



# The Sentinel

UUP – Oneonta Local 2190

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## Preserving SUNY’s Mission: Educational Quality, Accessibility, Affordability, and Diversity By William Simons, Chapter President

[**Editor’s Note:** Proposals concerning compensation and other matters emerging from the January 23, 2014, UUP Professional employees’ focus group meeting will appear in the next edition of *The Sentinel*. See the notes of the Part-Time Labor-Management Meeting in this issue concerning adjunct pay.]

The State University of New York was founded 66 years ago. Founded on the pillars of public responsibility, educational quality, accessibility, affordability, and diversity, it grew into a great university. In the last several years, SUNY has faced unprecedented challenges to its core mission. The hollowing of the American middle class, widening income gaps, the demonization of unions, the retreat of government from essential services, the rapacity of certain private interests, confusion as to how to best utilize new technologies, and leadership guided by image rather than vision have contributed to attacks on public education, including SUNY, throughout the United States. Of late, allies in the legislature and UUP, with the Oneonta Chapter playing a substantive role, held at bay such ill conceived policies as the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act (PHEEIA) and the Resource Allocation Model (RAM), both of which would taken significant resources from comprehensive SUNY colleges, such as Oneonta, and concentrated them on university centers. Chancellor Nancy Zimpher’s attempts to standardize, outsource, homogenize, and consolidate SUNY, however, continue to proliferate.



Bill: D.C. rally

Clarity as to the role of individual units is needed for effective counter to SUNY homogenization. In some cases, institutions could exchange mission statements and few would notice. Too many institutions have adopted generic mission statements that say everything except what is distinct and defining. Make no mistake: SUNY Oneonta is an excellent college, but to remain so it must confront serious and impending external challenges. As do all great enterprises, SUNY Oneonta merits an explicit defining mission deriving from our regional demographics, geography, resources, and economy. Place matters. An authentic mission statement animates and motivates—and is assimilated by—members of an organization. Organic mission statements emerge from civil, critical, and informed debate. That is why

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## **Preserving SUNY's Mission (continued)**

*The Sentinel* has begun republishing sociologist Alex Thomas' thoughtful series envisioning our college as the University of the Catskills.

Start-Up New York is less educational than rhetorical. Start-UP New York is not supportive of Main Street and existing local businesses. It would erode our civic core and the local tax base, which funds essential community services, including k-12 education. The ideas, talents, and programs of SUNY Oneonta harbor the potential to construct new and richly productive college-community collaborations. It will not be, however, through the chimera of Start-Up New York.

Seamless Transfer and the Open SUNY Textbook programs potentially whittle away at the distinctiveness of campus programs. Racial, ethnic, and income diversity have remained incomplete at SUNY institutions. Nonetheless, significant course and program latitude has encouraged diversity of perspectives, pedagogy, and curriculum. The Open SUNY Textbook program would serve as tool in the campaign to homogenize courses and programs across the 64 SUNY campuses. The textbook initiative is part of the larger Open SUNY campaign.

The term Open SUNY is Orwellian in its present context: it would close ideas and innovations—and close doors to individuals and groups. We are not Luddites but nor are we lemmings. The damage wrought by Common Core on K-12 education provides a cautionary tale. Much of current assessment activity serves to exhaust, perhaps deterring us from the formulation of questions and counter initiatives, and is akin to evaluating horse-drawn trolleys after the introduction of electrification. Who is assessing Open SUNY, and who is assessing the proliferation of assessors who dictate policies that threaten SUNY's mission? UUP has major reservations about Open SUNY. These reservations appear below.

### **Open SUNY: Let's Do It Right!**

#### **What is Open SUNY?**

SUNY System Administration describes Open SUNY as the largest online, distance and open learning initiative in the U.S. SUNY's goal is to be the largest public online educator, growing online enrollment to exceed 100,000 by 2017. SUNY proposes to expand online degree programs and resources, prior learning assessments (course credit for life and work experience), competency-based programs and other alternatives to classroom instruction, including experimentation with for-credit Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).



**State UUP President warns against shifting SUNY focus from students to profits**

#### **Some Open SUNY components:**

- 100 percent transferable General Education courses (through the Seamless Transfer initiative)
- Graduation in three years for 25 percent of SUNY students by 2015
- Electronic advisement through creation of a digital concierge to assist in providing advisement services such as planning, navigating and completing course and degree selection
- New online bachelor's degree programs
- Sharing of established courses across SUNY institutions through cross-registration, including General Education and elective courses that are part of majors

## ***Preserving SUNY's Mission (continued)***

- Grants to develop open e-textbooks
- A system-wide electronic database to facilitate degree and transfer options within SUNY

### **What is SUNY's timeline for Open SUNY?**

**January 2014:** Unveiling of Open SUNY **September 2014:** Prepare to launch Open SUNY "at scale."

### **Can SUNY meet its ambitious goals?**

At this point, SUNY has not provided a clear plan for implementation and oversight, course and curriculum development, or funding for Open SUNY. While SUNY is engaged in an extensive marketing campaign aimed at securing support for Open SUNY, critical details have yet to be announced.

### **How does the Open SUNY initiative differ from the development and expansion of online courses at SUNY campuses in recent years?**

Open SUNY is an administrative initiative, unlike faculty-led online course expansion that allows for high-quality online education and student success. It has been rolled out with limited input from SUNY academics and professionals with teaching and service delivery experience. The following Open SUNY goals are inconsistent with an educationally sound expansion of online education:

- Rapid expansion of online courses
- Increasing standardization of course content and interchangeable courses
- Delivery of courses and services by private, profit-seeking corporations such as Coursera and McKinsey Consulting

### **UUP's Concerns and Perspectives**

#### **--Open SUNY, as currently planned, may compromise educational quality and access**

Open SUNY, coupled with the Seamless Transfer initiative, suggests that SUNY may be targeting students taking introductory and general education courses and/or low-income students seeking a "less-expensive" degree. Unfortunately, there is broad agreement that students of color, low-income students, academically underprepared students, and first-generation college students benefit most from an educational environment that stresses social interaction with faculty and peers. According to "The 'Promises' of Online Higher Education: Access," an October study by the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education, these students run the most risk of losing access through online learning.

#### **--UUP supports high-quality online education, which Open SUNY may compromise**

UUP strongly supports online courses being designed and taught by faculty at SUNY institutions. Many SUNY professors already provide quality online education to their students, developing each course with the best teaching and learning practices in mind. The SUNY Learning Network, which launched in 1994, offers thousands of online courses, along with more than 80 online degree programs. Empire State College's Center for Distance Learning offers more than 500 online courses and includes support for students to work with faculty mentors, along with one-on-one communication with faculty and course instructors. However, Open SUNY may encourage the development of interchangeable courses and shift control and responsibility from campuses to for-profit consultants. These standardized online courses could diminish the diversity of campus missions and curricula, and restrict exposure to faculty with varying knowledge and perspectives. It could also limit the face-to-face advisement and mentoring that many students need to successfully complete college-level work.

### **Recommended Actions**

**Hold SUNY accountable for providing answers to the following questions:**

## ***Preserving SUNY's Mission (continued)***

### **-- How much funding will be made available to implement Open SUNY? Will there be additional funding or will existing funds be reallocated within institutions?**

If SUNY does not obtain additional, adequate funding, it is possible that inadequately funded programs and services will see further resource reductions.

### **--Will Open SUNY lead to a redistribution of funding within the system?**

Cross-registration increases the possibility that better-funded campuses will be able to increase online course offerings, drawing enrollments from resource-starved campuses. At a Nov. 18 meeting with UUP officers, SUNY officials indicated that for courses that draw students from multiple campuses, the full-time equivalent (FTE) would go to the campus hosting the course. FTEs affect campus budget allocations.

### **--How will Open SUNY impact diverse student populations with different needs and access limitations?**

SUNY's plan for robo-calls and email in place of in-person advisement could fail to adequately serve students with differing needs and levels of college preparedness. Open SUNY's "concierge" system could drain resources from financially pressed advisement and academic support programs with proven track records of success.

### **--How much money will SUNY allocate to private corporations and outside vendors as providers of a wide variety of online learning services, including course development, marketing, IT support, and textbooks?**

Open SUNY presently is dependent on two consultants: McKinsey Consulting for assistance with the implementation and communication of Open SUNY, and Coursera to develop a platform to deliver MOOCs across the SUNY system. SUNY has plans to expand private contracting to deliver additional educational services. Why is SUNY introducing profit-generation into the delivery of public education to the citizens of New York state?

### **--Will faculty members' intellectual property rights be protected if they choose to use Coursera or any other contractor's platform to deliver online education?**

Faculty who design online courses need absolute assurance that they will maintain control and ownership of the content of the courses they create. Protections must be put in place to prevent the contracting out of faculty-created courses without their full understanding and consent.

## **Urge the chancellor to revise Open SUNY plans**

Open SUNY, in its current form, is based on very limited faculty input and lacks the planning, infrastructure and funding necessary to ensure current and future students a quality higher education. If not done carefully, Open SUNY has the potential to impede access, erode educational quality, and weaken academic standards.

### **--UUP urges the chancellor to slow down the Open SUNY initiative and require an assessment of current plans with the following in mind:**

#### **1. Any new initiative that will impact the educational services SUNY provides must include a substantive plan for implementation and oversight.**

Open SUNY has been given an "unveiling" date of January 2014 and a launch date of September 2014, but "details are still in development." SUNY has not revealed specifics on how much funding will be made available to implement these broad and complex ideas, or how the funding will be allocated. The plan should also assess the impact of Open SUNY on diverse curricula and student populations, as well as on the overall public mission of SUNY.

## ***Preserving SUNY's Mission (continued)***

### **2. Course and curriculum development and support must rely on academic and professional faculty expertise and relate to the needs of students.**

Academic and professional faculty, administrators and students should be involved in the planning and implementation of Open SUNY across the system. Open SUNY's push toward a standardized educational process that stresses speed and transferability could jeopardize the quality of educational programs. A curriculum developed by faculty experts, as a matter of practice, moves students sequentially through preparatory classes and on to more advanced classes in a process based on student interests and faculty guidance. In contrast, what SUNY has made public so far indicates that, through Open SUNY, courses may be offered in a disconnected way, out of context and without a carefully developed, campus-specific curriculum.

### **3. Resource needs must be accurately identified, including full-time teaching faculty, professional support personnel, and new technology.**

Research has shown that larger student-to-faculty ratios adversely impact student performance. In addition, face-to-face advisement and mentoring have proven to be indispensable for student persistence and success. As currently staffed, SUNY's teaching and professional faculty cannot support Open SUNY's planned increase in students. There is a need for additional technology, advisement and other support services. Advisement in the form of robo-calls and emails makes it more likely that at-risk students will not succeed.

### **4. Investment in infrastructure necessary to support expansion of online degree programs is critical.**

The development of courses to fit multiple delivery methods requires training, skill, and academic and technical innovations. Additional time and resources, and investment in the technical support infrastructure, are necessary to deliver these services.

### **5. New York state tax dollars should be invested in public higher education, not in private consultants and for-profit corporations.**

Several SUNY campuses have developed and successfully delivered quality online education. Open SUNY will potentially shift the control and responsibility from the campuses to for-profit corporations such as Coursera and McKinsey Consulting. SUNY campuses are already successfully delivering online courses in keeping with their mission to educate the next generation; the mission of Coursera, and other private online higher education providers, is to turn a profit.

