

Clarion

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APRIL 2007

CCNY HISTORY

Lee Lorch
honored

Mathematician's
lifelong fight
against
racism

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Dave Sanders

PSC PUSHES FOR CITY FUNDS

CUNY AND THE COUNCIL

Mayor Bloomberg wants to cut CUNY's budget – but the PSC says that CUNY is already underfunded and needs more city support. Above, at the union's legislative breakfast during CUNY Week, Councilman Robert Jackson listens to Iris

DeLutro of the PSC Executive Council; between them are President Barbara Bowen (left) and BMCC Chapter Chair Jane Young. On May 9, union members will go to City Hall for a day of grassroots lobbying. **PAGES 3 AND 5**

YOUR BENEFITS

New adjunct fund begins

The Adjunct Professional Development Fund is an overdue recognition of the professional accomplishments of CUNY's part-time faculty. **PAGE 8**

CONTRACT TALKS

Bargaining and organizing

Do you want a good contract and a better University? The PSC's "My Five" network – member-to-member organizing to strengthen the union – invites you to join. **PAGE 4**

9/11 FALLOUT

Health risks at BMCC?

What health risks might BMCC faculty, staff and students face due to their proximity to Ground Zero? *Clarion* talks with an expert to get the facts. **PAGE 7**



THE UNIVERSITY

The limits of 'CUNY Lite'

The "rebranding" of CUNY in recent years has won favorable coverage in the press. But will this strategy reverse the damage done by years of cuts in public funding? **PAGE 11**



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | WRITE TO: CLARION/PSC, 61 BROADWAY, 15TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10006. E-MAIL: PHOGNESS@PSCMAIL.ORG. FAX: (212) 302-7815.

Time for tuition waivers at CUNY

● Have my eyes deceived me!?

I was reading through the new issue of *Clarion*, specifically the list of contract demands, and I happened to spot #24, "Tuition Waivers."

I never thought I'd live to see the day! For decades I have been carping about the lack of a tuition-waiver provision in our contracts. It makes no sense that small private colleges, often in consortium with one another, offer tuition waivers or abatements for the immediate families of employees, while we, the employees of America's largest urban public university system, have no such provision. How are we to continue to attract the best and brightest – in terms of both staff and student body – when we lack such an important and common fringe benefit?

I take my hat off to the individual who finally saw the light and wrote this provision into the list of demands. Please try to hold the line and do your utmost to make this part of our next contract. It may be

too late to do any good for me, as my only child is already in college, but there are hundreds, perhaps thousands of others who can benefit from such a provision.

Peter Dodenhoff
John Jay College

Anne Friedman of the PSC negotiating team responds: *Thank you for your enthusiastic support of contract demand #24. As you cogently argue, tuition waivers are standard at many colleges and universities across the country. Management will also benefit from such a provision, as it will foster recruitment and retention of faculty and attract a new cohort of students to the University. The tuition waiver demand has been included in PSC bargaining proposals in the last two rounds of negotiations and we will continue to fight for it in the next contract. We welcome your participation in the contract campaign as we build strong membership support for this demand, and we invite you to attend*

as an observer the negotiation session at which we will present our arguments for tuition waivers.

TIAA-CREF problems

● Like many others I received a letter in January, creating for my benefit four TIAA-CREF accounts instead of two. The explanation was that I had "multiple employers." As I've worked only at CUNY for 39+ years, I thought this odd. Moreover, TIAA-CREF listed me at Hunter – not at Lehman where I've worked since 1968!

After more than 40 phone calls to TIAA-CREF, I've spoken to nine different people. (Most calls were blanks as they have a dysfunctional phone system apparently designed to discourage human contact.) Five people were no help whatsoever, each giving a different explanation.

One disclosed that they have apparently mislaid three years of my payments in the 1960s, from the University of Delaware. Since as "old

dollars" they are worth quite a bit, I asked for an investigation and was promised a response by mid-February. That has not yet happened. (The person assigned to my problem did say that he had been sick for a week – seven weeks ago!)

An April 6 conversation uncovered no records of my prior contacts with TIAA-CREF and no idea where the missing payments might have gone. (One person suggested I should obtain Delaware's records!) Brightly I was told that my NYC personal investment advisor would undoubtedly solve my problems.

TIAA-CREF needs to prove that it is not as dysfunctional as its phone system.

Stefan Baumrin
Lehman College & the Graduate Center

Editor's note: See page 9 of the March *Clarion* (at www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm) for our reporting on problems with TIAA-CREF's shift to a new computer system; see page 5 for a further up-

date. The PSC urges members to check their account statements regularly – particularly now, in light of TIAA-CREF's recent problems.

If you do find a problem with your account, call TIAA-CREF's New York office at (800) 842-2011. If the problem remains unresolved, contact the PSC.

There has been growing concern among PSC members about the increasing number of problems encountered by many members in TIAA-CREF. The March 22 PSC Delegate Assembly approved a resolution from the Retirees Chapter, which cites TIAA-CREF's late payments, errors in account statements, poor customer service and other problems. The resolution asks that CUNY management and TIAA-CREF representatives meet with the PSC "to address and correct these concerns," and the union-wide Pension Committee is pursuing the issue.

Parity for EOC retirees

● Imagine my dismay when I read in the February *Clarion* that future retirees of the Educational Opportunity Centers would be receiving Medicare Part B reimbursement! What about those of us already retired? We have brought this issue to the attention of the PSC for years, finally gaining retirement health benefits, but only for the retiree himself/herself.

We have substantive documentation from various sources supporting our contention that we are employees of CUNY and therefore employees of New York City. *Thus, the whole focus should not be on Part B reimbursement alone, but on the more comprehensive issue of "parity" for EOC retirees as CUNY retirees with all of the entitlements that thereby accrue.* The contractual disparities have not been limited to retirement benefits, but to many ongoing benefits, such as differential contributions to TIAA-CREF – it reminds me of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* "wherein all are equal, but some are more equal than others."

Our numbers are small, and the cost to fund these benefits is minimal; however, our political clout is also weak, but let fairness prevail! The PSC owes it to us EOC retirees to press for these benefits in their contract negotiations.

Joe Marvel
Brooklyn EOC (retired)

PSC Executive Director Deborah Bell responds: *The PSC continues to press CUNY to provide Medicare Part B benefits to retired EOC employees, equivalent to those provided to retired CUNY employees. To date, EOC employees at the four CUNY EOCs have never been on the New York City or CUNY payroll.*

Coalition fights for affordable housing

By BENNETT BAUMER

A coalition of housing, labor and immigrant organizations plan to mobilize the largest affordable housing rally this decade on May 23 at Stuyvesant Town in Manhattan.

The groups are pushing Governor Eliot Spitzer to take steps to alleviate the city's affordable housing crisis.

The demonstration will be held on Wednesday, May 23 at 5 pm, at First Ave. and 14th St. (more information at www.nyisourhome.com).

Executive Council Member Jim Perlstein told *Clarion* why the PSC has joined 1199, DC37, the UFT, the Working Families Party and others in organizing the protest. "We've got many members who are desperate about the housing situation, particularly junior faculty, part-timers and HEOs," Perlstein said. "Much of the salary gain we may make on a contract can disappear because of the exorbitant price of housing. We're at the point where working people can't afford to live in the City – and we've got to demand a change."

Coming together under the name "New York Is Our Home," the coalition is asking for action on several fronts: preserve and expand affordable housing in New York City,

strengthen rent regulation laws, give public housing the funding it needs, and limit rents for people with AIDS/HIV to 30% of income. Another demand is "Keep the Promise – use Battery Park City money for affordable housing." Of \$1 billion in Battery Park City funds pledged for affordable housing, only \$143 million has actually been spent.

New York City has been losing af-

fordable housing units for many years. For more than a decade, the New York real estate industry and its ally, former Governor George Pataki, worked to chip away at rent stabilization

laws with one bill after another. Landlords are allowed rent increases when they remodel stabilized apartments and can deregulate the unit entirely when a vacancy occurs and the rent surpasses \$2,000. To stem the erosion of affordable units, the coalition wants Spitzer to end deregulation or raise the threshold much higher than \$2,000.

The coalition is also demanding preservation of affordable units created under the Mitchell-Lama program, which gave developers tax breaks and land deals in order to build affordable units. Landlords can opt out of the program after 20 years or if they pay off the mortgage prior to its termination. The last



PSC member and Stuyvesant Town tenant Greg Dunkel.

Mitchell-Lama project was constructed in 1978, and since 1985 more than 28,000 units have left the program – nearly 10,000 of those units between 2003 and 2005.

45% OF INCOME

Donald Jenner, a part-time faculty member at BMCC, moved into Independence Plaza, a Mitchell-Lama project in Lower Manhattan, 30 years ago as a grad student. But when landlord Larry Gluck bought the complex in 2003, the new owner moved quickly to pay off the mortgage and take the building out of the program.

"Gluck looked and said, 'This is Tribeca,'" Jenner said. "The current

market-rate tenants pay \$2,700-3,800 in rent." His own rent isn't that high yet, Jenner says, but still eats up about 45% of his and his wife's gross income.

Greg Dunkel, a computer systems analyst at the Central Office, lives in Stuyvesant Town, where residents are worried about the fate of affordable units after real estate giant Tishman Speyer bought the complex. "Tishman spent five billion dollars, and they want their money back," he said. "I think all members of the PSC who live in NYC – whether they rent or own – should come to the affordable housing rally on May 23." It's an issue, he said, that touches every union member.

PSC asks Council to restore funds

By DANIA RAJENDRA

In this year's preliminary executive budget, Mayor Michael Bloomberg proposed cuts for CUNY – as he has every year since he was first elected. The proposed reductions come despite the fact that CUNY's enrollment is at a 31-year high and the City is running a \$4 billion budget surplus.

"There is no reason CUNY should be poor, especially in this year of a record budget surplus," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "We can turn around a massive history of underfunding; there is no excuse for not increasing CUNY funding this year." Bloomberg's budget would fall \$59 million short of CUNY's budget request, leaving the University unable to meet even its mandatory cost increases.

STUDENTS SUFFER

"I can tell you from 30 years of intense, daily experience with students in need, that it is the students who suffer when New York City fails to invest in CUNY," PSC Secretary Arthurine DeSola testified to the City Council Committee on Higher Education. "Students who have been subject to poverty, and often racism, all their lives simply will not excel if their only chance at college just compounds that experience of poverty."

The PSC has been lobbying the City Council to reject Bloomberg's cuts. The union supports CUNY's request for a \$13 million increase over last year's city budget, and is asking the Council to allocate an additional \$12 million for a new City Council Scholars and Diversity Program. Under this PSC proposal, money would be earmarked to hire 200 more full-time faculty in com-

Bloomberg seeks cuts to CUNY



PSC Secretary Arthurine DeSola and First Vice President Steve London testified at a hearing held by the Council's Committee on Higher Education on March 16.

munity colleges. Funding would be targeted to increase diversity, expand counseling services by hiring more faculty counselors and increase support for student mentoring.

PSC seeks to keep scholarships, increase diversity and student counseling

PSC leaders testified in support of the proposal and in defense of others under the mayor's ax. These include CUNY's Citizenship and Immigration Project and its Black Male Initiative, as well as key financial aid programs such as the Lone Scholarships and the City Council's Safety Net program. PSC First Vice President Steve London told the Council that despite positive trends in city funding in recent

years, in real dollars city support for CUNY is still 17% below its level in 1990.

"Too many of our students do not get the counseling and mentoring services they need to stay in school and succeed," London testified. "The mayor's budget does not fully cover operating costs and financial aid needs. Uncorrected, CUNY and its students will suffer and we will move backwards rather than continue to repair the years of underfunding."

