

Clarion

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PROTESTS HEAT UP

FIGHTING FOR THE WELFARE FUND

PSC members demand CUNY increase payments to the Welfare Fund; they say benefits must be restored, not cut back. Real raises and equity improvements are also essential, the union says. From left, Florence Tager, Tony O'Brien and Steve Leberstein picketing the Trustees' meeting on October 25. **PAGES 3, 6, 7**



TRAVIA LEAVE Arbitrator rules for PSC

CUNY can't limit rights of those 55 to 61 **PAGE 9**

MAJOR GRANT

Support for adjuncts means student gains

A federal grant at City Tech will improve students' work by supporting adjuncts. Funds for an 'adjunct academy' allow part-timers to tutor students, participate in college life, and further professional development. **PAGE 5**



OUR HISTORY

Morris Schappes and academic freedom

Remembering a pioneer of academic unionism. Morris Schappes was fired because of his politics. He fought back and helped win tenure for faculty at CUNY. **PAGE 11**



THE ELECTION

What happened, and what to do about it

Scores of PSC members worked to get out the vote on November 2, part of an upsurge in activism that fell short of victory. A union forum in December will examine what comes next. **PAGE 10**

Union democracy and the PSC

By STEVE LONDON
PSC First Vice President

Chapter elections this spring

PSC chapter elections will be coming up this Spring on 11 campuses, the CUNY Central Office, and in the College Lab Technicians' chapter. Here is what you need to know to participate in those elections and other democratic processes of the PSC.

To be eligible to vote, you must have been a union member for four months prior to the election. That means union membership cards have to be filed by December 1, 2004 to vote in the chapter elections that will be held in April 2005. Four months of membership are also required to be eligible to vote on rati-

fication of a new contract. A paycheck deduction for union expenses does not make you a union member – you are not a PSC member unless you have signed a union card. Call the union's membership department (at 212-354-1252) if you have questions about your membership status.

HOW TO RUN

To run for office, you must have been a member in good standing for a year prior to the close of nominations, which is March 1, 2004.

Your participation in, and knowl-

edge of, the democratic life of the union is important, because the power of the union depends on union democracy. A union can be strong only if its demands are backed up by members' actions – and members will take action when union positions reflect their views.

The PSC constitution provides for the union's democratic structure. The chapter is the most basic unit of the PSC, and every member is encouraged to attend meetings of their chapter and take part in its decisions. All full-time and part-time faculty are organized together into campus-based chapters. Chapters for PSC members employed in the Higher Education Officer and College Lab Technician titles are formed on a cross-campus, CUNY-wide basis.

There is also a Retirees Chapter, plus workplace-based chapters at the Educational Opportunities Centers, the CUNY Central Office, and for PSC members employed at the CUNY Research Foundation (RF) Central Office. Soon there will be a chapter for RF employees at LaGuardia, who are negotiating their first contract.

Each chapter's leadership is directly elected by the members every three years. When members vote for chapter leadership, they also choose the chapter's representa-

tives to the PSC Delegate Assembly (DA) which is the union's highest policy-making body.

The Delegate Assembly holds open meetings monthly during the academic year. It debates resolutions from members, approves the union's budget, decides whether to recommend a proposed contract settlement to the members for ratification, makes political endorsements, and discusses union political and contract strategy.

PSC elections happen on a three-year cycle: half the chapter elections occur one year, the other half the next, and elections for union-wide offices are held in the third. Union-wide posts include the positions on PSC's Executive Council (EC), as well as delegates who represent the PSC at conventions of our state and national affiliates, New York State United Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers.

ELECT THE EXECs

The Executive Council, the PSC's CUNY-wide leadership and executive body, is directly elected by the members. The EC has twenty-five members, including the union's president and the three principal officers, five university-wide officers, plus vice-presidents and three officers for each of the following constituencies: senior colleges, community colleges, cross-campus groups,

and part-timers. All EC members are part of the union's Delegate Assembly. The EC appoints the union's negotiating committee, develops the union's budget and recommends resolutions to the DA, including initiatives on legislative and political issues.

(For a full list of EC members, see the *Clarion* masthead on page 11, or look at "Who's Who" on the PSC Web site, www.psc-cuny.com.)

The PSC also has a well-developed committee structure at the chapter and CUNY-wide levels. Some of these committees are constitutionally mandated, others are established by the EC or DA, and some are initiated directly by members. There are union committees on legislation, contract enforcement, safety and health, diversity, solidarity, academic freedom, women's issues, international questions, part-timer concerns and more, and they provide a host of opportunities for direct member involvement in union activity. (For a full list, click on "Committees" at www.psc-cuny.org.)

Finally, the PSC is affiliated with the larger labor movement. Members directly elect representatives to the conventions of NY State United Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers, as well as to the NYC Central Labor Council, the local affiliate of the AFL-CIO.

In the words of a famous song, "The union makes us strong." At the same time, the union's strength comes from its members. The PSC provides the opportunity for members to participate in union democracy and make us a strong union.

Members' voice is union's strength



PSC chapter meeting at City Tech on October 28: Jim Perlstien of the union's Solidarity Committee fields questions from members.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | WRITE TO: CLARION/PSC, 25 W. 43RD STREET, FIFTH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10036. E-MAIL: PHOGNESS@PSCMAIL.ORG. FAX: 212-302-7815.

Needed: a contract with paid parental leave

● I just want to thank you for publishing Tomio Geron's article profiling the difficulties of becoming a parent and working at CUNY. As a continuing ed. teacher (ESL) working 20 hours a week at Hunter's International English Language Institute, I am not eligible for any kind of paid time off. (I also have two other adjunct jobs.) Luckily, I have full medical coverage under my husband's plan.

Four weeks after my c-section at the end of July, I was teaching one four-hour class a week. Starting this week, I'm teaching another three classes.

It's really shameful how we are treated, considering that technically we work for the City. The City doesn't seem to have any qualms about spending our taxes on other things and not on the quality of higher education. How many millions of our local tax dollars went to securing the Republicans at their convention? How many more will go

to settling all the lawsuits brought against NYC and the NYPD? It kills me to think how the CUNY Board of Trustees, and ultimately the mayor, don't consider us worthy enough to have a contract, a decent salary, and paid time off for new mothers.

Debbie Coutavas
Hunter

More about Morris

● I was gratified to see two references in the March 2004 *Clarion* to Morris Schappes, with whom I worked for 30 years on *Jewish Currents*. I am correspondingly saddened to tell you of his death on June 3 of this year at the age of 97.

I would like to make two comments on the references in *Clarion*. In a letter to the editor, Israel Kugler wrote, "The Stalin-Hitler Pact and the murder of Soviet Yiddish writers later caused Schappes to end his attachment to the Communist Party." This is half right. The Stalin-

Hitler Pact of August 1939 had no effect on Morris' commitment to the Communist Party. It wasn't until the revelation of the Stalin's crimes against the Soviet Yiddish writers and others, in early 1956, that the break occurred.

An article on page 7 states that Morris was fired from City College "after his department chair, appointed by management, observed him teaching an essay by Shelley and mistook it for Marx." His firing actually resulted from the NYS Legislature's Rapp-Coudert Commission's investigation of Communists on the City College faculty. After Morris avowed his own party membership but refused to become an informer, he was purged along with 40 others. The CUNY administration formally apologized to these former employees in 1981.

Carol Jochnowitz

Editor's note: Our abbreviated reference to the Shelley incident (de-

scribed in more detail on page 11 of this issue) did not make clear that this took place the first time Schappes was fired, in 1936. After a public outcry, the CCNY administration was forced to reverse itself and restore Schappes to his job. Schappes was fired again in 1940, as Jochnowitz describes, and this time the defenders of academic freedom lost the fight.

Whose CUNY?

● Student clubs and community groups have complained that CUNY imposes arbitrary and excessive insurance requirements and charges for the use of its facilities. Now professors are restricted in their use of lecture halls.

Last Spring I requested the use of CCNY's engineering lecture hall for a course that I am teaching this Fall. The room has blackboard and projection facilities that are ideal for a quantitative course with a lot of

graphics. But the then-dean of engineering wrote on the back of the request, "Denied."

At first, I thought another class with larger enrollment must be scheduled at the same time, but to my horror nothing of the kind was the case. The reason given was that the dean wanted to keep the room clear of students' clutter, so that it would be ready in spic-and-span condition for outside professional events that he or other administration favorites sponsor.

When CUNY students are denied the use of facilities paid for by the taxpayers and intended for student use, whether in a classroom setting or for extracurricular activities, for no legitimate reason, it is time to ask questions. We must insist on a university-wide policy to check such abuses of authority, and return campus facilities to their legitimate users.

Jamal Manassah
CCNY

CUNY promises contract money offer soon

By PETER HOGNESS

More than a year of contract bargaining had produced no economic offer from CUNY management – until October 26, when management told PSC negotiators that it would make an offer “within the next couple of [bargaining] sessions.” The announcement came one day after a lively PSC picket line held outside the monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees.

“Contract now!” union members chanted, as they leafleted students and passers-by. “CUNY salaries and benefits, once outstanding among universities, have fallen to non-competitive levels,” said the leaflet, in an open letter to the Trustees. “We urge you...to take action today, and secure a financial offer that supports us in the work we do.”

On October 18, the union bargaining team had made its own proposal for a financial package. In an effort to move negotiations forward, PSC representatives said the union would be willing to take the contract settlement for the SUNY union, United University Professions, as a starting point. The PSC proposed using the UUP agreement as a framework for salary increases, with the addition of sufficient funding to stabilize the PSC/CUNY Welfare Fund (WF) and restore WF benefits.

STARTING POINT

The UUP settlement boosts pay in each year of the agreement, including an \$800 cash bonus the first year that becomes part of base salary at the end of the contract, with increases for seniority and the higher cost of living for those employed downstate. It adds up to increases of

Members' mobilization pushes 80th St.

about 15% over the life of the four-year contract.

“We made clear that a critical difference between the PSC and UUP was that our Welfare Fund covers prescription drugs and faces acute needs this year,” said Barbara Bowen, the PSC’s president and chief negotiator. “These needs cannot be addressed, as in the past, simply by allocating a fraction of a percentage point in salary to the Welfare Fund – nor can we eviscerate our raises to maintain our benefits.”