## **Protect the mission of New York State's public higher education system!**

--**Faculty and staff must be involved** in all aspects of developing, implementing, delivering and assessing expanded online courses and access through Open SUNY.

--A comprehensive review of current online courses, prior-learning assessment and competency-based programs must be done to determine the most effective **current practices** and the feasibility of expanding those successful **student-focused** approaches—before turning to for-profit consultants.

--**Campuses should not contract** with any outside vendor to deliver online courses or programs without the prior approval of the relevant department, program or curriculum committee. The first line of SUNY's mission states "... **provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality.**" UUP calls on the chancellor to redirect SUNY to its essential educational mission and work collaboratively with our academic and professional faculty to ensure all new educational initiatives are academically sound and enhance the mission of SUNY: to provide quality, affordable and accessible public higher education to all New Yorkers.

UUP will conduct strong advocacy on these issues and will call upon you to participate in these endeavors.

## Envision 2014: The Conflicted Basis or Flawed Vision for the Future?

By Rob Compton, Vice President for Academics

### Introduction: Winds of Change

The close of 2013 and the beginning of 2014 bring both hope and caution regarding the trends shaping higher education nationally, statewide, and on our campus. The winds of change continue to buffet higher education as politicians, students, and the public demand increased performance and results. As the recent scandal involving the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Department of African American and Africana studies demonstrates, it is incumbent upon all our members to perform their jobs diligently and with the upmost sense of integrity. When there is heightened scrutiny, the potential for opprobrium, whether justified or not, increases. This article examines several developing trends that require monitoring as the year progresses.



Snowman Time: Katie and Rob Compton

Macro-trends involving MOOCs, distance learning, assessment, Open SUNY, Start-Up New York, Open Textbooks, competency-based credentialing, and Seamless Transfer will continue to be a part of the higher education lexicon. In many cases, the pressure for implementation will increase. UUP Oneonta believes in the importance of higher education and supports the idea of improving access, lowering costs, maintaining and increasing state support, and increasing the quality of higher education. At the same time, many of the ideas proposed by the Chancellor which have potentially devastating outcomes on our campus cannot be overlooked, minimized, or simply laughed at. Without a doubt, there is increased pressure to force higher education into a business "straightjacket" by implementing neoliberal market principles at all levels. We need to keep in mind that this is a global trend. In fact, in many European and Australian universities, it is expected that faculty raise enough in grants to fund the salary of their positions.

### On Campus

- **Addressing Inequity**

In 2013, we saw some promise of increased equity on the Oneonta campus. After sustained discussion within UUP and our *Vision for the Future* as well as in the Senate and Council of Chairs, the administration moved to begin the arduous process of addressing inequity. The administration launched Phase I, which included minimum salaries for faculty and increased promotional increments. The laudable move is to be followed by Phase II, and there are discussions for Phase III. As the administration noted, the objective is to bring Oneonta up to the mean salaries of our sector. UUP Oneonta would eventually like the administration to move further. Also, UUP Oneonta has many unanswered questions, as you do, in terms of impact, who will benefit and who does not, and the extent to which these adjustments will be sustainable, especially if rational tuition policies cease. We remain committed to addressing inequity within departments, among departments, and among comparable institutions within the state and nationally. We remain increasingly concerned about the situation of our part-time colleagues as we await the results of Phase II and Phase III. In addition, we also believe that some of our Professional employees need long overdue redress regarding their salaries.

## ***Envision 2014 (continued)***

- **Deans and More Deans**

In 2013, the College witnessed the launching of a five-dean structure, with the hiring of three new deans. The new Deans have started to figure out the “lay of the land” and have begun to implement changes. At a previous Labor- Management meeting, Administration noted that fundraising will be a primary responsibility of the new Deans. Their success in these areas could affect the future of each school and their respective organizational culture. New monies, however, are instrumental and not intrinsic in the operation of the College. These funds could increase or decrease our flexibility. It is possible that “strings attached” funds could hand-cuff innovation or lead to deleterious types of changes. Two more Deans are being hired in 2014 and it is also possible that two Associate Provosts’ advertisements may be activated. UUP may need to conduct our periodic Quality of Life and Administrative Assessment to gather more information from our members regarding their perceptions of a changed environment as early as 2014. The College will also need to decide whether to hire associate or assistant deans as noted in the Middle States Report. UUP will continue to monitor the increase in administrative positions on the campus.

**“UUP may need to conduct our periodic Quality of Life and Administrative Assessment to gather more information from our members regarding their perceptions of a changed environment as early as 2014.”**

### **Off Campus**

When the Titanic hit the iceberg, the ship had to resort to managing in a new environment. Downstate Medical continues to be a major problem for SUNY and UUP. The fate of many employees and the costs of maintaining operations remain a primary concern of UUP Statewide. The Governor, who recently announced his desire to seek a second term, used to “talk left and walk right.” Now he speaks and acts with the forked tongue of a venture capitalist with ideas that are not well thought out. Meanwhile, at SUNY Central, it’s a one person show. The Chancellor, following the Governor’s cues, wants to transform SUNY into an engine of economic growth. Consultation, shared decision-making, and careful planning seems increasingly out of the picture. The trends and the effects of MOOC, Open SUNY, Open Textbooks, Seamless transfer, Start-Up New York, and Shared Services have created uncertainty and a siege environment amongst many of our members. The onslaught and blitzkrieg of neo-liberal practices have created confusion and fear.

“The trends and the effects of MOOC, Open SUNY, Open Textbooks, Seamless transfer, Start-Up New York, and Shared Services have created uncertainty and a siege environment amongst many of our members.”

UUP does not want to augment the anxiety. Higher education has been insulated from the “real world” for too long. At the same time, it ought not embrace the practices that have become de rigueur in some rapacious quarters of the economy.

- **MOOC and Open SUNY**

In 2013, higher education witnessed the expansion of MOOCs and then the manifest problems of its technological platform. SUNY entered into a contract with Coursera as part of Open SUNY. The details and costs of that contract are still unknown. At the same time, in San Jose State University (CA), faculty protested against MOOCs and the university had to change their approach to them in the end. Ironically, when high stakes testing in high school has come under increased criticism— and colleges and universities are seeking multiple student achievement indicators—MOOCs rely heavily and almost exclusively on tests. It is

## ***Envision 2014 (continued)***

too early to ascertain whether the fad has passed, but clearly technology remains both an opportunity and threat to higher education employment and outcomes. UUP will need to redouble its efforts to maintain a vigilant monitoring on how MOOCs are used.

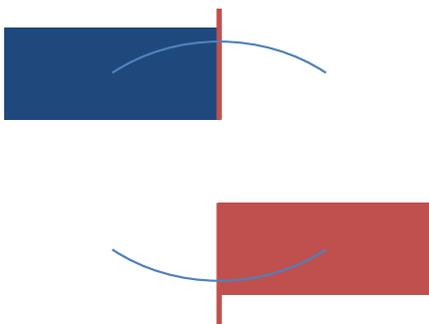
Open SUNY, including online offerings, three year degree completion, seamless transfer, and open textbooks are also neoliberal strategies to manage the increasing costs of higher education and to satisfy the managerial penchant for efficiency. I want to reiterate that education cannot be done on the cheap. In principle, the Chancellor's ideas are not novel or innovative, but based on common sense. Students should be able to take classes through multiple methods. Students should be able to transfer without losing the majority of their credits. And textbooks have become increasingly costly and their prices need to be contained. However, education, especially at the undergraduate level, requires "place" for most students. "Place" is where students meet faculty in person and get to know them. "Place" allows for students to benefit from co-curricular activities and to meet members of their cohort to form friendships and develop social skills. "Place" makes it possible for the professor to get to know the students, assist them in their goals, and to be able to write letters of recommendation or point out internship opportunities. These are very difficult to do 'online'. UUP remains concern that decisions are being made without sufficient student or faculty input. The drivers of change are not pedagogy, but ruthless cost containment. Cost containment should not be done on the backs of students and faculty.

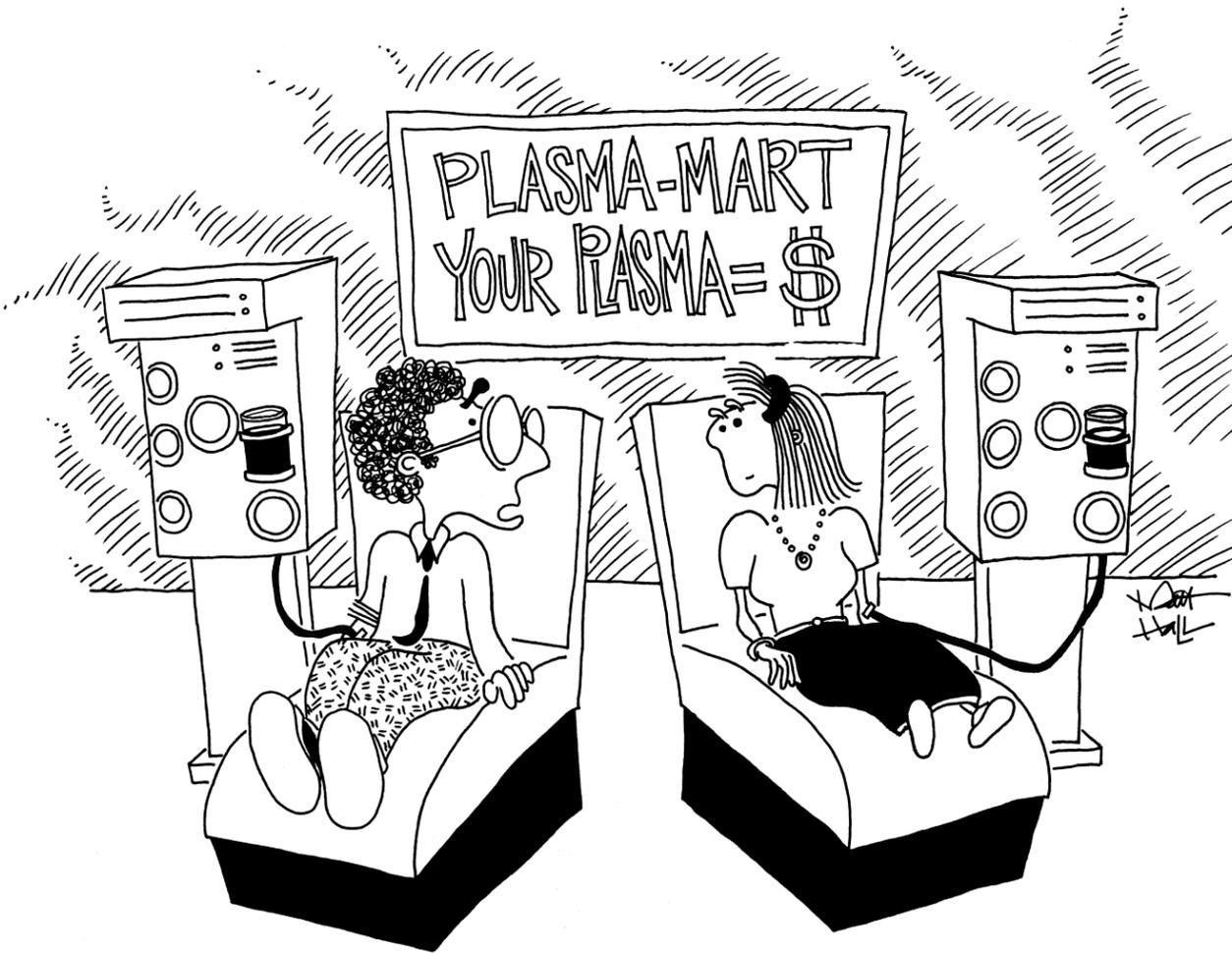
- **Start-Up: NY**

Despite the poor track record of the Empire Zones, Governor Cuomo seeks to use that model to create enterprise zones around SUNY Campuses. These zones would "operate 100% tax-free for 10 years. No business, corporate, state or local taxes, sales or property taxes, or franchise fees." [www.start-upny.com](http://www.start-upny.com). In addition, employees who work in the zones for these businesses would not have to pay any state income taxes.

