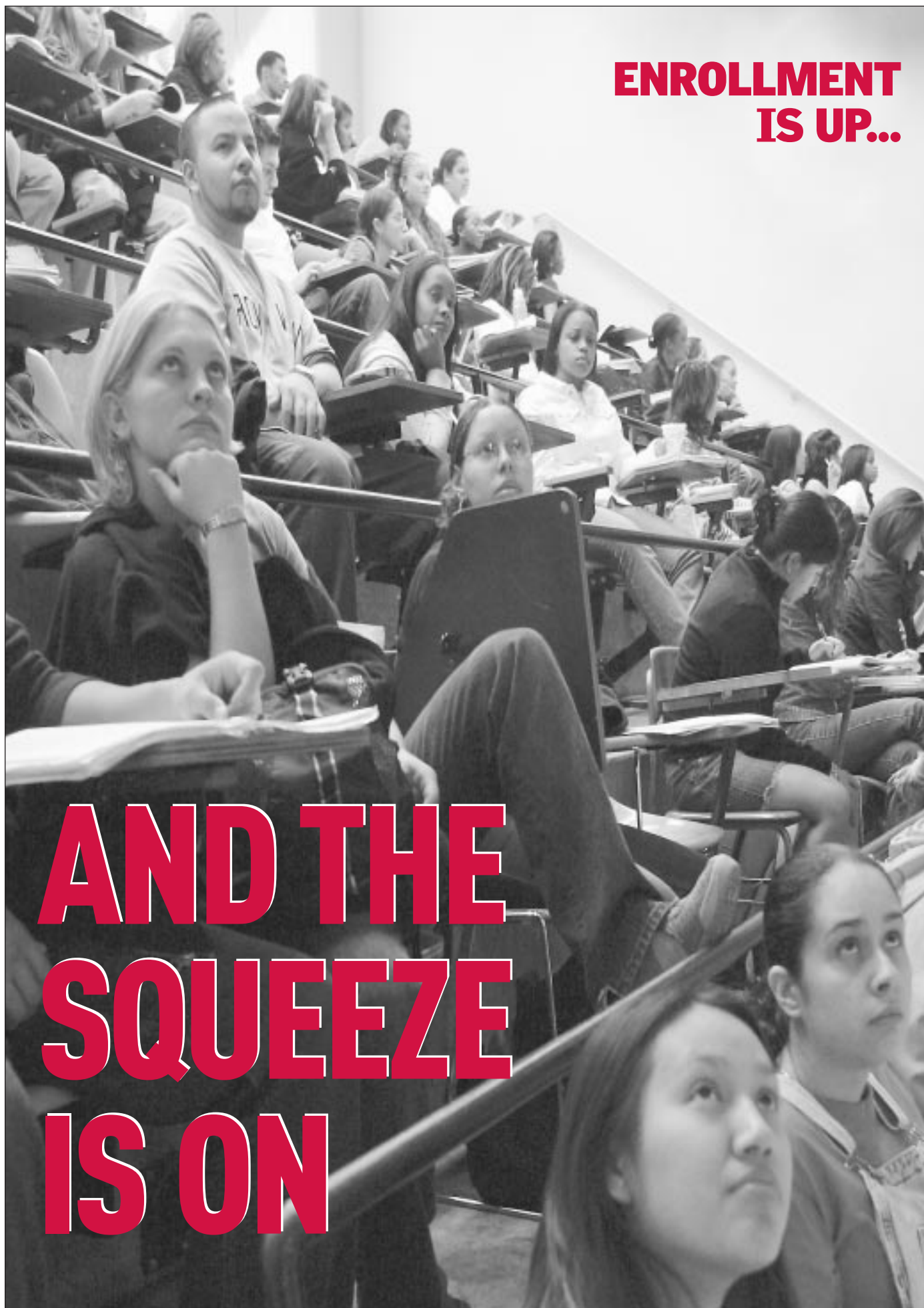


Clarion

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



NOVEMBER 2003



**ENROLLMENT
IS UP...**

**AND THE
SQUEEZE
IS ON**

CUNY student enrollment is up 2.4% this year, but overcrowding at many campuses is getting worse. With long lines, fire hazards and packed classrooms, safety and learning are threatened.

PAGE 4



**HIRING
450 new
hires**

CUNY community colleges will see a wave of new faculty and staff.

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NEGOTIATIONS

PSC contract demands on health and safety

Work should not make you sick. As contract bargaining continues this fall, the PSC demands stronger protections on construction hazards, fire safety and bad air.

