

# Clarion

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



SEPTEMBER 2008



**35-HOUR WEEK**

## New HEO OT rules

Settlement on overtime pay and comp time for members.

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## AGREEMENT IS RATIFIED

# CONTRACT VOTE: 93% YES

Members voted 93% in support of the new PSC-CUNY contract. The 37-month deal provides for 10.5% across-the-board raises, with more for those on the top step and some lower-paid titles. Other provisions and side letters will establish doctoral employee health insurance, 100 more conversion lines, professional

development money and a fund for paid parental leave. Implementation of some provisions is immediate, while others – including retroactive pay – are likely to take some months. Above, at the American Arbitration Association, workers stacked ballots before the results were tallied.

**PAGES 2 and 3**

### BUDGET

## City, State slash funds for CUNY

Albany gouged \$68.3 million from CUNY's budget this spring and summer. Chancellor Goldstein's comments gave State lawmakers the green light.

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### OUR RIGHTS

## Free speech fight at BMCC

A campus referendum at BMCC to defund NYPIRG kicked off a First Amendment struggle between PSC members and the BMCC administration.

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### LOANS CUT BACK

## Banks ice out CC students

A Bronx Community College student shares his perspective on banks' decision to reduce their lending to community college students.

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### RAISES

## New contract's salary tables

See how your salary will change under the new collective bargaining agreement. The numbers for each step and each title are inside.

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# How did you vote on the contract & why?

Clarion's Roving Reporter talks with members at City Tech



Nicholas Jahr

**JEAN KUBECK**  
Assistant Professor  
Psychology

I voted for it. Why did I vote yes? I thought it was pretty reasonable and compared well to SUNY's contract and others in terms of salary.

The sick leave bank – that made sense to me, because when I worked in Colorado they had something like that. You could donate sick days for people who needed them, and that's the essence of what this is doing. It's a really good idea. And parental leave is a huge step forward for individuals with new kids, both for moms and for dads.

I would like to have seen something more for City Tech, because our teaching load is still one more course than the other senior colleges. In the last contract we came down from five and four, to four and four. I would have liked to have seen this contract move us to four and three.



Nicholas Jahr

**BARRY ANTOKOLETZ**  
Adjunct Lecturer  
Speech

I voted yes. Although it's never enough, it seems to be more than previous contracts. Given how hard it is to get anything out of the City, and the economic times we're in, I'm glad to get it settled.

This union, they take it a step at a time, and each time they get bolder and bolder. History shows that the union record is that whatever they don't get this time, they struggle for next time.

For me, the salary increase is going to total about 16% with the extra increase on the top step – and that's pretty good. More full-time lines for adjuncts, that's good.

My big sore point is unemployment. The law should be changed so adjuncts can get unemployment insurance without any trouble. If you don't get a summer job, or an inter-session job, you should get unemployment insurance like any other job.



Dave Sanders

**JAQUI ELLIOTT**  
Senior College Lab Technician  
Biology

I voted yes because I believe this was the best possible contract we could get right now.

We got a lot of advances in this agreement, like the paid parental leave and the sick leave bank. If we went back to the bargaining table, we could have lost many things that we had gained. We did not get everything, but I thought it was workable.

The salary differential for CLTs with a master's or doctorate – that's a first, and we need it.

It would apply to everybody that I know. And now that people are aware of this, it will encourage more people to go back to school and work for those degrees.

For the future, my basic belief is that by effective organizing and mobilizing across every title at CUNY, as well as the students, we can win a better contract and the public will benefit. Let's start working on it now.



Peter Hogness

**WENDY SCRIBNER**  
Adjunct Lecturer  
English as a Second Language

I voted no. I voted yes on previous contracts that had some of the same problems for adjuncts – but this time I just felt more impatient.

We had no real gains on job security. Every term most adjuncts, including me, go through terrible stress not knowing how many courses we'll have. I've worked in the CUNY system for 15 years – but until a few days before this semester started, I didn't know whether I'd have enough classes to keep my health insurance.

Also, giving the same percentage wage increase across the board widens the gap between adjuncts and full-timers. Personally, I'll get that extra increase on the top step – but most adjuncts won't.

I felt that the small gains for adjuncts, like conversion lines or the Professional Development Fund, weren't enough to vote yes. I respect the union and our leadership, but we need to do more to change the two-tier system.



Dave Sanders

**PAT RUDDEN**  
Professor  
English

I voted yes – enthusiastically yes. This contract isn't perfect, but it breaks important new ground in a number of areas, particularly the paid parental leave fund. We're the first public-sector union in New York to get this, and people on my campus are very excited about it. That includes some people who might otherwise have left the University.

It's probably the most exciting thing in this contract – although the raises are pretty exciting, too! They're not what we deserve, of course, but they're better than we've seen in quite a while, especially for the top salary step in each title.

Another good thing about the raises was the timing. With this State budget deficit, if they'd taken longer who knows what we would have ended up with? Also the timing was good because we aren't waiting for years without any raises, as in the past.

Interviews by Nick Jahr & Peter Hogness



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## New contract is powerful – if we enforce it

● I want to thank all of the activists who fought so hard to win the last contract. We made some important gains and are well positioned to start mobilizing for the next round of negotiations.

At LaGuardia's Opening Sessions, Barbara Bowen was happy to announce that this would be the first year under her administration that we are not negotiating a contract. It seems that in a year when we are not bargaining, it will be to our advantage to organize for contract enforcement. Since the contract is only as powerful as we make it, it is our responsibility to make sure that we use it as much as possible.

Workload seems like an enormously important issue for us to mobilize around using as many strategies as we can. Community College full-time faculty have begun

to organize themselves to address this issue, and I hope that other constituencies will do so as well.

**Karen Miller**  
LaGuardia Community College

### Organizers deserve respect

● At the Republican Convention, Governor Sarah Palin and former Mayor Rudy Giuliani both used the term “community organizer” as something to laugh at. Clearly they do not understand nor respect the work of the thousands of community organizers working in urban neighborhoods and rural communities across this country. Their ridicule of this honorable, skilled profession, to which Barack Obama committed himself after college, is an affront to the millions of low-income and working-class people who are struggling

to improve their conditions and better the lives of their neighbors.

Community organizers help bring ordinary people together to collectively solve problems. They work to improve housing, health care, schools, the environment and social services. They build and support local leadership and help create the kind of organizations that give invisible people a voice in the political process.

They work “in the trenches” for long hours with too low pay to bring people out of poverty and despair, instill hope and opportunity, and create resources that strengthen neighborhoods. They are the glue that keeps many communities from disintegrating and falling into decay. To Sarah Palin, Rudy Giuliani and John McCain: there are many ways to serve this country and to build a

secure America. We should honor the work, dedication and competence of community organizers.

**Terry Mizrahi**  
Hunter College School Social Work

### The personal is political

● The religious right was known for condemning teen pregnancy on moral grounds. But they have flipped; the 17-year-old daughter of vice presidential hopeful Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska is with child....She is accepted, supported and praised.

I agree that when kids get into trouble, families need our support, but I sense a racial double standard. I was more than stunned when I saw a Republican delegate on TV with a button on her hat that said, “I Support Unwed Mothers.” These

same political forces showed no such accepting attitude when they championed punitive welfare “reform” policies that penalize women for having children before marriage. While most mothers on public assistance have been white, the public wrongly assumed most were women of color – and Republicans used vicious attacks on “welfare queens” to win votes.

Republicans demand abstinence-only programs that prevent schools from teaching about contraception, abortion and safe sex. They cut services for pregnant teens. And Palin wants a Constitutional amendment to criminalize abortion, including cases of rape or incest. Yet she told the press, “We're proud of Bristol's decision to have her baby” – a decision she would take away from others.

Some think that Palin's daughter got a pass on unwed teen pregnancy because her family is affluent, white and on the Right.

**Mimi Abramovitz**  
Hunter College School of Social Work

# PSC members ratify contract

By PETER HOGNESS  
& DANIA RAJENDRA

## Wide support for 37-month deal

PSC members have ratified the union's tentative agreement with CUNY by a wide margin, in a vote with 93% in favor and 7% opposed. The results were announced on September 3 by the American Arbitration Association (AAA), which counted the ballots and oversaw the election.

Altogether 6,764 members voted "yes," while 480 voted "no." The margin of approval was somewhat greater than the ratification of the PSC's last contract in 2006, which won 87% approval.

### CREATIVE

The new 37-month collective bargaining agreement expires on October 19, 2010. Under its terms, all faculty and staff represented by the PSC will receive a total salary increase of at least 10.5%. Those who are on the top salary step will get an additional raise in October 2009, for an increase that totals 13.8% in the case of top-step full-timers, or 16.7% for top-step part-timers. There are additional increases for full-timers in salary ranges and Lecturers and for some others at the lower end of CUNY's salary scales. (See below and page 8 for more details.)

"The best thing about this contract is its creativity," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "In addition to decent salary increases, it stretches the available dollars to

provide bigger increases at the top and the bottom of the salary scale, and includes some equity provisions and advances we had sought for years. This creativity was possible because members organized. Their campaigns, on issues like parental leave or graduate employee health insurance, helped shape the agreement."

The union organized around the slogan "CUNY Needs a Raise," arguing that uncompetitive salaries had seriously weakened CUNY's ability to recruit and retain faculty and staff. The targeted raises for the top salary step were seen as a way to start closing the pay gap between CUNY and comparable institutions, even if the total economic package was constrained by the "pattern" imposed on public employee unions by New York City and State.

The contract includes a number of other new provisions, and several are detailed below. "But union victories are also reflected in what is *not* in this agreement," Bowen told *Clarion*. She noted that the PSC turned back management demands to eliminate salary steps, remove elected department chairs from the union, slash job security for those in the Higher Education Officer series and introduce so-called "merit pay."

PSC chapter chairs across CUNY said that their members were over-

whelmingly in support of the agreement. "I heard no one on campus say they wished it had been turned down," said Bob Cermele, chapter chair at City Tech and also a member of the union's bargaining team. "I think members were very appreciative of the contract." People generally felt that a "yes" vote was a no-brainer."

"Most people on my campus supported it," said Carl Williams, PSC chapter chair at John Jay. "They voted yes and were eager for this settlement." But that strong backing was not unanimous, Williams noted. "There were some adjuncts who strongly advocated for a no vote," he said. "I can understand their wanting better job security, and we will have to press on this issue in the next agreement."

### NOT PERFECT

One of those was Michael Seitz, an adjunct at John Jay. "I was terribly disappointed," Seitz told *Clarion*. "I felt I could not support it, so I joined the 'Vote No' campaign." Basic job security provisions for part-timers was one of the PSC's priority demands, but management took a hard-line stance against any changes.

Without gains in job security, argued Seitz, "then at least the settlement should not worsen inequity in pay – for me that was sort of a last

### Targeted raises on top salary step



Gary Scholicher

AAA workers opened ballots on Sept. 3.

straw." The larger top-step increase for adjuncts (see below) was described by union negotiators as a first step in closing the gap in pay, but Seitz said this was not enough: "What we needed was something

that would benefit the whole community of adjuncts, and this only benefits a minority."

