

# Permission to speak with politicians?

By JOHN TARLETON

Following intense criticism from faculty members and the PSC, Hunter College has decided to redraft a policy that could have greatly expanded the administration's control over employee contact with public officials.

Announced in mid-November, the new policy would have required all faculty and staff to receive prior approval before talking with public officials in their capacities "as a scholar, teacher, mentor, or citizen of Hunter College."

Hunter Professor of Anthropology Gregory Johnson spotted the sweeping language when the document came through his e-mail box on the morning of November 19. He immediately brought it to the attention of the PSC chapter, which was meeting later that day.

"The text of the new policy goes way beyond anything they have contemplated before," said Johnson, who called the measure "unacceptable."

## PROVOST'S RESPONSE

The chapter unanimously approved a resolution denouncing the new policy as an "assault on the academic freedom and basic democratic rights of the Hunter community." Union-wide delegates also expressed outrage at the PSC Delegate Assembly two days later.

Faced with mounting criticism, the Hunter administration announced in December that it would revise the policy. Provost Vita Rabinowitz promised to work in consultation with the Hunter College Senate Standing Committee on Academic Freedom, and also invited PSC Chapter Chair Tami Gold to offer specific suggestions for changes to the policy.

"The fact that they pulled it back is because of the union chapter

## PSC vs. new Hunter policy



Dave Sanders

Hunter PSC Chapter Chair Tami Gold says faculty vigilance is crucial.

at Hunter," said Gold. "We were very diligent. We didn't wait one minute."

"Due to Greg Johnson, the chapter was pretty much ahead of the curve in its response," said Frank Kirkland, chair of the philosophy department. "Until then," he said, "no one had picked up on it."

Gold and other union members said the policy would have interfered with faculty members' ability to conduct research, or speak freely about the implications of their academic work for public policy. More generally, they told *Clarion*, the policy represented an overbearing "Big

Brother" approach to monitoring the activities of faculty and staff.

The policy would have required approval for discussions with public officials about student internships, or invitations to visit Hunter and speak to a class. "There's a fundamental issue of academic freedom for scholars that could be violated by a policy like that," said Tom Angotti, professor of urban affairs and planning.

"I engage with elected officials and with City officials all the time," added Angotti, who studies development policy decisions. "It's hard for me to see how a policy

like that could ever be practical." Angotti stressed that faculty members "need to be approached in a spirit of collegiality, not one of being given orders."

As written, the policy's reach would have extended even beyond New York City. Jack Hammond, a professor in Hunter's sociology department, routinely talks with public officials and agencies in Brazil and Bolivia while conducting field research. Hammond said it would be impossibly burdensome to have to secure approval before engaging in each of those conversations. "Your opportunities come up. You want to take advantage of them," he explained.

In a December 11 e-mail to *Clarion*, Rabinowitz said that the "external policy" statement was intended to coordinate activities of faculty members seeking funding for their work or opportunities for their students from public officials and public agencies." She said it was meant to be a continuation of a 2007 policy promulgated by Hunter that covered solicitation of grants and gifts from private individuals, corporations and foundations.

The policy's scope, however, went far beyond requests for financial support. It also explicitly applied to participation of public officials in "student opportunities, research, academic initiatives and special events," and to all "meetings and conversations with public officials and agencies in your capacity as a scholar, teacher, mentor or citizen of Hunter College." There were few specifics about what criteria might be used for denying permission for such conversations – but the policy did declare that interactions with public officials need to be "presented in ways that represent the College...to the best advantage."

A 2006 survey at Hunter, with responses from one-third of the school's full-time faculty, found that 62% were concerned that dissent on "controversial institutional issues" could spark retaliation by the college administration.

"Someone with a full understanding of what we do at a research university would never write a policy this way in the first place," Gold told *Clarion*. "It should never have seen the light of day."

Rabinowitz acknowledged that the policy needed "clarifications and improvements," and stated that "we do not intend this policy to interfere in any way with faculty scholarship or teaching." She promised to release a new policy by the beginning of the Spring semester.

