



# Unifier

UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS



FARMINGDALE CHAPTER



NOVEMBER 2024



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# Election Results and Moving Forward

Excerpt from UUP President, Fred Kowal's Message to Chapter Presidents, November 8, 2024

Well, the election is over. After a momentous, change-filled campaign, the votes are counted. I'm fairly certain that many of you are – like me – having a difficult time dealing with the results of the election. Kamala Harris fought the good fight and many of you along with rank and file UUPers were on the front lines fighting with her against the forces of hate, division, and authoritarianism. We also did countless hours of work to elect NYSUT- and UUP-endorsed candidates in New York State. We didn't win them all at the state level, but we won the vast majority of races.

But the election is over now and despite these efforts, the outcome at the national level was not one that we expected, nor is it one that I welcome, given the fights we are engaged in that require federal support. It is also realistic to expect that this second Trump administration could well mean serious assaults on unions, on higher education, on individual liberties, and even the entire constitutional system of our nation.

To those of you who supported Donald Trump, I remind you that we are a democratic union, and as such, I respect your right to vote as you see fit. Regardless of your choice, this union will always act in such a fashion that defends everyone's right to protections in our contract, negotiates a contract that benefits everyone in our bargaining unit, and advocates for the best possible budget for every campus where we work. None of that changes with this election or the choices individual members made regarding their votes. At the same time, should President Trump attack this union or any union, should he attack our constitutional democracy, I expect that all UUP members will join such a fight to protect our union rights and our nation.

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## UUPF Office

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## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP Meeting

Thursday, November 21, 2024 ◆ Gleeson 104 ◆ 11:00 am

Unsure of your active membership? Enroll today:  
<https://uupunion.org/myuup/Membership/>

Send us your questions or concerns. Click the mailbox at <https://uupfarm.org/>



# Professionals' Corner Tidbits & Reminders

By Solomon Ayo

**To Do:** As we all know, the election has come and gone. However, for the unions — both national and local — our work continues. The reality is that the majority has spoken, and under our system of government, we must accept the results. It is essential to ensure a smooth transfer of power without resorting to violence or engaging in obstructionist arguments or conspiracy theories. The role of UUP members, regardless of party affiliation, is to remain committed to ensuring that our elected officials address the needs of UUP members, both locally and statewide. For updates on activities by our elected representatives, please visit the UUP statewide website and click the “Take Action” button located in the lower right corner.

**DSI:** The Discretionary Salary Increases are determined by management. According to the bargaining agreement, it should appear on pay stubs by December 31, 2024. Please note that UUPF plays no role in these decisions or the criteria used to determine awards. This year, UUPF maintains its long-standing position that all members are underpaid and have value. They all contribute to the progress of this institution.

Professional Achievement forms are available on the Professionals page of our chapter website. Please avail yourself of

this tool twice per year to document your exceptional contributions to FSC: prior to your annual evaluation in the spring, and now during DSI season.

**Workload:** This is the most common issue among UUP members. If it’s time to update your Performance Program, you can draft changes on the .pdf form available on our website. If you need help, contact the chapter office. The issue of work overload was discussed in detail at our workshop; see the UUPF website for some tips. ♦



## Productivity Enhancement Program & NYS Flexible Spending Account

Enrollment Period: November 1 — December 9, 2024

### Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP) 2025

Eligible NYS employees can forfeit time off accrual in exchange for a credit applied to the biweekly cost of health coverage for 2025.

Human Resources has shared information in recent weeks. Note the health insurance rates for 2025 will be announced when the annual Option Transfer Period dates are established, generally in November or December.

### NYS Flexible Spending Account (FSA) 2025

The FSA program allows eligible employees to use pretax earnings to help pay for qualified unreimbursed medical, dental, vision, child or elder expenses and even certain adoption expenses. If you participate in FSA for 2024 and wish to do so again in 2025, enrollment is NOT automatic. You must reenroll during open enrollment each year you wish to participate in the FSA program.

# President's Message

## DO NOT OBEY IN ADVANCE

Since 2016, Americans have become too accustomed to accepting and apologizing for the “new normal.” We CANNOT afford to continue that. It is time for us to call out what is unacceptable when we hear it. We must intervene when encountering injustice. Complacency is our demise.

