

# The Sentinel

Volume 9, No. 07

UUP - Oneonta

March 2009

*Success is never wondering what if.*

- Karrie Huffman

## *The College at Oneonta: Discussion and Direction*

*By Bill Simons, Chapter President*

The most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression is upon us. Nevertheless, crisis provides opportunity to consider new directions. Now is the time to invest in endeavors to strengthen our world. Higher education is essential to the process of renewal. The State University of New York—and the College at Oneonta—have ideas, talent, and energy to contribute. This is the time for a full and open discussion of the future. UUP will soon host a *Vision for the Future* forum.

The corporate model has failed America, and it is not a good one for SUNY. Decisions based on short-term returns make it difficult to build enduring strengths. In the Bible, Joseph dreamt of seven fat years, followed by seven lean years. Within a comparatively short time, a declining pool of 18-year olds and other demographics will pose new challenges for the College at Oneonta. In addition to traditional rivalries with

colleges in our own sector, competition will increasingly come from expanding university centers and from the growth of four-year programs at institutions of technology.

No individual or group has a monopoly on good ideas. True diversity ought to embrace and welcome divergent thoughts. On a college campus, meaningful and strong debate should not be confined to the classroom. None should fear retaliation for their convictions. The best directions are likely to emerge from dialogue and debate encompassing numerous and diverse voices. Some of the suggestions that follow may find support; others may not. Hopefully they will encourage colleagues to express their vision for the future.



**1. Retain and Support Personnel.** We are in danger of losing some of our most valued professionals and faculty. Problems concerning workload, compensation, capriciousness, and job security need attention. If these problems are not addressed, declension and attrition of talent will diminish us.

Relentless workload inflation enervates personnel and ultimately diminishes effectiveness. An individual defined solely by their professional responsibilities is a poor role model for students. Funding needs to be increased for professional development; individuals ought not to be subsidizing the cost of their research and attendance at conferences

Salaries are too low and have declined in purchasing power. There was a time, not that long ago, when new fulltime hires could buy a house in the area; that is generally no longer the case. Many employees have difficulty paying bills for life's basics. And the meager compensation accorded our adjunct faculty reduces some of our colleagues to the ranks of the working poor.

Short-term containment of employee costs, via workload creep, inadequate compensation, and reliance on piecemeal labor, will lead to the long-term loss of talented personnel who will choose to go elsewhere — or, in other cases, it will make it more difficult for some of those who remain to retain the same levels of excellence.

Although UUP Oneonta continues to advocate 3-3 as the normative course load for full-time faculty, the union recognizes the significance of Management's commitment to implementing a normative 3-4 course load for fulltime faculty during the next academic year, while holding blameless those already on a 3-3 load.

**2. Foster Diversity.** The demographics of the administration, management, professional staff, faculty, and student

body ought to reflect a wide diversity of nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, economic class, and orientation. Recruiting members of under-represented groups should be a priority for those who truly believe in equity and inclusion. How many African Americans, for example, are there amongst the fulltime teaching faculty? Significantly augmenting international education and providing more of our New York State students with a study abroad experience would better prepare those we educate for growing economic and informational globalism.

The foreign language requirement needs strengthening in terms of offerings and expectations. The ability to speak, read, and think, with depth, in a second language is essential to any genuine multiculturalism — and a valuable tool, which most of our students ought to possess.

**3. Honors Program.** An expanded, integrated, and interdisciplinary Honors Program would have many benefits. Beyond attracting and retaining premier students, it would provide rich educational rewards to participants. Some practices from the past merit reconsideration.

For example, during my stint as Director of the Honors Program, Dan Casey, then Chair of the English Department, created a freshman semester of interrelated courses. The select freshmen in the Honors Program took courses in history, philosophy, and literature that were coordinated in terms of content and instruction. While students examined ancient Athens in history, they analyzed Plato's *Republic* in philosophy and a Greek tragedy in literature. All three instructors met together once a week with the Honors students in a truly integrative seminar that generated memorable discussion. Over time, due to Casey's leadership, qualified students could take three successive semesters of integrated honors courses. Moreover, honors students had the option of a residential component to their experience by living in the wing of a dormitory reserved for them. Some classes were taught in the lounge of a residence hall. Reflecting on Casey's creation might lead us to a revived multi-course freshmen or sophomore experience involving integrated Honors courses.

**4. Grade Inflation.** Grade inflation is a national problem, from the Ivy League to community colleges, and we are not immune from this malaise. Grade inflation fails to make proper distinctions, gives some an unrealistic sense of their standing, may leave students unprepared for evaluations they may encounter in professional schools and job situations, and pressures a segment of the faculty to conform to prevailing practices, rather than their best judgments. Indeed, there are graduate programs and firms that devalue the importance of inflated grades due to their inflation, and this diminishes genuine achievement. There are no easy answers to grade inflation, but the first step in ameliorating the problem is to acknowledge its existence.

**5. Social Service.** The Center for Social Responsibility remains one of the great jewels of our College. Linda Drake, the Center's Executive Director, does a remarkable job of involving students and staff in a range of worthy, benevolent enterprises. Working with Linda, as well as observing her volunteers, on post-Katrina relief in the Gulf, post-flood assistance in our own area, and serving food at *Saturday's Bread*, I have come to believe such community service is an essential part of everyone's education; it provides important perspective on lives different than one's own, develops leadership skills, fosters emotional maturity, builds solidarity, and connects thought and action. A public college and its students have a special obligation to the betterment of our world. Increased funding and staffing for the Center for Social Responsibility would allow more of our students and personnel to participate in social service initiatives. .

**6. Sustainability On Campus and Off.** Numerous individuals merit kudos for their on-going work to transform the Green Campus —and world— from aspiration to reality. Many activists from the Earth Science, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Education, Communication Arts, Sociology, Biology, Anthropology, Physics & Astronomy, Political Science, Philosophy, Economics & Business, English, Geography, History, Grants Development, Maintenance/Facilities, O.A.S. , University Police, Athletics, Human Ecology, Psychology, and many other College departments have made remarkable contributions to matters ecological.

Construction and renovation can create a more eco-friendly physical plant. Let plants bloom from rooftop gardens. Conservation and recycling are increasingly preserving resources. Joshua J. Frye, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies & Member of Green Team PR Committee, observed in the March 2008 *Sentinel*, that the Green Team has created the following sub-committees to pursue a greener campus: (1) Organizing Committee (2) Event Subcommittee, with a focus group for Earth Day; (3) Recycling; (4) Curriculum and Research; and (5) Public Relations.

The seminal and important scholarship of Joe Chiang has earned international recognition. His varied and significant research has great meaning for the environment. His work on **Utilization and Disposal of Fly Ash from Coal-fired Power Plants**, for example, has as its purpose “the minimization and utilization of wastes from coal-fired power plants.” The implications of Joe's body of work are enormous.

Renaissance man Dan Payne of the English Department—an attorney who served as counsel to the New York State

Senate Transportation Committee—employs the humanities in the service of the environment. His protean research and teaching have enriched nature and environmental literature. His book, *Voices in the Wilderness: American Nature Writing and Environmental Politics*, is a classic. Dan is the Director of the College's summer conference on Nature and Environmental Writing, a biennial event that attracts leading authorities in the field.

Tom Horvath, Associate Professor of Biology and Director, Environmental Sciences Program, is emblematic of the young leaders of UUP prominent in ecological initiatives. Tom is the author of numerous publications in his specialty of limnology (aquatic biology). The Mid-Atlantic panel on Aquatic Invasive Species grant pertained to Tom's extensive research on "Current and projected distribution of the invasive rusty crayfish, *Orconectes rusticus*, in the Upper Susquehanna River basin." Tom's study, with significant implications for local life, assessed the threat posed by this invasive species to our regional ecosystems and local biodiversity. Moreover, as the *Chesapeake Bay Journal* acknowledges, Tom "has monitored zebra mussels since they were discovered in the Susquehanna headwaters, said populations in New York lakes have 'really taken off.'"

Even in places far afield, the College at Oneonta makes a difference in the global ecology. In the March 2008 *Sentinel*, Biological Anthropologist Kimberly Dingess, Co-Director of DANTA --Organization for Conservation of the Tropics -- and an Adjunct Instructor, Anthropology, College at Oneonta, discussed her work. At the College at Oneonta, she has created a primate behavior and conservation field course in Costa Rica. Kim's field work encompasses experience in Mexico, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Uganda, and Ecuador. Kim and her partner, and husband, Nigel Mann, Assistant Professor, Biology, College at Oneonta, are committed to species and land preservation as well as eco-tourism.

Discussion about campus-based wind and solar power are emerging. It is time, however, to acknowledge that something needs to be done about parking. At certain times of the day, individuals report driving around campus for 20 or more minutes to find a parking space, and the large contingent of adjunct faculty have little choice as to time of their arrival. The fumes emitted from these automobiles do little to enhance the environment.

