



# Unifier

UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS



FARMINGDALE CHAPTER



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## A Civil Tongue

by Casey Bond, Professional Grievance Chair



### "Bewitched, Bothered & Bewildered"

To paraphrase the irreverent lyrics of Lorenz Hart, the state of incivility in the workplace often leaves me feeling "bothered and bewildered!" (Trust me, you don't want to know what "bewitches" your favorite UUPF civility columnist, although here's a hint...it rhymes with Forge Flooney. But we digress...)

Like most of my union brothers & sisters, the current state of workplace incivility leaves me "**bothered**" because studies show:

\*Workers are experiencing workplace incivility (ranging from rudeness to outright bullying) in greater numbers every year

\*Bad behavior of "schoolyard bullies" often continues into adulthood, manifesting as what's been called "cubicle bullies"

\*Victims suffer from a range of stress-related, physical and psychological disorders (including sleepless, depression, gastro-intestinal upsets, etc.)

\*Witnesses to bullying suffer from guilt and anxiety, often becoming withdrawn in an effort to avoid becoming the next "target"

\*Productivity plummets due to increased absenteeism, poor morale, eroded communication and a general lack of teamwork

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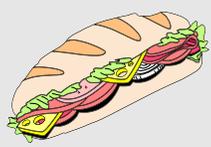
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**IMPORTANT**  
**Membership Meetings**

General Membership Meetings are held in GLSN 204 at 11 a.m.

- Oct. 18<sup>th</sup> – General Membership
- Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup> – Pre-retirement Seminar 11 am
- Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup> – Oktoberfest
- Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> – General Membership

## Democrat or Republican – a Tale of Two Political Parties and the Union

by Solomon Ayo, Vice President for Professionals

As the saying goes, “all politics are local.” This is not necessarily so, however, when it comes to coordinated marginalization of labor unions. When it comes to attacks on unions, the politics is local, state and nationwide, and it is also goes across political lines. Within the last year there have been three examples of bipartisan attacks on unions – namely, the National Football League (NFL) headed by bipartisan multi-millionaire and billionaire owners, the State of Wisconsin, and the City of Chicago respectively.

On the national level we had the recent attack by the nine billion dollar organization, the NFL, which locked-out its experienced referees over basic compensation such as health care. On the state level, there was an attack on the unions in Wisconsin, by a Republican governor, for the union’s collective bargaining position. On

the local level, there was an attack on the teachers’ union in Chicago, a city that is headed by a Democratic mayor. The teachers’ union in Chicago had a seven-day strike in September to demand, amongst other things, basic classroom needs which would enhance teachers’ effectiveness for the benefit of the children they teach. In all three of these instances, unions were the scapegoat and they were treated as the “bad guys.”

It appears to be common practice to cast blame on union membership for the economic consequences of fiscal decisions or directions in which they have had no say or control. In this dire national economic environment, what do you do? What can union members do when financial over-reach beyond one’s control could cost you your job or someone else theirs? It’s simple; regardless of party affiliations, a victory

for the person that looks out for the union is a victory for your job protection and for the livelihood of your immediate family members. For academic unions, according to the September issue of the 2012 NEA magazine “*Higher Education Advocate*”, for issues pertaining to faculty, staff and students, one should consider each political party’s candidates stand on the following topics: college affordability, student debt, privatization of schools (or support “for profit” schools/colleges), and of course **the candidates position on union rights**. For the New York state elections, visit the NY-SUT site ([http://www.nysut.org/mediareleases\\_18184.htm](http://www.nysut.org/mediareleases_18184.htm)) for a list of endorsed candidates who support educational unions. The choice is yours, but be sure to VOTE! In Union,

Solomon Ayo

### Pre-Retirement Seminar

**OK! So you’re not retiring this year. So you think this is a seminar to avoid! You are wrong! If you are planning to retire in the next five years, this one is for you.**

**UUPF is sponsoring a pre-retirement seminar on Tuesday, October 23, 2012 at 11 AM in the University Club at Knapp Hall. Walter Apple, the UUP Coordinator of Retiree Services will present options for Benefits Choices as well as the process that you need to begin to plan for retirement.**

**It takes time to plan for the decisions that you will need to make for your retirement years. We have all hopefully made good financial decisions over our working lives and now we need to make good decisions to carry us through the fun years of retirement.**

**If you think that the number of papers you had to sign to start working here was daunting, wait until you see the pile that comes with your retirement packet. Hopefully Walter can guide you through, so that most of your decisions are made before you are rushed into them.**

**Please RSVP to Debby Amato at 694-8873 or uupfdamato@aol.com . Refreshments will be served .**

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So, given the many negative consequences of workplace incivility, we’re “*bewildered*” by the lack of a SUNY-wide, clear, concise, comprehensive Workplace Civility Policy.