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ADJUNCTS

Campus Equity Week at City University

The PSC spotlights adjuncts and pushes for equity with events on Oct. 27-31. Also, deconstructing the tension between full-timers and part-timers.

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LABOR

US says no to labor rights in Iraq

US occupation authorities have used Saddam Hussein's anti-labor laws to block union organizing in Iraq's public sector. Does democracy include labor rights?

PAGE 9



Peter Hogness

Participants in the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride from Las Vegas, NV, at the October 4 rally in Queens to mark the end of the cross-country trek. PSC members joined tens of thousands demanding justice for immigrant workers.

Have you moved?

If you've changed your home address, or if you've moved to a different department or campus, please notify the PSC Membership Department. We'd like to make sure you get your copy of *Clarion*!

Please include your full name, home address, home and school tele-

phone, e-mail address, college, title and department. Write to PSC Membership Department, 25 W. 43rd St., 5th Fl., NY, NY 10036, or fax the information to 212-302-7815 ("Attention: Membership"). You can print the form from the PSC Web site, at www.psc-cuny.org/update.htm.



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.

Fix law on undocumented student tuition

● After the attacks on September 11, 2001, CUNY decided to charge all undocumented applicants the out-of-state tuition rate. After protests by a broad coalition of students, faculty and staff, community and labor organizations, a bill was passed that granted in-state status to many undocumented students. The law gives NY State status to students who attended a NY high school for at least two years (or earned a GED) and applied to CUNY or SUNY within five years of getting their diploma, or were enrolled in SUNY or CUNY in Fall 2001 and paid resident tuition.

While this is terrific for a large number of students, too many applicants are still left out. Any undocumented applicant who only has a high school diploma from abroad is still required to pay the out-of-state rate.

At the City College Center for Worker Education, we have had to deny admission to many older applicants who do not meet the requirements of the new law and cannot afford out-of-state tuition. Many are older women from the Caribbean who are working in service sector positions. We need new legislation to allow all undocumented applicants who can prove one year of NY State residence to be admitted at the in-state rate.

Jean Weisman
City College

HEOs and 9/11 at BMCC

● I was troubled by the lack of inclusion of Higher Education Officers in your article, "BMCC and 9/11 Fallout." Their contributions were crucial to the recovery of the college. They also were the PSC members most exposed to health and safety problems throughout this period.

Many HEOs at BMCC not only remained on campus throughout the day on September 11, but also returned before power, telephones and water were restored to bring back e-mail, distance learning and telecommunications infrastructure. Others set up command posts and call centers on 125th Street and 57th Street. HEOs phoned students day after day to see how they were doing and keep them informed on plans to reopen. Many HEOs worked without a day off, straight through to October 1. Special mention must be given to the University architects who worked under stressful conditions to replace the 50 classrooms lost at Fiterman Hall. The contribution of HEOs in returning our colleagues and 16,500 students back to the classroom cannot be underestimated.

I urge you to make a better effort to include not only HEOs in future articles, but also CLTs. The PSC is one union representing all of us, not

just our colleagues in the faculty. We are all in this together.

John Gallagher
BMCC

Go directly to jail

● This morning I attended the inauguration of the Queens College Center Fall Labor breakfast series. It featured City Council Speaker Gifford Miller, who is virtually running for mayor and was there to speak on the theme, "New York 2010: Envisioning a New City."

I asked Miller about his position on the 1967 Rockefeller-inspired Taylor Law, and whether as mayor he would jail municipal or state employees who went on strike. Speaker Miller responded quickly and enthusiastically, "The law is the law. As mayor I am sworn to uphold the law." He made no criticism of the Taylor Law whatsoever. I wondered if he would have had the same response to the laws on segregation fifty years ago.

Tony Gronowicz
City College

Research & the contract

● I am a new assistant professor at the Urban Public Health Program, School of Health Sciences at Hunter College, and want to express my deepest satisfaction with the new

The four plans are Aetna, CIGNA, HIP-POS (not HIP-HMO) and GHI-HMO (not the more common GHI-CBP).

If you purchase an optional drug rider, the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund will cover part of the cost instead of giving you a Medco card. This reimbursement is \$700 for families, \$300 if single. Drug rider costs range from \$16.02 to \$86.99 per paycheck.

Campus equity week

October 27 – 31

MONDAY 10/27, 3:30–5:00 pm: Informational picket at CUNY Board of Trustees meeting. Demand equity for part-timers. Hunter College School of Social Work, 129 E. 79th St. [Note the location]

FRIDAY 10/31, 10:00–1:00 pm: Forum on applying for new full-time jobs at CUNY. Panel and workshops on applications and interviews. Grad Center, Segal Theater.

