

UUP Stony Brook Chapter

STRATEGIC PLAN

I. RESTORE DEMOCRACY IN UNION LEADERSHIP

Increase UUP member participation through democratically-run chapter meetings, effective communication strategies, transparent decision-making processes, and the use of video conferencing technologies.

- ***Democratically-run meetings.*** We will commit to running general membership and executive board meetings according to the principles outlined in the chapter by-laws. One of our first tasks will be to make sure all members of the executive board are familiar with the by-laws and parliamentary procedures. Further, we will ask officers and committee chairs to submit written reports before meetings, which will minimize the time needed for reports at the meetings. This will leave more time for meaningful discussion of committee issues, old business, and new business among all members present.
- ***Effective communication strategies.*** We believe one of the keys to effective communication is advanced planning. We will release a full schedule of all UUP events – meetings, workshops, social events, etc. – at the start of each semester, and we will call upon Departmental Representatives to encourage participation in these events as the dates near. We will also commit to answering emails from members promptly and thoroughly to ensure that concerns are being heard, that needs are being met, and that members understand their rights and benefits programs.
- ***Transparent decision-making processes.*** We will publish the minutes from all general membership and executive board meetings on the chapter's website within 48 hours of the meeting. We will also create an online archive where all members can easily access meeting minutes, reports from all standing and ad-hoc committees, and chapter budget plans. Additionally, we will publish notes from Labor Management meetings. In sum, we recognize the rights of our members to know what their union leadership is working on, so we will take these steps to ensure all members are kept up-to-date on chapter activities.
- ***Video conferencing technologies.*** We will invite members to virtually attend our chapter meetings via video conferencing technologies. We are committed to engaging all members, including those who do not work on or live near the Stony Brook Center campus.

Enhance the chapter's commitment to democratic principles by establishing a committee to review and, if needed, amend our by-laws. In accordance with our by-laws (which mandate a regular review of our by-laws), we will launch an ad-hoc committee to review our current by-laws, to consider their strengths and weaknesses, and to propose amendments as deemed necessary.

II. PRIORITIZE CHAPTER BUILDING EFFORTS

Recruit new members, activate current members, and train future leaders by growing and strengthening the Departmental Representative System. A Department Representative is the person in each department who disseminates important information from the Chapter Office, but also the person that members can go to when they have workplace concerns or need the support of their union. It is essential to have a Department Representative in every single department, including South Campus, R&D park, and Southampton. Additionally, we see the Departmental Representative System as a way of training new leaders in our chapter and ensuring a robust future for our union. Currently, our chapter has about 90 department reps. We aim to boost that number to 150 during our first year in office, through the efforts of our Membership Committee, Membership Development Officer, and our chapter's paid organizer.

Increase UUP visibility and relevance on campus through a multi-prong communications strategy.

- **Become an Organizing Union.** We are invested in running our UUP chapter as an organizing, member driven union (instead of [merely a service union](#)) aligned with broader social justice unionism movements. But this does not mean that we will act hastily once elected into office. Our intention is to make informed, strategic decisions as a group, and openly discuss them with our membership. We want to empower all members to be active agents in our union, and that means a decentralized power structure that recognizes we are all members with valid opinions, whether you have been in UUP for 30 years or only 30 days. We must be in a constant state of recruiting new members, gathering feedback, and seeking to activate our current members.
- **Print and Digital Media.** We will expand membership engagement via social media outlets. We are committed to maintaining consistent communication with our members through emails, and we are also excited to reinvest in our newsletter, to circulate it in print and electronic forms, and to feature contributions from our memberships.
- **Face-to-Face Conversations.** We will also develop regular face-to-face informational campaigns to help members understand what their union does and can do. Following in the footsteps of other successful union reform movements, we want to build a culture of solidarity amongst our membership and send a powerful message by organizing union pride events. For example, we envision Department Representatives coordinating

members in their department to travel together to membership meetings while wearing UUP buttons and garb.

- ***Bulletin Boards.*** Working closely with Department Representatives, we resolve to have UUP Bulletin Boards in every single department by the end of our first year in office. While we want these boards to be information hubs, we also need them to become a symbol of UUP's strength across campus.

Foster a sense of union community by creating opportunities for Faculty and Professionals to socialize together and get to know one another.

- ***Reimagine the UUP Office as a space for all members.*** Our goal is to transform the UUP Office into a welcoming space where members can have a cup of coffee, mingle with other members on breaks, or get work done. We will strive to make our office as accessible as possible by consulting closely with our proposed Disability Rights and Concerns Committee.
- ***Organize social events on or near campus, in the Southampton area, and in Brooklyn and Manhattan.*** We want to build community, but we also know our membership is diverse. We are committed to engaging members where they're at and building solidarity among members who live near one another. We pledge to organize monthly happy hours after work, as well as monthly lunchtime social hours on campus. The goal of these events is to remind our membership that despite our many differences in occupations and our lived experiences that we are all UUP and we all believe in a strong union and robust SBU.

