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UUP - Oneonta

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*Whatever the mind can conceive and believe,
the mind can achieve.*

-Dr. Napoleon Hill

UUP Labor Day Celebration and Luncheon: Monday, September 3, 2007

By Bill Simons, Chapter President



United University Professions (UUP) cordially invites all professionals and academics in the UUP bargaining unit and their guest to a Labor Day celebration and luncheon on Monday, September 3rd, in the Butternut Room, Hunt Union, between 12 noon and 12:50 PM. The Butternut Room is located on the first floor of the Hunt Union, to the rear of the main dining area. In addition to the luncheon, the Labor Day celebration will include a panel presentation by four speakers on the significance of Labor Day observance. Panel speakers will include **Dr. Renee Walker**, Assistant Professor, Anthropology, and UUP Grievance Officer; **Dr. Daniel Payne**, Associate Professor, English, and UUP Flood Relief Volunteer; **Dr. Gina Keel**, Assistant Professor, Political Science and UUP Academic Delegate/Disabilities Officer; and **Dr. Robert Compton**, Associate Professor, Political Science and UUP Vice President for Academics. **Dr. Alex Thomas**, Chair/Associate Professor, Sociology, and UUP Representative, Labor-Management Grants Committee, will serve as program moderator. Following formal remarks by the panelists, audience comments, dialogue, and questions will be welcome. Expressions of solidarity, colorful posters and banners, and the music of the labor movement will compliment the Labor Day observance. Thanks to **Dr. Loraine Tyler**, UUP's director of special events, for facilitating this memorable Labor Day observance.

Why does UUP advocate for appropriate observance of Labor Day? Preparation and implementation makes the Labor Day program a vehicle for recruiting new UUP members, energizing current UUP members, and increasing UUP visibility on campus and in the community. Asserting the need for proper observance of Labor Day on the Oneonta campus is central to articulating employee issues.

When UUP supports your rights on Labor Day observance, it has transferability to other issues. What are examples of transferability on other issues? The following are some examples of UUP advances that came from such transferability, and it is precisely because much more needs to be done on these and other issues that observance of Labor Day matters:

1. the significant increase in a program providing course reduction for full time faculty: spring 2007, 35 applied and 28 received it;
2. for the first time ever (fall 2006) a number of adjunct faculty receiving discretionary money; in addition, UUP advocacy facilitated the first increase in half a generation of the starting salary for adjuncts;
3. creation of 2 appeals committees for Professionals to protect the rights of Professionals and approaching 100% compliance with performance programs that help to protect against work load creep and/or potentially provides a basis by which to make a case for salary augmentation. Four years ago only 45% of Professionals had up to date performance programs;
4. flood relief by our wonderful UUP members, who were led by the inimitable Linda Drake. UUP conducted a survey disseminated to all members and contacted and offered a UUP work crew to each

- individual who indicated structural damage in the survey; our work crews spent many hard days in the field; and UUP raised and distributed money for its members who suffered flood damage;
5. an increase in summer school and extra service compensation;
 6. protection of the integrity of the review process and the centrality of the contract-regulated evaluative file from being corrupted by informal processes that potentially damage the rights of employees to a fair review: see the front page of the the June 2007 Sentinel for a fuller explanation;
 7. representation of individuals with problems specific to them: UUP, particularly Grievance Officer Renee Walker, does this with professionalism, compassion, and to the best of its abilities. Several of you can personally attest to this---or may have reason to do so.
 8. the SUNY budget. Make no mistake: it is UUP that, year after year, does the primary, most extensive, and most significant advocacy with the State Legislature that provides campus funding. Former Chancellor John Ryan recognized this and said so repeatedly;
 9. UUP Oneonta initiated the process that led to Mirabito Fuel providing reduced rates for UUP members;
 10. when members reported discomfort from air coming from the tunnel connecting Netzer-IRC-Schumacher, UUP raised concerns that led to testing and abatement work.

UUP could go on and on, but, as French Premier Georges Clemenceau noted of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points, even the Almighty had only 10 points. The essential point is that UUP members have rebuilt the Oneonta chapter in terms of energy, size, and impact. Four years ago many of the officers were retirees not in daily contact with campus issues. While UUP is committed to a big tent embracing all ages, genders, races, and orientations, UUP Oneonta has greatly expanded its leadership in terms of numbers and in terms of quality of service, reflecting demographic diversity: UUP takes satisfaction that an 82-year old continues to be ubiquitous and highly valued in political advocacy, and UUP is proud that its new Sentinel editor and its new VOTE COPE officer are under 30. UUP calls ageism of any sort wrong, and it will continue to attract new leaders from all segments of the campus community.

Much still needs to be done, and your Labor Day advocacy can make a difference. UUP's strength comes from professionals, faculty, and part-timers advocating for each other. The working women and men of America find themselves assaulted by rising prices, the polarization of wealth, and the arrogance of power. The American Dream is imperiled. It is important on this Labor Day that your voice is heard. Our choice is stark: either allow anxious inertia to defeat us or fulfill our destiny as the emancipators. Thanks for advocating for others---and for yourself. Solidarity is essential.

Following are statements from 43 UUP sisters and brothers in support of Labor Day observance. These representative comments were selected from many received by your union. The authors of these statements are articulate, courageous, and proponents of social justice. Let us consider their words---and find our own inspiration.

— *John Relethford, Distinguished Teaching Professor, Anthropology:* "Labor Day is an important federal holiday that highlights the history and achievements of labor unions. It sends a message to our entire society about past inequities and working conditions and our hopes for tomorrow. These are particularly important lessons for the next generation of workers, our students. To have classes on this holiday while offices are closed sends the wrong message to our students and strips the day of its meaning of celebrating the efforts of all working people (and unions). I find that after looking at the Fall 2007 academic calendar at the other colleges in our sector, most are closed on Labor Day. Only Oneonta, Plattsburgh, and Potsdam have classes on Labor Day. Why?"

