

THE ECHO



Winter 2022

**A better
budget
for SUNY?**

**The end of
edTPA?**

**Upstate hosts
Pre-Medical
Opportunity
Program**

MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS · NEW UNIONS' CHALLENGES · A GREENER SUNY

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.

Contact UUP at P.O. Box 15143, Albany, New York 12212-5143. Telephone (518) 640-6600 or toll-free at (800) 342-4206. UUP's internet site is www.uupinfo.org. UUP is Local 2190 of the American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO) and is affiliated with NYSUT and the National Education Association.

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DARRYL McGRATH
Managing Editor

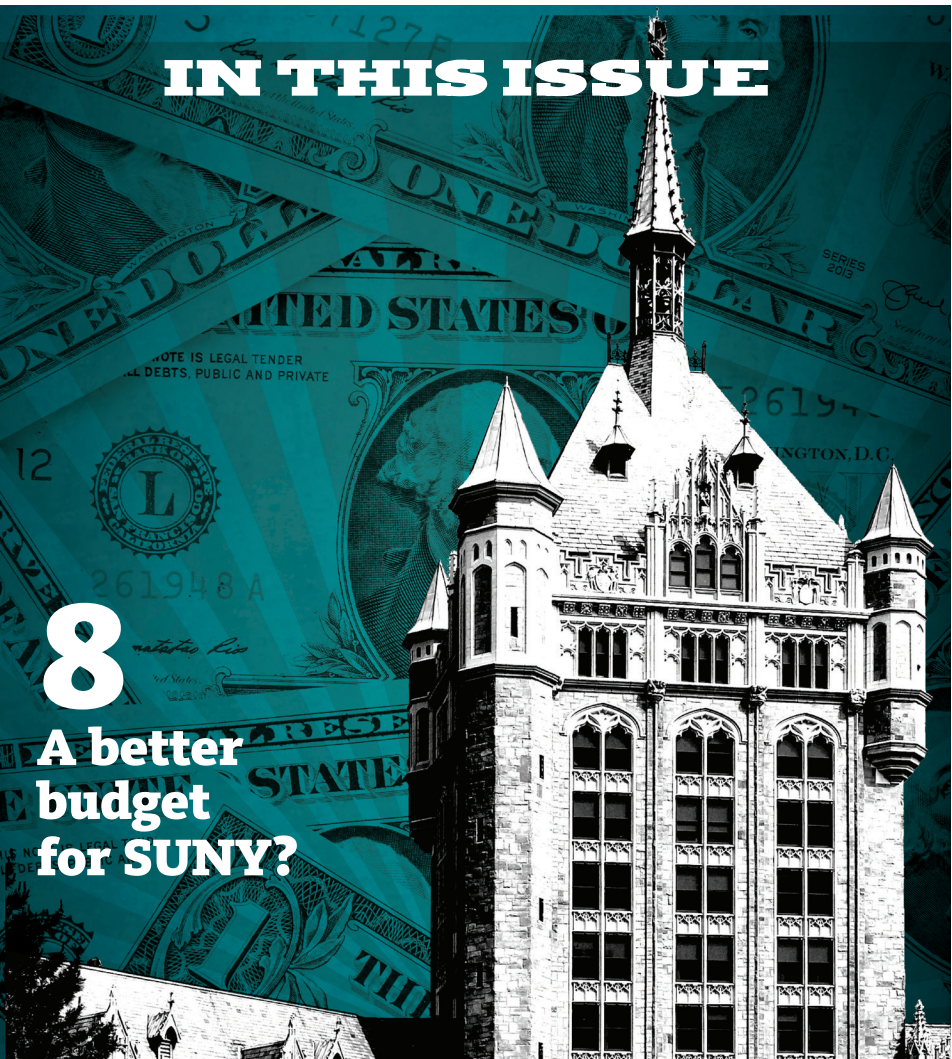
MARK HEMPSTEAD
Art Director

ANGELL M. VILLAFANE
Communications Assistant



AFTCN






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» **TO THE POINT** | UUP President Frederick Kowal



RESTORE OPPORTUNITY – FULLY FUND SUNY!

The Executive Budget proposal is a start. Now, UUP is asking New York to take that good start, expand it into real financial stability for SUNY, and make SUNY whole for the first time in decades.

Kowal has delivered that message, along with member activists and UUP officers, at rallies and news conferences, in testimony and in hearings before state lawmakers: New York needs to restore opportunity. New York needs to fully fund SUNY.

Click [HERE](#) or on the “play” icon above to view a video of Kowal speaking at a March 2 rally at Binghamton University, before a crowd of members and students, on the urgent need for even stronger state support for SUNY.

FIGHTING FOR OUR CLIMATE IS FIGHTING FOR OUR STUDENTS.

The time for action is now. We must act to combat the global climate crisis. UUP believes SUNY and New York state should lead the way toward renewable and sustainable energy sources. (See story on page 14.)

UUP supports fighting the global climate crisis.





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Labor department, NLRB form partnership

The U.S. Department of Labor and the National Labor Relations Board announced Jan. 6 that the Labor Department's Wage and Hour Division and the NLRB have signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen their partnership.

The new agreement outlines procedures on information-sharing, joint investigations and enforcement activity, as well as training, education and community outreach.

The agreement is an effort by the agencies to improve the enforcement process of the laws they administer, to better ensure the rights and protections of workers. The agreement will also allow for better enforcement against unlawful pay practices, misclassification of workers as independent contractors and retaliation against workers who exercise their legal rights.

Read more about the new partnership [HERE](#).

Read the Memorandum of Understanding between the DOL and the NLRB [HERE](#).

New unions getting attention, but challenges remain

Based on the headlines about union growth during the pandemic, you'd think that union membership is surging.

It is true that some unexpected groups of workers started organizing drives during the pandemic: Amazon warehouse workers, Starbucks baristas and congressional staff members.

Don't be surprised if the deliveristas—the people who deliver takeout meals through phone apps, a restaurant sideline that skyrocketed during the pandemic—are next. These low-wage and often-abused workers are gaining the kinds of concessions in New York City that may inch them toward a union vote.

