

UUP not affected directly by governor's layoff order

On March 24, Gov. David Paterson sent shockwaves through the state work force by announcing his intention to lay off 8,900 state workers. When the dust settled, the determination was that SUNY would not be affected since it is not subject to hiring by the Executive Branch.

Prior to the governor's announcement, UUP met with state officials and firmly refused to surrender its contracted 3% pay increase for this year, and refused to accept a five-day lag pay plan.

"No promises were offered that if we accepted, there would not be any nonrenewals," said UUP President Phil Smith. "Nor was there any indication that any savings would go toward the benefit of SUNY."

But repercussions from cuts to the SUNY budget may affect some campuses. Smith is appealing to chapter leaders to pass along any information about their individual campus along those lines.

"Let us know what you're hearing, or if any budgetary impacts are being felt," Smith asked.

New Paltz has already been hit. The campus announced a \$6 million deficit reduction plan that calls for a staff reduction of about 70 positions. During a meeting between New Paltz faculty and campus President Steven Poskanzer, Chapter President Glenn McNitt said the college had overestimated the cost of the budget shortfall by \$2 million.

Prior to the announcement, New Paltz had reduced staff by 51 positions, and is planning to eliminate another 20 via retirements, attrition and nonrenewals. Smith told reporters the suspension of certain graduate education programs will make it more difficult for Hudson Valley teachers who need master's level classes to complete their studies.

Smith is advising campuses to use some of the \$75 million supplemental operating fund approved in the new state budget — at the urging of UUP — to prevent or minimize cutbacks in faculty ranks.

The prospect of additional funds for SUNY is also being promoted by a majority of the 29-member New York Congressional delegation. They're appealing to Gov. Paterson to allocate more of the state's federal stimulus money to SUNY.

In a letter signed by 20 of the state's congressmen, the 19 Democrats and one Republican urge the governor to provide SUNY with additional stimulus funds to help the University deal with its budget shortfall.

"Many SUNY schools are critical components of our economy," said U.S. Rep. John McHugh (R-Pierrepont Manor), "and I am hopeful that the governor will use his discretion to provide the additional resources necessary to sustain SUNY during these difficult times."

UUP advocacy continues

Just because a new state budget has been adopted doesn't mean the sun has set on UUP's advocacy season.

UUPers will be flocking to Albany twice next month to push for passage of legislative issues not related to the budget. Unionists will be seeking support for passage of:

- Sovereign immunity legislation to restore the rights of public employees;
- The New York State Fair Pay Act, which would ensure equal pay for equal and comparable work without regard to gender;
- Unemployment insurance legislation for part-time SUNY employees; and
- Legislation codifying the SUNY Office for Diversity and Educational Equity in state education law.

The first advocacy day is scheduled for Tuesday, May 5. UUPers will be joined by their sisters and brothers from NYSUT for the second round of visits with lawmakers on Tuesday, May 12, for the Committee of 100.

UUPers lead workshops

Several UUP leaders had prominent roles in the April 19-21 national conference on how to negotiate higher education contracts during a recession.

The conference, "Academic Bargaining in an Era of Restraint," drew public and private higher education leaders from around the country to the conference site at Baruch College in New York City.

UUP President Phil Smith moderated a panel entitled, "Funding Public Higher Education in Tough Times." VP for Academics Fred Floss moderated, "The Influence of Globalization on U.S. Higher Education." Secretary Eileen Landy moderated, "Faculty Diversity: Gender and Ethnicity." VP for Professionals John Marino also attended.

AFT President Randi Weingarten and NEA President Dennis Van Roekel were among the speakers.

Reminders/Upcoming meetings

- **May 11-12**—NYSUT Committee of 100, Albany
- **May 25**—UUP office closed for Memorial Day
- **May 26**—UUP office summer hours begin, 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.
- **June 11-15**—AAUP annual meeting, Washington, D.C.
- **June 19**—UUP Executive Board meeting, Albany
- **June 26-27**—New Leaders Orientation, Albany
- **July 1-6**—NEA annual meeting, San Diego
- **July 12-15**—AFT Quest Conference, Washington, D.C.

TIMES UNION—April 22

Shutouts on state campus

Amid heavy competition, college offers exist but are often unaffordable

<http://www.timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=792600&category=REGION>

Elma Ramic has a 3.8 grade point average. She's in four advanced placement classes. She is fluent in three languages and plays volleyball.

But Ramic, an 18-year-old Albany High School senior, is apparently not State University of New York material. She was rejected from or wait-listed at all the SUNY schools to which she applied, a casualty of one of the most competitive years for state schools in recent memory.

"You just get drained," she said. "It plays with your emotions."

Ramic is not without options; she was accepted by Siena College and The College of Saint Rose as well as the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and Emerson College. But that also puts her in the same position as thousands of students across the state: admitted to the unaffordable.

