

Contract Negotiations, SUNY Budget, and PHEEIA

By Bill Simons, Chapter President



To paraphrase one of the great architects of the American Dream, Tom Paine, the cause of SUNY is in a great measure the cause of all New Yorkers. Since its creation in 1948, SUNY has made quality higher education accessible to groups formerly excluded by income, geography, race, and ethnicity. SUNY and its graduates have provided the ballast for New York State's economy, culture, and democracy. To prevent the deconstruction of SUNY and to revitalize New York, UUP members, in Oneonta and throughout the State, will again provide leadership.

Rob Compton, Bill Simons, and Dean Reinhardt

The challenges are clear and direct: we need to reverse the budgetary starvation of SUNY; in solidarity, let us prepare for renewed battle with the PHEEIA proponents of privatization; and UUPers must insist upon a strong contract.

The Agreement between the State of New York and United University Professions expires on July 1, 2011. UUP has begun extensive preparation for negotiations concerning the successor contract. Broad participation of the UUP membership is essential to this process. As noted in the official notice, which appears elsewhere in this issue of *The Sentinel*, the State UUP Contract Negotiation Team will conduct an open Meeting with UUP Oneonta Chapter Members on Wednesday, October 27th, from 11:30 AM-1 PM, Le Café, Morris. The UUP Contract Negotiation Team needs to hear your ideas, thoughts and concerns about the contract. UUP Oneonta's Academic and Professionals employees, both full- and part-time, are urged to voice their recommendations. UUP will provide a union lunch. If work schedule precludes your presence for the full 90-minutes, attend that portion of the meeting that you can. Both prior to and during the October 27th meeting, UUP Members Suggestion Forms will be distributed. Directions

concerning the completion and submission of the UUP Members Suggestion Forms will follow. **Given its content, the October 27th meeting is open only to members of UUP.**

SUNY College at Oneonta, our students, and the community are at the core of UUP advocacy. Insufficient funding poses a fundamental threat to SUNY. As State UUP President Phil Smith notes, the crisis is urgent:

Here's more reality: SUNY sustained a \$152 million state aid cut in the new budget...

More hiring freezes, job cuts, larger classes and fewer courses will undoubtedly be the outcome. Campuses have dealt with those issues over the past two years due to state budget cuts that account for more than 25 percent of SUNY's operating budget.

The time is now for SUNY to help cover shortfalls in SUNY's state-slashed budget. I've said this before: UUP will hold the chancellor to her promise to use \$147 million in reserves to help cover state cuts.

We'd like to see SUNY offer even more financial help for our cash-strapped campuses and hospitals. More funding would add needed fuel to SUNY, one of the state's most prolific economic engines. And it will allow campuses to continue to offer a quality, affordable education to students across New York, which, after all, is SUNY's mission.

Funding deprivation can enervate a public university system. This has happened elsewhere. In my home state of Massachusetts, for example, few top high school students, according to *The Boston Globe*, "even bother to apply" to the state university. A generation ago, I eagerly applied to the M.A. program in History at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst after election to Phi Beta Kappa at Colby College. As the *Globe* states, years of budget cuts have done great damage to the University of Massachusetts:

The predicament is infuriating, even embarrassing, for a state known as the birthplace of higher education in America and home to some of the world's best private colleges, say many students and their parents. More important, some state leaders say, it could be devastating to the state economy if Massachusetts continues to lose its home-grown talent to other states—especially as more families are looking for affordable alternatives to private colleges.

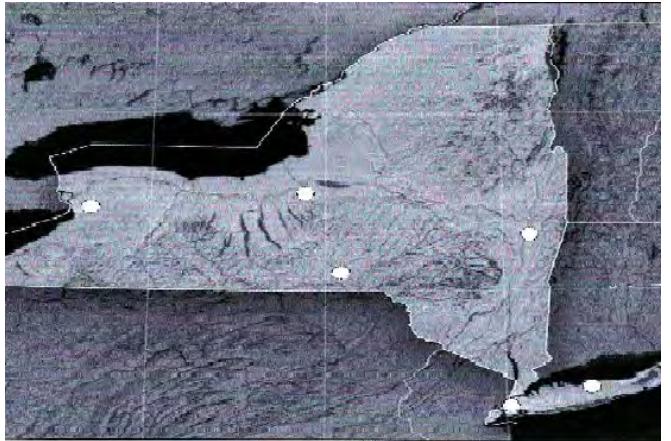
Do not allow SUNY to go the way of the University of Massachusetts.

In addition to contract and budget challenges, SUNY still faces the threat of PHEEIA. The proposed *Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act* is Orwellian named. PHEEIA is not about empowerment; it calls for the deconstruction of SUNY. Bottom line, PHEEIA calls for SUNY campuses to engage in Darwinian competition against one another. PHEEIA would further reduce public support for SUNY, cynically forcing campuses to heft tuition upon

already hard-pressed student families—and to pursue the chimera of finding support from arrangements with private business. PHEEIA would lead to the de facto privatization of SUNY. PHEEIA contradicts the SUNY model of accessible, higher education. PHEEIA envisions a flag-ship model, affordable primarily to the privileged. Below is map produced by PHEEIA proponents: can you find Oneonta on it?

Don't let anyone Buffalo you: PHEEIA would inflict serious damage on SUNY College at Oneonta.

As the voice of the people, UUP mounted an effective offensive against PHEEIA. Due to your efforts, PHEEIA, despite the incessant and strident tactics of the lame-duck Governor, outgoing President of SUNY University at Buffalo, and the incumbent Chancellor, was not enacted—yet. Phil Smith recounts the battle past—and the confrontation yet to come:



It is obvious to me that one of the biggest reasons we were able to set aside the so-called Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act (PHEEIA) was because someone got involved.

You.

Thousands of you spoke out against the Act, calling, e-mailing and faxing legislators. From the outset, we spoke up against the elimination of SUNY's governmental oversight and its accountability under existing state statutes. We made access and affordability statewide issues.

SUNY supporters, many of them contacted through our Save SUNY website, www.savesuny.org, also took action and played an important role. That site and the UUP website yielded nearly 25,000 faxes and more than 4,500 online petition signatures.

And despite Gov. David Paterson's insistence that PHEEIA be part of the state's 2010-11 budget, the legislators listened, even the two senators from Buffalo and Long Island who held out for weeks for PHEEIA's approval. Finally, on Aug. 3, the state budget was adopted without the ill-conceived Act.

The outcome could have been drastically different. PHEEIA had somehow become the last stumbling block to passing a very late state budget. Without your loud voices and UUP's full-court press, legislators may have felt forced to give in.

They felt forced in May, when they approved an emergency budget extender bill that included the governor's plan to furlough 100,000 state workers—including UUPers—one day a week until the budget was passed. State business would have stopped without the extender bill.

That's when we stepped in and took care of business. UUP and other state unions immediately obtained a stay to stop the furloughs, which were blocked May 28 by federal Judge Lawrence Kahn. Another challenge met; another crisis averted. While the furloughs are history, PHEEIA isn't. This nebulous proposal, which was pushed hard by SUNY, will be back at some point, you can be sure of that. Senate Democrats say they have a "framework" of a deal on PHEEIA with the Assembly, but no details have emerged since that Aug. 3 announcement. While we should feel satisfaction for a job well done, it's not time to be patting each other on the back.

Much will be expected of you in the weeks and months ahead. You will be asked to participate in rallies, meet in-district and in Albany with members of the New York State legislature, send faxes and emails and letters, and engage in community outreach. Respond as though the integrity of SUNY, the community, and your job depend upon your action. It will.

The situation is serious. Apathy and inertia will yield defeat. However, opportunity always accompanies crisis. Together, in union solidarity, let the sisters and brothers of UUP ensure that SUNY's best days lie ahead.



State UUP President Phil Smith greets Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver as NYSUT Executive VP Andy Pallotta looks on.

Open Meeting and Luncheon with State UUP Contract Negotiations Team:

Wednesday, October 27, 2010, 11:30am - 1pm, Le Café

UUP Chief Contract Negotiator Jamie Dangler; Associate Chief Contract Negotiator Mike Smiles, and Other UUP Contract Negotiations Team members will meet with members of the UUP Oneonta chapter on Wednesday, October 27, 2010, from 11:30 AM-1 PM, at Le Café, Morris. All members of the UUP Oneonta chapter are invited to attend and participate in this important meeting concerning negotiation of the next UUP contract. Lunch will be served. UUP members are invited to attend even if they can attend only part of the meeting. The meeting is limited to members of the UUP bargaining unit.

