

# UCATS Momentum

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

Volume 42 2021 Issue 1

## OPEN Enrollment for UNION-NEGOTIATED BENEFITS

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- Long-term Disability Insurance
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# Benefits due diligence

■ *Stephen Rechner, School of Law*

**B**y the time you read this the flurry of adjustments that come with returning to work on site will have subsided, and hopefully, the only thing on the horizon will be Open Enrollment.

If there is one point a global health crisis should drive home is the importance of a union contract and all the negotiated benefits that our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) guarantees. Last year at this time, NYU announced that there would be no annual wage increase – except for employees covered by a CBA. That meant UCATS members received the fourth of the six raises we negotiated in 2017 when managers and faculty got none. On September 13 of this year you will receive the fifth raise, which is again 2.5%.

Last year there was also a flurry of rumors about all the cost-cutting measures NYU was considering, including eliminating the NYU Retirement Plan contribution match. One reason that didn't happen is because UCATS members hired after January 1, 2019, can now choose the NYU Retirement Plan in lieu of the union-negotiated Staff Pension Plan, and we would certainly have raised objections if that were applied to our members in that plan.

Also essential in a health crisis is affordable health insurance. Uninsured/underinsured Americans who spent days/weeks/months in ICUs, and maybe even on ventilators, are now receiving the bills, which can be in the mil-



Stephen Rechner

lions of dollars. Even people with “good” health insurance are receiving bills in the tens of thousands of dollars. Depending on the union-negotiated plan you have, and your level of coverage, UCATS members’ out of pocket annual maximums range from \$2,000-6,000 provided you stay in network.

## Value in every link

After you have reviewed the most obvious NYU employee benefit choices you make during Open Enrollment, why not go to the NYU benefits page and click on every link to see what's there? Have you clicked on “Employee Discounts” and “Off-Campus Discounts”? There are lots of savings to be had and more than I can mention in this space.

And when was the last time you checked out your union member benefits? As a UCATS member you are also a member of New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the National Education Association (NEA) and the AFL-CIO. Each of these organizations have a

member benefits page and we've posted links to them on the UCATS website. If you take advantage of just some of the savings available from NYSUT/AFT/NEA/AFL-CIO you can easily recoup the entire annual cost of union membership and more.

The combined benefits of NYU employment and union membership are unequaled anywhere else but, to get their full-value you have to know what your benefits are. You have to do your benefits due diligence. That means reviewing NYU benefits web pages for full-time staff and poking around on the member benefit pages of our state/national affiliate partners. Benefits save you money. Not knowing your benefits is like walking past a \$100 bill lying on the sidewalk

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## UCATS Momentum

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Secretary	Henry Drobbin
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Newsletter



# UCATS win arbitration on essential worker pay

■ *Linda Wambaugh, Organizer*

In a decision issued on June 30, 2021, an arbitrator ruled that New York University breached Article 8, Paragraph F of the UCATS contract when it failed to provide essential employees with compensation “at the rate of time and one-half for up to three (3) consecutive days for all time actually worked.” This decision affects about 80 UCATS members who NYU designated as essential and were required to work onsite during the New York State shutdown of all but essential services from March 22-June 8, 2020.

## “Thanks” is not enough

Despite repeatedly thanking essential workers in their communications to the NYU community, NYU refused the essential employee pay for UCATS members required to report onsite during the shutdown including those working in Mail Services, NYU IT, Law School Housing and the

Office of Veterinary Resources among other areas.

UCATS filed a grievance to enforce the contract language we won in 2011 bargaining which says – *Employees providing essential services who are required to work when the University is officially closed due to an emergency (e.g. storms, power failures) shall be compensated at the rate of time and one-half for up to three (3) consecutive days for all time actually worked.*

UCATS argued in the grievance process that the essential worker pay was not only required under the contract, but it was also the right thing to do. We also asked NYU how they intended to thank their essential workers. Despite the limited amount of money involved, NYU denied the grievance and refused the essential worker pay claiming the University wasn’t “officially closed” during the state mandated shutdown.

With NYU refusing to follow the contract and do the right thing,

UCATS took the case to arbitration. Three UCATS members and UCATS organizer, Linda Wambaugh, testified at the two days of arbitration hearings held on January 22, 2021, and March 29, 2021. In her decision, the arbitrator says in part “... the university’s proposed three-part definition of “official closure” is not supported by the contract language, nor is it consistent with one of the key purposes of Article 8(F), which is to compensate those who must incur the hardships and risks associated with reporting to and functioning within a closed workplace during an emergency.”