In addition to member protests and pressure at the bargaining table, as well as signs of progress in

New York City’s contract talks with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) may have influenced the timing of management’s response. UFT President Randi Weingarten demurred from a *New York Times* report that a contract agreement was near, but said that the talks were making “slow but steady” progress. The City and State must both approve any settlement between the PSC and CUNY.

Since the start of the semester, the PSC and CUNY bargaining teams have met almost every week, trying to reach agreement in areas

where both have made proposals. Recent sessions have focused on job security for Higher Education Officers, issues of annual leave, and re-assigned time for union work. “Management’s proposals often move in exactly the opposite direction from ours,” Bowen explained. “But I am confident we can make progress, especially if management responds to our proposal with a reasonable financial offer.”

CONTRACT NOW

The October 25 picket line at the Trustees’ meeting included a special focus on equity issues, with signs such as “Equal Pay for Equal

Work,” “Promote HEOs and CLTs,” and “Part-Timers: CUNY’s Invisible Faculty?”

“We need a contract!” said Naomi Machado, who teaches in the College Language Immersion Program (CLIP) at BMCC. “Even though we teach 25 hours a week, CLIP teachers are still considered ‘part-time.’ We don’t have the same benefits as full-timers, and starting wages are just \$30 per classroom hour. It’s appalling. We need to have full-time status.”

Library and counseling faculty protested their second-class treatment in annual leave. “We don’t get the same leave as classroom faculty, but we have to meet the same criteria for promotion and tenure,” said Bonnie Nelson, of the library faculty at John Jay.

Ingrid Hughes, an adjunct in English at City Tech and BMCC, called it “outrageous” that part-time faculty earn so little and have no job security. “It’s such an anxious thing every semester, to be unsure whether or not you’ll get your job back.”

TAKING ACTION

“I’m here to help tell the Board of Trustees that it’s time to get a contract for full-time faculty and adjuncts alike,” said Bill Crain, professor of psychology at City College. “The administration awarded themselves enormous raises, while most faculty, especially part-time faculty, are underpaid.”

Union members across CUNY are writing to Chancellor Matthew Goldstein to urge a prompt and fair contract settlement. To send a letter of your own, go to the “Act Now” page on the PSC’s Web site, www.psc-cuny.org.



Close to 100 members joined the picket line outside the Trustees’ meeting, demanding equity in a new contract.

Solidarity with Colombian teachers strike

By DANIA RAJENDRA

On Tuesday, October 12, PSC members and others picketed the Colombian consulate in midtown Manhattan in solidarity with striking teachers in Colombia. Marchers denounced the Uribe government’s complicity in the murder of teachers and other union members.

The Federación Colombiana de Educadores (FECODE, the Colombian teachers’ union) reports that 300 teachers have been killed since 1998, with 83 killed last year alone. Thousands more have been forced to flee their jobs and homes because of death threats.

“When the Colombian teachers informed us of their national strike, the Delegate Assembly decided to offer our support and solidarity,” said Segundo Pantoja, director of the BMCC Center for Ethnic Studies. “An attack on one teacher is an attack on all of us.”

PSC pickets at consulate

More than 60 people joined the picket line, and the consulate closed its doors for the duration.

The PSC’s New York presence was one of many solidarity actions with the FECODE walkout, which was part of a one-day general strike held throughout Colombia. Union members and supportive citizens demonstrated against President Alvaro Uribe’s policies, including escalation of Colombia’s civil war, economic privatization and the violent repression of union activists. FECODE strike demands include protection of teachers’ right to life, an end to cuts in health care and pensions, an end to salary freezes, and increased support for public education.

President Uribe’s government receives both military and monetary support from the United States. On

October 10, Congress voted to double the number of U.S. soldiers in Colombia and send more private contractors. Billions of US dollars have gone to the Uribe government, and US aid has increased since Congress passed “Plan Colombia” in 2000. Unions and human rights groups say that Uribe’s administration is complicit in the human rights

abuses, citing close ties between the Colombian military and right-wing paramilitary groups. The latter are responsible for the vast majority of attacks on union leaders and have had virtual impunity under Uribe, with only a handful of prosecutions for abuses of human rights.

“To be a union member in Colombia is to take your life in your hands,” said Colombian native Amy

Velez, who attended the picket. As Velez described a visit to family in Colombia this summer, her eyes began to fill with tears. “I left my country 20 years ago, and I thought I would return in five years at the maximum,” she explained. “Now, I can see that it’s 300 times worse than when I left.”

YOUR TAX DOLLARS

“The U.S. is sending billions of dollars to support the paramilitary, but they don’t have enough money to support the needs of their citizens here in their own country,” said Velez, who is co-founder of the Center For Immigrant Families in Washington Heights.

PSC member Jack Hammond told *Clarion* about his own trip to Bogotá and Cali last summer. The situation is “very depressing,” Hammond said, “but it is inspiring to meet with people struggling very hard to defend their human rights and the hu-

man rights of everyone. They risk their lives every day and keep their sense of humor.”

The UFT and other allies joined PSC members at the demonstration. “This is a very important cause,” said Joel Schiller, who works in Violence Prevention at the UFT. “Unionists in Colombia are really putting their lives on the line.”

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has been a strong supporter of FECODE as a fellow teachers’ union.

A FECODE delegation visited the PSC’s International Committee on September 19, said Renate Bridenthal, chair of the committee. “As a union of professors, we were drawn in by the FECODE’s plight and their request for solidarity,” Bridenthal told *Clarion*.

Hoy, the local Spanish language daily newspaper, covered the demonstration with the headline, “CUNY Professors Protest Against Assassination of Teachers in Colombia.”

FECODE is asking educators to write to President Uribe; you can send an e-mail from the “Act Now!” page at www.psc-cuny.org.

83 teachers killed last year alone

Gains in local races

By DANIA RAJENDRA

For the PSC and other pro-labor New Yorkers, some good news in state and local races helped soften the sting of the national election results. Democrats picked up at least two and possibly four New York State Senate seats, potentially cutting the Republican majority in half. While two races were still undecided a week after the election, the certain winners include labor's own Diane Savino.

MORE ALLIES

"These victories certainly give our union a few more allies in Albany," said Cecilia McCall, PSC secretary. "We worked with these candidates. They know us, we know them, and they will be responsive to the PSC."

Savino, former political director of AFSCME Local 371 and a board member of the labor-backed Work-

GOP loses State Senate seats

ing Families Party, beat Republican Al Curtis with 63% of the vote. The two were vying to replace Seymour Lachman, who retired this year from a district that encompasses both Staten Island and part of Brooklyn.

Curtis is a former CUNY Trustee, a Giuliani administration official who supported the mayor's attacks on the University and voted to end remediation in its senior colleges. A NY Bar Association report in 2000 singled out Curtis for the conflicts of interest in his roles as a City employee, a Giuliani campaign donor, a Giuliani appointee and a supposedly independent Trustee. When Curtis spoke at York College's graduation ceremony in 2001, faculty and students turned their backs to protest his vote against remediation.

The Republicans poured in some \$200,000 at the end of the race, but couldn't save Curtis. A mysterious fake letter surfaced at the 11th hour, in which Savino supposedly declared that she was a "Lesbian American." Savino, who is pro-gay rights, single and heterosexual, charged that the letter was distributed by the Curtis campaign, which the campaign denied. Savino will be the first woman and first Staten Islander to represent the district.

Dirty tricks and \$200,000 couldn't beat Diane Savino

In East Harlem and the Bronx, a district with a high density of union members, José M. Serrano trounced Olga Mendez, who switched from Democrat to Republican in 2002. Mendez won only 18% of the vote, ending her tenure as the longest-

serving Puerto Rican elected official in the country. Serrano is a former City Councilman and is son of US Congressman José E. Serrano.

Also in the Bronx, Democrat Jeffrey Klein took over Guy Velella's vacated seat. Velella was convicted on bribery charges earlier this year and then sprung from jail after just three months by the obscure Local Conditional Release Commission. A probe into Velella's release turned up a number of irregularities, conflicts of interest and possible violations of the law, and will likely lead to his re-incarceration.

STILL COUNTING

In Syracuse, Democrat David Valesky seems to have beaten Republican Nancy Hoffmann, who switched parties in 1998. At press time, the count of absentee and paper ballots was still ongoing. In Westchester County, vote counting also continued in the contest between county legislator Andrea Stewart-Cousins and incumbent Nicholas Spano.

Frank Barbaro, the longtime progressive Assemblyman from Brooklyn and retired State Supreme Court

justice, made a good showing in his race for Congress against right-wing incumbent Republican Vito Fossella. Barbaro garnered 41% of the vote, the most any Democrat has won in the district since 1982. Democrats and union activists around the city are already discussing how to oust Fossella in 2006.

DROP THE ROCK

In an exciting victory for grassroots activists and opponents of the Rockefeller drug laws, David Soares was elected as Albany County's District Attorney. Soares ran against long-time incumbent Paul Clyne specifically to challenge Clyne's influential opposition to drug law reform. Backed by the Working Families Party (WFP), Soares beat Clyne in the Democratic primary. Clyne then ran in November on an independent line, but dropped out just before the general election.

"David Soares' win demonstrates the power of an issue-based, well-organized grassroots campaign to defeat established political machines," said Dan Cantor, executive director of the WFP, which had made the Soares campaign a top priority.

The PSC and the battle for Pennsylvania

By PETER HOGNESS

There's no way around it – for those who hoped to see a change in the White House, the outcome of this election hurt. But the desire for change sparked an unprecedented wave of activism, and that's something to build on for the future.

The PSC was part of this grassroots upsurge. Three busloads of volunteers got up at dawn to ride to Pennsylvania and spend a Saturday knocking on doors and talking to union voters. With support from the AFT, some members spent a week or more organizing in states as far away as Ohio and Michigan. The PSC office hosted phone banks on local races, which helped produce some good news for New York State (see above). The NYC Central Labor Council organized phone banks to call 250,000 union voters in Florida, and dozens of PSC members helped make it happen.

Clarion interviewed several PSC members who got on the bus to Pennsylvania. Here is some of what they had to say:

Nick Freudenberg, Hunter: I've been a political activist for 30 years, but I had never done electoral work before. I was impressed by the level of organization where we were in the Lehigh Valley. There were environmental groups, a Hispanic group, the labor group – there was a level of coordination that I have not seen before – and in the case of Pennsylvania, those coalitions were successful in winning the state for Kerry.

Precinct-walking with labor

Steve Burghardt, Hunter School of Social Work: We were canvassing in a solidly working-class neighborhood. There were a lot of yard sales – people were selling clothing, children's toys, furniture.

