

FROM THE PRESIDENT

A. W. (BILL) GODFREY

In 1993 the Republican Senate minority put out a document entitled "Fragile Giant: SUNY in an Age of Disinvestment" which outlined the shortsightedness and folly of reducing state tax levy funding of SUNY. The Democratic Senate minority committee has just issued a document entitled "SUNY: Rethinking, Shrinking or Sinking" which is highly critical of the Trustees "Rethinking SUNY" document. Among the observations are:

- State tax support has dropped from 84% to 49% in less than 10 years.
- As a result of budget cuts, tuition has climbed from \$1350 to \$3400 since 1988.
- Cuts in student aid have affected the perception of SUNY as a stable institution and have resulted in a drop in applications --as much as 10% to the university centers and 23% to the colleges of technology. Among the recommendations are that funding be restored to the 95-96 level. TAP should be restored to its current level and linked to the SUNY tuition level.
- A future increase in tuition should be averted.

- Differential tuition should not be permitted.

The full document is available in the UUP Office.

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Contract/Benefit Update

Bill Scheuerman, the statewide President of UUP, visited the campus on May 1 to explain why contract negotiations are virtually at an impasse. The state is insisting that a provision be included to allow them to contract services out or, even worse, to contract them in. This could result in the loss of many jobs and benefits for many of our members. To illustrate a worst case scenario: an entire academic department could be retrenched and selected members of that department could be rehired through the Research Foundation without tenure and reduced salary and benefits. Similarly, a service department could be retrenched and some employees rehired on Research without permanent appointment and with reduced benefits.

The UUP negotiating team has resisted the inclusion of such language in the contract which will weaken UUP as a bargaining unit and make members vulnerable to a capricious administration. To apply pressure on UUP the State is withholding their payment to the Benefit Trust Fund (BTF) which includes dental, optical, and prescriptions. UUP filed an improper practice before the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB). PERB ruled that there is reasonable cause to believe the State's action violated the law. Following that decision, the State Supreme Court ordered injunctive relief requiring the State to make

payments. The State has stood by their decision not the fund the BTF.

Each member of the UUP Benefit Trust Fund should have received notices from either Empire or your HMO, depending on the carrier you have. Most employees will not have to do anything to receive the prescription coverage. You must contact Employee Services at 2-6150 before Friday, June 7, if:

- You only have BTF coverage and you do NOT have health insurance.
- You have family BTF coverage and individual health insurance.

The Empire and HMO prescription plans are different from the BTF plan. Please read the appropriate literature and if necessary contact the provider before filling or mailing prescriptions.

Dental and Vision coverage has been suspended effective May 9, 1996. Please retain all receipts during this time.

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The Chancellor's resignation has further given an impression of a de-stabilized SUNY. Even though he was not an energetic defender of SUNY, pressured by the Trustees not to campaign against the cuts, the micro-management by the Trustees undermined his authority. The lead editorial in May 2 New York Times urges that his successor be "a strong independent advocate, not a puppet." William Scheuerman, UUP President will serve on the search committee for a new Chancellor.

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One of the cornerstones of the Governor's budget is the state income tax cut whose impact for most of us has been relatively insignificant. The Governor has also promoted tax incentives to encourage employers to remain in New York State communities. Our UUP chapter co-sponsored talks by Professor Robert Lynch which demonstrated quite conclusively

that tax cuts are financed by reductions in public services and had little impact on employment. His data indicated that spending increases in education and infrastructure were more likely to be accompanied by economic growth.

His report, "Do State and Local Tax Incentives Work," is available in the UUP Office.

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Hours: 8:30 - 3:00

The Stony Brook Chapter Executive Board meets on alternate Thursdays at 1:00. All Executive Board Meetings are open to the membership. Please feel free to attend.

UUP is affiliated with NYSUT and AFT (local 2190)