UCATS has requested the records for all UCATS members who worked onsite from March 22-June 8, 2020, to ensure that they receive the additional pay under the terms of Article 8-WAGES, Paragraph F.

We thank you UCATS essential workers! We’re glad we fought and successfully enforced your contractual rights!

## Benefits

(Continued from page 2)

because it’s too much trouble to pick it up.

Open enrollment isn’t just an exercise in deciding which health insurance plan you want for the coming year. It is an opportunity to make sure you are fully compensated for the work you do by learning about every benefit and discount available to you as an NYU employee and as a union member.

## ATTENTION UCATS ESSENTIAL WORKERS!

IF YOU WERE designated by NYU as an essential worker and were directed to work onsite during the period of March 22, 2020 through June 8, 2020, please email UCATS at [info@ucats3882.org](mailto:info@ucats3882.org) with your name, department and which days you worked onsite during that period. Written documentation of your department/manager directing you to work onsite during that period if you can provide it and copies of your pay stubs will be helpful.

# Protect your survivors

■ *Stephen Rechner,*  
*School of Law*

**N**o one wants to contemplate their own demise, but two years of pandemic has taught us all that death can come at any age and without warning. That's why understanding your union-negotiated \$50,000 NYU Group Life Insurance is essential to the well-being of your surviving family members.

This group life insurance protects your survivors and has been negotiated by UCATS to be provided to you by NYU at no cost, but, you have to take steps to ensure your survivors get your insurance in the event of your untimely demise. First and foremost, you have to tell them that you have life insurance and how to claim it.

## Designate a beneficiary!

The NYU Group Life Insurance is a policy held by NYU. Consequently, your survivor(s) will not find this policy among your effects, so if you don't tell them about it, they won't know to claim it. You can designate one or more beneficiaries. If you do that, the insurance provider, Prudential, will process the payment to your beneficiary upon receipt of your death

certificate. If you fail to designate your beneficiary, your survivor(s) will have to file a claim and prove to Prudential that they are your rightful heir.

Our national affiliates – New York State United Teachers, The American Federation of Teachers, and the National Education Association also offer some small life insurance policies to you at no cost. The Member Benefits page on the UCATS website has been updated with links to all of these benefits and how to claim them, but YOU still have to let your family

know that these benefits exist and that they have to claim them. When you are flat on your back in the ICU and intubated is no time to have to give your family members a tutorial on your life insurance benefits. Teach them now!

Your survivors will need to have your death certificate and, to claim any of your union provided insurances, they will need your NYSUT member ID which is on your NYSUT membership card. If you don't have your NYSUT membership card you can call NYSUT toll-free at 800-

342-9810; press "0" for the operator and ask for the Membership Records Department. A link to information about all of the union provided insurance benefits and how to make a claim is on the UCATS website in the Member Benefits section.

Life insurance is a benefit your survivors can only get IF you take the steps to enable them to claim your benefits. If no claim is made, no benefit is paid. You work hard for your union-negotiated benefits; don't let the insurance companies keep money owed to your survivors.

## UCATS MEMBER LIFE INSURANCE BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- ▶ **FREE** union-negotiated \$50,000 of NYU Group Life Insurance.
- ▶ **OPTION** to purchase up to \$60,000 of additional life insurance from NYU in \$5,000 increments on a shared-cost basis; you must enroll for the additional optional insurance.
- ▶ **FREE** \$1,000 Term life insurance from the National Education Association (NEA). If death is the result of an accident on the job this FREE benefit is \$50,000. If death is the result of a homicide on the job this FREE benefit is \$150,000.
- ▶ **FREE** \$5,000 Accidental death life insurance from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Death must be the result of an accident off the job. If death is the result of an accident on the job, this FREE benefit is \$10,000.
- ▶ **FREE** \$1,500 Accidental death life insurance from New York State United Teachers. Death must be the result of an accident.



