

# Clarion

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



MAY-JUNE 2008



## COOL COURSE Journal Club

Jeff Bird's new course teaches critical reading of published papers.

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Pat Amow

# STOP THE BUDGET CUTS

On Wednesday, May 7, fourteen City Council members joined more than 150 CUNY faculty, staff and students at a PSC press conference at City Hall. They called for reversal of the more than \$14 million in CUNY budget cuts that Bloomberg proposed in his Executive Budget and for additional urgently needed

funds for the University. The PSC delivered 25,000 postcards to Council members that day. "Students are streaming into the colleges to prepare for difficult economic conditions," said PSC President Barbara Bowen, above, with CUNY students, faculty and staff. "This is no time to cut the City University." **PAGE 5**

## COMING HOME

### From soldier to student at CUNY

Veterans who enroll at CUNY face many kinds of obstacles in making the transition to student life. Services are improving, but it's just a start.

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## RETIREMENT

### TIAA-CREF's new vehicles

CUNY participants and retirees in TIAA-CREF can now choose from a range of new investment options. Are they right for you?

Read more inside.

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## CUNY FUNDING

### Sending the wrong message

There is a growing public consensus that CUNY needs significant new investment. But Chancellor Goldstein's speeches often muddy that message.

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## CONTRACT

### CUNY makes an economic offer

After 15 months of negotiations for a new contract, CUNY management finally put some money on the table. The PSC says it falls short.

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# State teacher convention sets direction

By PETER HOGNESS

The annual Representative Assembly of the PSC's state affiliate, New York State United Teachers, was held April 10 to 12 in New York City, bringing together education workers and professionals from across the state.

In votes on NYSUT policy, all resolutions advanced by the PSC won support from delegates to this year's Representative Assembly (RA). The issues included health insurance for adjuncts, inflation protection for retirees, paid parental leave, environmental sustainability, and organizing efforts against war and racism.

## FIVE FRAMEWORKS

"At the convention, NYSUT leadership unveiled five frameworks to clearly communicate a more activist and progressive agenda for the union," PSC First Vice President Steve London told *Clarion*. "Focusing activity on building political power, internal and external organizing, good communication of message, a social justice agenda, and ongoing education, the convention signaled NYSUT's movement toward embracing the principles of social unionism."

RA delegates unanimously adopted a PSC resolution establishing the fight for high-quality health insurance for part-time faculty and staff as a NYSUT priority. The resolution called it "offensive...that public universities rely on part-time, contingent and graduate employees to carry much of the teaching load and keep the institution afloat – and then fail to offer these same employees the basic human provision of health insurance."

The RA pledged NYSUT's support for both legislative and collec-

## PSC resolutions win support

tive bargaining campaigns to ensure that New York universities provide high-quality, paid health insurance for part-time faculty and staff. The PSC has made this a key issue its current contract negotiations, demanding that CUNY provide paid health insurance coverage for its graduate employees and bring adjunct faculty and staff onto the regular City health plan.

The PSC has been pushing hard for a system of paid family leave at CUNY, and RA delegates approved a resolution in support of paid parental leave as a national social benefit. It noted that "the US is one of only five countries out of 173 surveyed worldwide that does not provide any federal entitlement to paid maternity leave," and that the lack of paid leave is particularly damaging to women's income and careers. Failure to provide paid family leave harms children and men as well, it added.

The PSC-sponsored resolution, adopted unanimously, urged the two national teacher unions with which NYSUT is affiliated, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, to both work for federal legislation that would guarantee "universal paid parental leave."

Last year saw a victory for equity in pension contributions, with the State Legislature voting to give participants in the Optional Retirement Program (made up of TIAA-CREF and similar plans) equal treatment with those in defined-benefit plans such as the Teachers Retirement System (TRS). Originally advanced by the PSC, this reform won strong

and persistent support from NYSUT and was finally enacted last fall. (See September 2007 *Clarion*, at [www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm](http://www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm) for details.)

This year's RA approved a call, from the PSC and other locals, to support inflation protection for participants in the ORP. The goal is to ensure income protection comparable to the Cost-Of-Living Adjustment currently provided to participants in TRS.

Also adopted were two PSC resolutions on war and peace. One voiced strong opposition to the Bush administration's moves toward war with Iran. It condemned "the reactionary regime of Ahmadinejad and his shameful, anti-Semitic Holocaust denials," as well as that government's attacks on Iranian workers and unions. But it warned that Bush's threats of military action only strengthen that regime, and that war with Iran "would lead to devastating loss of life,...a further drain on the education and health budgets in the US, and catastrophic consequences for the region and the world."

The other PSC proposal stated NYSUT's opposition to Bush's "policy of permanent and 'preemptive' war." Linking the US government's current militarism to attacks on civil liberties and international law, it urged closing of the Guantánamo prison and an end to torture and "rendition," as well as immediately beginning a complete withdrawal of US armed forces from Iraq. NYSUT's daily convention newsletter reported that "applause broke out in the audience" when this resolution



PSC Treasurer Mike Fabricant at the NYSUT Representative Assembly.

was approved.

"This resolution marks a profound shift in NYSUT policy," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "It registers opposition not just to the practice of the current war, but to the theory of 'preemptive' war that lies behind it." Over the last few years, Bowen said, NYSUT has evolved toward a clear-cut anti-war position, and the PSC has played an important role in that change.

## SOLIDARITY

On the solidarity front, the RA approved PSC resolutions on the "Jena 6" and in support of the teachers' union in Peru. The former urged that charges be dropped in the case of the "Jena 6," young African Americans indicted after conflict broke out at their high school in the wake of nooses being hung from a tree on school grounds. It called for NYSUT to organize a campaign and foster local activism on the issue, linking this case and other noose-hanging incidents to broader and persistent problems of racism in the US today.

The resolution in support of the teachers' union in Peru noted that the union had faced heavy government repression after a national strike whose demands included an increase in government funding for education. The union and its members were put in an even harder situation by the subsequent earthquake in Peru; the resolution called for NYSUT to consider a donation to the Peruvian educators' union.

A PSC resolution on sustainable energy policy was also adopted. Translating this global issue into a focus for local action, it calls for State action to establish a sustainable energy policy in the operations of CUNY and SUNY, as well as comprehensive planning to make both institutions "green" on other fronts.

## MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Bob Cermele, chair of the PSC chapter at City Tech and the union's Vice President for Senior Colleges, was named as one of NYSUT's two Higher Education Members of the Year. "Bob Cermele embodies all the qualities of an education union leader – professionalism, advocacy and compassion," said NYSUT President Richard C. Iannuzzi on the presentation of the award.

Cermele is a veteran of many lobbying trips to argue the union's case in Albany, and NYSUT Executive Vice President Alan Lubin called him an effective advocate. "When he speaks to legislators, they listen to his voice of experience about the needs of his students and the CUNY system," Lubin said.

Cermele said it meant a lot to him to be honored by the union and the people he works with. "To me," he said, "recognition by one's comrades is the highest acclaim."

UFT President Randi Weingarten chose the RA as the time and place to announce her candidacy for president of the AFT, which will choose a new top executive at its convention this summer. RA delegates voted overwhelmingly to support her candidacy.

The RA also heard from AFT-endorsed presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, speaking to delegates in the convention hall via a live telephone link from the campaign trail.



**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** | WRITE TO: CLARION/PSC, 61 BROADWAY, 15TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10006.  
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## Corporate cash vs. academic freedom?

● The April *Clarion* article, "Course controversy at Hunter," is very disturbing. We need to wait for the outcome of the investigation by the Hunter College Senate's Academic Freedom Committee, but if the allegations in the article prove to be accurate, there have been multiple and gross violations of academic freedom.

The course's provenance is rather mysterious. All agree that it originated not from a faculty member in the department but from somewhere in the Hunter administration, possibly the president's office, and was essentially created by a public relations firm for Coach bags. Why is this appropriate? And how much of an improvement is it that now, "faculty must approve all sponsored courses," according to the department chair?

Why should there be any credit-bearing "sponsored courses"?

In addition, it is asserted that an untenured faculty member was intimidated into teaching the course. Finally, Hunter was paid \$10,000 in return for offering the course. If verified, these allegations reveal a series of entirely improper proceedings. As CUNY becomes more reliant on private sources of funding, are we to be treated to more similar and sorry episodes in the future?

Lenore Beaky  
Vice Chair, University Faculty Senate

## National health care a must

● The horrifying experiences of our adjuncts, when they fall ill or need surgery (March *Clarion*), as a conse-

quence of the inadequate health coverage they receive from CUNY, is further stark evidence of the failure of this country's health insurance system.

For years, PSC/CUNY, like unions across the country, has been faced with rising costs and declining benefits. How to contain the cost of our health care system while assuring access to care has been highlighted in the current presidential campaign. Unfortunately, no candidate has yet put forth a proposal that addresses the problem in a serious way. Mandating that the uninsured buy costly insurance will never work, and it does nothing to help those of us who think we're insured but discover, when we need it, that our

coverage is inadequate.

We can learn from the many countries around the world with national health programs. None faces our problems of out-of-control costs and declining access. The lesson is that only a national health insurance program, such as that embodied in the Conyers-Kucinich Bill, HR 676, and supported by our union, can effectively rein in costs while providing coverage for everyone, no matter where or when we work.

Leonard Rodberg  
Queens College

## Next issue

More on the CUNY Law School, and the end of the adjunct labor series.

# CUNY makes money offer

By PETER HOGNESS

More than a year after negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement first began, CUNY management presented an economic offer on May 12. The chancellor's negotiators proposed increases of 3.15%, 3% and 3% over a 37-month agreement, plus 2% for other economic needs. The proposal would also boost employer contributions to the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund by \$50 per capita.

The last PSC-CUNY contract expired on September 19 of last year. The PSC called for talks on a new agreement to begin before the contract expired, and negotiations began several months earlier, on February 7, 2007. The financial offer

## Concessions still on the table

came after the PSC organized campus protests in April that criticized management's long delay in starting discussions on an economic package (see below, also April *Clarion*). Most municipal unions reached settlements with New York City last year, and the largest State worker unions followed suit between October and December. CUNY negotiators were accompanied by NYC's labor commissioner at the May 12 session.

### FALLS SHORT

The PSC bargaining team greeted management's proposal as "a serious offer," but said it still falls far short of the increase that CUNY needs. Barbara Bowen, the PSC's

president and chief negotiator, said that uncompetitive salaries at CUNY have caused a crisis in recruitment and retention, which management's offer will not solve. "Increases near the level of inflation will not begin to close the 20% salary gap separating CUNY and other comparable public universities," Bowen said. (See page 12.)