And the vote for the most unexpected organizing effort during the pandemic could go to the 30-odd employees of the Rabble-Rouser Chocolate and Craft Co. in Montpelier, Vt., whose website urges customers to "... stir up some trouble ...". The chocolatiers have just

joined the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3169.

But it's going to take more than catchy headlines to pump up union membership. The reported increase in the percentage of union members in the American workforce during the pandemic was an aberration, caused by a decline of nonunion workers which artificially inflated the rate of union workers.

The rate of union membership recently reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics—10.3—is just a fraction more than half of what that rate was in 1983, the first year for which comparable data is available.

In the meantime, it's no surprise that the Starbucks union drive, which is by now a national movement, started in New York. The Bureau of Labor Statistics also reports that New York has the second-highest union membership rate in the country at 22.2%, a very close second to Hawaii's 22.4%.



Professional development funds available

If you're looking for funding for professional development projects, workshops or conferences, you should consider applying for an Individual Development Award.

The Individual Development Awards program is offered through the NYS/UUP Joint Labor-Management Committees. Professional development committees on each campus decide which projects or applicants to grant funds to. They also set deadlines for grant applications.

Applicants can receive up to \$2,000 this year for up to two projects or activities. The program is open to full-time or part-time employees who are represented by UUP. Applicants should check with their chapter for the application deadline.

Full-time employees must be in the UUP Bargaining Unit when they submit their applications and during the dates of the projects or activities being covered by IDA grants.

Click [HERE](#) for more information and an application.

UUP launches Organizing Academy

An exciting new initiative for UUP members has started: the UUP Organizing Academy, which is providing training on the skills of internal union organizing for members who are serious about strengthening our union.

"This is a great opportunity to recruit, activate and engage our members for the fights ahead," UUP President Fred Kowal said in a message to members that announced the new effort. "Member-organizers who complete the entire training series will learn how to build union power, grow our union, develop as leaders, and run effective campaigns."

Topics include effective ways to conduct one-on-one conversations, plan a campaign, manage data and build an organizing team. Courses focus on the basics of organizing. Jordan Helin, UUP's mobilization and political training coordinator, has planned 15 courses with three levels of proficiency. Member-organizers will have the chance to attain these levels of proficiency and be recognized for their achievements.

Go to the Organizing Academy page on the UUP website [HERE](#) for more information and to register.



STAYCONNECTED!

To receive the union's weekly UUPConnect newsletter in your in box, email UUP Media & Publications Director Mike Lisi at UUPconnect@uupmail.org.

If your chapter has a news item or an event, email it to us so it can be shared statewide.

Questions and concerns about the newsletter can be directed to Mike Lisi or to UUPconnect@uupmail.org.

 **KEEPING YOU CONNECTED.**
www.uupinfo.org



UUP backs NYSUT endorsement of Schumer, Hochul

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Gov. Kathy Hochul have the backing of NYSUT and UUP in November. NYSUT’s Board of Directors voted Jan. 21 to endorse Schumer and Hochul in the November election, along with the rest of the Democratic state slate: Lt. Gov. Brian Benjamin, Attorney General Tish James and Comptroller Tom DiNapoli.

UUP President Fred Kowal, a NYSUT board member, voted for the endorsements. So did UUP’s other NYSUT board members: former statewide Treasurer Rowena Blackman-Stroud; former statewide Vice President for Academics Jamie Dangler; and former statewide Vice President for Professionals Tom Tucker. UUP played a prime role in the nomination decisions; UUP is NYSUT’s second-largest local, smaller only than the United Federation of Teachers.

Schumer and DiNapoli are longtime friends of UUP. And Hochul and James—a former UUP member—addressed UUP delegates at the 2018 Fall Delegate Assembly in Buffalo.

“Chuck Schumer is a true friend to UUP,” said Kowal. “He’s a fighter who understands the importance of public higher education and the positive impact a vibrant SUNY can have on our students, our members, our communities and our state. He

commitment to public higher education and health care,” said Kowal. “I am confident that by working together, we can build a stronger, more effective SUNY to serve our students on our campuses and our patients at SUNY’s public teaching hospitals.”

Kowal said that James deserved NYSUT’s endorsement because she believes in organized labor



and is dedicated to advocating for working people across New York state. NYSUT endorsed James in her first run for attorney general in 2018. She was a UUP member from 2014 through 2019.

“Attorney General James believes that everyone should be treated equally under the law and she’s shown that, time and time again,” Kowal said. “She believes in organized labor and the values we stand for. We applaud her determination and her drive to get to the truth and deliver justice.”

DiNapoli, who has spoken to UUP delegates at several delegate assemblies over the years, has been a staunch supporter of labor and public higher education. He deftly steered the state’s pension fund during the pandemic, and delivered a record 33.5% investment return for the fund.

“Tom DiNapoli has been a fierce protector of the state pension fund,” said Kowal. “He believes that all public workers deserve a secure retirement after their years of service and he’s shown that commitment by making the state pension fund one of the strongest in the country.”



IN THE NEWS



A ROUNDUP OF MEDIA MENTIONS

Nov. 30: [“Legislators and SUNY leaders push for more TAP funding for students”](#)
WNYT-TV, Albany

Nov. 30: [“SUNY union calls for boosting tuition assistance program”](#)
Spectrum News 1, Rochester

Dec. 15: [“Union says Upstate Hospital lost millions during pandemic, begs state government to better fund it”](#)
WSYR-TV, Syracuse

Dec. 15: [“Union calls on state to better fund Upstate and other public teaching hospitals”](#)
WRVO National Public Radio, Oswego

Dec. 22: [“Op-ed: Let’s stop pretending that Covid created our health care crisis”](#)
Crain’s New York Business

Jan. 6: [“Health-Care Workers’ Pay, Teacher Hirings Key Parts of Hochul Agenda”](#)
Chief-Leader, New York City

Jan. 7: [“Reaction to 2022 State of the State”](#)
“Empire State Weekly,” WTEN-TV, Albany

Jan. 14: [“Strangers in a very strange land”](#)
WAMC, Albany

Jan. 19: [“SUNY’s future: How Hochul wants to enact reforms”](#)
Politico NY

Jan. 19: [“Area officials seek further details in state spending plan”](#)
The Observer Today, Dunkirk

Feb. 7: [“SUNY, CUNY unions call for additional \\$500M in campus funding”](#)
WNYT-TV, Albany

Feb. 7: [“Unions call for more SUNY & CUNY investment”](#)
WRGB-TV, Schenectady

Feb. 7: [“Professors at New York’s public colleges ask for more money to ease shortfalls”](#)
WAMC, Albany

Feb. 7: [“Additional funding for SUNY and CUNY ‘must start this year,’ higher education advocates”](#)
amNY, New York City

Feb. 9: [“Even in a pandemic, SUNY’s teaching hospitals must fight for funding”](#)
WAMC, Albany

Feb. 14: [“Investing in New York’s public teaching hospitals”](#)
“Capitol Pressroom,” WCNY National Public Radio, Syracuse

Feb. 16: [“Forum examines racial disparity as Black vaccination rate lags”](#)
Daily Gazette, Schenectady

“Chuck Schumer is a true friend to UUP. He’s a fighter who understands the importance of public higher education.”