State UUP Negotiations Team members will be in Oneonta to listen to the ideas, thoughts, and concerns of UUP Oneonta members concerning provisions of the contract and the entire negotiations process.

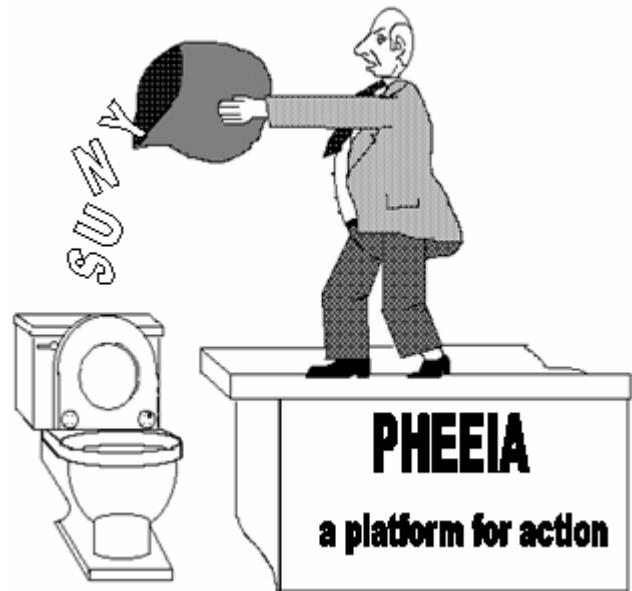
The **2007-2011 Agreement Between the State of New York and United University Professions** expires July 1, 2011. Members of the Negotiations Team will travel to all UUP Chapters to prepare for negotiations.

This is the time to make sure your voice is heard concerning the UUP contract. Oneonta's input to the UUP contract process is needed.

For information about this important meeting, contact Bill Simons simonswm@oneonta.edu, Rob Compton comptorw@oneonta.edu, or Norm Payne paynene@oneonta.edu.

PHEEIA Flushes SUNY: A Fred Miller Cartoon

By Fred Miller, Academic Delegate and Oneonta
Representative, Outreach Committee



Furlough Busting Japanese “Korokke”

By Rob Compton, Vice President for Academics

Tasty but easy to make, Japanese croquette are easy on the wallet. Kids love this recipe and in the event that furloughs make its ugly head shown, you can bask in culinary creativity.



Ingredients:

- 4 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- $\frac{1}{4}$ lb ground beef
- $\frac{1}{2}$ onion, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp soy sauce
- 1 egg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp pepper
- vegetable oil for frying
- flour and panko (Japanese breadcrumb) for coating

Instructions and Preparation:

Boil potatoes until soft and then drain and mash them (avoid any lumps). While the mashed potatoes are cooling, sauté the ground beef and onions and add soy sauce when you are about half way done. Drain any fat, put beef and onion mix into a bowl and add the mashed potatoes. IMPORTANT: Allow the mixture to completely cool. Season with salt and pepper.

Pat the mixture to make compact $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick oval-shaped patties. Completely coat each piece with flour. Then dip in beaten egg and coat completely with panko. Fry in 350 F oil until brown, drain on paper towels. Squirt some ketchup or tonkatsu sauce on “korokke” prior to eating. (To make tonkatsu sauce, mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of ketchup, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup soy sauce and Worcestershire sauce together).

About 4 servings

UUP and Political Action: Why Do We Engage in Advocacy?

By Rob Compton, Vice President for Academics

UUP statewide and Chapters engage in SUNY advocacy on an ongoing basis. Some people have asked me, "Why do you have to do such things that are often perceived as partisan?" When Governor Nelson Rockefeller worked to redesign the State Capitol, he wanted state government to be accessible to the citizens of the state. My answer to the question posed is, "We must advocate for SUNY and our members, because other causes go to Albany regularly and we cannot become invisible. In politics, the squeaky wheel gets the grease."



Rob Compton, middle

In this article, I examine the rationale, discuss the methods and strategies, and exhort members to become more involved in SUNY advocacy. SUNY advocacy remains the most effective mechanism to maintain state support, strengthen SUNY, and protect our jobs during severe economic downturns, such as the one we are currently experiencing.

Rationale and UUP's Source of Power

UUP's advocacy in Albany and within the chapters remains the most effective instrument for getting our legislative agenda enacted in New York state. Several years ago, NYSUT worked with UUP on the legislative agenda concerning "pension equity." New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), with over 600,000 members, can conduct political mobilization like a well oiled machine. It exerted its political capital and pointed out the inequity among employees in the Optional Retirement Program (ORP) in contrast with those in the New York State Teachers Retirement System (NYSTRS). Those in the ORP were excluded from an arrangement whereby NYSTRS members would no longer be required to make contributions after ten (10) years. In 2007, the New York State legislature passed and the Governor signed the pension equity bill. Currently, UUP members in Tier 4 no longer make contributions to their retirement after 10 years of service credit.

Back in 2003, New York was experiencing severe fiscal distress caused, in part, due to the 9-11 terrorist bombing. NYSUT mobilized its base and UUP also brought bus loads of activists to the capitol in the largest education demonstration in New York state history. By the end of the summer, NYSUT and UUP succeeding in working with the legislature to veto all of the Governor's veto, restoring hundreds of millions of dollars back to education, including higher education in the state of New York.

UUP and NYSUT work to build up political capital with legislators through VOTE-COPE. VOTE COPE contributions

UUP and Political Action: Why Do We Engage in Advocacy? (continued)

allow for our political action committee to endorse and provide campaign contributions to candidates for state and national office who support NYSUT and UUP's education agenda. VOTE COPE comes from financial contributions of our members. We also meet with legislators in Albany and in their district offices to discuss a variety of issues, including sharing our philosophy of protecting public higher education. Over time, we developed strong relationships with them and never do we take our legislators for granted. During the campaign periods, chapter volunteers from NYSUT and UUP staff phone banks, stuff envelopes, and conduct door-to-door canvassing of voters. At the state level, we are non-partisan and our only litmus test is: do you support NYSUT and UUP's education agenda?

Methods and Strategies

In addition to the meetings with legislators in Albany and their district offices, endorsement and VOTE COPE contributions, UUP, through the SUNY Outreach Committee has a comprehensive political action program. The SUNY Outreach Committee works on identifying, researching, and drafting our position paper on SUNY issues. Research involves collecting data from the campuses and utilizing the UUP and NYSUT research staff at Latham headquarters. In addition, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) provides research on national issues. The Outreach Committee meets regularly and remains in close contact with Chapter Presidents and campus Outreach Officers in developing the legislative agenda.

The Outreach Committee is also responsible for training our members to engage legislators. Armed with "Talking Points" UUPers visit legislators on specific days of the year, especially during the budget passage period. Over the years, we get to know the legislators and even run into our students, some of whom have become legislative aides or even legislators.

Training for our members takes place in two ways: formal and mentoring. Formal training is done prior to and on the day of our legislative visit. Over the years, UUP has held Regional Training Sessions on advocacy to update members about the organizations' legislative agenda. On the day of our visit in Albany, the day begins with a briefing of the status of important bills pending and UUP's position. One person is the delegation leader and another is the recorder. Mentoring of new members takes place on-the-job. The nuances of effective legislative outreach are far beyond the mechanics of recitation. The human relations component is something that I, for example, have learned from the legislative advocacy veterans, including Glenn McNitt of New Paltz, Larry Ashley of Cortland, and our very own Fred Miller and Gina Keel. Watching these three in action illustrated why we have been so effective. Gina Keel, in particular, has been very effective in bringing students with us to Albany. The information collected from our meetings, whether in Albany or in-district, is summarized and sent to Albany for discussion and incorporation into our future meetings and legislative strategy.

Exhortation to Help Yourself

Advocacy is important in a democracy. Many SUNY political scientists have been engaged in SUNY advocacy through UUP. But, advocacy is not just the job of "political scientists" but a duty for us all. Democracy is not a spectator sport. It is time to get involved with SUNY advocacy. The economy will take several years to mend, at the minimum and as the saying goes in politics, "out of sight, out of mind." In other words constant pressure on Albany is required.

UUP and Political Action: Why Do We Engage in Advocacy? (continued)

Public higher education is under assault in New York and nation-wide. Neoliberal cost-shifting to students in the form of tuition threaten to choke off access. The doing more with less philosophy can and has translated to furloughs, benefit cuts, and dramatically increased workload for many in higher education. As the nation's largest higher education union, UUP must be in the vanguard to resist PHEEIA and put an end to these notions that will bring about disempowerment and atrophy to SUNY and CUNY. It is time to become involved. If not for students and your family, do it for yourself, because without advocacy, your career may be at stake.

