

**UUPers make their case to legislators**

Close to 20 UUPers met with legislators in Albany May 5 and used the face time to gain support for a number of issues important to union members.

Members urged lawmakers to approve sovereign immunity legislation and The New York State Fair Pay Act, which would ensure equal pay for comparable work.

They also asked lawmakers to support unemployment insurance legislation for part-time SUNY employees, and to back legislation codifying the SUNY Office for Diversity and Educational Equity in state education law.

“We took our message to legislators and we pushed for their support,” said UUP President Phil Smith.

UUPers will be back in Albany next week to join their sisters and brothers from NYSUT as part of the Committee of 100.

**UUP fights to save vital New Paltz programs**

President Phil Smith and nearly 50 sign-waving New Paltz UUPers and nursing students sent a clear message to school administrators on Thursday: reverse plans now to cut the college’s nursing program and to suspend a number of graduation education programs.

“The New Paltz administration overreacted,” Smith said at an afternoon news conference at the college. “They have the state budget funds to continue these programs.”

The school’s administration has announced it will eliminate the nursing program and shelve graduation education programs in chemistry, earth science, French, math and Spanish. More than 100 jobs would be lost.

UUP Chapter President Glenn McNitt, foreign language professor and UUP delegate Peter Brown, nursing department chair Eleanor Richards and NYSUT Secretary-Treasurer Lee Cutler also spoke at the news



Photo by Don Feldstein

Dozens of SUNY New Paltz faculty and students took part in a May 7 news conference, holding up signs that showed their support for the union's efforts to restore the college's nursing and several other graduate education programs.

conference, along with nearly a dozen faculty members and other supporters.

McNitt said New Paltz President Steven Poskanzer should be looking to raise more revenues instead of making cuts. Richards said the decision to cut the nursing program was senseless because its tuition revenues cover its operation costs and create extra revenues for New Paltz.

Cutler pointed out the urgent need for future nurses and future teachers in math, science and foreign languages. It is shortsighted to cut these vital courses, he said.

**UUP communications win big**

UUP communications earned a total of 12 awards for writing, design and editorial content in the annual journalism competition conducted by the AFT Communicators Network.

President Phil Smith’s December 2008 commentary, “‘There is no try’ in the fight for SUNY,” earned a second-place award for Best Editorial or Column.

*The Voice* received a total of six awards, including first-place honors for Best Layout/Design and Best Original Illustration/Photo, while *The Active Retiree* won first place for Best Design and two third-place awards for news and feature writing. Also awarded were the union’s TV ad “Growth Machine” (first place), 35th anniversary journal (second place) and 2008 legislative brochure (third place).

More than 1,200 entries from hundreds of AFT locals entered the competition, which is judged by professional journalists and graphic designers.

**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 6**—Conference for Professionals, 8:30 a.m.- 1:00 p.m., Huntington, L.I.
- **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

NEWS RECORDED

—May 8

## SUNY New Paltz's teachers union rallies to save axed programs

<http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090508/NEWS/905080354/-1/NEWS>

Fighting words were the order of the day Thursday during a rally on behalf of the embattled nursing and masters teaching programs at SUNY New Paltz.

Phillip Smith, president of the state's United University Professions union, said Gov. David Paterson has between \$500 million and \$600 million in statewide SUNY funds that he could apply to the problem.

UUP local president Glenn McNitt said SUNY President Steve Poskanzer should stop trying to make New Paltz a "Harvard on the Hudson" and allow more students and their tuition money into its increasingly "elitist" halls and dorms.

These complaints and accusations came a few days after Poskanzer announced that he would implement the \$6 million budget cuts as originally announced several weeks ago, without modification from the faculty.

McNitt dismissed the evident finality of Poskanzer's statement:

"If he thinks it's over, he's in dreamland," McNitt said after the rally.

Eleanor Richards, chair of the nursing program, received rousing applause when she described nurses in the audience as people who typically have put others first.

"Now it's your turn," she said.

**Poughkeepsie Journal** —May 8

<http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090508/NEWS02/905080325&template=printart>

## Nursing education backers rally

*Teachers and students lodge protest on cuts to SUNY New Paltz president*

Supporters of the SUNY New Paltz nursing program on Thursday called on the college president to reverse his decision to eliminate the program.

"We're facing a crucial nursing shortage and it will only get worse," said Eleanor Richards, chairwoman of the New Paltz nursing department.

The cut will reduce the number of nurses who are qualified to teach at community colleges, compounding the problem, Richards said.

After the conference on campus, Richards alleged the program was being eliminated because its students were "vulnerable, mostly women, and don't fit the traditional role of a four-year student.

"I think the president thought that it would be an easy cut," she said.

Eric Gullickson, a spokesman for the college, said the school looked "across the board" at ways to generate revenue and cut expenses. "All areas were looked at with the same criteria and ground rules," he said.

