



Report of the Membership Development Officer

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In Brief

As we begin another academic year, the budget picture does not look any brighter for SUNY. This environment presents many challenges for our union and our members. We will need to make sure that members' rights are protected and contractual obligations are met by the state. I will continue to provide the tools and information to our chapter leaders to assist them with this task.

In August, we had a very successful meeting of the Chapter MDOs. The two days were filled with presentations, interactive sessions and handouts. Members who gave me feedback said the meeting was excellent and the information was very helpful and useful. We will be following up with subsequent meetings with the Chapter MDOs.

I continue to participate on NYSUT's Fair Trade Committee. We are scheduling some speaking engagements for members of the Committee to educate NYSUT members about Fair Trade. This includes many retiree groups, too.

Member Benefits has been very busy over the summer preparing for the Fall 2009 semester. We are scheduling campus presentations and we plan to be present at the campus benefits fairs. We had an increase in UUP scholarship applications for the Spring 2009 semester. The Retiree programs for vision and dental coverage continue to enjoy enrollment growth.

Finally, I am working with the Membership Committee to address a Delegate Assembly resolution on how UUP can assist its members in these tough economic times.

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Membership Development

The Chapter Development Reference Book has been distributed to all UUP chapters. Each of the Chapter Presidents and the Chapter Membership Development Officers has received a copy. We have added some new sections, and we will continue to update this book as new items are developed or shared from other chapters. I have heard back from many of the chapters that this is a useful tool for the chapter leaders in Membership Development. It seems the Acronym section was most popular, and we will continue to add to it as needed.

The August meeting of the Chapter MDOs was a rousing success. The two-day meeting gave MDOs and other leaders a chance to interact with each other, listen to some excellent presentations, practice some skills and have some lively discussions. We had a wide variety of presentations on topics such as organizing, communicating with members, building a department representative system, tips on new employee orientations, how retirees can help, and resources available to the chapters. The meeting's overall message was that you do not have to go at it alone at the chapter. And the greatest resource is not UUP central, not NYSUT, but what you as a Chapter MDO can provide to each other. You are the ones who are in the trenches, doing the work of internal organizing.

During the meeting, people were able to express their ideas and do some real communicating. There was also an opportunity to practice public speaking, a crucial skill in the membership development area.

One of my goals is to build on the network of Chapter MDOs so we can share ideas and presentations throughout the year. We do not need to wait for a meeting to share and to have a group of people on the campuses to help out when needed during a time of crisis – or in other words, “rally the troops”.

It is important to establish a presence early with our new members. Many chapters have a new employee orientation presentation. I will be working with the Membership Committee and the Chapter MDOs to develop a PowerPoint presentation to serve as a template. This will allow each chapter to modify the presentation to suit their needs.

Membership development is every union leader's responsibility. I will continue to work with all of our chapter leaders on internal organizing and keeping our membership informed. We need to be prepared to “call” our members to action when necessary.

Membership Charts and Reports

Given the current budget climate of New York state and SUNY, it will be more important than ever to provide accurate and timely information to chapter leaders. This will require not only the membership numbers, but also a list of names.

We have been providing chapter presidents with names of people who have come off the SUNY payroll. We have done this by comparing the names of people on the payroll in the previous year to the current year. Once we have those names, the chapter president can examine why they are no longer at SUNY. This information is also useful in looking at the different departments to see if there is a concentrated turnover or reduction of members in a department.

We have also made changes to the reports posted to the UUP LeaderNet. This has helped with contacting chapter members. We continue to assist those chapter leaders that request special reports for their projects. We continue to provide information to statewide leaders, too.

Membership history is also important. We have been tracking membership totals for the past six years to establish trends within our membership. This has proven to be a valuable tool in evaluating membership changes. Currently, each chapter has an 18-month history through the posted reports on UUP LeaderNet.

If you have a request or a need for specific membership information, please contact your chapter president.

