

The Sentinel

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UUP—ONEONTA

November 2006

Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. Margaret Mead

Leadership Across the Generations: Our Students and the Mission of UUP

By William Simons, Chapter President



Bill Simons

A number of UUPers have already received checks from the NYSUT Disaster Relief and Scholarship Fund. NYSUT and UUP members donated more than \$70,000 to the fund. Many of us not only contributed to that fund, but also participated in physical work on houses devastated by flooding. This is one type of leadership; so too is providing representation on the contract negotiations for which UUP is preparing. Leadership is a capacity to inspire, mobilize, empower, teach, represent, and/or serve. There are many leaders in UUP Oneonta and their leadership resonates through family, community, and campus. At SUNY Oneonta, our core mission is to educate students for life.

The leadership of UUPers takes many forms and, on our campus, is directed toward our students. The diverse leadership rendered by the full and part-time UUP academics and professionals is impressive. In the classrooms, computer labs, dormitories, library, and playing fields, as well as in the environs of admissions, academic advisement, career development, counseling services, Educational Opportunity Program, facilities, financial aid, grants, judicial affairs, Health/Wellness Center, Hunt Union, SICAS, student disability services, telecommunications, and TLTC, to name but a few, our members impart knowledge and, more importantly, teach students how to continue learning long after receiving a diploma. Many UUPers serve as advisors to student organizations, supervise work study students, and help undergraduates navigate a plethora of decisions. Through the Center for Social Responsibility, UUPers and students have worked side-by-side doing physically demanding flood relief work both in the post-Katrina Gulf and in our own region, as well as on many other projects. As role models, UUPers mentor those who will achieve excellence in their professions, make important discoveries, and promote social justice.

UUP recently collaborated with the Student Association (SA) at Oneonta and on SUNY campuses across New York State on the *Rock the Vote* campaign. *Rock the Vote* registers new student voters, facilitates voting, and develops student leadership. On the Oneonta campus, Stephanie R. Mercurio, SA Treasurer, coordinated the *Rock the Vote* campaign. Esther Spindler, president of *Democracy Matters*, and Robert Assante, president of the Political Science Club, also provided leadership in registering student voters. Professor Gina Keel, advisor to the Political Science Club, also merits thanks. At our October 17th *Food for Thought*/chapter meeting, UUP recognized the student leaders of the voter registration campaign as well as Jared Lefkowitz, SA Assistant Treasurer, who participated in flood relief work on the Gulf and locally. Before a substantial and appreciative assemblage in Morris' Le Café, Dr. Thomas Kriger, Special Assistant to statewide UUP President Bill Scheuerman, extolled student leadership. Robert, Esther, and Stephanie also spoke articulately of the importance of activism. Stephanie's eloquent and moving words are emblematic of the potential of our students:

Along with my studies and student government work, I am very involved here on the campus as well as the community. Being involved in the school community, as well as the surrounding town, is something we should all be passionate about. Everyone has ideas in their heads and voices to be heard, and we as leaders are their outlet. Something that students, and too many adults, overlook is their voting outlet. Too many people feel that their vote doesn't count or their voice doesn't matter.

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Leadership Across the Generations (continued from Page 1)

Through SUNY SA, I, along with other students from other schools and Oneonta, worked on getting students registered to vote using the Rock the Vote campaign. Planning that goes far beyond my involvement and a three week registration blitz, we worked to get as many students registered as possible... Although this is a great number, our jobs aren't over yet. Our jobs aren't over on Election Day (although that is a task in its own right). This is an ongoing effort that we need to pass down to the next generation of leaders here on this campus.

This whole experience has given me the "know how" to make Rock the Vote 2007 more successful than this year, and to make Rock the Vote 2008 something exceptional. We cannot let students continue to think that their vote isn't valid. We need to give them the resources to research why it's important to vote, what issues concern them, who's running for what, and to provide them the chance to have their voices heard.

In my Creating Persuasive Campaigns class with Dawn Sobns, my group and I decided that the issue we would tackle would not just be voting, but being an informed voter. I'm not going to say it's our duty to teach all of this. But I feel some sort of responsibility to inform my peers on what's going on in the world around them. To me, this is all common knowledge. To them, it's something they may not have had the opportunity to learn. As a student, as a friend, as a leader, or as a teacher, it's our jobs as people living and working in this learning environment to do what's best for our community. I want what's best for SUNY College at Oneonta and its faculty and students. The only way of succeeding is knowing. I know that after this experience, those who I meet will hear what I have to say, and hopefully, that action will be reciprocated.



