unions to recoup dollars paid prior to the *Janus* decision.

One such suit was filed before that law passed, against the Professional Staff Congress, which represents the faculty and staff at the City University of New York. UUP, along with the Farmingdale Chapter, was added to the suit as part of an amended complaint filed April 12 in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. In a story on that lawsuit, the *Times Union* quoted Kowal's prediction that the action would not prevail, because there was no proof that the union improperly collected fees from nonmembers before the *Janus* decision.

But just in case New Choice NY keeps pushing its tired line that UUP members should quit, Kowal has this advice to members who get some unwanted counsel on their front porch: "Be polite, but clear that you don't need them to tell you what to do. Don't argue with their scripted message, because they won't have any good answers. Tell them you are staying with your union, because your union is on your side. And then close the door."

away with another huge win: unprecedented member engagement.

Months of hard work in negotiations and powerful turnout from members helped the techs get the protections and benefits they deserve. Their battle for a fair contract comes on the heels of a win by the center's nurses, who waged a seven-month fight and subsequent strike to gain a fair contract last year. The momentum from that effort spilled into the techs' campaign, with members turning out in numbers higher than ever before.

Read more about member engagement at <https://bit.ly/2GsnMjn>

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### NEA holds 'pro-education' poster contest

The NEA is asking its members in good standing—including those represented by UUP—to show their creative side by designing the official "Strong Public Schools 2020" campaign poster. The public will select the winner in an online poll beginning in June.

The entry deadline is 5 p.m. May 31.

Six finalist entries will be posted on the NEA website for public voting, which will take place between midnight June 3 and 6 p.m. July 6. Winners will be announced on or around July 7.

The first-place prize is \$2,500 and a donation of \$500 in art supplies awarded to the winner's school; second-place is \$1,000; and third-place is \$500.

Contest rules and instructions on how to enter can be found at [StrongPublicSchools.org](https://StrongPublicSchools.org); click on Poster Contest on the horizontal toolbar.





ROB TRIMARCHI

## SUNY Poly Chapter

CHAPTER PRESIDENT LINDA WEBER SPEAKS OUT DURING A MARCH 26 PROFESSIONALS' MEETING SPONSORED BY THE SUNY POLY CHAPTER. MORE THAN A DOZEN MEMBERS ATTENDED, INCLUDING ERIC HOTCHKISS, CENTER, AND JOHN MADIA.



JIM McMAHON PHOTOS

## Empire State College Chapter

UUP MEMBERS JOIN IN SOLIDARITY WITH WORKERS RALLYING OUTSIDE THE AMAZON DISTRIBUTION CENTER IN STATEN ISLAND. RIGHT, CWA LOCAL 1102 PRESIDENT AND UUPER STEVE LAWTON, RIGHT, PRESENTS AN AMAZON OFFICIAL A LETTER PROTESTING THE FIRING OF A UNION ORGANIZER.

## Albany Chapter

DOZENS OF UUP MEMBERS ATTEND THE ALBANY CHAPTER FAMILY LEAVE WORKSHOP APRIL 18, PRESENTED BY STATEWIDE VP FOR ACADEMICS JAMIE DANGLER, RIGHT, LABOR RELATIONS SPECIALIST MAUREEN SEIDEL AND COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT ELIZABETH HOUGH. UUP SUCCESSFULLY NEGOTIATED FOR FAMILY LEAVE COVERAGE IN ITS 2016-2022 CONTRACT WITH NEW YORK STATE.



ROB TRIMARCHI





## Statewide Finance Committee

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS KIKO FRANCO OF OLD WESTBURY, LEFT, ED DRUMMOND OF STONY BROOK HSC, AND EARL PACKARD OF ALFRED, FRONT ROW, REVIEW THE UNION'S PROPOSED ANNUAL SPENDING PLAN, AS SECRETARY-TREASURER JERI O'BRYAN-LOSEE OUTLINES THE NEED FOR FUTURE BELT-TIGHTENING. THE COMMITTEE MET AT UUP HEADQUARTERS MARCH 24-25.



## Albany Chapter

NEARLY 100 ALBANY CHAPTER MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN AN APRIL 9 WORKSHOP TITLED "THE PATH TO CONTINUING AND PERMANENT APPOINTMENT." ABOVE RIGHT, UUP STATEWIDE MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICER TOM HOEY, LEFT, AND STATEWIDE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PATRICK ROMAIN, BOTH ALBANY CHAPTER MEMBERS, WELCOME THE PARTICIPANTS. ABOVE, UUP/NYSUT LABOR RELATIONS SPECIALIST MAUREEN SEIDEL DISCUSSES THE BEST AVENUES TO ACHIEVE TENURE.

## Oneonta Chapter

ONEONTA CHAPTER PRESIDENT BILL SIMONS INTRODUCES HIMSELF TO BHARATH RAMKUMAR, LEFT. RAMKUMAR IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF FASHION AND TEXTILES AT THE COLLEGE. UUP MEMBERS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZERS HAVE MADE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO REACH OUT TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BARGAINING UNIT.



