

Part-Time Concerns for 2008-2009: An Agenda

By J McDermott, Part-Time Concerns Officer



Hello again. Another academic year begins. I hope (I'm writing this before the event happens!) that I saw many of you at the PT Orientation. This has become a regular 'kick-off' for the academic year for Part-Timers--you get a lot of the 'little jobs' out of the way at the one-stop, one-hour gathering, and we get to see you at the UUP table! A big objective every year is to get the ratio of our members to fee-payers to balance more favorably on the member side, and the orientation session is an easy time for you to check your status. Some people want to be only fee-payers, which is your right, but others have that status unintentionally, and its those members we love to bring into full membership!

Regarding the headline for this column: "Part-Time Concerns for 2008-2009": these are your concerns that I try to represent, and how do I know what your concerns are? I see some of you around campus, I see some more at events like the orientation or the Labor Day observation, but here's an idea for you...if you want to send me a concern of yours, photocopy this page, and on the back side write out your concern. Drop that sheet into an inter-office envelope and send it to me at UUP, Human Ecology 206, c/o J McDermott -- or e-mail me directly at MCDERMJ@Oneonta.Edu. I'll get it, and if you send your name and a way to contact you, I'll be in touch ASAP. Or if you wish, send it without a name, and if I can validate the idea or concern, we'll try to address it.

This should be an interesting year on campus and in the country. I hope our best expectations are fulfilled. Oh, and by the way, are you registered to vote? Are your students? Do they know how to vote by absentee ballot? These are all good September questions...

Payin' It Forward from the Center for Social Responsibility and Community (CSRC)

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

The Center for Social Responsibility and Community (CSRC) mission is "to instill a sense of social responsibility and an understanding of the various means by which individuals can be involved in building strong communities." CSRC has been making a difference since 1994 when it was initially funded through a Kellogg Foundation grant. And yet, after all these years, many members of our faculty do not know what CSRC offers to them and their students.

CSRC connects students to volunteer opportunities with local nonprofit agencies, helps professors create service-learning courses and place students, and helps to promote other civic engagement activities throughout the year. One of my goals is to encourage more faculty members to add a service-learning component in their classes. What better way to enhance learning than by joining theory with experience through making a difference while fulfilling a need in the community. Learning through service can guide students to see the significance between what is being taught and the real world.

Last academic year, SUNY Oneonta students logged in 57,243 volunteer hours. Our students have served more than 546,375 hours during the past 14 years! It is rewarding to be able to introduce students to the experience and values of community service and to challenge participants to volunteer on a regular basis. Serving the community is a valuable learning experience that complements the students' academic work.

I also serve as the director of community service for our local UUP chapter. There is no better way to bring people together than by helping others. In the last few years our UUP members have joined each other by volunteering for friends who are in need or making new friends by helping them in a crisis. Together, we have helped Hurricane Katrina survivors, aided Central New York flood victims, organized collection drives and worked in local soup kitchens. UUP looks forward to continuing our teamwork and working together with our sisters and brothers in CSEA.

This year we have planned two events in November for UUP and CSEA volunteers. On November 1 we are looking for volunteers to join us at Saturday's Bread from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. On November 15 we will need volunteers to join our group helping Habitat for Humanity. Volunteers are needed to help with construction (no experience necessary), in addition to providing lunch for the construction volunteers that day. Please e-mail at DrakeLM@Oneonta.Edu to volunteer.

10/08

Part-Times Concerns: Autumn Reflections and Notes

By J McDermott, Part-Time Concerns Officer



I recently attended the statewide Part-Time Concerns Committee meeting, which took place on the Friday afternoon of the Fall DA. As your PT Concerns rep, I am a member of that committee. One of the most important discussions that took place concerned the committee's name and focus: should we be limited in any way to "just" part-time concerns, or should we be more broadly focused on all contingent issues? My feeling is that the name and the focus are not necessarily linked. As a standing committee of the statewide UUP organization, the name reflects the committee's origins, but it does not limit our scope or interests. The committee authorized the union president to stage a retreat before the Spring '09 DA takes place; the retreat would give the committee members an extended opportunity to explore this and other issues. In the past, many of our meetings were 90 minute affairs during which we could barely get official business done, but which yielded little chance to explore issues and to get to know what is really happening on campuses statewide. I sense an intense desire from many committee members to take advantage of a retreat. Do you have any interests that you feel I should bring to the table there?