I spoke with this one guy who'd fought in the Korean War. He was an older guy, with an American flag in the front yard, a yellow-ribbon "Support Our Troops" bumper sticker on his car. He was 100% against Bush because of the war in Iraq. "I know what war is like," he said, "and Bush clearly doesn't."

Ann Davison, Queens College: There were a lot of yard signs, the Bush – Cheney signs cheek-by-jowl with the Kerry – Edwards signs. In our area they were split about 50/50.

At one home an elderly Italian woman came to the door, with a large crucifix on her neck and a saint's medallion. Mostly she talked about how dreadful it was that Bush was injecting religion into politics! "I don't like the way he mixes them," she said.

Peter Jonas, Retiree (Baruch): One woman said to me, "Of course I'm voting for Kerry! The only reason you don't know is that my yard sign was stolen!" And some other PSC people said they heard the same thing from others, so obviously there were some dirty tricks going on.

A retiree said to me, "Yeah, we're

worried about Medicare, about Social Security. But how are young people around here ever going to get a job?" He said there was nothing left. Another retiree had said the same thing to me in Ohio, when I was precinct-walking with the AFT.

Dick Mendes, Retiree (Brooklyn): There was the drive past the shroud of the Bethlehem Steel works. Seven miles of rusted towers, broken windows, dormant cranes, the detritus of abandonment. And the shadows of the 25,000 workers and their families who had endured layoff after layoff, while the CEO was driven to his golf game in his limousine with a police escort. The whole city used to rumble with the noise and the smoke and the flames, 24 hours a day – not a nuisance but a comfort.

Nick Freudenberg: One of union leaders told us that the Bethlehem Steel plant is the largest brownfield site in the US. In this particular county, 10,000 people had lost their jobs just since 2000. It's striking that there would even be a discussion about who to vote for, given those circumstances.

Union activists there were troubled by the fact that even a lot of people who had lost jobs due to Bush's economic policies would still be likely to vote for him, for two main reasons: guns and abortion. It gave you some idea of how salient those issues are, especially outside of New York.



After arriving in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, John Mineka of Lehman College (right) is paired up with a local union member for canvassing work.

Peter Hogness, Clarion editor: I spoke with one guy – wiry, short grey hair, wearing a camouflage t-shirt – who really didn't like Bush.

He'd seen jobs from his plant get transferred to Mexico. He said the CIA helped put Saddam Hussein in power in the first place, and we shouldn't even be in Iraq.

But he was very, very opposed to abortion, and torn over how to vote. So I said, "Look, one thing to think about is that under Kerry, there would be fewer actual abortions." Abortions went down under Clinton, but they're back up under Bush

– because Bush is pushing this "abstinence-only" idea in sex education, and in anti-AIDS programs. I think it made a difference – when I left, he said, "You're doing good work, keep it up!"

Peter Jonas: In Allentown, the AFL-CIO had 600 people coming in to canvass on that day alone. And the range of people on the PSC bus was really something – retirees, active members, family members, all different ages and backgrounds. It's a hell of a community, our union. And I think we did some good.

City Tech gets grant for 'adjunct academy'

By DANIA RAJENDRA

To strengthen part-timers' role in academic life

City Tech has been awarded a major grant to create an "adjunct academy" at its School of Technology and Design, with the aim of better integrating adjunct faculty into the college's academic life.

The grant proposal was the work of Elaine Maldonado, director of City Tech's College Learning Centers. "A lot of our students are underrepresented in the higher end of the technical marketplace," explained Maldonado. "I was interested in the students; they were not getting the help they needed. There was an enormous untapped resource – most of the students are taught by adjuncts. And, as it turns out, what's good for the students is good for the teachers."

What's good for students is good for adjuncts

ACADEMIC LIFE

The half-million dollar grant from the US Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education (FIPSE) is aimed at "training a large cadre of adjuncts to serve as tutors and mentors, and supporting and compensating their roles in governance and leadership activities" within City Tech, FIPSE states.

Much of the grant is being used to pay adjuncts to tutor students outside of class. This not only improves

students' classroom performance, Maldonado said, but more closely links adjunct faculty with the City Tech campus. A PSC member who is currently a Higher Education Officer, Maldonado has previously worked at CUNY in both part-time and full-time faculty positions. As an adjunct, she noted, "if I stayed [after class], I did that as a volunteer. Now the time means something."

In the current contract, the PSC won a new provision that provides part-time faculty with a paid office hour if they teach six hours or more on the same campus. While this has made a big difference for many part-timers and their students, many adjunct faculty in City Tech's School of Technology and Design do not qualify under this provision. "In the School of Technology and Design, most of our adjuncts are in private practice in the industry," Maldonado noted.

"I've always been concerned that the whole thing with adjuncts is that you come in, teach a class, and you leave," she said. "You really feel like a stepchild." As noted in the FIPSE grant write-up, "[Adjunct faculty] do not get paid to...go to faculty meetings or participate in the academic life of the institution."



Elaine Maldonado, director of City Tech's College Learning Center

The FIPSE grant provides funds for adjuncts to attend conferences and participate in other professional development opportunities. Those attending conferences not only have their costs covered, but are paid a wage for their time at the meeting. "I want them to be compensated the same way anyone else would be, to make it a real professional offer,"

Maldonado said. Part-time faculty are also attending some department meetings, particularly so they can stay informed about curriculum decisions. When they do, they are paid for their time.

"City Tech's adjunct academy is a real breakthrough," said Marcia Newfield, PSC vice president for part-time personnel. "This is a very

creative prototype for part-timers' professional development, and we hope that other CUNY campuses pick up on it."

Maldonado notes that the marginalization of adjunct faculty is not unique to CUNY: "The reason that FIPSE gave me the money is because it's not just a CUNY problem; it's a national problem." While more full-time positions are certainly needed, Maldonado said, higher education's heavy reliance on adjunct faculty means that their situation needs to be improved today.

A BREAKTHROUGH

Marcelle Massara, an adjunct faculty member in English, was part of a pilot program for the "adjunct academy," which increased the pass rate in freshman comp by 13%. "The academy will give adjuncts the chance to take part in faculty meetings, socialize with our colleagues and get reimbursed for attending professional workshops or conferences," Massara said. "We'll feel like we're part of the faculty instead of [being] marginalized."

Maldonado made a presentation on the project at the last month's City Tech PSC chapter meeting. "It's just terrific," said City Tech Chapter Chair Bob Cermele. "This is the kind of idea that, once it's published, everyone says, Why didn't I think of that?"

The nuts and bolts of solidarity

A dozen members from across the PSC – part-time faculty and full-time faculty, higher education officers and a college lab technician – convened from eight campuses to explore "what it means to be an ally," as part of Campus Equity Week.

A report on their discussion follows below – but first, we'd like to invite Clarion readers to join the conversation. The October 26 meeting focused on two questions: "What don't others at CUNY understand about my group's situation?" and "What would it mean for others to be an ally to me?" If you have thoughts on these questions, please write to us – Clarion's address, e-mail and fax number are on page 2.

"I feel that among rank-and-file members, we continue to see each other as competitors," Denise Ingram, a new PSC officer for part-time personnel, told Clarion. "Unless we understand that what affects one of us affects us all, we will never be as powerful a union as we could be."

The need for equity "is reflected in the contract demands," noted Vice President for Part-Time Personnel Marcia Newfield, who organized the meeting, "but you don't re-

What it means to be an ally

ally know it in your gut the way you know your own situation."

BRIDGING THE GAP

To start bridging that gap, members shared their own stories. "After eight years, my schedule was cut back and I no longer qualified for health insurance," said Glenn McCloskey, who teaches in continuing education at Baruch. "Now I'm teaching a full load again, but to re-qualify for insurance I need a six-month appointment. They used to give these regularly, but not any more. It took only eight weeks of being underemployed to undo eight years of service."

Jackie DiSalvo, an associate professor of English, peppered McCloskey with questions. Though she also teaches at Baruch, and knew continuing education teachers face difficult conditions, McCloskey's description of how he lost health coverage was news to her. "We don't know enough about each other's issues," she said later.

How to move from competition to mutual support

Others around the table asked Iris DeLutro, a higher education officer (HEO), to say what she meant by a "reclassification." Unlike faculty positions, she explained, HEO titles are not on a promotional ladder. To advance in your career as a HEO, you must prove that your job duties have changed substantially – in effect, that you have a different job. To simply be more experienced, more skilled and better at your existing job is not enough to advance.

Sharon Swacker, an associate professor at City Tech, explained that library faculty do not get the same annual leave as other faculty. But even though library faculty are expected to meet the same requirements for publication and scholarship as others, they get only 20 to 30 days of leave.

MEMBERS CANDID

These gaps in experience can fuel mistrust. Members were candid about how this plays out in daily life.

"We're totally invisible," said Ingram, adding that part-time faculty are not seen as valued professionals. "We get treated like a kid with a summer job." HEO and college lab technician (CLT) representatives described a similar lack of respect from management and other employees. Full-timers said that CUNY might recognize them, but not their problems: "People think [full-time faculty] are stress-free," said John Hyland, professor of sociology at LaGuardia. "But inside our own group, it doesn't feel that way."

COMMON PROBLEMS

Along with differences, some common problems also emerged: workload was one that seemed to touch every group. Full-time faculty said the crush of a heavy teaching load and committee work leaves little time for research. HEOs and CLTs named workload as their number-one issue in their small-group discussion, saying that understaffing turns their contractual 35-hour work week into a piece of fiction. "For part-timers, the speedup is about survival," Newfield told Clarion – rushing off to another campus, or scrambling for

another class to qualify for health insurance.

INCLUSION

An honest effort at communication and inclusion is a necessary first step towards stronger mutual support, the activists agreed. "An ally [will] share information, elicit information, and show an interest in us," DeLutro said.

Several ideas were advanced for more inclusive organizing. CLT Chapter Vice Chair Ellen Steinberg described how she has worked to change college governance structures to be inclusive of CLTs. Joan Greenbaum, professor of computer science, noted that at LaGuardia, HEOs and CLTs are invited to participate in meetings of LaGuardia's faculty union chapter. Another suggestion was to schedule chapter meetings at a time convenient to part-timers, and to make sure they are informed.

"We have to bring the union to the part-time members, not expect the members to find their way to it," argued Ingram.