Committee Work

Membership Committee

At the Fall 2009 DA, the Membership Committee will consider several items that will help our members if they are non-renewed. This discussion started at the Chapter MDO meeting. Also, the committee will discuss the role of retirees in membership development.

The committee will also review a draft of a new employee orientation PowerPoint presentation that can be adapted to each chapter. The chapter leaders will be able to determine when and where to use this tool to introduce UUP to our new members.

I am planning to present some preliminary results from the membership survey to the committee. We are finishing up the survey analysis. We will compare these figures with survey results from four years ago.

Please feel free to stop by the committee meeting at the DA. Everyone is always welcome to attend.

NYSUT Fair Trade Committee

The committee members are available to talk with groups about Fair Trade. This could be any group, from a K-12 local to retirees to students in a classroom. If you are interested in having someone make a presentation to your members, please let me know.

There is a move to have a domestic fair trade certification process similar to the international process. This will help our domestic farmers who operate smaller farms in the United States.

You may recall that UUP delegates passed a resolution to encourage chapters to use Fair Trade products whenever possible at events, meetings and in everyday life (such as coffee in the chapter office). Look for the Fair Trade logo or go to the Fair Trade Web site to learn more about Fair Trade and the products that are available.



www.transfairusa.org

Please consider making Fair Trade chocolate your Halloween trick-or-treat choice this Halloween. You will be not only giving out great chocolate, you will also be helping the farmers and their family who produce the cocoa beans.

RELAG and COARM

COARM and RELAG will meet during the Fall DA and will discuss issues and services that affect UUP retirees. COARM is also holding a daylong meeting to host a full discussion of the issues they have identified. This meeting will occur before the DA.

Member Benefits and Services

We have seen another increase in the amount of scholarship applications for the Spring 2009 semester. We had close to 900 applications filed for the semester. We anticipate about the same number, or a slight increase, for fall.

We have also seen a steady increase of retirees enrolling in the dental and vision programs. We have more than

1,300 retirees in the dental program and close to 800 in the vision plan.

Finally, we are considering additional discounted services that would benefit our members in a variety of areas. For a list of the current discounts, please visit the UUP Web site under Benefits/Special offers or enter the following address into your Web browser:
<http://www.uupinfo.org/benefits/offers.html>.

The Numbers

Once again I have to report to you, the delegates, about a decrease in our membership as compared to last year. Looking at the August numbers, we saw a decrease of 171 in the membership across the bargaining unit.

The breakdown is as follows: We lost 169 full-time academics, but gained 152 full-time professionals, producing a net membership loss of 17 full-time members. Regarding part-time employees, we lost 130 professionals and 24 academics, totaling 154 part-timers. The decrease in part-time employees seems to be concentrated at the HSCs, Comprehensive, and University Center chapters.

The full-time decreases were mostly at the HSCs, and they were academics. This decrease, coupled with a downward trend line, is something we will need to watch closely in the coming months.

We did see an increase in retiree membership from August 2008. We had 141 retirees join as members, a 4.2 percent increase. This group has shown a steady percentage increase over the past few years.

Final Thoughts

***“AN INJURY TO
ONE IS AN INJURY
TO ALL”***

If there ever was a time to step up our internal organizing efforts, it's **now**. We need to engage new people to be active in UUP. With the economy not quite making a strong recovery and New York's budget crunch, it looks like we are in for more difficulty. We had a good start with the Chapter MDOs meeting, but it cannot stop there. As I mentioned several times during that meeting, there are resources available to the chapters. You do not need to go at this alone.

Through all of the years I have been involved in UUP, we have always pulled together in times of crisis. I am confident that by working with chapter leaders, we will be able to accomplish this again. It is crucial to get the word out to our members, whether it is through a newsletter, department rep system, meetings, or one-on-one contact. We also need to be as proactive as possible in resolving problems for our members.

Once again I want to thank you all for your support and I look forward to working with the chapters leaders over the next two years.

If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at:

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