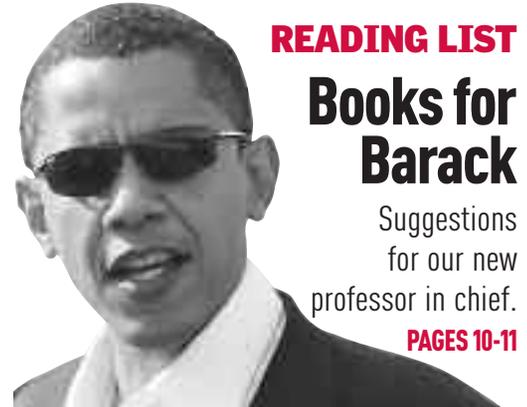


Clarion

NEWSPAPER OF THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS / CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK



DECEMBER 2008



READING LIST

Books for Barack

Suggestions for our new professor in chief.

PAGES 10-11



Lisa Quiñones

A NEW DEAL FOR NEW YORK STARTS WITH CUNY TIME TO SPEAK UP

Governor David Paterson has pressed for deep budget cuts and a big hike in CUNY tuition. But a growing coalition says that this will only hurt the economy – that instead, New York needs a bold new program of public investment. On November 18, a thousand people from unions and community groups across the state

rallied against budget cuts in the middle of an Albany snowstorm. Above, more than 400 PSC members and students turned out for a budget demonstration at LaGuardia Community College. Activists also held protests at Bronx Community College, Baruch, Hunter and John Jay.

PAGES 3, 6-7 & 12

CAPITAL IDEA

Finally funding Fiterman

The City announced last month that it will honor its commitment to fund the rebuilding of BMCC's Fiterman Hall, irreparably damaged on 9/11.

PAGE 4

ORGANIZING

Dept. reps build union strength

Department representatives give colleagues a go-to person for contract questions, union issues and information about local problems.

PAGE 5

HOUSING

Finding an affordable home

With research, persistence and a little luck, Brooklyn College PSC member Martha Nadell found out how she could buy a home in Brooklyn on a CUNY salary.

PAGE 9



ELECTION RESULTS

Ballot initiatives on higher ed

Voters approved ballot initiatives to boost higher education funding in several states – and split their verdicts on affirmative action.

PAGE 8

CALENDAR

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20: 9:30 am / International Committee meeting. For location and more information, contact Renate Bridenthal at rbrident@juno.com.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10: 12:00 pm / Labor Goes to the Movies shows *Eyes on the Prize*. To mark the day-long event, the union invites all CUNY faculty, staff and students – past or present – who participated in the Civil Rights Movement to join us for the screening. CUNY played a significant role in the Civil Rights movement; the best-known contribution is the work of Queens College student Andrew Goodman, who was one of three Civil Rights workers murdered in Mississippi in 1964.

In the PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th Floor. Lunch provided. For more information, contact Albert Muñoz, amunoz@psmail.org or (212) 354-1252. No RSVPs.

MONDAY, JANUARY 12 / Retiree Chapter's January luncheon. The topic is "Woody Guthrie Archive of Folk Music." At John Jay College. Lunch is \$22, contact Linda Slifkin, lslifkin@psmail.org or (212) 354-1252 for more information.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27: 6:00 pm / Women's Committee meeting. At the PSC office, 61 Broadway, 15th floor. ID necessary to get into the building. For more information contact, Marcia Newfield, mnewfield@psmail.org.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6: 4:00 pm / First Fridays meeting of the PSC Part-Time Personnel Committee. In the PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th floor. For more information contact Marcia Newfield at mnewfield@psmail.org.



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.

Don't push students out of CUNY

● The proposal to raise full-time tuition for City University senior college students by up to \$600, for a total of \$4,600 per year, is not a sign of a "rational tuition policy." For thousands of students, it would close the doors to CUNY.

City College was free for over 125 years, including during the Great Depression. Today, tuition is a rising burden – yet the majority of students at CUNY do not receive any financial aid.

I am the financial aid counselor for 660 students at the City College Center for Worker Education. Most of our students are women of color who work full time. The majority receive no financial aid, because they are part-time students, are single and/or their incomes are above the very low limits for eligibility. They struggle to pay for rent, food, health care, clothing, transportation, expenses for their children, books and their college tuition. The students cannot afford this increase.

Jean Weisman
CCNY Center for Worker Education

Reflection on the election-1

● Participating in the [PSC] phone bank in the weeks before the election was a very satisfying and enlightening experience. After making so many phone calls, I was touched and impressed by how involved the voters were in the elec-

tion process. People were informed and enthusiastic and very opinionated. Most were gracious in sharing their opinions and very few were unpleasant or unwilling to talk to me.

I felt very proud to live in a country where people can freely vote and voice their opinions so openly. I lived once in a country where this process did not exist, and every election day I am buoyed by the privileges we have in the United States. Obama's victory was simply thrilling. Like many others, I cried when it was announced that he had won. I saw his beautiful wife and children come out to meet him in Chicago and felt, for the first time in eight years, that there was hope for my country. We have chosen a brilliant, educated man to lead us. It is really a breath of fresh air!

Linda Farhood-Karasavva
Queens College

Reflection on the election-2

● We were campaigning for Barack Obama and it didn't look promising. The mailbox at the top of the driveway was festooned with POW and "Support our Troops" stickers. An American flag completely covered the front window. Yet another "Support our Troops" decal decorated the outer porch door, just in case we missed the earlier set. It looked like a right-wing stronghold.

But instead of being greeted by a surly sort wearing a National Rifle Association sweatshirt, a disarmingly warm 85-year-old woman answered the door. And not only was she not impressed by McCain but, of all the people we polled on this drizzly Saturday afternoon in white, working-class Wilkes-Barre, Penn., she was the one who waxed most enthusiastically about her support for Obama and her disdain for the GOP. Obama's charisma and earnest calls for revamped progressivism reminded her of Kennedy's; and she knew that McCain's health care and social security plans were certainly not in her own best interests nor in the interests of the country that she loved (as displayed by her front yard paraphernalia) so fervently.

So much for preconceived notions.

Bob Cermele
City Tech
Kadzi Mutizwa
New Labor Forum/
Murphy Institute

Reflection on the election-3

● Mr. Obama's campaign touched workers around the world, including PSC members who made the bus trip to Pennsylvania. Many saw this campaign as a fight against a destructive agenda and against racism. For the first time since I've been teaching at CUNY, black students in my classes were excited about an election. This raises the question of what's in store for workers and students.

The election of Mr. Obama offers an opportunity for change from many of the Bush policies. But we shouldn't conclude that workers and students are safe from attacks just because Mr. Obama is coming to power. If we are not vigilant, we may be in for even more vicious attacks.

Will Mr. Obama protect workers from attacks on health care, salaries and pensions as employers seek to regain profits, or will he call for sacrifices from workers in order to build unity? Will he end the unpopular war in Iraq or just move it to Pakistan? Will students have a right to a quality education or will they be required to perform national service in return for a public education? These are some of the issues that workers and students must be prepared to fight over in this new era.

Pat Lloyd
Kingsborough CC

Reflection on the election-4

● As the election season finally ends, I have many mixed emotions about its outcome. As a woman of a certain age, I was elated to support

the candidacy of Hillary Clinton. She and other women of earlier generations built the road on which today's successful professional women walk more easily. So, I went to snowy Iowa in December to work for her campaign. It was thrilling.

When Barack Obama won the nomination, I was painfully disappointed. Nevertheless, when the opportunity arose to work for his election, I started spending afternoons at the PSC headquarters, calling retired union members in Pennsylvania to encourage them to vote for him.

I spoke to hundreds of potential voters. Some, like the lady who spoke almost no English, but overflowed into a monologue of rapid Italian when she figured out why I was calling, sounded frail and elderly. Several others told me that they intended to write in Hillary's name. But almost all shared the view that our country needs to head off in a new direction and to follow new leadership to help its citizens fulfill their dreams.

I am proud to have participated in this historic election. My mother, whose family left Georgia in 1915 because of the violence of the Ku Klux Klan, also would be very proud.

Judith Klein Steinman
Hunter College High School (retired)

Credit where credit is due

● Many PSC members have been reading about the credit crunch and how difficult it can be to find sources for loans. One of the benefits that PSC/CUNY membership brings is eligibility to join the Education Affiliates Federal Credit Union (EAFCU). This opportunity is extended to all family members as well.

We have the means to offer credit cards and loans for help with college tuition, bill consolidation, car purchases or any other purposes.

Our credit union is member owned and offers the same products as a full service bank. Education Affiliates Federal Credit Union, which was started and supported by the PSC labor union, is a safe haven during this financial environment. All deposits are insured for up to \$250,000 by CUNA.

Please call us at (212) 302-1954 or visit our website at www.eafcu.org for further information.

Lorraine Stern, President
EAFCU

Write to Clarion

Letters may be on any topic, but must be less than 200 words and are subject to editing. Send in yours by January 20.

RF Central Office talks begin



PSC members at the CUNY Research Foundation's Central Office kicked off negotiations by approving their initial contract demands on November 7.

Call grows for better budget

By PETER HOGNESS

As the nation's economic crisis deepened, New York debated how to respond – by cutting State and City budgets to the bone or with a bold new program of public investment. So far Governor David Paterson has argued strongly for deep budget reductions. But outside the State House, and on campuses across CUNY, a growing number of voices have called for a change in direction.

On November 18, legislators came to Albany for a special session called by Paterson to consider his proposal for midyear budget cuts. The governor pressed hard for reductions of \$2 billion, which included slashing State aid to CUNY's community colleges by close to 11% and raising tuition at the senior colleges by \$600 per year.

In response, more than 1,000 people rallied outside the State House in a snowstorm that blanketed the capital. PSC members and students from Brooklyn College, Bronx Community College (BCC) and BMCC braved the cold to join the Albany protest, which was organized by the One New York Coalition and the Better Choice Budget Campaign.

NEW SOLUTIONS

The PSC is a member of One New York, and PSC President Barbara Bowen spoke at the rally. New York State, Bowen said, would have \$17 billion more in annual revenue if it reversed the wave of tax cuts enacted between 1994 and 2005, which largely benefited business and the richest New Yorkers. This year's immediate budget gap could be significantly narrowed by using the state's Tax Stabilization Fund, a "rainy day fund" created specifically for the kind of situation the State faces today. (See page 6 for details.)

Inside the Capitol, the governor failed to win legislative support for his proposed reductions, and the Assembly and State Senate went home for the rest of the year. Paterson's midyear cuts appeared dead.

But while this was a reprieve for CUNY and other vital public services, it was not yet a victory. New York still faces a multi-billion-dollar budget deficit – and neither the governor nor legislative leaders have expressed support for the progressive revenue measures that could offer a solution.

RALLYING

"As a union, what we need to do is present alternatives," said James Davis, an associate professor of English at Brooklyn College who attended the upstate rally. "Management will insist that less revenue from Wall Street means that either students or faculty have to suffer – they will try to cast it as either/or. That's their strategy."

In response, Davis said, "We need to make sure that faculty and stu-

Faculty and staff, student solidarity



Nick Cruz

PSC members and CUNY students traveled to Albany to rally outside the State Capitol building on November 18.

dents are on the same page. We need to have solidarity with each other." That was the point, he said, of PSC members and students going up to Albany together.