In The News is a compilation of media in the last couple of months (radio, television and papers across the state) featuring UUP.

**April 11:** [Statement from UUP President Frederick E. Kowal on the retirement of SUNY Board of Trustees Chair H. Carl McCall](#)

UUP Media Release

UUP President Fred Kowal congratulates McCall on more than 50 years of public service.

**April 5:** [CUNY, SUNY Unions: State Shortchanges Us](#)  
*Chief-Leader* (New York City, NY)

President Kowal expresses his frustration over a lack of state funding for SUNY in the 2019-20 state budget.

**March 22:** [Union gives thumbs-down to Trump's campus edict](#)  
*Times Union* (Albany, NY)

President Kowal calls the president's campus free speech executive order "unnecessary and redundant."

**March 7:** [Students rally to fix 'TAP gap'](#)

WXXI Radio (Rochester, NY)  
WRVO Radio (Oswego, NY)  
WAMC Radio (Albany, NY)

President Kowal talks about the importance of the state fully funding the Tuition Assistance Program in an interview with reporter Karen DeWitt.



**March 7:** [SUNY Chancellor is quietly stepping down from AES Corp board amid pressure over toxic coal ash](#)

*Hechinger Report* (New York, NY)

UUP gets a mention in this story about the SUNY Chancellor's decision to leave the AES Corp. board of directors.

**March 6:** [Educational Opportunity Programs help high-need students to thrive](#)

*Hechinger Report* (New York, NY)

A op-ed by President Kowal focusing on the success and importance of SUNY's opportunity programs, which UUP has long been a strong supporter of.

**March 6:** [NY professors' union is target of class action lawsuit](#)  
*Times Union* (Albany, NY)

UUP President Fred Kowal is quoted in this news story about a CUNY professor who is suing PSC/CUNY for back union dues.

**March 1:** [Higher Ed Suffers Under Trump Visa Restrictions](#)  
WAMC Radio (Albany, NY)

A commentary by UUP President Fred Kowal on how President Trump's visa restrictions have been detrimental to SUNY, as well as colleges and universities across America.

**Feb. 21:** [SUNY union: Chancellor should 'reconsider' role with power company](#)

*Times Union* (Albany, NY)

President Kowal calls on SUNY Chancellor Kristina Johnson to re-think her position as a board member at AES Corp., a Virginia-based company that operates a coal-burning power plant in Puerto Rico. The company has been spotlighted in media reports for its questionable methods of discarding toxic coal ash on the island, which is still recovering from Hurricane Maria.

## Hanging out at SOMOS

UUP MEMBERS ATTENDED THE SOMOS CONFERENCE MARCH 8-10 IN ALBANY. SOMOS' MISSION IS TO UNITE THE LATINO COMMUNITY AND RAISE AWARENESS, ADVOCATE AND ELEVATE SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS ON PUBLIC POLICY; AND TO ENSURE THE UPWARD MOBILITY OF LATINO YOUTH THROUGH EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT, MENTORING PROGRAMS AND SCHOLARSHIPS. SOMOS CONFERENCES SERVE AS A PLATFORM FOR LEGISLATORS, SCHOLARS, BUSINESS AND LABOR LEADERS TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE HISPANIC POPULATION OF NEW YORK STATE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE NYS ASSEMBLY/SENATE PUERTO RICAN/HISPANIC TASK FORCE. FROM LEFT ARE HARRY ESPAILLAT OF FARMINGDALE, UUP VP FOR PROFESSIONALS TOM TUCKER, STATE COMPTROLLER TOM DINAPOLI AND UUP PRESIDENT FRED KOWAL.





## SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON UUPERS

Each year, hundreds of UUP members publish books and articles, and are recognized for accomplishments on campus and in their communities. *The Echo* is pleased to recognize three members in this issue.

**Nate Cady**, a professor of nanobioscience at SUNY Polytechnic Institute, was recently awarded \$1.7 million in funding from the Rome-based Air Force Research Laboratory to enable future generations of computing systems by using memristors, or “memory resistors.”

Memristors are nanoscale electronic switching devices that act like synapses in the human brain. Cady and his research team aim to develop and fabricate neuromorphic computing power to meet stringent Air Force requirements for applications such as unmanned aerial vehicles, aircraft, satellites and other deployable autonomous systems.

Cady’s research will support a SUNY Poly postdoctoral researcher and graduate students, as well as a number of undergraduate students who will be able to learn first-hand how to develop and fabricate the memristive neuromorphic structures.



CADY

**Rick Henry** has published his sixth novel, *Letters* (RA Press, 2019). The book is set in a rural area of upstate New York, a region that he has continued to use as a backdrop for his fiction writing over the span of his 20-year career as a faculty member at SUNY Potsdam.

