



TO: SUNY University Faculty Senate (UFS)
FROM: Operations Committee
RE: Process for Professional Staff Advancement
DATE: January 20, 2024
LOCATION: 196th Plenary – Virtual
Resolution #: 196-06-1
Vote: For: 39 / Against: 1

Whereas the United University Professions (UUP) Vice President for Professionals shared the following ongoing professional staff advancement issues with the University Faculty Senate (UFS) Operations Committee:

- Paths of advancement are not planned when developing professional staff positions;
- Generic SUNY titles with a wide scope are used to create positions that do not have clear paths for advancement and clearly defined responsibilities;
- Job descriptions do not clearly define responsibilities necessary for professional advancement, preventing future advancement;
- SUNY titles must be reviewed, and title trees that clarify path advancement should be created;
- The lack of clear opportunities for professional advancement leads to poor professional retention and exacerbates staffing shortages; and

Whereas rapid staff turnover negatively impacts the student experience and retention; and

Whereas the lack of promotion opportunities and clear paths for promotion lead to increased professional staff turnover rates; and

Whereas these advancement issues impact student recruitment, enrollment, retention, and a quality higher education experience. Student retention is a major initiative for SUNY and is strongly supported by UFS, and UFS is concerned with the retention and morale of UUP professional staff.

Therefore be it resolved that UFS supports the current SUNY/UUP collaborations addressing the review of SUNY titles¹ for professional staff and requests that work on this initiative be expedited (see [Appendix A32](#) 2022/26 UUP Agreement) on such matters as:

- Reviewing and updating titles, title series, and title families to accurately reflect duties, skills, responsibilities, and functions that have developed since the existing title structure was established.

¹ <https://www.suny.edu/hr/compensation/unclassified/group-list/>

- Establishing, where appropriate, lines of promotion within title series and title families to provide suggested career advancement opportunities based on increasing levels of supervisory responsibility or based on increasing levels of substantive expertise and/or responsibility.
- Addressing recruitment and retention issues and changes in salary relationships among relevant occupational categories.

Be it further resolved that UFS requests the SUNY Chancellor to direct campus Human Resources (HR) offices to:

- Ensure new hires are aware of the paths of advancement for professional staff positions during the hiring process and make every effort to avoid the creation of positions that have no path of advancement;
- Demarcate the duties and responsibilities for professional advancement on annual performance evaluations and professional performance programs,
- Confirm that all existing professional staff positions be updated to the appropriate newly created titles to reduce the hardships of professional staff.

Be it further resolved that Campus Governance Leaders work with their campus executive leaders to raise awareness on these advancement issues and support changes as recommended by UUP.

Appendix A-32

Dr. Frederick E. Kowal, President
United University Professions

Dear Dr. Kowal:

During the course of negotiations, certain issues related to professionals were raised by UUP that were of such significant concern that review at the Executive level is required.

On a date as soon as practicable but no later than six months after the execution of the Agreement, and agreeable to the parties, the Executive Committee shall convene to discuss and review issues of mutual interest pertaining to professional employees, the first issue being the need to review and update existing professional titles and titles services.

During negotiations of the 2016-2022 Agreement management agreed to begin this process with a review of the SUNY information technology titles and title structure. While progress was made on this during the term of the last agreement, it has become apparent both that additional resources are necessary to complete this review and that a broader review of other professional titles and title series is also necessary.

To address this need, the parties have agreed that \$250,000 shall be allocated from Article 21 funds to SUNY System Administration in each year of the agreement, and continuing thereafter,

to support two new staff positions whose exclusive professional obligation shall be to undertake a classification review to identify and recommend modifications to existing professional titles and title series and their appropriate allocation to salary levels which may be necessary to:

- a. Review and update titles, title series, and title families to accurately reflect duties, skills, responsibilities, and functions which have developed since the existing title structure was established.
- b. Establish, where appropriate, lines of promotion within title series and title families to provide suggested career advancement opportunities, based on increasing levels of supervisory responsibility or based on increasing levels of substantive expertise and/or responsibility.
- c. Address recruitment and retention issues and changes in salary relationships among relevant occupational categories.

This study shall commence with the successful hiring of staff as soon as practicable following the execution of this agreement. SUNY shall meet with UUP in executive level Labor/Management to discuss which titles and title series will be reviewed after completion of the IT title review, to obtain UUPs input as the classification review progresses, to review the results, and to discuss implementation of the results.

In conjunction with this study, SUNY will also review, and discuss with UUP in executive level Labor/Management, the possibility of modifying the existing salary structure. This review may explore whether an expansion, and the allocation/reallocation of professional titles and title series to expanded SL grades is appropriate.

The agreement to review these issues in this forum will not constitute a waiver of any management or union right or prerogative.

Sincerely,

s/Michael N. Volforte, Director
Office of Employee Relations

s/Frederick E. Kowal, President
United University Professions