

IN TOUCH ...



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President's Notes

By Steven Abraham

Almost a year has passed since the last issue of "In Touch" was distributed, and a great deal has happened in that year. The most important issue has been the massive budget cuts that the state has levied on SUNY. Over the past two years, SUNY has had to deal with over \$600 million in budget cuts. UUP has engaged in extensive lobbying efforts in an attempt to block these cuts.



Early in the spring semester, legislation known as the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act ("PHEEIA") was proposed by the Governor and the SUNY Chancellor. UUP opposed the Act and worked hard to have it voted down. Briefly, PHEEIA would have essentially privatized SUNY. It would have taken SUNY tuition "off budget" and allowed each individual campus to set its own tuition. In addition, state oversight for leasing campus properties and entering into public-private partnerships would have been reduced and contracts for services and leases would have been removed from state oversight. In the opinion of UUP, if PHEEIA had been enacted, it would have been disastrous for employees represented by UUP as well as for students who attend SUNY schools. Fortunately, UUP has been successful in helping to prevent PHEEIA from becoming law so far, although it is expected that pieces of the legislation will be reintroduced.

Continued on page . . . 10

TABLE OF CONTENTS

➡ President's Notes.....	Pg 1
➡ Getting Active in the Union.....	Pg 2
➡ Assessment, or The End of Education.....	Pg 3
➡ We Need You.....	Pg 4
➡ The SUNY Budget and PHEEIA.....	Pg 5
➡ Against Assessment.....	Pg 6
➡ "... Duties of the Union Activist".....	Pg 7
➡ An Open Letter.....	Pg 8
➡ UUP End of Semester Reception.....	Pg 14
➡ NYSUT Member Benefits.....	Pg 20
➡ DSI List.....	Pg 21

Getting Active in the Union

By Bruce Altschuler, Grievance Chair for Academics



People often ask me what UUP is doing for them. Wanting to be polite, I generally respond with a list of major union functions. UUP negotiates the terms and conditions of employment, most notably our salaries and benefits. It seeks to protect our job secu-

rity, maintain safe working conditions and prevent our workload from becoming excessive. If the administration acts arbitrarily, the union can file a grievance. In the larger world, UUP is a powerful advocate not only for those in our bargaining unit, but for SUNY as a whole. Sometimes, knowing that the curious have something more specific in mind, I'll provide an update on that particular activity such as contract negotiations or the SUNY budget.

A more blunt answer, however, is that because the union is all of us, people should instead be asking what are we doing for ourselves. In unity, as the old saying goes, there is strength. The more each of us participates, the stronger and more effective our union will be. Even though we all have busy schedules, I want to suggest a few ways that faculty and staff can get more active. Such participation will not only help us all, it will give you a voice in important decisions.

Running for chapter office may seem like a large time commitment, but you don't have to start out as chapter president or a vice-president. A good place to begin would be to run for delegate to the UUP Delegate Assembly (DA). Each chapter is allocated a number of academic and professional representatives depending on the size of its membership. Once elected, a delegate is required to attend three meetings per year, two in Albany and the third rotating around the state (this year it was in Buffalo). In addition to having a say in UUP policy and electing officers, you will find this a great way to meet other SUNY faculty and staff and to learn what is happening on other campuses. UUP pays all expenses -- travel, meals and an overnight stay at the hotel. Anyone not elected

can serve as an alternate, which means that if a delegate cannot attend one of the DAs, the next person on the list is asked to replace him/her. Because we are all busy people, this happens quite regularly. In order to increase chapter participation, Oswego's bylaws state that anyone who receives at least five votes for delegate is elected to our chapter executive board which meets about three or four times per semester. At these meetings we discuss issues facing the campus, set chapter policy and approve local expenditures. Nominations for the DA will soon be solicited for our spring elections. Winners will serve for two year terms. To put it simply, you can join the chapter's executive board by nominating yourself and convincing four colleagues to vote for you. Just remember that academic and professional delegates are voted on separately so make sure that these four colleagues may vote in your category.

Another way to get involved is to be appointed to a statewide committee. There are committees to match a wide variety of interests. A few examples are affirmative action, disability rights, family leave, finance, globalization and corporatization, human and civil rights, labor and higher education, LGBT, outreach (which deals with the legislature), part-time concerns, technology issues and women's rights and concerns. If you are concerned that joining such a committee can cut into the time you need for scholarship, consider Oswego's own Stephen Rosow, who chairs the globalization and corporatization committee. This committee, with financial support from UUP, has organized scholarly conferences and recently collected some of the papers in a book. Committees typically meet two or three times per year. As with the DA, UUP covers travel expenses. Check out the UUP web site and, if you find a committee you would like to serve on, ask our chapter president, Steven Abraham, about the possibility of recommending you to the statewide president. It has been my experience that most of those who request a committee assignment receive it.

Continued on page ... 11

Assessment, or The End of Education

By Stephen J. Rosow, Vice-President for Academic



Assessment, we are told, is good for us. Through it we will become better teachers, and we will become more attentive to the needs of our students and the community at large. So, what is the problem?

In the university we increasingly live in an age of administration. The fiscal crisis has made matters worse, but this is not the source of recent assessment trends. Even the Obama administration, while its education policy reinforces administrative remedies for seemingly intransigent educational problems, has made a case that we ought to increase funding to universities and higher education. That funding would both promote innovation in leading technologies, especially in the energy sector, and reinvigorate the democratic political culture of activism and reasoned discourse that helped to put him into office, spurred not coincidentally by student activism.

Assessment is an administrative remedy to what is actually a political problem, or, more accurately, two political problems. First, we are told that the problem is that the US economy is losing competitiveness in the global economy because our college graduates do not score as well as those in other countries on tests of basic skills. So, assessment dovetails with the globalist program. Second, we are told that public universities are drains on public funds that our economy cannot afford. Therefore, faculty need to be held accountable in order to justify the economic expenditure and to force them to be more efficient. This criticism is often expressed by those neoconservatives who believe that the university is a haven of left-wing faculty, coddled by the tenure system, who are undermining authority and American/Western values.