— *Tom Horvath, Associate Professor, Biology; Director, Environmental Science; and UUP Oneonta Secretary and Health/Safety Officer:* "Labor Day is our nation's recognition that its existence depends on the selfless contributions of everyone in the labor force. Observing Labor Day is no less important than other observed holidays, especially when it comes to families. It is simply disrespectful to all of us when only a handful of our brothers and sisters are honored for their labors. Arguments that it disrupts the academic calendar are now off the table given this semester's schedule. I find no rational reason to disrespect all workers on Labor Day."

— *Dan Payne, Associate Professor, English:* "It is important to keep in mind that the faculty who are in favor of commemorating Labor Day are not doing so to receive a day off—the instructional day will be made up elsewhere in the college calendar. The purpose of observing this national holiday is to recall the sacrifices and contributions of the working men and women of this country. For me, those sacrifices were not simply something read about in a history text, but were part of growing up in a union family. When I was fourteen years old, my family and I spent Christmas at my father's union hall (Communications

Workers of America) since the CWA was in a bitter, protracted strike against AT&T. The members of my father's union, like those in many other unions over the last century, sacrificed a great deal to stand up for what they thought was right. Observing Labor Day is a way of remembering and thanking them for their sacrifices."

— *Bill Ashbaugh, Assistant Professor, History:* "Before joining the SUNY system here at Oneonta State, I had been a student or taught in all three California higher education systems, the Penn State system, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania system, and a private university (Drexel). None of these colleges, universities, or higher education systems required courses to meet on Labor Day. To make matters worse, here at SUNY Oneonta administrators and many people in support services DO have the holiday and get the day off. Why shouldn't professors, instructors, and students also have the right to celebrate this significant federal holiday that simply honors workers one day a year?"

— *Teri Weigl, Information Technology Help Desk Supervisor, and UUP Membership Director:* "Labor Day is a holiday to recognize the sacrifice made by workers before us. Their sacrifice is why we have fair labor standards, minimum wage, and a voice in work related issues which affect our lives. To not recognize a holiday as important as this is to say that their sacrifices did not matter. Seeing half the campus observe this holiday and the other half not observe it, sets a poor example to the young adults on this campus that are not only students, but quite often employees of the college."

...I find myself deeply troubled that by not celebrating this holiday, we are negating the sacrifices families have made in their labour,...

— *April Harper, Assistant Professor: History Department:* "As a first generation American, I was often made aware of the difficulties and advantages of my family's move to America. Our communication with our relatives in Europe exposed me to a world of labour relations in which the unions fought with the Communists and the government and each step made in favour of the workers was a grueling ordeal. My father worked in construction and my mother drove a school bus and

money was tight. But my mother always referred to my father's job as 'a good job' because it was steady, stable and he was protected by his union. His job didn't pay much, but he had one. I remember that for two years, we would have cold dinners twice a week and 'for fun' would eat by candlelight and heat our home with chopped wood in order to save money to send to our relatives who were suffering on strike. My family in America and in Europe were keen supporters of unions and I was very aware of the power and need for them. Labor Day was nothing more than a day off school, a picnic and parade for me as a child, but I remember my father taking time to shave and put on good clothes to celebrate and the deep meaning it had for him and the rest of my family. As I grew up, I was exposed to the stories of my family and this country and the role of labouring men and women in crafting every nation, every institution we value. I think back to the almost reverent attitude with which my family celebrated Labor Day and I find myself deeply troubled that by not celebrating this holiday, we are negating the sacrifices families have made in their labour, the sacrifices unions and members of unions have made to make working safe and to ensure there are 'good jobs' for us all. Celebrating Labor Day at SUCO may pose a difficulty for scheduling, but what a very, very sad message we send our workers, our families and our students that a scheduling difficulty is more important than reflecting upon our roots, our history and our culture. We send a message of disrespect to those who have laboured in the past and those, like ourselves, who labour today. Do we need to send the young people of today more messages of disrespect? Are teachers so valued and respected that we do not need to be included with the construction workers and school bus drivers of our country? I would urge the administration to consider the heavy implications of our non-observance of Labor Day and to reconsider their position and their duty to America's past workers, our students' future ideals of labour and the present value of the labour of the men and women who make this college run."

— *Jeri Anne Jerminario, Lead Programmer/Analyst, SICAS Center, and UUP Oneonta Professional Delegate:* "The end of summer or the beginning of a school year or time with your family. When I was younger Labor Day was the end of summer and time for another school year...Now in my adult years Labor Day is being with family, having a picnic and enjoying the three day weekend. The laboring that is done is enjoyed for it is for my family getting the picnic ready and oh yes there are always a surprise visit from relatives and friends. Labor Day has fond memories and with each passing Labor Day those memories are expanding."

— *John Carney, Professor Emeritus, Communications Arts; former Oneonta Councilperson; and UUP Oneonta Past President:* "A few years ago I was asked by the president of the local UUP chapter to give my opinion, about State University employees being expected to work on the national holiday – Labor Day. I did so. It was not printed.

Following is what I wrote,

'Since I'm retired I'm not sure that I'm the best person to ask about working on Labor Day. Retirees don't have to worry about retaliation, not that I ever did.

The majority of people on this campus are members of one of four unions. All employees except administrators, the people who collect the really big bucks, are represented by these unions. I think asking these people to work on a national holiday honoring labor is insulting. But, of course, their hands are tied by the Taylor Law, the State legislation which mandated the creation of labor unions for state employees.

I was thinking...wouldn't it be unfortunate if most of the union members employed on this campus fell ill on Labor Day this year and missed the annual UUP celebration...and their classes, secretarial jobs, security assignments, custodial duties, maintenance work, etc., etc...

That's what I wrote a few years ago. But while I was copying it over I had what I thought was a particularly brilliant idea. Why don't we all, on Labor Day, travel to Albany to honor those legislators who created the framework for our unions! But then I thought...they probably don't work on Labor Day...do they?"

— *Stephanie A. Bennett, Assistant Professor, Sociology, and UUP Academic Delegate:* “I believe that SUCO should observe Labor Day for several reasons. First is that it honors all those who work to make our country what it is. Second is that as a place of learning, we are supposed to be teaching students the importance of our living history and the cultural relevance of our traditions. Many Americans suffered harsh working conditions and hard lives to make it possible for students today to attend classes and get better opportunities than their ancestors. So why should we ignore the day that holds such importance and let students believe that their experiences in our society are just there and have always been. I believe this does a disservice to our students and is neglectful as educators.”

