



The Sentinel

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UUP - Oneonta

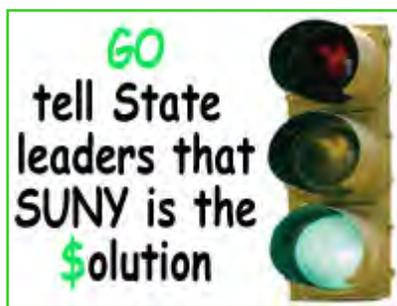
February 2010

"I believe I experience creativity at every moment of my life."

- Henri Bergson

UUP's Response to the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Proposal: A Draft

By Bill Simons, Chapter President



On January 26, 2010, a UUP Oneonta delegation, along with UUP contingents from SUNY campuses throughout the State, travelled to the New York State Legislature in Albany to meet with lawmakers and to explain UUP's serious reservations about the *Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act*. The following draft summary of New York State Governor David Paterson's proposed *Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act* and UUP's initial talking points in response to it was prepared by State UUP. Read the material carefully. The issues raised are perhaps the most grave in SUNY's history. UUP will continue its Outreach on behalf of SUNY until these matters are resolved. The outcome is far from assured, and the stakes are very high. When UUP asks you to support SUNY by letter, fax, email, and in-person advocacy, respond as though your job depends on it because it just might before this is over. Go to the Home Page of the State UUP site at <http://www.uupinfo.org/> periodically to remain current and check how you can advocate for SUNY. Advocate for SUNY for self, family, students, community, and College. Updates will follow. Indeed events on the ground may have altered between the writing and publication of this article. If so, we will let you know as soon as possible. For now, it is best to assume that the situation remains critical.

Something else. The reason that *The Sentinel* continues to run Alex Thomas' remarkable series on the University of the Catskills is precisely because crisis demands innovation, fresh perspective, and critical dialogue. Crisis creates challenge — and opportunity. As Alex notes, not only does geographic "location influence the SUNY Oneonta experience, it creates opportunities for an Oneonta University that is truly unique in scope: a public university committed to public outreach and research related to the community and environmental issues so critical to our times. Oneonta State University – the University of the Catskills. That's unique."

Take seriously and respond to the harsh realities below, but also take seriously Alex's challenge to create a better future. The two messages are not contradictory. Indeed, the former necessitates the latter.

UUP TALKING POINTS 2010-2011 EXECUTIVE BUDGET SUNY FLEXIBILITY

I. GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL

The legislation submitted by the Governor with his budget calls for the enactment of a Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act.

The Act provides SUNY with full authority to raise tuition without legislative approval, and impose differential tuition which is currently prohibited under current law.

It eliminates the current requirement for State appropriation of tuition and other SUNY revenues.

It also permits the University to lease campus properties, enter into contracts and variations of public/private partnerships with limited oversight.

II. UUP POSITION AND TALKING POINTS

- **UUP opposes the Governor’s proposal to grant SUNY the authority to raise tuition without legislative approval.**
- **UUP also opposes the Governor’s proposal to grant SUNY the authority to impose differential tuition.**
 - UUP cannot support these proposals which would clearly shift the burden to fund SUNY’s academic programs from the State to the students and their families. Under these proposals, SUNY is given the authority to institute across-the-board tuition increases up to 2 ½ times the five year rolling average of the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI).
 - The authority granting SUNY the flexibility to impose differential tuition is not subject to the HEPI cap or any other limitation – other than SUNY Board guidelines.
 - In effect, the Governor grants SUNY authority to exceed the HEPI cap for any specific campus or program, under the guise of differential tuition, and to whatever level the Board determines.
 - UUP believes that the State should have the primary responsibility to fund public higher education.
 - Under the Governor’s proposals no current student or applicant could possibly know how University tuition decisions will affect their subsequent ability to pay.
 - In that context, how can either the Governor or SUNY market this as a rational and predictable tuition policy?
 - We know that access and affordability are not mutually exclusive. If the Governor’s proposals are enacted, we run the very real risk of disenfranchising applicants from low and moderate income families.
 - Finally, these proposals set the stage for the eventual break up of the SUNY System. Competition among the campuses for students will certainly occur. Some campuses will be able to compete; others will not.
- **UUP opposes the elimination of State appropriations for SUNY’s expenditure of tuition, student fees and other campus revenues.**
 - This proposal permits SUNY to commingle tuition with other campus revenues and to spend these dollars without any oversight or limitation.
 - This will greatly diminish accountability for SUNY spending decisions.
 - The transparency of SUNY operations will be virtually eliminated.
 - In effect, under the Governor’s proposals, our public academic institutions will have the unrestricted freedom of SUNY’s private Research Foundation – which has been highly criticized for the secrecy of its operations.
- **UUP has serious reservations concerning proposals to provide SUNY the authority to enter into contracts, leases, public/private partnerships and joint ventures – in the absence of sufficient oversight.**
 - These provisions repeal statutes requiring that contracts and other related transactions be approved by the State Comptroller and Attorney General.
 - Leases and public/private partnerships which currently require legislative approval would be subject to a three person board consisting of one representative from each of the two majorities in the legislature and one appointed by the Governor. While this maintains some oversight, to ensure the propriety of those transactions additional oversight mechanisms will be

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imperative.

- Where employee protection language is provided, the language is insufficiently protective and requires substantial modification. In the absence of such modification, outsourcing becomes probable.
- In summary, UUP can not support these provisions, as drafted. Oversight will need to be enhanced and employee protections strengthened.



UUP Concern for Part-timers: Fairness and Equity is Paramount

By Rob Compton, VP for Academics

Close to or more than fifty percent (50%) of teaching faculty in our statewide UUP bargaining unit are part-timers. If you included graduate students teaching (who have their own union), on some campuses the majority of the courses are taught by non-tenured or tenure track. UUP Oneonta believes in the need to encourage the creation of more full-time opportunities for those part-timers desiring full-time employment. While UUP has pushed for health care for part-timers, their economic situation is still precarious: they are not generally able to earn tenure, and most of all their salaries are unfairly low.

Reality Hits Home for Adjuncts

There is very limited opportunity for upward career movement within the contingent labor market. Virtually all adjuncts start as adjuncts and finish their careers as adjuncts. The fact of the matter is that the “crew” at McDonalds have greater opportunities for upward advancement than adjuncts who teach the future generations of our country. That is a real travesty and injustice. On campus, they are hired to “only teach the course(s)” but that means that they are often excluded from departmental advising, meetings, and the distribution of professional development funds. In other words, they are truly at the mercy of “supply and demand”. All the responsibilities of teaching with limited privileges. In fact, there services could be discontinued at a future date. Indeed, they are semester-to-semester. How can you build financial and professional stability under those circumstances? “Get a full-time job?” I remind the reader of the state of the upstate economy. These issues are a subject for a future article, but here I’d like to focus on the economic crisis and the potential impact on part-timers. What can we do now on this campus?

We know SUNY employees, especially faculty, are generally underpaid in contrast to many other public university systems. These are tough economic times and things can get ‘out-of-hand’ quickly as the economic uncertainty brings out the worst in some people. It doesn’t have to be that way nor should it. Collectively and individually, I’d like you to consider the economic livelihood of part-timers on this campus. Yes, some have other full-time jobs. Many others depend on a series of PT jobs to make ends meet, teaching at Delhi, Hartwick, Cobleskill, Cortland, Broome and other colleges to cobble together a marginally survivable income. A few years ago, an adjunct told me, “I was in a grocery store using food stamps and I was embarrassed when I realized that the cashier was my student.” Imagine the cognitive dissonance of the student who realized that his/her “professor” was relegated to the margins of the American economy and had to use food stamps. Imagine the potential alienation from labor and status inconsistency that the part-timer must have felt.