Encourage involvement in UUP and the campus community by formalizing the recognition of union activity as university service. In keeping with other UUP chapters and SUNY campuses, we will work with the administration to officially recognize union activity as university service. One way to make the case for this recognition is to involve our chapter in the fabric of the university and coordinating our membership to volunteer for commencement, community days, and other university-wide events. Another way is to ensure that our committees work in conjunction with the University Senate, student organizations, the administration, and other campus entities. Together, we can benefit the Stony Brook University community by organizing voter registration drives and addressing other social issues.

Strengthen union power on campus by working with other unions to form a Campus Labor Council. We know that collective action is key to strengthening the voice of workers, so we will prioritize working in solidarity with other unions at Stony Brook. Specifically, we would like to work with other campus union leaders from the [RA Union](#), Graduate Student Employees Union ([GSEU](#)), the UUP [Health Sciences Chapter](#), the Civil Service Employees Association ([CSEA](#)), the Public Employees Federation ([PEF](#)) to form a Campus Labor Council. What we envision is a group that meets on a regular basis to discuss issues members are facing, to

identify common problems, and to support each other in the resolution of these issues. This council could also interact with local unions off-campus (K-12 teachers, community college, trade, and public sector unions.) and would be a vital force in connecting Stony Brook with the broader community.

Connect our members to the broader labor movement by integrating our chapter with the larger organizations with which UUP is affiliated and with other labor-based social justice movements. We recognize that the Stony Brook UUP Chapter is part of larger labor organizations, and we believe our chapter will grow stronger by participating in the broader labor movement. Our chapter is basically an “administrative arm” of [UUP Statewide \(Local 2190\)](#), which represents members on all the four-year SUNY campuses. As dues-paying members of our chapter, we are a part of statewide organizations (i.e. [New York State United Teachers](#), New York State [AFL-CIO](#)), national organizations ([American Federation of Teachers](#) and [National Education Association](#)), and international organizations (through the AFL-CIO). But, beyond the educational labor movement, we are also invested in forging stronger relationships with the [Long Island Federation of Labor](#) as well as labor-based social justice organizations UUP is affiliated with, including US Labor Against the War([USLAW](#)), the [Labor Network for Sustainability](#), and the [Labor Campaign for Single Payer Health Care](#). In short, we envision our union fighting not only for the terms and conditions of our own employment but also for a more just world.

III. TAKE ACTION TO IMPROVE OUR WORKING AND LEARNING CONDITIONS

Expand the scope of our union’s advocacy to include non-contractual issues. We recognize that our members have incredibly diverse needs and experiences at work. Issues do not need to relate directly to our contract to be deserving of attention and support. Our vision of the union does not turn away members if their issues do not fit a specific mold. Instead, we will follow through with action on a case-by-case basis to improve the campus environment for all; this includes issues of racial, gender and LGBTQ discrimination, non-disciplinary cases, and hostile work environment. Most importantly, we will follow up afterwards to ensure our members’ issues were addressed.

Revive the annual Stony Brook Day initiative to strengthen our campus community and lobby our legislators for more SUNY funding. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Stony Brook Day was an important yearly event for our chapter. For more than ten years it allowed students, faculty, and professionals to engage in discussions with state legislators in Albany. It was an opportunity for visibility, to express the needs of the university, and to communicate ideas for improvement. The event was co-sponsored by UUP and Stony Brook University. We pledge to work closely with Management to revive Stony Brook Day so our members can unite with other stakeholders on campus to lobby our elected officials. SUNY desperately needs funding, and Stony Brook Day will help us pressure our elected officials for what we deserve.

Collaborate with the University Senate to develop strategies for protecting and restoring shared governance on our campus. We look forward to formalizing UUP’s ties to the

University Senate and devising more effective mechanisms for coordinating our efforts. By studying the history of our chapter and talking to long-standing members and retirees, we have learned that our union has been at its strongest when the union and the senate have historically collaborated to curb administrative overreach and advocate for fairer workload and workplace policies.

Provide direct support to adjuncts and contingent faculty. We will act immediately to alleviate some of the injustices adjuncts and contingent faculty face on our campus. In addition to starting a laptop donation program, we will invite instructors who have not been given office space to use the UUP office to write, lesson plan, and hold office hours. We are ready to hear from adjuncts and contingents about what they need and how we can best support them. We intend to contact adjuncts and contingents individually and find meaningful ways to integrate them into their chapter. We pledge to work with the Administration to strengthen job security, negotiate for promotional opportunities, and establish living-wage course minimums for adjuncts and lecturers.

