

Clarion

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MAY-JUNE 2007

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE



Library faculty victory

Presidents can't block a professional leave.

PAGE 2



Lisa Quiñones

HEOs WIN SETTLEMENT

TIME = MONEY

From left, LaGuardia Financial Aid Counselor Ganga Persaud, PSC Secretary Arthurine DeSola, HEO Chapter Chair Jean Weisman, LaGuardia Enrollment Specialist Melanie Abreu (center), HEO Chapter Vice Chair Iris DeLutro, and

LaGuardia Financial Aid Counselor Robert Bandelt celebrate a settlement for unpaid overtime going back three years. Now, LaGuardia must pay time-and-a-half when the plaintiffs work more than 40 hours, as required by law. **PAGES 3,11**

BARGAINING CUNY unveils demands

CUNY management wants many changes that would leave faculty and staff stretched thinner and less able to teach and serve students. **PAGES 6-7, 10, 12**

THE WAR 6th CUNY student killed in Iraq

Brian Ritzberg Jr. went into the army after a year at Queensborough CC. He planned to return to college when he got out, but in April he died in Iraq. **PAGE 4**

NYC BUDGET Lobbying for CUNY funding

PSC members and students gathered to press New York City for full funding for CUNY and to support the PSC's call for more faculty counselors. **PAGES 5, 10**



ADJUNCTS Reappointment, unemployment

Part-time faculty should have received their letters of reappointment by now. With a letter or not, adjuncts may be eligible for unemployment benefits. **PAGE 9**

Library faculty win on leave

By PETER HOGNESS

College presidents cannot prevent CUNY library faculty from taking professional leave, according to a ruling issued April 11.

"When I heard we had won, it felt great!" said Wambui Mbugwa, a professor in the library department at BMCC who filed the grievance. "And not just for me. When people told me, 'Congratulations, you won the case,' I said no – I did not win the case. We won the case, because it's the CUNY library faculty who stand to gain."

"With the [libraries'] 12-month schedule, we have so little time to do research as it is," Mbugwa said. Unlike other faculty members, library faculty receive a maximum of 30 days of annual leave, and professional leave can provide them with additional time for scholarship.

Mbugwa had requested four weeks of professional reassignment leave for a July 2005 research project. In February 2005, her request was approved by the personnel and budget committees (P&B) of both her department and the college as a whole – which is all that the union contract requires.

UNAMBIGUOUS

But in June 2005, the college's lawyer argued that the president's approval was also needed, even if this was not spelled out in the con-

Prez can't nix professional leave



Wambui Mbugwa will conduct historical research in Kenya.

tract – and BMCC President Antonio Pérez refused to give his OK. Mbugwa, who has worked at BMCC since 1970, filed a grievance and the issue went to arbitration.

Management argued that the president's approval was required for any and all actions by a college-wide P&B, regardless of the contract's exact language. It cited two policy statements by the CUNY Board of Trustees from the 1970s – for example, a 1971 statement that "the president has the affirmative

responsibility for passing on all faculty personnel actions...."

But arbitrator Ralph Berger concluded that "the policies cited by the employer cannot take precedence over clear and unambiguous contract language." In essence, Berger wrote, "the employer is asking the arbitrator to read into the contract something that is not there."

The contract "clearly sets forth an approval procedure to be followed when librarians request reassignment leave," Berger concluded. "It

does not require approval by the president." Berger ordered that Mbugwa's leave be granted in the summer of 2008.

"This was a matter of principle," Mbugwa said. "The union worked hard to get this provision in the contract, and we would expect that it be followed. But always some campuses will try to bend the contract to whatever they would prefer."

"I was determined to go on with [the grievance], no matter what," she added. "What I had in the back of my mind was the junior faculty member, who might be more hesitant to fight. As a senior, tenured faculty member, there was clearly nothing they could do to me, so I felt I had a responsibility."

"I could not have done it without all the help from the union," Mbugwa added, particularly thanking Howard Prince, her grievance counselor and Nathaniel Charny, director of legal affairs. "When we get to the other side of a bridge, we can't forget all the people who helped us get there. Thank goodness we do have a union that will stand up for a member."

ORAL HISTORY

When she takes her leave next year, Mbugwa plans to interview women in Kenya who were involved in the anti-colonial struggle. This oral history project is part of her

"lifelong scholarship on African women," Charny said and is an example of how the contract can protect faculty members' ability to carry out research. "This part of the contract can keep scholarship from being stifled by arbitrary decisions."

RESEARCH

Libraries have often formed a natural home for research in oral history, from the UC Berkeley library's Regional Oral History Office, to the Library of Congress's well-known oral histories with survivors of slavery, witnesses to the Civil War and folk musicians.

"Oral history cannot be 100% accurate, of course, because it is someone's memory," Mbugwa said. "But we cannot disregard it. Often the written record contains errors as well – in the library, I often come across a written source that is simply wrong. There are many ways of knowing something firsthand, and oral history is one that is important."

For Mbugwa's project, time is of the essence. "The women I want to interview are getting old," she said. "Some have died, and it is important to get their view. In the books written on the Mau Mau movement that took place in Kenya in the 1950s, the focus has been on the men – and the women's voices also need to be heard."

So little time for research, librarian notes.



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.

Community college contract concerns

● I am writing to the *Clarion* because I want to express my enthusiasm about the meeting held at the union for full-time community college faculty to discuss the workload issues they face. The meeting was set up as a dialogue between this group and the union's bargaining team.

Activists from all six community colleges attended. People shared prepared and impromptu testimony about their experiences as individuals as well as observations about institutional shifts that have contributed to overwork. Many expressed an interest in fighting for a drop in the community college teaching load from 27 to 24 hours. The most inspiring part of this meeting for me was to be in a room

full of activists who shared similar concerns.

We talked about pulling together interested community college faculty and staff for other meetings and gatherings in order to continue what we started that night. So, watch out for the first PSC/CUNY community college social/organizing hour sometime this summer!

Karen Miller
LaGuardia Community College

Degrees of compensation

● According to the current contract there are only pay increases for [adjuncts who] obtain a PhD and not other advanced degrees. There are some instructors who only have a bachelor's degree and there are other instructors who have several master's degrees in their field and other fields related to their discipline.

Perhaps part-timers with more than one master's or PhD should be

compensated more for their additional investment in their education.

Josh Dentz
BMCC

Adjunct pay

● In the March 2007 *Clarion*, President Barbara Bowen responded to a letter, "Adjuncts and Union Action," from Andrea Siegel of Hunter who asked the PSC to do better for adjuncts. President Bowen noted that thousands of adjuncts received more than a 20% raise when they started being paid for office hours.

Now, how can extra work be called a raise? Adjuncts who teach at least six hours a week are paid for the hour at the normal teaching rate. Even though the extra dollars help a little, more work is not a raise. A real raise would be equal pay for equal work.

The highest hourly pay an adjunct lecturer gets now is \$68.54. In the new contract this pay rose from \$63.18 hourly to the present \$68.54.

Deducting \$63.18 from \$68.54, the difference is \$5.36. This amounts to less than 10%.

A more than 20% raise would be something like \$75.00 an hour, and hopefully more for adjuncts. Is President Bowen's reply to Ms. Siegel a naïve attempt to make the situation look better than it is?

Rocco Serini
BMCC

PSC President Barbara Bowen responds: *Thank you for your letter. You're absolutely right – the only real solution for adjuncts, and the University as a whole, is equal pay for equal work. It is a continuing disgrace that CUNY refuses to provide that. When I see the subway ads that say, "Look who's teaching at CUNY," I can't help thinking, "But look who's doing most of the teaching at CUNY – and being underpaid to do it."*

Since I became PSC president, equal pay for equal work has been

the union's position. In both of the previous rounds of bargaining, we argued strenuously that part-time lecturers' salaries should be a pro-rated version of full-time lecturers' salaries and that in exchange, part-timers should be expected to do a pro-rated share of committee and advising work. Faced with absolute management resistance to this proposal, we pressed instead for the paid professional/office hour. As a result, hundreds and hundreds of adjuncts saw their paychecks rise by over 20%. Most were already doing – unpaid – the work for which they are now paid. That's why it had the effect for them of a raise.

Having taken incremental steps toward improving conditions for adjuncts in the last two rounds of bargaining, the union is reasserting the demand for basic equity in the current contract talks. It will take substantial political clout to win; I invite you to join the work.

Write to Clarion

Letters must be less than 200 words and may be edited.

HEOs win OT payout

By DANIA RAJENDRA

On May 1, nine LaGuardia employees in Higher Education Officer-series titles signed an important piece of paper – a settlement with the college granting them back pay for overtime worked beyond 40 hours. At least as important, the settlement recognizes that they are entitled to such overtime pay in the future.

Plaintiff Robert Bandelt encouraged other HEOs across CUNY to call the union if they are assigned to work more than 35 hours without pay. “There is a sense of change going through this University,” Bandelt said, “because the people who work at this school are no longer going to accept business as usual.”

Seven Assistants to HEO and two HEO Assistants filed a federal lawsuit last summer, charging that LaGuardia Community College owed them money for time they were assigned to work beyond the contractually required 35 hours. The PSC worked closely with the plaintiffs and provided legal counsel for the suit.

IT'S THE LAW

Under the lawsuit settlement, LaGuardia management: 1) agreed to pay the plaintiffs double the amount of back wages they were due for time-and-a-half for work over 40 hours; 2) reimbursed the plaintiff's attorney fees; and 3) agreed that in the future they will comply with the law and pay plaintiffs time-and-a-half after 40 hours of work in a week. As a result of the financial settlement, each plaintiff will receive \$2,500.

The two sides agreed to defer the decision on payment for work over 35 and up to 40 hours to an arbitration the PSC has filed on the issue. The position of LaGuardia and CUNY management in the arbitration is that, under the contract, HEOs are not owed any compensation for assigned work over 35 hours. In the case, the union argued that HEOs should be paid straight-time or pro-rated hourly pay based on their annual salary. The arbitrator's decision is expected this summer.

“While this settlement applies to only these nine plaintiffs,” said PSC First Vice President Steve London, “this trail-blazing victory makes clear that CUNY colleges will have to pay for past violations of federal law, and the union will see to it that the law is enforced so that management has a clear financial incentive to obey the law in the future.”

