

Hello members of Rutgers and University Hospital,

Let me formally introduce to you one of my most favorite person in the world... ME! 😊

My name is Fatima Meadows and I have been a union member for 23 years. I signed my membership card during orientation because Roslyn, who spoke to my class, spoke with excitement and love for HPAE (Health Professional Allied Employee), so on November 6, 2000, long and behold a union member was born. This was the first job I had that was unionized, and with the involvement of people who all shared the same respect and admiration for the union, I felt the need and the urge to be a part of it. That is right I have seen the coming and going of this administration, and our union leaders, including me, I was a Union Rep, the Health & Safety Chair and currently the Grievance Chair for the North and I sat on the contract negotiations committee twice.

I decided to run for Co-President for the North because I can bring with me *Hospitable Passion with Ambitious Energy*. But most importantly I want to see things change, I want to see better organization, more inclusiveness, and more compassion for our members.

When I speak of a better organization, I want to see that all union positions are filled, I want to work closely with the administration of Rutgers and UH to bring change, hold them accountable to the change and work closely with HPAE Staff by continuing to include them in the strategic change in order to be a successful union by not hindering but supporting and strategizing a successful change.

More inclusiveness can only come by allowing everyone to be their authentic selves because being a leader is about making the right choices, speaking up for others and not worrying about being liked. We need to address the unfairness and mistreatment of our members who live a different lifestyle than you by having the Administration correct the behaviors of managers, and supervisors who causes negative impacts on their departments so we can have a more inclusive workplace without creating a hostile work environment.

Compassion for our members happens when we remember to remain open-minded throughout our conversations with them to hear exactly what it is that they expect from the union and remember to also remain empathic and respectful to the needs of those employees who are not members of the Union to see what I, you, we can do to change their membership status.

In closing, I need your help in changing our work environment, because a VOTE FOR ME IS A VOTE FOR US...

My name is Fatima Meadows, I would like to be your next union co-president!

Candidate Statement
Ryan Novosielski

I'm Ryan and currently serve as Co-President. I've worked at the combined Rutgers for 24 years, starting at UMDNJ as a high-school intern. I graduated from Rutgers College in 2004, my hometown hospital was University Hospital, and I've been responsible for IT equipment at today's Rowan-SOM. I've seen first-hand the good these employers can do, as well as experienced the toxicity and indifference they too often exhibit.

Collectively, we worked throughout the pandemic, through the myriad risks and challenges, providing mental healthcare, laboratory services vital to pandemic tracking and treatment, IT support for suddenly remote operations, healthcare in our prisons, and numerous other roles to make these employers what they are. Eight HPAE-represented workers lost their lives to COVID-19, while many of us lost family members and friends. Our employers' ways of thanking us were a mixture of withholding negotiated salary increases with dubious justification, dragging out contract negotiations, dictating remote work on their terms alone, offering uncompetitive compensation, forcing departments to fight for scraps under responsibility-centered management, requiring us to work on-site without meaningful justification or COVID protections, or – all too often – even a roof that reliably keeps water on the outside.

This isn't the workplace I envision, nor that I graduated from with pride 19 years ago, the one I want to visit when I need routine or crisis care, or that we want training our future medical professionals. Our employers need to adjust their priorities, embrace their public service missions instead of nickel-and-diming them – and their faculty, staff, and students – and to take the currently hollow notion of a “beloved community” seriously, not just the current eye-roll of a refrain. They need to staff departments properly, particularly in the vital mental health services areas, stop treating public healthcare as a business, stop privatizing our work with the help of RWJ-Barnabas and Virtua, and take our expert input seriously, not just ram through unpopular ideas like the Rutgers medical school merger, hoping we – and the surrounding community – won't notice. They need to pay us equitably and just to learn basic respect.

That is where we come in. We are nearly 3000 strong, all have ideas about how we could make these workplaces better, and – if we stand together – the power to make it happen. I believe in a local union that is transparent, democratically led, honest about our successes (and when we fall short), an ardent defender of public healthcare, a force to be reckoned with, and that gives you a true seat at the table, as we have with open bargaining, among other tactics. I pledge to continue the important work of centering member voices, working to ensure every corner of our workplaces are well-represented, and fight in general to ensure that workers are in control of their own destinies – in the workplace and in our union. If you feel the same way, re-elect me, and then reach out to get more involved. The success of our union depends upon what each of us puts in. Solidarity!

Hi, my name is Lisa Adams and I have been a member of HPAE Local 5094 since 2013. I started as a Union Representative at the School of Health Professions in Newark and am currently serving as the Co-Grievance Chair for the Central and South Campuses. I am humbly seeking your vote for Co-President of HPAE local 5094.

