

## UUP honors excellence at Fall Delegate Assembly

UUP lived up to the theme of “Honoring Excellence” at its 2007 Fall Delegate Assembly Sept. 28-29 in Buffalo. UUP applauded four exceptional union members and three SUNY students chosen to receive UUP College Scholarships.

Excellence extended to the description of UUP as outlined by UUP President Bill Scheuerman in his State of the Union address.

“UUP has never been in better shape,” Scheuerman told the union’s nearly 300 delegates. “Working together, we are the most effective public sector union in New York state.”

Scheuerman pointed to UUP’s reputation for effectiveness in the Legislature, saying the union has become the chief advocate for SUNY, filling the vacuum left by a succession of different SUNY chancellors. The additional \$160.7 million in this year’s state budget is among UUP’s legislative success stories.

“We’re on the road to recovery in SUNY after 15 years of bad budgets,” Scheuerman said.

He also emphasized the achievement of pension equity for the thousands of UUP members enrolled in the Optional Retirement Program (ORP), culminating a six-year struggle for passage of the ORP equity bill. ORP members will no longer be contributing 3% of their salaries toward their pensions after 10 years of service, following a three-year phase-in period.

Calling it “the toughest battle we’ve ever faced,” Scheuerman proudly said UUP’s extensive efforts to stave off the privatization of SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse worked. He said UUP, with the assistance of NYSUT, convinced the governor to approve an affiliation agreement between UMU and neighboring Crouse Hospital.

UUP Chief Negotiator and VP for Academics Fred Floss delivered an update on the union’s continuing negotiations with the state on a new contract. He said the state is coming back to the table with a new proposal on health care benefits to replace an earlier proposal that he described as



UUP President Bill Scheuerman addresses delegates to the 2007 Fall Delegate Assembly. Inset, Martha Livingston, delegate from Old Westbury, urges delegates to support passage of the single-payer health insurance bill.

—Photos by Dennis Stierer

“draconian.” He asked the delegates for their wholehearted support as talks progress.

“When all of us stand together, we’re going to get a contract that’s good for our members,” Floss said.

The Friday night dinner program featured an extensive menu of awards to deserving UUPers. Greg Auleta of Oswego, Al Ermanovics of SUNY Buffalo and Bob Reganse of Farmingdale each received the Nina Mitchell Award for Distinguished Service. This award for exemplary service to the union is named after the late Nina Mitchell of Brooklyn HSC.

Judy Wishnia of SUNY Stony Brook was honored as the Outstanding UUP Active Retiree

for 2007.

Additionally, three SUNY students—Elizabeth Gray of UAlbany, Selena Hill of Old Westbury and Allison Rent of Oswego—were each awarded \$2,000 scholarships from the UUP College Scholarship Trust Fund.

Delegates were busy debating and approving a total of 13 resolutions. Among them was one commending Scheuerman and UUP’s leadership, along with NYSUT, for their tireless efforts to protect UMU from privatization. Another asked for at least \$15 million more for SUNY to fund its newly created Office for Diversity and Educational Equity, an office formed largely through the efforts of UUP.

The union delegates reaffirmed their support of gender pay equity in a resolution prompted by a federal lawsuit against Adelphi University that alleges its full-time female professors are paid less than their male counterparts. Another approved resolution urges Congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act.

For a complete report on the DA, check out the upcoming November issue of *The Voice*.

The 2008 Spring DA is scheduled for Feb. 8-9 in Albany.

### Reminders/Upcoming meetings

**OCT 12-13** —NYSUT Higher Education Council meeting, Albany

**OCT 19** —UUP Executive Board meeting, Albany

**OCT 26-27** —Fall Leadership Workshops, Saratoga Springs

**OCT 26-27** —AFT Civil and Human Rights conference, New Orleans

**NOV 22-23** —UUP Office closed for Thanksgiving

(excerpts of selected newsclips)

**STAR-GAZETTE**—Sept. 25

### Making up for lost time

There's nothing like the end of summer to get people to refocus on their jobs. That seems to be the case in the New York Senate this week when the Senate Higher Education Committee takes up two key nominees for the State University of New York Board of Trustees.

Both are familiar names with wide-open resumes that are certainly no mystery to anyone who has followed state government and politics. Yet the Senate committee chairman, Sen. Kenneth LaValle, R-Port Jefferson, has predicted an all-day session on Wednesday to handle the nominations of Carl Hayden of Elmira and former state Comptroller H. Carl McCall.

A third nominee, Linda Sanford, who is a top IBM executive, will have to wait until another day. But that hearing shouldn't be delayed as long as the Hayden-McCall one has.

Anyone who has followed the gamesmanship surrounding Troopergate—the scandal that Gov. Eliot Spitzer's staff precipitated—certainly knows by now that government has slowed to a crawl from the political strife that Spitzer's staffers fortified by targeting Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno. As a result, quality nominees such as Hayden, the former Regents chancellor, and McCall, a former president of the New York City Board of Education, have been sidelined over the summer as Bruno and Spitzer waged a Cold War. But wars, even political ones, have their casualties, and Hayden and McCall were among them. Hayden, as Spitzer's appointee to chair the SUNY Board of Trustees, is the point person in heading up the search for a new SUNY chancellor to replace John Ryan, who left the post in May.

