

# SUNYLA AD HOC EQUITY COMMITTEE

## EQUITY: A CALL TO ACTION

### 1. HISTORY

In Martin Luther King, Jr's 1963 "Letter from Birmingham Jail," he wrote, "We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

Through our own decades-long struggle for the acknowledgement of our contributions as faculty, we have learned that sometimes even the simple recognition of our basic equality with classroom faculty must be demanded. To prove this we submit these facts:

- **October 1966**, forty years ago, SUNY library directors recommended to President Samuel B. Gould, that "the annual professional obligation of librarians be the same as that of instructional appointees ... with additional remuneration for service beyond the academic year, commensurate with that awarded to instructional staff." <sup>1</sup>

They explained: "The status that we propose for librarians within the system implies a regime of study and research beyond the level of the qualifying professional degree which, though different in detail, should be comparable in seriousness to that expected of instructional faculty. It is upon this premise that we base our recommendation that the annual professional obligation be limited." <sup>1</sup>

- **May 1968**, the SUNY Board of Trustees resolved "that the Chancellor be, and hereby is, authorized to prepare and seek implementation of a plan to facilitate the professional development of librarians and to provide for all professional librarians an option of academic year obligation, consistent with the needs and resources of the University." <sup>2</sup>

- **June 1968**, the SUNY Board of Trustees granted librarians faculty status based on a proposal by the SUNY Faculty Senate. Among other actions, they amended the Policies of the Board of Trustees by adding to Article II, section one, subdivision 1: "Academic staff in library positions may have academic year or calendar year obligations." <sup>3</sup>

- **April 1969**, SUNY library directors unanimously passed a resolution supporting an academic year schedule, four ranks equal to professorial ranks, remuneration for summer employment, and remuneration equal to professorial compensation for library faculty. <sup>4</sup>

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• **Fall 1970**, a committee of State University of New York Librarians Association (SUNYLA) leaders and library directors wrote a position paper and sent it to Chancellor Ernest L. Boyer. On the issue of academic year obligations, they wrote:

It is a recognizable fact that the burgeoning demands of the academic community; the self-imposed and self-selecting high standards of academic librarianship; the imposition of criteria for promotion and tenure; the imperatives of innovation; and the sophisticated technological advances of today's society are but a few of the demands which dictate that librarians must have adequate time for preparation, study, and research to promote their continued intellectual growth and development. To that end, the academic year appointment, without economic penalty and consistent with the academic calendar of the respective campuses, is essential. Naturally, library service will be maintained on a twelve month basis; the academic year for the librarian may not necessarily follow the traditional pattern of the professorial staff. For service beyond the academic year, remuneration should be made upon the same prorated basis as for the professorial staff.<sup>5</sup>

• **April 1972**, in response to a failed grievance on academic year contracts, the SUNYLA Council issued a news release that said, "As a result of the State University of New York's distressing lack of concern for the academic rights of librarians, we regretfully recommend that librarians exercise extreme caution before accepting a position in SUNY."<sup>6</sup>

• **December 1973**, the UUP Committee on Librarian Concerns was formed to serve as the "principle vehicle for bringing librarian concerns to the attention of the UUP Executive Board," namely, the implementation of a salary plan with four academic ranks and the placement of all librarians on academic year obligations without salary decreases.

• **December 1985**, SUNYLA resolved "that all jurisdictions within SUNY end all forms of discrimination against all library professionals," and further resolved its support for "all legal and legislative efforts to achieve salaries accurately reflecting the true value and worth of library professionals."<sup>7</sup>

• **September 2002**, SUNYLA further resolved to "strongly urge UUP to advocate for remedies to this inequity via options such as

- an academic year appointment, with no decrease in salary for SUNY library faculty
- a pro rated increase in salary to compensate for the additional months of service provided by SUNY library faculty working longer than an academic year."<sup>8</sup>

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## 2. TODAY

SUNY library faculty are evaluated by the same criteria as classroom faculty, but SUNY does not support librarians the way it supports its classroom faculty. For example:

### 2.1 Contract Year Inequities

Classroom faculty have ten-month contracts while library faculty have 12-month obligations. The 2006 SUNYLA Salary Survey recorded 281 full-time librarians at 27 state-operated units. Of those, four (1.4%) worked by academic year contract, 20 (7.1%) worked by college year contract, and 257 (91.5%) worked by calendar year contract. These numbers are inflated because for the first time two University Centers refused to participate in the Salary Survey.

The 2002 Salary Survey had a greater response rate, and its results are more accurate: of 432 full-time librarians at 30 state-operated units, three (.7%) worked by academic year contract, 17 (4%) worked by college year contract, and 412 (95%) worked by calendar year contract.

