

Clarion

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



JANUARY 2008



ON CAMPUS HEOs organize

An emphasis on campus-based activity encouraged many HEOs to become activists this year.

PAGE 11



Lisa Quiñones

HANDS OFF!

MEMBERS FIGHT CONCESSIONS

PSC chapters hosted on-campus actions, such as the BMCC protest above, to oppose management's concession demands and build support for the union's agenda in contract talks. Members also organized for health

insurance for graduate employees and paid parental leave. In recent sessions the PSC and CUNY each took demands off the table to focus the contract talks, but CUNY has yet to make a financial offer. **PAGES 5, 6-7**

NYS HIGHER ED

Right diagnosis, wrong Rx

Gov. Spitzer's Commission on Higher Education released its preliminary report on December 17. Its analysis was clear but its solutions fell short. **PAGES 5 & 12**

PART-TIME CUNY

Students and adjuncts

CUNY's reliance on underpaid, insecure part-timers has immediate and lasting consequences for students. Adjuncts, students and full-time faculty say everyone loses out. **PAGE 4**

DREAM ACT

NYC students push for new law

CUNY students and PSC members have been organizing support for federal legislation that would offer a decent future to thousands of undocumented students. **PAGE 8**



NEGOTIATIONS

Getting a good book contract

How do you get the best contract for publishing your book? The National Writers Union says it starts with being willing to stand up for yourself. **PAGE 9**

CALENDAR

MONDAY, JANUARY 7: 12:30 pm / The PSC Retirees Chapter holds its annual January Luncheon at John Jay College with a docent from the Metropolitan Museum of Art speaking on the New Greek and Roman Galleries. The fee is \$21. Contact Jacob Judd at jjudd18@optonline.net.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1: 4:00 pm / Part-time Personnel Committee meeting. At the PSC office, 61 Broadway, 16th floor. Contact Marcia Newfield at (212) 354-1252 or mnewfield@pscmail.org.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5: 5:30 – 7:30pm / PSC Health & Safety Watchdogs hosts the first of three training workshops – this one on indoor air quality, mold, and what to tell management to do about it. Food and refreshments provided. Pre-register by emailing hswatchdogs@pscmail.org or call the PSC at 212-354-1252, ask for health and safety. At the PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th floor.

Correction

We regret that the article on CUNY management salaries on page 5 of the Nov./Dec. *Clarion* contained some incorrect figures as a result of production problems. A corrected version of the article is now online, at www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm. Correct information on the salary increases can also be found in the PSC Delegate Assembly's Resolution on Management Salaries, at www.psc-cuny.org/ExecSalaryResolution07.htm.



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.

Responses to AFT endorsement

● Though no doubt I would agree with Steve Leberstein and Manny Ness on the goals of societal justice and equity in the US and abroad, I think their criticism of the AFT endorsement of Hillary Clinton (Nov./Dec. *Clarion*) needed to say whom they would propose as an alternative. We would no doubt have similar reservations about all the other Democratic candidates with the exception of Dennis Kucinich. I frankly don't see any deep ideological and economic alternative courses directed at the multiple needs of America's unions and the whole of our working class espoused by Clinton's other opponents.

I will vote for Kucinich in the New York primary, as a statement of political desire, but only because of New York's special political culture. Were I in Florida or Ohio I would vote for the Democratic front-runner. As a wounded veteran of feel-good votes much of my adult life, I cannot justify an attack on the best placed candidate to move our political system incrementally toward the goals we share.

In the absence of a parliamentary system, in which Bush would long ago have lost a vote of confidence, or a proportional-representation electoral system, in which third party candidates could have access to

political power, we need to support a Democratic Party victory.

Peter Ranis
Graduate Center & York (emeritus)

Clinton & the Democrats – 2

● Steve Leberstein and Manny Ness are right. Hillary Clinton's history of "triangulation" – trying to win elections by meeting the Republicans halfway – is exactly the wrong direction for the Democratic Party.

The 2008 election is critically important. But to take this nation's politics in a new direction, we also need to look beyond this year's candidates and think about how progressive social movements can exert power in the electoral arena. If all our organizing goes into a candidate's personal campaign apparatus, we'll have little to show for it once the election is over.

What we need is an organization that builds its strength beyond any one election, one that operates both inside and outside of the Democratic Party. The Rainbow Coalition of the 1980s was starting to develop into that kind of vehicle, providing a growing base of support for progressive candidates by connecting them with grassroots social movements. The way the

Rainbow linked the struggles for economic and racial justice also holds important lessons for today, particularly for those of us who work at CUNY.

Bill Fletcher and Danny Glover make a detailed argument for this approach in their article in *The Nation*, "Visualizing a Neo-Rainbow," available online at auroraus.org/nation.html.

This is a long-haul project, and only small steps may be possible in this election. But the time to start working on it is now.

Ron Hayduk
BMCC

Clinton & the Democrats – 3

● The debate in *Clarion* over the AFT's endorsement of Hillary Clinton is linked to our contract struggle and all the crucial issues labor faces. It's not just Hillary but the Democratic Party itself. War and colonial occupation in Iraq? Bush couldn't do it without them. The slave-labor Taylor Law we're up against? The Democrats back it, and Spitzer enforced it against the TWU. Now he and Clinton wind up *echoing* the frenzy against licenses for undocumented drivers.

No Child Left Behind, the Patriot Act, the new bill against "domestic radicalization"? Here too the Democrats seek to out-Bush Bush. And it was Bill Clinton who gutted *habeas corpus* and "welfare as we know it."

If students didn't learn in the face of so much data, they'd get an F.

Yet labor leaders keep funneling votes and dollars to the Democratic wing of the Property Party, as Vidal called it. This means more war, racism and union-busting; more Taylor Law, wage erosion and adjunct serfdom. It means labor's *power* continues to be chained. Instead of playing by the rulers' rules, we need class struggle and a fight for workers' power. It's way past time to break from the Democrats and build a workers' party.

Sándor John
Hunter College

CUNY cheats adjuncts – and sets a bad example

● One insidious effect of CUNY's current adjunct labor policies, unmentioned in the article "Adjunct labor & CUNY as an institution" (Nov./Dec. *Clarion*), is their effect upon the academic integrity of CUNY's students.

One key requisite for dishonest behavior is rationalization of the behavior by the wrongdoer.

CUNY students are well aware that adjunct faculty members are not considered full-fledged faculty by CUNY. CUNY students know that adjuncts are not provided ade-

quate office space, adequate access to computers and other technologies, or adequate services normally considered necessities when it comes to full-time faculty. The CUNY students know that adjuncts are paid substandard wages and that some colleges actually pay adjuncts *less* money for work during exam period.

CUNY's practices regarding its adjunct faculty accordingly facilitate and encourage the students to rationalize the plagiarism and cheating they choose to commit in adjunct-taught courses. Even as student plagiarism threatens academia's very integrity, CUNY's policies invite and promote such misconduct. If CUNY truly seeks excellence, then the *untermenschen* status accorded by CUNY to its adjunct faculty is counterproductive and sends the wrong message to the students and to the world.

Kenneth Ryesky
Queens College

Wash 'em up

● *Staphylococcus aureus*, often referred to simply as "staph," is considered by many microbiologists to be the prince of pathogenic bacteria. It can cause many types of serious infection, and some staph have become multi-drug resistant (MRSA). Until the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention and others find ways to control these bugs, diligence is the order of the day.

What the employer can do:

- ✓ Place importance on worker safety and health in the workplace.
- ✓ Ensure the availability of adequate facilities and supplies that encourage workers to practice good hygiene.
- ✓ Ensure that routine housekeeping in the workplace is followed.
- ✓ Ensure that contaminated equipment and surfaces are cleaned with the proper detergent.

What you can do:

- ✓ Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water and/or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ✓ Use moisturizing lotion on hands and feet.
- ✓ Use moisturizing body wash.
- ✓ Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- ✓ Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- ✓ Avoid sharing personal items such as uniforms and personal protective equipment.

Ezra Seltzer
Brooklyn College (retired)
Bob Wurman
Queens College (retired)

Building workers show strength



Thousands of SEIU Local 328J members were joined by allies on Wednesday, December 12, as they rallied after voting to strike if management refuses to settle a fair contract. The crowd marched from 42nd Street to Rockefeller Center. Commercial building owners have until December 31 to reach an agreement with the 26,000 workers, who work at 2,000 buildings.

CUNY steps on free speech

By PETER HOGNESS

LaGuardia Community College President Gail Mellow has announced a ban on use of the college's e-mail system for communicating about "union business." No other topics of discussion were prohibited in her October 30 letter to PSC chapter chair Lorraine Cohen.

"According to this policy, you can post a notice that there's a kitten up for adoption, or an apartment for rent in Bayside – but not that there's a union meeting," said Danny Lynch, professor of English and vice chair of the LaGuardia PSC chapter.

The announcement provoked a strong response from LaGuardia faculty and staff. "People are deeply disturbed," said PSC Chapter Chair Lorraine Cohen. "They see this as arbitrary, discriminatory and contrary to the values of our institution."

CHALLENGE

To challenge the ban, the PSC has filed a grievance, a complaint with the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), and a lawsuit in federal court. "CUNY's ban on union speech is a violation of the contract, New York State's Taylor Law and the First Amendment," said PSC First Vice President Steve London, chair of the PSC Contract Enforcement Committee. "The PSC will pursue all legal options available to protect the rights of union members at LaGuardia Community College."

The newly announced policy marks a sharp break from LaGuardia's past practice. The campus e-mail system had been regularly used for union communications for many years.

In her October 30 e-mail to Cohen, LaGuardia President Gail Mellow noted that Cohen had sent "notices relating to PSC meetings" over campus e-mail. According to Vice Chancellor Frederick Schaffer, Mellow wrote, this was a violation of CUNY's policy on computer use, because it allows CUNY's computer systems to be used only for "activities relating to the performance by CUNY employees of their duties and responsibilities."

Mellow's letter asserted, without elaboration, that "union business is not part of the performance of an employee's duties and responsibilities" – and she ordered an end to discussion of "union business" on LaGuardia e-mail.

The issue became a very public controversy the next day, when George Sussman, professor of history, posted Mellow's letter without comment on a college-wide e-mail list.