His confirmation by the Senate is critical to moving the state quickly toward finding a skilled and forceful leader as the next chancellor to run the state's 64-campus higher education system. By the time Hayden is confirmed—and his credentials strongly warrant that—the search will have lost nearly three months of valuable time. That's virtually a full semester of college that has gone by without permanent leadership for the SUNY system.

New York can do better than that. State officials have talked wishfully of making SUNY more competitive with its counterparts in other state, yet losing time in replacing Ryan signals to those watching New York that the Empire State has not put a high priority on its SUNY system.

People like Hayden, McCall and Sanford need to change that, but of course, they cannot if they're stuck in a political demilitarized zone between two factions.

But it's time for peace gestures. Bruno and Spitzer cannot go on fighting for another three-plus years and expect to accomplish anything on behalf of the state. They need to get over their political ill will toward one another and look at the bigger picture.

Part of that picture is finding people willing to

serve government and make it a better deal for taxpayers. The SUNY system is one of those areas, and the sooner Hayden can take the helm of the SUNY board, the better. He, McCall and Sanford should be quickly reviewed and confirmed.

Spitzer by now has the message: Don't mess with the Senate Republicans. That lesson needs to be put in a drawer somewhere. It's history. The state needs to move forward; LaValle's committee has the power and obligation to do that.

**TIMES HERALD-RECORD**—Sept. 24

### Growth of part-timers cheats professors and students

The always-interesting "Almanac Issue" of The Chronicle of Higher Education arrived this week. Its 96 pages contain a fascinating array of significant and obscure statistics about the current state of higher education in our country.

But a small table on page 25 puts numbers to what may be the most significant trend in higher education in the last two decades: In 1987, the Almanac reports, colleges and universities were staffed by 793,000 faculty members; 34% of them employed on a part-time basis. In 2005, the number of faculty members had grown to 1,290,000, while the percentage of part-time instructors, after a steady yearly climb, had reached 48%—almost one out of two.

Sometimes colleges and universities hire part-time faculty members for sound educational reasons, for example, to bring to their campuses specialists with some sort of professional expertise. But for the most part, the trend is driven by practical considerations: Part-time faculty members—euphemistically called "adjuncts"—are paid much less than full-time teachers, and ordinarily they receive no benefits or promise of employment beyond the current semester.

Compared with full-time faculty, they are a bargain, a budget windfall and a cushion in the event of falling enrollment.

Many adjuncts have the same credentials as full-time teachers, as well as considerable teaching experience. Often they cobble together a humble salary by rushing among different colleges and universities. For the most part, they do the grunt work, academia's "dirty jobs," staffing the courses that are left after the schedule has been picked over by the full-time faculty.

In short, they are just about as near the bottom of the academic hierarchy as it's possible to be—but without them modern higher education could not function.

But there are at least three things wrong with this trend toward part-time instruction:

The part-time system is, at its heart, exploitative. Business, of course, has learned to cross international boundaries to find the cheapest possible labor; colleges and universities are forced to find efficiencies closer to home. Adjuncts who are willing to work for low wages and no benefits because of their attraction to teaching, learning and ideas are

a perfect solution. But education should be driven by larger ethical considerations than merely the bottom line.

Many of the individuals in these categories do better-than-adequate jobs, but their effectiveness suffers from their exclusion from the ideal academic community that ought to be the goal of every good college. Full-time professors are busy enough, but adjuncts have to hurry on to the next class, which may be on the other side of town at a different institution. After a few years, poverty may drive the adjunct out entirely, which means that she's no longer available to students for any sort of long-term mentoring or letters of recommendation.

**TIMES UNION**—Sept. 12

### Stonewalling SUNY

So now it begins. New Yorkers are going to pay a price—an unacceptably high one—for the hard feelings between Gov. Eliot Spitzer and Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, R-Brunswick, over the so-called Troopergate scandal.

So much for the hopes raised at the start of the year that the Capitol's bad reputation for gridlock was about to become history. Now it appears that the partisan wrangling that led to the impasses in the past has been replaced by personal animosity between the two state leaders. Yes, things have changed since Day 1—decidedly for the worse.

As a consequence, SUNY will suffer. It needs a chancellor and a board of trustees to begin the search for one. But according to a Gannett News Service story, that's not likely to happen anytime soon. And the longer it takes, the more damage will be done to SUNY's academic stature and the ambitious plans by state leaders to transform the major SUNY campuses, including the University at Albany, into high-tech research centers that will act as economic engines for local economies and the state.

Spitzer isn't at fault here. He has a list of nominees, and it's a good one. He's tapped Carl Hayden, an Elmira attorney and former chancellor of the state Board of Regents, for chair of the SUNY board of trustees. For trustees, he's nominated H. Carl McCall, a former state comptroller and gubernatorial candidate, and Linda Sanford, a senior vice president at IBM. Hayden's credentials need no explanation. He served with distinction as Regents chancellor and he has the stature necessary to attract top-qualified applicants for the SUNY post. The resumes of McCall and Sanford are also impressive. Yet neither they nor any of the other nominees is likely to be confirmed by the Senate anytime soon.

No matter how the information about the Bruno flights was made public, the fact remains that New Yorkers had every right to know about them. Just as they have every right to expect that SUNY's future will lie in the hands of a capable leader, rather than held hostage to mean-spirited politics.