FITERMAN

Speaker Christine Quinn presented the Council's response to Bloomberg's budget on April 5. The Council expressed support for capital improvements at CUNY, for which

the PSC and CUNY have requested an additional \$39 million. This includes \$28 million for the demolition and replacement of Fiterman Hall, which suffered catastrophic damage in the 2001 attack on the World Trade Center. (See page 7.)

MONEY ON THE TABLE

The Council's response noted that the City has in effect left millions of dollars on the table by failing to match funds pledged by the State for capital improvements to the community colleges and Medgar Evers. The Council calls this "a disservice to the students and faculty," and said the City "should make it budgetary policy to fully match all state capital grants for CUNY's capital plan."

The Council would restore \$266 million in response to Bloomberg's proposed cuts in the city budget, as part of what is known as the "annual budget dance" – the mayor proposes cuts, and the City Council restores much of this funding. Council sources have told the PSC that this will include restorations for CUNY. "But until the mayor puts out his revised budget proposal, we don't expect to see any specific commitments," London told *Clarion*.

FULL SUPPORT

"More than ever, we need to offer our full financial support for the CUNY system in order to help them continue their long tradition of helping New Yorkers meet their educational needs," said David Weprin, chair of the Council's Finance Committee. Weprin spoke at the PSC's CUNY Day Breakfast on March 28, where he was presented with a "Friend of the PSC" award for 2007. (See story below.) Charles Barron, chair of the Council's Higher Education Committee, has also said that the Council must boost CUNY's city funding.

'CUNY at the Council' on May 9

On May 9, PSC members will make their presence felt at City Hall. Dubbed "CUNY at the Council: A PSC Day of Action," the day will feature grassroots lobbying of City Council members. And at a press conference on the City Council steps, PSC members, CUNY students and Council members will speak about CUNY's needs.

On May 9, union activists will also deliver thousands of purple postcards asking the Council to fund CUNY fairly. The purple postcards feature the message of this year's budget campaign: "The Time is Now to Invest in CUNY." That message is also at the heart of a PSC TV advertisement, aired the last two weeks of April in NYC. (See page 9.)

Postcards are available from the union office at (212) 354-1252, or by contacting PSC Organizer Sabine Hammad (shammad@pscmail.org). The TV ad, the postcard and a sign-up form for May 9 events are all available on the union's Web site, www.psc-cuny.org.

– PH

Rosie Mendez, whom the PSC supported early in her race for the Council in 2005, was one of the many Council members who attended the PSC breakfast. "It's part of our obligation to ensure CUNY has that [support]," Mendez told *Clarion*, "so students graduate with all the skills they need to succeed."

CUNY Week events center on city budget

During this year's CUNY Week, PSC chapters invited elected officials to campus to see members and students at work. The annual event, held the last week in March, focused on the City budget, and PSC leaders told Council members that "the time is now to invest in CUNY."

At a March 28 chapter meeting at Queensborough Community College, City Councilman Tony Avella told PSC members, students and local press that he is strongly opposed to Bloomberg's proposed cuts to CUNY. (See above.)

GOOD AND BAD

"Faculty and administrators took Avella on a tour, showing him some of the good things, like our nice computer labs, and some places that need repairs," Queensborough Chapter Chair Jay Appleman told

Council members on campus

Clarion. Council member Hiram Monserrate, a Queensborough alumnus, visited Appleman's class. "He spoke about his experience as a student here, how CUNY is so important to the City, and his opposition to Bloomberg's budget cuts," said Appleman.

At City Tech, David Yassky also pledged support, telling the chapter on March 27, "We need to get the funding to allow more adjuncts to become full-time."

"It was eye-opening for Yassky to hear first-hand from members about some of the deplorable conditions under which we work," said City Tech Chapter Chair Bob Cermele. "Yassky was very responsive, and

said he strongly supported efforts to fund the University."

Aides to Robert Jackson, Alan Gerson and Kendall Stewart visited City College, Borough of Manhattan Community College and Brooklyn College, respectively.

City Council members pledge support for CUNY.

There was a strong turnout of the City Council at the PSC's annual CUNY Day breakfast on March 28, where the union handed out three "Friend of the PSC" awards. One went to David Lavin, professor of sociology at Lehman and the Graduate Center, for his long-term studies of CUNY graduates who enrolled under open admissions. His new book chronicles the children of CUNY

open admissions alumni and how their parents' college educations improved the children's economic and social prospects.

The PSC also honored the World Trade Center Community Labor Coalition, which has led the fight for safe demolition and replacement of BMCC's Fiterman Hall. (See page 7.)

The union honored City Council Finance Committee Chair David Weprin. "Every honor is also a request," PSC President Barbara Bowen noted with a smile as she introduced him.

DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY

"By providing quality education at an affordable price, CUNY has opened up the doors of opportunity to many who would have never had that chance," said Weprin, who also said it was imperative to fully fund

the University. Weprin was joined by City Council colleagues Tony Avella, Leroy Comrie, Inez Dickens, Robert Jackson, Letitia James, Rosie Mendez and James Vacca. Speaker Christine Quinn and five more Council members sent aides.

ON TO MAY 9

The momentum from CUNY Week continued as the union mobilized for a day of grassroots lobbying on May 9, dubbed "CUNY at the Council: A PSC Day of Action." The day will feature the delivery of thousands of purple postcards addressed to Quinn, urging the Council to increase CUNY's funding. "Speaker Quinn has always been with us," said Eileen Moran, co-chair of the PSC Legislative Committee. "We urge her to come through again for CUNY."

– DR

Salaries first focus of bargaining

By PETER HOGNESS

In contract bargaining sessions on March 19 and April 2, PSC negotiators moved forward with a detailed presentation of the union's contract demands. Backed by extensive research, the bargaining team made the case for improvements in salary, health coverage and workload.

At the March 19 session, the PSC told management that faculty and staff need substantial raises. "We demonstrated how salaries for all members of the bargaining unit have fallen relative to inflation since the fiscal crisis of the 1970s," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. In real dollars, pay levels at CUNY fell sharply during the fiscal crisis and tumbled again in early 1980s and early 1990s. "The result is that CUNY salaries, which once were seen as very good, are no longer competitive," Bowen said.

Using unpublished data from the most recent salary survey by the American Association of University Professors, the PSC team showed

PSC & management meet twice

that CUNY salaries fall below those at comparable institutions. They contrasted CUNY's pay scale with that of the University of Maryland-Baltimore, SUNY-Buffalo, Rutgers (Newark and Camden), Yeshiva, Hofstra and others.

COMPETITIVE SALARIES

"If CUNY is to be a great university, it needs a salary structure that's competitive across the board," said Bowen. "You can't recruit and retain the best faculty and staff by cutting corners."

Other data showed the need to enhance CUNY's top salary steps. Currently 57% of full professors and 24% of all full-timers at City University are at the top step of the salary scale. "When people remain stuck at the top step for 15 or 20 years, it creates a real morale problem," said bargaining team member Steve Trimboli. "That's not good for the University."

Another presentation focused on the need to increase adjunct salaries. "CUNY's policy of underpaying adjuncts depresses all salaries," Bowen told *Clarion*. "And it leaves many adjuncts in poverty." PSC bargainers called for a specific increase to provide greater equity for adjuncts.

In addition, Bowen noted, "The stagnation of salaries is worst in titles with the highest proportion of people of color and women." Of full-time lecturers, for example, 52% are women and nearly half belong to federally protected racial or ethnic groups.

A significant pay hike is critical to achieve management's own declared goals, union negotiators said. For example, the CUNY Master Plan for 2006-2007 states, "Colleges will continually upgrade the quality of their faculty, as scholars and

as teachers." This simply cannot happen without the ability to pay competitive salaries, PSC representatives said.

Union bargainers also showed that faculty and staff raises have lagged behind those of management. Various "performance goals" have been cited to justify management's increases – most of which, the PSC team noted, have been achieved through the work and creativity of union members.

Uncompetitive salaries hurt members – and the University.

When the two sides met again on April 2, the focus was on health care. The PSC called for

ongoing increases in CUNY's contributions to the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund. Adjuncts who work more than half-time, or the equivalent, should be brought onto the regular city health insurance plan, the union argued, noting that this is already the case for most other groups of municipal employees. The bargaining team also emphasized the need for CUNY to provide

graduate employee health insurance, as comparable universities already do.

On faculty workload, PSC negotiators laid out the facts: CUNY's heavy teaching load is causing *current* faculty to look for positions elsewhere and has had a documented effect in causing sought-after candidates to turn down CUNY jobs when they are offered. To reverse these trends, they said, a reduction in teaching load is required.

DEMANDS EXPECTED

There was also discussion of a PSC proposal for reassigned time for scholarly work by faculty who are already tenured. This proposal builds on the successful model of reassigned time for research for junior faculty, which has increased CUNY's academic productivity.

Another bargaining session was scheduled for April 20, just after this issue of *Clarion* went to press. Union negotiators said they expected to receive management's list of demands at the session.

CALENDAR

APRIL 26-28 / Labor's Voices 3: Media for a New Workers' Movement brings together pro-worker journalists, media workers, academics and activists from unions and workers' centers across the country and around the world. CUNY Graduate Center, 34th Street and 5th Avenue. See www.laborsvoices.org.

FRIDAY, APRIL 27 / Open Access Committee meeting. Contact Susan Di Ramo for the time and place; sdccc@aol.com.

THURSDAY, MAY 10: 4:30 pm / Adjuncts and Continuing Education Teachers: Learn how to apply for a new PSC/CUNY Adjunct Professional Development Grant. PSC office, 61 Broadway, 15th floor. Photo ID required to enter the building. Contact Linda Slifkin to register, (212) 354-1252.

THURSDAY, MAY 10: 4:00 pm / PSC Solidarity Committee meeting. PSC office, 61 Broadway, 15th floor. Photo ID required to enter building. For info, jperstein@bassmeadow.net.

FRIDAY, MAY 11: 6:00 pm / Labor Goes to the Movies shows *Head On* with speaker Julia Sneeringer. PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th floor. Photo ID required to enter the building. Contact Dania Rajendra (212) 354-1252 or drajendra@psccmail.org. No RSVPs.

SATURDAY, MAY 19: 9:30 am - 12:30 pm / International Committee meeting, location TBA. Contact Renate Bridenthal at (212) 662-0934 or RBriden1@juno.com.

TUESDAY, MAY 22: 6:00 pm / Diversity Committee meeting. PSC office, 61 Broadway, 15th floor. Photo ID required to enter the building. For more info, e-mail samf@lagcc.cuny.edu

Junior faculty development



Untenured faculty from across the University gathered at the PSC for a day-long session on "How to survive and thrive at CUNY" on April 13.

Union launches 'My Five' network

By CLARION STAFF

Would you talk to five colleagues in order to help win a strong contract?

If the answer is yes, then you can sign up to join the PSC's "My Five" network.

The idea of "My Fives" is simple: each member chooses five colleagues with whom to stay in touch throughout negotiations.

Every two weeks or so, people in the My Five network will get in touch to discuss what's happening at the negotiating table, CUNY's demands and the union's strategy or how to organize the next action. My Fivers also stand ready to answer members' questions or connect them with someone at the union who can help. It's a bridge of two-way communication between active union members and the union leadership.

MUSCLE

The muscle and sinew of any union comes from this kind of connection between members, says Diane Menna, co-chair of the Executive Council's Organizing Committee. "We need a strong and active membership, talking to each other about the contract and union action, if we want to break through the City and State's insistence on pattern bargaining," Menna says. "If we want a good contract, we need to organize."

Most labor unions are based on a steward system, where a shop steward is responsible for 10, 20 or more workers in a given workplace. Often, these workers see each other every day, all day long. In contrast, CUNY is split up into separate aca-

Joining together

ademic departments, and PSC members' work constantly takes them out of "the office." Couple this with CUNY's demanding workload, and union members may not see some colleagues for days or even weeks unless they make a point of it.