TORRENT

"There was a torrent of e-mails in response," Sussman told *Clarion*. "People were outraged, including a number of senior faculty members who work closely with the administration on pedagogical innovation and other projects." He

LaGuardia move sparks protest



Gregory Nemec

added that people were unimpressed with Mellow's stated reason for the ban. "Performance of 'our duties and responsibilities' is intimately related to our terms and conditions of employment," Sussman noted, "and that's exactly what the union works on."

SPIRITED DISCUSSION

A few days later, a posting from LaGuardia's vice president of external and community affairs, Cindy Freidmutter, took note of the "spirited discussion" about the new policy and tried to clarify it. Freidmutter stated that Vice Chancellor Schaffer "is CUNY's lead person in the contract negotiations," and as such "he has asked that LaGuardia not allow the use of the college's e-mail for conducting union business" until the PSC agreed to bargain over the issue in contract talks.

"At the request of Vice Chancellor Schaffer," Freidmutter wrote, President Mellow had written to the campus PSC chapter to inform them of this new prohibition.

In a short reply, Gail Green-Anderson, a professor who has taught at LaGuardia for 21 years, wrote that she was "very disheartened by President Mellow's decision to act in line with Vice Chancellor Schaffer's directive. That directive sets limits on our ability to speak openly and honestly with each other."

This view was shared by many, as the next wave of responses soon made clear. Sally Mettler, chair of LaGuardia's Faculty Council, wrote that

Green-Anderson's note "got to the heart of the matter that is in the heart of the college." Why, she asked, hadn't Mellow instead "stood up for the principles of intellectual and communicative freedom?"

"Today's clarification," wrote J. Elizabeth Clark, professor of English, "means that CUNY management wants to decide when and where we can use e-mail. It's...an arbitrary invocation of power." What sense did it make, she asked, to rule that "you can use college e-mail to invite me to your baby shower, but the union can't invite me to a meeting about child care policies at the University?"

INTERVENTION

Three days later Vice Chancellor Schaffer, who is also CUNY's General Counsel, intervened in the discussion. In a note posted to the college-wide list, Schaffer wrote that CUNY's computer policy "permits incidental personal use of the University's computer resources.... Union business, however, does not constitute an incidental personal use."

"Why not?" inquired Sussman in his own post a couple of days later, noting that Schaffer had asserted this distinction but made no attempt to explain it. What it came down to, Sussman argued, was discrimination based on the content of speech – in other words, "censorship."

Schaffer's real motive, Sussman suggested, was an attempted power play in contract negotiations:

management was threatening union members' right to free communication in order to win a bargaining chip.

The PSC's Steve London agreed. "These are union rights, rights which we and our members have had for a long time," he told *Clarion*. "Now CUNY management is trying to take away our right to open communication via e-mail and force us to bargain to get it back. That appears to be why they've picked this fight."

"What CUNY has done here is outrageous," London continued. "It's disruptive to the college. Open communication by e-mail has been an important source of the college's sense of community, and there were no problems with it until CUNY's edict. Now CUNY has embroiled LaGuardia in a needless controversy by discriminating against the union."

NEEDLESS

In 2006 the PSC defeated a similar attempt to restrict union speech on the e-mail system at Kingsborough Community College. Patrick Lloyd, assistant professor of chemistry, was banned from a college e-mail list for discussing candidates in the Spring 2006 PSC union election. After the union filed an improper practice charge with PERB, management backed down and agreed to a settlement that restored Lloyd to the list and guaranteed all KCC employees' right to comment on union politics in the future.

Two years ago, Mellow tried to impose a different restriction on free speech at LaGuardia; in November 2005, she issued a memo insisting that all faculty and staff consult with her office whenever they spoke to the press. But after a strong challenge from the PSC, management announced that this memo would not be enforced.

As the current controversy at LaGuardia developed, Lorraine Cohen and other local union officers continued to discuss union issues by campus e-mail. In response, Schaffer e-mailed Cohen on December 4 to threaten that "if you continue to use CUNY's e-mail system to conduct union business...your e-mail privileges will be suspended."

When Cohen posted Schaffer's note to the college-wide list, the response was immediate: about 25 people volunteered to re-post notices of union meetings if Cohen was kicked off the system.

READY TO SPEAK OUT

"The most important thing has been this extraordinary outpouring of support," said Cohen, "and the willingness to take action by the faculty and staff." The ban seems to have had the opposite of its intended effect, she said. "Instead of people being intimidated, they're increasingly ready to speak out." Close to 200 faculty

LABOR IN BRIEF

UFT says affordable housing must be union

In October, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) allocated \$28 million in bonds from the teachers' pension system to back the construction of 234 units for housing educators in the Bronx. It was a small but important investment. But on November 28 the UFT discovered the builder was using non-union labor and withdrew its support. UFT President Randi Weingarten and the UFT are asking the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) to sell the bonds and withdraw from the deal.

Since then, efforts to negotiate with Atlantic Development Corp. for union wages have been unsuccessful and, on Dec. 4, UFT members and Weingarten protested outside the Bronx construction site to demand that the builder pay prevailing wages.

From the 1930s through the 1970s, unions sponsored the construction of many affordable housing units across New York City.

Korean gov't targets migrant union

On the morning of November 27, the Korean government arrested three senior officials of the Migrant Workers' Trade Union (MTU), which was founded in 2005 to organize Korea's 400,000 migrant workers and defend them against government repression.

MTU President Kajiman and General Secretary Masum were arrested en route to a protest at the Seoul Immigration Office. Vice President Raju was arrested in front of his workplace.

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) said that more than 20 MTU members and officers have been arrested since August and that "the simultaneous arrest of three MTU leaders is a clearly targeted attack, planned in timing with an intensification of the crackdown against undocumented migrants in South Korea." Amnesty International is also following the situation closely.

In the wake of these arrests, the KCTU has called for international solidarity. For more information, visit http://nodong.org/bbs/zboard.php?id=eng_action.

and staff have signed an online petition against the ban.

"To be unable to use college e-mail would interfere with the union's ability to represent our members," Cohen said. "It would be harmful to them, and to the college."

Unless management reverses its position, she said, "people will be left with a sense that the CUNY administration is very hostile to the rights of faculty and staff – the right to have the information we need to make our own decisions about issues before the college and the University."

Bad for adjuncts & students

By DANIA RAJENDRA and PETER HOGNESS

CUNY students often don't know that their class is taught by an adjunct – until they need to talk with the instructor outside of class.

Adjuncts often can't speak with students right after class, because they have to run across town to teach at another campus. And part-time faculty may not have an office hour – or, if they do, they may not have an office. If they have an office, they may have to share it with dozens of others.

Brian Foote, a Hunter College junior double major in political science and religion, appreciates that his adjunct professors make a big effort to meet with him. "I've had professors meet me at a bar," he told *Clarion*. "I'm sympathetic, so I try to be as flexible as possible." Ingrid Hughes, an adjunct lecturer at CUNY for many years, often goes over assignments with her students in the hallways at BMCC, because she shares office space with 50 other part-time faculty.

"You may set office hours, but your office is crowded with other adjuncts," said Ruben Rangel, an adjunct lecturer at Bronx Community College. "That sends a general signal to students that their education is not highly valued." In contract bargaining, CUNY management rebuffed a PSC demand that every adjunct be guaranteed a desk and a chair.

OFFICE HOUR

In the 2000-2002 contract, the PSC broke new ground by winning a paid office hour for part-time faculty who teach at least six hours on a single CUNY campus. But while this now benefits 4,000 adjuncts and their students, the majority of adjuncts must still decide whether to volunteer their time.

Those who qualify for the paid office hour often find that it is not enough. "Our students are very underprepared," said Hughes, who teaches remedial English and freshman composition at Bronx and Manhattan Community Colleges. "They need a lot of individual guidance. It's key to their success." But with her freshman composition class at BMCC this semester numbering 30 students, Hughes told *Clarion*, a single paid office hour a week is simply insufficient to reach all of them.

"We're prevented from serving students as fully as we could," said Michael Fisher, an adjunct lecturer in political science. "We're often put in a position where we're not the kind of professors that we can be, that we'd like to be."

Still, the full extent of the problem is often hidden from undergraduates. Because most adjuncts go the extra mile to meet their students' needs, students don't know the real costs of the adjunct labor system, or how US universities got to be this way.

"The crisis in academic staffing has been almost hidden from the public because contingent faculty

Exploitation of part-timers hurts both



Ruben Rangel, adjunct lecturer at Bronx Community College.

have done well in the classroom despite the exploitative and unprofessional conditions under which they work," said Larry Gold, director of higher education for the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). "Looking past the individual classroom to the aggregate, however, it cannot be good for students when most of their instructors" are so unsupported, he told *Clarion*.

Members of the Adjunct Project, an initiative of CUNY's Doctoral Student Council, decided that CUNY undergraduates deserved some education on a subject that's had such an important effect on the colleges they attend. So as part of Campus Equity Week this October, they developed a curriculum that helps adjuncts in different fields find ways to relate the topic to their syllabi.

"I talked to my students about underemployment, and the difference between having a job and having a job you can actually live on, [and] how this fits into our discussion of welfare," said Jesse Goldstein, an adjunct lecturer in sociology. "They were blown away – 70% of the kids in my class make more than me, and they're struggling to get by."

HOURLY RATE

Adjuncts are paid an hourly rate, based on the number of hours they spend in class. For those without a paid office hour, it works out to about \$2,700 or \$2,800 per semester for a three-credit course. Given the number of hours required to prepare for class and evaluate student work, said Jesse Goldstein, CUNY adjuncts find that their actual pay per hour is very low. "I'm doing something totally non-economic," he told *Clarion*. "It becomes this altruistic thing."

Five CUNY colleges – including

Baruch, where Jesse Goldstein works – actually pay adjuncts less during exam period, on the grounds that it takes less time to administer an exam than to teach a class. But both part-time and full-time faculty say that exam period is the busiest time of the semester. Union activists are outraged that these five colleges refuse to recognize or compensate the time that adjuncts spend grading exams and term papers, or meeting with students to advise them and discuss grades, during the end-of-semester crush. (See photos above.)

Dan Skinner, who has taught part-time at Hunter for five years, explained similar lessons to his classes in a lecture during Campus Equity Week. "I'm volunteering when they get papers back with tons of feedback," he said. After he explained this to students, they "start saying that they deserve better," he said. "It illuminated to them why adjuncts often aren't available," he said.