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All of us know that the work that part-time faculty do is under-compensated. Let’s look at it this way: If we start with the assumption that 80% of our work is teaching, then we can take the average professorial salary (in thousands of \$) at Oneonta from the Chronicle of Higher Education for 08-09: Professor 82.7; Associate Professor 63.4; and Assistant Professor 54.7%. Assuming the standard 7 courses a year teaching load, the Professor is paid \$9451 per course taught, the Associate Professor is paid \$7246, and the Assistant Professor is paid \$6251. The starting salary for our adjuncts is \$2500. While they are eligible for DSI and earn the contractually negotiated amounts, almost all adjuncts receive less than \$3000. Adjunct salaries, just like the minimum wage has not kept up with inflation.

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During these tough economic times coupled with the social exclusion that most adjuncts experience, it is easy for decisions made to negatively impact the adjunct. It's easy to assume that "the adjunct has another full-time job" or that "the university or college really does not have any legal obligation to an individual". While technically the case, we are a community. When a community needs to resort to legalistic formulations for individual protection, it's a sign of decay. While legal protections are necessary and important in this day and age, we should try to create and maintain a community. I realize that sometimes the egos and personalities preclude such conditions and legal and procedural protections are desirable and necessary, but the form the basis of the community and cannot substitute for it. Otherwise, it is merely a collection of individuals pursuing their own interests. I merely urge you to place yourself in the part-timers shoe and be kind to them.

What is to Be Done

Over the next several years, the tough economy will require us to make tough choices. Part of those choices will impact part-timers. Some of adjuncts have taught at the college for many years, sometimes more than a decade or two. They have come to rely on two or more course, not just for financial survival but for the much needed health insurance. When an adjunct who teaches two or more courses suddenly becomes unemployed, then the income AND insurance is gone. When the adjunct losses a course and goes down to one course, he/she loses the health insurance. Some of our adjuncts used to be public school teachers, were let go several years ago, and teach at a college or university to maintain their active enrollment in their pensions. When these adjuncts are let go, the pension suffers too.

Colleagues, including department chairs and administrators, please think about the social impact of decisions that you make or part-take in making. Most of all be considerate and kind to part-timers by treating them with respect and as genuine colleagues and refrain from the merely perfunctory "hi" or silence.

UUP Diversity Panel Discussion, March 24, 2010

UUP invites all members of the College and Community to its second Diversity Panel Discussion on March 24, 2010, at Le Cafe in Morris Hall Room, from 12 noon-1pm. Complimentary box lunch will be served. Vegetarian options are also available. To reserve a box lunch, call 436-2135, leave your name, and indicate whether or not you are reserving a vegetarian option.

The purpose of this panel discussion is to understand the experiences of International faculty members on the SUNY Oneonta campus. The panel consists of 1) Dr. Damayanthie Eluwawalage, Assistant Professor, Department of Human Ecology; 2) Dr. Moussa Traore, Assistant Professor, Department of Human Ecology; and 3) Dr. Miguel Leon, Assistant Professor, History Department. Dr. Eluwawalage is from Australia; Dr. Traore is from Mali; and Dr. Leon is originally from Peru. The moderator of the panel discussion is Dr. Nithya Iyer, Assistant Professor, Educational Psychology and Counseling. Dr. Iyer is originally from India.

The panel is sponsored by UUP. All College employees, students, and the general community are welcome to attend.

College and Community III

By Mike McAvoy, UUP Treasurer

Coming later this semester during an April lunch hour in a comfortable location on campus, I am pleased to be the organizer and moderator of College and Community III, the third in a series of panels sponsored by UUP on the relationship between SUNY College at Oneonta and the region. UUP is committed to examining means of collaboration and partnership between town and gown, and emphasizes that "SUNY is the Solution." While the panel is under consideration, our distinguished panelists will present their thoughts on the role of the college in the local economy and audience questions will follow the formal remarks of the panelists. UUP will provide complimentary box lunches and beverages to attendees. The College and Community III discussion is open to all. College employees, students, community members, and others are welcome to attend and participate.



To Be Special

By Alex Thomas, Associate Professor, Sociology,
and UUP Representative,
Labor-Management Grants Committee

From childhood we have all been told that we are special or unique or different, and indeed we are. In fact, unique characteristics are found across nature: every individual sheep has a unique nose, a unique tail, and a unique personality. Standing in a crowd of unique individuals, however, sheep become a sea of dirty wool by and large indistinguishable from one another. We'll leave the consequences for your individual sense of self alone, and instead consider the flock of colleges and universities with whom SUNY Oneonta must compete. But first a lesson in sociology.

In organizational theory, a basic distinction is made between broad (or general) niches and those that are more narrowly focused. In popular parlance, we think of a narrow niche when we use the term "niche," but properly speaking a broad-based niche is still technically a niche. The type of niche an organization occupies influences its economic strategy and its chances of success. For instance, an organization with a broad niche – for example, selling nails – will typically do best if there is an expanding market for the product. General niches generally have lots of competition, and continued growth provides lots of customers that keep competition at a less than cutthroat pace. However, if growth slows or new technologies give some organizations an edge over others, and the number of players will decline as they are outcompeted. In order to minimize the likelihood that it will fail, most organizations will attempt to remain as similar to their competitors as possible by following "best practices:" basically, copying the practices of other organizations. Over time, general niche firms begin to look the same: this is called "mimetic isomorphism."

Properly speaking, an organization with a "narrow niche" has some complex of goods or services that it offers that few, if any, other organizations offer. In other words, there is little competition. This strategy is not necessarily the panacea it is sometimes made out to be as it does offer some potential danger. If the potential market is too small, for instance, the organization may not succeed: consider the potential fate of a Mercedes dealer in Oneonta, for example. On the other hand, if the market is large enough to support the organization but not so large as a general niche, the organization can thrive. Consider the market for specialty beers, for example. (A quick aside: some of us in the sociology department occasionally and responsibly enjoy the locally-brewed Three Philosophers, which we arrogate to our discipline due to our three founding figures of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim).

What is the significance of this quick tour of sociological theory for our potential regional university? Consider what it is the SUNY Oneonta has to offer, and think about whether we are truly unique in that offering or not. For instance, the technology here at SUCO is great: enhanced classrooms, state-of-the-art computer labs, and knowledgeable people make teaching and learning here a great experience. But is it a narrow niche? Are there other colleges that do technology well, or perhaps even better than Oneonta? Does SUNY Oneonta have nanotechnology like SUNY Albany? Or the Artificial Intelligence capabilities of MIT? The short answer is "no." Technology is today so central to the educational experience at other colleges that to promote our college as a college for technology is to place us in a general niche, and a general niche that includes universities that actually do better than we do. Similarly, we should be careful not to promote the "uniqueness" of SUNY Oneonta in arenas in which other SUNY colleges perform well: all SUNY colleges are required to assess general education, we are not unique in that. Other SUNY colleges have made the Money Magazine list. On that list, SUNY Oneonta is tied for tenth place with Hunter College and Queens College, both CUNY schools, and only one notch above Fredonia. New Paltz is ranked at 8 and Geneseo at 2. And, unlike actual living students, Money Magazine only compares us to other "Masters Universities;" how many students or parents have even heard of Carnegie classifications? How many of our faculty have? SUNY Oneonta has made tremendous strides and we deserve to congratulate ourselves for that progress, but we are not unique in such progress. To develop a strategic plan that involves us looking to our immediate competitors for inspiration will only lead to more institutional isomorphism and the problems of being in too general a niche.

SUNY Oneonta does play the narrow niche well. We have one of the best Museum Studies programs in the country, and new programs in Dietetics and Lakes Management also serve a narrow niche. In fact,

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both Museum Studies and Lakes Management capitalize on our location in the Catskills and near the museums of the New York State Historical Association. In what other ways could the SUNY Oneonta experience build on our truly unique components?

Readers of this series surely know the answer. Oneonta is unique in its location: the only Masters I university in the Catskills, less than an hour from three metropolitan areas and in the hinterlands of the greatest city on earth. Within an hour of legendary skiing, hiking, and other outdoor activities. Our critics, and there are many in the college itself, may say that we are in the middle of nowhere, but really we are in the middle of everywhere. And not only does this location influence the SUNY Oneonta experience, it creates opportunities for an Oneonta University that is truly unique in scope: a public university committed to public outreach and research related to the community and environmental issues so critical to our times. Oneonta State University – the University of the Catskills. That’s unique.

