

UCATS Momentum

Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU, Local 3882, NYSUT, AFT, AFL-CIO

Volume 30 Number 3 | Summer 2009

Re-engineering II

What it means to you

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Raises coming, despite recession



Citing layoffs and declining wages throughout the city, Stephen Rechner testified against excessive rent increases for stabilized tenants before the Rent Guidelines Board in the Great Hall at Cooper Union on Wednesday, June 17.

■ *Stephen Rechner, Law School*

The news just seems to get worse everyday for ordinary working people. The official unemployment rate is now 9.4% and expected to continue increasing into double digits, over half a million workers per month continue to lose their jobs, and the number of Americans without health insurance has risen from 47 million a year ago to well over 51 million today. Meanwhile, executives in the banking and financial professions continue to enjoy excessive compensation, and even bonuses, courtesy of the American taxpayer.

No raise for managers

Here at NYU managers are again learning the hard way that annual raises are not guaranteed when you don't have a union. This year, as in 2003, NYU President John Sexton has unilaterally declared that there will be no raises, except for those employees covered by a union contract—and himself, no doubt.

Is there any hope for Americans who actually work for a living? There is if you are a member of UCATS!

Effective August 31, 2009, every UCATS member will receive a 3.25%

UCATS SALARY SCHEDULE EFFECTIVE AUGUST 31, 2009

Grade	Weekly Salary
5	750.00
6	756.00
7	782.00
8	804.00
9	826.50
10	867.00
Legal III	824.50
Legal II	967.00
Legal I	1,063.50
40	750.00
41	766.50
42	797.00
43	843.50
44	925.50
45	1,027.00

raise. In dollar terms that's a minimum of \$1,222 to over \$1,580 per year. Many UCATS members will receive more because they will get a longevity increase for reaching a service milestone and/or because that 3.25% is on a base salary that already includes several longevity increases.

Employees who have only started recently will also receive this increase. Even in good economic times employers make a newer employee wait at least a full year before considering a raise, and good times these are not; but even if your first day at NYU is August 30, you will get this raise.

There is one more raise coming in September 2010, and then in 2011 UCATS will negotiate a new contract with NYU.

As important as it is for all of us who currently work here to get
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UCATS Momentum

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What is NYU up to?

■ Kerissa Ward, 726 Broadway

In a lengthy e-mail sent May 20th to all New York University faculty and staff, Executive Vice President Michael Alfano outlined the Re-engineering II plan university officials are implementing to reduce administrative spending. Budget reductions in Re-engineering II are expected to relieve the \$120 million shortfall expected in Fiscal Year 2010, as well as free up funds for pet projects such as NYU Framework 2031 and NYU Plans 2031.

This memo came as follow-up to an e-mail sent by NYU President John Sexton on May 6th reporting that Re-engineering II would commence June 1, 2009 under the supervision of EVP Alfano.

Begun in March 2008, the NYU re-engineering plan involved a three-phase process of cost cutting in all departments with the goals of eventually trimming \$40 million from the budget each year and creating a contingency fund of \$26 million. It was hoped that these cuts could be met through a suspension of salary



Kerissa Ward

increases for non-union employees, staff attrition and budget reductions. However, preliminary cost-cutting measures were made at a time when sources of university income were not facing such a significant decline.

Additional cost cutting

While Re-engineering II will continue to include these original methods, other cost cutting strategies that will effect UCATS members include reductions in non-essential services and the elimination of jobs.

The announcement of lay-offs was surprising to many staff since

in a March 5th address to the Division of Student Affairs, when asked if there is already a layoff plan developed and, if so, which departments will be facing the largest amount of staff reductions, President Sexton stated, "Where as back in October/November I thought I could promise there wouldn't be staff reductions, I can't promise that now...We're not going to really have a sense of stability until sometime between Thanksgiving and February of next year."

EVP Alfano's memo did not state when or how many layoffs—especially those within UCATS—would occur. Many departments had already begun eliminating positions over the past few months, in anticipation of further budget reductions in Re-engineering II.

