

Clarion

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



SUMMER 2007



ROVING REPORTER
Summer reading

What books do you take to the beach – or the lab?

PAGE 8



Dave Sanders

CONTRACT PETITION

PSC PROPOSALS WIN SUPPORT

Union and management negotiators have met regularly throughout the summer in contract talks. There is a world of difference between the two sides' demands, posing a stark choice about what kind of university CUNY will be in the future.

So far more than 2,400 members have signed a petition to support the direction proposed by the PSC (see pp. 6-7 for signatures.) Above, Nick Irons signs a petition held by Anselma Rodriguez at Brooklyn College.

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RETIREMENT

New savings plan offered

All CUNY employees, both full- and part-time, now have a new retirement savings option. The 457 Plan, sponsored by New York State, is flexible and tax-deferred. **PAGE 9**

ORGANIZING

PSC wins labor board decision

The NLRB ruled that grad students who work for the Research Foundation do have union rights – and their May 2005 ballots must be counted. **PAGE 5**

PENSION EQUITY

NYS lawmakers OK reform bill

PSC members urge Gov. Spitzer to sign legislation that would give TIAA-CREF participants the same treatment as their co-workers in TRS. **PAGES 3, 12**



HISTORY

The fight against the slave trade

CUNY students and NYC union members joined British unionists' commemoration of the ban on the slave trade, and discussed its meaning for today. **PAGE 10**

Call for submissions Our CUNY vs. Their CUNY

By CLARION STAFF

Can you imagine?

The PSC is in the midst of negotiations with CUNY management for a new contract, and both sides have presented their demands. If you look at each side's list, say union activists – and you can find both on the web at www.psc-cuny.org/NewContractRound.htm, you'll see two very different visions for the University's future.

Two very different visions of the future

"It's one thing to describe the potential impact of these demands, if they make their way into the contract, in the prosaic language of newsletters and speeches," said a statement from the PSC Organizing

Committee. "But many of our members – artists, musicians, poets, fiction writers and performers – can present the possible future under these demands more vividly, whether that presentation is tragic or comic."

As part of an educational campaign about this round of bargaining, the committee is inviting union members "to contribute a piece of creative work that illustrates what life would really be like at CUNY under management's demands, or under the PSC's demands," to be considered for pre-

sentation at an event at the union hall on 61 Broadway. The event is planned for September 19, 2007, the day the current contract expires. "Send us your dystopian, utopian, or simply humorous version of CUNY's future were these demands to go into effect," the committee requested in a postcard sent to members the last week in July.

Submissions should be sent to Dorothee Benz at dbenz@pscmail.org. They will be considered and accepted on a rolling basis; all submissions must be received by September 5, 2007.

Outrage continues



Adjunct activists brought their "Campaign of Outrage" to open houses held at Bronx, Queensborough and Kingsborough Community Colleges in July. The colleges are among five at CUNY that pay adjunct faculty less during exam periods, even though they are often the busiest times of the semester. Protesters' message to management for the Fall: "We'll be back!"



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WRITE TO: CLARION/PSC, 61 BROADWAY, 15TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10006.
E-MAIL: PHOGNESS@PSCMAIL.ORG. FAX: (212) 302-7815.

Equal problems, unequal resources

● At the end of last semester, a student informed me that her father had entered the hospital and she would like to re-schedule the final. I told her not to worry and to contact me when his condition improved. Shortly afterward, I received a note from an administrator asking me to arrange an alternative time for "this Honors College student" to take the final.

This was the first time I had ever received such a request. As we know, Honors College students are given more than particular seminars or classes – they get free tuition and a portable computer. Evidently, they also receive counseling support that extends to the intervention of administrators with teachers.

CUNY's website states that the Honors College aims to develop students' "awareness of the resources available to them as members of the Honors College."

Yet one of the first things the other hundreds of thousands of CUNY students become aware of is CUNY's lack of resources, including counselors.

As the Honors College is heavily supported by private funds, the University risks reproducing a two-tier private/public system within CUNY itself.

If access is to remain the mission of CUNY, we should seek access to the best support practices for all of

our students, whose needs are surely no less than those of the Honors College's "University Scholars."

Jonathan Buchsbaum
Queens College

Against Hillary Clinton

● I see that Hillary Clinton may get the nod from the AFT. I strongly oppose this, for many reasons: she does not represent our members, our students, our CUNY or our city. Consider her failure to act positively towards labor issues while on the board of Wal-Mart; and her awful record on the Iraq war.

Even if the AFT board does vote to endorse Clinton, that need not be a unanimous recommendation – a principled abstention, or even a "no" vote, would send a strong signal. I remember our union's mistaken endorsement of McCall for New York governor over our own Stanley Aronowitz, which might have truly had a positive outcome – enhancement of alternate/third party politics in our L5 party state.

We are protesting in front of her office – we don't intend to support her in the proverbial smoky rooms, do we?

Paul Sheridan
Brooklyn College [retired]

Chapter election coverage

● In the May-June *Clarion* the headline on page 8 reads, "Incumbents win chapter races." At QCC a fusion ticket of CUNY Alliance and New Caucus supporters called the QCC Unified Slate was elected with a new chapter chair, Dr. Paul Weiss. The QCC chapter therefore

does not fit under the heading of the article and should be acknowledged separately.

As a newly elected delegate who ran on the QCC Unified Slate, I would like to extend congratulations to all the successful incumbent and newly elected candidates in the April 2007 PSC local elections.

Mona Fabricant
Queensborough Community College

Editor Peter Hogness responds: *While Clarion is happy to publish this letter, we think our headline was accurate and our coverage did not exclude anyone.*

Clarion's headline on the 2007 chapter elections had two parts, which read as follows:

*Incumbents win chapter races
Most elections uncontested
The first part of our headline referred to the contested chapter elections ("races"), all of which were won by incumbents. As every dictionary we've consulted agrees, if there is no competition, there is no race. The second part of the headline referred to the majority of chapter elections, like QCC, where there was no competition.*

As described in the May-June Clarion, the names of all those elected to chapter office are being published in this Summer issue (see page 5). As in the past, we print the name of each person and the office to which they were elected; as in the past, the names of those new to their position appear in italics.

Certainly there were many non-incumbents elected to chapter office in 2007, and not only at QCC. In fact, about 60% of those elected this Spring are new to their posts.

Brave, bold and undocumented

● Americans do not respect the law. Our highways are full of evidence of this.

Our heroes are not martyrs to the law, such as Sir Patrick Spens, Sir Thomas More or Uncle Tom. Our heroes are outlaws, such as Huck Finn, Han Solo, Ferris Beuller and Captain Jack Sparrow – to say nothing of our Founding Fathers. We admire those who get over on the system, who defy the law, who know no boundaries. An essential quality of the American is to color outside the lines, to challenge authority.

So what to make of all this sanctimony regarding illegal immigrants? Forget all of our ancestors who came to this country by any means necessary, including lies on immigration forms and false claims of professions, wealth, health and family relations. Having the cleverness and guts to defy unjust and unwieldy immigration laws in order to escape poverty and oppression should absolutely qualify an immigrant to be an American. This is the kind of person we want here – the kind of person who staged the Boston Tea Party, not the Tories of lesser motivation, creativity and courage who will stand on line for eight or ten years, who lack the sharpness wrought of desperate circumstances.

To the illegal immigrant we should say, "You've proven you've got what it takes to be one of us. Welcome to America!"

K.J. Walters
Lehman College

LABOR IN BRIEF

Bill to restore union rights of professionals

In March, federal lawmakers introduced bills to turn over the National Labor Relations Board's *Kentucky River* decision. That ruling redefined and radically expanded the board's definition of "supervisor" – which removed thousands of workers from the protection of federal law if they seek to form a union.

Three Democrats in the Senate and two in the House introduced the Re-Empowerment of Skilled and Professional Employees and Construction Tradeworkers (RE-SPECT) Act. The bill would amend the National Labor Relations Act by redefining "supervisor" as a worker who spends the majority of her or his day supervising others.

Faculty strike votes lead to contract gains

In early July, the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties reached an agreement with the state university system, after the academic union voted to authorize a strike. Members won a cash payment plus annual raises of 3% to 4% in each of four years.

"Our mantra has been no contract, no work," union President Patricia Heilman told the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. In previous years, she said, unionized faculty had worked past the contract expiration date. "Each time we did that, it ended in a bad result. So we decided we will try something else."

And in California, faculty in the state college system won salary increases of 21% to 25% over four years, after 94% of members authorized a walkout – the first strike vote in the union's history. A mediator's report was the basis for the settlement, reached in April.

Write to Clarion

Letters should be no more than 150 to 200 words in length, and may be subject to editing.

Legislature OKs pension equity bill

By PETER HOGNESS

On June 21, the New York Legislature passed a pension equity bill that has been one of the PSC's top priorities for the last seven years. The bill now awaits Gov. Spitzer's signature.

"We need one last push from members to get this bill signed," said Steve London, PSC first vice president and legislative representative. "NYSUT has made this bill its top priority and CUNY and TIAA-CREF have issued statements of support. We have put together a broad coalition of support and now the governor needs to hear that this is something the members want." (See page 9)

CONTRIBUTIONS

The legislation provides that CUNY and SUNY employees in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP), which includes TIAA-CREF and similar plans, who have 10 or more years of service would have the State or City pick up the contribution members are currently making to their pension plan. For most participants, this will mean a savings of 3% of their annual pay.