Even when students do connect with an adjunct faculty member, it's hard to develop a relationship because of uncertainty about where, when or even if the adjunct will teach another course at the same college.

"A student in my ancient philosophy class at Kingsborough told me that a friend of hers from LaGuardia, where I used to teach, had recommended my name," Bruno Gulli, an adjunct assistant professor, told *Clarion*. "But she was only in my class by chance because students don't know in advance what classes adjuncts teach."

Drew Hubner's students in English 610 petitioned the Hostos English Department to make sure that Hubner taught the next semester's course, English 611, and at the same

hour. They gathered more than 300 signatures. Hubner, who has taught at six CUNY campuses and 20 NYC-area colleges since 1988, said it was the first time his students had petitioned his department on his behalf, though they often ask about his schedule for the coming semester. "I have to say, he told *Clarion*. "It's ridiculous. Students deserve to know who is teaching a class."

COMMITMENT

It can be hard for adjuncts to commit to a given CUNY campus. Given the low wages paid to part-time faculty, it's hard to turn down a higher-paying course at NYU or the New School.

Foote, the Hunter student, was most frustrated that his adjunct professors so often take their CUNY teaching experience elsewhere. "I wish I were working with people who'll be more invested in the culture of the University," he said.

The lack of continuity can cause problems for a student's future. "Students often come back a semester or two later, wanting a recommendation for a scholarship or a college application," Hughes said. "But if you're not there any more, you can't give it to them. That's not satisfactory for either students or for us."

This is one part of a larger problem: lack of job security or decent wages make it difficult for adjuncts to act as mentors to undergraduates. "A past student who's considering graduate school just sent out a long e-mail to all her previous professors," said Hester Eisenstein, a full-time professor in the sociology department at Queens. "She was asking what grad schools she should look at, what journals she should be reading, and so on." Eisenstein told *Clarion* that it will take her a couple of hours to write a thorough reply; she sees this kind of mentoring as a basic and im-

portant part of her job. But part-timers are not paid for this kind of work, said Eisenstein.

More broadly, problems in continuity are an obstacle to building a college community, department chairs said.

"I think our adjuncts are good teachers," said Baruch sociology department Chair Glenn Petersen, "but it's one thing to know how to teach. It's another to know the student body of a campus – what works for them, what kinds of problems recur. It takes being on campus for a long time to get a good sense of that. Being part of a community is something that I work on with my junior faculty – encouraging them to interact with student organizations and so on. But I'd be embarrassed to do the same with my adjuncts, because they're not paid for it."

"You want to think you're functioning in a collegial academic environment where people share their professional commitments," said Joanne Reitano, a professor in LaGuardia's social science department. "But adjuncts don't have a chance to do so. We don't benefit from their knowledge and experience as we would if they were full-timers," she told *Clarion*. "Having so many faculty on the fringes of the system frays the academic community."

"The PSC leadership strongly supports the value of having tenured faculty with doctoral degrees and active research agendas teaching CUNY students," said the union's president, Barbara Bowen. "That is why we fight for full-time lines. But CUNY adjuncts are exceptional: a high proportion have PhDs and many are active scholars, despite the fact that CUNY provided them with absolutely zero support until the union negotiated a professional development fund." Still, she said, "no one is well served – least of all our students – when half of CUNY's faculty work in underpaid, insecure, unsupported, contingent positions."

Addressing these problems requires a two-pronged approach, say union leaders: CUNY needs more full-time lines, as the PSC and others have proposed to New York's Commission on Higher Education (see page 12). And CUNY needs better conditions for adjuncts, starting with basic job security provisions that would foster longer-term relationships with a single CUNY campus. "Better pay is also essential," said Bowen, "so that adjuncts are not asked to take a vow of poverty in order to give students what they need."

Nationally, the AFT is also working on both tracks. The AFT's Faculty And College Excellence (FACE) campaign, which grew out of a proposal by the PSC, is pushing states across the country to create more tenure-track positions and also provide part-time faculty with more stability and better pay.

"Students and adjuncts both would benefit from changes in the academic labor system," said PSC Vice President for Part-time Personnel Marcia Newfield. "United union activism is the only viable road for new possibilities."

– Second in a series on adjunct labor and the University

A focus on underfunding

By PETER HOGNESS

In its initial report, the New York State Commission on Higher Education said that the CUNY and SUNY systems had both suffered from chronic underfunding. But its proposals call for only a partial restoration of the cuts in CUNY's public support over the last generation.

The report, released Dec. 17, calls for hiring at least 2,000 more full-time faculty for CUNY and SUNY combined, addressing a backlog of deferred maintenance on the campuses of both systems and a \$3 billion research fund for both public and private universities. To pay for its proposals, the commission urged some increase in State funding and several forms of increased tuition.

"The PSC applauds Governor Spitzer for taking the position that New York State could – and should – have a premier system of public higher education," said the union's president, Barbara Bowen. The commission's report, she said, "takes a first, powerful step toward making that vision a reality by identifying the underlying structural problem for public higher education in New York: CUNY and SUNY are underfunded and have been for a long time."

But while the union credited the commission with the right diagnosis, it argued that the panel had come up with the wrong prescrip-

NYS higher ed report released



Gary Scholichet

Some 30 PSC members offered the commission testimony.

tion. "The report's recommendations fall short of both its vision and its analysis," said Bowen.

For example, PSC leaders said, the report looks to students to pay for much of the new investment in the system through increased tuition. "What New York needs, rather, is *public* investment in public higher education," said Bowen. "Shifting the burden onto students will inevitably restrict access to higher education for precisely those students who need it most."

She said this is particularly true for CUNY students, many the first in their families to attend college and most of whom are people of color.

"We commend the commission for focusing on the loss of full-time faculty in New York's public universities," said PSC First Vice President Steve London, but its recommendation for only 2,000 new full-time lines is too low. CUNY administration's State budget request for next year asks for funding to create 2,300 new full-time lines for

CUNY alone, and London pointed out that CUNY has 5,000 fewer full-time faculty today than it did in 1975, despite record enrollments. "At the rate the commission is suggesting that CUNY add new faculty, it would take more than a quarter of a century to regain our full faculty strength," he said.

The PSC also urged a focus on the historic decline in the purchasing power of CUNY salaries. Bowen said professors at Rutgers now make 24% more than their peers at CUNY, and those at the University of Connecticut earn 23% more. "To recruit – and retain – new faculty," said Bowen, "New York must invest in making competitive compensation a priority."

Governor Spitzer, who appointed the commission last spring, welcomed the report and vowed that his administration would "make New York's higher education second to none." In a press conference, Spitzer praised the report but stopped short of endorsing any specific proposals. "I expect these recommendations to become part of a continuing dialog aimed at helping our colleges, universities and students succeed," the governor said.

The commission adopted the "compact" approach advocated by CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, a panel member. Its "NYS Compact for

Higher Education" proposes a "cost-sharing relationship" that would rely heavily on revenue from tuition, private fundraising and internal cost-cutting measures, along with increased State support.

The commission also urged an end to "over-regulation on tuition pricing," letting each college set its own rates without legislative approval. But the chairs of the Assembly and State Senate Higher Education Committees both opposed the idea of "differential tuition," under which public colleges could charge varying amounts. The chair of the Senate committee, Kenneth LaValle, supported the commission's call for "modest, predictable tuition increases" on a regular basis, while Deborah Glick, the Queens College alumna who heads the Assembly committee, criticized this as a plan for "automatic tuition hikes."

The panel is slated to issue a final report by June 1. The 85-page preliminary report contains a plethora of other proposals, on topics from remedial education to support for graduate study.

Thirty PSC members gave testimony at the commission's two public hearings at CUNY before the release of the report, on December 5 at the Graduate Center and December 11 at Hunter School of Social Work. Speakers included both part-time and full-time employees, faculty and staff from 15 campuses and all five boroughs. Written testimony, as well as the report, can be found on the commission's website, www.hecommission.state.ny.us.

Right diagnosis, wrong prescription, says PSC

Pace of contract bargaining picks up

By CLARION STAFF

In contract bargaining in November and December, union and management negotiating teams worked to narrow the list of demands from both sides. While they remained far apart on the central issues, some progress was made in several areas.

In both the November 27 and December 14 sessions, CUNY representatives continued to say they were not prepared to put forward a financial offer. "PSC negotiators voiced the anger of faculty and staff at still receiving no financial offer," said Barbara Bowen, the union's president and chief negotiator. "It's vital that we have an economic package that restores CUNY salaries to competitive levels."

PRIORITIES

In an attempt to reduce the number of issues on the table, on November 27 both sides withdrew several previous demands. The PSC agreed to narrow down its list of proposals, concentrating on priorities announced at the October 30 mass meeting for this phase of the union's multi-contract strategy. (See pages 3 and 11 of the Nov./Dec. *Clarion* at

Still no CUNY financial offer

www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm, for details.)

In the absence of a financial offer, the PSC was unwilling to drop as many demands as management. "Union negotiators indicated our seriousness about addressing five essential areas in this contract," said Bowen, citing the following areas:

- 1) restoration of nationally competitive salaries;
- 2) stable health insurance on the New York City plan for eligible adjuncts;
- 3) health insurance for CUNY graduate employees comparable to that offered by SUNY;
- 4) paid family leave and tuition waivers at CUNY for children of faculty and staff;
- 5) job security for CUNY's most experienced adjuncts.

The union modified several of its demands, including those on health and safety, banked sick days and tuition waivers, and it withdrew some technical demands. The PSC's most significant move was to withdraw its major demand on a reduction in teaching load, deferring action on this issue for

a future round of bargaining. "This decision followed the PSC's announced strategy of concentrating on a few big-ticket economic improvements in each round of bargaining and being serious about winning them," Bowen told *Clarion*.

The PSC did, however, retain its demand to increase the amount of reassigned time for research available for mid-career and senior faculty. The union also retained demands on improving salaries, increasing the top salary step, providing equity for lower-paid titles, advancing reclassification for employees in the Higher Education Officer series (HEOs), providing paid family leave, adjunct job security and health insurance, and a number of other economic and non-economic items.