A significant hindrance to the University's budget has been the reduction in value of the NYU endowment. Before the current recession began, university endowments were growing at substantial rates nationwide; with NYU's endowment
(Continued on page 5)

Raises coming

(Continued from page 2)

a raise, is the fact that this increase once again raises the starting salary for every grade in our bargaining unit. In fact, for the last 30 years every raise UCATS has negotiated has raised the starting salaries of our newest members.

Obviously, that is important for every UCATS member who will be hired in the coming year, but it

also provides important job security for those of us currently employed. Raising the starting salaries of our newest members means that there is little savings to be achieved by replacing a long-term employee with a new hire.

In addition to guaranteed annual raises UCATS members have the security of affordable health insurance, a defined benefit

pension plan, a childcare fund, commuter expense accounts, longevity increases, free life insurance, job security, layoff/recall rights, overtime pay, a grievance procedure, cumulative sick leave, and family care leave.

There is no doubt about it—in good times NYU staff do better with a union contract; in bad times we can't live without it. ❁

Enhanced severance benefits

■ *Stephen Rechner, Law School*

It has taken many months, but the devastating effects of the global recession are taking their toll on NYU, and regrettably, that means some positions in our bargaining unit are going to be eliminated.

Our union contract has always provided valuable protection for our members in the form of layoff/displacement rights and severance pay (article 15). These include the right to fill a vacant position for which you are qualified and, when a vacant position is not available, the right to “bump” a less senior employee from a position for which you are qualified.

Historically, bumping less senior employees is an option that has rarely been exercised because vacant positions have been available. On those rare occasions when it has been done, almost no one involved has been satisfied and our members in those situations have asked us for other options.

Enhanced severance negotiated

We are pleased to announce that UCATS and NYU have reached an agreement for an optional enhanced severance package which will remain in effect at least until 2011 when we renegotiate our contract. Under the new agreement UCATS members whose jobs are eliminated will have the option of accepting an enhanced severance package *in lieu* of their bumping rights.

The enhanced severance package works like this: an employee with 1-15 years of service will receive 1 week of severance pay for each completed year of service (twice



The UCATS leadership team ratified an enhanced severance package at their monthly meeting on June 10.

what is currently specified in the contract); an employee with 16-25 years of completed service will receive 1 week of severance pay for each completed year of service plus 8 additional weeks of severance pay; an employee with 25+ years of completed service will receive 1 week of severance pay for each completed year of service plus 16 weeks of additional severance pay. Any member accepting the enhanced severance package will be eligible for unemployment benefits* and will also receive one year of Carebridge Employee Assistance benefits and one year of career counseling with the NYU Talent Management Office.

Additional benefits

In addition, federal stimulus money now covers 65% of the COBRA payments for workers who lose their job between now and December 31, 2009. You will also

continue to be eligible for benefits from our state affiliate, New York State United Teachers, for two years at no charge (see story on page 5).

The enhanced severance package we have negotiated with NYU is **optional**; it does not diminish or negate your right to fill a vacant position for which you are qualified or to bump a less senior employee from a position for which you are qualified.

In the event your position is eliminated there are many things you should consider before making the choices that are right for you; I encourage you to consult with one of our experienced organizers, Greg Succop or Linda Wambaugh, before making a decision (646-602-1485).

**If you have a second job, even a part-time second job, you will not be eligible for unemployment benefits (this is a matter of law over which NYU and UCATS have no control).* ❀

NYSUT SUPPORT FOR LAID-OFF UCATS MEMBERS

AS NEWS OF LAYOFFS and continued economic troubles clog the airwaves, our state affiliate, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) in partnership with the vendors of Member Benefits-endorsed programs are offering several resources to help laid off members.

In early April delegates to NYSUT's annual convention stepped up to ensure the continuity of membership and services for union members who lose their jobs. NYSUT dues for laid-off members will be \$0 for two years or until the member is re-employed in a job that affords them NYSUT membership.

"NYSUT is dedicated to providing support, information and resources to help you get through these tough times," NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi said.

In addition to NYSUT's newly launched Career Center (www.nysut.org/careers), laid-off members can take advantage of special offers from vendors of NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed programs.