# The labor movement loses a giant

## In memoriam – Richard Trumka, President, AFL-CIO

■ Ben Carr, CFO

*“When workers have a voice on a job, it improves their lives, and it improves the economy as a whole”*

–Richard Trumka

For decades, Richard Trumka was the head of the country’s largest labor federation, the AFL-CIO. Widely considered to be the face of the American labor movement while workers faced a surge in union-busting campaigns. Trumka presided over an organization that was diverse and fractious. On August 5, he passed away. Known for his passionate pro-labor stance and his attacks on corporate America. “The labor movement is the best vehicle out there to make broad social change that creates an America where everyone gets a chance to win once in a while, not just the people on Wall Street but every American out there,” he told *The Washington Post* in 2009, shortly after he was elected AFL-CIO president.

Trumka began his career in organized labor in the 1970s as a staff attorney for the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). He rose to be the President of the UMWA and served in that role for over a decade (1982-95). While



Summer 2007 AFT Conference. (l to r) former UCATS shop steward Joy Young, Stephen Rechner, Richard Trumka (then Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO), former UCATS VP Luz Contreras

President, he presided over several major strikes and boycotts.

In 1995 he became the Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO, the largest federation of unions in the United States with over 12 million members. He was elected President in 2009, serving in that capacity until his death earlier this month. A powerful force in Democratic politics, Mr. Trumka sought to reinvigorate the labor movement after years of declining union membership, linking the campaigns for job security, better wages, and improved working conditions to causes including the fight for racial justice. He cast himself as a spokesman for American labor as a whole, not just the more than 50 unions that make up the AFL-CIO. As head of the AFL-CIO, he launched initia-

tives aimed at reaching younger workers, championed the “Fight for \$15” effort to raise the minimum wage, and called for employees to have a voice in ensuring their workplaces have proper safety protocols during the coronavirus pandemic. He recently championed the White House’s push to pass a bipartisan infrastructure bill, in addition to legislation that would strengthen labor laws.

### Tributes to Mr. Trumka:

“Rich spent his life ensuring workers and their families were treated and compensated fairly. We’ll honor his legacy by continuing our work to create good-paying union jobs in communities across the country.”

–Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland

“Rich fought his entire life for dignity and respect for American workers. He practiced what he preached, and he brought the voices of working people to the forefront of our nation’s consciousness with deep humility.”

–Randi Weingarten

“For Rich, it was always about doing right by working people – fighting for and protecting their wages, their safety, their pensions, and their ability to build a good, decent, honorable middle-class life. It was about workers improving their own lives and building worker power together. And it was about America itself. It was about the American worker being the heart of our economic might and dynamism. I’ve always believed that the middle class built this country and unions built the middle class. There is no doubt that Rich Trumka helped build unions across America.”

–President Joe Biden

Richard Trumka’s loss will be felt across the labor movement. From livable wage increases to the freedom to form and join unions, his vision and legacy will live on in our hearts as we continue to fight for social and economic justice to which he dedicated his life. He will be greatly missed.

# Your UCATS Executive Council 2021-2023

TERM: May 1, 2021-April 30, 2023

## OFFICERS

	WORK LOCATION
Stephen Rechner, President	Law School
Diana Corzen, VP	VP Stud. Affairs/HS
Chris Crowe, VP	Bobst Library
Sharmaine Griffin, Treasurer	SPS
Rob Lesko, Secretary	SPS

## STEWARDS

Robert Platt	Bobst Library
Benjamin Carr	CFO
Edmond Monchais	CFO
Petra McCalmon	Capital Projects
Melonie Jones Cummings	College of Dentistry

## WORK LOCATION

Vanessa Sejourne	College of Dentistry
Jason Singleton	College of Dentistry
Larissa McDowell	School of Law
Joan Randolph	Courant
Marty Correia	FAS
Janiene Thiong	FAS
Lisa Steves	Gallatin
David Privler	School of Social Work
Ian Brown	SPS
Alex Resnick	Stern
Ariel Raskin	UDAR
Aleida Casanas	University Enrollment
Johanna Tyson	VP Stud. Affairs/HS

## NEW STEWARD – Edmond Monchais

■ *Interviewed by Robert Platt  
Bobst Library*

So many of us interact with EDMOND MONCHAIS, of NYU Mail Services, on a regular or daily basis. For many years, he has been in constant motion all around NYU, providing services and also a friendly word and firm handshake. As a newly-elected UCATS Shop Steward, Edmond is now helping to build our union and create a better environment for workers at NYU. I spoke to Edmond recently about his new role.

### Why did you become a steward, and join the council?

“I wanted to be helpful to the people I work with and help solve problems that my co-workers are having. In our workplace, the environment can be toxic. In mail



services, there is a lot of activity and lots of material to move. We all need to clear the air and keep the temperature down.