**7. Commit to the Economic Revitalization of Upstate New York.** Upstate New York is a region in need of economic rebirth. Too many of our neighbors lack jobs that provide either a decent wage or health benefits. Many of the best of our young people leave the region. As agents of change, we need to integrate ourselves far more into the region's economic infrastructure. Let's create a network of strong partnerships with businesses, financial institutions, foundations, public schools, local governments, media, unions, hospitals, professional offices, and service organizations. We have knowledge and skills to share — as do our potential partners. From collaborations in planning and implementation, synergism will emerge, strengthening the College and the region. Our students will participate in a broader range of on-site instruction, research projects, internships, and volunteerism; they will learn more. Second Wave jobs are gone for good; the College will offer majors, specialized courses, workshops, conferences, and certificate programs specifically designed for local residents to acquire additional skills and/or transition to new employment. Is it time, for example, to revisit a proposal for establishing a physician's assistant program in collaboration with Fox or Bassett? Faculty teaching and research will reach new audiences. With new cohorts of students on campus, an authentic diversity will create conduits across age, income, and life experience. Traditional and non-traditional students will come to know one another, to their mutual benefit. Town and gown will transcend traditional boundaries; we will unite to advocate to the State Legislature for adequate funding for both SUNY and Upstate New York. The College Upon a Hill will create a skilled local workforce that will revitalize existing enterprises and create new ones. The College of choice should be domiciled in a region of choice.

A January 2009 *Sentinel* article by College at Oneonta Sociologist Alex Thomas spoke brilliantly to these points. Alex wrote:

*1) Community and Environment. Oneonta is not only close to the Catskills and three of upstate's major cities, but the suburbs of New York City grow closer every year. In 2003, Ulster County, home to Kingston, Saugerties, and Woodstock, was classified by the federal government as part of the New York Census Statistical Area. Chances are that after the next census Sullivan County will also be part of New York's exurbs, and the college best situated to study the expansion of the metropolitan area is...Oneonta! In fact, our location lends itself to a very timely set of themes for the college: community, environment, and global citizenship. These themes cut across disciplines, as relevant to sociologists and educators as they are to biologists and geologists. We could study the impact of the development pattern found in the Catskills on the Black Bear, or the similarities between conflicts over water rights in Zimbabwe and here at home. We could do this by developing interdisciplinary graduate programs in such important areas as Sustainability Studies*

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and Environmental Policy.

2) *Embrace the Community.* I once read that communities that adopted “progressive urban policy,” programs in which the quality of life in a city was stressed, had significant advantages in terms of attracting new capital and revitalizing neighborhoods. The authors were Pierre Clavel and, um, Nancy Kleniewski. Oneonta, city, town, and college, could benefit from this approach. The College could participate in a regional commission composed of the city, Hartwick, and SUNY Oneonta that would identify and implement proposals that could improve the quality of life in the area. This might include downtown investment, for instance, but could also include using lands own by all three entities to create a trail system that encircles the city. Not only would the city benefit, but both colleges would gain advantage in attracting students looking for a healthy and safe downtown and good hiking or biking right near campus. The approach could even go regional: there is an old rail line that runs from Oneonta’s west end to Cooperstown via the Otego Valley, and a similar trail could bring students back down Route 28 to form a fifty-mile bike trail. In fact, this approach is now becoming more common, and one needs travel no farther than Schenectady to see Union College actively involved in revitalizing the inner city, or to Hamilton where Colgate University is deeply involved in renovating old storefronts downtown. And with such jewels as the Center for Economic and Community Development and the Center for Social Responsibility, the College has a head start in becoming an active force in building a sustainable and livable community.

3) *Competitiveness.* Part of being a first rate institution is being able to attract and retain top rate talent. The College has done very well in recent years, but there is always room for improvement. Given that there are other institutions, such as Hartwick College and Bassett Healthcare, in the region that have a strong intellectual base, a consortium of sorts could help each of these institutions. For instance, Bassett Healthcare has a high quality research division, but there is little contact between them and us. Closer to home, Fox also has a “knowledge” workforce and has the added advantage of being unionized. Similarly, the shifting demographics of the past generation have made it more likely that a potential hire will have a partner who is also an academic. Current policies leave the employment of the significant other to luck; in other words, you might get a job but he or she is left to play the adjunct market and hope for a full time job before it’s too late. A consortium could help place faculty in nearby institutions, but even without a consortium a program to place significant others could help us retain faculty and even attract some who would otherwise not apply.

And in the April 2008 *Sentinel*, Tim Hayes, Director Center for Economic & Community Development, provided significant insight into the mission of the CECD:

*After speaking with Bill Simons about his February call to action “College Upon a Hill: Oneonta Exceptionalism,” I was pleased when he offered me this space to explain more about the Center for Economic & Community Development.*

*Established in 1990 through the foresight of President Donovan, the CECD has since operated under the direction of Dr. Barry Warren. The CECD is part of the Division of College Advancement which works to strengthen the resources of the College by raising the sights of others. I joined the CECD in 2005 as its first Associate Director and enjoyed a close mentorship experience before taking over as Director earlier this year.*

*Similar ventures exist on campuses across the country with missions related to advancing the economic growth or community well-being – often both – of cities, regions or states in which they reside. Many of my colleagues work in much larger institutions in more populous regions than our part of upstate New York, and the activities of economic and/or community development vary, but a common theme unites us all. Colleges and universities must strive for complementary relationships with their respective communities.*

*I have heard the following concept in various forms, most recently attributed to a former president of Boise State University: “There is no great city without a great university.” One might add that a great university thrives when integrated into a great city. Dr. Simons combined these sentiments best in our recent correspondence writing, “A college of choice should be domiciled in a region of choice.” Working toward*

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both ends requires an acceptance of our co-evolutionary relationship with Oneonta. As the College at Oneonta moves “from good to great,” we should help the region do the same.

Examples exist at other campuses. The University of Texas at Dallas calls for “making a great city even greater” by producing quality K-12 educators and promoting educational opportunities, supporting a thriving arts scene, advancing a positive economic climate for business, promoting community leadership and volunteerism, and providing vision and assistance to bolster local physical infrastructure ([www.utdallas.edu/strategicplan](http://www.utdallas.edu/strategicplan)). Portland (OR) State University promoted similar initiatives related to its belief that “a great city and a great university are inextricably bound” ([gcbu.oaa.pdx.edu/AboutGCBU](http://gcbu.oaa.pdx.edu/AboutGCBU)). Closer to home, Albany’s mayor, also a UAlbany graduate, reiterated the relationship between the city and its higher education institutions. Our own College comprehensive plan calls for us: “To continue to define and enhance the College community and the common characteristics which engage all individuals in unified ways on and off campus” (emphasis added).

We should not worry that Oneonta is small in comparison to places like those mentioned above. Take it from Aristotle, “A great city is not to be confused with a populous one.” With roughly a third of the Oneonta (town & city) population being affiliated with this College, we simply have a larger relative footprint.

Given this outlook, the CECD serves as a research and problem-solving resource to Oneonta and its environs to help address challenges facing local people, organizations and municipalities. Our collaborative efforts address such topics as downtown revitalization, program impact analysis, leadership development, strategic planning and organization development. Many CECD projects have drawn on College faculty and staff as co-authors or advisors and in their roles as community members. Also, student interns have gained valuable experience by applying knowledge gained in the classroom to work in the field.

Recent examples of CECD projects include process and performance evaluations of drug treatment courts, resident surveys for municipal comprehensive plans, an analysis of residential and commercial construction trends, school district strategic planning, successful grant applications for flood relief and housing rehabilitation, and opinion studies for area non-profit organizations.

The CECD’s centerpiece program is Leadership Otsego. Created in 1997, this year-long seminar brings together community members to train a corps of future leaders. Monthly meetings and site tours help participants consider challenges in the areas of land use, arts, economics, education, government, human services, and news media. Leadership Otsego has always included a member of the campus community.

While the CECD takes on these projects, many other people contribute to the greatness of both our College and our city. Since the College actively seeks to benefit Oneonta, I hope the CECD complements the work of our campus community to fulfill our common mission.

For more information about the CECD, visit: [www.oneonta.edu/advancement/cecd/](http://www.oneonta.edu/advancement/cecd/)

**8. Regional Center for the Arts, Culture, and Recreation.** We do not live by bread alone. The College also has the potential to be the regional center for arts, culture, and recreation. Our ranks already include superbly talented and accomplished musicians, conductors, artists, actors, directors, writers, filmmakers, and other creative people. They share their own work and that of their students, both of which are impressive. Plays, slam poetry, music in all its forms, lectures, movies, dance, professional entertainers, and athletic contests enrich campus and community life. Nonetheless, looking to the future — our students still need more alternatives to counter the lure of the bar culture, and we could attract additional components of the community to the campus.

When special projects money was available, several colleges in our sector built field houses larger than our own, conducive to an expanded range of activities. We need more floor space to accommodate intramural sports. Ice skating rinks can now be found on a number of SUNY campuses. Between ice skating and hockey, some rinks are open 23 hours a day, closing only for maintenance. A varsity hockey team and intramural squads, maybe augmented by younger faculty members, would add another dimension to campus life. In addition, such a facility would encourage public schools to establish hockey programs and rent our facility — and discover the College. And lots of people enjoy skating. Despite new material covering the concrete, our indoor track, which I as walker have spent many enjoyable hours on, is not suitable for speed running. In addition, we need more pool space for recreational swimming — and a pool deep enough to allow NCAA sanctioned diving competition.