Management's money offer "represents the beginning of the economic discussion," not the final word, Bowen emphasized. That discussion became intense in the wake of the May 12 bargaining session, which was followed by a flurry of side meetings

and technical discussions. "We are prepared to work around the clock to reach a settlement," Bowen said on behalf of the union team.

In discussing how the 2% for other economic needs would be used, management negotiators advocated for what they called "performance pay" – a plan the union said would not help to solve CUNY's salary crisis. "One-time awards of money, not added to base pay and given at the discretion of the college president, are no substitute for true salary increases," Bowen said. "We need real salary increases, not fake ones." (See also page 11.)

In the May 12 bargaining session, management indicated some open-

ness to other union demands. PSC negotiators pressed their case for paid family leave, job security and health insurance for part-time employees, and boosting the top salary step in every title and rank.

### CONCESSIONS

There was no discussion of a range of concessions demanded by management in past negotiating sessions, which have been sharply criticized by the union. These include eliminating salary steps, taking department chairs out of the union, and slashing job security for Higher Education Officer-series employees.

In a public meeting at Brooklyn College in March, Chancellor Goldstein said that if faculty opinion was strongly against the idea, he was prepared to abandon the demand to exclude department chairs from the bargaining unit. However, this demand – and the others – have yet to be withdrawn by the chancellor's representatives in negotiations.

# Organizers demand contract, raise

By DANIA RAJENDRA

"New York needs CUNY, and CUNY needs a raise." That was the message of a PSC television ad that ran on cable and local broadcast TV during April. And just in case CUNY Trustees didn't see it, union members brought that message to a protest at the Board's April 28 meeting.

Members picketed in the rain outside the main building at Baruch, expressing their frustration over 15 months of negotiations without an economic offer. Later the protest moved inside to the Trustees' meeting on the 14th floor. In the conference room, activists stood silently with signs that showed the rise in the cost of consumer goods – like gas, milk, and average rents – while CUNY salaries have fallen behind.

When *Clarion* asked Aisha Peña, a library faculty member at Baruch, why she had come to the picket, her response couldn't have been clearer: "Raises! Raises! Raises!"

Mabel Rodriguez-Cuesta, an adjunct lecturer in Baruch's modern language department, agreed. "Everything is very expensive," she said. "We are getting paid less than our needs."

### DO THE MATH

The picketers handed out flyers that asked CUNY Trustees to "Do the math," and featured math problems such as this: "Pay for HEO Assistants has lost 41% of its earning power since 1971. If they had received the same percentage salary increases as Chancellor Goldstein since 2003 – 58% – how much closer would they be today to recovering this earning power?" (The answer: "They would have recovered 86.5% of the loss.")

The flyer was "Assignment

## On TV, on campus, at the Board



Sending the message loud and clear to the Board of Trustees.

overdue," with an original due date of September 19, 2007 – the day the last PSC-CUNY contract expired.

Inside, members of the PSC bargaining team sat in the front row of chairs at the Board of Trustees meeting, to symbolize that the union was still waiting for an economic offer, 15 months after bargaining for a new agreement began. They held signs that said, "CUNY needs a raise!" while members chanted the same slogan outside. One effect of the protest was seen two weeks later, when management finally produced a financial offer (see above).

One member on the picket line, Alan Perlman, has been a CLT at Baruch for more than 30 years. As he handed flyers to passing students and others, Perlman said, "It's time for promotions, for equality – and a raise!"

On the other end of the seniority scale was Baruch librarian Chris Tuttle, joining the line after just two months on the job. "CUNY needs a contract," said Tuttle, as he did his part to help win a fair agreement.

### TV AD

The union's TV advertisement aired during morning news shows on local broadcast channels, as well as NY1 and CNN on cable. A lively animation shows CUNY salaries as uncompetitive with neighboring public institutions: University of Connecticut, Rutgers University and University of Delaware, with pay at CUNY 20% below these universities. The ad, which also ran in Albany, can be viewed on the PSC website, at [www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org). (See also page 11.)

Local campus organizing also focused on the need for CUNY-wide

salary increases. At Brooklyn College, the chapter invited elected officials to a hearing about the effects of CUNY's low salaries and other substandard learning conditions. Faculty and staff told State Senator Kevin Parker and Assemblymember Rhoda Jacobs about the growing crisis in recruitment and retention.

"No one wants to live on the miserable deal we offer at CUNY," BC Professor Nancy Romer told Parker and Jacobs in her testimony. "They know they will have abbreviated research careers, never be able to buy a house, and have a very hard time having children."

More than 40 union members attended. Those who testified included part-time and full-time, junior and senior faculty, as well as staff, said Chapter Chair Tibbi Duboys.

"It is very difficult to recruit and retain highly qualified job candidates," noted BC English department Chair James Davis. In his own department, he said, there has been "an especially chilling effect on the recruitment and retention of highly qualified people of color, many of whom seem genuinely to like the idea of teaching in Brooklyn and to admire CUNY's mission but who...receive offers from other institutions that far exceed what we offer them in both financial and non-financial terms."

Both Parker and Jacobs said that much of the testimony was shocking, and that they had not heard these concerns raised by CUNY administration. The two legislators encouraged PSC members to continue to raise the issues with the entire Brooklyn Senate and Assembly delegation.

"It's very troubling," Parker told

*Clarion*. "All of this goes directly to the quality of education students are receiving." In addition to uncompetitive pay, Parker said CUNY needs to deal with its outsized teaching load, which limits student-faculty interaction. "Greater availability of professors makes [students] more productive in their own learning," Parker said. More funds for CUNY's physical plant are needed for "optimal teaching conditions," Parker added. "Money should go to making the buildings healthy for faculty, students and staff."

### ON CAMPUS

In other campus organizing, the BMCC chapter circulated a petition among all members in support of the union's demands for adjuncts, including a Certificate of Continuing Employment (CCE) to provide a measure of job security for adjuncts who have received multiple appointments and successful evaluations.

The union is asking members on other campuses to sign – and you can do so online, at [www.psc-cuny.org/APpetition/PTpetition.htm](http://www.psc-cuny.org/APpetition/PTpetition.htm). "You need not be an adjunct to sign!" emphasized PSC Vice President for Part-Time Personnel Marcia Newfield, herself an adjunct at BMCC.

Greater continuity for experienced adjunct faculty would help students and CUNY as a whole, union activists say. To support the union's negotiators as they make this case at the bargaining table, the PSC is asking adjuncts to send in their own accounts of how lack of job security has hurt them, their departments and their students. (E-mail your story to Newfield at [mnewfield@psccmail.org](mailto:mnewfield@psccmail.org).)

"Students often ask adjuncts whether we'll be teaching the next semester, since we teach most of the intro classes at CUNY," Newfield said. "It's bad for them, and bad for us, to have to tell them that we have no idea."

**'We are getting paid less than our needs,' members say**

# Student draws gun on classmate, self

By KATE PASTOR

An April 30 incident at City College brought home to CUNY the fear of violence on campus.

That afternoon, CCNY student Kirk Hanley showed another student a gun and told her there would be trouble. According to Mary Lou Edmondson, City College vice president for communications, the female student excused herself and walked into the financial aid office, where she reported what had happened. Hanley followed her to financial aid and sat down in the waiting area.

Silvester Mendoza, a 23-year-old senior, told *Clarion* he was sitting in the financial aid lounge at about 2 pm, when college security officers arrived and approached a male student, Hanley, sitting behind him. The officers asked Hanley to leave

## Quick action by students, security averts injury

the lounge and speak with them – but he refused and pulled out a gun. Although police later described it as an “imitation pistol,” it appeared to be a lethal weapon.

Hanley grabbed a nearby student by her hair and put the gun next to her head, Mendoza said. Moments later, two NYPD officers arrived, one of whom drew his gun. Mendoza remembers Hanley repeatedly asking, “Are you guys going to shoot me like Sean Bell?”

### CRY FOR HELP

As officers urged him to drop the gun, he let the woman go and announced he was going to shoot himself. Saying, “All I wanted was help,” he put the gun to his own head and started to cry, before dropping

it and moving towards the door.

Police arrested Hanley and took him to St. Luke’s Hospital for evaluation. The incident was over in less than five minutes. “They did a good job,” said Mendoza, a psychology major. “They acted quickly.”

### ARRESTED

Hanley was arrested on charges of kidnapping, criminal possession of a weapon and reckless endangerment. Edmondson described the gun as a “black powder pistol,” and said it was loaded. An NYPD spokesperson told *Clarion* the police report called it an “imitation pistol”; he declined to provide further details.

Hanley was carrying several suicide notes. At the time of the inci-

dent, his MySpace page said, “I’m incredibly sad and depressed...I’ve been laughed at for my speech disorder, spit on (literally), humiliated, rejected and isolated.”

The web page listed his heroes as including “Timothy McVeigh, Cho, Reb and V.” Seung-Hui Cho shot 32 students last year at Virginia Tech, while “Reb” and “V” were nicknames of the shooters at Columbine High School. But the suicide notes led many observers to suggest that Hanley’s aim was to provoke a police shooting, or “suicide by cop.”

Jean Weisman, chair of the PSC’s Higher Education Officer chapter and a City College employee, praised the fact that the volatile situation was handled without anyone being hurt. But she said the delay in

informing the college community about what happened was too long.

Weisman first received an e-mail about the incident at 6:24 that evening, and only because her dean forwarded an e-mail from the president. That e-mail had originally been sent at 5:52 pm, hours after the incident and after most people had left for the day.

### SYSTEMS FAILURE?

According to Edmondson, an e-mail was sent out to all students, faculty and staff the day of the incident, but not everyone on the list received it until it was resent the next day. Because the April 30 incident was quickly contained, Edmondson said it did not warrant use of the new CUNY Alert system, which allows students, faculty and staff who sign up to receive emergency information through text or voice messages. (“CUNY Alert” went into effect at the start of the Spring semester; see [www1.cuny.edu/news/alert.html](http://www1.cuny.edu/news/alert.html) for details.)

# Campus safety & CUNY counseling

By KATE PASTOR

The April 30 incident at CCNY (see above) was more extreme than most CUNY faculty or staff will ever face. But it was also more clear-cut. More common is the problem of assessing whether or not a student who is distraught may endanger themselves or others.

A CUNY graduate student who works in an office at Hunter College told *Clarion* she faced this type of problem at the end of the Fall 2007 semester. An undergraduate she supervised returned to the office after missing a number of days of work and told her he was depressed and upset and felt like shooting everybody. She said she knew he had problems at home and was facing consequences for poor school and work attendance.