Mike Friery, Library Support Assistant, Milne Library, and Adjunct, History: “I think that this coming Labor Day should find us all considering the fate of future generations of American workers. During the twentieth century America became the unique homeplace of an unprecedented partnership between Labor and Capital. The American dream, in its present form, was conceived and born out of that union. The industrial jobs which made it possible for American workers to enter the middle class are now fading rapidly from the grasp of our children. Let’s celebrate this Labor Day by committing to doing everything possible to bring those jobs home for our descendants!”

— *Kathleen O’Mara, Professor, Departments of Africana & Latino Studies & History:* “Labor Day/Laborers’ Day: I grew up in Chicago, a city rich in labor history and labor activism. One of my first introductions to that history was a childhood visit to Haymarket Square, the site of the May 4, 1886 Haymarket Riot/Tragedy which followed the May 1st general strike for the Eight Hour Work Day. Hundreds of thousands of workers went on strike, later remembered as May 1st International Workers Day, a holiday now celebrated in sixty-six countries but not in the country where it began. In the U.S. we celebrate labor (workers) in September and unfortunately, on our campus by working—the opposite of recognition. It is time for us to change that!”



Labor Day 2004

— *Chris Keegan, Assistant Professor, Departments of Philosophy and Africana and Latino Studies:* “While not an exhaustive explanation of the self, labor is a reflection of who we are, like the shadow that follows the body on a sunny day; it is an adumbration of the core of our being; it is something that reflects our values, desires, aspirations, regrets, faiths, and so much more. What this implies is that our labor is a framework that defines -- and is defined by -- us, and through this framework we see our place in the world and our connection to all that it contains -- the flora and fauna and the things of nature, as well as the community of humankind of which we are all a part. The carpenter who looks out upon her world and the relationships therein, see things through a prism that at once reflects who she is while defining her in return. Filing papers, pounding nails, grading essays, and running meetings is never just filing papers, pounding nails, grading essays, and running meetings.

To ignore the importance of Labor Day is to neglect something so fundamentally, so existentially a part of human existence as to warrant serious concern. Simply think of the historical epochs and societies where (some, if not all) labor was viewed as a mere instrumental task to some end; what you will find in those times and cultures is a lack of conscious reflection on who we are, a lack of compassion for what we are, and lack of vision about where we are going.

I have truly enjoyed laboring here at Oneonta. The faculty, staff, administration, and students are simply wonderful, and I see things only getting better through the hard work and dedication of so many terrific people. But let’s make it even better, by taking a day to acknowledge the importance of labor, in whatever form it takes.”

— *Brian Haley, Chair and Associate Professor, Anthropology:* “After joining the College community in 2000, I was surprised to learn that Labor Day was not a holiday for faculty and students. All other public institutions I’ve been a part of in my life gave students and faculty the day off. That is the way it should be here at Oneonta. Otherwise we diminish respect among our students for the contributions of workers to the quality of life in this country, and we inadvertently create the impression that those who teach and those who study aren’t really working. For an institution that prides itself in the quality of its teaching and the quality of the new teachers it produces, this is remarkably short-sighted.”

— *Kim Muller, Manager, Grants Development Office; Mayor, City of Oneonta (1998-2006); and former UUP newsletter editor:* “‘What the Woman who labors wants is the right to live, not simply exist. The worker must have bread, but she must have roses too.’ Rose Schneiderman, feminist labor leader (1912) I hope that on this Labor Day, those of us who have the option to stop and smell the roses acknowledge those who must on that day toil for bread.”

Richard Barberio, Associate Professor, Political Science: “‘Oh, you can’t scare me, I’m sticking to the union...’ When Woody Guthrie wrote the lyrics to his song Union Maid in the early 1940s, he voiced a sentiment that was comforting to working people for whom union activity was still a somewhat daring, but necessary part of life. While many of the challenges faced by working people have changed in the ensuing years, the necessity of solidarity that comes from supporting union activity remains the same on Labor Day and every day.”

— *Michael Green, Professor, Philosophy:* “America lost its love for labor nearly thirty years ago when Reagan dismantled the Air Traffic Controllers Union. It was decided that unions were unnecessary because we were going to create a classless “ownership” society. Americans are so much smarter than anyone else in the world they can use their brains and create wealth through playing with paper financial instruments and let everyone else actually work for a living. It is so much easier to get something for nothing than to actually work for it. So the government printed tons of easy money, and America became a prisoner of the miraculous ATM mentality. Stand in front of your house or brokerage account long enough, and it will just magically spit out money like an ATM machine. There is no need for anyone to work. So we shipped the high-wage union jobs first to the South, then to Mexico, and then to China. So what if wages in America declined and stagnated since the early seventies and debt piled upon debt? So what if medical and pension benefits disappeared? So what if wealth became more and more concentrated in the hands of the few and more and more Americans became debt slaves? So what if unionized labor becomes a protected elite, open to attack from the new class of low-wage, no-benefit lumpencapitalists? The only thing important now is that we are all capitalists. We should change Labor Day to Capitalist Day and all celebrate by day trading, opening a home equity account, and going to Wal-Mart.”

— *Steve Gilbert, Chair and Professor, Psychology:* “... Benjamin Yakubovsky ... on this great day in 1921 became a citizen of the United States, and took on the American name ‘Jacobs.’ He was a tailor by trade, and a union man, toiling for the ILGU (International Ladies Garment Union). It was hard paying dues with money needed to feed his family. But paying union dues was to him what ‘davening’ morning prayers were to his father: an affirmation of faith in the future. Fast forward 85 years, and Steven, the second son of Benjamin and Rebecca’s daughter ‘Billie’ ...daily enjoys the bounty made possible, in great measure, by ‘the union,’ and those who sacrificed for it. We should properly commemorate Labor Day, but not simply to edify those currently privileged. A proper commemoration forces us to ask uncomfortable and usually avoidable questions: ‘Does the person next to me at the Labor Day Commemoration ceremony enjoy a decent wage, have workplace protection, quality health insurance, and an adequate pension plan?’ Probably not. ‘Does she deserve them as much as I do?’ Yes. ‘How can we bring that about?’”