"This is a completely new experience for me," said Jenny Perdomo, a sophomore at BMCC who traveled to Albany with others from CUNY. "It's the first time I've gone to Albany, the first time I've done lobbying."

Perdomo said her decision to attend was related to her classes in political science and sociology. "I've really been awakened by these two classes," Perdomo said. "And I wanted to see how people can influence government. If you see everything that's happening, you have to do something about it – you can't just sit home and watch TV."

But you can learn something from TV, too, she added. "I watched the town hall meeting with the governor, when he said that if we raise taxes, the rich people are going to be leaving the city," Perdomo said. "But I think the people who are actually moving out of the city are not the rich. They're the hard-working people, like my sister, who just recently moved to North Carolina. The rich people love the city, because they have the money to live here. I don't think it will hurt them a lot to raise taxes."

CUNY students said that if tuition is raised, many would be forced to drop out. "Between books

and tuition, if I cannot pay the tuition increase, I won't be on campus next semester," said Jerdene Allen, a student at Bronx Community College. "My mom is a single parent, she's a full-time graduate student and we pay more than half our income for rent – but I didn't get financial aid this year. I think Governor Paterson

needs to think about the consequences of cutting education and explore other avenues."

Those sentiments were also heard in a wave of protests at CUNY colleges. Hundreds of students and union members rallied at BCC, Baruch, Hunter, John Jay, LaGuardia and Queens, urging the State to take a new direction.

The largest was at LaGuardia on November 24, where a crowd of more than 400 gathered outside the college's main entrance.

"I'm just trying to come to school, get an education and get a better life – that's all I'm asking for," said Jason Chester, a LaGuardia student who had just formed a new club to fight against budget cuts. "How come the government doesn't care about us?" he asked. "Meanwhile the top 1%, the rich, are paying 6.5% tax – and we're paying, what, 12%? Does that make sense to you?"

"This was the largest event at the college that I have seen since I was hired in 1993," Lorraine Cohen, chair of LaGuardia's PSC chapter, told *Clarion*. "What was most

thrilling was how many students spoke so thoughtfully and passionately about the proposed tuition hikes and budget cuts. They talked about the sacrifices of their parents, the struggle to balance competing demands of work, school and family. They spoke of the anguish and anger that they are feeling in the middle of this economic downturn when Wall Street is being bailed out...and a war costing trillions of dollars goes on minute by minute, day by day."

The speakers' themes were echoed in the chants: "Money for school, not for war!", "Tax the rich, not the poor!" and "Bail out education, not the corporations!"

STUDENT VOICES

Christopher Díaz captured the mix of anger and optimism that ran through the high-energy crowd. "I am proud to say I am a second-generation student at LaGuardia Community College," he said over the microphone. "My mother went to LaGuardia Community College. She's helping me right now, investing in my education so that I may have a better life," he said. "I am also proud to say that this is the beginning of a huge change. We are the beginning, we are a huge wave, we are the majority...We are the future."

In another rally the same day at Bronx Community College, sponsored by the PSC and student government, students spoke about the impact of a tuition hike in blunt, personal terms. "Because education

is the escape out of the urban ghetto, a lot of us are changing careers. I need a degree for people to take me seriously in the work force," said José Rosa, an older student returning to school. An increase would mean hard choices, Rosa said: "\$300 is the difference between buying a warm coat for winter and paying tuition."

MOMENTUM

The first of the wave of campus protests came October 29 at Queens College, in an protest against budget cuts dubbed "Q-Unity." The College's student government initiated the rally and sought support from the PSC chapter and the college senate. More than 100 people attended in the midst of a heavy storm. "When we saw the weather, we thought it would be a total disaster," said Hester Eisenstein, acting chapter chair. "No one will stand here, we thought. And it was freezing, but they stayed throughout the pouring rain and sleet that fell on us like needles. It was inspiring, to see them stick it out with such enthusiasm!"

A rally at Hunter on November 12, organized by CUNY Contingents Unite, drew a couple of hundred people – many of them new to activism. "We had a milk crate that somebody borrowed from one of the street vendors," said Hunter adjunct Sándor John. "We said, 'Now's a great time to get up here and say what you feel about the budget cuts, the tuition hike.' So some students who'd never spoken in public started to nudge each other: 'You go up.' 'No, you go up!'" The speeches that followed, he said, were "both spontaneous and very eloquent."

A December 3 teach-in organized by the PSC chapter at John Jay featured speakers on the economic crisis and its effects on CUNY. More than 100 students, faculty and staff gathered to share analysis and talk strategy. The next week, two protests converged outside Baruch College before the monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees. One was initiated by CUNY Contingents Unite, the other by the BCC Student Government Association; City Council Higher Education Committee Chair Charles Barron and PSC President Bowen were among invited speakers at the latter.

As *Clarion* went to press, Governor Paterson was preparing to present his executive budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2010 on December 16 – more than a month earlier than usual. He was widely expected to propose cuts to CUNY and other public programs and a significant tuition increase, and the PSC appealed to members to turn out for what it dubbed "an emergency mobilization," the same day at 4 pm outside Paterson's office at 3rd Avenue and 41st Street.

Winter was coming on strong in mid-December – but it looked more and more like things were heating up.

City agrees to fund Fiterman

By KARAH WOODWARD

On November 13, Mayor Bloomberg reversed himself and announced that the City would provide the final piece of funding required for the demolition and replacement of BMCC's Fiterman Hall, a large classroom building that was damaged beyond repair on September 11, 2001.

Bloomberg said the City will contribute \$139 million towards the project. The status of Fiterman Hall had been uncertain as the mayor balked at allocating the money needed for reconstruction to move ahead.

"I'm very happy," said Rebecca Hill, PSC chapter chair at BMCC. "This has been a festering problem for seven years, and it took students, faculty and administration taking to the streets to get movement toward a solution."

SKEPTICAL

One lesson, Hill told *Clarion*, is to remain skeptical when officials say that something is politically impossible. "It shows that the City can spend money in the middle of a fiscal crisis," said Hill. "When the political will is there, money can be found."

Asked by a reporter why it took seven years to line up all the funding, Bloomberg first blamed "long and torturous" negotiations between CUNY and its insurers. That dispute, however, was settled in 2004. As to why it had taken until now, the mayor replied he is not one to look back: "Should have, could have, would have doesn't get us anywhere."

As the city's building boom drove up construction costs, Bloomberg and the *New York Post* complained

Persistence & protest pay off



The old Fiterman Hall, still shrouded and broken, will now finally come down.

that CUNY was asking for far too much. But in the end, Bloomberg told the press, the City concluded "we just couldn't get it done for less money."

"We need to have the building rebuilt to show the world that we are recovering from September 11," said State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, who pressed the City to put up its share after State funds were committed. Hill credited the persistence of Charles Barron, chair of the City Council's Higher Education

Committee, as another important factor.

Fiterman was irreparably damaged on 9/11 when debris tore open the building, filling it with asbestos and other toxic contaminants such as lead and dioxin.

DOUBLE LOSS

It was a double loss for BMCC. The college, already crowded far beyond its capacity, had almost completed a \$64 million renovation of Fiterman Hall. "BMCC was severely over-

crowded even before," said Bill Friedheim, who taught at the college for 40 years, "but the loss of Fiterman exacerbated it greatly and the impact was felt immediately."

Built originally for 8,000 students, the school had grown to 16,000 by the time of the September 11 attack. Enrollment reached a record 21,000 students this year, and overcrowding is severe.

CUNY's insurer, FM Global, maintained that Fiterman could be repaired – a far less expensive proposition than replacing it with a new structure. CUNY and the PSC insisted that the wreck could not be salvaged, pointing to extensive structural damage as well as the contamination. In 2004, FM Global agreed to a \$90 million settlement. State funding was the next piece to fall in place – but State support for CUNY capital projects requires an equal City match.

As of this summer, the State had committed to provide \$98.6 million – but the Bloomberg administration refused to go beyond an appropriation of \$20 million. The City also sought to count a \$60 million federal grant from FEMA, designated for Fiterman, as part of its own contribution – and this double-counting would have left the project short.

Bloomberg's announcement of a much higher figure, \$139 million, appears to include the FEMA funds – but at the press conference, no one was complaining.

The protracted battle to fund Fiterman began in December 2001, when the PSC sponsored the first labor demonstration in the wake of 9/11. More than 500 students and union members circled BMCC's

main building, demanding funding for CUNY and the reconstruction of lower Manhattan. "We, the students of BMCC, are tired of being treated with constant disrespect!" student government leader Anthony Worgs told the crowd.

The union later helped form the World Trade Center (WTC) Labor-Community Coalition, joining forces with community and environmental organizations to monitor cleanup and reconstruction. PSC members spoke at hearings of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation and repeatedly lobbied the City Council, urging funding for Fiterman's replacement.

In 2004, PSC members joined with NYCOSH and Sierra Club in a vigil near the Fiterman site. "Fiterman Hall stands as a blackened, broken building three years after the tragic attack," said a union statement, urging quicker action on a safe rebuilding.

New 14-story building due in 2012

This year the union rallied with students at City Hall in May during final deliberations on the City budget. With City funding still on hold, a special City Council hearing in June 2008 drew a packed crowd and heard testimony from students, PSC activists, and college administration. Council members expressed alarm at the firsthand accounts of massive overcrowding at BMCC and its impact on education.

Frustrated with the City's stance, CUNY Central Administration began to take a harder line in public. Iris Weinshall, CUNY's vice-chancellor of facilities and planning, suggested that as long as funding for the entire project was not secure, CUNY would not demolish the damaged building – which had been widely cited as a demoralizing eyesore in discussions of the WTC rebuilding effort. "To have an empty space there, what purpose would it serve?" Weinshall said to a *Daily News* reporter last July.

This fall, a September 10 rally at the Fiterman site drew about 500 people. Speakers included Barron, fellow Councilmember Alan Gerson, BMCC President Antonio Pérez, and Hill and Barbara Bowen from the PSC. The union and college management both organized for the demonstration – which, to the surprise of many, had strong backing from the administration.

UNPRECEDENTED

"Never had this happened before, that the college administration organized a protest rally," said Friedheim who taught at BMCC from 1965 until his retirement in 2006. He believed these organized events had an impact. "It showed they were serious about the needs of the campus and the students," said Hill, who as chapter chair has tangled with college administrators on other occasions.

The decontamination of Fiterman is scheduled to be completed by February 2009. Demolition of the old structure will begin immediately after and is expected to take six months. Upon its completion in 2012, the new Fiterman Hall will be a 14-story building with 390,000 square feet of classroom space, computer labs, academic offices and public space.

Chicago workers occupy their factory

By BENJAMIN DANGL

When the 250 workers at the Republic Windows and Doors factory in Chicago were told that the plant was shutting down, they decided to take matters into their own hands. On December 5, the workers occupied their factory in an act that echoes the sit-down strikes of the 1930s and the factory occupations during Argentina's 2001 economic crisis.

"They want the poor person to stay down. We're here, and we're not going anywhere until we get what's fair and what's ours," Silvia Mazón, 47, a formerly apolitical mother and worker at the factory for 13 years told *The New York Times*. "They thought they would get rid of us easily, but if we have to be here for Christmas, it doesn't matter."