— UUP President Fred Kowal

was instrumental in getting the American Rescue Plan passed last year and his good works helped steer \$1.7 billion in federal pandemic aid to SUNY since 2020.”

NYSUT’s endorsement of Hochul is its first endorsement for governor in more than 15 years. “We look forward to working with Gov. Hochul, who has shown herself to be a decisive leader with a

SUNY’S CAMPUSES AND PUBLIC TEACHING HOSPITALS NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

Gov. Hochul’s Executive Budget proposal addresses some historic inequalities when it comes to SUNY’s financial programs. However, it does not go far enough to help the majority of SUNY campuses that have been damaged by 14 years of underfunding. SUNY’s public teaching hospitals in Brooklyn, Stony Brook and Syracuse have treated thousands of COVID-19

patients and delivered tens of thousands of vaccinations to fight COVID-19. Our hospitals need public funding support now more than ever. Click [HERE](#) to urge our representatives in the Legislature to push to include \$250 million in additional funding for SUNY campuses and our public teaching hospitals in the 2022-2023 state budget.





Toward a **better** budget for SUNY

UUP has been making the case for realistic funding levels in a series of press conferences and advocacy events around the state

By Darryl McGrath

With almost three weeks to go until New York has a final enacted state budget, UUP members and advocates of public higher education are making a strong push right up to the end to get a better budget for SUNY.

Gov. Kathy Hochul's Executive Budget proposal addressed several of SUNY's needs, Kowal noted in his initial Jan. 18 statement on that proposal, but much work remains to be done.

"Gov. Hochul's proposed Executive Budget clearly addresses some longstanding issues for SUNY that have been underfunded or ignored by the state for more than a decade," Kowal said. "However, her spending proposal does not reach the funding levels

that SUNY and our public teaching hospitals desperately need to overcome more than a decade of gross underfunding of SUNY.”

Advocacy across the state

UUP didn’t wait for the Executive Budget to begin making a strong case for those realistic funding levels. Starting in November and continuing up to the publication of this issue of *The Echo*, UUP and an impressive group of advocates for public higher education—including lawmakers, other unions and student groups—have held a series of events around the state designed to call attention to the fact that SUNY campuses and hospitals need more state support. That advocacy will continue right up to the passage of the final

“WHAT WE ARE SEEKING IS A DOWN PAYMENT ON WHAT WE NEED, BUT ALSO A DOWN PAYMENT ON THE FUTURE AND A DOWN PAYMENT ON HOPE.” — UUP PRESIDENT FRED KOWAL

state budget, which is expected on or around April 1.

Many of UUP’s partners in these events are SUNY graduates who spoke about what a SUNY education meant to them. Or, they have family members who are SUNY students or graduates. The backdrop to all these events has been UUP’s legislative agenda, titled New York HEALS, which stands for health care, education, access, leadership and sustainability—a summary of the five attributes that a strong SUNY brings to New York.

As *The Echo* was posted, UUP had already hosted two events at UAlbany—news conferences and a rally—two events at Buffalo State, including a news conference and a rally—a news conference at Upstate Medical University, a rally and news conference at Binghamton University, and rallies at Plattsburgh and New Paltz.

But the largest event—the one that was a live version of a billboard with flashing lights, impossible to ignore—was the March 6 double rally and march in Brooklyn and Manhattan. There, several hundred UUP members joined with hundreds of their union colleagues from the Professional Staff Congress/

CUNY and CUNY students for two rallies—one each in Manhattan and Brooklyn—and a march across the Brooklyn Bridge. The day was an impressive show of solidarity—filled with chants, signs, banners and live music—by the state’s two largest higher education unions and numerous student activist groups. UUP intended the event to send a can’t-miss message to lawmakers that, as Kowal has said, it’s time for 15 years of austerity to end.

In February, UUP launched a statewide television ad calling on the state to provide needed funding to SUNY’s public teaching hospitals. A companion social media campaign focused on getting more state aid for SUNY campuses.

Throughout March, numerous UUP chapters also held tabling and social media events to call attention to the need for more funding to four-year campuses.

And, just as this issue of *The Echo* went up on the UUP website, UUP members and a strong lineup of lawmakers and SUNY leaders held a virtual day of advocacy for SUNY’s Educational Opportunity Program and the Educational Opportunity Centers.

SUNY ties run deep in Legislature

In addition to statewide and chapter leaders at each event, a strong coalition of lawmakers who support public higher education spoke at the news conferences, including state senators Rachel May, Sean Ryan and Assembly members Al Stirpe, Monica Wallace, Bill Conrad, Jonathan Rivera, John McDonald, Billy Jones, Kenny Burgos and Phil Steck, along with Albany Common Council member Owusu Anane. Many of the lawmakers are graduates of SUNY colleges or have children attending a SUNY college.

“We have a lot of work to do,” Kowal said. “What we are seeking is a down payment on what we need, but also a down payment on the future and a down payment on hope.”

Members, lawmakers speak up for SUNY

UUP’s work to secure the best budget possible for SUNY started in November, when Kowal made separate appearances before the Senate and Assembly higher education committees. Along with statewide and chapter leaders, lawmakers and students, he spoke up at the series of well-attended and widely covered press conferences in Albany, Buffalo and Syracuse. Areas of focus included the TAP Gap, adequate operating funding and desperately needed state support for the three SUNY hospitals, in Syracuse; Stony Brook, Long Island; and in Brooklyn.