Given the fiscal constraints under which most local governments, including the City of Oneonta, operates under, an increase in state aid and/or an increase in tax payments by everyone else will be required to make up the shortfall. Furthermore, these new businesses will use local services, such as fire and police, without payment. Local zoning laws would also have to be altered.

Most frightening about Start-Up NY is the lack of any public cost benefit analysis, community impact studies, public hearings and discussions in affected municipalities, or even an estimate of the costs in terms of lost state revenue. New Yorkers deserve the details of this plan. Until the full ramifications are known, it would be unwise for any SUNY, including the College at Oneonta, to partner with a corporation or the state in pursuit of implementing Start-Up NY.





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*"So how long have you been an adjunct?"*

## Oneonta University Revisited

By Alex Thomas, Associate Professor, Sociology

**[Editor's Note:** *The Chronicle of Higher Education* recently warned that “regional public universities and smaller private colleges lacking a well-defined niche” are particularly vulnerable to impending vicissitudes. Dr. Alex Thomas, a prolific scholar, wrote a visionary multi-part series for *The Sentinel*. It is time to revisit Alex’s commentaries and to give them the attention they merit. Let candid and creative dialogue begin. The commentary below originally appeared in the April 2010 issue of *The Sentinel*.]

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.



Dr. Thomas

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 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

## ***Oneonta University Revisited (continued)***

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.

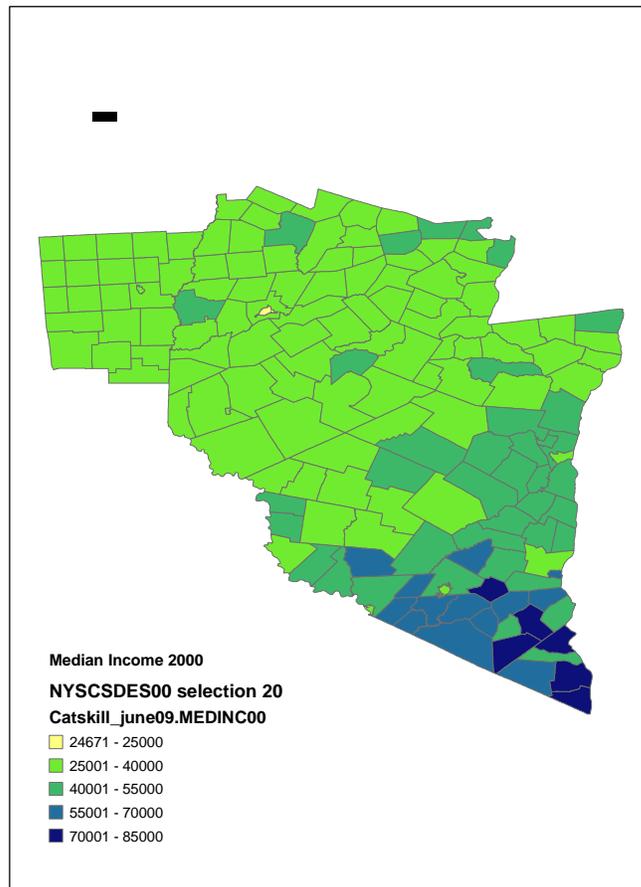
A regional university needs to be organized in such a way that the creativity of the faculty is allowed to bubble up. This, frankly, involves ending the Divisions of Stuff and More Stuff. In the social sciences, for example, efforts on the part of the department chairs to meet on a regular basis were 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 re-examine 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 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.

**Oneonta University Revisited (continued)**

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**

## Contingent Concerns

By J McDermott, Contingent Concerns Officer, UUP Oneonta

2014: the New Year begins.

The winter holiday decoration in my little New York village features, on every other light post along the main street, an illuminated snowflake: each is about four feet high, with eight spiky arms, and each arm bears small white lights. They've been our holiday decorations for at least a decade, and they were getting old. The local Chamber of Commerce sponsored a refurbishing, and put out a call for volunteers. Old and young, people from the village and beyond came forward to strip the old lights off the frames so those frames could be sandblasted and repainted, and then the lights were reattached onto the frames, the snowflakes tested, and finally mounted once again onto the street poles. It took many hours, over many weeks. Are they perfect? No, but the small imperfections (a bulb out here or there, a small section on arm or two unlit) remind us all of the very human community effort that got the snowflakes restored at a fraction of the cost of purchasing replacements. And of course, most folk who drive through the village see the pretty lights, and have no knowledge of the community's efforts to get them into place this year. Nor do they need to know. It's just a pretty village at night.



There's a lesson in that for those of us in unions. It's very easy to join, and very easy to let union activity happen around us. But unions are communities of interest – some say unions are not only the best way to introduce democracy into the workplace, but are the only way to do so. But just like the percentage of voters in the American experiment is falling, so the percentage of members who are actively involved in union work is declining. So my resolution for 2014 is for me to try harder to let SUNY Oneonta's UUP members know how easy it is to be active; how that activity can be as safe as we can make it; and how without your participation our union is weakened.

For my task as Contingent Concerns Officer, that means finding new and better ways to reach out to our contingent members, Full-Time or Part-Time, academic or professional. Please take a moment to send me a message some time this year—When or where is a good time or place to meet? What are your greatest concerns? Is the union meeting your needs? How can I do a better job for you? Send me an email: [jmcdermo@uupmail.org](mailto:jmcdermo@uupmail.org). (I suggest using an email other than oneonta.edu to send your message.) For example, some members spoke to me during the fall semester about how, after many, many years of service as adjuncts on this campus, they face great insecurity about working under one year contracts that can be terminated at will. Because of those discussions, and with the individuals' personal situations undisclosed, we will be initiating discussion of ways to solve that dilemma, ways that offer a professionally satisfying resolution to both the employees and the institution.

In solidarity, Happy New Year to all.

### SENTINEL QUIZ

By Nancy S. Cannon, Academic Delegate and Sentinel Photographer



The actor's hometown around the time of his birth

This iconic American actor, writer, philanthropist, and opponent of the Blacklist, now nearly 98 years old, was born in a small New York State city along the Mohawk River. His cinematic roles include playing a mad artist, leader of a slave rebellion, general in the Israeli War of Independence, soulful cowboy, conqueror of Troy, juggler, and jazz musician. Who is he? The first person to email Nancy Cannon ([cannonns@oneonta.edu](mailto:cannonns@oneonta.edu)) with the correct answer will receive a UUP related prize.

The answer to the December quiz, "This mammal, sometimes an unwelcome house guest in New York State, is a host of the tick that carries Lyme disease. What is it?" The correct answer is "deer mouse" The first correct answer was provided by Ben Wendrow.

## Lincoln Day Lecture: Wednesday, February 12th, 12 Noon, Morris Complex



All members of the College and Greater Oneonta communities are invited to UUP's Second Annual Lincoln Day Lecture on February 12th at 12 Noon, Morris Complex. In this 150th anniversary year of Lincoln's re-election as president and defining Civil War policies, consideration of Lincoln's life and actions provides an opportunity for consideration of the relationship between race and labor to American national identity. Dr. J. Thomas Hogle, academic and activist, will deliver the 2014 Lincoln Day Lecture. He is a charismatic and protean speaker. Dr. Hogle's presentation is entitled "The Sable Arm of the Republic: Abraham Lincoln and the Creation and Use of Black Troops in the Civil War." Dr. Hogle will examine the evolution of Lincoln's thought and policies toward black soldiers in the Union army. Questions and discussion will follow the formal presentation.

Lincoln referred to Black soldiers as "the sable arm" of the republic. They constituted approximately 10% of the Union army and 10% of its casualties. Black troops participated in many notable engagements, including the costly beachhead assault on Battery Wagner in Charleston (SC) harbor. The history of the Lincoln presidency, Black soldiers, and slavery are intertwined. Lincoln's action and those of Black soldiers continue to resonate in U.S. race relations.

A veteran as well as a scholar, Dr. Hogle volunteered for military service during the Vietnam War. He saw combat in the Mekong Delta as an army infantry rifleman. Professor and former Chair of Social Science (History and Government) at Morrisville State College, Dr. Hogle earned BA (Oswego State), MA (SUNY Plattsburgh), and PhD (University of Colorado) degrees in history. Knowledgeable, significant, and accessible, Dr. Hogle is widely regarded as an excellent teacher and public speaker. He has lectured under the auspices of the New York Council for the Humanities. Extensive overseas teaching in Europe, the Middle East, Korea, and Japan reflect Dr. Hogle's global perspective. He is currently President of the UUP Morrisville Chapter. Through the years, Dr. Hogle has acquired extensive experience in legislative and public advocacy. Dr. Hogle epitomizes the scholar activist and will present a compelling analysis of the legacy of Lincoln and Black troops.



Dr. J. Thomas Hogle, Lincoln scholar and social activist

## Join UUP: Strength in Solidarity



# Are You a Member?

Thomas P. DiNapoli New York State Comptroller		JOHN DOE		Total Gross		Fed. Taxable Gross	
				Current	3456.78	1234.56	
				YTD	45,678.90	34,567.89	
Advice #	123456789	Pay Start Date	07/13/2009	Net Pay <b>1,234.56</b>			
Advice Date	07/12/2009	Pay End Date	07/27/009				
Department ID	1234			Pay Rate	78,910.11		
<b>EARNINGS</b>							
		YTD		TAX DATA			
	His./Days	Earnings	His./Days	Earnings	Federal	State	NYC
Regular Pay Salary Employee		3456.78		45,678.90	4	4	
Location Pay		56.78		678.90	2	8	
<b>TAXES</b>							
		Current		YTD			
		Fed Withholding		3,456.78		1,234.56	
		Medicare		45,678.90		34,567.89	
		Social Security		3,456.78		1,234.56	
		NY Withholding		45,678.90		34,567.89	
<b>BEFORE TAX DEDUCTIONS</b>							
		Current		YTD			
		Regular Before Tax Health		456.78		1,234.56	
		Supplemental Ret. Annually Pkgs.		678.90		5,678.90	
		TIAA Retirement Before Tax		56.78		1,234.56	
						<b>UUP Member 26P</b>	
						34.56	
						456.78	

## CHECK PAY STUB TO MAKE SURE

In order to be a member of the union, your paycheck **must** say "UUP Member." If it says "UUP Agency Fee," then you are included in the Professional Services Negotiating Unit, but are *not* a member of the union.