At first, the graduate student was unsure how to respond. “People say things like that,” she remembers thinking, “but they don’t really mean it.” But after consideration, she told her supervisor about the conversation, and the student in question was met by security personnel the next time he arrived at work. “I’d rather say something and nothing happens, than not say something and something does happen,” she explained.

### VIGILANCE

Since the shootings last year at Virginia Tech and last February at Northern Illinois University, college faculty and staff have become more vigilant about reporting things they might have ignored in the past. Protecting the safety of all students, faculty and staff may sometimes require excluding a troubled student from campus. But responses that emphasize security alone may only compound the problem.

For example, in 2004 a Hunter student who lived in the dorms on the

## Student/counselor ratio is high

college’s Brookdale campus attempted suicide. When she was discharged from the hospital, she returned to the dorm – only to find that the locks on her room had been changed. “She was allowed to pack up her belongings only under the surveillance of a security guard,” reported *Inside Higher Ed*, and she was escorted off campus. She later sued the college, arguing that Hunter had violated the Fair Housing Act, the American with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act, and won a \$65,000 settlement.

“It doesn’t make sense to throw out a student who said they’re contemplating suicide,” acknowledged Carl Kirschner, CUNY’s assistant dean of student affairs.

### Part of a national trend

“You’re taking away their only support system.” As an alternative to disciplinary action, there is now a new policy – CUNY’s Medical Withdrawal and Re-Entry Policy and Procedure, which took effect July 1, 2007. It gives students whose behavior is a threat to themselves or others, or substantially disrupts the learning or working environment, the option of voluntary withdrawal.

Disciplinary procedures are no longer considered for students who threaten or attempt suicide, and students who withdraw under the new policy can undergo psychological assessment and apply for re-entry. To decide on involuntary withdrawals, CUNY now brings together a Health Review Committee made up of mental health professionals.

Kirschner said that the administration is looking for creative ways to deal with the growing demand for more psychological intervention, including increasing faculty involvement. “We want faculty and



Ma'at Lewis Coles of John Jay

staff to be able to recognize a student in psychological distress,” he said, adding “If staff and faculty can do that...we can pick up on these problems a lot earlier.”

Faculty interviewed for this story told *Clarion* that they would gladly attend a training or go online for a few hours to get more informed. But for efforts that require a more significant investment of time, CUNY’s outsized teaching load could make it difficult to get faculty widely involved. To be effective University-wide, faculty said, new initiatives will require new resources.

Other faculty and staff said they wished they knew more about both CUNY’s procedures and best practices for handling unstable students. Counseling centers and departments at various colleges have taken steps to reach out to other faculty and staff, but there is currently no University-wide strategy. And at best, there is a wide range of awareness among faculty and staff about CUNY policy.



Annecy Báez of Lehman

Directors of counseling from the various colleges will discuss intervention at an upcoming retreat, and the topic has been the subject of several trainings on CUNY campuses, Kirschner said. Student Affairs is starting a pilot program in the fall at Hostos Community College, Brooklyn and City colleges to train faculty to recognize and refer students with problems, and Kirschner said he hopes to eventually expand the program CUNY-wide. The administration is also contracting with at least one private consultant to design interactive online scenarios to teach faculty how to react to a range of student behavior.

### NEW APPROACHES

Directors of counseling across CUNY say that they struggle with limited resources in the face of growing needs. “We’re seeing an increase in the number of faculty seeking consultations for dealing with students with emotional and behavioral issues or problems,” said Ma’at Lewis-Coles, interim director of counseling at John Jay. But with

only three full-time counselors, she said, there is a constant struggle to keep up with growing demand.

At CUNY community colleges, the ratio of counselors to general population students is 1:2,300. At the senior colleges, the ratio is 1:5,000. In contrast, standards of the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS) require a minimum ratio of one trained psychological counselor to every 1,500 students. Many professional organizations call for even smaller ratios; for example, the Association of Counseling defines the optimum as 1:250.

### DOING MORE WITH LESS

“We’re understaffed and we’re overwhelmed,” said Annecy Báez, director of counseling at Lehman. It’s not just about the numbers, she added: “Counselors need to get paid adequately, especially if you want people with experience.” The center she directs was recently reduced from four full-time counselors to three, when it lost funding for the fourth position.

PSC proposals to both the City Council and the State Legislature would provide new support for CUNY’s badly overstretched psychological counseling services (see page 5 in this issue; also see the April *Clarion*).

The problems facing CUNY counselors are part of a national trend. According to a 2007 survey by the American College Counseling Association, more than 90% of counseling directors reported seeing more students with severe psychological problems. Yet most said they were being asked to meet a growing demand for services without any additional resources.

More than ever, mental health is seen as prerequisite for safety on campus. “I think it’s a reflection of what’s happening nationally,” said Lewis-Coles. There is a growing public awareness, she said, that “when students have problems they can become very serious.” Whether that awareness will translate into a new public commitment remains to be seen.

# PSC & students lobby Council

By JOHN TARLETON

More than 150 CUNY faculty, staff and students gathered on the steps of City Hall on May 7, calling on Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the City Council to restore funding for \$44 million in proposed budget cuts. The PSC delivered 25,000 postcards to City Hall showing public support for the union's budget message and demanding new funds for City University.

"Enrollment at CUNY is higher than it has been in 35 years, and students are streaming into the colleges to prepare for difficult economic conditions," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "This is no time to cut the City University." Bowen told reporters that Bloomberg's proposed \$28.3 million cut to CUNY's operating budget should be reversed, as should the proposed \$15.7 million reduction in student aid. She also warned that the City "is throwing away millions of dollars in State capital funds by not matching the capital funding for CUNY."

"At a time when Wall Street is hemorrhaging, we have to diversify," said Tish James, one of 14 City Council members who attended the press conference. "To invest in human capital," she said, "is absolutely critical....So we have to invest in CUNY."

Ed Ott, director of the NYC Central Labor Council, called CUNY "the University of the working class and the working middle class of this city," and demanded that the budget cuts be overturned. "It's the responsibility of elected leaders to find the money," Ott said.

"What are we doing when we're shutting the door to CUNY?" asked Councilmember Miguel Martinez. "What kind of message are we sending?" Martinez and other members pledged to fight for the restorations.

"I will do everything in my power

## Union vs. Bloomberg's cuts



From left, Councilmembers Larry Seabrook, John Liu, David Weprin, BMCC Professor Jim Blake, PSC First VP Steve London and PSC President Barbara Bowen.

as head of the Finance Committee," said Councilmember David Weprin, "to see that these unfair cuts are restored fully." Councilmember Robert Jackson and others warned that to win this fight, thousands of people must make their voices heard.

James and Councilmembers Maria del Carmen Arroyo, Melissa Mark-Viverito, Helen Sears and Larry Seabrook all said that as CUNY graduates, they understand why CUNY is important.

### NYC'S BEST

Several students spoke at the event, including Mark Bradshaw of Hostos Community College. "My experience at Hostos has been excellent; I've been taught by some of the city's best teachers," Bradshaw said. "CUNY has given me a second chance at achieving my goals and living out my dreams." He plans to go on to John Jay College and the

CUNY School of Law. "As a person who works full time," Bradshaw said, "I am not able to afford an NYU or Columbia or Fordham education. But I'm very proud to be at CUNY."

"CUNY students are hard-working people with very modest means," said Donna Gill, a member of the PSC Executive Council who works in Hunter's financial aid office. "They work incredibly hard, juggling school, work and family obligations." Reductions in financial aid "have real consequences for real students and it's devastating," said Gill.

Bloomberg's reductions would slash \$11.2 million from the Vallone Scholarships, which provide tuition assistance to CUNY students who maintain a B average. "That may very well stop some of our best and brightest, who might not be able to afford a college education, from getting it," said Councilmember Peter Vallone, Jr., whose father led the effort to establish the

program. "That would be a tragedy."

"We really have to make sure that we provide for CUNY and for the good working men and women of the PSC," said Weprin, one of several speakers to address the needs of faculty and staff. "We need CUNY professors to be treated fairly and equally," said Councilmember John Liu. "We should not keep asking them to make, year after year, these draconian sacrifices."

Councilmembers Leroy Comrie and Oliver Koppell also attended the rally.

Besides calling for the cuts to be reversed, speakers emphasized that CUNY urgently needs new public investment. "We are also calling on the Council to go beyond the endless repetition of cuts, restoration, cuts, restoration," Bowen said. "What about moving forward?" She cited the PSC's proposal for \$2.5 million in new funding to hire more faculty counselors and increase faculty-student mentoring. "CUNY is five times below nationally recommended standards for the ratio of students to counselors," Bowen told *Clarion*. "Instead, we should aim to beat that standard."

The 25,000 signed postcards, urging the Council to rescind the cuts and commit new funds to CUNY, was the first effort of "CUNY Rising," a union-backed grassroots lobbying effort.

Students and union members canvassed their campuses and communities with the postcards for several weeks, asking for public support. Hostos Community College turned in the most cards - 3,300 - while City Tech, BMCC and Brooklyn College followed with 2,900, 1,900 and 1,800 signed cards respectively.

Lizette Colón, newly elected as PSC chapter chair at Hostos, told *Clarion* that the postcard drive was such a success on her campus because faculty and students were actively in-

involved. Cards were available through the student government association, student clubs and at a wide array of student events. Students also took cards home to be signed by family and community members.

"We said take five - to your parents, to your bodega, to your lover - and then bring them back," she explained. "It was great to see students returning with their contributions." Colón said one student, Nilton González, single-handedly turned in 400 cards. Other star organizers included faculty in mathematics and dental hygiene, said Colón.

### OUTRAGEOUS

Speakers at the rally also blasted Bloomberg's shortchanging of CUNY's capital budget. "It is outrageous and it is unacceptable that the mayor would release an executive budget which does not include the funds needed to rebuild Fiterman Hall," said Councilmember Alan Gerson. A BMCC classroom building, Fiterman was damaged beyond repair in the 9/11 attacks. Construction to replace it faces a funding shortfall, due to the City's refusal to match State contributions to CUNY's capital plan.

"We cannot allow the City to leave money on the table," Bowen said, "when the money is there from the State and all the City needs to do is match it."

The PSC protest was the top story on *Crain's New York Business* website. It was also featured in a range of other media across the city, including WNYC's "Morning Edition," community papers like the Queens *Times-Ledger* and the Chinese-language *World Journal*, the civil service weekly *The Chief*, and activist outlets like NYC Indymedia and *The Independent*.