"We are, after all is said and done, part of the same institution, one that works best if we work together," Newfield later said. "Solidarity starts at home." She asked members to "write your thoughts to Clarion, so this conversation can expand until we all live inside it."

– DR

Welfare Fund stories

Teeth, drugs and members' lives

By PETER HOGNESS

Stephen Barrera needs dental work – and it's going to hurt. "If I go forward with this, it's going to cost me \$13,000," he told *Clarion*. "I've got to figure out where I'm going to come up with this money."

The work Barrera needs is extensive. "Basically they have to create a bridge for the entire roof of my mouth," he explained, "and I need another bridge on the bottom." The projected cost will be about \$9,000 for the top and \$4,000 for the bottom. "I've looked at implants, but they're also expensive," he said. "There's no good way to do it."

The prospect of a bill this large has put Barrera in a real bind. "My wife just started a new job, and we're backed up on a lot of bills," he said. "So now we're trying to determine what's most important – keeping the creditors at bay, or going ahead with this dental work."

Barrera, an assistant to HEO at York College, is one of many PSC members who have been hurt by recent changes in the Welfare Fund (WF). The WF is financed by employer contributions from

CUNY, and these payments have not kept up with rapidly rising health care costs. To keep the Fund afloat, the WF Trustees adopted a range of cost-saving and benefit changes – and changes in the dental plan have hit some members especially hard.

HUGE BILLS

"I understand why we're at where we're at," Barrera told *Clarion*. "But when members in the campus meetings said they could sacrifice some of the dental coverage to help save the prescription plan, I don't think they realized how much this could cost." While rates charged by Guardian Plan dentists include a significant discount, major dental work can still leave members facing an enormous bill.

Cutting prescription coverage to improve the dental plan would be no solution, Barrera said. Instead, CUNY has to provide enough funds to meet its employees' needs. "We're not unrealistic," he explained. "We're not expecting anything for free. But benefits need to mean something." To strengthen benefits for the future, Barrera said, "we have to fight for a better infusion of money."

"Management needs to understand that with a good contract, we can work together to make this a better university," Barrera continued. "And what better way to do that than to provide good health benefits? Then we can come in every day to do our jobs, and not fear that we'll have to sacrifice one thing to pay for another."

Norah Chase has spent \$1800 for a bridge and a couple of thousand more for two root canals and other treatment. "It's been the season of the teeth!" she said ruefully.

Chase, who retired this year as professor of English at Kingsborough Community College, says the changes in dental coverage have hit her in the pocketbook. "When it used to be \$100 for a crown, that was fabulous," she said. "Now it's about \$500 for a crown, with the Guardian discount." Without the discount, the charge would be about \$1,200, so Chase still values her coverage – but it now costs \$400 more than before.

"To have the kind of plan we did before, the Welfare Fund needs more money," said Chase, currently an adjunct at the CCNY Center for Worker Education. "That means the CUNY administration should be working with the union to increase funding – it's desperately needed."

Benefits are important not only to individual employees, argued Chase, but also to the future of the University. "CUNY needs good benefits to attract and retain good faculty and staff," she said. "If someplace else offers the same salary and a better benefit package, we're going to lose those folks."

Improving dental benefits is not Chase's only concern: maintaining the prescription plan and benefits for retirees are also high priorities. Prescription drugs account for two-thirds of the WF's expenses, and their cost is increasing by 15-20% per year.

"I was shocked when I learned how much the medicines that I'm taking cost," Chase said. "I had no idea. And I would have to pay for them even if they were not covered – it would not be a choice."

Many union plans do not provide the same level of prescription drug coverage for retirees and actives – but Chase, like members at last year's open meetings, said that it's vital that this be maintained at CUNY. "You often need medicines most when you are older," she said. "Hopefully everybody is going to live long enough to be a retiree, so everyone is going to need retiree benefits."

STARK CHOICES

Harry Cason is an adjunct in political science at the College of Staten Island. His dental insurance costs have not gone up – because he never had any insurance to start with. "We part-timers don't have any dental coverage," he noted, and low pay and no insurance can leave you with stark choices. "I just pulled my own tooth the other day," Cason said.

"I had chosen not to spend \$1500 to get it capped," he explained. "I just didn't have the money. I decided I



Denise Ingram, adjunct lecturer at Hunter College, rallies for dental care in the new contract at the PSC picket outside the Board of Trustees meeting on October 25.

could live without the tooth better than I could live without the \$1500." The damaged tooth became loose, and remained so for quite a while. "I just continued to play with it and eventually decided to force it out," Cason said. "It was a little painful."

"The complete lack of dental insurance is a major problem," said Denise Ingram, an adjunct at Hunter for the last two years and a graduate student in sociology. "I have been getting root canal and a crown on one tooth – that's cost \$3000 so far with a few hundred more to go. That's more than I make for teaching a three-credit class!"

In last year's campus meetings, members said that maintaining the WF's prescription drug coverage is a top priority. For some who are on long-term medication, access to prescription drugs is literally a matter of life and death. "For example, there are breast cancer survivors who must take tamoxifen to prevent a recurrence," said Marty Kaplan, a retired professor of biology at Queens College.

Kaplan and his wife take regular

medication to fight a range of conditions, including osteoporosis, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, arthritis and more. Without prescription drug coverage, the cost could well be more than \$1000.

LIFESAVING

"All I can tell you is that if we had to go pay for all this by ourselves, we'd be in trouble – and we are probably on the low end of prescription expenses, among retirees," said Kaplan. "Often you don't know how significant prescription coverage is until you need it. With the price of everything going up, it's lifesaving."

"With prescription drug costs going up every year, if the Fund just stands still it loses ground," noted Mike Fabricant, professor at the Hunter School of Social Work and a member of the PSC's bargaining team. "Even the increased funding we won through the Municipal Labor Committee is not enough. To maintain the [WF's] drug benefit, the University has got to infuse more money into the Fund. There is no other option."

"Welfare Fund members have done their part," said Larry Morgan, the Fund's new executive director. "Their participation in the mail-order program and use of generic drugs is way beyond what other providers have seen. More than half are now using Guardian dentists. I thought we would probably have to mount great campaigns to accomplish this, but people have already done it. Members should be congratulated for trying to work with the program."

CUNY MUST PAY

The union says that now it's CUNY's turn to contribute more. "Decent benefits are not only something management owes to CUNY employees," said Fabricant. "They make it possible for us to do the work of the University. If the people who do the work are not cared for in some very basic ways, CUNY will suffer."

"Management needs to step up to the plate with additional funds, and it needs to do so in this contract," Fabricant concluded. "That's why this is a centerpiece of our fight."

Underfunding of benefits continues Welfare Fund crisis

By **STEVE LONDON**
PSC First Vice President and
Welfare Fund Executive Officer

New funding in contract is solution

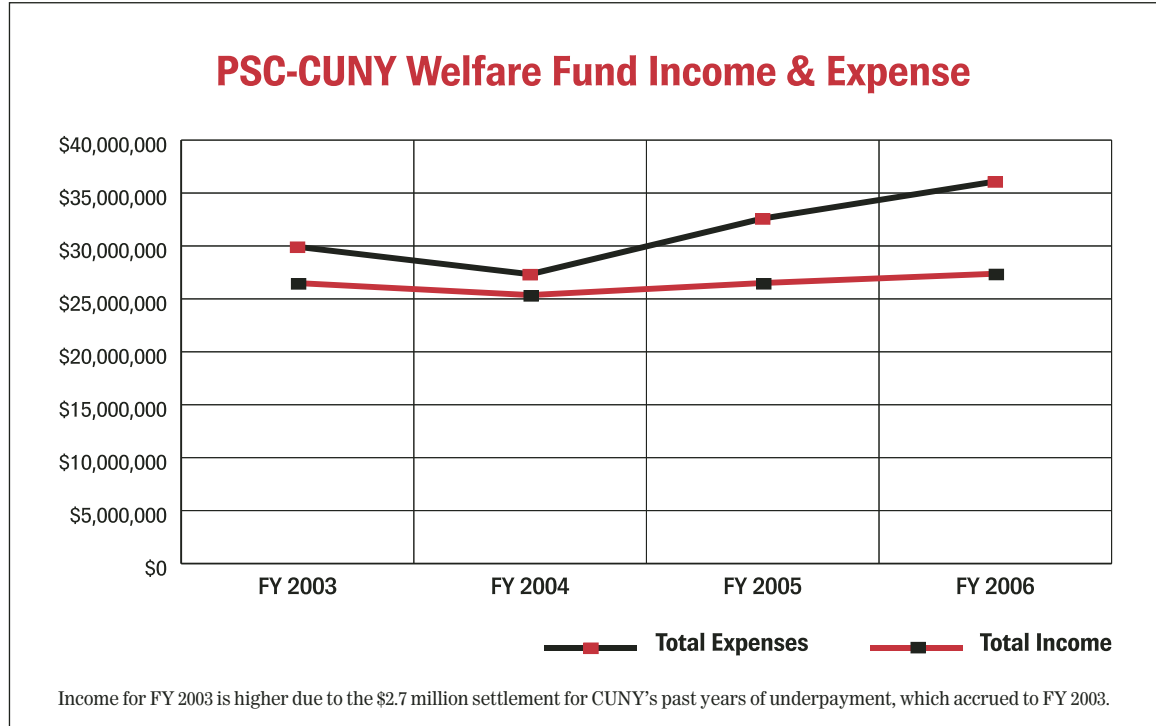
When I think of what we have just been through with the Welfare Fund's financial situation, I return to an image from my youth: of an airplane pictured in a World War II-era film, hurtling toward the ground with the pilot struggling to pull up before crashing. Luckily, the pilot succeeds at the last minute and avoids disaster.

Three years ago we were staring at projected operating deficits for the Welfare Fund (WF) of \$6 million in fiscal year 2003 and \$10 million in FY 2004 – and the WF reserves were not sufficient to cover these deficits. But we pulled together and avoided the worst.

We did this with a combination of added resources from the last contract, a \$2.7 million settlement with CUNY for years of underpaying the Fund, and painful benefit reductions and restructuring. The result was that in FY 2003, the operating deficit was brought down from the projected \$6 million to \$3.5 million; in the just-completed 2004 fiscal year, it was further reduced from a projected \$10 million to \$2 million. Our reserves, though small, were able to cover these reduced operating deficits (see the accompanying table).