The number of times that UUP will call on you for help in SUNY Advocacy will most certainly increase as we weather the changes in our economy and in higher education. We only ask that each person commit to one advocacy event once every two or three years. The union and SUNY can only be as strong as its members. Thanks to the members who have supported and worked with UUP on SUNY Outreach in the past. We could not have done it without you. Of others, it's time to step up to the plate.



Please Join UUP and Have Your Voice Heard!

Upcoming Visit of the UUP Negotiations Team to Oneonta Chapter

By Hanfu Mi, Membership Director

The current contract, the 2007-2011 Agreement Between the State of New York and United University Professions,



expires on July 1, 2011. UUP's extensive preparations to negotiate the successor contract are in progress. The Negotiations Team, headed by Jamie Dangler, UUP Chief Negotiator, Statewide Executive Board Member, and Cortland UUP Chapter President, will travel to our campus on Wednesday, October 27 to meet with you, the members, to collect information and conduct the needs assessment phase of the negotiations process.

Hanfu Mi, Membership Director

The members will listen to your ideas, thoughts, suggestions, and concerns. Information about the entire negotiations process can be discussed as well. A meeting with the Negotiations Team members has been planned between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. at the Morris Conference Center.

Please don't miss this unique opportunity to express your views and offer ideas, suggestions, and recommendations directly to the members of the UUP Negotiations Team. You may also use a Member Suggestion Form to do the same before, during, and after the Team's visit. You may contact any UUP Oneonta Chapter Executive Board members to get a copy of the form. In addition, we'll have copies made to distribute at the Team's chapter visit. Currently, a Negotiations Survey is being designed and is going to be conducted in the near future. Please by all means make sure that your voice is heard!

However, only UUP members who have signed the card can participate in the Negotiations Survey and vote on the new contract. It is a good time for you to check your status to make sure that you are a UUP member so that you can participate fully in the entire negotiations process.

Blowing the Dust out of Alumni Hall

By Ron Bishop, Health/Safety Officer



Ron Bishop, Health/Safety Officer

An apparent “toxic building” issue surfaced in the last week of March, 2010. The person who contacted me was experiencing sore throat, burning eyes, headaches, and rashes soon after she showed up for work in the top floor of Alumni Hall. These symptoms would subside after she left the building, but were growing worse and more persistent with time. Her physician determined that she was having allergic reactions to something in the air at work. At the time I was called in, she had run through serious sick leave, was wearing a face mask, and wanted information about how to file a worker’s compensation claim.

As I investigated, I met several other people who had experienced sore throats and/or rashes that developed at work, especially in the CADE area. One had a rash on her arm at that time. They opined that the air system was blowing dirty air, and pointed out the condition of the ceiling air grilles. They were really dirty, as illustrated by this photo taken in Room 220.

Borrowing a ladder, I found grime on the inside upper surfaces of every grille, even those which had recently been cleaned. (Cleaning (and examining) them was complicated by the presence of a fan running in each grille.) A layer of dust covered the ceiling-mounted return gratings and other surfaces exposed in the open air return system. We had a prime suspect to account for the health effects that were being experienced. But why? And why now?



For some background, the 2nd (top) floor of Alumni Hall houses the Center for Academic Development and Enrichment (CADE) and Student Disability Services (SDS). This was formerly the college’s library building, and refitting the open book stacks area for office, computer lab, tutoring and testing spaces posed major challenges

Blowing the Dust out of Alumni Hall (continued)

in air flow management. The most recent new work included renovation of the 1st (middle) floor and installation of new air handling units for the building, completed in 2009. Apparently, no one cleaned the top floor air ducts prior to their connection to the new air system components below, so the newer, stronger air handling units were blowing decades of built-up dust out of the old ducts.

By the time I reached Tom Rathbone (Associate Vice President for Facilities) with my observations, he and his group were already taking steps to mitigate the situation. They installed new filters in the air handling units, requested immediate cleaning of all the air grilles by Custodial Services, and arranged for a contractor to clean and sanitize the air ducts throughout the building over the mid-semester break. Then, following up with air quality specialist John van Raalte, they purchased air quality testing equipment over the summer to enable “in-house” monitoring of campus indoor spaces for the long term. Health-related complaints in Alumni Hall have come to an end.

In spite of Facilities’ vigorous and effective campaign to fix these problems, I requested a joint UUP-administration meeting. Workers in Alumni Hall were exposed to dirty air for most of a year, and preventing this from being repeated somewhere else was a high priority. Lisa Wenck (Associate Vice-President for Employee Services) led a meeting attended by Bill Simons (President, UUP), Tom Rathbone, Norman Payne (Assistant Director, Facilities and Vice-President for Professionals, UUP), Rob Compton (Vice-President for Academics, UUP), Don Ackerman (Director, Facilities Operations), Dennis Selzner (NYSUT/UUP Labor Relations Specialist), Rick Roberts (Assistant Director, Facilities Operations), and myself. After discussing the history and current status of the technical problems in Alumni Hall, we turned to the real problem: COMMUNICATION. It was decided that we need to promote greater understanding among the campus community about who to call when some facility doesn’t work properly or, worse, makes someone sick.

Let me lay out the basics for you here. If your conditions are too hot, too cold, too windy, too stifling or too wet; if you smell unexplained foul odors, sense worsening indoor allergy symptoms, or see someone engaged in a noxious activity, then please act right away and:

Mention it to your supervisor or executive secretary.

Put in a call to your building manager.

CALL ME; it doesn’t matter whether or not you’re in UUP. My campus extension is 3198.

DON’T just complain to your coworkers, stop with mentioning it to your supervisor, or give up after calling your building manager. You may, at your discretion, call or send an email to Facilities or Human Resources; just keep communicating the situation until you see some positive action. We’ll all be glad you did.

Here’s to a safer, more healthful environment at SUNY Oneonta.

We need to promote greater understanding among the campus community about who to call when some facility doesn’t work properly or, worse, makes someone sick.”

UUP Oneonta's New Webmaster: John Chiang



Over the summer, UUP Oneonta worked to make its website www.1ontauup.org more accessible to our members. We reworked the dead-links and added benefit links including forms for Dental and Vision. In addition, the new website will provide more timely updates of events and our award-winning newsletter, *The Sentinel*. Two individuals have been instrumental to this development: John Chiang and Chris Compton (son of Rob Compton, UUP Vice President for Academics). Over the summer, Chris Compton redesigned the website as a summer project and scoped out the appropriate hosting site. Now the baton has been passed to John Chiang, Associate Professor of Communication Arts.

Dr. John Chiang

John Chiang is known for his prolific research, innovative teaching, significant service, and protean work ethic. Armed with a Ph.D. from SUNY-Albany and Chinese language skills, his gravitas among international faculty on this campus cannot be doubted. His research transcends standard US research in his field as it is infused with intercultural and cross-cultural aspects. John contributed to *Imaging Globalization* (2009), a groundbreaking anthology edited by several UUP members — a Ho Hon Leung, Matthew Hendley, Robert Compton, and Brian Haley. John has also published in the top communications journals, including *Discourse & Communication*, *Language and Education*, *Social Semiotics*, *Intercultural Pragmatics*, and *Intercultural Education*, all within the past three years. His latest article explores the political rhetoric of former CNN news commentator and anchor Lou Dobbs.

Welcome aboard John!



Supervisor Information Series: Professional Employee Performance Programs and Evaluations

The Professional Employee Performance Programs and Evaluations workshops were the first in a series of joint Labor/Management program initiatives. The Professional Employee Performance Programs and Evaluations workshops were held on Thursday, September 30 and Friday, October 1, 2010.

As the first of programs to be offered in the Supervisor Information Series, the Professional Employee Performance Programs and Evaluations workshops provided insight and information to supervisors on the essential steps of completing the performance program and evaluations for professional employees. Topics covered included:

*Requirements/Guidelines

*Management tool/Employee Roadmap

*Fostering Communication

*Changes in duties and responsibilities

**Do's and Don 't's"

*Sharing of "Best" Practices

SUNY Oneonta: Labor Day 2010

By any standard, the UUP Labor Day gathering on the SUNY College at Oneonta campus was impressive. The size and enthusiasm of the assembled UUPers was notable.

Chapter Vice President for Academics introduced the main speaker of the day, Dr. Frederick G. Floss, State UUP Vice President of Academics and Chief Negotiator for the previous contract. Fred delivered a powerful message.



Dr. Frederick G. Floss addresses the standing-room only crowd. Photos courtesy Brian R. Tappen.