ANALYSIS REVEALS ONGOING BUDGET NEEDS

The Executive Budget proposal addresses many longtime needs at SUNY, and it responds to programs and services for which UUP has advocated for many years.

But what the Executive Budget proposal does not do is fully seize a rare opportunity to help SUNY recover from years of starvation funding. This is especially true for the SUNY hospitals, which have not received any state operating funds since 2017. In a year when New York has \$7.2 billion more in tax revenues than originally projected, UUP asks, “If not now, when?”

“While we are seeing, for the first time in years, an increase in state operations for SUNY, it is not enough to counter the damage that has been done by

more than a decade of underfunding,” UUP President Fred Kowal wrote to members about UUP’s analysis of the Executive Budget proposal.

Kowal credited Gov. Kathy Hochul for proposed investments in public higher education that set a

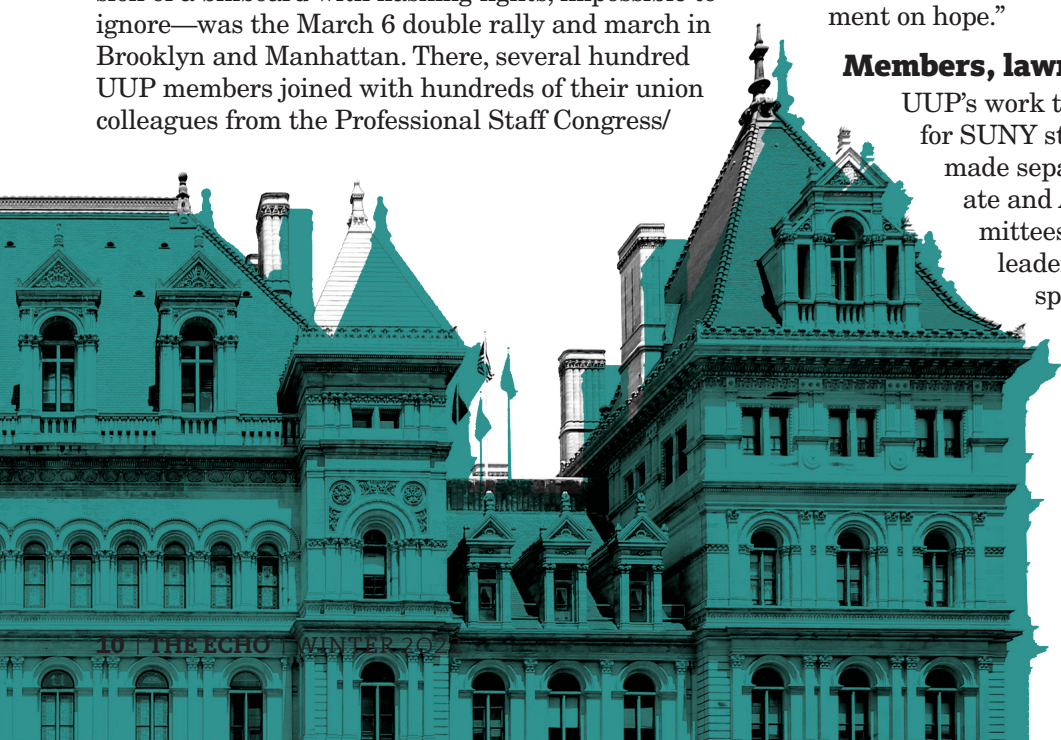
“THERE NEEDS TO BE A GREATER INVESTMENT TO ENSURE ALL OUR CAMPUSES ARE ON SOLID FINANCIAL FOOTING AND ARE ABLE TO FULFILL THEIR MISSION.”

welcome new tone. He called on New York to reach farther.

“There needs to be a greater investment to ensure all our campuses are on solid financial footing and are able to fulfill their mission,” Kowal said.

Key points of the Executive Budget proposal as it pertains to SUNY:

- An increase of \$118.7 million in state aid to campuses and programs.
- A combined \$98 million increase in indirect support for SUNY, employee fringe benefits and capital debt service.
- Continuation of a special aid program for state-operated campuses—\$18 million in this budget—which will help with the hiring of new classroom faculty; and \$4 million to help with textbook costs for students.
- Elimination of the TAP Gap and the Excelsior Gap, which could free up a combined \$62.5 million for campuses.
- \$53 million for new full-time faculty, although this money would be shared with community colleges.
- No increase in resident undergraduate tuition.
- Increases of 10% and 12% for SUNY opportunity programs.
- \$5.4 million for new campus childcare centers.
- \$153.4 million to state-operated campuses and statutory colleges for capital projects, along with a share of \$396.6 million allocated for priority maintenance.
- \$1 million to make the SUNY Pre-Medical Opportunity Program permanent.
- \$425 million in new flexible capital funding, and the elimination of the \$200 million Capital Matching Project, which UUP opposed.
- One-time bonuses of up to \$3,000 for health care workers, although eligibility details are still being developed.
- Increased income eligibility for subsidized child care.
- A \$6.8 million increase for Doctors Across New York in FY 2023, and \$5.6 million annually beginning in FY 2024, to provide loan forgiveness for doctors who work in underserved areas.
- A proposed update to the metric used to set the Global Cap spending limit for Medicaid, which would provide an additional spending authority of \$366 million in FY 2022-23 and \$534 million in FY 2023-24.
- \$459 million to either restore a previous cut to the Medicaid reimbursement fund, or to increase Medicaid rates.
- A net \$4 million investment in a range of programs to support maternal health.



“I always wanted to heal with my hands.”

Pre-med program affirms student's dream

BRI'AJAH'NAE HYMES HAS LONG known she wanted to be a physical therapist. A week at Upstate Medical University last summer in a pilot program for future health care professionals affirmed that she's been right all along in that choice.

“I always wanted to heal with my hands, not just prescribe medication,” Hymes said. “As a physical therapist, I can heal with my hands. That's what I want to do for the rest of my life.”

Hymes is a first-generation college graduate who just earned her undergraduate degree in environmental biology, with a focus on pre-health studies at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and she can point to several formative experiences that steered her toward her dream. They

include admission to the Educational Opportunity Program at ESF; her selection for the pilot pre-med program at Upstate; and her recent acceptance into the Upstate Medical University Doctor of Physical Therapy program, where she will begin her studies in June.