On a more local beat, I was walking across campus last week, and saw a man with a sign in the quad; he was turned in such a way that I could not read the sign. I just had to find out what was on it! It turns out that he was calling attention to the Teamsters' contract vote scheduled for the next day; the local represents campus Sodexo workers. It was enlightening to learn some of the details of the contract up for voting; it was also the first time I realized that the Teamsters had representation on the campus. I left the quad, walked into Netzer, and ran into a friend who is the service agent for the SEIU local. I later found out that the grad students here also have a union. Four unions here on campus! What a hotbed of solidarity! But I also wondered: how rarely do we all work, or even gather, together. The Labor Day observations might be a place to start. This past holiday there was great turnout for the 'meet the president' lunch. Let's keep it up! UUP members meet regularly for the Tuesday luncheon series; will I see you there?

J McDermott, PT Concerns officer

Some "fill" info should you need it...

Make your cell phone worthless to anyone else if it's lost or stolen

There is a simple way of making lost or stolen mobiles useless to thieves. It starts with knowing your phone's serial number.

To check the serial number of many mobile phones, key in the following: star-pound-zero-six-pound (* # 06 #). The phone's unique fifteen digit code should appear on the screen. Write it down somewhere safe.

Should your mobile phone be lost or stolen, you can phone your service provider with this code. The provider will then be able to block your handset, so even if its sim card is changed, the phone will be totally useless.

No charge for directory assistance.

Phone companies can and do charge \$1.00 or more for 411 (information) calls when they don't have to. When you need to use the 411/information option, simply dial 1-800-FREE-411 (1-800-373-3411) without incurring a charge.

SENTINEL QUIZ

Question:

What College at Oneonta coach led a college athletic team to the NCAA Division I National Championship finals? What was the sport?



The first person to email Nancy Cannon (cannonns@oneonta.edu) with the correct answer will receive a College at Oneonta fleece sport blanket.

The answer to the August quiz, "What US inventor and architect designed a car in 1933 that had got 30 miles per US gallon, could transport 11 passengers, and had a top speed of 120 miles per hour" was Buckminster Fuller. The first person to answer correctly was Michael Sullivan.

From the Part-Time Concerns Corner

By J McDermott, UUP Oneonta Part Time Concerns Officer



Happy New Year! One thing about holidays is they're the same for all of us. And it's moments like these that make me realize that as different as the concerns and interests of part-time/contingent and fulltime/tenure track employees are on SUNY campuses, we are all represented by one union. Unions have two major responsibilities: the first is to obtain and apply the best contract possible for its members, and the second is to represent the general economic and political interests of workers in a society. It is our job to make sure that our union represents all members, and fulfills its responsibilities to each of us. The union doesn't work for us; we work for us.

This past month has been a tough one for unions in the U.S., and if you read just the headlines you might get discouraged. Early in December, the political focus was on the ill-named 'bailout' of the Detroit auto industry. But it wasn't a bailout, and it wasn't just Detroit. Early in December, State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli released a report on the automotive industry in New York which found that there are more than 230,000 auto industry-related jobs in New York State.

The report disclosed that approximately 3.2 percent of New York's workforce is employed in auto-related businesses, with about 30,000 individuals directly employed by the auto industry in New York. Another 200,000 New Yorkers work in auto-related businesses, such as part suppliers and dealerships. Most of the 200 auto parts manufacturers are concentrated in Western New York. In the greater Buffalo area, they employ more than 16,000 people. Another 5,000 people in the Rochester area work in auto parts jobs, while Syracuse, Ithaca, Cortland and Utica are also important locations in the auto-parts manufacturing sector. Recognize those cities? Auto paychecks send lots of students to SUNY schools.