The adjuncts on the bargaining team and the union's Executive Council all supported the agreement. "It was our opinion, having been in the thick of negotiations over the year, that this was the best we could do at this time," said bargaining team member Marcia Newfield. "I voted 'yes' for the conversion lines, professional development funds, graduate health insurance and an extra percentage at the top." Newfield and other EC members said that the PSC must find new ways to tackle adjunct job security. "We don't have to wait for the next contract fight to make progress in this area."

### TECHNOLOGY

Turnout was about the same as in the last contract vote two years ago, 54% compared to 56%. Albert Sherman, chair of the College Lab Tech chapter, said that the new use of Internet and telephone-based voting systems with secure passwords made it easier for members who had been away for the summer to cast their vote before the deadline. "I'd like to see more use of electronic tools by the union in the future," he said. "We can use technology to help democracy."

A total of 1,846 members cast votes via the Internet and 1,069 voted by phone, while 4,339 used the traditional paper mail ballot.

# When new contract provisions take effect

Many provisions of the new contract are now in effect, while others will be implemented over the next few months.

The first question for many members is, "When will we get our raises and retroactive pay?" In previous contracts, this has taken several months, as the State and City reprogram their computers and work out details with CUNY central administration. If past practice is a guide, this money would be seen in members' paychecks around the end of Fall semester, but the union is working with CUNY administration to see if it can be done sooner.

### NEW BENEFITS

The first salary increase, of 3.15%, is effective as of a year ago, September 20, 2007. The second increase, 4% compounded, is effective October 6, 2008. Thus, bargaining unit members who were on CUNY payroll on September 20, 2007, will receive the entire value of the first year's increase retroactively, plus some part of the increase that takes effect this October 6.

Further pay increases in this contract include a 3% increase, com-

## Raises, conversion lines & more

pounded, on October 20, 2009, and an additional increase on that date to the top salary step. (This extra top-step increase is 3.1% for full-time titles with salary steps and 5.75% for part-time titles with a step schedule.) The new salary schedules are detailed on page 8.

### COMMITMENTS

On doctoral employee health insurance, which was the subject of a side letter hammered out with the contract settlement, CUNY has committed to starting the new program with the Spring semester. The PSC is pressing for an earlier start date, and the issue is under discussion.

A provision that took effect as soon as the contract was ratified is the use of sick days to care for family members. Under the new collective bargaining agreement, members who accrue sick days may use up to three days per year for the care of a family member who is ill. Bargaining unit members have the right to use this benefit immediately; if you wish to do so,

inform your department chair or supervisor.

The contract also provides for establishment of a "sick leave bank" and a system of dedicated sick leave days, through which members with accrued sick days can donate them to others. The sometimes complex details of how these two new programs would function are still being worked out; the union will notify members as soon as these benefits can be used.

The new contract provides for CUNY to make the first of three annual contributions to the Adjunct Professional Development Fund effective September 28, 2008. The committee that administers the fund will reconvene to review applications in mid-October. (Note that applications must be approved before any grant-supported expenses are incurred.) The agreement provides for the HEO/CLT Professional Development Fund to continue under the same terms and conditions as in the last con-

tract. (See [psc-cuny.org/ProfessionalDevelopment.htm](http://psc-cuny.org/ProfessionalDevelopment.htm) for applications and details on both funds.)

Another side letter specified that CUNY will create 100 new Lecturer lines, full-time positions drawing from a hiring pool of experienced CUNY adjuncts. Just before *Clarion* went to press, Chancellor Goldstein announced the allocation of the first

50 lines among the colleges: as with the conversion lines created during the last contract, most colleges will receive three new lines. The next step is for presidents to allocate lines to departments, and then for departments

to do the hiring; the first 50 positions are to be filled before the start of the Spring semester. Despite recent budget cuts (see pages 5 and 12), CUNY has retained its commitment to hiring for the first 50 lines during this academic year, with the balance to be hired during 2009-10.

The new contract also contains a fund for paid parental leave. This provision was subject to enactment of unrelated State legislation on family leave, and that legislation did

not pass. But there is a strong commitment to making this benefit work, and discussions with the governor's office have continued throughout the summer. The contract makes this provision effective September 28, 2008, and the union has stressed that members who are expecting children this fall cannot wait. We will update you as soon as discussions are finalized.

### MENTORING

Under the new contract, the PSC and CUNY will create a pilot program on student mentoring, to operate on a limited number of campuses during the 2009-2010 academic year. This program will be developed in the current academic year, and that process is still in its early stages. A number of members have already contacted the union with useful ideas on how a student mentoring program might best be structured, and input from other members is encouraged. If you are interested in contributing ideas for this pilot effort, contact Kate Pfordresher at the PSC, (212) 354-1252 or [kpfordresher@pscmail.org](mailto:kpfordresher@pscmail.org).

# New Master Plan neglects most of CUNY

By KARAH WOODWARD

On June 23, the CUNY Board of Trustees unanimously approved the University's Master Plan for 2008-2012. Chancellor Goldstein told Trustees that the plan "embraces and advances the core values of this University."

University Faculty Senate (UFS) and PSC leaders said that while they support individual projects outlined in the plan, in many respects it neglects the vast majority of CUNY's students, faculty and staff. "In several ways, the Master Plan continues to move us away from what CUNY used to stand for, which was opportunity and access for all," said UFS Vice Chair Lenore Beaky.

"To meet its historic mission, CUNY must overcome major structural problems caused first of all by a historic withdrawal of public funding," said PSC First Vice President Steve London. "But the Master Plan leaves those structural problems largely unaddressed."

## PROBLEMS LOOM

"Between 1990 and 2003, CUNY lost, in real dollars, \$2,154 per full-time equivalent student," London noted. While the new CUNY plan addresses the University's capital needs in some detail, he said, the other structural issues caused by this lack of funding are given short

## Silent on funding shortfalls

shriff. "CUNY's academic labor system relying on highly exploited adjunct labor is not addressed. Recruitment and retention of full-time faculty are mentioned, but the plan voices no commitment to reversing the long-term erosion of salaries or tackling the reduction of teaching load, both of which are necessary for CUNY to become competitive and attract a new generation of scholars."

The new Master Plan puts special focus on the natural sciences at CUNY, as well as nursing and teacher education. It seeks smoother articulation between CUNY's community and senior college degree programs and emphasizes continuing the University's collaboration with NYC's Department of Education on various pre-college programs. The plan also calls for founding a new Graduate School of Public Health.

The document urges studying the creation of a new community college, probably in Manhattan. It also calls for a feasibility study on establishing "an academic program in pharmacy" at CUNY, an idea proposed by the UFS. "The pharmacy doctorate is something we have been trying to realize within CUNY for many years," said UFS Chair

Manfred Philipp. "It was mentioned in this plan and that is entirely new."

But UFS and union representatives say that, unfortunately, this kind of openness to faculty and staff input is very much the exception, not the rule, in this Master Plan.

## ADMINISTRATIVE

"It is a heavily administrative document," said Beaky, "one that in general does not support faculty governance and curriculum control." For example, she said, the plan does not describe faculty's role in the design of key initiatives like the proposed School of Public Health or expansion of "2 + 2" degree programs that link senior and community colleges. But such initiatives

need faculty participation in their initial stages of development, said Beaky – not just limited consultation after their basic direction is set. "Faculty governance should be involved from the beginning, with curriculum and program design approved by faculty members."

The new Master Plan heavily emphasizes programs that are seen as more selective or elite. In the section on hiring more full-time faculty, for example, more than one-quarter of

the space is devoted to the CUNY-wide Honors College, which enrolls less than 1% of CUNY students. The plan's section on the Honors College is as long as the section on community colleges, which enroll one-third of CUNY's student body.

The detailed discussion of the Honors College is not a problem in itself, said Philipp. What is of concern, he told *Clarion*, is that the plan neglects major areas of need. For example, the UFS had urged that the plan provide more resources for ESL and CLIP courses and more support for these students and those who teach them. "We need professional development for faculty who teach ESL students, and the students need more tutors and writing centers," said Beaky. The UFS also expressed disappointment that the plan did not ask for adjustments to New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), such as expansion of part-time TAP, that would better address the realities of CUNY students' lives.

## INVISIBLE ADJUNCTS

The terms "adjunct" or "part-time faculty" are not mentioned once in the entire Master Plan, and UFS representatives agreed with the PSC's criticism of the failure to mention those who teach half of CUNY's classes. The UFS had urged that the Master Plan include support for grant applications and measures to support contingent faculty as acad-

emics, such as access to office space, computers and printers.

The Master Plan sets a goal of 70% of instruction at CUNY provided by full-time faculty, a target that was also part of the 2000-2004 and 2004-2008 Master Plans. In fact, CUNY has cited this target since the mid-1990s – but the years since have seen only modest progress.

## CAPITAL PLAN

"The 6,700 full-time faculty in Fall 2007 is far from the 11,000 full-time faculty of CUNY in the 1970s, when enrollment was comparable to today's," London said. The CUNY-wide average for undergraduate courses taught by full-timers in 2004 was 48%, and the administration has not released University-wide figures since.

The section on capital spending at CUNY drew more support from union and UFS representatives. Here the Master Plan emphasizes the need to fund a backlog of projects for maintenance and repair, to protect health and safety at CUNY, and create good learning environments. The plan includes a new emphasis on environmental sustainability.

CUNY's Master Plan now goes to the New York State Board of Regents, which will vote on final approval of the plan this fall. The Regents held public hearings before voting on the previous Master Plan, but have not yet committed to doing so this time around.

# New CUNY trustee is lawyer vs. unions

By PETER HOGNESS

The newest member of the CUNY Board of Trustees is Peter S. Pantaleo, head of the employment law division of DLA Piper, the largest law firm in the United States. A member of CUNY's Business Advisory Council, he is the first trustee to be named by Gov. David Paterson. Pantaleo was nominated on June 4 and confirmed by the State Senate soon after.

"I'm really enthusiastic about the notion of high-quality public university education," said Pantaleo. "My dad was an operating engineer, and I come from a fairly modest immigrant family background. CUNY is a phenomenal idea that seems to be working pretty well."

## HOTELS & GAMBLING

Pantaleo has practiced corporate-side labor law for many years, representing management in its conflicts with employees and their unions. Employers in the hotel and gambling industries have been a specialty: for example, Pantaleo represented MGM in its battle to prevent unionization of the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, then the largest hotel in the world.

DLA Piper describes Pantaleo's

## Paterson's first appointment

practice as "advising multinational employers on complex, politically sensitive labor and employment matters." He is one of two top executives in charge of its global employment and pensions group, head of its labor law division for the US, and managing partner of the firm's New York office.

DLA Piper notes that Pantaleo "has represented employers confronted with traditional union organization efforts as well as corporate campaigns." For those who wish to maintain "a union-free environment," the firm says, Pantaleo's division can provide a wide range of services: "When union activity arises, we work closely with the company to combat organizing efforts and the election campaign. This may cover the entire spectrum from advice on strategies, methods and techniques, to representation before the NLRB in unfair labor practice charges."

Unionized employers are advised that DLA Piper "provide[s] assistance in all aspects of the management-union relationship," from contract negotiations to "union decertification."