## UUP Membership Entitles You To:

- Vote on collective bargaining agreement
- Hold union office
- Attend union meetings
- Elect union leaders on your campus and choose your representatives at the state and national levels
- Maintain UUP membership after retirement and be eligible for benefit programs
- Upon separation of service, obtain Associate Membership with NYSUT and be eligible for benefit programs

Please contact your chapter officers for a membership card.

### Who can become a member of the UUP?

To be eligible to join UUP, one must be an employee of the State University of New York and belong to the Professional Services Negotiation Unit (PSNU, also called the 08 Bargaining Unit).

### **I am on the faculty at Oneonta/ part of the professional staff / a librarian , so I am automatically a member of UUP, right?**

No. By legislative action, UUP has "agency fee," meaning that all individuals who are classified as being members of the "Professional Services Negotiating Unit" pay a fee to the union if they are not actually members. The fee is equal to the dues charged UUP members, because Fee Payers receive many services from the union even though they are not members. Nonetheless, unless one signs and returns a membership application form to UUP Central, one cannot vote in UUP elections, run for office within UUP or participate fully in UUP policy making. In short, if you don't sign the card, you are not a member of UUP.

### **What do I need to do in order to join?**

You can obtain a membership application by contacting the UUP Oneonta Chapter Office, and leaving a phone message at 436-2135 or by emailing [Oneonta@UUPmail.org](mailto:Oneonta@UUPmail.org). You may also download the Membership Application (in PDF Format) from the UUP Central website, [www.uupinfo.org](http://www.uupinfo.org) by clicking "Welcome/Join," and "How to Join UUP?" The form may be completed, SIGNED, and mailed to UUP, PO Box 15143, Albany, NY 12212-5143.

## VOTE-COPE! Support Public Higher Education

By Kyle Britton, Director, VOTE-COPE, and Professional Delegate

First, I hope you and your families had a wonderful Holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Second, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who contributes to VOTE-COPE!

If you do not currently contribute to VOTE-COPE, please, fill out the form below and send it to the UUP Oneonta Chapter office (UUP, IRC 105). Donations as small as twenty-six dollars a year helps not just you; but all of your brothers and sisters in UUP/NYSUT, and most importantly the children of tomorrow!

YOU have the power to build on our past successes and your commanding voice needs to be heard loud and clear. What better way to support public higher education, to ensure accountability and transparency for SUNY's research and campus foundations, and to support the increase of equity and salaries for all members. Won't you join us in the fight?

Please contact me (Kyle Britton) [Kyle.Britton@oneonta.edu](mailto:Kyle.Britton@oneonta.edu) concerning any questions about VOTE/COPE.

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UUP VOTE/COPE Voluntary Contribution • United University Professions • P.O. Box 15143, Albany, NY 12212-5143

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Include Street, City, State, ZIP) \_\_\_\_\_

Campus \_\_\_\_\_ Department \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### AUTHORIZATION FOR VOLUNTARY DEDUCTION

Effective no earlier than \_\_\_\_\_ (enter date), I hereby authorize regular payroll deductions from my earnings in the amount specified below as a voluntary contribution to be paid to VOTE/COPE, to be used in accordance with applicable law for the purpose of making political contributions in connection with federal, state and local elections. My contribution is voluntary, and I understand that it is not required as a condition of employment, and that I may revoke this authorization at any time by giving written notice to the Treasurer of United University Professions.

Contribution Per Pay Period (Circle One)      \$1      \$2      \$5      \$10      Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Class Counts: Dr. King and the House of Want

By Bill Simons, Chapter President

[**Editor's Note:** The February 2014 *Sentinel* will report on UUP Oneonta January 20, 2014, Martin Luther King Jr. program, which featured presentation by NAACP leaders.]

The great struggle was and remains that between “the house of Have” and “the House of Want.” From his first battle in Montgomery in 1955 to his last crusade in Memphis in 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., stood with those locked in “the House of Want.” He knew that class counts, and assertions of racial justice remain hallow unless accompanied by universal access to a decent standard of living, encompassing education, employment, health care, housing, diet, and physical security. Poverty provides poor soil for dignity, respect, and opportunity. For history to bend to the good, Dr. King understood the need for human solidarity. Celebration of Dr. King sans emulation undermines his legacy. We must not allow the “the House of Have” to divide the daughters and sons of “the House of Want.”

As part of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observance, Edison Bond, a leader of Brooklyn’s African-American faith-based community and State UUP Membership Development Officer, spoke on “The Legacy of Martin Luther King: Race, Labor, and Justice” on Monday, January 21st at Noon in Le Café, Morris Complex. Dr. Nithya Iyer, Director of UUP Oneonta’s Diversity Series, introduced the program. UUP and the Africana-Latino Studies Department jointly sponsored the program. Edison Bond’s presentation included the current plight of the medical complex at Downstate SUNY-Brooklyn, which threatens the health and employment of many thousands of low income people, as well as the future of SUNY. Dr. King emphasized that labor unions with the right to collective bargaining provide the bulwark against Dickensian child labor, exploitive wages, unsafe working conditions, arbitrary dismissal, denial of medical services, and destitution in retirement. Dr. King asserted, *"Our needs are identical with labor's needs: Decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old-age security, health and welfare measures, conditions in which families can grow, have education for their children, and respect in the community."*



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In the days of southern bondage, the planter class nurtured animosities between poor whites and black slaves. Obscuring their appropriation of black lives, wealthy planters, a minority in the antebellum South, frequently employed poor whites as overseers. Eschewing their own responsibility for the worst abominations of slavery, planters cast the overseers and slave patrols, also staffed by poor whites, as buffers to absorb the hostility of the exploited. With their pose of paternalism, the planter elite sought to misdirect black resentment. Slavery robbed blacks of freedom and debased white laborers. Likewise, with appeals to racial solidarity, the planter elite attempted to blunt the class consciousness of poor whites.

Following Emancipation, the political and legal gains of former slaves during Reconstruction proved ephemeral. Violence and the erosion of federal support left blacks vulnerable. Reconstruction never compensated freed blacks with “40 acres and a mule:” without an economic base, newly acquired rights withered. Exploitable labor of technically free black labor impeded a living wage and unionization on both sides of the southern color line.

The Populist uprisings of the late nineteenth century may have created a fleeting interlude with the potential to forge interracial class solidarity between poor southern whites and poor blacks, but the power of prejudice impeded such an alliance. Unjust and abused laws, brutal convict leasing of blacks “found guilty” of trivial or non-existent offenses, tenancy and sharecropping, debt servitude to large land owners that amounted to peonage, intimidation, lynching, segregation, political disenfranchisement, high illiteracy, and grinding poverty long dominated black life in the South.

## ***Class Counts: Dr. King and the House of Want (continued)***

The masters of the New South knew the value of tokenism—and its effectiveness when endorsed by a faux spokesperson of the underclass. The white elite found their man in Booker T. Washington. Race leader, principal of the Tuskegee Institute, and recipient of white philanthropic largess, Washington exerted much influence amongst fellow blacks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Eschewing political and legal rights as well liberal arts education, Washington counseled black accommodation, vocational training, and reliance on the white elite. While Washington's private correspondence and actions as well as his ultimate intentions deviated from his platform counsel, his public rhetoric endorsed the major tenets of the economic elite — laissez faire, Social Darwinism, Horatio Algerism, imperialism, monopolistic business, and anti-unionism.



W. E. B. Du Bois

In *Souls of Black Folks* and throughout his long life, scholar-activist W. E. B. Du Bois luminously provided another prototype of black leadership, rooted in assertiveness. The Washington-Du Bois dialectic on race and class continues to resonate. For a price, disciples of Washington are still available to serve as public tokens to legitimize half-measures. In his brilliant novel, *Invisible Man*, African-American novelist Ralph Ellison savages a Washington-like race leader as a selfish, hypocritical Judas goat.

The Great Migration of hundreds of thousands of blacks from the rural South to the urban North did not end racial or class exploitation. Inner-city black poverty still blights the American Dream. Northern industrialists deterred worker solidarity by stoking racial and ethnic animosities. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Pinkerton and government arms were not the only weapons of the industrial elite against labor aspirations for decent wages, reduction of hours, and a work environment that did not maim and kill with regularity. Employers oft accentuated differences between immigrant groups by ethnic-specific task divisions that fragmented the work force. Last hired and first fired, black migrants to the urban North might find themselves deployed as strikebreakers by factory owners, deepening worker cleavages.

Not until the Great Depression of the 1930s and the New Deal's Wagner Act did American workers ameliorate racial and ethnic antagonisms sufficiently to unionize the nation's basic industries. Rejecting the craft unionism and exclusionary framework of the American Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) united workers through industrial unionism. In the late 1930s, via strikes, which sometimes met blood reprisals, newly united workers in steel, automobile, rubber, and other basic industries won significant victories.

The CIO and President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal added a new economic dimension to the American democracy, but they did not render racial justice. Nevertheless, the Roosevelts, Franklin and especially Eleanor, came to occupy an iconic status in African-American consciousness. During the 1930s, blacks abandoned the Republicans, the party of Lincoln the Emancipator, for FDR's Democrats in extraordinary numbers. In gestures, substantive and symbolic, such as Eleanor making possible the performance of African-American contralto Marian Anderson at the Lincoln Monument, the Roosevelts evoked a strong resonance amongst blacks. Nonetheless, blacks encountered discrimination and/or exclusion from some New Deal programs. Neither the First nor Second Hundred Days included civil rights measures, and FDR, fearful of losing the support of southern congressman for New Deal bills, failed to fight for anti-lynching legislation even as Billie Holiday's rendition of *Strange Fruit* pierced the conscience of America.



Billie Holiday

## ***Class Counts: Dr. King and the House of Want (continued)***



**A. Philip Randolph and Eleanor Roosevelt**

The great African-American leader A. Philip Randolph, president of the predominantly black Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), fused the issues of race and class. The Great Depression outlived the New Deal, and, in 1941 Randolph prepared to confront *An American Dilemma*. He planned a black March on Washington for July 1, 1941, with the purpose of protesting racial discrimination in the armed forces and in defense industries. Many thousands of black Americans responded to Randolph's March on Washington appeal. Concerned about the image of the U.S. in the world at a time of global turmoil, FDR convinced Randolph to call off the March in return for the issuance of Executive Order 8802, which prohibited racial discrimination in defense-related industries. The Fair Employment Practices Committee, created to enforce Executive Order 8802, was limited in its effectiveness, and desegregation of the military did not come until after World

War II during the Truman Administration. The 1950s, however, brought the Warren Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* against segregated public schools, the emergence of Dr. King, and the true birth of the modern Civil Rights Movements. Nor did Randolph disappear.