### What is your experience so far?

“I have not yet worked representing people, but I am learning

about giving advice, and helping refer people to the union when necessary. It is my role to help people get the right information.”

### You move around NYU a lot and meet a lot of people. What do members say to you about NYU?

“Different places have different problems, and everyone needs help, but when it is outside my area of expertise, I make sure they contact the union office. People all over have questions. But I want to be there especially for my department.”

### What does the union mean to you?

“I can protect people from unfair treatment. There is a lot that goes on, but not everything is a fight. Sometimes there are just misunderstandings. A few words of simple conversation can resolve problems.”

# NEW STEWARD – Alex Resnick

■ *Interviewed by Robert Platt  
Bobst Library*

**A**LEXANDER RESNICK is working in the Executive Programs Department of the Stern School of Business. He is also working towards his Masters Degree in Urban Planning at Wagner. Recently he was elected to the UCATS Executive Council as a Shop Steward. I spoke to him recently about the experience.

## Why did you want to become a shop steward?

I worked for the American exhibit at the World's Fair in Kazakhstan, where they required employees fluent in Russian. I worked there for four months. I saw people being taken advantage of by their employers and I felt it was



important for employees to stand up for each other.

## What do you think of the experience so far?

I feel grateful. Working after college, I was not expecting a union position. Negotiations over sick pay,

wages, and the group health plan are done by the union, unlike when everyone has to do it for themselves. It is also good to get guidance from the union when problems come up. With COVID we've had to adapt to new conditions and having people to talk to about employee issues is important. And new issues will arise around re-opening.

## What are conditions like at Stern?

With a contract behind us, the administration is more mindful of our work-life balance. They have to pay attention when students' needs don't align with what we're able to provide.

## What does the union mean to you?

It's good to know that there is someone to go to when there's a problem. It's important to know that someone is looking out for the employees.

# NEW STEWARD – Janiene Ming Thiong

■ *Marty Correia, Faculty Arts  
and Science*

**A** recent addition to the UCATS Executive Council, **JANIENE MING THIONG** is no newcomer to NYU. This 30-years-young UCATS member has worked in Arts & Science for five years. When asked what inspired her to become a union steward she said, "I've always been curious about policies and procedures and tend to be pretty vocal about this curiosity. Grateful to my teammate and friend Marty Correia for thinking of me when the opportunity presented itself."

Most UCATS members love to talk about how being in a union



impacts their life, and that's no different for Janiene, "Being a part of

a union reinforces my belief in my community and the world we live in. It reminds me that our voices do hold power."

Growing up, Janiene saw the power of unions first-hand when family members were active in their union locals. When thinking about the future generation of union members, she said, "I can see this generation's cause will center around work/life balance.

After spending close to 2 years working remotely, employees' priorities have shifted and I believe we all want to make sure we are productive employees, present family members and contributing citizens. I believe

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# New UCATS Organizer Henry Drobbin

■ Christopher Crowe, Bobst Library

**O**n July 26th UCATS was happy to welcome aboard a new professional organizer, Henry Drobbin who, together with longtime Senior Organizer Linda Wambaugh, will carry out most of the day-to-day business of our local. In the lead up to his first day I sat down with him to talk about his background, his many accomplishments in union organizing at the New School, and his vision for the future of our union.

**Why don't we start with the basics – Where are you from? Where did you go to school? What did you study? Where have you worked?**

**HENRY:** I was born and raised here in New York – Richmond Hill, Queens, 111th stop on the J train. It's a really great, diverse neighborhood. I went to Richmond Hill High School then SUNY Old Westbury on Long Island, around Hicksville.

**What did you study there?**

**HENRY:** I studied multicultural literature, which was critical for me to really develop my analytical skill set.

**That's a good skill set for an organizer.**

**HENRY:** When I graduated I was looking for a job. It was a medium job market out there and I ended up at the New School – as a temp. Then I worked in International Student and Scholar Services for ten years. Then I was in the Politics Department for three years. And in the last year I was also in the Economics Department.

**How did you get into union work and organizing?**

**HENRY:** I'm very conscious of having a great place to work. I want



that anywhere I go. I try to solve problems, be helpful. I was nominated by a colleague to be on our negotiating committee, and with no experience, I accepted. Sometimes you just have to say YES to a situation. I took the opportunity and got to see a little bit of how my union worked, what some of the issues were.