**9. Streamline the Administration.** We need to reduce the size of a burgeoning administration. Let’s have more workers and fewer overseers. Senior management positions have proliferated over the past decade. There are too many vice presidents, associate vice presidents, associate provosts, and presidential designees. Rationalizing and

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streamlining the management infrastructure would allow for a more responsive and accountable administration. For example, a meaningful realignment of the academic divisions, while necessitating an additional dean, would allow for the elimination of the three associate dean positions. Management sprawl spawns red tape and increased distance between decision-makers and our core mission. Paperwork processed in certain administrative offices disappears, for long periods of time, into a black hole. These conditions stifle creativity and initiative. Moreover, over-funding administrative lines consumes too many of our resources, including monies that would be better directed. Emulating corporate budget practices takes away from educational priorities.

**10. Reduce Assessment.** Can we reduce assessment activities? Some of it is gratuitous — and it has spiraled out of control. How many articles, books, conference papers, new teaching strategies, and course revisions will remain still born due to heavy time demands associated with tedious and copious assessment dictates. In private, there are administrators who will tell you that some of the assessment activities are of dubious value, but are undertaken to comply with guidelines imposed from above. As *Dilbert* reminds us, mandates sans substance erode energies and elicit cynicism in the workplace. Vigilance is needed against the proliferating paper chase of forms and reports emanating from assessment. As inappropriate corporate models are imposed on academia, paper empires menace intellectual vitality on campus. Dr. Ken Buckman, Director of the University Honors Program at the University of Texas-Pan America, speaks fearlessly about forms of assessments currently in vogue:

*Conceiving of education merely as an outcome distorts the ethos of learning, understanding, and teaching. Viewing education as an engagement between a student and a professor in the transformative process of learning is never reducible to an outcome, but rather is a continual process of self-realization and self-remaking for both student and the professor. Education is not reducible to an item for consumption, but is a capacity for self-responsibility for continually making anew of the self. To look at education as just a measurable outcome loses sight of the educational process as an art that is cultivated in an atmosphere of free inquiry where the outcome is often not predictable and often unanticipated.*

On a more parochial level, the College's use of the SPI instrument to evaluate teaching elicits caveats. Teachers need feedback, but usage of the form on this campus is not to garner information to improve teaching but to solicit evidence needed for reappointment, tenure, and promotion. Students and instructors both know this. During the disastrous Vietnam War, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara engaged in strategic planning based on erroneous statistics concerning enemy killed, numbers that American field commanders inflated to meet the expectations of superiors. McNamara was brilliant — and a fool. Our students and the public deserve better, as do we, than the fog of such practices. How many steps removed are SPI responses from those on *Rate My Professor*?

Tough questions remain unanswered. How much does assessment cost in terms of time, personnel, and money? Who is assessing the assessors? Does assessment do what it purports to do? How much *assessment* is enough? Are our energies better spent?

**Conclusion.** There is so much that is done so well at the College at Oneonta. Alex Thomas deftly defines the task before us: "how to keep the progress going and where to go from here." To do that, let's continue the discussion.

## ***Volunteers Needed for UUP and CSEA at Saturday's Bread — Saturday, April 4, 2009***

*By Bill Simons, Chapter President*

On Saturday, April 4, 2009, UUP Oneonta will join our friends from CSEA to staff *Saturday's Bread*, a community kitchen that dispenses hot meals and good cheer. Linda Drake will, as previously, co-ordinate our chapter's participation in this worthwhile community service. Although *Saturday's Bread* is housed at the First United Methodist Church, 66 Chestnut Street, Oneonta, the program is a non-denominational and humanitarian service open to all. To be part of the volunteer group at *Saturday's Bread* on April 4th, you must be willing to work from 9 AM to 2 PM. As we need an exact list of the names and numbers of participants, please e-mail ([drakelm@oneonta.edu](mailto:drakelm@oneonta.edu)) Linda Drake to volunteer. When you contact Linda, please provide her with your full name, e-mail, and telephone number.

Kudos to Linda, the College at Oneonta's Executive Director of the Center for Social Responsibility and UUP's Director of Community Service, for continuing to facilitate the involvement of volunteers in a variety of benevolent enterprises. UUP Oneonta has participated in post-Katrina reconstruction in the Gulf, flood relief in our region, collection drives, Habitat for Humanity, and other volunteerism under Linda's leadership. UUP is proud to collaborate with our brothers and sisters in CSEA in this current *Saturday's Bread* endeavor. Service is central to our mission.



## *UUP Legislative Information Day, Working the Halls to Represent Members*

*By Gina L. Keel, Academic Delegate  
and Director, Labor Film Series*

On Tuesday, February 24, 2009, UUP leaders from campuses across the state took a day out of their spring breaks and flocked to the Legislative Office Building (LOB) in Albany to press our 2009 legislative agenda. Oneonta was represented by Bill Simons, Ed Wesnofske, Fred Miller, and Gina Keel. Campuses generated attention and interest in our cause by displaying colorful materials and hosting prominent speakers in the LOB “well.” Top legislative leaders forcefully voiced their support for SUNY as crucial to the long-term economic well-being of the state, and several shared stories of their personal connection to SUNY as alumni, relatives of alumni and even former faculty. Among the speakers were Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith, Assembly Majority Leader Ron Canestrari, Senate Minority Leader Dean Skelos and Assembly Minority Leader Jim Tedisco. Senator Ken LaValle, former chair and ranking minority member of the Senate Higher Education committee, called on Governor Paterson to resubmit a budget reflecting federal stimulus money, put \$150M back into the SUNY budget, fund the teaching hospitals, and institute a rational tuition policy.

All speakers noted the importance of restoring funds cut from SUNY in order to “keep the best higher education system in the country,” as Assemblyman Canestrari put it. Lawmakers voiced their understanding of UUP’s, and other campus constituents’, anger at sweeping SUNY tuition and operations funds to fill holes in the state budget. As Senator Smith said, “we need to revisit what we have done” and “we will listen better.” We could sense that lawmakers were increasingly receptive to calls to move beyond budget balancing focused on cuts and reconsider revenue options, such as increasing progressivity in the income tax system to more equitably spread sacrifices in this period of fiscal crisis.

Campus representatives also visited legislative offices, meeting with lawmakers and their staffs to personally express stories of challenges faced at the campus level and offer legislative recommendations (see below). Your team visited the offices of Assemblyman Pete Lopez, Assemblyman Richard Brodsky, and Senator Eric Adams. We feel we made a difference and hope to see the results in a more enlightened budget for the coming year. Of course, we need your help on advocacy; keep up the calls and faxes!

UUP legislative recommendations and 2009-2010 executive budget positions include:

- Reject executive budget wage and benefits proposals for public employees, particularly the elimination of the scheduled 3% pay increase and additional 5-day lag in payroll that violate the UUP contract
- Use tuition monies to fully support student access and educational programs
- Restore cuts to chronically underfunded SUNY hospitals to prevent further operating deficits and maintain community access to crucial services
- Restore cuts to Educational Opportunity Centers and Programs to prevent limiting access to the vulnerable students
- Enact personal income tax reform that creates fairness in taxation by (re-) establishing new higher tax brackets starting at \$250,000.

Please



Thanks.

## ***UUP Oneonta Professionals Can—and Should –Seek Promotion***

*By John Marino, Statewide UUP Vice President for Professionals*



During numerous visits to SUNY College at Oneonta, I have had many UUP Professionals ask me: “How do I get a promotion and salary increase.” I counsel Oneonta UUPers to see chapter Vice President for Professionals **Norm Payne** because one of the benefits of being in the UUP bargaining unit is that Professionals can ask for a promotion and salary increase at any time. There are no structural impediments in the contract or other documents that prevent you from asking.

But I’ve also learned over the years that most questions are like onions—they have multiple layers, each answer giving rise to another question.

I suggest that Oneonta Professionals start trying to figure out where you want to be in five, ten, or twenty years. Do you aspire to be a supervisor or an administrator? Are you content with what you are doing, but want to grow and gain expertise in your professional field? You should also realize that some of your dreams and aspirations might not go as planned. So you should develop Plan B.

Obviously, your Performance Program is a crucial document and all UUP Professionals should have an up-to-date Performance Program. The best time to ask for a promotion or salary increase is right after you are evaluated on the duties and responsibilities you agreed to perform over the course of the year as part of your Performance Program. Don’t expect to hear your supervisor say, “You’re SUNY’s best employee! We’re going to give you a big promotion and lots of money to go with it.” The reality is that you have to ask for a promotion or salary increase—and you have to be prepared to present your case.

Once you’ve asked for a promotion or salary increase, your supervisor has 45 days to respond. If the 45 days pass without any word from your supervisor, then according to the UUP contract, your request has been denied.

If you were “on the fence” about your request in the first place and don’t wish to pursue further action, then I would suggest you take this opportunity to ask your supervisor, colleagues, and **Norm Payne**, UUP Oneonta Vice President for Professionals, what you need to do to get promoted down the road. There are more immediate options, however.

To challenge the denial also speak to **Norm Payne**, UUP Oneonta Vice President for Professionals, about appealing the decision to the College Review Panel. The College Review Panel typically consists of several UUP members elected by UUP Professionals on your campus. The College Review Panel at the College at Oneonta will review your application for promotion if you were denied anywhere below the level of the campus president.