Like many of my colleagues, I joined the union because I wanted to fight back against Rutgers' mistreatment of our members. I saw firsthand how our members suffer under the leadership of poor managers and supervisors and the lengths Rutgers' will go to protect their own while simultaneously disempowering our members and violating our contract. The disdain that Rutgers has for Unions was even more evident during my time on the Negotiations Committee where they tried to gut our contract, essentially leaving us with a worthless piece of paper.

I have seen what our local can accomplish when we work together for the greater good of our members, but I also know the flip side of that. We have all heard the expression, "a house divided against itself cannot stand". This is the first expression that came to mind during our last contract negotiations with Rutgers. It was brutal and it was made abundantly clear that our local is much like a house with many cracks. Between the infighting and poor communication with members, it was startling to see how far away we have moved from the mission of this local. Despite this, I believe through thoughtful and strategic actions guided by the objectives laid out in our Constitution and Bylaws, we can make our local stronger and better equipped to handle whatever Rutgers throws at us.

I am running for Co-President because I believe it is time for the current incumbent to pass the baton so that members, like me, can continue to build upon the work they have accomplished throughout their tenure. We need new leaders who will move our local forward with new ideas and plans that will benefit ALL our members. One of my priorities is to improve communication and collaboration with HPAE Staff Representatives, the Local Executive Board, and HPAE members. We need to refocus our energy on working together to prioritize the needs and interests of our members—because they are the ones who matter the most. Our members are located across the state of New Jersey, so I also plan to prioritize breaking down the existing silos by creating opportunities to engage with our members in more meaningful and constructive ways.

I am humbly seeking your vote for Co-President of HPAE local 5094. I believe my many years of experience with the Union make me a strong candidate for this position. If elected, I am ready to serve, and would be honored to work alongside all of you as we continue to fight to make Rutgers a safer, healthier, and better place to work.

Lisa Adams

Candidate for HPAE Local 5094 Co-President, Central and South Jersey

Candidate statement

Justin O'Hea

My name is Justin O'Hea, I am a clinical social worker at Rutgers University Behavioral Healthcare (UBHC) and I am excited to announce that I am running again for Co-President of HPAE Local 5094. I have been an employee of Former UMDNJ, now Rutgers for almost 12 years now. I am first and foremost a clinician, working with the mentally illness, addiction, homelessness, and the marginalized. I have been working as a mental health professional for 22 years. I have been involved with HPAE since I started my career at UMDNJ. I have served as my unit representative, was the sitting COPE chair for 3 years, have been doing activism and advocacy for the union throughout the Rutgers integration, and through this partnership "agreement" with RWJ Barnabas. I remain to be an outspoken and public critic of the privatization, corporatization, and exploitation of our institution, of our labor, of healthcare in the state of NJ, over higher education, on a national scale as well. I have done activism and public advocacy for several years now with HPAE and numerous other grassroots organizations across the state. I have been pushing to organize, engage, and activate the union membership on my unit and across the organization to be more involved and active in union campaigns and direct actions. I have helped run rallies with the Rutgers Union Coalition, student organizations, spoke in several Board of Governors meetings, have rallied and spoke in the most recent Rutgers Senate meeting, town hall meetings for University Hospital, and have become one of the public faces of the HPAE opposition to the Rutgers Health agreement. Most of all, I with the assistance of our other co-president, HPAE staff, and elected leadership, was able to navigate the through the largest collective trauma and global health emergency in modern times. We fought through the fiscal "emergency," layoffs, remote work, issues with furloughs and unemployment. We completed the most contentious contract cycle in modern times. I am battle tested and continue to push for more democracy and transparency and access to the negotiations process as a local. I have represented HPAE in communicating with and urging the support from NJ lawmakers and have been actively working to help push our Union in a more progressive direction for the future. I believe that HPAE needs to look towards the future, do more community outreach, and use our power to focus on more social justice issues that our communities face, and take on issues beyond our silo of organizational interest. I am a dedicated, passionate, tenacious, and righteously angry advocate and spokesperson for our union. I am truly a fighter! I want to bring the recognition deserved, and the fighting reputation back to this union. We have been sidelined for long enough! Please support me in my re-election bid to continue as a co-president of HPAE 5094, I will not disappoint!

Mayra Barreto

Candidate Statement – Grievance Chair

My name is Mayra and I am a candidate for Grievance Chair. A little about myself I have been with the university for 25 years. During my tenure with the university, I have been on the contract negotiation committee a couple of times including this last round of contract negotiations. I am fully vested in participating in the union and helping my fellow members. I am running for grievance chair because I firmly believe I can make a difference. The climate in the university has changed and it is vastly different from when we were UMDNJ. My 25 years of experience and vast knowledge of the University and its different divisions place me in the unique position to better handle the growing number of grievances of our members.

I hope that you will consider me and vote.

Thank you!