FREE LEGAL SERVICES PLAN

THE LAW FIRM of Feldman, Dramer & Monaco, P.C., provider of the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Legal Service Plan, will waive the plan's annual fee for members laid off at the end of the current school year. The free Legal Service plan year will begin September 1st for laid off UCATS members. More information about the plan benefits can be found at www.memberbenefits.nysut.org. To access the free plan, laid-off members should call Member Benefits at 800-626-8101.

What is NYU up to?

(Continued from page 3)

reaching \$2.5 billion from 2007 to 2008. Accessing these funds has become more difficult, however, as New York State law prohibits universities from drawing on their endowments once the funds fall below their "historic dollar value."

In his March 5th address President Sexton was optimistic about overcoming this obstacle and reassured the administrators and staff that he was actively lobbying state legislators to reverse this law. Calling it an "underwater endowment," President Sexton said, "One of the things I was doing in Albany was trying to get New York to pass a uniform law that 28 states have passed in the last 18 months that allow us to get to that money. But that's not going to come for at least a year and a half." He went on to note that the university can withstand the wait, but if current law is not overturned the projected budget loss could be \$30 million.

What about us?

News that the budget deficit is even greater than that has left many of us questioning whether our own positions at the University will be impacted.

Under the UCATS contract, Code 106 and 104 employees whose positions are eliminated have contractual protections which include bumping rights and severance benefits. In the event that your position is eliminated you should expect your supervisor or HR representative to explain your options to you and you should take careful notes. If you wish to discuss the options that have been offered you can schedule an appointment to meet with a UCATS organizer by calling 646-602-1485.

Another cost-saving measure NYU has implemented is the freezing of salaries for managers and faculty. In 2003 managers and faculty received a \$750 one-time bonus in lieu of a pay increase. Six years later they face another year without raises to ease the budget, but no bonuses will be offered this time. According to a survey of 330 higher education institutions conducted by the College and University Association for Human Resources, salary freezes are "the most-used method of keeping costs down." Meanwhile, UCATS members will still receive our contractual raises of 3.25% in 2009 and 3% in 2010 before we renegotiate in 2011.

Despite the detailed strategies listed in Alfano's memo, many questions remain for members: When will UCATS members be notified if their positions are eliminated? How will their work load increase? What sacrifices are being made by upper administration? How will these changes effect our new contract in 2011?

Unfortunately, the answers to these questions are not yet known. What is known is, as stated in the e-mails from President Sexton and EVP Alfano, that the changes made in Re-engineering II will be permanent. ❁

New steward profiles



Barbara Bova, Ph.D.

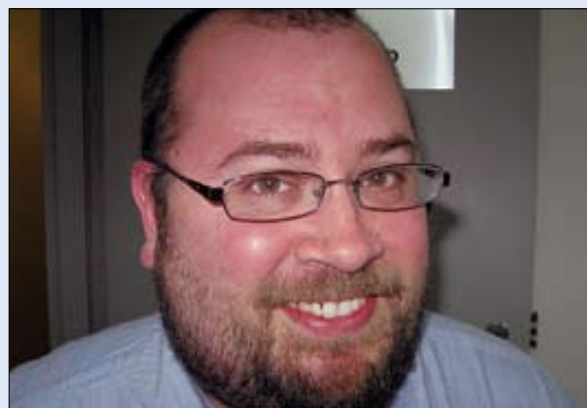
Barbara Bova, Ph.D., has been an Admissions Assistant at the Law School for over 30 years. Her job entails applications intake, extensive contact with prospective students by phone, working with the Admissions Committee and troubleshooting. She most enjoys contact with the students and guiding them through the application process.

As a long-term employee Barbara says “the union was always there for us and I would like to contribute whatever I can.” Barbara has earned both her MA and Ph.D. from NYU with a background in occupational safety and health. Barbara has observed that “UCATS handles situations before they get out of hand. It restores reason, disseminates information, expands benefits and rights and strengthens the contract.”

She believes that UCATS can encourage member involvement with suggestion boxes, meet your steward events, and lunch-time drop-in events in area lounges.

Outside of NYU, Barbara enjoys concerts, learning foreign languages, and working with animals.