### A more serious threat

# IELI faculty petition to retain space

By DANIA RAJENDRA

At Hunter's International English Language Institute (IELI), 55 faculty members teach English as a Second Language to more than 3,500 students. In early April, IELI teachers were told that they would lose their faculty room, which was to be painted and converted to classroom space.

The IELI faculty room is not luxurious; it's a windowless room lined with file cabinets. But its loss would be a hard blow to those who work or study at IELI because the program's faculty are all Continuing Education teachers. As part-timers, they have no offices. Losing the faculty room would leave them without space to prepare their classes, store materials or meet with students.

In response, they began to organize. After calling the union, IELI's adjuncts put together a petition:

## Space crunch squeezes faculty

"Don't take away our only space!" They presented it to Hunter administration on April 14, less than two weeks after they got the news.

### PRECIOUS SPACE

Appropriating their space, the petition said, would "prevent a collegial, supportive and innovative faculty from functioning productively," and would "strike at the faculty's ongoing ability to collaborate on behalf of our students, share best practices...and mentor and support each other."

IELI teachers who didn't have class on April 16 gathered that day to deliver the petition to Hunter President Jennifer Raab, IELI Director Alison Rice, and Lorraine Gallucci, Hunter's director of Continuing Education and Special Programs. "Peo-

ple were energized after the petitions were presented, said Yvonne Groseil, a leader among IELI faculty.

"I've taught here since 1984 - for 24 years," said James Willimetz. "This is the worst crisis we've ever faced."

The faculty room houses decades worth of files and serves as a common space for the teachers, who teach all day but often have big gaps in their schedules. Hunter administration says they could still use the room when no class is in session - but IELI faculty say that having only the "left-over" time is inadequate.

"Some of us would have to get here an hour early just to check our mailboxes, because once there's a class in session, we wouldn't be al-

lowed access," said Sarah Shively, a teacher who joined the group presenting the petition.

"No two teachers have identical hours," noted Shant Melkonian, an IELI teacher. "It's hard enough teaching as a part-timer," he said, without losing their only dedicated space.

During the week of April 21, the room was emptied of all furniture and painted. During that week, Groseil said, faculty had no access to their files - or one another. "There was no sense of collegiality," she told *Clarion*. "We felt what we had lost. We got a sense of what the impact would be if we don't retain the room. It will be a really sad place, isolated and lonely." Groseil said she and several teachers "brought in some chairs to set up a makeshift workspace again, [and] things picked back up."

### 'This is the worst crisis we've faced.'

"Collegiality is so important," Groseil emphasized. And for part-timers who lack job security and tend to have irregular schedules, it's particularly precious. IELI faculty member Gretchen Irwin-Harada told the *Envoy*, Hunter's student newspaper, that such connections with colleagues have helped her "to be a better teacher."

Groseil, Hunter chapter leader Mike Perna and PSC Vice President for Part-Time Personnel Marcia Newfield are working with the IELI faculty to keep the pressure on.

Groseil said that at a May meeting with Hunter administration, "the IELI faculty presented a very positive idea to reconfigure departmental space to create a classroom, available full time for classes, as well as a dedicated Faculty Room. We hope that the college will agree to this creative idea for solving two very important problems: the need for classroom space and the need for providing support for a hard-working, highly productive faculty."

## LABOR IN BRIEF

### UUP fights funding cuts

On May 2, hundreds of United University Professions members and supporters rallied at the State Senate to protest a proposal to freeze millions of dollars in SUNY funding.

SUNY had already lost \$38 million in the 2008-2009 state budget, and this new plan would withhold \$109 million in additional revenue. The frozen funds are not state tax dollars but rather fees already collected by SUNY from tuition, dormitory fees and other payments.

UUP President Philip H. Smith said the impact would be devastating and could lead to thousands of canceled courses and larger class sizes. Faculty cuts and fewer course offerings will threaten the graduate possibilities for students as degree programs take longer to complete, costing families more money.

"Why is SUNY the primary target?" Smith asked. "It won't balance this budget and it won't save taxpayers a dime."

### Refusal to sign loyalty oath costs job

A Cal State teacher was fired from her job after refusing to sign a loyalty oath to "defend" the US and California constitutions against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Wendy Gonaver, who is a Quaker from Pennsylvania, considered the oath a violation of her First Amendment rights. She attempted to attach a statement to the oath, but administrators at Cal State Fullerton rejected it, saying her addendum was against the law.

The loyalty oath, which California requires of all citizens working in public jobs, was added to the state constitution by voters in 1952 with the purpose of identifying Communists.

Policy implementation across California varies widely, but the 23-campus Cal State system has taken a hard line, firing at least two instructors prior to Gonaver. Efforts to remove the oath from California's constitution have so far been unsuccessful.

### Henry Ford adjuncts vote for union

On May 7, part-time adjunct faculty at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, Michigan voted to join the Henry Ford Community College Adjunct Faculty Organization.

Those seeking union representation voted "yes" by an overwhelming majority of three to one. The 580 adjuncts at Henry Ford join 60,000 contingent faculty members affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers.

Currently Henry Ford's adjunct faculty earn considerably less than their counterparts at other universities in southeast Michigan. Members hope to improve their salaries and working conditions, including access to health care and job security.

# Veterans' services at CUNY

By NICHOLAS JAHR

"I got called up in the middle of the semester," said Fernando Braga. Hunter's deadline for withdrawal was well past when Braga, a soldier in the Army National Guard, was sent to Iraq. "The people I was talking to all said, 'Well, basically you can drop your classes or take an incomplete.'" In fact, he could have received an exceptional withdrawal (and eventually negotiated one after returning from Iraq). But "the people I was talking to didn't handle that and didn't know about that," said Braga. "It was just an additional task for the VA rep at my school."

As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan grind on, a growing number of CUNY students are also military veterans. They're students at a University where veterans' services were drastically reduced in the 1990s, and most have encountered problems as a result. CUNY has recently given more attention to veterans' issues, and vets and their advocates have welcomed the change. But they caution that it will take a larger commitment to give vets at CUNY the support they need.

### MORE VETS AT CUNY

"When people started shipping out to Afghanistan, then I started hearing about problems," said José Vásquez, a CCNY graduate now enrolled in the Graduate Center's doctoral program in anthropology. "Vets trying to, for example, get a refund for tuition, or...get it to count towards the semester they return. They were trying to work those kinds of deals out and a lot of times were meeting all sorts of resistance and barriers," said Vásquez, who like Braga works with Iraq Veterans against the War. "The people shipping out felt like, 'Shit, well, cut me a break here, I'm going off to war.'"

Kamal Tomlin returned from the battlefield in the fall of 2006. He is now in his second semester at Hunter, where he is the founding president of Hunter's new veterans' club. "Once I paid my tuition," he said, "I was just thrown in the lion's den. There wasn't anyone to guide me or teach me."

Asked how anyone who spent time in Baghdad could see Hunter as the lion's den, Kamal talked about the problems he had concentrating and not knowing who to look to for help: "There was no smooth transition; when you get into the Army there's people to guide you." At Hunter he was on his own, without the intense discipline that structures life in the military. "It's sort of like a knee brace," he explained. "You get used to it. Once you take it off, you wobble a bit."

"The mission of CUNY is to serve working-class, immigrant students,"

## CUNY has made progress, but it's just a start

said Glenn Petersen, professor of anthropology at Baruch and a veteran of the war in Vietnam. "What could be more of a public service than to respond to some of the needs of people who were willing to sacrifice everything they had for us?"

Nearly everyone agrees that CUNY is playing catch up in this effort. Ben Chitty, who has been active in veterans' affairs at CUNY for two decades and now serves as the secretary of CUNY's Veterans Steering Committee, recalled, "In the late '80s and early '90s the CUNY Office of Veterans Affairs was probably the leading advocate for veterans in the city." That office was opened only after veterans of the Vietnam war staged a sit-in to call attention to the problems they faced. As the number of veterans enrolled at CUNY dwindled from what Chitty thinks was a high of 25,000 in the late 1970s to fewer than 3,000 in 1995, the office fell victim to cost cutting under the Giuliani and Pataki administrations. Another factor, Chitty added, was political animus toward the office's coordinator, Mike Gold, who believed that citywide advocacy on veterans' issues was an important part of his job.

Now the number of veterans at CUNY is once again on the rise: at Baruch, for example, the number of students applying for veterans' benefits has increased by 50% in the last two years. Estimates of the number of reservists and active-duty veterans currently enrolled at CUNY range from 1,700 to 2,500. Whatever the exact number, it is sure to grow, and some predict that as many as 10,000 new veterans may ultimately be enrolled on CUNY's campuses.

It is unclear how many veterans now at CUNY have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, but veterans' advocates on several campuses say it is a large percentage. For example, Claudette Guinn, who has overseen veterans' affairs at Brooklyn College for 17 years, estimates that between 60 and 75 of the roughly 200 veterans who are students at Brooklyn have served in either war.

### ADDRESSING NEEDS

Both individual colleges and 80th Street are now moving to expand veterans' services at City University. Last year, CUNY hired its first University-wide Coordinator for Veterans Affairs in a decade, a Navy veteran named Wilfred Cotto. Hiring Cotto was a major step toward addressing the needs of these new veterans, and in February CUNY held its first veterans' conference. Working with the Office of



A.J. Luna, coordinator of veterans services at City Tech.

Student Affairs, Cotto's office has awarded three \$45,000 grants to CUNY colleges to support their work with vets.

One of those grants funded a retention program at LaGuardia Community College, providing support for student veterans enrolled at the college. A few months later LaGuardia was awarded a \$1.25 million five-year grant under the federal government's Upward Bound program, to help prepare veterans for higher education. "We had this type of grant from 1972 to 1995 and just got it again last year," said Samuel Farrell, director of LaGuardia's Veterans Center.

### INCONSISTENT SUPPORT

"I think it's a good start," said Joe Bello, chair of CUNY's Veterans Steering Committee. "As we move toward the future, more is going to need to be done."

At CUNY today, said Petersen, "some campuses have good programs, some have none at all. That doesn't seem to me to be an appropriate way to respond to the issues veterans are facing."

Chitty agrees. "They still have not grappled with the problem of the varying levels of services available at different colleges," he explained. "Cotto is doing a pretty good job given what he has to work with, but I think the University is still hoping to produce something that looks great without spending very much money."

Despite the assertion in a *New York Times* article last year that "CUNY officials...are appointing a specialist in veterans' issues on every campus," many CUNY col-

leges – including some with the largest numbers of vets – still have no one on staff who works exclusively with veterans. It's an important goal, said Cotto: "But that's going to take funding."