So, the alliance that has produced the mania for assessment is an alliance of neoliberals, neo-conservatives, and globalists. And, we ought not to forget that this is **a political alliance**, not some necessary, inevitable and natural reaction to given conditions. What's more, this alliance is now reinforced by an education-consulting industry of significant scope and proportions.

I want to address briefly two sets of problems I see with assessment. The first has to do with the implications for the kind of education universities provide, and the second has to do with longer-term issues of restructuring the identity of faculty.

In its most extreme form, assessment forces us to "teach to the test." The more general problem with the emphasis on assessment is that it judges education in terms of "outcomes," that is, effects that are immediately apparent upon completion of a course or a program. This seems to me to reinforce a particular behavioral methodology in which we can isolate dependent and independent variables and measure them. Furthermore, it seems a slippery slope toward violations of academic freedom in which faculty are in essence told what to teach in the guise of being told how to teach. Perhaps we are not there yet, although we have now been told—by other faculty no less!!—that "understanding" is not an appropriate or adequate goal for our classes because it cannot be measured! If we believe, as I do, that methodologies and pedagogies imply normative values and have political consequences (they produce our students as certain kinds of people with the abilities to think in certain ways and not others), assessment raises the risk of a kind of coercion that will limit our students' abilities to think critically.

Continued on page ... 19

Part-time Academics and Professionals: We Need You

By Lori Nash, Part-time Concerns Representative



This is the perfect time to get involved with the union. We are at the end of a contract and will be starting the process of negotiations for the new contract. There are three ways that part-time professionals and academics can become more active in the union.

First, be sure to vote on the next contract. The only way to be able to vote on the next contract is to be a union member. Don't worry if you are unsure about whether or not you are a member. You are not alone. An easy way to find out about your status is to look at your pay stub. Look at what it says under "After Tax Deductions." Does it say "agency fee payer" or does it say "member"? If you are a member, you are all set for voting for the next contract. If you are an agency fee payer, you are not eligible to vote on the next contract. Signing up is easy, though, so don't worry. Contact me at lori.nash@oswego.edu or 312-3264, or Beth Canale at uup@oswego.edu or 312-3263 at the campus UUP office. Membership forms are available on our chapter website too. Becoming a member does not cost anything additional; you just need to sign a membership card.

Just be sure to get yourself signed up ASAP.

Second, be sure to let the Negotiations Team know what you want in the next contract. There are several ways to do this: talk to the Negotiations Team directly; fill out a membership suggestion form and send it to the team; e-mail Jamie Dangler, Chief Negotiator; and/or, complete the member survey. The Negotiations Team has been travelling around the state, visiting UUP chapters to find out what UUP members want in the next contract. The Team was at our campus on October 25. This was an excellent opportunity to make your voice heard, and several of you did so. Thank you! Your comments were recorded by the Negotiations Team, and these will be discussed when the Negotiations Team sits down with the Negotiations Committee to determine priorities for the next contract. They will also consider the data they are collecting from a member survey they mailed to each member in mid-November. Look for it in the mail, and be sure to send it back before the December 15th deadline. Becoming involved in the contract process is empowering, so be sure to participate.

Continued on page ... 15



Negotiations Team member Anne Wiegard of Cortland, left, chats with Negotiations Committee members Lori Nash of Oswego and Peter Brown of New Paltz.

The SUNY Budget and PHEEIA

By Winfield Ihlow, VP for Professionals



[Information in this article comes from the UUP Research Office in Albany, and was presented by Phil Smith at the Winter Delegate Assembly, February 2010.]

"The mission of the state university system shall be to provide the people of New York educational services of the highest quality with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population in a complete range of academic, professional and vocational postsecondary programs . . ."

--- New York State Education Law, Section 351

Let me start with two questions:

1. Is SUNY a state university system, or just a collection of separate and independent colleges?
2. Is SUNY a state supported university, to be affordable and accessible by the citizens of the state of New York, or not?

At the beginning of this year, the New York State budget had a \$7.4 billion deficit. The budget was expected to grow to over \$11 billion if \$4.8 billion in cuts could not be found. What's more, the budget situation was expected to

worsen because Federal Stimulus funds would expire at the end of the year. The deficit was expected to run to nearly \$6.3 billion in budget year 2011-2012. Thus, the attraction of plundering the SUNY budget is likely to continue through the 2012-2013 budget year.

This means that either SUNY will be financially eviscerated, or else funds to support the operation of the university will need to be raised from other sources, like tuition increases or from outside sources, like corporate grants.

The state budget proposal at that time targeted \$118 million in the SUNY budget. Although this figure constitutes only a small percentage of the overall cut proposed to state agencies, it represents 24% of this year's SUNY budget. Coming on the heels of cuts to 25% of the SUNY budget since 2008, this latest round brings our losses to over \$550 million dollars, meaning that SUNY has lost a higher percentage of its state-funding over the past two years than any other state agency or functional program area. As enacted, the Governor's budget means that state funding for SUNY amounts to \$84 million less than it was in 1990-91.

Continued on page ... 12

STATE ACTIONS	STATE CUTS
2008-09 Mid-Year Cuts	\$148,000,000
2009-10 Enacted Budget Funding Reductions	\$172,000,000
2009-10 Mid-Year Cut	\$90,000,000
Proposed 2010-11 Executive Budget Cut	\$149,000,000*
21-Day Amendment Reallocation from Statutory Colleges (Cornell & Alfred)	\$3,500,000
TOTAL State Funding Cuts If the Governor's Recommendations are Enacted	\$562,500,000*

Against Assessment

By Bennet Schaber, English



A little over seven years ago, when I first began to serve as chair and when my department, English & Creative Writing, was first registering what appeared to us as a new and rapidly intensifying regime of the administration of more and more of our activities, a regime that not only tracked and assessed these activities, but that also demanded our ongoing participation in these procedures, thus not only amplifying and expanding our duties, but noticeably modifying their very shape and texture, I circulated to the faculty a short essay by Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control" (1990). There, to somewhat simplify, Deleuze outlines a shift from the "disciplinary societies" to the "societies of control" of his essay's title. He borrowed the term "disciplinary" from Michel Foucault, who located the emergence of this kind of society in the period of the European Enlightenment. In short, what Foucault discerned in a Europe committed, at least formally, to Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, was the construction of what he described as an "archipelago" of institutions—educational, penal, medical, military, industrial—the very work of which, although "positive" and on the face of things non-repressive (especially in contradistinction to the *Ancien Régime* they replaced), gave rise to a striated, articulated and hierarchical system of subordinations, the supervisory effects of which were expanded forms of un-freedom, inequality, and non-fraternity.