Though SUNY schools have been getting increasingly more selective for years, the latest numbers show an acceleration fueled by the one-two punch of the economy and possibly the largest graduating high school class in American history, the result of the baby boomlet generation. At the same time, private schools are admitting more students than ever before as they struggle under shrinking endowments and an uncertain number of students who will show up in August.

That reflects a national trend, according to a recent survey by the College Board, which shows that 41 percent of high school students are more seriously considering a public university or college near home. Students are particularly stressed now because May 1 is the deadline to decide where they will attend college.

SUNY Binghamton received 30,000 applications for 3,000 spots. The University at Albany had 22,000 students competing for 2,250 open seats next fall. Geneseo received 11,000 applications for 950 spots.

"It's been exceptionally tight," said Earl Barcomb, a Schenectady High school counselor. Students who may have easily been accepted in the past, he said, were rejected this year.

Bill Caren, associate vice president for enrollment services at Geneseo, attributed the rise in students to the economy as well as the academic reputation of the school.

SUNY typically costs about \$17,000 a year for in-state students, less than half the cost of some private schools, which are approaching \$50,000 a year in tuition and room and board.

Though private schools might be offering slots to more students for the fall, the financial aid packages haven't been as generous, said Marty Anderson, an Albany High School guidance counselor.

(excerpts of selected newsclips)

Ramic, whose family fled Bosnia to escape the war there in the mid-1990s, is frustrated that the larger schools seemingly focused on her SAT scores, when she has four years of academic excellence to boost her application. Still, the SUNY shutout has been a boon for her as she's found that small schools give more personalized attention.

She's about to send in her deposit to Siena, where admissions officials have bent over backward to find her more financial aid. She expects to find the same level of attention in the classrooms.

The Daily Star—April 16

SUNY Oneonta hosts panel

http://www.thedailystar.com/local/local_story_106041513.html

About 50 SUNY Oneonta students, staff and community members attended a panel discussion at noon Wednesday examining the economic, social and cultural interaction between the college and the region.

The talk at Morris Hall at the State University College at Oneonta was sponsored by the United University Professions union for academic and professional employees at the college.

Four people from the community participated in the panel: Oneonta Mayor John Nader; Milford Central School superintendent and chairman of the Otsego County Chamber board, Peter Livshin; general manager of Hometown Oneonta newspaper, Jim Kevlin; and Oneonta Tigers general manager Andrew Weber.

After a short talk, they answered questions from the audience.

The feedback will be brought to campus leaders to see what more can be done to build bridges between the college and the community, said union event coordinator Gina Keel, an assistant professor for political science at the college.

The college, like other institutions in the SUNY system, is the "lifeblood" of the community, said Nader. This is something legislators need to be made aware of when lobbying for state aid, he said.

However, the state funding formula favors cities such as Oneonta because students are included in the population counts, and their income is considered low, he said.

The city gets about as much from sales tax as property tax, and SUNY Oneonta and Hartwick College helps that situation because of spending by students and staff, he said.

Although about 52 percent of real-property assessments are exempt from taxes, the value "dwarfs" any problems, he said.

The college offers a tremendous amount of cultural and social possibilities, Livshin said. Much of his staff has received at least one degree from the college, he said.

Another benefit came from the college's

Center for Economic and Community Development, which was hired to work on a strategic plan for the school.

"We wouldn't have been able to do that without the assistance of SUNY Oneonta," he said.

In response to questions, the panel said more could be done to promote student spending in local businesses.

Junior Mike Dessingue said he came to the session because of a political-science requirement but found information that was important to know, including the economic impact of the college.

Retired sociology professor Ed Wesnofske said he was curious about what would be discussed. "Upstate New York has challenges in sustaining itself," but the speakers pointed out important resources the college provides the community, he said.

THE RECORD ONLINE

—April 15

SUNY New Paltz closes grad programs in teaching

<http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090415/NEWS/904150340>

The freeze on SUNY New Paltz education master's degrees leaves local school officials in a quandary when recruiting qualified teachers for math and science programs.

The university announced Tuesday that it will suspend admissions to its master's in education and master of arts in teaching programs in chemistry, earth science, French, Spanish and math. Low enrollment, despite recruiting efforts, spurred the decision, according to a university press release.

Yet math, science and foreign languages are the very areas in which school districts are having trouble finding qualified teachers, said Carolyn Brauer, Mount Saint Mary College director of student teaching. She's coordinating a conference to attract youth to the teaching field this month in response to a study by a region-wide panel of school officials.

Brauer said superintendents are saying that local colleges produce a lot of teachers but not in the specialties needed. "Quite frankly, right now we have enough English and Social Studies teachers," she said.

The Mount offers an education master's degree in special education and literacy — also high-need areas — but not in math or science. Local teachers who need master's level classes to meet licensing requirements will have to travel farther for schooling or pay private tuition fees, said Phillip Smith, president of United University Professions, the union that represents teachers in college systems.

Newburgh Free Academy principal Peter Copeletti also called the loss of the master's level programs disappointing. "Math and science are areas that we need very highly trained teachers in," he said.