There's a new leadership team in town and you may be wondering how they got there when you weren't asked to cast a ballot. Under the new election rules of our constitution, revised in 2006, all nominated member's running unopposed were elected by the casting of one ballot by our secretary, Edwin Guzman, on April 21. Ten members have joined the team as first-time shop stewards and we introduce them to you here.



Christopher Crowe

Chris has worked in the Bobst Library Circulation Department for 15 years as an Access Services Financial Coordinator. His job entails accounting for, documenting and reconciling fine and fee transactions, overseeing petty cash funds and issuing refunds. He likes working independently and working for an institution



David Langkamp

For over six years David Langkamp has been the assistant to the Dean for Graduate Enrollment Services at GSAS. He does everything from scheduling meetings to coordinating maintenance projects. The best part of his job he says is “diving into a project

and seeing the end results” but he also realizes that “the union is the reason I’m still getting a raise this year.”

Lucky for David there is no shortage of projects for a UCATS shop steward! As a steward David hopes to gain a “better understanding of what protections the union contract gives to our members, and bring that knowledge back to the people I represent.” He would like to see UCATS improve our e-mail communication with members, specifically by developing a list of our members’ personal e-mail addresses, knowing that using NYU e-mail addresses is bad practice for union communication.

David is currently in a graduate program at SCPS studying animation and he enjoys making music “with some pretty awesome computer software.”

“dedicated to the preservation, dissemination and advancement of knowledge.” Chris says, “In short, I am a fixer, a jack of all trades and something of a bad cop.”

What Chris likes about UCATS is “our collective protection against an institution that isn’t always as noble as it claims to be—and should be.” He has become a shop steward after witnessing the ongoing harassment of a coworker; although he is not the victim, the harassment has become offensive to him.

His goal in becoming a shop steward is to create a culture of respect in the workplace. He believes we can do more to address our members’ fear in the workplace by educating them about their contractual rights and protections.

On his own time Chris enjoys opera, Wagner specifically, baseball, travel and bike riding.



Ellen Bernard

Ellen has been an Administrative Secretary for just two years at the Silver School of Social Work. Her primary responsibilities are preparing schedules and assisting students with registration.

About her NYU job Ellen said, “It’s marvelous to be working with young people who have a desire to help others.”

Ellen decided to become a shop steward after receiving help from the union during a stressful time. She hopes to give the same support and encouragement to other members in need.

Outside of work Ellen loves Broadway show tunes, movies and sports.

Johanna Tyson

Johanna Tyson is a Pharmacy Technician with the Student Health Center. She assists the licensed Pharmacists with dispensing medication and other health care products. She has worked at NYU for five years.



Johanna is looking forward to helping her co-workers, keeping them informed about the union’s activities and helping out to the best of her ability. On becoming a shop steward Johanna said, “From what I’ve heard and read, UCATS has a long history of fighting for our members’ rights and making the workplace safe and respectful for people like myself.” About UCATS she said, “I think the union is doing a great job, but there is always room for improvement.”



Diana Hamilton

Diana Hamilton wasted no time becoming a UCATS shop steward. She has been a Program Assistant for just over a year in the Faculty Arts and Science college. Like many UCATS members, her job is to do everything—meeting the needs of faculty, students and managers, processing reimbursements, and academic reporting. Visas anyone? She appreciates not being an “at-will” employee in this economy, “especially now that the department is being pressured to cut more positions.”

Diana’s motivation for getting involved in the union is knowing that she has benefited from the union and wanting to play a bigger role. One of her goals is, “I hope to make more people at the university aware of just how much they benefit from being in the union, even if they’ve never called the office with a complaint or a question.” She also believes that UCATS should “reach out to more department administrators to make sure they are aware of the limitations of what can be asked of support staff.”

In her free time Diana enjoys comparative literature and poetry. She recently ran a Friday night poetry reading series at the St. Mark’s Poetry Project.

Edward Hopely

Edward Hopely is an Administrative Aide for NYU Abu-Dhabi since October 2008. As an NYU undergraduate student Edward spent several seasons working in the NYU landscaping department and the NYU Gardenshop. He currently works with the NYUAD Director of Admissions recruiting the first NYUAD class (2010) through direct contact with students, high-school counselors and other forms of information dissemination.