The paradox here, and we've lived with it for a long time, is that universal education—the very institution required for the exercise of "the public use of reason," that central tenet of Kantian Enlightenment—also functioned, by virtue of its hierarchies, supervisory examinations, disciplinary procedures, etc. to undermine the free use of reason for whose end it was created. Thus the

university—and Kant already recognized this in his own writing about it—has been in full deconstruction for at least the last two centuries. At odds with itself, oscillating between equality and inequality, between its aspirations and its institutional facticity, the university continually deferred its end, both in the sense of its purpose and conclusion, its *telos* and *eschaton*. And lest this be taken for metaphysical mumbo jumbo: who among us, whether as teacher or student, has not felt the terrible but dizzying ambivalence and ambiguity of being part of the university in its widest acceptance? Who does not every day question the wisdom and truth of what and how we teach and learn? In a sense, and I hope I will not be misunderstood, the university has been driven by its own impossibility: free to question everything and then, free to question even that freedom, in theory and in act.

In his essay, Deleuze notes the gradual eclipse of a society structured according to the discipline, training, subordination and supervision of individuals (just think of how schooling depends upon lining up, sitting in rows, moving at the sound of a bell, passing examinations and moving up in grades, etc.) and the emergence of another society based upon control, flexibility, passwords, card swipes, and shifting gates, walls and barriers. In the words of Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Whereas disciplinary society relied on independent variables or molds, control society thrives on inseparable variations and modulations: factories have given way to businesses with 'souls' focused on metaproduction and on destroying unions through inexorable rivalry; schools have given way to continuing education and constant assessment...." Her list goes on. But here I only want to note that if the university of the disciplinary society was driven by its own impossibility, this new school is driven precisely by its possibility and ubiquity, its essence

Continued on page ... 15

"The Unglamorous But Worthwhile Duties of the Union Activist":

Taking a Page out of Alice Walker's Revolutionary Book

By Maureen Curtin, Membership Development



The federal government's plan to extend tax cuts which were meant to expire this year guarantees that the wealthiest Americans will grow richer. This wealth, concentrated and consolidated for and by a tiny percentage of Americans, dictates the economic policy of all three branches of government. This wouldn't bother me a bit, really, if only it meant that, finally, the rest of us might exercise some civic responsibility. But that would mean getting exercised.







Instead, when I listen to conversations among faculty on campus, conversations about how we must simply accept cuts to faculty lines, order fewer pens, run off fewer copies, give back raises, resign ourselves to shoddy machines, I hear colleagues rationalize, "After all, where is the money going to come from?" And I want to ask some of the smartest people I know whether we might accomplish more if rather than conceding to economic deficits we worked together to overcome political deficits.

In "Imposed Amnesia," Henry Giroux argues that the forces on the left which are positioned to organize the popular disenchantment of Americans in a defense of democracy and against further exploitation have simply conceded. These concessions might be explained in different ways. On the one hand, certain popular theoretical positions in the academy have underwritten neoliberal discourse in the media and think tanks where public opinion is shaped. On the other hand, many academics see themselves as individual operators whose sanctity of self is compromised when asked to work in solidarity. In effect, we have all colluded with the destruction of public values and public spaces.

To reverse this destruction, Giroux calls for rallying behind and supporting the work of Michael Lerner, Chris Hedges, Noam Chomsky, Bill Moyers, and Amy Goodman. Locally, of course, we can urge WRVO to pick up Amy Goodman's "Democracy Now," but I wish to

call on my colleagues at SUNY-Oswego and SUNY wide to go one step further.

Rather than simply work to "reclaim a democratic imagery," as Giroux puts it, I propose, like other writers in the newsletter, to resist the cannibalistic work of assessment so as to recover time, which is, itself, so crucial to thinking, questioning, and talking together. I also propose specific projects on which we might work together. These include:

-  consolidating our collective intellectual and research skills as scholars to conduct the kind of information gathering which will support policy development among regional groups like the Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS)
-  partnering with K-12 educators (NYSUT) in saturating local and regional media with writing campaigns which make the case for public education and make the case against the Orwellian doublespeak that disguises privatization in the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act (PHEEIA)
-  calling on faculty governance to move beyond a transactional approach to doing business as usual and to mobilize to work politically—by challenging administrative initiatives which convert education into "educational experiences," for example
-  setting a goal to increase student voting to 75% and lobbying for a political corollary to Quest on Election Day to maximize the chances of meeting this goal
-  collaborating with SA to develop a campaign which frames the terms of the student loan bubble before it bursts (UUP "Words to Whiz By" anyone?)
-  lobbying for blocs of "Student Life" programming focused on issue-based, town hall discussions—distributed across various media platforms—and partnering with SA to develop these projects

Continued on page ... 16

An Open Letter: The Many Costs of the Administrative Model in the University

By Ed Lonky, Psychology

I offer these observations in the spirit of stimulating a healthy debate, one which I hope will lead to a renewed sense of union activism that advocates a more adversarial role with administration.

In advance of President Stanley's visit to the Psychology Department on November 15th faculty were asked to submit questions. Among the questions I was interested in having her address was one which reflects a current discussion ongoing in higher education (at least if we are to believe the Chronicle of Higher Education and AAUP). It is one which has come to be summarized by the phrase "careerism in higher education administration." It reflects the shift in the ranks of deans, provosts and presidents (and their assistants, associates, and advisors) away from what is identified as a traditionalist model where administrators come from the senior ranks of faculty who are exemplars of the teacher scholar model toward a corporate model where being an administrator is seen as a viable vocational track pursued by junior faculty often from the time they arrive on campus.