Management withdrew its demands on assigning teaching duties to HEOs, increasing the number of courses an individual adjunct can teach, reducing the amount of reassigned time available for union work, changing some notification dates in the contract, changing the grievance procedure, and making it

more difficult to file grievances over items in personnel files.

Management's most significant move was the withdrawal of some of its demands to remove from the bargaining unit certain on-campus HEOs who work in areas close to college management.

FOCUS

CUNY did not, however, withdraw any of its most sweeping demands to increase management control and restructure the University along corporate lines. It maintained its demands to take away salary steps from most full-time faculty and staff, to remove department chairs from the union and to slash HEO job security.

"While it was painful for the union to withdraw even a single demand," said Bowen, "the November 27 session made a significant advance toward being able to reach a settlement. With a narrower range of demands on the table for both sides, talks can have more focus and clarity."

Talks continued on December 14, but CUNY again made no financial offer. A range of other topics, includ-

ing provisions on health and safety issues, were discussed.

The union presented CUNY negotiators with petitions bearing more than 700 signatures demanding health insurance for graduate employees and eligible part-time faculty (see page 6). PSC negotiators invited Carl Lindskoog, an observer at the session and the chair of the Doctoral Students' Council Adjunct Project, to speak about the importance of obtaining funds from the legislature for health insurance for CUNY graduate students as a part of this contract. SUNY already provides such coverage, but CUNY is one of a handful of US universities that provide no health insurance for doctoral students and graduate employees.

As *Clarion* went to press, another session was scheduled for December 21. "The union is demanding that frequent bargaining sessions continue," said bargaining team member Mike Fabricant, "and we continue to press Chancellor Goldstein's representatives for a financial offer."

Narrowing the range of issues, but still far apart

Push for parental leave

A key issue in contract negotiations is paid parental leave – which CUNY currently does not provide. “When I tell people it doesn’t exist at CUNY, they say, ‘Are you serious? How can they not provide that?’” said Victoria Ying, assistant professor of biology at City Tech. “At other universities, or in the corporate world, they have it. I think it’s time to do something about it at CUNY.”

“At Queens College, we had a petition with more than 200 signatures and organized a meeting with the college president,” said Karen Strassler, an assistant professor of anthropology. “He was generally supportive, but took the position that he is not involved in contract negotiations. We said, ‘We’re asking you to demonstrate your support by taking it up with the chancellor, taking it up with the Council of Presidents, because this is an issue of concern not only to the faculty at large but also to department chairs. You should see this as an issue that’s important to you, not one that you’re outside of.’”

NOT AN OPTION

A letter signed by most department chairs at Queens warned that CUNY’s lack of paid parental leave

PSC perspective featured on TV news

is hurting the University’s efforts to recruit and retain new faculty. “I think the issue is coming up more today because there is a lot of new hiring at CUNY,” commented Ying,



NBC interviewed QC profs for their feature on CUNY’s lack of paid parental leave.

“and that includes more women, proportionately, than might have been the case in the past.”

While Ying said she has no immediate plans to have children, she thinks that paid parental leave is important to her future – and the future of the University. “Hopefully when I need it, we will have it,” she said. “And for CUNY, I think it just makes sense.”

Since people with young children often find it difficult to come

to meetings, Strassler said, “We’re trying to be creative about finding other ways for people to be involved. If your free time is between 11:00 pm and 1:00 am, maybe you can help do some research online.” An online discussion group has been established through which parental leave activists can stay informed; to join or find out more, send an e-mail to cunypaidleave@gmail.com.

The PSC’s organizing around parental leave received some media attention in a TV news report on WNBC-Channel 4. Strassler was one of five members interviewed for the broadcast feature, which can be viewed online at www.psc-cuny.org/psc-currents.htm.

UNPAID INSUFFICIENT

Federal law requires CUNY to allow new parents to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, but Carolina Bank Muñoz of Brooklyn College told Channel 4’s Tracie Strahan that this was not a real solution. “You could stay off [work] and not get paid,” said Bank Muñoz, “but living in New York City on a CUNY salary, that’s impossible.”

With a doctor’s note, expectant or new mothers (but not fathers) can use sick leave to get some paid time off – but PSC President Barbara Bowen pointed out in the broadcast report that this is not an option for new faculty or staff who haven’t earned much sick leave or staff who have used it up with an earlier illness or injury.

“It’s impossible for me to have more children under the current policy, as much as I don’t want my daughter to be an on-camera discussion afterwards, co-anchor Darlene Rodriguez noted that the US is among just five countries worldwide that have no law requiring any form of paid maternity leave – and that the other four are Lesotho, Liberia, Swaziland and Papua-New Guinea. “That’s outrageous,” commented Rodriguez.

An issue of concern to all – not only parents.

– PH



“The professors are protesting!” a BMCC faculty member says.

Sick of no health coverage at GC

In the first week of December, PSC activists at the Graduate Center asked their colleagues to wear a band-aid or bandage every day to call attention to the issue of health insurance for graduate employees. CUNY provides no health insurance coverage for its Graduate Teaching Fellows, Technology Fellows, Writing Fellows, or others employed on graduate assistant lines.

“CUNY is really an anomaly,” said Jennifer Gaboury, an adjunct lecturer and PhD candidate in political science. “SUNY and other major state university systems around the country almost universally provide their graduate students with health insurance, but not CUNY.”

BAND-AID BADGES

Participants put band-aids on their sweaters, foreheads and other attention-getting locations. But Kate Griffiths arrived at the Graduate Center with a band-aid already on her arm. “Earlier this morning I had a blood test,” explained Griffiths, a graduate assistant in the anthropology department. “I paid \$179 out of pocket. I real-

ly hope the test comes back negative, because I cannot afford to get sick.”

“I don’t go to the doctor,” Christa Paterline, a graduate student in anthropology, told *Clarion*. “Hopefully nothing dire happens – it’s a source of anxiety.”

The band-aids were used to draw attention to a petition calling on CUNY to provide insurance coverage for its doctoral employees and for eligible part-time faculty. “We were able to collect more than 400 signatures on the first day alone,” said Carl Lindskoog, a PhD candidate in history. “Grad students were waiting in line to sign – a rare experience for those of us who have tried to enlist support for other causes at other times.” At *Clarion* press time, the list of signatures had reached 700 and was still growing. (To sign online, go to <http://gcadvocate.org/petition/>.)

A placard on the petitioning table in the Graduate Center lobby summed it all up: “Graduate students are sick of going without health care!”

– PH



Graduate employees and their supporters lined up to sign a petition for health insurance.

BMCC h

By PETER HOGNESS

In what was billed as a “silent march,” PSC members at BMCC walked single-file through nearly every department in the college, carrying signs and handing out leaflets about the union’s contract fight. The highly visible protest drew widespread support from students, as well as faculty and staff.

“They deserve everything they can get,” said BMCC student Alton Pierce as the line of protesters came up an escalator and walked down the hall. “The State is being cheap. We need our good professors at CUNY – they don’t get paid as much as at private universities, and they should.”

CUNY’S CONCESSIONS

Held on December 12, the last day of classes, the demonstration grew to more than 50 people. With signs that said “Hands off salary steps!” and “Hands off department chairs!” the protest urged CUNY to take its demands for union concessions off the bargaining table. For example, management has called for eliminating the current system of annual salary steps, and using that money to fund discretionary raises that would be controlled by the college president.

“That’s a terrible idea,” said student José Rosario after reading a leaflet and talking with one of the protesters. “It’s



...y member overheard a student say into a cellphone.

holds silent protest

Students, members offer support

ke a revival of the Bush administration – this idea that you should have one person in control of everything.” Instead of one-person rule, Rosario said, what we need is more democracy.”

Management has also demanded that department chairs be barred from union membership – and seven department chairs and several deputy and former chairs joined the protest to express their opposition to this idea.

“I don’t believe department chairs should be taken out of the union,” said Everett Flannery, chair of the department of allied health sciences. “Chairs have been union members since before I came here in 1974, and I don’t think we should be taken out now.”

“I don’t want to be management,” said English department Chair Joyce Harte. “I love what I do, and I like the fact that I’m still part of the faculty, that I’m their representative.” Harte told *Clarion* that she is new in the job; she became chair of her department just this Fall. “It’s great to have a new chair to see this happening,” she said, gesturing at the protesters in front of her. “It’s great to know that you have this support.”

Each time the quiet “conga line” entered a new department, the protest drew curious stares – which turned in-

to smiles, questions and cries of support as soon as people saw what it was all about. “I’m behind you all the way!” exclaimed one faculty member before he was pulled back into a meeting. Others dropped what they were doing and joined the protest on the spot. The line got longer and longer as it moved from floor to floor.

Students in class craned their necks to see what was going on, while those in the hallways took leaflets, asked questions and shouted support.

PEOPLE JOINED IN

While the procession remained a quiet one, silence was not strictly observed. Marchers offered a sentence or two of explanation, invited colleagues to join them, and answered students’ questions.

The last stop was at the college’s executive suite, where President Antonio Pérez surprised some protesters by warmly welcoming them into his office. Anne Friedman, a professor at BMCC and PSC vice president for community colleges, asked Pérez to urge top CUNY administrators to drop the demands on salary steps and department chairs.

The protest “sent a strong, collective message to our administration, to CUNY

management and to our colleagues across CUNY,” Friedman told *Clarion*. “We absolutely must get management’s regressive demands off the table, and that means we have to be serious and united in this contract struggle.”

The idea for the protest came out of discussions within BMCC’s local contract campaign committee and chapter leadership. “We wanted to do something new, something with a presence inside the building,” said Rebecca Hill, assistant professor of social science. “We thought a lot about how to make sure it had the right tone.”

Telling CUNY management to remove concessions

Its success was based on careful organizing – weekly tabling, inviting department chairs to take part, and broad outreach by e-mail and telephone. “When we were tabling, we’d ask people to fill out a volunteer card and check off things that they’d be willing to do,” said Hill. “One of those things was ‘attend a demonstration,’ so we invited everyone who’d checked that box.”

For many who took part, it was their first union action at BMCC, which Hill called a good sign for the future. The same was true for student reaction, she told *Clarion*. “To see the students gaping at us openmouthed as we went by was really fun,” she said. “We stepped out of our typical role – and they supported us.”