When Albany approved a similar change for TRS members in 2000, employees in TIAA-CREF and other plans were left out. "It's an equity issue," said former PSC Secretary Cecilia McCall, who coordinated the

Fairness for those in TIAA-CREF

union's grassroots lobbying push to win legislative approval. "This is a benefit that people in TRS have had for several years, and people in TIAA-CREF should not get different treatment."

Pedro Irigoyen, Chief College Lab Technician in the chemistry department at Queensborough Community College, called his representative, State Senator Serf Maltese to urge support for the bill. Irigoyen has worked at CUNY for 25 years. "It's a matter of fairness," he told *Clarion*. "What's done for others should be done for all." He said he would use the savings to put aside more for his retirement: "I'm about 10 years away from retiring, and this would help quite a bit."

At one time most PSC members were in TRS, which is a traditional defined-benefit pension system. Today, most choose to join CUNY's ORP, a defined-contribution system. "When the ORP was created, the Legislature was explicit about its intent to ensure equitable treatment of all public retirement systems," said London. "This reform puts that intent into practice."

If signed into law, the bill would be phased in over a three-year period, with the employer picking up a 1% ad-

ditional contribution in each year.

"When we came into office in 2000, we found that a deal had been cut on pensions as part of that year's round of collective bargaining, which gave this benefit to TRS participants," London told *Clarion*. "But the ORP was left out. We immediately went to work to get the ORP plans included, but it was too late – the deal was already sealed."

PSC leaders then moved to build support within the union's state affiliate, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), for the necessary reform. After discussions with leaders of United University Professions (SUNY's statewide union of faculty and staff) and with leaders of the separate locals at the SUNY community colleges, NYSUT took up the issue as a legislative priority.

"In the spring of 2001 we had support in principle from the legislature and the governor," London said. But agreement on a budget was delayed – and then 9/11 happened.

The tentative agreement was knocked off the table, in what was the first of several contentious State budget years.

"We brought the bill forward every year and worked hard to

build support for it over time," London said. "Then last year, with a lot of member support, we got the pension equity bill passed in Albany by both houses – only to have it vetoed by Gov. Pataki."

"This year we again did a full-court press," said London. "It became NYSUT's number-one priority, and we had an outpouring of support from our members calling their legislators. And so, seven years after we began this effort, we got it passed by the legislature a second time."



Assemblyman Peter Abbate (center), pension committee chair, with (from left) PSC members Peter Jonas, Carol Stanger, Bob Cermele and Vera Weekes.

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GRATIFIED

"I felt gratified that almost every member we called already knew about this issue," said McCall. "They knew we had been trying to get it for a while and they were grateful that we called. So the word is out there, and members appreciated having a chance to affect the outcome."

Members' phone calls made the difference: all four State Senators targeted by the PSC supported the

bill, and their backing helped secure approval by the Senate's Republican majority.

McCall noted that the CUNY administration also threw its support behind the legislation. "They told legislators that this is a tool for recruitment," she explained.

As *Clarion* went to press, union members were again being asked to make their voices heard – this time to contact the governor.

The bill will be officially delivered to Gov. Spitzer in early August, and he will have 10 days in which to take action.

Peter Jonas, chair of the PSC Pension Committee, urged union members to take action. "Last year we achieved a legislative victory, but saw the bill torpedoed by then-Governor Pataki," Jonas told *Clarion*. "This year, we – PSC members – must let Governor Spitzer know that he needs to step up and sign this legislation."

(See page 12 for information on how you can take action.)

City increases funding for CUNY

By DANIA RAJENDRA

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced an agreement on a \$59 billion budget for New York City on June 15. Newspapers celebrated the early achievement on the spending plan for fiscal 2008 – the budget often doesn't get done until hours before the June 30 deadline.

The early agreement also brought some good news for CUNY funding. The City Council reversed \$42 million of the mayor's cuts and added \$31.1 million to CUNY's funding, for a total budget of \$264.7 million. The budget provides for two new programs – the ASAP Initiative, which aims to support community college students in gaining their associate's degrees, and a new veterans' center based at LaGuardia. The Council also increased the allocations for CUNY's capital budget, so that CUNY can receive all matching funds available from the State.

The PSC had pushed hard for the restorations. "Our members' ac-

Council reverses mayor's cuts

tivism paid off," said First Vice President Steve London. "The Council heard us and we are very pleased at the advances made in this year's budget." Overall, London noted, City support for senior and community college programs was up by a total of 13.3% over last year. PSC members helped produce that result by signing some 13,000 postcards on the budget, holding CUNY Week events with legislators on campuses, and turning out for a May 9 lobby day at City Hall.

MEMBERS

"When adjusted for inflation, at the City level we have almost recovered from the devastating de-funding of the 1990s," London said. "While we are still 12% behind 1991 in real dollars in City support for CUNY, we have made up much of the lost ground."

But London noted that many pressing problems at CUNY remain to be

solved. From CUNY's shortage of psychological counseling to an excessive reliance on part-time faculty. "We look forward to making real progress in the years to come," he said.

Much of the budget restorations and enhancements will cover increases to costs such as energy, the University's salaries and benefits. A large portion goes to City Council-sponsored student aid programs, such as the Vallone Scholarships and the need-based Safety Net program. CUNY's Black Male Empowerment Initiative received restorations and a \$1 million enhancement to expand its work.

While Bloomberg had sought \$25.8 million in cuts to CUNY's community colleges in his executive budget, he nevertheless proposed a new program to increase student recruitment, retention and graduation in April as part of his anti-poverty

program. The City allocated \$6.5 million to the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, known as ASAP. The program seeks to provide extra student support – additional financial aid, more convenient scheduling for working students, tutors, and a summer program for preparatory or remedial work. ASAP students will be grouped in cohorts of 25 or fewer students to provide peer support as well.

"We have made up much of the lost ground" of the 1990s.

"The mayor and chancellor focusing attention on the community colleges is good," said PSC Vice President for Community Colleges Anne Friedman. "But more counseling, smaller classes and more financial help should be a regular part of CUNY's community college budget, not only a special program."

The City also allocated \$1 million for a new Veterans Resource Center at LaGuardia. "Our vets' program was created in January 1972 to provide education services to re-

turning Vietnam combat veterans," said Samuel Farrell, who directs the veterans' programs at LaGuardia. "Thirty-five years later, we find ourselves in the same position. CUNY is still a place for returning soldiers to develop the skills they need to compete in the job market." Farrell said the LaGuardia-based program will serve as a CUNY-wide model as the programming is developed.

In addition to those two programs, the City Council restored \$600,000 for the CUNY Citizenship and Immigration Project, and \$1.6 million for the Dominican Studies Institute, the Center for Puerto Rican Studies and the Immigration Center.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Council did not fund a PSC proposal for hiring additional faculty counselors to address a long-standing shortfall in mental health services available to CUNY students. The recent tragedy at Virginia Tech highlights the importance of action on this problem, PSC President Barbara Bowen told *Clarion*, and the union is committed to pursuing the issue in next year's budget. "We are going to continue to alert State and City lawmakers to this pressing need," she said.

Spitzer names higher ed commission

By PETER HOGNESS

Gov. Eliot Spitzer has appointed a Commission on Higher Education, and has asked it to develop a plan "to enable our public universities to go from being good to being great." Its preliminary report is due by December 1 of this year.

Spitzer first proposed the commission in his State of the State address in January. He said then that it should recommend strategies for "achieving academic excellence, ensuring access, and contributing to the State's workforce and economic development efforts," and these are also the main themes of his May 29 executive order.

PRESTIGE?

At a press conference held May 29, Spitzer praised New York's public universities but lamented that they do not generally have the same level of prestige as those in a number of other states. The commission's report, he said, will chart a path that can "make NY's higher educational system a world-class institution... so that we can look at the CUNY system and the SUNY system and say it

Initial report due Dec. 1

is akin to the UCLA program, it is akin to what they have at Wisconsin, Carolina [or] Texas."

PSC President Barbara Bowen told *Clarion* that the union welcomed formation of the commission, and that increased attention for public higher education in New York was long overdue. "There is a basic issue that underlies everything in public higher education in New York, and that's the historic decline in funding," she said. "Both CUNY and SUNY have seen a huge withdrawal of State support. I hope the commission begins with a recognition of this fundamental fact, and I look forward to the results of its work."

During the 1990s, Bowen noted, State support for CUNY dropped by about one-third in real dollars, and it is still 18% below its 1990 level. "Everything that a commission might study – the drop in full-time faculty, access to a college education, the need to bolster research – they're all connected to the lack of funds," she said.

At the press conference, Spitzer spoke at length about the potential role of public universities in economic growth. His executive order says that the commission will recommend ways for "increasing the alignment of SUNY and CUNY research centers and degree programs with the economic development objectives of the State and the region of the State where each campus is situated." (It adds that "the ability of students and faculty to pursue research untethered to any predetermined economic objectives" should also be maintained.)

The governor's remarks also focused heavily on SUNY. Noting that the SUNY system has "so many masters," he said the commission would examine its governance structure. But while he spoke about CUNY less often, the governor made clear that the commission would also look at the City University system.

To take the state "from good to great"

Spitzer's executive order envisions "increasing direct State support" for SUNY and CUNY, but also "greater flexibility in tuition practices." His executive budget said the commission should develop "a rational tuition policy" that would provide "predictability in future tuition charges." CUNY central administration has used similar language with respect to tuition increases, which the PSC has long opposed.