There is much wisdom in Stephanie's words. *Rock the Vote* is a beginning, not an end, in the evolution of leadership. UUP looks forward to facilitating this process and to future collaboration. UUP will, as it has always done, advocate for a strong SUNY. When UUPers again travel I-88 to Albany to meet with state legislators to make the case for excellence and affordability in higher education, we plan to invite emergent student leaders to join with us.

UUP Contract: The Voices of the Oneonta Chapter Membership

By Janie Forrest-Glotzer, Oneonta Presenter for the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Contract Negotiations

UUP is in the first stages of preparing for contract negotiations (the current contract will expire on June 30, 2007). The contract to be negotiated will set terms and conditions of employment for a four year period. Contract negotiations take place between UUP and the State of New York. A single contract will encompass all UUP/SUNY campuses.

Rob Compton, Vice President for Academics, and I serve as Oneonta's representatives to UUP's statewide Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Contract Negotiations; and chapter President Bill Simons serves on the Negotiations Committee. On October 12, 2006, UUP chapters throughout the State sent their representatives to the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee to join the Negotiations Committee and the Negotiations Team at a pivotal meeting in Albany. The chapter representatives gave preliminary reports on the issues and concerns of their UUP chapters, making the voices and wishes of their memberships heard in this daylong meeting to begin the process of considering contract goals and priorities. This gathering was intense, candid, informative, focused, laborious, committed, and democratic.

UUP President William Scheuerman said the forum would help UUP develop "a contract proposal that truly reflects the needs of our membership." In addition to the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee statements, members of various

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UUP Contract (continued from page 2)

statewide committees delivered detailed reports on issues of importance to members for the upcoming negotiations. Numerous specific and well documented proposals representing the concerns of professionals, faculty, part-timers, adjuncts, and coaches were put forward.

Oneonta – and every other UUP chapter – submitted a preliminary written report that was copious and contained specific proposals by local UUPers. In addition, each chapter delivered a formal oral presentation. I was selected to give Oneonta’s oral report and, preliminary to that task, spent much time in preparation. It was a privilege to convey and assert the voices of the Oneonta chapter membership.

Members of the Negotiations Team and Contract Committee listened closely to reports from Oneonta and other UUP chapters. I found the reports of my fellow presenters to be compelling and well-organized. Nonetheless, this is just the beginning of the road that will take us to the negotiation process and a new contract.

Janie Forrest-Glotzer, of Oneonta, and Clifford DaVis, of Cobleskill, (foreground) both members of the Negotiations Ad Hoc Advisory Committee, await their chapters' turns to make presentations during the Oct. 12 meeting of all three negotiations work groups.

Photo/caption courtesy of the UUP website (<http://www.uupinfo.org/>)



Workload Creep

By Norm Payne, Vice President for Professionals



“No good deed goes unpunished,” so goes the cynical aphorism. I don’t believe it, but I DO believe that every member of the UUP bargaining unit needs to guard against workload creep. You are your own best resource: be vigilant and inoculate yourself against workload creep.

If you are an academic or professional member of the UUP Oneonta bargaining unit and are performing a new task or project on a voluntary basis beyond your normal professional obligation/performance program, compose a written understanding with your chair/supervisor. Both you and your chair/supervisor should sign the document, and you should retain the document in your files. The written understanding between you and your chair/supervisor should note that the performance of this voluntary task:

- 1) does not represent a precedent for purposes of future assignments to you;
- 2) does not represent a precedent for others on the campus; and
- 3) may occur more than once without affecting any part of this voluntary understanding.

The written understanding should also note that the above conditions will be in effect whether or not financial or other compensation is offered and accepted. However, financial compensation or a quid-pro-quo reduction in some other aspect of your work for the voluntary task undertaken is an effective means of underlining that the voluntary service was above and beyond your normal professional obligation/performance program.