Bandelt explained that PSC members in LaGuardia's Enrollment Services Department decided to take action after seeing some discrepancies in treatment. In August 2005, Bandelt saw an adver-

Speaking up about long hours at LaGuardia



From left, Robert Bandelt, Melanie Abreu, Sutonia Boykin, Cheryl McKenzie and Ganga Persaud signed their settlement papers at the PSC on May 1.

tisement for an enrollment specialist with a job description similar to his own as a financial counselor. The ad, Bandelt told *Clarion*, specified that overtime pay was offered. “So, the question was raised, why was that position offered overtime, but we weren't?”

The ad came shortly after another incident that had angered PSC members in the department. “A number of my colleagues worked very late during registration that Thursday before Labor Day. They worked until 11 pm,” Bandelt said. “Management had promised them cabs home, but by 11 management had all gone home, and there was nobody there to approve the expense. They were unceremoniously dumped onto the streets in Long Island City at 11:00 at night,” Bandelt recalled.

In September, Bandelt's colleagues met with Human Resources Director Raymond Carozza and LaGuardia Vice President Peter Grant Jordan, who told the HEOs that LaGuardia did not pay overtime, period. And, moreover, that the hours between 35 and 40 were not paid at all. That meeting spurred Bandelt and his colleagues to call the union office.

GRIEVANCE

The PSC-CUNY contract specifies a 35-hour work week for HEO-series employees (Assistant to HEO, HEO Assistant, HEO Associate and Higher Education Officer – together referred to simply as “HEOs”). The union decided on a two-pronged strategy: 1) file a grievance for the contractual violation of forcing these plaintiffs to work beyond the required 35 hours; and 2) file a lawsuit under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

“The only way to make management respect the 35-hour week is to force them to do so through the grievance procedure or the courts,” said PSC grievance counselor Donna Gill, herself a HEO at Hunter College. Gill worked with the LaGuardia plaintiffs as they prepared their grievance. “It's hard for us,” she told *Clarion*, “because CUNY takes advantage of our professional commitment to our students. But if no one speaks out, our hours become endless.”

Like many other HEOs, those at LaGuardia say they routinely work more than 35 hours. During registration periods, they often work more than 40 hours – and thanks to changes in the process, registration periods now take place approximately seven out of 12 months a year.

MANDATORY

Overtime, HEOs say, is common and mandatory.

“I don't volunteer overtime; I'm required to do overtime,” Financial Counselor Ganga Persaud said in his deposition. He explained how it worked: “You are given a schedule. If you are unlucky enough to be working that day when we have a huge crowd and the work ends later, you have no choice.” His colleague Melanie Abreu testified that “We're there until we see the last student.”

“In our line of work, it's difficult,” said Cheryl McKenzie, who works in Enrollment Services. “When we're advising a student, we don't want to keep our eyes on the clock. But we should be compensated when we work late.”

The Fair Labor Standards Act requires employers to pay time-and-a-half for hours worked after 40. Many types of workers are exempt – farmworkers, some sales workers, executives and others.

CUNY management now presumes Assistants to HEO to be covered under the time-and-a-half provision of the FLSA. For other HEO-series titles, CUNY says, its assessment of which ones are covered and which ones exempt depends on a case-by-case analysis of job responsibilities, including the level of independent exercise of discretion and judgment.

SETTLEMENT

All nine plaintiffs in the lawsuit were entitled to overtime according to CUNY's classifications, and CUNY clearly violated the law – sometimes quite flagrantly. Persaud, Bandelt and other HEOs testified that supervisors doctored their timesheets, erasing the notes about overtime hours. Their colleagues who joined the lawsuit – Abreu, McKenzie, Anthony Sclafani, Renee Daniels, Sutonia Boykin, Stephen Greene and Abram Bolouvi – testified to similar practices and other problems with overtime.

At a May 1 event at the PSC, five of the LaGuardia plaintiffs signed the settlement, celebrated the victory and affirmed their resolve to continue the fight. Union leaders were on hand to offer congratulations, thanks and support for the future.

“This is really what a union means,” said London, “that the people on the front line are not alone.”

“The plaintiffs took such an incredible lead in confronting overwork – and work without pay – in the University,” said LaGuardia Chapter Chair Lorraine Cohen.

HEO Chapter Chair Jean Weisman noted that the issue of out-of-control work hours among HEOs – which leads to burnout and problems for family life – has been a priority issue for the PSC for the last

Back pay and the law

Under CUNY's interpretation of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), employees in an Assistant to HEO title are presumed eligible to be paid time-and-a-half for hours worked over 40 hours a week. Some in other HEO-series titles may also be covered, says CUNY, but this depends on a case-by-case analysis of their specific jobs.

All covered employees should be paid time-and-a-half going forward, but the legal procedures for collecting back pay for overtime depend on where you are employed.

If you are employed by a community college, you may sue for up to three years of back pay. For instance, if you worked 45 hours per week for two weeks in each of the last three years, and your hourly rate works out to \$40, you would be entitled to \$1,800 in back pay. If you are employed by a senior college, the Graduate Center, or the CUNY Central Office, you can only go back six months.

In the absence of record keeping by the employer, documentation of hours worked is required. The documentation required at the community colleges, however, is less stringent than that required in the case of a lawsuit filed at a senior college. This distinction is due to the fact that CUNY is both a City and a State institution, and the law treats City and State employees differently.

If there are weeks when you are assigned to work more than either 35 or 40 hours as described above, or this has happened in the past, call Cynthia Campos at the PSC office immediately at (212) 354-1252. – PH

several years. “This has taken a lot of hard work and persistence from union leadership, staff and members alike,” she said. “Our efforts are finally starting to bear fruit.”

FIGHT CONTINUES

The union says similar problems likely exist on other campuses. As news of the settlement spread, members in HEO-series titles on other campuses began calling, PSC Coordinator of Contract Enforcement Cynthia Campos told *Clarion*. (HEO-series employees who have been assigned overtime without compensation should call Campos at (212) 354-1252. The PSC is interested in pursuing other cases, so those affected should call immediately.)

Even in the midst of the celebration, HEO leaders – and plaintiffs – kept their focus on the rest of the fight.

“The real argument is about hours 36 to 40,” Abreu told *Clarion*. “That's the bulk of the hours we all work beyond what the contract requires.”

Around the chapters

Sinkholes and war spur action

By DANIA RAJENDRA

BRONX: GIANT HOLE SPARKS SAFETY CHECK

The weekend of April 14, the rain was tremendous. And by Tuesday, April 17, so was the hole in front of the Havemeyer Lab building on the Bronx Community College campus. In a short time, the sinkhole had grown to an alarming size, large enough to hold a small car.

Later that afternoon, the fire department evacuated the building, concerned about its structural integrity. "The fire department went into the building about 4:30," recalled Ray Hubener, coordinator of the college's CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP), which is based in Havemeyer Lab. "They ordered us all out of the building and we had to cancel classes that night."

Fortunately, it was only closed for a single night. With the area around the hole roped off and the building's

safety confirmed, it was open for business the next day.

The union had responded quickly to the gaping hole, and union representatives were glad to find management wanted to move fast as well.

The chapter's health and safety committee co-chair, Virginia Mishkin, told *Clarion* that she met with CLIP faculty the morning of April 17 and called the administration immediately after. They were working on the situation, she told *Clarion*: "The whole area was sectioned off," said Mishkin and the college called both the fire department and Department of Buildings.

COOPERATION

The area has remained cordoned off, the building's main entrance cannot be used, and the hole continues to grow, members say. But they agree that the college administration has been extremely responsive and is working to resolve the problem. "It's the fastest BCC has ever moved," Hubener said.

Mishkin, too, is pleased with the administration's actions. "There's been a tremendous amount of cooperation," she said. "They respond immediately whenever I call."

PSC Chapter Chair Marianne Pita noted that is a change – one she attributes to the chapter's concentrated organizing around health and safety. She told *Clarion* the chapter is pushing for a joint management-union health and safety committee, which would include other unions on campus.

LOCAL CAMPUS ACTION AGAINST IRAQ WAR

PSC members and their students organized antiwar activities on several CUNY campuses this semester.

At Queens College, some 80 people joined a May 7 protest. The event included chants, poetry, speeches and political theatre. The latter included three students dressed Guantánamo-style in hoods and orange jumpsuits, which pro-

voked strong reactions from passing classmates.

Student organizer Ana Giraldo noted that military recruiters have already targeted her high-school-age sister. "A 16-year-old shouldn't be thinking, 'Oh, will I need to go and kill because I cannot pay for college?' We need more financial aid, more scholarships, more opportunities to go to school."

PSC member Bob Cowen said that in addition to this month's demonstration, members and students have worked together against military recruiting on campus. "We have reached an agreement with the administration that we, the PSC Faculty/Student AntiWar Committee is to be notified when the military comes on campus to recruit and we are then provided a nearby table to antirecruit," he told *Clarion*. "This seems to work well and the military have very few students to talk to when we are there."

This semester PSC activists worked on antiwar events at sever-

al other campuses, including John Jay, College of Staten Island, and Bronx Community College. "We had an event with Gold Star Families Speak Out and Iraq Vets Against the War that was very powerful with very good turn-out," said Suzan Moss, professor of physical education and wellness at BCC. A similar event at CSI sparked planning for a campus protest that was covered in the *Staten Island Advance*.

Antiwar actions seen across CUNY

PSC Peace and Justice Committee Chair Lenny Dick told *Clarion* that most CUNY campuses are home to a persistent, antiwar, anti-military recruitment sentiment. "Well over 1,000 signatures to the US Labor Against the War petition have been collected CUNY-wide," Dick said. (You can see the petition at www.psc-cuny.org.) "It's significant that we have more people doing antiwar activity. It's bringing people into the union," he said.

QCC student killed in Iraq

By PETER HOGNESS & JENNIFER MANLEY

It would have been his 25th birthday celebration. But instead, he lay lifeless in a coffin that looked too big for his frame. To the right, equally still, a soldier stood at attention for the duration of a two-hour memorial service for Pfc. Brian Ritzberg Jr. – the sixth CUNY student to die in Iraq.

Ritzberg's body was flown home last week from Kirkuk, Iraq. His wife Clara flew in from her military post at Fort Riley, Kansas for the April 11 service at the Morisco Funeral Home in Astoria, not far from the apartment they once shared and the Queensbridge Houses where Ritzberg grew up.