Meanwhile, the task of helping veterans navigate the CUNY system often falls to each school's certifying officer, the person who processes the forms for veterans' education benefits. More than half of CUNY colleges rely on the certifying officer as their "veterans affairs representative." Several of these told *Clarion* that due to other responsibilities, they spend as little as 30% or even 10% of their time on veterans' affairs. "It's not fair that they take a person that's already full time and throw this on them," said A.J. Luna, coordinator of veterans' services at City Tech.

"Working with veterans is a full-time job, and then some," said Claudette Guinn, who is also Brooklyn College's overall coordinator for student affairs. "Having someone in the bursar's [office] just to certify the veterans really doesn't help them." What vets need, Guinn explained, is a staffer who can follow up with veterans individually and work with them on a number of levels.

Vets say that this lack of consistent support combined with the general underfunding of student services at CUNY, too often leaves them hanging. Kamal Tomlin said that when he first came to Hunter, there were always long lines to see the person who could answer his questions: "The one time I saw her I had to cut class."

The number one issue for most veterans is the cost of paying for

# CUNY

school, said Omari Rose, a young vet who has been working in veterans affairs at City Tech during his freshman year. "Tuition, books... that stuff piles up quickly," said Rose. But it's not easy for vets to identify what benefits are available, or get past bureaucratic hurdles to use them.

## BENEFITS UNTAPPED

"A lot of veterans don't know what they're entitled to," noted Rose. Whether it's five years of free health coverage for new veterans who enroll at a VA hospital, or the \$1,000 per semester under the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for veterans of Iraq or Afghanistan, many vets leave benefits untapped. "You'd be surprised to know the [number of] veterans who are unaware of that," Claudette Guinn said of the TAP grants. The same will probably hold true for a new benefit created this year, which will provide the full cost of CUNY or SUNY in-state tuition for Iraq, Afghanistan, Persian Gulf and Vietnam veterans.

The GI Bill can potentially cover most of students' expenses – but asked whether it provides enough to live on, Fernando Braga is succinct: "Not at all. No way. Especially not in New York."

And some veterans report long delays. "I would apply in August and I wouldn't get my first check until October," José Vásquez recalled. "So at the beginning of the semester I was always a starving student." Procedures also vary from campus to campus: for example, while Hunter and Brooklyn College allow veterans to defer payment until their benefit check arrives, at Kingsborough veterans must pay up front and be reimbursed later.

Obtaining transfer credit for military training can also be frustrating. Omari Rose had served as a military communications officer, but said he was required to take introductory courses on material he already knew when he majored in electrical engineering at City Tech.

## ADJUSTING TO HOME

Beyond the practical issues of benefits and credits, veterans also face more personal challenges in adjusting to student life. Many describe feeling out of place, surrounded by fellow students whose preoccupations often seem like trivial concerns. Others echo Kamal Tomlin's comments about the difficulty of going from a highly regimented life to a self-regulated student schedule and finding it hard to concentrate.

Jennifer Pastor, an assistant professor in psychology at BMCC, first heard about the problem of returning home from her son, who served in Iraq. "Mom, I want to go back," he told her. "I got used to it there, I know what to expect. I feel more

comfortable over there than I do over here." Inspired by her son's struggle, Dr. Pastor began working with veterans at the college.

One veteran confided to Pastor that she'd felt safer in Iraq than she did in Brooklyn. In Iraq, "I know who my guys are, I know who's around me, I know they're going to protect me." Pastor recalled her saying. Given these persistent feelings, Pastor observed, "It's almost like their nervous system is still wired to expect sniper fire, to expect a roadside bomb."

Media coverage of veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars has often focused on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); as a result, many vets are wary of being stereotyped as unstable. "I don't want to put that at the forefront," said Cotto. While PTSD is a real problem, he said "not all veterans go through that. Most of them are very well adjusted."

Several sources in veterans affairs at CUNY estimated that 10 to 15% of veterans enrolled at City University may need counseling for PTSD. But Samuel Farrell of LaGuardia notes that for those who've served in a combat zone, the figure is higher. "For returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan, it could be as high as 50%," Farrell told *Clarion*.

Many vets struggle with issues that are less severe, but could still determine whether or not they can stay in school. Yet at most colleges, CUNY's counseling resources are already overstretched (see page 4). "I don't think CUNY is prepared to deal with the growing need at individual campuses," Farrell said.

To provide effective support, out-



Omari Rose worked to help other veterans during his freshman year at City Tech.

reach is a key ingredient. Vets who could be helped by counseling don't always step forward to ask for it. "You have to engage with them before you can get them to open up about anything," said Bello. Offering a cup of coffee or helping with benefits issues can be a starting point for other conversations. "You're never going to find out anything right from the beginning," Bello said.

## VETS CONNECT

Maria Saltas, a counselor who works with veterans at Queensborough Community College, said that QCC's new Veterans Center has helped make those connections – thanks to staff who are both veterans and students themselves. "When student veterans have questions, they tend to go over there,"

Saltas said. "They speak to other student veterans, who they seem to really connect with." If a staffer thinks counseling could be helpful, they may refer someone to QCC's Counseling Center. "So in that way, the connection between veteran and counselor starts with a fellow veteran," Saltas explained.

The visibility of the center, located on the first floor of QCC's Student Union, helps vets connect with information and with each other, Saltas said. "Now they know where to go," she told *Clarion*. "Before, we might have the information they needed, but they didn't know where to find it."

Building community among veterans at CUNY can be a challenge. At a small forum for vets held at Baruch last December, students in attendance realized that not one of

them knew another veteran at the school. Yet that kind of connection can be vital to their success in college. "The best person to engage and bring out a veteran is another veteran," said Roger Sherwood, associate professor at Hunter's School of Social Work and director of the Project for Return & Opportunity in Veterans' Education (PROVE).

Certainly that was true for Joe Bello. Back in 1995, Bello had just mustered out of the Navy. "I never envisioned going to school," he said. "My first thought was, 'I got to look for work.'" But after he enrolled at the Upward Bound program at LaGuardia, Bello said, "I met some vets who were older than me, and a little wiser than me, and they started helping me out." Through Upward Bound he set his sights on college, and went on to earn a degree at NYU. Today Upward Bound is again offered at LaGuardia, under Bello's direction.

## OPPORTUNITY

With the right kind of support, said Sherwood, college can provide returning veterans with a unique opportunity. "School is a very positive transition point," he explained. "If we can join them in that transition, we can also begin to lend them support in dealing with any kind of residual war experience."

Veterans' advocates at CUNY agree that providing this kind of support will require more resources. "We have a chance to get out ahead of the curve and establish programs here that we'll showcase for the rest of the country and get money flowing from the federal government," argued Glenn Petersen. But right now, he said, "There's so little available that it's fighting for scraps."

"I think CUNY has been stumbling slowly in the right direction," he concluded. But to get the job done, the University "has to put more money where its mouth is."



A forum for veterans was held at City Tech on May 16.

## LABOR IN BRIEF

### Aramark on strike

Every day, the strong, rhythmic chants of the striking UNITE HERE Local 100 members reach the PSC office, all the way on the 15th floor of the building across the street from the picket line. Thirty-five UNITE HERE workers, who staff the Bank of New York cafeterias run by the huge foodservice company Aramark, have been on strike since early March.

Their contract expired on February 29. The workers make \$500 per week on average and are fighting for an hourly wage increase, better pension and medical benefits, and card check neutrality for workers at other Aramark locations who wish to organize.

Strikers are keeping up morale, they told *Clarion*. "We're going to stick together and keep taking action," said member Rose Lynn.

Striking UNITE HERE members picket at Broadway & Rector, Monday to Friday, mornings and early afternoons. PSC members can stop by to offer support or join the chanting: "Aramark, you didn't listen! Now you have an empty kitchen!"

### PBA arbitration

The New York police officers' union, the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) won a 9.7% raise over two years from an arbitration panel on May 19. The panel also significantly increased officers' starting pay by \$10,781. The officers lost 10 vacation days a year, in a major concession.

PBA President Pat Lynch told *The New York Times* that he was pleased the deal broke the long tradition of matching police and firefighters' raises. Starting pay at the Police Academy went from \$25,100 to \$35,881 with the decision, and both the City and the PBA hope it will help with the NYPD's recruiting crisis.

### African unions act against repression

On April 18, the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) refused to unload weapons from a Chinese ship docked in a South African harbor. The weapons were destined for Zimbabwe, which is in the midst of a conflict over the presidential election results.

The weapons had been purchased by the Zimbabwean government, headed by President Robert Mugabe. SATAWU members refused to unload the cargo because they were concerned the weapons would be used against fellow union members. The Zimbabwean union movement generally supports Morgan Tsvangirai, the opposition candidate.

Throughout southern Africa, longshore workers' job actions meant the ship was unable to unload. The ship, with the arms still aboard, was sent to Angola, where union dock workers unloaded only the building materials but refused to handle the munitions.

# Chapter elections complete

By PETER HOGNESS

PSC chapter elections in April brought a number of new faces to local leadership: half of those elected as chapter chair will serve in that office for the first time. But 10 of the 12 races were uncontested, and only at City College did two slates face off against each other.

Half of PSC's chapters held elections for local leadership this year. The other half voted last year, and next year an election will be held for union-wide positions. Both local and union-wide officers serve three-year terms.

"I'm excited about the upcoming term," said Nikki McDaniel, newly elected chapter chair at Bronx Community College. "We've already set a number of goals that we want to work toward." McDaniel, an associate professor of biology, said that key issues at BCC include health and safety, teaching load, and paid family leave. Building alliances with students, other unions and community groups will be high on the chapter's agenda, McDaniel said.

Albert Sherman, new chair of the College Lab Technicians' chapter, has worked at CUNY for more than two decades. "I have been involved at CUNY for all of my working years," said Sherman, a senior CLT who works in the graphic arts program at City Tech. "I love what I do, and I'm very happy to become the new chapter chair." A primary concern for Sherman will be ensuring good communication within the chapter. "I want to make sure everyone's on the same page," he told *Clarion*.

New John Jay Chapter Chair Carl Williams is eager to get started on addressing the problem of child care on his campus. "We have a lot of younger faculty," he noted, "and we need to continue to work with the administration and try to find ways to address that need." Williams, who is in the SEEK Program, is also planning to work on reducing class size and addressing the space crunch. "The college is trying to get a new building, but that's moving very slowly, so space is becoming an issue in terms of housing new hires," he said.

### SLATES

New Caucus slates were elected in eight chapters, while at Baruch, Hostos and the Central Office other slates were voted in (see list below).