To all these steps, Hymes would add being raised by a grandmother who inspired and encouraged her, and who helped Hymes realize that she wanted to specialize in physical therapy for older patients.

“IT WAS LITERALLY A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE FOR ME. YOU CAN TELL THEY WANT STUDENTS LIKE ME TO SUCCEED.”

“Taking care of my grandmother just proved this was what I wanted to do,” Hymes said in a recent interview with *The Voice*. She has also spoken about her time at ESF during a December UUP press conference at Upstate to advocate for SUNY hospitals in the state budget.

Hymes flourished at ESF, where she received the Norman R. McConney, Jr. Award for Student Excellence—an annual recognition of academic and personal achievement by EOP students—and where she was a commencement speaker.

Her college career reached a high point when she was selected as one of 25 students for SUNY's pilot session of the Pre-Medical Opportunity Program. UUP had first proposed this kind of pipeline program through its legislative agenda several years ago, and SUNY has credited UUP with the idea that became the Pre-Medical Opportunity Program.

During her week at Upstate, Hymes got to participate in a gross anatomy lab, meet some of her future instructors, and see other young Black students who were already inspiring and welcoming examples in the physical therapy program.

“It was literally a life-changing experience for me,” she said. “You can tell they want students like me to succeed.”



Bri'ajah'nae Hymes

TEACHER EDUCATION

The end of edTPA?

Proposal to drop assessment a win for Teacher Ed programs

Nearly a decade of complaints about the edTPA assessment for aspiring teachers in New York has resulted in a victory for SUNY teacher education faculty, with the State Education Department's proposal to drop the edTPA requirement for certification.

“We're all very super excited and very happy for our students,” said UUP member Cathy Houston-Wilson of Brockport, who chairs the UUP statewide Teacher Education Committee. “This will open up more opportunities for students to get certified.”

The New York State Education Department accepted public comment on its proposal through Feb. 28. The proposal is expected to be presented to the Board of Regents for a vote at its April 2022 meeting. If the edTPA is eliminated, teacher education programs will introduce another assessment of classroom skills and knowledge of subject content.

The edTPA is a three-part assessment designed to demonstrate a student teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. It's been required in New York since May 2014.

» Video requirement a dreaded distraction

The edTPA—which stands for “educative teacher performance assessment”—requires student teachers to plan a lesson, produce a video that shows them teaching that lesson, and then write an evaluation explaining how the lesson affected the students.

The video requirement generated the most complaints, with student teachers and faculty describing it as a distraction. Student teachers talked about how

the pressure to produce a flawless video made it difficult to concentrate on teaching.

In her comments to the State Education Department, Houston-Wilson noted that “...edTPA has stifled students' abilities to make connections with the children they teach, because they focus all their attention on edTPA and lose sight of the real reason they are there: to educate and make a positive impact on the children they are teaching.”

» UUP's long effort on edTPA

Jamie Dangler, who retired in 2021 as UUP's statewide vice president for academics, worked for years with UUP's teacher education faculty to revise the

“We're all very super excited and very happy for our students. This will open up more opportunities for students to get certified.”

Cathy Houston-Wilson,
chair of the UUP statewide Teacher Education Committee

edTPA, even as the prospect of seeing it eliminated had seemed elusive.

Teacher education faculty noted in vain that all SUNY teacher education programs had effective classroom evaluations of student teachers in place long before the edTPA. They also noted that the \$300 fee posed a hardship for students, and that missing a passing score by one point could make or break a career.

Eventually, the State Education Department offered assistance with the fee to students experiencing financial hardship, and it allowed some students to qualify for a “safety net” that enabled them to substitute a different assessment. But for most, the edTPA remained an often frustrating and distracting part of student teaching.

The State Education Department suspended the edTPA in the spring of 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic. Student teachers were allowed to substitute a different assessment, but the prospect of the edTPA resuming in the summer of 2022 had loomed for future teachers.

Read more about the proposal to eliminate the edTPA requirement [HERE](#).

» What is edTPA?

The edTPA—which stands for “educative teacher performance assessment”—is a three-part assessment designed to demonstrate a student teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

Required in New York since May 2014, it calls for student teachers to plan a lesson, produce a video that shows them teaching that lesson, and then write an evaluation explaining how the lesson affected the students.

Environmental committee would seek a more sustainable SUNY

UUP has been building toward this step for years: the creation of a statewide committee on environmental issues that will work with SUNY to tap the university's enormous potential as a player in sustainability and green energy in New York.

Now, that long effort is likely to come to pass. Delegates at the UUP Spring 2022 Delegate Assembly will vote on a proposed constitutional amendment to make the Ad Hoc Environmental Issues and Advocacy Committee a standing committee of the union.

The establishment of the committee will make it even easier for UUP to take a leading role in steering both SUNY and New York toward meeting, and then exceeding, national compliance standards for greenhouse emissions and the reduction of waste. Around that goal, there are many other potential projects the committee can undertake on sustainability and a move toward clean energy.

"UUP has spent an increasing amount of time and effort on environmental issues in the last four or five

years," UUP President Fred Kowal said. "It seemed a natural next step to have a committee formed. One of the arguments we've made is that SUNY is uniquely positioned to take a lead with ongoing issues of climate change and climate justice, and to bring about some solutions."

Many experts in UUP membership

The co-chairs of the ad hoc committee are UUP members Susan Fassler, a member of the UUP chapter at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and director of sustainable operations at ESF; and Brian Obach, a member of the UUP New Paltz Chapter and a sociology professor at New Paltz.

“OUR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS, ENERGY SAVINGS AND REDUCTION OF WASTE ARE NOT THREATS TO ANYONE; THEY’RE IN EVERYONE’S INTERESTS.”

Zachary Bellinger, a UUP member at the Upstate Medical University Chapter, is vice chair. UUP has many members who work on environmental and climate change issues, in areas ranging from biology to engineering.