The sounds of the service included spirituals sung a cappella, an intermittent organ and the halting, heartfelt words of the soldier's young relatives – all with the rumbling of the N train outside.

AFTER ONE MONTH

Ritzberg had only been in Iraq a month when a suicide bomber drove a truck loaded with explosives into his compound on April 2, and he was fatally wounded by shrapnel.

Elijah Mack, Ritzberg's grandfather, helped raise him. "He was very lovable and a very likable person," Mack said. "I just hope now he'll rest in peace."

Brian Ritzberg's relatives described him as "sweet" and

Sixth CUNY student to die in conflict

"brave." He grew up in Long Island City and studied computer and electronics repair at Thomas Edison High School in Jamaica, where he was on the track team. "To me family is the most important thing life has to offer," he wrote on his MySpace page last year. "When the world turns its back on you, they will always be there."

Ritzberg attended Queensborough Community College in Fall 2002 and Spring 2003. It was not always easy for him – but he liked it, his sister-in-law, Katherine Cordero, told *Clarion*. "He really enjoyed his year in college," she said, "He liked what he was studying."

Ritzberg joined the Army Reserve, where he met Cordero's sister, Clara, in 2004. "They started going out, and shortly after that they got married," Katherine recalled. They had decided to go on active duty together: their wedding was in March 2005, and by June they were both stationed at Fort Riley. Brian Ritzberg became an MP, assigned to the 977th Military Police Company in the Army's 1st Infantry Division.

At first he was making plans for a military career, his father, Brian Ritzberg Sr., told the *New York Post*. "But after being in Iraq, he wanted out," the elder Ritzberg said.



Soldiers and spouses Brian and Clara Ritzberg, before he was sent to Iraq.

"Brian did not want to go to war," Katherine Cordero told *Clarion*. "He wanted a family with the woman he loved, my sister." Once his military service was over, he planned to return to college and then go on to work as a computer technician or a New York police officer. "He was very proud and wanted to continue his education," Cordero said. "He wanted a degree and a better future."

STUDENT

"It's so sad that Brian won't be able to take his second chance at college," said Beth Counihan, an assistant professor of English at Queensborough who taught his composition class. He started as a strong student, she said: "We would have loved to have welcomed him back."



At the memorial service for Brian Ritzberg, his widow Clara is comforted by her sister, Katherine Cordero.

At Morisco Funeral Home, antiwar sentiments were threaded through the memorial service, and Ritzberg's relatives seem to be of one mind about the occupation of Iraq. His mother, Margaret Fields, expressed her opinion forcefully to NY1, just after her son was killed. "It's unnecessary. It's senseless. It's killing people; it's killing soldiers," she said. "Things are not getting better. Twenty-five get killed, they send 50 more. It's just wiping the soldiers out. It's not improving anything, just more loss for families."

"I don't believe in this war," Katherine Cordero told *Clarion*. George Bush should enlist and put his own life at risk, she said. "This is all a set-up by our corrupt president – so many innocent people dying for no reason."

Her sister, Clara Ritzberg, has created a MySpace memorial to her fallen husband, "dedicated to those

who miss Brian." The slideshow on her web page shows Brian looking serious, joking around, on duty in Iraq, relaxing at home.

A SOLDIER'S VIEW

Below that she's posted a YouTube video, titled *Fallen Heroes*. "Don't make another family feel the pain of losing a loved one," it says at the start. "Bring our troops home." What follows are photos of one grieving family after another, for three long minutes. It's hard to watch.

Clara Ritzberg is still in the army, on active duty. She last spoke to Brian the day after their wedding anniversary – one day before he was killed.

Jennifer Manley is an assistant editor of the Queens Chronicle, where her report on Brian Ritzberg's memorial was first published in April. Peter Hogness is editor of Clarion.

'CUNY at the Council'

By DANIA RAJENDRA

PSC members and their students lobbied City Council members for more money for CUNY at the union's "Day of Action" on May 9.

Dubbed "CUNY at the Council," the day began with a reception hosted by Charles Barron, who chairs the City Council Committee on Higher Education. At the reception, PSC activists talked with Barron and other City Council members about more support for CUNY. Six more Council members joined the press conference later in the day. "You get over there and show your strength!" Council Member Robert Jackson told the gathered PSC members. He led the group in a round of chanting "PSC! PSC! PSC!" and the pumped-up PSC contingent moved to the steps of City Hall.

They brought 15,000 postcards with them, which were displayed for the press and then delivered to Speaker Christine Quinn. The union's message? With a record-setting City budget surplus and enrollment at a 31-year high, cutting CUNY is simply unconscionable.

\$4 BILLION SURPLUS

"This city is rich," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "There is a \$4 billion surplus, yet the mayor has called for \$35 million in cuts from CUNY." Despite some improvements in recent years, Bowen noted, City funding is still 17% lower in real dollars than it was in 1990. The PSC has asked the Council to reject Bloomberg's cuts,

Lobbying local lawmakers

fully fund CUNY's budget request and approve an additional \$6 million for new faculty counselors and a student mentoring program (see below).

Bloomberg's proposed cuts go in exactly the wrong direction, Barron told reporters. "If there is \$100 million for Ratner and the Nets, and \$105 million for the Mets, what are

"The City is rich." Yet the mayor has called for cuts to CUNY.

you doing cutting CUNY?" the councilman asked.

"This should not be an issue every year," agreed Council Member Jimmy Vacca. "I'm here to support restorations and enhancements. I'm here to say, help the kids at CUNY, and also help the adults at CUNY who are going back to school." Vacca himself enrolled at Queens College in 1999 "when I was 40-something," he said, and earned a master's degree. "You are never too old to go back to school," he said.

While many other Council members appeared at the press conference to show their support, it was CUNY students and faculty who took center stage.

"What's at stake here are not abstract numbers on a page, but real people – people like me," said BMCC student Jesús Urbaz. "CUNY is the only way I can afford a college education and have a chance at a secure future."

"Most of my classes are in rooms too small for the number of students," Urbaz noted. "For our teachers, it means they have less

time for each individual student. For me and my fellow students, it means we can't always get the attention and advice we need."

OVERCROWDED

PSC members from BMCC concurred. "I came today because at BMCC there is so much we could do with more money," said Saavik Ford, who teaches astronomy. "We have severe space problems – in my office, we are five full-time, tenure-track faculty in a tiny space." Adjunct faculty have it even worse, with as many as 60 assigned to a single room. Ford summed up her feelings in four words: "Bloomberg's cuts are insane!"

Shane Correia, a BMCC student who was formerly homeless, wrote a statement that was read by one of his professors, Ron Hayduk. "The cuts the mayor wants to make in CUNY's funding request are...dangerous and economically self-destructive." (See page 10 for more.)

Students from York also turned out to back the PSC's call for more City support. "For students, the desire for an education is there," student Stacy Ann Brown told *Clarion*. "The government should be encouraging that." Brown works four days a week in a nursing home in order to qualify for health benefits, while pursuing her BA in social work and occupational therapy.

Also on May 9, members and students went together in small groups to lobby several City Council members for their support. The law re-



PSC First Vice President Steve London (center) delivered some of the 15,000 postcards calling for fair funding for CUNY to City Council Speaker Christine Quinn.

quires final action on the City budget by June 30.

PUSH CONTINUES

Bloomberg's proposed cuts include basic operating funds and the Council's "Safety Net" financial aid program, among others. The PSC is pressing the City Council to fully fund CUNY's budget request, plus allocate an additional \$6.3 million to fund the union's counseling and mentoring plan.

"CUNY at the Council" was the culmination of weeks of campus-based organizing that kicked off with CUNY Week in late March. That's

how the 15,000 postcards were signed and collected – members tabled in campus hallways, circulated postcards at union meetings, and discussed the issue with students and colleagues. To boost the lobbying effort, the PSC ran a television ad. After May 9, the union's Delegate Assembly members called Council members' offices in a second wave of pressure for stronger City support.

The postcard, the TV ad, plus photos and statements from "CUNY at the Council" can all be seen at www.psc-cuny.org. PSC leaders urged members to keep the pressure on in June.

Increase faculty counselors at CUNY

Below is an excerpt from the PSC's proposal to the New York City Council for expanding the number of faculty counselors at CUNY community colleges. (New York City provides the main financial support to the community colleges, while CUNY's senior colleges are funded mainly by the State.)

The Professional Staff Congress/CUNY proposes an additional \$6.3 million in funding to the City University of New York for the purpose of adding urgently-needed psychological counseling faculty at the six community colleges....

ACUTE SHORTAGE

For several years, the PSC has focused on the need for additional faculty counselors at the community colleges....The PSC's initial proposal...called for a general increase in full-time faculty at the community colleges, with a special focus on diversity among the faculty and the need for more faculty counselors.

The events of April 16 at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State Uni-

A PSC proposal to NYC

versity moved us to change our proposal. While the causes of the massacre at Virginia Tech are multiple and complex, one clear issue that emerged was the importance of psychological and mental health counseling. The long-standing shortage of faculty counselors at CUNY suddenly appeared more urgent.

We are asking [for \$4.3 million] for an additional 51 full-time faculty counselors at the CUNY community colleges, and [\$2 million] for a program to allow closer mentoring of individual students by full-time faculty in other academic disciplines.

A history of budget cuts from both the City and the State has left CUNY short of full-time faculty in every area. The shortage has been particularly acute among faculty counselors. At the CUNY community colleges, the ratio [of faculty counselors to students] is 1 to 1,628.

That ratio is unacceptable on any college campus; it is especially unacceptable at CUNY. If any students in the country should be provided with adequate counseling faculty, it is

CUNY students. Statistically among the lowest-income college students in the nation, CUNY students face pressures unknown at many academic institutions. They hold down jobs, they support families, they contend every day with racism and poverty, they translate and mediate for parents, siblings and community. Among all CUNY students, 72% are people of color, 48% work at least 20 hours a week; 23% support children; 48% speak a native language other than English.

We in the Professional Staff Congress, who are privileged to teach and learn from these students, are aware of their remarkable resilience. It is a tribute to their com-

A need newly visible after the Virginia Tech tragedy

ulty counselors...would offer a blueprint of a responsible way for a community to answer some of the questions raised for every college by Virginia Tech.

A critical element of the PSC initiative is the proposal that a substantial number of the 51 new faculty counselors hired be people of color. Diversity within CUNY is not just a goal; it is a statutory requirement, codified in the 1979 New York State Education Law.