UUP MEMBERS CONFER WITH Assemblyman Peter Lopez

*By Gina Keel, Academic Delegate and Outreach Representative,
and Fred Miller, Academic Delegate and Outreach Representative*



On the chilly morning of January 15, ***Assemblyman Peter Lopez*** (*Republican—Assembly District 127*) met with UUP Chapter representatives and a student leader on the SUNY Oneonta campus. UUP members present were Bill Simons, Robert Compton, Michael McAvoy, Hanfu Mi, Fred Miller, and Gina Keel. Joshua Symer, SUNY Student Association State District 2 Representative, joined the advocacy group.

The group met for two hours and explored the major issues facing SUNY, UUP, and the State Legislature in 2010. Paramount among those issues are the continuing decline in state support for SUNY’s operating budget, increased tuition revenues diverted to the general fund, and the promise and dangers of SUNY flexibility proposals. Attendees considered the impact on education quality and access for all New York students in this continuing fiscal crisis.

Assemblyman Lopez was open and frank about the extreme financial difficulties facing New York and the fact that the 2010-2011 State Budget is not going to be very popular with anyone. He demonstrated understanding and concern for public higher education’s mission and its investment function for producing the state’s next generation of workers and citizens. He listened to UUP warnings and student testimonials about: over-use of part-timers, overcrowded classes, inability of some students to get classes to finish their degree programs in four years, and the increasing burden student loan debt. Pete (his preferred moniker) cautioned the group that many in the legislature focus on the aggregate appropriation of past years, incremental changes, and don’t distinguish between Capital Budgets and Operating Budgets. He suggested that SUNY advocates help inform legislators of their ideas about where to find savings through better resource use and focus on student outcomes.

Pete again demonstrated candor and insight when discussing the advantages and pitfalls of “flexibility” proposals. He seemed acutely conscious of the need to balance opportunity for innovation through community partnerships with the preservation of SUNY as a public institution entrusted with public assets. The group seemed to agree that SUNY should not become a group of semi-independent schools and colleges that set their own tuition and take risks without proper oversight to ensure accountability and fiscal integrity. UUP favors a more cautious approach that focuses on efficiency enhancements and removing bureaucratic impediments to normal operations.

Overall, the meeting was successful in establishing a true dialogue among informed, concerned, and sincere leaders seeking the best options for preserving our State University.



UUP Labor Film Series

At Hunt Union Red Dragon Theater

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



Spring Semester 2010 Program

Norma Rae

Wednesday, March 10, 6:15 – 8:30 PM

Norma Rae is a low-wage worker in a small-town Southern cotton mill who gains the courage to challenge traditions and finds her activist voice. Inspired by a labor organizer, she risks economic and personal consequences to improve unhealthy working conditions and establish a union in her shop. In this performance, Sally Field broke out of her nice-girl stereotype and won an Academy Award for Best Actress. Celebrate Women's contributions to history this month along with us. (1979)



Arlit, deuxième Paris

Arlit, the second Paris **Wednesday, April 21, 6:15 - 7:45 PM**

Arlit is a uranium mining town in the Sahara desert of Niger developed by European corporations that extracted profits to fuel nuclear power and left behind radiation sickness, contamination, and unemployment. Arlit flourished during early 70s when its mines employed 25,000 workers from across Africa in high paying jobs. Now, it's little more than a ghost town and place of transit. In French, Bariba, Hausa and Tamashek with English subtitles. See this film with an environmental justice theme just before Earth Day. (2005)

These films run approximately 2 hrs, and will be followed by an audience discussion. For more information, please contact Professor Gina L. Keel, Film Series Director, at keelgl@oneonta.edu

Retiree Concerns Or; Who Me?---Worry?

*By Fred Miller, Academic Delegate
and Outreach Representative*

I receive mail and e-mail from a number of different retiree organizations to which I belong. For the last several months most of their communications have focused on the Health Care issue. Every few days I receive something describing some facet of one plan or another and the effect that it might have on retirees. Within a few days, I frequently receive another communication (sometimes from the same source, sometimes from a different one) telling me that that particular plan has been changed or dropped altogether or that the first communication had the facts all wrong.

I have hesitated to write anything for the Sentinel about these issues because by the time you read in February what I'm writing in January, what I have written probably will be totally irrelevant and possibly misleading. With all the possible results of the various Health Care Plans and the frightening impact some of them may have on retired people, I'm thankful that I'm only slightly paranoid; otherwise, I'd be exhausted from the worry.

Having said all that--- let me share some excerpts from a communication reacting to a portion of Gov. Patterson's proposed 2010-2011 NY State budget. The communication is from The Retired Public Employees Association and is dated January 21, 2010:

"The Executive Budget proposal calls for retirees participating in NYSHIP and Medicare (and active employees enrolled in Medicare) to pay a fee in return for their Medicare Part B reimbursement-10% of Medicare Part B premiums for individual coverage and 25% for dependent coverage"

The analysis by the RPEA which follows that statement contends that, if the Governor's plan is adopted, "public employees will be losing anywhere from \$115.68 per year for individuals to \$289.20 for families at a minimum." The analysis continues to say that families with higher incomes would be "taxed" more and, "---could be paying as much as \$1,060.80 per year---in addition to paying the regular premiums for retiree health insurance under the NYSHIP program."

By the time this article you are reading appears in The Sentinel we all may have heard/read a great deal more about this proposal of the Governor or it might have disappeared. It may have "been removed from the table", as they say; or it may remain in the budget, but be obscured by other issues which may seem more important. It may or may not be passed by the Legislature if it ever gets to them.

Happy paranoia!

UUP Encourages Recycling

Solidarity,

Justice,

Environmental Responsibility

Please



Thanks

Succeeding As Women In Higher Education: Neoliberalism & Our Discontents

By Kathleen O'Mara, Chair,
Africana & Latino Studies;
and UUP, Oneonta Chapter

The Center for Gender and Intercultural Studies at SUNY Cortland organized a three day conference, October 23-25, 2009 which explored a number of issues related to the achievements of women in higher education. Dr. Mecke



Nagel, the CGIS director managed to secure the new SUNY Chancellor, Dr. Nancy Zimpher, the first woman to head SUNY, as a special guest speaker for day two. The keynote speaker, Dr. Sarah Fenstermaker, Prof of Sociology, UC Santa Barbara, who is known for her work on gender inequality, e.g., *Doing Gender, Doing Difference: Inequality, Power, and Institutional Change*, presented on "Ivory Towers, Playing Fields, and Glass Ceilings: Beyond Metaphor to Best Practices." There were three SUNY Oneonta faculty presenters in attendance: Drs. Patricia Francis, Betty Wambui, and Kathleen O'Mara (see photo at left).

The conference's operating assumption, that women should be assuming greater leadership roles in the academy, was the reason the conference organizers invited papers and panels to assess the persistence of what Bernice Sandler two decades ago called "the chilly climate" for women. The organizers also encouraged proposals recommending substantive change, hoping discussions at the conference would be pursued in regional meetings and email fora. Although the conference could have been merely female academic cheerleading of the "You've come a long way, baby" sort, that perspective was minimal and balanced by critiques of slow progress, depressing gaps in acknowledging women as not just academic workers, but as mothers, child raisers and elder caregivers, and the socio-economic context of our neoliberal moment. The presence of a number of UUP activists contributed to intense discussions about the work that still needs to be done on the issue of gender parity vis à vis salaries, workloads, tenure, and promotion. Fred Floss, VP for Academics, UUP, provided an analysis of "gender and declining wage premiums" which was alarming. Several presentations addressed the problems and exploitation of contingent academic labor, and the obstacles for women of color and immigrant academic women. SUNY Oneonta's Betty Wambui participated on a panel detailing the difficult experiences of academics in the U.S. from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

As someone who examines the discursive constraints of neoliberalism in the academy, I observed the presenters' widespread acceptance of corporate discourse, e.g., excellence, best practices, diversity, but not especially neoliberal policies in action. The keynote speaker for example tried to redeploy best practices. When Chancellor Zimpher asserted that she "believed in the business model" and inferred that such a commitment may have influenced the SUNY Search Committee which chose her for the chancellor's position, a number of academics present registered dismay, and spoke later about their disappointment. She also endorsed "decentralization" and campus specialization which led to participants later voicing much concern over SUNY's "direction." Looking back, I note that despite incisive, thoughtful analyses of gender inequity, many conference participants preferred to believe in the idea of great gender "progress," cataloging gains, which over several decades have been substantial, rather than identifying the profound constraints of our neoliberal university which divides and pits a part time, temporary, heavily female "contingent" labor "precariat" against full time, tenured and tenure track work force, and reduces faculty to flexible labor inputs expected to deliver transferable skills and data to student customers (Gill & Pratt 2008,10). Tougher, critical understandings were produced in papers such as "The Myth of Meritocracy, Civility, and Success for Women in the Academy;" "Sisterhood is Overrated: Women Administrators and Faculty on the Realities of Surviving a Chilly Climate;" "The Politics of Data: What the EEOC Compliance Chart Conceals and So Perpetuates as 'Normative'..." and "Assessing Equity in Faculty Workload at SUNY Cortland."