Joe Chiang, Professor, Chemistry:

“I agree with you 100% to hold no class on Labor Day. Working people deserve this day off.”

— *Nancy Cannon, Acting Head, Reference and Instruction, Milne Library, and UUP Oneonta Academic Delegate/Photographer:* “My Wisconsin farm family knew no unions or Labor Day holiday. Cows required milking twice a day, seven days a week. If there were any farm labor unions in that place and time, I was unaware of them. Not that it mattered--my family was too fiercely independent to join one anyway. Despite the long hours, life was good. They owned their farm and were their own boss. The world has changed much since those days spent on the ‘amber fields of grain.’ The small family farm has been Walmartized into non-existence like small town businesses. Corporations now run megafarms, hiring low-paid workers who have little chance of ever owning a piece of the action. We are fortunate to have a union like UUP to represent us. Others are not so privileged. Remember those without union benefits as we celebrate Labor Day. Is there anything we can do to better the lives of those less well-off than ourselves?”

— *Gina Keel, Assistant Professor, Political Science and UUP Oneonta Disabilities Officer:* “Great and small achievements are rooted in the labor of dedicated individuals who sacrifice personal liberty in the service of others. Society and its institutions should reward their efforts with a day of recognition and celebration. Intellectual labor no less than manual labor deserves recognition and a holiday for relief and rejuvenation.”

— *Dan McGraw, former Coach, Women’s Basketball, Athletics (now at Binghamton University):* “Labor Day is a national observance set aside to celebrate the struggles and accomplishments of hard working men and women. Requiring students and faculty to report for classes when administrative offices are closed sends a mixed message. It is disheartening that at a public institution of higher education, there appears to be a lack of respect for the Labor Movement that created this great country.”



Brian Lowe, Assistant Professor, Sociology: “The recent economic prosperity experienced within the United States has been almost exclusively the result of the efforts of the middle and working classes. Despite the enormous profits of corporations and the fortunes of a few very wealthy individuals, the wealth controlled by these organizations and persons is in fact generated by the middle and working classes. Clive Crook notes in his article ‘The Height of Inequality’ that ‘Over thirty-five years, the rise in wages and salaries in the wide middle of the income distribution was 11 percent. The rise in wages and salaries at the top income distribution was 617 percent (Atlantic Monthly, September 2006: 36).’

“At this time of growing inequality within this country, further establishing the United States as having the greatest inequality in the post-industrial world, the importance of recognizing Labor Day becomes all the more pertinent. As the wealth generated by the middle and working classes is increasingly diverted upwards, we require public rituals that unite the real wealth builders and remind working people that we are the true wealth producers.”

— *Renee Walker, Assistant Professor, Anthropology and UUP Oneonta Grievance Officer:* “When I started teaching at SUCO four years ago, I was excited to come to a place that was so supportive and welcoming. I was very surprised to learn that classes are held on Labor Day. Having come from a private college that does observe Labor Day, I was astonished that a state institution

that the quality of life for the American worker has improved largely through the persistent and organized efforts of those who have embraced the cause of labor, often in the face of great personal risk, addressed the inequities in the workplace, and upheld the value of work. More remains to be done.”

— *Orlando Legname, Associate Professor, Music Industry:* “The military took power in Brazil when I was one year old. Later, I supported Luiz Inacio “Lula” da Silva, a Metal Workers’ Union leader in the process of developing the Labor’s Party. In the 80s, the country needed to become a democracy again and I participated in the fight for direct elections for president. Now, Lula is the President of Brazil and is running for a second term. This is living history. It illustrates the real power of workers and unions. The observance of Labor Day is crucial to remind us of that and to make sure that we are each doing our responsibility.”

— *Alex Thomas, Chair and Associate Professor, Sociology, and UUP Oneonta Representative, Joint Labor-Management Grants Committee:* “Labor day in America is immersed in the contradictions of our time. On the one hand, it is out of step with the international labor movement by not being on May 1st - May Day. On the other, Americans celebrate the holiday enjoying the fruits of past labor struggles - talking with family and friends, playing in the yard or at the park, and generally relaxing. I suppose the key point is to remember the struggles of the past and to reaffirm our commitment to keeping the victories we have won. We cannot let the fruits of those struggles get whittled away.”

— *Geoff O’Shea, Assistant Professor, Psychology:* “Labor Day is an important holiday to recognize because it pays tribute to the great social and economic achievements of the American worker whose dedication has given our country one of the highest standards of living in the world and whose democratic ideals have been a model for workers in other nations.”

David Lonborg, SUCO Alumnus (2003), Social Studies Teacher/Martin Van Buren High School (Queens, New York), and Member, United Federation of Teachers: “Labor Day exists as a reminder of the importance of recognizing the hard work and dedication of millions of people of today and yesterday. It is also a reminder of the strides that have been made and the improvements of the conditions and the livelihoods of working people; many of them due to the catalyst of the labor unions. Although they have become the object of criticism today, unions remain integral to the assurance that we are all adequately compensated for our work and dedication, and ensuring that our safety and well-being remain a priority in all our fields of employment.”

— *Paul Conway, Professor, Political Science, and UUP Oneonta Mediator:* “With so many examples such as good American jobs that are outsourced and the horrible sweatshops that our corporations contract to do their dirty work in Asia, we see more and more evidence of the worst economic consequences of globalization everyday. The historical importance of organized labor as well as the need for revitalized labor movements in this country and abroad should be increasingly obvious. If we can’t use a real Labor Day holiday to recognize and emphasize these points we’re all in big trouble.”

— *Fred Miller, Professor Emeritus, Communication Arts and longtime UUP leader:* “We communicate by using symbols. Words are symbols, pictures are symbols many of our gestures and actions are symbolic. We use our clothing as symbols, our haircuts, our cars. Even some very long and complex behavior is committed as a symbol, behavior which is intended to communicate something to someone. Labor Day in the United States is a symbol of the respect we as citizens have for the dignity of labor and our respect for the working women and men of our nation. It is set aside so that we may symbolize our pride---our pride in ourselves and in the work we do; the pride we have in our fellow workers. In fact it is an expression of the pride we have in our country. It allows us to celebrate and recognize the work of the millions of hands and minds it has taken to build our nation. It is a day which honors us all.”