DEFICITS LOOM

I wish I could say the worst is over and the Fund is no longer facing financial difficulties. Unfortunately, the cost of prescription drugs and health insurance is projected by Fund consultants to increase at the rate of 17% to 18% per year. As the graph above shows, if there is no change in the current employer contribution per member, utilization patterns, and benefits, then health-care inflation alone will cause the operating deficit of the Fund to grow precipitously over the next two years, reaching a projected \$10 million in FY 2006.



Thus, that nightmarish image of the impending crash has not gone away. The Fund's financial reserves are almost gone and at some point in the next six to eight months we will simply run out of money if nothing else is done. Fund trustees, exercising their fiduciary obligations, would have to act to protect the Fund's financial stability and benefits. Unless there is an infusion of new resources, this could only mean increased member cost-sharing and/or further reductions in coverage.

CUNY MUST PAY

The union leadership considers both of these options absolutely unacceptable. Shifting more of the costs of prescription drugs or dental care to Fund members will greatly erode the value of Fund benefits. Members already pay, on average, 25% of prescription drug costs and

the Fund's reimbursement schedule for dental procedures does little to defray expensive out-of-pocket costs for dental care. Eligible adjuncts, as a group, already contribute 15% toward the cost of health insurance coverage that is similar to full-timer coverage.

CUNY has made an historic commitment to provide a comprehensive benefit package to active and retired instructional staff. It also took a leading role in providing health and prescription drug benefits to adjuncts. CUNY's proud history should be honored through the maintenance of these commitments.

It should be obvious that, currently, CUNY underfunds our benefits. Our next contract must rectify this situation. We need a settlement with enough money to cover projected operating deficits, rebuild the

reserves, and provide additional funding to enhance dental benefits.

But new money in the contract to fund benefits should not come from our contractual salary package. To divert salary increases into Welfare Fund supplemental funding would be just another way of shifting the increasing costs of benefits onto the backs of members – who have already shouldered an increase.

To try to fund benefits out of salary increases would be a losing proposition. Given the staggering inflation in healthcare costs, salary increases would be progressively eaten up by the growing cost of benefits. Simply put, we cannot afford to take the money that is necessary for the Welfare Fund out of our salary settlement.

That is why it is important to fight for a contract that combines real raises with restorations for the Welfare Fund, maintaining the principle that funding of benefits must be in addition to salary increases. And that's why it is important for members to join the PSC contract campaign. Only by making ourselves heard – with our colleagues, with the college presidents, with the Chancellor – will we have a chance to preserve our benefits.

You can join the contract campaign on the PSC Web site, at www.psc-cuny.org. After clicking on "Contract Now!" you can send a letter to the Chancellor and sign a pledge card for future actions. If you'd rather sign up by phone, call the PSC office at 212-354-1252.

Income & Expense Summary

2003 Actual / FY2004 Estimated
and FY 2005/ FY 2006 Projected

	Actual FY 2003	Estimated FY 2004	Projected FY 2005	Projected FY 2006
Total Income	\$26,493,429	\$25,360,600	\$26,500,600	\$27,378,100
Total Expenses	\$29,918,823	\$27,329,000	\$32,592,700	\$36,088,200
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	(\$3,425,394)	(\$1,968,400)	(\$6,092,100)	(\$8,710,100)
Claim Fluctuation Margin		(\$952,000)	(\$1,186,000)	(\$1,348,600)
Investment Gains (losses)	(\$76,156)	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Reduction to Net Assets	(\$3,501,550)	(\$2,920,900)	(\$7,278,100)	(\$10,058,700)
Net Assets	\$5,327,579	\$2,406,679	(\$4,871,421)	(\$14,930,121)

Sources: The Segal Company; PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund FY 2003 financial statement (presented by Berdon, LLP). See also note on graph.

CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24: Ellen Balleisen will be available to discuss retirement planning for adjunct TRS members. At the PSC office, 25 W. 43rd Street. Call Linda Slifkin at 212-354-1252 to schedule an appointment.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29 / 4:00 – 5:30 pm: PSC contract protest at the CUNY Board of Trustees' meeting. At Baruch College at 24th St. & Lexington Ave.; call 212-354-1252.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29 / 6:00 pm: Peace and Justice Committee meeting at the PSC office, 25 W. 43rd St.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6 / 1:00 pm: Retirees Chapter meeting will feature Frank Stella of the AFT speaking on the election. All PSC members welcome. At the CUNY Graduate Center.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10: Vito Ruolo from TIAA-CREF will be available to discuss retirement planning. At the PSC office, 25 W. 43rd Street. Call Linda Slifkin at 212-354-1252 for an appointment.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10 / 6:00 pm: Labor Goes to the Movies, the PSC film series, presents "Norma Rae." In this labor classic, Sally Field stars as Norma Rae, a courageous textile worker who organizes her Southern factory in the late 70s. At the CCNY Center for Worker Education, 99 Hudson St., 6th floor.

HIGHER ED IN BRIEF

No raise for SUNY prez

Last month, SUNY Chancellor Robert King asked the Board of Trustees to raise college presidents' salaries and his own pay by \$200,000 a year. Public outrage followed. In response, the Board approved the college presidents' raises but didn't give one to King. He is a Pataki appointee who already makes \$250,000 annually, plus a yearly housing allowance of \$90,000. The Board also approved increases in tuition at some community colleges.

Chicago strike settled

Faculty and staff at Chicago's City Colleges settled their three-week-old strike after mediation by the Rev. James Meeks. The 1,300 teachers, represented by the Cook County College Teachers Union/ AFT, and management met halfway on salaries and health care but the union forced management to drop its demand that all faculty assume an average three-hour per semester increase in teaching load. City Colleges are Chicago's community college system.

Higher Ed Act: Tough fight for funding

By DANIA RAJENDRA

Congress has been debating a new version of the Higher Education Act, the main source of federal aid to colleges and universities, for the last two years. It's now clear that a reauthorization vote won't happen before 2005. But some clear battle lines have been drawn, and students and institutions can expect a tough fight to win fair funding – especially with increased Republican majorities in Congress.

"We are in a very tough budget environment and a very pro-privatization climate," said Gabriella Gomez of the Department of Legislation at the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). "Our challenge is to find ways to work differently and smarter, to build new coalitions. We need to keep the focus on how to provide access to college – which is the purpose of the Higher Education Act."

PIECEMEAL APPROACH

First passed in 1965, the HEA established loans and grants to enable students to pay for college, as well as work-study programs and a range of institutional aid. Congress is supposed to reauthorize the Act every six years; it was last approved in 1996. In this session, the House has taken up the HEA piece by piece, considering a series of separate bills on different aspects of the Act.

A key example of the Republicans' punitive approach is their proposal to tie federal aid to colleges' graduation rates. Those schools whose students took the longest to attain their degree would face cuts in federal funding. This would be sure to hurt public institutions, since graduation rates are lowest among the students that they serve: those who are low-income, older, working, students of color, and the first in their family to go to college.

In 2002, the Department of Education rewarded colleges with high graduation rates by giving them special grants. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported that of the 65 winners, not a single school was public. *The Chronicle* cited LaGuardia Community College as one of several public institutions with successful programs to help low-income and minority students graduate, "by creating programs to provide them with greater academic and social support."

The AFT wants to expand such efforts and strengthen programs that prepare under-represented students for college. Similar proposals are in Sen. Hillary Clinton's Non-traditional Student Success Act, which would also increase funding for campus childcare, improve remedial education, and change Pell Grant rules to make them fairer for working students. But funding for

Taking aim at public colleges

such initiatives isn't in the Republican legislative proposals.

Many students do not graduate because of financial problems: for a growing number, college is simply unaffordable. But on this question, Republican proposals emphasize punishing institutions, not addressing root causes.

Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-Calif.) has accused universities of gouging parents and students, and suggested financial penalties for institutions that raise tuition too steeply. McKeon proposed legislation last year that would require higher education institutions to submit data for a "college affordability index." Those that raised tuition too much would ultimately lose federal funding.

The bill infuriated educators across the country. Critics noted that 80% of US college students attend public institutions, where steep tuition hikes have largely been the result of drastic cuts in public funding. In the current fiscal environment, McKeon's proposal would tend to penalize those institutions that have suffered the deepest cuts in public aid.

DISTRACTION

As for private universities, a recent study by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) found that schools' growing expenses for financial aid were one of the main roots of escalating costs. Lack of adequate federal financial aid is thus fueling increases in tuition. Other factors were increased costs for information technology, benefits and infrastructure for scientific research; faculty salaries rose more slowly than overall college costs.

The outcry against McKeon's bill led him to withdraw it in March. But the idea of a "college affordability index" persisted in other legislation.

Educators, unions and Congressional Democrats propose a different route to making college more affordable: increase the resources available to students. "Much of the noise [on tuition] is a diversion from the real issues," said Mark Smith, director of government relations for the AAUP. "State funding is down, and the purchasing power of the Pell Grant is down a lot."

In 1980, a Pell Grant covered 77% of average costs for a public, four-year college education, including tuition, fees, and room-and-board. But by 2003, a Pell Grant paid for less than 41% of the costs at a four-year

public college. Last academic year, the maximum Pell Grant was officially capped at \$5,800 – but Congress has only appropriated enough funds for grants of up to \$4,050.

FRAUD

In an effort to stop the hemorrhaging of state funds from public colleges, Sen. Edward Kennedy's proposed QUAD Act would penalize states that cut support for higher education by more than 10%, and would also increase Pell Grant funds. House Democrats introduced the Part-Time Student Assistance Act, to expand part-time students' access to feder-

publicans want to lift the so-called "90/10 rule," which requires that for-profit colleges get at least 10% of their revenues from some source other than federal student aid. The AFT is adamantly opposed to rolling back the 90/10 rule, noting that it "drastically reduced" fraud and abuse by for-profit schools.

Representatives from both parties on the higher education committee have supported repeal of the "50% rule," which states that schools offering more than 50% of

their courses on-line or through the mail cannot qualify for federal aid. This measure was introduced in the early 1990s, when mail-order diploma mills were bilk-

Rights," though this measure did not make it out of committee. In the name of guaranteeing "diverse viewpoints" in academia, this bill would have put Congress in the position of deciding what political views are acceptable for college faculty to hold. The PSC, AFT, and AAUP have all taken strong stands against these measures.