ACCESS

The governor also said that increasing access to higher education in New York State would be a key goal. His executive order says that "improving the affordability of higher education" should be one of the panel's top priorities, and that this would require "directing more of the available aid to students with greatest demonstrated need." The commission is also charged with making recommendations on New York's community colleges – in particular how they can increase graduation rates.

The chair of the commission is Hunter Rawlings, former president of Cornell University. Speaking to

reporters, Rawlings stressed his past experience in public higher education, including leading public universities in Iowa and Colorado.

The other members of the commission include: CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein; CUNY Trustee Marc Shaw; President Marcia Keizs of York College; President Eduardo Martí of Queensborough Community College; Robert Paaswell, distinguished professor of civil engineering at CCNY; Queens College student Lauren Talerman; interim SUNY Chancellor John Clark and the presidents of three SUNY campuses; Bill Scheuerman, head of SUNY's union of faculty and professional staff; the presidents of NYU, Columbia and Syracuse and the dean of Harvard Law; Assemblywoman Deborah Glick and Sen. Kenneth LaValle, who chair the higher education committees of the New York Assembly and State Senate; Rochester Teachers Association President Adam Urbanski; Bruce Raynor, president of UNITE-HERE; John Dyson, a former deputy mayor under Rudolph Giuliani; and Abe Lackman, head of New York's main association of private colleges and universities.

Deborah Glick, CUNY alumna, is new Assembly higher ed chair

By DANIA RAJENDRA

"I began my college career when CUNY had a policy of free tuition – so I did not face the prospect of coming out of my undergraduate years with a lot of debt," recalled Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, a Queens College graduate.

Perhaps more importantly, the absence of tuition helped students get a better education. "There was more time to study, more time to be involved politically," she told *Clarion* this spring. Glick's own political involvement began as an undergraduate, and it put her on a path that led to the New York Legislature.

"Today, the exploration of ideas and finding your way through a variety of interests has been short-circuited by the cost of school and the demand to move forward" to a specific job. "So critical thinking and knowledge for knowledge's sake have suffered throughout higher education."

COMMISSION

Glick has represented the 66th Assembly District in Greenwich Village since 1990, when she became the first openly lesbian or gay member of the New York State Assembly. Now chair of the higher education committee, Glick was recently named by Gov. Spitzer as a

TAP reform a priority

member of his new Commission on Higher Education (see above).

Glick began at Queens College in 1967. She majored in theater and then in English and "had wonderful teachers in both departments." With their encouragement for broad intellectual exploration, "My college experience was very rich," she said.

She also learned a lot outside of class. "I was very involved in political activism," she explained. "It was during the tumultuous Vietnam War days [and] it was very exciting."

It was also prior to *Roe v Wade*, and she became involved in the struggle to change the law on abortion.

Becoming an active feminist was also sparked, in part, by her own experience with discrimination in class. "As a woman, I was actively discouraged from science" – a common experience in the 1960s, she said. "I was interested in chemistry and calculus, and I was having some trouble with the math. I definitely didn't get the kind of support in math and science that would have led me to pursue [chemistry as] a career." Glick pursued a theater major until she "took a hiatus."

She contrasted her math experience at Queens with her experience

years later, studying for her MBA at Fordham. "I was more assertive, I was older, and I demanded a clearer explanation for things I didn't understand. But there was also more of a change in general attitudes. The assumption was that you were going to go forward."

RETURNED

After working full-time for a few years, Glick returned to undergraduate study at Queens – and came back to a different CUNY: "When I returned at night to finish, policies had changed, and there was tuition. As a working person, I felt the stresses of working and going to school, and this probably was more in line with the majority of experiences that students have today."

And Glick bears those experiences in mind when politicians talk about the time to graduation at public universities. "People who have the perseverance to go to school, and still juggle family and work, are necessarily going to take more years," she said. "And they should be given kudos for their perseverance. They're hardly laggards."

Given that students often need more than two or four years to finish their degrees, Glick said it is time to re-examine the TAP pro-



Deborah Glick, first from left, middle row, with students at Queens College.

gram. "We have to rethink and massage the TAP program so that it is more reflective of the way students go through school now. It's of great concern and interest to me." Under TAP's current rules, students who are financially self-supporting are at a disadvantage.

More broadly, Glick is concerned that rising costs have made higher education much less accessible: "Bottom line, we've seen dramatic increases in the cost of public higher ed, and we haven't seen the same dramatic increase in working people's incomes."

TERRIFIC AD

Glick praised the PSC's efforts to change the funding equation. She said the union's TV ad on this year's budget battle was "terrific," and its lobbying efforts get noticed. "The

PSC team led by Barbara Bowen has had a dramatic impact in a fairly short time," Glick said.

New York State still lags behind many other states in support for its public universities, said Glick – but the situation is at least beginning to improve. Chairing the Committee on Higher Education gives her "an opportunity to take stock of the state's commitment and try to impact that."

State support for CUNY's capital spending plans is one hopeful sign, said Glick, but it will take many years to repair the damage done by decades of neglect. "And rebuilding CUNY does not just mean capital construction," she told *Clarion*. To rebuild "the fiber of the university" will require many other kinds of support, including an increase in full-time faculty lines.

NLRB rules for RF workers

By DANIA RAJENDRA

On June 29, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) told CUNY's Research Foundation (RF) that the CUNY graduate students are, in fact, workers – who do have the right to unionize.

The ruling cleared the way for counting ballots that Research Foundation employees cast in a Graduate Center union election in May 2005. But on July 18, almost as soon as that count began, it ground to a halt due to objections from RF management. PSC representatives sought a compromise that would let the count continue, but were unsuccessful. Now the count is on hold again, pending a decision from the regional NLRB on challenged ballots.

GRAD ASSISTANT

The original dispute revolved around an NLRB decision that found that graduate assistants at Brown University were not really workers.

Union rights of CUNY grad students affirmed.

RF stalls, but ballots to be counted

The board said they were not employees but rather students receiving a stipend to support their education, and it ruled that private-sector graduate assistants therefore had no federally-protected right to organize.

ARGUMENT REJECTED

When RF employees at the CUNY Graduate Center sought to unionize with the PSC, the RF tried to adopt the same argument. Although the RF claims that it is a completely separate employer from CUNY – and private-sector where CUNY is public – it contended that most of its Graduate Center employees had no right to organize because they were also CUNY graduate students.

The NLRB rejected that argument: "Unlike Brown, the employer [the Research Foundation] is not an educational institution."

Rob Sauté, a doctoral student in sociology at the Graduate Center, agreed. "The RF doesn't grant degrees! Although they probably would be highly qualified to confer degrees in union-busting, delaying and dragging," he joked.

Sauté faults the RF for the repeated holdups. "Clearly the RF has every advantage in delaying," he said. "It means the union has to keep starting over." Since many RF employees work on specific research projects, he explained, turnover is high. "Many work on projects that last one or two years. Mine was four." But his project is over now – so Sauté, who was active in the union drive, is no longer an RF employee.

VOICE

Sauté predicted that the RF's latest objections would not prevent a union victory. "It's a last-ditch effort to deny people a voice," he said.

The PSC wants the ballots to be



Lisa Quiriones

On July 17, an NLRB agent opened some ballots cast in May 2005.

counted, in full, without further delay. "We will work hard to move the vote through the board's procedure as quickly as possible," said PSC Executive Director Deborah Bell. "But this is one more example

of why card-check recognition and congressional passage of the Employee Free Choice Act is so important. Current procedures are too vulnerable to stalling tactics by management."

Chapter election results

By PETER HOGNESS

Results of the PSC's 2007 chapter elections were certified by the union's Elections Committee on May 4, and the committee's report was accepted at the May 31 meeting of the Delegate Assembly.

A complete list of those elected follows below, with those who are new to their position listed in italics.

PSC elections occur on a staggered three-year cycle: half the union's chapters had elections in 2007, while the other half will vote for local leadership next year. Union-wide elections will next be held in 2009. Both chapter and union-wide positions have a three-year term of office.

Clarion reported on this year's elections on page 8 of our May 2007 issue. For a more detailed description of the PSC's structure, see page 2 of the November 2004 edition. Both are available at www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm.

Bronx EOC: (BXEOC Slate) Chairperson, Santiago Villafañe; Delegate to the DA, Santiago Villafañe.

Brooklyn EOC: (A. Nicholas/T. Javaid Slate, except where noted) Chairperson, Amy Nicholas; Vice Chairperson, Tanweer Javaid; Officer at Large, Joan H. Grant-Boyd; Delegate to the DA, Amy Nicholas; Alternate Delegate to the DA, *Brenth Daniel* (C. Murdock/A. Browne Slate).

College of Staten Island: (New Cau-

Many new local leaders

cus Slate) Chairperson, Vasilios Petratos; Vice Chairperson, Roslyn Bologh; Secretary, *Shah Jayman*; Officers-At-Large, Sarah Benesch, *Satyapraka Das*, *Allen Natowitz*, Stephen Stearns; Delegates to the DA, Vasilios Petratos, *Michael Batson*, Rima Blair, Harry Cason, *Richard Flanagan*; Alternate Delegates to the DA, *Emile Chi*, *John Davenport*, *David Krit*, *Alexei Matveev*; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, *Carol Demartinis*, *Cheryl Wu*.