Members oppose CUNY’s demands

Petitions, buttons spread the word

By CLARION STAFF

Close to 1,000 people attended the PSC mass meeting in late October – and as it came to an end, PSC Treasurer Mike Fabricant asked them to take the next step.

“It’s telling that, just one month after the expiration of our contract, you organized to fill this room,” Fabricant said. “Now we need to go back to our campuses and engage people in a union conversation. We need to reach out, so that the members understand far and wide that we are in a fight.”

Union members took up that challenge in November and December, finding creative ways to spread the word and get new people in motion. From a “silent march” through the halls at BMCC (see left) to “band-aid week” at the Graduate Center (see page 6), activists organized against CUNY’s concessionary demands and for the union’s agenda.

Campus organizing often urged CUNY to withdraw its demands for union concessions. Management is seeking to take department chairs out of the union, eliminate salary steps, and slash job security for Higher Education Officers. “These demands are all aimed at increasing management’s control over our working lives,” Fabricant said.

A number of chapters have held labor-management meetings, calling on their college presidents to tell 80th St. to take their concessionary demands off the table and support the PSC’s key demands.

PETITION

The union chapter at John Jay organized a petition drive to voice members’ opposition to taking department chairs out of the union. “We see this proposal as a transitional step towards appointment of chairs and making them simply part of management,” said Andrew Karmen, professor of sociology. More immediately, Karmen said, “It would leave chairs in some kind of limbo if they don’t have the protections of the union. And if they feel more vulnerable, they’re not going to be as assertive in speaking out to advocate for our interests.”

“Our lives are so intimately tied to decisions made by our department chairs, on everything from travel money to teaching assignments,” observed PSC Chapter Chair Jim Cohen. “If their independence is undermined, or if the president ultimately gets the power to appoint them, it would undermine collegial decision-making – which is at the



heart of what academia is all about.”

“Circulating the petition gives us an opportunity to talk about the negotiations – about management’s attempts to force us to accept givebacks, and how the union can protect our interests,” Karmen said. “Even people who are not enthusiastic about participating in the union feel very strongly about maintaining union protections for chairs and maintaining their elected status.”

SIGNATURES

In the first week of petitioning, Karmen told *Clarion*, “over 150 signatures were gathered quickly and easily.” Adjuncts and full-timers have both been quite interested in signing, he added. “If anyone is dependent on who is the chair of a department, it’s the adjunct. If chairs became simply a part of management, it would affect adjuncts very negatively.”

A similar petition is underway at LaGuardia –

where members wore union buttons to the college’s annual holiday party. “People were very receptive,” said Abby Schoneboom, an instructor in the social science department. “The button that says ‘Hands off our chairs!’ was a popular one, and so was the one that says ‘CUNY needs a raise!’ By the time I looked around at the area where people were mingling, it was peppered with these little blue buttons. It became kind of like kids trading baseball cards – people swapping buttons so they could get a complete set of all five.”

BUTTONS

“People were more fired up than usual,” Schoneboom said, thanks in part to a recent controversy about free speech on the LaGuardia e-mail system (see page 3). As she handed out buttons, she said, “there wasn’t a single person who brushed them away or reacted negatively.”

The contract campaign buttons have been popular items on other campuses across CUNY. (The others in the five-button set read “Hands off salary steps,” “Hands off HEOs,” and – for adjuncts – “CUNY is contingent on us.”) If you would like one or more buttons, to wear or distribute to others, contact either your chapter chair or Nick Cruz (ncruz@psc mail.org) in the PSC office.

Members display their support for PSC proposals.

CUNY & the DREAM Act

By STEPHANIE HORVATH

Students explain the need

This fall, thousands of undocumented CUNY students saw their collective dream deferred as Congress again failed to pass the DREAM Act, which would expand access to college for undocumented immigrants who came to the US as children.

But CUNY students and graduates who have been organizing support for the DREAM Act say they are not discouraged. They note that the bill received majority support in the Senate, even though it failed to win the 60 votes needed to move it forward, and they vow to try again in this legislative session.

"We are going to continue," said Marisol Ramos, a recent Hunter College graduate. "Even if the DREAM Act does not pass this year, it will be passed eventually because it's a sensible, bi-partisan solution to a broken immigration system."

EXPAND ACCESS

Ramos is a member of the New York State Youth Leadership Council (NYSYLC), affiliated with the New York Immigration Coalition, the main group organizing CUNY students in support of the bill. Almost all the core members of NYSYLC are CUNY students or alumni, Ramos told *Clarion*; they represent a total of 11 CUNY campuses.

The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act would allow conditional legal status to undocumented youth who demonstrate residency in the US for at least the past five years, arrival in the US before age 16, a high school diploma or GED, and "proof of good moral standing."

Children have little say in their parents' decision to migrate to the US, whether or not their parents have legal papers. As they near adulthood and start to plan for the future, they face a looming threat of deportation from what is often the only country they have ever really known.

ASPIRATIONS

Cristina Jimenez, a Queens College alumna and founding member of NYSYLC, said that the DREAM Act is essential to the NYSYLC's mission of encouraging immigrant youth "to graduate high school, pursue higher education and pursue their dreams in terms of career." In New York City, Jimenez told *Clarion*, CUNY is "the home for undocumented immigrant students trying to pursue higher education" – which, she said, means that passage of the DREAM Act should be a priority for the University. "It's critical that CUNY know we have those students on our campuses and [consider] how we can help them."

At CUNY, 38% of students were born outside the US mainland and 48% speak a language other than Eng-

lish as their first language. Charles Barron, chair of the City Council Committee on Higher Education, reports that an estimated 6,500 of about 80,000 immigrant students enrolled at CUNY are undocumented.

INELIGIBLE

NYSYLC members stressed the importance of maintaining CUNY's policy of charging in-state tuition rates for undocumented immigrant students who graduated high school or earned a GED in New York State. In 2001, after the attacks of 9/11, CUNY imposed out-of-state rates on students who were long-time New York residents but lacked immigration papers. The PSC and a coalition of community organizations reversed this change by winning passage of current State law.

In the same spirit of advocacy for students, a number of PSC members are working to support the DREAM Act, which the union has

endorsed. George Priestley, a political science professor at Queens College, told *Clarion* he remembers recommending scholarship programs to at least three or four bright, talented students in the past, "only to find out that these students were not eligible because they were not documented." Priestley said that "it was very painful for them to tell me" that they could not pursue the opportunity.

As someone who has taught at Queens College for 38 years, Priestley said, he knows that these students could become "great professionals – as doctors, as lawyers, as teachers, who would make contributions to this society that would even touch my life" – if given the chance.

REFRAME DEBATE

At a City Council hearing last October, Priestley said, "It is time to reframe the immigration debate to include US foreign and trade policies; labor migration in the global economy; and racial/ethnic relations in the Americas and beyond."



Kate Pfordresher

At a hearing, PSC members and CUNY students say why they back the DREAM Act.

Priestley was one of several CUNY faculty to testify at the hearing, at which PSC Secretary Arthurine DeSola spoke on the union's behalf. DeSola spoke of the union's support for maintaining in-state tuition rates for all New York youth – but noted that without the DREAM Act, undocumented immigrant students at CUNY face a heavy burden because they are ineligible for financial aid.

"As a financial aid counselor at LaGuardia Community College for

many years," DeSola said, she saw that "many [students] worked full-time [while attending CUNY] or frequently took time off from school to earn enough money to pay the next semester's tuition and fees."

While the DREAM Act stalled in the US Senate last October after advocates fell eight votes short of the 60 needed to cut off debate, it is likely to come up again in 2008. More information is available at the NYSYLC website, www.nysylc.org.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS – SPRING 2008

Chapter Officers, Delegates and Alternates to the PSC Delegate Assembly and PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Advisory Council

Term of Office: 3 Years

ELECTION SCHEDULE

1. Nominating petitions will be available upon request from chapter chairpersons or the PSC office from February 4, 2008 to March 3, 2008.
2. Properly completed nominating petitions must be received at the PSC office, 61 Broadway – Ste. 1500, New York, N.Y. 10006, by 5:00 pm, March 3, 2008.
3. Ballots will be mailed to members' home addresses on April 1, 2008.
4. Ballots in uncontested elections must be received at the PSC office by 5:00 pm on April 28, 2008.
5. Ballots in contested elections must be received at the office of the designated ballot-counting organization by 5:00 pm on April 28, 2008.
6. Ballots will be counted at 10:00 am on April 29, 2008.

OFFICERS TO BE ELECTED

In each of the Chapters listed below, voters will elect the Chapter Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, four Officers-at-Large, Delegates to the Delegate Assembly (in addition to the Chapter Chairperson, who shall automatically be the initial delegate to the Delegate Assembly) and Alternates to the Delegate Assembly according to the following listing:

Chapter	Members	Delegates	Alternates	Petition Signatures Required
Baruch	630	chair + 5	4	25
Bronx Community College	444	chair + 3	4	25
Brooklyn	738	chair + 6	5	25
City College	591	chair + 5	4	25
College Lab Technicians	524	chair + 4	4	25
CUNY Central Office	180	chair + 1	2	25
Graduate School	246	chair + 1	2	25
Hostos Community College	242	chair + 1	2	25
Hunter	863	chair + 7	5	25
John Jay	646	chair + 5	4	25
LaGuardia	624	chair + 5	4	25
Queens	951	chair + 9	5	25
York	307	chair + 2	3	25

Relevant portions of the ELECTION RULES are summarized below. The complete rules may be obtained from Barbara Gabriel at the PSC office, or viewed on the PSC website.

Eligibility for Holding Office: Members shall be permitted to hold chapter-level office who have been members in good standing of the appropriate chapter for at least one (1) year prior to the close of nominations, March 3, 2008.

Voting Eligibility: Members shall be permitted to participate in the nomination process and to vote who have been members in good standing of the appropriate chapter for at least four (4) months prior to the mailing of the ballots on April 1, 2008 (i.e., they must have joined on or before December 3, 2007).