"I personally represent unionized employers almost exclusively," Pantaleo stressed in an interview with *Clarion*. "We represent some pretty union-oriented, enlightened employers. For example, casinos are pretty heavily regulated, and MGM Mirage recognized pretty early on that collegial, cooperative relations with labor offer an advantage" in that environment.

## TWO SIDES

Pantaleo downplayed the extent of his firm's work in opposing unionization and said he had negotiated many management neutrality agreements for union organizing drives. "I'm a management labor lawyer," he said. "But it takes two sides to have a collective bargaining agreement." Speaking personally, he said, "I actually am a proponent of collective bargaining."

In addition to union-management relations, Pantaleo directs the labor law group's work on civil rights issues, retirement plans, and workplace health and safety. "Our lawyers have represented corporations that have been cited by OSHA in some of the most serious fatality cases in the past 10 years," the com-



Peter Pantaleo

pany notes. "Our defenses have involved the sophisticated use of experts...when millions of dollars of corporate assets were at issue."

Pantaleo often speaks at meetings of health care employers, in addition to those in the hotel and gambling industries. His firm says he is "recognized as an authority on European Union social policy" and has written on EU regulations on gender discrimination and part-time work.

Formerly president of Verner Lipfert, a Washington law firm whose partners included former Sens. Bob Dole and George Mitchell, Pantaleo joined DLA Piper when the two firms merged in 2002. He received his law degree at the University of North Dakota in 1976, after earning his bachelor's degree at the University of Wisconsin.

## BIPARTISAN

Pantaleo's political donations have been bipartisan. In 1999 he contributed to Elizabeth Dole's and John McCain's campaigns for president, while in 2008 he gave to the presidential bids of Chris Dodd and Joe Biden. By far his largest donations, however, have been to his own firm's Political Action Committee.

"Twelve of the 15 voting members of the CUNY Board are current or retired corporate officers," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "Not one is from an organization that represents labor – though thousands of union members and their children depend on CUNY." While the PSC will judge Pantaleo based on his actions as a trustee, Bowen said, his appointment "raises a red flag."

"With all the fabulous labor and community leaders we have in New York, why appoint someone who made his career and his money fighting against working people?" said Bowen. "It's time for appointments from the organizations whose members have a stake in the future of CUNY."

# State slices CUNY budget twice

By DANIA RAJENDRA

CUNY was hit with a \$50.6 million cut in State funding in August, after the Legislature approved reductions proposed by Gov. David Paterson. The move came on top of \$17.7 million in cuts that were part of the State budget passed last spring and a \$5.9 million reduction in City aid to community colleges.

The PSC fought the cuts hard, lobbying lawmakers, asking members to speak out and generating press coverage across the state. "Opposition among legislators to the governor's additional August cuts was strong," said PSC First Vice President Steve London. "Then, we heard that CUNY management sent the message that CUNY could handle the cuts. This made further opposition difficult."

Chancellor Goldstein indicated that more than half of the cuts will be covered by surpluses from the FY08 CUNY budget and the use of capital funds, for a net operating budget cut of \$18.6 million. He said CUNY would continue hiring some full-time faculty "for replacement purposes and for new positions already...in each college's financial plan," as well as some "staff who provide direct services to students." But he said the cuts would require a hiring freeze for all non-instructional staff and strict limits on other spending.

"It's preposterous to suggest that CUNY can withstand this level of cuts after two decades of fiscal starvation and not be hurt," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "We feel that it is absolutely the wrong signal

## City leaves capital \$ on the table

for the Legislature to send about CUNY's ability to endure disinvestment by the State," she told *The Chief*.

Goldstein said that there would be no reduction of "direct student services" or course cancellations, but as *Clarion* went to press there were reports at Brooklyn College that some courses were axed due to cuts in the adjunct hiring budget.

### FEW CHOICES

"We weighed all the available options but there are precious few choices," BC President Christoph Kimmich told the *Excelsior*, the college's student paper. "What we have to do is (a) reduce the funds we normally set aside for hiring adjunct faculty and (b) postpone or defer maintenance, renovation, repairs, painting and the like.

This will probably have the effect of reducing some courses we offer now..."

Citing a ballooning budget deficit, Paterson summoned legislators back for a special session in August and called for State spending reductions of 7% across the board. Legislators did reject proposed cuts in the State's base aid to both SUNY and CUNY community colleges and to the State's Tuition Assistance Program, reflecting these constituencies' opposition to further cuts.

Albany corridors were buzzing with speculation about why Goldstein had backed off from firm opposition to the CUNY cuts. Top

SUNY administrators spoke openly about the State budget squeeze as "an opportunity" to win support for a new policy of permanent, annual tuition hikes, and some wondered if the CUNY chancellor had similar ideas.

Annual tuition increases are part of Goldstein's "CUNY Compact" proposal for financing the University, which calls for tuition increases to finance the majority of the costs of programmatic increases. At the University Student Senate retreat at the start of this semester, Goldstein said bluntly that a tuition hike at CUNY is necessary.

The PSC has strongly opposed tuition increases at CUNY. "In times of economic hardship, investment in higher education should be increased, not cut," London said. "Tuition increases would put new financial burdens on our student body in an already difficult economic climate and make retention and increased graduation rates – some of CUNY's important goals – even harder to achieve. There is no substitute for public funding."

### TUITION HIKES

The union has also pointed out that past tuition hikes have often left CUNY with less net revenue than before: higher tuition has been imposed along with cuts in State support, which then reduced the baseline for public funding in future years.

"The essence of the 'Compact' is supposed to involve an increase in State funding as a precondition for tu-



PSC Secretary Arthurine DeSola spoke against the State budget cuts on August 15.

tion hikes," said London. "At a time when we are starting the next budget cycle \$68 million in the hole, it would go against the Compact's own logic to raise tuition," said London.

Last spring's City budget didn't help CUNY students' burdens. Cutting City aid to community colleges by \$5.9 million and a 39% reduction in the Vallone Scholarships were bad enough. In some ways worse was the City's failure to meet State capital appropriations for CUNY, which left \$157 million "on the table," including money badly needed for the replacement of Fiterman

Hall, the BMCC building destroyed on 9/11.

In May, 150 PSC members and students were joined by 14 City Councilmembers in speaking out at City Hall against Bloomberg's cuts. This grassroots lobbying got some substantial restorations: the Council restored \$24.4 million to the community college operating budget and provided \$10.6 million for student services and programs. But while the picture was less bleak than at the State level, the union called the final City budget "disappointing."

# Obama, McCain differ on higher education policy

By PETER HOGNESS & KARAH WOODWARD

Comparing Barack Obama's and John McCain's positions on higher education, one thing is clear: the Obama campaign has given the topic a lot more attention. The McCain campaign did not release a higher education policy statement until August 15, and it adds up to six short, general paragraphs. Obama released his months ago and it runs for several pages, presenting a number of proposals that are fairly detailed.

### PELL GRANTS

The two candidates have different views on student aid, the focus of most federal higher education policy. When Obama was elected to the US Senate, the first bill he introduced called for raising the maximum Pell Grant from \$4,050 to \$5,100, and he supported subsequent changes that raised it to \$5,400. On student loans, Obama favors ending federal subsidies to private lenders and instead expanding the publicly

funded Direct Loan program, which he says costs less but provides the same benefit. McCain has repeatedly voted against increasing the Pell Grant maximum; he supports continuing the role of private lenders and in 2005 voted to allow them to raise interest rates on some student loans.

Obama's "American Opportunity Tax Credit" would provide a \$4,000 education credit for students who commit to 100 hours of community service. The credit would be fully refundable: low-income families who pay less than that amount in taxes would still receive the full \$4,000 benefit. McCain does not call for any new tax benefits for higher education. He says only that "existing tax benefits are too complicated" and that more people would take advantage of them if they were simplified.

In one of their few points of agreement, McCain and Obama both say that federal student financial aid has become too complex. Obama calls specifically for getting rid of the 127-question FAFSA application form.

He would replace it with a box to check on federal tax returns, allowing financial aid information to be filed automatically. McCain offers more general support for "consolidating programs" and simplifying the application form, but does not specify how.

Beyond student aid, Obama proposes to boost direct support to colleges. His Community College Partnership Program would provide new grants to two-year institutions to analyze which skills are in high demand in the local job market and help prepare students for those jobs. It would also support community colleges that increase the number of students who attain their AA degree and/or the number who transfer to senior colleges. McCain has no proposals to increase direct aid to institutions of higher education.

Obama also supports doubling federal funding for basic research and praises the role that "institutions of higher learning have served as the nation's primary research

and development laboratories." Another funding priority for the Democratic nominee would be a new program of grants for "outstanding early-career researchers."

### MOCKING RESEARCH

McCain's main comment about federally funded research has been to highlight – and ridicule – a study of grizzly bear DNA. "Three million dollars to study the DNA of bears in Montana," growls a McCain TV ad. "Unbelievable!"

Researchers at the US Geological Survey say that in fact the study is key to determining whether or not the bears are still an endangered species: barbed-wire stations in the forest snag fur from passing bears, and genetic fingerprinting then allows scientists to build an accurate population count.

McCain's higher education policy statement promises that "eliminating earmarks would immediately and significantly improve the federal government's support for university research" by avoiding the diversion of research budgets into

"pork barrel projects." However, McCain has said that eliminating earmarks will pay for tax cuts, US troops in Iraq and a balanced budget. Given that in 2005, the Office of Management and Budget put the total cost of earmarks in the federal budget at \$18.9 billion – less than the US spends in Iraq every two months – it's not clear how much would be left over for research funding.

Aside from earmarks, McCain's Web site says almost nothing about federal research support; instead it emphasizes tax breaks for privately funded R&D.

The differences in the two candidates' approaches to these issues might be related to Obama's 12 years on the faculty of the University of Chicago. But whether the reasons are partly personal or purely political, Obama's and McCain's stands on higher education present a study in contrasts.

*The AFT, the PSC's national affiliate, has endorsed Barack Obama for president. Union members from New York will be working to help him win, both locally and in other states. If you'd like to get involved in the PSC's efforts, contact Amanda DeJesus Magalhaes at adejesus@pscmail.org or (212) 354-1252.*

## CUNY IN BRIEF

### CSI moves to start construction on dorms

CUNY announced in 2005 a plan to build a new 600-bed dorm on the College of Staten Island campus. At the June Board of Trustees meeting, the BoT approved a resolution to move forward with construction. The project will be financed with \$86 million in tax-exempt bonds.

Last February CSI administration told the *Staten Island Advance* that they hoped to break ground this fall and complete construction by the end of the Spring 2010 semester. The dorms would consist of two four-story buildings and one five-story building. They would be the first student residences on the commuter campus.

### Almost-free tuition for recent vets

Under a new State tuition benefits program, veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan will have more help with tuition, CUNY announced in July. Awards for veterans who attend CUNY this fall will be set at 98% of tuition or \$4,287.50, whichever is less, CUNY said on its Web site.

Governor Paterson suggested cutting the benefit almost immediately after signing it. When he called the Legislature back for its special session, he proposed a 50% reduction to the program, but it was exempted after negotiations with legislators.

"It's outstanding that New York has stepped up to get education benefits for veterans," Iraq veteran Paul Rieckhoff told the *Daily News*, "but the federal government needs to step up and follow their lead."