Arguably, there is no academic discipline in which diversity is more important than counseling. Many students feel more comfortable speaking to a counselor if the counselor is a person of a similar race, gender, sexual orientation or age. If this proposal is funded, CUNY colleges could be encouraged to draw on the outstanding pool of diverse men and women who enter into the counseling field.

On behalf of the 20,000 faculty and professional staff we represent – and of the 400,000 students we serve – we submit that CUNY cannot wait to address its crisis of counseling faculty. The City University must be given the funds to support this need. Not to do so, when the need is both longstanding and newly urgent, could be dangerously short-sighted.



Michelle Calderon

At the department chairs' meeting: PSC bargaining team member Bob Cermele and Mary Alice Browne, chair, Dept. of Radiologic Technology & Medical Imaging.

Management wants ma

By PETER HOGNESS

PSC-CUNY contract negotiations continued on April 20 and May 4, with another session scheduled just as *Clarion* went to press at the end of May. Perhaps the biggest news to emerge was management's list of contract demands, which CUNY gave to the union on April 20.

"CUNY to PSC: Do More, Get Less." That's how the headline in *The Chief*, the civil service weekly newspaper, summed it up. The union bargaining team warned that a number of the proposals appear to "call for a weak-

No financial offer from CUNY

ening of some of [our] most basic rights and professional conditions."

CLEAR CONCERNS

Management negotiators have not yet begun the formal presentation of their demands, and union negotiators pledged to "listen with an open mind...and bargain in good faith." But they were clearly concerned by what they had seen so far. (See statement at bottom. Full text of management proposals is at

www.psc-cuny.org/Contract/CUNY_Demands.pdf.)

A dozen rank-and-file PSC members attended the April 20 session as observers. "The union has to think carefully about these demands and respond with substance and evidence," said one observer, Felipe Pimentel, an assistant professor of sociology at Hostos. "But some are clearly unacceptable."

For example, Pimentel noted, the proposal to eliminate step in-

Department chairs meet at PSC

Department chairs from across CUNY met for the second time at the union office, to discuss the PSC contract and their work as chairs on May 11. Much of this session focused on key issues in the new round of contract negotiations.

"I looked at the management demands," said Andrew Beveridge, chair of Queens College's sociology department. "If possible, my view of them may be even more negative than the union's!" Beveridge said that management's proposed changes would make the work of department chairs harder. "Buried in there is post-tenure review and more – it's crazy. The combination of salary increases under the discretion of the president

and lump-sum payments, in particular, is not something that would work."

At the meeting, Beveridge told other chairs that department chairs at Queens College had signed a letter in support of paid family leave, a change that has been proposed by the PSC. Addressed to CUNY's chancellor, trustees, college presidents and also the PSC, the letter says, "While we realize that family leave is part of collective bargaining, we urge management to work together with labor to resolve this crucial matter.... It is imperative that the University design a modern family leave policy." Beveridge encouraged department

Recruitment, retention, research time all pressing concerns

chairs at other colleges to consider statements of their own.

Anne Friedman, PSC vice president for community colleges, told *Clarion* that chairs "repeatedly cited difficulties in recruitment and retention," due to such issues as salary, health benefits, parental leave and workload. "These problems become particularly acute when departments seek to improve racial and ethnic diversity in their ranks," Friedman noted.

CONSTANTLY BUSY

Department chairs must contend with and help manage all the time pressures on faculty members in their department, said Mary Alice Browne, chair of radiologic technology and medical imaging at City

Tech. But chairs themselves urgently need more support, she said.

"Chairs don't have the time we need to do scholarly research work, because we're constantly busy," she told *Clarion*. "We get released time, but the demands of the job are a lot more than the time we get – it's very difficult. We need a more realistic amount of released time, and it should be written into the union contract."

Management is demanding that department chairs be removed from the bargaining unit, a change that Frederick DeNaples, chair of the English department at Bronx Community College, does not support. "The demand that chairs be out of the union is very troubling," he said. "It's clear that 80th Street takes it

very seriously, because they keep asking about it."

"Department chairs should be elected by the faculty and be members of the faculty," DeNaples said. "We have a strong tradition of shared governance at CUNY, and part of what makes that work is that chairs are part of the faculty and not the administration."

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DeNaples noted that a similar meeting with chairs was held last Fall to explain provisions in the new contract and said he found both sessions helpful. "I hope the union will continue this sort of meeting, whenever we have a new contract or enter bargaining," he said.

Friedman, a member of the PSC Executive Council, said that this is exactly what the union's leadership has in mind – and more. To provide ongoing input on issues in negotiations, an advisory committee of department chairs was formed at the

Management's demands will weaken CUNY

Below is an excerpt from the PSC bargaining team's statement on management's contract demands, released on April 24. Full text of the CUNY management proposals is at www.psc-cuny.org/Contract/CUNY-Demands.pdf.

The PSC bargaining team will listen with an open mind to management's presentation of their demands, and we will bargain in good faith. We will seek to identify common ground where it exists. But the list of demands delivered by management on Friday does not signal an interest in reaching a timely settlement. It includes no financial offer, and yet seeks major concessions. The list includes many demands rejected roundly in years past by the PSC membership. But it goes beyond merely recycling past demands. It includes new demands that, taken together with a series of demands rejected in the past, amount to an attempt to restructure the University.

Rather than presenting a vision that moves CUNY forward – as the

union's demands do – management's demands call for a weakening of some of the basic rights and professional conditions that make a university a university. They would restructure the University in the following ways:

1. Weaken tenure: With this set of demands, CUNY goes on record trying to further diminish the percentage of faculty who are protected by tenure and academic freedom. CUNY proposes to allow unlimited expansion of the Distinguished Lecturer position, which is currently capped in number and limited to an appointment of five years, so it potentially becomes a whole new tier of full-time faculty, serving at will. CUNY also proposes to increase the permitted teaching loads of part-timers, creating a position with a full-time teaching load at part-time wages and without the protection of tenure.

2. Weaken job security for HEOs: Professional staff in the higher educa-

tion officer series are currently eligible to earn job security after eight years under Article 13.3.b. of the contract. CUNY management is again trying to erode this provision and make it easier to fire long-time professional staff.

3. Replace salary steps with discretionary pay and micro-managing of individual salaries by college president: The management demands include no offer of an across-the-board salary increase. Instead, for almost all full-time titles, they propose eliminating regular salary increments and replacing them with a minimum/maximum salary range and a system of lump-sum awards. College presidents would decide individual salary increases, if any, within the range. Adjuncts and CLTs are not included in the system for lump-sum "performance" awards.

4. Weaken academic freedom: the expansion of contingent, part-time and non-tenure-track positions

would mean that only a minority of CUNY courses would be taught by people who have the essential protection of academic freedom. Academic freedom at the University as a whole is undermined if most of the courses are taught without freedom from the fear of reprisals and dismissal based on academic content.

5. Increase contingent and part-time positions: While the best universities across the country are trying to decrease their reliance on under-paid part-time and contingent faculty, CUNY is seeking to add contingent positions. Management wants to create a new, "fractional" HEO position; to increase the limit on the number of courses taught by part-timers; to expand the untenured Distinguished Lecturer position; and to permit HEOs to teach courses "for no additional compensation." These demands, if accepted, would mean a university with

more contingent workers and fewer courses taught by instructors with tenure, academic freedom, and the expectation of research and scholarship.

6. Weaken professional autonomy and faculty governance: The first demand on CUNY's list is to remove department chairs from the union. That would mean that department chairs, who have always at CUNY been colleagues, would become management – answerable to 80th Street, not to the faculty in their departments. This demand has been consistently rejected by the membership of the PSC.

7. Weaken the union: Management's demands include a direct attack on the union: they attempt to diminish the membership and effectiveness of the PSC. The demands call for the removal not only of department chairs, but of certain other em-

Fewer protections for us, more discretion for them.

ny concessions

creases would leave decisions about raises in the hands of college presidents. "Members are concerned that this would open the door to favoritism and arbitrary decisions," he said. "It would create mistrust and undermine collegiality in the colleges and weaken the capacity of the union to generate solidarity."

PROMOTIONS

At the May 4 session, the PSC presented arguments in support of demands for improvements for HEOs, CLTs and retirees.

A focus of the union's presentation was the severe difficulty HEOs face in moving up to a higher title when their increased job responsibilities justify a change, since HEO-series titles are not promotional. "The lack of mobility in the HEO series creates enormous problems of morale and attrition," said Bowen.

With CUNY employees under constant pressure to "do more with less," she said, many HEOs have seen a significant expansion of their responsibilities. "Many are in fact doing a higher-level job,"

Bowen said, "but they have so few routes to get that recognized."

Anselma Rodriguez, coordinator of graduate studies at Brooklyn College, was an observer at the May 4 talks. "Barbara Bowen, Iris DeLutro and Steve London really presented our positions strongly and without wavering," she said. "I'm pleased that the union seems to have an awareness of what we want – which is first of all an opportunity for advancement. It's time for the University to give us recognition as the professionals that we are."

On CLT issues, the PSC proposed creation of a new title to recognize the increase in technological knowledge that has been required of CLTs, particularly those in more se-

nior positions. "As CUNY boasts about how tech-savvy it's become, with systems running 24/7, it's CLTs and HEOs who are doing the work to make that possible," Bowen said. "CLTs have gone back to school on their own, in order to be able to do

Do more with less, PSC members are told.

what CUNY is asking of them – and there's little recognition of that."

For retirees, the union is asking that they have continued access to the electronic resources – e-mail, online journals, databases, etc. – that they used at CUNY before they retired. "Many retirees are active scholars," Bowen noted, "and their continuing research enhances CUNY's reputation. Their work deserves this kind of support."

After witnessing the two sides facing off in bargaining, many rank-and-file observers decided to sign up as members of the union's "My Five" organizing network. (More information at www.psc-cuny.org/myfivesignup.htm.) And an online petition gave members a way to voice their opposition to management's demands and their support for the union's agenda – more than 900 members signed the statement in the first two days. (See "15-Minute Activist," page 12, for details.)

Meanwhile PSC activists from CUNY's community colleges met on May 10 to discuss their working conditions and how to change them for the better through the contract fight. Another meeting is being planned for the summer; the PSC website will have details. (See p 2.)