Henry has explored upstate New York through several other fictional novels, notably *Lucy’s Eggs: Short Stories and a Novella*, winner of the 2006 Adirondack Center for Writing Award for Best Fiction. His novel, *Increase Crawford* (not yet published), is also set in upstate New York.

Henry is an English professor; he teaches literature, linguistics and writing, and directs the bachelor’s of fine arts in creative writing program. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, his master’s from Bowling Green State University, and his bachelor’s from St. Lawrence University.

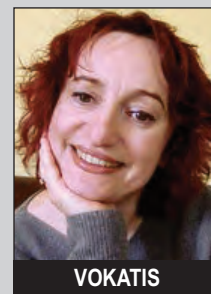


HENRY

**Barbara Vokatis**, an assistant professor of elementary education and reading at SUNY Oneonta, recently presented two papers at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) in Toronto.

On April 6, she presented an individual paper co-authored with Albany Chapter member **Jianwei Zhang**. The title of the presentation was: “Dialogic Literacy Enabled by Cross-community Interactions in Scientific Knowledge Building.” This study aims to provide the description of an example of scientific knowledge building, through literacy, to inform implementation of new learning standards.

She also presented a paper titled, “This Is My iPad!: Reconfiguring Dialogic Reading in Parent-Child Interactions with iPad Ebooks.”



VOKATIS



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# What Do You Do When They Come For You?

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



### **Disciplinary Rights: Article 19 of the UUP Contract**

UUP representation provided to all UUP dues-paying members holding term, permanent or continuing appointment. The first step UUP members should take with any disciplinary action is to contact their UUP chapter leadership, who will contact your UUP/NYSUT representative. Refer to Article 19 of the UUP contract for additional disciplinary and other rights that you have:

<http://uupinfo.org/negotiations/contract.php>

United University Professions  
PO Box 15143, Albany NY 12212-5143  
518.640.6600 800.342.4206  
fax: 518.640.6698 [www.uupinfo.org](http://www.uupinfo.org)



## **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

### **Interrogation Rights**

If you believe that you are the target of disciplinary action during an investigative interview, ask for a representative and invoke the following rights:

- 1) You should ask the subject matter before questioning, and have the ability to confer with your representative privately before questioning begins;
- 2) To have your representative present during the interview to provide assistance; and
- 3) To offer statements or evidence to prove or support your version of the incident.

**Note:** Refusal to answer questions before asserting your rights to a representative could result in discipline for insubordination. Speak to a UUP chapter representative for details.

### **Suspension or Reassignment Rights**

If you are about to be suspended without pay or temporarily reassigned, request a UUP representative be present, and be aware of the following rights:

- 1) You can only be suspended or reassigned if your continued presence at work represents a danger to persons or property or would severely interrupt operations. In such case, a written Notice of Discipline (NOD) must be served to you no later than 10 days after suspension or reassignment; or
- 2) You can be suspended or reassigned if you have been charged with the commission of a crime. The NOD must be served to you within contractual timelines (Article 19.7 (a)(2)).

### **Disciplinary Rights**

If you are being disciplined, you have the right to request representation, and:

- 1) Details of charges against you must be outlined in a written NOD;
- 2) You must be served a copy of the NOD by certified mail or personal service; and
- 3) You have 10 working days to file a disciplinary grievance to challenge the charges outlined in the NOD.

**Note:** Additional information may be obtained from your UUP chapter representative.



# Your Union Contract **At Work!**



## UUP Benefit Trust Fund Scholarship Program

**FAST  
FACTS**

A new UUP Benefit Trust Fund Scholarship Program is available for undergraduate students; the program runs through the Spring 2022 semester. **Scholarships of \$500 per semester are available for eligible dependent children of active, UUP-represented SUNY employees.**

### Eligibility and guidelines:

- Scholarship awards can be used for books, supplies, or room and board costs; they cannot be used to pay for tuition.
- A maximum of one \$500 scholarship per dependent child will be awarded each semester, even if both parents are UUP-represented employees.
- Eligible dependents, up to age 26, must be enrolled in a SUNY state-operated campus. Dependent children who turn 26 anytime during the semester in which they are applying are no longer eligible.
- Each dependent child is eligible for a maximum of eight scholarships. Scholarship checks will be issued in the UUP-represented employee's name.
- Applications must be postmarked by 60 days after the end of the semester for which the dependent child is applying.
- The scholarship form outlines specific criteria that UUP-represented employees and their dependent children must meet to qualify for the scholarship.
  - There are two different forms based on a member's eligibility for the New York State Health Insurance Program. Non-NYSHIP-eligible employees will need to provide documentation verifying that they are the parent of the student.

**For more information, call the UUP  
Benefit Trust Fund at 800-887-3863.**

**For applications, go to  
<https://bit.ly/2TIEkSA> or  
scan the QR code at right.**





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



**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.



**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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