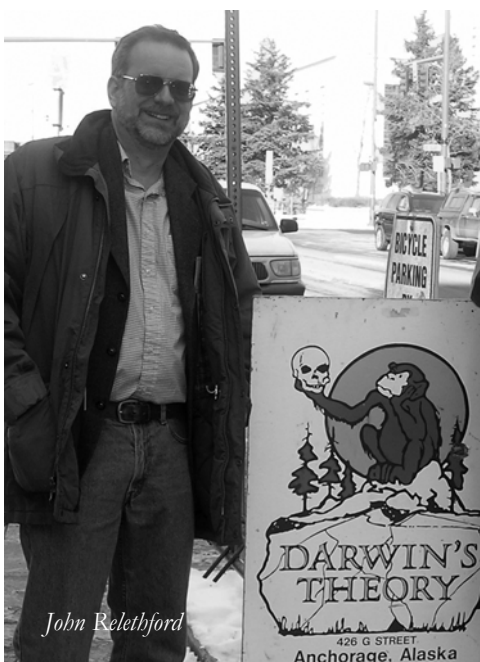
Some Thoughts on Assessment and Academic Freedom

By John Relethford, Distinguished Teaching Professor, Anthropology Department

According to news reports from the online version of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (March 31, April 10), assessment and accountability have been hot topics of discussion in recent meetings of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, including discussions of standardized tests for comparative purposes. Although I can identify positive results from assessment efforts, I also worry about the potential impact of mandates and standardized forms and tests, particularly on academic freedom.

I am not opposed to assessment. Like all professors, I assess student performance in a variety of ways, including exams, research papers, book reviews, labs, and homework assignments. The *exact means* of assessment in each class depends on the nature and size of the class and the learning goals *specific to that class*. I try new approaches over time, read articles and books on different approaches to teaching and testing, and talk to many colleagues about their experiences.

It *is* true that I am uncomfortable with mandated assessment on a larger scale, and am not interested personally in comparisons on standardized tests across faculty, departments, or colleges, either as a SUNY faculty member or as the parent of a SUNY student. However, such standardized assessment is rapidly becoming a reality, and we must be vigilant in considering the potential impact of such measures on our teaching. My main concern is the potential for such activities to intrude on academic freedom. My view is that any assessment plan that specifically mandates the nature of grading in an individual course is a violation of the principles of academic freedom, which include freedom of grading. In their report on censure of Benedict College in South Carolina, the American Association of University Professors notes that “The freedom to grade one’s students is an essential part of the ‘freedom in the classroom’ that the 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* ensures college and university teachers.” (www.aaup.org/Com/a/Institutions/benedict.htm). Although the Benedict College situation specifically involves an institutionally mandated grading scheme (specific weights were to be used for student effort as well as performance), I would argue that the general principle of freedom to set the mode and nature of grading in a course is the responsibility of the individual instructor and falls under the protection of academic freedom.



John Relethford

Although I think it appropriate in general to ask professors to provide information regarding how they assess various learning outcomes in their classes, it may not be appropriate to mandate a specific type of assessment if the implementation of assessment dictates or otherwise affects one’s decisions regarding grading. An example of this problem is the forms for assessing General Education courses listed in Appendix L of the Faculty Handbook. The first part of these forms asks for information on how different learning outcomes will be assessed, such as multiple-choice exams, essays, and other measures. This general request is straightforward and reasonable—how does assessment take place in the course? However, the form also specifies that “At least two measures are required for each outcome listed in the grid.” In my view, this is intrusive, as the assessment form dictates how assessment will take place in any specific course.

At present, I would have no trouble complying with the mandate as I currently use two different forms of assessment in my 100-level General Education course—multiple-choice and short-answer questions. However, suppose I decide to base course assessment entirely and

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Thoughts on Assessment... (continued from Page 4)

exclusively on essay exams? The question of whether this is a good idea or not from a pedagogical and practical level is something I would have to wrestle with, and something I would probably research and discuss with others. In this case, by relying entirely on essays I would be in violation of the “two measure” mandate. In order to comply, I would have to alter my course assessment (and by extension my course structure), which to me is a violation of the principles of academic freedom. Oh sure, I can figure several ways around this particular problem in order to comply with the mandate, but the point is that I shouldn’t have to.

To be honest, I don’t think the “two measure” mandate is a problem in and of itself, but it does set a dangerous precedent and opens the door to other potential problems down the road. Likewise, so does any call for course-embedded assessment if it specifically mandates the mode of grading and/or can affect the mode of instruction. The *specifics* of assessment should not be implemented in any way that costs us our academic freedom. The College Senate recently passed a resolution that calls for assessing critical thinking “in upper division general education courses using the rubrics and standards of the Discipline-Based Panel on Critical Thinking.” (Minutes of February 13, 2006). As we struggle with how this resolution should be implemented specifically, we need to keep the core principles of academic freedom in mind. It is a reality that we are living in a world where assessment is mandated increasingly, and we therefore need to remain watchful. Like most freedoms, academic freedom is something difficult to get back once you’ve given it away.