The result is an intuitively obvious one; no longer do we have administrators who have risen through the ranks of the professorate to senior status on the basis of peer review, bringing with them to administration the sensibilities of decades in the role of teacher and scholar. Instead we have college administrations populated by those whose career path leads them increasingly away from teaching and scholarship into service activities and with the liberal use of administrative release from teaching, into part time and then full time roles as coordinators, directors, assistants and associates. This results in an administration with a very different profile of sensitivities, one in which faculty are seen as interchangeable, where instructional costs are to be minimized and productivity maximized. At the na-

tional level one aspect of the debate centers on the claim that this shift in the administrative model is responsible for the fact that at colleges and universities over the past decade, administrative costs have risen at rates that are variously estimated at 3, 4, or 5 times the rates of teaching faculty costs over the same period of time. Concurrently, administrator salaries have risen at annual rates that almost always exceed those increases in faculty salaries.

It was against this backdrop that I sought from our local chapter and from UUP data that might validate at least at the Oswego campus these national claims. Those data are nowhere to be found. This in itself is disturbing as it suggests a fundamental inability to hold accountable in terms of one of the most direct metrics (\$\$\$) an administration increasingly indifferent and even hostile to its faculty. It also makes a reasoned discussion of this issue of campus leadership models all the more difficult to engage in if we do not have some of the most important outcome data. How can we judge the answer to the question of administrative costs at Oswego over the past decade if reliable and valid data are not accessible?

A broader question of course is whether or not this is a discussion worthy of having. When I look back at the instructional faculty changes that have occurred in the psychology department during my tenure; that is, a department that has gone from 32 full time PhD's to the equivalent of 16, and in recent years close to half of all students in psychology courses being taught by part time and adjunct faculty I certainly think it is. I make no claim as to the reasons for these cuts, only that challenging the administration on its costs and leadership model is something that I think our union should do.

VOTE COPE

VOTE-COPE (Voice of Teachers for Education - Committee of Political Education) is the political action fund organized through New York State United Teachers (NYSUT). It is non-partisan in that it is not used to support any particular political party, but rather can be used to support any political party or politician or political activity that will further the our interests as UUP members and employees of the SUNY system.

By law, our mandatory union contributions (dues or negotiation fees) cannot be used for political activities. VOTE-COPE funds must be voluntary contributions by the members specifically for these activities. A state-wide committee governs the expenditure of our VOTE-COPE funds, so that they will be used in the most efficient way to further our interests in the support of education and our labor.

It is a fact of life that money enables us to support people and activities in the political world. When UUP can put funding behind our political support, then those in power will pay attention when we make our interests known.


If all of the members of our chapter of UUP were to contribute a dollar out of each paycheck, then our campus would be contributing over \$1000 per month to VOTE-COPE. Would you really miss \$2 a month out of your paycheck? Hopefully, most of us could manage to contribute even a few dollars each paycheck to help fund the political activities our union, so they can wield even more influence in government decision- making.

UUP VOTE-COPE Voluntary Contribution forms can be obtained from your UUP office in 305 Snygg Hall.

If you call ext 3263, or call Winfield Ihlow at ext 2558, we will send you the form through campus mail, and you can fill it out and send it in to Payroll Office. It only takes about a minute or two to fill out the form.

Please consider making a VOTE-COPE contribution through payroll deduction.

Your donation helps ensure NYSUT and UUP political activists will be able to raise issues of crucial importance to union members in all constituencies and professions. VOTE-COPE keeps *your* stake in those issues on the table for candidates and officials who share our priorities.

<p>PLEASE RETAIN FOR YOUR RECORDS</p> <p>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.</p> <p>VOTE/COPE funds, by law, are kept separate from those of NYSUT and UUP.</p> <p>Contribution Per Pay Period: _____ Effective (M/D/Y): _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">VOTE/COPE Solicits and Accepts Voluntary Contributions. CONTRIBUTIONS OR GIFTS TO VOTE/COPE ARE NOT TAX DEDUCTIBLE.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> UUP: (800) 342-4206 06/07</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">UUP VOTE/COPE Voluntary Contribution United University Professions, P.O. Box 15143, Albany, NY 12212-5143</p> <p>Last Name _____ First _____ MI _____</p> <p>Address (Include Street, City, State, Zip) _____</p> <p>Campus _____ Department _____ E-mail _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AUTHORIZATION FOR VOLUNTARY DEDUCTION</p> <hr/> <p>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.</p> <p>Contribution Per Pay Period (Circle One) \$1 \$2 \$5 \$10 Other \$ _____</p> <p>Signature _____ Date _____</p>
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President's Notes continued from pg 1

In May, Governor Paterson attempted to inflict furloughs on many state employees. Essentially, the Governor sought to require certain state employees to stay home for one day each week and forego one day's pay. Since many of those affected by these furloughs would have been SUNY employees represented by UUP, UUP acted quickly in a federal court, seeking an injunction against the furloughs. Fortunately, the injunction was granted, averting thousands of UUP employees from having to forego precious pay.

The biggest current issue for UUP is the negotiation of a new contract to cover employees represented by UUP. The current contract expires on July 1, 2011, which means that a new contract will need to be negotiated. The process is already under way. The negotiations team –the people who actually will negotiate with the State on behalf of UUP–has been selected and is gearing up for the actual bargaining sessions. These sessions will commence sometime in the spring semester. Between now and when negotiations commence, UUP is formulating the proposals the team will bring to the table. UUP wants to ensure that the proposals the team brings to the bargaining table reflect the interests and desires of the members, and member input is being sought in a number of different ways. The UUP website has member suggestion forms that allow members to voice their concerns over the present contract and their suggestions for a new one. In addition, a negotiations survey is currently circulating to all UUP members, inviting members to express their opinions on various contractual issues. Further, the negotiations team visited Oswego on October 25 to meet with Oswego bargaining unit members and solicit firsthand their concerns about the current contract. Finally, two of your colleagues, Jim Nichols and

Rich Hughes, are contacting employees to solicit their preferences regarding what the negotiations team should bring to the table. Of course, if you have any suggestions related to the new contract, feel free to contact me personally or to contact the UUP office on campus, and we will be sure that your suggestions are considered by the negotiations team. In December, another group called the negotiations committee will meet to examine all the suggestions that have been made on all of the campuses and formulate the proposals that the negotiations team will bring to the bargaining table. Both Lori Nash and I will be on the negotiations committee so you can be sure that we will do our best to see that the suggestions of Oswego employees are made part of the bargaining proposals.