In 1963, Randolph finally got his March. The August 28, 1963, March on Washington called for **Jobs and Freedom**: racial justice cannot endure without economic justice. Randolph initiated the Great March on Washington in 1963, and labor unions played a key role in its organization. At the Great March, before a vast assemblage in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial, Dr. King eloquently linked civil and economic rights:

*Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity.*

*But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition.*

Rooted in non-violent civil disobedience, deeds of courage and confrontation followed. Dr. King and a generation of activists piqued a nation's conscience. The Civil Rights Acts of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the War on Poverty bear testament to that struggle.

Dr. King consistently linked racial and labor rights. Before an AFL-CIO convention, he proclaimed:

*Negroes are almost entirely a working people. There are pitifully few Negro millionaires, and few Negro employers. Our needs are identical with labor's needs — decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old age security, health and welfare measures, conditions in which families can grow, have education for their children and respect in the community. That is why Negroes support labor's demands and fight laws which curb labor. That is why the labor-hater and labor-baiter is virtually always a twin-headed creature spewing anti-Negro epithets from one mouth and anti-labor propaganda from the other mouth.*

## ***Class Counts: Dr. King and the House of Want (continued)***

Dr. King recognized that labor unions with the right to collective bargaining provide the bulwark against Dickensian child labor, exploitive wages, unsafe working conditions, arbitrary dismissal, denial of medical services, and destitution in retirement. Dr. King evoked a righteous God thundering against greed and privilege: *"The children of my sons and daughters were in need of economic security and you did not provide for them."*

Dr. King increasingly focused on bringing an end to poverty in America and to the war in Vietnam, a conflict where American combat troops disproportionately came from the racial and economic underclass. Dr. King planned to initiate a Poor People's Campaign in May 1968 with an encampment in the national capital that would advocate for the poor and dramatize their continuing need for jobs, housing, and health care. Prior to the start of the Poor People's Campaign, Dr. King, however, responded to the plight of workers in Memphis.

The unnecessary death of two black municipal workers, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, in Memphis, Tennessee, due to an antiquated garbage compressor precipitated a strike of that city's sanitation collectors for better conditions. City government refused to negotiate with sanitation workers or recognize their union (American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees — AFSCME, Local 1733) and termed their strike illegal. Despite death threats, Dr. King came to Memphis in March 1968 to join the strikers and called for union recognition; Dr. King asserted, *"Workers want a guarantee that there will be a union, that their money will go into the union and if trouble comes, they can help themselves."* At a March 28th march, led by Dr. King, Memphis police employed nightsticks and tear gas; police gunfire killed 16-year old Larry Payne. The strike continued. On April 4, 1968, an assassin shot Dr. King to death as he stood on the second floor balcony of a Memphis motel.



**Dr. King marches with striking sanitation workers in embattled Memphis**

Riots engulfed cities across America in response to Dr. King's death. Dr. King, a prophet of peace, was not there that night to quell the violence. In Memphis, a shaken city government engaged in collective bargaining with sanitation workers, recognized AFSCME, Local 1733, and reached a settlement. And the Poor People's March began in Washington on May 12th.

Forty-six years have passed since Dr. King's death. His birthday is a national holiday. The problems he spoke about — racism, poverty, labor exploitation, and war — plague us still. As with Muhammad Ali, Dr. King and his message are today too often sanitized, only a few steps removed from the President's Day advertisements that trivialize Washington and Lincoln. The powerful seek to detach Dr. King's call for equality from class and economic issues. Dr. King's legacy is best honored not by celebration but by taking up his unfinished work.

In an America once again polarized between "the House of Have" and "the House of Want," UUP Oneonta strives to take Dr. King's legacy seriously. Stay alert to tokenism—and the elite's search for a contemporary Booker T. Washington. Cynicism will not prevail. We are forging new relationships with other unions, and this concerns the elite who seek to foster, as in ages past, discord amongst the diverse inhabitants of the House of Want. The House of Have seeks to break the labor movement. Look at the battles fought in Wisconsin, Michigan, and other states. The attack on decent wages, collective bargaining,

## Class Counts: Dr. King and the House of Want (continued)

pensions, and workplace safety comes yoked with surveillance, profiling, and regressive taxation. The House of Want seeks to set worker against worker. Brutal physical violence against labor of former times has yielded to techniques of demonization and the stripping of rights. Union solidarity and class issues will make themselves felt: count on it.

It takes more courage to confront injustice close by than afar, and UUP will keep faith with Dr. King. Too many of our adjuncts are among the working poor. Adjunct starting pay was last adjusted — \$2,500 per course — in 2006: it is time to raise it. We can more effectively engage the 300,000 African Americans who reside amongst the 3.6 million people within a 2-hour drive of Oneonta. Let's remain vigilant to the potential threat that consolidation and sharing of services pose to SUNY's historic mission of accessibility.



Oneonta unions rally: police, fire, Teamsters, CSEA, K-12 teachers, UUP

Then and forever, Dr. King admonishes us, "You may not be on strike. But either we go up together, or we go down together." He recognized that equity and inclusion are hollow without economic rights. Let not Dr. King have lived and died in vain. Let not naked power strip workers of their human dignity. Join Dr. King in worker solidarity.



Books of Genesis: "Here cometh the dreamer. Let us slay him and see what becomes of his dream."

### 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 <http://www.oneontauup.org/>

Norm Payne is the UUP Oneonta Web Master.

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

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

## Thoughts on Gun Violence and Nelson Mandela

*By Peter Muckell, Alumni, State University College at Oneonta (1982) and New York University (1988)*

On December 5th, the world lost Nelson Mandela. It was interesting to learn about the evolution of the man and how his *personal* transformation was prerequisite to the *political* transformation of South Africa. Early in the struggle against Apartheid, Mandela began to believe that a non-violent dismantling of Apartheid would not be possible. In 1962 he left South Africa to gain support for an armed struggle and received military training in Morocco and Ethiopia. It was largely Mandela's pivot towards terrorism that resulted in his 27 year imprisonment. Mandela's willingness to forgive and constructively engage his captors is the Mandela that we now know and who is globally revered. From a practical perspective it is not Mandela's capacity for forgiveness that is so remarkable, but rather his ability to work with his opposition while maintaining the support of his own party (African National Congress). Mandela was willing to ignore the radicals among his own supporters and assume the responsibility of governing South Africa.

I am a recreational hunter who lives in Newtown, CT. I grew up with guns in my house. I have received firearms training for providing executive protection. I am neither pro-gun nor anti-gun, but the Sandy Hook shooting has prompted me to think deeply about the gun debate. My wife and I have 2 girls in the Newtown School District (both were in lockdown about a 2 minute drive from Sandy Hook School). It is impossible to convey the searing sadness that the town experienced after the shooting. Although such sadness is still very much on the minds of those of us living in Newtown, it is understood that this is irrelevant to those beyond the boundaries of our town. I say this because prior to the Sandy Hook massacre, I was able to quickly forget the devastation from other mass shootings and simply ignore the gun murders in our urban areas. Newtown residents cannot claim the moral high ground on the subject of gun violence. We are simply one of the growing communities that have been devastated by its effects and have begun supporting common sense solutions.



**We Must Not Forget**

Following a polite pause immediately after Sandy Hook, most of our elected officials seemed to be gauging if anything had changed in our country's views on firearms. When compared to other mass shootings, many legislators initially said that the Sandy Hook slaughter "felt different." After some gyrations in polling, most (but not all) of our elected officials went back to their familiar pro-gun or anti-gun stance and aligned themselves accordingly. Familiar positions always feel safer. They also offer an opportunity to appear courageous, while incurring little risk. The vast majority of our politicians have taken one of two courses of actions. Those serving in noncompetitive districts have aligned themselves with only one side of the gun debate, either for or against more gun regulation. Those serving in districts with a diverse electorate have been reluctant to venture into the debate entirely. (To be fair, a few officeholders have actually taken courageous positions). Most politicians have aligned with the side most likely to enhance their chances for re-election. Unfortunately, re-election has little to do with actual governing. It is certainly not courageous.

The peaceful transition of South Africa may not have occurred had Mandela not been willing to ignore fringe groups and accept the responsibility to govern. Our leaders must address both sides of the gun debate in an honest manner while being willing to ignore the extremes. Those that are sensible, acknowledge both the potential benefits of firearm ownership as well as the dangers that guns pose in the wrong hands. Hunting is a sport that is steeped in American tradition and often enjoyed by multiple generations of family members. Those who do not hunt might be surprised to

## ***Thoughts on Gun Violence and Nelson Mandela (continued)***

learn that hunters often have great respect for the animals they kill, which includes a deep sense of obligation to avoid wasting the game that they have taken. Hunting also provides an environmental benefit by helping to mitigate an exploding deer population - which contributes to the spread of Lyme disease and causes crop damage and automobile accidents.

Nevertheless, guns are dangerous. We must also acknowledge the enormously beneficial role that universal background checks provides, as well as the need for anti-trafficking legislation,— especially in American cities. Why is there still political resistance to the fact that all Americans would benefit from keeping felons and the dangerously mentally ill from gaining access to firearms?

There is nothing courageous about politicians ginning up a base of supporters to promote policies that have little chance of being enacted. Effective government requires problem solving. We are allowing our elected leaders to avoid their responsibility. Genuine political courage requires the confidence to stare down one's fringe supporters in order to craft effective solutions. It is this that demonstrates the greatness of Nelson Mandela.



## **Contingent Concerns Labor-Management Meeting: Wednesday, December 18, 9:45 AM**

***By J McDermott, Contingent Concerns Officer, UUP Oneonta***

For UUP: Officer for Contingents J McDermott and Labor Relations Specialist Darryl Wood

For Management: Senior Executive Employee Services Officer Lisa Wenck

Agenda items discussed:

1. Clarification of parking policy for first week of Fall classes—*there is no 'grace period'*. Existing passes from the previous year are good through the end of August, so if a member does not have a pass at the first class day, there are a few days to obtain one. But the passes are now available through the mail over the summer, so members can have a new pass on the car before the start of the semester if they take advantage of the system.
2. The administration was informed of the recent unanimous vote by the UUP Oneonta Executive Board in support of the "Mayday \$5K" campaign. This national campaign was already endorsed by UUP at the Fall DA. It was pointed out that information about the campaign and its logic for a national minimum salary of \$5000/3 cr. Course is available online.
3. Inquiry was made about the timetable for subsequent phases of the administration's salary adjustment schedules. When Phase I (for FT academics) was announced, many of us were left wondering when and what about us? We were informed that contingent/PT issues will be addressed in Phase III. It was added that the administration is fully committed to all phases of the campaign, and that Phase III may not necessarily come *after* Phase II.
4. There is a previous practice of compensation for needed training sessions for those adjuncts who must complete assessment reviews. Because the session for that training has already been held, those who attended will receive compensation retroactively.

This was the second of the four mandated Contingent Concerns labor /management meetings for the 2013-14 academic year.

## I'm a Snowflake, You're a Widget: The SUNY Management/Faculty Divide

By Daniel G. Payne, Professor, English, and Member, UUP Oneonta

In the last two issues of *the Sentinel*, I addressed the subject of New York State's Taylor Law (Article 14 of the New York State Civil Service Law) and how that provision essentially abolishes the right of public employee unions in New York State to engage in strikes and other work actions. Given that New York—once recognized as a labor-friendly state—now treats its public employees as though they were the root cause of the fiscal complications created by politicians in Albany's corridors of power and privilege, as well as in public and private sector board rooms across the state, how can public employees such as SUNY Oneonta's faculty, effect meaningful change—particularly when the balance of power seems so one-sided? In other words, what actions are left available to us when the traditional shared governance model at SUNY institutions is no longer operative, or when the bargaining power between UUP at the state level and the governor's representatives have become so one-sided that good faith bargaining is merely an illusion?