Higher Education Officers: (New Caucus Slate, except where noted) Chairperson, Jean Weisman; Vice Chairperson, *Iris DeLutro*; Secretary, Ann Batiuk; Officers-At-Large, Sheriann Grant-Fordham, Janet Leslie-Pierre, *David Nadvorney*, *Robert Nelson*; Delegates to the DA, *Anthony Andrews*, Stephen Barrera, Ann Batiuk, *Daniella Francisco*, Ralph Giordano, *Margaret Pierce-Anyon*, Wayne Harewood, Nicholas Irons, *Ed Loble* (HEOs Now Slate), *George Muchita*, Michael Neal, *Warren Orange*, *Anselma Rodriguez*, *Alisa Sher* (HEOs Now Slate), *Steven Selwyn*, *Alvin Tramble*, Jean Weisman, *Paula Wiest* (HEOs Now Slate), *Janet Winter*; Alternate Delegates to the DA, *Carole Taylor*, *Michael Simmonds*, *Andrea Vasquez*, *Robert Bandelt*, *Marc Ward*.

Hunter Campus Schools: (Campus Schools Caucus Slate) Chairperson,

David Towber; Vice Chairperson, *Lee Weinberg*; Secretary, *Sylvia Schaindlin*; Officers-At-Large, *Alvin Shields*, *Barbara Ghnassia*, Michael Stratechuk, *Cristina Moore*. Delegate to the DA, David Towber.

Kingsborough Community College: (Your Faculty Slate) Chairperson, Rina Yarmish; Vice Chairperson, Theodore Markus; Secretary, *Michael Sokolow*; Officers-At-Large, *Gregory Aizin*, William Winter, *Barbara Walters*, *Denis Sivack*; Delegates to the DA, Rina Yarmish, *Susan Aranoff*, William Rooney, *Cliff Hesse*, *Donald Donin*, Silvea Thomas, Michael Barnhart; Alternates to the DA, *Joseph Consolo*, Ronald Forman, Alfonso Garcia Osuna, *Donald Hume*, *Gordon Bassen*; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Rina Yarmish, Richard Staum.

Lehman College: (Academic Slate) Chairperson, Helene Silverman; Vice Chairperson, *John Mineka*; Secretary, Duane Tananbaum; Officers-At-Large, *Bruce Byland*, Catherine Alicia Georges, *Liesl Jones*, *Kevin Sailor*; Delegates to the DA, Helene Silverman, *Eric Calyo*, *M. Marsham Castro*, *Wayne Halliday*, John Mineka; Alternate Delegates to the DA, *Christy Folsom*, *Jonathan Halabi*, *Manfred Philipp*, *Mark Zuss*; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Alice Akan, *Keville Frederickson*.

Borough of Manhattan Community College: (New Caucus Slate) Chairperson, Jane Young; Vice Chairperson, *Joyce Moorman*; Secretary, *Cynthia Wiseman*; Officers-At-Large, *Wambui Mbugua*, *Brenda Wyatt*, Ruth Herz, *Mildred Whitenner*; Delegates to the DA, Jane Young, Joyce Moorman, Ingrid Hughes, Mike Vozick, *Kenneth Levinson*, *Rafael Corbalan*, *Rebecca Hill*, Charles Post; Alternates to the DA, Lisa Rose, Shirley Rausher, *Phil Eggers*, *Dolores DeLuise*, *Angela Romeo-Molloy*; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Marcia Newfield, *Margie White*.

Medgar Evers: (Medgar Evers College Alliance Slate) Chairperson, Edward Catapane; Vice Chairperson, *Darius Movasseghi*; Secretary, *Steven Nardi*; Officers-At-Large, *Stanley Bajue*, *Dereck Skeete*, *Iola Thompson*; Delegates to the DA, Edward Catapane, *Waldaba Stewart*; Alternate Delegates to the DA, *Patricia E.D. Belcon*, *Jewel James*; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Darius Movasseghi, *Ventura Simmons*.

New York City College of Technology: (New Caucus Slate) Chairperson, Robert Cermele; Vice Chairperson, *Mary Alice Browne*; Secretary, *Tess Tobin*; Officers-At-Large, *Kyle Cuordileone*, Joel Greenstein, *Ana Marcano*, *Sharon Swacker*; Delegates to the DA, Robert Cermele, *Stephen James*, *Gary Morgan*, *Costas Panayotakis*, *Patricia Rudden*, Wendy Scribner, *Gerald Van Loon*; Alternate Delegates to the DA, *Malcolm Ebanks*,

Marta Effinger, *Michael Gomez*, *Barry Keating*, *Brian Keener*; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, *Jackie Elliot*, *Helen Frank*.

Queensborough Community College: (QCC Unified Slate) Chairperson, *Paul Weiss*; Vice Chairperson, *Wilma Fletcher*; Secretary, *Sheila Beck*; Officers-At-Large, *Jacob Appleman*, *Kitty Bateman*, *Charles Neuman*, *Alexandra Tarasko*; Delegates to the DA, Paul Weiss, *Judith Barbanell*, *Mona Fabricant*, Philip Pecorino, JoAnn Wein, *Reuvain Zahavy*; Alternate Delegates to the DA, *David Lieberman*, *Jane Poulsen*, *Tom Smith*, *Lana Zinger*; PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Advisory Council, Tom Gerson, David Klarberg.

Research Foundation: (RF/CUNY Slate) Chairperson, Anthony Dixon; Vice Chairperson, *Fisner Antoine*; Delegate to the DA, Anthony Dixon.

Retirees Chapter: (Retiree Caucus Slate) Chairperson, Jacob Judd; Vice Chairperson, *James Perlstein*; Secretary, Mary Bryce-Jennings; Officers-At-Large, Francine Brewer, *Judith Bronfman*, Martin Kaplan, *Eileen Moran*; Delegates to the DA, Jacob Judd, *Joel Berger*, *David Kotelchuck*, *Ezra Seltzer*; Alternate Delegates to the DA, *Miriam Bal-muth*, *Theodore Gottesman*, *Steven Leberstein*, *Robert Wurman*; PSC-CUNY Welfare Advisory Council, Irwin Yellowitz.

Manhattan EOC: [Special election to be held Fall 2007.]

Queens EOC: [None.]

Registrars: [Special election to be held Fall 2007.]

JOB SECURITY AFTER 7 YEARS

Union proposes CCE for adjuncts

By BARBARA BOWEN PSC President

Among the union's innovative proposals in this round of bargaining is a Certificate of Continuous Employment for adjuncts.

Once upon a time, adjuncts in higher education were truly an adjunct to the rest of the faculty - they offered specialized courses not available from other faculty, or they taught for a semester or two in areas otherwise not addressed by the college. That has not been true for many years, especially at CUNY. For reasons that are both financial and political, the higher education workforce has been dramatically restructured, with CUNY as one of the worst offenders. Nationally, the percentage of part-timers among college faculty members increased 41% between 1990 and 2003. At CUNY, the increase in the same period was 71%.

CORE FACULTY

In 2007, we are long past the point when it is possible to describe CUNY adjuncts as anything but part of the core faculty. Half of the University's courses are taught by adjuncts, and the ratio of part-time to full-time faculty is on the rise, even as more full-timers are

hired. Though formally committed to the goal of 70% full-time faculty and 30% adjuncts, CUNY continues to rely on thousands of underpaid part-timers to balance the budget as enrollment climbs.

Yet CUNY management is officially in denial about the way it has restructured its workforce. The smiling faculty faces you see on subway ads are never of adjuncts, even though adjuncts are the majority of "who's teaching at CUNY." Particularly in its approach to adjunct job security, the University continues to act as if it's 1965.

CUNY wants to have its cake and eat it too:

Management's position is that it's fine for adjuncts to teach half the courses and offer years or even decades of service to the same department, but that when it comes to job security, each new semester is a clean slate. CUNY has stated clearly that in its view, an adjunct's employment can be ended "for any reason, or no reason at all" - no matter how many years the adjunct has taught at CUNY, and no matter how well.

The union is seeking to address this issue in the current round of negotiations. We have proposed a series of one-year and multi-year appointments leading to a Certificate of Continuous Employment, which would provide job security

in a part-time position. The CCE would be modeled on the CCE available to lecturers and would be provided retroactively to long-serving adjuncts who met the eligibility threshold.

The proposal is still under discussion with CUNY and the union is open to negotiation about the details, so I won't discuss them here. The essential point made by the union's proposal is that CUNY must reciprocate the commitment to the University and its students shown by the thousands of adjuncts who return every semester and teach many of CUNY's core courses. The University cannot go on relying on the long-time experience of a cadre of adjuncts and then treating them like throw-away people.

EVERYONE

A CCE for CUNY's most tested adjuncts is good for everyone: full-time faculty, students, professional staff, adjuncts themselves, and above all, students. Job security for all of us is undermined when management has the option of terminating any faculty member at will, and students' education is compromised when half of their instructors receive virtually no institutional security.

The PSC is proposing a seven-year period before the CCE, so de-

partments would have adequate opportunity to assess whether an adjunct is right for long-term employment. Stable employment for the subset of adjuncts who met the eligibility threshold would bring much-needed stability for students, who are mystified when they learn that their professor is no longer with the college after the course is finished. It would bring increased predictability to the hiring process for department chairs while still allowing the flexibility to cover many courses with non-certificated adjuncts. (The proposal includes protection for graduate employees, in recognition of the University's commitment to providing them with teaching opportunities.)

Not least important, an adjunct CCE would enlarge academic freedom at CUNY, now seriously endangered by the fact that thousands of courses are taught by people unprotected from arbitrary or politically-motivated termination.

