

Report of the Vice President for Professionals

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February 5 – 6, 2010

I hope you all had a happy and healthy holiday season and hope that joy continues throughout the year.

I was invited by the leadership of the Professional Staff Congress, the union that represents the City University of New York's academic and professional faculty, to speak at their professional's conference in October. The topic they wanted to hear about was our system of promotion. While there are many contractual differences between our contracts, the problems our members face are identical: A lack of a clear career path, very few promotional opportunities, and very little support from supervisors. For me, it was just like listening to UUP members. The PSC does have some contractual provisions which are beneficial. For example, they have a step system, which of course we would like to have as well. We also have beneficial provisions including an appeals process which the PSC group wanted to hear more about.

I was also asked to speak to professionals at the Community College Conference in November. The topic was on compensation beyond the normal professional obligation. I started my presentation by asking two questions. The first was "How many of you bring work home?" More than 75 percent of the attendees raised their hands. The second question was "How many of you assign extra work to yourselves?" Again, about three quarters of the attendees raised their hands. I've asked the same questions to our own members and the response is the same. I always remind people that management is not responsible to compensate us for the work we assign ourselves. The best practice is to speak to your supervisor before you do extra work and find out what the compensation will be before you do it.

Speaking to members of other higher education unions was very interesting. We have very different collective bargaining agreements which attempt to deal with the similar issues we face. We all agreed that the best way to address some of these issues is to educate our members on how to best use the contracts that they work under and try to make them better. UUP has been doing just that and many chapters are providing valuable training for their professionals.

In October, the North Country chapters had their regional conference. The topics presented by chapter leaders were: "Promotions and Salary Increases," "Workload for Professionals is Changing," and "Comp time and On- Call Issues." Vice Presidents Gina Doty (Plattsburgh), Dave Hartle (Canton) and Joe Sarnoff (Potsdam) did a great job explaining to the attendees how they can deal with these issues and I want to thank them for sharing their enthusiasm and knowledge. All of the participants left with a better understanding of the topics discussed.

Since the last Delegate Assembly, I've had the opportunity to visit the following chapters: Plattsburgh, Potsdam, Canton, Empire State, Albany, Cortland, Oneonta and Stony Brook HSC. All were well attended and I would like to thank the chapter leaders for the invitations. I have several visits scheduled for the spring semester and I am looking forward to seeing some of you soon.

As I write this report, the new Guide for Professionals is at the printer. If all goes well, we should have copies for the Delegate Assembly. I will also have them shipped to your chapters and make it available on our Web site. The new guide provides an overview of performance programs, evaluations, promotions and salary increases. I think our members will find it useful throughout their careers at SUNY.

My next project will be a new handbook for vice presidents for professionals. At our VPP committee meeting, I will ask the chapter vice presidents for their input on what they would like to see included. I've also asked the vice presidents for agenda items. I've gotten a few suggestions already, but one that stands out is a request to discuss the role of the vice president. Since the last DA, many chapters have set up professional issues committees and I've gotten some requests to discuss the role and function of this type of committee.

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, especially for the article on "Bullying." 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'John' written in a cursive style.

John