### Sarah Palin & CUNY: parallel lives?

While mayor of Wasilla, vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin ordered the town's public employees not to speak to the press without her permission. LaGuardia PSC members might remember what that's like.

In November 2005, LaGuardia Community College President Gail Mellow told all faculty and staff to consult with her office before talking with reporters. (See *Clarion*, March 2006.) But LaGuardia faculty and staff didn't take the decree lying down. With the PSC, they fought this violation of their constitutional right to free speech and won a "re-clarification" of the policy, as a request, not a rule.

Baruch College's administration tried to impose the same edict in 2006, but also backed off after a firm union response.

As mayor of Wasilla, Palin also expressed interest in banning certain books from the town library – and tried to fire the librarian, who had vowed to resist. So far no CUNY colleges have shown interest in following this example.

# BMCC chapter wins free speech tussle with management

By KARAH WOODWARD

In the final days of Spring semester, the administration at Borough of Manhattan Community College ordered faculty and staff not to express their opinions about a campus referendum on student fees. But a strong response from the union forced the administration to retreat from its original position.

"The PSC and its members fully intend to continue to speak out on this and other issues, regardless of the administration's attempts to stifle free speech and public debate," wrote PSC Chapter Chair Rebecca Hill in a May 8 open letter. A month later, a new statement from the college administration acknowledged PSC members' right to do so.

## STUDENT REFERENDUM

At issue was a student referendum on funding for BMCC's chapter of the New York Public Interest Group. NYPIRG is the largest student-directed advocacy organization in New York State and is active on nine CUNY campuses.

At many colleges, students have voted to support NYPIRG through student activity fees. At BMCC, the group is supported by a \$4 assessment that students have reaffirmed in repeated referendums since NYPIRG came to campus in 2003. Last Spring's referendum at BMCC would have defunded NYPIRG, di-

## First Amendment rights at issue

recting the money to a study abroad program instead.

NYPIRG tackles a range of issues, and many – such as fighting budget cuts and tuition hikes at CUNY – also affect faculty and staff. BMCC's PSC chapter has organized with NYPIRG on some of these campaigns: for example, in May and again in August the two groups worked together on City Hall protests against CUNY budget cuts.

In response to the referendum, NYPIRG appealed to students for support and asked the PSC to make its voice heard. Fifty union members signed a statement, which NYPIRG circulated as a poster and leaflet. Ron Hayduk, a union delegate who has worked with NYPIRG, also circulated his own letter encouraging faculty to speak with students and urge them to vote "no" on the referendum.

"The way the referendum was framed was a little misleading," said Hayduk, an associate professor of political science. "A lot of faculty were not clear that essentially the referendum would defund NYPIRG completely, not just transfer some funds to the student abroad program. I felt people needed to be better informed."

On May 1, BMCC Vice President

Robert Diaz wrote to both the entire college staff and to Ron Hayduk individually, citing student election rules and insisting that faculty and staff must maintain "a posture of neutrality" in the NYPIRG referendum. Diaz wrote to Hayduk that his letter had "crossed the boundary of free speech" and was "not acceptable."

## College administration acknowledges faculty's right to free speech

"There is in fact no rule prohibiting faculty from speaking out on referenda such as the one to defund NYPIRG," stated Hill's May 8 response, which was also circulated to BMCC faculty and staff. "We are part of the campus community, and we have a right to speak up about political decisions that will affect our lives here." The administration's gag order "violates the core rights of our members and the entire community of BMCC," said Hill.

## PUBLIC ISSUES

"Students have the right to organize a referendum on any of a variety of public issues," said Charlie Post, associate professor of social science and the chapter's grievance officer. "NYPIRG's role is just one of them. If, say, the military were recruiting on campus, that might be

the subject of a student vote. And faculty and staff clearly have the right to express their opinion on any of these controversies."

Peter Zwiebach, the union's director of legal affairs, told *Clarion* that the rules cited by Vice President Diaz on faculty neutrality did not apply – but that even if they did, they would be unconstitutional. "These rules clearly speak to elections for student government office, not a referendum," Zwiebach observed. "However, the most important issue here is that BMCC can not institute election policies to limit the fundamental right to freedom of speech."

## GAG ORDER

Union activists also pointed out that management's attempt to restrict free speech was applied unequally. For more than a decade, a faculty member at Brooklyn College has advocated for an end to NYPIRG's funding from student fees on that campus, but he has faced no reprimands or censorship from campus administration.

And at BMCC this Spring, the administration had in fact allowed faculty to assist the anti-NYPIRG referendum. Earlier in the semester, the first effort to get the student referendum on the ballot had failed due to lack of signatures. After the administration gave the green light to a second attempt, students supporting the referendum recruited faculty members to help them gather signatures. Hill's letter noted that the administration knew about this practice but took no action against it, and she said this was a clear case of "unequal treatment of faculty speech, based solely on viewpoint."

When the votes were in, NYPIRG won by a comfortable margin and retained its funding. The following month, BMCC management retreated from its earlier stance and the gag order was withdrawn.

## UNEQUAL

"As a matter of First Amendment law and consistent with shared governance, the faculty has a right to comment on such matters," wrote Vice President Diaz in a June 10 e-mail message to the entire campus. However, the administration still urged faculty to avoid commenting on political debates within the student body: "The administration believes that campus civility and harmony are best achieved when faculty members do not inject themselves into the internal affairs or disputes of the students," Diaz wrote.

"The PSC is committed to defending academic freedom and freedom of speech on campus," responded Hill. "It's a fundamental part of our lives as scholars, and it is crucial to the health of the University that faculty can speak on issues that are curricular and extracurricular."

## Solidarity begins at home



PSC members Avi Bornstein and Deadra Brown brought their children to the Labor Day Parade on September 6.

# Agreement reached on HEO overtime

By DANIA RAJENDRA

Overtime by employees in the Higher Education Officer series (HEOs) was the subject of a major agreement reached this summer between CUNY and the PSC.

The late July accord followed union victories in a grievance and a lawsuit on the overtime issue, with the PSC charging that CUNY had violated both the union contract and federal law. The violations? That CUNY management routinely required HEO-series employees to work more than the contractual 35 hours per week – without compensation.

The union won a settlement in the lawsuit in April 2007 and won the grievance three months later when an arbitrator ruled in the PSC's favor. Following these decisions, the PSC and CUNY worked out the recent implementation agreement on how HEOs can claim their time.

Now, all HEOs who work between 35 and 40 hours a week should have the extra time returned to them as compensatory time off (or "comp time"). For overtime beyond 40 hours, HEOs will get either comp time or pay at time-and-a-half, depending on their specific job.

## IT'S THE LAW

Under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), most Assistants to HEO and many Higher Education Assistants must get overtime pay after 40 hours in a week. Most HE Associates and Higher Education Officers are defined as "exempt" under the FLSA and will thus get comp time rather than pay for hours above 40. (See below for more details.)

As part of the agreement, members will get compensation for past overtime worked between July 19, 2007 (the date of the arbitration decision), and June 24, 2008, if they

## Members file for money, time



Ganga Persaud spoke up about overtime and HEOs.

submitted a valid claim by August 24. Arthur Ecock, a HEO who works in the CUNY central administration's computer center, turned in a claim for 299 hours and 36 minutes. The numbers came from the University's own computing data, said Greg Dunkel, a coworker and chair of the PSC's Central Office chapter: "This is down to the minute of when he logged on, when he logged off."

"I am a systems programmer," explained Ecock. "I'm responsible for a wide variety of applications, such as the CUNY portal directory servers." When something breaks, he's responsible for fixing it. "I average 10 to 15 hours a week of overtime," said Ecock. "We are severely understaffed."

Ecock has worked at CUNY for 28 years, and he hopes that reckoning with his overtime will push supervisors to hire more staff. "I am FLSA exempt, so my motivation is not monetary," he noted. "I could certainly use the additional 40-plus days of time off that 299 hours represents. Adding it all up pushed me to realize that, really, I am working too much. It's very easy to burn out," he said. "You put in these hours and you don't get appreciated."

## IT'S A VICTORY

Ganga Persaud is an Assistant to HEO, and one of nine PSC members at LaGuardia Community College who filed the grievance and the lawsuit. He's proud of what they

achieved – a change that benefits thousands of union members. "I just put in my timesheet for 42 hours in a week I recently worked," Persaud told *Clarion*. "That's two hours of pay and five hours of comp time. It is a victory, because in the old days we would have gotten nothing for working those hours."

Some HEOs said that the possibility of recouping their time helped make the long hours of registration more bearable this year. "Several students waited from 10 am until 4:30 pm to register," said Higher Education Associate Peter Holoman, an academic advisor in the Student Advocacy and Support Services Center at Medgar Evers College. "You just can't say to these people, 'No, I'm not going to help you. I'm going home now.' Some of my coworkers didn't leave until 9:30 pm." As a campus HEO leader, he said, "I told them, 'Make sure you account for that time.'" Just as important, he added, was to ensure management was aware of his colleagues' work hours.

The settlement covers overtime that is "assigned" – which means overtime must be authorized, in advance and in writing, by an administrator designated by the college president. When asked to work overtime, HEOs should request the authorization in writing, which should be provided at least 48 hours in advance whenever possible.

Overtime is also "assigned" when it results from a specific project assigned by a supervisor in addition to one's usual responsibilities. A common example would be when HEOs are detailed to work registration, which happens on every CUNY campus.

"It's just the reality," says HEO Chapter Chair Jean Weisman.

"Everyone has to work overtime at registration." But other situations are less clear-cut. Old habits die hard, Weisman noted, and both management and union members are accustomed to HEOs working endless hours but getting nothing in return.

## IT'S A CULTURE CHANGE

So Weisman and others are encouraging HEOs to speak up, in order to get the compensation they deserve. "We need to start changing the culture," she told *Clarion*. "For too long, CUNY management has taken advantage of our commitment to our students, our colleagues and our programs. If there is more work to be done beyond 35 hours, we deserve to be compensated for that time."

"People are used to working OT and not saying anything," agreed Bob Nelson, deputy director of Student Services and Information Systems at the Graduate Center. "The culture says, don't complain, just do it." But his own story is a lesson, he said, in the value of bucking that trend.

Nelson began at the Graduate Center in 1979, and started to speak out about overtime in late 1981. Finally, he said, his directors listened.

"Eventually," he said, "the GC itself was responsive. I got work-study help," and later more staff. "That was great for me, and it meant I had more time for myself," said Nelson. "What I did with that time was educate myself, and as a result of that, I was promoted, and I got more significant – and more satisfying – positions." That time, and that opportunity, should be available to everyone, he said. "The culture should be that there should be enough people here to do the job."

Changing the culture of donating time to CUNY

# Answers to FAQs about HEO OT settlement

**1. What is overtime?** Overtime hours are those a HEO-series employee is assigned to work in excess of his/her usual 35-hour workweek. If a supervisor assigns a HEO-series employee to perform a specific project in addition to his/her usual responsibilities, and the project requires the employee to work beyond his/her regularly scheduled 35-hour workweek for a defined period in order to complete the project on time, those excess hours are also overtime.

**2. What is compensatory time?** Compensatory time is time off equal to the number of hours worked in excess of the 35-hour workweek.