Paid parental leave a necessity

By DAN NORTH
CCNY Center for Worker Education

The PSC's contract demand for a semester of paid parental leave (CUNY presently has none) is about the big issues involved in building a great university.

It's about recruitment and retention. It's about matching benefits provided by competing institutions. It's about respect for the needs of CUNY's growing number of younger faculty and staff.

But perhaps most important, like many union demands, paid parental leave is about the daily lives of people trying to juggle jobs, health and family responsibilities.

SICK AND TIRED

Robin Rogers-Dillon, associate professor of sociology at Queens College, had her son Dashiell in July 2003. Because she and her husband needed her salary and health insurance, she went back to work that September.

"I got very sick with bronchitis in October and ended up on strong antibiotics that were passed on to my nursing baby," said Rogers-Dillon. "I'm sure my illness was because of the severe exhaustion I suffered. It was immensely difficult. This shouldn't happen to anyone. No woman should have to choose between sacrificing her health or her family's economic security to have a child."

UNTENABLE

Karen Strassler, assistant professor in anthropology, continued working at Queens until a week before her due date in December 2005. Her pregnancy and the birth of her son Leo were relatively easy, she says, but the part that bothered her came when she took an unpaid leave for the following semester.

"I was in a privileged position because of my husband's income, even though it was a stretch economically. But as a principle, it's completely untenable that someone has to have another source of income to get by. I

Younger faculty want change

was appalled that CUNY is so out of step with other institutions. My department chair and the people around me were very supportive, but there's a disconnect with CUNY-wide policy. I feel we're at the mercy of a heartless bureaucracy that's not concerned about our well-being."

Julie George, assistant professor of political science at Queens College, worked this Spring virtually up to her due date of May 31. Anticipating that she and her husband would be unable to get by on just his salary, she decided she had to work the entire semester.

"It's starting to wear me down," George said in early May. "It's a rough commute, driving to Queens from our home in New Jersey across New York City traffic. In class, I don't have as much energy – I don't move around the classroom like I generally do. And my students

eye me with trepidation, wondering if I'll go into labor right in front of them. CUNY needs to pay attention to the needs of the people they're hiring."

My students wonder if will I go into labor in class.

PSC members are beginning to organize local support for winning paid parental leave in the next contract. At Queens College, John Jay and elsewhere, PSC chapters are circulating petitions and asking to meet with their college president to discuss the issue.

The frustration voiced by Rogers-Dillon, Strassler and George is widely shared, said Queens PSC Chapter Chair Jonathan Buchsbaum, and the petition has been a way to make that visible. About 30 union members met with Queens College President James Muyskens on May 21 and urged him to lobby other campus presidents and

CUNY Chancellor Goldstein for paid parental leave.

At John Jay, 20 PSC members met on May 10 to exchange their concerns and organize for future action. The meeting was jointly sponsored by the union, the college's Gender Study Committee and the John Jay Faculty Senate. Although the college has hired more than 100 new full-time faculty members in the last couple of years, retention is threatened by lack of parent-friendly conditions, Chapter Chair Jim Cohen told *Clarion*. Cohen reported that at least five members told him they would have attended the May 10 meeting, but couldn't because they didn't have child care – another issue that the union is pressing in contract talks.

ARCHAIC

"CUNY's current policy is archaic," Buchsbaum told *Clarion*. "Paid parental leave is an idea whose time has come." Today CUNY offers only unpaid parental or childcare leave. An expectant or new mother can use up paid sick leave only with a doctor's note and is obviously not an option for fathers at all. Using CUNY's unpaid childcare leave means employees don't have their regular health insurance coverage, requiring them to pay COBRA as much as \$14,000 a year to maintain it – which many junior faculty cannot afford. (For more information, see www.psc-cuny.org/Clarion/ParentalLeave.pdf.)

Buchsbaum said that in his own department, media studies, half his co-workers, most of them younger faculty frustrated by CUNY's lack of competitive pay and benefits, are looking for jobs elsewhere. Many are surprised to learn that CUNY has no paid parental leave – and may discover this exactly when they need it. "We've put in so much time and effort to build an excellent department, and now people are thinking of fleeing," said Buchsbaum. "If CUNY really wants to strive for excellence, one thing it must do is offer excellent benefits for parents."



Michelle Calderin

Dept. chairs met at the PSC on May 11.

May 11 meeting. "As academic leaders," Friedman said, "department chairs are in a unique position to inform the PSC's demands."

– PH

employees; for the loss of some union income; and for a sharp reduction in the number of hours of reassigned time the union can purchase from CUNY to fight for our members' rights and implement the contract.

8. Weaken due process: CUNY calls for several changes in the grievance procedure that would restrict access to due process for faculty and staff.

The CUNY of these demands is a university where tenure and academic freedom are increasingly rare, where more and more teaching is performed by employees without tenure or job security, where the corps of research faculty is diminished, where professional staff have less of the job protection they need to serve our students well, where due process rights are weakened, where faculty governance is undermined, where the exploitative system of part-time labor is expanded, and where the urgent need for a transformation in salaries eroded by years of deficit budgets is ignored.

CUNY faculty and staff have made clear that this is not the CUNY we want.



Lisa Quifones

Assistant professor Karen Strassler with her son Leo.

CALENDAR

THURSDAY, MAY 31: 5:30 pm / "My Five" training. Get involved in the campaign for a good contract. At the PSC office, 61 Broadway, 15th floor. Photo ID required to enter the building. Contact Mary Ann Carlese at (212) 354-1252 or mcarlese@pscmail.org.

FRIDAY JUNE 1: 4:00 – 6:00 pm / Part-time Personnel Committee meeting, at the PSC office. Contact Marcia Newfield at (212) 354-1252 or mnewfield@pscmail.org.

SATURDAY, JUNE 9: 12 noon / Queens College geologist Steve Pekar speaks on the history of climate change, the first talk in the CUNY summer lecture series on Governor's Island. A full list and ferry information is at www.govisland.com.

MONDAY, JUNE 11: 10:30 am / Retirees Chapter Luncheon at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Breakfast at 10:30, business meeting at 11:30, luncheon at 12:30. \$20; RSVP by June 4 to Linda Slifkin at lslifkin@pscmail.org or (212) 354-1252.

TUESDAY, JUNE 12: 9 am – 4 pm / PSC Pre-Retirement Conference. See page 9. RSVPs required in advance to Linda Slifkin at lslifkin@pscmail.org or (212) 354-1252.

TUESDAY, JUNE 12: 6:00 pm / Women's Committee meeting, at the PSC office. Contact Debra Bergen at (212) 354-1252 or dbergen@pscmail.org.

THURSDAY, JUNE 14: 6:00 pm / Solidarity Committee meeting at the PSC office. Contact Jim Perlstein at (212) 354-1252 or jperlstein@bassmeadow.com.

Incumbents win chapter races

Most elections uncontested

By PETER HOGNESS

This year's PSC union elections saw local leadership and union delegates elected by half of the union's chapters. Three of those elections were contested, and the incumbents won in all three cases: chapter chairs Jean Weisman of the HEO Chapter, Rina Yarmish of Kingsborough and Jane Young of BMCC were all re-elected by wide margins.

In the HEO chapter, the union's largest, the New Caucus slate led by Weisman faced off against the HEOs Now slate led by Frederick Brodzinski. Weisman got 429 votes to Brodzinski's 254, according to a count of the mail ballot conducted by the independent American Arbitration Association (AAA).

VOTE COUNT

The AAA reported that it mailed out exactly 1700 ballots, and received 709 by the April 26 deadline. (Three ballots were void or completely blank, and not all voters cast a vote for chapter chair.) The vote count was conducted at AAA headquarters on April 27.

In the race at Kingsborough Community College, Yarmish and her Your Faculty slate defeated an Action Caucus / New Caucus slate led by Patrick Lloyd as its candidate for chapter chair. Yarmish received 244 votes to Lloyd's 97.

AAA mailed out 584 ballots to PSC members at Kingsborough, of which 356 ballots were returned with two of those void or blank.

At BMCC, incumbent Chapter Chair Jane Young won 276 votes, while challenger Nkechi Agwu got 122. Young's New Caucus candidates defeated Agwu's BMCC Faculty Caucus slate for all chapter positions.

Of the 415 ballots mailed out in the BMCC election, 356 were sent back to AAA with none void or blank.

Uncontested elections for local office and union delegate were held at the Bronx Educational Opportunity Center, College of Staten Island, Hunter Campus Schools, Lehman, Medgar Evers, City Tech, Queensborough Community College, the Research Foundation Central Office and the Retirees' Chapter. Votes in those races were counted at the PSC office, also on April 27.

In the election at the Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center, Chapter Chair Amy Nicholas was re-elected – but the result might still qualify as an upset. Another candidate for chapter chair, Clifton Murock, was the only one listed on the ballot, but Nicholas prevailed in a write-in campaign by a result of 12 votes to 7.

Complete results for all races can be found on the PSC website at www.psc-cuny.org/April06Election.htm.



From left, candidates Rina Yarmish, Jean Weisman, Jack Arnow, Elections Committee member Marilyn Neimark & NC observer Andy McInerney at the vote count.

The results were certified by the PSC Elections Committee on May 4, with its report to be received by the Delegate Assembly at the end of May. A full list of all those elected will be published in *Clarion's* summer issue.

SEPARATE BALLOTS

Because of an error on the original ballot for Welfare Fund Advisory Board positions at Kingsborough Community College, the election for those two positions was conducted separately in May, with mail ballots due by May 21 and the vote count by AAA on May 22.

PSC union elections run on a three-year cycle: last year, members voted to fill union-wide positions (the president and other principal officers, Executive Council members, etc.), and in that contest Yarmish ran unsuccessfully for president on the CUNY Alliance slate against incumbent Barbara Bowen, whose New Caucus slate won all union-wide positions. This year, local elections were held in half of the PSC's chapters, and next year the other half will follow suit. Union-wide elections will next be held in the Spring of 2009.

PSC participates in NYSUT RA

By GREG DUNKEL
Central Office

Shaping a statewide agenda

The resolutions the PSC brought to the 2007 Representative Assembly of New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) reflected members' concerns for a decent workplace, a secure retirement and social justice.

Why do local unions like the PSC affiliate with a statewide body like NYSUT? One delegate from the United Federation of Teachers put it this way during floor discussion of a PSC-sponsored resolution on health care and a secure retirement: "What we say and pass here is carefully considered by our bosses and the politicians in the State of New York."