At CCNY, the incumbent New Caucus was opposed by the CCNY Faculty First slate, and the results showed the chapter to be closely split. For most positions, the gap between winner and loser was three votes or less. New Caucus candidate Mike Green was elected chapter chair – by one vote, 136 to 135 – while the CCNY Faculty First slate won two-thirds of the positions on the chapter's executive committee by narrow margins. Jane Gallagher, the CCNY Faculty First candidate for vice chair, was elected by 14

## Many new leaders take office



Workers at the American Arbitration Association counted ballots from CCNY.

votes, the widest margin of any CCNY contest.

In a joint statement, Green and Gallagher said the two sides would look for ways to cooperate. "With the union election completed, the new leadership of the City College

chapter of the Professional Staff Congress looks forward to serving all the faculty of the college," they wrote. "The entire leadership will work together for the good of all." Green is professor and former chair

in the chemistry department; Gallagher is professor and current department chair in biology.

*Names of those elected and their slates are listed below. Those who were re-elected are listed in regular type; names of those newly elected are in italics. Complete results are on the PSC website, at [www.psc-cuny.org/Elections.htm](http://www.psc-cuny.org/Elections.htm).*

**Baruch College:** (Fusion Slate) Chair, Peter Hitchcock; Vice Chair, Gail Graves; Secretary, Stanley Wine; Officers-At-Large, Bryant Hayes, Gayana Jurkevich, Glenn Petersen, Sarah Ryan; Delegates to the DA, Stanton Biddle, Jacqueline Disalvo, George Hill, Stanley Wine; Alternates to the DA, David Lichtenhal, Sandra Mullings, Rita Ormsby, Abdullah Tansel; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, George Hill

**Bronx Community College:** (New Caucus Slate) Chair, Nichole McDaniel; Vice Chair, Sharon Persinger; Secretary, Sharon Utakis; Officers-At-Large, John Athanasourelis, Jason Davis, Suzan Moss, Nelson Reynoso; Delegates to the DA, Leonard Dick, Claudio Mazzatenta, Vrunda Prabhu; Alternates to the DA, Nikos Apostolakis, Simon Davis, Annette Opler; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Laroie Lawton, Alex Robert

**Brooklyn College:** (New Caucus Slate) Chair, Tibbi Duboys; Vice Chair, Scott Dexter; Secretary, William Gargan; Officer-At-Large, David Bloomfield, James Davis,

Joseph Entin, Joseph Wilson; Delegates to the DA, Alan Aja, Nanette Funk, Jean Grassman, Immanuel Ness, Priya Parmar, Timothy Shortell; Alternates to the DA, Carolina Bank, Janet Johnson, Martha Nadell, Nancy Romer, Jocelyn Wills; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Robert Padgug, Paula Whitlock

**City College:** (CCNY Faculty First Slate or New Caucus Slate, as noted) Chair, Michael Green (NC); Vice Chair, Jane Gallagher (FF); Secretary, Charles Watkins, Jr. (FF); Officers-At-Large, Bill Crain (NC), Claudia Lascar (FF), Thea Pignataro (FF), Elizabeth Starcevic (NC); Delegates to the DA, Philip Barnett (NC), Yossi Berechman (FF), Carol Huang (FF), Jeremy Hubbell (FF), Fred Moshary (FF); Alternates to the DA, Hope Hartman (NC), Stephen Jablonsky (FF), Charles Stewart (FF), Gordon Thompson (FF); PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Fred Brodzinski (FF), Ed Camp (FF)

**College Lab Technicians:** (New Caucus Slate) Chair, Albert Sherman; Vice Chair, Alan Perlman; Secretary, Carol Demartinis-Hartman; Officers-At-Large, Louis Rivera, Keith Rowan, Thomas Shemanski, Robert Suhoke; Delegates to the DA, Barry Carr, Jackie Elliott, Joy Johnson, Camille McIntyre; Alternates to the DA, Lee Cambridge, Joel Gomez, Lourdes Rosario-Moran; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, None

**CUNY Central Office:** (CO Renewal Slate) Chair, Gregory Dunkel; Vice Chair, None; Secretary, None; Officer-At-Large, None; Delegates to the DA, Gertrude Hilton-Kitt; Alternates to the DA, None; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, None

**Graduate School:** No elections this Spring in Graduate School chapter; special elections will be held at a future date.

**Hostos Community College:** (Justice/Justicia for Hostos Slate) Chair, Lizette Colón; Vice Chair, Felipe Pimentel; Secretary, Craig Bernardini; Officers-At-Large, Lau-

ra Kaplan, Henry Lesnick, Olga Steinberg-Neifach, Peter Roman; Delegates to the DA, Laura Kaplan; Alternates to the DA, Violeta Menil, Olga Steinberg-Neifach; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Paula Gannon

**Hunter College:** (New Caucus Slate, except as noted) Chair, Tami Gold; Vice Chair, Mark Goldberg; Secretary, None; Officers-At-Large, Kelly Anderson, Frank Kirkland, Blanca Vasquez; Delegates to the DA, Kelly Anderson, Mark Goldberg, Sándor John, (independent candidate) Frank Kirkland, David Winn, Blanca Vasquez; Alternates to the DA, Jennifer Hayashida, Michael Perna, Rosalind Petchesky, Ida Susser, Lynn Roberts; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, None

**John Jay College:** (New Caucus Slate) Chair, Carl Williams; Vice Chair, Angela Crossman; Secretary, Bonnie Nelson; Officers-At-Large, Andrew Karmen, John Pittman, Francis Sheehan, Carmen Solis; Delegates to the DA, Avram Bornstein, Holly Clarke, Jim Cohen, Nivedita Majumdar, Peter Mameli; Alternates to the DA, Anru Lee, Gerald Markowitz, Rick Richardson, Michael Seitz; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Rulisa Galloway-Perry, Dan Pinello

**LaGuardia Community College:** (New Caucus Slate) Chair, Lorraine Cohen; Vice Chair, Daniel Lynch; Secretary, Timothy Coogan; Officers-At-Large, Sarah Durand, Francine Egger-Sider, Michael Frank, Karen Miller; Delegates to the DA, Timothy Coogan, Daniel Lynch, Sally Mettler, Sigmund Shen, George Walters; Alternates to the DA, Denise Carter, Sarah Durand, Michael Frank, Karen Miller; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Melanie Abreu, Terry Parker

**Queens College:** (New Caucus Slate) Chair, Jonathan Buchsbaum; Vice Chair, Hester Eisenstein; Secretary, Roopali Mukherjee; Officers-At-Large, Alyson Cole, Carrie Hintz, Jeff Maskovsky, Richard Maxwell; Delegates to the DA, Ann Davison, Jennifer Eddy, Hugh English, Carl Lindskoog, Stephan Pekar, Manuel Sanudo, Jack Zevin; Alternates to the DA, Duncan Faherty, Elena Frangakis-Syrett, François Pierre-Louis, Cicely Rodway, Bette Weidman; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Arthur Chitty, Marci Goodman

**York College:** (New Caucus Slate) Chair, Janice Cline; Vice Chair, Steven Weisblatt; Secretary, None; Officers-At-Large, Denise Agin, Lindamichelle Baron, Farley Mawyer; Delegates to the DA, Shirley Frank, Steven Weisblatt; Alternates to the DA, Jean Francois, Daniel Robie, Detlef Ronneburger; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Stephen Barrera, Sherrian Grant-Fordham

# New TIAA-CREF fund options

By CLARISSA GILBERT WEISS  
PSC Director of Pension & Welfare Benefits

CUNY has approved the introduction of 37 additional investment vehicles for employees and retirees who have TIAA-CREF either as their retirement program and/or their Salary Reduction Agreement (SRA). The change was effective April 1, 2008.

Participants and retirees can select from a wide range of "TIAA Access Annuities." You may have already been contacted by TIAA-CREF's campus consultants as they roll out information about the new choices. These consultants can provide you with fund-specific allocation information. Another way to get more information will be a customized website that TIAA-CREF will soon complete, available only to CUNY participants and retirees. The site will include information on plan eligibility, enroll-

## 37 additional vehicles

ment, contributions and investment choices and will have tools and calculators for retirement planning. (For the new site's web address, and more information on when it will go live, ask your campus human resources office or TIAA-CREF campus consultant. Notices will also be sent to instructional staff.)

### RISK

*Many of these new individual funds have heightened risk, and several are far more volatile than the original investment vehicles previously available to participants and retirees.* The PSC strongly urges members to read carefully the various prospectuses and especially past performance indicators and to meet with the campus TIAA-CREF

counselors and their own personal financial advisors before making any decisions.

For the first time, TIAA-CREF is now offering investment options outside of its own family of funds. These are limited to a small group of funds from Vanguard, American Funds, T. Rowe Price and Western Asset Management. With low fee structures similar to TIAA-CREF's own funds, they will be managed through TIAA-CREF for its participants.

Of the 37 new funds, seven are "lifecycle" funds. Lifecycle funds are a mix of fixed, equity and money market funds, with the proportion of each type of investment targeted to a participant's age and retirement

date. The participant picks an estimated retirement date, and TIAA-CREF automatically invests the money in what they feel is a correct mix. This mix will change over time, with more assets put into investments with highly predictable returns as the estimated retirement date gets closer. Participants can invest as little or as much as they wish, and can increase the amount or stop it whenever they choose. They can also change the retirement target date at any time.

A lifecycle fund will now be the default for individuals who do not choose any specific investment option at the time they join TIAA-CREF. Previously the default option was TIAA-CREF's money market fund. Participants can change from this default option at any time.

### New choices called "Access Annuities"

## Sign up for 9/11 registry by Aug. 13

By CLARION STAFF

If you worked on or near the World Trade Center ruins, it is important that you register no later than August 13, 2008, with the New York State Workers' Compensation Board. By registering, you will preserve your right to file a workers' compensation claim, in case you get sick in the future.

Last summer, the Workers' Compensation Law was changed to allow those who worked in the World Trade Center vicinity to file a claim for workers' compensation if they have or develop in the future a 9/11 related illness. But to do so, rescue, recovery and cleanup workers and volunteers – including BMCC faculty and staff – must register with the Workers' Compensation Board no later than August 13, 2008. However, to date, only about 40,000 people of the over 100,000 who qualify have registered.

### EXPOSURE

People who were exposed to toxic dust or psychological trauma while working in the area after 9/11 should protect their right to file a claim. The exact definition of recovery and cleanup work is left open; registering now may protect your rights in the future.

The law applies to those who worked in lower Manhattan south of Canal or Pike Streets, between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 12, 2002. For detailed information, visit the NY-COSH website at [www.nycosh.org](http://www.nycosh.org), or call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline, (866) WTC-2556. Find out about registration requirements now, before it's too late.

