

UUP Delegate Assembly Report (Fall 2023)

Submitted by SUNY Oswego Chapter President Frank J. Byrne

1. Summary of President Fred Kowal's "State of the Union Address"
 - a. Celebration of UUP's 50 year anniversary, summary of the union's history and accomplishments.
 - b. Summary of the gains made in the new contract and the struggle that produced it. They include:
 - Across-the-board (ATB) salary increases: 2% in 2022; 3% in 2023; 3% in 2024; 3% in 2025. These increases include retroactive pay for all current and former bargaining unit members for time worked between July 2022 and implementation.
 - Increase minimum salaries for academic rank and professional SL grades: All minimums for academic ranks and SL grades increase by the ATBs plus additional adjustments for the lowest academic ranks and SL grades 1-3. This was a major priority for us and what we achieved is a start – but only a start.
 - Retention Awards: Builds on the existing \$500 Service Award for attaining tenure/permanent appointment, etc. (generally at or around 7 years). Increases that award to \$1,000 on-base and expands eligibility to qualified academic rank titles effective 7/1/24. A second \$800 award, for those who previously received the 7-year award, at completion of 12 years of service is effective beginning 7/1/25. This has been a long-standing goal for UUP and establishing the principle in our contract of longevity awards on base is something major that we will build on going forward.
 - On-base DSI: 0.5% pool for DSI each year through 2026. The 2023 DSI will be distributed across the board (\$400 for full-time employees, pro-rated for part-timers).
 - Lump Sum Bonus: Employees on-payroll at the date of ratification and 4/30/24 will earn a \$3000 lump sum bonus, not added to base salary, pro-rated for part-time employees. The award will be split. Full-time employees will receive \$1500 on 7/1/24, and \$1500 on 7/1/25. Eligible employees who leave service after 4/30/24 will receive both payments.
 - Per course salary minimums for part-time academic faculty: Minimum salaries per 3-credit course or credit equivalents increase over the life of the agreement to \$6000 for University Centers and \$5500 for Comprehensive and Technical campuses in 2026. This was the last domino to fall and I'm proud that we were able to get to the new minimums in 2026 that are truly historic and long overdue. But still, the fight must continue, adjunct pay even now remains abysmally low.
 - PGY Salary Schedule: The salary schedule for medical residents increases by the ATBs plus additional adjustments to establish salaries comparable to other residency programs.
 - Location Pay: Increases during the term of the agreement to \$4000 Downstate and \$2000 Mid-Hudson in 2025.
 - Holiday pay: Hospital workers will have the option to choose holiday pay or comp-time for all State holidays, with holiday pay as the default option.
 - On-call pay rates: Increase to \$8/hour upstate, and to \$10/hour in NYC and on Long Island.
 - Paid Parenting Leave: Provides up to 12 weeks of fully paid parenting leave, which can be used instead of or in conjunction with current leave benefits. To be able to get this benefit and include part timers is truly historic -- and totally necessary!
 - Sick Leave Accrual Cap: The cap during employment increases to 225 days. Though we can only use 200 days to help pay for retiree health benefits, it does create a buffer as we approach retirement.
 - Progressively Longer Terms for Contingent Faculty: Part-time academics will earn one-year term appointments after three years of work; Full-time Lecturers, as well as Clinical and Research titles on the non-HSC academic campuses, will earn three-year term appointments after seven years of work. The fight for more job security for contingents will continue, but we have established the principle, and this will benefit members who have served our students so well.
 - Joint Labor-Management Committee programs: Significant expansions in funding for the

Individual Development Awards, Drescher Leave program, and CLEFR program. The existing CLEFR program will expand to include reimbursement for license and certification renewal fees.

- Professional Title Review: Created two positions in SUNY System Admin to conduct a comprehensive review of the SUNY professional title series.
- c. Contract Overwhelmingly Approved by Members
- Out of 31,433 eligible voters, 15,456 ballots were cast – the most votes ever.
 - 14,900 voted for ratification (96.4%) and – again – the most yes votes ever.
 - 556 voted against ratification (3.6%)
- d. Legislation Update (these are highlights) - the Governor and the Legislature included language in the final state budget that directs the SUNY Board of Trustees to develop a long-term plan to address the impact of student enrollment fluctuations on the academic and financial sustainability of state operated campuses and community colleges. The plan shall include, but not be limited to: • projected student enrollments • an assessment of degree and credential offerings • initiatives to attract and retain students and faculty from diverse demographics and any research benchmarks; and • how the trustees plan to stabilize the finances of all campuses and leverage each campus's strengths to improve its long-term success. The plan must be submitted to the Governor and the Legislature by Jan. 1, 2024. And at this point, Kowal has heard nothing about this report nor what's happening at SUNY to bring about the work on the report. He will be raising this issue at his next (monthly) meeting with the Chancellor.
- i. After the passage of the budget, a piece of legislation which UUP fought for aggressively passed both houses and was signed by the Governor. It requires every SUNY campus to provide access to medication abortion to all enrolled students by either: 1. Employing or contracting with authorized prescribers; or 2. Providing students with information and referrals to authorized prescribers. 3. Beginning 24 months after the effective date and annually thereafter, the SUNY trustees shall issue a report detailing how each campus is providing access to medication abortion and the number of authorized prescribers at each campus.
- e. ****The Crisis at Potsdam & the \$163 Million Budgeted for "Distressed" SUNY Campuses:**
- Instead of doing the right thing and allocating increased state operating funds based on campus need, SUNY chose to use those funds in other irresponsible ways according to President Kowal, such as giving the university centers funding equivalent to what they would have received if SUNY's tuition proposal had been enacted in the budget. They also chose to allocate only a little more than half of that funding, \$85.4 million, to these campuses, leaving financially distressed campuses with financial deficits. Moreover, a portion of that allocated funding is restricted and can only be expended for specific programs, such as supporting food banks on campuses and mental health services for students. Though UUP certainly support these efforts (though Kowal noted food banks wouldn't be necessary if meal plans weren't so expensive or if the costs were rolled into tuition and thus covered by TAP, Excelsior, etc.) it begs the question as to how such services on financially strapped campuses will survive.