FRIDAY 10/31, 2:00–4:30 pm: Film Festival on contingent academic labor and reception. Grad Center, Segal Theater.

Contact your chapter chair to find out about local events.

Nov. 14 health plan deadline

November 14 is the end of the annual transfer period for CUNY employees who want to change health plans. Get forms and details from your campus personnel office.

For four of the plans, members have two options for prescription drug coverage: either stay with Medco, or purchase an optional drug rider (in addition to any co-insurance payments for the plan itself).

The four plans are Aetna, CIGNA, HIP-POS (not HIP-HMO) and GHI-HMO (not the more common GHI-CBP).

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CALENDAR

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3 / 1:00 pm: Retirees Chapter meeting. At the CUNY Graduate Center, 34th St. and 5th Ave., Room 9204.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4: Meet with a TIAA-CREF representative to discuss asset allocation, retirement and tax deferred annuity. At the PSC office, 25 West 43rd St. Call Linda Slifkin at 212-354-1252 to schedule an appointment.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6 / 6:00 pm: PSC Solidarity Committee meeting. At the PSC office. For more info, call Jim Perlstein at 212-354-1252.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7 / 3:00 pm: "First Fridays" Adjunct Affairs meeting. At the PSC office. For more info, call Marcia Newfield at 212-354-1252.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14: Deadline for annual transfer period for CUNY employees to change health plans. More information at left.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14 / 6:00 pm: Labor Goes to the Movies, PSC film series. "Harlan County, USA," a dynamic documentary about striking miners from rural Kentucky. At the CCNY Center for Worker Education, 99 Hudson St.

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 16 / 9:30 am – 12:30 pm: PSC International Committee meeting. For location or other information, e-mail Tony O'Brien at ajobrien@bway.net.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18 / 6:00 pm: PSC Women's Committee meeting. At the PSC office. For more info, call Norah Chase at 212-354-1252.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21 / 9:30 am: "The Patriot Act and the University." UFS conference on provisions of the act, implications for faculty, particular concerns of scientists and librarians, immigration issues and historical context. Speakers include Ellen Schrecker (Yeshiva), Joan Scott (AAUP), Allan Wernick (Hostos), Donna Lieberman (NYCLU). At Hunter College School of Social Work, 129 East 79th St. (at Lexington Ave). Advance registration required: e-mail William.Phipps@mail.cuny.edu or call 212-794-5538.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21: Deadline to enroll in the Health Care Flexible Spending Account program for 2004. For more info see September *Clarion*, page 9 (online at www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm) or visit your campus personnel office.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1: Deadline for Belle Zeller Scholarship applications. Established in 1979 to honor the PSC's founding president for her scholarship and social concern. Provides continuing payment of (in-state) tuition. Do you know students who should apply? Requirements and application forms on the Web at www.psc-cuny.org/psc-currents.htm, or call 212-354-1252 to request.

Editor's note: Thanks for this letter, which helped suggest the topic of this issue's Roving Reporter, on page 8.

Your health and the contract

By PETER HOGNESS

PSC demands a safe workplace

The PSC's contract proposals on health and safety have a simple theme: going to work shouldn't make you sick. The union's demands target problems such as air quality, fire safety, dangerous construction and more.

"North Hall is in serious violation of the fire code," says Francis Sheehan, chair of the John Jay PSC chapter's health and safety committee. "The building occupancy is almost double NYC's limit." Why is CUNY not in compliance? "The University says it has 'sovereign immunity,' since CUNY is a part of State government, and therefore doesn't have to comply with NYC codes," Sheehan explains.

The fire safety violations at John Jay's North Hall are numerous and long-standing – and ironically, it is the one CUNY college that specializes in firefighter training. "Our colleagues in Fire Science mention how embarrassing it is to have a seminar or conference in the building," Sheehan says "What some of them do is assign North Hall as a semester project to their students, asking them to go around and document all the fire code violations!"

The reason the law specifies occupancy limits, Sheehan explains, is so that the building can be evacuated promptly in case of fire or other emergency. "If you have twice as many people as you're supposed to," he points out, "then the number of stairways is insufficient, doorways aren't wide enough, and so on." Besides the danger of being caught in a fire, there is a risk that a rush toward crowded exits might cause some to be trampled. "Few people take these things seriously until they have a real emergency," Sheehan says, "and then they wonder, 'Why weren't we prepared?'"

PSC contract demand #63 states, "the University shall provide a workplace that meets City and State requirements for fire safety and emergency evacuation."

Management at John Jay has taken the issue seriously in the last year or so, said Sheehan. But the college has been in violation of the fire code for at least a decade.

