



## Demystifying Labor-Management Meetings: Summary and New Developments III

By Rob Compton, UUP Oneonta Vice President for Academics

\*Editor’s Note: This article updates an essay that originally appeared in the March 2006 Sentinel and was subsequently revised in December 2010.

**The contract mandates Labor-Management meetings and they are an important vehicle to address issues, concerns, and disputes regarding the “terms and conditions of employment.”**



Rob Compton, VP Academics and Ho Hon Leung, UUP Oneonta Academic Delegate in Suzhou, PR China (2013)

### Why Have Labor-Management Meetings?

In recent years, many new academic and professional employees have joined the Oneonta community. Thus, it is appropriate that the inaugural issue of *The Sentinel* for the new academic year provides an update on Labor-Management meetings and relations. *The Sentinel* publishes the notes of the Labor-Management meetings. These notes are not minutes, but instead seek to capture Labor’s perception of the meetings. New members, in particular, may wonder how UUP prepares for these meetings and how the agenda for Labor-Management meetings is constructed.

First, a brief background is in order. The contract between UUP and the State of New York mandates Labor-Management meetings. Under the provisions of the contract, UUP is entitled to monthly Labor-Management meetings as well as separate Part-Time Labor Management meetings. UUP and Management have fiduciary duties to

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uphold the “terms and conditions of employment” as outlined in the contract. In other words, 90% of the contract is administrative and routine. The other 10%, the so-called “gray zone,” requires UUP to advocate assertively for the interests of our members, even in the face of potential collision of ideas, purposes, and style with Management. UUP does not shirk from this responsibility. The most important aspect of Labor-Management meetings is to maintain and enhance the evolving relationship between Labor and Management and to maintain an atmosphere of respect and reciprocity.

By law, UUP has the exclusive right to represent its members in matters pertaining to “terms and conditions of employment.” UUP works in consultation with UUP Statewide, but the Oneonta Chapter sets its own agenda for Labor-Management meetings. In addition, UUP Oneonta, through “lateral movement,” solicits ideas and counsel from other UUP chapters through list-serves, emails, and meetings. Throughout the process, we also work closely with the Chapter Grievance Officer and the NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist, a professional trained in “best practices” and contractual matters. The UUP/NYSUT legal counsel is also available when necessary. For political advice, UUP Oneonta solicits input from member meetings, discussions, and surveys.

### **History of Oneonta Labor-Management Relations**

During the previous College administration, tension and acrimony impeded Labor-Management relations prior to 2008. The former College President did not attend Labor-Management meetings regularly, except for a contractually required “once a semester” presence. The nadir was reached on September 6, 2006. Nonetheless, important issues required discussion and resolution. Hence, significant progress in areas of course-load reductions per page 24 of the Faculty Handbook and with the processes involved in the reappointment, tenure, and promotion process occurred. UUP also received assurance that unsubstantiated rumors and innuendo would not be part of personnel decisions.

The tone of Labor-Management changed considerably with the inauguration of a new President, Nancy Kleniewski, in 2008. Attending all Labor-Management meetings, President Kleniewski worked with UUP to cultivate respectful relationships and consider collaborative endeavors. Labor and Management have come to recognize that they share much common ground. Nonetheless, by its nature, labor-management relations entail, by turns, advocacy, divergent positions, negotiations, compromise, resolution, and/or disagreement. Labor-Management relations are a day-by-day continuous process, ranging the gamut of issues from health/safety concerns to personnel matters. Labor-Management meetings are framed around detailed and significant agendas.

Despite areas of difference, Labor and Management recognize their mutual interdependence benefits the College. Embarrassing each other does not promote a good College working environment. Each side could return to the tactics of the pre-2008 past but choose a better path. Relations are now civil and cordial. The issues addressed in Labor-Management meetings and in other venues are always fully resolved, but serious effort is made to explore solutions. Significant credit goes to the President herself and several other members of her team.

On the UUP side, the Executive Board wanted to move to a different less confrontational model. UUP Oneonta President Bill Simons, along with Chapter Vice Presidents Rob Compton and Norm Payne, are amongst the key Labor liaisons; Senior Executive Employee Services Officer Lisa Wenck serves as the Management counterpart and is President Nancy Kleniewski’s designee for labor relations. UUP and Management

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communicate in diverse venues, including through monthly Labor-Management Meetings, which vary between large group and two-on-two sessions. Some of the notes pertaining to the two-on-two meetings are less detailed than those for large group Labor-Management meetings. That is by design as that promotes candid discussion on difficult issues. In addition, there are regularly scheduled Labor-Management meetings dedicated exclusively to part-time concerns. Informal Labor-Management “sidebar” meetings, held whenever needed, also serve as an important conduit as do frequent phone calls and emails between the union and the administration.

### **Agenda Setting**

How is the agenda for the Labor-Management Meeting set? The agenda requires meticulous development on this campus. Initially, we gather information regarding problems as reported to us by emails, phone calls, and observation by Executive Board members. Research, analysis, and evaluation of potential issues follow. UUP attempts to resolve problems by working with Management. Labor-Management meetings also serve as a mechanism to verify previously agreed upon matters, clarify understandings and resolving misunderstandings and to inform our membership.

After UUP gathers information about a pressing or simmering issue, a filtering process takes place. Sometimes the issue is resolved by a phone call or through informal channels. Other times, the issue does not fall under our jurisdiction. UUP takes significant care to make sure that it respects the purview of the College Senate and the Administration. Oneonta, like all UUP chapters, has a Labor Relations Specialist (LRS) who provides professional contractual advice. UUP Oneonta’s Labor Relations Specialist (Darryl Wood) attends our, Labor-Management and Executive Board meetings. The LRS, in consultation with the Chapter Grievance Officer (Mike Brown), decides if a specific situation qualifies for formal grievance procedures.

Issues may first surface at Executive Board or Chapter meetings or through the emails, phone communications, and survey responses of UUP members. The decision to move on an issue is not an impulsive move, but instead one that is developed through careful and concerted analysis. UUP assesses the legal, political, and practical aspects of the issue and gauges constituent support and positions. During the strategy phase, questions emerge. How do we approach the issue? How is the issue linked with other issues? What was the tone of the past Labor-Management meetings? Sometimes strategy for key issues is refined at lengthy meetings lasting two days (Friday-Saturday) at the State UUP Delegate Assembly, typically in Albany, and State UUP Chapter Presidents and Vice Presidents workshops. These venues are very time consuming, but provide the UUP Oneonta leadership with the opportunity to work on issues and plot out various scenarios without distraction. On campus, Bill Simons, Norm Payne, and I are in regular contact on issues as they develop. Furthermore, we discuss issues germane to the union every day, despite our busy schedules. On some days, we speak for only a few minutes. On other days, we spend multiple hours dealing with developing issues or responding to a crisis.

**The decision to move on an issue is not an impulsive move, but instead one that is developed through a tedious and concerted analysis.**

The Labor-Management Meeting agenda, submitted to Management ten working days prior to the meeting, identifies the issues of the upcoming meeting. In crafting the agenda, UUP Oneonta pays close attention to details, including the ordering of items and the person assigned responsibility for asking

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particular questions during the actual meeting. Executive Board members complete remaining research on agenda items in preparation for the upcoming Labor-Management Meeting.

### **UUP Pre-Labor Management Meeting and the Meeting Itself**

UUP conducts a pre-Labor Management meeting. UUP's policy is that attendance at the pre-meeting is a prerequisite for attending the Labor-Management Meeting. UUP's delegation at Labor-Management meetings typically comprises six-eight senior union officers appointed by the Chapter President. At the Pre-Labor Management meeting, UUP discuss the agenda, get last minute advice from our Labor Relations Specialist, and confirms the division of the questions. The pre-meeting lasts about 45 minutes. Management also conducts similar meetings, but we are not privy to their methods of operation. The administration's delegation to Labor-Management meetings typically includes President Nancy Kleniewski, Executive Employee Services Officer Lisa Wenck, Provost Maria Thompson, Vice President for Finance and Administration Todd Foreman, and Vice President for Student Development Steve Perry.