Kowal made his concerns about this distribution process clear in the monthly meeting that he holds with the Chancellor. Chancellor King indicated that SUNY's approach represented the "best way forward" for the system, including the financially challenged campuses – and one hospital, Downstate. At that meeting and in every subsequent meeting and additional phone calls, Kowal stressed the importance of UUP being part of any conversations about the future of Downstate and any of the financially challenged campuses. The Chancellor deflected conversations about Potsdam by simply indicating that conversations needed to take place. Then, without prior warning or indication, UUP headquarters began to hear from UUP members at Potsdam and the North Country media that an announcement was pending that would mean major cuts at Potsdam.

The day before the official announcement was made, President Kowal received a phone call from the Governor's office to inform him that restructuring of Potsdam would take place and that it would mean downsizing. When he met with the Chancellor prior to the official announcement, Kowal made clear that his position and our union's position is that this plan for Potsdam reflects a manufactured crisis. Given the amount of resources in the budget, no cuts needed to be made. Furthermore, the most productive and effective way to strategically plan is from the position of financial security, not in a crisis situation – especially not in a manufactured crisis situation. Kowal also expressed his concern that the steps being taken at Potsdam could be replicated at other campuses and that UUP would fight with all of its resources against the plans being announced

at Potsdam and also in ways that would foreclose any future attacks on the work we do across SUNY at all campuses and hospitals.

The proposed plan for Potsdam will potentially entail the elimination of 14 programs and untold numbers of faculty and professional staff. President Kowal made it clear that this is unacceptable, given the reality that the cause of the financial deficit at Potsdam and all other campuses was the Cuomo Administration's direct attack on public higher education. He stated that campuses were starved of resources and this, combined with COVID, inevitably led to a decline in enrollment. Though the past two budgets have been much better than during the Cuomo years, campuses are still financially challenged, and our colleagues are continuing to face massive workload stress. Kowal argued that the solution to the financial and enrollment challenges is NOT to cut. It is to grow the campuses through massive public investment and a reduction in the costs for students to attend our institutions.

f. Summary of UUP's Wins on Behalf of Members:

- Won a major change in hiring procedure at Oneonta. For many years all new professionals were initially hired on temp lines – Oneonta agreed to change its longstanding practice and hire positions predominantly on term lines.
- *Successfully convinced Potsdam to back off on its attempt to include work-for-hire agreements as part of academic expectations. (This seems to be a disturbing trend on certain campuses)*
- At Brockport, UUP was successful in helping a member get credited an additional 67 sick days due to a management error in their classification of college-year vs calendar year. This made a huge difference in the member's health insurance obligations in retirement.
- At Upstate, UUP was successful in continuing to maintain free shuttle lot parking for members and to keep the costs of garage parking flat.

2. VPP & VPA Reports (both contained summaries of activities and initiatives over since the Spring DA).

3. Resolutions:

- a. Proposed Constitutional Amendment: Contingent Representation on the Statewide Executive Board (ARTICLE V Executive Board; Section 1. Composition (146-159)) - **Passed**
- b. Resolution to support Starbucks Workers United against union-busting and in its efforts to expand as a union into every Starbucks store across the US. (Presented to the Executive Board by the Cortland Chapter) - **Passed**
- c. Resolution regarding Solidarity with Colleagues at WVU. - **Passed**
- d. Resolution to Fund Reproductive Rights: Resolved to ask UUP to contribute a total of \$6,000 to the National Network of Executive Abortion Funds and the ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project – **Assembly voted to send it to a sub-committee of the Executive Board** (so that the two organizations may be vetted for any anti-union bias/support; presumably if they are cleared the exec board can send the money)
- e. Resolution in Support of Sensible Federal Government Priorities (essentially a resolution that support Rep. Barbara Lee's (D-CA) and Rep. Mark Pocan's (D-WI) "People Over the Pentagon Act" that calls for a \$100 billion cut to the Pentagon budget and having those funds go toward infrastructure, health care, education, retirement security, etc.) - **Passed**