"All we're asking is that CUNY comply with City and State occupancy limits – before someone gets hurt," says PSC Health and Safety Officer Joan Greenbaum.

GOT AIR?

Indoor air quality (IAQ) is one of the main health and safety problems faced by CUNY employees. Some of the most dramatic examples come from CUNY science labs, where fume hoods that are supposed to provide ventilation often do not work. "It's clear that the air exchange in our science building is inadequate," says biologist Jonathan Levitt of CC-

NY. "The work in our labs generates volatile compounds, and on a number of occasions we've had fumes backing up into the labs and even the corridor."

Fume hoods at John Jay have been a constant problem to which management has been slow to respond, until now. "With several of these fume hoods, you hit a switch and nothing happens," Sheehan explains. "One had no motor and no belt – but it was listed as being in working order! I had to take a picture of it to convince management there was a problem."

But IAQ is not just a problem in laboratories. "What has come to be known as 'sick building syndrome' arose in the wake of the 1970s energy crisis, with sealed buildings [and] windows...designed and built to cut costs in the amount of air taken in and recirculated," Greenbaum and PSC Health and Safety Officer David Kotelchuck write in the Fall 2003 issue of *Working USA*.

A related problem is old buildings with poorly designed ventilation systems, or renovations that impede the movement of air. "Rooms tend to be subdivided into smaller offices without regard to ventilation," observes Jean Grassman, assistant professor of health and nutrition at Brooklyn College. "In Boylan Hall I've seen some offices that are essentially dead areas in terms of air flow."

Reactions to "sick building syndrome" can include headaches, irritated eyes, breathing problems or rashes. Poor air flow can also cause excess concentrations of CO₂ – which can be dangerous to learning. "It can lead to difficulty concentrating and even make people feel sleepy," says Greenbaum. "This can be frustrating for both students and teachers, but they are often unaware of the cause."

PSC contract demand #61 calls for CUNY to provide ventilation that meets the only recognized standard for air circulation in indoor environments, developed by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). Besides clean air, this demand also calls for the University to provide "access to safe drinking water, cleanliness, temperature, light and noise control."

This is not an extravagant demand, notes Sheehan. "Could you imagine being on the other side of the bargaining table, and being told



A crane collapse smashed a construction shed at Queens College in August 2001.

that you have to argue against providing air, light and water?" he asks with a smile. "What would you say? 'Well, I don't think we can give you that light or air – you can't have everything!'"

CONSTRUCTION

Construction projects are a major source of problems for those who work at CUNY. In late August 2001, a construction crane collapsed across a pathway at Queens College. Fortunately, classes were not yet in session and the normally busy pathway was empty. The crane operator had started up the crane without checking the machine's stabilizers, and contractor Nu-Way Crane Service was blamed for hiring dangerously inexperienced workers.

Less dramatic construction problems can still cause serious health hazards. "When we moved in, they weren't finished at all," says a PSC member who works in the new building at Baruch. "The contractors were continuing to work all around us." The terrazzo floors had not yet been poured – and when they were, strong fumes spread throughout the building. "They were wearing those gas-mask-style respirators, but we were wearing nothing," she recalls.

Temperature was also a major problem in the unfinished building. "We had no heat for a couple of months," says the union member, who asked to remain anonymous. "We were freezing, we just walked around in our coats all the time."

Constant construction dust caused breathing problems. "The dust was really out of control," the member says, and she was severely affected. "They were supposed to be

doing the work on evenings and weekends, but work was happening when it wasn't supposed to be." While working in these conditions, both she and a co-worker found that their breathing difficulties developed into asthma, an illness that both now live with.

PSC contract demand #62 insists that CUNY ensure that construction does not "interfere with the working and learning environment." It would require that construction areas be isolated to prevent dust and fumes from affecting PSC members while they work, and would require advance notice of construction schedules. And it would give campus health and safety personnel the right to issue a stop-work order if hazards or noise interfere with PSC members' ability to do their jobs.

MENTAL HEALTH

Other demands would improve the grievance procedure to promote faster resolution of problems at the college level, and require University reporting on the ratio of faculty counselors to students at each campus.

"The PSC has mounted an active response to CUNY's serious health and safety problems," says Debbie Bell, the union's executive director. "We've organized direct action on campuses, built chapter health and safety committees, pressed the issue in labor-management meetings, campaigned for capital funding to replace buildings like John Jay's North Hall. New contract language will bring stronger leverage to all our organizing efforts."

"Health and safety is serious business," says Greenbaum. "The aim of our contract demands is to ensure that management treats it that way."