**Labor and Management typically retain a focused professionalism.**

With adrenaline flowing and united in purpose, the UUP delegation walks together from the union office to the Executive Conference Room in Netzer for the Labor-Management meeting. The Management and UUP teams, sitting across from one another at a table, customarily greet one another at the onset. Although theater, humor, and verbal jabs occasionally punctuate the meetings, Labor and Management typically retain a focused professionalism. Both the union and the administration recognize that the success of the College depends on constructive Labor-Management relations. UUP realizes that grandstanding will not accomplish anything for our members. During the meeting, UUP works the agenda systematically, dialogues with Management, and asks key follow-up questions. UUP watches body language and the selection of words because semantics are important. Our Secretary Geoff O'Shea takes meticulous and accurate notes. UUP and Management remain attuned to the pace and content of the discussion of agenda items. Based on Pre-Labor-Management meeting strategy, specific members of the UUP delegation take primary responsibility for particular agenda items. Labor-Management meetings typically run for about an hour.

### **Conclusion: Debriefing and Post-Labor Management**

In baseball, it's never over until the last out. With UUP work, however, rarely is there a last out. A Post-Labor-Management Meeting or "debriefing" follows the Labor-Management Meeting. UUP leaders who attended the Labor-Management Meeting spend a subsequent thirty minutes to an hour discussing all aspects of the session with the administration, noting who attended, body language, changes in Management positions, and what we did well or poorly. The Labor Relations Specialist provides his critique. UUP then discusses strategy for the next Labor-Management Meeting. In the interim, as UUP prepares for that next Labor-Management meeting, we strategize, report to the UUP Executive Board, conduct a Chapter Meeting, and discuss developments with our counterparts from other UUP chapters. As needed, UUP Oneonta confer with State UUP officers and legal representatives. UUP Oneonta also has less formal dialogues with Management between Labor-Management meetings. UUP is in perpetual extra innings!

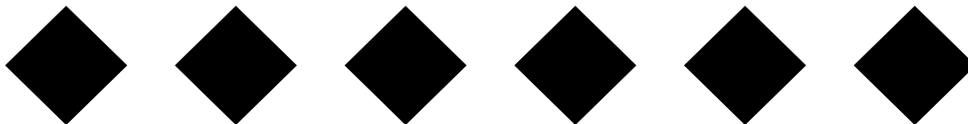
Labor-Management relations require diligence, tenacity, and information. UUP cannot merely assert its positions, rant, and make demands. Nor can Management discount UUP. If an issue impacts our members, UUP has it on its radar. However, timing, approach, and preparation are essential. Labor-Management relations are a learning and maturation process for both parties. For the good of the College, Labor and Management have both come a long way.

## UUP Joins CSEA at Oneonta Outlaws Game: Union Baseball



former minor league pitcher Fred Miller, far left, and other union leaders at the ballgame

On Saturday, July 13, 2013, a UUP Oneonta delegation attended an Oneonta Outlaws game at historic Damaschke Field. CSEA LOCAL 839 sponsored the game. Aided by enthusiastic union cheers, the hometown Oneonta Outlaws defeated the Niagara Power 5-1 in New York Collegiate Baseball League action. Fred Miller, who organized the UUP contingent at the ballpark, served several terms as Chapter President. Amongst his many milestone achievements, Fred was a minor league baseball pitcher, with a wicked curve ball, in the old St. Louis Browns farm system.



## Mayday Manifesto

[Editor's Note: The Manifesto below was crafted by the New Paltz Chapter of UUP and endorsed by several other UUP chapters, including Oneonta.]



Mayday! This is an emergency call for help! We face a dangerous crisis in higher education. It affects almost every university, college and community college. It is not limited to any city, region or state. It is called contingency: the majority of teachers in higher education today are grossly underpaid, at-will employees, lacking any meaningful job security and the academic freedom essential to quality education.

The tenured jobs of the past have been outsourced to a contingent academic labor force. Many so-called "part-timers" teach twice as much as their "full-time" colleagues. Similarly, many "temps," whose short-term contracts typically extend for a year or less, have been teaching for decades—often longer than permanent teachers on continuing appointments.

The effects of this crisis should be known to everyone. Contingency has been a dirty little secret for nearly half a century, in plain sight but almost totally ignored, and nothing will change until the facts are widely understood. The majority of college teachers in the United States today—over a million individuals—are contingent. Most of them are so-called "adjuncts." They are paid poverty wages, earning an average of \$2,700 per three-credit semester course. Most adjuncts make \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year, often working more than 40 hours per week. An estimated 80% lack any health or retirement benefits, and academic freedom is meaningless in the absence of any job security.

The conditions under which contingent teachers are forced to work undermine the quality of higher education. Their miserable working conditions adversely affect student learning conditions, thus short-changing our students and threatening the future of our nation. This is no way to prepare the next generation for an increasingly competitive global economy! Funding education on the cheap has resulted in most American students no longer being competitive with those in dozens of other countries.

To reverse this disastrous trend, the undersigned urge that the following steps be adopted on a priority basis:

1. Increase the starting salary for a three-credit semester course to a minimum of \$5,000 for all instructors in higher education.
2. Ensure academic freedom by providing progressively longer contracts for all contingent instructors who have proven themselves during an initial probationary period.
1. Provide health insurance for all instructors, either through their college's health insurance system or through the Affordable Care Act.
2. Support the quality education of our students by providing their instructors with necessary office space, individual development support, telephones, email accounts and mail boxes.
3. Guarantee fair and equitable access to unemployment benefits when college instructors are not working.
4. Guarantee eligibility for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program to all college instructors who have taught for ten years, during which they were repaying their student loans.
5. With or without a time-in service requirement, allow all college teachers to vote and hold office in institutional governance, including faculty senates and academic departments.

The signatories urge a comprehensive, cooperative effort to end the staffing crisis in higher education for the sake of all our students and all our citizens. Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!

To view UUP and students protesting at SUNY New Paltz, go to the following links:

[http://www.midhudsonnews.com/News/2013/May/10/Zimpher\\_SNP-10May13.html](http://www.midhudsonnews.com/News/2013/May/10/Zimpher_SNP-10May13.html)

<http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20130510/NEWS/305100369>

<http://thelittlebellion.com/index.php/2013/05/suny-chancellor-responds-to-question-on-black-student-enrollment>

## Broccoli Salad Recipe

*Submitted by Barbara Torrey, former UUP and currently working at Job Corps*



Dressing – Mix together well:

1 Cup Lite Olive Oil Mayo

2 Tablespoons Sugar

2 Tablespoons Cider Vinegar

Mix together in separate bowl:

1 to 1 ½ Lbs Broccoli separated into flowerets

½ Cup Red or Sweet Onion, diced

½ to ¾ Cup Raisins or Craisins

½ to ¾ Cup Walnuts or Sunflower Seeds

Real Bacon Bits

Salt to taste (optional)

Pour dressing over broccoli mixture and mix thoroughly. Refrigerate several hours or overnight to blend flavors before serving. The proportion of raisins, nuts and bacon bits to broccoli can be adjusted to taste. The amount of dressing can also be increased if desired (i.e. 1 ½ Cups mayo and 3 tablespoons each of sugar & vinegar).

## Contingent Concerns Officer J McDermott: Hello Again! I'm Back!



J McDermott

The last time I wrote for the *Sentinel* I was Oneonta's "Part Time Concerns Officer". I served in that office from the fall of '03 to the spring of '09. Now I'm back, as the "Officer for Contingents": new title, same me. The change in title is significant, however, because it reflects changes to the UUP Constitution, changes which were pushed by the Oneonta chapter, changes which are meant to insure that contingents have full institutional presence in our union, at both local and state levels.

Before I left office here, I wrote in the *Sentinel*: "I won't be holding this post forever. There are some days I am burned out. Who will be next? A fulltime faculty or professional member might take it over; they have more security from which to argue hard points across the table. Another part-timer might step forward." And as you know, in the intervening years, part-time concerns were represented very well by Karina Cespedes, Caridad Souza and Leah Bridgers.

I kept myself busy on the state UUP Part-Time/Contingent Concerns Committee, and on the smaller "A-47 executive level committee" on part-time concerns, called for in an appendix article in an earlier contract. Most recently, for the past three years, I've been a member of the UUP Negotiations team, which broadened my exposure to UUP members, full-time and part-time; tenure track and contingent; academic and professional, at colleges, university centers and medical centers all across the state. And I was one of UUP's delegates to "COCAL X", an international meeting of the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor held in Mexico City in August 2012.