My paper addressed the distortions and constraints of corporate discourse, a lexicon full of "sound and fury," of assertions of accomplishment, "signifying nothing" since excellence, diversity, best practices, employer of choice, equity, inclusion, accountability, etc., are shifting signifiers meaning whatever the speaker wants, referring to nothing concrete, only a claim or a hope. Many of our students of color comprehend this practice when they note,

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“Oneonta’s diversity is all on the web page, not the classroom.” Another problem of ‘difference’ is the expected gender performance for academic women which pivots on expressions of unrelentingly upbeat and cheerleading discourse and a performance “norm” which is very white and middle class and which leaves few spaces for women to resist profoundly conformist heteronormative expressions of femininity.

The rationale for such expectations and practices is provided by the “appreciative inquiry” approach to administrative management in which only “positive” discussions are permitted. Indeed, as Gervase Bushe notes, AI’s distinctive competence is as an intervention into the social construction of reality.” Unfortunately, keeping the focus on the positive,” rather than making democratically “planned change,” often avoids the anxiety of dealing with real concerns and structural problems, and ends up suppressing dissent, indeed, becoming an administrative practice of repression. The twenty first century when significant numbers of women academics have succeeded in higher education has also coincided with the rapid spread of AI practices we all recognize, e.g., “Discovery, Dream, and Design for institutional transformation.” At desk level we recognize such practices as “function creep,” i.e., more work, more “accountability” for faculty, less time for scholarship or family life as well as an implicit demand for our complicity in speed-up, longer work hours, and larger work loads. At the micro level of academic departments a new repertoire of techniques and discourse related to AI has emerged for silencing complaints, and negating difficulties in “collegial relations” such as ostracism, mobbing, and ridicule of dissent as negativism. Worryingly, academics who practice such behaviors are rewarded with resources and merit pay. This imposed focus on the positive is a discursive constraint with material consequences. When only certain kinds of commentary are permitted, there are other consequences which we all recognize: stress, health problems, and hostile work environments? The irony is that as disagreement is reframed as not focusing on the positive, academics are loudly encouraged to be “collaborative,” as if no one previously was!

Today many academics endorse neoliberal notions of flexibility on the job (e.g., vastly increased assessment exercises, frequent curricular innovations) without calculating the “speed-up,” attached to the intensification of workloads, especially attending the drive to adopt new technologies such as online communications platforms (e.g., ANGEL, Moodle) and the resulting need for continuous retraining, i.e., “encouragements” to employ WebCt creatively, (Gill 2008). The “tyranny of email” is another discursive and time constraint, naturalized so that academics openly acknowledge the anxiety of checking email first thing in the morning while pouring corn flakes into the kids’ breakfast bowls. Again, the increased feminization of the academic work force has intersected with what Negri (2000) identified as the whole society placed at the disposal of profit, the “factory without walls,” or the academy without walls, where we work 18-7, still feel guilty about not doing enough and then must go home to “get any real work done.”

I have described some of the discursive practices and material constraints that affect all academics, not just women, to underscore that the conditions of academic work require critical scrutiny in new terms, not those of the EEOC or the statistical breakdown of workloads, tenure and promotion by gender. At the Succeeding AS Women Conference, many participants were still employing these measures. Instead a number of us urged all to acknowledge and contest the authoritarian character of neoliberalism in the academy, its demands for conformity, its gross inequalities along the lines of FT/PT work, and the departmental “kitchen” work provided by complicit women academics and our untenured colleagues fearful of job termination.

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The “Sacred City” of Caral or this Long, Long Andean Past

By Miguel León, Oneonta Representative,
Statewide UUP Latino Concerns Committee

[Editor’s Note: Dr. Miguel León, History Department, possesses a visceral authenticity. He notes, “*Because I am a historian raised and partially educated in the Andes (Peru), I will bring a non-European perspective to my historiographical and archaeological vision without ignoring the developments of historical and archaeological research which were born in the West. It is a personal duty to speak differently about the past because I represent a culture that developed in isolation for thousands of years without interactions with other civilizations. At the same time, I do not think that the Andean civilization is absolutely “unique.” On the contrary, I believe that it can be compared to other civilizations.*”]

In a previous article, I wrote about better times in Peru. In addition to the economic boom, political stability and optimism among Peruvians, I also witnessed another interesting development, it is something that I am calling “an archaeological boom”. A series of spectacular archaeological discoveries are enriching the cultural patrimony of Peru, especially in the Northern part of the country, but not limited to that region. Due to the magnitude of the discoveries, in particular Caral, I thought that it was necessary to write about it in a separate piece. I have divided the article into three parts. First, I will narrate my visit to the ancient site; second, I will briefly discuss the anthropological implications of its discovery and, third, I will reflect on its significance in contemporary Peru.

The trip to Caral was in itself a magical experience. Leaving Lima at 8:30 a.m., I arrived at Supe, a small coastal town after three hours. The journey takes you through beautiful views of the Pacific Ocean, scary cliffs, dusty towns and deserts. The desert makes this trip truly special. Aside from feeling completely detached from urban life, its noise and pace, you feel as though you are entering into a new dimension, a dimension in which your sensibilities are more receptive to time and the sense of sacredness. It is a short trip, but you feel like you have traveled to an extremely remote place. As I was leaving the site I felt a strange urgency for moving close to Caral; it was as if the sacred city acted like a magnetic force pulling me into its influence. When I came back the next day, I woke up to the news that Caral had been designated a cultural patrimony of the world by UNESCO.

Caral is located 200 kilometers north of Lima. The Caral archaeological site is a large settlement of around 66 hectares composed mainly of pyramids, circular sunken plazas, amphitheatres and residential architecture. Caral, which was discovered in 1996 by the Peruvian archaeologist Ruth Shady, is 4,500 years old. One of the most fascinating things about this site is its antiquity. For a long time we thought that the cultures of the Americas were late in their development. Archaeologists dated the rise of civilization in the Americas around 1,000 B.C. However, Caral Civilization is 1,500 years older than that which adds a significant amount of time to the development of Andean civilization and makes it even older than the Chinese civilization??!!.

Caral is destroying all previous schemes developed by European and American anthropologists who have tried to explain the evolution of complex societies. According to anthropological theory, the presence of ceramics is usually associated with a society of standardized culture which is evidence of a sophisticated level of social organization and management of resources. The absence of ceramics in this site questions many premises in anthropological theory. The development of technology has been considered a priority in our understanding of the evolution of societies. In the case of Caral, religion and trade seem to be central. What Caral may be teaching us is that human societies do not need to follow the same path of evolution. Some archaeologists have named Caral a “missing link”, a society somewhere between the Neolithic Revolution and the rise of City-states. Another astonishing feature of Caral is that archaeologists have not found weapons or signs of warfare in this site. Unlike most other societies which reached this level of complexity, Caral was a society in which war did not play a significant role.