587,000 EDUCATORS

The reason for this attitude is that the PSC and other member unions of NYSUT, combined, represent 587,000 teachers and professionals in New York, working at all levels of education from pre-K to post-grad.

"It is important to have a voice for public higher education at such a large table," said Arthurine DeSola, PSC secretary. And that voice has

been effective, DeSola said; the PSC's activism has influenced NYSUT's positions and sparked increased attention to higher education, from the State budget to issues of academic freedom. Today NYSUT's Board of Directors includes three leaders of the PSC: President Barbara Bowen, First Vice President Steve London and Vice President for Cross-Campus Units Iris DeLutro.

At this year's Representative Assembly (RA), there was vigorous discussion of a resolution from the PSC calling for NYSUT to "reaffirm its position that cuts to pensions and health care will not be tolerated." The resolution was opposed by a number of locals that voiced concern that it could interfere with their ability to reach a contract with their employers, and they cited NYSUT's strong tradition of local autonomy. Barbara Bowen and other PSC delegates responded that the resolution was designed to strengthen the hand of locals with the support of the larger NYSUT. Although a resolutions committee

had recommended that the PSC proposal be rejected, it drew support from delegates from the UFT and other locals and the RA voted to refer it to NYSUT's Board of Directors for further discussion.

END BULLYING

A PSC resolution on workplace bullying and employers who create a hostile work environment passed unanimously. NYSUT will work for legislation that will make it easier for workers to deal with this kind of conduct.

The PSC's resolution calling on TIAA-CREF to consider a company's labor policies when selecting companies for its socially responsible investment fund, Social Choice, passed unanimously and is to be forwarded to TIAA-CREF's management.

The PSC co-sponsored a number of resolutions with the Retiree Councils in NYSUT. One supported New York State legislation to permanently protect retirees against "unilateral diminution of their retiree health benefits by their for-

mer employers." Another called for a repeal of "means-testing" for Medicare premiums, which it said was "at odds with the premise of social insurance."

On civil liberties, delegates passed a PSC resolution calling for repeal of the Bush administration's Military Commissions Act, on the grounds that it violates the right to a writ of habeas corpus. The resolution cited a *New York Times* editorial describing the act as "a tyrannical law that will be ranked with the low points in American democracy."

Two major social justice issues that the PSC brought to the NYSUT RA concerned the war in Iraq and justice for the teachers who waged a long strike in Oaxaca, Mexico.

SUPPORT OAXACA

NYSUT adopted a PSC sponsored resolution calling for "an end to the repression of the people of Oaxaca... the immediate release of the teachers and other political prisoners of Oaxaca... and support [for] the just demands of the teachers of Oaxaca" by a voice vote with no significant oppo-

sition. One delegate from the UFT put it simply: "An attack on a teacher anywhere is an attack on us all."

The PSC resolution on the war in Iraq called for the "immediate withdrawal of all troops, bases and military operations" and a halt to funding to continue the war; this was rejected in a resolutions committee by a vote of 102 to 77. After a debate on the convention floor, NYSUT adopted a resolution calling for both "rapid" withdrawal and continued funding, similar to the current stance of congressional leadership.

Lenny Dick, an adjunct in the math department at Bronx Community College and chair of the PSC's Peace and Justice Committee, was not discouraged. He remembered four years ago when the PSC first raised an antiwar resolution at NYSUT; it sometimes seemed to be a lonely position. But the PSC persisted, and last year NYSUT passed a resolution favoring troop withdrawal – short of the PSC's position, but NYSUT's first such stand during a US war.

"Now we meet delegates from throughout New York State who agree with the PSC's antiwar resolution," said Dick.

On this and other issues, PSC delegates to the NYSUT RA say their arguments and organizing have had an impact.

Reappointment notices and unemployment

If you teach at CUNY part-time, you ought to have received your Fall 2007 appointment letter. For appointments for the Fall semester, letters should have been received by May 1. For appointments for both Fall and Spring '08 semesters, letters should have been received by May 15.

Appointment letters must include your title and hourly pay rate. If ei-

ther is incorrect, now is the time to notify Human Resources – though you do have until 30 days from the first day of the semester. Corrections to your pay will be retroactive to the beginning of the semester. (Information about the contractual increase, which goes into effect

September 19, should come in the Fall.) Call an adjunct grievance

counselor in the PSC office at (212) 354-1252 with any questions.

Whether or not you've been reappointed, you can apply for unemployment insurance if you are not working over the summer. If you're not reappointed, you should have no problem. Call (888) 209-8124 to apply over the phone. If you are reappointed, the situation is more complicated. See the story on page 9 of the May 2005 *Clarion* (find it at www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm) for more information.

The PSC continues its push to convince New York State lawmakers to change the law to give adjuncts an unequivocal right to unemployment insurance. Add your voice to the chorus of support by signing and e-mailing a letter to your assembly member and state senator by clicking on Act Now at www.psc-cuny.org.

– DR

Adjunct and HEO/CLT professional development

The committee that awards Adjunct and Continuing Education Teacher Professional Development grants will meet again on June 15. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until that day.

So far, PSC staff report that since the fund's inception on March 23, sixty-four applications have been approved. Application forms and eligibility requirements are available at <http://www.psc-cuny.org/AdjunctContinuingEdDev.htm>.

“Adjuncts have long complained about being isolated and outside the loop,” said PSC VP for Part-timers Marcia Newfield. “Support for their projects is a step towards inclusion. Their chairs must approve their applications and, in doing so, have the opportunity to share adjuncts’ work with their colleagues.” The ADJ-CET Professional Development Fund members are Steve Trimboli, Elizabeth Olana, Norah Chase and Michael Seitz.

The HEO/CLT Professional Development Fund Committee will meet on June 25; applications for that fund are also accepted on an ongoing basis.

– DR

Two labor strategists join the PSC staff

Communications & policy

By DANIA RAJENDRA

The PSC has recently added two labor movement veterans to the union's staff, experienced in working with academics and with unionized professionals.

Dorothee Benz was hired in December to head up the union's communications efforts outside of *Clarion*. Benz, as she is known to her colleagues, led design and planning of the new “This Week in the PSC” e-mail – an idea that came out of the union's “listening campaign” last fall.

(If you're not getting this weekly update, you can sign up on the union's website, www.psc-cuny.org.) With projects like this one, she is working to build the PSC's communications capacity and to better integrate the different parts of the union's media work – with each other and with union strategy.

FORMER MEMBER

Benz received her PhD in political science from the CUNY Graduate Center and was a PSC member for two years while teaching at Baruch. Her dissertation was on labor law and union organizing. She's an award-winning labor journalist and strategist who has held staff positions at UNITE, CWA and SEIU, and worked as a consultant for other unions. She has published in both scholarly journals such as *Politics and Society* and in political periodicals such as *In These Times*. Benz and her family live in Brooklyn.

“Communications is absolutely integral to organizing and to building union power,” said Benz. “I'm thrilled to be part of that work here at the PSC, where my experience at CUNY, my scholarly expertise and my communications background all come together.”

BROAD INTEREST

In May, Kate Pfordresher joined the staff as the PSC's first coordinator, research and public policy. “I'm glad to work at a union with such

broad legislative and policy interests,” Pfordresher told *Clarion*, “and I look forward to creating new opportunities for CUNY faculty and staff to participate.”

Pfordresher holds a master's degree in public policy from Columbia University. She has worked for the Committee of Interns and Residents/SEIU, and for AFSCME DC 37 and its Local 375, which represents engineers, architects and other city professionals.

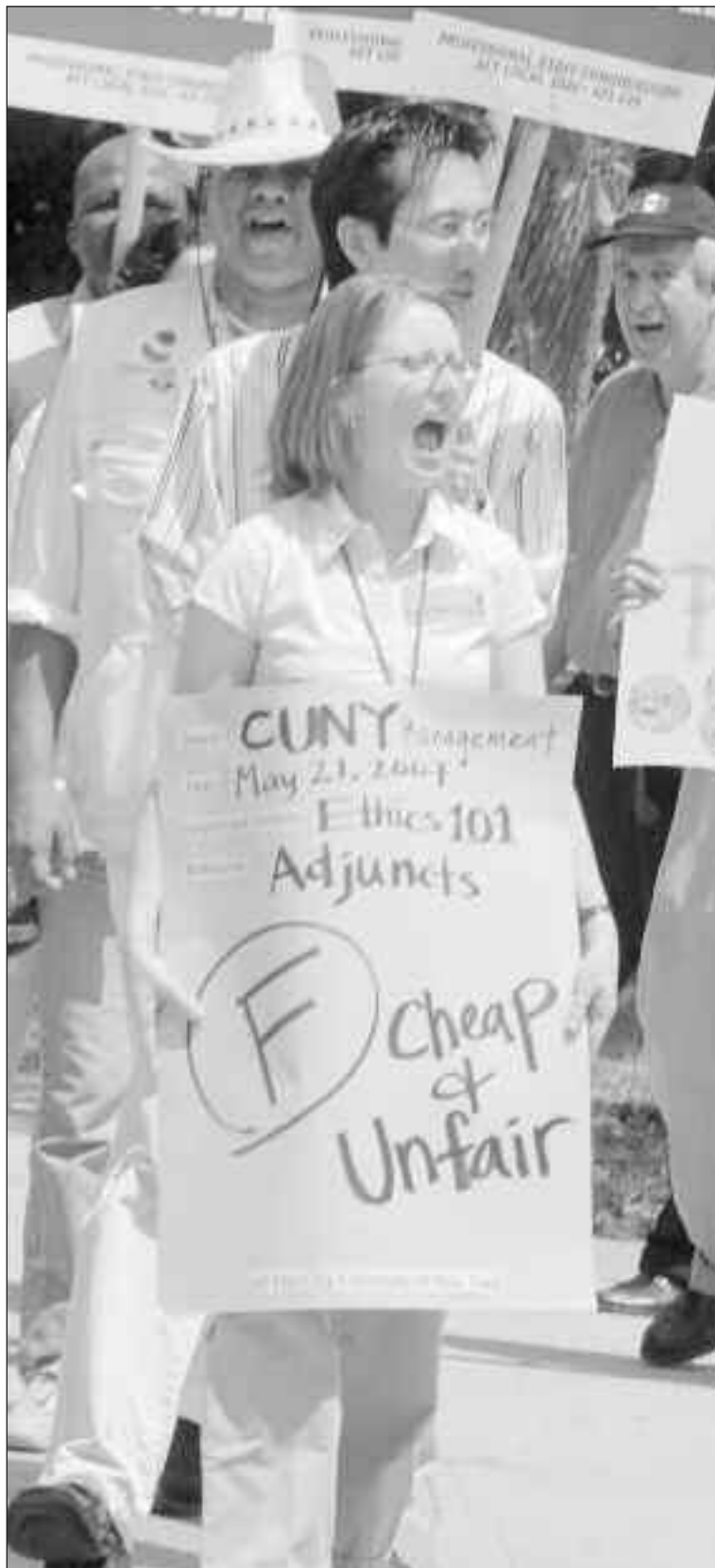
She has led labor-community initiatives including the People of Faith Network, a national multi-faith coalition of local congregations, clergy and faith-based activists. The group has campaigned to end sweatshop abuses and allied with CUNY activists fighting the ban on remediation in the senior colleges.