The challenges to SUNY in the year ahead are formidable, and the commitment to UUP solidarity is, as never before, essential. PHEEIA and deep budget cuts remain formidable potential threat. As it has through the years, UUP will advocate tirelessly for SUNY.

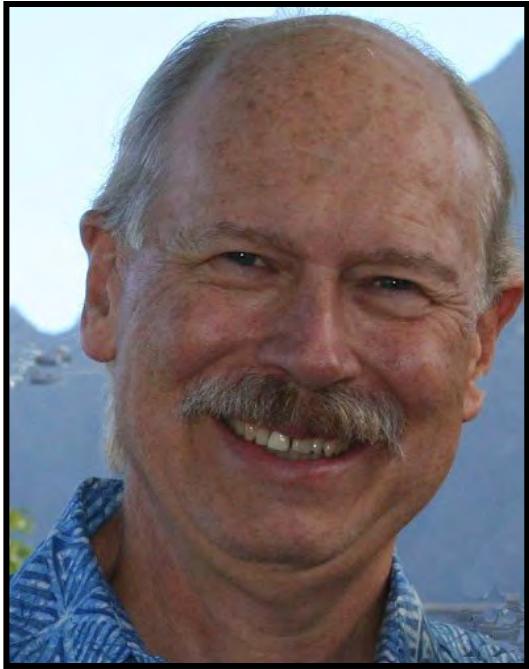


Two UUP Fred's, Floss and Miller, enjoy a moment of rest on Labor Day.

Special thanks to Brian Tappen of the State UUP Executive Board and Arty Shertzer, President of the large UUP Stony Brook Chapter, for coming to Oneonta's Labor Day rally and expressing solidarity. Kudos to Brian for his photographs of the event!

As New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo stated, "Labor Day gives us the opportunity to celebrate the essential role that organized labor plays in our society - one that benefits this state's workers and by extension all New Yorkers."

Tribute to Dr. Douglas W. Shrader, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Philosophy (May 22, 1953—July 27, 2010)



By Ashok Kumar Malhotra, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor and former UUP Oneonta Vice President for Academics

I first met Doug Shrader in 1979, just as he was completing his PhD at the University of Illinois at Chicago. I was Chair of the Oneonta Philosophy Department at the time, conducting a search to hire someone in the area of philosophy of science. In a strong applicant pool filled with hundreds of promising young scholars, Doug stood out as one of the very best. He joined our department at the rank of Assistant Professor that fall.

Dr. Douglas W. Shrader

During the past thirty one years, our relationship had grown and evolved in a multitude of ways that I could scarcely have expected at the time. Because of Doug's hard work and his exceptional understanding of the workings of the department and the college, the members of the Philosophy Department unanimously elected him as the Chair in 1986. With the exception of a two-year hiatus as Dean of Arts and Humanities (1991-1993), he continued to chair our department until 2008 when he voluntarily stepped down so that he could spend more time in the classroom as well as in pursuit of his own wide-ranging research projects. Under his leadership as Department Chair and Dean, our college became one of the top tier institutions within the SUNY system and our department expanded dramatically while building a national reputation that few undergraduate programs can match.

Along the way, Doug became one of our institution's most popular and beloved teachers as well as a demanding scholar of international renown. Tributes include a Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching (1991), an Oneonta Alumni Commendation for Academic Excellence (1995), and biographical profiles in well known directories such as *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in the World*, and *Who's Who in American Education*. In 1999, Doug became one of the youngest ever to be awarded the Distinguished Teaching Professorship, the highest rank available within the SUNY system. This rare honor was "created by the State University Board of Trustees as a prestigious system-level distinction ... [to] recognize and reward SUNY's finest and most accomplished faculty" (<http://www.suny.edu/provost/facultyAwards.cfm>).

In 1985, Doug and I sat in a coffee shop with another colleague, wondering why students in introductory classes were struggling with fundamental concepts. We eventually decided that the problem lay neither with the professors nor their students, but rather with the texts themselves. We resolved to create a better text, one that would cover Eastern as well as Western Philosophy, demonstrate relationships between Philosophy and other academic

Tribute to Dr. Douglas W. Shrader (continued)

fields, and include essays authored by women as well as men. Doug created sample chapters and began negotiating with publishers. In 1996, Prentice Hall published the fruits of a decade of collaboration of which I am extremely pleased to have been a part: Shrader & Malhotra – *Pathways to Philosophy: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*. Fourteen years later, the text is still in print, still cutting edge, and still in use at universities in Canada as well as the United States.

I have also been fortunate to have had the opportunity to see Doug give presentations at conferences in Finland, Jamaica, Japan, Russia, Trinidad, and Turkey, as well as various locations throughout the United States. No matter what the venue, he was thoughtful, poised, and extraordinarily articulate. His papers were not only well received, but often became the topic of conversation in the hallways throughout the remainder of the conference.

Recognizing the importance of conferences in his own intellectual development, Doug worked with students to create the first annual SUNY Oneonta Undergraduate Philosophy Conference in 1996. The conference, for which Doug served as faculty advisor till 2010, attracted submissions from outstanding students throughout North America. In 2009, for example, papers were presented by students from Alaska, California, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, and Virginia. From Illinois, students represented DePaul University, University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

As if organizing and hosting an international undergraduate conference were not enough, Doug also edited and published a unique volume each year that featured the work of promising young students alongside polished essays by well established keynote speakers. Titles in this impressive series include *Children of Athena, Philosophy and the Public Realm*, and *Thinking Outside the Box*.

Although originally trained in Philosophy of Science and Metaphysics, Doug had expanded his horizons by pursuing an extensive program of post-doctoral study in Asian Philosophy. He had participated in five six-week NEH Summer Seminars and Institutes as well as two five-week field studies in China. As a result, he had thrice been appointed to the position of Visiting Scholar at the prestigious East-West Center in Hawaii.

Moreover, here in upstate New York, Doug had worked with me to establish the Yoga and Meditation Society for the Scientific Study of Spirituality. Specifically, he had provided advice and input concerning guest speakers, helped conduct televised interviews with those speakers, given a popular multi-media presentation titled “Music, Mysticism, and Meditation,” and served as the associate editor for the first issue of a new journal: *Yoga and Meditation Now: An International Journal of Health and Wellness*.

At a more personal level, Doug has collaborated on a project that is particularly close to my heart. Through the Ninash Foundation, established in memory of my wife in 1996, we have built five schools for impoverished children in rural villages in India. Doug had provided counsel and support, designed the initial version of the foundation’s website (www.ninash.org), served as narrator on a series of fund-raising documentaries, and traveled to India in 2001 and 2003 to participate in the construction and operation of Indo-International Schools in Dundlod (Rajasthan), Kuran (Gujarat), and Mahapura (Rajasthan) that are providing free education to more than 1100 female and minority children of India.

The same spirit of generosity and giving that motivates his work with the Ninash Foundation is evident in the classroom as well. Doug was a pioneer and long-time supporter of Service Learning at Oneonta. During 2008-

Tribute to Dr. Douglas W. Shrader (continued)

2009, for example, students in his *Philosophy of Life and Death* class devoted nearly 2000 hours of volunteer time to a wide range of projects with dozens of organizations in the greater Oneonta community. Even in his death, Doug had generously given his cornea to provide sight to individuals in Germany and helped others with life giving organs.

Doug Shrader died on July 27, 2010, leaving behind a wonderful legacy as well as a vacuum that can never be filled.

At a personal level, I have lost: my closest friend, who was more than a brother to me; a travelling companion, who joyously visited with me eight countries where we presented papers and argued to our heart content while chasing the sunsets; a scholar friend, who generously devoted his time to go through more than a dozen of my manuscripts offering insightful comments, writing prefaces for some and giving unique titles to the books such as *Wisdom of the Tao Te Ching: The Code of a Spiritual Warrior* and *Instant Nirvana: Americanization of Mysticism and Meditation*; a big hearted man, who generously donated his time to provide commentaries for the Ninash Foundation's 2003 and 2007 DVDs that reached audiences in more than eight countries by raising funds for building 5 Indo-International Schools for more than 1100 impoverished female and minority children of India; a great interviewer, who helped interview more than 25 scholars/practitioners from both East and West for the Yoga Society; and wrote letters of recommendation to fetch me some of the most prestigious awards such as the SUNY Distinguished Teaching Award, UUP and Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Teaching as well as the University of Hawaii and East West Center Distinguished Alumni Awards.