Dr. Daniel Payne, teacher, author, attorney, and activist

The issue of statewide UUP and its negotiations are an area far too broad to deal with here; and so, I will confine my remarks to some of the ways that faculty can try to make their voices heard at our own institution. For those Oneonta faculty no longer confident that “things will just work themselves out,” options are available. It is possible to impact the direction that SUNY Oneonta takes.

First, we have our local UUP chapter to represent our interests. Union leaders press the case of labor (that is to say, all of us, whether we see ourselves in that light or not) in regular labor-management meetings with the administration. If an individual member of the union feels that he or she has been unfairly dealt with by administration, it is the union that presses the grievance, serving as for the employee designee. Our local UUP chapter also works tirelessly to advocate for us in Albany, to keep the membership informed of relevant issues via such means as *The Sentinel*, and by presenting our views in public forums. Because the union represents all of us, it may sometimes take positions that are not in harmony with our own, individual opinions. As scholars and teachers who have worked hard to get where we are, it is sometimes hard to comprehend that when it comes to labor and management, faculty and administration, we are not all little snowflakes, unique and special in our own way, but interchangeable widgets in the educational assembly line.

Another venue for advancing the interests of faculty and students is the college senate. At one point, this body was the faculty senate, but the previous administration, after being handed a no confidence vote by the faculty, apparently believed that the senate would be easier to control and direct if it was no longer quite so faculty-driven. In any event, many of the senate's standing committees still do an enormous amount of work on behalf of the college although, of course, there is never any assurance that these efforts will be used in administrative decision-making. It is, however, one of relatively few open forums where faculty as a body have an opportunity to ask questions of the administration and to present opinions on the topics of the day. It is also in the college senate where any “no-confidence” vote against the administration would be conducted, although this course would be such an important (albeit largely symbolic) step—the faculty/administration equivalent of “crossing the Rubicon”—that it would require a great deal of thought and debate before being pursued.

At one time, it was customary for the leader of the college's academic divisions (i.e., the provost) and the divisional leadership (i.e., the deans) to come from the ranks of teaching faculty, thereby ensuring that academic policy would be managed and set by leaders who were respected as teachers, scholars, and colleagues, and had an intimate knowledge of local and SUNY-wide issues facing the college today. This is no longer the case, as—even on the academic affairs side of the college—administrative and fundraising experience appear to be the *sine qua non* for all potential full-time administrators (N.B., I exclude our interim deans from this statement); teaching and scholarship are accordingly devalued. Given this unsettling development, the role of the Councils of Chairs in each division (or

## ***I'm a Snowflake, You're a Widget (continued)***

“school”) at SUNY Oneonta has become much more important. It is here where faculty often has the best opportunity to present the college’s academic policy-makers with the view from ground-level, as well as an assessment of faculty opinion on specific issues.

The three options outlined above are not the only recourse left to faculty by any means; individual actions, such as writing to administrators, newspapers, and other public venues may also have the potential to reach open minds. There is also the legal system, although the cost of pursuing remedies in the courts is no small matter in time or expense.

It is not just SUNY faculty who know that something has gone terribly wrong with higher education in New York State. Students and their parents realize that the system is out of balance when the cost of SUNY tuition and fees steadily (and sometimes abruptly) rises, but the quality of education and the percentage of tuition costs that actually go directly toward educational expenses decline. As a union and as individuals, a concerted public information effort is necessary to communicate to the people of the state of New York, especially to our students and their families that the promise of SUNY—access to higher education that doesn’t bar the poor, the working class, the middle-class, recent immigrants, and non-traditional students simply because they don’t have the means to attend an expensive private (or indeed, public) institution is in danger of becoming a permanent casualty to temporary fads in academic policy and administration.



## **UUP Student Scholarships: Application Process**

UUPers are urged to inform qualified students of the following. SUNY students can now apply for annual scholarships of \$3,000 offered by United University Professions (UUP), the union that represents academic and professional faculty of the State University of New York.

The scholarships are funded by contributions from UUP members and their families.

The UUP College Scholarship Fund annually awards scholarships to a maximum of four SUNY undergraduates who have demonstrated their dedication to the goals and ideals of the labor movement and who excel academically. In order to qualify, applicants must be full-time undergraduates enrolled at a SUNY state-operated campus and possess a minimum grade-point average of 3.75.

### **The application deadline is February 28, 2014.**

Full-time graduate or professional SUNY students are eligible to apply for UUP’s William Scheuerman Post Baccalaureate Scholarship. Applicants must have a course load of at least nine credits, have completed at least nine credits, and hold a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.95. Law and health science students must have completed at least one full semester. Eligible applicants must also exhibit dedication to the goals and ideals of the labor union movement. This annual \$3,000 scholarship is named in honor of former UUP president William Scheuerman.

For both scholarships, students must also demonstrate personal and academic achievement, and display a strong record of community service. UUP awards the scholarships to students on a one-time basis, but there is no limit on how many times a student may apply. The application deadline is Feb. 28, 2014.

“UUP is proud to offer these scholarships to the best and brightest students attending SUNY,” said UUP President Frederick E. Kowal. “In addition to their academic achievements, what will set the winners apart is their involvement in social issues and community activities.”

Students may obtain and complete scholarship applications online through UUP’s website at <http://www.uupinfo.org/scholarships/scholarship.php>. For more information, contact the UUP Administrative Office in Albany toll-free at (800) 342-4206.

## DSA and Far i due litiganti, il terzo gode

By Dr. Fida Mohammad, UUP Academic Delegate



Dr. Fida Mohammad

### DSA Fairness Context

I am writing this essay within the framework of our President's mission of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion. ADL training was meant to cultivate and nurture civility and sensitivity to one another. Raising awareness to inequities and insensitivity is my goal. Discretionary Salary Allowance (DSA) is a one-time payment unlike the Discretionary Salary Increase (DSI) that would go to our base. For this article, DSA, in terms of the purposes, processes, and results, is the focus of analysis.

Discretionary power *per se* is an essential tool of administration and should be used as a scalpel to correct administrative and departmental inequities as well as deal with unforeseen situations. Discretion is absolute in kingdoms and some third world dictatorships and those countries are candid about their style of ruling and general public understands that they are living in an authoritarian societies and do not expect fairness. Discretion is not absolute in countries and/or societies that claim to be civilized and cherish democratic and deliberative ethos of justice and fairness. If the King of Saudi Arabia issues a decree (fair or unfair), you have to accept it, whether you like it or not, because the king is not bound by any rules and is not accountable to anyone

In democratic societies, discretion must be guided by Rawlsian or other ideals of justice and fairness. In order to restrain vindictive tendencies, Rawl came up with imaginary *Veil of Ignorance*. *Veil of Ignorance*, plainly stated, is a good ethical tool for a decision maker to develop empathy with those who will be on receiving end of his or her decisions. In other words one should imagine what if somebody else was making decision and I was victim of it. Developing empathy generally moderates our psychopathic propensities and lack thereof could lead to psychopathic tendencies that in turn lead to abuse of power, grandiosity, insensitivity to employees, and breakdown of morale in an organizational context. Hoffman believes that "empathy is the spark of human concern for others, the glue that makes social life possible" (2000, p. 3).

### Departmental Context and Violation of Rawlsian Principles

I will critique the role of discretion in the current award DSA process. The current DSA process deviated from transparent standards, democratic procedures, and collective ownership of decisions. In application of the current DSA process for my department, the administration bypassed departmental recommendations and the chair. The administration quietly created its own rankings without fully taking into confidence my department. Several of us, including myself, were recommended for DSA but found out from others that I, along with two colleagues, did not receive any DSA this year. I discovered that others got the lion's share while 3 senior members were totally excluded. I became curious and contacted the dean's office for reasons, criteria, and standards that guided her decision. I was bluntly told that we don't give reasons. I said, will I get a letter? The Dean's office said "No." Later, the chair indicated that the Dean wanted departmental rankings. The chair said she gathered from our Dean that more money would go to a few faculty members given the paucity of the amounts. In reality, it was not few getting more, rather it was more getting more while denying few. I am happy that others got DSA, but I am upset at the secrecy and non-transparency of the process.

### Understanding the Power of Control Underlying Discretion Understanding the Power of Control Underlying Discretion

According to Thompson, abuse of power is "bad not because money and benefits change hands, and not because of the motives of participants, but because it privatizes valuable aspects of public life, bypassing processes of representation, debate, and choice" (in Lambsdorff, 2002, p. 97). I am a reasonable person in that in a fair process if I get nothing I will accept, the results. I concur with Hegtvedt that, "individuals are more likely to tolerate unfair or low

## ***DSA and Far i due litiganti, il terzo gode (continued)***

outcomes if the procedures by which they were produced are perceived as fair” (in Hermanowicz, 2013, p. 375). Altruistic leadership is accessible and responsive to the needs and grievances of its employees. “Leaders seeking self-benefit focus on personal achievements, and control followers through coercion and reward” (Johnson, 2003, p. 52). In such an environment employees learn to “be quiet,” to play along so that they can get along with the reward system (Hermanowicz, 2013, p. 270). Whimsical regulatory control of economic rewards and punishments has the potential to convert DSA into a rent-seeking system where the compliant, weak, snitches and mediocre will flourish while those who are assertive will be marginalized. Hermanowicz nicely articulated this point:

Marginalization is a social process wherein an individual is relegated to a position of comparative unimportance and powerlessness. Marginalization of the adept takes multiple forms: intimidation, torment, pressure, humiliation, mocking, provocation, and outright discrimination, as in unfounded disparities in the distribution of resources and rewards (2013, pp. 268–69).

Vagueness can expose a situation to multiple interpretations allowing those in power to create a dominant interpretation of what Foucault called a power/knowledge relationship.

Some non-recipients of rewards start disparaging those who benefited from the system and that fragments the campus community. This division may be functional for some but destructive for an organization; *divide et impera* (divide and rule) old imperial colonial policy is still operational in some organizational politics. Divide and Rule is nicely captured by Italian proverb “*Far i due litiganti, il terzo gode*” that means “Between two fighters, the third benefits.” *Tertio* counterpart words according to Burt are *Tertius* and *derde*. *Tertius* refers to an individual who benefits from the disunion of others (Burt, 1992). The strategic goal of *Tertius* is to foster uncertainty and Burt thinks,

where there is any uncertainty about whose preferences should dominate a relationship, there is an opportunity for the ***tertius*** to broker the negotiation for control by playing demands against one another. There is no long-term contract that keeps a relationship strong, no legal binding that can secure the trust necessary to a productive relationship. Your network is a pulsing swirl of mixed, conflicting demands (1992, p. 78).