Nominating Procedures: Nominations of an individual or of a slate *must* be by official nominating petition signed by no fewer than twenty-five (25) members of the chapter in good standing, or by no fewer than twenty-five percent (25%) of the members of the chapter in good standing, whichever is less. For *all* candidates, petitions shall include: (a) the printed name, signature, department and college of each petitioner; and (b) the printed name, signature, department and college of the nominee, as well as the office being sought by the nominee. For chapter elections, members may only sign nominating petitions of the chapter to which they belong. **A candidate's signature on a slate petition shall constitute that candidate's acceptance of the slate designation.**

Slate Regulations: A slate of candidates will be recognized if it consists of candidates for twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the officers to be elected, and if it submits, prior to the close of nominations: (a) a listing of caucus officers, including the person designated to authorize nominees for that slate; and (b) the names of the members of the caucus's 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 seven days prior to the mailing of the ballots.

Balloting: All voting must be on the official PSC ballot. Write-in votes are permitted. A write-in vote shall be valid if the intent of the voter is clear; written, printed and typed names are acceptable. A write-in candidate must meet the same eligibility requirements as a regular candidate. In chapter elections, any nominated or write-in candidate must receive at least ten votes or ten percent of the votes cast for that office, whichever is less, in order to be elected. Write-in candidates who are elected must submit written acceptance of office to the Elections Committee within ten calendar days of notification that their election has been certified.

Campaigning: Duly declared candidates may mail literature at their own expense, either directly or through the PSC mailing house (Century Direct, 30-00 47th Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101). At the request of the candidate and at cost, the PSC will provide Century Direct with

home-addressed download of the membership, or will provide candidates with college-addressed list or labels of the membership. Candidates must notify the PSC five business days in advance of the mailing to allow sufficient time for the ordering of labels. Please see Barbara Gabriel at the PSC for further information, and to file the required forms.

Election Tally: Each candidate, or a representative of the candidate, is entitled to be present at the counting of the ballots.

PSC-CUNY WELFARE FUND ADVISORY COUNCIL

At each of the colleges listed below, voters will elect the designated number of members of the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Advisory Council, in accordance with the above schedule and rules and the by-laws of the PSC/CUNY Welfare Fund:

Colleges	Council Members
Baruch	2
Bronx Community College	2
Brooklyn	2
City College	2
CUNY Central Office	1
Graduate School	1
Hostos Community College	1
Hunter	2
John Jay	2
LaGuardia	2
Queens	2
York	2

Voting Eligibility: All members in good standing of the PSC at the above colleges, who have been members in good standing for at least four (4) months, including Higher Education Officers, Registrars and College Laboratory Technicians, as well as faculty, will elect the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Advisory Council members running at their respective colleges.

Eligibility for Holding Office: PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Advisory Council members must be CUNY instructional staff members who have been members in good standing of the PSC for two (2) years prior to the close of nominations, March 3, 2008.

Nominations: Advisory Council members shall be nominated by written petition signed by no fewer than twenty-five (25) or twenty-five percent (25%) whichever is less, of the CUNY instructional staff members at each unit who are also PSC members. Slate nominations will be permitted.

DOLLARS & SENSE

Negotiating your book contract

By KEN WACHSBERGER

The most important part of negotiating a book or journalism contract is convincing yourself that you have a right to negotiate in the first place. Publishers count on the long-time practice of most writers to sign away all rights, no questions asked, in exchange for getting published. Your approach should be just the opposite: Don't ever sign a boilerplate contract. Publishers' contracts are written by publishers' attorneys for the sole benefit of publishers.

In addition, more than once I've heard a publisher tell me, "No one has ever asked for that before." Don't be intimidated by this response. Take it as a compliment. You have broken new ground for writers. We thank you. With a few exceptions, every publisher is willing to make concessions. Don't write for those that aren't. Your dignity should come first – not to mention the additional income and the control over your work that come with negotiating.

In negotiating a book or journalism contract over the phone, follow these eight steps:

STEP ONE: "Self-hypnotize." Convince yourself that you're worth more than their boilerplate contract or you'll never convince the publisher. Two lines to say with conviction (practice speaking into a mirror before calling the publisher):

"I am a professional writer."

This is especially important for academics. You're not just an academic who writes or a writer who teaches. You're an academic and a writer. They are two different, though related, careers. That's why I believe you should also belong to the National Writers Union – it doesn't conflict with belonging to your academic union, and it serves a different need.

"That seems a little low to me."

I can't emphasize enough how much that attitude has earned me. Say it slowly; then pause. Wait for the publisher to respond.

STEP TWO: Know your contract. If you join the National Writers Union (NWU) and are a book author, you can obtain a copy of *National Writers Union Guide to Book Contracts*, our bible. As a journalist, you can obtain a copy of the NWU's standard journalism contract. Go through every clause in your contract and find counterparts from the *Guide* or the standard journalism contract.

STEP THREE: Contact a book or journalism contract adviser. At the same time that you're calling the National Writers Union office to request *Guide to Book Contracts* or a standard journalism contract, you can request a book or journalism contract adviser. (Send an e-mail request to advice@nwu.org.) Being able to tap into the NWU's contract advising network is one of the most valuable benefits of National Writers Union membership.

STEP FOUR: Know your bottom line. In negotiating, you seldom get everything you want. The idea is to improve your contract as much as possible but not be so rigid that you lose a potentially workable contract. On the other hand, not every contract is workable. What are your bottom-line issues, the ones in whose defense you would walk away rather than compromise? Two to fight for in this information and electronic age are copyright and electronic rights. As a professional writer, you want the right to profitably resell your books and articles without penalty. What else matters to you? Only you know.

It's smart to ask for more.

STEP FIVE: Prepare an opening script and good notes. If you're comfortable on the phone and totally primed for negotiations, maybe an exact script isn't necessary. But remember the value of a good first impression in setting the tone of your conversation. A script is most important in helping you overcome initial fear of negotiating. Write it down beforehand and practice repeating it until it sounds natural. Only then is it time to make your call to or accept a call from the publisher. Also, don't wing it or rely on memory during the negotiations. We're writers, not rememberers. Write down the points you want to make about every clause, including the first bids, the fallback bids and the bottom-line positions.

Here's a sample phone dialogue to get the discussion moving in your direction:

Assuming you've already talked previously with the editor and you're on a first-name basis (don't ever sign a contract with someone named Sir or Ma'am), start off like this: "Hey, Les, I'm calling about my contract. I have a few concerns before I can sign it." ("Concerns" is better than "questions.")

Your surprised editor replies, "What's wrong with it?"

You say, "I want to publish with you because you're a prestigious organization. But besides prestige and a small advance [if you are so fortunate], what do I get for my hard work?"

Or, "I'm pleased that you want to publish my book, and I know that you have deadlines so I would like to get this back to you as soon as possible – but I'm a writer [not an acade-

mic who writes!]. I write words to pay my bills. You're starving me here."

Or else simply, "Would you like to go clause by clause?"

STEP SIX: Take notes during the negotiations. The act of note taking empowers you and it prepares you for the inevitable follow-up communications. Record dates of all phone correspondence, keep photocopies of all letters you send, print out all e-mail correspondence, and write down the names of everyone you talk to, including secretaries.

STEP SEVEN: Take a day to think about your conversation before making any commitments. Don't feel compelled or pressured to make a snap decision over the phone. Report back to your NWU contract adviser and ask questions. When you demand time to think, you are taking control. And, of course, the extra time allows you to psych yourself up and prepare a script if you need it.

STEP EIGHT: Be prepared to walk. Those who have no human dignity and are comfortable being stepped on can ignore this step.

But you've read this far, so you demand respect. You've already determined your bottom-line issues in step four. If the publisher can't respect those terms, go elsewhere.

Best of success in your negotiating. And when you get finished, drop me an e-mail and tell me how you did. I know your contract will be improved. I'd like to know by how much so I can share your success story with others.

Ken Wachsberger is the founder and co-chair of the National Writers Union's Academic Writers Caucus, as well as a book contract adviser specializing in academic publishing contracts. The NWU's former 2nd vice president for external organizing, he teaches at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti. He may be reached at ken@azenphonypress.com.

This article originally appeared on the National Writers Union website (www.nwu.org); reprinted with permission. The NWU was formed in 1981 to represent freelance writers in all genres, including fiction, poetry, academic writing, technical writing, screen writing and journalism. Affiliated with the UAW since 1992, the NWU's grievance officers have won members over \$1.4 million in grievance awards.

Union made



John Frisbie

Beatrice, the daughter of Annie Frisbie, a member of the Writers Guild of America, and John Frisbie, a gaffer, was born 10 days into the WGA strike. Writers are seeking to share TV & film revenue from the internet. Info on NYC-area picket lines is at www.wgaeast.org. Join strikers as they chant, "We write, they wrong!"

Reimbursement for Medicare Part B

If you are a CUNY retiree who is 65 or older, you're entitled to a full reimbursement of your Medicare Part B premium payments – more than \$1,000 per year. This important benefit was won and defended by the combined action of NYC's municipal unions, including the PSC.

Medicare Part B is the portion of Medicare that covers doctors' visits, outpatient care and other services not covered by Medicare Part A, which covers hospitalization. In most cases, the premium is deducted automatically from your Social Security check.

Reimbursement is not automatic, but you only have to sign up for it once. You can do so if you are retired and will be 65 or older during calendar year 2008. You can also be reimbursed for premiums paid for your eligible spouse or registered domestic partner. Once you are signed up, you'll receive your refund check each summer.

SIGN UP ONCE

To sign up to receive your refund, send a copy of your Medicare card to: NYC Health

Benefits Program, 40 Rector Street, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10006. (Be sure to send a copy, not the original.) If your spouse or domestic partner is eligible for coverage, send a copy of his or her Medicare card along with your name and Social Security number to the same address. For more information, contact the New York City Office of Labor Relations at (212) 513-0470.

For more details, see page 9 of the Jan. 2005 *Clarion*, at www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm.

– DR & PH

UNION SOLIDARITY

Why the teachers' union in Oaxaca matters to us

By **NANCY ROMER**
Brooklyn College

In 1976, when CUNY and other public services in New York City were decimated by the "NYC Fiscal Crisis," it felt like a force of nature. With hindsight, it's clear that the gutting of public services in NYC was one of the first salvos in a political war that has spread around the world. In many ways, New York in the mid-70s was a test case.

Over the next three decades, conservative forces created a new economic and political reality of fewer public services, fewer labor and environmental rights, and enormous increases in corporate profits. While politicians like Reagan and Thatcher sold it to the public as a program of "smaller government," at heart it was driven by something else. As David Harvey of the CUNY Graduate Center says, it was a wealth creation program for the rich.