ON THE DEFENSE

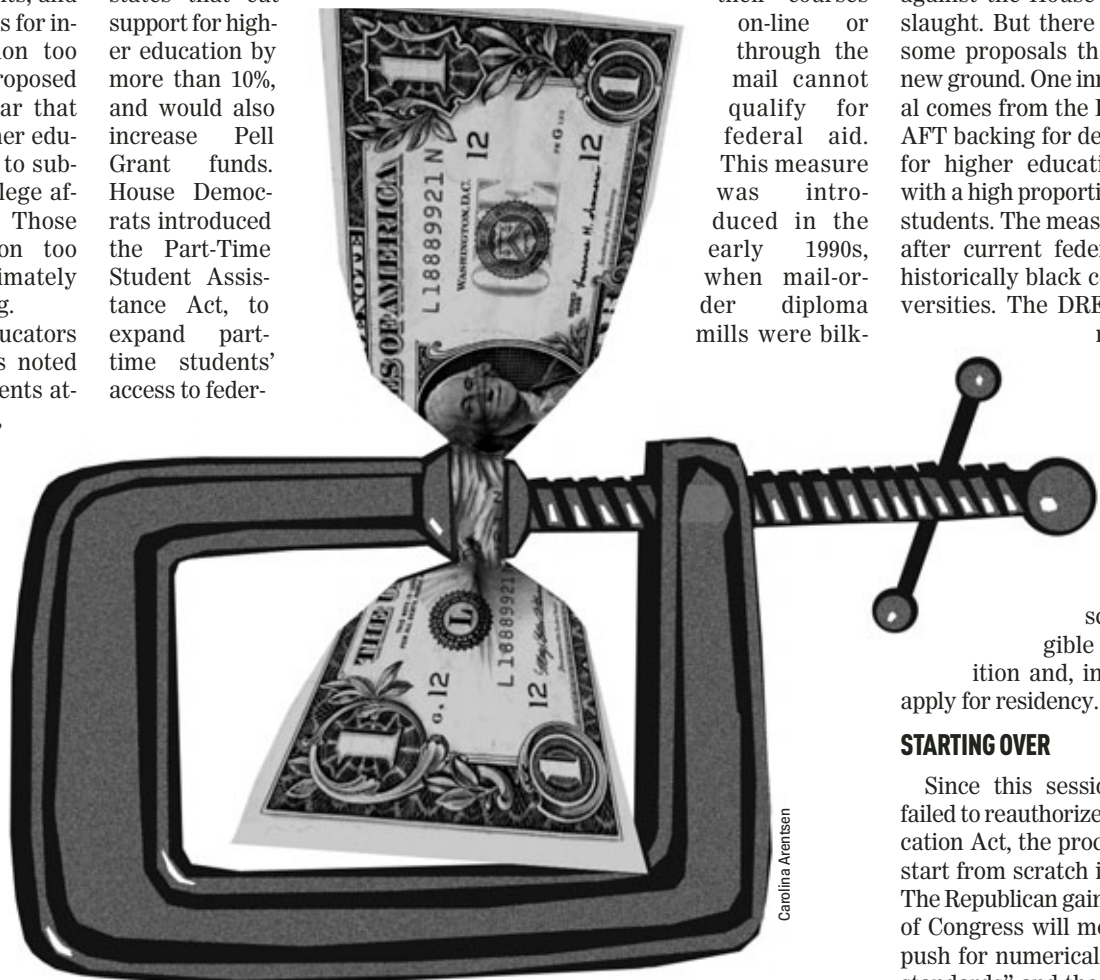
Advocates for higher education have mainly been playing defense against the House Republican onslaught. But there have also been some proposals that would break new ground. One innovative proposal comes from the PSC, which won AFT backing for dedicated funding for higher education institutions with a high proportion of immigrant students. The measure is patterned after current federal funding for historically black colleges and universities. The DREAM Act, while not part of the HEA, would expand college access by allowing undocumented immigrant students who graduate from US high schools to be eligible for in-state tuition and, in some cases, to apply for residency.

STARTING OVER

Since this session of Congress failed to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, the process will have to start from scratch in January 2005. The Republican gains in both houses of Congress will mean a continued push for numerical "accountability standards" and the politicization of funding, though it is not yet clear how much closer the new Senate will move towards the aggressive stance of the House. With President Bush's emphasis on further tax cuts, available resources are likely to shrink further.

In his second term, Bush can be expected to support some of the worst initiatives of Congressional Republicans. Signs point to a carrot-and-stick approach: carrots for for-profit institutions, lenders, and others already succeeding by Republicans' metrics, and sticks for public education and others in need of support.

Besides Congress and the President, there is a third factor that will shape the reauthorization of the HEA: public opinion. Voters are concerned about college access, and see it as critical to their children's future. With politicians on both sides and public-interest groups all appealing for public support, 2005 is likely to see a hard-fought battle over federal aid to higher education.



Carolina Arentsen

al aid. In the Republican-dominated Congress, these ideas failed to develop any traction.

Republican proposals emphasize loans over grants in student aid – despite the growing debt burden of American college students. The most generous GOP bill, HR 4283, would raise the current level of Pell Grants slightly but then freeze it for the next six years, while raising loan limits and converting loans from fixed to variable interest. More loans mean more business for the financial industry, which clearly counts McKeon and House Education and Workforce Committee Chair John Boehner (R-Ohio) among its friends. The two Congressmen received nearly \$370,000 last year in contributions from loan-consolidation companies and the student loan industry.

McKeon and Boehner also received \$228,000 in contributions from for-profit colleges – and are seeking to loosen restrictions on federal aid to for-profit institutions. House Re-

publicans also tried to use the HEA to exert political control over the content of scholarship. Last year the House passed HR 3077, which would create a federal panel to monitor teaching and scholarship at international area studies centers funded under the HEA. Those who testified in favor of the bill said it was necessary because experts in international studies, particularly those studying the Middle East, had become "anti-American." A similar assault on academic freedom came with the so-called "Student Bill of

CUNY bid to limit Travia leave is rejected

By ELLEN BALLEISEN
PSC Pension Counselor

Arbitrator agrees with PSC

In a major victory for PSC members, an arbitrator has ruled that all full-time employees appointed after July 1, 1976 are entitled to Travia leave once they reach the age of 55. CUNY had argued that employees were appointed after this date who are in TIAA-CREF or other parts of the Optional Retirement Program could take Travia leave only if they were at least 62 and had 10 years of service.

Travia leave is paid leave granted to eligible instructional employees of the City University of New York who intend to retire. It consists of one-half of the retiree's sick leave, which is paid out during a semester of leave prior to retirement. Employees on Travia have the option to change their minds about retiring and return to their position the following semester.

INCENTIVES CHANGE

Throughout the 1990s, all Optional Retirement Program (ORP) participants between the ages of 55 and 62 and who had at least 10 years of service were able to take Travia leave, because of statewide early retirement incentives. Any CUNY employee who qualified for



After Rose Starr decided to retire, she was unjustly denied Travia leave.

these incentives also qualified for Travia.

The August 31 ruling, by Arbitrator David Stein, came in a grievance filed on behalf of Rose Starr, associate professor at the Hunter School of Social Work, who is a member of TIAA-CREF. Starr applied for Travia leave in Fall 2001, when she was 59 years old and no early retirement incentive was in effect. CUNY rejected her application on the basis

of her age, leading the PSC to file a grievance on her behalf.

The union then discovered that Eugene Moretta of Brooklyn College and Eileen Moran of Queens College had also been denied Travia because they were not yet 62. They were added to the complaint.

55 IS THE NORM

During the arbitration, the PSC noted that instructional staff mem-

bers in the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) are entitled to Travia leave as soon as they qualify for a service retirement. The PSC argued that group includes any employee eligible to retire except those on disability. TRS participants are usually eligible to receive pension benefits at the age of 55.

The PSC also pointed out that article 16.4 of the PSC-CUNY contract says that ORP participants qualify for Travia if they meet "similar eligibility requirements" to those of their colleagues in TRS. The union argued that CUNY had violated article 16.4 by demanding that ORP participants be seven years older than TRS participants in order to receive Travia leave.

Stein accepted the PSC's logic. His decision notes that "Roget's International Thesaurus...sets forth the following synonyms for 'similar': 'approximate, like, comparative'.... [S]imply put, 62 is not approximately 55.... [I]n seven years a college freshman can graduate law school, a United States president can virtually serve out his constitutionally allotted two terms." The decision directs CUNY to pay Starr, Moretta and Moran their Travia leave retroactively, and to do the same for other instructional staff

members in the ORP who retired between 55 and 61 years of age and were previously denied Travia leave. According to the arbitration decision, CUNY must also grant eligibility for Travia to all future retirees once they reach the age of 55. Those who think they may have been wrongly denied Travia leave should contact Clarissa Gilbert Weiss in the PSC office (212-354-1252 or cweiss@psemail.org).

SPEAK UP

CUNY management has accepted the arbitrator's directive regarding the three named grievants and all future retirees. However, management plans to appeal the requirement that the University make retroactive payments to anyone who retired after the grievance was filed in September 2001 and before the August ruling.

Rose Starr, who will now receive her Travia in a lump sum three years after her retirement, expressed delight at the final outcome and has advice for others who feel their rights are being violated. "If you have concerns, speak to the PSC," said Starr. "The union puts its thumb on the scale to even up an otherwise uneven balance of power between you and University administration."

Affects members who are 55 and older

How the transit benefit was won

By DANIA RAJENDRA

"Winning a transit benefit for CUNY faculty and staff has been a byzantine process," says PSC President Barbara Bowen. "It angers me that it took years to put into effect a benefit we negotiated in 2001. But it's not enough to be angry - we had to be persistent. There were obstacles, and we had to figure out how to overcome them. The PSC exerted pressure the whole way to make that happen."

The CUNY TransitBenefit allows faculty and staff to pay for NYC bus and subway expenses with pre-tax earnings (including express buses within the five boroughs). That's a potential savings of more than \$200 a year for subway or local bus commuters or \$300 for express bus users. To sign up, contact your college's human resources office or go to www.cuny.edu/transitbenefit. You will be issued a special debit card, which can be used to pay for mass transit.

Many of the difficulties in achieving this seemingly straightforward benefit stem from the fact that CUNY employees are paid by both New York City and the state. No group of New York state workers had ever had this type of benefit, and it required changes to state law.