The workers are demanding that they be paid their vacation and severance pay or that the factory continue its operations. They were given only three days' notice of the shut-

Obama: workers 'absolutely right'

down, not the 60 days' notice required under federal and State law.

On December 5, 50 of the workers at the plant – taking shifts in the occupation – sat on chairs and pallets inside the factory and were supplied with blankets, sleeping bags and food from supporters. Throughout the takeover, workers have been cleaning the building and shoveling snow while protesters gathered outside, waving signs and chanting in solidarity.

SOLIDARITY

The occupation of the factory – which produces heating-efficient vinyl windows and sliding doors – is taking place in the midst of a massive recession, with the rate of unemployment in the US at a 15-year high and with 600,000 manufacturing jobs lost this year alone.

The factory workers are protest-

ing the fact that Bank of America received \$25 billion in the recent \$700 billion government bailout and then went ahead and cut off credit to Republic Windows and Doors, resulting in the subsequent closing of the factory.

"The bank has the money in this situation," said Mark Meister, a representative of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, the union the factory workers belong to. "And we are demanding that Bank of America release the money owed to workers who have earned it and are entitled to it."

In support of the union, the State of Illinois temporarily stopped doing business with Bank of America.

President-elect Barack Obama announced his support: "When it comes to the situation here in Chicago with

the workers who are asking for their benefits and payments they have earned, I think they are absolutely right... what's happening to them is reflective of what's happening across this economy."

'Not going until we get what's ours.'

ago.... This, in many ways, is the beginning of a larger movement for mass action to resist economic violence."

Visit www.ueunion.org/ue_republic.html to send a support message, make a donation and tell Bank of America to do the right thing. As *Clarion* went to press, late-breaking reports indicated the workers were close to winning severance pay. Solidarity actions in NYC were in the works.

A longer version of this story is at www.upsidedownworld.org.

Department reps build PSC

By PETER HOGNESS & KARAH WOODWARD

When PSC members have questions or concerns about union issues, they often turn first to another union member in the same department. "That's where people often feel most comfortable," said Carolina Bank Muñoz, assistant professor of sociology at Brooklyn College.

Of course, that only works if there's someone in your department who's well-informed about the union. That's why many PSC chapters have been working to build a structure of department representatives on their campus, so that each department has at least one person who can play that role.

"It's a way for me to provide a service to my colleagues, the union and the college," said Gerry Van Loon, assistant professor of hospitality management at City Tech. "It means being the point person for the union on a chapter level. We communicate and we inform."

RIGHT TIME

That's especially needed now, Van Loon said, at a time when CUNY has a growing number of new faculty members.

Like many department reps, Van Loon gives a short report on union matters in his department meetings, where he answers any questions that colleagues may have. "The first time I wasn't sure how they would take it," he told *Clarion*. "But my colleagues' reaction was, 'This is great.'"

Faculty members often have a question or a suggestion about the union in the back of their minds, Van Loon explained – but they're not sure who to raise it with. "This is a way to put union issues in the fore of members' minds every month, so they can know what's going on and act," he said. Issues range from workload, to City Tech's buildings & grounds, to the recent national election.

Gil Marzan, professor of biology at BCC, sees the role of department representative as a bridge for communication between union leadership and the rank and file. "It goes both ways – connecting with the union to help the department and also informing the union what is important to us [on issues] such as workload, overcrowding and structural problems," explained Marzan, one of three union representatives in his department.

BACK & FORTH

"It's important as well that this allows my colleagues to bring their concerns back to the union," Van Loon said. "It should be an ongoing conversation." After a department meeting, he usually e-mails the chapter chair, Bob Cermele, to let him know if anything was brought up that might require more information or action.

Another part of his role as a department representative, Van Loon said, is to inform or advise cowork-

Two-way union conversation



Gerry Van Loon is a PSC department representative at City Tech.

ers about the union contract. "The contract is a big black hole for a lot of colleagues," he said. By making sure union members have the information they need, "we can resolve some issues on a local level."

"In the big scheme of things, I see this as a role to organize and help members get involved in our union," Van Loon told *Clarion*. "The faculty and CLTs in my department are passionate. Once they are on board with an issue, they are on board in a serious way."

The results, he said, can go far beyond just one department: "I think the strength of the PSC – in contract negotiations, political advocacy – depends upon strength in the workplace. The more organized we are locally, the stronger our union is as a whole."

SYSTEMATIC

While a few chapters have had some kind of department rep structure in the past, "this is the first effort to establish them systematically, at campuses across CUNY," said PSC Director of Organizing Chris Aikin.

According to Cermele, the PSC started organizing departmental reps at City Tech this semester after mapping out ideas over the summer break. "It was not well organized or thought out until this summer at a chapter executive committee retreat," explained Cermele. "Now 90% of our departments are covered and we're working on the others."

Nikki McDaniel, chapter chair at Bronx Community College, said that the CUNY Rising postcard campaign, voicing opposition to cuts to CUNY's budget, had helped expand the department rep structure at BCC. "It caught us by surprise," she said. "It showed us that if our chap-

ter is active, doing things that excite people, then even in the smaller departments we'll find people who want to participate," she said. "Right now we have a rep in every department."

In contrast, she said, a structure that's not used for much is just a skeleton, and it won't draw people in. "Being a member of a committee that gets nothing done isn't too exciting," she said with a laugh. "But if members see that they can accomplish something, and the activity required is manageable, then people will be interested."

The other key element, said Bank Muñoz, is face-to-face contact. "People are more willing to do something through a personal connection," she told *Clarion*. "For instance, we sent a bunch of CUNY Rising postcards to one department without much re-

sult. It wasn't until I met with someone in that department that we really made progress." And that, she added, is exactly why department reps are important: "When you get the information from someone in your department who you see every week, you're more likely to respond."

Ultimately, she said, a department rep structure is not really a separate task that's added on top of other union work – it's just a more effective tool for work that union activists would be doing anyway.

EASY ENTRY

As the PSC chapter at Hostos starts to establish department reps, it has aimed to make it easy to get involved, said Felipe Pimentel, an assistant professor of social science. "Being a department representative means doing some very concrete, practical things," Pimentel noted. "Basically we want people who can bring flyers to their department or figure out who is not a union member and bring them membership cards. We don't want to overwhelm people with too much."

To keep the work manageable, the Bronx CC chapter has worked to expand the system. McDaniel believes that union members who work in larger departments will be served best by a buddy system of representatives. "One department

Dept. reps help resolve issues at the local level.

rep makes sense for a department of five or six faculty, but it's nice to spread the workload," explained Marzan.

Another union representative in Marzan's department, Alex Wolf, said he was glad to represent both full-timers and part-timers. The former adjunct told *Clarion*, "Full-timers and part-timers have similar needs, [but] in a lot of ways they are different. I believe I can serve both groups," he said. Ultimately, Wolf serves as an act of self-interest.

"The more people participate, the stronger the union will be," Wolf said. "And departmental reps can be a part of that."

HIGHER ED IN BRIEF

Presidents reject raises

A handful of college presidents have turned down bonuses and raises during the economic downturn, a symbolic but poignant gesture. The president of Rutgers University donated his \$100,000 raise to student financial aid. The president of Brevard Community College turned down two raises in order to help students pay for textbooks. "Under the circumstances, I just didn't feel right taking the bonus," said Michael Hogan, president of the University of Connecticut, who refused his \$100,000 bonus. The president of Rowan University asked that his \$15,000 bonus go towards a general scholarship fund. Meanwhile the head of the University of Louisville rejected a six-figure bonus, accepting instead the university's across-the-board raise of \$700.

Not making the grade

The US higher education system shows modest improvements but erosion in terms of global competitiveness, according to a December report from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. *Measuring Up* examines national and state-by-state progress in providing Americans with education and training beyond high school up to a bachelor's degree. New York got an "F" for affordability. See more at www.highereducation.org.

Adjunct exploitation quantified

A new report from the AFT, *Reversing Course*, shows that contingent instructors, including graduate teaching assistants, teach 50% of undergraduate courses at US public colleges and universities. They have low wages, job insecurity, few or no health or pension benefits, and teach in all disciplines. "Administrations are increasingly running colleges and universities more like businesses," said Sandra Schroeder, chair of the AFT Higher Education program. More at www.aftface.org.

Clarion named best local union paper

For the fourth year in a row, *Clarion* has been named the best local union newspaper in its circulation class in the US and Canada. The International Labor Communications Association chose the paper as the best among the largest union locals. *Clarion* was also picked for best cartoon in a local union paper ("Nicked and Dimed," by Ricardo Levins Morales, on the exploitation of CUNY adjuncts) and for best local union editorial ("The Limits of CUNY Lite," by Barbara Bowen, on CUNY's advertising strategy). Last fall's PSC contract campaign brochures, produced by Dorothee

Benz, former Communications Coordinator ("Why Not CUNY?"), won for best special publication by a local union.

E-MAIL WINS

The contract brochures and the union's weekly e-mail newsletter, *This Week in the PSC*, won prizes from the AFT's communications network. *Clarion* picked up first place for best design, thanks to the work of designer Margarita Aguilar; for a news story about Fiterman Hall in the October 2007 issue; and "Adjunct health care is broken," by *Clarion* Associate Editor Dania Ra-

rajendra, the union's new communications coordinator.

Rajendra's health and safety story won a first award from NYSUT, which also handed out another award for Bowen's "The Limits of CUNY Lite," plus prizes for best feature, best news story, best story on new members' issues, best front page and general excellence. "As always," wrote one judge, "*Clarion* is a joy for readers and judges."

NYSUT judges called the PSC website, run by webmaster Bill Friedheim, a "nicely designed site with good content and good navigation."

—PH & DR

Budget cuts will hurt the economy

Investing in our communities will help

The PSC is one of 150 organizations that have joined together to form One New York, a coalition of unions and community organizations fighting for fair and effective decisions on the New York State and City budgets (see also page 3). Along with the Better Choice Budget Campaign, a similar coalition mainly based upstate, One New York is calling for smart, progressive reforms to provide more public revenue in a time of need. These two position statements describe the coalition's proposals for closing the State budget gap.

As Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz pointed out in a letter to New York State leaders earlier this year, "It is economically preferable to raise taxes on those with high income than to cut State expenditures." Stiglitz points out that "budget cuts reduce the level of total spending." Budget cuts will be a drag on an already hurting economy. Investing in our community needs will provide economic stimulus to our economy.

In these difficult fiscal times, we are standing together as One New York to fight for fairness in the State budget. Tough times call for tough choices, but we believe this is the very moment that government needs to step up and support the most vulnerable New Yorkers. Here are four practical alternatives to making devastating cuts:

Rainy day funds:

- NYS has two rainy day funds, one of these (the Tax Stabilization Reserve Fund) is specifically designed for the purpose of closing year-end budget gaps in difficult fiscal times.

- Nothing could better describe the circumstances we face now – it's not only rainy, but a mammoth storm is brewing. This rainy day fund has \$1.03 billion available that can be accessed on March 31 to close out the fiscal year.

- On June 13, 2008, Standard & Poor's issued a report on State cred-

it that included specific recommendations on how to use State rainy day funds without negatively impacting a State's credit rating. Their report summarized that the use of rainy day funds in combination with budget cuts and new revenues creates a balanced approach unlike using the rainy day fund without addressing cuts and revenues.