— *Rob Compton, Associate Professor, Political Science, and UUP Oneonta Vice President for Academics:* “In an era of political doubletalk with politicians and policy makers engaging in ‘Talk Left, Walk Right’ behavior, I expect the College of Oneonta to resist that escalating tendency and envision a future where Labor will take its rightful stage in national and international politics. The full observance of Labor Day is a small but critical component that will allow our members to reflect on the past struggles and successes of the Labor Movement and to come together to construct a more equitable future for all workers. Full Labor Day observance will send an unequivocal message that the College of Oneonta does the ‘right thing.’”

— *Don Hill, Professor, Anthropology:* “I’ve been a teacher at SUNY Oneonta since 1978. I have enjoyed my tenure; I like our school and the people who work here and I find it a wonderful working and living environment. Before coming to Oneonta I worked at the American Museum of Natural History, Hunter College, Indiana University, San Francisco University, Goodman Heating and Air-Conditioning Factory, and about four or five other places. This is the only place where I have worked where WORK was required on LABOR DAY. I find this very, very difficult to understand. Why do we work on a nationally approved holiday, glorified by Republicans, Democrats, Greens and other political parties? It is considered by our state and national leaders as a legitimate day of rest, a day to reflect on labor organizations and the work ethic, but not apparently by our local administration. What gives? Why do they insist on returning us to the days of yore, before the Triangle Factory Fire, before the organization of the AFL, the CIO, UUP, and my favorite workers group, the IWW?”

Ed Wesnofske, Assistant Professor (Retired), Sociology, and UUP Oneonta Past President: “To ask individuals to work on the national holiday that honors workers erodes the dignity of labor.”

Sen Zhang, Assistant Professor, Mathematics, Computer Science, & Statistics: “I am impressed by how much help the students, faculty and staff, and residents of Oneonta have done in Sidney to alleviate the damages associated with the flood. I hope the families there that have suffered serious loss of property finally have rebuilt their houses again. The spirit of Labor Day lives.”

— JMcDermott, Adjunct Faculty, English, and UUP Oneonta Part-Time Concerns Officer: "Last year I wrote: "Don't get caught up in arguments about whether May Day is the true Workers' Holiday, and that Labor Day is management's gift to workers. Just know that we shouldn't be working on Labor Day. It's a federal holiday. It's the unofficial 'end of summer' observation. And when we work while our children's schools are off, it causes great stress to families who have to arrange for holiday child care, and we may even miss family and friends who ARE celebrating. SUNY UUP asks: WHY ARE WE WORKING ON LABOR DAY?"

But this year? Go ahead-- get in an argument with someone! Labor Day IS management's 'gift' to placate labor—and what's worse, They Took It Back!!

So let last year's question resound throughout Oneonta: "WHY ARE WE WORKING ON LABOR DAY?"

And just to get you started:

The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City, under the leadership of the Central Labor Union. The railroad union that was founded here in Oneonta at that same time was part of an intense national effort for worker's rights. The 'Guide to the Brotherhood Of Railroad Trainmen Records, 1883-1973', which is in the Kheel Center for Labor-Management Archives at Cornell University Library, discloses that

The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen was founded in 1883 in Oneonta, N.Y. as a protective and insurance organization. By the time of its merger with three other railroad labor unions to form the United Transportation Union in 1969, it had the greatest membership of any of the operating railroad brotherhoods.... The rail service members of the BRT included conductors and their assistants, dining car stewards, ticket collectors, train baggagemen, brakemen, and train flagmen. The yard service members of the BRT included yardmasters, yard conductors, switchtenders, foremen, flagmen, brakemen, switchmen, car tenders, operators, hump riders, and car operators.

In 1893, the Pullman [railroad sleeping car] company was caught in the nationwide economic depression. Orders for railroad sleeping cars declined, and George Pullman was forced to lay off hundreds of employees. Those who remained endured wage cuts, even while rents in Pullman remained consistent. Take-home paychecks plummeted.

And so the employees walked out, demanding lower rents and higher pay. The American Railway Union, led by a young Eugene V. Debs, came to the cause of the striking workers, and railroad workers across the nation boycotted trains carrying Pullman cars. Rioting, pillaging, and burning of railroad cars soon ensued; mobs of non-union workers joined in.

The strike instantly became a national issue. President Grover Cleveland, faced with nervous railroad executives and interrupted mail trains, declared the strike a federal crime and deployed 12,000 troops to break the strike. Violence erupted, and two men were killed when U.S. deputy marshals fired on protesters in Kensington, near Chicago, but the strike was doomed.

On August 3, 1894, the strike was declared over. Debs went to prison, his ARU was disbanded, and Pullman employees henceforth signed a pledge that they would never again unionize. Aside from the already existing American Federation of Labor and the various railroad brotherhoods, industrial workers' unions were effectively stamped out and remained so until the Great Depression.

In an attempt to appease the nation's workers, Labor Day is born

The movement for a national Labor Day had been growing for some time. In September 1892, union workers in New York City took an unpaid day off and marched around Union Square in support of the holiday. But now, protests against President Cleveland's harsh methods [in breaking the Pullman strike] made the appeasement of the nation's workers a top political priority. In the immediate wake of the strike, legislation was rushed unanimously through both houses of Congress, and the bill arrived on President Cleveland's desk just six days after his troops had broken the Pullman strike. 1894 was an election year. President Cleveland seized the chance at conciliation, and Labor Day was born. He was not reelected.

In 1898, Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, called it "the day for which the toilers in past centuries looked forward, when their rights and their wrongs would be discussed...that the workers of our day may not only lay down their tools of labor for a holiday, but upon which they may touch shoulders in marching phalanx and feel the stronger for it.

So Labor Day 2007 is the 125th anniversary of a labor holiday originated in this state, and we're celebrating it in a town with a recognized place in labor history. But we will be working on this significant holiday anniversary.

SUNY Oneonta UUP asks: "Why are we working on Labor Day?"

Did You Know?