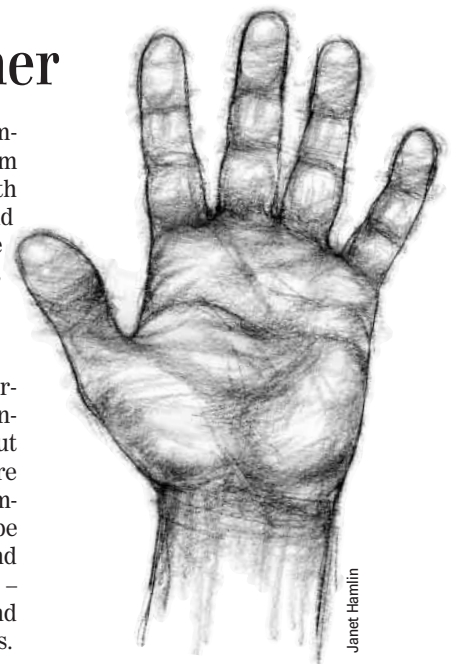
EFFECTIVE

Chapter meetings are an important way for members to stay informed and express their views – but chapters generally meet no more than once a month, and many members find it difficult to attend. "To be effective in a contract fight – and make no mistake, a fight it will be – we need more ways to involve and engage our members," Menna says.

Many campuses began My Fives during the last contract campaign. City College, College of Staten Island, Hunter, Queens, Brooklyn and City Tech all worked with some form of My Five organizing last year. Now the structure is being reactivated on some campuses and initiated on others.

2 WAY RELAY

"My Fives will relay members' questions, thoughts and comments on the contract campaign to the union leadership," said Ann Davison of Queens College. "When the bargaining team goes to the table, they're bargaining for 20,000 faculty and staff. To do that effectively, we need a back-and-forth conversation between individual members and the leadership."



Janet Hamlin

"We're building a network, like the leaves and branches of a tree," said Lizette Colón, a faculty counselor at Hostos and member of the Executive Council. "People like that idea, and it doesn't seem overwhelming if it's only five other people." Connecting with co-workers isn't a chore, she adds – it's a pleasure: "You get to know each other a little better – and the point is to have some fun in the process."

Menna summed it up this way: "Hundreds of member-organizers, making a small commitment of time each week, can add up to the power we need." Training for My Five organizers is being offered this Spring. If you're interested in joining the My Five team, sign up at www.psc-cuny.org/myfivesignup.htm.

Modest increases from NYS

By PETER HOGNESS

On April 1, the New York State Legislature approved a budget that meets CUNY's current costs and provides a few increases.

"By the standard of the last 15 years in Albany, this is a good budget," said PSC First Vice President Steve London. "By the standard of what CUNY needs, this budget falls short."

CUNY's senior colleges will receive \$79.3 million more in state support than last year's budget. Most of that money – \$67.8 million – will go to mandatory cost increases in areas such as employee benefits, contractual wage increases, utility bills and other areas of inflation. Another \$10.3 million will go to new initiatives, including \$6.2 million that can be used for a small number of new full-time faculty lines.

APPROPRIATIONS

Additional appropriations of \$1.2 million will be shared by the SEEK Program and the Joseph Murphy Institute for Worker Education and Labor Studies.

It all adds up to \$7.5 million more

CUNY needs more, PSC says

than the increase proposed by Gov. Elliot Spitzer, for an increase of 8.6% in senior college support instead of the 7.7% hike that Spitzer requested.

CUNY's community colleges receive important state support based on the number of "full-time equivalent students," or FTEs. Spitzer asked for \$100 more per FTE, while CUNY proposed a \$125 per FTE increase and the PSC urged the legislature to raise it by \$250. In the end, the Legis-

lature raised the amount by \$150 per FTE, for a total of \$9.3 million in new support.

Unlike former Gov. George Pataki, Spitzer began with a budget proposal that covered CUNY's basic cost increases and did not attempt to slash student aid or raise tuition. Pataki often requested savage cuts to New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and other financial assistance; while Spitzer did request some smaller TAP reductions, these were rejected by the legislature. Like last year's budget,

it broke with a downward trend in CUNY's funding that went back to 1990. But, also like last year's budget, it did not aim to undo the damage of years of underfunding.

"It's wonderful not to have to fight against losing money or against huge cuts in student aid," said Eileen Moran, co-chair of the PSC's Legislative Committee. "But little restorations like these are never going to give CUNY what we need."

150 YEARS OLD?

A case in point, said Moran, is the CUNY Master Plan's stated goal of a 70/30 ratio for instruction by full-time and part-time faculty. "At the current rate, we'll all be 150 years old before we reach that goal." Enrollment at CUNY is at a 31-year high. "As a result, there has been little progress in increasing the number of classes taught by full-time faculty," noted Moran. "At best, we are treading water".

An important advance in this year's overall state budget was the recognition, as the result of a suc-

cessful lawsuit by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, that New York State was shortchanging its public schools. In the year to come, the State will spend \$600 million more on K-12 students in New York City – and Moran predicted that this will have a major effect on CUNY.

"Investing more in the city's poorer schools will mean more high school graduates who want to go to college," she told *Clarion*. "That means the demand for seats at CUNY is going to be even greater. We can't meet that demand without more state support."

This year CUNY had asked the legislature for \$24 million beyond the governor's executive budget. The PSC supported this request, and proposed an additional \$52 million for new full-time lines, a diversity hiring initiative, additional student support staff, and funds for student mentoring.

"For CUNY to do better in the future, we have to engage the public at large," said Moran. "We're going to have to engage the revenue side of the budget, to undo Pataki's attacks on progressive taxation. And that means fighting for a wider political change in New York State."

HIGHER ED IN BRIEF

U of MN dumps TIAA-CREF

The University of Minnesota dropped TIAA-CREF as its retirement plan, "after years of feedback from participants about record-keeping and customer service problems," the University said in a statement. Moreover, the decision "reflects the growing concerns of several faculty and staff committees, as well as the administration, that the problems were not being addressed effectively." Participants have faced delayed payments and account statement errors, problems that have grown with the shift to a new computer system.

"We acknowledge and respect the University's frustration with our service issues, which we are working diligently to resolve," responded TIAA-CREF spokesperson Chad Peterson. Meanwhile, the Labor Department is looking at the problems TIAA-CREF members are having at private colleges.

Aid officers caught in conflict of interest

New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo subpoenaed Columbia University to provide information about financial aid officers who own stock in student loan companies. David Charlow, associate dean of student affairs, owned stock in the parent company of Student Loan Xpress. Columbia included Student Loan Xpress on a list of "preferred lenders" sent to students – a list that Charlow personally endorsed.

Cuomo is also seeking records from the University of Southern California and the University of Texas as part of a wide-ranging probe of conflicts of interest in the student loan industry. He said student loan companies, in petitioning financial aid professionals for inclusion on the lists, offered some officers stock options and payments as consultants or board members. Most students only consider financial aid companies from the "preferred lender" list.

Historians, 1 – Bush, 0

The US House of Representatives passed the "Presidential Records Act Amendments of 2007" by a margin of 393 to 93 on March 14, overturning a Bush executive order that allows current and former presidents and vice presidents to withhold or delay the public release of presidential records.

Bush's original order – issued in 2002 – was opposed by the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, the National Security Archive, the Reporter's Committee for Freedom of the Press and two individual presidential historians.

In a 2002 *Clarion* article, Distinguished Professor Blanche Wiesen Cook called the Bush order an "act of absolute monarchy." The bill now goes to the Senate.

See the PSC on TV

By DANIA RAJENDRA

PSC television ads in support of increased state and city funding ran on stations in Albany and in New York City as part of this year's budget battle.

"I've seen the TV ad, and I think it's fantastic," said Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, who chairs the Committee on Higher Education. The advertisement ran on Albany cable and broadcast stations for two weeks.

A New York City version of the ad went on the air during the last two weeks of April, on both cable and broadcast, during programs like "Good Day New York."

NEEDS NUMEROUS

"There's so much we could do with more funding!" exclaimed Ann Delilkan, a PSC member at City Tech who appears in the ad. "There is a terrible lack of classrooms," she told *Clarion*. "We don't have funding for labs, and class size is ridiculous for this type of work." Delilkan, an assistant professor of speech, said she had done voice-overs before, but that this was her first time on film.

It was Costas Panayotakis's first commercial as well. "My first reaction was to smile, but they said 'don't,'" the assistant professor of sociology told *Clarion*. "It was interesting to be a part of a commercial because I'm skeptical of the adver-

Budget battle hits airwaves



college's Namm building. City Tech faculty and students graciously endured the noise, lights and other distractions of the all-day shoot, which employed an all-union crew.

VOLUNTEERS

PSC staff recruited the volunteers on the spot. Though

conventional wisdom, in the age of the "reality show," is that people will do anything to get on television, many faculty and students brushed off the offer of appearing on TV until the purpose – fair funding for CUNY – was explained.

New ad features City Tech faculty and students.

Students were enthusiastic about the experience and the advertisement itself. "I love it!" Ruth Destine told *Clarion* after she viewed the finished ad. "I hope that with the commercial, we can finally get every dime they owe us."

You can view the ad on the union's website at www.psc-cuny.org/budgethearing07.htm. (Scroll down until you see "PSC Ads in the Budget Campaign" on the left.)

tising industry as an institution. My scholarship is about consumerism and environmental problems, so advertising is something I think a lot about."

"Certainly, we need more funding," Panayotakis said, noting that much of CUNY seems run down in contrast to some of the shiny, new flagship facilities. "When I go to Baruch or the Grad Center, the difference is palpable."

TYPICAL CLASS

The commercial was filmed in a classroom at City Tech where Panayotakis teaches – and in another typical classroom and hallway on the fifth floor of the

LABOR IN BRIEF

Faculty strikes and threats

The Faculty and Staff Federation of Community College of Philadelphia (AFT Local 2026) won raises after a nine-day strike in March. The new contract includes average raises of almost 4% annually over the next five years and the continuation of employer-paid health-care. "We had a spirit of solidarity on the picket line that spread to our younger members," said FSF co-chair John Braxton.

And in April, the California Faculty Association reached a four-year agreement with the California State University after members ratified a plan to implement rolling strikes throughout the system. Union members won base pay increases of 20.7% over four years.

Farmworkers win

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a farm workers' organization in South Florida, announced on April 9 that McDonalds would cooperate in ending abusive practices against the farm workers who pick their tomatoes. As part of the agreement, McDonalds agreed to pay an additional penny per pound of tomatoes, which will go directly to pickers. Additionally, the company and CIW will jointly develop a code of conduct and an enforcement mechanism for the code. For more information, see www.ciw-online.org.

Math association honors Lee Lorch

By **DAN NORTH**
CCNY Center for Worker Education

Lifelong fighter for racial justice

Mathematician Lee Lorch, whom City College fired in 1949 and later honored for his civil rights activism, has won the Mathematical Association of America's (MAA) annual award for "distinguished contributions to mathematics and mathematics education."

A fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Royal Society of Canada, 91-year-old Lorch has published more than 80 papers in summability theory, special functions and other subfields of classical mathematical analysis. But he is perhaps best known for his work against inequities of race and gender.

"What I like about this award is not that it recognizes me, but that it recognizes the importance of the issues in which I've been involved," said Lorch when the award was announced in January. "That is, to make the scientific community, the mathematics community in particular, hospitable to minorities and to women."

NYC NATIVE

Born in New York City in 1915, Lorch received his BA from Cornell and his doctorate in mathematics from the University of Cincinnati. He applied for a job at CCNY in 1941, but ran into anti-Semitism. When he arrived at the department chair's office, he was immediately asked, "When did you change your name?" When Lorch said his name had always been the same, he was promptly asked when his father had changed his name. "When he replied that his father had also not changed his name, the interview ended," according to a history published by the American Mathematical Society (AMS).