With the work of the negotiating team finally winding down, I decided to run again for the Contingent post here; it was a close election, as those things go, between me and Geoffrey O'Shea. I'm happy that I'll be working beside Geoff, who is now our chapter secretary.

I took office in June, and my first meeting with the administration was about the Adjunct Orientation for the fall of 2013. It will be *during* the first week of classes rather than *before*, because of difficulty securing space on campus, but it will still happen, and UUP will still have a table! These orientations began during my first years as PT Rep, and almost everyone who attends says they are very helpful. Some people now just stop in to pick up a parking sticker or to get an ID card, but even if you've been coming for years, stay a while and find out what's new in the campus resources for adjunct instructors.

I closed my 'goodbye message' in the *Sentinel* by asking "Would you like to sit on our side of the table for the PT Concerns Labor Management meetings? Would you like to help me organize a PT Forum? Would you like to just share some time over coffee and tell me your story and concerns? It's spring. Let's grow together... j.mcdermott at oneonta dot edu. "

Well, now it's the fall, not spring, but the invitation still stands. Help me represent your interests; I really do like listening. As an adjunct in the English department, I'm on campus MWF mornings, for classes at 8 and 9 am; I'm in my office on the third floor of Milne later those days. (And I usually try to get into the gym before I leave campus. By saying that in public, I hope I'll get there more often!)

In solidarity,  
J McDermott

## Beyond Labor Day: Challenges Ahead

By Bill Simons, Chapter President

UUP Oneonta hosted a Labor Day celebration on Monday, September 2, 2013, from 11 AM-1 PM, on the Quad. The UUP Labor Day observance constituted an important Chapter building event and helped prepare us for the formidable tasks ahead. Facilitating symbolic and substantive expressions of solidarity, Labor Day once again renewed our courage, purpose, and resolve. UUP Director of Special Events Loraine Tyler merits kudos for organizing our Labor Day gathering.

Next year Oneonta UUPers will share Labor Day with family and friends. In 2014, there will be no classes on Labor Day. UUP thanks SUNY President Nancy Kleniewski, Senior Executive Employee Services Officer Lisa Wenck, the Calendar Committee, and the support of the UUP membership for the evolution of the College Calendar. The 2014 observance of Labor Day will constitute a significant milestone. As Dr. Gina Keel, Assistant Professor, Political Science and UUP stalwart, asserts,

*Great and small achievements are rooted in the labor of dedicated individuals who sacrifice personal liberty in the service of others. Society and its institutions should reward their efforts with a day of recognition and celebration. Intellectual labor, no less than manual labor, deserves recognition and a holiday for relief and rejuvenation.*

On Labor Day 2013, we reflected on the workers' past triumphs and struggles—and present challenges. The working women and men of America find themselves assaulted by rising prices, the polarization of wealth, and the arrogance of power. On our home base, SUNY is imperiled by an erosion of public support, "systemness" that does not adequately emphasize that place matters, MOOCs, underrepresentation of minorities, the geometric proliferation of assessment, transparency that is sometimes more rhetorical than substantive, stagnant salaries, exploited adjuncts, barriers to internal advancement, and declining morale.

Our choice is stark: either allow anxious inertia to defeat us or fulfill our destiny as emancipators. UUP will call upon you to write letters, sign petitions, write articles, participate in rallies, contribute to VOTE/COPE, join legislative advocacy, and engage in community activism.

The wise and venerable labor leader Fred Miller relates the story of an individual who once believed, "You can't fight city hall." With seasoning, the neophyte evolved to the view that "You can't fight city hall and win." Our protagonist still hadn't completed life's learning curve, but, at least, stage 2-consciousness created awareness that the people can battle entrenched power even if they will not prevail. Finally, the observant pilgrim experienced the great epiphany on which the labor movement rests: "You can't fight city hall and win **alone.**"



The American Worker—"We Who Built American":  
Toon by Fred Miller, Academic Delegate

## UUP Labor-Management Meeting Monday, May 13, 2013

For Management: Nancy Kleniewski (President) and Lisa Wenck (Senior Executive Employee Services Officer)

For UUP: Bill Simons (President) and Rob Compton (Vice President for Academics)

I. Management and UUP discussed expanding Labor-Management collaborations. UUP participation in Fulltime Faculty Orientation was confirmed and subsequent discussions involving the Part-Time Orientation with our returning Officer for Contingents will take place. UUP and Management discussed re-activating the Speakers Bureau

II. UUP requested setting a date for June 2013 Labor-Management Meeting: Budget and Fiscal Update with UUP to send several possible dates.

III. UUP and Management agreed to maintain the ongoing format of Labor-Management meetings for the September-December 2013 semester

IV. UUP and Management discussed the Adjunct Remuneration for a 3-SH course and Management responded that a September 2013 semester salary study would begin with faculty.

V. UUP stated that SUNY cannot survive without public support and that private funds are the “cream.”

VI. UUP and Management discussed the importance of Campus Distinctiveness.

VII. Management and UUP agreed that the Liberal Arts are the key to the success of our students. Both sides discussed how that can be effectively communicated to students and parents.

VIII. Management affirmed the importance of assessment and UUP stated that assessment should move away from the static nature given future directions in higher education.

IX. UUP shared with Management its concerns regarding Professional and Academic Recruitment and Retention. Management and Labor discussed the problems of the academic labor market.



## UUP Labor-Management Meeting for July 9th, 2013, 3:00pm

*By Geoffrey O'Shea, Secretary*

For UUP: Ron Bishop, Nancy Cannon, Rob Compton, J. McDermott, Fred Miller, Geoffrey O'Shea, Norm Payne, Andy Perry, and Bill Simons

For Management: Todd Foreman, Maria Thompson, and Lisa Wenck

- I. Todd Foreman provided an overview for the upcoming fiscal year (FY) 2013/2014 budget.
  - A. Some of the highlights include:
    1. Total projected FY 2013/2014 funds: 108.8 million
    2. Total state tax support: 13 million which represents 12% of the total funds.
      - a. This percentage has declined from 19% in FY 2007/2008.
  - B. The college has become increasingly dependent on tuition and fees
  - C. Labor asked about capital budget funds which have been placed on hold by the governor's office
    - A. Money for new building projects,
    - B. Money for critical maintenance of campus and which typically includes projects that occur during the summer, and
    - C. Emergency maintenance money
    - D. Labor asked whether the Fitzelle renovation was proceeding on-time and Management indicated that it was currently on-time.
    - E. UUP request and Management agreed to send the slides of the presentation.
- II. UUP and Management began a dialogue on contract implementation
  - A. On-Call and Recall provisions
    1. Labor asked whether there was a specific plan in place.
    2. Management indicated that Lisa and Norm would meet to discuss this.
  - B. Deficit Reduction plans
    1. Management indicated that there was no plan currently in place, but that they have recently worked with other bargaining units and thus, are familiar with the issues of developing a plan.
    2. UUP will be informed as the process proceeds
  - C. Discretionary Salary Allocation (DSA)
    1. Management currently has not developed a plan to allocate DSA either for full-time or part-time employees and discussions will continue
    2. Labor strongly advocated for an across-the-board DSA.
- III. Part-time Salaries and the Salary Equity Study
  - A. Labor asked about Management's plans for completing the salary equity study
  - B. Management indicated that in the fall they will be using a holistic approach advocated by President Kleniewski to include both full and part-timers.
- IV. Management indicated that the 2014-2015 college calendar would be made available next week.
- V. UUP asked about the College Senate for the coming year
  - A. UUP brought to Management that members are concerned about the lack of a presiding officer for the coming year and general communications about the matter
  - B. Management indicated that there is a volunteer; UUP believes that elections are necessary as soon as possible

## Public Education Rally: Saturday, June 8, 2013: 'We Cannot 'Measure What We Treasure'

A strong UUP Oneonta contingent participated in the Saturday, June 8, 2013, *Publication Education* rally. UUP Oneonta and local K-12 NYSUT teachers filled a bus that travelled from Oneonta to the Albany rally. The Greater Oneonta delegation included Karen Alers, Diana Rocklein, Michelle Pattison, Pat Pattis, Aaron Sorensen, Allen Caswell, Irene Morissey, Mark Luetzger, Michelle Decker, Pam Davis, Marjorie Bailey, Naomi Graham, Nate Schultz, Mike Lynch, Pat Follett, Kenneth Sider, Susan Murphy, Joe Otello, K.C. Feiler, Carol Wood, Ginny Graver, Barb Brown, Van Jaffie, Stephanie Jaffie, Melanie Ferrara, David Grodsky, Becca Brooks, Anita Levine, Virgil Briggs, William Simons, Fred Miller, Brian Dobler, Kjersti Van Slyke, Maryann Luciano, Joyce Powell, Karen Anderson, Ginny Grave, Irene Bourgeois, Carol Ceisel, and Carol Mikoda. In Albany, Oneonta joined with 15,000 other union sisters and brothers throughout the state to support public higher education, stop the assault on educational funding, and put a halt to the wasteful, geometric proliferation of anti-education assessment.