Gramsci (1985) sees this phenomenon as “war of positions” where consent is created via reward of some and exclusion of others that in turn pits one group against the others by the hegemonic bloc. The beneficiaries of hegemonic domination reinvent themselves to the extent that could acquiescently work with David Duke and Martin Luther King depending on situational exigencies. In an unpredictable environment of reward and punishment, some people adapt to their life situation both willingly and unwillingly in order to survive and therefore a conglomerate of heterogeneous leanings emerge. Wartenberg (1992) calls this situated power,

situated power does not reside exclusively in a single site or institution of society. The situated conception of power shows that social power is a heterogeneous presence that spreads across an entire field of agents and practices, although its exercise depends upon the decision of the dominant agents. Such heterogeneity is constituted by a complex coordination among agents located in diverse sites and institutions, all of whose presence in a social alignment is necessary to constitute a situated power relationship (Wartenberg 1992, pp. 90-1).

In everyday life we encounter ethical dilemmas and some of that are described by Turvey and Crowder:

- 1) Truth v. Loyalty: Choosing between maintaining personal integrity or keeping fidelity pledged to others (e.g., friends, family members, co-workers, employers, and organizations).
- 2) Individual v. Group: Choosing between the interests of an individual, or a few, and those of a larger community.
- 3) Immediate v. Future: Choosing between present benefits and those that are long-term.
- 4) Justice v. Compassion: Choosing between fair and dispassionate application of consequences and the individual need or warrant for charity (2013, p. 4).

## ***DSA and Far i due litiganti, il terzo gode (continued)***

An ethical leader must overcome and transcend personal likes and dislikes by taking the moral high road that in turn strengthens the leader's legitimacy. Brown et al found "ethical leadership is positively related to follower satisfaction, motivation, organizational commitment" (Brown & Treviño, 2006, p. 608). The conditions and practices of DSI and now DSA prevent the creation of optimal organizational cohesion and ethical leaders. Instead, they create an environment that instills phony behavior and ethics, exclusion and marginalization, and rent seeking behavior. As a college, the organization suffers.

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## **Cultivating the 'Entrepreneurial Spirit' at America's Largest University**

***By Lawrence Wittner, Professor Emeritus, History, and Academic Delegate, UUP Albany***

[Editor's Note: The excerpted comments below appeared in the following article—Lawrence Wittner, "Cultivating the 'Entrepreneurial Spirit' at America's Largest University," *The Huffington Post*, 12/23/2013 [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lawrence-wittner/entrepreneurial-spirit-suny\\_b\\_4490785.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lawrence-wittner/entrepreneurial-spirit-suny_b_4490785.html)

The State University of New York (SUNY) -- 64 higher education campuses with nearly half a million students -- is the largest university system in the United States. Therefore, when university administrators join the state's governor in turning SUNY into a loyal servant of big business, that fact has significant ramifications.

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Local campus administrators have been quick to jump on the bandwagon... SUNY Cortland's ...Erik Bitterbaum, the campus President, declared that his school was "taking steps to make sure our campus culture nurtures the spirit of entrepreneurship, one of the primary strategic goals [of the SUNY system] ..."

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Other SUNY campuses were not far behind... under Start-Up New York...

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[I]s it appropriate for an educational institution to be so thoroughly devoted to the fostering of "entrepreneurialism?"

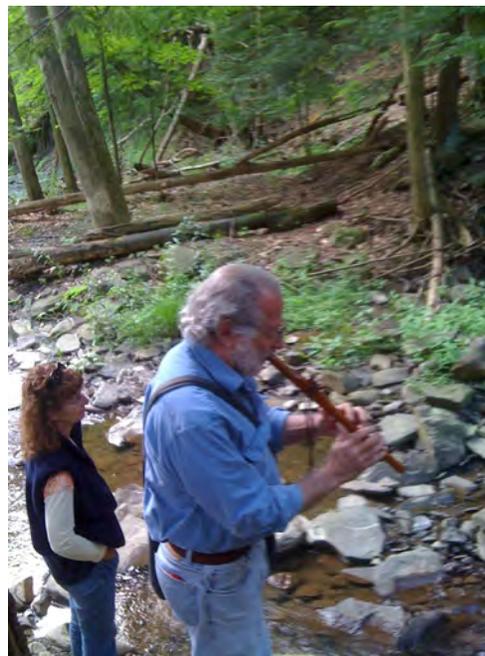
## Remembrance of Marvin Taub, “a gracious and gentle man”

*By Zanna McKay, Associate Professor, Elementary Education and Reading, and UUP Member*

**[Editor’s Note:** Professor Marvin Taub was a retired and longtime member of the Human Ecology (former Home Economics) Department at SUNY Oneonta. He was a UUP member. As a teacher, participant in the on-campus early childhood program, counselor, and scholar, Marvin impacted the lives of a generation of students, colleagues, and children with his wisdom, wit, and kindness.]

Marvin was my very dear friend for 8 years, and we spent two years (2007-09) teaching together at the same school in Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam. He was a gracious and gentle man, and his presence will be greatly missed.

Marvin was a local presence in many ways. *The Daily Star* ran an article about how his flute playing at sunset on Table Rock was an iconic aspect of the Hartwick experience. He created the legend of the flute player on Table Rock. He was amazingly energetic, preferring to be outside, walking, playing his flute, and canoeing. These last few years he regularly walked my dogs at Pine Lake several times a week. He had a favorite hike that he took, stopping to enjoy the meadow, the river, the woods and the lake. A 300-year oak was a standard stop for him to appreciate the changes this oak had seen in the world and drop a small stone at its base. In the summer, he would come in from walking at Pine Lake, eat something, and head up Table Rock Mountain to flute the sun down. He often exclaimed about how deep his love of this land along the Susquehanna was, from his childhood in Binghamton to his time here in Oneonta.



Marvin had an authentic presence that made him very easy for children especially to connect with. As a long time early childhood educator at SUNY Oneonta, he had a huge impact on the community. People would often come up to him and remind him of their time together in his class, 20 years earlier!

He had an affinity with indigenous cultures that was reflected in his time spent studying and visiting in the American Southwest, South America, and South Africa as well as living in Vietnam. He was uniquely curious and appreciative of the world, especially connections in nature, finding meaning in the flight of a hawk or a slow turtle on a log.

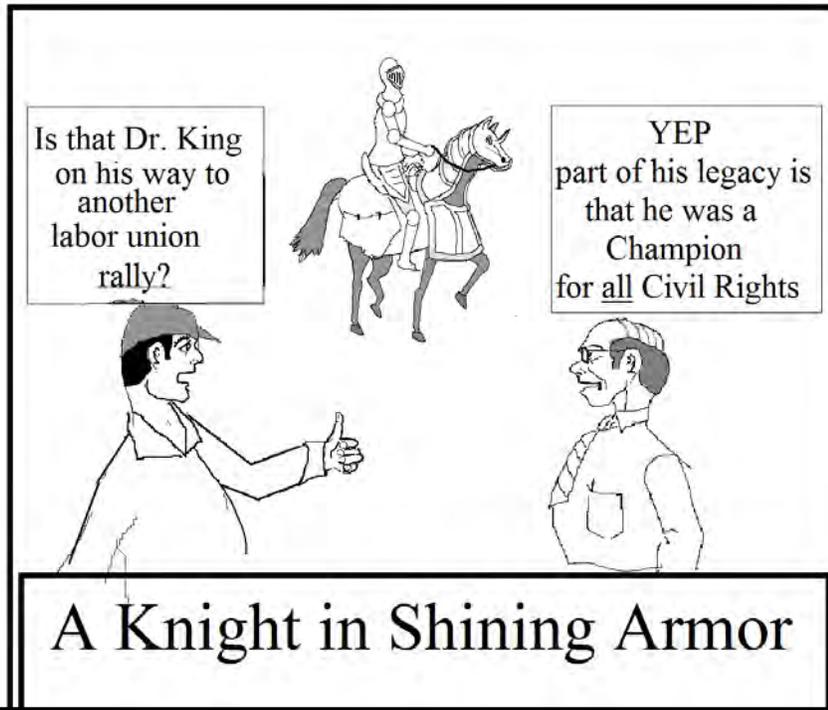
In my life, Marvin was a wonderful friend, a companion in the exploration of meaning in life. He had a way of looking at spirituality that brought in the entire world, especially nature. Wherever he was, he set up photos of his ancestors and the rest of his family, along with a feather, a stone or an artifact from South Africa or Vietnam. He was a great mentor and guide to my daughter, steadying her in teen years and college.

Marvin knew what mattered in life and focused on it. Sometimes I would ask a favor of him and he would look at the sky and trees and say, I will do it tomorrow, today I have to get out in the woods.

Marvin took my dogs walking the afternoon of December 30, 2013. I was out for the evening and on my return at 10:30 I found he had not returned. I called his good friend Hutch and we met the police at Pine Lake to find my dogs shivering by his car. With the help of many search and rescue people, we eventually found where he had fallen in, apparently having walked most of the way across the lake from the beach towards the sauna. His will be cremated and his family will have a service for Marvin on May 30th.

## Toon Commentary: Labor Remembers Dr. King

By Fred Miller, Academic Delegate



### UUP Labor-Management Meeting Notes: December 9, 2013, 3:00 pm

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

**For Labor:** Bill Simons (UUP Oneonta President) and Rob Compton (UUP Oneonta VP for Academics)

Labor met with Management to discuss pertinent issues and wrap up the semester. Labor and Management agreed to continue the format of L-M meetings into the spring semester.

UUP and Management discussed the tone and substance of Labor-Management relations, including interaction at their meetings. Management shared their perspective on *The Sentinel*. Labor re-iterated the request for timely input and consultation on important Management decisions impacting UUP members. UUP and Management recognized their specific and distinct responsibilities within the College. While there is a great core of agreement, those respective roles also necessitate divergence on certain issues. UUP and Management both recognize the goal of operating within a context of mutual candor and civility.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15pm.

# Our Earliest Memories of Life and What They Tell Us About Human Memory: A Convivium Lecture Honoring Dr. Mary Howes' Contributions to the Field of Memory Research

By Dr. Geoffrey O'Shea, Associate Professor, History, and UUP Secretary

[Editor's Note: The article that follows is adapted from Dr. Geoffrey O'Shea's December 12, 2013, Convivium presentation.]

Dr. Mary B. Howes was a Professor Emeritus in the Psychology Department who passed away last spring after a long battle with cancer. During her 28-year career at SUNY-Oneonta, Dr. Howes introduced generations of students to the wonders of human memory through her gifted teaching and the insightful textbooks and research she published in this area. As a scholar, she had a special fascination with human memory, how and why it works, how it gives us the ability to revisit our past experiences, carve out possibilities for imagined futures, and enrich our lives in the present with instant access to personal information and knowledge of the world. During her career, Mary authored three academic books, each touching on the subject of human memory: *The Psychology of Human Cognition: Mainstream and Genevan Traditions*<sup>1</sup> (1990), *Human Memory: Structures and Images* (2006), and a posthumous work, *Human Memory: A Constructivist View*<sup>2</sup> (2014). The last of these was the only one that included a co-author, myself, and attempts a reconciliation of modern views of memory with her views. Mary also published a novel, *With the Tide* (2010), which in her words was the "story of memory, how it hides, or lingers behind doors, only to jump out and startle."