**Tell us about successes you've had, challenges you've overcome, work that you've done that you're proud of?**

**HENRY:** Well, we had issues with classifications; workers who hadn't been reclassified or who had been at the base salary of our unit and not recognized by The New School. There were about 40 people in this group and I reached out to all of them and said, "Let's do a reclassification; it's something your contract provides for." I did it and I didn't like the process; there wasn't really a lot of information to go on so we were kind of throwing darts at a board. So I said, "why

don't we try to standardize this?" We created one form that everyone filled out and one method of doing the reclassification process. We started submitting applications one or two every month, and we started to be successful – I think we had maybe twenty-five reclassifications that were successful. The ones that weren't successful, at our next contract negotiations we addressed the core issues, which was that it was merit based and we made some of the reclassifications time based. That was a big win, it really was.

Then on the basis of that I was able to work with my colleagues to organize another unit because everyone else in the university was, like, "hey why not me?" So I went around and I had conversations with roughly three hundred people, multiple times. Every lunch break was a meeting...after work...before work...In the end we just about doubled our membership when we organized our technical workers. I lead that effort in 2017. It was about two years of work but then we had a successful contract with an 87% yes rate, which I'm really proud of. At the end of that we had a UNION in the best sense. Organizing a new group of workers into our union was a really great experience that succeeded by hard work, perseverance and unity. We were proud of our contract before the pandemic, and even more so, last year when everyone at The New School had pay cuts EXCEPT for our members.

The pinnacle best moment I had as a labor organizer was after our last contract negotiations, being able to tell so many people in the room that their wages will increase X times, and everyone is

*(Continued on page 9)*



# Henry Drobbin

(Continued from page 8)

lighting up and saying, “Wow, my situation is CHANGED.” It is those moments that I chase and want to have more of them. I think this world is very much ready for more of those moments. You know, the patriarchy, capitalism, everything has been grinding workers so hard for so many years, pushing us down – there are a lot of rungs on that ladder we can climb quickly if we climb together.

## What do you hope to do at UCATS?

HENRY: I want to learn. I really want to know what the members want and I want to be a conduit to making that happen. That’s my focus. I don’t think a good organizer

comes to impose their will. Well... maybe on the institution. But then it’s OUR will.

## Is there anything you’d like to say to the members?

HENRY: First of all, thank you for this opportunity. I’m a fighter. Every day, I think, it’s another day to become a more formidable advocate for our members.

It’s very important we should be thankful for what we have – while also seeing our potential to get more. Appreciate it. And part of that appreciation is appreciating that I am in the union and the union has benefits, there’s accountability, and it counteracts a system that is meant to grind you, sometimes

grind you to dust. Without that accountability you have no power, you’re at the will of your employer. I tell a lot of my colleagues who are in the union: first start out with thankful, then let’s look at where we can improve.

Ultimately my quest is to help people prepare for their future selves. I think labor organizing is that. A contract is that. We’re constantly in the NOW, the struggle in New York is real, New York is a very RIGHT NOW place but what you need is tomorrow. A good contract is going to prepare you for tomorrow and help you survive today.

## Are you ready to win?

HENRY: That’s all I do.

## The following appeared in the most recent edition of NYSUT United

[ OUR SRPs ]

## Getting to know ... Diana Corzen



CITIZENM

*Diana Corzen, an LPN at the NYU Student Health Center, is a vice president with the Union of Clerical, Administrative and Technical Staff at NYU. She was interviewed by Sharmaine Griffin, UCATS treasurer and a member of the NYSUT SRP Advisory Committee.*

their individual set-ups and needs. It is challenging and every day is a learning experience, because medicine is never stagnant. I love meeting people and trying to impact their everyday lives.

**How did you get involved in the union?**

I grew up in a union household and have always been in a union. Working at NYU was the first time I had ever encountered an open shop and I was surprised at how resistant some people were 24 years ago to becoming union members.

I can say with confidence, that being consistent, available to talk and to basically explain the facts to people, made it easier to have members join. Then

we negotiated and got a closed shop, and now it is more of educating members about their rights and how the contract works for all of us.

**Tell me how you make a difference.**

I make a difference by showing up and speaking proudly about what UCATS has done for us at NYU. Being able to point out the improvements in our contracts after each bargaining session and being able to have open dialogue with a supervisor on what is or is not in the contract to protect the member helps to make the difference every day.