**3. Who is eligible?** All HEO-series employees are entitled to compensatory time. HEO series employees who are "non-exempt" under the Fair Labor Standards Act (primarily Assts. to HEO and HE Assts.) are entitled to

receive compensatory time for hours assigned between 35 and 40 hours in a week and payment at the rate of time-and-a-half for hours worked beyond 40 in a week. HEO series employees who are "exempt" under the Fair Labor Standards Act are entitled to receive compensatory time for all hours assigned in excess of the 35-hour workweek.

**4. How does compensatory time differ from overtime payments?** Overtime is payment for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek as defined by the FLSA. HEO series employees who are "non-exempt" must receive payment (not compensatory time) at the rate of time-and-a-half for hours worked in excess of 40 hours. Most Assistants to HEO and many HE Assistants are "non-exempt" and eligible for overtime payments. Most HEO Associates and Higher Educa-

tion Officers are "exempt" under FLSA and not eligible for overtime payments from the University for hours worked beyond 40 in any workweek, but are eligible for compensatory time. If you are unsure of your status as either "exempt" or "non-exempt," contact the Human Resources Director at your college.

**5. What do I do if I think I am misclassified?** The first step is to clarify your classification with the Human Resources Director at your college. Then, call the union and speak to a HEO grievance counselor to discuss your situation.

**6. How do I earn compensatory time?** When you are assigned overtime beyond your 35-hour workweek and have received written authorization in advance and your time record reflects the additional hours worked, you are entitled to receive compen-

satory time for hours worked between 35 and 40 if you are "non-exempt." If you are "exempt" you are entitled to receive compensatory time for all hours worked in excess of your 35-hour workweek.

**7. How do I use earned compensatory time?** The earning and the use of compensatory time will be recorded based on the contractual HEO "leave year" (September 1 – August 31) and will be reported on a quarterly basis. Compensatory time should be scheduled to be used as promptly as possible within the quarter in which it is earned and must be used no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the quarter. It will be scheduled by the supervisor in consultation with the employee.

**8. What if I am told to work in excess of my 35-hour workweek and my supervisor refuses to authorize over-**

**time?** In these situations, immediately contact a HEO grievance counselor for guidance.

**9. What if I am given too much work to do in a 35-hour workweek and my supervisor tells me I should be able to complete this work within the 35-hour workweek?** The contract protects against members being required to work an excessive number of hours or being assigned an unreasonable schedule. Depending on the circumstances, you may have the right to file a grievance. Please contact a HEO grievance counselor for guidance in these situations.

To contact a PSC HEO grievance counselor, call the union office Tuesday through Friday between 10 am and 4 pm at (212) 354-1252. A more detailed version of this Q&A is on the union Web site at [www.psc-cuny.org/HEO/HEO35hourWorkweek.pdf](http://www.psc-cuny.org/HEO/HEO35hourWorkweek.pdf).

# The new contract's salary schedules

## In effect through Oct. 2010

Below are the salary schedules negotiated under the new union contract for all CUNY titles in the PSC's bargaining unit. The first column reflects the salary steps on the last day of the previous contract; the following columns reflect the increases to the salary steps under the new agreement, ratified on September 3 (see page 3). Educational Opportunity Center salary schedules will be published after completion of negotiations on the EOCs. See [www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org) for answers to frequently asked questions in the special contract issue of *Clarion*, the new salary schedule and other contract documents.

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>PROFESSOR</b>			
\$ 62,268	64,229	66,799	68,803
64,728	66,767	69,438	71,521
67,285	69,404	72,181	74,346
69,636	71,830	74,703	76,944
71,716	73,975	76,934	79,242
74,483	76,829	79,902	82,299
77,249	79,682	82,870	85,356
80,020	82,541	85,842	88,418
82,820	85,429	88,846	91,511
85,621	88,318	91,851	94,606
89,082	91,888	95,564	98,431
92,541	95,456	99,274	102,253
95,997	99,021	102,982	106,071
98,726	101,836	105,909	109,087
102,235	105,455	109,674	116,364

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR</b>			
\$ 50,321	51,906	53,982	55,602
52,301	53,948	56,106	57,790
54,362	56,074	58,317	60,067
56,713	58,499	60,839	62,665
58,787	60,639	63,064	64,956
61,563	63,502	66,042	68,024
64,323	66,349	69,003	71,073
67,092	69,205	71,974	74,133
69,405	71,591	74,455	76,689
71,716	73,975	76,934	79,242
74,483	76,829	79,902	82,299
77,249	79,682	82,870	85,356
80,020	82,541	85,842	88,418
82,136	84,723	88,112	90,756
84,902	87,576	91,079	96,635

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>ASSISTANT PROFESSOR</b>			
\$ 38,801	40,023	41,624	42,873
40,321	41,591	43,255	44,552
41,904	43,224	44,953	46,302
43,981	45,366	47,181	48,596
46,333	47,792	49,704	51,195
47,995	49,507	51,487	53,032
49,792	51,360	53,415	55,017
52,144	53,787	55,938	57,616
53,947	55,646	57,872	59,608
56,024	57,789	60,100	61,903
58,787	60,639	63,064	64,956
61,563	63,502	66,042	68,024
64,323	66,349	69,003	71,073
67,092	69,205	71,974	74,133
69,139	71,317	74,170	76,395
71,732	73,992	76,951	81,645

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>INSTRUCTOR AND INSTRUCTOR NURSING SCIENCE</b>			
\$ 35,657	36,780	38,251	39,399
37,051	38,218	39,747	40,939
38,501	39,714	41,302	42,541
40,851	42,138	43,823	45,138
42,929	44,281	46,053	47,434
44,588	45,993	47,832	49,267
46,943	48,422	50,359	51,869
48,604	50,135	52,140	53,705
50,266	51,849	53,923	55,541
51,926	53,562	55,704	57,375
53,583	55,271	57,482	59,206
55,245	56,985	59,265	61,043
57,342	59,148	61,514	65,267

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09	3/19/10
<b>LECTURER</b>				
\$ 36,595	37,748	39,258	40,435	41,435
38,027	39,225	40,794	42,018	43,018
39,515	40,760	42,390	43,662	44,662
41,928	43,249	44,979	46,328	47,328
44,062	45,450	47,268	48,686	49,686
45,765	47,207	49,095	50,568	51,568
48,184	49,702	51,690	53,241	54,241
49,890	51,462	53,520	55,126	56,126
51,596	53,221	55,350	57,011	58,011
53,300	54,979	57,178	58,893	59,893
55,003	56,736	59,005	60,775	61,775
56,710	58,496	60,836	62,661	63,661
58,415	60,255	62,665	64,545	65,545
60,122	62,016	64,496	66,431	67,431
62,526	64,496	67,075	69,088	70,088
64,933	66,978	69,658	73,907	74,907

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>LECTURER DOCTORAL SCHEDULE</b>			
\$ 41,024	42,316	44,009	45,329
42,632	43,975	45,734	47,106
44,305	45,701	47,529	48,954
46,179	48,191	50,118	51,622
48,858	50,397	52,413	53,985
50,558	52,151	54,237	55,864
52,977	54,646	56,832	58,537
54,680	56,402	58,659	60,418

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>ASSISTANT TO HIGHER EDUCATION OFFICER</b>			
\$ 32,197	33,211	34,540	35,576
33,454	34,508	35,888	36,965
34,759	35,854	37,288	38,407
36,318	37,462	38,960	40,129
37,670	38,857	40,411	41,623
39,515	40,760	42,390	43,662
41,928	43,249	44,979	46,328
44,062	45,450	47,268	48,686
45,765	47,207	49,095	50,568
48,184	49,702	51,690	53,241
49,890	51,462	53,520	55,126
51,596	53,221	55,350	57,011
53,300	54,979	57,178	58,893
55,003	56,736	59,005	60,775
56,710	58,496	60,836	62,661
58,415	60,255	62,665	64,545
59,888	61,774	64,245	66,173
61,365	63,298	65,830	69,846

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>ASSISTANT TO HIGHER EDUCATION OFFICER II</b>			
\$ 58,569	60,414	62,830	64,715
60,002	61,892	64,368	66,299
61,909	63,859	66,413	70,465

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>ASSISTANT TO HIGHER EDUCATION OFFICER I</b>			
\$ 33,870	34,937	36,334	37,424
35,388	36,503	37,963	39,102
36,704	37,860	39,375	40,556
38,501	39,714	41,302	42,541
41,163	42,460	44,158	46,852

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>SENIOR REGISTRAR</b>			
\$ 62,268	64,229	66,799	68,803
64,728	66,767	69,438	71,521
67,285	69,404	72,181	74,346
69,636	71,830	74,703	76,944
71,716	73,975	76,934	79,242
74,483	76,829	79,902	82,299
77,249	79,682	82,870	85,356
80,020	82,541	85,842	88,418
85,621	88,318	91,851	94,606
89,082	91,888	95,564	98,431
92,541	95,456	99,274	102,253
95,997	99,021	102,982	106,071
98,726	101,836	105,909	109,087
102,235	105,455	109,674	116,364

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>REGISTRAR</b>			
\$ 52,240	53,886	56,041	57,722
54,299	56,009	58,250	59,997
56,439	58,217	60,546	62,362
58,787	60,639	63,064	64,956
61,563	63,502	66,042	68,024
64,323	66,349	69,003	71,073
67,092	69,205	71,974	74,133
71,716	73,975	76,934	79,242
74,483	76,829	79,902	82,299
77,249	79,682	82,870	85,356
80,020	82,541	85,842	88,418
85,621	88,318	91,851	94,606
89,082	91,888	95,564	98,431
92,541	95,456	99,274	102,253
95,997	99,021	102,982	106,071
98,726	101,836	105,909	109,087
102,235	105,455	109,674	116,364

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>ASSOCIATE REGISTRAR</b>			
\$ 44,560	45,964	47,802	49,236
46,312	47,771	49,682	51,172
48,132	49,648	51,634	53,183
50,484	52,074	54,157	55,782
52,144	53,787	55,938	57,616
53,947	55,646	57,872	59,608
56,024	57,789	60,100	61,903
58,787	60,639	63,064	64,956
61,563	63,502	66,042	68,024
64,323	66,349	69,003	71,073
67,092	69,205	71,974	74,133
69,139	71,317	74,170	76,395
71,732	73,992	76,951	81,645

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>ASSISTANT REGISTRAR</b>			
\$ 36,595	37,748	39,258	40,435
38,027	39,225	40,794	42,018
39,515	40,760	42,390	43,662
41,928	43,249	44,979	46,328
44,062	45,450	47,268	48,686
45,765	47,207	49,095	50,568
48,184	49,702	51,690	53,241
49,890	51,462	53,520	55,126
51,596	53,221	55,350	57,011
53,300	54,979	57,178	58,893
55,003	56,736	59,005	60,775
56,710	58,496	60,836	62,661
58,415	60,255	62,665	64,545
59,888	61,774	64,245	66,173
61,365	63,298	65,830	69,846

9/19/07	9/20/07	10/6/08	10/20/09
<b>GRADUATE ASSISTANT A</b>			
\$ 18,825	19,418	20,195	20,801
19,545	20,161	20,967	21,596
20,296	20,935	21,773	22,426
21,362	22,035	22,916	23,604
22,573	23,284	24,215	24,942
23,424	24,162	25,128	25,882
24,632	25,408	26,424	27,217
25,484	26,287	27,338	28,158
26,338	27,168	28,254	29,102
27,193	28,050	29,172	



# Adjunct Professional Development Fund

By PETER HOGNESS

The last PSC contract provided for creation of an Adjunct Professional Development Fund – the first grant program at CUNY to support part-time faculty as academics. The program was highly successful, supporting a wide range of scholarly, creative and educational projects. The number and quality of applications was so great that, by late spring of this year, the money in the fund was dwindling and it temporarily suspended accepting applications.