We already see outrageous appointments at the national level, in an attempt to dismantle from within the programs and departments that we rely on as citizens. This is on purpose. Like the velociraptors in Jurassic Park, those in power are testing the fences. *We are the fences.*

“We the People” will only matter if we act — in unison — to maintain the fundamentals: public education, healthcare, clean air, clean water. In case you

didn't believe it three weeks ago, that is ALL in danger now. They are counting on us “checking out” now that the elections are over. But I will proudly accept my place on an “enemies list” if it means protecting public education, Social Security, my right to vote and bodily autonomy. Remaining silent is obeying in advance. When you obey in advance, you become morally invested in what happens next.

There are many fights ahead of us. To learn what you can do to be on the right side of history, join or follow the organizations listed below. Together we can do more than put up guardrails; we can build the road to recovery.

*In Solidarity*  
*Yolanda Drakkir*



Do not obey in advance. Most of the power of authoritarianism is freely given. In times like these, individuals think ahead about what a more oppressive government will want, and then offer themselves without being asked. A citizen who adapts in this way is teaching power what it can do.

*Timothy Snyder, On Tyranny*



- [equalrightsamendment.org](http://equalrightsamendment.org)
- [sign4era.org](http://sign4era.org)
- [aclu.org](http://aclu.org)
- [naacp.org](http://naacp.org)
- [hrc.org](http://hrc.org)
- [humanrightsfirst.org](http://humanrightsfirst.org)

## Election Results

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For those of you who are worried or frightened by the prospect of a second Trump administration, I share your worries and fears. But it is vital that we take these moments of mourning — and it is right that we mourn — to reflect as well on our way forward. I believe, as I have quoted from MLK so often, that the arc of history does bend towards justice. But it does not bend easily, and for the past decade, there has been an array of forces led by Trump to push back on that arc. Now, he is President again, to be surrounded by those who do not share our values.

So be it. Earlier this week, Kamala Harris challenged us to continue the fight for our principles. She reminded us that when we fight we win, but that the victory can take a long, long time. I have every confidence that all of you are with me in wanting to take on the fight to defend what we've won in our 50 years of union work, to defend our communities, to defend our freedom, and to fight for a better future for all.

I look forward to the next battles. And we have the power to win all of our fights, engaged as we are with the knowledge that we are on the right side of history — as we have been for over 50 years.

In Solidarity — now, more than ever...

*Fred*



Education | Healthcare | Public Services

The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) threaten the Social Security benefits of millions of retired teachers, support staff and other public employees every day. Together, these two provisions unfairly penalize retirees in states across the country and in Puerto Rico who have worked in public service but in their careers paid into Social Security. These folks really get hurt by losing their Social Security.

While current law does not impact every retiree in every state, the people affected feel real economic pain. For example, the GPO denies survivor benefits to retired teachers, support staff and other public employees whose spouses paid into Social Security, disproportionately impacting women, who are already more likely to be impoverished as they get older.

That is why Reps. Abigail Spanberger (D-Va.) and Garret Graves (R-La.) have championed the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023, a bill that would fully repeal the WEP and GPO.

**They and the AFT have worked hard to ensure that the majority of current House members support the repeal of these bad provisions. The vote will be TODAY! Ask your representative to vote yes on the Social Security Fairness Act.**

For decades, the WEP and GPO have undermined the ability to retire with dignity. Now Congress has the power to get this done and pass legislation that would be a real solution for millions of retirees.

The Social Security Fairness Act is supported by a robust, bipartisan group of lawmakers. **It's vitally important to tell your representative that the WEP and GPO must be fully repealed.**

Congress can right this wrong today when the House votes to reverse the WEP and GPO and make everyday life more secure for millions of retired teachers and public employees across the country. Repealing the WEP and GPO is a real, commonsense solution that the AFT has been fighting for to make life better for retirees. **Join us and take action now!**

In unity,  
Randi Weingarten  
AFT President

# Academic Corner

By Amit Bandyopadhyay

The New York Times (11/2, Blinder) examined how reforms at colleges and universities are limiting longstanding prerogatives of faculty members. The Times explained that for more than a century, professors in the US “have regularly had vast influence over instruction, personnel and other hallmarks of campus life, sharing sway with presidents and trustees in decisions shaping many parts of campus life – an authority that is unfathomable in many workplaces.” However, “this year has shown how fraught and fragile that practice, known as shared governance, has become at public and private universities alike.”