Lorch married Grace Lonergan in 1943 and served in the Army in India and Okinawa. After the war, the CCNY math department had a different chair, and Lorch was hired as an instructor in 1946. With his wife and infant daughter Alice, he moved into Stuyvesant Town, the then-new middle-income housing development along Manhattan's First Ave. They soon discovered that Stuyvesant Town's owner, Met Life, had banned rentals to African Americans.

"How would you feel if you were moving into an apartment someone needed more than you, but couldn't get for unfair reasons? You wouldn't feel comfortable," Lorch told *Clarion*. "Being white conferred an undeserved privilege that made us feel dirty. In order to wash the dirt off, we had an obligation to try to change things. We just wanted our daughter to grow up in a decent world and to have everyone else's kids grow up the same way."

Lorch became vice chair of the Tenants Committee to End Discrimination in Stuyvesant Town, playing a highly visible role. In 1949, the pro-

motions committee of CCNY math department recommended that he be promoted to assistant professor – but instead Lorch was not reappointed and found himself out of a job.

The firing was widely seen as a response to Lorch's civil rights activism. The New York chapter of the NAACP called for an investigation, as did the CCNY student council, the American Jewish Congress (AJC), the Teachers Union (a predecessor of PSC) and other labor and student groups. They also questioned whether anti-Semitism was involved. Since Lorch had an "unblemished record," the AJC declared, his firing "brings into disrepute our municipal college system and inevitably creates suspicion that religious con-

Lorch found employment at Pennsylvania State College – but kept his Stuyvesant Town apartment and let a black family stay in it as his guests. When Penn State found out, Lorch was fired again. The college president's assistant told Lorch that using his apartment to integrate Stuyvesant Town was "extreme, illegal and immoral, and damaging to the public relations of the college."

... AND NO ACADEMIC FREEDOM

That was too much for *The New York Times*, which editorialized on April 11, 1950 that "academic freedom is really imperiled if a professor is to be penalized because he takes a firm and positive stand against racial discrimination." The

sex line and for this reason has profoundly affected the development of many persons who would otherwise have carried out the low expectations of the time."

Five of Lorch's Fisk students went on to doctorates in math, the first Fisk students to do so. Four were women. By 1970, only 14 African-American women had secured mathematics PhDs.

In 1954, soon after the *Brown vs. Board of Education* school desegregation ruling, the Lorches tried to register their daughter in a black elementary school near their Nashville home. Lorch was promptly called before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Asked repeatedly if he was a Communist, Lorch said he was not but that the question itself was un-

news. She was rewarded within a month by a subpoena from the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security. Like her husband, Grace Lorch refused to cooperate.

Grace Lorch, who died in 1974, had figured in another pioneering effort for equal rights. In 1943, when she was a Boston school teacher and president of the Boston Teachers Union, Massachusetts regulations required women teachers to resign if they married.

Grace Lorch refused to do so and was fired for what her husband called "committing matrimony." Her firing sparked a challenge to the rule, which was repealed in 1953.

The Lorches' high visibility in the Little Rock school integration campaign had consequences. After dynamite was left under their garage door and their daughter was beaten up at school, the family left Arkansas. With Lee Lorch unable to find academic work in the US, the family moved to Canada in 1959. He taught for nine years at the University of Alberta before moving on to York University in Toronto.

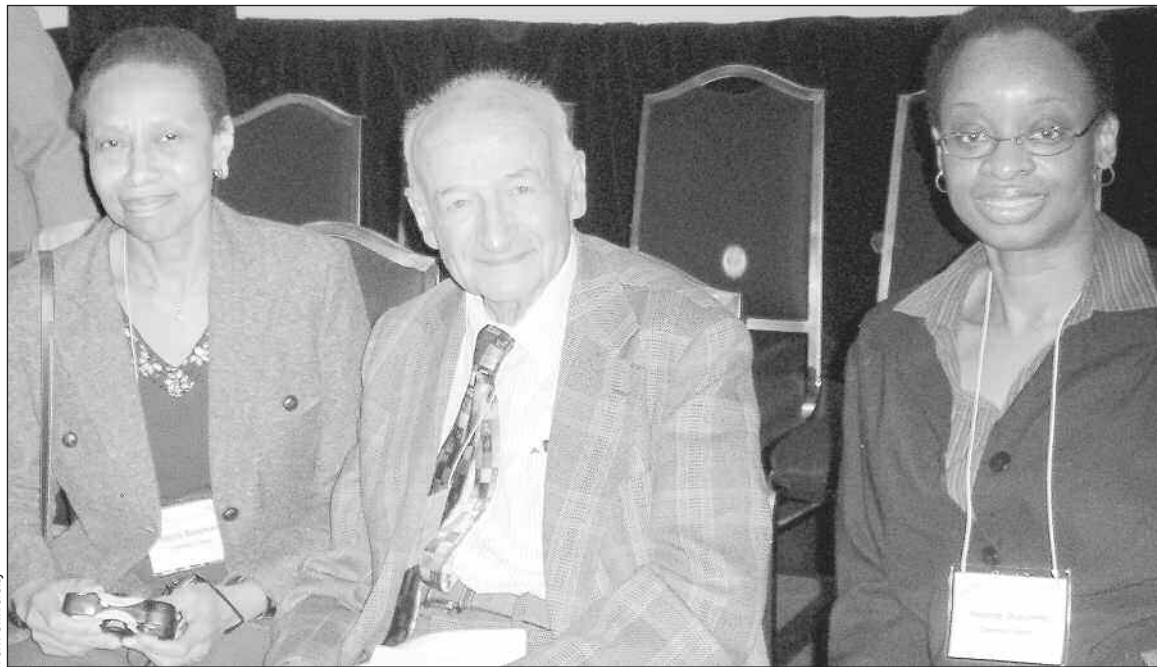
"A DIFFERENT PLACE"

In 1990, Lorch was awarded an honorary doctorate at CCNY's commencement. "CCNY was a different place than in 1949, with different people," Lorch told *Clarion*. "I looked on it as the leadership disassociating themselves from what had been done earlier. It showed they appreciated what I'd meant, not only professionally but also in civil rights activities."

Lorch officially retired from York in 1985, but has remained professionally active. When he received his award in January, at the annual joint meetings of the MAA and AMS in New Orleans, he was working on a paper about Bessel functions. Characteristically, he used his acceptance statement to make a political point. In addition to gracious thanks, Lorch spoke about the racial injustice so evident in post-Katrina New Orleans. Then he brought this home to his profession:

"Even the American Mathematical Society home page tells us only of Tulane – not of the several afflicted historically black colleges and universities. Perhaps no one in these institutions has submitted a report. Maybe they do not feel really part of the mathematical community. Why not? What is being done about it?... 'The struggle continues.'"

Looking back on a career studded with proud achievements and painful reprisals, Lorch told *Clarion*, "I often get asked what keeps me going. That's the wrong question. It shows how society is so accepting of racism and injustice that you need to explain why you fight against them. It should be the other way around – you should need to explain if you *don't* fight."



Lee Lorch (center) with Sylvia Bozeman (left) and Yewande Olubummo. Bozeman and Olubummo are former and current chairs of the math department at Spelman College, a historically black women's college that gave Lorch an honorary degree in 1999.

sideration played a part in the college's action."

Lorch had the support of most of his colleagues, but not the department chair. Among those who supported Lorch was Emil Post, a logician whose work was known around the world. Post was "probably the most distinguished mathematician ever on City College staff," Lorch told *Clarion*. "He took the issue very seriously and later exerted himself to help me find a job elsewhere."

NO REASON...

At CUNY today, if a full-time faculty member is not reappointed, management must state the reasons for the decision. But in 1949, untenured full-time faculty were in the same situation that part-time faculty face today: no reason was required. "Sometimes you have to do things in this life which you don't care to explain," said CCNY's president at the time, Harry Wright. According to *The New York Times*, Wright conceded that "Dr. Lorch's teaching qualifications had not been questioned."

Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, prodded by the AFT local at Penn State, protested Lorch's firing. So did Albert Einstein. But Penn State stood firm, and the Lorches hit the road again.

Lorch became one of two white professors at Fisk University, a black institution in Nashville. He is proud of his pioneering efforts at Fisk, both in mentoring black students and in fighting racist practices of national mathematics organizations. For example, when the MAA held a regional convention at Vanderbilt in 1951, African-American mathematicians were barred from the official convention banquet. Lorch and his colleagues protested and won a change in practice for the future.

In 1976, Etta Zuber Falconer, one of Lorch's students at Fisk, recalled his role as a teacher: "Under his prodding, I gradually became aware of the beauty and power of mathematics. Dr. Lorch encouraged me in the pursuit of a mathematical career at a time when it was unpopular for both African Americans and women. He refused to see a color or

constitutional. When he refused to answer questions about his past political associations, Lorch was charged with contempt – and the white majority on Fisk's board of trustees voted to fire him.

LITTLE ROCK

In 1955, Lorch was hired at another black institution, Philander Smith College in Little Rock. His students included the college's first student to earn a PhD in math, and Lorch served as vice president of the Little Rock branch of the NAACP.

Then, in the fall of 1957, nine African-American teenagers tried to integrate Little Rock's Central High School. As they were turned away, an angry white mob of nearly 500 surrounded one of the black students, Enid Eckford. Amid shouts of "get a rope, lynch her," a white woman emerged from the crowd, remonstrated with those nearest Eckford and led the 15-year-old student onto a nearby city bus.

The woman was Grace Lorch, and her efforts that day were front-page

9/11 health risks and BMCC

David Newman is an industrial hygienist with the New York Committee for Occupational Safety & Health (NYCOSH). Clarion spoke with him about post-9/11 environmental contamination in Lower Manhattan and health concerns for people who work or study at BMCC.

Q. What kind of health risks might exist for people who work or study at BMCC?

A. The answer depends on their level of exposure to hazardous substances. The first issue is, what exposures did they have, if any, on 9/11 itself? Second, what, if any, exposures they may have had since then. And third, what exposures may result in the future – from the demolition of Fiterman Hall, the Deutsche Bank building, etc.

The people who had the most exposure are probably those caught in the dust cloud on 9/11.

Q. Even though that was just one day?

A. Yes, because for many people this was a massively acute exposure – an intense exposure to multiple substances. Granted, it was a short period of time, but we have a fairly high level of concern for people who were caught in the dust cloud.

The next group of concern would be rescue and recovery workers “on the pile” at Ground Zero.

Next would be cleanup and janitorial workers cleaning residential and commercial buildings around the Trade Center site. These were largely immigrants hired as day laborers and some regular building maintenance personnel. Another group is workers who restored essential services: water, electricity and so on, who disturbed dust and debris as they worked.

The last group would be residents, workers and students with no direct relationship to cleanup or rescue work, but who’ve spent substantial time downtown and may have been exposed to contaminants in indoor air.

Q. So that last group would include most people at BMCC. What are some of the potential sources of exposure since 9/11?

A. The debris from Ground Zero was trucked to a waste transfer site directly across West Street from BMCC, where it was transferred to barges. That site in particular was dirty – it was poorly run. The main problem was that the dust suppression was badly managed. As the WTC debris was transferred from trucks to the barges, it was supposed to be wet down so that dust didn’t become airborne. All too frequently, however, that did not happen!

This was right across from BMCC and close to the trailers set up to provide temporary classrooms after the loss of Fiterman Hall. Putting these trailers on the highway, immediately across from the waste transfer site, was not well thought out.

Working around Ground Zero



Ron Capozzoli

The dust cloud on 9/11 included lead, mercury, asbestos and dioxin. Health risks vary with the level of exposure.

Also, BMCC’s North Moore Street entrance was used as a staging area for emergency personnel, which means that WTC dust was probably tracked in on people’s clothing and shoes.