With the ratification of the new contract, the fund has been renewed. CUNY will make three annual payments to the fund of \$500,000 each, and the committee that administers its grants will resume meeting in mid-October.

CUNY's adjuncts are a diverse group, and so are the projects that have been supported by the Adjunct Professional Development Fund. Below are a few examples, in a range of disciplines. If they inspire you to make a proposal of your own, information on how to apply can be found at the end of this article.

## WRITING

Diane Sposito's grant allowed her to attend the well-known Santa Fe Screenwriter's Conference in 2007. Sposito is a playwright who has begun writing for film and television; she teaches writing-intensive classes in the speech, communication and theater arts department at BMCC, where she has taught for the past six years.

"I think my theater work has made me a more vibrant and energizing teacher," Sposito told *Clarion*, and she said that many of the practical exercises and techniques at the conference found direct application in her classes at BMCC.

"Writing is writing, and both students and professional writers can experience that agony of feeling, 'Oh, it's wrong, it's wrong,' before they even start." Drawing on some approaches from the conference, she said, "I've been able to navigate that threshold with my students, and they've become much less nervous or afraid."

"With creative writing, the starting point is getting them to feel comfortable just *saying* something," she added. "For many, it comes as a surprise that writing can be an act of pleasure, something they really enjoy. A lot of kids are really, really afraid of it, often because they come in with spelling or grammar issues. Those are important to tackle, but to get there they also need to learn to enjoy the act of writing."

Sposito's own work as a writer comes into her classes at BMCC in another way, she said: students often ask her for guidance about pursuing a career in writing for the screen or the stage.

Sposito is co-librettist on *Heaven in Your Pocket*, a production in this year's New York Musical Theater Festival, which she describes as

## Supporting intellectual life

"the Sundance of musical theater." With performances that run through September 28, she said it's exciting not only for her but for her students as well. "I know for my students, I'm in some ways a role model," she said. "I've told them it's been the culmination of a lot of hard work and faith in myself. I kept going and it paid off."

## FORENSIC SCIENCE

Danielle Sapse has been an adjunct at John Jay College since 2002. She's a lawyer – but she majored in chemistry and worked in research labs as an undergraduate. Her grant is supporting work that combines both parts of her background, in a project on the chemistry of fingerprint identification.

pounds useful in forensic science.

Sapse has been invited to give a series of eight lectures related to this work at the University of Rouen in France later this year. She has previously lectured at Rouen on the use of DNA in challenging past criminal convictions. Sapse said she is proposing a new course on scientific evidence in court, and her current research has contributed to her thinking about the design of that course in several ways.

## PHILOSOPHY

Chrysoula Gitsoulis has been teaching philosophy at CUNY since 1998 – first at Baruch and for the past four years at City College. She was three

quality of Wittgenstein's philosophical writing," she said and how the style of his writing is related to the content of his work. "I argue that this poetic quality can be traced to four distinct sources, and that it is necessarily bound up with his way of doing philosophy – not just accidentally connected."

## Support for scholarship, resources for research

Her second talk, at a meeting of the International Association for Greek Philosophy in Crete, was on "The Myth of Gyges and the Possibility of Altruism," taking a section of Plato's *Republic* as her point of departure. "It concerns whether altruism is a genuine phenomenon, or something that human beings masquerade at for hope of future benefit," she explained. In this case, the paper had a direct relationship to her work in the classroom at CUNY, as she discusses these ethical



Diane Sposito, a playwright who teaches at BMCC, attended a conference with her grant.

Some fingerprints "are easily detected on certain surfaces," she explained. "Others, called latent fingerprints, are harder to detect. Latent fingerprints are invisible prints that are formed by the transfer of perspiration from the finger ridges to an object." There are various techniques for making them visible, such as the use of the chemical ninhydrin, which turns purple-blue when it combines with amino acids that are found in perspiration. This process is faster when heat is applied.

Sapse's project involves using a computer modeling program to identify chemical analogs of ninhydrin that might have some of the same properties, and thus be useful in fingerprint identification. While not involved in experimental work herself, she told *Clarion*, her calculations may suggest experiments valuable to others working on developing com-

years old when her parents migrated to the US from Greece, and she said her family background helped spark her early interest in ancient Greek philosophy.

"At first I was partly motivated by a desire to better understand my historical roots," she told *Clarion*. "But after a while, I found it was fascinating in its own right." Over time, her philosophical interests moved on to other times and places; she's currently revising her dissertation on 20th century Anglo-American philosophy in the doctoral program at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Gitsoulis received support to present two papers at philosophy conferences in Greece this summer. The first, delivered at the Athens Institute for Education and Research, was on Wittgenstein and draws on her dissertation.

"The paper examines the poetic

issues regularly both in introductory philosophy and in her course on human nature.

## HOW TO APPLY

Grants from the Adjunct Professional Development Fund have supported a wide range of other projects, from anthropological fieldwork in Russia to graduate coursework in counseling psychology.

If you have a project in mind, you can get application forms and more information on the PSC Web site, at [www.psc-cuny.org/ProfessionalDevelopment.htm](http://www.psc-cuny.org/ProfessionalDevelopment.htm), or by calling Linda Slikin at (212) 354-1252.

Applications are considered on a rolling basis, and priority is given to people who have not previously received support. The maximum grant is \$3,000; please note that applications must be approved before any money is spent on the proposed activity.

## HIGHER ED IN BRIEF

### HEA reauthorized

On August 15, President Bush signed the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) – five years after its expiration.

The bill won wide bipartisan support, passing the House 380 to 49 and the Senate 83 to 8. New HEA provisions in student aid include making Pell Grants available year round, requiring more transparency from lenders and simplifying the FAFSA application form.

Critics claim that costs associated with new reporting requirements – established to create more accountability – may prove burdensome for some institutions.

Not included was text from the controversial right-wing initiative known as "the Academic Bill of Rights," which would limit academic freedom by imposing government monitoring of faculty members' political views.

AFT President Randi Weingarten lauded the new law for making higher ed "more affordable," with its Pell Grant improvements and loan forgiveness for graduates who work for the public interest.

### NC CCs shut out undocumented students

Last month, North Carolina announced that undocumented students would not be allowed to enroll in its community colleges. The state is one of only a few that deny undocumented students the right to an education.

The State's Board of Community Colleges voted on the policy on August 15, codifying a motion brought by Democrat Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, who is running for governor.

The State made the move in spite of the conclusions of the federal Department of Homeland Security, which has said that federal law does not prevent public colleges from accepting undocumented students.

In New York State, undocumented students who graduate from New York State high schools can attend CUNY and SUNY at in-state rates.

### Midwest invests

As New York State responds to its economic slowdown by further underfunding public higher education (see page 5), states in the Midwest have a proactive approach – relying on their public colleges as "key players in the long-term transformation of their economies," reported the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. These states "look to [public higher ed] to provide needed work-force training and spawn new industries," the story said.

"The path to economic security and stability runs through the college campus," said Larry Isaak, president of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact.

Several Midwestern states have had tough economic years, but limited or avoided cuts to higher ed.

## STATE POLITICS

# Tax fairness and CUNY's future

By **RON HAYDUK**  
BMCC

In August, Governor Paterson called the Legislature into session to consider imposing a strict cap on local property taxes. It was a fake solution to a real problem, and the Assembly did the right thing in rejecting it.

Property taxes are crushing many beleaguered homeowners, particularly outside of New York City, and they need relief. But capping property taxes – without regard to levels of income and wealth – is a wrong-headed policy that has been tried in other states and resulted in disaster for public schools. In California, Illinois and Massachusetts tax caps led to massive teacher layoffs, larger class sizes and lower student success rates. Most NY localities' school budgets are about 50% funded by property taxes.

## A SOLUTION

California, for example, had one of the nation's best public school systems until Proposition 13's tax cap was adopted in 1978. A generation later, the RAND Corporation found that California had the second-worst teacher to student ratio in the nation and national test scores were lower than every state but Mississippi and Louisiana.

The tax cap idea is not only bad for schools, it also fails to give relief to those who need it most. A cap would only limit the rate at which levies increase in the future, doing nothing to ease the burden for seniors and working families who already suffer from unaffordable property taxes.

Thankfully, there is a better way. It's a tried and true method that is finally getting some attention in Albany: tax the rich! Well, at least tax them somewhat more than we do today. This summer, after a vocal organizing campaign by the Working Families Party, several key unions and community groups, the New York State Assembly passed a progressive "circuit-breaker" bill instead of the regressive right-wing tax cap.

## PROGRESSIVE

If enacted into law, the "circuit-breaker" proposal would deliver a targeted property tax cut based on family income and pay for it by modestly rolling back some of the income tax giveaways that have gone to New York's wealthiest families in the last three decades.

The rich would pay somewhat more, while middle- and low-income homeowners would pay less.

The roughly 26,000 millionaires who live in New York would see their income tax rate rise by a mere 1.75%, but that would generate more than a billion dollars a year.

In the midst of rising unemployment and a home foreclosure crisis, the circuit-breaker plan would give millions of working New Yorkers a tax break exactly when they need it most. It's a fair and progressive way to give property tax relief to working families and low-income seniors, without denying public schools the funding they need to provide a sound education. It includes a similar rebate for renters, which would enhance both equity and economic activity.