Doug was a great man, who was a brilliant scholar, a devoted friend and a most generous human being. His good deeds fill up half the cup while leaving the other half empty for all of us to keep filling with all those good deeds, which he would have done if he were alive. Human beings like Doug rarely walk on this earth. Though Doug has gone away in his physical form, he will remain with us in the sunrise and the sun set; in the snowflakes and raindrops as well as in the love we get from others and the love we shower on them. He will be there every time our heart beats with love, compassion and generosity and Doug, like the *Lion King*, will remain our beacon of light to guide our path when we are left groping in the dark.



UUP Diversity Panel Discussion: Wednesday, October 13, 2010

Noon, Otsego Grille, Morris Hall



Dr. Gayane Torosyan

UUP invites all members of the College and Community to the Diversity Panel Discussion on October 13, 2010 at Otsego Grille, in Morris Hall Room, between 12 noon and 1pm. This is the third in a series of diversity panels sponsored by UUP Oneonta. Complimentary lunch will be served. Vegetarian options are also available.

The purpose of this panel discussion is to examine the experiences of international faculty members on the SUNY Oneonta campus. The panel consists of 1) Dr. Gayane Torosyan, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Arts. Dr. Torosyan is originally from Armenia; 2) Dr. Sunil Labroo, Associate Professor, Department of Physics & Astronomy. Dr. Labroo is originally from India. 3) Dr. Betty Wambui, Lecturer, Philosophy and African and Latina Studies. Dr. Wambui is from Kenya. The moderator of the panel discussion is Dr. Nithya Iyer, Assistant Professor, Educational Psychology and Counseling. Dr. Iyer is from India.

The panel is sponsored by UUP and all College employees and students as well as the general community are welcome to attend.

Happy Anniversary to a Good IDEA

By Dawn Hamlin, Disabilities Officer



Did you know that 2010 is the 35th anniversary of Public Law 94-142 – aka the *Education for all Handicapped Children Act*? It was a very good year for the many American families whose lives were affected by disabilities. Prior to PL 94-142, access to a free, appropriate, public education was sporadic at best and all too often, non-existent. Some choices were available for people who were lucky enough to live in more urban areas. Most of these programs were run by agencies like The ARC and other special interest groups. For others with more financial capital, their wealth could open the doors to private schools and personal tutors. Unfortunately for many, their children were left with no options at all.

What brought about the change in our public education system? It certainly wasn't a massive influx of unexpected funds. Rather it was political action brought on by concerned parents and caring community citizens. We must never forget the power we have to positively impact lives of others who may or may not be able to speak for themselves. The whole field of Special Education and disability awareness has been shaped by small groups of people who saw the need for action even in the face of overwhelming odds.

Many changes have occurred since 1975. Today PL 94-142 is known as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and it has gone through several reauthorizations. In the 1976-1977 school year our public education system (K-12) supported 3,700,000 students with identified disabilities. The most common disability at the time was Speech or Language Impairments, 1 in 3 children receiving Special Education services were eligible under this category. Over 6,600,000 students aged 3-21 now receive services under IDEA, and most (39%) qualify for services under Specific Learning Disability. In 1990 two new categories were added, autism and traumatic brain injury. Interestingly, ADHD was rejected at the same time – many were concerned with overburdening limited personnel and financial resources due to the high number of children identified with the disorder.

So what does this all have to do with us at SUNY Oneonta? Depending on the day or your particular courses – the answer may be ‘not much’. But one big change that has occurred in the last 35 years is the shift in focus in the public school system to see access to a higher education as a desirable and/or necessary outcome – for both general *and* special education students.

Today over 10% of the students enrolled in post secondary institutions identify themselves as a student with a disability. This can present interesting challenges in the college classroom. Even within a certain category such as Specific Learning Disabilities, the needs and strengths of the students can vary widely. Unfortunately too few public school teachers feel adequately prepared to help these students at the K-12 level, so it makes me question – how are faculty prepared to meet this challenge? Let me know what you think – I'd be interested to hear what you have to say about your experiences.

ATTENTION! Call for applications for the annual
RICHARD SIEGFRIED JUNIOR FACULTY
PRIZE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Eligibility: All SUNY- Oneonta full-time, junior (non-tenured) faculty.

The selection process includes:

1. Evidence of academic achievement such as the publication of books or articles, grants for research or other scholarly endeavors, exhibits, presentations at conferences, creative achievements, performance events, or works in progress.
2. Presentation of a 45-minute lecture on a topic related to the applicant's scholarly area of expertise that is appropriate for an audience of non-specialists.

October 11, 2010: Deadline for submission of application to: Academic Excellence Committee, Office of the Provost, 340 Netzer Administration Bldg.

Week of October 25, 2010: Successful applicant will be notified.

Evening of December 2, 2010: Successful applicant will receive the \$1,000 prize and deliver the Siegfried Lecture in Craven Lounge.

Checklist of materials to submit:

- 1. Statement regarding academic excellence.
- 2. Current vita listing published books, articles, chapters, creative activities, presentations, or other scholarly achievements.
- 3. Representative copies of materials listed above.
- 4. Title and brief outline of proposed presentation, identifying topics to be covered, organization, and mode (e.g., transparencies, slides, PowerPoint, demonstration).
- 5. Explanation of why the topic will interest a general audience and enhance the reputation of the College.
- 6. Statement regarding public speaking experience and style.
- 7. At least one letter supporting your ability to give such a presentation.
- 8. Audio/visual tape of a past presentation or class lecture (optional). Contact the Instructional Resource Center for help with this.

The Richard Siegfried Junior Faculty Prize for Academic Excellence is funded by a gift from Alice Siegfried in memory of her husband and in honor of his commitment to academic excellence. This annual event is also generously supported by the Fund for Oneonta. 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 (William Simons-Chair, Michael Green, Lawrence Guzy, and Ho Hon Leung,) and the Richard Siegfried Junior Faculty Prize (Devin Castendyk).

The Richard Siegfried Junior Faculty Prize has a twofold purpose:

- 1) recognition of academic excellence and
- 2) public promotion of the College at Oneonta.

Students with outstanding GPA's will receive awards funded by gifts to the 2009-2010 Alumni Annual Fund.

AFLAC Available to UUP Members - Coming to Campus Soon!

By Mona L. Hughes, UUP Oneonta Benefits Chair

We have all seen those television commercials where a big white duck yells out the word "Aflac" to every question asked regarding how to pay expenses when you have been injured or are sick. But, are you fully aware of what Aflac offers? Do you know that Aflac is available to UUP Members?

Aflac NY (American Family Life Assurance Company) offers UUP members the best in supplemental insurance products. Aflac provides low-cost insurance coverage that pays cash benefits when a policyholder has a covered accident or illness.

It is different from major medical insurance that pays for doctors and hospitals. Aflac is insurance coverage for everyday living and pays cash directly to the policyholder to help with daily expenses when you are hurt or sick.

Aflac is a financial protection for the times you and/or a family member have unexpected expenses. Benefits are predetermined and paid regardless of any other insurance protection you may already carry. Your Aflac benefits checks come directly to you and can be used for anything. You decide the best way to spend them!

Aflac NY also offers UUP members the opportunity to purchase Accident, Cancer and Short-Term Disability insurance policies with discounts of up to 40 percent off the regular price of other policies. Enrollment and payment is fast and easy and is payroll deductible so you never have to worry about when your payment is due.

Sometime in the near future, UUP Oneonta will be offering you another opportunity to meet with Aflac representatives to ask questions and pick up some literature regarding Aflac. This visit will also offer those of you who have shown interest in purchasing a policy the opportunity to sign up. More information will be released as soon as we have the details in place.

In the meantime if you have questions you may contact me at 436-2490 or hughesml@oneonta.edu.

SENTINEL QUIZ



This photo was taken from the inside of a tall Oneonta landmark. What is it? The first person to email Nancy Cannon (cannonns@oneonta.edu) with the correct answer will receive a UUP cap.

The answer to the September *Sentinel* quiz, "What city hosted the September 5, 1882 Labor Day parade depicted in the illustration" is New York City. The first correct answer was provided by Scott Dickerson.

Now Available, Faculty Office, Barely Used



By Kathleen O'Mara, Chair, Africana & Latino Studies Department; Professor, History; and UUP Representative, State Women's Rights and Concerns Committee

Looking back at the past summer I have been reflecting on how one prepares for a new academic year. Yes, I revise or prep syllabi, assemble course-packs, upload materials on ANGEL and trade Keens for assorted New Balance trainers to sprint to the classroom, but an additional preparation is reading several months worth of Laurie Taylor columns.