UUP Professionals who appeal to the College Review Panel will be informed, in writing, if it is determined that a promotion is unwarranted. Should the College Review Panel determine that a promotion is warranted, it will forward its recommendation to College at Oneonta President Nancy Kleniewski. The UUP Professional will receive a copy of the recommendation.

The College at Oneonta President has ninety calendar days to render a decision. If the campus president denies the promotion, a UUP Professional can appeal to the University Review Board.

The complete description of the process can be found on pages 105-108 in the ***2007-2011 Agreement between New York State and United University Professions***.

Rights that are not asserted wither. Contact UUP Oneonta for Professionals **Norm Payne** at 436-2021 or [PayneNE@Oneonta.Edu](mailto:PayneNE@Oneonta.Edu) to learn more seeking promotion and salary increase.

## ***SUNY Encourages Campuses to Take a Flexible Approach to Accommodating Family Care Needs***

*By Jamie Dangler, Chair, UUP Statewide Family Leave Committee*

One outcome of contract negotiations for the 2007-2011 Agreement Between the State of New York and United University Professions is a letter from SUNY “encouraging campuses to recognize the importance to employees of a flexible approach to accommodating family care needs.” The letter, reprinted below, reflects “conceptual agreements” reached at the bargaining table during discussions about family leave and work-life balance issues.

An article in the February, 2009 issue of UUP’s statewide publication, THE VOICE, explains that letters such as this one reflect the state and UUP coming to “an agreement on conceptual issues that are inherently less cut-and-dried, and are best implemented at the individual campuses” (Karen Mattison, “In agreement: Letters deal with family care, fiscal hardship,” THE VOICE, Feb., 2009, p. 11).

UUP has continued to press for improvements in family leave provisions. An increase in the number of accrued sick days available for care of family members (from 15 to 30) and a new Voluntary Reduction in Work Schedule program are among the gains realized in the 2007-11 contract. Still, variation in the specific family care situations our members face reveals the importance of approaching work-life balance and family leave needs in multiple ways.

The impact of SUNY’s letter will depend on whether its message is translated into concrete actions. UUP chapters can use it as a foundation for developing a dialogue with campus administrations about ways to create a supportive work environment that enhances flexibility and recognizes the critical nature of work-life balance for today’s workforce.

UUP members are encouraged to seek guidance and support from chapter leaders as they explore possible options to accommodate their family care needs. In turn, chapter leaders are encouraged to document their members’ experiences (successes and setbacks) and communicate them to the statewide Family Leave Committee, which is charged to investigate issues confronting families and make recommendations to the President of UUP for legislative or collective bargaining action.

Let’s work together to build on the momentum developed during the last round of contract negotiations. Supporting work-life balance is a win-win for UUP members and campus administrations.

*Janie Forest-Glotzer ([forresjl@oneonta.edu](mailto:forresjl@oneonta.edu)) is Oneonta’s representative to the statewide UUP Family Leave Committee.*

Text of letter from SUNY to campuses:

*“During the course of negotiations for the 2007-2011 Agreement, UUP raised concerns involving family leave and the balance between the demands of work and family responsibilities. Such issues impact employees throughout their entire career cycle and may differ widely from employee to employee.*

*“Issues range from child-rearing, child care to spousal care or elder care issues. Employees are often confronted with the need to balance the many, sometimes, competing, priorities of their employment and personal lives.*

*“While maintaining SUNY’s level of excellence and competitiveness in higher education, we should also be aware of the need to find balance between personal/family life and the professional life. A culture of supporting employees in a manner consistent with their employment obligations when the responsibilities of family life are particularly demanding may help employees balance their work/life commitments.*

*“In that regard, and as fulfillment of a commitment made at the negotiations table, this letter serves the purpose of encouraging campuses to recognize the importance to employees of a flexible approach to accommodating family care needs.”*

## ***Assemblymen Pete Lopez comes to SUNY Oneonta***

*By Amritanshu Chandrani Mukherjee,  
Political Science Major,  
SUNY College at Oneonta*



Assemblyman Pete Lopez came to speak to members of the UUP a meeting sponsored by the organization at the Leatherstocking Room of the Hunt Union on February 19th, 2009.

I was invited by my professors Dr. Robert Compton of Political Science, Dr. Gina Keel of Political Science and UUP President Dr. Bill Simons to come and participate at the event. A number of other distinguished faculty members, administrative staff and retired faculty and staff members made their presence at the notable event. A number of prominent student leaders also graced their presence at the event, increasing its importance and overall outreach to the entire campus community. Overall sixty people were in attendance.

Dr. Simons firstly welcomed the Assemblyman and praised his efforts to formulate and implement progressive reforms in the constituency. He then gave the floor to Assemblyman Lopez to talk a little about himself and his efforts to continue to serve the community and New York State in general. The Assemblyman also talked about the importance of the UUP, SUNY faculty and staff members and part-time instructors in the overall SUNY system. He emphasized that there were harsh times ahead due to the economic crisis and the budgetary restrictions in New York State, but there is a light at the end of the road and through constant diligence and effort, this crisis could be resolved. Assemblyman Lopez was also inspirational in talking about other reforms in the private sector, environment etc. that would improve the overall infrastructural development of the community and the state.

The Assemblyman then threw the floor open for questions about any matter related to SUNY, the community, and the state. A number of faculty members voiced concern about the fact that the budgetary crisis in the state had a negative impact on SUNY and asked what the state Governor David A. Patterson intended to do. Asserting the requirement of reliance in the dealing with the restraints caused by the financial crisis, the Assemblyman assured the gathering that he was opposed to a number of changes that the state government was going through and therefore assured that he would continue to strive to serve the people that he was representing. A number of questions were asked about the resources being used and implemented to provide economic and infrastructural development in the community, and the Assemblymen continued to talk about the numerous legislations that he was either co-sponsoring or implementing on a grassroots level to boost the state, regional, and local economy.

After the formal question and answer session, Assemblyman Lopez informally interacted with the gathering by speaking to a number of people individually and listening to their concerns on various issues. I got an opportunity to speak personally with the Assemblyman and introduce myself as a voice of the students of the campus. He humbly invited me to visit him in his legislative office with a group of fellow students to personally interact with interested students who were not able to make the event about any other issues or concerns that they might have.

Overall, the experience was an enriching experience and I thank the UUP and my professors Dr. Compton and Dr. Keel as well as UUP President Dr. Simons for honoring me with this opportunity.

## ***Temporary Change to IRA Law May Affect Many Seniors***

*By Fred Miller, Retiree Representative*

As part of the Worker, Retiree and Employer Recovery Act of 2008 signed on December 23 by then-President Bush, retirees will not have to take mandatory withdrawals from their IRA accounts during 2009. According to The Washington Post, the law waives, "any required minimum distributions in 2009 from retirement plans such as 401(k)s, 403(b)s and certain 457(b)s. The distribution rules also apply to traditional individual retirement accounts and IRA-based plans." Normally, withdrawals are required every year after an account holder turns 70 ½, even if the money is not needed. However, financial experts have advised investors who are able to try to wait for the markets to rebound before taking out additional funds. "This change could offer a useful break to retirees who do not want to take a withdrawal at a time when their accounts are at a low point," said George J. Kourpias, President of the Alliance.

## **LET'S UNITE TO SAVE DR. LESLIE BREITEN AS AN EMPIRE-PLAN PARTICIPATOR!**

*By Mona Hughes, UUP Oneonta Benefits Officer and Veronica Diver, Vice President, CSEA/SUNY Oneonta*

Recently, many of the College's female employees who carry the Empire Plan received a letter from Dr. Leslie Breiten, a leader in women's health care in Oneonta, indicating that, as of April 1st, she would no longer be a participating provider. Dr. Breiten's decision stems from the continued diminutive payment-for-services she receives from the Empire Plan following three years of unsuccessful attempts to negotiate a fair fee-payment schedule for services rendered to patients. Sadly, Dr. Breiten is paid more for her Medicare patients than she is for Empire patients—yet each year employees face increases in both Empire health-care premiums and patient co-pays.

After April 1, 2009, Dr. Breiten's patients will be required to pay the full fee at the time of their visit for services received and will be responsible for submitting the appropriate paperwork to Empire for reimbursement. What's important to know is that there is no reimbursement until the required "out-of-network" amount of \$363.00 for UUPers and \$225.00 for CSEA-represented employees is reached. Thereafter, approximately 80% of what Empire deems appropriate may be reimbursed. While Dr. Breiten's staff has kindly offered to assist Empire-Plan patients with paperwork, the fact remains that it will be very costly—and, perhaps, even prohibitive—for many Empire-Plan patients to continue with Dr. Breiten.

Dr. Breiten's withdrawal from the Empire plan affects more than 500 of her patients—many of them on this campus. She is one of only two female participating-provider physicians in Oneonta providing gynecological health care. The loss of Dr. Breiten and her staff as Empire-Plan participators will be devastating to both our members and to our community at large. Some members are willing to forego their health care if Dr. Breiten is no longer a participating provider. Sisters and Brothers, we can not let this happen. We must not let this happen!