# Adjunct fund needs new support

By CLARION STAFF

As part of the last contract settlement with CUNY, the PSC received \$500,000 to develop a grant program to support professional development work by eligible adjuncts and continuing education teachers.

At the time, the PSC negotiators knew it would be very successful and urged CUNY to make this an ongoing fund. However, CUNY said the University needed proof that there would be a clear need for continuing funds. That proof is now well in hand.

From April 2007 to July 2007, the Adjunct Professional Develop-

## Temporary halt to applications

ment Fund awarded \$198,820 in grants. Since September 2007 the fund awarded another \$280,180 in further grants, for a total of approximately \$479,000. During this 14-month period, the fund received more than 360 applications and awarded 277 grants.

### SUSPENSION

The Adjunct Professional Development Fund is administered by a four-person committee appointed by the PSC president, which meets monthly to approve applications.

At its last meeting, the committee decided to suspend temporarily acceptance of new applications until such time as the University agrees to the PSC demand to continue support for the fund. (Funds still on hand may be needed to support grants already approved. Though all proposed spending under a grant application must be approved in advance, the exact cost of some items may not be known until after the work is done.)

"The union urges adjuncts and continuing education teachers to

help us tell the University how this fund has assisted them in their research, creative projects, and in attending classes and conferences," said committee member Norah Chase. "The strong demand for grants from the fund and the work the fund has supported testify to the scholarly talent among CUNY's part-time faculty."

Chase asked adjuncts and continuing education teachers who have received grants from the fund to e-mail accounts of their work and the difference that support from the fund has made. (Send them to Clarissa Gilbert Weiss, the fund administrator, at [cweiss@pscmail.org](mailto:cweiss@pscmail.org).)

# Union, CUNY reach agreement on fixing errors in adjunct pay

A recent grievance settlement expanded CUNY adjuncts' ability to file a grievance for full back pay if they are paid at an incorrect rate in the Spring 2008 or Fall 2008 semesters.

When CUNY sends out appointment letters for adjuncts, it is she or he is supposed to notify each part-timer of her or his title and rate of pay. If an adjunct is being paid at an incorrect rate, to win full back pay supposed to inform the college's human resources office of the error within 30 days of the start of the semester. Being notified of the rate of pay in the appointment letter is important to adjuncts' ability to report any errors in a timely manner.

### Letters with no rates of pay violate the contract

In January, the PSC filed a grievance charging that some colleges at CUNY had sent out appointment letters for the Spring 2008 semester that did not state adjuncts' titles or rates of pay, thus violating the requirements of the union contract.

Others did not receive appointment letters within the timeframe that the collective bargaining agreement requires. According to Section 10.1 (a) 3 of the PSC-CUNY contract, adjuncts must get notice of appointment or non-reappointment by December 1 for work in the Spring semester, and by May 1 for Fall semester employment (except

for adjuncts who are eligible for one-year appointments, who must receive such notice by May 15).

### BACK PAY

The settlement agreement provides that any adjunct who did not receive timely notice of rate of pay in the appointment letter for either the Spring 2008 or Fall 2008 semester, and later is informed of a rate of pay that is incorrect, has 30 days from the date they receive the letter to inform the college's human resources office about the error. If the adjunct informs the HR office within that time, will be able to collect the full amount owed, retroactive to the start of that semester.

— PH



## May 1 anti-war actions across CUNY

On May 1, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union shut down West Coast ports in a one-day strike to protest the war in Iraq and the damage it is causing to working people here at home. PSC members supported the action with anti-war events on 10 campuses. Two forums at Hostos drew more than 300 people; participants were reminded that celebration of May 1 as a workers' holiday began in the US in 1886. Above, protesting domestic effects of the war.

## CALENDAR

**MONDAY, JUNE 2:** 5:00 pm / AAUP ballots due in the AAA office, 1633 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.

**FRIDAY JUNE 6:** 4:00 pm / "First Fridays" meeting of the PSC Part-Time Personnel Committee. At the PSC office, 61 Broadway, 15th floor. ID needed to enter the building. For more information, contact Marcia Newfield, (212) 354-1252 or mnewfield@psccmail.org.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11:** 11:30 am / The Retirees' Chapter holds its end-of-year meeting and luncheon at the CUNY Graduate Center, 34th Street and Fifth Avenue. Contact Linda Slifkin, lslifkin@psccmail.org or (212) 354-1252.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11:** 12:30 pm / A memorial program for Israel Kugler, one of the founders of the PSC along with Belle Zeller, a lifelong champion of academic freedom, collective bargaining and democracy in the workplace. At the CUNY Graduate Center. Contact Linda Slifkin, lslifkin@psccmail.org or (212) 354-1252.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 14:** 12:00 pm / New Yorkers United, a broad coalition of unions, community groups, and faith and advocacy organizations, representing hundreds of thousands throughout the five boroughs, launches its Declaration of Principles for Immigrant Rights. At SEIU 32BJ, 101 Avenue of the Americas. (See below.)

**TUESDAY, JUNE 17:** 6:00 pm / PSC Women's Committee hosts a "read out," in which members and friends will read from their own works in progress. At the PSC office.

## 'Declaration of Principles for Immigrant Rights'

A broad coalition of unions, community groups, and faith and advocacy organizations, calling itself New Yorkers United, has drafted a Declaration of Principles for Immigrant Rights. The coalition represents hundreds of thousands of members throughout the five boroughs.

The launch of the declaration will take place on Saturday, June 14 at noon at SEIU 32BJ, located at 101 Avenue of the Americas, just north of Canal Street. The event will feature an explication of the principles; the circulation of pledge cards in support, and workshops on the myriad issues confronting New York's immigrant community. There will be food, music, and a variety of visual displays.

The event is designed to initiate an ongoing campaign to educate and energize working class communities in New York City about the problems and prospects facing immigrants and their families here in the city. The campaign strives to raise public awareness about immigrant rights and to hold public officials accountable for upholding them.

# Reading, writing and rubric: Journal Club

By DANIA RAJENDRA

Last Fall Jeff Bird, assistant professor of biogeochemistry in the School of Earth and Environmental Science at Queens College and the Graduate Center, offered a new course to graduate students in his program: "Journal Club."

The formal name of the class is Current Topics in Biogeochemistry, and Bird talked with *Clarion* about the thinking that lay behind it.

"As a department, we decided to start prioritizing seminar-style classes for our PhD and master's students," he said. "This is fairly common at most R-1 universities [referring to top-tier universities]," he said and is not a novel idea at CUNY. But the emphasis is an important one, and it led Bird to reflect on his own graduate education.

### BUILD COMMUNITY

As a PhD student at the University of California at Davis, he said, "I had the benefit of being in a large lab that had weekly meetings." As a post-doc, "We'd get together over beers and read a paper once a week. What we did is incorporate those ideas into something more formal and provide some assistance in developing those skills."

"If a department is big enough," Bird noted, "a lot of things can happen more casually." But in a smaller program such as his, he saw the need to be deliberate in offering students "additional coursework on some of their scholarship and research-related skills."

The journal club class required each of the 10 enrolled graduate students to present on a scientific paper published in a peer-reviewed journal and lead a discussion. This sharpened their grasp of critical reading, scientific writing and the process of peer review. It also helped build community within the department as a whole, a goal that Bird says has a big pedagogical payoff.

### WHY WE DO IT

Much of the class's value lies in "demonstrating to the students that we, as scientists, enjoy getting together and discussing papers," Bird told *Clarion*. "This is part of why we do what we do," he explained. "As our program grows, I felt it was essential that our students experience that....It's our responsibility as mentors of graduate students to provide that kind of atmosphere."

"I can't over-emphasize the importance of learning from fellow graduate students," he added. "Building those collegial relationships is important – they can last for a career."

In the course of the semester, Bird said, students learned that "just because a paper has been published in a peer-reviewed journal does not automatically make it a good paper." They developed a rubric for analyzing journal articles, which Bird said was "a nice way for students to articulate what they had learned through the semester."

### SHARPEN SKILLS

The class also developed students' skills in leading a discussion, including how to ask questions in a way that encourages further participation. It was so successful on that score that Bird incorporated elements of the journal club into the undergraduate class he taught this past Spring, Chemistry of the Global Environment.

Participation in the journal club class by his colleagues was invaluable, Bird said. He invited other members of the department to stop by for the seminar, and he was pleased that several did: "We had three or four faculty members who regularly attended."

"It's a good thing for graduate students to have discussions and interactions in a more informal way," Bird told *Clarion*. "It encourages collegiality. Your typical 'professor hat' and 'student hat' can be taken off a bit – it makes us more accessible." Students and faculty both benefit.

### MODEL

The journal club class allowed faculty to model for graduate students the importance of setting time aside for collective reflection and discussion. "The students are really busy," Bird noted. "They're taking classes, doing research, a lot of them teach. It's an important thing to encourage them to interact in an environment that isn't super formal."

Bird and his colleagues are planning a follow up course for next Fall. "We're thinking about offering classes on grant writing, scientific writing and scientific presentation," he said. "Those are very important parts of any job post-PhD, whether it's in the private sector or in academia."

Bird's experience in both sectors is something he draws on in his teaching and research at CUNY.



Assistant professor Jeff Bird, with undergraduate Anna Liu in his lab, introducing an ongoing course that builds skill and community among graduate students.

After completing his BS in soil science at Cornell, he worked for a while before earning an MS in plant and soil science at the University of Vermont. Then he worked as a soils specialist and agricultural program leader for Cornell Cooperative Extension before heading to UC Davis for his PhD in terrestrial biochemistry.

After a post-doctoral fellowship at UC Berkeley and Lawrence Na-

tional Laboratory, Bird said he wanted to work at a public or land-grant university "because of their historical mission of meeting the needs of the public." After focusing on research during his post-doc, he added, "I was very interested in teaching being a prominent part of my position while maintaining a robust research program. CUNY is a unique and perfect place to do that."

## TELLING THE TRUTH

# What does CUNY need – a raise or ‘modernization’?

By **STEVE LONDON**  
PSC First Vice President

**W**hat does CUNY need to better serve its students and all New Yorkers? There is a growing consensus across the University, among both instructional staff and administrators, about the need for three things:

- more full-time faculty and staff positions;
- higher salaries and lower teaching loads to recruit and retain faculty;
- increased capital funding to deal with deferred maintenance and an aging physical plant.

Both the PSC and CUNY management have put more full-time lines and increased operating and capital aid front and center in our message on the State and City budgets. In the course of the union's contract campaign, our members have heard from college presidents, provosts and deans of their understanding of our uncompetitive salary and teaching load, and the difficulties these create for the colleges in recruitment and retention.