As stated earlier, the current contract expires on July 1, 2011. Needless to say, everyone at UUP hopes that the new agreement will be reached before that date so that there will be a smooth transition from the current contract to a new one. In the event that a new agreement is not reached, however, you should be aware that many of the benefits you have under the current agreement will continue. A principle known as "the Triborough" doctrine states that any provision in the current UUP contract that does not have a specific expiration date must continue when a contract expires until a new one is reached. Therefore, things like medical coverage, dental coverage, and the grievance procedure will not expire on July 1, 2011. So, while there will not be any further pay increases until the new contract is reached, many of your current benefits will continue. In addition, the current contract provides for one more round of DSI in the fall of 2011.

Continued on page ... 11

**UUP
Contract
Negotiation Updates**

Available at:
<http://www.uupinfo.org/negotiations/index.html>

Getting Active in the Union continued from pg 2

Similarly, the local chapter has committees, nearly all of which have vacancies. Because our chapter executive board meetings are open to everyone, I would invite you to attend and see what we are doing. Contact any of our executive board members or the UUP office (X3263 or email uup@oswego.edu) to find out when we will meet next. This is posted on the chapter website calendar as well.

If you just want to be heard, do what I have just done, write something for the chapter newsletter. As you can see from this issue, we have an energetic new editor who is anxious to put you into print. Just contact her with a good idea.

Finally, whether you do or don't choose to get involved in any of the above, participate as much as you can by attending our chapter events and helping in our advocacy by sending faxes or emails, which can be easily done via the UUP website. In addition to our regular notifications, you can learn what is going on by checking out our chapter website at: www.uuposwego.org.

If you would like to know more about any of the activities discussed in this article, I am always glad to talk more about them than this limited space allows.

President's Notes continued from pg 10

In addition, over the last year, the Oswego Chapter executive board has tended to a number of issues on campus. First, a UUP-Oswego website was established and is up and running. In fact, the website was given an award at the Spring UUP statewide delegate assembly. The website is a great place for you to go and see what's happening at Oswego UUP. In addition, one round of Individual Development Awards Program (IDAP) awards was distributed in the spring, and the IDAP committee is getting ready to distribute another round. There will be one more round of awards under the current contract in the spring 2011. In addition, Oswego-UUP hosted a holiday party in December 2009, co-hosted a retirement reception in the May 2010,

and held its annual fall picnic at Fallbrook in September 2010. Finally, the Chapter worked with the campus administration to address a number of issues that affected SUNY-Oswego employees.

All in all, it has been a busy year for UUP, both at the state level and here at Oswego. The statewide executive board and the Oswego chapter executive board have done their best to ensure that your interests are represented as well as possible. We welcome input, questions and concerns from all employees represented by UUP, and we welcome your becoming involved.



The SUNY Budget and PHEEIA..... continued from pg 5

Of course, if the full-time faculty-to-student ratio of the early 90's had been maintained, there would be 2,300 more full-time faculty in the system to conduct courses for the increased number of students now attending SUNY. Even if the 2004, full-time faculty ratio had been maintained, there would be 1,000 additional full-time faculty in the system. Instead, rising numbers of contingent (part-time) faculty have been hired to teach the growing student population. Knowledgeable and dedicated, contingent faculty could contribute that much more if they had the job security and support that comes with full-time positions.

Notwithstanding the increased dependence on contingent faculty, the failure of the NY State government to support the SUNY system has resulted in the denial of admission to qualified students; the cancellation of some courses and a corresponding increase in the size of remaining classes; delayed graduations; and spiraling tuitions costs.

Once upon a time, the state government paid 70% of the cost of running the SUNY system. That percentage is now down to less than 50%. If New York State does not support SUNY with the financial resources it needs, then these funds will have to come from somewhere—namely, the one dependable income stream that the system has: STUDENTS' TUITION.

This dire situation will be further exacerbated if the Public Higher Education Empowerment & Innovation Act (PHEEIA), or "SUNY Flexibility Plan," is enacted. Students will bear the burden of being cut loose from New York State government support, and they will gain no additional benefit.

Consider that the more than \$550 million reduction in state support and tuition for the SUNY system during the past two years is equivalent to deleting the following campuses from the SUNY system: Albany, Binghamton, Brockport, Cortland,

Geneseo, and New Paltz. Or, just choose any 10 of the comprehensive colleges, like Oswego. Yet we no longer need to rely on the hypothetical to express the impact. On one side, we have begun to see the termination of degree granting programs in French, Russian, Italian, theatre, and classics at SUNY-Albany. Similarly, at SUNY-Geneseo, the programs in Communicative Disorders and Sciences, computers science, and studio arts have been terminated. This is just the beginning. Programs, departments, and campuses are being set against each other. On the other side of this scenario, we are being urged to respond to the erosion of state support by embracing privatization.

PHEEIA would give SUNY campuses the full authority to raise tuition without legislative approval. Legislative approval may at times seem an inconvenience, but it provides political oversight with political accountability when tuition is increased. Legislators have accountability to the voters (students and their parents), unlike university administrators who are not public officials and thus would neither risk nor bear consequences for tuition increases.

Furthermore, at this time, the law of the State of New York prohibits differential tuition. That is, no SUNY campus can charge a higher tuition than another because it is a "better" college or university. We are currently ONE STATE UNIVERSITY system. One college or university may offer programs not available at other colleges or universities in the system, but students are supposed to get the same quality of education at any of the campuses. Currently, New York State is required to appropriate a contribution toward tuition costs, especially for New York State residents. In addition, the state is required to appropriate funds for other SUNY revenue needs.

Continued on page ... 13

The SUNY Budget and PHEEIA..... continued from pg 12

In targeting the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), meanwhile, the Governor's 2010-11 budget compounds the cuts to SUNY. The budget cuts TAP by over \$50 million, and though the current reductions to TAP awards amount to a small increment of \$75 per student, the move sets a precedent for deeper cuts in the future. Already, these cuts reduce the maximum TAP award for two-year degree programs from \$5,000 to \$4,000 and eliminate TAP altogether for graduate students. Also, students who are married without children are seeing a decrease in the maximum TAP award--from \$5,000 to \$3,025. Together with the unchecked tuition increases PHEEIA can introduce, these cuts threaten to feed the conditions for a new, devastating economic bubble: student loan debt.