The Oneonta contingent

Averill Park Teachers' Association activist Michelle Smead wrote a perceptive commentary, "Public Education Rally: Saturday, June 8, 2013: 'We Cannot 'Measure What We Treasure' Top 10 Reasons to Rally for Public Education in Albany, New York, on June 8," *Diane Ravitch's blog: A site to discuss better education for all* (<http://dianeravitch.net/2013/05/02/top-10-reasons-to-rally-for-public-education-in-albany-new-york-on-june-8/>). Smead provided a clear a ten-point rationale for the rally:

*Testing in New York has turned into the Monster that Ate the Children.*

*Teachers plan to rally at the state capitol in Albany on June 8 to support public education and protest the deluge of high-stakes testing.*

*This was written by the leader of the teachers' union in the Averill Park school district in upstate New York.*

*TOP TEN reasons to March on Albany in the Rally for Public Education:*

*10. You have realized public education is being hi-jacked by for profit organizations.*

*9. You are tired of reading about how ineffective you are at your own profession by people who know nothing about education.*

*8. You believe high stakes testing is out of control in NY.*

*7. You believe you have not had enough time to learn the Common Core yourself, let alone have your students tested on it!*

*6. You believe your students' personal information, including their state assessment results and their IEPs and other personal data should be kept confidential.*

*5. You believe your effectiveness rating should be kept confidential, and don't want a link on the district web page to this information or directions given to get this information.*

*4. You believe that NYS should report to the public the amount of tax payer money spent on developing, administering, grading and reviewing state assessments.*

*3. The word PEARSON makes your skin crawl.*

*2. You work in Averill Park (Insert your own school district.) and have lost about a quarter of your faculty due to unfair state budget cuts!*

*AND THE NUMBER ONE REASON...*

*1. You are a caring professional who wants the BEST public education for your own students, children, and grandchildren and you know this isn't it!*



assessing the assessors

## Reading: Sharing the Word

By Bill Simons, Chapter President



Sharing the Word: Lily and Isaac Simons, March 2013

It was the end of a long day. Bedtime beckoned. Lily, already in her pajamas, opened a favorite book. Her little brother, Isaac, drew close. Through an amalgam of memory and illustration, Lily began to “read.” Curious and interested, Isaac, then just seven-months old, anchored arms to lift his head, the better to see and hear Lily. Isaac did not understand the words, but he felt drawn by his sister’s story. The activity brought them together in shared experience.

I too have had such moments. Long ago, my mother and grandmother read to me, dramatizing their renditions, and, in time, they provided an enthusiastic audience for my early attempts to sound out the written word. This past winter, after my mother took a fall, I read *The Making of the President, 1960* by her bedside. It took us back to a good time in our lives, one filled with promise.

During a passage in my son Joe’s youth, we took turns reading aloud two pages a day from *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. It was a ritual we savored, entering the world of Atticus, Jem, Scout, and Boo Radley — and inviting them into ours. One some level, without us ever articulating it, we recognized that Harper Lee’s Depression Era tale was about our relationship.

Sometimes, in the evening, I read to Nancy from one of her favorite works, Susan Fenimore Cooper’s *Rural Hours*, a nature diary recounting the author’s Cooperstown observations. Susan’s words reaffirm our place in the universe.

From photographs she has taken, Nancy created personalized illustrated books with age-appropriate text for each of the three grandchildren. During our visits to their home, Lily and Hannah present their personalized books for a shared reading. We hope that Isaac, who just celebrated his first birthday, will take the same satisfaction from his book.

For the first twenty-five years of my life, I participated with my grandparents in reading aloud the Passover story of Hebrew liberation from slavery. Since 2007, I have done so with my grandchildren. The shared reading from the *Haggadah* at our home *seder* binds the generations of my family.

Reading sometimes challenges us. Odysseys of the mind may lead to exciting encounters with new places, people, and ideas — or the words can provide comfort by the confirmation of values, relationships, and traditions. Reading stokes imagination and discovery. It also reassures, informs, provokes, and questions. The words may elicit laughter, tears, indignation, hope, or inspiration. Reading is one of life’s gifts, made the more precious when shared.

UUP will sponsor a *Reading: Share the Word* program, an invitation for attendees to read a few passages or pages from their favorite works and to listen to other do the same.

## Bill Simons Co-Chairs “Building Coalitions and Chapter Development” Workshop for New Chapter Presidents

UUP Oneonta Chapter President Bill Simons, along with New Paltz President Peter Brown and Farmingdale President and Farmingdale President Yolanda Pauze, led a workshop on “Building Coalitions and Chapter Development” on June 20, 2013, at NYSUT Headquarters in Latham. The workshop, part of UUP’s New Leadership Orientation, presented information, perspectives, and ideas for newly elected UUP Chapter Presidents and other leaders across New York State.



Bill Simons with union sisters and brothers

Bill drew upon his experience, having recently received reelection to a sixth two-year term as President of UUP Oneonta. Bill greeted new leaders, representing numerous chapters, by emphasizing that, despite formidable challenges, this is an exciting time to serve as a union leader: “The union has a new president, new leadership and new energy. I envy you.” Bill advised that UUP chapters need to be tasked-oriented, active in their communities, recruit dedicated officers, and build strong member participation. Although State UUP in Albany will provide essential guidance and direction, Bill stressed the imperative of lateral networking with

other chapters. He examined several Oneonta initiatives that might with modification have applicability to building other UUP chapters. For coalition building and Chapter development, Bill discussed providing a framework for effective and timely response to potential grievances, disseminating grant and benefits services data, informed and frequent in-district and Albany SUNY advocacy with legislators, vigorous membership and VOTE/COPE campaigns, responding to Part-Time and Contingent concerns from day one of their arrival on campus through a presence at orientation—and following up, recruiting and advocating young faculty and professionals, holding regular and meaningful Labor-Management meetings, conducting a membership assessment survey of Management and of the campus climate, sponsoring diversity and disability/exceptionalities meetings, initiating a debate for candidates for State UUP President, creating College-Community forums, inaugurating a Labor Film Series, establishing annual lectures series concerning the legacy of both Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Abraham Lincoln, on-site flood relief locally and in the Gulf, staffing a local community coalition, organizing a multi-union workers’ rally that filled the downtown, maintaining a substantive monthly 32-page newsletter and an award-winning website, networking with local media, and attending COARM meetings and reminding retirees of their continuing role in the Chapter. Bill ended by encouraging new Chapter presidents to trust their own instincts, abilities, and ideas, reminding them that each campus has its own distinct dynamics and culture.

Yolanda Pauze, Farmingdale’s charismatic President, builds upon the great Chapter traditions established by Bob Reganese and Mike Smiles. Yolanda shared with the new leaders the remarkable success Farmingdale has had recruiting “fresh blood,” articulating adjunct and contingent concerns, and providing representation to members experiencing difficulties. To formalize faculty concerns, the Chapter created an Academic Issues Committee. Farmingdale,



Yolanda at the mike: Farmingdale President Pauze

### ***Workshop for New Chapter Presidents (continued)***

adopting a shop steward system, instituted a departmental rep structure that augments a sense of belonging. Once members feared being seen going to the UUP Farmingdale office, now their antagonists fear them coming to the union.

New Paltz President Peter Brown, deliberate, detailed, and creative, has done a tremendous job revitalizing his Chapter. He shared with new leaders several of the innovations that New Paltz has implemented. Peter recruited capable new leaders, but also had the courage to remove those who failed to produce. *The Bullhorn*, New Paltz's newsletter, actively solicits member articles on a myriad of important topics, even, like Oneonta, featuring a resident cartoonist. New Paltz sponsored a pro-con debate concerning the ratification of the UUP contract. The Chapter facilitated a huge May Day Rally, demanding economic justice for adjunct faculty and contingent labor, and will continue that campaign during Campus Equity Week. New Paltz recruited two outstanding student interns who wrote *Bullhorn* articles and immersed themselves in other Chapter activities.