Most recently Pfordresher headed Urban Agenda and the NYC Apollo Alliance, a coalition formed by unions and environmental justice groups. “The Apollo Alliance advocates for clean and renewable energy and job creation,” Pfordresher told *Clarion*, and it sees the transition to sustainable environmental practices as a source of good jobs for New York.

ALLIANCES

Pfordresher and her husband, an associate professor of archeology at Queens College, live in Brooklyn.

“One of the best investments a union can make with members' dues money is hiring first-rate staff to carry out the members' agenda,” said PSC President Barbara Bowen. “As the PSC becomes increasingly influential on policy issues, and increasingly focused on listening to and communicating with members, it is essential to have top people in policy and communications. That's what we have in Benz and Kate, and we're fortunate to have them join the many staff who bring valuable experience and passionate commitment to the work of the PSC.”



Outraged!

Assistant professor Nikki McDaniel, Bronx Community College, at a protest of the college's practice of short-changing adjuncts their last hour of pay during exam week. Go to www.psc-cuny.org to sign the petition and see pictures from all five protests held at the end of May.

Pre-retirement conference

The annual PSC Pre-retirement Conference will be held on Tuesday, June 12, from 9:00 to 4:00 at the CUNY Graduate Center.

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Retirement System _____

College _____

Date of original CUNY employment _____

Make checks payable to the PSC and return

by June 1, 2007 to:
Clarissa Gilbert Weiss, PSC/CUNY,
61 Broadway, 15th floor,
New York, NY 10006.

STUDENT VIEWPOINT

Don't cut our hope

By SHANE CORREIA
Student at BMCC

Editor's note: This statement by BMCC student Shane Correia was read on the steps of City Hall on May 9, as part of the PSC's "CUNY at the Council" Day of Action on the City budget. See page 5 for more details.

Today I send you this letter as a student of BMCC. One year ago I stood in the world as a homeless high school student. I was forced to flee from a home life full of physical and emotional abuse that I was subjected to simply because I am gay. Were

it not for the federal and state funding which guaranteed me, as a citizen of New York City, a grant to attend college, my time living on the subway, working and trying to graduate high school could have ended with me living my life as nothing more than a statistic.

While I lived on the train and worked for a better life, I never once asked for money from anyone, and yet today, I find myself joining the voices of other students and faculty asking for better funding so that the economically disadvantaged may have a shot at a better future. To the mayor and the City Council I say that unless you restore CUNY's funding, you are lessening scholarship opportuni-

ties and retracting aid for those who need it. In addition to all that you would take away from us, you would most importantly take away our hope. By cutting us off, you would be discarding the neediest in my generation.

DANGEROUS

I am not the last student who was homeless who will attend BMCC, as there are many smart, homeless youth in NYC – and I have met them, scraped with them, talked with them, I know them and their abilities. Without CUNY, I would not be a student of anything, but I would be that kid on the train you avoided sitting next to on your commute to this press conference.



Michelle Calderón

From left, BMCC students Joana Mangune, Devorah Hernández and Sikwang Yoo at City Hall on May 9.

The cuts the mayor wants to make in CUNY's funding request are not harmless and practical – they are dangerous and economically self-destructive. You have the opportunity to invest in New York City through those who need it, those

who wish to escape the condemnation of the ghettos and the future of blight. Take this opportunity to realize that all of us here are investments and to shortchange us is to condemn us all to a future of no change at all.

What do you think of management's demands?

Clarion's Roving Reporter asks members at City Tech to take a look



Heather Appel

BRIAN KEENER
Professor and Chair
English Dept.

I'd say I'm against all the management demands. There's been no financial offer – but instead they're saying that in place of a uniform salary structure, college presidents would have discretion to decide who would get salary increases or not. This would increase the power of college presidents, and people would be more under the thumb of the administration than before.

They also want to expand distinguished lecturer positions without limit, so you have more faculty without tenure. And they want to change evaluations – they want HEOs and CLTs evaluated not just by the chairperson, but potentially by a representative of the dean or president, too. Basically they don't want evaluations left in the hands of department chairs.



Heather Appel

RONDA KING
Job Placement Coordinator
Placement Office

Based on what they're saying in their demands, they want to increase work for HEOs and faculty, especially part-time staff – and they haven't come to any agreement on the monetary increase. It still remains the same.

I feel very cheated. They're asking for us to do a lot and not giving us anything in return. Even past improvements that were proposed are not being acknowledged, like childcare and advancement opportunities for HEOs. Instead, they want to cut our job security, so there's no security for long-term professional staff. It doesn't sound like it's starting out very well at all so far.

I'd like to see our health benefits improve in this contract, especially dental. I think that management should definitely increase their contributions to the Welfare Fund.



Pat Arnow

WALTER DUFRESNE
Adjunct Assistant Professor
Advertising and Graphic Arts Dept.

One of the big efforts I see in management's proposals is an effort to "part-timerize" the workforce even more than it already is. The administration might as well be running the United Parcel Service – UPS tried the same thing with their staff years ago. I'm appalled, because CUNY's management is proposing that we go backwards.

It's an attempt to take resources out of the bargaining unit – in an odd way, it's an effort to de-fund CUNY's faculty and staff, and further deprive our students from working with full-time faculty and staff.

I do get sick and tired of paying for management's salaries out of my lousy wages. My students deserve better and I deserve better.



Heather Appel

TED MIÑON
Senior College Lab Technician
Advertising and Graphic Arts Dept.

From a technical standpoint, I've always believed in the step process [for raises] because it's controlled – you know it's coming and if you're in line for the next step, you're going to get it. That way you know what to expect.

I'm always fighting for the rights of the technical staff. My biggest concern would be for my technical staff and providing enough Apple/Mac open labs. We have over a thousand students who need open lab time, and it's going to be a problem.

When additional equipment is added to the department, our responsibilities increase, and I feel that if our responsibilities increase, our pay should increase in kind. In the 14 years I've been here, my responsibilities have grown tremendously. We're adding faculty, but we're not adding technicians.



Heather Appel

HÜSEYİN YÜCE
Professor
Mathematics Dept.

As a faculty member, I feel the chair is part of the department; he should be under the protection of the union. To make him part of management – that would put him in an awkward position. I'm not saying the president is an outsider, but his norms and criteria would be different from ours. I think it's better for faculty members to choose our own representative.

And I'm for union demands for paid maternity leave and family medical leave. CUNY is run by us – and everybody should have basic rights. CUNY is not just a building. Everybody gets sick – and I think it makes sense not to have to worry about your financial situation when you or a family member is in the worst condition.

It's like a marriage – in sickness and in health. CUNY should be with us in sickness too.

PENNY WISE, POUND FOOLISH

CUNY's dirty little secrets

By BARBARA BOWEN
PSC President

Immersed in the intense and largely private work of teaching and research, full-time faculty can easily lose sight of the fact that we are employees. The desire to believe that academic employers are different from others – in fact, that they are hardly employers at all – goes deep. None of us would be doing this work, after all, if we hadn't at some point in our lives fallen in love with school. It's hard to end that romance; we want to believe that we and our institution are partners.

Many times, we are. There are instances throughout CUNY of genuine collegiality between labor and management, of good people in management positions trying to do what's best for faculty, staff and students. And there is a powerful record of institutional cooperation between CUNY and the PSC; our partnership on legislative issues is responsible for the beginning of a turnaround in CUNY funding, and every month we conduct hundreds of conversations that quietly resolve problems and reach agreements.

ILLUSIONS

But no one who has worked as closely as I have with this CUNY management can hold onto illusions about the nature of our employer. We see every day the arbitrary application of rules, the attempts to grab power, the tendency to ignore the views of the faculty and impose unilateral decisions. At the bargaining table I have listened – and objected – to management's reflexive insults about how faculty use their time, their slights to the professionalism of staff, their frequent contempt for adjuncts, and their appallingly insensitive responses to members. When a group of young faculty recently presented a cogent plea for management to provide paid parental leave, CUNY's chief negotiator commented, "I timed *my* pregnancy."

I thought I had lost my illusions about CUNY as an employer and that after six years of being exposed to CUNY at the bargaining table nothing could shock me. I was wrong. Two things that came to light this year reveal CUNY as an employer in ways for which I was unprepared. Significantly, both involve employees who do not have the same visibility or relative autonomy as full-time faculty; one concerns professional staff in the Higher Education Officer title, the other involves adjuncts. You can read about the HEOs in this issue of *Clarion*: for years, CUNY has routinely violated the contractual provision limiting the HEO work week to 35



Ricardo Levins Morales

hours. I have yet to meet a single HEO who reports that she or he (most often *she* in this title) is not routinely expected or required to work overtime. Stories of HEOs staying at registration till near midnight are routine. CUNY cynically trades on their professionalism and commitment to their students, confident that they will stay as long as it takes to get the job done. And with the University now furiously advertising for more students, the job takes longer and longer: HEOs are often responsible for enrollment, registration and financial aid, and CUNY's drive to fill seats in classrooms has put them under enormous pressure.