Advocates of PHEEIA distract us from the looming threat to students, SUNY, and the greater public good by emphasizing privatization above all else. In effect, PHEEIA would take the place of the state and, in the absence of funding, create pressure for SUNY campuses to lease campus properties and to enter into contracts with private parties with very limited oversight. This is described as "flexibility," but flexibility for what and for whom? Is it flexibility when the state abdicates its responsibility and the resulting deficit compels administrators to pursue the kinds of development which compromises campus green spaces or business partnerships which are not directly relevant to educating students?

Under current law, legislators and elected officials, like the State Comptroller and the State Attorney General, must approve contracts and other related transactions. Where private arrangements have arisen in the past, campuses have been stuck with additional expenses and obligations which further drain resources from campus. SUNY Farmingdale, for instance, became responsible for the maintenance of a building when a pharmaceutical research company vacated the campus. PHEEIA proposes a system which would place contract approvals in the hands of an executive board with little oversight or accountability.

In New York State, the PHEEIA proposal would eliminate State appropriations for SUNY tuition and

all other campus revenues apart from direct student aid (i.e., TAP). This would permit SUNY campuses to co-mingle tuition with other campus revenues and to spend those dollars without any oversight or limitation. This would greatly diminish accountability for SUNY campus' spending decisions and virtually eliminate the transparency of SUNY operations. With funding principally dependent upon tuition, SUNY would then have unrestrictive freedom to operate with secrecy. Conversely, with State funding of the university, there is legislative oversight. Oversight is cumbersome and annoying, but it tends to restrict abuses.

In addition to compromising SUNY's mandate, PHEEIA imperils labor. If each campus becomes independent of the SUNY system, then what would become of the status of our UUP contract? After all, the UUP contract is with the state of New York and the SUNY system. If each campus becomes an independent operator, then would UUP need to negotiate with each campus separately? Could the same staffing levels, compensation levels and benefits packages be maintained by each campus separately? Could labor protections be sufficiently maintained, or would outsourcing become a possibility? Under a state-wide system with state-government oversight, the unity of a state-wide contract makes it possible to ensure employment security for academic faculty and professional staff.

If, on the other hand, the SUNY campuses are cut loose from State appropriations because of tuition independence, then the State could abandon funding the university even further than it already has. PHEEIA would make tuition the main source of the SUNY campuses' revenue growth. For example, SUNY has promised to increase the full-time faculty by 2200 over the next 10 years. But, in order to fund this promise, SUNY would have to triple current tuition. No one disputes the need for an increase in full-time faculty by 2200, if not by more. But, isn't SUNY a State supported university, and shouldn't the State step up to its responsibility to fund the university? Shouldn't the SUNY administration be advocating with the governor's office and the legislature for preserving and increasing State appropriations?

Continued on page ... 16

Editorial Policy

The opinions expressed in *In Touch* are those of the writer. They do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the United University Professions.

In Touch encourages letters to the editor about union, campus and university issues, politics and other membership concerns. Letters should be e-mailed and include the writer's name, telephone number and e-mail address.

Limit the length, when possible, to 500 words. In the competition for space, shorter letters most often will receive preference. Letters will be published based on the following criteria: the order in

which they are received, space availability and timeliness of the letter's topic. Letters submitted by first-time writers may also receive preference. Names of writers will be withheld upon request. Inappropriate pieces will not be published.

In Touch reserves the right to edit all letters. We cannot guarantee that all letters will be published. The final decision is at the discretion of the editor. Please send your letters to uup@oswego.edu.

The Editorial Policy was liberally borrowed from SUNY Potsdam's *Within The Ranks*.

Attention !!!

Visit your UUP Oswego Chapter website for UUP information:
Benefits, Contract, Tuition Assistance Waiver Form, and UUP News
<http://www.uuposwego.org/>



UUP
End of Semester
Reception is
December 10th
in the
Sheldon Ballroom
4:00 to 6:30
with the
Oswego Jazz Project

Part-time Academics and professionals: We Need Youcontinued from pg 4

Finally, join the Part-time Concerns Committee. In fact, you'll be helping to found the Committee. At present, part-time issues are raised by me, or one of the other Executive Board members, at our monthly Executive Board meetings. I suspect that there are a lot of part-time issues that are not getting addressed because the members of the Executive Board are not aware of the concerns. Many part-time concerns are never known by anyone but the person who is suffering, typically because the person with the concern is afraid to raise the issue (after all, part-time academics and professional do not have job security), and/or because the person with the concern believes that nothing can be done to solve the problem. Hav-

ing an Oswego Part-time Concerns Committee will help us help part-time people better. Be sure to watch for the announcement of the first meeting. And, in the mean time, feel free to contact me to let me know of your interest.

There is no better time to get involved with the union. Join me in helping to ensure that part-time issues are a union priority in this next round of negotiations. Email: lori.nash@oswego.edu Ext. 3264.

Against Assessment (Schaber).....continued from pg 6

continuous and constant and, increasingly, without a physical localization. And while the previous university was forced to defer its end (and hence, at least occasionally, to thwart its own instrumentality), the new school has no end: it quite simply, functions (or occasionally, malfunctions). And where the university was crucially political, the site of dissensus and contesting forces, the new school is technocratic, the site of an ongoing optimization. And where the criteria for success were themselves under deconstruction, as it were, they are now self-proclaiming. In short, education since the Enlightenment has been perennially in crisis because it has been, in every sense of the word, critical. I myself cannot remember any time in the last half century when I have not been told that 'American education is in crisis'. Well, that crisis may soon be over; and there's plenty of reason to be plenty scared.

My point is not to mourn the passing of the university, but to join in the effort to construct a new one by resisting, first and foremost, the new forms of control currently being implemented and to

keep the university safe for deconstruction under new conditions (political, technological, economic, aesthetic, theological). Assessment is one of the names of the new forms of control and it has a history one moment of which I'd like to briefly explore before coming to an even briefer conclusion.