The health-benefits departments of both UUP and CSEA in Albany have been alerted and are actively working to seek adjustments to Dr. Breiten's fee schedule. While our unions play a large role in negotiating our contracts with Empire, it is both our collective and individual voices which must now ring loud and clear with our legislators to let them know that women's health care in Oneonta must neither be compromised nor overlooked.

At the February 19th Food for Thought/UUP Meeting, Assemblyman Peter D. Lopez was the guest speaker. Following the meeting and during a one-on-one with Assemblyman Lopez, he indicated that he was willing to help with this issue, but also stressed that there is power in numbers and that a united front goes much farther than just a few voices. Fellow UUPers, it is time to unite with our brothers and sisters in CSEA to fight the good fight in keeping Dr. Leslie Breiten a choice among the Empire-Plan participating providers for women's health care in Oneonta.

We are asking all of you to write to your respective legislators: Assemblyman Peter Lopez, Senator James Seward and Assemblyman William Magee, to request their support on this issue. As our letters flood their mailboxes, they will hear our voices, they will feel our strength in numbers and they will know that united we stand. Now is the time to take action.

Please write, fax or email the following representatives (form letters are also available from Mona Hughes, [hughesml@oneonta.edu](mailto:hughesml@oneonta.edu), or Veronica Diver, [diverv@oneonta.edu](mailto:diverv@oneonta.edu) :

*Assemblyman Peter D. Lopez*  
9 Legislative Office Building  
Albany, New York 12248  
Phone: 518-455-5363  
Fax: 518-455-5856  
Email: [LOPEZP@ASSEMBLY.STATE.NY.US](mailto:LOPEZP@ASSEMBLY.STATE.NY.US)

*Assemblyman William Magee*  
Legislative Office Building 828  
Albany, NY 12248  
Phone: 518-455-4807  
Email: [MageeW@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:MageeW@assembly.state.ny.us)

*Senator James L. Seward*  
917 Legislative Office Building  
Albany, NY 12247  
Phone: 518-455-3131  
Email: [seward@senate.state.ny.us](mailto:seward@senate.state.ny.us)

## ***Part Time Concerns Labor Management Meeting***

11 February 2009, 1:00pm to 2:00pm

For UUP: J McDermott, Rob Compton, and Karina Cespedes

For Management: Lisa Wenck

### I. General Education and Faculty Activities Reports

- a. UUP thanked Management for its prompt response on the General Education Assessment inquiry and the Faculty Activities Report (FAR)
  - i. Management reiterated the need for part-timers to comply with General Education
  - ii. UUP suggested that this, at a minimum, needs to be in the appointment letter
- b. UUP and Management agree that FARs for Part Timers are voluntary
  - i. UUP stated that FARs are the basis for DSI considerations for full-time faculty and under the current situation, there is often no basis of evaluating PT employees for DSI
  - ii. Management and UUP agreed to continue dialog to create a process for evaluation of PT for DSI purposes which could involve a PT Handbook
- c. Management says that it cannot apply the \$500 award that adjuncts get for consecutive service to the base salary at this time, but would be willing to continue discussions on this matter.
- d. UUP asked if full-time lecturers who return to being adjuncts would have to re-start at the minimum established per course.
  - i. Management said that is not their understanding
  - ii. (UUP now has verification that this has not happened)

### II. PT Application for Employee Tuition Assistance

- a. Management informed UUP that this does program is not applicable for PT during the summer
- b. Management also noted that a clarification of this program and its application for Part-Timers will appear in the Bulletin at a later date

### III. Part Time Numbers and Policies

- a. In light of the budget issues, UUP asked Management about the impact of funding on part-time faculty numbers on the Oneonta campus
- b. Management noted that the number of Part-timers has actually increased by 16.
- c. UUP noted that it does not look favorably on PT faculty who teach a full-time load but get paid as adjuncts
  - i. Management noted that at most there is a “handful” of these individuals who have obtained an exception and these are by semester. These employees may individually teach in more than one department.
  - ii. Management promised to obtain the exact numbers
- d. Management noted that “comparisons to the 90’s budgets is apples and oranges” in that we have reserves. It’s a new time and leadership and funds for PT employee have been increased.

### IV. Part Timer Employees’ Opportunities for Internal Consideration for Full –time College Positions Posted

- a. Management distributed a MOU signed in 1993 between UUP and Management that sets the protocol for internal applications as it applies to full-timers.
- b. Management and UUP agreed to examine whether this can be re-drafted and provisions made for Part Timers
- c. UUP agreed to take this into consultation and obtain contractual advice.

## ***Diversity through Experiential Learning: Teaching and the Model UN Experience***

*By Rob Compton, Vice President for Academics*



Thomas Friedman, The New York Times columnist and noted author on globalization noted that solving today’s complicated and multifaceted problems require skills that draw upon inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches. He also noted that the policy analyst of the future must be able sift through and then synthesize a vast array of information and perspectives. He referred to this in Lexus and the Oliver Tree as “multi-dimensional information arbitrage” or what I’d say is sociological imagination for the 21st century. Oddly, the training of students, both in undergraduate programs and in graduate schools continue to narrow in two ways. First, the “training” is becoming more skills based, driven by assessment mechanisms and disciplinary

orthodoxy. Second, as Thomas Kuhn, in the classic, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* noted, puzzle solving, rather than paradigm shattering is the norm in the sciences and social sciences. Therefore, Friedmansque approaches to research and teaching at this time, goes against the core conservative ideas of academic puzzle solving. In fact, going against the grain by proposing to reform higher education, whether nationally, within our respective fields, or even at your own institution often leads to negative professional consequences as powerful forces of orthodox defend the hegemonic paradigm. (This may be a subject for another time and place.)

But the numerous cross-cutting problems of today (e.g., the economy, the environment, and racism) will not simply “go away.” Even if we continue to behave as if they do not exist by operating in our staid paradigms, our students will become part of the future solution. Some of us will equip the leaders of the future while others will engage in paradigmatic preservation. Such is the reality of the academic survival mode.

### **Model UN to the Rescue**

Fortunately, for me, I have been teaching and advising the Oneonta Model UN delegation for several years now. Similar to the study abroad programs, both short-term and semester long, the National Model United Nations (NMUN) challenges both the students and the professor to adopt a interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach that incorporates the principles of multi-dimensional information arbitrage. The NMUN is an annual conference held in New York City in April and for four consecutive years, SUNY Oneonta has sent a delegation to this prestigious conference. The annual conference hosts more than 3,500 students with more than 50% of the participants from abroad. There are usually students from the usual European countries, but also Egypt, China, South Korea, Morocco, Iraq, Russia, Ghana, and South Africa. In many cases, delegates speak at least three languages! In 2007, Oneonta represented Morocco and won an Honorable Mention Award at the conference where less than 10% of the delegations are honored. It should be noted, that there has been strong moral and financial support from the Oneonta College administration, but at this time funding remains a year-by-year proposition. Our participants spend about \$350 of their own monies for hotel (four nights in Manhattan), travel costs, and incidentals- mostly food and coffee for the late nights. Some universities have more than \$10,000 allocated annually to their Model UN programs. One university, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, has a budget of more than \$20,000 annually and a panel of international law experts at its disposal. Many teams attend regional conferences, create “A” and “B” teams, and practice at these smaller venues leading up to the New York Conference. In contrast, we are a shoestring operation. Therefore, I am quite proud of our students, who diligently prepare for the conference.

At the conference, students represent a country- this year Botswana- and sit on UN Committee and Associated Bodies panels. In preparation for the conference, I work with the students in and out of class to prepare them on UN rules and procedures of debate, the UN system and its history and functions, Botswana’s domestic and foreign relations, and the issues before each committee. Students conduct research and write a position paper that summarizes the trajectory of issue development in the real world by citing UN resolutions and conventions and proposes a plan of action. These position papers must agree with the country’s position to “remain in character.” Issues such as “addressing the impact intra-regional migration” require an understanding of social, political, economic, and environmental sciences. Furthermore, just like in the real world, the simulation entails the ability to synthesize different perspectives and navigate the plethora of personalities and interests evident on the global stage. The issues are so complex and multi-faceted that I have learned so much from preparing the students and attending the conferences.

### **Conclusion**

The UN experience has become a foundation of Political Science and International Studies as well as our in process (future) International Development Studies major. Our students benefit from the experiential learning by interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary learning and application of tools and skills in a “real time” student run simulation. Students assess their progress and compare their undergraduate programs with their cohorts from all different types of universities and colleges. The gamut of universities and colleges, from community colleges, to Oberlin, MIT and their diverse geographical origins allows our students to assess their educational experience at Oneonta in a comparative manner.

Most important of all, students who thought that they would never be able to compete with the Ivy Schools or with students from Haverford discover a surprising fact- Oneonta trains them well. Students return back to campus with increased confidence, which is well deserved, and eager to engage in learning and application of knowledge. Although intense and I lose my spring break along with the students, we all know that colleges must adapt to provide educational experiences that go beyond the classroom.