Q. Have there been measurements of contamination inside BMCC’s main building?

A. After 9/11, the PSC pushed aggressively for independent environmental testing of BMCC’s ventilation system and interior. Those tests found that the main mechanical ventilation systems were heavily contaminated with lead. While there’s no direct proof, a reasonable presumption is that the bulk of that lead was WTC-derived. Lead levels in classrooms or offices did not exceed EPA residential guidelines, but the contamination of the ventilation system was of concern.

Q. Could this lead have come mainly from years of traffic on West Street?

A. The highway might be a presumed source – but gasoline has been lead-free for years. Eliminating lead exposure from gasoline has been a significant result from environmental controls. Also, both BMCC and Stuyvesant High School were contaminated with lead. Since both are relatively new buildings, the source was more likely the WTC than vehicle emissions.

Q. What are some of the potential sources of lead in dust from the WTC’s collapse?

A. One is lead-based paint, which is banned for residential use but still allowed in the workplace. It’s common for structural use, like coating beams.

Another source would be computers. Each PC can have up to several pounds of lead in it, and there were

thousands of computers in the Twin Towers.

In the very little data we have from the EPA on indoor, as opposed to outdoor, environments lead was one of the heavy hitters among 9/11 contaminants. So while there’s no absolute proof, it is most likely that the lead in BMCC’s ventilation system was derived from the Trade Center collapse.

Q. What happened after the lead was found?

A. The PSC pressed hard for the ventilation system to be cleaned. BMCC’s administration agreed to do so, but the work wasn’t finished until 2003. The union’s health and safety officers say that the college ultimately did the right thing, but that it shouldn’t have taken so much prodding, and that BMCC shouldn’t have had to beg for the money to get this done.

Q. What about the ventilation systems in the trailers?

A. They’re vastly inferior to the system in the main building, with filters at the low end of the protection scale. So people in the trailers may have been more exposed to WTC contaminants and less protected by the inferior filters.

Q. Is there evidence that these exposures at BMCC have caused health problems?

A. A very early study, six months after 9/11, did find higher rates of persistent respiratory symptoms among BMCC employees. While we don’t have data specific to BMCC since then, it is possible that some BMCC faculty, staff and students have or will develop respiratory problems from WTC-derived exposures.

Q. What substances in WTC-related dust could be harmful?

A. First, I want to emphasize that not all exposures are equal. You can’t equate exposures at BMCC with exposures of those who spent months in recovery work in and around the pile. The exposure at BMCC would be much less, but not necessarily nonexistent.

The other point is, not all exposures to hazardous substances produce illness. The greater the exposure, the greater the risk – but many people can be exposed and never become ill.

That said, we’ve seen a variety of respiratory problems among those with WTC exposures. Some WTC dust was as alkaline as Drano, causing irritation and even chemical burns to the respiratory system. This was one cause of what’s colloquially called “WTC cough” or “WTC syndrome.” In some people it’s been persistent, in others it’s cleared up. We’ve also seen an elevated incidence of new-onset asthma and exacerbation of existing cases.

Again, this is in general. We have virtually no data for BMCC folks specifically.

Lead and mercury are central nervous system depressants and are associated with neurological problems. Dioxin and asbestos, also present in WTC dust, are cancer-causing agents. Cancers are diseases with long latency periods – that is, a long time between exposure and the emergence of symptoms.

Leukemia and other so-called “soft tumors” – blood cancers and so on – could begin to show up five years or so after exposure, so around now would be the beginning of that time-frame. So-called “hard tumors” like lung cancer generally take 15 or 20 years to develop. Most medical experts think a large elevation in the number of cancers is not likely, but many believe that some increase is likely. However, that’s really unknown.

Q. If someone at BMCC is concerned about WTC-related health effects, what should they do?

A. Everyone who worked at BMCC in the wake of 9/11 should register with the New York Workers’ Compensation Board before the August 14 deadline. (See sidebar above.) This protects your right to file a claim in the future.

If you’ve been ill, and you think your symptoms might be related to 9/11 exposure, you should go to the WTC Environmental Health Center at Bellevue Hospital – you don’t have to have been a Ground Zero worker. [See sidebar.]

It’s also important to prevent any further exposure in the future – and here the biggest concern is the upcoming demolition of BMCC’s Fiterman Hall, heavily contaminated with dioxin, asbestos, lead and other hazardous substances.

Register by August 14 to protect your rights

By DAVID KOTELCHUCK
PSC Health & Safety Officer

Workers who may have been exposed to WTC-related contamination since 9/11, such as BMCC faculty and staff, must register with the New York State Workers’ Compensation system by August 14 to preserve their rights to claim workers’ compensation benefits if they later become ill from this exposure. This filing is *not* a claim for workers’ compensation, but a registration of WTC exposure should you become ill in the future. If you don’t register, you will lose your rights to future WTC-related benefits. More information and registration forms are at www.nycosh.org.

“While the registry is defined in terms of those who took part in cleanup work, this category is undefined and potentially very broad,” said David Newman of NYCOSH. “If you worked at BMCC after 9/11 you should sign up now to protect your rights.”

(There is a similar registry for potential future disability retirement for those in Teachers’ Retirement System Tiers III or IV. This has an earlier deadline of June 14; registration forms and information are at www.trb.ny.us.)

If you believe you now have a WTC-related health condition, expert treatment is available at the Bellevue WTC Environmental Health Clinic ((212) 562-1720). Thanks to new city funding, treatment is not limited to rescue workers.

“It’s important for people to go to this clinic as opposed to just relying on their own doctor,” said Newman. “This clinic has the experience of seeing hundreds of people with WTC-related illnesses and can make sure you get the right diagnosis and treatment.”

It’s essential that Fiterman is demolished in a way that prevents release of these contaminants, and BMCC faculty, staff and students can help ensure that this is the case. Every six weeks there’s a public meeting about various aspects of the decontamination and demolition plan. You can get dates of upcoming meetings at www.bmcc.cuny.edu – click on ‘Fiterman Hall News.’

The PSC has been very active since September 2001. It’s part of the WTC Community Labor Coalition, which is pressing for a safe and transparent process, and it’s on the advisory committee for the Fiterman demolition. So getting active with the union – with the chapter at BMCC or with the PSC Health & Safety Watchdogs – is a good way to stay informed and affect what happens.

How did you spend your sabbatical?

Roving Reporter asks, "How does 80% pay make a difference?"



Dave Sanders

LEA FRIDMAN
Professor
English Department
Kingsborough Community College

In the work-intensive environment of a community college, a sabbatical is a special gift. So far I have been working on new drafts of two plays. I am now preparing for meetings and travel needed for my third play, this time a historical drama about a neglected African American figure. I plan to visit archives in the US, Britain, Belgium and Africa. Letters, records, documents, actual locations are great stimulants to the imagination.

My first play, written on an earlier sabbatical, was eventually directed by Robert Kalfin, founder of the Chelsea Theatre. It was also the basis of an "illuminated" book form of the play (with visual artists Judith Wilde and Olga Mezhibovskaya). This time around, however, I live on a single salary and could not have dreamed of taking a sabbatical without the 80% we now receive.



Michelle Calderon

SOCORRO DE JESUS
Assistant Professor
Language and Cognition
Hostos Community College

This is my first sabbatical. While teaching, there is so much to do within the campus and at home. But the sabbatical really frees you up. I just needed time to sit and be able to think without worrying about grading papers, attending committee and departmental meetings, and fulfilling other duties required of full time faculty.

Everybody should take a sabbatical every seven years; I'm just sorry I waited so long!

I had made plans for 50%, but of course 80% of my regular pay is so much nicer. Thanks, PSC!

I'm working on materials for the literature component of the first-level ESL course I teach, English as a Second Language 016 - Literature & Contemporary Issues. I'm creating a student workbook for each of the two literary books we use in that class, *Out of the Dust* and *Esperanza Rising*.



Lisa Quiñones

MYRIAM SARACHIK
Distinguished Professor
Physics Department
City College

I'm spending time in my lab and with my graduate students and thinking up new directions for my research. I'm serving on many advisory panels (many of them abroad), site visiting teams and reviewing physics departments throughout the US.

I do experiments at very low temperatures to study electrons in solids. My work is focused in two areas: the transition from insulating to metallic behavior in semiconductors, and in two-dimensional systems where this transition was thought to be impossible. I also study molecular magnets, in which all molecules act like tiny magnets. Here we have discovered unexpected, fascinating quantum mechanical effects on a large scale where only classical behavior was expected. These materials may be useful for quantum computation.

I don't think the 80% pay for sabbatical leaves is a good idea - what CUNY really needs is competitive salaries.



Lisa Quiñones

NICOLE COOLEY
Associate Professor
English Department
Queens College

I am a poet, and I teach creative writing and poetry. I am working on a book of poetry, *Breach*, about Hurricane Katrina. That's been my sabbatical project.

I could never have finished this book without the sabbatical! Just to have the space and time to read and think and write is amazing. It's enabled me to get so much done.

I was incredibly lucky, because I had applied for the sabbatical at 50%, but my outside funding didn't come through. I couldn't have made it work at 50%, but I could at 80%. I'm extremely grateful to the union.

The timing was perfect for me, because I'm heading up our new MFA program in the Fall. This was the time for me to write, before the administrative responsibilities start up again.



Lisa Quiñones

ALBERT SHERMAN
Senior College Lab Technician
Advertising Design & Graphic Arts
City Tech

I'm a Senior CLT, so I oversee the equipment in the labs and assist all of the professors. In my department, we have a multimedia program that is advancing. The technology is changing and we need to keep up with the times.

I'm using my sabbatical to finish my Masters in Radio and TV Communications at Brooklyn College. I'm researching new technologies, such as TIVO or TV on your cell phone, and how all of it can be measured by the Nielsen ratings. They don't have that capability right now.

Financially, I could not do a sabbatical at 50%. I was going to school two nights a week, plus working, and I was almost ready to drop out. [The new contract] is allowing me to finish the program and give my full devotion to it.

Interviews by Dania Rajendra

Adjunct professional development fund kicks off

By ELLEN BALLEISEN
Bronx Community College

Up to \$3K for those eligible

All teachers are lifelong learners who benefit from conducting research, attending conferences and taking courses. But the cost of professional development can be prohibitive for CUNY's underpaid adjuncts and continuing education teachers.

The new PSC-CUNY Adjunct Professional Development Fund, which has \$500,000 to disburse, takes a big first step towards addressing this problem. The fund, established under the 2002-2007 contract, represents the first time CUNY has provided institutional support for the career development of contingent faculty.

Grants will be made for up to \$3,000 per academic year. Eligible adjuncts and continuing education teachers can apply for funds to cover tuition, books and registration fees for rele-

vant courses; most expenses related to attending professional conferences, including travel; and many expenses related to research projects.

6 HOURS NEEDED

Adjuncts are eligible if they are teaching at least six contact hours in the semester in which they apply, have taught at least one course in the two most recent semesters (not including Summer session) and have been notified of reappointment for the next consecutive semester.

Continuing education teachers are eligible if they have been appointed to a position that will continue for a period of more than six months and requires them to teach a minimum of 20 hours per week, and have taught in such an appoint-

ment for the two most recent consecutive semesters (not including Summer session).

Applications and guidelines have been mailed to adjuncts and continuing education teachers and can also be downloaded at www.psc-cuny.org/AdjunctContinuingEdDev.htm. Applications from adjuncts must be signed by their department chairs; those from continuing education teachers must be signed by the program directors. Retirees and full-time CUNY employees who also work as adjuncts are not eligible.

After an application is submitted, it will be reviewed by the Adjunct Professional Development Committee, which will decide whether to approve the grant. *Note that an application must be approved by the*

committee in advance, before any money is spent, in order to qualify. After an application is approved, grant awardees then pay their expenses up front and submit receipts for reimbursement.

The fund "meets a long-desired need for support for adjuncts' scholarly and creative work," says PSC Vice President for Part-Time Personnel Marcia Newfield. Newfield notes that the fund's \$500,000 comes from a one-time infusion of money, but that in the current contract talks, the union has presented a demand to make the fund permanent, supported by recurring contributions from CUNY.