In his short time at NYU Edward has already observed that an NYU staff person “may be answerable to multiple and sometimes competing demands.” He has also observed that UCATS is very responsive to inquiries and problems brought to our attention and he is looking forward to becoming a resource for his fellow workers. Edward believes UCATS must do a better job getting our members to attend meetings and participate.

Off campus Edward enjoys reading, writing and riding his bicycle.

Vanessa Sejourne

Vanessa is a Dental Assistant in the Dental School’s Pediatric Clinic. She is interested in the many health and safety issues that workers are exposed to in a Dental clinic setting. She was recently selected to work on a joint union-management Health and Safety Committee at the Dental School that was mandated by OSHA



as a result of violations they identified during a recent investigation. Over her years working in the Pediatric Clinic Vanessa has become the “go-to” person for her coworkers, and now she made it official by becoming a UCATS shop steward. We are delighted to welcome her onto the leadership team.

Tawania Reggler



Tawania is a PC Technician with the Development and Alumni Relations Department providing technical support, applications training, and resolving password issues. She derives great satisfaction from her job when she

can help people be more efficient.

On being a new steward Tawania said, “What motivated me to become a shop steward was the information that I received. As union members, we fail to understand the rights and benefits at our disposal. I plan to educate our members, and utilize our knowledge to become productive members of the community.” She also says she would like to see more *Momentum* articles about career advancement for our members.

In her spare time Tawania enjoys writing, reading, video games and composing music.

Robert Crandall



Robert Crandall has been a Sterilization Technician at the Dental Center since 1997. What he likes best about his NYU job is that “every day is a challenge.” In addition to overseeing the sterilization of dental equipment for the faculty and students in the Manhattan facili-

ties, Robert and his co-workers work with the faculty on outreach programs to foreign countries and Alaska.

He said he became a steward because he wanted to help his co-workers and “instead of just talking about our problems I wanted to be part of the solutions.”

Robert values time with family and enjoys camping, movies and basketball.

MEMBER'S QUESTIONS

Q: Is my job at NYU secure?

The decision to eliminate positions rests solely with management. Our contract provides our members with valuable safeguards when positions are eliminated, but it doesn't give us the right to prevent NYU from eliminating positions (*see articles 15 and 29 of the union contract*). Chances are, if you are reading this and you have not yet been told that your job is slated for elimination, your job is as secure as it gets. Worrying is an unnecessary waste of energy, and it is not going to make your job any more secure. If you want to give yourself some added peace of mind the best thing you can do is build up your personal savings so that you have at least 12 months of living expenses in the bank to fall back on in the event that you lose your job.

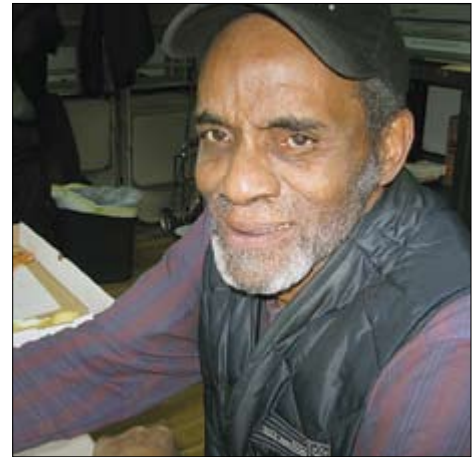
Q: What is the union doing to protect our jobs?

Your officers and stewards are meeting regularly to discuss all aspects of the University's re-engineering plan as it unfolds. We also recently negotiated an optional *Enhanced Severance Package* (*see details on page 4*) for displaced members who choose to forgo their right to bump into another position. As always, our organizers, Greg and Linda, are available M-F, 9-5, to discuss developments in your area.

Q: What do I do if I am informed that my position is being eliminated?

Ask lots of questions, take lots of notes, and then contact the union office (ucats@erols.com or 646-602-1485). We will review management's handling of your specific case to ensure compliance with applicable law, past practice, and our contract. It is management's responsibility to explain your options to you; if they do it well, as they should, you will understand your options and be able to make the decision that is right for you. The options will vary depending on your ability and willingness to fill another position. You may also be given the option of accepting an *Enhanced Severance Package* that we recently negotiated with NYU.