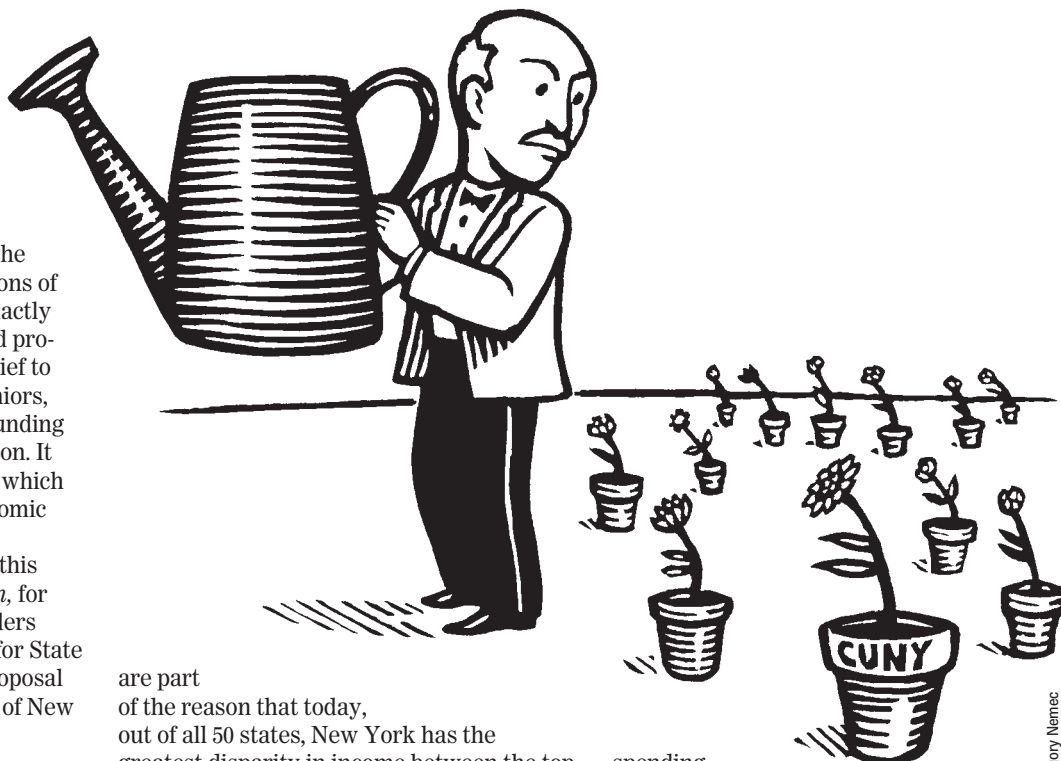
New York's right wing is afraid of this idea. The conservative *New York Sun*, for example, warned its well-heeled readers "Millionaire's Tax at Heart of Battle for State Senate." The paper noted that the proposal is highly popular – supported by 78% of New Yorkers in a recent poll.

## THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY

The circuit-breaker idea would be a good start – but a fully progressive tax policy would have to go further in addressing the underlying problem. In the last three decades, starting under Gov. Cuomo and continuing under Gov. Pataki, the wealthiest 1% of New Yorkers have seen their taxes cut in half. The tax burden has been shifted downward to the middle and working classes. Sharp reductions in federal school aid and State revenue sharing have led to higher property taxes as localities sought to keep municipal governments and schools afloat.

Meanwhile tax cuts for the rich meant funding cuts for public services, from affordable housing to public universities. New York also imposed rising "user fees," from transit fare hikes to tuition increases at CUNY and SUNY. ("User fee" is a convenient euphemism for regressive taxation: these are essentially taxes levied only on those who depend on public services.)

These changes in tax and spending policy



Gregory Nemecek

are part of the reason that today, out of all 50 states, New York has the greatest disparity in income between the top 1% and the bottom half of its population. We have seen the rich get filthy rich, while the rest of us are left to fend for ourselves.

## FAIR STRUCTURE

Returning to New York State's tax structure of a generation ago, while adjusting tax brackets and the personal exemption to reflect inflation, would result in the vast majority of taxpayers paying *less* than we do today, while New York would gain several billion more in revenue. Public services that have been slashed could get a sorely needed boost. For CUNY, a fairer tax structure could make it possible to reverse decades of defunding of the University.

For CUNY to get what it truly needs – enough support to create good conditions for teaching, learning and research at every college – will take more than a marginal increase in public funding. The NYS Commission on Higher Education concluded that the State's public universities have faced a chronic problem of too little investment and called for several billion dollars in new

spending to reverse that trend.

But it's very unlikely that CUNY and SUNY will win that kind of gain if every other public service is being cut or only seeing slight improvement.

New York's public sector has been starved for many years. Until we secure an increase in State and City revenue, CUNY will be in competition with health care, housing, parks and libraries for scarce public resources. That's a losing game – especially when the economy is contracting.

What CUNY needs is a broad shift in the politics of New York State, so that private profit and the privileges of the wealthy are not sacred and public needs are more highly valued. It's a big lift, but one that could make a tremendous difference in our quality of life. We have the numbers; it is a matter of organizing our political strength.

## BROADER VISION

The PSC can't create this kind of change on our own. We can only do so as part of a larger movement. That means taking action as part of a broad coalition – faculty and staff, students and family members – that looks to unite working people based on our common interests. Mutual support among unions and community groups isn't pie in the sky. Rather, it's the only pragmatic way to win what CUNY really needs.

While working hard to mobilize our members, the PSC has also taken part in labor and community coalitions. This has increased our political clout in Albany and at City Hall. Our political action work – largely funded by members' COPE contributions – now includes an exciting new initiative, CUNY Rising, which aims to forge longer-term alliances with students, alumni and community groups. This holds great promise in helping to change debate and politics in New York State. (For more information, see the legislative and solidarity pages at [www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org).)

Attacking regressive taxes and promoting progressive tax policy is one practical way to advance these goals. It focuses attention on a real problem and points to a viable solution. And in so doing, it can contribute to a broader vision for New York's shared future.

## 78% of NY approves of taxing top 1%

## CALENDAR

**Friday, September 26: 6:00 pm** / Labor Goes to the Movies presents *Within Our Gates*, Oscar Micheaux's 1920 silent film made in response to D.W. Griffith's infamous *Birth of a Nation* (1915). Oscar Micheaux, an early African American filmmaker, made independent films for 30 years entirely outside the Hollywood system. Censored by some states due to its scenes of murder, lynching and rape, the film provides an incisive look at American race relations from one of the pioneers of African American filmmaking. In the PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th floor, \$2 suggested donation. Contact Albert Muñoz at the PSC, (212) 354-1252 or [amunoz@pscmail.org](mailto:amunoz@pscmail.org). No RSVPs.

**Friday, October 3: 4:00 pm** / First Fridays meeting of the PSC Part-Time Personnel Committee. At the PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th floor. For more information contact Marcia Newfield at [revolu@earthlink.net](mailto:revolu@earthlink.net).

**Monday, October 6: 1:00 pm** / PSC Retirees Chapter Meeting. At the PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th floor. In the first session PSC President Barbara Bowen will speak on "The State of the Union." During the second session, retirees will be divided into groups by pension plan, and speakers from TRS and TIAA pension systems will explain new plan choices recently made available under the two plans.

**Monday, October 6: 4:00 pm** / PSC Pension Committee Meeting. The

PSC Pension Committee is completing a long study of pension issues. We want to be aware of all the issues, including yours. Present your concerns at this open hearing. For more information contact the committee's chair, Peter Jonas, at [Peter.J.PSC@gmail.com](mailto:Peter.J.PSC@gmail.com).

**October 17-19** / CUNY Social Forum. The CUNY Social Forum aims to lay the foundation for a cohesive cross-CUNY student movement by examining issues and planning actions rooted in CUNY's historic mission to serve the diverse working people of NYC and its status as an urban university dedicated to producing knowledge that contributes to the public good. For more information, go to [www.cunysocialforum.com](http://www.cunysocialforum.com).

**Monday, October 20: 6:00 pm** / PSC Solidarity Committee Meeting. At the PSC office, 61 Broadway, 15th floor. For more information, contact Jim Perlstein at [jperlstein@bassmeadow.com](mailto:jperlstein@bassmeadow.com).

**Tuesday, October 21: 6:00 pm** / PSC Women's Committee Meeting. At the PSC office, 61 Broadway, 15th floor. For more information, contact Marcia Newfield at [revolu@earthlink.net](mailto:revolu@earthlink.net).

**Saturday, October 25: 9:30 am** / International Committee Meeting. For more information contact Renate Bridenthal, [rbriden1@juno.com](mailto:rbriden1@juno.com).

**Monday, October 27: 6:00 pm** / HEO Chapter Meeting. At the CUNY Graduate Center, 34th Street and 5th Avenue, Room C 203/204.

## HOW THE BANKS SAY 'THANKS'

# Community college students need not apply for loans

By KESI FOSTER

The American Dream deferred – that was the message from national lenders when they moved to significantly reduce their lending to students who attend community college. Education is the great equalizer, but there was no equality in their decision: they targeted community colleges for cuts while extending their lending programs at distinguished four-year schools.

According to *The New York Times* (6/2/08), the following lenders have started turning away from community college students: Citibank, JPMorgan Chase, SunTrust and PNC. In the case of Citibank, it has stopped offering loans to all community college students in the state of California. Citibank gave an odd explanation: a spokesperson said the bank has “temporarily suspended lending at schools which tend to have loans with lower balances and shorter periods over which we earn interest.” In other words, community college students borrow too little money and pay off our loans too fast.

## SAFETY NET

Other banks cite default rates and the lower earnings of community college students. This might sound like solid reasoning were it not for the facts (duly pointed out in the article) that colleges can only take part in federal loan programs if they have low default rates and that government insurance covers 95% of the value of student loans. Thus there is minimal risk involved for the lending companies.

We've been told that a college degree will set a person on the path for success. Not everyone takes the same path, however. People enroll in community college for many different reasons. Some didn't get the grades in high school to qualify for a four-year school, while others have to work full-time and need the flexibility that community colleges offer. Most simply cannot afford to enroll in a four-year school. I am one of them.

After high school, I enrolled in St. John's University because I got decent grades in high school and I was expected to go to college. I had no understanding of what I wanted to be in life and didn't grasp the importance of the college experience and a higher education. I pretty much picked a major out of a hat and then spent my first two semesters skipping one too many a class. By the summer, I decided not to enroll for the Fall and took a full-time job instead. It wasn't anyone's fault – in truth, I was not ready to attend college and made my decision accordingly.

Yet in my household, education has always been stressed, and so I knew that I would return to college. After a few years of working, I matured a great deal and had a better sense of where I wanted to go in life. So I reapplied to St. John's and was accepted once again. I quickly realized, though, that my situation had changed dramatically. The tuition was now double what it had been when I left, and I did not qualify for financial aid since I was no longer a dependent but the sole taxpayer. (New York's Tuition Assistance Program is mainly designed for young people supported by their parents and provides poor support for independent working adults.) With little choice, I turned to the best alternative available: community college.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

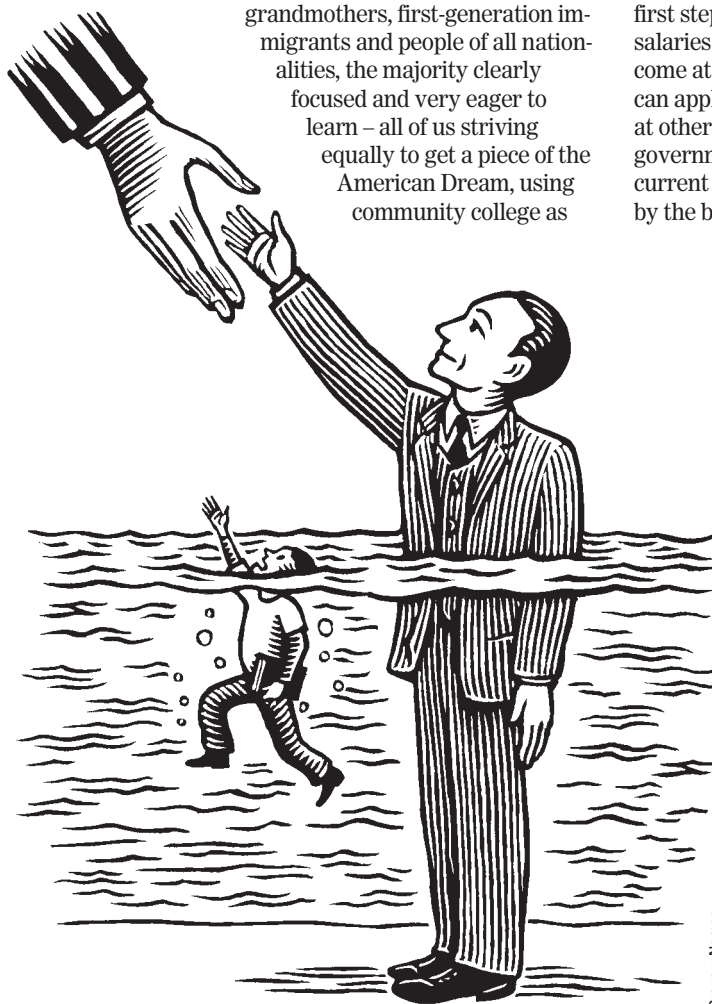
At first I was discouraged. There is a stark difference between the administration of St. John's and that of my new school, Bronx Community College. Whereas it took only about 30 minutes to sign up for classes at St. John's, it can take a whole day at BCC. And they may even ask you to come back due to some mysterious hold on your record that can be taken care of only by a faculty member whose schedule never overlaps with your own. During registration, I have asked the same question three different times and gotten back three completely different answers. There was also this sense of stigma I was carrying around, that somehow an education at a community college is inferior – some people refer to it as “the 13th grade.”