"We are eager to see a wide range of applications, reflecting the unusual accomplishment and professionalism of adjuncts at CUNY,"

Newfield said. "There are a myriad number of ways the money can be used. It could cover the cost of travel to libraries outside the New York area for someone doing research.

New grants recognize professional life of adjuncts.

Someone working on a doctorate could use it to pay for printing a dissertation. People presenting at or participating in professional conferences might use a grant to cover travel, registration costs and professional membership fees."

Workshops on the Adjunct Professional Development Fund and how to apply for a grant will be held at the PSC office on April 27 and May 10. (See Calendar, page 4, for details). For more information contact Linda Slifkin (lsifkin@pscmail.org) or Clarissa Weiss (cweiss@pscmail.org); both can also be reached at (212) 354-1252.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDITOR'S REPORT

AUGUST 31, 2006

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Notes to Financial Statements

Independent Auditor's Report

Board of Directors

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

We have audited the accompanying balance sheet of Professional Staff Congress/CUNY as of August 31, 2006 and the related statements of revenues, expenses and change in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes consideration of internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Professional Staff Congress/CUNY's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Professional Staff Congress/CUNY as of August 31, 2006, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

December 21, 2006

LOEB & TROPER

655 Third Avenue, 12th floor, New York, NY 10017

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY

the Internal Revenue Code. PSC/CUNY's primary source of revenues is membership dues.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AUGUST 31, 2006

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF ORGANIZATION

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY (PSC/CUNY) is Local 2334 of the American Federation of Teachers and was created by a merger of the Legislative Conference of The City University of New York and the United Federation of College Teachers. It was created to be the collective bargaining representative of the instructional staff of the City University of New York.

PSC/CUNY is a not-for-profit organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(5) of

NOTE 2 – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting – The financial statements are prepared on the accrual basis.

Fixed assets – Fixed assets are recorded at cost. Depreciation is recorded on the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets. Leasehold improvements are amortized over the life of the lease on the straight-line method.

Use of estimates – The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of

America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements. Estimates also affect the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Cash and cash equivalents – For financial statement purposes, the organization counts all liquid debt instruments with maturity at the time of purchase of three months or less to be cash equivalents.

Functional allocation of expenses – The costs of providing services have been summarized on a functional basis. Accordingly, certain costs have been allocated between the program and supporting services benefited.

Unrestricted net assets – Unrestricted net assets include funds having no restriction as to use or purpose imposed by donors.

NOTE 3 – FIXED ASSETS

		Useful Lives
Equipment	\$333,670	5 years
Leasehold improvements	359,240	15 years
Furniture and fixtures	211,288	5-7 years
Construction in progress	9,042	
	913,240	
Accumulated depreciation and amortization	(512,161)	
	\$401,079	

NOTE 4 – LEASE

PSC/CUNY rents space for its administrative office. The rent is pursuant to a lease that expires on September 30, 2006. The lease includes provisions for escalations and utility charges. PSC/CUNY has taken on a new lease for its administrative office which also includes provisions for escalations and utility charges. The rent for the lease commences October 1, 2006 and the lease expires June 30, 2022.

Rent expense for the year ended August 31, 2006 was \$593,527.

Minimum payments required under the lease are as follows:

2007	\$668,538
2008	701,287
2009	715,313
2010	729,620
2011	744,212
Thereafter	9,159,498

PSC/CUNY rents out a portion of its premises to an affiliated organization. Total rental income for the year was \$224,518.

NOTE 5 – PENSION PLANS

Clerical and support staff are covered by a non-contributory defined contribution pension plan administered by Local 153 - OPEIU. For the year ended August 31, 2006, the contributions to these plans amounted to \$137,663.

PSC/CUNY also sponsors a defined benefit pension plan covering all professional (non-clerical/support) employees who are over the age of twenty-one and have completed one year of service, except those covered above. All contributions are made by PSC/CUNY. No participant contributions except for temporary employees are required under the plan.

The following table summarizes the benefit obligations, fair value of assets, funded status

and accrued benefit costs as of August 31, 2006 and employer contributions, benefits paid and net periodic pension costs for the year then ended:

Benefit obligation	\$(1,224,227)
Fair value of plan assets	1,325,790
Funded status	\$101,563
Prepaid pension benefit cost recognized in the balance sheet	\$357,930
Benefits paid	\$83,800
Net periodic pension cost	\$121,703

Weighted average assumptions as of August 31, 2006:

Discount rate	6.5%
Expected return on plan assets	7.0%
Rate of compensation increase	4.0%

PSC-CUNY's pension plan asset allocations by asset category are as follows:

Asset category	
Cash and cash equivalents	18%
Equities	46
Fixed income	36

PSC-CUNY's investment policies are designed to ensure adequate plan assets are available to provide future payments of pension benefits to eligible participants. Taking into account the expected long-term rate of return on plan assets, PSC-CUNY formulates the investment portfolio composed of the optimal combination of cash and cash equivalents, equities and fixed income.

Cash Flows

PSC-CUNY expects to contribute \$197,889 to its pension plan in 2006.

The following benefit payments, which reflect expected future service, are expected to be paid as follows:

Year Ended	
2010	\$103,513
2011-2015	1,710,916

NOTE 6 – FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY provides collective bargaining and other union-related services to its members. Expenses related to these programs are:

Programs	\$9,643,558
Management and general	1,009,397
	\$10,652,955

NOTE 7 – CONCENTRATIONS

Financial instruments which potentially subject the Company to a concentration of credit risk are cash and cash equivalents with major financial institutions in excess of FDIC insurance limits. These financial institutions have strong credit ratings and management believes that credit risk related to these accounts is minimal.

NOTE 8 – INVESTMENTS

	Cost	Market
Bond funds	\$2,343,503	\$2,619,921
Stock funds	380,606	489,217
	\$2,724,109	\$3,109,138

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY	EXHIBIT A
BALANCE SHEET AUGUST 31, 2006	
ASSETS	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$500,628
Certificate of deposits	1,565,713
Investments (Note 8)	3,109,138
Accounts receivable	230,658
Dues receivable	1,130,502
Prepaid pension (Note 5)	357,930
Other prepaid expenses	10,165
Fixed assets (net of accumulated depreciation of \$512,161 in 2006) (Note 3)	401,079
Total assets	\$7,305,813
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
Due to the New York State United Teachers and American Federation of Teachers	\$724,000
Accounts payable	485,765
Accrued fringes benefits	393,496
Other accrued expenses	63,793
Total liabilities	1,667,054
Net assets (Exhibit B)	5,638,759
Unrestricted	5,638,759
Total liabilities and net assets	\$7,305,813

See independent auditor's report. The accompanying notes are an integral part of these statements.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY	EXHIBIT B
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES AND CHANGE IN NET ASSETS AUGUST 31, 2006	
Revenues	
Membership dues	\$9,243,664
Subsidies from affiliates – New York State United Teachers and American Federation of Teachers	1,478,727
Interest and dividends (net of \$11,815 investment fees)	211,310
Loss on investments	(2,471)
Rental income	224,518
Total revenues	11,155,748
Expenses	
Salaries	1,655,684
Fringe benefits	703,735
Depreciation and amortization	11,975
Dues to affiliated organizations	5,457,906
Conferences and meetings	158,915
Moving related costs	321,003
Occupancy	717,955
Repairs and maintenance	132,994
Office supplies, printing, publishing	235,942
Postage and delivery	59,984
Professional fees	252,778
Contract and budget campaign expenses	187,815
Insurance	22,108
Reassigned time and stipends	564,933
Mobilization and outreach	35,684
Community relations	23,115
Other expenses	60,951
Total expenses (Note 6)	10,603,477
Change in unrestricted net assets (Exhibit C)	552,271
Net assets – beginning of year	5,086,488
Net assets – end of year (Exhibit A)	\$5,638,759

See independent auditor's report. The accompanying notes are an integral part of these statements.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY	EXHIBIT C
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS AUGUST 31, 2006	
Cash flows from operating activities	
Change in net assets (Exhibit B)	\$552,271
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities	
Depreciation and amortization	11,975
Loss on investments	2,471
Increase in assets	
Accounts receivable	(140,487)
Dues receivable	(396,000)
Prepaid pension	(15,958)
Increase (decrease) in liabilities	
Due to New York State United Teachers and American Federation of Teachers	(154,000)
Accounts payable	251,595
Accrued fringe benefits	(4,270)
Other accrued expenses	623
Net cash provided by operating activities	108,220
Cash flows from investing activities	
Purchase of fixed assets	(373,496)
Purchase of certificate of deposits	(223,239)
Liquidation of certificate of deposits	309,006
Purchase of investments	(343,064)
Net cash used by investing activities	(630,793)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(522,573)
Cash and cash equivalents – beginning of year	1,023,201
Cash and cash equivalents – end of year	\$ 500,628

See independent auditor's report. The accompanying notes are an integral part of these statements.

PSC budget

The PSC is committed to financial transparency: members are entitled to know how their dues are being spent. As is usual practice, we publish the annual audit for your information. (See statement at left.) Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

– Michael Fabricant
PSC Treasurer

Awards panel

Please nominate faculty to lead PSC/CUNY Award panels in many areas, including visual arts, biochemistry, molecular biology, business, finance, communications, linguistics, speech, languages, economics, engineering, ethnic and area studies, history, library science, mathematics, music, performing arts, psychology and women's studies. See www.ufs.cuny.edu or call (212) 794-5538 by May 11.

Pre-retirement conference

The annual PSC Pre-retirement Conference will be held on Tuesday, June 12, from 9:00 to 4:00 at the CUNY Graduate Center. This conference is designed for members who will retire in about five years and will feature speakers on financial planning, health benefits and taxes. If you wish to attend, please return the form below before June 1. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. If you need kosher food, please send a note with your registration.

I will attend the PSC Pre-retirement Conference. Enclosed is \$_____ registration fees for _____ places at \$25 each.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Retirement System _____

College _____

Date of original CUNY employment _____

Make checks payable to Professional Staff Congress and return by June 1, 2007 to:
Clarissa Gilbert Weiss, PSC/CUNY,
61 Broadway, 15th floor,
New York, NY 10006.

GENDER AND POLICY

Taxes are a women's issue

By MIMI ABRAMOVITZ
Hunter and Graduate Center

In 1858, Lucy Stone protested that without the vote, women suffered taxation without representation. From the time of that challenge to the massive tax cuts of recent years, the US tax system has shortchanged women – especially low-income women and women of color.

Misleading tax talk and the lack of tax data broken down by gender or race have obscured this reality. Nonetheless, because the caretaking role of women places them at the center of conflicts over government tax and spending priorities, taxes are a women's issue.

WOMEN AND THE TAX SYSTEM

Women are affected by the tax system on three key fronts: as taxpayers, consumers of government services and public employees. They account for about 50% of all taxpayers, and wives now contribute more than one-third of household income. Given women's low-paying jobs and the poverty of single mothers, women comprise over 60% of the taxpayers in the bottom 20% of households and are concentrated in the lowest brackets. Women would benefit most from a system that collected taxes based on one's ability to pay.

Due to women's low wages, lack of wealth, limited savings, longevity and role as the nation's primary caregivers, women are also the primary consumers of many tax-funded goods and services such as cash assistance and social programs that have improved the well-being of women and their families since the New Deal. For women, the recent tax cuts have translated into service cuts.

Taxes are also a women's issue because women predominate as public sector employees. The public sector has been a route to the middle class for many white women and for women and men of color when the private sector would not hire us. When tax cuts translate into job cuts, women are disproportionately hurt.