Ruth Shady renamed Caral, the “Sacred City of Caral”. The site has been “*puesto en valor*” (put into value) in an aggressive way. Caral has a website which is very good, [www. http://www.caralperu.gob.pe/nueva/principal_ing.html](http://www.caralperu.gob.pe/nueva/principal_ing.html). The actual site is visited by hundreds of tourists, mainly Peruvians, during the weekends. In addition to a tour of the site, visitors are exposed to native Andean ceremonies such as shamanistic practices of purification and blessings that are organized by the staff. Shamans perform

continued

rituals at night, torches light the site and a main fire is at the center of the ceremonies. Caral has been “reinvented” as a sacred place which enriches the development of Andean Spirituality. Spiritualities require sacred places to develop, to nurture contemplation, ritual and validation, in the same way religions such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism operate.

Another significance of Caral is the impact it is having on the historical consciousness of Peruvians. In my previous article I mentioned the improvement of Peruvians’ self-esteem. Definitely, Caral and other archaeological discoveries are enriching Peruvian identity in many ways. I can mention a few of them: it is contributing to developing a strong national identity, it is vindicating once more, the importance of this long, long Andean past in the lives of Peruvians today and, especially, it is an asset that Peruvians can use to see the future with pride and confidence.



Aerial view of Caral site with the Main Temple and the Supe Valley in the background.



A view of Two of Caral Pyramids.

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 go to the UUP Oneonta chapter website, which is designed and maintained by Kyle Britton, go to the following link <http://www.oneontauup.org>

The chapter website contains a number of innovative features and links.

The statewide **UUP website** is located at www.uupinfo.org It contains information about members benefits and many other important topics.

SENTINEL QUIZ



After his retirement from the Coast Guard, this author, born in Ithaca, NY, became a senior editor for *Reader's Digest* and conducted interviews for *Playboy*. He collaborated on a "as told to" autobiography with an iconic black leader who was felled by an assassin. He became famous for a multigenerational saga, recounted in a best-selling book and on a landmark television mini-series that allegedly related the history of his own family. **Who is he?**

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

The answer to the last Sentinel quiz: *"This College at Oneonta coach, whose career spanned several decades, had an overall win record of over 80%. Who is the coach and sport?"* The answer is Coach John Hurley. The first correct answers were provided by Maddy Hayes and Jack Callaci. Maddy Hayes, currently of Academic Information Technology Services, formerly worked for the Physical Education and Athletic Departments. Jack Callaci is a former SUNY Oneonta track star, current labor leader, and elected member of our College Athletic Hall of Fame. Jack wrote:

"The answer can only be my coach and my friend John T. Hurley. By the way, there was one other question you left out. How many coaches can boast that over thirty years after graduation all of his boys came out to see him for a reunion? We love him. Jack..... Of course I met him as simply coach Hurley. But it was my great pleasure to quickly come to know him as a man. A man of principle, a real old line FDR Democrat, a most interesting fellow and a man with a big heart. I don't know if you know this but after my freshman year in cross country, I was not running for the team. I was just running tons of miles and loving it. It was John that suggested I run the marathon and on his own time with his own money he encouraged me, coached me, took me to stay with his mom in Salem, Mass. before the marathon."



Coach Hurley and the team late 1970s



Coach Hurley and the same team 2009

Shale Gas: Blessing or Curse?

By Ron Bishop, UUP Health-Safety Officer

The Southern Tier of New York lies over two vast natural gas repositories, the Marcellus and Utica shales. Is shale gas a blessing or a curse?

Energy developers and landowner coalitions assert that a robust gas extraction industry here would bring prosperity to our region and reduce our nation's dependence on foreign energy supplies. For example, a commissioned report, "Potential Economic and Fiscal Benefits from Natural Gas Production in Broome County, New York" (1) projects that this industry could bring a positive economic impact of up to \$15 billion over 10 years to just one county.



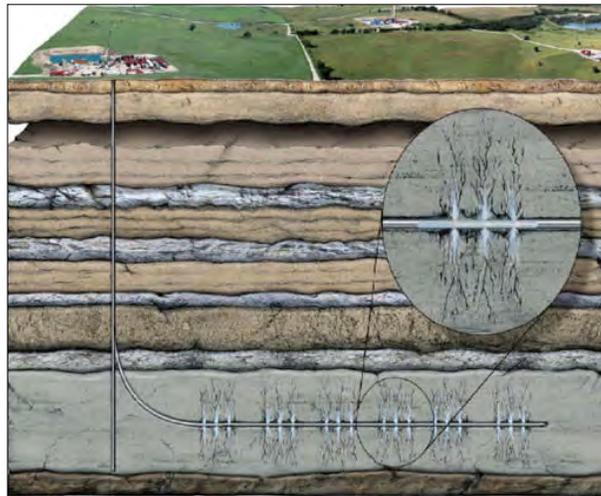
More cautious observers cite a report, "Fossil Fuel Extraction as a County Economic Development Strategy" (2) which showed that counties hosting intensive oil and gas extraction performed more poorly over 35 years than similar counties where there was little or no drilling. "Energy-focusing" counties ended up with smaller economies, lower student graduation rates, and greater disparity between rich and poor residents.

Why are these two profiles so different? The former considers only the boom phase of industrial development while the latter takes the entire boom-bust cycle into account. Rather than supporting economic recovery, the gas industry appears to be one from which we would have to recover over the long term.

And that's before we consider environmental damages.

Shale rock doesn't release gas readily, so intensive means are required to bring it to the surface. Briefly, a well is drilled vertically to the gas-bearing rock, then horizontally to keep the well bore in the production zone (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Horizontal Drilling / Hydraulic Fracturing



The entire hole is cased in steel and concrete, and deep segments are sequentially perforated, washed with acid, and hydraulically fractured with a mixture of water, sand and system is installed to separate brines (up to 6 times more salty than seawater) from gases. Also, a pipeline must be built to convey the gas to a pipeline grid (not yet existent in our part of the state).

For drilling and "hydrofracturing", each gas well project requires an average of 4 million gallons of water to which are added biocides (to prevent microbe growth), thickeners (to carry sand more effectively), surfactants (to improve the fluid's rock penetration), corrosion inhibitors and other additives – about 10 tons of chemicals in all, not including sand. More than three-quarters of them are associated with risks to human or ecological health (some at concentrations below their chemical detection limits) (3), and more than half remain deep in the bedrock where their effects on living systems are completely unknown.

Evidence is accumulating that the drilling / hydrofracturing process is culpable for real harm (4). However, greater impacts to surrounding communities generally arise from fields and forests fragmented by all-weather access roads (Figure 2),

continued

Figure 2. Allegheny National Forest, Pennsylvania



rural roads and bridges crumbled by up to a thousand heavy trucks per well (5), chemical spills, seeping brine ponds, tanker accidents, pipeline leaks and dense diesel exhaust fumes (6).

Recognizing the greater (50-fold greater) scale that distinguishes modern shale gas projects from traditional gas wells in New York, Governor Paterson ordered the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to develop new regulations for the natural gas industry. In September 2009, they released a draft Supplement to the Generic Environmental Impact Statement for Oil, Gas and Solution Mining. This document sparked enormous controversy, eliciting more than 10 thousand public comments. Among them was a letter from the New York State Public Employees Federation (PEF) that urges a moratorium on gas development with hydrofracturing for at least a year (7). DEC union employees allege that neither the draft regulations nor agency infrastructure are adequate to fulfill their missions vis-à-vis large scale natural gas extraction.

The energy we use has to come from somewhere. But is now the time to exploit natural gas, with technology and regulatory systems so immature? On Thursday, February 18, starting at 6:30 in the Craven Lounge of Morris Hall, I'll be presenting on the gas industry. I hope to see you there.