For example, “Arizona lawmakers sought to do away with legal guarantees of faculty power at public universities, their ambitions thwarted only by the governor’s veto. At the University of Kentucky, trustees dissolved the University Senate and made professorial influence only advisory.” And, during protests at Columbia University, “the school’s then-president provoked fury when she defied a University Senate committee and called in the police.”

The Chronicle of Higher Education (11/4, McMurtrie) reports Amy Clukey, an associate professor at the University of Louisville, faced rampant cheating facilitated by AI among her students upon returning from a leave. Despite her efforts to create unique assignments, Clukey discovered widespread use of AI for

plagiarism. She stated “she feels less like a teacher and more like a human plagiarism detector, spending hours each week analyzing her students’ writing to determine its authenticity.” A student even sent an apology email that closely resembled a ChatGPT-generated response.

This issue reflects a broader trend, with institutions like Middlebury College witnessing a rise in honor code violations. Middlebury’s annual survey showed an increase in students admitting to cheating, from 35% in 2019 to 65% in 2024. Clukey and other educators are seeking ways to address this challenge, emphasizing the importance of academic integrity and considering enforcement of academic-



integrity policies as a necessary step.

The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review (11/4, Schackner) reports the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF) has voted to affiliate with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), starting January 1. The decision was made following “a three-day election last week.” APSCUF, representing “more than 5,000 faculty and coaches across Pennsylvania’s 10 state-owned universities,” joins AFT, which is part of the AFL-CIO and represents 1.8 million education and other workers.

APSCUF President Kenneth Mash emphasized the importance of a national platform to address financial and political pressures on academia, particularly amidst current national challenges. AFT President Randi Weingarten “said AFT and APSCUF share the same goals: accessible, affordable higher education that enables colleges and universities to be the economic, social, and academic engines of communities.” ♦

# Francis Hopkinson: Declaration Signer and Designer of the U.S. Flag and Seal

By Daniel Scott Marrone

Not all Founding Fathers were generals or presidents. One was a highly accomplished administrator, artist, poet, playwright, harpsichordist, and organist. Francis Hopkinson (1737-1791) is credited as being the first American to have composed a song registered (the precursor to copyrighting) within colonial government archives. According to the U.S. Library of Congress, his tune “My Days have been so Wondrous Free” (1759), “is regarded as the earliest surviving American secular composition.” He also designed the first U.S. Official Seal, and the original plate designs used to print Continental Currency.

Born in Philadelphia, Hopkinson relocated to the New Jersey colony in the early 1770s. From June 21 to November 18, 1776, he represented the future “Garden State” in the Second Continental Congress. During his time in Congress, Hopkinson participated in strenuous, heated debate as to whether or not the colonies should break free from Great Britain. A committed Patriot, he readily signed the Declaration of Independence, putting his life on the line by defying King George III’s unbearable rule.

Among Hopkinson’s greatest contributions was the design of the first official U.S. flag. In the course of history, seamstress

Betsy Ross is nearly always remembered—incorrectly--as the designer of the first official U.S. flag. Therein lies the question: who really designed the first official U.S. flag?

For this essay, ten book and online sources, including the U.S. Library of Congress, were referenced regarding the U.S. flag origin. Each of the ten sources indicates that Hopkinson designed the first official flag of the United States of America.

This fact does not degrade the contribution of Betsy Ross for designing and sewing together many early U.S. flags, including her iconic 13-star Constellation (in a ring) flag. But this flag was solely a commemorative banner honoring General George Washington and the Continental Army at the culmination of the harsh winter encampment at Valley Forge (December 19, 1777 to June 19, 1778). Importantly, the Ross flag was never approved by Congress. On the other hand, Hopkinson’s flag was unanimously approved by members of the Second Continental Congress on June 14, 1777. Three of the reference sources used for this essay include: [the Library of Congress Biography of Francis Hopkinson](#); Quaipe, M. M., Weig, M. J., & Appleman, R. E. (1961) *The History of the United States Flag*; and Boleslaw, H. C. & Mastai,



M. D. (1973) *The Stars and The Stripes*.

## Hopkinson-Designed Naval Pennant on the “Bonhomme Richard”

On November 18, 1776, Hopkinson resigned from Congress to become Chairman of the Continental Navy Board in Philadelphia. He served in this capacity, roughly equivalent as the first U.S. Secretary of the Navy, until August 16, 1778. He certainly left an indelible legacy during his tenure.