## ***CSRC from 30,000 Feet! The Center of Social Responsibility on the Move***

*By Linda Drake, Executive Director, CSRC and Director of Community Service, UUP*



Members of the CSRC (Center of Social Responsibility) Team are collaborating on writing this article while in flight to Greenbelt, Maryland. Our four CSRC Student Coordinators--Laurelle Ritter, Tanya Henderson, Stephanie Griffith, Luke Hall—and I, CSRC director Linda Drake, are attending the Impact: National Student Conference on Service, Advocacy and Social Action held this year in the Washington DC area. CSRC staff has been attending this Annual Conference for nine years. The conference is put on by students for students. Over 1000 students will come away not only with a rejuvenation of excitement for making a difference, but also with new skills and ideas to benefit the campus and community. Some of the conference tracks include: Building a Strong Service Program, with components such as training, retention, program structure and strategic partnerships; Connecting Action and the Classroom (Service Learning); Changing the World 3.0 (Technology), technology to enhance students' work; and Taking on the Issues, addressing domestic poverty, economic justice, and hunger. These are just a few of the many stimulating workshops!

Stephanie said, *“This is my first conference and I’m really excited to learn how to better help the many students who come through the doors of CSRC, sending them out to help the community. These skills will not only benefit the CSRC operation but will also stay with me when I seek future employment.”* Steph is a sophomore and sociology major who hopes to become a counselor.

Luke said he is *“looking forward to meeting other students from all around the country and representing SUNY Oneonta and all that we do. It’s going to be great to bring back new ideas that will spark new innovations at the Center. Hopefully, these new ideas will improve the Center and create a greater sense of community among SUNY Oneonta students and staff.”* Luke is a sophomore and his major is elementary education with a concentration on earth science. His goal is to teach fifth and six grade and coach varsity athletics.

*“This is my second year attending this conference and I am equally as excited to be a part of this year’s conference. These conferences are inspiring and we are able to meet people from all over the United States who share the same compassion about civic engagement. Last year, I took away an idea called **Break Away**, which I am trying to implement on our campus, plus some good fundraising ideas,”* said Tanya. Tanya is a junior who is majoring in sociology and child and family studies. She is looking forward to working as a high school guidance counselor.

Laurelle enjoys *“talking to so many students who like to help others. Last year at the conference, I was overwhelmed by news of what students are able to do on their own campuses with just a little help from the administrators. I attended a lot of programs about being environmentally conscious on the campus and thought it was really educational. As a result, I joined the Green Team when I got back on campus.”* Laurelle is a junior majoring in mass communications and communication studies. After graduation, she looks forward to writing about women’s issues for a magazine.

CSRC is student led. These four students and three work study students are the heart of CSRC and the glue which holds the Center together. Our students meet and greet prospective student volunteers and help place them in our community. We really have a great team and think of ourselves as a **CSRC family**.

We have all been very busy this month, planning and implementing a variety of projects, while continuing our efforts to place student volunteers in the community. CSRC held another campus blood drive on March 5th. Our final blood drive for this semester will take place on April 15th. The SUNY Oneonta campus has exceeded the goals set for each drive thanks to the support of students, staff and faculty.

*CSRC students are wrapping up Daffodil Days, an annual fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. This year CSRC raised a little over \$3000 from the sale of daffodils--a hopeful reminder of spring. The flowers will be distributed to students, as well as others on campus, during the week of March 16.*

*Chi Phi and CSRC will be co-sponsoring a new Walk for Breast Cancer Support and Education to be held on April 25th in Neahwa Park. We are looking forward to working with the community and walking together for a great cause.*

*Our Annual Into the Streets Service Day will be held on Saturday, May 2.* We are in the end stages of planning and are looking forward to placing 500 or more students out in the local community to “make a difference” by putting in an estimated 3000 hours of service in just one day.

*We have launched a new fundraising endeavor.* In a recent air accident, a passenger flight crashed into a house in Buffalo NY owned by the Wielinski family. The father was killed in the incident, but the mother and one of her daughters escaped without injury. Another daughter, **Jessica Wielinski, was a December 2006 early graduate of SUNY Oneonta who majored in Food Service and Restaurant Administration.** She had graduated from Clarence Senior High School in 2003. Jessica later relocated from Clarence Center NY and now lives in Highland Mills NY, currently working as Catering Coordinator for Panera Bread Café in Nanuet. Jessica has three sisters with whom she is very close and loves to hang out with her family, friends and her boyfriend Vinny who is also a SUNY Oneonta graduate. Two of Jessica’s fellow alumni phoned to ask if CSRC might help Jessica and her family. Within hours of putting out a call for a few students to work on the fundraiser, we had 15 volunteers. We are now organizing a campus-wide fundraising campaign to help support Jessica and her family. Look for the posters around campus.

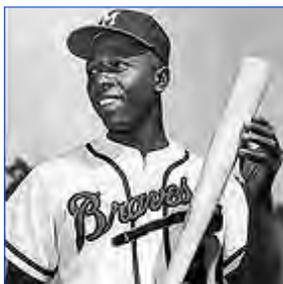
*One group of five students are already at work in planning a 12-hour dance-a-thon for November 2009.* This event should prove to be a lot of fun for the campus community, and proceeds will benefit local nonprofits. We are excited to inform our faculty about the CSRC Service-Learning Workshop to be held on April 15th at 3 p.m. There will be a panel presentation, led by Jim Heffernan, president of New York Campus Compact. Heffernan will provide an overview of the many benefits of service-learning. In addition, Dr. Doug Shrader (philosophy) and Dr. Wendy Mitteager (geography) will be discussing their successes and trials in promoting service-learning in their courses. Please plan to join us on April 15 to share your ideas and questions about service learning. Learn how we are able to help one another while, at the same time, enable students to take concepts out of the classroom and apply them in practice.

CSRC will join in solidarity with CSEA and UUP when we volunteer at Saturday’s Bread on April 4th from 9:30-2:00. It is always rewarding to work together while helping to serve the community.

Please call Linda Drake with any questions at 436-2633—to sign up for the Service-Learning Workshop or to participate at Saturday’s Bread.

Linda Drake, CSRC Executive Director  
Signing out, from 30,000 feet!

## *Sentinel Quiz*



**Question:** *This player began his baseball career in Indianapolis in the Negro Leagues. When outfielder Bobby Thomson broke his ankle, this opened the door in Milwaukee for this future Hall of Fame great. Who is he?*

The first person to email Nancy Cannon ([cannonns@oneonta.edu](mailto:cannonns@oneonta.edu)) with the correct answer will receive a UUP cap.

The answer to the February quiz, “*It has been said that this 18th century German philosopher led such a strict and predicable life that neighbors would set their clocks by his daily walks*” is Immanuel Kant. The first person to provide the correct answer was **John Relethford**.

## *Freedom of Information Act: Promoting Transparency*

[Editor's Note: The following is adapted and reprinted from a communication received from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP)]

On January 21, 2009, the first full day of the new Obama administration, the White House issued a memo instructing all heads of federal agencies and departments to respond “promptly and in a spirit of cooperation” to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). On the same day, President Obama also signed an executive order on presidential records. These two actions constitute a very positive first step from the new administration on a core issue.

The White House FOIA memo states that government “should not keep information confidential merely because public officials might be embarrassed by disclosure, because errors and failures might be revealed, or because of speculative or abstract fears.” In addition, agencies should take affirmative steps to make information public. The executive order on presidential records makes those records more accessible by eliminating barriers erected by the Bush administration. Under the new executive order, presidents could limit access only by invoking executive privilege. Such claims would be subject to a review process.

Both the FOIA memorandum and the executive order on presidential records echo the thought and language in Chapter 11 of “Liberty and Security: Recommendations for the Next Administration and Congress,” of which the AAUP was an original endorser. The administration’s change of policy will greatly facilitate the free flow of information and make the work of faculty and academic researchers easier and more fruitful.

The AAUP concurs with President Obama’s rejection, in his inaugural address, of the idea that national safety and our democratic ideals are at odds with one another. AAUP will continue to advocate for the free flow of scholars and of ideas, and the preservation of academic freedom even in times of national crisis, secure in our knowledge that these do not compromise security.

AAUP hopes that the spirit of the administration’s initiatives on FOIA and presidential records will also be taken to heart by another kind of administration—those leading colleges and universities. In order for real shared governance to exist, faculty and their senates need access to information about financial and other matters, particularly in these difficult fiscal times.

### *UUP Labor Film Series*

At Hunt Union Red Dragon Theater

*Promoting Solidarity, Justice, and Environmental Responsibility  
Through Educational Film Screenings and Discussions*



Spring Semester 2009 Program

#### **Waging a Living**

**Monday, March 16, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

The American dream asserts hard work guarantees opportunity and mobility. So, why can't poor people “just get a job” and pull themselves out of poverty? This documentary challenges simplistic prescriptions and helps us understand why more than 30 million working Americans can't meet their basic needs. It follows the struggles of four diverse American families living below the poverty line in California, New York, and New Jersey over a three-year period. (2004)

#### **Salt of the Earth**

**Monday, April 20, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

Considered subversive for questioning white superiority and male domination while promoting solidarity of working people, this is the only film blacklisted in American history! This inspirational drama features Mexican-Americans who went on strike at New Mexico's Empire Zinc Mine to challenge discrimination and unsafe working conditions. During production, the blacklisted cast and crew were subject to attacks by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and other anti-Communist organizations. On the Library of Congress' list of the top 100 most important films made in the U.S. (1954)

*Most films run approximately 90 minutes, followed by an audience discussion. For more information, please contact Professor Gina L. Keel, Film Series Director, at [keelgl@oneonta.edu](mailto:keelgl@oneonta.edu)*

## *The College is Sustained by Our Human Capital: Support Our Faculty and Campus Employees*

*By Michael Flinton, UUP Member  
and Cooperstown Graduate Program,  
Museum Administration & Management*

Whether in times of austerity or adequate funding, some organizations never seem to have enough people to get the job done in an effective and efficient manner. There always seems to be the need for one more person, usually one with some degree of expertise that the rest of us seem to lack in order to move our organization, project, or program over the hump and closer to meeting its goals and objectives.

