



Photo by Mike Lisi

Assemblyman Steven Englebright (D-E. Setauket), far left, answers one of many questions posed to him by UUPers at the Long Island Legislative Event. Also shown, from left, are Joan Gumbs, Solomon Ayo, George Fernandez and Nora Galambos.

## Long Island UUPers reach out to local leaders

UUP kicked off its 2009 Political Action Calendar with its annual Long Island Legislative Event Jan. 16.

More than 60 UUPers from five campuses came to the event, held in Huntington, to meet with local legislators and bring the message that SUNY is the solution to the state's economic woes.

"This was an opportunity to get representatives from all the chapters on Long Island to meet with area lawmakers and remind them that SUNY is the solution for New York's economic recovery," said Charlie McAteer, a Stony Brook delegate and UUP Outreach Coordinator for Long Island, who coordinated the event. "And each of the five chapters has a story to tell, so (legislators) got a chance to hear the stories at the same time."

"We need to educate ourselves out of this recession," said Farmingdale Chapter

delegate George Fernandez. "We can't afford any more budget cuts."

The Farmingdale, New Paltz, Stony Brook, Stony Brook HSC and Old Westbury chapters were represented at the meeting. Three UUP officers — VP for Professionals John Marino, Secretary Eileen Landy and Membership Development Officer Ed Quinn — were also there.

Several legislators made it to the meeting, including Assemblyman Robert Sweeney (D-Lindenhurst), and Assemblyman Steven Englebright (D-E. Setauket).

Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel (D-Great Neck) was represented by Sandy Portnoy, her communications coordinator.

"These events are important," said Old Westbury Chapter President Candelario "Kiko" Franco. "We want to make sure that (legislators) are on the same page with us and we need to enlist their support."

## Smith addresses lawmakers

Warning that SUNY cannot withstand additional reductions in state support, UUP President Phil Smith presented the union's budgetary concerns to a panel of state lawmakers in Albany Jan. 15.

"Full-time faculty continues to be depleted with the result that courses are being cancelled, class sizes are increasing to unacceptably high levels, and admission is being denied to tens of thousands of qualified high school and community college graduates," Smith told a joint legislative hearing on the governor's Executive Budget.

Smith expressed special concern about the fate of SUNY's three teaching hospitals which are facing a \$25 million cut in their state subsidy. He warned the quality of health care provided by the hospitals is at great risk.

"The budget fails to recognize that these hospitals are required to serve not only large populations of underinsured and uninsured patients, but also patients with medical conditions that require very costly treatment," he said.

Smith urged lawmakers to reverse the governor's \$25 million budget slash and replace it with a \$40 million increase.

UUP's president also spoke out strongly against the governor's budget proposal to cancel this year's scheduled salary increase for union members, saying it would breach UUP's contract with the state.

The Executive Budget does have some positive proposals that UUP supports, including the creation of a \$75 million supplemental operating aid fund that UUP had pushed for. The money would be used to prevent further erosion to SUNY's programs caused by previous budget cuts. Smith also spoke in favor of a proposal to provide SUNY with a \$40 million net increase in operating funds over the next 18 months from higher tuition revenues.

### Reminders/Upcoming meetings

- **Jan. 27**—UUP Outreach Day, Albany
- **Jan. 29**—UUP Executive Board, Albany
- **Jan. 30-31**—2009 Winter DA, Albany
- **Feb. 3**—UUP Outreach Day and Extraordinary NYSUT Committee of 100 Day, Albany
- **Feb. 10**—UUP Outreach Day, Albany
- **Feb. 24**—UUP Legislative Event, Albany
- **Feb. 26**—UUP Executive Board, Albany
- **Mar. 6-8**—AFT Higher Ed Issues Conference, Miami

(*excerpts of selected newsclips*)

## **The Chief** —Jan. 23 (*subscription only*) **SUNY Union Leader: Teaching Hospitals Not Able to Withstand Cuts**

United University Professions President Phillip H. Smith has urged state lawmakers to resist any more cuts to the State University of New York system, saying that its three teaching hospitals are near the breaking point due to lack of funding.

"The quality of health care provided by these institutions is at great risk," Smith told a joint legislative hearing in Albany on Governor Paterson's new Executive Budget. He warned that the public hospitals at Syracuse, Downstate Medical in Brooklyn and Stony Brook Universities are in dire need of funding, as they are mandated by law to serve uninsured and underinsured patients.

### **Urges \$65M Turnaround**

Smith asked the State Legislature to reverse the \$25 million in cuts to teaching hospitals proposed by the Governor and instead increase the state subsidy of SUNY by \$40 million.

"The issue here is whether SUNY can continue to provide accessible public higher education and quality health care for New Yorkers," he said. "I would argue that even during these difficult times, the state must give SUNY the funding it needs to fulfill its core mission. Full-time faculty continues to be depleted with the result that courses are being cancelled, class sizes are increasing to unacceptably high levels, and admission is being denied to tens of thousands of qualified high school and community college graduates."

Smith also railed against the Governor's proposal to postpone the scheduled salary increase for UUP members, saying such a move was illegal and in violation of their contract with the state.

But the union head praised some aspects of the Executive Budget. Unlike his counterpart Barbara Bowen at the Professional Staff Congress, who represents faculty at the City University of New York, Smith came out in favor of tuition increases, predicting a net increase of \$40 million in SUNY operating funds. He also praised a motion to create a \$75-million supplemental operating aid fund derived from the University's reserves and uncommitted fund balances.