**What brings you joy outside of work?**

I am a member of the New York City Medical Reserve Corps, which tries to fill in for staff and participate in community health and prevention clinics. I volunteered for contact tracing at NYU and I used to volunteer with the Mount Sinai Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program. Now my greatest joy is keeping my vegetable garden alive!

**Tell me about your job and why you love what you do.**

I am a clinical nurse in an ambulatory school health center. I work with a variety of specialists from endocrinology to sports medicine. Each day is a different mix of the providers I work with and

## Saving our democracy

**Randi Weingarten**, President  
American Federation of Teachers

I was catching up on some reading this week, with the TV on in the background, when I heard the journalist A.B. Stoddard warn, “We might have had our last free and fair election.” I stiffened, because I knew she was exactly right and she was sounding an alarm. A fire is sweeping the country, set in state after state by anti-democracy forces who are working to limit voting rights, interfere with vote counting and even manipulate the outcome of elections. Pay attention, because we are witnessing the most ominous threats to our democracy in our lifetimes.

This anti-democratic turn can be traced to the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2013 ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which gutted a key part of the 1965 Voting Rights Act—the requirement that states with a history of discriminatory voting laws seek federal preclearance to pass new voting laws. Republican-led state legislatures wasted no time to disenfranchise low-income, young, Black and brown voters they expected would vote for Democrats, passing strict voter ID laws and restricting early voting, absentee voting and voting by mail. And now, since Donald Trump lost the last presidential election, Republicans across the country have used that loss and his lies about the election to spur the most expansive rollback of voting rights since the Jim Crow era.

This year alone, lawmakers in 48 states have introduced nearly 400 restrictive voting bills. There are bills that suppress voting, that threaten poll workers and election officials with fines and even criminal prosecution for dubious violations, and that give legislatures the power to override electoral outcomes based on unproven allegations.

The glut of bills restricting voting rights has obscured something equally, if not more, alarming: how partisan, corruptible and potentially rigged *vote counting* will be with the passage of these bills.

A proposed new voting bill in Texas—blocked by Democrats for now—gives courts more power to void election results and lowers the bar for proving charges of voter fraud. Republicans in the Arizona Senate have engaged a company with no experience in ballot counting to conduct a forensic audit to search for fraudulent ballots from the 2020 presidential election. After Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger rebuffed pressure from then-President Trump to “find 12,000 ballots” for him, lawmakers removed him as the head of the board that oversees

state election laws and gave the board new authority to intervene in local elections, such as those in heavily Democratic areas like Atlanta’s Fulton County. And don’t forget that a majority of Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives attempted on Jan. 6 to throw out some states’ electoral votes—votes that went for Joe Biden.

### We might have had our last free and fair election.

What about the root cause that is fueling these efforts—Trump’s big lie that the November elections were rigged and the presidency was stolen from him? This claim has been thoroughly discredited, but it keeps being circulated and it fuels the barrage of threats and intimidation against many election officials, from secretaries of state to low-level workers. Some officials who refused Trump’s demands to alter election outcomes, including Raffensperger, have received death threats of hanging, firing squads and torture, terrorizing them and threatening the U.S. electoral system.

This is why federal action is crucial right now to keep our democracy. Over the last decade, 1 in 6 democracies have failed. Two bills in Congress are poised to protect the sovereignty of the people. The first, the For the People Act,

which passed in the House of Representatives and awaits action in the Senate, would establish rules for federal elections that would supersede many of the state-level voting restrictions that have been or soon could be enacted. It would require election officials to automatically register any eligible voter, require early voting periods, prohibit states from restricting mail-in voting, protect against purges of the voter rolls, prohibit harassment and intimidation of election workers, beef up election cybersecurity and defense from foreign interference, and provide vital funding for elections. In addition, the bill would ban partisan gerrymandering and establish uniform rules for redrawing congressional districts.

Congress must also restore the federal preclearance requirement for states with a history of discriminatory voting laws—the requirement invalidated by the Supreme Court in *Shelby County v. Holder*. The second major voting rights bill before Congress, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, is set to do just that.

Democrats are working to find a way forward, but, with the current politics over the filibuster and Republican opposition in the Senate, both bills face an uphill climb. Whatever final form these bills take, they must protect access to the vote and the integrity of our elections.

Protecting our democratic principles is patriotic, not partisan. Our responsibility as citizens is not just to vote; it is to stand up so that everyone who is eligible can vote and every vote is counted.