Dr. O'Mara, far left

I wrap myself in steel-belted humor to deflect the onslaught of managerial discourse which opens a new semester, especially the words, those strategically deployable shifters which mean everything and nothing such as **excellence, diversity, sustainability, stewardship, measurable impact** and their cousins, the soulless acronyms APAC, GEAC, SLO, etc. The urgent need for satire was brought home to me early this summer when a colleague at a UK university remarked that their offices were now referred to as “cells”(!) which reflected their use and design since three years ago when all campus printing was centralized and faculty lost their printers and most of their paper and other supplies. When her colleagues retire or die there is a rush for 2006 or even 20th century equipment—book cases, file cabinets, staplers, desks, chairs—artifacts of a lost work culture.

Laurie Taylor, a British sociologist, posts a “weekly report from the front line of Poppleton University,” (an imaginary former Polytechnic, not unlike US comprehensives), that is a satiric commentary on contemporary higher ed for *The Times Higher Education Supplement* (UK). From this perch for thirty years he has recorded the absurdities of the neoliberal transformation of higher education into a business facing, privatized, customer focused, managerial driven entity. What David Harvey describes (2005:61) as the imposition of a culture of entrepreneurialism with strict rules of surveillance, financial accountability and productivity poorly suited to universities, Taylor skewers weekly, employing fictional stock characters such as Prof Gordon Lapping of Media & Cultural Studies, and Jamie Targett, Dir. of Corporate Affairs who embody the silliness of policy shifts and their sinister effects. One of my favorites is Taylor’s 2008 (3/7/08) posting in which Louise Bimpson, the Director of HR reported, “the success of the **leadership courses**” has resulted in “urgent vacancies on the campus for qualified followers. This three-week course will provide attendees with a range of basic followership skills including unquestioning obedience, general subservience, all-round docility and thoroughgoing conformity.” In response to our current moment of budget slashing and furloughs, Ms. Bimpson criticized “academics facing dismissal for a lack of perspective,” about “consultative redundancy planning,” using language at the session having “no place in HR lexicon.” These faculty members failed to appreciate that part of “the **strategic plan**... (which) offered the(m) a chance to air their point of

view” about imminent dismissal. The campus **surveillance** regime is represented by the Deputy Director of Staff Time Management, Gloria Chopard, who “extended the ban upon academic corridor conversations to staff toilets and covered walkways.” Research by her department has shown that “conversations between academics in these settings was invariably of a ‘negative variety’ and occasionally descended into ‘gratuitous abuse of individual administrators.’” (*THES*, 29/07/10)

In this time of GFC (global financial crisis) we in higher ed are experiencing new **cost saving** policies, ones resulting in “office cells” and fundamental assaults on academic culture duly noted by Taylor.

“In a dramatic cost saving initiative, our Head of Procurement, Mr. T.G. Messina ... announced that all academics attending conferences less than 90 miles from campus will be required to select the Cycling and Packed Lunch option on their Travel Expense forms.” (*THES* 1/07/10)

Outsourcing can create unforeseen problems such as Poppleton U’s need to apologize to parents for “last week’s graduation ceremony...interrupted by the appearance of two bailiffs who claimed that the rental period for the university mace had expired.” The endless discussion about academic excellence frequently pivots on new and imaginative ways to improve **knowledge delivery** and **assess its impact** with Taylor contributing to the ongoing “**excellence in teaching and learning**” discussion:

“...Mark Russell and Helen Barefoot of the University of Herefordshire’s Learning and Teaching Institute have discovered the formula for the perfect teacher. Director of Curriculum Development, Janet Fluellen, said that she fully endorsed the idea that “the ideal lecturer was an ‘edutainer,’ ...able to combine education and entertainment”. As the first step to further the entertainment aspect she announced the formation of a university Joke Bank... (What do you get if you cross a sociologist with a member of the Mafia? An offer you can’t understand). ..Not all academics have welcomed the development. One professor with grey hair and a saggy blue cardigan...who wished to remain anonymous, said that what with the vice-chancellor’s salary and the size of the human resources department, there were already quite enough jokes on campus.” (*THES*, 22 July 2010)

Since we have no equivalent Laurie Taylor, I am inviting OSC colleagues to consider contributing to a Poppleton U inspired Catskillian University page in *the Sentinel*, a place to imagine, critique and record—preferably humorously—our work lives today. If some prefer, this can be a blog. The only requirement is a Wildean sense of candor and willingness to publicly comment and move away from the safety of eyeball rolling and whispering. Various genres and lengths are welcome, including txt/sms poems. Every day Monty Pythonesque interactions occur as well as institutional announcements and email headlines begging for comment. One from this week’s *CHE* – [Budget] “Cuts Intensify Identity Crisis...” a clever way of describing administrative anxiety about slipping in the college rankings! Two months ago there was the *CHE* question, “Do Faculty Need Single Offices?” No, just a cell.

Recently a facilities consultant who I thought was meeting to discuss (again) the Fitzelle rehab, but is working on a

Now Available, Faculty Office, Barely Used (continued)

ten year OSC campus grounds design plan came to my office. When I asked him, “how can I help you?” He replied, “Tell me your dream (!)... for the campus, your department?” I smiled wanly at this ritualized consultative waltz and asked him if he knew much about my department and its location in the greater design of the institution over the past twenty-five years. As consultants do, he asked me to share that information, assuring me that all information provided goes into a grinder and comes out unattributed to anyone! As a **stakeholder** I shared, but what I wanted to say was, “Will you all stop asking me to ‘**dream, discover and design**’ and get me a new printer?!” And please do not take away my faculty’s contiguous offices. “Dreaming” is big on US campuses, but unfortunately dreams shared administratively are remembered about as well as my nightly ones. I am still waiting for the full results of the earlier **dream** sessions about our campus’s future, i.e., more than a handful of bullet points. For the record, I approve of dreams, even robust dreams. Indeed, as a Black Studies scholar-activist, actualizing the “dream deferred” is a disciplinary value. One of my dreams, indeed, the **sustainability** of my department hinges on it, is to hire full time faculty trained in the inter-discipline! Having a printer with adequate toner and power is merely a prerequisite for a search.

Please consider sharing your thoughts on campus transformations, your reactions to the bevy of policy changes and strategic plans, your latest encounter with strategically deployable shifters, and gosh golly, your dreams about a great work environment, **community engagement, internationalization**, etc. Send to: omarakk@oneonta.edu.



Oneonta University Revisited

By Alex Thomas, Acting Dean, Behavioral & Applied Science and Associate Professor Sociology



[Editor's Note: UUP wishes Alex Thomas well in his new position as Acting Dean, Behavioral & Applied Science. The union appreciates Alex's long service, now completed, as the senior UUP representative to the Individual Development Awards Committees and for the remarkable series of articles that he wrote for *The Sentinel* on his proposal for Oneonta as regional university. The penultimate article in that series reappears below. It was previously published in the April 2010 issue. Good luck, Alex!]

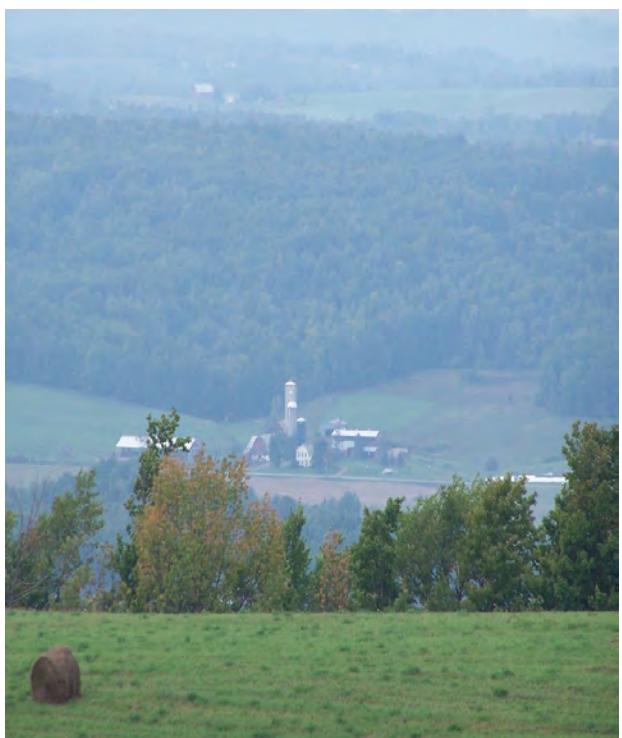
For almost a year I have been writing a flow of consciousness directed at reconceptualizing our fine college. We've used terms such as “granola strategy” and “regional university,” but month by month the topic has changed and the focus has differed. So here, in my final column of the year, is the “granola strategy” in one place.