The committee's mission is to "examine environmental issues affecting the UUP and SUNY communities and collaboratively propose and advocate for policies and programs that build a more sustainable and regenerative future." The other Ad Hoc members are Don Erb from the Buffalo Center Chapter, Justin Heavey from the ESF Chapter, Ellen McTigue from the Downstate Chapter, Katherine Spector from the Oswego Chapter, Penny Strobeck from the Albany Chapter and Thomas Wilson from the Stony Brook Chapter.

In a recent interview in which Fassler and Obach talked about the potential new committee, Fassler described herself as "really an advocate for zero waste" and said that recycling should be thought of more as a last resort by now, not a solution. It's far better, she said, to reduce packaging waste in the first place than to hope that everything labeled as recyclable will in fact be recycled.

New approaches to waste reduction, investments

Fassler gained attention on a statewide platform with her incisive and blunt assessment about environmental challenges facing New York when she testified during an Assembly hearing in May 2021 on the enactment of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. That's the state's 2019 law that sets ambitious goals for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. In her testimony, Fassler said that legislative mandates may be the only way to bring about significant environmental goals, as decades of voluntary efforts have not brought about enough change, fast enough.

Prior to that Assembly hearing, Fassler had been a panelist for a UUP roundtable April 22, 2021, on how SUNY could be a lead player in addressing climate change. Read about her appearances at both events [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

Obach has worked on getting the TIAA retirement plan to divest from stocks linked to fossil fuel production. Delegates at the UUP Winter 2021 Delegate Assembly passed a resolution urging the SUNY Board of Trustees to advocate for TIAA to divest from fossil fuel holdings and agribusiness holdings associated with deforestation and human rights abuses, and to advocate for the investment of TIAA funds in renewable energy.

In December 2020, the New Paltz Faculty Senate and the New Paltz UUP Chapter passed resolutions urging TIAA to divest from holdings linked to fossil fuels and deforestation. Obach helped write both of those resolutions, the language of which served as the basis for the resolution that went before the DA.

UUP is uniquely positioned to address environmental issues, Obach said. These concerns hew closely to a union's mission of ensuring safe working conditions and the best possible society for all.

Said Obach, "Our environmental protections, energy savings and reduction of waste are not threats to anyone; they're in everyone's interests."

The path from ad hoc to standing committee

Delegates to the UUP Spring 2022 Delegate Assembly, April 8-9 at the Crowne Plaza-Desmond Hotel in Albany, will consider a motion to establish the Ad Hoc Environmental Issues and Advocacy Committee as a standing committee.

If the standing committee is created, it will join the other 25 UUP committees that deal with issues confronting members, higher education and the labor movement. Committee topics cover a wide range of concerns, including those that affect Black and Latino faculty and staff members, veterans and the technology campuses, to name a few.

UUP committees discuss issues, propose solutions and/or resolutions and may form subcommittees for a particular purpose. All standing committees report to the UUP president, the UUP Executive Board and, through the Executive Board, to the Delegate Assembly.

If approved at the Spring 2022 DA, the Environmental Issues and Advocacy Committee will be charged with examining environmental issues affecting the UUP and SUNY communities, and collaboratively proposing and advocating for policies and programs that build a more sustainable and regenerative future.

The full text of the proposed constitutional amendment to make the Ad Hoc Environmental Issues and Advocacy Committee a standing committee is on [Page 18](#) of this issue of *The Echo*. It can also be seen [HERE](#) on the UUP website.

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 a few of these members in the following pages.

Annette Johnson recognized by Albany Common Council

» The Albany Common Council has recognized **Annette Johnson**, a member of the UUP Albany Chapter, for her distinguished service to SUNY and to public health education, as part of the council's annual observance of Black History Month.

Johnson received the award at ceremony hosted by the Common Council Feb. 23. You can watch that video [HERE](#).



A member of the UUP Albany Chapter, Annette Johnson is a clinical associate professor in the UAlbany School of Public Health, Department of Health Policy, Management and Behavior. Her academic work has focused on addressing bias and disparities in the delivery of health services to diverse populations and groups.

Tom Hoey, UUP statewide Membership Development officer and an Albany Common Council member, nominated Johnson for the award. Hoey represents the Common Council's 15th Ward, which includes the University at Albany's uptown campus. Each Common Council member nominates one person from their ward for this annual recognition. Honorees must live in Albany and must have made significant contributions to the community.

Johnson is a clinical associate professor in the UAlbany School of Public Health, Department of Health Policy, Management and Behavior. She is also an adjunct professor in the UAlbany Department of Africana Studies. Her academic work has focused on addressing bias and disparities in the delivery of health services to diverse populations and groups.

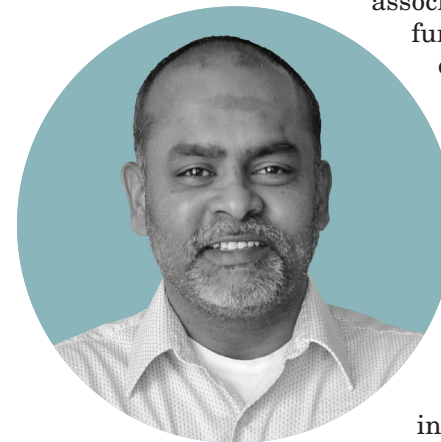
Johnson had a long career with the New York State Department of Health, and she also worked for several other public service agencies and organizations in the public and private sectors.

At the Health Department, she worked in programs dealing with underserved populations; AIDS; maternal, child and adolescent health and nutrition. Her long record of community service has included stints as a board member or advisory committee member with Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood Inc.; the City of Albany Poverty Reduction Initiative; the Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital District; Equinox Inc.; and the South End Neighborhood Tutors program, among other volunteer efforts.

In the autobiographical statement that Johnson submitted to the Albany Common Council prior to receiving her award, she described what it has been like to work in public health during the coronavirus pandemic.

"What we thought would be a time-limited public health emergency has grown to be a pandemic," Johnson wrote. "With this change, there is now the necessity for preparing communities and providers for more longstanding changes in the way we live and interact with each other. I see this as a great opportunity to work with partners across the spectrum, to help ensure there are education and health care programs and services in place that would benefit all of us in this new period we are experiencing."

Building a better foundation



» UUP member **Sivapalan Gajan** of SUNY Polytechnic Institute, an associate professor of civil engineering, has received \$198,000 in funding from the National Science Foundation for his work on improving the resiliency of buildings and bridges during earthquakes.