As Navy Board Chairman, he designed two flags. The first was a Naval pennant that was flown on Continental Navy warships, including the one gifted from French King Louis XVI for use against the Royal Navy. The ship, originally named *Duc de Duras*, was built in 1765. On February 4, 1779, she was placed in the hands of her new captain, John Paul Jones, who renamed the vessel *Bonhomme Richard*, French for “Good Man Richard.” The new name for the vessel honored Jones’ patron and friend Benja-

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# Francis Hopkinson:

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min Franklin and his popular publication, *Poor Richard's Almanac*.

On September 23, 1779, the ship battled the Royal Navy's HMS *Serapis*. After four hours of close-range cannon fire, half of the crews from both battered ships lay dead. At that point, the Captain of the *Serapis* called to Captain Jones to surrender. His answer was, "sir, I have not yet begun to fight!"

The *Bonhomme Ricard* was now ablaze and leaking badly. To stop his warship from sinking, Captain Jones lashed the *Bonhomme Richard* to the *Serapis*, and hand-to-hand combat ensued. The American sailors overcame their Royal Navy counterparts. Captain John Paul Jones now commanded both the damaged *Serapis* and the much more damaged *Bonhomme Richard*.

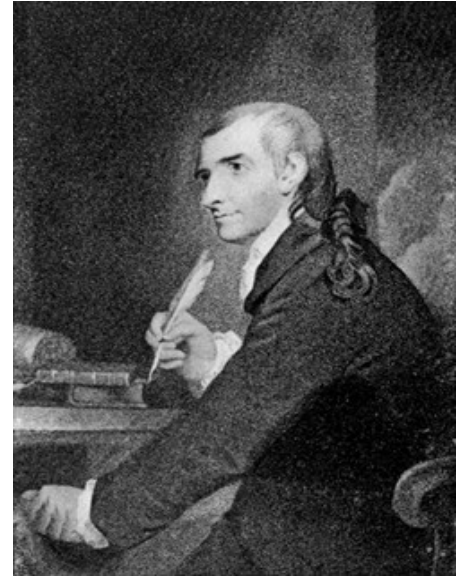
Despite all their efforts, the U.S. sailors could not stop the *Bonhomme Richard* from finally sinking, but first ensured the Hopkinson-designed Naval pennant was transferred to the



*Serapis*. This Naval pennant was now unfurled over the Continental Navy's newest vessel, the captured *Serapis*.

## Hopkinson Designed the First Official U.S. Flag

Hopkinson designed another flag, in fact, *THE* flag! In early 1777, Hopkinson submitted to Congress a design for the nation's flag, as well as his perspective on the flag's importance. He was prescient in believing that the U.S. flag was to be the patriotic culmination of the *many* flags of those that have immigrated and will immigrate to the nation. The Hopkinson-designed flag had 13 six-pointed stars in horizontal rows within a blue canton (see image). While the stars would increase as new states joined the union, the field of 13 alternating red and white



stripes would stay fixed in recognition of the 13 original colonies that initially comprised the nation. On June 14, 1777, Congress approved Hopkinson's flag design. This date would be forever known as Flag Day.

On May 9, 1791, Hopkinson died from an apoplectic seizure (what we would now call a "stroke"). His flag design, however, has endured. Vermont and Kentucky were admitted to the union as the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> states on March 4, 1791, and on June 1, 1792, respectively. The Hopkinson U.S. flag was then altered with 15 stars, all of which were five-pointed in appearance. As additional states joined the union, the number of stars on the flag increased accordingly. The flag was last altered on August 21, 1959, with Hawaii joining the union as the 50<sup>th</sup> state. Except for the number of stars and the change to five-pointed stars, the Hopkinson flag has continued to be the official U.S. flag.

A heartfelt salute to Founding Father Francis Hopkinson and his magnificent flag design! ◆

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