Reform the Personal Income Tax:

- New York State should support a progressive increase in the NYS Personal Income Tax.

- Adding new tax brackets to the top with progressive rates could generate tremendous revenues.*

State budgetary savings:

- Cut the Empire Zone Program – A 2004 State Comptroller's Office audit found that 23% of businesses receiving Empire Zone tax credits actual-

ly cut jobs at their companies, while only 30% of recipients met or exceeded their job-growth targets. A follow-up audit in 2007 found few improvements. (Savings begin at \$50 million per year, rising to \$500 million a year after 10 years.)

- End the use of high-priced engineering, accounting and other professional consultants by the State by having the work done by State employees at a savings of several hundred millions of dollars a year.

Oppose non-progressive tax proposals:

- NYS must oppose all tax proposals that are not progressive, including tax breaks for businesses and the implementation of a sales tax on items under \$110.

* Note: According to the Fiscal Policy Institute, "the large multi-year tax cuts enacted between 1994 and 2005 are now reducing State revenue by over \$17 billion per year."

New York needs a fair Personal Income Tax system

Since its inception, the One New York coalition, comprised of 150 organizations including the PSC, has been advocating progressive revenue proposals at press conferences, rallies and in meetings with elected officials. This is a statement from the coalition.

New York faces a deficit of approximately \$12 billion that may increase if the economy worsens. Many voices want to solve this problem by cutting programs working families rely on. The right solution [is] not a budget balanced on the backs of working families alone, but reform of New York's tax system to recapture lost revenue.

What's wrong with our current PIT system?

Over the last 30 years, elected officials have cut income tax rates on

the wealthiest New Yorkers in half and changed the tax code so families earning very different incomes pay the same tax rates. These changes have resulted in billions of dollars of lost State revenue per year. It's simply not fair.

Why fight for restoring fairness to our PIT system?

More State revenue from income taxes means less reliance on local property taxes to pay for public services. PIT reform will allow the State to protect the social safety net that so many New Yorkers rely on. Restoring fairness to our PIT sys-

tem would allow for a much needed investment in middle-class New Yorkers and boost our economy.

How do we propose fixing New York's PIT system?

Any reform should be progressive and ensure that families in New York who make substantially different incomes pay different tax rates.

This was also last done in 2003 on a temporary, three-year basis, with two new tax brackets added to the top. That increase generated \$1.5 billion.

Various examples exist of how a PIT

increase can be structured. While we are not endorsing one plan or another at the moment, various plans could potentially raise much more than the \$1.5 billion generated, on average, by the 2003 to 2005 increase. The model below was developed by the Working Families Party.

This would add four new income brackets to the PIT code. Those making more money will pay marginally higher rates. These changes would raise roughly \$4.8 billion in State revenue, depending on the health of the economy. This money can be used to protect services working families rely on, undertake new public initiatives in the future and reduce New York's reliance on property taxes.

Some people say that raising income tax rates in New York will cause people to move away or harm the economy.

This is simply not true:

- After New York raised income taxes in 2003, the number of high-income taxpayers and their income grew exponentially.

- According to Joseph Stiglitz, 2001 recipient of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics, and Peter Orszag, director of the Congressional Budget Office, "reductions in government spending on goods and services...are likely to be more damaging to the economy in the short run than tax increases focused on higher-income families."

One model for Personal Income Tax reform (Working Families Party Proposal)			
New Income Brackets	New Rate	Total Revenue Created	
\$40,000 – \$250,000	No change	\$4.8bn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The new 7.25% rate would reinstate the temporary PIT increase in 2005 on this income group ● The new 8.97% rate would equal New Jersey's rate at that income ● The new 10.3% rate would be equal to California's rate at that income ● Of the \$4.8bn raised, the vast majority would be from households earning more than \$1,000,000
Earning over \$250,000	7.25%		
Earning over \$500,000	8.97%		
Earning over \$1,000,000	10.30%		
Earning over \$5,000,000	11.00%		

Today in New York
Your household earns \$50,000, your tax rate = 6.85%
Your household earns \$500,000, your tax rate = 6.85%
Your household earns \$5,000,000, your tax rate = 6.85%
Rates apply to taxable income for married couples. The current top rate of 6.85% also applies to single taxpayers with taxable income over \$20,000.

Students, union

CUNY

By JOHN TARLETON & PETER HOGNESS

Francisca Villar is a Bronx Community College student and mother of two who went from being on welfare to being a National Science Foundation scholar. It's the kind of change that might be celebrated in a CUNY subway ad – but those ads don't tell the whole story.

To enroll in classes this fall, Villar told *Clarion*, "I had to stop paying rent for two months. I can't continue doing that or I'll be in the street." So when Villar testified at a Board of Trustees hearing on CUNY's budget, her concerns were both personal and urgent. "Please don't increase our tuition," she said. "It's our future that's at stake."

Opinion at the December 3 hearing ran heavily against a tuition hike, with more than three-quarters of those who testified opposing the idea. PSC members said that instead, CUNY must be financed with public investment through progressive tax reform (see article at left).

"So many of our students are here by virtue of a delicate balancing act that they and their families somehow manage to pull off," said Scott Dexter, a faculty member at Brooklyn College. "To ask them to help make up the State's revenue shortfall, when the courage cannot be found to ask those who actually can afford to pay, would...run counter to the trust placed in you by the University community."

WRONG IDEA

With the State of New York facing a projected budget deficit of \$1.5 billion in fiscal year 2008-2009 and \$12.5 billion the year after, initial indications are that Governor David Paterson will call for \$82 million in cuts to CUNY for fiscal year 2010 and support the administration's request for a hefty tuition hike.

The PSC has argued that massive budget cuts will only worsen New York's economic slowdown, and that investment in CUNY is particularly important.

As the State and City "seek recovery from this economic collapse, they need to recognize the key role CUNY plays in any recovery," said Brendan Flynn, an adjunct lecturer at Hunter College. "Through community and four-year colleges, students and workers can gain or refine skills to adapt to the needs of a new economy. In times of economic downturn, our universities are engines of economic development and growth."

INVEST INSTEAD

"Albany's approach to the deficit suffers from a poverty of imagination," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "During the Great Depression, New York invested in mass higher education," Bowen said. "Three new CUNY colleges were

members testify

needs more public investment



Wilma Fletcher-Anthony is a vice chair of the Queensborough Community Center PSC chapter.

established during the 1930s – Brooklyn, Queens and Lehman – all while tuition was held at zero. That is the kind of political courage and vision we need now.”

There was some common ground between the union and CUNY central administration on the need for investment in CUNY. Bowen and others welcomed the administration's support for increasing the number of full-time faculty and funding of CUNY's mandatory costs. Union representatives also noted that, unlike SUNY's administration, CUNY had not requested a tuition increase for Spring 2009 and that its proposed tuition hike was framed as a maximum rather than a fixed amount.

CEILING

But on the basic question of whether CUNY should request a tuition increase, the two sides sharply diverged. The PSC argues increased State investment is both possible and necessary, while the administration is asking for a tuition increase. Under CUNY's 2009-2010 budget proposal, tuition for full-time students at CUNY senior colleges would go up by as much as \$600 per year, from \$4,000 to \$4,600, while community college tuition would increase by as much as \$400 per year, up to a rate of \$3,200.

“There is an alternative,” said PSC Treasurer Mike Fabricant. “Increased public investment and not tuition increases should be the basis for financing CUNY.” That alternative, he said, begins with progres-

sive tax reform to increase State revenue. “Repealing the tax cuts adopted during the Pataki administration, a giveaway to the wealthiest New Yorkers, would yield \$17 billion,” he said (see page 6). Citing Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, Fabricant emphasized that “tax increases on higher income families are the least damaging mechanism for closing State fiscal deficits” in an economic slowdown.

PSC activists pointed out that only 20% of the money from a tuition increase would stay with CUNY. The rest would be offset by immediate reductions in State support, with the net result that 80% of the tuition increase would be used to plug the hole in the State budget.

Victor Vásquez, a freshman at LaGuardia Community College, found this hard to accept. “The people on Wall Street [are] the ones who messed up, not us,” said Vásquez, who is the first in his family to attend college. “We're students in the classroom learning, trying our hardest to get into a better life, a life that our parents wanted us to have. My dad is the only one working in my family. And I've worked with him quite a few times and I see how difficult it is to earn a single dollar. I urge you to not raise the tuition, because right now he barely scrapes up enough money for me to go to college.”

STUDENT STORIES

Álvaro López, whose parents are janitors, said the tuition increase would be a severe hardship for his

studies at BMCC. With no financial aid, he works full time at a restaurant to pay his tuition and the rent on his apartment.

“How do we rebuild our country?” he asked. “Do we go after the same policies over and over again, of budget cuts, of going after the most vulnerable people? Or do we actually invest in our future, do we actually invest in infrastructure, building jobs, education and schools? I think that's one of the things that we're really grappling with here.”



Álvaro López, a BMCC student, asked, “How do we want to rebuild?”

PSC Secretary Arthurine DeSola agreed. “A New Deal for New York starts with CUNY,” she told the hearing. “Our students...are investing in their own future – and New York State must match their investment.”

Some faculty testified in support of the administration and argued that raising tuition is good public policy. Terrence Martell, professor of finance at Baruch, testified that the chancellor's CUNY Compact calls for “participation of all the stakeholders...in a fair and balanced way.” The State, City and CUNY administration will each do their part, he said, while “students invest via tuition increases.” While acknowledging that “this particular budget request relies disproportionately on a tuition increase,” Martell defended this on the grounds that tuition has not been raised for several years.

Other speakers countered that students are already being excluded by CUNY's high tuition. “I'm aware of students who are dropping out of school because of the costs, the current costs of education,” said Wilma Fletcher-Anthony, a counselor at Queensborough Community College. She gave the example of Patricia, a QCC student who fell through the cracks in the financial aid system and was receiving no assistance. “She is no longer a student at Queensborough. She had to stop coming to school because she simply could not afford it,” said Fletcher-Anthony. “How many more like her will we see if tuition should increase?”

“One could argue that tuition increases could be offset by [financial] aid, but this is not the case,” said Ni-

na Young, an instructor at City Tech. She, too, described a student – one of her smartest – who lacks financial resources yet receives no aid.

Lorraine Cohen, PSC chapter chair at LaGuardia, noted that some New Yorkers at first might not imagine that the proposed tuition hike could be an impossible burden. “For the upper middle class, \$300 a semester is equal to one meal at a really good restaurant with a nice bottle of wine, or one night at a moderately priced New York hotel,” Cohen observed.

But as Brooklyn College student Marissa Day told the hearing, most CUNY students live in a different world. “A \$300 tuition hike is the equivalent of one or two week's wages for many students,” said Day. “An untold number...will have to drop out should tuition be raised.” For example, she said, “there are students residing in City shelters pursuing educations at CUNY.” For them, and for many others, a few hundred dollars is simply money they don't have.

Students are struggling for their education.