"We really need to hear from the provost on this," said William Sakas, chair of the Hunter Senate's academic freedom committee. "At this point and time, it's premature to have a strong feeling one way or the other," he told *Clarion*. Hunter's 2007 policy on contact with private donors had not sparked any complaints, Sakas noted. For the new policy, he said, "we'll be concerned to see if this impedes faculty research, classroom teaching, or curricular development."

## 'PLEASED'

Gold said she was "pleased that the provost heard the concerns of the faculty and the PSC," and looks forward to seeing the revised policy.

"This incident speaks to the importance of an active and engaged faculty," she told *Clarion*. "It became a public issue because Professor Johnson spotted the problem and brought it to our chapter union meeting. This illustrates the necessity for vigilance by union members, and a strong PSC chapter."

# Trustees give pay hikes to CUNY bigs

By PETER HOGNESS

On November 23, CUNY's chancellor, vice chancellors and college presidents were awarded raises by a vote of the Board of Trustees.

The largest raise for a CUNY college president went to Hunter's Jennifer Raab, whose 8% raise in base pay came to \$18,863. Most presidents received increases between 4% and 5%, ranging from about \$8,500 to \$12,000 apiece. Increases for vice chancellors were more uniform: almost every vice chancellor received a 5% increase, which added up to about \$10,000 to \$14,000 each.

Chancellor Goldstein's \$450,000 salary was increased by \$40,000, to a total of \$490,000 per year. This 9% increase came on top of a 14% increase in Fall 2008. In addition to salary, the chancellor also receives

## Top execs get stockings stuffed

a housing allowance of \$90,000 per year and use of a car and driver.

Raab's 8% increase brings her base salary to \$254,652 – or just a few hundred dollars less than the highest-paid CUNY college president, Karen Gould of Brooklyn College, who is paid \$255,000 per year. (Last year the two highest paid CUNY college presidents were CUNY's Gregory Williams, at \$273,061, and Baruch's Kathleen Waldron, then paid \$260,503. Both have since resigned, and their colleges are currently searching for replacements.)

## COLOR OF MONEY

The presidents of three CUNY colleges – Brooklyn, Hostos and Medgar Evers – have been in office less than a year, and these new ar-

rivals each received a 2% increase. The next lowest increase was the 3% given to Carolyn Williams of Bronx Community College, a \$6,270 boost that brings her pay to \$215,259.

Six of the eight lowest-paid CUNY college presidents are black or Latino, while six of the eight highest-paid presidents are white. (There are no CUNY college presidents who are Asian American.)

The highest paid vice chancellor, again this year, is Executive VC and Chief Operating Officer Alan Dobrin, whose 5% raise gives him a new salary of \$290,689. Peter Grant Jordan, who was appointed vice chancellor for student affairs

just this October, received a 2% raise. His salary, the lowest among the vice chancellors, now stands at \$204,000.

The one vice chancellor who did not appear in the schedule of raises approved by the trustees was Vice Chancellor for Research Gil-

lian Small. Small's salary is paid by the CUNY Research Foundation (RF), and after a 5% increase it now stands at \$231,525.

Chancellor Goldstein's \$40,000 raise is larger than the annual household income of more than two-thirds of CUNY's undergraduates, and many CUNY adjuncts. The Trustees' resolution on the chancellor's increase said it was "richly deserved" and "necessary for CUNY to remain competitive and on its upward trajectory." It

**Goldstein's salary jumps from \$450,000 to \$490,000**

compared the chancellor's salary with those of top executives at several other public university systems, including the University of California, the University of Texas, Ohio State and Rutgers, who are paid more.

## SHARED SACRIFICE

The Trustees did not cite comparisons to the heads of the University of Washington, the University of Connecticut or the University of Minnesota – all of whom have turned down or returned raises or bonuses in the last academic year. When Rutgers President Richard McCormick was awarded a \$100,000 performance bonus in the summer of 2008, he said he would give that amount to Rutgers to be used for student financial aid. "Rutgers is not a rich kids' school," McCormick observed at the time. "A great many need financial aid."

A complete list of raises for CUNY's top executives is at [www.psc-cuny.org/ExecRaises09.htm](http://www.psc-cuny.org/ExecRaises09.htm).