In 1995 Robert Barr and John Tagg published "From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education," an essay that both summarized and rhetorically reformulated already existing discourses of educational reform, particularly those associated with the "assessment movement," and proposed a program and way of thinking for the future of those discourses and their objectives—a new paradigm, precisely. The essay remains, in many ways, a remarkable piece of rhetoric and, also in many ways, a not unremarkable labor of thought. What's more, it still strikes the reader as remarkably honest and for the most

Continued on page ... 17

The SUNY Budget and PHEEIA..... continued from pg 13

At present, SUNY tuition increases are tied to the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI), a measure of the inflation rate applicable to United States higher education. More precisely, the measure is the increase in costs in a defined basket of goods and services typically purchased by institutions of higher education. Common fund Institute, a non-profit organization devoted to the management of college and university endowments, has calculated HEPI on the basis of the fiscal year ending each June 30. Using HEPI, SUNY can institute across-the-board tuition increases at only two-and-a-half times the five-year rolling average of the HEPI index. This creates a ceiling for tuition increases, thus curtailing excesses. By contrast, the differential tuition proposed under PHEEIA would allow increases at SUNY's discretion on top of the HEPI index cap. Such increases would not be subject to any limitation or restriction. Without rationality and predictability, how could students and prospective students count on future SUNY tuition decisions?

Make no mistake: the triumph of PHEEIA would mean that the state has reneged on its mandate to ensure an affordable and accessible university for the citizens of New York. Join UUP in fighting the "flexibility" proposals that would permit SUNY to further shift the funding burden from the State as a whole to students and their families. Ultimately, UUP opposition to PHEEIA and other proposed cuts to the SUNY budget by the Governor is an expression of our support for a public university and for the students whom we serve as teachers and staff. Opposing PHEEIA is also an affirmation of equality and democracy. Or, as George Lakoff reminds us, writing about a comparable scenario in California higher education, "The privatization issue goes beyond public education. It is about whether we have a democracy that works for the common good or a plutocracy that privileges the wealthy and powerful."

"The Unglamorous But Worthwhile Duties of the Union Activist" continued from pg 7

→ developing from those partnerships radio, theatre, and film projects which can be distributed to those sites in the community and region where the voting blocs are strongest

→ inviting public school educators to campus to collaborate on expanding those projects for distribution to those sites in the community and region where the voting blocs are traditionally weakest

These ideas may be ambitious but, ultimately, they require more diligence than courage. As American novelist Alice Walker wrote when she reflected on what defines the work of the black revolutionary artist, "The real revolution is always concerned with the least glamorous stuff. With raising a reading level from second grade to third. With simplifying history and writing it down

(or reciting it) for the old folks. With helping illiterates fill out food-stamp forms—for they must eat, revolution or not." Walker echoes Giroux in this respect: both tell us that revolution arises from pedagogy. Our work, indeed our charge, is political. Embrace it.

Please contact me to indicate your interest in participating in one or more of these projects. The project which receives the greatest interest will take precedence as we organize a plan to transform economic deficits into political gains: mfcurtin13126@yahoo.com

Against Assessment (Schaber)..... continued from pg 15

part accurate about the sources and kinds of resistance and enthusiasm it expects from its various addressees. That said, like any polemic, it often mischaracterizes its principal adversary and, more crucially, continually puts on display a series of important contexts without which it becomes increasingly impossible to understand the exact significance of the argument. I have tried to hint at that context in my too brief account of the society of control and the university in and as crisis.

By now the authors' argument should sound familiar; indeed, many of my colleagues repeat it every day, unaware of its origins and heedless of its actual effects. It goes something like this: **A)** Under the "Instruction Paradigm," colleges provide instruction. **B)** Under the new "Learning Paradigm," colleges produce learning "by whatever works best." **C)** What is at stake then is not "access" to higher education but "success," the achievement of a number of objectives from "skills" and "knowledge" to "ever-higher graduation rates" and "increasing learning standards." In sum, an institution formerly organized around teaching thus re-organizes itself around learning. In the authors' own words, the Learning Paradigm "expects to increase learning outputs" and "to do so continuously." The paradigm, therefore, by emphasizing learning, imagines a college education as flexible and continuous, governed by ends according to which all means are adjusted. In a sense, like your computer or your new car, education can be and must be customizable. And like your computer and your car, this will require ongoing diagnostics and upgrades external to the operations themselves, as you might receive from say OnStar or Microsoft or a GPS device.

What makes this all function, and as I hope the words "diagnostics" and "upgrades" and "customization" suggest, is called "assessment." According to Barr and Tagg: "The key structure for changing the rest of the system is an institution wide assessment and information system--an essential structure in the Learning Paradigm, and a key means for getting there. It would provide constant, useful feedback on institutional perform-

ance. It would track transfer, graduation, and other completion rates. It would track the flow of students through learning stages (such as the achievement of basic skills) and the development of in-depth knowledge in a discipline. It would measure the knowledge and skills of program completers and graduates. It would assess learning along many dimensions and in many places and stages in each student's college experience." The system, as Barr and Tagg imagine it, must function continuously (because performance must always be improving) and externally (because it is not about grades in specific courses but about performance or outcomes). Optimally, the system functions according to cybernetic principles, just like a thermostat. Set the desired temperature (or learning outcome) and constantly monitor the environment (assess) to control the heating system ("learning activities").

In fact, the "learning environments" proposed by Barr and Tagg "may even be 'teacherless.'" That is, given the cybernetic model proposed, a teacher may in the long term be more of an inhibitor than facilitator of the data inputs and outputs of this "learner-centered" model, so-called. Of course, these environments would be "designed" by teachers, but teachers need not be present to answer to that design. What replaces this critical or reflective moment is exactly assessment, the ongoing process of adapting means to prescribed ends. And what may be most pernicious in this "efficiency" model of feedback-loop education, is the complete excision of every form of criticism or contestation.

In 1969, Harold Taylor famously imagined a university of "students without teachers" in the name of "the creation of new models of human community which can change the quality and character of life." It is not difficult to measure the distance from his "students without teachers" to Barr and Tagg's "learners" without teachers. It is the distance from dissensus to adaptation, from engaged thinking to outcomes.