UNPAID LABOR

Yet when a change in the federal Fair Labor Standards Act made it illegal to deny overtime pay to certain categories of HEOs, including many of the lowest-paid at CUNY, it took a lawsuit by nine courageous HEOs at LaGuardia to force CUNY to offer back pay for years of overtime work. Meanwhile, CUNY still refuses to admit that it must pay *all* HEOs for hours worked beyond the contractual 35. Management's position is breath-

taking: they agree that the law requires them to pay time-and-a-half to eligible employees who work more than 40 hours, but when asked how they planned to pay HEOs for the hours between 35 and 40, they replied that they intended to pay nothing at all. Not time-and-a-half, not straight time, not minimum wage, not one cent. Nothing speaks more clearly about the nature of our employer.

When you add into the mix that the HEOs CUNY has classified as eligible for overtime pay are usually those in lower-paid titles and that these titles include a high proportion of women and people of color, the issue becomes even more disturbing. The union has filed a grievance to compel CUNY to pay all HEOs for all hours worked over the contractual 35-hour work week. But even after CUNY has admitted that many HEO-series employees must be paid overtime for work beyond 40 hours, they may still have to litigate to get the back pay CUNY owes them.

Employees at a university – employees anywhere – should not have to sue their employer to receive the money they are owed. An institution that purports to be about transmitting knowledge and values should not

maintain policies that routinely cheat employees out of salary. CUNY can say anything it wants in its multi-million dollar advertising campaign, but a key measure of what it stands for is how it treats its employees.

The other revelation about CUNY as an employer comes from the policy of five CUNY colleges to underpay adjuncts by one hour each semester. A pattern is emerging here: denial of pay for some hours worked by faculty and staff in the least privileged positions in the academic hierarchy. The five schools – Baruch, Bronx CC, College of Staten Island, Kingsborough and Queensborough – maintain that during the fifteenth week of the semester an adjunct teaching a three-hour course works for only two hours, not three – because that's the typical length of an exam. Anyone who has ever taught a class knows that this is absurd.

WAL-MART UNIVERSITY

Adjuncts are paid by the hour, but each hour of pay is supposed to provide compensation for the many hours worked outside of class to prepare, work with students and grade papers. To suggest that an instructor does *less* work in the fifteenth week simply because she or he spends fewer minutes actually standing in front of a classroom reveals either a profound misperception of teaching or a staggering mean-spirit-

edness. It hardly needs to be said that such a policy is not worthy of a university – it's embarrassing and frankly, it's cheap. As one Baruch student said in response to the May 21 demonstration on the issue, "This is a college, not a corporation. I don't want to go to Wal-Mart U."

For sheer nastiness, nickel-and-diming some of CUNY's lowest-paid faculty is hard to beat. All faculty, however, are diminished by association, and the implications of this policy for education are frightening. If teaching can be redefined in such minimalist terms, what happens to the concept that there is a relation between teaching and research, or that work outside the classroom with individual students is part of instruction? We are just a few steps away from succumbing entirely to the factory model of education.

DO THE RIGHT THING

During exam week in May, PSC members took to the streets to protest the policy of underpaying adjuncts, and petitions with tens of thousands of signatures were delivered to presidents at the five offending colleges. But we should not have to demonstrate to compel the University to pay people for the work they do. Refusing to pay HEOs for work between 35 and 40 hours or underpaying adjuncts by one hour will not balance CUNY's budget; all it does is diminish CUNY's stature.

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein has invested a lot in creating a public image for his leadership of high-mindedness and vision. These policies, if widely known, would tell a different story. And in the end the policies are his responsibility. They are so egregious that I am going to do something I have not done in this column before. I am calling on Chancellor Goldstein directly to do the right thing. Whether he changes the unfair policies will speak more forcefully about what he stands for than any number of subway ads.

Sometimes CUNY is embarrassingly cheap.

Clarion MAY-JUNE 2007

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DEBT INSTEAD OF DEGREES

Higher education access at risk

By JOANNE REITANO

The current plight of public higher education is explored in two books with revealing titles: *America's Untapped Resource: Low-Income Students in Higher Education* and *Defending the Community College Equity Agenda*. They suggest that, like the nation, public higher education is at a crossroads.

For much of our history, public higher education was intrinsically interwoven with democratic concepts of opportunity, meritocracy and social mobility. The objective (and the struggle) was to make higher education more accessible to more people in more places. Over the past few decades, however, this quest has been undermined by conservatives who prioritize the private over the public interest, the few over the many. As evidence, consider the rise and fall of open admissions at CUNY.

America's Untapped Resource: Low Income Students in Higher Education, edited by Richard D. Kahlenberg (The Century Foundation Press, 2004), tries to reposition equity in an increasingly inequitable society. Because attending college is directly correlated with socioeconomic mobility, the authors stress the unfinished agenda of facilitating college attendance for poor and working-class students of all races.

GAPS

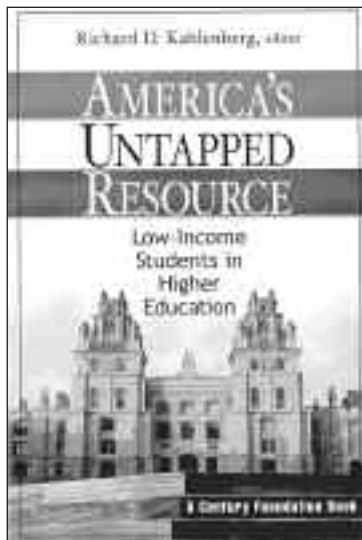
First and foremost, they point to the achievement gaps, the opportunity gaps and the financial barriers that help create them. Declining public funds and rising tuitions are compounded by shifts from grants to loans, from need-based to merit-based aid. These changes discourage some students from attending college, make many work so much as to interfere with learning and compel oth-

ers to stop out or drop out. All too many students acquire debts instead of degrees. To mitigate these impacts, the authors advocate tax credits for lower income families, larger Pell grants and more need-based aid. They pursue public policy solutions to public higher education problems.

The second issue is the lack of success that follows whatever access exists. This subject is addressed in both books, but is the special focus of *Defending the Community College Equity Agenda*, edited by Thomas Bailey and Vanessa Smith Morest (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006). Representing the Community College Research Center at Columbia University's Teachers College (TC), the authors endorse the equity agenda, which they define as preparation for college, access to college and success in college. They acknowledge the public policy issues highlighted by The Century Foundation, but emphasize institutional responsibility for improving retention, transfer and graduation rates.

ACCESS & SUCCESS

The TC researchers recognize that community colleges serve the poorest students in higher education, who have the worst high school preparation. Although these students need the most services, community colleges get less public funding than senior colleges and therefore have fewer resources. Moreover, because state funding is enrollment driven, community colleges often value quantity over quality, entrance over exit. This pattern is particularly unfortunate because community colleges have the highest proportion of minority students in college and account for half the nation's undergraduates. Community colleges are the ca-



naries in the coal mine of public higher education.

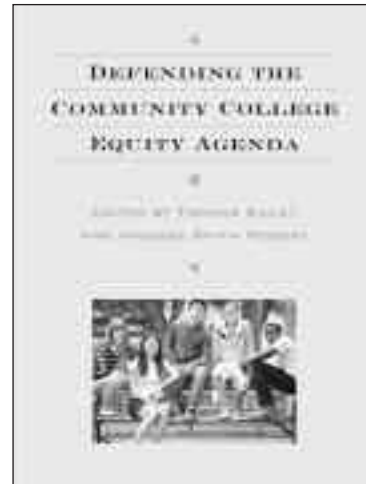
Despite understanding that community colleges have multiple missions and that different students are served in different ways, the TC researchers remain fixed on completion rates. However, the authors admit that focusing on outcomes may have mixed impacts, such as those we see at CUNY. Barrier exams may further disadvantage already disadvantaged students. Imposing restrictive entrance requirements and demanding better graduation rates may encourage community and senior colleges alike to seek more middle class students who bolster their statistics, require fewer services and can pay higher tuitions. Note CUNY's honors college, flagship programs and middle class-oriented publicity materials. No wonder people who support the access revolution view much of the pressure for "accountability" as a counter-revolution.

What can be done to better align access and success? Aside from asserting the need for more research on the subject, the TC book endorses better links between high school

and college, restored counseling services, more cohesive developmental education programs, more cooperation between credit and non-credit divisions and more attention to transfer issues. As the authors concede, community colleges are already pursuing most of these strategies, but all warrant strengthening. Dare we wonder how community colleges can constantly be expected to "do more with less"?

FUNDING

The Century Foundation supports much the same agenda, but also makes several innovative suggestions regarding funding. They fear that placing GPA requirements or time limits on student aid might increase grade inflation and/or decrease graduation. Instead of these punitive strategies, they suggest that states pay senior colleges a premium for enrolling



low-income students and community college transfers.

They also believe that states should assume the full costs for remediation so that students do not pay to learn what should have been taught in high school, which is free. Since 75% of all colleges of-

fer remediation, this is not just a community college issue. At CUNY, the lack of financial aid for developmental education, which must be completed before students enter for-credit courses, makes college even less accessible.

Oddly enough, neither book pays much attention to faculty – their struggles or their contributions. The "adjunctification" of the faculty is briefly noted, but workload issues are totally ignored. These omissions might be due to the fact that, although the researchers' credentials are impressive, none identifies mainly with the undergraduate classroom. Furthermore, of the ten authors with the Community College Research Center, only one is affiliated with a community college – as an administrator specializing in workforce development. Hopefully, however, the research institute and Ivy League labels attached to both studies will draw much-needed attention to the pressing problems bedeviling all access institutions.

SOBERING

These are sobering books. In the process of presenting data on the challenges facing public higher education in America today, they prove that recurrent questions about access and success are easier to ask than to answer. They also demonstrate that structural problems and ideological challenges cut across the academy as national support for public higher education wanes, tuition rises and the conservative agenda prevails. Most importantly, they document how much the conversation about higher education has changed and how fragile our democratic, egalitarian convictions have become.

Joanne Reitano is professor of history at LaGuardia Community College. Her latest book is The Restless City: A Short History of New York from Colonial Times to the Present (Routledge, 2006).

Community colleges & the 'equity agenda'

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15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Sign the contract statement

The PSC's push for a good contract this round is part of the union's agenda to make CUNY what it could be, and to make our professional lives what they should be. Say "enough!" to doing more with less – our students, our research, our families all deserve better.

It is critical to send this message strongly to management – their contract demands (see pages 6-7 and 10) are bad for us and bad for CUNY. Read and sign the statement supporting the PSC's vision for a new contract at www.psc-cuny.org.