To further the inequity, classroom faculty who work 12-month schedules are given 20% increases in salary while librarians who move to the academic year face a reduction in pay of up to 17%. Also, librarians have a professional obligation to be on campus while most classroom faculty must only meet classes and hold office hours.

### 2.2 Salary Inequities

In 1995, the average SUNY librarian earned \$43,066 while the average SUNY classroom faculty member earned \$48,838: a difference of \$5,772.<sup>9</sup> In 1998, librarians earned an average \$45,240 while classroom faculty averaged \$48,518: a difference of \$3,278.<sup>10</sup> In 2002, librarians earned an average \$50,868 while classroom faculty averaged \$56,437: a difference of \$5,569.<sup>11</sup> In 2006, the average SUNY librarian earns \$55,595 while classroom faculty average \$61,413: a difference of \$5,818.<sup>12</sup>

It is worth noting that these salary inequities are compounded by the contract year inequities detailed above.

A recent SUNYLA survey of library directors found that at least 22% of separating librarians left for better-paying library jobs elsewhere.<sup>13</sup> And a recent summary of SUNYLA Exit Surveys, completed by the separating librarians themselves, showed that 60% of respondents -- the highest percentage for any factor -- said that "better salary" was one of the factors that influenced their decision to leave.<sup>14</sup> Forty percent indicated "better benefits" was also a reason.

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### 2.3 Inequities of Status

SUNY economizes at the expense of our professional identities. With chronic budget cuts, staff reductions and hiring freezes, many SUNY librarians have found themselves performing additional functions without compensation just to keep their departments operational.

SUNY's treatment of librarians is unequal, unfair and unjust. If we are truly faculty in terms of promotions, appointment, service to the University, and scholarship, then we must absolutely be treated as equal faculty in terms of contract year and compensation. Forty years on and we are still fighting for equal treatment and equal respect for equal work. The negotiation of our next contract is about to begin: the time for action is now.

### 3. **ACTION POINTS**

We call for the redress of the inequities listed above, specifically:

#### 3.1 Chancellor Ryan

We respectfully request that Chancellor John R. Ryan ascertain, evaluate and report to SUNYLA on SUNY's treatment of its librarians, and we ask that he comment in writing on the academic standing and relative worth of SUNY librarians. Specifically, we ask two questions: Why are SUNY library faculty paid less than classroom faculty, and why are SUNY library faculty not on academic year appointments?

We also seek an explanation of this apparent contradiction: how can we be so vital to the University that they cannot grant us academic year obligations but so unimportant that we are consistently compensated at rates below classroom faculty levels?

We ask that this report be completed by November 1, 2006.

#### 3.2 Equality is our Goal

We must acknowledge that equality is our goal. As faculty, librarians must work the same contract time as other faculty and be compensated, in practice, at rates equal to other faculty: academic year contracts with compensation for librarians choosing to work during the summer. Anything less than equal treatment is not acceptable.

We must request the option of professorial titles to reflect our faculty status, with the designations: Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. This is a first small step toward equality and one that would not cost any money to grant.

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#### 3.3 The Time for Action is Now

We must acknowledge that the time for action is now and that we will not rest until we have achieved our stated goal. Also, we must completely reject SUNY's assertion that the time is not ripe. We have been waiting for forty years, and our patience is exhausted.

#### 3.4 Working through the UUP

First, we must work from within the UUP during the upcoming contract negotiations. The more input to UUP about our concerns the better, including completing the UUP survey, e-mails to UUP President William E. Scheuerman, and e-mails to the as-yet-unnamed chief negotiator.

Second, we must request meetings now with Dr. Scheuerman to discuss our concerns.

Third, Appendix A-31 of the 2003-2007 State University Professional Services Negotiating Unit Agreement states that "specific compensation issues were identified by UUP that were of such significant concern that review at the Executive level is required."

If necessary, we must call on SUNY and the UUP to work together using the Appendix A-31 framework to address library faculty's concerns for salary and contract year equity.

#### 3.5 Local Discretionary Monies

Until a system-wide solution is enacted, we should explore and support the use of local discretionary monies to make adjustments at the local campuses. For example, 4% raises for librarians over the life of the contract, in addition to any negotiated raise.

For example, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at SUNY Farmingdale recently decided to use 20% of their discretionary monies to address local salary inequities. The Farmingdale model could be exported to other campuses until a system-wide solution is implemented.

#### 3.6 Work to Rule

As librarians, we are well-regarded for our levels of collegiality and collaboration. We care, and SUNY takes advantage of our high level of commitment to our work, to our profession, to our campuses, and to SUNY.