The story of how this benefit was

PSC persistence pays off

won is an object lesson in the complexities faced by public workers, and in what can be achieved through collective action:

PHASE ONE: Establishing the benefit

1/11/01: The Municipal Labor Committee, which represents all City unions, reaches an agreement with New York City on employee benefits. The PSC works with other CUNY unions to make sure the agreement specifically includes CUNY workers as eligible for the transit benefit.

However, the law that originally created the transit benefit excluded CUNY workers. The original legislation had been written for workers at City agencies - and this does not include CUNY, which receives both City and State funding.

The PSC asks sympathetic lawmakers in Albany to investigate whether this could be remedied administratively, without requiring the State Legislature to pass a new bill, but the eventual answer is no - the law must be changed.

PHASE TWO: Changing the law

The PSC includes the issue in its lobbying agenda for the 2001-02 legislative session. The union drafts new legislation, finds sponsors in

the Assembly and in the Senate, and convinces CUNY management to support the measure. PSC members push for passage of the bill when they go on lobbying trips to Albany; the issue is also raised when visiting legislators in their home districts.

Despite winning support in both the State Senate and Assembly, an

YOUR BENEFITS

unrelated dispute between lawmakers keeps the bill stuck in committee through the legislative session.

In the 2002-03 session, after renewed advocacy by the PSC and its state affiliate, NYSUT, the bill passes in both houses. Governor Pataki signs it into law in July 2003.

PHASE THREE: Ensuring fair implementation for members

In Fall 2003, the PSC invites other unions with members at CUNY to negotiate together with CUNY management, in order to secure the best possible version of the transit benefit for CUNY workers.

The State, which manages the payroll for CUNY senior college employees, has no experience integrating this type of benefit into their payroll

system. The PSC presses for the necessary computer programming changes to be done on a priority basis.

The PSC negotiates with CUNY management to make sure the benefit is structured to meet the needs of its members. For example, in order to be most useful for full-time faculty, CUNY's transit benefit takes account of changing summer schedules. To be useful for part-timers, the benefit is available to employees regardless of how many hours they work per week - there is no minimum threshold.

City workers have by this time secured an improved version of the transit benefit: their benefit can now be used to pay for express buses within NYC, and there is now more flexibility in the amount of the pre-tax deduction. The PSC and other CUNY unions work with CUNY management to make sure that their members are given this newer, more flexible version of the benefit.

Even with the TransitBenefit cards now becoming available, the fight is still not over. Those working in CUNY's Educational Opportunity Centers are still not covered. The PSC wants them included, and wants the TransitBenefit expanded to cover commuter rail, such as LIRR and MetroNorth.

"This benefit is not something the University simply bestowed on us," commented Bowen. "It had to be won in three different arenas: collective bargaining, legislation and implementation. Persistent pressure was the key."

LABOR IN BRIEF

Victories in NYC higher ed

Last month, the New School finally agreed to bargain with Academics Come Together-UAW, the union that represents the 1600 New School part-time faculty. ACT-UAW also includes adjuncts at NYU, who won their first contract in May.

At Cooper Union, the clerical and technical staff voted five to one to join NYSUT/AFT on November 5.

San Francisco hotel owners continue lockout

In September, members of the newly merged UNITE HERE, struck hotels in San Francisco. In response, hotel owners locked out the strikers and their colleagues and hired scabs. At press time, workers remain locked out as hotel owners resist the union's strategy of lining up contract expiration dates across the country. Meanwhile, in Atlantic City, 10,000 UNITE HERE casino workers ended their month-long strike. They won raises, pension contributions, and fully funded health-care, but lost their bid to line up their contract expiration dates with other locals in the industry.

THE ELECTION

Don't mourn, analyze!

By **BARBARA BOWEN**
PSC President

On the morning after the Bush election, the members of the PSC's negotiating team gathered for a collective bargaining session at 80th Street. Shattered and sleep-deprived, we chided ourselves for failing to anticipate that this might be a bad day for a morning negotiating session. But as it turned out, it was a good thing to be at the bargaining table and in the company of union activists on the morning of November third.

As we listened to CUNY management making proposals that would impose limits on who could receive reassigned time for union work and on job security protections for Higher Education Officers, it was hard not to think about what a second Bush term could mean for CUNY. Pressure from the PSC has moved Chancellor Goldstein to say publicly that he intends to secure the best possible contract for the faculty – and we applaud him for that – but the fact remains that many of management's proposals would reduce job security, increase managerial control and weaken the union.

The corporate CUNY of these proposals, a university increasingly stratified and privatized, would be completely at home in the Bush landscape – whatever management's intentions. Part of the “political capital” Bush claims to have accumulated during his campaign is permission to remake higher education through more privatization, less access and assaults on academic freedom. (Let's not forget, though, that the claim of a “mandate” is just right-wing spin: there is no mandate for a president when 89% of African Americans voters opposed him, when his chief opponent won more votes than any challenger in US history, and when about half of eligible voters didn't vote at all.

FIGHT BACK

Whether we follow Joe Hill and refuse to mourn – or we feel, as I do, that mourning is analysis, and an essential part of political understanding – it is important to grasp what the political climate of a second Bush term could mean for us at CUNY, in every venue from the bargaining table to the financial aid office, from the science lab to the research library. Some voices within the labor movement and on the left are urging us just to get back to work, doing the same thing only more of it, but I want to suggest that there is a need for sharp, detailed analysis of both the small picture

and the large in order to make effective plans for the fight-back ahead.

It's well known that a second Bush term will have major implications for areas such as foreign policy, the war and the Supreme Court, but there is an equally developed agenda on issues less visible in the press and particularly relevant to CUNY. The Republicans have already signaled that higher education is a fiscal and ideological flashpoint; their plans for the Higher Education Act, currently up for reauthorization by Congress, include undermining public funding, supporting for-profit institutions, and weakening financial support for poor and minority students. (See the article in this issue of *Clarion*, page 8.) In the last Congress, a Senate majority opposed the worst of these pro-

and the arts, “permanent” tax cuts for the wealthy – and a critical issue, the starvation of state budgets and consequent defunding of public higher education.

DECEMBER FORUM

As a first step toward analysis, the PSC will hold a forum in December at which colleagues from within and outside CUNY will examine what the Bush agenda may mean on these issues and others – and how we can develop resistance. You'll receive a mailing with the time, place and program, and I would welcome your suggestions as we move quickly to organize the event. “We are lucky to have the union,” a member of the PSC bargaining team, Mike Fabricant, said to me that morning after the election. A union, especially of academic



A voter in Cleveland, Ohio, cast her ballot on November 2.

posals, but it will now take much more organizing to stop a dangerous reshaping of public higher education.

Other issues, too, bear close examination. I think we can expect a fierce attack on the labor movement, perhaps especially on public employee unions like ours. In the recent decision precluding graduate employees from unionizing, we saw that matters who sits on the National Labor Relations Board – what are Bush's plans for that Board and for labor law? And what about healthcare, which is fast becoming the central labor issue of our time? Even the mild healthcare reform proposed by Kerry would have offered some relief in prescription drug costs for welfare funds like ours; now the fight to stabilize our Welfare Fund in this contract is even more critical. The list of issues with immediate impact on us goes on: science policy, Social Security, affirmative action, civil liberties, workplace health and safety, funding for research

workers, gives us a space independent of our employer in which to reflect and organize; a union also gives us a structure through which to act politically once that analysis is done.

THINKING TOGETHER

Perhaps the most important question for analysis is how to understand and nurture the extraordinary upsurge in progressive political mobilization over the last year. In the PSC, we saw an unprecedented level of activism. That hundreds of our members, and hundreds of thousands of people across the country, felt they could not abstain from political action at this historical moment may well be the most important news of the election. I look forward to working together as union to analyze how to develop an agenda of resistance that is more than just defensive, both in our immediate battle for a good contract and in the many other battles ahead.

How does four more years affect CUNY?

POEMS

Two by Saadi Youssef Tower

Our cities shared their poisons with us,
then suddenly
banished us to a cloud.
We didn't despair when once again
we became fugitives....
But we're no longer light as lightning
to live in a cloud again,
in any passing cloud.

In the morning we haul our crates to ports
on to baggage belts
in airport basements.

Where did you come from?
~

Where are you going?
~

How did you carry your heavy crates?
~

Did you know that the station was moved
and that the last train left twenty years ago?
~

.....
.....
.....

Still, I will drag my boxes
and in the evening carry them, to a room.
I will climb my tower and enter
any room,
any passing cloud.

Belgrade, 2/10/1988

A hot night

In the air that staggers
between seashells,
the remains of a dead bird
and fish that belong to sailors
who will not return.
In the air there are these smells:
an Indian woman combed
her hair under the washline,
and the charred smell
of grilled crabs,
and this soaked shirt.

Aden, 7/9/1984

Saadi Youssef is one of the leading poets of the Arab world. Born in 1934 in Basra, Iraq, he wrote progressive political free verse poetry in the 50s, 60s and 70s. In the late 70s, he left Iraq and has since lived all over Europe and the Arab world. These poems are reprinted from Without an Alphabet, Without a Face with the permission of Graywolf Press.

Translator Khaled Mattawa, from Libya and Louisiana, authored two books and translated three volumes of contemporary Arabic poetry. He teaches at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

OUR HISTORY

Morris Schappes: An activist's life

By **STEPHEN LEBERSTEIN**
PSC Chapter Chair, CCNY

In March 1936, a 29-year-old English instructor named Morris Schappes was teaching a section of "English 4" at City College, as he had for the past eight years.

He had assigned his students to read Shelley's "The Mask of Anarchy," a poem that expressed Shelley's shock at the infamous Peterloo Massacre of 1819. Hundreds of men, women and children peaceably demonstrating for parliamentary reform and a living wage were brutally dispersed by the local militia, with a number of demonstrators killed. Shelley concluded his ode with these expectant stanzas:

And these words shall then become
Like oppression's thundered doom
Ringing through each heart and brain,
Heard again – again – again –
Rise like lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number –
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you –
Ye are many – they are few.

Morris's plan for the class, he remembered much later, was to show his students how the poet, "as a human being, reacts to his world as a whole, in correspondence, in poetry, in prose; he doesn't just go up to the birdloft." To make this point, he read from Shelley's essay, "A Philosophical View of Reform," written a year after "The Mask" but then lost for a 100 years.

Into his classroom, for the first time in Morris's eight years at City College, walked Prof. Charles Francis Horne, chair of the English department. Horne's sole claim to scholarly achievement was a history of the American Legion; he had been appointed as department chair by the college administration. He stayed no more than 15 minutes.