Policy makers from the governor to City Council members also have heard of our need to lift average salaries that lag behind comparable public universities, of our need to replace physical infrastructure that has deteriorated. They understand our message: CUNY needs significant new resources to undo the effects of decades of underfunding.

As the University has aggressively sought to recruit and retain a new generation of instructional staff over the past eight years, its inability to compete effectively has become increasingly evident. Opinion makers in New York State are starting to acknowledge that CUNY and SUNY need major new investment. We should all promote that position.

## DISCORD

But Chancellor Goldstein has decided to introduce a discordant note into the midst of this growing agreement. In public appearances on college campuses and at national meetings, he has been saying that the PSC-CUNY contract has to be “modernized” to bring CUNY into the 21st century. When he speaks of “modernization,” he prominently mentions that the contract should provide for “performance-based” pay. We should also remember the other demands CUNY management currently

has on the bargaining table to restructure the contract, e.g., reduced job security, elimination of salary steps, and taking department chairs out of the PSC bargaining unit.

As the chancellor told the annual conference of the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions on April 7, “Flexibility, nimbleness, continuous investment, and performance rewards will and should be the way universities operate.”

## UNCOMPETITIVE

For its part, the union has made clear that to bring CUNY into the 21st century and better serve its students, it must solve three major structural issues that stand in the way of recruiting and retaining faculty: uncompetitive salaries, uncompetitive workload and an exploitative adjunct system.

For Goldstein, “modernization” of CUNY means more discretion and control for management, more hierarchy, and less job security for faculty and professional staff. These proposals provide for no new resources, just greater corporatization of the University.

## SCARCITY

In his April 7 speech, Goldstein points to the decline in government support for public higher education and accepts that this defunding will continue. His proposals to corporatize the University are thus situated within a mentality of scarcity, where management is charged with making do with less. Performance-based pay or “merit” pay fits into this model, because it allows for management to reward a chosen few with higher salaries. This strategy would allow management to burnish a “star” image while investing little in the vast majority of faculty and professional staff.

As he promotes this corporate strategy, the chancellor's message is that the Uni-

versity can operate effectively with scarce resources, that it can run on a shining exterior with a hollow core. Such a message, however, contradicts both the PSC's and CUNY management's State and City lobbying efforts.

This is a time when we all should be focused on a unified message that the lack of resources across a wide range of areas

Peer-reviewed, merit-based decisions on reappointment, promotion and tenure are routinely made throughout the University and have been for years. The contract has due-process protections to guarantee that this process is fair and unbiased.

Neither the chancellor nor other administrators have offered substantive criticisms of the merit-based system that CUNY already has. The vague assertion of the need to “modernize” is little more than a thin veil over an attempt to grab discretionary power for management without any real data to back it up.

## VAGUE ASSERTION

The union has reached agreements with management in past contract negotiations that dealt with real problems facing our members and the University. For example, the union agreed with management to extend the tenure clock for an additional two years to allow for additional time to review tenure candidates. Also, because of recruitment and retention problems, the union agreed to an over-scale provision that allows for salary to

increase up to 165% of base salary. While these agreements were controversial among our membership, in the end we agreed to them because, in part, they addressed real problems.

The contractual tools already exist for performance-based reappointment, promotion and tenure. The union has an obligation to our members and our students to see to it that all CUNY students get an excellent education – and this requires restoring all of our salaries to competitive levels. Cherry-picking a few faculty and staff to reward with extra compensation will do little to improve education for the vast majority of our students.

## PUBLIC SUPPORT

CUNY needs to win public support for making a new and significant investment in public higher education. To do so, the union and management should work together to promote unified themes based in the reality of our condition.

There is a real story to tell about how important CUNY is to New York and how seriously CUNY has been under-resourced since the fiscal crisis period of the 1970s.

There is a real story to tell about how difficult it is to recruit and retain faculty because our salaries and workload are uncompetitive. There is a real story to tell about how hard our faculty and professional staff work to serve CUNY students. And there is a real story to tell about how hard our students work to overcome great difficulties and receive an education.

Our students, above all, deserve our unified efforts and truth telling: CUNY needs a raise!



Truth in advertising: New York needs CUNY and CUNY needs a raise, this PSC TV commercial tells viewers in New York City and Albany.

compromises CUNY's ability to adequately serve our students. The chancellor's attack on the structure of the PSC-CUNY contract not only steps on such a unified message, his proposals imply to the public that there is a problem with faculty and staff performance that needs to be managed through a system of incentive pay. This is not true. The problem at CUNY is the entire salary scale is too low and we lack adequate resources.

As the chancellor well knows, the contract and CUNY bylaws already provide for an extensive system of performance-based reappointment, promotion and tenure, with faculty peer review. And the PSC has long advocated at the bargaining table that a similar performance-based promotional system should be extended to the HEO ranks.

**The problem is not our performance, it's that at CUNY we lack adequate resources.**

## Clarion MAY-JUNE 2008

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## BARGAINING

# Union responds to CUNY offer

By **BARBARA BOWEN**  
PSC President

**A**fter contract protests on a dozen campuses and a PSC demonstration at the April Board of Trustees meeting, CUNY representatives came to the table with an economic offer on Monday, May 12. They were joined at the bargaining session by the New York City Labor Commissioner and other City representatives. CUNY's initial economic offer is for a 37-month contract with increases of 3.15%, 3% and 3% plus an additional 2% to address other economic needs and a \$50 per capita increase to Welfare Fund contributions.

In proposing the 2% for additional economic needs, CUNY's representatives acknowledged that the PSC has identified several additional needs for this round of bargaining. They also cited management demands for "performance pay" and for the introduction of a new full-time faculty position in certain fields – a "clinical professor." Management's representatives made no mention of their demands (still on the table) to eliminate salary steps, reduce job security for HEO employees or remove department chairs from the bargaining unit.

## BEGINNING

I want to stress that CUNY's offer – which is more than eight months overdue – represents the *beginning* of the economic discussion. Much more discussion will follow, and already in the week since the offer was made, an accelerated schedule of informal meetings has begun. Given the worsening economic climate, however, the PSC bargaining team is concerned about CUNY's long delay in coming to the table with money. But now that the economic discussion has begun, we are prepared to work around the

clock to reach a settlement. Your pressure was essential in moving these negotiations forward and defining the major issues. It will continue to be important as we work to bring the talks to a close.

## INITIAL

While CUNY's initial economic proposal is a serious offer, it falls dramatically short of the amount needed to lift salaries to an acceptable level and address other critical issues. CUNY cannot wait to address the growing salary crisis. The gap between our salaries and salaries at comparable institutions has been growing for 30 years; it has reached the point where it must be addressed *now* if CUNY is to remain at all competitive nationally. Increases near the level of inflation will not begin to close the 20% salary gap separating CUNY and other comparable public universities.

Speaking for the union negotiating team, I responded to management's offer by stressing the need to add value to the economic package. CUNY's failure to provide competitive salaries is tearing the University apart. Untenured faculty are leaving for better jobs, senior scholars are being recruited elsewhere, and top candidates for CUNY positions are turning CUNY down. The future of the University is at stake. The union is aware of current economic conditions, but a salary offer of this size signals a lack of commitment to that future. CUNY has made sure that Chancellor Goldstein's salary remains competitive, increasing it by 58% since 2003. Our salaries must also increase.

At the bargaining table, we engaged CUNY's representatives in a discussion of enhancing the value of the economic package and affirmed our willingness to work



Gary Scholichet

**Long division: uncompetitive salaries are tearing CUNY apart.**

with management to rebuild CUNY salaries.

The union began this round of bargaining by identifying our collective priorities for this phase of contract negotiations and announcing them at our October 2007 mass meeting. We addressed those priorities – starting with salaries – at the May 12 session. CUNY management's offer suggested that they had heard our message about the importance of several issues beyond salary. Speaking for the union, I emphasized the urgency of raising the value of the top salary step in every title and every rank; of providing paid family leave; and of offering health insurance to the many instructional staff members at CUNY who are uninsured or underinsured. We discussed the need for stable health insurance

for eligible adjuncts, and both sides acknowledged that progress is being made on health insurance for graduate employees through other avenues.

While the union challenged several economic features of the offer and raised a number of technical questions, we also called on management to respond to the demand for adjunct job security. It is not acceptable – either pedagogically or ethically – for CUNY to go on treating half the faculty as if they were disposable. An adjunct can teach at CUNY for 15 years, contribute profoundly to students' CUNY experience, and then be told on a moment's notice that he or she is no longer needed. CUNY survived two decades of budget slashing by hiring a part-time labor force paid a fraction of full-time salaries. It is unfair and unbecoming of a university to turn its back on that labor force whenever the opportunity arises.

The union also objected to the concept of "performance pay." One-time awards of money, not added into base pay and given at the discretion of the college president, are no substitute for true salary increases. We need real salary increases, not fake ones. A similar provision, the "Performance Excellence Award," was included in the 1996-2000 contract; it was roundly rejected by members and not continued in later contracts. The PSC urged management to concentrate on across-the-board increases and raises to the top steps of all ranks rather than illusory and divisive proposals for "performance pay."

## OUR PRIORITIES

In the week since the May 12 session, the two sides have met in several smaller, informal meetings with the goal of making real progress. The union remains open to hearing further details of management's proposals, but we are committed to the priorities our members have articulated.

It was clear even from this initial economic session that our priorities have been heard, but unless the economic offer is expanded, CUNY will put a whole generation of faculty, staff – and students – at risk. We may need to call on you in the coming days and weeks to support the work of the bargaining team. Do not underestimate the power we have when we speak and act together. Stay in touch with the union, even if you are going away for all or part of the summer, by reading "This Week in the PSC," the union's e-mail bulletin and by checking the union website ([www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org)). Thank you for the support you have shown so far.

*If you don't currently receive "This Week in the PSC," you can sign up for this update at [www.psc-cuny.org/ThisWeek.htm](http://www.psc-cuny.org/ThisWeek.htm).*

## CUNY must add value to proposal

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY  
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## 15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

# Stay informed

Things are happening at the bargaining table. Stay abreast of the news – and possible union actions – by regularly checking the union's website, [www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org) this summer. There's a whole section on this round of contract negotiations, including news and

analysis. If you haven't already, you can sign up for the union's e-newsletter, "This Week in the PSC" by filling in the form at [www.psc-cuny.org/ThisWeek.htm](http://www.psc-cuny.org/ThisWeek.htm). Your union may need you this summer – and you'll want to know what's happening. Stay in touch.