STRUGGLE

Susan DiRaimo, who teaches an 8:00 am ESL class at City College, spoke of the struggles of four of her students who work full-time jobs overnight, as home health aides or taxi drivers, to cover their tuition. “Chancellor Goldstein,” she said at the hearing, “you and I both graduated from City College when we didn't have to pay any tuition.” If not for that opportunity, she later told *Clarion*, neither she nor Goldstein would be living the same life they enjoy today. “These students, who all want to be future engineers...feel that they can't continue” if tuition is raised, DiRaimo testified. “They'll have to drop out, at least for a semester. So I'm pleading with you not to increase the tuition.”

LAST SHOT

“CUNY is the last shot that students have at upward mobility,” Nina Young told CUNY management. “People are struggling and working hard to get their education. It would be great if you went to Albany and fought just as hard as they do to safeguard their...door of opportunity.”

In a hearing filled with emotional testimony, there was perhaps no better example of CUNY students' determination than that of Monique Lewis. After a long struggle, one of her five children had died just days before the hearing. But Young felt she had no choice but to come and testify. A tuition hike could put CUNY out of her reach – and so she felt she owed it to her other children, and herself, to come and make sure her voice was heard.

Higher ed funds gain in referenda

By KARAH WOODWARD
& PETER HOGNESS

While the hard-fought presidential campaign drew the most attention in the November election, voters also decided the fate of a range of ballot initiatives on higher education.

State ballots featured more than a dozen college-related referenda this fall. Funding was the most common focus, and most of the revenue proposals passed by wide margins. In ballot questions on social issues related to higher ed, such as affirmative action or stem cell research, restrictive measures were adopted only in Nebraska.

In Montana, voters renewed a 60-year-old property tax measure that is a vital source of funds for public higher education. The tax, which received a 10-year extension, currently provides \$13.4 million a year for Montana's public colleges – 9% of their total state support. Despite vocal opposition from a coalition of 12 right-wing organizations, the tax measure passed by a wide margin, 57% to 43%. Opponents claimed that the University of Montana system discriminates against political conservatives and the religious, but these charges failed to resonate with voters.

FUNDING LOSS IN FLORIDA

In Florida, a proposal that would have allowed for new local sales tax levies to benefit community colleges was defeated 56.5% to 43.5%. The measure, Amendment 8, would have permitted voters in a given locality to consider a half-cent tax increase, which if approved would have provided additional funds for area community colleges for five years before expiring.

Some in higher education, such as John Grosskopf, acting president of North Florida Community College, opposed Amendment 8, arguing that it might lead to a decline in support from the state. "Much like the Lotto, which started as supplementary funding," warned Grosskopf in the *Miami Herald*, "it would one day become expected and required" for community colleges to depend on local taxes.

But with Florida's two-year colleges losing \$116.4 million in State funding this academic year, supporters of Amendment 8 said it was urgently needed. "Higher education in Florida is in a state of collapse," Tom Auxter, president of United Faculty of Florida, said before the election. "This is a stop-gap emergency measure. If people care about community colleges and want to keep them from collapsing, then they need to do this."

In this year's referenda, gambling was the most popular way to provide new revenue for higher education. Five states considered new ways to funnel gambling income into public higher education, and four of these five proposals were approved.

In Arkansas, Amendment 3 passed by an overwhelming vote of 67% to 33%, establishing a state lottery that will put money into scholarships and grants for Arkansas citizens who at-

Most new money from gambling

tend college within the state. The fight over Amendment 3, which revised a constitutional ban on lotteries dating back to 1836, pitted the state's conservative religious traditions against growing concern over Arkansas's economic future.

"Our state ranks 50th among the states in the number of citizens over the age of 25 who hold a college degree," said Dr. Dean Kumpuris, chair

funding, with 78% of the taxes on new gambling revenue going to student financial aid. The state's Legislative Council previously estimated that this would bring in an additional \$300 million over the first five years – but that figure is likely to fall as the economy continues to decline.

Support for the initiative represented an odd marriage between higher education and a Colorado

Maine was the only state to reject one of these gambling proposals, with 56% of voters opposing an initiative that would have allowed a new casino in Oxford County. Had it passed, the measure would have allocated 10% of the new casino's revenues to benefit higher education programs.

The emphasis on gambling as a way to fund public higher education may sound familiar to New Yorkers. Last year, when a State commission on higher education called for big new investments in the CUNY and

vote and strong support from the California Federation of Teachers, the California Teachers Association, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and both US Senators.

And in New Mexico, voters passed Bond Questions C and D, by 58% and 65% respectively. Their passage paves the way for the State to issue \$198 million in bonds with funds slotted for capital improvements at public universities, as well as at research facilities, health care centers and special schools (such as schools for the deaf).

STEM CELL

In ballot measures on social questions, 53% of Michigan voters elected to lift harsh limits on stem cell research. Previous State law had banned the use of embryonic stem cell lines developed in Michigan and imposed criminal penalties of up to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$10 million on researchers who violated its provisions. Michigan scientists were thus allowed to use embryonic stem cells only from out of state. Now women treated at Michigan fertility clinics will be allowed to donate surplus embryos, which would otherwise be discarded, for stem cell research.

November also saw the first defeat for Ward Connerly's electoral crusade against affirmative action. A former member of the University of California Board of Regents, Connerly played the lead role in getting an anti-affirmative action ballot measure – Proposition 209 – passed in California in 1996. In the following decade, black enrollment at UCLA fell by 57%.

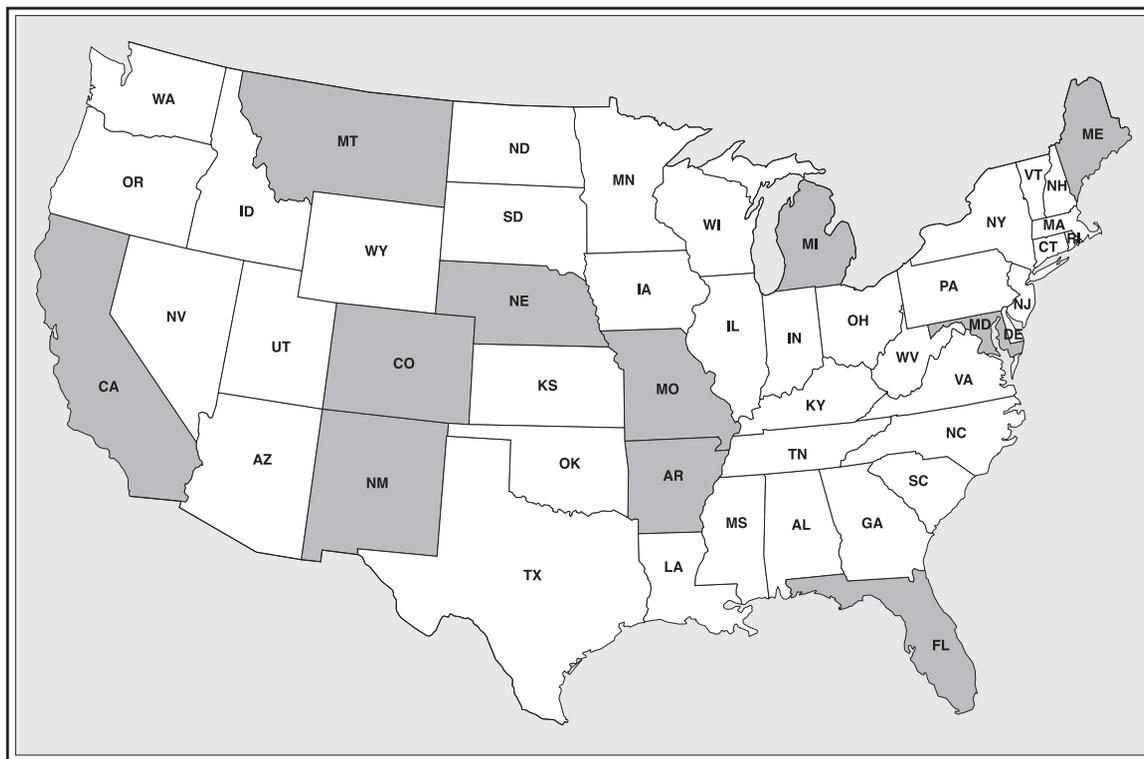
Since then Connerly has won passage of similar measures in Florida and Washington State and has turned opposition to affirmative action into a lucrative career. The group he founded, the American Civil Rights Institute, uses 75% of its budget to pay him a salary of more than \$1 million a year.

AFFIRMED

This November 4 was supposed to be a Super Tuesday for banning affirmative action: Connerly had told his right-wing funders that he would get referenda enacted in five more states. But he failed to get the measure on the ballot in Arizona, Missouri or Oklahoma, and he suffered his first defeat at the polls in Colorado.

The vote against Connerly's Colorado initiative was 51% to 49% – and the relatively close margin of 36,000 votes showed the broader effects of the Obama campaign's massive voter registration and turnout efforts. Without this November's surge in voting by African Americans, Latinos and young people, Connerly's campaign in Colorado would almost certainly have prevailed.

He did succeed in Nebraska, where 58% of voters supported an end to affirmative action in public universities and other State institutions. But the result in that deeply Republican state came as no surprise. The electoral map in Colorado is similar to those in states like Washington, Florida or California, where Connerly has succeeded in the past – and the Colorado defeat may therefore be a better bell-weather of future trends.



State referenda on higher ed issues focused on funding, affirmative action & stem cell research.

of the Board of Visitors of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, which endorsed the amendment.

Estimates of the new funding the lottery will provide range from \$60 million to \$100 million annually, though it may be two years before the money actually becomes available.

The passage of HB4 in Maryland, by 59% to 41%, marked the largest potential infusion of gambling money into a state-wide education fund. Fifteen thousand state-owned video slot machines at five locations are projected to produce more than \$300 million per year for K-12 schools and capital projects at public colleges. Maryland faces a deficit of well over \$1 billion in the next fiscal year. "Originally we didn't support this," explained AFT Maryland President Loretta Johnson, "but when we looked at what happened to state funds, we had to be realistic. You can't get anything in a State budget unless you have a line that says how its going to be funded."

Colorado's "Limited Gaming Initiative" also passed easily, with 59% of the vote. Casino towns will now be allowed to vote on extending the operating hours of gambling, adding new games and raising the betting limit from \$5 to \$100. In this case the new public revenue comes from taxes on a privately-owned gambling industry.

Colorado community colleges stand to gain the lion's share of new

gambling industry that is in trouble, with revenues down 11% last year. Casino owners saw this amendment as a lifeline and put \$7 million into the "vote yes" campaign.

Colorado's oil and gas industry spent \$10.8 million to defeat Amendment 58 – an initiative that would have ended large tax breaks for oil and gas companies operating in the state. The measure was defeated, 58% to 42%. Had it passed, more than \$190 million in new annual revenue would have been dedicated to scholarships at public colleges. Supporters of the amendment – including AFT Colorado, other education groups and environmental organizations – were outspent almost four to one by opponents, who tapped into middle-class fears of oil and gas price increases if Amendment 58 were approved.

In Missouri, supporters of a 1% rise in the state gambling tax said it would raise \$130 million for K-12 schools and \$5 to 7 million for public higher education. Opponents disputed these figures and said that most Missouri schools would get no additional funds. Proposition A, which won with 56% of the vote, also eliminates the \$500 maximum on how much money can be lost on a single wager. State teacher unions did not back this initiative, in part because they agreed that revenue projections were speculative.