<< New York was named in honor of the Duke of York >>

• Albany became the capital of the State in January 1797 •

▲ Erie Canal was completed in 1825 ▼

•• New York was the 11th state to enter the Union, on July 26, 1788 ••

♦ OTSEGO from an Indian word meaning "place of the rock" ♦

+ New York was the first state to require license plates on automobiles +

Labor-Management Meeting Notes: May 14, 2007

By Tom Horvath, Secretary, UUP Oneonta

For Management: Dan Larkin, Carol Blazina, Leif Hartmark, Steve Perry, and Lisa Wenk
Guest: Bart Ingersoll

For UUP: Bill Simons, Rob Compton, Tom Horvath, Norm Payne, Dennis Selzner”



Meeting opened at 3:00pm

1. UUP requested to participate in Summer 2007 orientation of fulltime new hires. Management indicated that, as in past years, UUP would be invited, and Gail Feuer would contact UUP with further information. UUP thanked and acknowledged the invitation to participation in the 2007 third annual orientation for part-timers to be held on August 28.
2. UUP Request for Report on Campus Security. Management gave a detailed report on the current status of policies, which can be viewed via the website. Coming down the pipe from State mandates are new procedures that all state employees will be subject to. For example, training will be required of us all to identify and respond to workplace violence. Also related to response of critical incidences, Automated External Defibrillator will be required to be in public-accessible places throughout campus. The campus community will need to provide volunteers to be trained on their use. Management estimates that about 600 of us will need to volunteer. University Police is obviously burdened with much of the first response efforts, and they run training and strategizing sessions, as well as mock tabletop scenarios to constantly seek better actions to deal with any number of incidences.
3. UUP requested a budget report for 2007-2008 academic year. Management provided a detailed report of the current budget. Although the final allocations of the SUNY budget are still being decided, the process is ahead of last year's timeline. Management noted that the overall SUNY budget was favorable; SUNY did see an increase and the strong advocacy of the Chancellor and UUP contributed to this. However, SUNY didn't fair a well as other state operations in the state, which means there is room for improvement in future coordinated advocacy. Management noted that higher education is not always a high state budgetary priority, however, SUNY may be in for an even better budget next year if higher education initiatives being advocated come online. Oneonta will see an increase in budget of about 3.6% based on a 6.2% increase in state's contribution to the overall SUNY operating budget. However, we did not get everything that we asked for. UUP thanked the Provost for increasing professional development funds for the coming year by \$10,000. UUP stated its position common goal with administration to maximize the campus budget to create win-win situations. UUP noted that our main goals regarding the budget for increased adjunct salaries, more money for professional development, more full-time faculty lines, and greater access to the teaching resources for adjuncts, especially off hours. Management is working on ways to achieve the increased access for adjunct to teaching resources in IRC.
4. UUP returned to the issue introduced on January 22, 2007, February 12, 2007, and March 26, 2007, concerning protecting the integrity of the review process and the centrality of the contract-regulated evaluative file from being corrupted by informal processes that potentially damages the rights of employees to a fair review during the renewal, promotion, and tenure process. UUP again asked the Management's response to the following questions:
 - A. Are individuals below the level of the president encouraged to investigate the background of a candidate?
 - B. Are individuals below the level of the president allowed to investigate the background of a candidate?
 - C. Is it encouraged and permitted for materials or information not appearing in the evaluative files to be transmitted upwards?
 - D. Is it allowed for a secret file other than the evaluative file to be maintained?
 - E. Is it allowed for a secret file other than the evaluative file to be transmitted upwards?
 - F. How are unsubstantiated rumors and or innuendoes kept out of the process?

Management's response for A-E was an unqualified "NO". On the question of how to keep unsubstantiated rumors and or innuendoes kept out of the process, Management asked for UUP's suggestions. Management was unclear how rumors on campus could not impact deliberations and stated that people talk about things. UUP noted that the Deans' Advisory Councils (DACs) are charged to look at individuals' files and offer recommendations. However, based on the responses to A-E, Management recognizes that such rumors are not allowed to be part of the evaluative process, as they occur outside the parameters of the evaluative file. UUP asked for transparency as to the make-up of the DACs. UUP indicated that information reported to the union suggested that actual practice has not in all cases conformed to the management responses to A-E. It was agreed that this issue requires further discussion in a different venue.

(DSI and summer school issues will be discussed at the June Labor-Management Meeting.)

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 pm

Labor-Management Meeting Notes: 18 June 2007

By Tom Horvath, Secretary, UUP Oneonta



For Management: Lisa Wenk, Carol Blazina, Steve Perry, and Dan Larkin.

For UUP: Bill Simons, Nancy Cannon, Tom Horvath, Norm Payne, and Dennis Selzner

Meeting opened at 3:06pm

1. DSI questions, related to the 2006 awards:

UUP asked for clarifications on how adjunct faculty figured into the total number of faculty any one department could put forward for DSI. Management replied that adjunct faculty contributed equivalently to full-time faculty in regards to number of faculty in a department. For example, a department with 7 full-time and 3 adjunct could have put forward 5 names for DSI.

UUP pressed Management on the issue of professionals being able to apply for DSI merit. As it stands Management does not believe professionals can apply for merit DSI. This has to do with their performance program, and that their supervisor would have to put them forward. UUP disagrees with the current understanding of professionals not being able to request DSI merit via their performance program, and made their position known. It appeared that Management was in the process of rethinking their procedures, and they would be discussing this issue with Vice Presidents in the future.

It is understood that Management will provide with their guidelines the data necessary for academics to apply for equity DSI in the coming rounds. This was information that UUP had to FOIL previously.

2. Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedures for SUNY Employees and Students and Discrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures for SUNY Employees and Students UUP asked about the origins of the memo and brochure that College employees received in May on the latest interpretation and application of the above policies. Management replied that the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee (AAAC) had decided to revise the brochure to bring them up to date in terms of new personnel (e.g., Director of the Office of Equity and Inclusion) and clarifying campus procedures concerning these policies, although the SUNY-wide policy on this matter has not changed since 2004. Management responded that the campus-based decision to update was made in December 2006. According to Management, the brochures on campus-based procedures were sent to the printer in March 2007, but due to problems at the printer, the materials were not distributed in paper form until May, but were on the web in April. UUP pointed out that while SUNY-wide policy remains unchanged, new wording in the College at Oneonta's interpretation of that policy and campus-based application could have implications for UUP members, many of whom reported being concerned about the content and the timing of the distribution (during finals week) of the campus-generated materials. UUP asked if any of the College at Oneonta's collective bargaining units had input in the new wording of campus application and procedures; Management replied "No". When asked the rationale for not consulting any of Oneonta's collective bargaining units for input, Management informed UUP that this was not part of the Contract. UUP asked about the membership of the AAAC. Management replied that the membership was online and had members from the faculty and other President-appointed campus personnel. UUP asked to whom the Director of the Office of Equity and Inclusion answered. Management replied that the person holding this position answers directly to the President of the College.

3. Re: February 12, 2007, UUP citation of Contract Agreement, Article 8 Section 4a, for Summer School issues:

UUP asked again about Summer School 2006 information. Management gave some data. 202 courses were offered, 81 were cancelled (121 were allowed to be taught – not counting individual enrollments, internships, or other out-of-classroom courses). UUP also asked why courses were cancelled. Apart from decisions based on the need for Summer Session to be self-supporting, Management would need to have Nancy Wolters speak further on this and on Management's basic philosophy of Summer Session. Online courses are treated consistently with traditional courses. UUP pointed out that some courses appear to be treated differently based on the minimum enrollment required for a summer course to be taught. Again, Management would need to have Nancy Wolter's input.

4. Return to the issue introduced on January 22, 2007, February 12, 2007, and March 26, 2007 and May 14, 2007, concerning protecting the integrity of the review process and the centrality of the contract-regulated evaluative file from being corrupted by informal processes that potentially damage the rights of employees to a fair review during the renewal, promotion, and tenure process:

UUP found salutary Management's position, stated at the May 14, 2007, Labor-Management Meeting, that the administration does not support the use of materials other than those found in the evaluative file when making decisions

of contract renewals, continuing appointment. However, UUP asked again for Management to explain how unsubstantiated rumors and or innuendoes are kept out of the process? When asked previously, Management returned the question to UUP. This time UUP asked if that was meant as an invitation to engage in a dialogue on the matter. Management stated that they know they have the charge to maintain the integrity of the process by informing all those involved in the review of materials of their role in maintaining the integrity. UUP again pointed out that that integrity has been compromised recently and that UUP is committed to maintaining the integrity of the process. Management stated that the academic administration strives hard to ensure faculty a fair review process. UUP and Management appeared receptive to further communication of this issue.

5. Deans' Advisory Councils

UUP requested for the names of members on the Deans' Advisory Committees. Management gave them as: Division of Behavioral and Applied Science – Ed Beck, Craig Bielert, Daqi Li, Theresa Russo, Thomas Sakoulas, and Anna Stave (Fida Mohammad and Joan Marshall were replaced in the spring while they were on sabbatical); Division of Science and Social Science – Donna Vogler, Gwen Crane, Constant Goutziers, Paul French, and William Wilkerson.

6. College Calendar

UUP reiterated its commitment to no classes on Labor Day, the Monday following Easter and the first two nights of Passover

7. Other Terms and Conditions of Employment

Management informed UUP that the fall orientation program for part-time employees is on schedule and that the administration would be letting UUP know more about the logistics for the event. UUP commended Management for the success of the orientation program for part-timers, which has garnered positive feedback since its reception in 2005. The orientation program for part-time employees disseminates significant and useful information in a welcoming environment.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm

The SUNY Cortland Model: Implications for Adjuncts and Others

J McDermott, Part-Times Concerns Officer



SUNY Cortland has reduced its number of adjuncts by creating more lecturer positions. To learn more about this go to the link to the SUNY Cortland UUP newsletter concerning the “Full Time Lecturer” Memorandum of Understanding that they’ve achieved at SUNY Cortland. For us at Oneonta, now, this is a FYI issue. I’m not suggesting we could or should move toward this here at Oneonta. I just would like you to be informed about the topic, which would have implications for adjuncts and others.

Go to : <http://www.uuphost.org/cortland/newsletter.htm> . On this page you can click on the edition for Vol 31 Issue 5 Mar/Apr 2006. The UUP Cortland president’s front page article gives you a review of efforts on that campus.

UUP Oneonta Welcomes Jill Nelson as New Sentinel Editor

UUP Oneonta welcomes Jill Nelson as our new Sentinel editor. Jill brings talent, energy, and youth to the newsletter. On campus, she is the Computer Lab Manager for Academic Information Technology Services.



Jill is an alumni of the College at Oneonta. As an undergraduate, she majored in Earth Science and was the student Computer Technician at Milne Library. In December 2003, Jill graduated with a B.S. degree.

An enthusiast of outdoor sports, Jill has done considerable hiking in the Catskills and Adirondacks. Winter finds Jill on snowshoes, and during the summer, Jill water skis. She also enjoys baking and cross stitching. Her pets, two dogs (Cookie and Lilli) and cat (Adam), get along well.

During the New Solidarity era, a select group of remarkable people - Richie Lee, Nancy Cannon, Jim Greenberg, Kim Muller, and Kathy Meeker - have edited The Sentinel. Like her predecessors, Jill will do a great job. The newsletter is the voice of the chapter, and UUP Oneonta is proud to have Jill as our new editor.

Course Load Reductions – Looking Forward to Spring 2008

By Tom Horvath, UUP Secretary and Health & Safety Officer



I've now written seven, I think, of these articles touting the benefits of applying for a course load reduction outlined in the Faculty Handbook. In fact, I was getting the feeling that I was sounding like a broken record/scratched cd/ or whatever damages an iPod. But now we are welcoming a new cohort of faculty to our midst and the message can be repeated.

What is this course load reduction program? Most full-time faculty are required to teach 12 sh of courses each semester. For some, this means 3 or 4 preps a semester. This requires a good bit of time, especially for the junior faculty. Time has to be partitioned between teaching duties, committees/meetings, family/personal time and we still have to be professionally active. The course load reduction program allows for faculty to request a reduction so that time can be applied to professional development or other related activities. Teaching is obviously an important component of what we do at the College. But we will be more effective teachers if we stay active in our particular disciplines. I've heard faculty say that they don't want to be viewed by colleagues as not carrying their weight in the department [in terms of teaching load]. But the department benefits many fold from supporting course load reductions by its members. In fact, President Donovan highlighted the increase in faculty receiving reductions last year as a positive direction for the College.