State UUP President Fred Kowal concluded the workshop with inspiring presence and words. Alone our talents and strengths are muted. In solidarity, there is much that new and experienced leaders and members can do. Forward.



State UUP President Fred Kowal

## Spring Delegate Assembly: Kyle Britton and Norm Payne Recognized for Accomplishments

At the May 3-4, 2013, Spring Delegate Assembly (DA) in Albany, the union held important presidential, secretary, and executive board elections. [The elections receive coverage elsewhere in this issue.] The DA is the legislative body of State UUP. Chapters throughout New York State send delegations to the DA. The size of chapter delegations is proportionate to the number of UUP members on a campus. The DA meets three times per year—fall, winter, and spring. Nearly 300 academic and professional delegates attended the Winter DA in Albany. UUP Oneonta sent a large, energetic, and savvy delegation to the Spring DA. Oneonta DA participants included Rob Compton, Norm Payne, Tom Horvath, Janet Frankl, Gina Keel, Kyle Britton, Loraine Tyler, Rich Tyler, Andy Perry, Jeri Anne Jerminario, Fred Miller, Nancy Cannon, Chris Bulson, Joe Baldwin, Glenn Pichardo, and Bill Simons. The Oneonta Delegation attended committee meetings and workshops, participated in plenary session debates and votes, attended and asked questions at the tentative contract briefing, and engaged in the requisite politics. In addition, the Spring DA was particularly notable for Oneonta because two of its Chapter leaders received prestigious and competitive State awards.



UUP Oneonta VOTE COPE Director Kyle Britton, left, honored

Oneonta VOTE-COPE Director Kyle Britton was recognized for his extraordinary work building up the union's political action fund. VOTE-COPE is the Committee on Political Education, the non-partisan political action arm of New York State United Teachers and UUP. Funded entirely by voluntary contributions from members, VOTE-COPE is used to help union-backed candidates and campaign committees that support education and labor. Kyle's dedication and success contribute significantly to the success of VOTE-COPE.



UUP Oneonta Webmaster Norm Payne receives award for excellence

In the New York State journalism competition, the Oneonta Chapter website took first-place honors. Oneonta Webmaster and Vice President for Academics Norm Payne accepted the plaques on behalf of himself and co-webmaster Alex Jean-Charles. The Oneonta website provides essential information: check it out at <http://www.oneontauup.org/> The Oneonta delegation gave Norm and Kyle appreciative standing ovations—as did the rest of the 350 DA delegates. For Oneonta, it was a memorable DA.



UUP Oneonta DA Delegation, included, left to right, Gina Keel, Kyle Britton, Tom Horvath, Rob Compton, Bill Simons, Fred Miller, and Nancy Cannon

## The How to Speak to Professors



Panelists Craig Bielert, Joshua Frye, Trudy Thomas-Smith  
Bill Simons, Rob Compton & moderator Susan Kenny

Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) sponsored a *How to Speak to Professors* panel on Friday evening, July 19, 2013. Panelists included Craig Bielert (Psychology), Joshua Frye (Communication Arts), Penina Kamina (Elementary Education & Reading), Robert Compton (ALS & Political Science), Trudy Thomas-Smith (Chemistry & Biochemistry), and Bill Simons (History). EOP counselor Susan Kenny moderated. With 64 EOP students filling the room, the session was lively, interactive, informative, and candid. The heat and humidity outside could not dampen the energy, focus, and engagement of attendees. The following topics provided ballast to the proceedings:

- How to address a professor
- How to write an email to a professor
- What are good/bad classroom behaviors
- What should students do during an office visit
- Opportunities to collaborate with professors

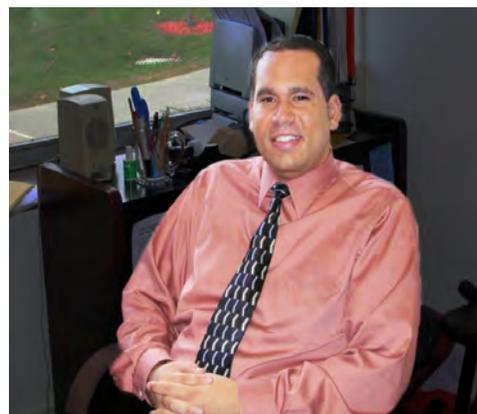
Professors and students committed to working hard and collaborating in and outside the classroom.

Professors shared a Mexican dinner and informal discussion with students prior to the panel. Students commented enthusiastically on their first two weeks at SUNY Oneonta.

SOUP coordinator Zanna McKay (Elementary Education) and diversity stalwart Maria Montoya (Foreign Languages and Literatures) provided additional commentary. EOP counselor Glenn Pichardo did a superb job organizing the program.

Despite their busy Friday itinerary, students enthusiastically looked forward to their Saturday service day — and their upcoming trip downtown and talent show.

Let's all welcome and support our EOP students. Their diversity and energy they bring will enrich SUNY Oneonta!



EOP Counselor Glenn Pichardo

## UUP Welcomes Geoff O'Shea as New Chapter Secretary



Geoff O'Shea

UUP welcomes Geoffrey O'Shea as new Chapter Secretary. Geoff follows in the footsteps of our outstanding former Secretary Tom Horvath. Tom has joined his family in Germany to commence his new duties at the University of Koblenz-Landau on the Landu Campus in the school of natural and environmental sciences. Geoff will do a great job providing official records of Labor-Management and Executive Board meetings. As an officer of the union, Geoff will also provide counsel on matters that come before the Executive Board.

Geoff is an Associate Professor in the Psychology Department. His educational background includes a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Hiram College, a master's degree in Human Neuropsychology from the University of Northern Colorado, and a doctorate in Cognitive Psychology from Colorado State University. He conducts research in human memory, applied cognition, and historical studies of mental chronometry. His teaching includes courses in Research Methods, Cognitive Psychology, Human Memory, and the Psychology of Music. During his career at SUNY-Oneonta, he has served as chair of the Research Committee, a member of the College Senate Steering Committee, and department chair. A native of Staten Island and Brooklyn, Geoff was an outstanding schoolboy basketball player and played against future NBA star Chris Mullin.



### 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](http://www.1ontauup.org)

Norm Payne is the 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](http://www.uupinfo.org) It contains information about members benefits and many other important topics.

## UUP Welcomes Michael Brown as New Grievance Officer

UUP welcomes Dr. Michael Brown as the new Chapter Grievance Officer. Mike joined the Psychology Department in 2010. He is a social-cognitive psychologist who is interested in how individuals make attributions and judgments when presented with novel, complex, and contradictory information. He has been active in shared governance since he first arrived at SUNY-Oneonta. After representing his department on College Senate for the last three years, Michael will begin serving as the College Senate Secretary in fall 2013. Michael is also on the board of directors for Long Island Crisis Center, where he spent over 10 years volunteering as a crisis counselor and statistical analyst. He can be reached at 436-3558 or by email at [michael.brown@oneonta.edu](mailto:michael.brown@oneonta.edu).



Mike Brown

As we welcome Mike, we also wish to thank outgoing Grievance Officer Renee Walker, who held the post with courage and distinction for seven years. *The Sentinel* republishes below one of Renee's UUP articles as an introduction to grievance procedures. Renee's article appears below with minor adaptations.