Cynthia Lassonde Receives Drescher Award

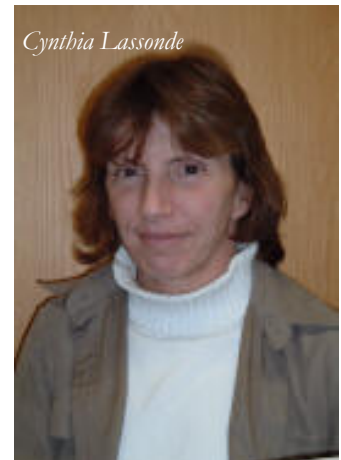
Congratulations to **CYNTHIA LASSONDE**, Assistant Professor (Elementary Education & Reading), on receiving an award from the **Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Affirmative Action/Diversity Leave Program**, which provides funds to enhance employment opportunities for minorities, women, persons with disabilities and Vietnam-era veterans by assisting them to prepare for permanent or continuing appointments within SUNY.

The Drescher Program is one of several administered through **The State of New York/United University Professions Joint Labor-Management Committees**. The six Committees, negotiated in the 2003-2007 State/UUP Agreement, address mutually identified issues affecting the quality and productivity of the SUNY system, and provide funding opportunities to UUP members in a variety of programs.

Dr. Lassonde’s Drescher award will support a Spring 2007 semester leave, during which she will complete data collection and analysis for an ongoing study of teacher education and critical inquiry (in collaboration with a team of researchers from the University of Georgia); present findings at two major conferences in the field; and prepare manuscripts for publication.

This is the second year in a row that a College at Oneonta faculty member has been the recipient of a Drescher award. **Zanna McKay** (Education) was awarded a leave during the Spring 2006 semester which enabled her to work on three primary research projects and prepare manuscripts for publication.

For information on the Joint Labor-Management Committees and their various programs, see www.uup.lmc.state.ny.us./committees.html. Additionally, although the primary focus of the Grants Development Office (GDO) is on grants/contracts that are awarded through the College, GDO staff will help faculty with individual external award applications (workload permitting).



Part-Time Concerns Report

By J McDermott, *Part-Time Concerns Officer*

So...the midterm grades are in; we're halfway through the semester. Of course, you know you can submit those grades online, right? There need not be a last-minute rush back to campus to turn in a hard copy to the Registrar's Office! If you don't know how to do it, ask a colleague, your department secretary, or send me an email.

Speaking of life made easier by the computer, keep an eye out for that oversized envelope from Albany, the one that contains the UUP 2006 negotiations survey. Go through the questionnaire, but note the "online password" at the top of the intro letter. It's a much more efficient process if you don't mail your survey, and instead go online and 1) fill out your answers, 2) enter your password, and 3) submit your survey. Don't forget the 'comments' boxes!

Now that the recent round of discretionary salary increases has passed, we will continue to work on smoothing out the rough edges in the process, especially as it applies to part-time and adjunct employees. There were several points in this last round that could have been stated with greater precision, and we hope to have these clarified by the next round.



The Part-Time Concerns Committee needs your interest and input, and poses the question: When would be the best time for the Committee to have a general meeting? At the end of the fall semester? During the winter break? On a Friday afternoon? Or would a Tuesday evening be better? Once again, if you don't tell us that you're interested, how will we know?

And one final note: I have now served two terms as the Part-Time Concerns Officer. I'd be glad to run again, but if anyone else is interested in the position, please put your name up for election. It's a great way to be active in the union at both the local and state level, and in the life of the general campus community.

I welcome hearing your questions and concerns about the issues raised here or any other matter relating to part-time issues. Please e-mail me at MCDERMJ@oneonta.edu.

Labor-Management Meeting Notes: 11 September 2006

By Tom Horvath, *UUP Oneonta Secretary*

For Management: Alan Donovan, Dan Larkin, Steve Perry, Lisa Wenck

For UUP: Bill Simons, Rob Compton, Janie Forrest-Glotzer, Tom Horvath, Gina Keel, J McDermott, Fred Miller, Norm Payne, Rich Tyler



The meeting opened at 3:03 PM and went immediately off record.

We returned to the agenda at 3:50 PM, but due to time limitations agreed to address the most time sensitive issue of discretionary salary increases (DSI), especially as it pertain to adjuncts.