After attending for more than three semesters now, I would say the administration of the school has improved some, but it is still in disarray. In this and other ways, basic resources at the college are badly lacking. It seems not a single functioning water fountain can be found on the entire campus, though there are soda machines in every building. The heating and AC systems are hit or miss, and the menu at the food hall is less than appealing.

As for the education, however, I couldn't have been more wrong. It has been rigorous

and very well rounded – great preparation for any baccalaureate program.

I was embarrassed to qualify only as a freshman even though I was legally old enough to drink – that is, I felt that way until I got to class and met my classmates. The beauty of community college is the student body. Many of us have returned to community college as a second chance to achieve our goals. I met single mothers, fathers, grandmothers, first-generation immigrants and people of all nationalities, the majority clearly focused and very eager to learn – all of us striving equally to get a piece of the American Dream, using community college as



Gregory Nemecek

the springboard. When people would raise their hands to answer questions, you would hear West Indian accents, Eastern European accents, East Indian accents, Latino accents and some I just couldn't place. Since I was still working, the flexible schedule was a necessity for me. Like me, many classmates came to class right after their full-time jobs. I don't think most of us could afford to leave our jobs, and without community college we couldn't continue our higher education.

## Our reward for saving the credit industry?

The student body at community colleges should be an inspiration to America. When I see a single mother who takes care of her children, works a full-time job, and finds time on the nights and weekends to attend school, I am inspired to continue despite at times feeling overwhelmed. Yet when it was discovered that lenders were turning their backs on these hardworking students, America didn't blink an eye. Since the credit industry is now turning its back on us, should we consider turning our backs on the banks when they want the government to bail them out?

## LEVELING THE FIELD

Or perhaps we should do as economist Dean Baker recently suggested: that Congress impose a strict cap on management compensation of \$2 million a year, including salary, bonuses, stock options and personal use of company jets, as one of the terms of the bailout. As Baker says, “This can be a good first step toward reining in the outrageous salaries at financial institutions that have come at the expense of ordinary workers. We can apply the same salary caps for managers at other financial institutions that feed at the government trough.” He notes that under the current bailout, which naturally was written by the banks themselves, “the government is explicitly subsidizing the pay of incompetent bank managers.”

And if our financial institutions are going to cut back on college loans, why not downsize lending at the distinguished four-year schools? After all, students at the wealthy four-year schools have far more net worth than those attending community college. Also, since so many students at community college work full-time, I bet we're actually paying a great deal more in taxes than students at private four-year colleges.

When it was discovered that a local congressman, my local congressman, was hoarding rent-stabilized apartments, it became a weeklong media circus, with news conferences and special features on the 6 and 11 o'clock news. It seems like you can't turn on the news without a politician convening a press conference to defend their indefensibly corrupt behavior. Yet when it comes to the corruptions of the big banks, the government rushes in to save their skin – that is, their bloated salaries – and the media looks the other way.

## CONSPIRACY?

In many inner cities and low-income communities, too many students fall through the cracks before they even get a chance to attend community college. As a society, we can't allow even more holes for them to fall through. What happens to people when more unnecessary obstacles are placed in front of them on their path to success?

The big banks want us to help them out in tough times, after having made extremely irrational lending decisions. But when we need help to pursue a very sound and rational course, the attainment of a college degree, America's politicians sit in the back of the classroom and nod off to sleep, squandering yet another chance for us to improve ourselves.

It makes one wonder if that might be the whole plan.

*Kesi Foster was raised in New Rochelle, NY, and is currently a student at Bronx Community College. He can be reached at kesibfoster@hotmail.com. This article was originally published online at CommonDreams.org.*

## Clarion SEPTEMBER 2008

Newspaper of the Professional Staff Congress/City University of New York, collective bargaining representative of the CUNY instructional staff. Vol. 37, No. 7. PSC/CUNY is affiliated with the American Association of University Professors, National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers (Local 2334), AFL-CIO, the New York City Central Labor Council, and New York State United Teachers. Published by PSC/CUNY, 61 Broadway, 15th floor, New York, NY 10006. Telephone: (212) 354-1252. Website: www.psc-cuny.org. E-mail: phogness@pscmail.org. All opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the PSC.

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## LOST OPPORTUNITIES

# What I would have done with \$50 million

By **BARBARA BOWEN**  
PSC President

In midsummer, Governor Paterson announced that New York State would face a \$6 billion budget deficit next year, and called the Legislature back to Albany for an emergency session. The only lasting solution to New York's frequent budget shortfalls is to restructure the tax system for greater fairness and more revenue. But Paterson has so far refused to consider even such short-term solutions as a temporary surcharge on New York's millionaires and resorted instead to gouging the budgets of health care and higher education.

## CUTS OK'D

A centerpiece of his proposal was a \$50.6 million cut to CUNY – part of a program of 7% reductions across the board. But for CUNY that cut comes on top of a \$17.7 million cut this spring and two decades of underfunding before that – a record that has earned New York last place among the 50 states in the trend of per capita spending on public higher education.

Initially, many legislators appeared willing to resist the governor's CUNY proposal. But as the August 18 session neared, they received word from Chancellor Goldstein that CUNY could, in Goldstein's words, "minimize the impact" of the reduction. Goldstein told legislators, as he wrote later in his public message, that this huge cut to CUNY's budget could be absorbed by unused reserve funds, a "temporary vacancy control program" in administrative hiring, various other one-time cuts and an \$8 million cut to the "Other than Personnel Services" budget (OTPS).

Albany got the message, and the cut to CUNY passed by a landslide, with only 10 members of the Assembly and six of the Senate dissenting. Several legislators I spoke to afterwards used the same phrase: their own opposition melt-

ed because Goldstein "agreed to" the cut.

Both the Legislature and the governor should be held accountable for undermining CUNY once again, but special responsibility falls on CUNY's central administration. While I appreciate Goldstein's pledge not to cut faculty hires and not to renege on the 100 new Lecturer positions agreed to with the contract, as well as his limitation of most of the cuts to the reserve, the message his administration sent to Albany gave the legislators permission to cut CUNY.

Perhaps at 80th Street, where supplies never run low and salaries for management are well into the six figures, a multimillion dollar cut in OTPS funds does not feel like a crisis. But people on the campuses know that CUNY cannot afford a cut of even one dollar to its budget, much less \$50 million. For us, the impact of the cut will *not* be minimal. Few things create more daily misery than the lack of equipment, books and supplies, and some campuses have made even sharper cuts, cancelling courses because of lack of funds. Chancellor Goldstein may think that CUNY can do without that \$50 million, but I doubt that many of us would agree.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Instead of returning the \$50 million to Albany, Goldstein could have preserved the OTPS budget, removed the freeze on administrative hiring, restored the courses cancelled because of lack of funds, and put the reserve funds to good use – addressing some of the routine indignities of CUNY life. These are some of the things on my own list:

- Fix every leak in every ceiling in every CUNY building, eliminating the hundreds of white plastic buckets that appear whenever there is a heavy rainfall and the growth of mold.
- Establish a two-year pilot program to cut class size in half, then



Gregory Nemec

measure the effect on student retention and achievement, faculty satisfaction and research productivity.

- Provide a major infusion of funding to the PSC-CUNY research awards and other professional development funds, quadrupling the money available for research support.
- Triple the amount of travel money available to support participation in academic conferences and the reassigned time for unsponsored research.
- Supply a "cultural passport" to New York City for every student – not just those in the Honors College.
- Create a fund to support recruitment of a faculty as diverse as the student body.

- End, once and for all, CUNY's indefensible failure to pay adjuncts at five colleges for the full amount they earn during the fifteenth week of the semester.

- Experiment with hiring adequate numbers of staff in the registrar's office, financial aid and other offices that serve students.
- Fund the college libraries so they can catch up on book acquisitions stalled by years of budget cuts.
- Spend a few million dollars to install drinking fountains in every CUNY building – and make sure that all of them are working.
- Stop nickel-and-diming us with efforts such as buying low-quality test tubes. Upgrade equipment in science labs on every campus.
- And what about a little fund for chalk, so we no longer have to car-

ry our own supply if we want to indulge in such luxuries as writing on a blackboard?

## SO MUCH MORE

My list only scratches the surface, and even so, \$50 million could not do all of this at once. I haven't even touched on the major structural problems that require permanent funding, such as salary improvements, adjunct equity, health benefits and manageable teaching loads. But I bet that almost anyone who works or studies at CUNY could come up with a list of their own that would quickly add up to \$50 million or more.

Telling Albany that CUNY can absorb a budget cut without pain is not the way to end the pattern of disinvestment. I understand that Goldstein's position on the budget was part of a strategy, perhaps to secure a lighter cut the next time around, perhaps to make tuition increases – long a part of his agenda – appear inevitable. Either way, it is not a strategy for transformation; it is a strategy for getting by – and as always, getting by with less.

## WRONG STRATEGY

The only way to break the cycle of poverty-level funding for CUNY is to name the crisis and honestly chronicle its effects. When New York's Commission on Higher Education concludes that the State has shortchanged CUNY and SUNY by billions of dollars, advocates for CUNY should demand full funding – not give the green light to budget cuts. Accepting the cut just normalizes the pattern of inadequate funding and opens the door to more budget cuts in the future.

When the hard budget choices come in the next round, Chancellor Goldstein should take the position that a cut of any size is intolerable. If he cannot imagine what CUNY needs, we can – and \$50 million is just the beginning.

## Cuts will be felt on campus

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## 15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

## What's on YOUR list?

We suspect that everyone at CUNY is carrying around a mental list of what could have been done with the \$50 million CUNY returned to the State this August. Perhaps Chancellor Goldstein needs ideas. Send your own personal wish list to Goldstein,

along with the message that next time budget cuts are discussed in Albany, CUNY should take the position that not a single dollar should be cut. The union Web site, [www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org), has a letter ready for you to send and to amplify with a list of your own.