SINGLED OUT

That afternoon, Morris passed the English Department office, Shelley's essays in hand, when Horne spotted him and called him inside. "What do you mean by reading Karl Marx?" Horne demanded. Morris tried to show him the text of "A Philosophical View of Reform," which Horne had apparently heard him read to the class. "He turned his back on me and walked over to the window and that was that," Morris recalled.

But that was just the beginning. A few weeks later Morris was handed a letter just as he was starting his 9:00 class. Along with

several other members of the College's fledgling union, the Instructional Staff Association, Morris Schappes had been fired.

That afternoon, students in the hundreds staged a protest outside the President's office. Within a month the dismissal of the "City College Thirteen," all of them activists in the union or in CCNY's Anti-Fascist Association, had become city-wide issue.

Students knew and respected Morris and the others because "we liked the students and had a special orientation to [them]. We had common interests," as Morris put it, "so that the students often turned to us, and you would be known to people who kept their ears open."

Though an academic, Morris was no stranger to the labor movement. As a young Communist he had lent a hand in organizing the Transport Workers Union, leafletting conductors on the Sixth and Ninth Avenue "Els." Labor activists like the TWU's Mike Quill knew Morris and the others, and regarded them as allies.

TRUE TO HIS ROOTS

At the 1936 May Day rally, reinstatement of the City College Thirteen was a major demand. A contingent of hundreds of faculty and students marched, with about 60 faculty members decked out in cap and gown led by John Bridge, a professor in the Latin department. During the march, a mounted cop came trotting up and bent down to speak to the classics scholar. (Later, Morris learned that he had been a student of Bridge's and had stopped to greet him.)

The apparently trivial incident, the mounted policeman and the academically be-decked marshal in the May Day rally, also represented something about Morris's work and life at that time, a quality that resonates with people of my generation. The son of working-class immigrants, Schappes entered City College in its halcyon days when the entrance standard was a 60 high school average, with a 65 average on certain Regents exams.

More than 50 years later, reflecting on his good fortune in gaining admission to college, Morris recalled City's entrance require-



Hugo Gellert/Committee for the Defense of Public Education

all 13 of the dismissed City College teachers, over-riding the action of the notoriously reactionary President Frederick Robinson. This victory represented the high water mark of Morris's political life at the College, signaling both the agenda and power of the Left. "Everyone knew what we stood for," he said.

Following the victory of the City College Thirteen, the Instructional Staff Association took on what it saw as two critical issues: democratizing the structure of the College and the lack of tenure. By 1938, what had begun as the "democratization plan" in the union had become State law. It put faculty appointments in the hands of the faculty, made curriculum a matter of faculty control, and mandated tenure for all ranks after three years' satisfactory service.

There is much more to tell about Morris Schappes's life, as a scholar and an organizer, but there is no room here to tell it.

He was active in the successor to the ISA, the New York College Teachers Union, AFT Local 537 – at the time the largest academic labor union in the US. One of Local 537's most important achievements was pressing the administration to hire CCNY's first black faculty member, Max Yergan, in 1938.

The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of 1939 changed the political climate, isolating activists like Morris and rendering them vulnerable. Yet he didn't understand the source of his weakness at the time when he most needed to defend himself. The attack gathered force in 1940 and 1941, as the NY State Legislature's Rapp-Coudert Committee undertook an investigation of "subversion" in the schools.

INVALUABLE GIFTS

Significantly, the investigation began by subpoenaing the membership list and records of the New York Teachers Union and the College Teachers Union. Morris was one of more than 30 CCNY employees who were fired, for refusing to "name names" to the committee.

Morris Schappes died this year at the age of 97. While some might say that his time at City College ended in failure, I would claim that Morris left us invaluable gifts. What the Rapp-Coudert purge did perpetrate, at least for a time, was a collective amnesia about the vision, activity and accomplishments of Morris Schappes and his comrades. We can honor Morris by restoring that memory, one of the many gifts that he has left us.

Adapted from a longer article in Jewish Currents (Sept./Oct. 2004); print copy available from www.jewishcurrents.org. (See also letter on page 2.) An exhibit on struggles for academic freedom at City College in the 30s and 40s will be at the Graduate Center from February 4 to March 4, 2005.

Winning tenure in the thirties.

Clarion NOVEMBER 2004

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CONTINUING EDUCATION

Don't forget the faculty

By ELLEN BALLEISEN

Adult and continuing education programs, once a sideline to CUNY's main mission, now account for about half of CUNY's student enrollment, with a total of 238,379 continuing education students in the 2002-2003 academic year. These students are not just taking classes for hobbies like water aerobics or amateur photography: continuing education courses now include custom-designed training for specific businesses, intensive ESL and basic skills instruction, and career training in fields such as computer programming and accounting.

According to *CUNY on the Job*, a report released last spring by the Center for an Urban Future, CUNY's continuing education programs have "the potential to be an unrivalled public resource for employers and workers at all levels." This report repeatedly mentions the need to integrate continuing education with the rest of the University. It cites the views of Gail Mellow, president of LaGuardia: "The non-credit [courses] are seen as the shadow college. We need to bring that population into the sunshine and think of every person who walks through the door as a student." Mellow's views are echoed by Michael Paull, Lehman's dean of adult education, who says, "We are intentionally blurring the lines between credit, non-credit, certificate and degree programs...continuing education has to be reconceptualized."

IN THE SHADOWS

As a continuing education teacher, I know CUNY has some terrific programs now and great potential to expand its offerings. But the report doesn't address some key questions: Who's teaching all these students? How are instructors compensated? If continuing education students are to be "brought into the sunshine," are there any plans to do the same for continuing education teachers?

Current terms and conditions of employment for CUNY's continuing education teachers are spelled out at the back of the PSC-CUNY contract in an appendix. Take a look and you'll see that continuing education teachers (CETs) are separate from and unequal to both adjuncts and full-time faculty in degree programs. Minimum hourly pay for CETs is \$27.43, about half the minimum hourly rate of \$53.60 for adjuncts in credit

programs. There is no salary schedule for CETs; adjuncts have a five-step schedule and full-timers have 15 or 16 steps.

To get health insurance or paid sick leave, CETs must teach at least 20 hours per week and have a six-month appointment. All teaching adjuncts have sick leave, even if it is minimal, and after teaching for two consecutive semesters, adjuncts who teach six hours a week can get health coverage.

UNEQUAL HOURS

CETs also teach 60-minute hours, compared to the 50-minute hour used in the rest of the University. For teachers in my program, who spend 25 hours per week in the classroom, the extra 10 minutes per hour add up to 150 extra hours per year – with zero extra pay.

Many CETs have full-time jobs elsewhere. But others do not and are *de facto* full-time faculty. Perhaps the most bizarre inequity that CETs face is that more than 65 of them teach 25 hours per week – up to 900 sixty-minute hours per year – yet are still classified as "part-time." By contrast, the maximum required for full-time CUNY faculty is 405 fifty-minute hours per year, the load for all community college faculty and for senior college lecturers.

Granted, full-timers have additional obligations, including research and departmental responsibilities. But it's still a puzzle: how can someone have more than twice as many contact hours as a full-time faculty member and still be considered "part-time"?

The answer lies with a section of the CUNY Board of Trustees bylaws that *defines* all CETs as part-time employees, regardless of their actual teaching loads. This definition is a hangover from days when continuing education had far fewer students, and instructors taught only a few hours per week. If written today, this line in the bylaws might land its author in a remedial math class!



Carolina Arentsen

So I applaud the desire of CUNY executives to break down the walls between continuing education and the rest of the University – but only if these plans include breaking down walls for teachers as well, by changing outdated employment structures. Specific proposals to do this are already on the table; in the current contract negotiations, the PSC has presented several contract demands that would upgrade pay and benefits for CUNY's CETs. The union hopes to build on advances won in the last contract, which provided sick leave and modest base pay additions to the small number of CETs who teach 20 or more hours per week with six-month appointments.

YEARS WITHOUT A RAISE

Barriers also need to come down for the CETs paid through the Research Foundation, who according to the most recent figures teach about 40% of CUNY's nearly 240,000 continuing education students. RF teachers are not covered by the PSC-CUNY contract or the BoT bylaws, and most are not union members, though this has begun to change as RF employees seek to organize

with the PSC. Like CETs paid directly by CUNY, RF teachers can be classified as part-time even if they teach far more hours than CUNY full-timers. And they can go years without a raise.

Interestingly, *CUNY on the Job* describes what CUNY can learn from the School of Continuing and Professional Studies at NYU, which the report calls "a national model for mixing academics and professional studies." But the report doesn't mention that NYU's continuing education teachers and adjuncts recently voted to unionize, and spent most of 2003-2004 threatening a strike. Last April the strike was averted with a contract settlement that provides NYU's continuing education teachers with a minimum hourly rate rising from \$50 to \$60 over five years.

CUNY on the Job also lauds CUNY's continuing education programs for "a particularly strong record of moving immigrants and

low-income workers into working- and middle-class jobs." This compliment is deserved but also deeply ironic. Competitive wages, decent benefits and raises based on experience are all basic elements of a good job. Continuing education at CUNY aims to help students obtain these cornerstones of middle-class life, yet fails to guarantee them for continuing education teachers.

The report concludes that CUNY can help government "create a coherent workforce development system designed to push its workers as far as they can go up the skills ladder" but says CUNY will realize this opportunity only with comprehensive long-range planning.

I agree, but with this caveat: no organization can effectively plan for long-term growth without attention to the needs of its own workforce – in this case, the teachers on the front lines of the programs that CUNY is anxious to expand.

Ellen Balleisen has been a CUNY "part-timer" for 18 years, the first ten as an adjunct on several campuses and the past eight as a continuing education teacher in the Language Immersion Program at Bronx Community College. Since 2003 she has also been a PSC pension counselor.

Our students want good jobs – so do we.

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15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Tell CUNY: Contract now!

This Halloween marked the second year without a contract for PSC members. That's two years without a raise, without a commitment from CUNY to maintain our benefits, without the respect that faculty and staff deserve.

To let management know that PSC members want to see a decent financial offer, go to the PSC Web site (www.psc-cuny.org) and click on "Contract Now" to fax a letter to Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. Log on and send a message: we need a good contract, with real raises and fair CUNY contributions to the Welfare Fund. If you have more than 15 minutes, you can also join the contract protest on Monday, November 29 (see Calendar, page 7).

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