An adjunct CCE at CUNY is long overdue. Colleges across the country, and several right here in New York, have offered it successfully, and CUNY should follow their lead.

The PSC remains adamant that a predominantly full-time faculty in tenured or tenure-track positions - with time for research,

protection of academic freedom, and decent salaries and benefits - is essential for a serious university. The union has led the campaign for more full-time faculty positions for CUNY; we were the first to break the official silence on the issue, and we have had some success, working with management, in achieving funding increases to address it.

RESTRUCTURED

But whether we like it or not, CUNY has restructured its workforce. There are still more than 8,000 adjuncts at the University. CUNY management may be engaged in denial about adjuncts' role in the University, but we - whether full-time faculty, adjuncts or professional staff - should recognize that it is in no one's interest but management's to deny the most experienced adjuncts a measure of job security. It is certainly not in the interests of our students to be taught by people who don't know from one semester to the next whether they will have a job.

An adjunct CCE would go a long way towards making the most of the talented part-time faculty we are lucky enough to have in New York City, and would make a genuine contribution to the education of our students.

Our vision for a new contract

The PSC campaign for a new contract is part of the union's agenda to make CUNY what it could be - and our professional lives here what they should be.

A great university provides the conditions faculty and staff need to work. Why not CUNY?

The PSC contract demands express the union's vision for CUNY:

- restoration of competitive salaries
strong tenure protections
support for academic freedom
reasonable workloads
excellent benefits
fair treatment for part-time faculty
family-friendly provisions
advancement for professional staff
support for research and scholarship

CUNY management's demands express a very different agenda:

- weakening tenure
weakening academic freedom
removing department chairs from the union
weakening job security for HEOs
increasing exploitation of contingent labor
weakening due process
weakening the union
replacing salary steps with micro-management of salary by presidents

We support the PSC's demand for a university that provides the salaries and conditions we need to educate our students:

Table listing names of members from various CUNY campuses including Baruch College, Brooklyn College, Borough of Manhattan Community College, and others.

At Lehman College, *Clarion's* Roving Reporter asks

What are you reading this summer?



Heather Appel

IMMACULEE HIRUSHIMANA
Assistant Professor
of Middle and High School Education

This summer my personal reading is this book by Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*. It's his autobiography. It's a page-turner, and I can relate to it – not to his political struggles, but to his youth and his schooling. I think anyone can find it enjoyable, not just African-born people.

I'm reading a lot about writing and literacy and the politics of literacy in the public schools. The book I'm currently reading is by Patrick Finn, called *Literacy With an Attitude*. It's about educating working-class students in their own self-interest. It draws a contrast between the forms and content of instruction given to students based on how wealthy they are, so I know I have to prepare my teaching candidates to really avoid prejudice and preconceived notions if they're teaching in the city.



Heather Appel

TERRENCE CHENG
Assistant Professor
of English

So far this summer I've read *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut, *Jarhead* by Anthony Swofford and *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque. I'm preparing to teach a senior seminar focusing on the literature of war in the fall, and I'd never read *Slaughterhouse Five* or *All Quiet on the Western Front*. So I am slowly whittling down my list of books I've never read that I feel guilty about. And the books have not disappointed. *Catch-22* is next.

I'm also a judge this year for the Asian American Writers Workshop Literary Awards, so I have 15 novels that I need to whittle down to three finalists by Labor Day. The first I've read from that group is *American Born Chinese* by Gene Yang, which is a graphic novel and a great book for young adults.



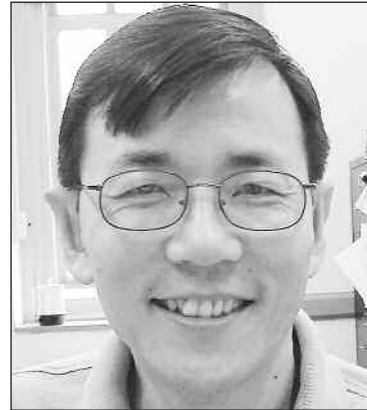
Heather Appel

JOSEPH RACHLIN
Professor and Chair
of Biological Sciences

A whole bunch of books on multivariate analysis – I'm catching up on that before the semester begins because of the research I'm doing. I'm an aquatic ecologist, and we've been involved in research on the Bronx River as part of a restoration project. We're restocking the Bronx River with alewife, a river herring that has not been in the river since the early 1600s.

For fun, I read anything I can get my hands on, any good novel. I just finished reading the 21 volumes of Patrick O'Brian's series about [British Navy] Captain Jack Aubrey and his partner John Maturin during the Napoleonic War period.

Next I want to read *The Undercover Economist* by Tim Harford – it's kind of a fun book on macroeconomics. He got famous in England answering economic questions accurately but sort of tongue-in-cheek, making economics accessible to the public.



Heather Appel

HAIPING CHENG
Associate Professor
of Microbiology

For science, I keep up with our research area through journals such as *Science*, *Nature* and *Cell*. I am studying signal exchange between a bacterium, *sinorhizobium meliloti*, which allows alfalfa to grow without costly fertilizer.

For fun – well, actually I don't read, I listen. I have a 40-minute commute, and I found I can add some color to the trip by listening to tapes on different subjects. Last year I went through [Tolstoy's] *War and Peace*, and that took a few months of commuting to complete – it was 45 tapes.

The last set of tapes I listened to was 24 lectures on Greek mythology. Growing up in China, I had heard some of these dramatic stories, and I have always been fascinated by them. But I had read them in Chinese, so I couldn't name the gods and the heroes in English. I like the story of Theseus the best – I remembered it the most from childhood.



Heather Appel

KHEMA CHAN
Program Assistant
for College Now

Right now I'm reading a book called *US Guys: The True and Twisted Mind of the American Man*, by Charlie LeDuff. It's really amazing – it's a travelogue through places like Tulsa, Oakland and Detroit. The author took a year to travel across the US and found that men in all different places had the same worries and uncertainties – about things like race, sexuality, God, ambition, isolation and misunderstandings.

What I love about this book is that LeDuff did not just go out to seek interviews, he did something better; he immersed himself their lives. For example, he rode in a gay rodeo in Oklahoma City and he participated in a biker's brawl in Oakland California.

My next reading will be Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*.

Interviews by Heather Appel

Department of Labor rules that the PSC's 2006 election was fair

By PETER HOGNESS

The US Department of Labor has finished its investigation of a challenge to the 2006 PSC election, deciding to take no action on the complaint.

The federal agency informed the PSC on June 6, Executive Director Deborah Bell told the June 21 PSC Delegate Assembly. "They are closing the books," Bell said, "and will issue a detailed report within a year."

The 2006 union-wide election saw two slates of candidates face off against each other, the incumbent

Challenge to vote is rejected

New Caucus versus the CUNY Alliance. When ballots were counted on April 25, 2006, the New Caucus was again the winner, and a week later the CUNY Alliance filed a challenge to the election. After a hearing on the complaint, the PSC Elections Committee concluded that the challenge was without merit, and in late May 2006, the union's Delegate Assembly voted to accept the committee's report.

"The protesting parties then appealed to our parent body, the

American Federation of Teachers, as is their right," said Bell. After examining the complaint, she said, the AFT concluded that none of the charges were serious enough to require detailed investigation and dismissed the appeal. The CUNY Alliance then took its challenge to the Bush administration's Department of Labor (DOL).

"The Department of Labor conducted an exhaustive investiga-

tion," noted Bell, "and concluded that the election was valid. This complaint has now been rejected at every level, and the election was found to be fair several times over."

The Bush administration concludes there were no infractions.

the labor movement and could be counted on to scrutinize the challenge with a fine tooth comb," com-

mented Deale, a professor at CUNY School of Law. "If it could not find an infraction, there wasn't one to be found." There is of course a cost to defending electoral challenges, Deale added, "but those costs are outweighed by the need for transparency and open, vigorous debate amongst different viewpoints."

TRANSPARENCY

Bell told delegates that the union had been completely cooperative with DOL investigators and thanked PSC staff for their hard work in responding to federal requests. "The DOL has spent nearly a year investigating in enormous detail," she said. "This consumed many days of staff time, during which the regular business of the union still had to continue."

The Elections Committee report, which examines the charges in detail, is available at www.psc-cuny.org/PDF/PSC06ElectionChallengeDecision.pdf.

New savings option

By **CLARISSA GILBERT WEISS**
PSC Director of Pension & Welfare Benefits

As of September 1, 2007, CUNY will offer its employees a new form of tax-deferred savings, the New York State Deferred Compensation Plan.

Known as a "457 Plan," the program allows employees to set aside as little as 1% of their salary or as much as \$15,500 per year in pre-tax contributions to various plan-sponsored investment vehicles. This amount is in addition to any money that employees invest in CUNY's existing tax-deferred options.

THREE EXECUTIVES

The 457 Plan will have three account executives assigned to CUNY's campuses to provide information to employees. There will be a telephone hotline, a managed website, reports and a quarterly newsletter. Account executives have already begun to visit CUNY campuses to explain the plan and assist employees who wish their de-

Retirement plan is tax-deferred

ductions to begin in the Fall. However, enrollment can occur at any time during the year, and employees can increase, decrease or stop their contributions at any time.

START AT ANY TIME

Those employed by multiple colleges will have to file separate enrollment applications with the human resources office at each college if they wish to have payroll deductions made from each job.

