

Report of the Vice President for Professionals

John J. Marino

**2009 Fall Delegate Assembly
October 2-3, 2009**

I hope you all had a good summer. It sure went by pretty fast; August was beautiful but July was not. That's the way it goes sometimes. I want to thank you for the invitations to the start of the semester functions, as well as the opportunities I have had to meet with your professionals.

On June 6 we had our first regional meeting. It was held at the Huntington Hilton on Long Island. Over 70 members participated in the four-hour event. We attracted members from the following chapters: Brooklyn HSC, Farmingdale, Old Westbury, Stony Brook and Stony Brook HSC. Our first topic was called "Show Me the Money," and we discussed the ways our members can use their performance programs to attain promotions and salary increases. The discussion was led by Yolanda Pauze (Farmingdale), Bruce Kube (Stony Brook HSC) and Bill Capowski (NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist). Our next topic was titled "Humor in the Workplace," and was presented by Donna Buehler (Stony Brook). Donna provided some activities on how to look at things in a different way and how to enjoy going to work. Our final topic was "Gripe, Grievance or Do I Work for a Difficult Boss," led by Ed O'Connell (Stony Brook), Pam Wolfskill (Stony Brook) and Susan Bloom Jones (NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist). They discussed how to recognize differences between grievances as they relate to the contract and other non-contractual problems people might encounter at work. The evaluations were all positive and the common message was that our members want more events like this one. To get the word out we provided a brochure and flier outlining the meeting agenda. In order to get an accurate count of attendees, we offered mail, phone and on line registration. This all worked well and everyone had a name tag that also identified their chapter. Of course there are always glitches, but they were easily overcome and nobody was turned away (except for the one person who was not a member and didn't even work at a SUNY campus!) We would like to have another on Long Island before the end of the year. One of the topics we are sure to cover is comp time. The most difficult part is finding a date that will work. In addition to our presenters I would like to thank Irene Stern (Stony Brook HSC), Marge Bryan (Stony Brook HSC) and Eliliana Martinez (Old Westbury) who also participated in the planning process. It was a success and our members benefited by gaining some knowledge.

We are currently planning a regional conference for the North Country chapters: Plattsburgh, Potsdam and Canton. It is scheduled for October 23-24. The chapters are planning for a general open forum with yours truly and a dinner speaker. They have also incorporated some time for people to get to know each other. The titles of the topics for the proposed agenda are: "Promotions and Salary Increases," "Workload for Professionals is Changing" and "Comp Time and On-Call Issues." The plan is for the chapter leaders to present and lead the discussions for each topic.

As you can see there is not a one-size-fits-all format for these conferences. It may not even be possible in some parts of the state. However, it is a good way to engage members who are not likely to travel great distances or who are not able to participate in other meetings we have, such as a Delegate Assembly. We will be discussing this at our Vice Presidents for Professionals Committee meeting at this DA.

The Vice Presidents for Professionals Committee (formerly known as the Professional Issues Committee) has always been comprised of chapter VPPs; the only thing that changed is the name. I've asked for the name of the committee to be changed to avoid some confusion. In the past many delegates came to this meeting and I encourage them to continue. However, the VPPs play a vital role at the chapters. We need to discuss strategies and ideas in order to give the membership they serve the greatest benefit. I also need their help since they are a crucial link to what is happening at the chapters.

At the VPP meeting at this DA, we will discuss the possibility of regional meetings in other parts of the state. I will also present a final draft of a new booklet I've created. This document provides a thorough overview of performance programs, evaluations, promotions and salary increases. It is currently in the hands of the Communications Department for formatting. The VPPs will have a chance to review the document during the meeting and make suggested changes. Then it's off to the printer and out to the chapters within the next few weeks. I am also in the process of working on a booklet for permanent appointment and it should be ready for review soon. We will also discuss the title proposal that was developed for the last round of negotiations. Before we know it we will be in contract talks again and this issue is an important one for professionals. This is a very good document and addresses many of our needs as it relates to the lack of titles and career ladder at SUNY. If there is any tweaking that needs to be done we should get started now. I would like to discuss the VPPs' goals for the upcoming year, such as setting up a Professional Issues Committee or training for the College Review Panel and Evaluation Review Committee. The list is endless and I am committed to helping the VPPs realize the goals they have for their chapters. Finally, I would like to have a Vice Presidents Retreat. This would enable us to spend a day together to discuss issues, do some training, work on a handbook for VPPs and set some goals for the future.

During the Professional Delegates Meeting on Friday from 3 to 4 p.m. we will be conducting an overview of the various contractual committees. Specifically, the College Review Panel, University Review Board, Evaluation Review Committee and the Chancellor's Tri-Partite Committee. This is something many of you have asked for and it is important for us to know how they are formed, who can serve on them, and their functions.

Last year I was asked to speak about professional issues at the American Federation of Teachers higher education conference. I have also been working with colleagues from other AFT higher ed institutions around the county to find ways of giving professionals a higher profile. This year I will be presenting at the Community College Conference in November. I've also been asked to speak at the Professional Staff Congress's meeting for professionals. Both unions are interested in our process for salary increases and promotions. There are also items in their contracts that we would like to see in ours as well.

During the next year I will continue to write articles that are relevant to professionals for publication in *The Voice*. The feedback has been positive and you are welcome to reprint them in your chapter newsletters. It is fine with me if you make some changes to give it the flavor of your chapter, but I'd appreciate receiving a copy. If you have any topics you would like to see covered, please let me know.

I am looking forward to working with you over the next year to continue to improve the working lives of the professionals at SUNY. If you have any ideas or comments, please let me know by e-mail at jmarino@uupmail.org or phone at 1-800-342-4206 and 518-640-6603 (direct line).

As always, I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at the next meeting or chapter visit.

In Solidarity,

John

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