Here's my understanding of how the program works. If you feel you qualify for a reduction (see the excerpt from the Faculty Handbook below – or go to the College web site and download the Faculty Handbook from the Quick Link and go to page 25), approach your chair and discuss the possibility of requesting a reduction. The chair then forwards the request to the Dean for approval.

The first step needs to be taken, however. It appears to me that the College is increasing its expectations of faculty professional activity, and the course load reduction program is the current acceptable means for reallocating your time for professional development. I strongly encourage you to look over these provisions and discuss options with your chair.

Here are the provisions in the Faculty Handbook (still on page 25).

From Faculty Handbook:

Appropriate justifications for reductions may include but are not limited to the following:

- a. exceptional involvement in specific instructional activities, such as preparation of a new course, the revision of existing course materials, involvement in the development or instruction of new academic programs, or the instruction of graduate level courses;
- b. exceptional involvement in a specific program of research and scholarly activity;
- c. exceptional involvement in specific service activities, such as assignment to special college projects or committees;
- d. involvement in professional development activities, such as retraining for another specialty area or to address departmental needs;
- e. administrative assignments, such as service as department chair or designation as program or area director;
- f. an exceptionally heavy workload in teaching assignment, due to reasons such as participation in courses with large class sizes resulting in unusual time commitments, such as assignments that generate a total of 375 credit hours or more.
- g. supervision of internship activities for program or department;
- h. an unusually high teaching load or other assigned professional responsibilities in a previous semester or planned for a subsequent semester;
- i. other assigned professional responsibilities or scholarly activities as deemed appropriate.

1. Require the...Department to revise their bylaws to include expectations of the department chair's role, procedures for chairs' letters and departmental letters accompanying renewal files, other procedures for communication about renewals as needed, rules for general debate and disagreement, and for a vote of no-confidence for a chair. We strongly suggest that in revising their by-laws, the ...Department consult Robert's Rules of order, and pay particular attention to what is a vote of confidence and how to remove officers before their term is up. To the extent that similar revisions in other departments might prevent or mitigate future conflict, such revisions might be suggested for other departments as well
2. Provide a structure for mentoring new chairs. Ideally, mentoring would include guidance from senior members of the department. As importantly, mentoring might also involve the chair seeking out other knowledgeable chairs who would be relatively free from departmental politics and departmental agendas.
3. Request a talk from the Dean to the Department that provides some encouragement about putting this conflict to rest, following rules of order in discussions, and keeping departmental conflicts in-house.
4. Provide whatever level of transparency is possible in regard to personnel decisions and/or point faculty toward key areas in available paperwork that have been the basis of personnel decisions.
5. In highly sensitive matters, it is recommended that the Dean or other administrator consider how to avoid placing the department chair in the perceived role of information gatekeeper and/or decision-maker at the expense of the chair's role as department leader and advocate.

VOTE-COPE: What's That?

By Kyle Britton, Director, VOTE-COPE



Since August 2006, when hired as a Professional Staff member, I received a small rectangle piece of paper with the words "VOTE-COPE" written in bold letters. Maybe not for you, but for me when words seem to have the power to jump out in front of your eyes instead of hiding among the army of ants in the small fine print, I often ponder the importance and meanings of those two words.

As of July 2007, I was appointed VOTE-COPE officer for SUNY Oneonta, and now I understand what those two bold words stood for; strength and assistance. As my predecessors affirmed time and time again, "VOTE-COPE strengthens political action programs and, assist candidates and campaign committees that support education and labor by providing voluntary funds contributed by its members." A small donation of one dollar out of each paycheck can help advocate for more full-time faculty lines and keep more students from not being left behind in the non-existent five year programs. Let's not forget the 3 percent contribution relief for Faculty and Staff started this year was made possible from your voluntary donations to VOTE-COPE.

So with that said, take a minute right now and ask yourself, what other changes would you like to see? In order for the NYSUT and/or the UUP to fight for those changes we need your strength and assistance. Support VOTE-COPE today and perceive the changes tomorrow!

To sign up for VOTE-COPE, please fill out the form below and send it to the address listed.

<p>PLEASE RETAIN FOR YOUR RECORDS</p> <p>VOTE/COPE is the non-partisan political action fund of UUP and its affiliate, New York State United Teachers. It coordinates the voluntary contributions of members and makes contributions to UUP/NYSUT-endorsed candidates and to UUP/NYSUT-supported general campaign committees.</p> <p>VOTE/COPE funds, by law, are kept separate from those of NYSUT and UUP.</p> <p>Contribution Per Pay Period: _____</p> <p>Effective (M/D/Y): _____</p> <p>VOTE/COPE Solicits and Accepts Voluntary Contributions.</p> <p>CONTRIBUTIONS OR GIFTS TO VOTE/COPE ARE NOT TAX DEDUCTIBLE.</p> <p> UUP: (800) 342-4206</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">UUP VOTE/COPE Voluntary Contribution United University Professions, P.O. Box 15143, Albany, NY 12212-5143</p> <p>Last Name _____ First _____ MI _____ Soc. Sec. No. _____</p> <p>Address (Include Street, City, State, Zip) _____</p> <p>Campus _____ Department: _____ E-mail: _____</p> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">AUTHORIZATION FOR VOLUNTARY DEDUCTION</div> <p>Effective no earlier than _____ (enter date); I hereby authorize regular payroll deductions from my earnings in the amount specified below as a voluntary contribution to be paid to VOTE/COPE, to be used in accordance with applicable law for the purpose of making political contributions in connection with Federal, State, and local elections. My contribution is voluntary, and I understand that it is not required as a condition of employment, and that I may revoke this authorization at any time by giving written notice to the Treasurer of United University Professions.</p> <p>Contribution Per Pay Period (Circle One) \$1 \$2 \$5 \$10 Other \$: _____</p> <p>Signature _____ Date _____</p>
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(d = delegate, o = office, h = home)