But when Republicans in Congress decided to oppose the "auto bailout", they did so by trying to make the UAW make unilateral concessions. It was alleged that there was a huge disparity between unionized Big Three worker compensation and the paychecks of workers on the lines of Southern and Western non-union auto factories. But that just isn't true anymore- in large part because the UAW already made those concessions. In September 2007, after a two-day strike, the UAW reached an agreement with GM, and later reached agreements with the other auto makers. The concessions? It was reported that "the agreements froze wages for production workers; reclassified and placed "non-production" workers on a lower wage scale; and set a new hire rate at about \$14.00 an hour—about half what incumbent workers earn—with inferior benefits. A buyout program was designed to push as many senior workers out the door as possible to make room for the new hires." The high cost of retiree benefits is moving to a trust fund. Under the terms of the agreement, by next year, the majority of workers in union and non-union plants would be very close to wage parity. So what were the Congressional Republicans demanding? Some observers saw a very locally-focused effort by representatives of states with non-union plants to hurt the unionized workers of the Detroit Three, because the multi-million-dollar-taxpayer-subsidized plants in their states would benefit. Others saw a more general attack on union labor, the opening salvo in a Republican anti-union campaign anticipating the fight over the enactment of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA).

Whatever the reason, be ready to witness a big struggle over union rights in this country, in Congress, in the press, and in the workplace. But don't lose hope. December also saw a remarkable action in Chicago, Illinois. Workers at Republic Windows and Doors occupied their factory when management tried to close the operation down. Holding the plant for six days, they successfully got banks to grant the loans the company needed to stay open. E. Jason Wambsgans of the Chicago Tribune reported that Bob Bruno, director of the labor studies program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, predicted organized labor would be emboldened by the workers' success. "If you combine some palpable street anger with organizational resources in a changing political mood," he said, "you can begin to see more of these sort of riskier, militant adventures, and they're more likely to succeed."

Keep that in mind as we, academic workers represented by the UUP, try to work through the difficult choices facing us as citizens, workers and union members here in New York in 2009. Once again, brothers and sisters, **Happy New Year!**

1/09

Part Time Concerns Report: February 2009

There's been lots of activity going on, locally and statewide. Here at SUCO, the Part-Time Concerns Labor Management meetings resume in February, after having been temporarily replaced last semester by single-issue UUP Labor-Management Meetings between UUP and Management and attended by campus President Nancy Kleniewski), including one on December 1, 2008, devoted exclusively to Part-Time Concerns . The February Part-Time Labor Management meeting will be reported on in The Sentinel.

Statewide there have been two meetings of the PT Concerns Committee, which consists of all the representatives from campuses across the state. We had a retreat in mid-January, where goals and obstacles were explored. This was an important meeting because representatives rarely have the opportunity to report situations and discuss strategy; most of our meetings have been limited to 'getting business done': Necessary duties, but rarely inspirational. With new leadership from committee co-chairs Carolyn Kube (Stony Brook HSC) and Jill Hanifan (Albany), the committee is determined to lead the effort to protect and preserve the interests of contingent members across the state. A regular committee meeting was held at the Winter DA. The committee intends to set up both video-links and regional meetings to make it easier for local reps to participate in statewide discussions.

The executive level A-47 Committee also has continued to meet, accomplishing some much needed background work on previous negotiations and beginning to set strategy for upcoming meetings with the state negotiators. As I reported previously, this committee is bound by the confidentiality rules of the general negotiating committee (it is technically a limited continuation of the current contract's negotiations), but I will try to keep you abreast of its general activities.