Gullickson said the president's decision is final. ...

Throughout the rally Thursday, men and women filled the aisles and lecture room chairs, holding

(excerpts of selected newsclips)

signs that said "The sky is not falling. Don't cut SUNY programs," and "Don't bleed before you cut."

Glenn McNitt, president of the New Paltz chapter of the United University Professions, the union representing SUNY professors and staff, said the "seemingly reasonable" criteria for the cuts had "tragic flaws."

The school "should have searched more broadly for additional revenue," he said.

McNitt said the nursing program didn't fit President Steven Poskanzer's "elitist conception of a Harvard on the Hudson."

David Hobby, chairman of the New Paltz mathematics department, stood up to speak against the school's suspension of admission to graduate programs in chemistry, earth science, French, math and science.

"One third of local high school teachers have gone through our program," he said.

"We weren't given an opportunity to show our numbers to the administration," he said. "The decision was made and there were really wasn't much consultation."

**The Legislative Gazette** —May 4

## UUP elects Smith to full term

[http://www.legislativegazette.com/read\\_more.php?story=3778&searchstr=UUP](http://www.legislativegazette.com/read_more.php?story=3778&searchstr=UUP)

United University Professions has elected President Phillip Smith to his first full two-year term.

Smith, of Manlius, Onondaga County, is on leave from State University of New York Upstate Medical University in Syracuse where he serves as a professor of cell developmental biology. He has been involved with the union for 28 years, according to UUP. He served in numerous leadership positions at both local and statewide levels.

"It's a good feeling," Smith said on a phone interview before adding, "This is not a good time to be president or governor of anything given the financial circumstances we're dealing with.

But, "We try to rise to the challenge," he said. ...

"In the immediate future we have a lot of non budgetary items to deal with such as fair pay and making sure our employers are treated properly," Smith said, referring to the Fair Pay Act that calls for equal pay regardless of gender. "In the longer term one of the things I would like to see us do is become more active politically."

Smith said he wants to encourage union members on the campus level to become more politically involved by contacting their lawmakers about certain issues, as one example.

"Our slogan that SUNY is the solution is not just empty words," he said. "We are an economic engine to recovery."

Other officers re-elected include Eileen Landy, UUP's statewide secretary, Edward Quinn, assistant to the chair of the Theatre Arts at SUNY Stony Brook. Re-elected executive board members include Caroline Bailey, Edison Bond, F. Glenn McNitt and Laura Rhoads.

Newly elected executive board members include David Curry, Robert Reganse and Brian Tappen.

**The Record** —April 29

**SUNY New Paltz faculty oppose cutting programs**  
<http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090429/NEWS/904290321/-1/NEWS>

A majority of senior SUNY New Paltz faculty say they "strongly oppose" the administration's plan to eliminate the college nursing program and suspend several graduate programs as a way of meeting its \$6 million budget shortfall.

Faculty union President Glenn McNitt said 118 of approximately 200 senior union members signed the petition; the union has an active membership of about 650 members, including adjuncts and new hires, he said.

McNitt called the proposed program cuts "inappropriate, excessive and disastrous for our community." In a separate letter to college President Steve Poskanzer, he urged Poskanzer to cancel the cuts and focus on increasing income through increasing admissions.

McNitt described reaction to the phase-out of the nursing program as a "groundswell of opposition." He said New York's congressional delegation will try to secure \$118 million in stimulus money for the SUNY system. ...

**Daily Freeman** —April 27

## SUNY cut concerns hospitals

<http://www.dailyfreeman.com/articles/2009/04/27/news/doc49f50cc2d66e1280966862.prt>

Regional hospital officials have expressed concerns over the ability to develop future nursing leaders in the area in light of SUNY New Paltz's decision to phase out its nursing program.

As the health care system becomes increasingly complex, "a two-year degree is not enough anymore," said Hilda Merolli, the director of education services at the St. Francis Hospital in Poughkeepsie.

"You cannot run an efficient hospital with only associate's-level nurses," added Bernadette Ryan, a St. Francis nurse who will graduate in four weeks with a bachelor's degree from SUNY New Paltz but will not be able to enroll in the master's program there. Ryan also noted that "you need expertise at the bedside during life-or-death situations."

Local community colleges provide feeder nursing programs for SUNY New Paltz's programs, as nurses-to-be can complete their associate's degrees at the community college level and go on to achieve bachelor's and master's degrees at SUNY, according to Eleanor Richards, head of the SUNY New Paltz nursing department, which appears to be the latest casualty of the state's budget crunch. ...

Richards estimated the full-time, undergraduate tuition of local private colleges is \$21,210, compared to SUNY's current level of \$4,970. Meanwhile, local private colleges charge about \$742 per graduate credit compared to SUNY's \$328 for state residents, she said. ...