In order to bring the college to the “next level,” we must first define what we mean by the “next level.” This requires some honest appraisal of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats – what

urban planners call a “SWOT analysis.” That could be a column of its own so I’ll spare you the details, but it is worth thinking about why the college has made such leaps and bounds since the mid-90s. We should acknowledge that our enrollment management and admissions have improved significantly in that time, and the folks who have helped engineer our success deserve a round of applause. Rising numbers beget rising numbers, at least for a time, and we are attracting some very good students. Other factors are also important: the “Blacklist Scandal” not only brought shame to our institution in the 1990s, but for a time applications were down so much that Hulbert Hall was closed. By the early part of this decade a new generation of students who had not heard of this stain were again applying to the college, and this enabled us to be more selective in our admissions – we can think of this as the Blacklist Bounceback. The favorable location of the college – in the middle of everywhere, not “nowhere” – means that Oneonta is now the funky college town two hours from the city because the suburbs are growing closer to Oneonta. This is a tremendous opportunity for the college and the town as a whole. And of course, the big gorilla in the room is the affordability of public colleges, even with budget cuts and rising tuition, vis-à-vis our private competitors. The fact of the matter is that nearly all colleges in our sector of SUNY have witnessed similar improvements in their status, so in at least one sense our boat is simply rising with the tide.

SUNY Central has been callous in its treatment of the comprehensive colleges. The university centers are given card blanche to expand at will, sopping up large proportions of the SUNY budget yet allowed to disassociate themselves with the larger institution. A proposed bond will benefit the centers even more. Our institution in particular must be careful to not step on the toes of the gorillas on either side of us: Albany and Binghamton. While *Money Magazine* is nice enough to compare us only to other colleges in our Carnegie classification in the northeast, prospective students don’t realize that a “Research I” and a “Masters I” institution are the not the same. In real life, we compete against Albany and Binghamton, as well as all the private colleges that we sometimes seem to ignore. We also compete against the two-year colleges, now four-year colleges. Whereas SUNY

Oneonta had a niche even when I was applying to colleges, it is now shared with Delhi and Mohawk Valley Community College. SUNY Central has not only “given away” our niche, but through the Seamless Transfer Initiative is actively blurring the lines between the comprehensive colleges and the community colleges. Several years ago my department lost an adjunct with a Masters degree – a fine teacher without an interest in research or pursuing a Ph.D. – because it was apparent that our department requires a doctorate for a full-time position. Seamless transfer will require us to accept courses from faculty at other institutions who we would not hire at our own, and there is a contradiction here. Either we should lower our standards or the two-year colleges should raise theirs; in the process, we should consider what it is about a college education that makes it different than a high school education. In either case, SUNY Central is proving itself to be our adversary and not our friend.



The answer to this conundrum is to reimagine SUNY Oneonta as something between a research university and a four-year teaching college. In other words, carving out a narrowly-defined niche so that we do not compete directly against the university centers or the new four-year colleges. SUNY Oneonta should aim to be a university with a focus on teaching and community involvement; in other words, strive to live up to the potential of a public university. For inspiration we should look to our home region: the Catskill Mountains and Upper Susquehanna region, stretching from the Delaware River to the Mohawk River. What types of issues are important in this region? The Catskills are faced with increasing population pressure as the New York City suburbs move north: what is the development like? Typically, houses are built on large lots in the countryside. Does this pattern have side effects? Yes – human-animal interactions are up, and not just with deer but with bobcats and bear as well! In the northern part of our region, most obvious in the Mohawk River valley but in smaller industrial towns like Richfield Springs and Sherburne as well, the big story has been deindustrialization and disinvestment. SUNY Oneonta is the largest college in this region, with only Albany, Binghamton, Cortland, and New Paltz at the region's fringe approaching our size.

SUNY Oneonta can make a legitimate claim to be the University of the Catskills and address issues related to our region, particularly environmental issues and the urban/rural nexus. In New York, only Cornell University has a significant program that examines rural issues, and that has not always fared well with budget cuts. Even if their programs go away entirely the issues they address will not, and Oneonta is in a perfect location to study them. Such a regional focus need not be parochial: there are other communities in the shadows of great cities facing similar issues of development, disinvestment, and environmental degradation, and we should find them whether they be an hour from London or two hours from Seoul. Addressing issues of community and environment can help our local area, but in doing so we can establish programs to be emulated in other places on a global scale.

How do we celebrate this shift in focus? By rebranding. Personally, I like “Oneonta State University” as it keeps our name and public affiliation. I also like a subtitle of “The University of the Catskills” to be used in our marketing. Other people probably have other ideas – we should discuss them.

Retooling and rebranding is only a beginning. The college will continue to have difficulty in recruiting a diverse student body and faculty if it does not address certain issues in the community. This is not such a strange idea, however, as many institutions have acknowledged that their fates are tied to that of the community at large. Colgate University, for example, has created a program that buys downtown buildings and renovates them. Both Union College and the Sage Colleges have created programs meant to revitalize neighborhood housing around the college. My own *alma mater* Northeastern University has revitalized a large area in its Boston neighborhood. We need to do the same by looking for examples of towns similar to Oneonta: Ithaca and Northampton immediately come to mind. Oneonta State University is not going to attract large numbers of students looking for an exhilarating urban experience, but it can attract students looking for the comforts of small town urbanism set amid easy access to hiking and skiing. By emphasizing our access to the amenities of the Catskills and even our easy access to nearby metropolitan areas, we become an attractive option.

Oneonta University Revisited (continued)

We also need to invest in the surrounding community. By working with the city and Hartwick College, we can contribute to a public trail system that encircles the city, for example. By building a sports complex with Hartwick College downtown, not only can we have access to a superior swimming pool, ice rink, and arena large enough for graduation, but it will be a great community facility as well. The creation of a contemporary art museum downtown, similar to Mass MOCA in North Adams, Massachusetts, can help Oneonta transition to an arts community in the summer tourist months. Although in the past I called for assistance to Oneonta World of Learning (OWL) for a children's museum downtown, the vacant Soccer Hall of Fame presents a unique opportunity. Not only were there interactive exhibits, but the space would allow for a series of educational exhibits that could draw on the strengths of our faculty. I for one would like to work on the exhibits on the evolution of cities and on sprawl in the Catskills – I'm sure other people have their own ideas. We could also give assistance in revitalizing downtown by building off-campus apartments for upperclassmen and graduate students in the urban renewal area south of Main Street along modern urban planning standards that stress focal points and pedestrian flow.

A regional university needs to be organized in such a way that the creativity of the faculty is allowed to bubble up. This, frankly, involves ending the Divisions of Stuff and More Stuff. In the social sciences, for example, efforts on the part of the department chairs to meet on a regular basis were stymied by the fact that we were in different divisions, which at the least made it difficult to add yet another meeting to our already busy schedules. This situation could be averted by creating academic units that actually put similar departments together, thus allowing them to coordinate actions and work together. The Sociology Department would benefit from an effort to make Oneonta a destination for the social sciences – an individual department cannot do this alone. Your department would similarly benefit from coordination and working together. There are multiple ways to do this, but here is my vote. Turn the Division of Education into the School of Education, and place Business & Economics and Human Ecology in a School of Professional Studies. Then, put the rest of us in a College of Arts & Sciences, divided into the Divisions of Social & Behavioral Sciences, Natural & Physical Sciences, and Arts & Humanities, each headed by an Assistant Dean meant to coordinate departments rather than rule them. Keep the departmental structure intact. Add a graduate school to create graduate programs as a regional university should have graduate programs, but these will require coordination among departments. The graduate school should also reexamine policies such as the cross listing of graduate and undergraduate courses. Certain programs could perhaps be housed under centers designed to both offer graduate programs and function as a research center. For instance, a “Center for Community and Environment” could in theory sponsor an interdisciplinary Masters Program and operate as a research center.