I'm sure you know that I am active in UUP Part Time Concerns issues partly out of self-interest. I am an adjunct here, teaching two courses per semester in the English department. My outlook has grown well beyond my individual status, however, as I have become more and more aware of issues of justice and equity in "academic contingent employment issues". These are issues not just here in Oneonta, nor just at SUNY, nor even just across US campuses. Fairness and equity for contingent employees is an issue worldwide, as higher education internationally has moved to a 'business model' of employment organization. (Do a search for "anomalous wave" and you'll discover how the issue has resonated throughout Italian society this year.) But I also know that the issue remains, at root, one of enormous importance to individual employees, to you and to me. That's why some simple gestures of support are so important to us all. In that light, I've received permission to share a message I recently received from the chair of my department. It read:

"Colleagues:

Our union, UUP, announced in the most recent Bulletin (of 1/28 I believe) that the Individual Development Awards Program (IDAP) grants' cycle is now open. IDAP grants support professional activities such as research, conference attendance and/or presentation, costs associated with publication, and many other development opportunities. [The link to the checklist and application form(s) for these grants is given below.]

I urge you to consider application in this cycle to support your professional activities. Part-time instructional faculty should especially consider this funding because pride of place is given to those who work for us as adjuncts. Please let me know if I can help with the application, if you have questions, or if I can help you by directing your call to an IDAP committee member.

Best wishes,
Richie"

I spoke to Dr. Richard Lee, chair of the English Department, the very next day. He said that it was a natural outreach for a chair to communicate a message such as this one, but I thanked him for his thoughtful effort. I hope all chairs will do the same. We spoke briefly about how the issue of campus culture still needs to be met directly and creatively. Fulltime faculty, tenure track or not, are very used to the whole grant application process. Many adjuncts are not. Here are excerpts from the UUP release: The UUP Individual Development Awards Program (IDAP) is designed to support a variety of professional development projects or activities by

assisting eligible employees to develop their full professional potential and to prepare for advancement. The maximum amount that can be awarded to an applicant is \$1000. This allocation covers projects / activities that have occurred or will occur between July 2, 2008 and July 1, 2009. All activity must be completed and all funds must be encumbered by July 1, 2009....Full-time employees must be in the bargaining unit at the time of the award and during the dates of the project or activity. Part-time employees who meet the eligibility test for 26 weeks coverage for health benefits, and are eligible for health benefits during the summer, will also be eligible for funding for a project or activity that occurs during the summer whether or not they are on the payroll. A complete application consisting of 3 forms-the statewide application, the budget summary, and the Oneonta cover sheet, is available at <http://www.oneonta.edu/admin/humres/Payroll/IDA.asp>.

If you think you might want to avail yourself of a grant, but you're not sure what it really means, or how to do it, talk Hope Lambrecht at 436-2504 (LAMBREHR@ONEONTA.EDU) or to colleagues in your department, or your chair, or call the UUP office, or the campus grants office. Any one of the people you reach will be happy to speak with you about the opportunities and the process.

'Til next month, in solidarity,

J McDermott



Reflections – On and About

By Betty Wambui, Philosophy Department

I was one of millions of people who took time off to watch the inauguration of the forty-fourth president of the United States of America, an event historic and significant in many senses for many. In its unfolding I was interested in the fact that many individuals tried to read the event and into the event, to seek not only to understand it but also to determine its obvious as well as its more subtle hidden meaning. I myself engaged in this enterprise even as I asked myself if there was/were any meaning(s) to distill from it, wondered if its center which is where we all were, where we continue to be, is/was a place to find, discover, recognize such significance if indeed it has/had any. In spite of this self issued warning, I find myself still interested in playing the tarot game with this event especially given my historical location – an immigrant to the United States of America, and my interests – social political questions especially as these connect to race, class, sex, gender and culture especially this month that is dedicated to Black History in the United States.