*I wanted to make some comments on getting UUP's help on a variety of issues. As you may or may not be aware, as grievance chair, I try to help UUP members that have problems resulting from violations of the contract (2011-2016) Agreement between the State of New York and United University Professions). Sometimes, we are able to resolve a dispute resulting from a contract violation. Many times, however, issues arise that are not direct violations of the contract but may be resolvable through other avenues.*

*Let me advise everyone who thinks they may have a contractual issue (even if you are not sure whether it is contractual or not) to contact myself or a member of the UUP Oneonta Executive Board. This should be done as soon as a problem is detected because there are often time restraints on when something can be acted upon. If it is determined that there is no contractual violation, however, there are other steps to take.*

*First, if the issue has to do with possible discrimination, then the Affirmative Action Office can be contacted. We are protected from discrimination under the New York State Division of Human Rights and the United States Equal Opportunity Commission. However, remember that discrimination complaints must be filed within 90 days.*

*Second, issues and complaints can also be checked against Department bylaws or other operating procedures (such as the Policies of the Board of Trustees). The Policies of the Board of the Trustees is available online on the Faculty/Staff homepage.*

*Finally, issues can also be brought up as Labor/Management concerns and can be discussed in meetings between the two parties. This is a provision under Article 8 of the Agreement between the State of New York and UUP.*

*In short, there are multiple avenues to pursue if difficulties arise in your workplace and the Union is here to help. I am always happy to meet with anyone and get information on the problem.*

## SUNY Oneonta's Common Read: Sherman Alexie and Flight

By Susan Bernardin, Professor English; and Chair, Women's and Gender Studies



Sherman Alexie

Norman, Oklahoma: Friday, March 26, 2010. Sherman Alexie speaks to a rapt crowd of hundreds of Native American high school students who have traveled from across Oklahoma to hear him speak. Part standup comedian, part cultural commentator, Alexie retraces his improbable journey from the Spokane Indian Reservation in eastern Washington to national acclaim as writer and filmmaker. His raw humor, so easily relatable to this youthful audience, has everyone laughing even as he describes wince-worthy scenes of commodity food, privation, and above all, his life-altering decision to leave tribal school

for an off-reservation high school, where he and the school mascot were the only Indians.

From his breakthrough book of short stories, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993), to his screenplay for the landmark 1998 film *Smoke Signals*, the first (and only) feature-length major film to be written and produced by Native Americans, Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene) explores the contradictions, ironies, and complexities of contemporary Native experiences in the United States, experiences that lead him to broader considerations of American identity, politics, and culture. His razor-sharp humor, which is directed at everyone, including himself, serves as a crucial ingredient of his success in reaching audiences ranging from readers of *The New Yorker* (for which he regularly writes) to "at risk" high school students. Alexie's versatility as a writer and as a performer is rooted in his background. He quips, "I grew up in a culture of storytellers and highly indigenous stand-up comedians. It's just my natural way of communicating." As the most visible, media-savvy Native writer in the United States, Alexie uses his unusual position to unsettle our nation's enduring assumptions and stereotypes about Indians. His edgy humor, accessible language, and provocative ideas open up spaces of understanding across cultural divides.

If you are one of the 45,167 and counting who follow him on Twitter, you will see firsthand that Alexie wields words as both weapon and tool: from gay marriage to gun control, racism to poverty, he confronts hypocrisy wherever he finds it, all while urging public discussion about our most uncomfortable, most unresolved issues. His writing tackles these very issues and in doing so, often purposely challenges common assumptions about Native Americans. For example, his short stories explore urban Indian experiences, middle-class Indian experiences, and queer Native identities. As you can imagine, his work is not without controversy. Across the country, communities have banned his popular young adult novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, and his provocative statements about contemporary Native American life have earned a fair share of criticism.

This very commitment to creating a space for difficult public conversations on the matters that still divide and challenge us as a nation is the foundation of Alexie's novel, *Flight* (2007), the selected text for SUNY Oneonta's inaugural Common Read. Common Reads have become an increasingly common centerpiece of

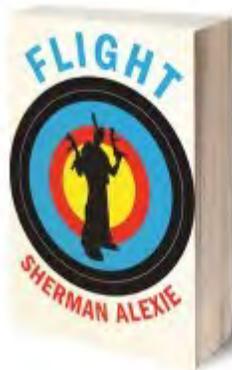
## ***SUNY Oneonta's Common Read: Sherman Alexie and Flight (continued)***

college experience across the country. Aimed at building community through the experience of reading a shared text and discussing that text's central concerns, the Common Read reminds us of what so often gets lost in the challenging climate of today's higher education: the power and value of public dialogue on issues that matter. Following the community discussions and teach-ins created by the September 4, 2012 commemoration of the Black List, discussion on campus continued on how to deepen the College's exploration of diversity and student engagement. With President Nancy Kleniewski's strong support and encouragement, leaders of the First Year Experience, including Bill Wilkerson, Theresa Russo and Monica Grau, initiated plans to develop our own Common Read. All incoming students have received a copy of the novel, and copies have been made available for faculty and staff at the campus bookstore. In watching colleagues from diverse departments--from Chemistry to Psychology and many in between--brainstorm about integrating the book or its themes into their courses, I saw firsthand the benefits of a Common Read. Not just for the students, but for all of us.

On September 10, Sherman Alexie will spend the day on campus, meeting with students and faculty and offering a keynote lecture at 7:30 pm in the Field House.

Before and after September 10, a series of events will build on Alexie's campus visit that include a screening of *Smoke Signals* on August 26; a screening of the recent film, *Crooked Arrows* (about an American Indian lacrosse team and tribal community); and programming for first-year experience students at the Fenimore Art Museum.

Why choose *Flight* as SUNY Oneonta's first Common Read? From its memorable opening line--"Call me Zits"--*Flight* propels us on a page-turning journey through violent episodes in U.S. history. The narrator, a fifteen-year-old foster kid who is Irish American and American Indian, is embarked on that age-old journey to discover who he is. He needs to know why his father abandoned him, and how he fits into a country that seems to have no place for him. By turns funny and agonizing, the novel was inspired by 9/11 and Alexie's interest in exploring the origins, perpetuation, and tenacity of violence. Zits' own attraction to guns and revenge converges in a Seattle bank, where he starts shooting. What happens next is a central mystery of the novel, but when he is shot and seemingly killed, Zits embarks on a journey through time and space that lands him at different moments of violent encounter between whites and Indians. Both topical and timeless, *Flight* challenges us to consider the relationship between gun culture and young men's violence; between identity and education; between justice and retribution; between "us" and "them." Driving this book then are the questions that matter: the banality of evil; our capacities for betrayal; the intergenerational effects of violence; the possibilities of healing and reconciliation. Confronting violence, Zits closes his eyes when he cannot bear it. Yet Alexie makes us look. What better text then, for our first Common Read?



## Reasonable Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities

By Gail Landsman, UUP Academic Delegate, Albany Chapter

[Editor's Note: An earlier version of this article on disabilities accommodations originally appeared in the *The Forum*, the newsletter of UUP Albany. It is republished with the permission of the author Gail Landsman and *The Forum* editor Marty Manjak. Thanks also to contributors Sally Knapp, Carol Jewell, James Mancuso, Maureen Seidel, and Merissa Mabee. *The Sentinel* republication does not include some of the Albany specific material.]

If you are an *employee* who has a disability and require an accommodation to perform your job, do you know whom to contact? Chances are the answer is no. The university's reasonable accommodation policy for employees has never been formalized or posted. That is, we hope, about to change.



### A Bit of History

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and New York State's Civil Rights Law protect any individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits that person in some major life activity, and any individual who has a history of, or who is regarded as having, such an impairment. These laws direct employers to modify working conditions to allow equal participation of employees with disabilities.

UUP members have long been concerned that requests for accommodations by employees had no single route or appeals process. Sally Knapp, an early UUP advocate for disability rights recalled that one UAlbany faculty member with a hearing impairment requested a room to teach in that would accommodate his deafness. He was referred to various different people, but finally retired without ever getting the accommodation.

To assess whether people on other campuses were also being denied accommodations, as well as to monitor implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act at SUNY campuses, the UUP Disability Rights and Concerns Committee surveyed UUP bargaining unit members in 2000-2001. As co-chair of the statewide UUP Disability Rights and Concerns Committee, UAlbany's Sally Knapp prepared the committee's report, released in April 2004, entitled *Disability Access and SUNY Campuses: 10 Years After the ADA*. The full report, which covers issues of campus accessibility, provision of reasonable accommodations for employees, age and disability, attitudes toward disability, and the "just community" can be accessed at <http://uupinfo.org/reports/reportpdf/disability.pdf>.

### Report Findings

Among the findings of that report were that 72 out of 384 respondents (30.8%) indicated that "there are accommodations that would enable them to better perform their jobs, which they did not have." The study indicated that on average, "32% of teaching faculty, 25% of librarians, and 13.8% of professionals were *denied* requested accommodations." Particularly striking in the report were figures comparing accommodations by type of disability. The least accommodated categories were people with visual disabilities, followed by those with emotional/psychiatric disabilities, and respiratory disabilities. The report speculates that readers or computer programs might have been perceived as being too costly as accommodations for those with visual impairments, while those with psychiatric disabilities may not have felt comfortable discussing their disability and thus never initiated the process of requesting accommodations.