Photo: AFT

Weingarten, second from left, with election volunteers in Savannah, Ga., Dec. 21, 2020.

**FOLLOW RANDI WEINGARTEN:** [twitter.com/rweingarten](https://twitter.com/rweingarten)



# UCATS in Action

**MARCH 4, MAY 12**– Meetings of the NYSUT Civil and Human Rights Committee. UCATS Shop Steward Ben Carr was appointed to the committee last year and attended the meetings via Zoom. “At our March meeting we discussed the insurrection at the Capitol on January 6, and how non-people of color can listen as allies to people of color to better understand the issues they are facing. On May 12th the topic of discussion was how to address Anti-Asian hate.

**MAY 1**– Newly elected/re-elected UCATS Executive Council takes office for May 1, 2021-April 30, 2023 term. The Council meets monthly on the second Monday of each month.



**MAY 14**– GSOC – The Graduate Student Organizing Committee, UAW Local 2110 –

reached a tentative agreement with NYU after being on strike for three weeks. The contract has since been ratified by an overwhelming majority of GSOC’s members. Members of the UCATS leadership team joined the GSOC picket line in front of Bobst Library throughout the strike.

**MAY 23**– UCATS organizer Linda Wambaugh presented a day-long training session for newly elected first-time shop stewards Edmond Monchais, CFO, Alex Resnick, Stern, and Janiene Thiong, FAS. Yes, they did that on a Sunday.

**JUNE 15, JULY 26, AUGUST 11**– President Stephen Rechner, Secretary Rob Lesko, and UCATS organizing staff met with NYU to discuss reopening logistics and ramifications of vaccine mandate.

**JULY 26**– UCATS welcomed Henry Drobbin to the UCATS organizing staff. Henry replaces Matt Siliciano who moved on to a better opportunity. Henry comes to us from The New School where he was a shop steward.

**SEPTEMBER 16**– UCATS organizing staff and Stephen Rechner met with NYU to allocate child-care subsidies for 2022. The fund for calendar year 2022 is \$180,000 plus any unclaimed funds from the previous year.

## Janiene Ming Thiong

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there is a balance there that we will all want.”

She advises other UCATS members to take care of themselves, “I would say what my parents tell me – you are no

good to anyone if you are not well. Being your best at work requires that you prioritize yourself.”

Janiene and the rest of the UCATS leadership team need you to be your best. So, please do some-

thing nice for yourself or learn something new. Janiene keeps herself at the top of her game by making time for what she loves, “outside of work I truly enjoy swimming (just being in water), taking

long walks and getting lost, and trying new things.

Currently that is teaching myself how to play basketball.” If you see Janiene on campus, introduce yourself and tell her how you’ve been taking care of you!

# Bulletin Board

## WAGE INCREASE

CONGRATULATIONS! You received another 2.5% raise effective September 13, 2021 because of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) UCATS negotiated in 2017 which is in effect until 2023. This is the 5th of 6th raises we negotiated in 2017. UCATS members have received a wage increase every year since we negotiated our first CBA in 1979. That's 42 years and 42 raises. Even better, every one of those raises increased the starting wage for every new employee going forward, so no matter when you started working at NYU your starting wage included every union-negotiated increase that occurred since 1979.

## OPEN ENROLLMENT

OPEN ENROLLMENT isn't just for reviewing your health insurance/dental/vision selections. Make some time to go to the benefits page for full-time staff on the NYU website to make sure you are taking advantage of everything available to you as an NYU employee. The only benefits you really have are the benefits you know about. If you don't know about all the benefits available to you, then you are leaving money on the table and agreeing to work for NYU for less.

## HOLIDAY SHOP WITH PURCHASING POWER

UCATS MEMBERS have a great money-saving benefit from our state federation, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT). The Purchasing Power Member Shopping Program is an online shopping service that offers you the ability to purchase brand-new, brand-name products and pay for them over time through the ease of ACH withdrawals. Get your holiday shopping done online and pay over time – interest free! While Purchasing Power is not a discount program, it can save you money and stress compared to high-interest credit cards or rent-to-own stores. And unlike layaway programs, Purchasing Power allows you to receive your order up front with manageable payments that have zero interest, no credit check and no hidden fees. To get started, go to [ucats3882.org](http://ucats3882.org), scroll down to Member Benefits, click Learn More and then click NYSUT Member Benefits and Purchasing Power.