Although the 457 Plan is offered through the State, it is open to both senior and community college employees. All CUNY employees who receive either a New York City or State paycheck are eligible to participate. The 457 Plan is open to both full-time and part-time employees, as well as to CUNY retirees who work as adjuncts. If you reach age 70½ and are still em-

ployed at CUNY, you do not have to begin withdrawals from the plan until you retire.

Withdrawals can be made only after age 59½ and must begin no later than age 70½ if you are no longer employed either full-time or part-time at CUNY. Money contributed and the interest earned are both exempt from federal, state and local taxes until withdrawn. However, taxes must be paid on all withdrawals.

There are hardship provisions that allow individuals who qualify to withdraw money before age 59½. While the hardship rules are strict, they do not include any penalties for early withdrawals.

31 CHOICES

The NYS 457 Plan has 31 different investment vehicles, including money market funds, bond funds, balanced funds, stock funds and international funds. There is one social choice fund, PAX World, and a Lifecycle Fund. The annual administrative fee for the plan, which is run on a for-profit basis, is \$14.00. For each of the mutual funds, fund operating expenses range from 0.10% to 0.35% of assets, a charge that is deducted directly from participants' accounts. Some funds may impose a short-term trade fee or be subject to a trade restriction policy.

Individuals may take out loans of

up to \$50,000 or 50% of assets (whichever is less) that must be paid back within five years.

Employees in the NYC Teachers' Retirement System who are paying back for prior service may use their own 457 plan assets to buy that time back. (Employees who participate in CUNY's SRA or TDA plans can presently use those accounts to do the same thing, and the 457 Plan functions similarly.)

Money that CUNY employees have in a 403B or 401K plan or an IRA may be rolled into the 457 Plan at any time.

When an employee leaves CUNY service, money in his or her 457 Plan may remain in the plan or be rolled over into a 403B or 401K plan, into an IRA, or into another 457 plan. Beneficiaries may remain in the 457 Plan upon the death of the CUNY employee or retiree.

GET INFORMED

If you are interested in this type of investment, speak to the account executives when they come to your campus. As with all financial investments, the PSC encourages members to start by educating themselves about their options and opportunities.

If you have questions, contact your campus human resources office or e-mail Clarissa Gilbert Weiss at the PSC at cweiss@psemail.org.

The 457 Plan is open to all CUNY employees.

Wireless phone service – unionized & at a discount

By **CLARION STAFF**

AT&T (formerly Cingular) is the only wireless company that is virtually 100% union: 40,000 of its employees are members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), and the company has agreed not to oppose union organizing efforts.

The company is now offering a 10% discount to members of all AFL-CIO-affiliated unions. (This includes all PSC members, since the PSC belongs to the American Federation of Teachers, which is part of the AFL-CIO.)

"For union families, the choice in wireless is clear," said CWA President Larry Cohen, who called AT&T "a company that respects workers' rights to organize."

The 10% discount off the regular monthly rate is available for any AT&T individual or family plan, along with a \$50 savings on new phones, and is valid through October 31. (The union member discount was previously 5%.) Current AT&T/Cingular customers will need to renew their contracts for two years to be eligible for the new discount.

NEW CONTRACTS

The offer is only available at AT&T-owned retail stores, not by phone or online. When signing up or renewing service, give the store clerk the following AT&T Union Discount FAN number: 00113662. For information on AT&T store locations, go to www.wireless.att.com/find-a-store.

Social Security & Travia leave

Full-time faculty and professional staff who will be on Travia leave and who are eligible because of age for Social Security benefits should be aware that, according to federal law, Social Security does not count sick and vacation pay as part of your earnings for the year. Since pay for Travia leave is one-half of your sick leave bank, if you are over 62 years of age and receiving Travia leave you are absolutely entitled to collect Social Security as well. The same rule can also apply to qualified annual leave.

The human resources office at your college will prepare a record for you to take with you to Social Security that explains that you are on Travia leave (and/or qualified annual leave) and therefore entitled to collect Social Security at the same time. Further information on this benefit, called "Special Payments After Retirement," can be obtained online at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10063.html – or you can request a printed copy by calling (800) 772-1213.

– CGW

HEOs question QC prez



Maureen Pierce-Anyan puts a question to Queens College President James Muyskens at a May 30 meeting on concerns of QC employees in Higher Education Officer-series titles, organized by the PSC's HEO Chapter.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Israel boycott opposed

In May, convention delegates of Britain's University and College Union (UCU) asked its members to consider a call from Palestinian unions to boycott Israeli academic institutions, condemning "the complicity of Israeli academia in the occupation."

Academic unions in the US, including the AFT and AAUP, urged UCU members to reject the boycott proposal.

PSC representatives to the AFT and AAUP have voted to oppose the boycott, and the PSC approved its own anti-boycott resolution at its June Delegate Assembly. Noting that "among PSC members there is a spectrum of deeply-held and sometimes conflicting positions on the issue of Israel's expansion into the post-1967 territories," it emphasizes that "the PSC vigorously supports academic freedom and defends the free and open exchange of ideas among scholars – the lifeblood of academic work" and urges UCU members to reject the boycott call. (Full text is at www.psc-cuny.org/DelegateAssemblyResolutions.htm – scroll down to June 21, 2007.)

UCU General Secretary Sally Hunt said she thinks the boycott proposal does not have the support of most UCU members.

Iraqi oil workers strike

On June 4, members of the Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions (IFOU) went on strike at some oil pipelines to keep oil revenues public and pressure the government to live up to its promises of wage increases, vacation time and permanent jobs for temporary workers. After the Iraqi government ordered the arrest of union leaders and the army surrounded the strikers, the union called off the strike. The AFL-CIO issued a joint statement with the UK's Trade Union Congress supporting the Iraqi union, which represents 26,000 workers. The government must "pull back its security and military forces and cease its menacing threats to arrest and attack these workers immediately," the two federations declared.

French plan sparks debate

New French President Nicolas Sarkozy wasted no time publishing his plans to give the nation's universities more autonomy – but then postponed its official introduction in the face of serious opposition. Students and faculty critics warn his plan lays the groundwork to privatize, and defund, French universities.

"They say it is important to open up the possibility for private companies to put money into higher education, and this is because they want to put in less," Alain Trautmann, an immunologist at the Cochin Institute, told the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

CONTESTED HISTORY

Legacies of the slave trade

By STEPHEN LEBERSTEIN

March 1807 was a momentous month for abolitionists: that month saw the passage of bills, first in the US Congress and then on March 25 in the UK Parliament, outlawing the African slave trade. The bicentennial of these actions comes at a time of rancorous dispute about the legacy of slavery today.

At the beginning of the 18th century, all the developed nations of Western Europe accepted chattel slavery and the African slave trade that supported it as a necessary evil, and often justified it as a mission to Christianize and civilize "heathens." But by 1888 slavery as a legal institution had ended everywhere in the New World.

For Britain, ending the African slave trade was not easily achieved because of its importance to British commerce, maritime trade and imperial hegemony. As Eric Williams demonstrated in his epic *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), the slave trade and the West Indian plantation economy supplied much of the capital for the industrial revolution, which transformed English society in the early 19th century. The threat of slave revolts, especially the 1791 uprising in St. Domingue (Haiti), and a mounting popular abolition movement at home, led the British elites who profited from slavery, however reluctantly, to agree to end the African slave trade. Some believed that outlawing the trade would help preserve the West Indian plantation economy, given the propensity of African-born slaves to rise in revolt, while abolitionists saw it a step toward the abolition of slavery itself.

The British movement to abolish the slave trade may well have been the first mass social movement of modern times. Parliamentary victory is identified with William Wilberforce, a wealthy merchant and the member of Parliament (MP) for Hull on the Channel coast in Yorkshire, and the main character in the recently released feature film *Amazing Grace*. But the chief organizer of the movement was Thomas Clarkson, a Cambridge classmate who developed the techniques of the modern mass social movement among the mine and mill workers of the North.

INHUMAN BRUTALITY

At considerable risk to his own safety and even his life, Clarkson frequented the main slaving ports of England – Bristol, Liverpool and London – to uncover the shameful reality of the trade and to put it on public display. While the trade's apologists claimed that it helped train sailors for service in the Royal Navy, Clarkson discovered that a single slaving voyage might cost the lives of a third of the sailors, and often a much larger share of their "cargo" of enslaved Africans. He found sea captains wracked by guilt for their role in the trade – none more famous than John Newton, author of the hymn "Amazing Grace" – now willing to testify, provide diagrams of the holds of their ships and describe the inhuman brutality used to control the hundreds of men, women and children being transported to Caribbean slave markets.

Based in part in the churches of "Dissenting Sects," Friends, Methodists and other evangelical Christians, the movement used emerging means of communication such as newspapers, broadsides with graphic images of slave ships, pamphlets and badges created



Union representatives and CUNY students stand in front of the town hall in Kingston-on-Hull, sister city to Brooklyn, where public events commemorated the ban on the African slave trade.

by the potter Josiah Wedgwood featuring slaves with the logos, "Am I Not a Woman and a Sister," "Am I Not a Man and a Brother," to put the slave trade in the public eye. Abolition societies were organized in many of the cities and towns in the North of England, with pamphlets and Wedgwood badges distributed to participants.

ONE MILLION SIGNATURES

At a time when many of the workers in the new industrial towns of the North had no representation in Parliament, a common way to speak to power was through petitions. By 1807, the movement collected nearly a million signatures on the petition that Wilberforce unrolled down the aisle in the House of Commons. The petition included the names of fully one half the adult men and many women in the city of Manchester – an incredible feat at a time before the advent of telephones and e-mail.