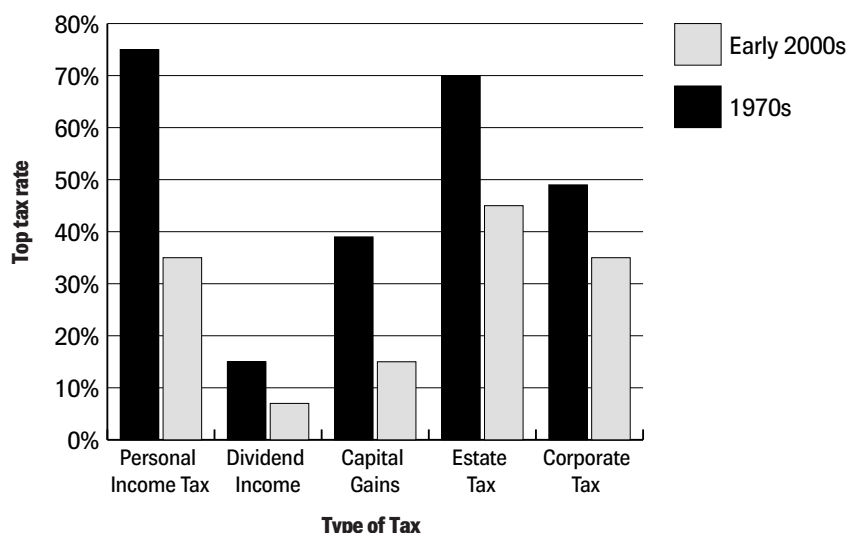
PROGRESSIVE TAXATION CONTESTED

Although women have nothing to lose and everything to gain from a tax system based on ability to pay, the idea of a progressive tax system has been highly contested throughout US history. The nation originally lacked an income tax and throughout the 1800s relied on highly regressive tariff and excise taxes. The burden of this system fueled public support for the 16th Amendment to the Constitution (1913), which provided for taxation of wages, wealth and profits. Women won the right to vote in 1920 and so no longer suffered taxation without representation.

Movement toward a more progressive tax system lost ground in the post-World War I conservative backlash against Progressive Era reforms. Opponents of a fair tax won cuts at the top and expanded the tax base at the bottom, drawing more women workers and members of low-income households into the tax system and making them pay a larger share.

The Great Depression of the 1930s and the cost of World War II temporarily and begrudgingly overcame elite resistance to progressive taxes. To pay for the New Deal, Congress raised top rates, but also brought more average households into the system. Responding to the costs of World War II, Congress hiked the top tax rate again to a

Changes in tax rates since 1970s



ABOVE:
Reaganomics trumps the New Deal, as the government has slashed top tax rates in category after category.

record high of 94% and increased the number of brackets to new high of 25.

By the end of WWII, the introduction of the withholding tax and a further reduction in the tax exemption level caused the number of taxpayers to jump tenfold to 75% of all workers. This transformed the "class" tax into a "mass" tax – interestingly, just as women began to enter the work force in larger numbers. The payment of the tax bill drifted downward, but nearly everyone got something from the growth of publicly provided goods and services. As a result, a 1972 poll found that people considered the federal income tax to be the "fairest" tax of all.

PUBLIC POLICY U-TURN

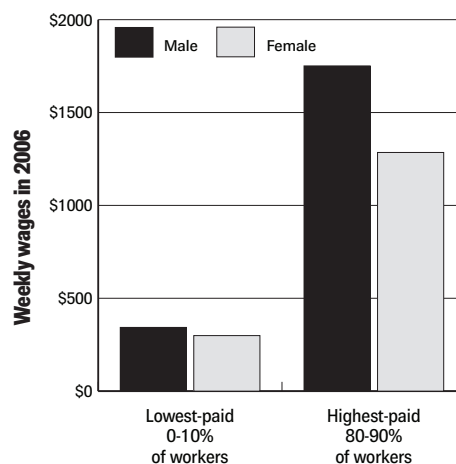
This "golden age of capitalism" came to an end in the mid-1970s, as the nation faced its second major economic crisis of the 20th century.

In the 1930s, collapse of the economy, social unrest and a growing labor movement had forced the nation's leaders to turn to the government as the solution to their economic and political woes. However reluctantly, the elite accepted a redistribution of income downwards and an expanded the role for the state. To this end, the New Deal (1) enlarged the role of the federal government; (2) created the modern welfare state; (3) helped business, farmers and organized labor get back on their feet; and (4) muted the period's social conflicts.

As important as it was, the new welfare state unfortunately perpetuated society's inequities of race and gender. The regulations of the landmark Social Security Act (1935) favored married over single women, full-time homemakers over working wives and reinforced the economic dependence of women on men. Its programs also excluded domestic workers and farm laborers – the main occupations open to African Americans and Latinos at the time, and the former almost entirely female – and paved the way for a long and tarnished history of "welfare-state racism."

In the mid-1970s, deindustrialization, globalization and economic stagnation led

Income by gender



ABOVE:
Men earn more than women at all levels – but the gap is biggest at the top of the scale. In the graph above, men earn 15% more than women at lower incomes, but 36% more among higher earners.

to a decisive turn in government policy. Unfortunately for women, the turn was in the wrong direction.

The U-turn in public policy known as Reaganomics, supply side economics and neoliberalism sought to reduce the cost of doing business by undoing the New Deal. This economic recovery strategy surfaced in the mid-1970s, was launched in full by Reagan and has been followed by every administration since. To stimulate growth, it sought to redistribute income upwards and downsize the state. To this end, public policy (1) limited the role of the federal government, (2) shrank the welfare state, (3) lowered labor costs, and (4) weakened the influence of popular movements most likely to resist the resulting austerity plan. The main tactics included tax cuts, reduced social spending, the privatization of public services and the devolution of public policy to the states. As the Far Right gained a grip on US public policy, it sought to restore "family values" and "color-blind" government politics.

Congress had chipped away at the progressivity of the tax system from 1945 to 1975, but Reaganomics produced a systematic overhaul. After 1975, Congress reduced the

number of tax brackets from 25 (1971–1978) to six (2004) and dramatically lowered the top tax rate on all incomes. (See chart.)

Since the mid-1970s, these changes in the tax system have shortchanged women. The first wave of tax cuts left nearly 30% of all taxpayers out in the cold, including 17 million mothers with incomes below 125% of the poverty line and 1.5 million elderly women living alone. While Congress eventually lowered taxes on income below the poverty line, most of the added tax cuts went to the rich, benefiting disproportionately fewer women. By 2006, 71% of tax cut benefits flowed to the top 20% of households. In contrast, many women suffered from massive cuts in programs that since the New Deal had provided them with jobs; underwritten women's care work in the home; helped women balance work and family life; and increased their bargaining power at home and at work. In a 2005 poll, 46% of women said their families had been hurt by cuts to government services, while only 34% of men held this view.

WHAT NEXT?

Today, given public opposition to the Iraq war, some loss of support for tax cuts and Democrats' control of Congress, the time may be right to improve economic tax literacy and to reframe the debate on behalf of a fair and just tax system. A 2004 poll found that 55% of respondents felt federal tax cuts had gone too far.

We can reframe the debate by reminding ourselves that "everyone is on welfare." Contrary to conventional wisdom, the US has two welfare systems. The well-known and highly visible *social welfare system* is administered at the federal level by the Department of Health and Human Services. It includes both the meager and stigmatized means-tested public assistance programs that serve the poor, such as TANF and food stamps, and the more popular and generous social insurance programs such as Social Security and Medicare that also serve the middle class. Women and working-class people are over-represented in the social welfare system.

The second, less visible system is the *fiscal welfare system*. It is administered by the IRS and delivers its benefits indirectly through tax deductions, exemptions and credits. Both are "welfare" systems because they underwrite the same basic needs – including the cost of raising children, but also the costs of housing, health care, education, child care and retirement. Both systems also leave the Treasury with less money – one through direct spending, the other through tax breaks. Disproportionately fewer women benefit from the fiscal welfare system, as they or their families often do not earn enough to pay taxes or to itemize their tax bill.

REFRAME

We can also reframe the debate by challenging *misleading spin*. Talk of a tax "burden" obscures the fact that well-funded public services support the well-being of women and the wider society. Talk of tax "relief" suggests that tax cuts relieve everyone equally – when most of the "relief" has gone to the rich. The call for "simplification" sounds appealing, but is actually part of the push for a "flat tax" that would undo the progressive income tax altogether.

Tax and spending policies that redistribute income upwards and downsize the state are harmful to women. They also fall heavily on CUNY's mostly female students and on both faculty and staff in public higher education. Tax policy is not a sexy issue, but we ignore the fight for tax fairness at our peril.

Progressive taxation benefits women.

Based on Taxes Are A Women's Issue: Reframing the Debate by Mimi Abramovitz and Sandra Morgen (Feminist Press, 2006).

UNIVERSITY STRATEGY

The limits of 'CUNY Lite'

By **BARBARA BOWEN**
PSC President

Few of us who were at CUNY in 1999 will forget the June 7 front-page headline in the *Daily News*: "F for CUNY." That headline explains a lot about the changes in University policy since 1999; in a sense, the CUNY central administration has been in flight from it ever since.

"F for CUNY" was the paper's terse and malicious summary of the report released that day by Mayor Giuliani's taskforce on the City University of New York. The actual title of the report – "An Institution Adrift" – was not much more than a genteel version of the same indictment. The mayor's handpicked taskforce – headed by Benno Schmidt, now chair of the CUNY Board – constructed a narrative of CUNY's recent history as a new version of The Fall: CUNY had once been great, open admissions had ruined it, and now the University needed to be saved. The only hope was a fundamental shift in policy direction. Not only did "An Institution Adrift" oversimplify institutional history and overlook the substantial achievements of students, faculty and staff since the 1970s, it also failed to name the real problems.

THE MONEY PROBLEM

The problem was money. In 1999, New York was the only state in the nation where funding for higher education had declined in the previous decade; moreover, CUNY had never been allowed to recover from the fiscal crisis of the 1970s, and the number of full-time faculty was still 5,000 less than its level in 1975. CUNY was an early victim of what later came to be called "starving the beast" – the strategy from Ronald Reagan's economic team that cut government funds for public institutions so deeply that they were bound to fail, thus allowing the public to be persuaded that funding for such worthless institutions should be cut even further.

But it is easier to rewrite academic policy and restrict admissions than to dismantle a whole political agenda. In the wake of that *Daily News* headline, the CUNY administration ended open admissions, introduced standardized testing in place of some faculty assessment of students, hired a new chancellor and began a well-orchestrated campaign to rewrite the narrative. CUNY was strenuously "re-branded" as a success. Eight years later, the campaign has clearly worked. Instead of racist headlines about CUNY's failure, we see subway ads imploring us to "Look Who's Teaching

at CUNY." (Though even those celebratory ads seem a bit haunted by the *Daily News* "F"; it's hard not to hear a note of surprise that such a distinguished person is actually at CUNY.)