Ward Connerly's first defeat at the polls

How to buy on a CUNY salary

By JOHN TARLETON

In 2006, Martha Nadell was paying \$1,450 per month to live in a cramped basement apartment in Windsor Terrace.

But shortly before she was forced to move, Nadell spotted an ad for an affordable housing lottery in her neighborhood newspaper. Sponsored by the Fifth Avenue Committee, a Brooklyn non-profit, the lottery offered aspiring first-time homebuyers a shot at purchasing a three-story brownstone in Park Slope that would normally be far out of their price range.

"I didn't think I'd be able to afford to buy anything in New York, but also thought I'd never qualify for an affordable housing program," said Nadell, an associate professor of English at Brooklyn College. "But I did qualify, and I won!"

After she was tapped in October 2006, Nadell entered a whirlwind process that culminated in her becoming the new owner and landlord of a brownstone priced at \$460,000 in June 2007. Since then she has become something of an evangelist about such programs, spreading the word to other CUNY faculty and staff about how they can navigate the system and become homeowners in New York City.

GOOD ODDS

The odds in her housing lottery were far better than Lotto. "I won it by being number 40 in a list of a few hundred who applied," Nadell told *Clarion*. "In a recent Fifth Avenue Committee lottery with an income cap of \$96,000, only around 30 people applied – and one of those 30 won." Income caps vary. In some recent

Affordable housing is out there



Martha Nadell at home in Brooklyn.

lotteries for affordable housing home sales, maximum incomes ranged from \$30,000 to more than \$150,000. There are also lotteries for affordable rental units under programs like Mitchell-Lama, where some recent income caps ran from \$26,000 to \$53,000. You can sign up to be notified by e-mail about new affordable housing lotteries for both home purchase and rental programs.

"It's a matter of tracking down these programs and not assuming you won't qualify," said Nadell.

After winning her lottery, Nadell still had to establish that she was fully ready to assume the burdens of home ownership before the Fifth Avenue Committee (www.fifthave.org) would sell her the house. Nadell compares the process to "learning a new language." First she had to submit salary stubs and tax returns and

go through a rigorous credit check. She then took a class from Neighbors Helping Neighbors (www.nhnhome.org), another Brooklyn-based non-profit, which helps prepare would-be homeowners. She learned the details of how to obtain a mortgage, how to acquire a loan for closing costs, making a down payment, signing a contract, budgeting for home ownership and more.

"One of the great things about this process is that they were not going to just sell me the house and have me lose it," Nadell said. For example, "they wouldn't offer me the house unless the [monthly] cost would be no more than 30% of my income."

Nadell also took courses on property management from the City's Department of Housing Preserva-

tion and Development and on landlord/tenant law from BMCC so that she could rent out the top two floors of her house in a responsible way. Money from renters is what made Nadell's purchase affordable: rent covers almost half of her monthly home-related costs of \$3,500.

ALTERNATIVES

Robert McCool, Nadell's instructor at Neighbors Helping Neighbors (NHN), said prospective home buyers who receive training from non-profits like NHN don't experience the kind of manipulation and deception that became commonplace in the commercial mortgage industry. "Don't use anyplace that's not a non-profit," Nadell said.

"It pays to dig around to look for favorable mortgage products," she added. With help from NHN, she received a fixed-rate, 30-year mortgage at 5.625% interest. She also had to make a down payment of 5% and pay \$23,000 in closing costs, which she covered by taking on a second loan for 10 years at 4% interest.

Banks have tightened their lending practices since September's financial meltdown. Higher credit scores and larger down payments are now being demanded of mortgage applicants, said McCool. Where Nadell was able to buy her home with 5% down, banks would now expect to see 10% or even 20%. "On the low salaries we get at CUNY, even putting down 5% can be a stretch," commented Nadell. Some programs offer assistance with down payments.

McCool emphasized that it is crucial for prospective home buyers to be realistic about what they can afford

There is non-profit help for first-time buyers.

Housing resources

Affordable housing resources (gathered by Martha Nadell and coworkers):

● www.tinyurl.com/housinghelp

Current lotteries for home purchase in NYC:

● www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/buyers/lotteries.shtml

Community housing organizations assisting first-time homebuyers:

● www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/buyers/downpayment.shtml

Other affordable housing resources:

● www.dhcr.state.ny.us/general/affhsg.htm

● www.nhsnyc.org

● www.habitatnyc.org

● www.housingpartnership.com/homebuyers/currentdevelopments.php

Affordable rental units and co-ops in NYC:

● www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/apartment/lotteries.shtml

● www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/apartment/mitchell-lama.shtml

and consider their alternatives. He noted that cooperatives allow a buyer to gain equity but come with substantially lower closing costs. And affordable-housing rentals can be a boon to those with lower incomes.

But whether you are poor or middle-class, said Nadell, anyone who's interested should find out more. "At first I felt guilty about it," she told *Clarion*.

"I have a Harvard degree – what am I doing applying for affordable housing?" But without assistance, Nadell doubts that she would ever have become a homeowner in NYC.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS — SPRING 2009

PSC GENERAL OFFICERS

Term of Office: 3 Years

President, First Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, 5 University-wide Officers.

Vice President, Senior Colleges, and 3 Senior College Officers.

Vice President, Community Colleges, and 3 Community College Officers.

Vice President, Cross Campus Chapters, and 3 Cross-Campus Officers.

Vice President, Part-Time Instructional Staff, and 3 Part-Time Instructional Staff Officers.

Two Retiree Executive Council Officers.

NYSUT AND AFT CONVENTION DELEGATES

Term of Office: 3 years

100 Convention Delegate Positions

AAUP ANNUAL MEETING DELEGATES

(Only PSC members designated as members of the AAUP are eligible to run and vote)

Term of Office: 3 years

15 Annual Meeting Delegate Positions

ELECTION SCHEDULE:

1. Nominating petitions will be obtainable upon request from chapter chairpersons or from Barbara Gabriel, Coordinator of Administrative Services, at the PSC office from January 26 to March 2, 2009.

2. Petitions must be received at the Professional Staff Congress, 61 Broadway, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10006 by 5 pm, March 2, 2009.

3. A candidate or his/her designee may inspect the list of eligible voters at the American Arbitration As-

sociation offices at 1633 Broadway – 10th Floor, on March 27, 2009, between the hours of 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.

4. Ballots will be mailed to members by the American Arbitration Association on Wednesday, April 1, 2009. Anyone who does not receive a ballot by April 9th should call Barbara Gabriel at the PSC office, 212-354-1252 for a duplicate ballot or to check your membership status.

5. All ballots received by the American Arbitration Association by 5 pm on Wednesday, April 29, 2009, will be included in the count.

6. Ballots will be counted on Thursday, April 30, 2009, at 10 am at the American Arbitration Association offices, 1633 Broadway – basement.

ELIGIBILITY TO SERVE:

To hold a position as a general officer (serving on the Executive Council), one must have been a member in good standing of the PSC for at least one (1) year prior to the close of nominations, March 2, 2009. Among the general officer positions, retiree members may only serve as Retiree Executive Council Officers.

ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE:

To be eligible to vote in this election one must have been a member in good standing for at least four (4) months prior to the mailing of the ballots, April 1, 2009.

NOMINATIONS PROCEDURE:

1. Nominations shall be by written petition signed by no less than fifty (50) members of the appropriate constituency in good standing. For the AAUP Delegate positions the written petition must be signed by no fewer than twenty-five (25) of the identified members in good standing of the PSC Chapter of the AAUP.

2. Slate nominations shall be permitted.

SLATE REGULATIONS:

A slate of candidates will be recognized if it consists of candidates for twenty-five percent or more of the officers to be elected, and if it submits, prior to the close of nominations: (1) a listing of caucus officers, all of whom must be members in good standing, including the person designated to authorize nominees for that caucus' slate and the members of the caucus Committee on Vacancies, which, unless otherwise designated, shall be the caucus nominating committee authorized to replace any candidate on the slate whose name is withdrawn no later than 7 days prior to the mailing of the ballots; and (2) a nominating petition including the printed name, signature, department and college of each petitioner and, for each candidate running on the slate, his/her signature, as well as the printed name, department, college and position being sought. The candidate's signature on the slate petition shall constitute that candidate's acceptance of the slate designation.

ELECTION RULES:

A copy of the Rules Governing All General and Chapter Elections is available for inspection by all eligible voters from Barbara Gabriel, Coordinator of Administrative Services, at the PSC central office. Relevant sections are summarized below:

1. All voting must be on an official ballot. Write-in votes are permitted. The intent of the voter must be clear, whether the name of the candidate is written, printed or typed. In order for a write-in vote to be considered valid, the candidate must meet the same eligibility requirements as a regular candidate. A write-in candidate must receive at least 10 or 10 percent (10%) of the total votes cast in the election, whichever is less, to be elected. Write-in candidates who are elected must submit written acceptance of office to the Elections Committee within ten days of the notification of election results.

2. Each candidate, or a representative designated in writing, is entitled to observe the counting of the ballots.

3. The issue of *Clarion* published in March 2009 will carry biographies and/or statements by the candidates for general officers. Each candidate for general officer will be allotted 200 words, and may also submit a photo. Slates of candidates for general officer may pool their allotment of words in whatever fashion they choose. The deadline for typed copy is 5 pm, March 3, 2009. For information on existing *Clarion* photos, contact the editor by February 23, 2009. Candidates for delegates to the NYSUT, AFT and AAUP conventions will be listed, but they will not receive further space.

Candidates for general officers may purchase not more than one-half page of advertising space in the issue of *Clarion* published in March 2009. Slates may purchase not more than one page of advertising space in that issue. The deadline for camera-ready mechanicals or an equivalent digital file is 5 pm, March 3, 2009. (Note: It would be helpful to *Clarion* if candidates can give newspaper staff advance notice of their intention to submit statements or advertisements, by February 16, 2009, or as soon as possible thereafter.) Space limitations preclude an offer of space to candidates for delegates to the NYSUT, AFT and AAUP conventions.

All candidates may mail literature at their own expense through Century Direct, 30-00 47th Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101-3415, the PSC mailing house. The PSC computer service will provide Century Direct with home-addressed electronic downloads of the membership, or will provide candidates with college-addressed labels of the membership at cost. The computer service must have five days of advance notice to provide these labels.

AAUP candidates running for office can purchase the complete list for \$5.00. The list will be mailed to the candidates' home address. List will not be faxed.

READING LIST

A book for Barack?

There are many ways in which the president-elect is different from his predecessor, but one of them is this: he has spent a good part of his life in academia. Obama is a skilled writer and a serious reader; there is nothing unusual about seeing him board a plane with a thick book under his arm.

If you were to recommend a book for President-elect Obama to read, what would it be? Below is a range of suggestions from CUNY faculty and staff. You can find more, and add your own, at www.psc-cuny.org/barackbook.htm.

I'D RECOMMEND *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, by Thomas Sugrue. As a native of Detroit whose parents migrated to the Motor City so my father could get an assembly-line job at GM, I want Obama to appreciate the role that the auto industry has played historically in African Americans' lives. That quintessential American industry catapulted blacks into working- and middle-class status at a time when few other businesses would have. Likewise, the UAW played a unique defining role in civil rights advancements in this country. The president-elect

needs to appreciate this backdrop as he strives for a balance between aiding and admonishing the Big Three.