## **Press & Sun-Bulletin** —Jan. 21

### **BU seeks community help to fight state cuts**

<http://www.pressconnects.com/article/20090121/NEWS01/901210344/1001/news>

Binghamton University President Lois B. DeFleur is urging the public to protest state funding cuts to the SUNY system, including a new tuition increase that sends most of the additional money to the state's general fund.

"We need the community, we need our faculty and staff, we need our students," DeFleur said. "We are such an important part of the state's future."

In a new online video on BU's Think Binghamton Web page, DeFleur calls on viewers to advocate for the university by contacting Gov. David A. Paterson and state legislators.

"It's not too late to try to help us influence these

proposals," DeFleur said in the video message.

"We need your voice to help us change these very serious proposals that would so adversely affect Binghamton."

Under the new tuition policy, students this spring will pay \$310 more in tuition. Next year, annual tuition will increase \$620. However, the state plans to take 90 percent of the additional money from the spring semester and 80 percent in the fall, DeFleur said.

"I think a lot of us feel very strongly that, if we're going to do a tuition increase, that tuition ought to go to the university to improve what they're doing," said state Assemblywoman Donna A. Lupardo, D-Endwell.

Broome Community College officials anticipate a tuition increase for the 2009-10 school year. The amount has not been determined.

The 2009-10 state budget also calls for the SUNY system to relinquish \$40 million raised through entrepreneurial activities such as winter session and reduce \$23 million in spending on university-wide programs such as library and academic purchasing.

Overall, state support for BU was cut 6.5 percent for the current year. Under the current 2009-10 proposal, BU's state funding will drop 17 percent, DeFleur said. ...

## **TIMES UNION** —Jan. 19

### **SUNY about to tap head**

<http://www.timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=761289&category=REGION>

The search for a new chancellor at the State University of New York should be wrapped up by Jan. 27, according to SUNY Chairman Carl Hayden. According to word among the college administrators' network, the search committee is seriously considering Nancy L. Zimpher, the first female president of the University of Cincinnati.

Described as "a bit of a wonk" in a recent article in the Cincinnati Enquirer, Zimpher gained notoriety for forcing out popular basketball coach Bob Huggins in 2005. The article also noted that in her six years, the Big East school recorded a 7 percent increase in its graduation rate, saw research funding rise to record levels, almost tripled the school's number of National Merit Scholars, and grew enrollment by 10 percent.

The 62-year-old professor of education previously was a dean at Ohio State University, her alma mater (for her bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees), and chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee from 1998 to 2003. ...

## **THE GAZETTE** —Jan. 9

### **NYSTI fights proposed merger with Egg**

[http://www.dailygazette.com/news/2009/jan/09/0109\\_nysti/](http://www.dailygazette.com/news/2009/jan/09/0109_nysti/)

Officials with the New York State Theatre Institute are waging a campaign to prevent being merged with the Empire State Plaza Performing Arts Center Corporation, also known as The Egg.

NYSTI is lobbying state leaders to keep the proposal off the legislative calendar, which will be

set by Jan. 15. In the midst of uncertainty, it is also planning for its next theater season on the campus of Russell Sage College in Troy. NYSTI officials say they are against the merger because the two organizations have different missions.

NYSTI is a professional theater organization that caters to families and school audiences, participates in cultural exchanges with foreign artists and develops new plays and musicals. Staffers teach educational classroom and summer programs to children.

An internship program teaches teens and young adults various aspects of theater, including costume and set design, sound and lighting and acting. More than 1,500 interns have worked and studied at NYSTI, including Russell Sage theater students.

NYSTI has hosted more than 30 foreign artists or companies.

In addition, some of NYSTI's interns are so-called "persons in need of supervision" — minors from unstable families or who are at risk of dropping out of school or getting in trouble.

Some of those youths become very successful after the program, said Patricia Di Benedetto Snyder, NYSTI artistic director.

Snyder said NYSTI and The Egg have completely different missions, as The Egg is a performance venue and not involved in education like NYSTI. An attempt to unite them would fail, as it did in the 1980s, she said. ...

The proposal is in Gov. David Paterson's 2009-10 budget, meaning that any merger would take place starting in April. "NYSTI's work would continue uninterrupted through a seamless transition," (Matt) Anderson said, spokesman for the state budget office.

Anderson said the move is proposed along with many others to help close a \$15.4 billion budget deficit. The merger would save \$274,000.

"We expect that with all proposals, there would be a full dialogue," he said.

But Snyder said NYSTI would willingly accept an appropriate budget cut to avoid a merger. The organization is prepared to slice everything except staffers, cutting costumes and sets to bare bones and reusing those materials, she said.

"We're ready to do it. We'll be cutting down all over the place," she said.

NYSTI is reaching out to elected officials and has gotten its union, UUP, on board to lobby state leaders as well. The support of UUP's sister union, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), could have an even bigger impact, said John Romeo, president of the NYSTI chapter of UUP. "We can attack from both angles," he said.

On Thursday, NYSTI's board of directors adopted a resolution opposing the proposed merger, and it plans to forward it to Paterson with the signature of each board member.

Board president David Morris said that in the short time since the proposal was announced in late December, there has been a large outpouring of support for NYSTI. "Let's hope that they come to their senses and this doesn't happen," he said of state leaders. ...