Continued on page ... 18

Against Assessment (Schaber)..... continued from pg 17

Barr and Tagg end their essay with a three-point program for promoting their new paradigm. First, they encourage their supporters to “speak within the new paradigm,” that is, never stop repeating the phrases “quality learning,” “learning programs,” learning outcomes,” etc. Today you’ll have trouble finding an administrator who hasn’t taken this advice to heart, even and especially if they have no real idea of what these phrases mean or where exactly they’ve come from. Second, the authors stress that assessment is the real key to the implementation of their program because it requires the specification of learning outcomes and initiates the closing of the feedback loop. Finally, they encourage the funding of education based precisely on the results of these practices and acknowledge this model will be attractive to legislators who are eager to save money and demonstrate “results,” precisely.

I should note that Barr and Tagg generated their essay out of their experiences at community colleges, and that they nowhere think of higher education as generating the new forms of life imagined by Taylor and, poignantly I think, by students everywhere today, so starved by impoverished forms of networked sociality that the learning paradigm promises only to expand, a kind of Facebook university. What Barr and Tagg do imagine, however, is preparing desperate students for flexible forms of labor. What they leave out, of course, is that there is no way the ruling class would ever consign its children to (virtual) institutions of this sort, which leaves the “learners” of Barr and Tagg’s new paradigm trained but without cultural capital, adapted but without the forms of life from which (real) politics and aesthetics grow.

It is worthwhile then, to return to Chun’s comments upon the “societies of control,” to the link she makes between factories “focused on metaproduction and on destroying unions” and schools “given way to continuing education and constant assessment.” The ongoing assault on organized labor, couched in much the same rhetoric as the assault on the university, is more than anything the attempt to wrest from working

people the material conditions to create their own forms of life while putting into its place corporate and telecommunicational flux. And the ongoing assault on the university—and on all education—constitutes the same attempt to diminish and marginalize resistant forms of individual and collective autonomy and, yes, control.

On the first page of their essay, Barr and Tagg make the following analogy, one they believe will cinch their case in advance: “To say the purpose of college is to provide instruction [as opposed to ‘producing learning’] is like saying that General Motors’ business is to operate assembly lines.” Again, we encounter the link between the factory and the school; and again the elision of the workers at the expense of the bottom line. But isn’t the end of every practice of production the production of the forms and conditions of human life? And are not organized labor and, no less, the university faculty and its students, two of the collectives responsible for precisely that demand? Perhaps the university faculty and the union member have never been closer to their selfsame identity than at this moment.

Assessment is only one aspect of an overdetermined process reshaping much of contemporary education. My contention is that it is to be resisted in the name of the difficult Enlightenment principles informing the modern university now everywhere under assault. That resistance has to start first by seriously analyzing and discussing the complex conditions under which faculty and students teach, learn and, yes, work. And it will have to include and acknowledge the equality of the increasingly numerous and increasingly marginalized forms of adjunct, part-time and contingent teaching and learning. Second, it will entail a radicalization of who we are and what we do. And it will require the acknowledgement that all forms of resistance imply forms of risk. All of this will require forms of self-control, because otherwise, control will be nothing but the implementation of programs beyond our control.

Continued on page ... 19

Assessment, or The End of Education (Rosow)..... continued from pg 3

The longer-term problems are, to me, at least as troubling if not more so. We can probably avoid the worst of the coercion in our classrooms (although some faculty, more than others, will feel the pressures to conform to methodologies and pedagogies at odds with their best judgments and even political positions). The long-term problem inheres in the mantra that assessment must be an on-going process. Assessment only works if we continually do it and create continual feedback loops. Assessment, then, only works if we continue to do assessment. Its point is (drum-roll please): assessment. The fact that assessment takes so much time is part of its effect. This is a classic disciplinary technology. It routinizes patterns of behavior that instantiate administration as the normal activity of faculty. Faculty are now subjects who must think of themselves as administrators and their programs as entrepreneurial enterprises that efficiently produce products ("outcomes") our customers want and, presumably, need.

So, what should we do about this? We ought to reject the assessment regime and return to an

emphasis on programs of evaluation. First, of course, we need to make clear that as faculty we already evaluate our programs and our students' knowledge on a regular basis; and we agree that where we don't, we should. Then, we have to establish that assessment is not the same as evaluation; in fact, it works against evaluation. Evaluation is a process of reflection, of thinking about what we do in classrooms and in programs, while assessment, we are told, implies the measurement of discrete outcomes. Would you evaluate a work of art based primarily on how much it sells for at Sotheby's? Is The- lonius Monk's "Round about Midnight" a great piece of music only because many others have recorded it and because Clint Eastwood used it as a theme song in a movie? We can be pressed, and as academics we ought to be pressed, to articulate criteria of evaluation, but this should be thoughtful, full of thought, not based on calculations demanded by political programs that seek to evacuate much of the critical and democratic elements of higher education.

Against Assessment (Schaber)..... continued from pg 18

Some simple things might be worth trying out. When a provost or dean or chair asks you to be involved in any form assessment, politely refuse. If one of those same administrators offers to send you to a conference in Las Vegas or San Antonio to learn about assessment, politely refuse. You might offer to take the money to attend a regional conference on biodiversity, but it's unlikely you'll get a yes on that one! When emails arrive from ETS or AAC&U or Pearson or any of the other groups, profit or non-profit, asking you to complete a survey or offering you a free trial of their assessment instruments, just delete it. The assessment industry lives on data; it eats it and shits it. Starve it! When you find yourself involved in a program review or self-study, emphasize, in your final document, the difference between critical self-reflection and cybernetics. Make your pro-

gram's self-study a transformative and even joyful occasion for thinking. Assessment abhors thinking. Finally, for now, talk to one another and to students about assessment. Frankly politicize it. Because it's really about politics, about a people's university.

In an op-ed piece in *The New York Times* (11/18/08), Peter Salins, former provost of SUNY, writes that, "the university collects a gold mine of student data." He is correct; and he's one of the people responsible for transforming SUNY into precisely a mining operation. Indeed, it is hard to understand how a university could be so poor with such wealth in its midst. But neither students nor teachers seem to profit from this data, which more often than not turns out to be the gold from which is fashioned the cross upon which, once more....

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Christopher Hockey

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