Regarding accommodations for disability, the report concluded "*There is a serious lack of needed accommodations for disabled employees at SUNY* [Emphasis in the original]. Stinginess in providing job-enhancing accommodations is 'penny-wise and pound-foolish' and translates into a loss of productivity to both SUNY and the 72 employees who need them."

## ***Reasonable Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities (continued)***

### **Requesting a reasonable accommodation**

The ADA, New York's Civil Rights Law, and Section 504 provide the legal basis for requests for reasonable accommodations for both employees and students with disabilities. It is important to note that the University is responsible for providing a reasonable accommodation only for employees with disabilities of which the university is made aware. In fact, unless the impairment is obvious, such as a missing limb, blindness, or a mobility impairment requiring use of a wheelchair, the university must not initiate a discussion of potential disability or reasonable accommodation. *The responsibility and right to raise the issue of disability belongs to the employee alone.* The University is not able to address a disability unless and until the employee seeks a reasonable accommodation.

Disclosure is thus the first step in requesting an accommodation. However many employees hesitate to take this step, particularly if they would be revealing a chronic illness (such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, or Crohn's disease), or a mental illness. The decision to disclose such an "invisible" or "hidden disability" is complex, and may entail concerns about social stigma, stereotyping, pity, the undermining of professional support, and fear of being judged less capable of performing one's responsibilities. This puts the employee in a no-win situation. In the words of Elaine Beretz, "Revealing the challenges of a medical condition risks seeming unable to do the job. Downplaying the challenges risks a poor performance review that focuses solely on decreased productivity." Untenured faculty and employees facing performance reviews may feel particularly vulnerable and hesitant to disclose a hidden disability.

It is important to realize that any institutional authority to which one discloses a disability is obligated to respect the individual's privacy. Under federal law, medical records and information about a disability must be kept separate from the employee's regular personnel file. This does not, however, remove all the anxieties associated with such a disclosure. Current research into the experiences of those who have disclosed mental illness in academia may prove helpful in addressing these issues. The advantages and disadvantages of disclosing an invisible disability are also reviewed in some articles listed in "Resources" online (page 1).

The request for an accommodation may be made verbally. However consultants for the U.S. Labor Department Office of Disability Employment Policy's Job Accommodation Network (JAN) *recommend employees always put their requests in writing.* An employee must be able, with or without an accommodation, to perform the essential functions of their position. The employee must also provide documentation from a medical professional (doctor, physical therapist, mental health counselor, etc.).

Employees may or may not know the specific reasonable accommodation needed to carry out the essential functions of their job. An employee's medical professional may be able to make recommendations. Often however, this is not the case. The Job Accommodation Network's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) is an excellent resource to help employees and/or employers match the disability and job limitation of the employee to suggested accommodations. For instance, if an employee has arthritis, he or she could choose from a list of limitations (such as "individual has fine motor limitations," "individual is sensitive to extreme temperature conditions") each of which leads to job functions with which one has difficulty (such as keyboarding, or gripping or pinching objects) and in turn results in accommodation solutions (on screen keyboards and work prediction programs, keyguards, speech recognition software, or page turners and book holders). To find this resource, go to <http://AskJAN.org/> and click on "Search Accommodations Database."

UAlbany employees seeking to start the process of requesting an accommodation have had no official point of contact; nor has the procedure for requesting an accommodation ever been posted. So after weighing the pros and cons of disclosure and determining if an accommodation is necessary, to whom should one disclose? We do not know if there are employees who never sought needed accommodations out of fear of disclosure to a supervisor or because of lack of knowledge about how to start the process.

*Many thanks to Sally Knapp, Carol Jewell, James Mancuso, Maureen Seidel, and Merissa Mabee for providing information that was useful in preparing this article.*

## Mental Illness: To Tell or Not?

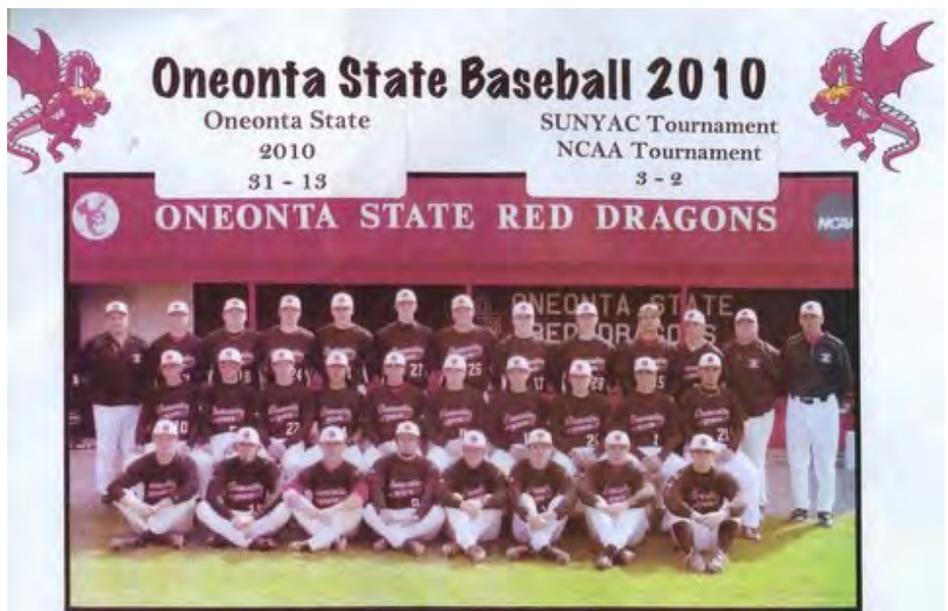
By Carol Jewell

Disability awareness programs have generally been geared to visible disabilities. Invisible disabilities (e.g., heart disease, asthma) are less often discussed. Even more infrequent are discussions around mental illness. In 2012 researchers began a survey to gather information on disclosures of mental health issues among faculty. Here's the link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/facultydisclosureproject>. You are encouraged to participate.



## Iconic Baseball Coach Rick Ferchen Moves to the Keuka College Diamond

Rick Ferchen, the baseball coach with the highest winning percentage in SUNY Oneonta history and a long-time UUP member, is moving to the Keuka College diamond. Keuka College recently named Rick its new varsity baseball coach. Recipient of several Coach of the Year Awards, Coach Ferchen, based on games won, is the tenth winningest Division III college baseball coach of all time. His cumulative career college coaching record includes an impressive 715 victories. A half dozen of his players have signed professional contracts. Under Coach Ferchen, the Oneonta Red Dragons perennially earned post-season births in the State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) and Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) tournaments. It is not the statistics, however, that define Coach Ferchen.



For Coach Ferchen — the players always come first

Coach Ferchen uses the college baseball experience to ground his players in life lessons. By nurturing player respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, teachers, the game, and academics, Coach fashions a framework that will provide guidance long after graduation. His credo emphasizes “Respect, Trust, and Loyalty.” Recognizing the need for balance, Coach Ferchen also tells his players to “have fun and play hard.” These axioms, explains Coach Ferchen, translate into a commitment to “Prepare — Perform — Position.” “Position” means “make it to the next step” on the diamond, in the classroom, and in life.

From his first day at O-State, Coach Ferchen remained a tireless and principled recruiter. Beyond baseball tools, he looks for respect, passion, character, and attitude in evaluating recruits. Coach Ferchen developed enduring relations with the parents of his players. Coach Ferchen always conducts himself as a gentleman on and off the diamond, and his players model themselves in his mold. Under Coach Ferchen, O-State ballplayers earned note as good students and contributors to campus and community. An exceptional mentor, Coach Ferchen involved his players in volunteer activities, including leaf raking, assistance for the elderly, Little League clinics, *Kids Night Out*, and *Into the Streets*.

