

2010 WINTER DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

*Vice President for Academics
February 5-6, 2010*

Frederick G. Floss

“Now, I say to you today my friends, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.’”

Martin Luther King Jr. (1929 - 1968)

Speech at Civil Rights March on Washington, August 28, 1963

The struggles of the 1960s presented many more difficulties than we face today. Although we have come a long way in making Dr. King’s dream a reality, we cannot stop trying to reach his ambitious goal. Whether we are fighting for a fair health care system for all Americans or for quality health care for our men and women in the armed forces, we have only started the process.

When it comes to SUNY, the fight for quality and access for all students in New York has just begun. UUP, through advocacy and our strong support for initiatives from national health care to the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, gives our members many opportunities to participate in creating a better union and society.

I have been working on a number of projects with the other UUP officers. But we need your help to truly make a lasting impact. Please consider becoming involved in these or other UUP initiatives.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Attacks on free speech are becoming more common in higher education. A number of cases, including the Supreme Court’s 2006 decision in *Garcetti v. Ceballos*, [547 U.S. 410](#), question whether academic freedom exists for the individual in the public sector academy. My article in the February issue of *The Voice* provides more detail on the topic, but first let me say that SUNY and UUP have a strong commitment to academic freedom. The SUNY Board of Trustees’ Policies contains language affirming academic freedom. The *Garcetti* case is a new kind of attack. This attack on academic freedom is not just about what goes on in the classroom, but what is said in faculty meetings or in the press. The *Garcetti* case is about a Los Angeles County deputy district attorney who spoke out about

actions he believed were wrong in a case and was subsequently let go because of the statements he made. The Supreme Court ruled that there was no First Amendment right to free speech in this case. The American Association of University Professors and others have suggested that the Board of Trustees Policies protect academic freedom as we know it, but we must continue to fight so everyone has the right to free expression. With that in mind, if you hear of any attempts to limit academic freedom on your campus please let us know so we can mount a challenge. .

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY II

At the Fall 2009 Delegate Assembly, MDO Ed Quinn and I presented the academic results of the membership survey at the Academic Meeting. Since then, a number of groups have asked for presentations using the survey data. The Strategic Planning, Affirmative Action, and Membership committees, as well as the Task Force on Contingent Faculty (to name a few) are using the survey to help strengthen the programs and plans of UUP.

Here are a few quick facts about UUP:

- We are getting younger: almost 36 percent of academics have been at SUNY less than 7 years.
- Sixty-two percent of our members have never taught at another school.
- More than half (56 percent) teach either two or three classes per semester, while 12 percent teach four classes or more.
- We are growing at the hospitals and universities and declining at the four-year and tech sector colleges.

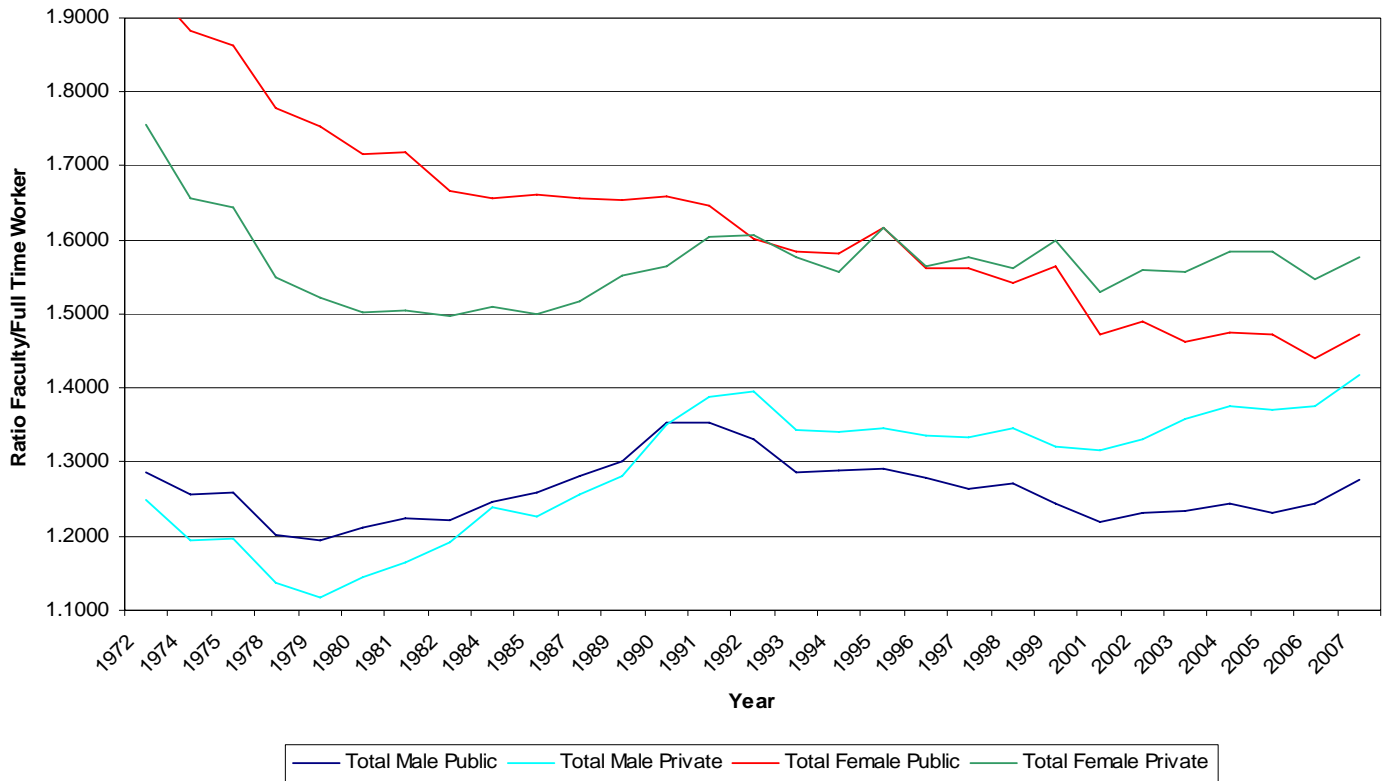
For the first time, we asked a question about race. From the survey, our membership is approximately 83 percent Caucasian, five percent Asian, four percent African-American, and three percent Hispanic. The survey can continue to help us understand our union and better prepare ourselves for the future. Please let me know if one of your committees or chapters would like a presentation.