Traditionally we speak in of Human Resources when we discuss, plan, or measure an organization's staffing structure or capabilities. It's customary for HR directors and managers at all levels to speak about FTEs (Full Time Equivalents) when they report staffing needs or shortfalls for their departments. Are there more descriptive and accurate terms or concepts out there to express the true abilities of our labor force? In a word, "yes" ... Human Capital!

Human Capital, in contrast to Human Resources, has become a more apt description of what we individually and collectively bring to work each day. What we use to get the job done, whether we work in the classroom, campus power plant, dining hall, or library. As elsewhere in human nature, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts because we not only have the necessary credentials required to do the job, we also bring our values, ethics, motivations, and seemingly endless capacity to try and do our best. The result is that in austere times when we're asked to accept that the "one more person with the right qualifications and experience" cannot be provided, we draw upon the Human Capital we have within us to get the job done, which enables us to provide students with the quality educational experience that they rightly deserve and need to be successful. By acting as professionals we increase the Human Capital of our students, our college, each other, and ourselves. In something of a paradox, when it comes to the amount of human capital we have in the bank, the more we use what we have, the more our account grows.

As much as we may wish that it be the same for economics as it is for mankind, alas that is not the case. So, what's the path to short term sustainability for a public college during these difficult times? Increase the amount of Human Capital we already have. For those among us in leadership positions, this means examining our Human Capital portfolio much like you would the college's financial investments. Determine our distribution, measure our organizational performance and rate of return in order to insure we're adequately structured to weather the economic storm. Invest in us! But know that just as new financial instruments make their way to market; new professionals will be needed in the longer term. The philosophy of doing more with less doesn't mean that we should strive to do everything with nothing. To meet the challenges before us, the best advice is just what financial advisors tell their clients: invest in what you know. Examine and measure who we are with an eye toward helping us grow. Support on and off campus professional development opportunities, conferences, and participation in professional affiliations, and your investment will reap long term benefits. SUNY Oneonta will emerge a survivor and better off from the unprecedented times we live in.

Someone once said, "The only thing worse than investing in your employees and have them leave, is to not invest in them and have them stay." That's never been the mindset at SUNY Oneonta, so let's not even suggest it has to come to that. Before us are opportunities to excel and grow, not because of hard times, but in spite of them. Human Resources may contain the basic ingredients to build a winning team, but Human Capital is money in the bank for a rainy day. It's not raining that hard yet, so let's keep investing.

## *Wal-Mart*

*By Lester Hadsell, Department of Economics, Finance, and Accounting*

Wal-Mart's size and way of doing business has attracted attention from a wide variety of interests. Labor unions object to Wal-Mart's employment practices. Environmentalists object to Wal-Mart's proclivity for building on the outskirts of town. Local retailers object to the competition that Wal-Mart brings. Consumers, on the other hand, seem to approve of the low prices, large selection, and convenience offered by Wal-Mart. And local government officials often contend that Wal-Mart is an economic development tool – generating tax revenue and employment. My own research on Wal-Mart has measured Wal-Mart's effect on local property values and taxes. My goal in this brief article is to highlight some of the important issues concerning Wal-Mart and summarize findings of academic economists while providing resources, both academic and from the popular press, for those who want to know more.

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Labor unions are naturally concerned with Wal-Mart's employment practices, which has several facets, including the effects on the level of employment and wages and on employment conditions. Foremost in the criticism of Wal-Mart's labor practices has been several well-publicized cases of labor mistreatment (e.g., lock-ins) and gender discrimination. Further, Wal-Mart's strong anti-union stance is well-known. In one instance, Wal-Mart closed all of its meat departments after one of them voted to unionize. This past December, Wal-Mart agreed to pay at least \$352 million to settle multiple lawsuits claiming that it forced employees to work off the clock. [See Greenhouse; Greenhouse and Rosenbloom; and Huffington Post.]

Wal-Mart has also been criticized for paying low wages (compared to other large retailers, e.g. Costco and Target). The high productivity of Wal-Mart employees, owing mostly to their use of technology, might be expected to lead to higher wages. As reported by economist Emek Basker, Wal-Mart's sales per employee are 30% higher than the industry average. On the other hand, reduced competition for Wal-Mart employees (as Wal-Mart becomes the big employer in a locale) will work in the opposite direction. Economists such as Michael Hicks find mixed empirical evidence on Wal-Mart's effect on wages in the retail sector in their aggregate studies.

Economic theory suggests that Wal-Mart, because of its productivity and size, will cause a decline in the number of people employed in the retail sector. As a result, without significant additional retail sales, employment will decline. Nationally, the percentage of all jobs that are in retail trade has been flat or declining slightly in recent years. At the local level (often measured empirically by economists at the county level), the evidence suggests that Wal-Mart may be associated with greater employment in the retail sector if there are no nearby stores. When nearby Wal-Marts exist the higher employment levels disappear, and sometimes become negative, as people formerly employed in retail find other employment.

Also of concern to many are Wal-Mart's effects on the environment. Wal-Mart's practice of building on the outskirts of towns can be detrimental in several respects, as farmland is lost and sprawl encouraged, leading to other problems. Building on the outskirts of towns makes economic sense for Wal-Mart (cheaper land, cheaper building costs) but may not be as profitable without help from local governments who often provide extension of public services and hefty tax breaks. In Cobleskill, for example, the village line was extended in the early 1990s so that the new Wal-Mart would have access to village water and sewer services as these were extended out to the store. Changes like these have implications for local governments which rely heavily on the sales and property taxes for revenue to pay for such services, both of which may be affected by Wal-Mart. The evidence regarding sales tax revenue is mixed and depends, among other things, on the proximity of other Wal-Marts [see Hicks]. My own research on property taxes of small communities in New York State indicates that property tax rates are slightly higher all other things equal in communities with a

Wal-Mart compared to those without. That is, additional local government spending on roads, sewer, and so on that results from accommodation of Wal-Mart exceeds additional revenues received by the government.

Of course, Wal-Mart provides many benefits – they are huge and profitable for a reason. Wal-Mart certainly offers lower prices compared to competitors. Emek Basker reviews recent, reliable studies that indicate that prices at Wal-Mart are up to 27% lower, depending on the locale and selection of goods. Further, Wal-Mart lowers the prices that competitors charge, so the benefits to consumers are even greater in this regard. Some earlier studies suggested that Wal-Mart prices were no lower than those of local retailers, and sometimes higher, but these earlier studies typically compared prices of different brands and quality. The impact of lower prices at Wal-Mart are so large that some economists suggest that aggregate inflation is overestimated in the aggregate consumer price index (CPI).

Wal-Mart's influences are complex. As a member of the community I have my own preferences with regard to Wal-Mart. As an economist, I can only provide the evidence – which indicate both positive and negative effects in terms of employment, price, environmental, and fiscal impacts. Society, through its political and social institutions must voice their opinion.

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## ***Benefits, Salary Equity, and Budget***

The monthly *Food for Thought* / UUP Chapter meeting was held in the Butternuts Valley Room, Hunt Union, on Thursday, March 12th at Noon, and featured a presentation by Jamie Dangle, Chair of the UUP Statewide Family Leave Committee and UUP Vice President for Academics at SUNY Cortland. Dr. Dangler discussed UUP Work-Life Services/Benefits and Family Leave as well as provide handouts of her SUNY salary/gender inequity study, which was based on regression analysis. The Work-Life Services portion of Dr. Dangler's presentation included the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Dependent Care Advantage Account and Health Care Spending Account, Network Childcare Centers, the new Resource and Referral Service, information on Pre-Retirement Seminars, NYS-Ride, and family leave avenues. An Associate Professor, Sociology, SUNY Cortland, Dr. Dangler is the author of **The Role of Waged Homework in the Modern World**, a publication of SUNY Press. Her course offering include the Sociology of the Family. Questions and discussion will follow Dr. Dangler's formal program.

In addition, Dr. Michael McAvoy, UUP Oneonta Treasurer, presented the proposed chapter budget for the next fiscal year. Following discussion of the proposed budget, the chapter voted on it.

## *UUP on the Water: Unionism by Canoe*

By Teresa De Santis

(Editor's Note: Teresa served as an adjunct lecturer in the Fine Arts Department during the past school year. She looks forward to teaching again at SUNY Oneonta in the future. With multiple areas of expertise, Theresa is also a once, and thus, we hope, future member of the UUP Oneonta bargaining unit. UUP Oneonta plans to subsequently alert members to a future canoe-fest; watch upcoming issues of *The Sentinel* for details.)