Nineteen Sixty three was the year of independence in that country that was home to Obama's mainly absent father. I was not there to witness the event but I did grow up like many Americans who listened to stories of the Civil Rights Era, listening to stories of and singing songs about the independence struggle and of the glorious moment of its declaration. In my mind, I carry a picture of my mother and aunt, young girls then who like many were swept up by the euphoria of the call of freedom and possibility that the moment of independence represented. Young girls dancing and walking their way from my grandparent's home in Bahati (a Swahili word that means "luck"), - which was in the segregated African Quarters set aside for people of the Kikuyu Ethnic Group in Nairobi - , walking and dancing to Uhuru Gardens (Uhuru means freedom) to participate in what was for Kenya was a historic event - a transfer of power from a Colonial Master. It is ironically, this spirit that the crowds who thronged into Washington evoked for me, this equivalence that comes to my mind as I consider this inauguration that comes so close on the heels of a month set aside to remember experiences so similar to colonial ones. Just as in 1963 many Kenyan's felt a sense of relief and also empowerment in the break from a painful colonial history that had burdened Kenyans with socially, politically and economically skewed relations, so does there seem

UUP Spring New Leadership Workshops

By Nithya Iyer and Hanfu Mi

It was an honor to be invited to the UUP Spring New Leadership Workshops on March 20-21, 2009 held at the Gideon Putnam Hotel in Saratoga, NY. This was an amazing opportunity to see first-hand what the UUP is and how it functions. We were able to meet UUP statewide leaders, colleagues from our own campus and other campuses across the state. Everyone there was very enthusiastic, welcoming, and willing to share their knowledge and workings of the Union. The Oneonta academic delegates included, in addition to us, *Bill Simons*, President, and *Rob Compton*, Vice President for Academics. *Gina Keel*, and *Renee Walker*; the professional delegates included *Norm Payne*, Vice President for Professionals, *Janie Forrest-Glotzer*, and *Janet Frankl*.

The leadership workshop that both of us attended was on the topic of Chapter Development. The workshop was very engaging and the workshop leaders were very passionate about the topic. In this workshop, the leaders discussed the UUP's organizational structure and assisted participants to recognize the roles and responsibilities that UUP assumes. They presented a broad overview of the UUP structure, functional relationships, and activities. Models of strategic plans to increase active union member participation from all areas of the campus were discussed. The workshop also helped participants learn ways to engage in political action statewide and locally, and to build community/campus coalitions. We are proud to report that, in our workshop, UUP Oneonta Chapter was used as an example for successful chapter development efforts in getting members involved.

In summary, this was a positive experience for us. We came away with a breath of knowledge of the workings of the UUP. We hope that our experiences will help other active members to get involved and participate in events such as the New Leadership Workshops. It is truly a great avenue to understand and appreciate how the UUP represents the interest of academic and professional employees of SUNY.

Part-Times Concerns Report

By J McDermott, Part-Times Concerns Officer



Another quiet month here in the passive valley. Actually, not really. We still await results in the 20th district race. Another kid's been beaten in a downtown bar fight. And new gas leases are being signed here at the rate of about 50,000 acres a month. A veritable ocean of noise...

It's been the rhetoric du monde to speak of part time academic labor as 'contingent labor', because we work without long-term security and for low wages. This is true, and it's an informative analogy. But don't forget that as we as union workers support the Employee Free Choice Act and other national labor law improvements, that here in New York, all around the SUNY campuses, the true 'contingent laborers' are the farm-workers and domestic laborers who have never found the true protection of national or state labor laws. *Please be aware that there is action in Albany again this year to begin to bring labor law equity and protection to these workers. Please don't hesitate to be an advocate for them.*

Two issues that came up in the last PT Concerns labor/management meeting, a PT Handbook and FT hiring considerations for PT academics, are continuing to be researched. We hope to have some action on them before the end of the semester. Additionally, the difficulty in finding parking spaces has continued as an issue for both PT and FT members.

April is also election month here in the UUP, at both the local and state level. Please consider those who have placed their names before you. I am not running for this office again. It's been an honor to serve you. I plan to continue to be active in the union, working in solidarity for the interests of us all and for part-time academics and professionals in particular.

5/09