RECOGNITION

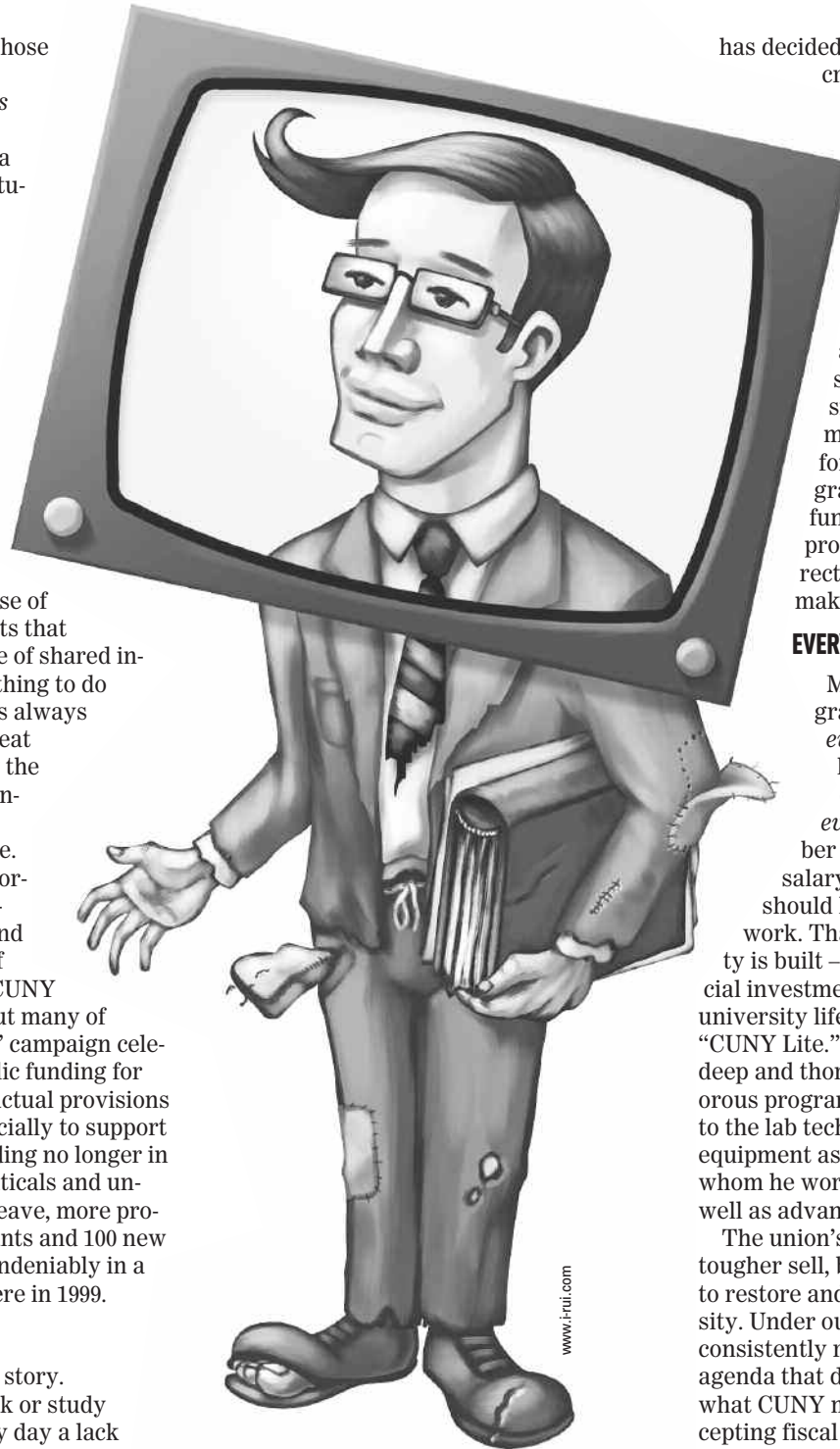
I want to be clear: it is an enormous relief to see the University where we work no longer derided in the media and a genuine pleasure to see recognition of some of CUNY's outstanding students and faculty. The benefits of having major scholars as colleagues are obvious to those of us who work here – benefits that have to do with the texture of shared intellectual life and have nothing to do with marketing. CUNY has always had major scholars and great teachers, including during the Giuliani era when it was under attack – but belated recognition is still welcome.

The PSC, though we vigorously opposed the dismantling of open admissions and introduction of a regime of testing, has worked with CUNY management to bring about many of the gains the "new CUNY" campaign celebrates. The freefall in public funding for CUNY has stopped; contractual provisions have been improved, especially to support research. With public funding no longer in decline, with decent sabbaticals and untenured faculty research leave, more professional development grants and 100 new conversion lines, we are undeniably in a better position than we were in 1999.

STILL POOR

Yet that's not the whole story. CUNY is still poor. To work or study here is to experience every day a lack of political will to provide adequate funding for public higher education. Lagging salaries, unmanageable courseloads, unpaid overtime for professional staff, the dependence of the entire University on the underpaid labor of adjuncts – not to mention leaky ceilings, horrible ventilation, lack of equipment and supplies – all of these are part of our reality.

CUNY's accommodation to scarcity



has decided to accept fairly limited increases in public funding and target them to a few very visible programs. If not all students can have small classes and free laptops, then create an Honors College where at least a few students can enjoy them – and make sure it's covered in the press. If not all faculty can have good salaries or even full-time positions, then propose management-driven salary increases for a few. If most academic programs are desperately short of funds, then create a few high-profile programs under the direct control of management and make sure these are fully funded.

EVERY STUDENT

My point is not that these programs should not exist; it's that every CUNY student should have the resources of students in the Honors College, every faculty and staff member should have a major lift in salary, every academic program should have the funds to do its work. That's the way a great university is built – not by good PR and superficial investment in a thin layer of university life, or what I would call "CUNY Lite." There is no substitute for deep and thorough support – to unglamorous programs as well as the glamorous, to the lab technician who sets up the equipment as well as to the professor with whom he works, to basic skills courses as well as advanced research labs.

The union's vision for CUNY may be a tougher sell, but it is the only honest way to restore and re-create our public university. Under our leadership, the PSC has consistently refused to accept the political agenda that dictates poverty for CUNY – what CUNY management would call "accepting fiscal reality." There is plenty of money in this city and state; New York City is in the midst of the largest budget surplus in its history – four billion dollars.

THE PARTS & THE WHOLE

As I write this, we have yet to receive CUNY management's contract demands, but they have already signaled that they plan to address the crisis in our salaries by proposing targeted, discretionary salary increases for a few rather than a major lift in salaries for all. That might create an illusion of good pay at CUNY, but it would fail to build a real university.

The truth is that there is no cheap way to turn around an institution that has been the victim of years of planned neglect. It will cost money to restore competitive salaries to CUNY, create manageable workloads, address the scandal of the adjunct labor system and provide for basic human rights like paid parental leave. Universities – at least good ones – are complex institutions, all of whose parts must be sustained if the whole is to be strong. There is no "lite" way to make CUNY great.

Clarion APRIL 2007

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Five colleges shortchange adjuncts

By **DIANE MENNA**
PSC Executive Council

You are a victim of “workload creep.” Almost every one of us at CUNY – full-time or part-time, faculty or staff – is doing more work for less pay. This exploitation takes many forms: more administrative duties piled onto full-time faculty without more reassigned time; meetings and student conferences for part-time faculty without any

pay; HEOs pressed to work longer and longer hours without compensation. One of the more outrageous and silent forms of workload creep affects faculty on five campuses: Baruch, Bronx Community College, College of Staten Island, Kingsborough and Queensborough Community Colleges. These five CUNY colleges pay their adjuncts less than the other 12 colleges for the same amount of work each semester – at least one hour less (or, at Kingsborough, 3/5 of an hour less). Full-time faculty who teach an overload course at these five colleges are shortchanged in the same fashion.

WORKLOAD CREEP

Call it “workload creep” or “pay-check shrinkage,” the result is much the same – the same amount of work receives less pay. It is silent because it is mostly unknown – not only to faculty and staff at other col-

leges, but to the very faculty who are affected. It is silent also because we do not speak out against it.

“I was shocked that the University would be that chintzy,” said Harry Cason, an adjunct at the College of Staten Island. “I can see that they might make a mistake, but to defend a practice that is so unfair to those who teach and work on the side of the University is unbelievable.”

“CUNY’s defense of five of its schools that shortchange adjuncts is outrageous, to say the least,” commented Marcia Newfield, PSC vice-president for part-time personnel. “Will CUNY’s next subway ad be a boast about how much they get out of their employees, while giving so little?”

Why do these five colleges pay less for courses taught under adjunct titles? Throughout most of CUNY, adjuncts are paid 45 hours a semester for a three-credit course (three hours per week for 15 weeks). But in 1973, these five colleges started paying only 44 hours (which Kingsborough, under faculty pressure, later increased to 44.4). Administrators of these five colleges argue that an instructor “teaches” three hours a week for 14 weeks of a semester (totaling 42 hours), but merely “proctors” a two-hour final exam in the 15th week. Therefore, they contend, the college should pay only 44 hours for the semester. (Adjuncts who

“Campaign of Outrage” aims to win equal pay for equal work.



Adjunct activists plan strategy for the Campaign of Outrage.

teach a four- or five-hour course are shortchanged even more.)

In an arbitration case decided last year, the University defended its right to give unequal pay for equal work and sought to impose a constricted, bureaucratic definition of what constitutes teaching. “The policy clearly assumes that a teacher is paid only for his or her hours standing in front of the class,” said Marianne Pita, PSC chapter chair at Bronx Community College. “But teaching is far more than that hour in the classroom, as everyone who teaches for a living knows quite well.”

THE BUSIEST WEEK

At the hearing, the union presented extensive evidence that adjuncts do far more than “proctor” during finals week. Preparing and grading exams, helping students prepare to take them, conferring with students over test results and final papers, etc. – all this can take far more time than a teacher’s average weekly work the rest of the year. “For most of us, it’s the busiest week of the semester,” said Pita. “People go out of their minds trying to get it all done.”

But the arbitrator did not rule on

this factual issue. Instead, he found for the colleges based on past practice. Since the policy has been in place for over 30 years and the contract does not specifically define a semester as 15 weeks long, he ruled that these five colleges can continue their practice. The same legal argument of past practice, however, safeguards adjuncts at the other 12 colleges from suddenly receiving less for the same amount of work.

“The arbitrator said management can keep doing it at these five colleges,” commented Steve London, the union’s first vice president and chair of its contract enforcement committee, “but that doesn’t make it right.”

“To pay only two hours for that final week is a slap in the face to adjuncts and all that they give to the University,” commented London. “And to cheat our members this way is a slap at the entire union.” CUNY management talks a lot about “the integrated University,” London said. “But when it comes to basic labor standards, they want to have it both ways.”

“In terms of a college’s budget,” noted Pita, “the amount of money it

would take to provide full pay for the 15th week is relatively small. And to give our campus some level of equity with the other 12 colleges would do a lot for adjuncts’ morale.”

Why, then, has management resisted the idea? “I think it’s a power issue,” Pita said. “It’s an issue of control.”

PETITION

To end the silence and educate everyone about the issue, the union has launched what organizers call a “Campaign of Outrage.” A petition to the presidents of the five offending colleges expressing anger at their policy of shortchanging adjuncts is being circulated across the University and in the community. (See below.) Demonstrations are planned for five days during finals week, one day at each college. (See box at left.) Organizers are also distributing informational fliers – and to spark discussion, they are wearing day-glow stickers that read simply, “Outraged!”

Being informed and speaking out, organizers believe, is the first step in pushing back against “workload creep.”

15 weeks’ pay for 15 weeks’ work!

Protests to demand that these five colleges stop shortchanging adjuncts will be held on five days during finals week, from 12:00 to 1:30 each day:

Monday, May 21 – Baruch

Tuesday, May 22 – Bronx CC

Wednesday, May 23 – College of Staten Island

Thursday, May 24 – Kingsborough CC

Friday, May 25 – Queensborough CC

For more information, call PSC Organizer Sue Li at (212) 354-1252.

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15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Sign on for fairness

Five CUNY colleges are refusing to give part-time faculty full pay for a full semester’s work. The PSC has organized a “Campaign of Outrage” to demand a change, and part-timers aren’t the only ones outraged by the double standard. Sign the petition demanding that management at Baruch, CSI and Bronx, Kingsborough and Queensborough CCs give adjuncts 15 weeks’ pay for 15 weeks’ work.

Whether you’re full-time or part-time, faculty or staff, whatever campus you work at – now is the time to make your voice heard. Sign on at www.psc-cuny.org/CampaignofOutrage.htm and ask your department colleagues to do the same. If you work on one of the offending campuses, ask them to join you at the protest on your campus during the exam period. (See dates at left.)