1. "Potential economic and fiscal impacts from natural gas production in Broome County, New York", Preliminary Report for Broome County Legislators. B.L. Weinstein and T.L. Clower, July 2009.
2. "Fossil Fuel Extraction as a County Economic Development Strategy: Are Energy-focusing Counties Benefiting?", A Report from the Energy and the West Series. Headwaters Economics, Revised July 2009.
3. "Beyond MSDS: A Review of Hazardous Materials Used by New York's Natural Gas Industry". R.E. Bishop, Sustainable Otsego (www.sustainableotsego.org) September 2009.
4. "EPA: Chemicals Found in Wyoming Drinking Water Might Be from Natural Gas Drilling". Abrahm Lustgarten, ProPublica; Scientific American, August 26, 2009.
5. "Riding Out the Rush for Riches". Jill Ercolino, PA Township News, June 2008.
6. "Health Survey Results of Current and Former DISH / Clark, Texas, Residents". Wilma Subra, Earthworks' Oil and Gas Accountability Project, December 2009.
7. Letter from Steward Council of Division 169, PEF/encon to dSGEIS Comments, NYSDEC, December 28, 2009.

Ninash Foundation Celebrates the 10th Anniversary of the Oneonta Sister City Project by Visiting India



**Dr. Ashok Malhotra, SUNY Oneonta -
Philosophy Department
and
Ms. Linda Drake, SUNY Oneonta -
Director of the Center for Social
Responsibility and Community
and
The Children of Dundlod
Indo-International School**

The Ninash Foundation Team of ten people celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Oneonta sister city project in India from December 27, 2009 to January 17, 2010. Dr. Ashok Malhotra, President of the Ninash Foundation and SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor and Ms. Linda Drake, Treasurer of the Ninash Foundation and Director, SUNY Oneonta Center for Social Responsibility and Community accompanied the group consisting of Dr. John Koller, Board Member and Professor Emeritus, RPI, Troy, New York; Dr. Mimi Forman, Board Member and Psychotherapist, New York City; Mr. Mike Whelan, Filmmaker from Saratoga Springs; Ms. Imola, artist from Las Vegas; Mr. Raj Malhotra, Secretary for the Ninash Foundation and Investment consultant from New Jersey; Mrs. Christina Malhotra, Board Member and Grant Writer for music and art, New York City, and Ms. Rayna and Ms. Anya, third grade and Kindergarten students from Glen Ridge, New Jersey.

From December 28, 2009 to January 8, 2010, the Ninash Team visited the five Indo-International schools and was involved in a number of celebrative activities.

On December 30, the Ninash group visited the Indo-International Culture Preservation School, Mahapura, Jaipur. Here Drs. John Koller and Mimi Forman could see with their own eyes the difference their financial contributions have made towards building the state-of-the-art Computer-Library with six computers and two thousand books as well as an artisan wing in the school that will provide vocational instructions to children towards creating and restoring stained glass windows, a dying art in India. This library and the artisan wing will be accessible to the children, faculty and members of the community.



**Mahapura Indo-International
Culture School**

From December 31, 2009 to January 4, 2010, the celebrative events at the Oneonta Sister City Indo-International School in Dundlod involved the opening of the up-to-date Christy Koller Memorial Library-Computer Center with seven thousand books, computers, DVD and CD players, over head projector, email and educational games.

The Dundlod Indo-International School that started with 50 impoverished children in 1996 has grown from an elementary to a high school with 550 children. It is Ninash's star school because it has proudly sent 10 underprivileged children to college during 2009. The school celebrated its 14th anniversary with the performances by the children in Rajasthani, Hindi and English to entertain the foreign and local guests. It was an impressive heart-winning performance by the children.



**Dundlod Indo-International
School**

Moreover, thanks to the efforts of Linda Drake and generous contributions of the Oneonta and Cooperstown communities, 28 dairy goats were given away to the poorest of poor villagers of Dundlod so that they would have milk and cheese to feed their families. During the past four years, local donors have graciously contributed a total of 103 goats to the village of Dundlod. Furthermore, the Ninash Team gave away a harmonium to a blind musician of Dundlod in recognition of his contributions to providing entertainment to the SUNY groups since 1996.

The Indo-International School in Kuran, situated in a remote area of Gujarat, which was devastated by the 2001 earthquake, was opened by the Ninash Foundation with 205 children in 2001, now has grown to 235 in 2010. From January 6-8, 2010, Dr. Malhotra and Ms. Drake

continued

participated in a number of celebrative events: they performed the ribbon cutting ceremony to inaugurate a new High School to be built during the next year; moreover, they opened a state-of-the-art Library-Computer Center with six computers and internet along with one thousand books, news papers and educational games. The Mayor of Kuran, called the Sarpanch, celebrated the event by sending the first email to Drs. John Koller and Mimi Forman for their financial contributions towards the opening of the new library in memory of their daughter Christy Koller. The importance of this event lays in the fact that this remote village in Gujarat, which was completely devastated during the 2001 earthquake, has come out of isolation now by having an internet access to every part of the globe. A momentous accomplishment for the villagers and the world! Other events at the Indo-International School in Kuran included the opening and switching on of the Water Filtration Plant to supply clean drinking water to the school children and the opening of a Children Center to provide after school activities. The children embellished the celebration by entertaining the guests through performances in the three languages of Gujarati, Hindi and English.

Another highlight of the trip was an invitation from Narendrakumar, a student completing MA in Social Work from Anand University in India. He had followed the model of the Ninash Foundation by starting his own Way-Made Charity using his personal savings. Through this charity, he built a nursery school for the 64 tribal children of Sagbara, a small town near the border of Gujarat and Maharashtra. Dr. Malhotra was invited to be the chief guest at the opening of the new school in this tribal area where the children gave a touching performance for two hours.



Christy Koller Library

The Ninash Foundation, a 501C (3) charitable organization, was established in 1996 to spread literacy among the impoverished children and adults throughout the world. It depends upon funds raised by the students from SUNY Oneonta, Oneonta City and Cooperstown schools as well as donations by the local and upstate New York rotaries and members of the national and international community.

The Ninash Foundation has built five schools in the isolated villages of India that are providing education to more than 1050 underprivileged children. In order to continue providing free education to these impoverished children, the Foundation needs to raise at least \$30,000 in donations each year to keep the schools running. The Foundation's goal is to raise \$250,000 to set up a trust fund, the interest from which will be used to support these schools in perpetuity.

Please contribute generously to the trust fund by mailing your donations to: The Ninash Foundation, 17 Center Street, Oneonta, NY 13820, USA or visit the Ninash website at (www.ninash.org) and contribute electronically through PayPal.

Haitian Relief

UUP recognizes and thanks its members for their generosity through the years to those in need, manifested by on-site volunteerism, collections of goods, and financial donations. The January 12th earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti — and its aftermath — now demands our attention. To contribute to Haitian Relief, please contact one of the following agencies. Web site addresses for these agencies are noted below.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>American Red Cross</i> | redcross.org |
| 2. <i>AmeriCares Foundation</i> | americares.org |
| 3. <i>Catholic Relief Services</i> | crs.org |
| 4. <i>CARE</i> | care.org |
| 5. <i>Doctors Without Borders</i> | doctorswithoutborders.org |
| 6. <i>UNICEF</i> | unicefusa.org |

Labor-Management Meeting of January 18, 2010

UUP, represented by Bill Simons (President) and Rob Compton (VP Academics) and Management, represented by Nancy Kleniewski (President) and Lisa Wenck (Associate VP for Employee Services), met on January 18, 2010 for a Labor-Management meeting.

I. Joint outreach: UUP and Management briefly discussed the need to wait for further clarification from each of our principals in Albany regarding flexibility, but noted that each side **will continue to meet with elected officials to represent SUNY concerns for adequate funding.**

II. Management agreed to contact Dr. Guzy (Chair, SPARC) to request a meeting involving all unions regarding **Strategic Planning update.**

III. As the UUP-GOER contract gets set to expire in 2011, both UUP and Management agreed to move forward to meet the deadline for the **Oneonta Speakers Bureau Joint Labor Management Grant** to fruition with the next several weeks.

IV. Discussions regarding **Professional Performance Programs and Evaluations** is an issue of mutual concern and responsibility. UUP and Management agreed to continue to work together to protect both the employer and employee by enforcing the contract.

V. UUP and Management worked constructively to seek resolution on **exceptions to the 21 SH teaching load.** Management would provide, at a future date, further details regarding implementation and follow-up.