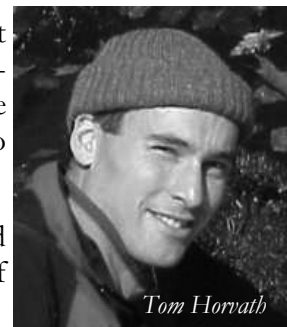
UUP asked Management to clarify the calculation for base salary for adjunct faculty and how DSI would figure. Management stated that the salary of the adjunct is divided by 26 weeks to determine the biweekly amount. The DSI amount allocated to the adjunct would then also be divided by 26 weeks and that amount would be added to the bi-weekly pay.

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Labor-Management Meeting (continued from Page 6)

UUP noted that the DSI guidelines provided by Management were unclear and that questions were raised from UUP members, including department chairs. How do departments count adjuncts in relation to full-time faculty? How many adjuncts equal one fulltime faculty? Furthermore, what evaluative mechanisms apply to adjuncts as they do not have to provide Faculty Activities Reports at the end of the year?

Management reminded UUP that guidelines from this year and past years established adjunct eligibility for DSI. Furthermore, Management noted that adjuncts are aware of their eligibility.



UUP noted that it appears that no adjunct faculty received DSI last year. Adjuncts, until now, have harbored the perception that they are excluded from the DSI process. Sentiment amongst our adjunct faculty members has been that DSI is not a realistic option for them.

In addition, UUP also asked for clarification of professionals' ability to apply for DSI. UUP noted that supervisors put in for professionals to receive DSI. Professionals themselves do not directly apply for DSI. Therefore, professionals have a different system from the faculty and they feel that their supervisors ultimately make the decision on this matter.

UUP asked Management for updated data on faculty applying for reduced course load under the Handbook provisions. Management was not aware of any applications at the time.

The meeting adjourned at 4:18 PM.

Our Hall of Fame Moment: Teaching as Collaboration

By Bill Simons, Chapter President

During the Spring 2006 semester, I taught History 394: *Baseball and American Culture*. Because History 394 is a capstone seminar that rotates among History Department faculty, the content varies depending on the background of the instructor. However, the purpose of the course remains constant — to provide History majors with a culminating experience in historical research and writing. Given my own research and the proximity of the National Baseball Hall of Fame Library in Cooperstown, the preeminent archives in the field, I selected baseball's relationship to the larger United States history beyond the playing field as the topical framework for the seminar. Nancy Cannon, Acting Head of Reference and Instruction at Milne Library, contributed greatly to the course by assisting with the creation of the History 394 web page, meeting formally with the class in Milne's Instructional Resource Room to demonstrate the use of various research tools, and working with students one-on-one throughout the semester.

Initial assignments and exercises were purposefully demanding to prepare students for writing a seminar quality research paper (approximately 20 pages of text plus documentation). Submission of final papers was preceded by rigorous written and oral screenings of various segments during the writing process. Although they varied in quality, the final products demonstrated that the history capstone course utilizing baseball as subject matter produced research papers appropriate to the standards of an undergraduate seminar. The course culminated in a collaborative presentation in June as part of a panel entitled "Students and Scholars: A Baseball Dialogue" at the Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture. Four students (Dan O' Brien, Joe Ryder, Liz Wolotira, and Kevin Clough) were selected from the seminar to present their research findings, with Nancy Cannon and me serving as co-presenters on the panel.

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Hall of Fame Moment (continued from Page 7)

After I provided an overview of History 394, Nancy presented an exercise we had used during the course to facilitate student ability to access research databases, analyze primary sources, and compare conflicting interpretations. Utilizing PowerPoint and computer technology, Nancy demonstrated the varied reaction to Jackie Robinson's reintegration of Major League Baseball on April 15, 1947 by displaying articles from *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Chicago Defender* concerning Robinson's debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Beyond explaining the process of locating materials, the differences and similarities in tone and content manifested by these articles were discussed. The *Los Angeles Times*, for example, gave more attention to Robinson's athletic exploits at UCLA and his West Coast background in general than did newspapers from other regions. And, the *Chicago Defender*, an African-American newspaper, addressed its black readership with distinctive and direct exhortations about their behavior; this approach was absent from metropolitan newspapers with a general readership. During the course, such activities developed student skills germane to content analysis and historiography. In addition to Milne Library's archives, students took advantage of resources available through memberships in the Society for American Baseball Research.