### Fall Canoeing in Otsego County

Last September, I ran into Bill Simons at one of the many canoe launches on the Susquehanna River. It was a late Sunday afternoon early in the Fall semester. I recognized Bill from last year's rainy day Spring UUP chicken barbecue picnic, where I met him and many of our local professionals. As usual, Bill was sporting his venerable UUP hat. We re-introduced ourselves, then immediately compared boats- I have a 10 1/2 foot Hornbeck kevlar canoe that weighs in at 18 lbs and is a bright golden yellow. Bill had brought his stable and compact 12 foot Grunman aluminum canoe to



the river. (Both these canoes are about as small as they come, and were designed with one person in mind, although Bill's canoe can safely handle up to two people.) I purchased my boat upon returning from graduate school at Utah State University in Logan, Utah, where my mind sometimes drifted to the water, trees and the dense green canopy of the Eastern United States. My canoe was crafted by Peter Hornbeck, an ex-schoolteacher who has a workshop in Olmsteadville, NY in the Eastern Adirondacks. Pete-the-boatbuilder turned to full-time boat-crafting after a heart attack in his late 40's caused him to quit teaching in favor of this novel career path. Pete's handiwork in kevlar has floated me on many a trip through our local surroundings and beyond in the Adirondack mountains. Bill uses his 44 lbs aluminum canoe to sport around by himself after work, as his boat is light enough for him to easily hoist onto his car by himself.

The late afternoon fall day was hot, dry, and bright. Shadows were beginning to lengthen and sharpen with the bulk of the summer behind us, but there was still a sense of heat and warmth in the air. We canoed upstream. On the way up the river, we saw a set of cottages on the east shore. We waved to the cottagers, and they waved back. Just around the bend from the cottages is an historic wetland area, which varies in water level from season to season and from year to year. Today a cursory examination of the area from the boats showed the wetland currently in a rather muddy and mucky state, seemingly taken over by a field of reedy grasses. Just a few years ago, I was able to canoe into this area, which was then an oblong-shaped pond attached to the river by the tether of its narrow outlet stream. That particular day I was able to enjoy the pond and to sit down to a late afternoon lunch with a large turtle. Today we were unable to canoe into the now dried-up body



of water, and had to content ourselves by peeking over the wooded margin at the outlet's edge, imagining what mysteries lay inside.

A float trip is usually an excellent opportunity for birding, as well as for watching beavers and other riparian wildlife. We watched for the king of them all, the great blue heron, but he was surprisingly absent from the scene. At the halfway point, I picked up a meter-long beaver-chewed stick from the swirling river waters. The branch bore signs of the beaver's activity and showed a rhythmically chewed pattern of brown and white like an African batik. Us humans shared an apple, and then washed down its sweetness with some good ol' West Oneonta well water. Then we turned downstream. Floating downstream proved half the work of going upstream on this section of river. There was no noise at all except for the nearly silent dip of our canoe paddles in the water.



The canoe launch site where we met by chance is one of the many available canoe launches (also called 'put-ins') along the Susquehanna River. The Susquehanna is canoeable for its entire length in Otsego County and beyond. We are rich with many other canoeable rivers and streams within the borders of our county. Canoeable creeks, streams, and rivers form a network of informal "linear parks" throughout the region. The Unadilla River is canoeable for nearly its entire length from Bridgewater, NY (sometimes affectionately called "Bilgewater") south to Sidney, NY. The Cherry Valley Creek is our next best navigable stream, and is canoeable from about Roseboom south to its confluence with the Susquehanna near Milford.

The Butternut Creek is also an exceptionally beautiful stream, with an excellent canoe launch in the park at Copes Corners south of Gilbertsville. Sections of Otego Creek (west of Oneonta, NY) and the venerable Schenevus Creek are also canoeable, but in the smaller creeks there is a greater likelihood of encountering blowdowns spanning the stream channel. (These trees are affectionately called "strainers" or "keepers", depending on their size and position.) Canoeing and kayaking are excellent alternative activities for professors and college staff as the cares and pressures of academia quickly melt away the moment one pushes off from shore and into the flowing waters of our liquid natural heritage.

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## *The Sentinel Websites and Disclaimer*

### **Editor's Note:**

Statements Made in *The Sentinel* do not necessarily reflect the opinion of UUP or any of its statewide representatives.

To read past issues — as well as the current edition — of *The Sentinel* on-line, go to [www.uuphost.org/oneonta](http://www.uuphost.org/oneonta).

This site also includes other material concerning UUP Oneonta.

The statewide UUP website is located at [www.uupinfo.org](http://www.uupinfo.org). It contains information about members benefits and many other important topics.

## *An Alumnus Reflects: Appreciation for Professor Richard Grimaldi*

*By Matthew Eberhard, SUNY College at Oneonta Alumni, Class of '06*

My name is *Matthew Eberhard*, and I am a December 2006 graduate of the meteorology program at SUNY Oneonta. I am writing to express my gratitude and respect for Dr. Richard Grimaldi for helping me attain my goals and the success I enjoy today.

Dr. Grimaldi was my instructor for the courses of Physical Meteorology, Atmospheric Dynamics I and II, and Mesometeorology. These courses, along with a complementary course load of chemistry, physics, and calculus, comprise the backbone of the meteorology degree. The complex relationship between the mathematical equations that govern the Earth system and the actual natural processes that make up day-to-day weather is indeed very difficult subject matter, and as such difficult to explain. However, Dr. Grimaldi was able to link together a solid basis in math with a practical approach to weather.

Between the spring and summer of 2006, Dr. Grimaldi and a fellow student of mine were able to develop, from scratch, a new course bridging the courses of Physical Meteorology and Atmospheric Dynamics I. While I did not personally have an opportunity to participate in this course, I was impressed with his efforts to improve understanding of the difficult subject matter.

Dr. Grimaldi was also able to complement our classroom experience with valuable extracurricular activities and conference participation. During my time at Oneonta, I was able to attend the Northeastern Storm Conference, and the 1st annual Lake Effect Conference. My fellow students and I were not only introduced to these new opportunities, but Dr. Grimaldi encouraged all students to attend. During the summer of 2006, concurrent with my internship at the National Weather Service Office in Binghamton, New York, I undertook an independent study under Dr. Grimaldi's supervision. We investigated severe weather occurrences as a function of seasonal lake ice extent in Minnesota. This work gave me valuable experience using climate datasets and data tools, and culminated in a poster presentation at the American Geophysical Union (AGU) Fall Meeting in San Francisco. Opportunities such as these not only broaden your awareness of your chosen field as a whole, but provide valuable awareness of job opportunities and future ideas.

Dr. Grimaldi became the meteorology club advisor during fall semester 2005, and in doing so increased the membership of the club substantially due to outreach and new programs. We were also offered opportunities for field trips for educational (National Weather Service offices) and personal (Howes Cavern) enjoyment. Trips such as these strengthened the already close-knit fabric of our department and allowed students from other majors and disciplines to be introduced to new things.

Nearing the end of my Oneonta experience, Dr. Grimaldi encouraged me to explore all of the opportunities available to me, and I applied to both graduate school and a number of public and private sector jobs. Within three months of graduation, I was offered a private sector position with excellent salary and benefits, and within the same two-week period, was offered a fully paid graduate assistantship with the University of Nebraska. I attribute this uncommon good fortune to the well-rounded background I was provided with: a combination of solid technical expertise, preparedness for challenges ahead, and real-world experience. I chose to accept an excellent position in the wind energy industry and have found fulfillment in this position for more than two years.

I consider technical and mathematical competence to be essential to any modern career in the sciences, and am assured that many employers feel the same. Dr. Grimaldi provides essential background in this area, without which many job candidates could be put at a disadvantage. My analytical and computational abilities improved substantially as I moved through the meteorology major, and this provides many different benefits. Statistical analysis, data manipulation, and competence with Microsoft Excel were areas I had ignored prior to taking Dr. Grimaldi's upper-level courses, and these very areas are essential in my day-to-day duties. I also credit our research and

presentation work with improving my self-confidence in job interviews and opening many areas of discussion in my current field.

In summation, Dr. Richard Grimaldi was an integral part of my success and is an asset to the meteorology program at SUNY Oneonta. I have full confidence he will continue to provide support, experience, and expert knowledge to future students at Oneonta. With hard work, perseverance, and the excellent foundation provided through this program, I have no doubt future generations of Oneonta graduates will be able to succeed as I did.

### Thank you!

For the strong support many of you whom gave to VOTE-COPE this year! You know who you are! It's time to call on everyone you know, and for the members of Oneonta UUP that are not a part of VOTE-COPE! It's time to call upon them! YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE! It's time for all UUP and NYSUT members to join together and protect what VOTE-COPE has allowed many SUNY workers to enjoy!

How would you feel if you heard the 3% pay increase and the additional 5-day lag payroll, that YOU fought for are proposed to be eliminated by State Legislature sometime this year. What about "Governor David Paterson's current educational budget proposals?" Without students where would YOU be right now? And without the UUP? Would you have the benefits that you have now?

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