Start a student internship program to deepen connections with students on campus and to mentor the next generation of labor leaders. Following the lead of other UUP chapters, we will start a for-credit undergraduate and graduate internship program for Stony Brook Students interested in learning more about labor activism and fighting for educational justice. We see this internship program as a great way of improving our chapter's communication with members while simultaneously developing generative mentoring relationships with students. Interns will have the opportunity to develop their leadership potential and hone their professional communication skills - all while learning more about labor organizing.

Initiate conversations with relevant administrative bodies about the role UUP can and should play in developing diversity initiatives and campus safety policies.

- ***Cultural competency trainings.*** We believe the union should work in concert with the administration to advance the university's diversity mission, and we would like to play an active role in developing cultural competency trainings designed to create a more inclusive campus environment.
- ***Title IX/Sexual Harassment.*** We are concerned by our union's lack of involvement in the development and enforcement of Stony Brook's sexual misconduct policies. While our contract (Article 19) affords members union representation when being questioned in any equal employment or Title IX investigatory processes, there is currently no language to guarantee representation for employees if they are the accuser in a case or are bystanders witnessing misconduct. We are eager to work with the administration to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to ensure all parties receive fair representation and due process and are protected from various forms of retaliation.

IV. ACTIVATE UNION COMMITTEES TO REALIZE OUR VISION

Improve the effectiveness of our chapter by revitalizing existing committees and developing mechanisms for holding them accountable to the membership. Our committees are the main avenue in which members can get involved in our union. Without an accessible and transparent committee structure, we cannot have a democratically run union. We're looking to develop ways of giving committees the autonomy to do what they need to do (and exercise their own creativity without being micromanaged) while also holding them accountable to the membership and their needs (by submitting regular reports, etc.) Committee co-chairs will be encouraged to share power with fellow committee members and make decisions democratically. Inactive committees, or those run by fiat are a disservice to our members.

Examine existing committee structures to evaluate their effectiveness

During our first year in office, we will review the missions of existing committees and explore opportunities for aligning the committee structure with our vision for educational justice and a member driven union that meets all members needs. We pledge to solicit input from the membership about what committees they would like to see. Additionally, we are open to forming ad-hoc committees as needed and, when warranted, amending the chapter's bylaws to add new standing committees.

Advocate for racial justice and LGBTQ equity

We are wondering how our inactive Diversity Committee might take up a more explicitly anti-racist and pro-immigrant rights agenda in its advocacy work, and we are curious to know if the Women's Concerns Committee might be expanded to function as an LGBTQ-inclusive Gender and Sexuality Council. We might also find ways to expand the scope of the Community Service Committee to engage more explicitly in social justice movements on campus and beyond.

Fight ableist discrimination and other disability injustices on campus by forming a Disability Rights and Concerns Committee. As a chapter of UUP Statewide, we are [required to have a standing](#) Disability Rights and Concerns Committee. Unfortunately, our Stony Brook chapter has not yet formed a committee of this kind. We pledge to change this as soon as we take office. We are committed to improving the working conditions for disabled members and other members with access needs, and we look forward to working with allies across Stony Brook to enhance campus accessibility, advocate for disability-related issues, and create more inclusive learning conditions for disabled students.

Enhance our union's capacity to handle grievances in a timely and transparent fashion by forming a Grievance Committee. We pledge to immediately form a standing Grievance Committee that will support our chapter's two Grievance Officers. We can avoid issues such as vacancies in office, only one or two members handling Grievances from start to finish, and a lack of succession planning by trying a new approach. By constantly training members of this committee on the skills needed to be a grievance officer, we can always be prepared by having

more members aware of our contractual rights we can better advocate for our membership. Having a committee of members pledged to assisting our Grievance Officers will allow grievances to be handled more quickly and efficiently. By having more members involved in this capacity we can also offer members assistance on workplace issues currently not covered by our contract. We think it is unjust and a disservice to our members who voluntarily spend their hard-earned money via dues to only assist them along rigid contractual lines.

Strengthen our organizing efforts by forming a Data Collection Committee to investigate workplace issues and develop research-based recommendations. We believe that our organizing efforts will be most effective if we take the time to fully understand the issues our members are facing and to develop research-based strategies for enacting positive change on our campus. Therefore, we intend to form a Data Collection Committee that will be tasked with studying workplace issues, identifying causes or effects, exploring our organizing options, and making recommendations for how our chapter should proceed. Issues the Data Collection Committee might investigate include: racial inequities in hiring, retention, and promotion; salary compression for long-time Stony Brook employees; and best practices concerning union representation and Title IX cases. We feel our union must always be open to new ideas and strategies and we imagine this committee to be at the cutting edge of labor and higher education trends.