Out and About



Clockwise from top: UCATS organizer Linda Wambaugh facilitates a strategic planning meeting of the leadership team on Saturday, June 10.



Andrew Jackson of Mail Services celebrated his 20th year at the UCATS Longevity Reception on April 15.



The newly constituted UCATS Executive Council held our first meeting on May 13.

Naomi Tarantel (l) and Liz Schnore (r) discussed the upcoming art show at the UCATS Staff Appreciation Day Celebration on April 21.



On April 23rd UCATS members joined our sisters and brothers of ACT-UAW in front of the New School to protest the dismissal of the entire faculty of the Art Department there. ACT-UAW Local 7902 represents adjunct faculty at the New School and New York University.

Committee secures art show space



Members of the Art Show Committee, chaired by member Liz Schnore, have been meeting regularly to move the show forward.

■ Mathias Sias, Bobst Library

Preparations for the first group art show for UCATS local 3882 members are continuing with success! We have been given three spaces at the Kimmel Center, from November 23 through the end of January 2010. Lounges on the 2nd and 8th floor of Kimmel, as well as the side-walk-facing window spaces along Laguardia Place and West 3rd Street, will be filled with work by many of our talented members. An opening celebration will take place on a date yet to be confirmed, but will most likely be some time during the week following the Thanksgiving holiday.

Collective effort

The planning of the exhibition is being done by a volunteer group

of artists, led by Liz Schnore, a UCATS member in the Office of Construction Management at the University. The group is currently looking at each member's artwork and thinking about how to best present the work as a whole. The group is also planning to print a limited number of catalogs of the exhibition with color reproductions of the artists' work. The funding for this catalog, as well as expenses for the installation and de-installation of the show, and food and drinks for the opening celebration, has been generously allocated by the local [and we are in preparations for requesting matching funds from the University as well].

We are still looking for additional artists, and would encourage anyone who would like to be involved in this excellent project, either as an exhibiting artist, or as

a supporter, to please contact us as soon as possible. The show is open to all media, although special considerations may need to be made for three-dimensional work. If you have something unusual in mind please don't hesitate to contact us to discuss possibilities. We already have a fascinating and varied group of work and would like very much to add to it.

The group has tentatively decided to title the exhibition "Collective," which we felt was representative of a group of artists from various backgrounds and disciplines coming together to create a unique experience, and also evocative of the feeling of solidarity and connectedness that comes from being part of the local.

For more information, please contact Mathias Sias at mrs181@nyu.edu, or Liz Schnore at liz.schnore@nyu.edu. ☛

How is the recession affecting you

The UCATS leadership team is in the process of creating a strategic plan for the next two years leading up to contract negotiations in 2011. We would like to know how you are experiencing the recession and the NYU "Re-engineering II" Plan.

What is your school/unit, job title and grade at NYU? _____

How long have you worked at NYU? (circle one)

Less than 5 years 5-10 Years 10-15 years Over 15 years

Has your household lost a source of income in the last 12 months?
(check all that apply)

- I have lost a second job
- A family member residing with me has lost a primary job
- A family member residing with me has lost a second job
- My household has not lost a source of income in the last 12 months

How has NYU's Re-Engineering II affected your department? (check all that apply)

- One or more management positions have been eliminated in my school/unit
- One or more staff positions have been eliminated in my school/unit
- One or more vacant positions are not being filled in my school/unit
- No positions have been eliminated in my school/unit

How has NYU's Re-Engineering II affected your job? (check all that apply)

- Higher graded work has been redistributed to me
- Lower graded work has been redistributed to me
- My workload has increased substantially
- My workload has remained the same

If your workload has increased substantially (check all that apply):

- I have been asked to work overtime with pay
- I have been required to work overtime with pay
- I have been required to accept compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay
- I have been asked to work overtime without pay or compensatory time off
- I have been required to work overtime without pay or compensatory time off
- I have not worked overtime

Optional: if you would like a UCATS organizer to contact you to discuss your situation please provide your name and a daytime phone number:

Please fax to UCATS at 646-602-9554 or mail to UCATS, 636 Broadway,
New York, NY 10016.