Celebrating the bicentennial was high on the agenda of the British labor movement. To help mark the event, the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) invited the Brooklyn College Graduate Center for Worker Education to organize and lead a trade union and student delegation to the UK for the bicentennial event in March. The delegation was led by the author and included 14 graduate students in a special course, "The Politics of the Abolition of the Slave Trade," and seven trade unionists from SEIU 1199, DC 37 Local 2507, RWDSU 338, SEIU CIR and CWA 1180, in addition to another PSC delegate, Professor Joseph Wilson.

As Americans, the group found the welcome it received beyond the realm of its usual experience. The delegation, hosted by the Hon. Diana Johnson, MP for Hull, Wilberforce's own constituency, toured the House of Commons, attended a luncheon and later met other MPs and senior government ministers.

Most of the delegation's time was in Yorkshire in the industrial North of England: in Leeds, headquarters of the TUC for Yorkshire, and in Hull to meet with British trade unionists at the Trade Union Studies Center at East Riding College, to visit the Wilberforce Insti-

tute for the study of Slavery & Emancipation, the Wilberforce House Museum, Hull's Guild Hall for a formal reception and dinner, and for a major conference on the group's last day.

During the tour of the Wilberforce House Museum, site of a major exhibition on the African slave trade and the fight to end it, Okenfe Aigbe Lebart, a Nigerian-born Brooklyn College graduate student, found a pair of metal-worked figures in a display case of artifacts showing African life in the colonial period. Okenfe led me to the case, and said, "Those are from my people, the Edo in Benin, but we know the incident when they were taken not as a 'Punitive Expedition' but as 'the Massacre.'" Recalling the discovery later, Okenfe said, "I was not only flabbergasted but perplexed when I saw some of the loot that was taken during the British Massacre of 1897 at the Wilberforce House Museum. As a boy, I only heard the stories relating to the expedition. I never in my young life thought that I would come across some of the loot that was taken from the Oba's [the King's] Palace."

The presence of these objects at the Wilberforce House museum testified to the long history of horror that Britain inflicted on Africa and Africans. This remains a contested history. Critics like Ken Livingstone, mayor of London, have attacked the Blair government for its refusal "even to recognize the slave trade as a crime against humanity." Livingstone and others also questioned British self-congratulation for ending the slave trade, thereby ignoring the indispensable role of slaves in their own emancipation.

RISING UP

As the British newspaper the *Guardian* reported on the day of the bicentennial conference, groups in Jamaica questioned why the British should take so much of the credit for abolition, which indemnified the planters for the emancipation of their slaves when slavery in the British West Indies was finally abolished in 1838. As Livingstone wrote in the *Guardian* a few days earlier, "Material being produced today to mark the anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade makes it appear that white people liberated black – the assumption being they could not do it them-

selves. In reality, slaves rose against the trade from its inception. This broke it."

The culmination of the trip was a commemorative conference held at KC Stadium, Hull's soccer venue, organized by Britain's labor movement. Hundreds of delegates attended along with MPs and ministers. Cliff Williams, regional secretary of Unison (Britain's major public sector union), remarked that a mass social movement of ordinary working people made it possible for Wilberforce to get the abolition bill through Parliament after a generation's efforts.

The Rt. Honorable Hillary Benn, minister for international economic development, praised the ordinary workers who made up the abolition movement, including Sheffield metalworkers and Lancashire textile workers, both of whose products were traded in Africa. With other industrial workers, they signed abolition petitions in overwhelming numbers, risking their livelihood if the trade ended. "Without politics, nothing changes. Thanks to politics, and labor politics, things can, and do, change," he said. "Today 12 million are trafficked, in bondage." If Wilberforce were here today, he would be disappointed, he concluded, pledging that the UK would sign the European Union's Convention on Human Trafficking.

The Rt. Honorable Alan Johnson, minister for education, pledged to include the abolition movement, the African slave trade and slavery itself in the UK's national curriculum and teacher training. Any attempt to eradicate slavery today, he said, will fail without a campaign to eradicate global poverty, and he promised to work in partnership with the Trades Union Congress to do so.

Benn and Johnson's remarks underscored the TUC's emphasis on commemorating the abolition of the African slave trade as so significant to today's labor movement: for them, as for the TUC, marking this bicentennial is a reminder that slavery's legacy of racism still weighs heavily on our societies.

As Joseph Harker wrote in the *Guardian*, slavery's "legacy, and its emotional scars, remain with us to this day.... The lingering effects of this shameful period can be seen in statistics on inequality, school achievement, poverty, discrimination, crime and criminal justice. This can't be allowed to continue."

TODAY

Addressing that legacy, and working to ameliorate the global poverty and oppression that make human trafficking possible today, are urgent contemporary analogs to the earlier abolition movement.

An unexpected high point of the conference came when Bill Adams, the TUC regional secretary, announced the start of an International Project, building on the work begun with New York trade unionists through CUNY some years ago. A major objective of the labor movement in the UK, he said, is to extend labor rights to all workers. By protecting immigrant rights in the workplace, "we will also protect the rights of our people," Adams said. Then, he, Benn and Johnson singled out the New York delegation for recognition.

For the delegates from New York, the trip abroad was rich in lessons. As one student remarked on returning, "I realized from this experience that it is possible to change the world." Others were ready to redouble their activism in the labor movement. Everyone wondered sorrowfully at the stunning silence about the slave trade and its abolition in the US, in contrast with its high-profile recognition in the UK.

Stephen Leberstein, adjunct professor of political science at Brooklyn College, developed and taught "The Politics of the Abolition of the Slave Trade," and led the New York delegation hosted by the British TUC.

Mass organizing & revolts combined to end it.

LABOR & CLIMATE CHANGE

‘Après nous, le deluge’

By **ASHLEY DAWSON**
College of Staten Island

Public opinion in the US seems to have finally reached a tipping point on the issue of global warming. The Cornell Global Labor Institute's Climate Crisis Conference, held in NYC in May and attended by a significant PSC contingent, constitutes an important acknowledgement of this crisis by the North American labor movement and a serious attempt to forge policies that respond to it.

As those who've followed the science know, pre-industrial concentrations of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide stood at 270 parts per million (ppm); today, they have risen to 390 ppm. If we are to avoid unleashing warming greater than 2 degrees Celsius, we need to keep concentrations below 450 ppm. This threshold is important because once we warm the planet more than 2 degrees, scientists theorize that positive feedback mechanisms will kick in that are likely to unleash unstoppable warming. A recent study from NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, co-authored by dozens of leading environmental scientists, argues that human-made greenhouse gases have already brought the Earth's climate close to critical tipping points.

TIPPING POINT

One example of such a tipping point is the melting of the Arctic icecap: as the ice melts, more ocean is exposed, leading to greater absorption of solar radiation and, in turn, further melting of the ice. Less well known but perhaps more deadly are the thawing of the Siberian tundra, which threatens to free millions of tons of the potent warming gas methane, or the drying out and potential combustion of the world's rain forests. According to top scientists such as NASA's James Hansen, we have less than a decade to make the changes needed to stave off such runaway climate change.

Given the history of enmity between labor and environmentalists, it was heartening to see significant solidarity at the Cornell conference between these two groups. Labor leaders such as Dave Foster of the United Steelworkers joined environmental leaders like the Sierra Club's Cathy Duvall and prominent scientists such as Princeton's Robert Socolow to articulate their concern over our collective future. Central to their message was an emphasis on social justice.

Global warming is going to adversely affect everyone on the planet, but it will damage the most vulnerable people, animals and plants most gravely. It will exacerbate trends toward greater economic inequality, both globally and within individual countries. Would a



Sen. Bernie Sanders (Ind-VT) spoke to union activists at the Cornell conference on climate change.

new "green" economy also continue these trends? As venture capital seeks out its newest fix in renewable energy startups, how can we ensure that the new environmentalism will also be socially sustainable?

One of the most important venues for tackling such questions in the US has been the Apollo Alliance. Formed as a national organization in 2003, the Apollo Alliance has sought to unite the labor and environmental movements with social justice advocates. It has pointed to the opportunities for domestic job creation in the transition to sustainable energy production. The Apollo Alliance is not simply defensive, as has too often been the case for labor: rather, it is advancing forward-thinking plans to build a more sustainable economy in a way that shares both the environmental and economic benefits with New York's working-class majority.

GREEN FOR THE RICH

Without such policies, the danger is that new green buildings in the city will be exclusively for the rich: Battery Park City's ritzy Solaire building, with its solar panels, filtered air, locally sourced building materials, and whopping multi-million dollar apartment price tags, is a prominent example of such environmentalism-for-stockbrokers.

In New York City, the local branch of the Apollo Alliance has developed an ambitious ten-point plan for a socially just urban green transition. It includes promoting a "zero-waste" policy through sweeping recycling pro-

grams, greening the city's roofs and public spaces, building thousands of new energy-efficient buildings and retrofitting old ones, and investing in renewable energy sources. This plan is exciting not simply for its attention to issues of sustainability and environmental racism, but also for the hundreds of thousands of "green collar" jobs that it would help create.