VI. UUP appreciates Management's to restructure **DSI.** UUP has always preferred a more equitable distribution of the monies. UUP and Management shared their perspectives on DSI. UUP will continue to engage Management in a dialogue regarding DSI.

VII. UUP and Management agreed that **online teaching training is critical to the success of the summer courses** at Oneonta. UUP noted its concerns regarding the process of certification. Management will continue to fine-tune the approach for certification/verification of eligibility to teach online.

ONCE IN A WHILE A PROBLEM POPS UP!

By Mona L. Hughes, UUP Benefits Officer

Here we are at the beginning of a new year with hopes of an easy transition and better days ahead that are free of stress, or at least a little more stress free. We are just sailing along doing our jobs, living our lives, and then all of a sudden it happens— something so annoying that impacts our lives in such a negative way that we can't help becoming frustrated while trying to solve it.

Recently it came to my attention that a member who has been on campus for several years had their benefits canceled in early January. Of course this meant that when the member went to the eye doctors or the dentist, they would be denied benefit coverage. They had not been notified of their benefits suspension so was totally unaware until they needed to use their benefits. There was never a gap in their employment that might cause this problem, it was just one of those life occurrences we have no control over and no one could tell you why it happened. Having this member's benefits activated again has become a work in progress with the assumption that it will soon be solved.

To avoid this type of problem or any other, take the time to ask when you schedule appointments with benefit participators to check your eligibility status. If you find you are not being shown as eligible, please let me know immediately.

Life is full of annoying problems waiting to crimp our style and send us off in a direction we would rather not go. Please remember that if you have not enrolled as a UUP member, you must fill out a UUP Benefits Enrollment Card, a Beneficiary Card, and take the time to join the union by completing a UUP Enrollment Card. All of these forms can be obtained through the UUP website at: www.uupinfo.org—click on Benefits and then forms.

Regardless, if you are a new or long-standing member, if you run into a benefit problem, please contact me immediately at hughesml@oneonta.edu, or our UUP Office at **x2135**. We are here to help. Once in awhile, a problem pops up!

The Battery-Powered Book

By Hugh A. Holden,
Senior Assistant Librarian,
Milne Library



Last night, after once again staring for too long into the soul-sucking Internet, I turned down the handsome voice reading Fielding's "Tom Jones" and went to bed.

It wasn't quite midnight. From among the pile of books stacked on the floor at the foot of my bed, I picked up my battered copy of *Robinson Crusoe*. What happened next was as predictable as the clock itself: within a few minutes - seldom more than a page - the book slipped from my fingers and I proceeded to further damage my frame by slumping into an EISP (ergonomically incorrect sleeping posture). A while later, I awoke to turn off the light (either before or after stumbling off to the loo, perhaps cracking a shin on the way, all depending on whether my mind was coming along). Where was the book? It might be on the floor waiting for me to step on it. It might be tangled up in the sheets. Or it might be beneath me, another lump in the mattress, a lump I would feel, perhaps painfully, in the morning. Needless to say, this is one badly battered paperback. Happily, it's not among my prized hardcovers.

But were my copy of Defoe's masterpiece a hardcover, would it, like so many of my printed prizes, sit "safely" in a box for years, perhaps only to end up in a book sale, pawed by barbarians looking for the sex scenes, or in a squalid kitchen, propping up the short leg of a cheap table on the uneven floor of a poor student's filthy flat?

Although I would pity a real Crusoe because the only reading material he had during his nearly 30 years of island isolation were 2 copies of the Bible, nowhere does the character (more real to many than many real castaways), lament this fact. In fact, he may have been perfectly content, such was his religious bent (and, to many post-moderns, the least satisfying paragraphs of the narrative). I imagine that at least one of his copies of Scripture must have been showing wear before his eventual repatriation.

Should I wish, I could read either of these 2 works on an Amazon Kindle, the first "eBook reader" to make the electronic or "e" book a universal topic of conversation (even if, like many other conversation pieces, it spends most of its life on "better" coffee tables). Jeff Bezos succeeded where others had failed, although his success was, for the longest time, very difficult to gauge because the Bezos boys & girls refused from the start to release sales figures, and remain cagey about it even now.

And if I tired of Robinson & Friday, or Ezekiel and his ilk, I could quickly select a different text. The books on "Mr. K" currently include the complete novels of Jules Verne (for when I'm in the mood for good, old-timey, sexless Sci Fi). And if none of the many books now on the machine scratched that night's itch, the flip of a 2nd switch on the back of the device would soon have me shopping, on-line (via a no-cost, cell-phone-like network called "Whisper-net") at the Amazon Kindle store, searching the back-catalog, or even downloading free texts - in the last case, only if I don't mind reading nothing still in copyright; which to many a leisure reader means nothing. (Yes, there are ways to get around that, but not in bed if you're not one to curl up there with your PC and a fast connection.)

I don't take Mr. K to bed for the obvious reason: rolling over onto it might do much worse than put a crease in the cover. Once again, the physical book has become too valuable. Mr. K *may*, of course, be a lot tougher than it appears. Admittedly, the warp may be in my own cover. Many a book lover thinks it foolish to hide his loves away. And, though paper is the "universal tinder," fools like me fill their *wooden* houses with it. And if you look closely at the cell phone that your neighbor on the bus, in the grocery check-out line, or coming at you head-on in his car is using, it's apt to be anything but pristine in appearance. That "electronic leash" (Thank you, Steven King.) is getting bruised getting used! If Amazon's second Kindle model, the *Kindle 2* (and the *DX* with a larger screen) can't take the physical abuse we give our cell phones and print books, Amazon will do one of three things: (1) be displaced by the first company that does manage to put an eBook reader inside a water-tight, titanium shell and bullet-proof screen; (2) itself be the first to abuse-proof these things; or (3) go the way of some budding competitors and innovate along the lines of cheap and disposable. (I myself suspect that paper and glue will remain the only automatically ecologically correct choice

continued

for many decades to come.)

Ah, but so much of the world enters our brains through our ears. And so much more could, sparing our eyes for other stimuli. My hands and eyes are needed for cooking supper, or I'm again attempting to teach myself that art of the digital native: multi-tasking. Long ago, when both Jeff Bezos and I were assuming that we'd reach our advanced decrepitude with full heads of hair, audio technology gave us another option: recorded books. A gent once set down on the counter, at my cash register in Burns & Ignoble, a stack of CDs, all of them recorded books. "I do a lot of driving," he volunteered, "and radio quickly becomes a bore." It was a good sale for the store. And in the early '90s, spending notably bigger bucks than the print version demanded per title was still the only way to get someone to read to you without suffering the inconveniences of maintaining a close friendship, a marriage or a literate slave. (We won't discuss here whether the latter two terms constitute redundancy.) Currently, a voice actor named George Guidall is entertaining the ears of my pre-occupied body with an excellent reading of Henri Charrière's "Papillon."

Although I could (at the cost of money and / or time) use Mr. Kindle for this, I'm not. Just as I don't care to sleep with that white, angular, sexy-to-only-a-Star-Wars-storm trooper plastic book, I won't go into public wearing an audio book player. While the health conscious-cost unconscious can be seen jogging to tunes that are being pumped directly to auditory nerves from their feather-weight MP3 or Apple devices, I carry the Kindle in a jerry-rigged canvas sack hooked to my belt. And ear buds are out for my ears, so I would look and feel like a fool doing in public what only a hip hop artist looks hip doing: hip hopping about in headphones. The Kindle *does* have a small speaker in back - what no tiny MP3 player even has room for; and it's actually better than the speaker(s) on many a laptop computer. But the controls are so awkward, and the paucity of built-in storage space so shameful (on the first version or *Kindle 1* that I'm using), that it's fair to infer that Amazon was not thinking of audio books (and their necessarily "fat" files) when it first introduced the Kindle. And even now, the "Read-to-Me" feature on the new *Kindle 2* - when not disabled to please some angry authors and publishers - reads in a synthetic "voice" that only a zombie could love.