The students then made their individual presentations. In "The Hero vs. the Conqueror," Kevin explored dualisms in the national character through two very different baseball icons of the Progressive Era, Honus Wagner and Ty Cobb. Examining first and second generation Jewish-American life, Liz found that baseball served both as a source of generational conflict and as a mechanism of assimilation. Socially and politically, 1919 constituted one of the most tumultuous years in United States history, and Joe depicted the Black Sox scandal as emblematic of that transitional time. Dan analyzed the American zeitgeist at the mid-point of the last century from the vantage point of "the shot heard 'round the world" (the home run by the New York Giants' Bobby Thomson on October 3, 1951 in the decisive game of a playoff series against the Brooklyn Dodgers).

The formal student presentations, as well as responses to questions from a large and attentive audience, were marked by command of the material, verve, and poise. Well deserved applause for Kevin, Liz, Joe, and Dan ended the session, and that show of respect came from an assemblage dominated by baseball scholars. The four students plan to further their studies (two in the graduate program in history at SUNY Albany). The academic collaboration with the students in History 394 was a privilege, and our joint panel at the Hall of Fame provided a meaningful ending to that journey.



HALL OF FAME MOMENT
(pictured from left to right):

Seated: Kevin Clough, Dan O'Brien, Joe Ryder, and Liz Wolotira

Standing: Nancy Cannon, Bill Simons



VOTE COPE – Political Action

By Brenda Balcom, Director, VOTE COPE

VOTE COPE (Voice Of Teachers in Education–Committee On Political Education) is essential for UUP’s political effectiveness. If you want a voice that is clear and articulate, amplified above the usual din of politics, VOTE COPE is that voice! Contributing to VOTE COPE ensures that the interests of the educational community are represented when important decisions are made.

With local and state elections almost upon us, it is more important than ever to get out and vote. Many people think that their vote does not matter. Imagine if everyone felt that way – we would never elect local officials or a president! There have been many, many elections that have been decided by less than 100 votes (and not just on a local level). So, thinking that your vote does not count could not be farther from the truth. If you don’t vote because you cannot get to the polls in time, the polls are too crowded, or you lack transportation, please consider an absentee ballot, or call a local volunteer organization that provides transportation for voters. Voting has become a privilege that far many too Americans take for granted. The next time you neglect to vote, ask yourself how you would feel if you didn't have that choice.

Brenda Balcom



VOTE COPE supports candidates who earn the endorsement of NYSUT/UUP based on their strong support on educational issues. This is our collective voice – Let’s make it a loud one!

Please use the card below to sign up for VOTE COPE now! And, feel welcome to contact me with questions or concerns:

Email: balcombl@oneonta.edu/Telephone: Ext. 3713

VOTE/COPE NEEDS YOUR PARTICIPATION

The card below briefly describes the union’s VOTE/COPE political action program and how you can contribute painlessly via payroll deduction. Just complete, sign, and send the card below to UUP, PO Box 15143, Albany, NY 12212-5143. Note that you enter your contribution per pay period (not total contribution). VOTE/COPE funds are the only resource the union has for getting the message out about the importance of state funding for public higher education, so one hundred percent participation by UUP members should not be an unreasonable goal.

PLEASE RETAIN FOR YOUR RECORDS

VOTE/COPE is the non-partisan political action fund of UUP and its affiliate, New York State United Teachers. It coordinates the voluntary contributions of members and makes contributions to UUP/NYSUT-endorsed candidates and to UUP/NYSUT-supported general campaign committees.

VOTE/COPE funds, by law, are kept separate from those of NYSUT and UUP.

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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 _____

ONEONTA UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS CHAPTER

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VOTE COPE.....	Brenda Balcom.....	BALCOMBL	436-3713 (office)

(d) = delegate

All email addresses are @oneonta.edu

UUP website: www.uupinfo.org

UUP Oneonta website:

www.uuphost.org/oneonta

Other Delegates & Alternates

Joe Baldwin.....	BALDWIJC	436-3517 (office)
Chris Bulson	BULSONCE.....	397-9345 (home)
John Carney	CARNEYJJ	432-5360 (home)
Jeri Anne Jerminario.....	JERMINJA.....	432-4559 (home)
Richie Lee.....	LEERE	436-2493 (office)



UUP Oneonta Office

206 Human Ecology Building

Tel: 436-2135

Fax: 436-2295

Email: oneonta@uupmail.org

Peg Carney, Administrative Assistant

The Sentinel

Co-Copy Editors:

Kim Muller (mullerkk@oneonta.edu)

Kathy Meeker (meekerkl@oneonta.edu)

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