

UUP in History

1973

Representatives of the Senate Professional Association and the State University Federation of Teachers met to discuss a merger, leading to the formation of SUNY/United, later renamed United University Professions.

1970s

Established the new organization as a dominant force and increased union membership. Tackled women's issues and the outdated policy of refusing women the right to work once they became pregnant. New policies were implemented which allowed pregnant women to work as long as they are physically able and allowing women to use sick and vacation time to offset any leave without pay. Battled for job security and tuition waivers. Secured permanent status for professionals. Negotiated five days of family sick leave and sabbatical leave. UUP became certified as exclusive bargaining agent representing SUNY academic and professional faculty. Guaranteed minimum salaries for full-time employees, shortly followed by coverage of part-timers by a benefits package. Professional "quotas" for SUNY librarians are removed, winning promotions for librarians on the same basis as all academics. A similar victory was won for SUNY professionals earlier the same year. Secured a 9% salary increase. All bargaining unit members protected by \$5,000 in term life insurance provided by UUP. Membership doubles from 1977 to 1979.

1980s

Campaigned for pay equity. Argued with the Governor's budget, saying it was "totally inadequate" and a "recipe for the destruction of SUNY." Rallied with unionists and students at a "Save SUNY" rally and achieved an increase in budget, averting the need for the more than 3,000 proposed layoffs. Suspended the call by a group of taxpayers for a graduated tuition increase based on parental ability to pay, saying that this proposal would force students to pay 60% of their overall education costs. UUP and the state inaugurated a newly negotiated statewide employee assistance program (EAP), aimed at offering confidential assistance in obtaining treatment and support from an appropriate human services agency. UUP secured the designation of E.F. Hutton & Co. as the agent through which bargaining unit members can make tax-sheltered investments through payroll deduction. Signed a historic agreement freeing up billions of dollars of TIAA-CREF retirement funds belonging to participants. New contract includes a 16.3% base salary hike during the life of the contract and innovations like giving \$1 million in Excellence Awards. Won a battle with the IRS, keeping employee benefits safe from being taxed. Influenced the return of millions of people to SUNY budget. Won \$3 million for distribution by the NYS/UUP Joint Labor/Management Disparity committee, which used the money to fund salary disparities. Opposed SUNY's attempt to impose parking fees to cure its budget woes.

1990s

Worked for domestic partner and day care coverage. Dealt with new issues including distance learning, accelerated technological change, and the growing use of part-time employees. Appointed a new Retiree Legislative Action Group (RELAG) to develop a legislative program for retirees. Supported the formal organization of the New York State Theatre Institute (NYSTI) chapter, as UUP retained the bargaining rights to represent NYSTI workers even though the state cut the budget and transferred control of the institute to a public benefit corporation. Secured flexibility legislation for SUNY's teaching hospitals. Completed the three-year-long oral history project, composed of more than 40 interviews detailing the story of UUP's founding and growth. Promoted SUNY two-year colleges to lawmakers and the public. Testified against hospital flexibility plan because it didn't take into account the mission of the teaching hospitals and it jeopardized the integrity of the bargaining unit. Co-sponsored "Operation Safeguard SUNY" focusing attention on the state university and its impact on the communities in which SUNY campuses exist. Supported the Campaign for Sweatfree in New York, opposing the sale of any sweatshop-produced merchandise to any SUNY campus.

2000s

A slipping economy and state budget deficits threatened to massively cut programs and funding and force 4,000 layoffs. Focus on job security became first and foremost, followed by contract negotiations.

2003

Worked with the chancellor to get assurance for no layoffs. Worked with political leaders to find new revenue sources to avoid budget cuts because of the fiscal deficit. Bargained for a new contract to fit the changing needs of members.

2004

Succeeded in getting the legislative leaders in both houses to put language in the Green Book of legislative intent that restricted layoffs. Reached an agreement on contract negotiations, resulting in a 15.6% payroll and a major increase of funding to the Benefit Trust Fund. Campaigned to raise budget funds for the SUNY colleges, highlighting bringing funding to the technology colleges. Stopped the proposal to privatize SUNY's teaching hospitals. Won a decision making SUNY responsible for paying minimum salaries to faculty classified as Geographical Full Timers. UUP became the leading role among higher education affiliates, surpassing AFT and NYSUT.

2005

Campaigned for increased funds in the state budget for more full-time faculty. Added to and created a broad range of benefit enhancements and discounts for members, including dental coverage, eye exams and glasses coverage, infertility coverage, domestic partner eligibility benefits, and removing deductibles and co-pays from mastectomy prosthetics. Protected the rights of professionals in the Teachers Retirement System (TRS). Campaigned for health insurance for part-time workers and a disciplinary arbitration decision that ordered reinstatement of a suspended, tenured faculty member whom SUNY wanted to terminate.

2006

Campaigned for even more funds for more full-time faculty; Pushed for an Optional Retirement Program (ORP) pension equity bill. Achieved an increase in the state budget, providing \$25 million for enrollment growth and the creation of urgently needed, full-time, tenure-track lines at the state-operated campuses. Advocated for an Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) that was passed in the Legislature. The UUP Benefit Trust Fund added a broad range of new discounts and services. Addressed issues in media outreach, such as academic freedom, the needs of part-time faculty, and sovereign immunity.

2007

Pushed for legislation including: an Optional Retirement Program (ORP); Unemployment insurance for part-time faculty; Sovereign immunity, restoring public employee rights to sue their employer; The Fair Pay bill, barring employee pay discrimination based on sex, race and/or national origin; Prohibiting the diminution of health insurance benefits to SUNY retirees; and health coverage for all New Yorkers. Successfully advocated for an increase in budget, leading to an increased budget of \$143.2 million with an additional \$17 million in funding for the SUNY state-operated campuses. \$10 million of this additional funding was allocated for new faculty lines and SUNY's new Office of Diversity and Educational Equity, which UUP helped develop, along with Assemblyman Peter Rivera and his colleagues on the Assembly/Senate Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force. Supported nurses calling for an end to mandatory overtime which was later approved as a bill in the Assembly.