Now I know some folks will say, “We can’t have an official, bona fide, set in stone Workplace Civility Policy without a New York State or Federal Civility Law in place first.” And to those folks I’d reply, with all due respect, “Fiddlesticks!” Why? Because the time to stand up and be counted on this issue is sooner, not later!

For the record- there are lots of colleges and agencies that have done just that! For example, in 2011 OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) adopted an anti-bullying policy. OSHA’s manual states that its policy is “to provide a workplace that is free from violence, harassment, intimidation and other disruptive behavior.” It defines “verbal intimidation” as “making false statements that are malicious, disparaging, derogatory, disrespectful, abusive or rude.” There’s a lot more to the OSHA policy, but you get the idea!

So, fellow UUPFers, if you too are “bothered” by the lack of a Workplace Civility Policy, don’t be “bewildered” any longer...just contact me and let your voice be heard. In particular, let us know if you’re currently being victimized. Together, let’s help the administration learn to sing another tune!

In Solidarity,  
Casey Bond

Please contact “A Civil Tongue” at [uup-farmingdale@gmail.com](mailto:uup-farmingdale@gmail.com). All correspondence held in strictest confidence.◊

# President's Message

September and October have been very valuable months for UUPF members. Here are some examples:

## Health & Safety

Everyone knows that Nathan Hale Hall re-opened in August 2011 after two years of remodeling. What you may not know is that the inhabitants of the building have been suffering extreme conditions inside: frigid temperatures in the northeast corner, sauna conditions in the northwest, and 80% humidity levels in a half-dozen labs. With the help of faculty and staff, UUPF was able to compile detailed information which was provided to administration. Vice President LaRosa set forth a plan of action that began with a thorough investigation of the issues, and resulted in a request to have Nathan Hale Hall re-commissioned! A company will be brought in to assess the work done and determine if portions will have to be repaired by the contractors. UUPF expects to continue to work with management as this project progresses

Another issue which arose during these discussions was our concern for research faculty. UUPF shared information about the potential negative impact that damaged equipment and sub-standard facilities may have on research, and subsequently on the professional progress of tenure-track faculty. President Keen acknowledged the unfairness of circumstances be-

yond a faculty member's control, and said that their evaluations should take such situations into account. He said that anyone concerned about that should speak with him directly.

## Parking

To everyone who called or emailed me about safety issues in the parking lots and roadways over the past few months, here again I am happy to report that administration has been extremely responsive. Your specific concerns and suggestions appeared to be helpful to management's ongoing discussions with traffic safety engineers. In fact, administration has decided to have the campus parking lots re-commissioned too! Formal review is expected to include signage and pedestrian pathways as well.

## Early Warning

'Tis the season for identifying students who are not making the grade. UUPF has met with management to clear up some of the confusing information circulated earlier this year regarding the College's Early Warning System. In the end it was agreed that faculty responsibility ends with identifying students at risk, as has been the past practice.

Any subsequent data gathering that may be needed is not the responsibility of the faculty. However, UUPF did agree to support voluntary mechanisms for gathering information needed for existing grants. Those too shall



be reviewed by UUPF before they are circulated.

## Professional Staff

Inconsistent information regarding proposed changes to supervisory relationships for professional staff in the academic areas resulted in chaos over the past several weeks. I am proud to say that the solidarity demonstrated by academic department heads in opposition to prospective changes paved the way to very productive discussions with administration on this issue. I think, in the end, both management and UUPF professionals will benefit from this exchange.

I will report on all of these in greater detail at our next General Membership meeting, but all-in-all, I want to thank administration for a constructive start to the semester. I look forward to a productive year.

In Solidarity,  
*Yolanda Pauzé*

## FLEX SPENDING— 2013 Open Enrollment Now Through November 9, 2012

If you have been thinking about enrolling in the NYS Flex Spending Account to save on your eligible dependent care and unreimbursed health care expenses, NOW is the time to do something about it. Go to <http://www.flexspend.ny.gov/2013/enrollsplash.asp> to enroll.