In his book title, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Harvey uses the term familiar around the world for this attack on the public sphere. Under the banner of "liberalizing" taxes, trade and regulation, the neo-liberals argue that the unrestricted private market can provide the solution to almost any problem. In political discussions in Europe or Latin America, "neo-liberalism" is a term as common today as "religious right" is in the United States. Yet here in the US, which has done more to develop and promote neo-liberalism than any other country, the term is much less known.

WREAKING HAVOC

Neo-liberalism was invented in the North and then imposed on the global South. In the US and other developed countries, the aggressive campaign to roll back public services has hurt the public employees who provide these services as well as the public that uses them, while private-sector workers have seen their incomes fall in the wake of deregulation and pro-corporate trade deals like NAFTA. In poor and developing countries, "liberalized" agreements on trade and investment have gone hand-in-hand with loans from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) – which demanded deep cuts in public spending.

In nations both rich and poor, cuts in public services thus became the norm. Public education, in particular, has taken it on the chin. In the US, the attack on NYC's and CUNY's budgets was followed by California's Proposition 13, whose



The PSC picketed the Mexican consulate in solidarity with striking Oaxaca teachers in June 2006. The AFT and NYSUT have also expressed support.

strict tax reductions led to wave after wave of K-12 school budget cuts. In the years that followed, funding for all levels of public education suffered across the country. Once a climate of scarcity was established, privatization schemes and efforts to bust teacher unions were advanced as "solutions" to the budget crunch.

Reduced funding for public universities has meant a growing gap in salaries between public and private institutions; full-time faculty replaced with underpaid and insecure adjuncts; threats to tenure; and ever-increasing tuition and admissions requirements. Instead of campaigning for a restoration of public funds, top administrators have increasingly sought to model universities after corporations. They have argued that if academia imitates the practices of the business world, it will make public universities more efficient and allow them to "do more with less."

"Neo-liberalism" may be an unfamiliar term. But as union members, and as faculty and staff at a public university serving the great people of New York City, we have been its targets. We need to be aware of this to engage in the battle before us. We need to know what we are up against and where we can find allies.

Neo-liberal policies have wreaked particular havoc in Latin America. The misery of the average Latin American increased dramatically as IMF-imposed "structural adjustments" shrank

public services and shredded what little safety net existed. New rules on trade and investment have destroyed small-scale agriculture, decreased living standards, and sparked an upsurge in international migration. Latin America was promised an expansion of industrial jobs – but from Argentina to Mexico, neo-liberal policies have sparked massive layoffs and failed to lift workers' incomes.

INTERTWINED FATES

For the poor majority, the promised gains never appeared, and the people of Latin America are now challenging what has become known as the "Washington Consensus." These challenges are taking many different forms, but have some common threads: they are pro-worker, pro-public services and pro-national independence.

Teachers in Latin America have played a key, often catalyzing, role in these social movements. Teachers have historically been leaders in Latin America, particularly in traditionally poor and working-class communities. They have knowledge, they take their students and communities to heart, and they are often connected to larger systems of thought and organization. So it is no surprise that they see both the larger picture of the policies that need to change and take steps to protect themselves and the communities

they serve. From Chile to Ecuador, from Brazil to Bolivia, teacher unions have been part of the backbone of movements for progressive change.

The teachers' union in Oaxaca, Mexico, is a perfect and valiant example of this phenomenon. Oaxaca's teachers see their own fate as completely intertwined with that of their students and communities, and they have strongly opposed privatization of public education. When Oaxaqueño teachers went out on strike in May 2006, demanding higher salaries and free books and uniforms for their desperately poor students, they were joined by parents and other community members. When state police violently attacked their peaceful protests, it sparked a broad democratic uprising – a movement to defend the teachers and demand a new state government. Poor and indigenous women led nonviolent takeovers of state TV and radio stations, changing Oaxaca's media landscape.

This movement has involved thousands of people and hundreds of organizations in democratic decision-making. Despite subsequent repression, the experience has touched a chord among those who've been part of it. This has been especially true among indigenous Oaxaqueños, whose traditions value consensus and local discussion, but who for centuries were told to shut up while others rule. The forms of organization created by this social movement speak to the possibility of real grassroots democracy that builds a community in which people care for each other – the precious dreams that have been squeezed out of our lives.

INSPIRATION

Teachers in Oaxaca are not buying the neo-liberal agenda; they are defying it. They know that their profession and their communities cannot continue within it. They are determined to create new ways to teach, learn and live that are creative and egalitarian.

International support for the striking teachers in Oaxaca has been an important part of the political puzzle. Teacher unions from all over the world have protested on their behalf: we in the US have visited Mexican consulates in our cities and held rallies to demand freedom for imprisoned union activists. The PSC, NYSUT and AFT have all adopted strong resolutions in support of Oaxaca's teach-

ers. And our voice is important – when I attended a support meeting in Mexico City for the striking teachers in Oaxaca and read our resolution to activists there, they stood up and cheered. They need our support and we need to help them win.

If the new social movements in Latin America are defeated, it will reinforce the idea that, as Thatcher claimed, "there is no alternative" to neo-liberalism. But if they succeed, if we see a "new deal" emerge in Latin America, it will open up new political possibilities for us in the US as well. And just as Washington's conservative think tanks looked to privatization under Thatcher and Pinochet for policy ideas and inspiration, we can learn a lot from teachers in Oaxaca and how they've made their union strong.

SOLIDARITY

It is easy to see the Oaxaqueños as different from us. We have so much more materially than they do and we are much less engaged. But we too have had our victories against the neo-liberal agenda. Beginning with massive demonstrations at the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in 1999, we in the United States have also begun to say, "Enough!" US unions recently helped defeat the privatization of Social Security, which was supposed to be the centerpiece of Bush's second term. Increasing anger over the effects of NAFTA on US industrial jobs has put politicians who support such neo-liberal trade and investment deals on the defensive.

The continued devastation created by government policy in New Orleans – the ultimate in "fend for yourself" neo-liberalism – has been a wake-up call for many Americans. The strong public reaction to federal failure post-Katrina did lasting damage to Bush's popularity. But two years after Katrina, so much of New Orleans – especially neighborhoods that were poor and black – still lies in ruins. New Orleans today is an illustration of our deep national legacy of racism and shows how far we have to go.

We need a government that serves the needs of its people and supports the dignity of us all. We certainly don't have that now. We can have it in the future, but only if we begin to work for it now. And we need to see the similarities and the need for solidarity across our borders so that decency can prevail.

The right wing has promoted a pro-corporate agenda on an international scale, imposing neo-liberal policies from the top down. We need the same kind of global effort, from the bottom up.

Unions have long known that solidarity is our main source of strength – and in the age of a global economy, we have to carry out mutual aid across national borders if we want our society to truly serve the interests and needs of our people. The old union adage, "United we stand, divided we fall," has a new meaning: like capital, we must cross national borders to forge effective alliances for our shared future.

Allying for a shared future

LESSONS FROM THE CAMPUSES

HEOs re-energize chapter

By JEAN WEISMAN

Chair, Higher Education Officer Chapter

In the summer of 2006, Arthurine DeSola, a Higher Education Officer (HEO) and the newly elected secretary of the PSC, set out on a "listening campaign," visiting all 18 CUNY campuses to listen to the concerns of HEO-series employees. The union's listening campaign, which continued that Fall, thus began with a focus on HEO concerns.

DeSola was joined by HEO members of the Executive Council and HEO chapter leaders, including myself as chapter chair. We heard members describe continually working more than 35 hours per week, a lack of promotions, an increased workload, a lack of respect by the administration, and many other issues.

As we continued our union work we thought about all that we had heard, and the following summer the union planned a major HEO organizing effort. The Contract Organizing Committee worked with PSC staff organizers and chapter leaders to organize meetings on all the campuses. In the process, we saw a renewal of grassroots energy that has transformed the HEO chapter's style of organizing.

DECIDING TOGETHER

In the past, we had organized chapter meetings with speeches by PSC representatives, defended HEOs with grievances, and encouraged HEOs to participate in union activities. However, it was always difficult to keep up with members' needs, since the HEO chapter represents 2,200 people at 18 different campuses. The work depended on a few people and we always felt like we weren't doing enough. At the same time, we often felt overwhelmed by all we had to do.

In the summer of 2007, the union assigned four union organizers and a new organizing coordinator to work with HEOs. PSC Treasurer Mike Fabricant's background in community and labor organizing was particularly useful as we planned our effort. We divided the campuses amongst four HEO PSC executive committee members and the chapter chair. Each of us was responsible for a specific geographic area. The organizers called key contacts, set up meetings, and collected signatures and e-mail addresses for the future. At each meeting, the local campus activists played a critical role in bringing people together.

As we went to each campus, we didn't approach these meetings with the attitude that we were coming to simply give people information or to tell them what to do. Our



HEOs at LaGuardia Community College talk about their concerns.

goal was to find out their concerns, discuss what they needed, and decide together what we could do about it.

We wanted to get to know people we weren't already in contact with and learn who wanted to be an organizer. People were happy to see us, and it turned out that many people at the meetings were willing to be organizers. We worked to spread out the responsibility, so that one person would write an e-mail, another would make some phone calls, and no one would feel overburdened.

Soon we began to see results. People began organizing their own meetings, trying to solve their own problems without necessarily calling chapter leaders first. Someone might call me to say, "We had a meeting and these are the four questions people came up with – what do you think about this one?" Members took responsibility for informing us about the issues on their campuses and took responsibility for resolving them.

STRONGER NETWORKS

By the end of the summer, we had organizing committees on most of the campuses. Some organized monthly meetings, and most established e-mail lists. HEOs on some campuses publish their own newsletters. Members' activity is more developed at some colleges than at others – but across CUNY, more HEOs are acting as

organizers and building stronger union networks.

More and more, people realize that the union is not an insurance company or a law firm where you call up and expect someone else to solve your problems for you. We all are the union, and the union is stronger than the sum of its parts. The PSC has been around for more than 35 years, and we can merge the experience of the officers and the staff with the needs of the members today.