So, I've got Charrière's novel downloaded to a cute MP3 player, right? No. On pre-recorded CDs? No again. The Library's copy was published in 1996 by Recorded Books. (Call number EMC MEDIA HV 8956 G8 C513 1996). Even at that date, it was thought safe for libraries to buy cassette tapes. With an old but sturdy Panasonic cassette player/recorder in my pants pocket and the headphones cord snaking up my back, inside my shirt (so it doesn't catch on a door knob and rip an ear off), I set about chopping onions or whatever as Papillon works his Odyssean escape from France's once notorious system of penal colonies.

The Library has a small but rich collection of these tapes. I've listened to several now. Some are showing audible signs of tape degeneration. "Papillon" is still OK, but several others, not much older, are in bad shape. Worry? How much do libraries worry when the pages of books turn yellow with age and their bindings start giving way? Books are easy: if it's popular, you buy a newer edition. If it's out-of-print, it's now easier than ever (though it can be quite costly) to search the out-of-print / used book market. If your copy turns out to be rare, well, that's why "rare book collections" and grant-ease were invented!

When the voice of Mr. Guidall begins to creak, squeak, and echo itself, should the Library buy the audio book again on DVD? Setting aside the admittedly large question, "Does usage justify the investment?," we need to consider: Isn't the DVD facing extinction at the hands of *Blue-Ray*? (Sounds like the *Godzilla* saga all over again, eh?) Right now, I'm listening to Chinese children sing. Their high, clear voices come to me over the Net from the *Naxos Music Library* to which the Library subscribes. And I could, with several mouse clicks, return to the *Naxo Spoken Word Library* and *Tom Jones*. But unless I can fit this running laptop into the canvas bag I use for Mr. K, and I build a wireless network to feed it.... you get the idea. For the sake of its business, i.e., copyright restrictions, Naxos cannot make it easy for me to take its audio books (or music) wherever I please. And Amazon has admitted that it's not really interested in doing business with libraries. It appears inevitable: all the world's books, probably including its libraries' collections, will all eventually reside in that "cloud" of which the "Web 3.0" pod people sing. Platform independence will follow - but probably at personal cost. (THINK "unlocked" cell phones.) A two dollar e-Book reader will serve you - in its essential function - as well as a two million dollar, diamond-studded model. But this technology will mean nothing to most unless and until we put the cork back in the copyright bottle.

The Susan Sutton Smith Faculty Prize for Academic Excellence is made possible by an endowment created by Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Smith in memory of their daughter, Susan, and in honor of her commitment to academic excellence. This annual event is also generously supported by the SUNY-Oneonta Alumni Association.

This year's selection committee includes the Provost, the Academic Deans, and members of the Academic Excellence Committee who are past recipients of the Susan Sutton Smith Prize (Dr. William Simons, Chair; Dr. Michael Green, Dr. Lawrence Guzy, Dr. Ho Hon Leung) and the Richard Siegfried Prize (Dr. Brian Lowe).

Additional information

The Susan Sutton Smith Faculty Prize has a twofold purpose:

- 1) recognition of academic excellence and
- 2) public promotion of the State University of New York at Oneonta.

At the morning breakfast students with outstanding GPA's will receive awards funded by gifts to the Alumni Annual Fund.

Academic Freedom Ensures Fairness By Fred Floss, State UUP Vice President for Academics



[**Editor's Note:** This article originally appeared in **The Voice**, a publication of State UUP.]

The issue of academic freedom has come to the fore again with the case of the Binghamton basketball scandal. At its heart, the question is whether all students can expect fair treatment or whether those of privilege will get a free ride. This time, it is about basketball players and grades. In Illinois, it was about needing to "know someone" to even get accepted into the university. Each new revelation attacks the basic integrity of higher education and puts all of the work we do in jeopardy.

The importance of academic freedom is not just as an individual member's right, but rather as a social right, one that ensures basic fairness in the higher education system. By allowing each UUP member to exercise his or her right to teach classes without interference and to speak out on important issues without retaliation, we protect more than an individual's rights—we protect the integrity of our system.

Academic freedom would be of little importance if our members only spoke-up on noncontroversial issues. It is when difficult issues arise, and when "good people" disagree, that academic freedom becomes the most important. It would be easy to stay quiet and protect our college and university sports teams. It would be easy to stay quiet when racism, sexism or other social injustices take place. Academic freedom takes away these excuses and strengthens civil discourse.

In the Binghamton case, we need to applaud Chancellor Zimpher for calling on Binghamton University to reinstate professor Sally Dear, the contingent faculty member who brought to light the alleged grading problem at that campus (see related story, below). It would have been easy for the chancellor to say that "other issues" or "financial problems" were the reason for the nonrenewal (which one could argue is the standard line in a case like this). Instead, the chancellor asked for an outside investigation.

UUP continues to monitor this situation and work to protect members who might find themselves in a position where doing the right thing puts their job on the line.

Instead of pressuring professors to give the basketball team better grades, would it not have been better for these young men to be given tutors and mandatory study sessions?

When universities attack those who bring up the importance of education, they are letting down all of our students and they are saying that academic integrity does not matter.

We need to applaud those who put themselves forward, and we must stand with them to protect our rights.

Remote Programs: Out of Sight Doesn't Mean Out of Mind When Teamwork Comes First

By Michael Flinton, Academic Delegate; Oneonta Representative, State UUP Technology Committee; and Assistant Professor, Cooperstown Graduate Program

College campuses aren't what they used to be. Not by a long shot. Not too long ago, the word "campus" was generally taken to mean a contiguous piece of land, or closely grouped buildings, where a single organization was located or set of activities took place, i.e. a *college* campus. But that meaning is rapidly changing ... has changed in fact, forever. The unstoppable force of technology, in the form of distance learning, has met the seemingly immovable object of public education and the former is permanently reshaping the latter. Discussing the merits and outcomes of that collision will go on forever perhaps and is best left for other forums.

At SUNY Oneonta we have an example of what lies between the traditional college campus and the virtual world of cyber-education; a program that the college can take pride in having owned and operated for almost 50 years, the Cooperstown Graduate Program. As an "off-campus" or "remote" program, the nationally recognized graduate program in museum studies represents just how much we can do as dedicated educators when we work together for the good of our students.

Currently located on the grounds of the New York State Historical Association while its' facilities undergo a major upgrade, CGP continues to rely upon the Oneonta campus for everything from paperclips to textbooks, from faculty professional development opportunities, to field trip transportation support, and from computer support to interlibrary loan delivery on a daily basis. Without the commitment and cooperation of UUP and CSEA members, and campus administration the program could not operate. That it operates so successfully, and has for so long, is testimony to how things that work well often run the risk of being taken for granted.

One thing that brings this to mind is the support that's been provided by the college during the year that the CGP classroom and administrative facilities have been undergoing a major renovation. Thanks to professionals on all sides, not only were the academic programs seamlessly relocated, but there was also an equally professional continuation of physical support by the campus. No small feat when you consider that CGP is 30 miles away from the main campus. Dozens of us can take pride in how the first phase of the building project took place without detriment to quality of services and programs. Relocation of CGP to the NYSHA Library took planning, patience, and a great deal of teamwork from all concerned.

In recognizing what teamwork can produce, the employees of Milne Library come to mind as a good example of supplying services that are essential to faculty, student, and program success. Officially, "The Division of Library & Information Services has a responsibility to provide excellent library service and technology support to both our onsite students and faculty, and those who are located away from the central campus." The Division of Library & Information Services takes seriously its responsibility of providing effective support for the Cooperstown Graduate Program—and to all students and employees.

Relying upon Milne for personally delivered daily interlibrary-loans, online access services, access to new databases or trial subscriptions, information technology support, and use of its Teaching, Learning, and Technology Center, CGP has come to expect that Milne's support will be there when needed. That may be twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, year round, as in the case of off-campus email service, access to the library's electronic holdings, general academic computing services and Internet access. Thanks to the staff at Milne, and dozens more all across campus, "remote" programs such as CGP can count on the "campus", however you define that. The significance to all this, besides educating and preparing tomorrow's museum professionals today, is that a college is a community of like-minded professionals who understand and demonstrate teamwork regardless where they may be located.

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