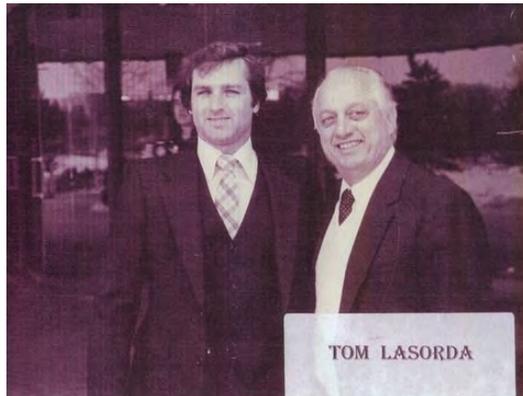
In addition to his remarkable College coaching career, Coach Ferchen served for 11 years as the Director of *Baseball World*, a summer camp founded by Chicago White Sox minority owner Eddie Einhorn and located on the SUNY

## ***Iconic Baseball Coach Rick Ferchen Moves to the Keuka College Diamond (continued)***

Oneonta campus. At *Baseball World's* peak, Coach Ferchen expertly supervised an 8-week program for 2640 campers per summer season with teams and players rotating weekly. Campers, ranging in age from 11 to late teens, came to Oneonta with coaches, parents, and siblings, which meant significant revenue, field improvement, and positive publicity for the College. Teams travelled to *Baseball World* from all over the U.S. as well from diverse regions of the world, including Israel, Japan, Mexico, and Canada, providing a positive showcase for the College. With Coach Ferchen as Director, *Baseball World* has had a tremendous impact on the greater Oneonta economy, boosting restaurants, motels, and other local businesses.

The move to Keuka College in New York's beautiful Finger Lakes region returns Coach Ferchen to his western New York roots. Situated on the shores of Keuka Lake, the Keuka College is noted for its leadership in career exploration. Reflecting on his move to the Green and Gold of Keuka College, Coach Ferchen observes:

*To be selected and offered this position, especially when there were so many talented candidates, I'm just honored to have the opportunity to develop Keuka into a consistent winner. Keuka was exactly what I was looking for in a coaching position. I enjoy the competition of Division III athletics, the philosophy and what it means to be a student-athlete. Keuka has an excellent reputation for academics and athletics, and I like the size of the school. I wanted the opportunity to develop another program into a winner, that's been the story of my career, turning programs that may be struggling and transforming them into winners.*



Two great coaches, Rick Ferchen, left, and Hall of Famer Tommy Lasorda, right

Players, past and present, join so many in the College and community in thanking Rick Ferchen for his many contributions and wish him much continued coaching and personal success at Keuka College in the years ahead. Longtime Oneonta Little League manager and Otsego County Board Representative Rich Murphy speaks for many when he calls Coach Ferchen "a vibrant, important part of this community." With his customary generosity and good will, Coach Ferchen wishes to return that thanks:

*To my players, I wish you all the best, always. A coach is only as good as the players, and I have been honored to coach a lot of great student athletes. Words are insufficient to thank my longtime assistant coaches, Tom Marks and Mike Lum, for their loyalty, respect, hard work, and commitment of time; their contributions made the program successful.*

*The O-State grounds crews, facilities staff, equipment managers, trainers, alumni, faculty, and community boosters are great professionals and people. Thanks also to the wonderful secretaries for their much appreciated assistance. And I want to recognize the outstanding College dining staff. So many friends have helped me and the program. Over the years, I have enjoyed the friendship and assistance of my fellow head coaches, a truly exceptional group. Thanks to the Oneonta community for welcoming and supporting Mary Lou and I and our children through the years; Kyle and Brianna have grown up in a good place. O-State baseball could always count on business boosters Rick and Marshall Eastman, Joe of Sal's Pizzeria, the Sixth Ward Athletic Club, and so many other good folks. And a tip of the hat goes to Rich Murphy and Oneonta Little League for supporting our baseball camps and clinics. My family and I cherish our Oneonta years.*

## UUP Annual Spring Party: Saturday, May 11, 2013: Union Families in Celebration and Solidarity

Over 100 UUPers and their families gathered on Saturday, May 11, 2013, at the College Camp for our annual spring Chapter meeting and celebration.

A Chapter meeting preceded the party. We discussed the year past and the year to come. UUP noted that the serious challenges ahead also bring opportunities to renew UUP and SUNY.

State UUP Vice President for Professionals Philippe Abraham, State UUP Secretary Eileen Landy, and Utica/Rome Chapter President Rafael Romero joined the assemblage in a wonderful show of solidarity. Oneonta's great friend Brian Tappan again helped pick up the food, juggled, and took photographs.



great union people, great Brooks' barbecue, and great music



the great 4th Leaf band: Irish and union music filled the air

UUP VOTE-COPE Director Kyle Britton and his talented 4th Leaf band mates—Patrick Lippincott, Steve Dillon, Clayton Bink, and John Gill—filled the air with sounds of joy and inspiration. Their renditions of *Solidarity Forever* and *Woody's This Land Is Your Land* had union spirits soaring. The 4th Leaf band reminded us of the ties that bind us in good times and bad as well as of our efforts to make the world a better place, the true mission of unions.

Brooks' House of Bar-B-Q provided their distinctive and delicious food. Music, animated conversation, laughter, and games made for a great time. UUPers drawn from four generations, took respite from their multitude of responsibilities to celebrate with friends and colleagues. The scene resembled a tableau from a Frank Capra movie. It was the people's day. UUP celebrants created a rainbow of diversity. These salt-of-the-earth, hard-working unionists who have given so much to the College and community garnered new strength for the struggles ahead. Only those with the capacity to express joy possess the courage to demand the right of all to pursue happiness. Thanks to the incomparable Loraine Tyler for organizing this special gathering and to Carol Forman for helping to serve.



thanks to Loraine and Carol

## **Adjunct Suffrage: Doing the Right Thing for our Adjunct Instructors and Our College**

*By Janet Nepkie, Distinguished Service Professor (Department of Music)*

At recent SUNY Oneonta College Senate meetings, proposals have been made to increase the salary levels of our adjuncts in recognition of the high value our campus places on their contributions to our college and our students. The administration decided that although the excellent work of adjuncts is regarded with respect and gratitude, this is not a time when their rate of pay can be increased across-the-board. The President remained open about the prospects for an increase in starting pay.

In addition to adequately compensating our adjuncts, what other means do we have to acknowledge and enhance the importance of our adjunct faculty in the educational process and quality to which our college aspires? In recognition of the vital importance that adjuncts have in the instructional quality at SUNY Oneonta, and to acknowledge their importance to our academic community, all departments can give an equal vote in departmental matters to their adjuncts as a way of including PT faculty in the department culture.

Adjunct suffrage is certainly not a new idea. Throughout the country, academic institutions have recognized the institutional value of allowing adjunct faculty an equal vote with full-time faculty (one person, one vote on all issues on which faculty have a vote). A June 28, 2012 *Inside Higher Ed* article stated, "It's time for faculty senates and academic departments to make sure adjuncts can vote in their meetings and elections and hold offices, just as tenure-track and tenured faculty members are permitted to do." (<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/06/28/aaup-report-stresses-need-adjunct-involvement-governance>) While not mandatory, PT attendance at departmental meetings can be noted on a chair's letter in support of a PT faculty member receiving DSI.

In a recent report on Contingent Faculty and Governance, the AAUP stated, "No faculty member should be excluded from participation in governance because of the appointment conditions over which most have little control." Elsewhere in the report, the following clear recommendation was made: "Eligibility for voting and holding office should be the same for all faculty regardless of full- or part-time status." At SUNY Oneonta, let us join this nationwide movement to give all faculty, both full- and part-time, equal votes in departmental matters, excluding matters of reappointment, promotion, and tenure. All departmental members working under the auspices and instruments of faculty governance (i.e., departmental bylaws, the University Faculty Senate, and the Oneonta College Senate) need to resolve adjunct voting for department chairs.

The SUNY Oneonta College Senate has a committee dedicated to the rights and welfare of our adjuncts. Our local UUP chapter supports the movement to give adjunct faculty an equal voice and equal vote as that enjoyed by full-time faculty, provided no PT faculty is coerced into mandatory attendance at Department meetings. We seem to have agreement amongst many key campus stakeholders on improving working conditions of our adjuncts. We are ready to take this first, important step of giving adjuncts an equal voice in departmental affairs by amending or crafting bylaws that include equal voting rights for all contingent faculty, including our adjunct instructors.

Faculty throughout SUNY are asking administrators to support "shared governance." Our faculty can lead the way in this important initiative by adopting shared governance amongst the faculty. There should be no "second-class citizens" among departmental faculty. Let us extend the right to vote in equal fashion to all instructional faculty.

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