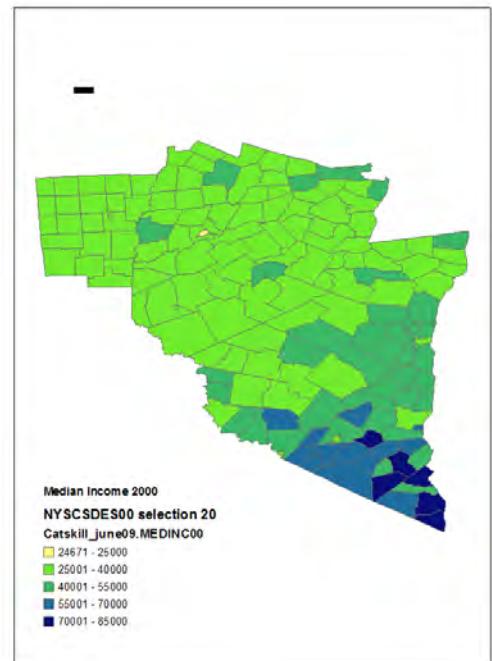
In order to make this work, faculty would need to trust that the administration is looking out for the best interest of the college. Oneonta State University still has the benefit of academic integrity as we have not sold ourselves to a corporate model of education as yet. Indeed, to make such a transition we need good leadership from our administrators, people willing to float an idea without the fear that people will say they are dictating. As faculty, we need to give them the ability to lead without fear of repercussion.

In order to make this work, administration would need to trust that the faculty is looking out for the best interest of the college. Decisions should be transparent. While supervision should be expected, the departments

Oneonta University Revisited (continued)

should be given the latitude to develop policies that work for their unique circumstances. The policy about teaching load is a good example of this: ultimately, the people who know best are in the departments.

This is the time to build on the successes of the past. If we believe that Oneonta State University is truly a college of excellence, then it is only a matter of time before other colleges seek to replicate our success. To do so, we need to give ourselves one more pat on the back and then get to work. We need to discard antiquated parochialisms and work together. The causes of environmental degradation in the region cannot be understood without an understanding of urbanization in the region and how our geographical niche is similar (or not) to places in the shadows of other great cities. In other words, the natural sciences need to work with the social sciences. Also, the loss of the unique northern Appalachian culture cannot be understood without the important work of the humanities in terms of understanding and preserving that culture. In other words, the social sciences need to work with the humanities. Ultimately, Oneonta is in a unique place to study such issues and it can be the transforming characteristic of our university. This series has been an invitation to discuss such ideas and many more. Ultimately, for such an idea as a regional university to work, we need to discuss and design and change.



Median Household Income in the Catskill Region, 2000. Darker colors represent higher incomes: notice the gradient as one travels to and from the New York City suburbs in the bottom right.



UUP Labor Film Series - At Hunt Union Red Dragon Theater

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

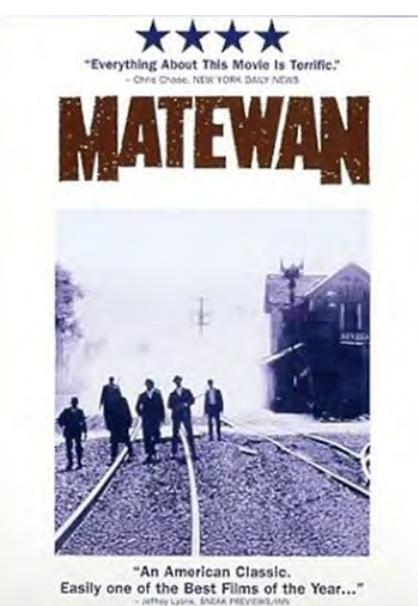


Matewan

Wednesday, November 10, 6:00 - 8:00 PM

John Sayles directed this fierce film based on true events and characters from a violent 1920 labor conflict in Matewan, West Virginia. Coal miners, struggling to form a union, are up against company operators and gun thugs. Black and Italian miners, brought in by the company to break the strike, are caught between the two forces. Union activist and ex-Wobbly Joe Kenehan, sent to help organize the union, determines to bring the groups together. Independent Spirit Award winner; Oscar nominated. (2006)

The film will be followed by an audience discussion. For more information, please contact Professor Gina L. Keel, Film Series Director, at keelgl@oneonta.edu



Celebrate the 18th SUNY Oneonta Learn and Serve Program in India:

December 28, 2010---January 14, 2011

By Ashok Kumar Malhotra, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor

and former UUP Oneonta Vice President for Academics



Study the old and new civilizations of India while helping the underprivileged children get education!

The ancient and modern civilization of India throbs with energy and life. Come and experience the ever changing and ever growing kaleidoscope that is India. Learn about the country first-hand through this eighteen-day SUNY Intersession Program directed by Dr. Ashok Malhotra, (SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor) and Ms. Linda Drake (Director, Center for Social Responsibility and Community.)

Ashok Malhotra, back row, second from left; Linda Drake, first row, right

Participants will learn about the history and culture of India through lectures and excursions to places of historical, religious and artistic significance as well as visit the five Indo-International Schools in the villages of Dundlod, Mahapura and Kuran where they will volunteer their services.

Through Learn and Serve in India, you can continue the tradition of service established by the SUNY Oneonta Semester in India program, where in 1996, students and faculty established the first Indo-International School.

Established in 1979, it is the longest running SUNY Study Abroad Program in India! Participants will celebrate its 31st year of continued existence during their 18 day sojourn in India.

Approximate cost: \$4000.00 (Includes)

International Round Trip, Domestic Air Travel and Ground Transportation; Hotel Stays, Meals; English Speaking Guides, Lectures and Entrance Fees to Monuments/Special Events in India.

Faculty: Please announce this in your classes -- Seats are limited!

Students, faculty and members of the community are encouraged to participate in this once in a lifetime opportunity to visit India by Contacting: Dr. Ashok Malhotra (Philosophy Department); Tel: 607-436-3220 or 607-432-0496 (malhotak@oneonta.edu) or Ms. Linda Drake (Center for Social Responsibility and Community); Tel: 607-436-2633 (drakelm@oneonta.edu).

Gas Drilling: Community Impact

By Nancy S. Cannon, Academic Delegate and UUP Representative,
Joint Labor-Management Individual Development Awards Committee

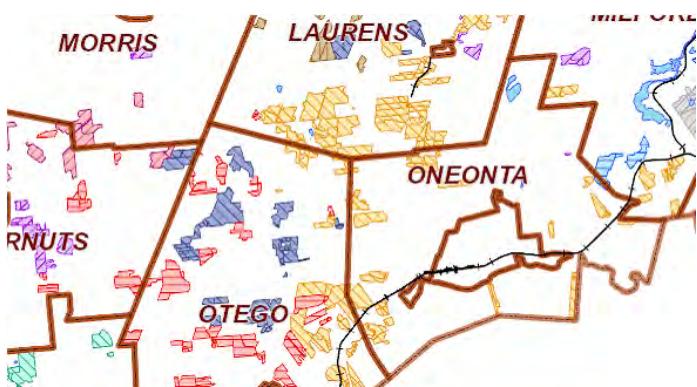
[Source: Jennifer Kingsley, "Life in Not-So-Sleepy Burlington Sure Has Changed," *Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin*, June 8, 2010, 10A.]

As issues involving natural gas drilling remain contested in our region and the environmental catastrophe in the Gulf leaves reverberations, the experiences of Bradford County, Pennsylvania, provide perspective. Bradford County resident Debbie Finnerty comments on the changes wrought by gas drilling in her region:

The water quality has deteriorated. The traffic has increased — not only the cars or tractor-trailers, but now the dump trucks and water trucks due to the gas well explosion in this area (Kingsley, 10A).

Another Bradford resident, Julie Wolfe, observed of the aftermath of gas drilling, "We have no one to blame but ourselves. We asked for it, now we have to deal with it. I just want my small town back (Kingsley, 10A)."

In our own Leatherstocking, region, drillers' plans entail employing hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") — driving huge amounts of water, chemicals, and sand into the land to crack rock and unleash natural gas. The chemicals, some injected and others surfacing from the flow back of indigenous materials, include carcinogenic threats to health such as benzene and arsenic (Nancy Cannon, "The Natural Gas Development Cycle: Boom and Bust," *The Sentinel*,



May 2010, 14). Local activist Nicole Dillingham observed to *The Daily Star* (2/27-28/10, 1A): "If we leave this gas in the ground for a while, it's only going to become more valuable, and there may come a day when we can extract it safely." That day, notes Dillingham, is certainly not here.

Land leased for natural gas as of September 2009 <http://map.otsegocounty.com/Otsego%20County%20Natural%20Gas%20Map/default.aspx>

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, go to the following link www.1ontauup.org. John Chiang is UUP Oneonta Web Master. 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.

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Administrative Assistant	Peg Carney	ONEONTA@UUPMAIL.ORG	
		UUP Oneonta Office: 206 Human Ecology Building	436-2135 (o)

Other Delegates & Alternates:

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John Carney	CARNEYJJ	432-5360 (h)
Jeri Anne Jerminario	JERMINJA	436-2377 (o)

*e-mail addresses are
@ONEONTA.EDU
(d = delegate, o = office, h
= home)