CORTLAND WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The "Succeeding as Women in Higher Education" conference was held at Cortland in October. It was run by our very own Mecke Nagel, who did a wonderful job. A large number of UUPers presented at the conference and it was hard to choose which sessions to attend. My paper was entitled "The Declining Rate of Return to Women in Higher Education." The main point of the paper is that while the rate of return to professors in higher education has significantly declined for both men and women since the early 1990s, public sector women have seen the largest decline. That fact is illustrated by the red line on the graph below.

The rate of return is the ratio of the average salary of the faculty group divided by the average salary of workers in the economy. The impact of this lower return will make it less appealing for women in the future to go to graduate school and eventually become professors. More disturbing is the reason for the decline: Women in higher education are not catching up to men as fast as they are in the rest of the economy. I am currently finishing a new draft of this paper; Please let me know if you would like a copy.

Ratios of Average Salaries by Gender in Public and Private Sectors



ALUMNI PROJECT

Phil has asked that I work on getting SUNY alumni more involved in fighting for a better budget for SUNY, per the DA resolution in the fall. He has already talked with the Chancellor, but we will still need to put together a comprehensive program. Here is a draft outline of a plan I am working on. I am interested in your comments and suggestions.

1. FRIENDS OF SUNY /OR SAVE OUR SUNY

- a. Set up a Web site to send letters (Like the Save Upstate Web site).
- b. Ask campus presidents to send alumni to site to send letters.
- c. Chapters can use site to ask students and others to send letters.

2. JOINT LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

- a. Ask Chancellor to write a joint letter to alumni.
- b. Write joint letter with Campus and Chapter Presidents to alumni.
- c. Write letter for campus alumni magazines.

3. SUNY ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL FACULTY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
 - a. Start an Alumni Association for our members who are alumni.
 - b. Connect with NYSUT SUNY alumni and ask for help (at the RA)
 - c. Use this group to write to alumni chapter magazines, message boards, Twitter and Facebook to get out our message.

4. AD HOC UUP COMMITTEE ON ALUMNI
 - a. Set up a committee so these issues do not get lost.
 - b. Committee appointed by president of alumni delegates and chapter leaders.

5. ALUMNI DIRECTORIES / BOARDS
 - a. Enlist current and past chapter alumni board members to join campaign to save SUNY.
 - b. Create a Chapter/Alumni board event on campus.

6. HARRIS PUBLISHING
 - a. Harris publishes alumni lists, which we can purchase.

TEMPLE

AFT asked if I would help organize this semester at Temple University in Philadelphia. It was an eye-opening experience. The Temple contract has a provision stating that if 65 percent of the faculty becomes members, they would be entitled to agency fee. Currently, I believe they are at about 60 percent, so the push is on. It is amazing how many higher paid faculty members are reluctant to join, not because they disagree with the union, but because they do not want to give up a few dollars. Still, the Temple union is a vibrant union working hard under the guidance of their president, Art Hochner. I was with Nula Drescher, who is much better at organizing than I am.

What I find interesting at Temple is that nearly 60 percent of the full-time faculty are non-tenure track and live on one-year contracts. This makes it extremely hard to organize and breaks the school into a two-tier system which I hope we never see at SUNY.

REGIONAL MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

The North Country had a retreat and regional meeting in October, offering a number of sessions for academics and professionals. Special thanks go to Gina Doty, who scheduled the event and took care of all of our needs. I am looking forward to other regions putting together a meeting this semester. If your region would like to have a regional meeting, please let me know and I can help schedule it.

In addition, the workload workshops are continuing. The latest workshops were held at Fredonia, Farmingdale, Oswego and Stony Brook HSC. If your chapter would like a workshop, please let me know.