VICTORIES

Around the same time as the summer organizing campaign, we published "The HEO Handbook," explaining union members' basic rights – and we won two important victories. Nine HEO-series employees at LaGuardia Community College, with the help of union staff and officers, went to court to sue for overtime and back pay. They won a settlement awarding each of them \$2,500 in back pay and an agreement by the college to pay time-and-a-half for overtime beyond 40 hours per week. Next they won an arbitration award that affirmed the right to compensatory time for all HEO-series employees who work more than 35 hours per week.

Those victories helped us, because people could see that when you take a stand, when you get involved, it's worth it.

Social networks are also important in or-

ganizing. We tried to work with social networks where they already existed, and help establish them where they did not.

Many campuses have independent HEO associations. Several were formed after re-trenchment was declared in 1992 and a disproportionate number of HEOs were terminated. These associations became voices for HEOs on their campuses. They organized educational activities, held meetings with their college president and took on professional development activities (such as Outward Bound), charity work and social events. We were able to hook up with these associations and various social networks to work together to build the chapter.

BUILDING SUPPORT

But we also found many isolated HEOs, who enjoyed the opportunity to meet with other staff colleagues and union representatives. In some departments, like the bursar's office, financial aid, admissions, or the registrar, HEOs experience a lot of camaraderie because a group of people work together – and work very hard together around registration. In other departments, however, HEOs can be very isolated – they may be the only one in their office, and their work may not often bring them in contact with other staff. These people especially appreciate union outreach. They have important issues, but it may be that nobody has ever spoken with them before about the union.

Once summer was over, we kept on organizing. In September and October, we organized luncheons with five to ten members at each campus, encouraging people to set up a system of representatives from each department, building or floor. Over the summer, we had asked all HEOs to sign the petition in support of the PSC's contract demands. In the Fall, we used our expanded networks to encourage people to attend the mass meeting about the contract on October 30 at Cooper Union, and we were impressed with the large turnout of HEOs there.

In the meantime, CUNY management wants to slash our hard-won job security, so it can treat us as disposable employees and wants to take away our salary steps and offer "merit" pay. (You can read about management's demands on the PSC website, at www.psc-cuny.org/ContractUpdate07Apr124.htm.)

COLLECTIVE ACTION

In response, we are asking *all* PSC members to wear the buttons "Hands Off the HEOs." At the suggestion of a member who came to one of our luncheon meetings this Fall, we are asking all HEOs to write letters to Chancellor Goldstein to express their opposition to the administration's demands and their support for a reasonable workload, promotions, and respect and dignity for HEOs.

Development of our work in a collective way has been liberating for many of us. We are no longer just a few people who are worried about getting all the work of the HEO chapter done – we are tackling that work with the full resources of the union, leadership, staff and rank-and-file. It is now a strong and vital part of the entire work of the union.

Grassroots effort by Higher Education Officers

Clarion JANUARY 2008

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A PSC PROPOSAL

Building the 21st-Century CUNY

Below is the PSC's proposal to the New York State Commission on Higher Education, which released its preliminary report on December 17 (see page 5). "Our proposal is for a bold and unapologetic reinvestment of public money in CUNY," PSC President Barbara Bowen told the commission in testimony on December 2. "Decades of damage cannot be undone by business-as-usual marginal increases, and losses on the magnitude of those suffered by CUNY cannot be recouped by imposing higher costs on our students."

To reverse the three decades of underfunding of the City University of New York and provide the resources necessary to make CUNY one of the nation's great universities, substantial new investments are needed over the next five years to:

Add new full-time faculty lines sufficient to bring CUNY's full-time faculty workforce to 11,000, which is the number of full-time faculty employed by CUNY before State and City disinvestment.

This Fall, CUNY enrolled 232,114 students – it's the largest student body at any time in the last 35 years. Yet, the University now has only 6,541 full-time faculty, including librarians and counselors, or 4,512 less than in 1972. To put it another way, CUNY has approximately 1 full-time faculty member for every 35 students enrolled today, compared to 1 for every 21 students enrolled in 1972.

The PSC strongly supports CUNY's hiring target of 2,300 net new full-time faculty over the next four years so that 70% of the instructional workload can be covered by full-time faculty. This will not completely close the gap – especially if enrollments rise more than expected – but it will be a major step forward.

Restore faculty compensation and benefits to national competitiveness so that CUNY is able to recruit and retain top-quality faculty who want to make their careers at CUNY. Salaries for full-time faculty and

staff at CUNY have lost between 27% and 51% of their value since 1971. At a time when the cost of living in New York City is making it increasingly difficult for middle-class people to stay and raise a family here, CUNY is finding it harder to retain faculty at all levels. Though the University is still able to recruit young professors because of its reputation as an exciting place to work, the University is on the verge of becoming non-competitive nationally because of depressed salaries and substandard working conditions.

Restoring the competitiveness of faculty compensation and benefits is critical if CUNY is to contribute to the broad research and development agenda as well as train large numbers of new public school teachers – to name but two specific goals envisioned in the governor's charge to the commission. Restoration of salaries and conditions to competitive levels is also essential if CUNY is to replace the generation of senior faculty now nearing retirement.

Provide equitable pay and benefits to part-time faculty, recognizing that CUNY has relied on adjunct staff to make up for the severe lack of resources. CUNY hires approximately 10,000 part-time faculty and staff each semester to be able to provide classroom teaching and other vital services to students. Many adjunct faculty have served continuously on a semester-by-semester, contingent basis for a decade or longer. These adjuncts

deserve better pay, benefits and job security in recognition of the vital role they have played through CUNY's lean years. Even if full-time faculty lines are added, CUNY can still anticipate relying on a core of adjuncts. Instruction for CUNY students is compromised if these positions fail to offer even a living wage.

Restore a teaching load that allows time for students and time for research. Perhaps the single most important factor in a student's education is time with individual faculty members. Class size and teaching loads at CUNY make such time almost impossible. The excessive teaching load and class size at CUNY also directly inhibit research; arguably no factor has more influence on the ability of CUNY faculty to compete for research funding.

Support doctoral students by granting health insurance and tuition waivers – provisions that are standard at almost every other PhD-granting institution. Investing in graduate student employees improves CUNY's standing nationally and its ability to attract the best candidates for senior faculty positions. It is essential if CUNY is to increase its capacity for important research. An investment in graduate assistants is also an investment in quality teaching, which will benefit generations of undergraduates to come.

Create conditions of academic employment that bring CUNY up to the standard of peer institutions nationally and regionally. These include, for example, paid family leave; tu-

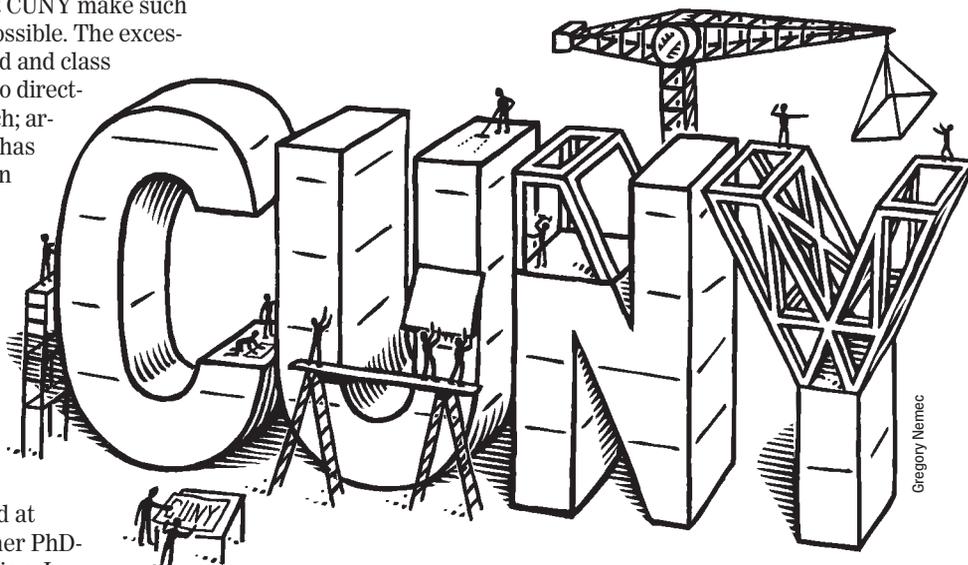
ition waivers for family members; and start-up investments in laboratory space, equipment and other resources to support research.

Introduce a pilot CUNY Mentors Fund with grants of time and material support to faculty and staff who work intensively with individual and small groups of students on a project basis. There is no better way to improve student retention and graduation rates than individual attention from their professors. The proposed Mentors Fund would provide opportunities to develop

standards of one for every 1,000-1,500 students.

Fully fund CUNY's capital budget to make up for decades of deferred maintenance, in addition to providing new science and technology facilities, libraries, classrooms and office space. Replenish library collections, many of which were severely compromised during the 1980s and 1990s. A whole generation of scholarship is missing from CUNY libraries.

To make CUNY a great university requires providing the resources



new service learning programs, take students to professional conferences, organize support groups for minority and immigrant students, and create new internships and field placements.

Increase funding for student services, especially psychological counseling. Outside the College Discovery and SEEK programs, CUNY community colleges have only one licensed mental health counselor for every 2,236 students on average; senior colleges and graduate programs have just one for every 5,096. These levels of service fall far short of the nationally-recognized

to all the University to compete in national and regional academic labor markets. The level of reinvestment needed cannot be achieved by marginal investments because the gap is just too great. The PSC feels strongly that it is unfair to require current students, whose tuition and fees already cover approximately 38% of CUNY's total operating budget (up from a 19% share in 1990), to make up this long-term disinvestment. We call on the commission to be as bold as the founders of CUNY in 1847 and to recommend a return to full funding for CUNY. Anything else shortchanges New York's students and New York's future.

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15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Find the 'lost' faculty

How many of your department's candidates have turned down an offer and how many of your colleagues have left CUNY because of our uncompetitive salaries, onerous workloads, inadequate research support, or missing paid parental leave, among benefit or other concerns? Take a few minutes to fill out the form at www.psc-cuny.org/LostFaculty.

htm and help the PSC document CUNY's "lost" faculty and staff.

By filling out the form, you'll help the union show that improvements in salaries and working conditions are integral to fixing the University's recruitment and retention problem. Help us alert students, allies, and political and civic leaders to the crisis CUNY faces as a result of its uncompetitive salaries!