Sugrue's extraordinary book provides rich context for how much-maligned Detroit became a symbol for urban decline – how it was not due to the “natural” consequence of market forces but to racist practices and policies, producing what Sugrue calls “racialized inequality.”

Perhaps once he has read Sugrue's book, Obama will help the nation understand that providing workers with decent wages, adequate health care and sufficient retirement income is not something to punish. I hope he will also remind the nation that the auto industry didn't just produce cars. It gave tens of thousands of blacks – and millions of others – a shot at the American dream. More than we can say for Citigroup.

Bridgett Davis
Professor of Journalism
Baruch College

I WOULD LIKE to be immodest and recommend that Barack Obama read at least one chapter, number 5, of my recently published book, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire*:

From Algiers to Baghdad. I was planning to send him a copy.

The book puts the US “war on terror” in comparative perspective by showing its similarities with the war which the French Army waged in Algeria in 1954-62, during which torture was used systematically. Key French military intelligence officers shared their anti-subversive war methods with the CIA and taught them at various military training sites in the US.

The book details the meaning and impact of torture on the military as well as its victims and reveals that anti-subversive wars inescapably use torture (as well as other coercive methods). Primarily because of this, such wars alienate the local populations and fail to achieve their goals.

Marnia Lazreg
Professor of Sociology
Hunter College & Graduate Center

I KNEW I wanted to select poetry – poems that might restore his own celebrated calm in this era of crisis. I thought of a favorite book, *String of Beads: Poems by Princess Shikishi*, but a collection of tanka by this aristocrat did

not feel right in this time of deepening class divisions. Even so, I stood daydreaming in front of my shelf of Japanese poets and suddenly rediscovered Richard Wright's haiku: *This Other World*. Published 10 years ago, it is a collection of 817 of the thousands of haiku he wrote during the last 18 months of his life. He wrote them “obsessively” in Paris and the French countryside. His daughter Julia Wright notes in her introduction that these “were self-developed antidotes against illness, and that breaking down words into syllables matched the shortness of his breath.” I hasten to add that these are not the corny, faux-profound nuggets that we see passing for art; they are not simply 17-syllable nature poems. Wright's pieces are expressions of wonder that aim for the “haiku moment” – described by Joan Giroux as “an instant in which man becomes united to an object, virtually becomes that object and realizes the eternal, universal truth contained in being.” His versions “transcend both race and color without ever denying them.”

I hope it does not offend copyright laws to quote just one:

117
The crow flew so fast
That he left his lonely caw
Behind in the fields.

Poetry may not change the world, but it can provoke – or invite us to quiet.

Kimiko Hahn
Distinguished Professor of English
Queens College

A KILLING ON LONG ISLAND

Crying out for justice

By **TONY O'BRIEN**
PSC International Committee

A cold rain fell across the banner of the PSC as a thousand people gathered November 14 for the night vigil for Marcelo Lucero. On the very spot near the Patchogue railroad station where he had been murdered the week before by a gang of racist youths, our banner flew somberly in rage and mourning next to unionists from the Laborers and the Heat & Frost Insulators locals and the canvas banners of the Workplace Project and the Frente Unido Ecuatoriano.

Clergy preached love and forgiveness and politicians made promises. Marcello's brother

and friends remembered him by speaking of the pain of migrancy, the separation of parents from children. His mother spoke by telephone from Cuenca, Ecuador. Vigil organizers discouraged chanting and maintained the solemn tone of a muffled drum.

And yet...the faces of the mostly local and Latino families were unquiet. A former student, now an immigrant worker advocate, told me there was a lot of fear after the murder. Not only fear of gutter racists like the Minutemen and Klan who are organizing in the area. Fear of an anti-immigrant reaction by the authorities – Suffolk County executive Steve Levy, Immigration and Customs Enforcement,

A murmur becomes a shout

Silence, fear and death

Below is an excerpt from a New York Times editorial of November 25, “A catastrophic silence.”

[After] the killing of Marcelo Lucero, an Ecuadorean immigrant, on Long Island this month...the silence that echoes most painfully is that of the Latino victims of these and other hidden crimes. Mr. Lucero's death has set loose a flood of stories of abuse and harassment. A police precinct commander lost his job over his handling of two other attacks against Latino men that fatal day, an acknowledgment that in Suffolk, equal protection may not always apply to everyone.

Suffolk is not the only place with hate crimes or fearful immigrants. The same silence ruled in Postville, Iowa, where children

worked brutal hours on a slaughterhouse killing floor. It hung over a factory in New Bedford, Mass., that systematically cheated workers of wages and the Mississippi shipyards where legal guest workers were held in modern-day indentured servitude.

The silence of undocumented immigrants is the catastrophic silence of people taught by legislative harassment and relentless stereotyping to live mute and afraid.

Mr. Levy sees no role for himself in this drama.

“Since when is enforcing the law seen as something negative and inflammatory?” he asked his critics this week. Here is an attempt to explain.

The fixation on uprooting and expelling immigrants is negative because it doesn't

the police – should immigrants respond to the murder with marches and strikes for jobs and services and housing and health care and amnesty. So they did not organize: they mourned.

Then we spoke. Not with left-wing chants, except, briefly, “¡El pueblo, unido, jamás será vencido!” The authentic *cri de coeur* of the mourners of Marcelo Lucero was for justice. “¡Justicia, justicia!” we cried. A tentative murmur, then louder, the single, simple word rose again and again, a counterpoint to every speech.

What is *justice*? How do we workers of all nations – *obrerros, unidos* – win it?

work. It's inflammatory because it tears communities and families apart.

When you turn the local police into *la migra*, as Mr. Levy once tried to do, you turn immigrants into the mute prey of criminals. When you relentlessly pick fights with advocates who criticize you, as Mr. Levy has, you are unable to stand with them when disaster strikes.

And when you tolerate the poisonous notion that “illegal” is a stain that can never be erased, with no path to atonement, then you turn the undocumented into a permanent class of presumed criminals who have no rights.

The undocumented do have rights. They have the right to be paid for their labor, to speak freely and to congregate in public places without fear....

I RECOMMEND that President-elect Obama read *102 Minutes: The Untold Story of the Fight to Survive inside the Twin Towers*, by Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn. Nothing will be more important for the new president than to protect domestic security. This book, a finalist for the National Book Award, reveals in a chilling way how our safety often rests on mundane, bureaucratic matters that get little public attention until disaster strikes: building codes, fire regulations, protocols for public-safety agencies to work together.

The new president needs to make sure that the response to catastrophe, whether resulting from terrorism or natural disaster, is not mired in bureaucratic ineptitude. The book is also a monument to what's special about New York: its people.

Paul Moses
Professor of Journalism
Brooklyn College & CUNY School of Journalism

NIALL FERGUSON'S *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World*. Published eight days after the November election, Ferguson's book anticipated the financial meltdown, based upon both his research of actions leading up to the present crisis and their analogy to similar crises in the past, most particularly in the late 19th century. Linking it directly to the creation and control of money by government actions or inactions, Ferguson reinforces the point that a round of runs on banks and other institutions and their serial failure is not unprecedented, but is nearly inevitable given the lack of oversight and our interconnected global work. Credit and money is too important to be left to the financiers alone, as we have once again learned.

Andrew Beveridge
Professor of Sociology
Queens College & Graduate Center

THE UNITED STATES is experiencing the worst recession it has seen in more than 30 years and economists project that things will get worse before they get better. While President-elect Obama has already pledged to stimulate the economy with a major infra-

structure/green jobs program, it is important that he not get lost inside the Beltway and forget the broad coalition of voters who sent him there. This is why I suggest that he read *The Green Collar Economy* by Van Jones.

Jones calls for investing half the \$700 billion Congress appropriated for a financial rescue to start the job of creating a “Green New Deal” to make the US more energy independent – putting people to work building and installing solar panels and wind turbines, weatherizing homes and buildings, and constructing more mass transit and fuel-efficient vehicles. This would cut our nation’s carbon footprint, reposition the US as the leading green economy and pay sustainable dividends for generations to come.

Jones ties these specific points to a broader truth: that the green economy must be built by the people and for the people. He argues that only a coalition of civic-minded Americans, together with the enlightened self-interest of the green business community, can make it happen. This book will remind Obama that while the green economy can give America renewable energy, it is our democratic values that renew our moral energy.

Vernon Mogensen
Professor of Political Science
Kingsborough Community College

THE BOOK that I would recommend to President-elect Obama is *Nursing Against the Odds: How Health Care Cost Cutting, Media Stereotypes, and Medical Hubris Undermine Nurses and Patient Care*, by Suzanne Gordon.

This book examines the issues of health care financing, restructuring, the nursing shortage, negative stereotyping of nurses in the media, and specific problems between and among health care providers in our current health care system. Gordon outlines possible solutions and emphasizes the pivotal role that nursing should have in the resolution of these problems and the eventual enactment of health care reform.

Hopefully information in this book could inform policy decisions that will be made about the future health care workforce, workplace environments, patient safety and the delivery of quality health care.

Catherine Alicia Georges
Chair & Associate Professor of Nursing
Lehman College

MINE IS a four-fold recommendation about leadership in a democracy and the challenge of balancing idealism with pragmatism. First is James MacGregor Burns’ classic political biography *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*, which examines the possibilities and perils of Machiavelli’s standard for acquiring and maintaining power. Second is Stephen B. Oates’ inspiring short analysis of *Abraham Lincoln, The Man Behind the Myths*, which ties leadership to the national psychology and the needs of the moment. Obama would appreciate the way in which Oates defines a great leader (page 57) and deftly analyzes Lincoln’s language. Third is Ray Ginger’s moving biography of Eugene V. Debs, originally titled *The Bending Cross*. An idealist and humanitarian, Debs was widely beloved because he

never stopped pursuing fundamental change on behalf of his constituency, the workers. Last, but not least, is Dr. Seuss’ *Yertle the Turtle*, which highlights the arrogance of power and the potential of the powerless to change history. While reinforcing Obama’s resolve to remain humble, it would be a great book to share with his daughters.

Joanne Reitano
Professor of History
LaGuardia Community College

I WOULD recommend *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* by Robert Tressell, who wrote



Barack Obama on the campaign trail with *The Post-American World*, by Fareed Zakaria.

of his experience of poverty and exploitation as a painter and the fear that his daughter, who he was raising alone, would be condemned to deeper poverty and the workhouse if he were to die. The “philanthropists” are the workers who sacrifice their life energies to be exploited by their bosses. The book’s characters include hypocritical “Christians,” corrupt politicians and of course ruthless, parasitic employers who force speedups and shoddy work to maximize their profits.

This is a classic of British working-class literature, published in 1914 after the author’s death from tuberculosis. Things are not so different for many Americans today. A reading of this book might shift some White House energies from enriching bankers to helping the working people who are their victims.

William Tabb
Professor of Economics (emeritus)
Queens College

A WHOLE NEW MIND: *Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*, by Daniel Pink. Pink contends that we have entered a “conceptual age” in which expansive thought is the greatest commodity individuals have to offer – and

that those who can create and empathize will lead. He suggests that the Master of Fine Arts is the new Master of Business Administration, and that the financial health of a country is contingent on fostering creative thinkers. Indeed, Pink argues, the only thing that cannot be outsourced to other countries is our creativity and ingenuity.