The grant will be used for Gajan's research on the development of a system to more accurately predict how rocking foundations will function, which will in turn help engineers better design these systems. Effectively designed rocking foundations can lessen the loss of life and structural damage during an earthquake, and they can also contribute to lower rebuilding costs.

Gajan, a member of UUP's SUNY Polytechnic Institute Chapter, said he plans to involve undergraduate students in civil and mechanical engineering in the development of the predictive system, which will provide them with an opportunity for extensive hands-on learning.

UUP trio streamlines antiviral drug screening

» Three Buffalo HSC Chapter members are among the co-authors of a research paper about a project to develop a way to more efficiently and rapidly screen for anti-viral drugs that could be used for the treatment of COVID-19.

The paper was published online in October 2021 in the journal *Antiviral Research*. UUP members **Spyridon Stavrou**, **Ram Samudrala** and **Tom Melendy** are co-authors with their colleagues Rama Dey-Rao, George Smith, Zackary Falls and Uddhav Timilsina. All the researchers are at the University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

The research aimed to develop a way to more efficiently and rapidly screen for a certain class of anti-viral drugs against the virus that causes COVID-19. The process developed through this research will allow thousands of compounds to be rapidly screened.

As Melendy, a UUP Executive Board member, explained, "It is likely that this virus will become endemic in the world population – likely continuing to circulate and cause disease or death in some unlucky individuals. In addition to vaccine use, anti-virals will become an important way of dealing with this virus, and having more than one or two anti-viral drugs will help in addressing this public health issue. Also, if drug resistant strains of the virus arise, having more than one drug, against more than one viral target, will be critical."

Read the paper in the journal *Antiviral Research* [HERE](#).



Ram Samudrala



Spyridon Stavrou



Tom Melendy

2022 SPRING DELEGATE ASSEMBLY
PROPOSED UUP CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS
SUBMITTED BY EXECUTIVE BOARD

ARTICLE X
COMMITTEES

Article X. Section 1.

MOTION to establish the Environmental Issues & Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee as a standing committee with the charge provided below. Renumber other subsections appropriately.

Current Language:

Section 1. Standing Committees.

The Standing Committees of this organization shall be the Committees on Academic Medical Programs, Black and Latino Faculty/Staff Concerns, Chapter Presidents, Chapter Vice Presidents for Academics, Chapter Vice Presidents for Professionals, Compliance/Audit, Constitution and Governance, Contingent Employment, Disability Rights and Concerns, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Finance, Future of Public Higher Education, Grievance, Membership, Negotiations, Opportunity Programs, Solidarity, Sexual Orientations United for Liberty (SOUL), Teacher Education, Technology Campuses, UUP Outreach, UUP Scholarship, Veterans Affairs, Women’s Rights and Concerns, and the Retired Membership Governing Committee. Committees discuss issues, propose solutions and/or resolutions and may form subcommittees for a particular purpose. All Standing Committees shall report to the President, the Executive Board and, through the Executive Board, to the Delegate Assembly.

Proposed Language Change:

Section 1. Standing Committees.

The Standing Committees of this organization shall be the Committees on Academic Medical Programs, Black and Latino Faculty/Staff Concerns, Chapter Presidents, Chapter Vice Presidents for Academics, Chapter Vice Presidents for Professionals, Compliance/Audit, Constitution and Governance, Contingent Employment, Disability Rights and Concerns, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, **Environmental Issues & Advocacy**, Finance, Future of Public Higher Education, Grievance, Membership, Negotiations, Opportunity Programs, Solidarity, Sexual Orientations United for Liberty (SOUL), Teacher Education, Technology Campuses, UUP Outreach, UUP Scholarship, Veterans Affairs, Women’s Rights and Concerns, and the Retired Membership Governing Committee. Committees discuss issues, propose solutions and/or resolutions and may form subcommittees for a particular purpose. All Standing Committees shall report to the President, the Executive Board and, through the Executive Board, to the Delegate Assembly.

The Environmental Issues and Advocacy Committee shall examine environmental issues affecting the UUP and SUNY communities and collaboratively propose and advocate for policies and programs that build a more sustainable and regenerative future.

Language if Adopted:

Section 1. Standing Committees.

The Standing Committees of this organization shall be the Committees on Academic Medical Programs, Black and Latino Faculty/Staff Concerns, Chapter Presidents, Chapter Vice Presidents for Academics, Chapter Vice Presidents for Professionals, Compliance/Audit, Constitution and Governance, Contingent Employment, Disability Rights and Concerns, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, **Environmental Issues & Advocacy**, Finance, Future of Public Higher Education, Grievance, Membership, Negotiations, Opportunity Programs, Solidarity, Sexual Orientations United for Liberty (SOUL), Teacher Education, Technology Campuses, UUP Outreach, UUP Scholarship, Veterans Affairs, Women’s Rights and Concerns, and the Retired Membership Governing Committee. Committees discuss issues, propose solutions and/or resolutions and may form subcommittees for a particular purpose. All Standing Committees shall report to the President, the Executive Board and, through the Executive Board, to the Delegate Assembly.

The Environmental Issues and Advocacy Committee shall examine environmental issues affecting the UUP and SUNY communities and collaboratively propose and advocate for policies and programs that build a more sustainable and regenerative future.

2022 SPRING DELEGATE ASSEMBLY
PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE FOR RETIRED MEMBERSHIP GOVERNING BOARD
COMMITTEE CHAIR TO BE A VOTING MEMBER OF THE STATEWIDE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Existing language:

Article V Executive Board

Section 1. Composition

There shall be an Executive Board consisting of the officers and fourteen additional persons elected by the Delegate Assembly. In addition, the Chair of the Retired Membership Governing Committee shall serve as a nonvoting member; the Chair of the Retired Membership Governing Committee shall not be included in determining Chapter representation on the Board. Total membership on the Executive Board shall reflect the approximate whole-number ratio by the categories of membership on the rolls of United University Professions. The Executive Board shall include no fewer than one member from each of the five types of Chapters, as defined in Article VII, Section 4, of this Constitution and no fewer than one contingent member, as defined in Article III, Section 2, of this Constitution. No more than two members of the entire Executive Board may be from the same Chapter.