As very active members of our college communities, we work hard for SUNY outside the bounds of our UUP contract. We must stop doing this, however personally painful this is, until SUNY treats us equally with classroom faculty.

This action will be very painful for us, but we must do it to be effective.

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#### 3.7 Professional Labor Advice

Librarians are also well-regarded for their high ethical standards, personally and professionally. For example, we take strong measures to maintain the confidentiality of our clients and vocally oppose efforts to infringe on their rights. Also, we continue to give freely to SUNY even though for forty years it has refused us equal treatment.

To maintain this high standard, we must obtain the counsel of expert labor advice. We are involved in complex legal matters. We must be sure of our legal foundation to ensure we always act in a lawful manner.

If the UUP is unable to get satisfaction from SUNY on our concerns then the UUP should support us by supplying expert labor advice -- even outside advice -- for SUNYLA.

#### 3.8 Cautionary Press Release

In spring 2007, we must reassess our concerns and how the Chancellor, the SUNY Board of Trustees, and the UUP have responded. At that time, we must evaluate the propriety of issuing a second cautionary press release, on the 35th anniversary of our first one.

#### 3.9 Ad Hoc Community College Equity Committee

Librarians always help those in need. If our fellow librarians at New York's community colleges feel they have similar goals, we will help them in every way possible.

SUNYLA Ad Hoc Equity Committee

Judith Bird, SUNY Farmingdale: Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Librarianship, 2002

Ron Foster, Chair, SUNYIT: Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Librarianship, 2006

Ellen McCabe, SUNY Cortland

Corinne Nyquist, SUNY New Paltz: Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Librarianship, 1986

John Schumacher, SUNY OLIS

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> President's Advisory Committee on Libraries, memo to President Samuel B. Gould, State University of New York, 7 Oct. 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Board of Trustees of State University of New York, Minutes of a Meeting, State University of New York, 9 May 1968.

<sup>3</sup> Board of Trustees of State University of New York, Minutes of a Meeting, State University of New York, 28 June 1968.

<sup>4</sup> SUNY Head Librarians Conference, Summary of Proceedings of the S.U.N.Y. Head Librarians Conference: Eighteenth Annual Conference, 23-25 Apr. 1969.

<sup>5</sup> Position Paper Committee, The Place of Librarians in SUNY: A Position Paper, in Gemma DeVinney, The 1965-1974 Faculty Status Movement as a Professionalization Effort with Social Movement Characteristics: A Case Study of the State University of New York, 1987.

<sup>6</sup> Gemma DeVinney, A Chronology of the Faculty Status Movement: National Movement Leading to SUNY Movement, 23 May 2006, 15 May 2006, <[http://libweb.lib.buffalo.edu/sw/committees/fec/fcstat\\_chrono.htm](http://libweb.lib.buffalo.edu/sw/committees/fec/fcstat_chrono.htm)>.

<sup>7</sup> State University of New York Librarians Association, SUNYLA Newsletter, Dec. 1985.

<sup>8</sup> SUNYLA Executive Board, Minutes, State University of New York Librarians Association, 13 Sept. 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Average SUNY librarian salary from an analysis of 1995 SUNYLA Salary Survey data by the SUNYLA Ad Hoc Equity Committee. Average SUNY classroom faculty salary from an analysis of SUNY institutions' salary averages by the SUNYLA Ad Hoc Equity Committee using data from the March-April 1995 issue of Academe, pages 56-61.

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<sup>10</sup> Average SUNY librarian salary from an analysis of 1998 SUNYLA Salary Survey data by the SUNYLA Ad Hoc Equity Committee. Average SUNY classroom faculty salary from an analysis of SUNY institutions' salary averages by the SUNYLA Ad Hoc Equity Committee using data from the March-April 1998 issue of Academe, pages 68-73.

<sup>11</sup> Average SUNY librarian salary from an analysis of 2002 SUNYLA Salary Survey data by the SUNYLA Ad Hoc Equity Committee. Average SUNY classroom faculty salary from an analysis of SUNY institutions' salary averages by the SUNYLA Ad Hoc Equity Committee using data from the March-April 2002 issue of Academe, pages 66-71.

<sup>12</sup> Average SUNY librarian salary from an analysis of 2006 SUNYLA Salary Survey data by the SUNYLA Ad Hoc Equity Committee. Average SUNY classroom faculty salary from an analysis of SUNY institutions' salary averages by the SUNYLA Ad Hoc Equity Committee using data from the March-April 2006 issue of Academe, pages 74-79.

<sup>13</sup> SUNYLA Ad Hoc Equity Committee, Separating Librarians, Feb. 2006.

<sup>14</sup> SUNYLA Personnel Policies Committee, SUNYLA Exit Surveys, 1995-2005, Feb. 2006.