OBSTACLES

Yet the way ahead is littered with obstacles. While at the Cornell Climate Crisis conference, for example, I attended a roundtable on how labor could shape the next global agreement on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Discussion highlighted the role of undemocratic institutions such as the World Bank in bankrolling unsustainable, fossil fuel-based development policies over the last several decades. Despite this negative history, the World Bank was tapped by the G8 at the Gleneagles summit of 2005 to plan a global transition to sustainable energy. The resulting policy document could allow greenhouse gas emissions so high that they would unleash catastrophic climate change.

As the world's most powerful countries met again in Germany in early June, the US sought to derail international negotiations for a new post-Kyoto agreement for greenhouse gas reductions. It proposed to lead a new track independent of the existing, United Nations framework – essentially a stalling tactic, designed to avoid further action as

long as Bush is president. Meanwhile within the US, serious measures such as the Waxman-Jeffords greenhouse initiative (which promises to cut emissions by 80% by 2050) have little chance of passage in the Democrat-controlled Congress.

The news is not all bad, though: in the absence of national leadership, regional efforts at climate mitigation have been popping up ever more frequently. Yet if the kinds of changes necessary to mitigate climate change are to take place, a genuine green social movement that brings together labor with environmental groups and other progressives will have to exert sustained pressure on these purblind leaders.

EDUCATE

How can the PSC contribute to this struggle? As a union focused on education, we have a vital role to play in making young people aware of the basic issues surrounding climate change and our collective future. *An Inconvenient Truth*, with its computer-animated sequence showing downtown Manhattan submerged by rising sea levels, underlined how climate change is a local issue for all New Yorkers. Environmental literacy could be included as a fundamental part of the CUNY core curriculum.

In addition to taking these issues into the classroom, we can also help change the institutions where we work. While residents of New York consume far less resources per capita than the average American, as a result of the city's dense housing patterns and abundant public transportation, we still produce 1% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions – an amount equal to Portugal or Ireland.

There's no reason our hometown shouldn't be setting a global example for sustainability, rather than following in the wake of cities like Portland, London and Singapore, and Mayor Bloomberg's planNYC goes some way towards addressing this need. The mayor's congestion pricing proposal has drawn most of the media attention, but planNYC also calls for other measures such as promoting solar power for City buildings and greening the city's yellow cab fleet.

CUNY can play a prominent role in a transition to sustainability. **CUNY is, after all, responsible for 10% of greenhouse gas emissions caused by City buildings.** As professionals working within an institution that has such a large environmental footprint, we can have a significant impact simply by encouraging CUNY to lead by example. To this end, the PSC needs to develop a forward-thinking position on a just green transition. In doing so, we can learn much from other groups such as the student-led organization Campus Climate Challenge.

CUNY CAN CONTRIBUTE

CUNY's participation in a recent agreement among local institutions of higher education to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 30% is an important start, as is its recent Sustainable Construction Initiative. But more needs to be done: for example, CUNY has yet to step up and endorse the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment, which commits signers to a target of zero emissions. The PSC should urge CUNY to adopt the following specific policy measures:

- 1) **purchasing clean power** from renewable resources;
- 2) **implementing green purchasing** policies for products that use less energy and are better for people and the environment;
- 3) **upgrading efficiency** through the replacement of inefficient appliances and the retrofitting of polluting buildings;
- 4) **constructing high-performance buildings**; and
- 5) **creating a culture of energy conservation** on our campuses.

Clarion SUMMER 2007

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Unions for sustainability & social justice

Ideologue named to higher ed panel

By **BARBARA MCKENNA**
and **PETER HOGNESS**

The appointment this spring of Anne Neal, president of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), to a federal panel on college and university accreditation fueled concerns that the department is becoming ever more politicized under Education Secretary Margaret Spellings.

Despite its official-sounding name, ACTA is a highly political organization that has been a sometimes shrill advocate for a conservative agenda within higher education. For example, after the 9/11 attacks ACTA released a report titled, "Defending Civilization: How Our Universities Are Failing America and What Can Be Done About It." Neal was one of two authors of that report, which charged that "college and university faculty have been the weak link in America's response to the attack."

Secretary Spellings named Neal as one of 15 members of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI), which advises the Education Secretary on recognition of accrediting agencies and related policy matters. The topic is drawing new attention in Washington: with Congress in the hands of the Democrats, the Bush administration has decided that accreditation policy is its best bet for implementing the recommendations of Secretary Spellings' Commission on the Future of Higher Education, which completed its work last year.

BRAZEN

For example, NACIQI has been discussing "ways to prod accreditors to force colleges to measure and report more quantitative data about their success in educating students," *Inside Higher Ed* reported in June. Spellings' commission put a major emphasis on such reporting.

Neal's appointment to NACIQI is seen as particularly brazen because she is an outspoken opponent of accreditation itself. ACTA called for

Accreditation & the Bush agenda



Anne Neal of ACTA at a legislative hearing in Pennsylvania.

dismantling the accreditation system in a 2002 report and repeated that advice in a 2007 follow-up. Currently, students at non-accredited institutions such as the University of Esoterica or Patriot Bible University are not eligible for federal financial aid. ACTA wants to eliminate that restriction and end what it calls "the accreditor monopoly." It envisions a future where accreditation associations would act "in a manner more akin to business consultants," supported only by "voluntary payments" and thus forced "to pass the test of the market."

In her foreword to ACTA's 2002 report, Neal wrote: "Putting the matter in a nutshell, we conclude that accreditation has not served to ensure quality, has not protected the curriculum from serious degradation and gives students, parents, and public decision-makers almost no useful information about institutions of higher education."

Neal is among those critics, such as David Horowitz, who complain that there are too many liberals and leftists in US colleges and uni-

versities and advocate for externally imposed restrictions on faculty and institutions as a solution. ACTA calls for laws that would require colleges to report to state legislatures on what measures they are taking to guarantee "intellectual diversity" – thus putting government in the position of passing judgment on faculty members' political views.

CONSERVATIVES

ACTA was founded in 1995 as the National Alumni Forum with seed money from the politically conservative Lynde and Harry Bradley and John M. Olin Foundations; it changed its name to ACTA in 1998. Among its co-founders were Lynne Cheney, wife of Vice President Dick Cheney and former chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities. As part of its claim to bipartisanship, the group has listed Sen. Joseph Lieberman as a co-founder – but when Lieberman denounced ACTA's post-9/11 report as antithetical to academic freedom, he wrote that he had never been a co-

founder and asked ACTA to remove all such references from its website and published documents.

When Spellings appointed Neal to the NACIQI, it sparked charges that she was putting the fox into the accreditation henhouse. Among those raising concerns was Free Exchange On Campus, a coalition that includes the PSC's national affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers (more information at www.freeexchangeoncampus.org). Free Exchange questioned whether Neal would be effective in administering a system she wants to abolish, or whether she would instead simply use her position to advance ACTA's political agenda.

Neal dismissed such concerns. In an interview with *Inside Higher Ed*, she said, "Separate and apart from the commentary we have made about the system as it has operated in the past, that system is still in place, and NACIQI is responsible for ensuring as much quality as possible and accrediting the accreditors. Obviously those who serve are bound by the regulations that apply."

Neal's assurance that she could keep her NACIQI hat separate from ACTA's political agenda rang somewhat hollow, particularly when ACTA rushed out a new publication, *Why Accreditation Doesn't Work*, this July. In addition to repeating ACTA's call for abolishing accreditation, the new report puts ACTA's broader political agenda front and center: it begins with four "stories from the front lines," three of which complain that higher education institutions should not promote race and gender diversity as a policy goal. Neal wrote the report's forward.

SKEPTICAL

"If the Department of Education wonders why colleges and universities are skeptical about their motives with respect to accreditation, they need look no further than this report," Terry Hartle of the American Council on Education told the

Chronicle of Higher Education. He described it as "a hodgepodge of half-baked ideas and anecdotes."

Several members of Congress have become concerned that, through NACIQI and a negotiated federal rule process, Secretary Spellings is trying to impose standards and regulations that are normally defined by Congress through the Higher Education Act. Congress is currently working on a reauthorization of the act, which is now several years overdue. As that work moves forward, members of both the US Senate and House of Representatives have moved to clip Secretary Spellings' wings.

FUNDAMENTAL

On May 25, Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), a former secretary of education under the first President Bush, made a speech on the floor of the Senate in which he warned Spellings not to try an end run around the legislative process by changing accreditation procedures.

"For that reason, if necessary, I will offer an amendment to the Higher Education Act to prohibit the department from issuing any final regulations on these issues until Congress acts. Congress needs to legislate first."

And in June, members of the House added a provision to an education spending bill that would prohibit the Education Department from using funds to promulgate new accreditation regulations. The vote came after Rep. George Miller, Chair of the House Committee on Education, blasted Spellings for attempting "to circumvent Congress."

As the clock runs out on the Bush administration, you can expect that the topic of accreditation will continue to heat up. And you can expect Anne Neal to be in the thick of it.

Barbara McKenna is editor of AFT On Campus. Peter Hogness is editor of Clarion.

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Write the governor!

New York's Assembly and Senate have passed the PSC's pension equity legislation. Last year then-Governor Pataki vetoed this important reform. This year we have a new governor, and we hope to have his support – but Gov. Spitzer needs to hear from you! To urge him to sign the bill, go to www.psc-cuny.org and click on "Act Now."

The measure provides that after 10 years' service at CUNY or

SUNY, the employee pension contribution paid by participants in TIAA-CREF and other plans in the Optional Retirement Program (ORP) will be covered by the employer. A similar reform was approved for participants in the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) in 2000.

Tell the governor that it's only fair to treat all CUNY and SUNY employees equally.