As an educator of undergraduate art students, I have always been concerned that within academia there is so much focus on being “correct.” While I understand that a quantifiable way of measuring students’ retention of knowledge can be important, I have always

mitment to dignity, respect and justice for all. A policy of bombs and contempt must be replaced by the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. President-elect Obama, there is one book you might look to as you restore our nation’s reputation in our imperiled world: Allida Black’s brilliant first volume of *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, 1945-1948: The Human Rights Years*, with a splendid foreword by Hillary Rodham Clinton. Senator Clinton’s celebration of ER’s life is galvanizing: “Throughout history... we have witnessed a cold dark region of the human soul that permits one group to de-humanize another.” ER’s legacy urges us to imagine “a better future for all...I hope her words will be a call to action.”

We need a new New Deal for the US, and a New Deal for the world. To move beyond international arrogance and nuclear terror, we need human rights more urgently than ever – for love, for love of the world.

Blanche Wiesen Cook
Distinguished Professor of History
John Jay College & Graduate Center

THE NEW YORK CITY LAW REVIEW is a must-read for Obama. Produced by students at CUNY School of Law, the *NYC Law Review* is actually a set of 11 volumes, with more on the way – but because our president-elect knows his way around law review articles, I’m counting it as a single book.

Our president-elect will be especially interested in the Symposium on Guantánamo Bay, as he considers how to accomplish closing that prison, and the Symposium on Nonprofit Organizations, as he tries to rebalance the role of government and the private sector in providing social services. And of course he’ll want to know about the relationship of transgender marriages and immigration, federal enforcement of pornography laws, and community organizing in post-Katrina New Orleans.

It’s a book that will remind him that law must be in the service of human needs.

Ruthann Robson
Professor of Law &
University Distinguished Professor
CUNY School of Law

I’D RECOMMEND *Predictably Irrational* by Dan Ariely – a fascinating look at why people make the decisions they do, and the many different ways that we unwittingly act against our own interests.

Anyone with the power to make decisions that affect every person on the planet ought to have an understanding of why all people sometimes make very bad choices, and how we can be on guard against the tendencies that lead us in the wrong direction. Unlike a lot of the reading material a president has to plow through, this book is laced with humor, which would provide President Obama with some much-needed comic relief.

Ellen Balleisen
CLIP Teacher
Bronx Community College

I WANT to recommend *Migration: New and Selected Poems*, by W. S. Merwin.

Merwin is arguably our greatest living American poet, certainly the one who has most influenced and transformed poetry in our time. This collection contains the best of his long career and includes brilliant new poems as well. Still living and working in Hawaii, he attains new heights, new breakthroughs in vision and in language with every passing year. He speaks in a whisper, in a prayer, of the secrets of the heart. He tells us in plangent tones of all it is to be human.

Grace Schulman
Distinguished Professor of English
Baruch College

With thanks to Scott McLemee of Inside Higher Ed for the inspiration.

Clarion DECEMBER 2008

Newspaper of the Professional Staff Congress/City University of New York, collective bargaining representative of the CUNY instructional staff. Vol. 37, No. 9. PSC/CUNY is affiliated with the American Association of University Professors, National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers (Local 2334), AFL-CIO, the New York City Central Labor Council, and New York State United Teachers. Published by PSC/CUNY, 61 Broadway, 15th floor, New York, NY 10006. Telephone: (212) 354-1252. Website: www.psc-cuny.org. E-mail: phogness@psccmail.org. All opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the PSC.

PSC OFFICERS: Barbara Bowen, President; Steven London, First Vice President; Arthurine DeSola, Secretary; Michael Fabricant, Treasurer; Stanley Aronowitz, Jonathan Buchsbaum, Lorraine Cohen, John Pittman, Nancy Romer, University-wide Officers; Robert Cermele, Vice President, Senior Colleges; Kathleen Barker, Marilyn Neimark, Alex Vitale, Senior College Officers; Anne Friedman, Vice President, Community Colleges; Jacob Appleman, Lizette Colón, Susan O’Malley, Community College Officers; Iris DeLutro, Vice President, Cross Campus Units; Donna Veronica Gill, Steven Trimboli, Vera Weekes, Cross Campus Officers; Marcia Newfield, Vice President, Part-Time Personnel; Susan DiRaimo, Diane Menna, George Walters, Part-Time College Officers; Peter Jonas, James Perlstein, Retiree Officers; Irwin H. Polishook, President Emeritus; Peter I Hoberman, Vice President Emeritus, Cross Campus Units.

STAFF: Deborah Bell, Executive Director; Naomi Zauderer, Associate Executive Director; Chris Aikin, Director, Organizing; Faye H. Alladin, Coordinator, Financial Services; Debra L. Bergen, Director, Contract Administration & University-wide Grievance Officer; Nick Cruz, Coordinator of Organizing; Kian Frederick, Coordinator of Organizing; Barbara Gabriel, Coordinator, Office Services and Human Resources; Kate Pfordresher, Coordinator, Research & Public Policy; Diana Rosato, Coordinator, Membership Department; Clarissa Gilbert Weiss, Director, Pension and Welfare Benefits; Peter Zwiebach, Director of Legal Affairs.

Editor: Peter Hogness / Associate Editor: Dania Rajendra / Designer: Margarita Aguilar / Proofreader: Nicole Lisa / Reporter: Karah Woodward / Intern: James Long
© 2008 Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

Recommended reading across disciplines

THINKING BIGGER

An alternative to raising tuition

BY BARBARA BOWEN
PSC President

Millions of Americans just voted for a president who promised to raise taxes on the rich to fund the social programs the country needs. Congress is considering a sweeping economic stimulus to rebuild the country's infrastructure. Economists are persuading the government that there is a right moment for deficit spending. Yesterday's adherents of small government and market-based solutions are starting to call for more government investment. And factory workers in Chicago are standing up and sitting in to make sure a fair share of investment goes to them. At the level of the national economy, everyone seems to be ready to think big.

Why, then, are Albany and CUNY thinking so small? As a national consensus grows that you can't cut your way out of a recession, Governor Paterson continues to call for massive, debilitating cuts, and Chancellor Goldstein accepts the "reality" that the only hope for investment in CUNY lies in having students make up part of the State's budget deficit. There is an alternative to the poverty of imagination coming out of both Albany and 80th Street, and it's at the heart of the union's position that this is the moment for more – not less – investment in CUNY.

MORE FOR CUNY

Before you respond that anyone who thinks New York State can invest more in CUNY when the state is facing a \$15 billion shortfall is dreaming, consider a little CUNY history. During the Depression, facing even deeper economic distress than we are now, New York founded two CUNY colleges and built another – all while maintaining free tuition. Queens College was established on the



ElWise Noisette/NYSUT

PSC President Barbara Bowen with First Vice President Steve London and CUNY students and supporters in Albany on November 18.

campus of an existing institution in 1937, Brooklyn College was built by the federal Public Works Administration in 1935, and the four beautiful original buildings of what is now Lehman College were built in 1934 by the New York WPA. Confronted with a crisis of staggering unemployment and poverty, New York decided to invest in public higher education, betting on the power of a college education to foster both individual and collective recovery.

How different the message from Albany is now. We hear almost every day from the governor's office that there is no alternative to slashing funds for health care and education. The misleading mantra

is "shared sacrifice." What is really meant is that programs that save the lives of the poor will be gutted while the State refuses to restructure the income tax so that "sacrifice" – or what I would rather call contribution – really is shared.

REVENUE

The only ideas for increased revenue coming out of Albany so far are regressive: increased "taxes" on public transportation and public higher education. Yet the real crisis in New York State is a revenue crisis, not a deficit crisis. New York State would have \$17 billion more in revenue in this year's budget alone – eliminating

all need for discussion of budget cuts – if the State simply restored the multi-year cuts enacted from 1994 to 2005.

Over the past 30 years, New York has cut the tax rate on the top income bracket in half – from 15.4% to 6.85%. Today the poorest New Yorkers, those earning \$15,000 or less a year, pay 12.6% of their income in State and local taxes, while those earning \$1.6 million or more pay only about half that rate. The top earners in New York are not paying their share.

PARADIGM

And what has CUNY proposed? That our students pay part of that share in their place. Under the tuition increase proposal approved on December 8 by CUNY's Board of Trustees, only 20% of the higher tuition would go to CUNY – the rest would be used to fill the State's budget hole. Lacking the courage to propose even a temporary increase in income tax by those most able to pay, the State now expects some of its poorest residents to pay that money instead. New York State has so far failed to hear the message of the presidential election or the chorus of support for progressive taxation and renewed government spending.

The chancellor and the trustees have welcomed the State's arrangement because in past years the State has demanded 100% of any tuition increase. They see this year's provision as a paradigm shift. What would be a paradigm shift is free tuition. An allocation of \$120 out of every \$600 paid by our students is an improvement, but it does nothing to shift the paradigm. Our students are being made to pay for Albany's lack of political vision.

The University's budget proposal essentially gives up on the idea of major new investment of public funds. It telegraphs to Albany that CUNY can tolerate the cuts that have already been made and that

the State budget gap should be closed by imposing further taxes on the poor and middle class. It assumes that a combination of philanthropy, a tuition rebate and "efficiencies" can make up for decades of public underinvestment, and – most important – that there is no alternative for Albany or CUNY.

All four of those premises are wrong. Chancellor Goldstein's message on the budget asserts that the University has been able to withstand more than \$68 million in cuts in this last year alone while maintaining "our core academic mission." It is a public relations fantasy that a university can have its per-student funding cut by almost 25%, as CUNY's has been in the last two decades, without harm to its core academic mission.

RENEW

The only solution to that underfunding is renewed investment of public funds. There is no one at CUNY who does not support increased investment, but falling back on the failed policy of increased tuition is not the way to achieve it. In the 1990s CUNY tuition rose four times, and at the end of the decade the University had \$285 million less in total funds. The tuition increase proposal in the current budget would not even restore the money cut last year – let alone allow for the growth we all want.

People are the real wealth of nations. With its signal history as an institution of democratic education, CUNY could offer a vision to the whole country of how to develop that wealth. The trustees have missed that chance. Now it is up to the State. Governor Paterson releases his proposed budget on December 16, and the Legislature will vote on it this spring. New York, don't fail in this historic moment. Make educational history again; invest in the state's future, invest in CUNY.

More state investment

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY
61 Broadway, 15th Floor
New York, New York 10006

Return Service Requested

NonProfit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
New York, N.Y.
Permit No. 8049



15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Employee Free Choice Act-ion!

Help pass the most important labor law reform in a generation – the Employee Free Choice Act. Working people are routinely denied the freedom to unite with their coworkers and bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions. Especially in the private sector, corporations regularly intimidate employees – including firing pro-union workers – to keep out unions, and there is little recourse for workers

under the law. It's a widespread problem, and there's legislation to address it.

You can find a link to the Employee Free Choice Act website from the PSC website, www.psc-cuny.org. Click on the "Employee Free Choice Act" box to sign the petition. With your remaining 15 minutes, you can forward the petition to friends and family from the site. Labor's goal is one million signatures – help pass the Act!