On December 12th, I gave a convivium dedicated to Mary's contributions to the field of memory research. The focus of my talk was a paper that Mary, along with her colleagues in the psychology department, Drs. Michael Siegel and Foster Brown, published in 1993 on the topic of early childhood memories. Psychologists in the field of memory research are interested in examining early childhood memories because of their value in understanding the nature of the human memory system and how it develops. Like cosmologists looking backward at the early universe for clues as to how the universe unfolded, memory researchers seek to understand the properties of our earliest recollections of life and note how they differ from our recollections during adulthood.

The memories that we have of early childhood are often difficult to study due to a number of factors such as the length of time that has elapsed between the original events and our attempts to recollect them. Additionally, the brain of a young child is still developing so it is unclear what the level of quality is of memories formed by the immature brain. What we do know of these early memories is that they are generally in the form of isolated fragments without any connection to earlier or later events in the episode. For instance, when an individual is asked to recall their earliest memory, they often retrieve a brief episode. And while their memory for the episode is quite clear, they cannot recall what events transpired either before or after this brief episode. It is as though a curtain has risen on a scene and then fallen. We recognize the scene, but not how it fits in to a temporal context as we generally experience with memories for episodes in adulthood.

Our recollection of our earliest memories is also stymied by a mysterious phenomenon known as *infantile amnesia*, in which individuals generally cannot retrieve memories that occurred before three years of age. A number of theories have been offered to account for infantile amnesia such as the aforementioned idea that the brain and thus, its memory system, is in an immature state and not capable of retaining detailed memories for a long period of time. Another theory suggests that the emergence of language around the age of three and thus, the ability to give our experience an internal narrative, provides a stronger code that enhances our capability of retaining memories. It might also be the case that language replaces an earlier non-verbal system for memory coding such that we cannot retrieve the memories formed using this earlier coding once language becomes operational.

## ***Our Earliest Memories of Life (continued)***

In their 1993 paper, Mary and her colleagues attempted to probe deeper into this phenomenon of infantile amnesia by examining two facets of these earliest memories: their accuracy and what types of details are contained within earliest memories such as emotion, imagery, color, the spatial layout of an environment, and what thoughts individuals had in the moment of that experience. Regarding the accuracy of our earliest memories, Sigmund Freud theorized that our earliest memories tend to be inaccurate since their durability is due to an association with a traumatic experience and that such trauma produces memory distortion. Another giant of 20th century psychology, Jean Piaget, considered that the content of early memories would be less than accurate due to the developing child's less rigorous abilities at interpreting their experience.

In order to study the accuracy of earliest memories, Mary and her colleagues developed a procedure whereby subjects' accounts were submitted for verification to individuals who were present during the remembered episode. Both sets of people, the subjects and the verifiers, completed a questionnaire about the content of the recollection. However, the verifiers were only provided with a minimum of details about the subjects' earliest memories so as not to bias their accounts. The results of these questionnaires were, thus, analyzed for the extent to which the subjects' accounts agreed with those of the verifiers. Subjects' accounts were also analyzed according to the extent and type of content that characterized their recollections.

The results of this research demonstrated several important and previously unknown aspects of earliest memories. First, contrary to Freud's assertion that traumatic memories would endure more than positive or neutral memories, Mary's results indicated that subjects' recollections were approximately evenly split between those characterized by negative emotion and those characterized by positive and neutral emotions. Furthermore, there were no statistically significant differences between the accuracy of subjects' recollections of earliest memories and the accounts provided by their verifiers for negative, positive, and neutral memories. Thus, Mary's research strongly refuted the ideas of two giants of 20th century psychology, Freud and Piaget, with regard to the accuracy of our earliest memories.

Mary's study on earliest memories also revealed some previously unknown information about the prevalence of the content of these memories. Knowledge of contextual information was found to be the most prevalent type of content of earliest memories. Content with strong visual properties, such as color and imagery, was also found to be a prevalent aspect of earliest memories. Interestingly, higher-order cognitive processes, such as interpretations of the experience as narrative or internal thoughts, were found to be significantly less prevalent. Thus, the picture that emerges is of an early memory system operating primarily on sensory processes rather than higher-order cognition, but with a strong capacity to encode context.

Like earliest memories themselves, Howes, Siegel, and Brown's (1993) paper has endured in the memories of many researchers. It has been cited across a variety of subfields of psychology such as developmental psychology, criminal justice, cross-cultural studies, behavioral neuroscience, and even food science. Within the past three years, Howes et al.'s paper has been cited in four books including, most recently, Wang's (2013), *The Autobiographical Self in Time and Culture*. In fact, David Pillemer, a leading memory researcher, cited Howes et al.'s work in an article published in a special issue of the *General Review of Psychology* devoted to autobiographical memory.

As someone for whom Mary was a beloved colleague and co-author, what will endure in my memory is a person who was dedicated to the true meaning of scholarship not only within the realm of research, but as a colleague and a teacher. Such people are quite extraordinary and rare as they lead us toward greater truths in both our disciplines and our lives. My own earliest memories of being a faculty member at Oneonta will always be ablaze with memories of Mary and the example that she set for me to follow both as an academic and a person.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Ed Wesnofske, the former president of the UUP-Oneonta chapter, and Michael Siegel, the former chairman of the psychology department, provided Mary with critical reading and feedback on this manuscript prior to publication.

<sup>2</sup>Michael Siegel provided critical reading and feedback on this manuscript prior to publication.

## Reform Literature in Higher Education

By Mark Ferrara, Associate Professor, English Department, and UUP Member

[Editor's Note: This commentary is republished with permission of the author. From: Mark Ferrara, "Reform Literature in Higher Education," *Ask My Professor: A Grassroots Approach to the Crisis in Higher Education*. The *Ask My Professor* website is dedicated to encouraging students and their parents to ask one simple question of professors and administrators as they chose a college or university: "How many faculty at this institution are adjunct, full-time instructors and lecturers, or tenured and tenure-track members?" The on-line version of the website is at [http://www.askmyprofessor.org/administrative\\_bloat/](http://www.askmyprofessor.org/administrative_bloat/), and it provides links to the sources referenced in the following article.]

Those of us who work on campuses, where dismay over the crisis in higher education never seems to translate into meaningful demands for reform, may feel frustrated by indifference to this dire situation among faculty, staff, students, and parents alike. Yet, such a marginalized position can paradoxically become one of strength, for there is a prophetic quality to the "lone voice crying in the wilderness."

This idiomatic expression is used to describe an individual who is willing to express an unpopular point of view, one that is only later understood by others to be correct. It therefore falls to the conscientious individual to cry out over the din of capitulation, if the institutions and organizations around that individual prove incapable, or unwilling, to challenge the status quo. The proverbial wilderness is vast, but it encompasses all marginalized points of view whose time will come.

The burgeoning body of reform literature in higher education gives credence to the notion that lone disparate voices can join together to create a chorus of objection that will lead to meaningful transformation in U.S. higher education. For example, more than twenty years ago, [Bruce Wilshire](#) warned that the modern American university was adopting the structure of a "managed organization" to integrate all its functions—a trend that has only accelerated since 1990.

In [\*The Knowledge Factory: Dismantling the Corporate University and Creating True Higher Learning \(2000\)\*](#), Stanley Aronowitz demonstrated that the new corporate culture in the academy makes faculty more like "employees" with administrative "bosses" rather than free agents. As a result, power has "slowly but surely shifted to administrators who retain final determination over nearly all university issues." Aronowitz also exposes the ubiquitous academic plan as another tool "used to remove authority over curriculum decisions from the local campus community and give it to the central administration."

For [Guye Tuchman](#), the "classic professions" of medicine, law, and academia are all being transformed by a culture that privileges "institutional logics, pervasive auditing, and an accountability regime" and emphasizes "workforce and capital development" over knowledge itself. She points to faculty complicity in this process. While "some professors agree with the central administration" there are others who "may stage direct or indirect attacks" on it (by turning to the University Senate and its committees, for instance). Such a situation allows the administration to employ the time-honored tactic of divide and conquer to quell dissent, if they even need to bother. Far too often, Tuchman asserts, "when faced with an administrative policy that professors feel doesn't touch their immediate concerns, they may consciously accede to the wishes of the central administration."

[Toby Miller](#) argues that these top-down models of higher education administration and centralization mean "more obedience, more external review, more metrification of tasks, more forms, less autonomy, and less time to research," all of which impact how much time faculty have for their students. Indeed, these days "administrators refer to 'change' as an unproblematic good that they adore and admire," when in fact it is a

## ***Reform Literature in Higher Education (continued)***

rhetorical term that really refers “to managerial mistrust of academics.” Tenured faculty now make up less than one-third of teaching staff across the nation, and non-teaching managers outnumber teaching faculty at most colleges and universities.

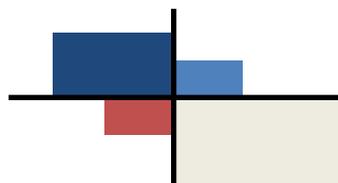
The eventual elimination of the tenure system would result in a loss of the principle of academic freedom, which once made American universities the envy of the world. Nearly fifteen years ago, [Donald Kennedy](#) warned the academic freedom that accompanies tenure protects faculty from political interference, allows the voicing of heterodox notions, and therefore needs to be preserved. Marjorie Heins agrees, and in her [new book](#), she observes that the generational loss of faculty governance has deprived faculty of an essential means of resistance to administrative control. She also sees that a new “classism” is emerging in the university between part-time and full-time faculty, which is compounded by the valuing of profit and “revenue streams” over humanistic learning.

[Andrew Delbanco](#) bemoans the loss of liberal education, since it provides the wholistic studies that are “necessary to democracy,” and are a “hedge against utilitarian values.” Instead, he finds that we are moving toward “professional and vocational education” in the United States. For instance, between 1970 and 2005, business enrollments increased 176%, while communications grew by 616%. Although elite colleges and universities may be immune from these trends, less prestigious institutions with fewer resources suffer increasingly from [administrative bloat](#), high tuition costs, underpaid teachers and a reliance on adjunct labor, standardization, Balkanization of academic units, fragmented curricula, and the influx of corporate values. In short, American colleges and universities are spiraling into decline due to an erosion of the student-centered values that once informed them.

Looking forward, [Robert Golden](#) (a former provost and vice president for academic affairs and branch campus dean) imagines a State University of New York comprehensive college in the year 2050. According to Golden, there will be only fifty faculty members (on 5-year renewable contracts) to serve the 6,000 students on campus, MOOC courses will dominate the curriculum, the library will have few physical books, and the once mighty administrators will face decreasing power and autonomy in the wake of the “growing importance of technology in support services as well as the centralization of those services.”

Golden concludes this ominous portrayal of the comprehensive public college of tomorrow with a series of practical actions that faculty members can adopt now to counter this trajectory (including writing to alert the public and engaging local communities). Otherwise, in generations to come, American colleges and universities might resemble ghost towns with quads, instead of the vibrant hubs of innovation and pluralism they were in the second half of the 20th century. After all, what “is a university without departments,” quips [Rebecca Schuman](#), but an “immaculately landscaped corporate park with its own apparel store, full of the sound of tuition money disappearing...but signifying nothing.”

**Demand more tenure-track appointments at your college or university! Make the choice to attend an institution that invests in you by investing in the faculty!**



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