Proposed language

Article V Executive Board

Section 1. Composition

There shall be an Executive Board consisting of the officers and fourteen additional persons elected by the Delegate Assembly. In addition, the Chair of the Retired Membership Governing Committee shall serve as a **nonvoting limited voting member**; this **board member may vote on issues affecting UUP Retiree Members and such items as ruled on by the chair of the Executive Board, but not voting on the UUP budget, matters affecting the terms and conditions of employment of bargaining unit members, contract negotiations, ratification and its enforcement.** ~~The~~ the Chair of the Retired Membership Governing Committee shall not be included in determining Chapter representation on the Board. Total membership on the Executive Board shall reflect the approximate whole-number ratio by the categories of membership on the rolls of United University Professions. The Executive Board shall include no fewer than one member from each of the five types of Chapters, as defined in Article VII, Section 4, of this Constitution and no fewer than one contingent member, as defined in Article III, Section 2, of this Constitution. No more than two members of the entire Executive Board may be from the same Chapter.

Language if adopted

Article V Executive Board

Section 1. Composition

There shall be an Executive Board consisting of the officers and fourteen additional persons elected by the Delegate Assembly. In addition, the Chair of the Retired Membership Governing Committee shall serve as a limited voting member; this board member may vote on issues affecting UUP Retiree Members and such items as ruled on by the chair of the Executive Board, but not voting on the UUP budget, matters affecting the terms and conditions of employment of bargaining unit members, contract negotiations, ratification and its enforcement. The Chair of the Retired Membership Governing Committee shall not be included in determining Chapter representation on the Board. Total membership on the Executive Board shall reflect the approximate whole-number ratio by the categories of membership on the rolls of United University Professions. The Executive Board shall include no fewer than one member from each of the five types of Chapters, as defined in Article VII, Section 4, of this Constitution and no fewer than one contingent member, as defined in Article III, Section 2, of this Constitution. No more than two members of the entire Executive Board may be from the same Chapter.

WORKING HARD FOR YOU:

UUP BENEFITS PROGRAM OFFERS MANY CHOICES

Hello, UUP-represented employees.

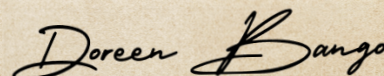
My name is Doreen Bango, and I'm UUP's Benefits Director/Fund Administrator. The UUP Benefit Trust Fund and I would like to personally welcome all our UUP-represented employees to our benefits program.

I would like to give you a fresh overview of your benefits. I encourage you to read *The Echo* and *The Voice* throughout the year for continuing updates on all your UUP Benefit Trust Fund benefits, along with the UUP Member Services Voluntary Programs.

Please watch the UUP website at www.uupinfo.org, for invitations to our Benefits 101 programs, which are Benefit Trust Fund-hosted webinars that

will show you how to maximize your UUP benefits. You will have chances to win prizes throughout the presentation.

You can also participate in New Employee Orientation webinars, which we hold at noon every other Wednesday. You do not have to be a new hire to join New Employee Orientation webinars, which provide valuable information for all UUP-represented employees of SUNY. Go [HERE](#) to register for an upcoming session.



» HERE'S AN OVERVIEW OF HOW UUP BENEFITS WORK FOR YOU «

Benefit Trust Fund: As an eligible UUP-represented employee, you are entitled to a wide range of benefits and discounted services. Your collective bargaining agreement between UUP and New York state provides for dental, vision, life insurance and the dependent scholarship program. These benefits are at absolutely no cost to you. These benefits are funded by the state and administered through the UUP Benefit Trust Fund at the UUP central offices in Latham, NY.

Delta Dental PPO plan: This program covers cleanings and exams at 100% when in network. The annual maximum benefit is \$3,000 per eligible member and/or spouse, domestic partner or dependant. Orthodontic services are available for both children and adults.

Delta Dental DHMO plan (DeltaCare USA): This is an in-network-only program with no claim forms or maximums. The plan covers most preventive and diagnostic services at 100%. There are reduced costs for basic restorative services, and orthodontic services are available for both children and adults. Teeth whitening is also covered under this plan.

DavisVision: This program offers a comprehensive eye exam and one pair of glasses (or the benefit may be applied to contact lenses or sunglasses) once every 12 months for eligible UUP members and dependents.

MetLife: The group life insurance program is provided for all active bargaining unit members. The maximum life insurance benefit is \$10,000, and there's an AD&D benefit of \$10,000. This benefit also includes a travel assistance program that covers you when you are at least 100 hundred miles away from home.

The BTF representatives – Mary Jane, Mia, Amber, Regina and Kim – assist our members with more than just dental, vision and life insurance questions. They also help mem-

bers with Empire Plan and HMO claims, address changes and dependent eligibility, and they will quickly direct your calls to the appropriate departments when necessary. The BTF representatives are here to ensure you receive proper information and the service you deserve.

Member Services Trust Fund: This fund offers voluntary programs with discounted rates from Aflac, Liberty Mutual, MetLife Legal Plan, Mid-Island Mortgage, Sotheby's real estate, Colonial Voluntary Programs and Trupanion. The Member Service Trust Fund also offers dental and vision benefits for retiree and non-eligible part-time UUP members and surviving spouses.

UUP SPECIAL OFFERS

Apple, AT&T, Barclays Center, BJ's Wholesale Club, Brooklyn Nets, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Enterprise Truck Rental, Goodyear, hp Academy, NYPIRG-Fuel Buyers Group, NYCB Live, The Walking Company, Tickets at Work and Verizon Wireless

Our retiree coordinators Walter, Gretchen and Dakota are valuable resources for our UUP retiree members and are extremely knowledgeable in all related retiree issues. They can be reached at (800) 887-3863, Option 2.

For a detailed explanation of your benefits through the UUP Benefit Trust Fund, check out our website at www.uupinfo.org and click on Benefits / Member/ Benefit Trust Fund, or call us at (800) 887-3863, Option 1.

LET US DO THE WORK FOR YOU!

A special thanks to all of you who decided to become UUP members. Because of you, we have the negotiating power to afford this valuable benefit package at no cost to you. If you haven't done so, please consider becoming a member of UUP.

You can sign up online at www.uupinfo.org. Join now!