LABOR IN BRIEF

Farm worker bill moving

A bill that would allow the estimated 500,000 undocumented farm workers easier temporary legal status and a path to green cards is moving forward in Congress. The Agricultural Job Opportunity, Benefits and Security Act, or "AgJOBS Act," would allow workers to apply for temporary resident status after working 100 days in agricultural jobs since February 2001. Workers could also become permanent residents if they commit to 360 days of farm work in the six years ending August 31, 2009. The bill, which has bipartisan support in the House and Senate, is a version of a similar bill that had momentum two years ago, prior to being put on hold after September 11. The United Farm Workers union is encouraging supporters to contact their representatives and senators to urge passage of the bill. The bill is one of a number of immigration bills recently gaining support as the presidential election nears.

LA strikes for health care halt buses, trains

Two separate major Los Angeles unions—grocery workers and transit workers—went on strike in October. At *Clarion* press time, 70,000 workers represented by the United Food and Commercial Workers at three grocery chains, Albertsons, Ralph's and Vons, were in the second week of their strike for affordable health care after voting 97% for the strike.

Most customers are honoring the picket lines, according to press accounts. Meanwhile, the 2,000 bus mechanics represented by Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1277 went on strike on October 14. The strike was honored by drivers, supervisors and clerks for buses, subways and light rail lines, crippling transportation in the Los Angeles area. Private Teamster contract workers whom the MTA had hired to drive limited service buses also decided to strike. The MTA wants more control of the union's health benefit fund and wants workers to contribute more money.

Subway tunnels are dark as coal

West Virginia coal mines are better lit than NYC subway tunnels, according to a union delegation that went 1,000 feet down to investigate. A former Clinton administration Labor Department official said in a recent TWU-sponsored report that NYC subway lighting does not meet federal or State illumination standards. The union is pushing the lighting issue because 21 transit workers have died in the system in the past 20 years, 4 of them since 2001.

HIGHER ED IN BRIEF

Color-blind colleges in Iraq?

The Bush administration appointed John Agresto, a former Reagan administration official and outspoken affirmative action opponent, to oversee rebuilding higher education in Iraq. The former president of 900-student St. John's College in New Mexico will now oversee 18 universities, two dozen technical colleges and a number of two-year colleges in the Iraqi ministry of higher education. "This is of a magnitude greater than anything I've ever done," he told the Associated Press. When Agresto, deputy chairman of the NEH under Ronald Reagan, was nominated by Reagan to head the National Archives, 16 major scholarly groups opposed him, arguing that he was not qualified, and he was not appointed.

Academic visa reform

A number of academic and labor groups are pushing for reforms in immigration policy to allow international students and scholars to study and work freely in the U.S. Since September 11, many such students and scholars have faced difficulties due to visa restrictions, background checks and other security initiatives. The groups, including AAUP and the AFL-CIO, and graduate student labor unions at Brown, Columbia, Cornell, NYU, and University of California, are asking supporters to sign an online petition at www.visareform.net.

Pols and chickens and sheep, oh my!

The 2003 Ig Nobel Prize Awards were announced by the *Journal of Irreproducible Results*. John Trinkaus, professor emeritus at Baruch, won for documenting 80 annoyances and anomalies of daily life, from drivers who don't stop at stop signs to swimmers who swim only in the shallow end to – the most egregious of all – shoppers who exceed the number of items in the express line. A study of sheep-dragging concluded that they drag better down an incline than on a flat surface. Another winner: the self-explanatory "Chickens Prefer Beautiful Humans." An award was also given for research irrefutably proving that politicians have uniquely simple personalities.

Correction

A photo caption in the September *Clarion* made an error of omission. Marcia Newfield, pictured walking the strike picket line at Long Island University's Brooklyn campus, is not only the PSC vice president for part-time personnel. She is also an adjunct at LIU, and was on strike herself at the time.

CUNY enrollment up by 2.4%

By TOMIO GERON

Enrollment at CUNY is up this year for the fourth straight year, rising 2.4% from last year to 213,952.

While the enrollment increase was welcomed across the University, CUNY campuses are now more crowded than ever. The influx has sparked concerns over how packed classrooms and hallways affect both health and learning.

"It's great that more students are coming to CUNY," said PSC First Vice President Steve London. "We need to make sure that we have the resources to meet their needs. More students means we need more full-time faculty and more State support."

Enrollment at Bronx Community College grew 10%. "The numbers are definitely up, and a lot of classes had to be added at the last minute," said Marianne Pita, chair of the PSC chapter at BCC and assistant professor of ESL. "There are a lot of classes that are overcrowded."

Higher Education Officers at BCC said conditions at registration were worse than ever. "The staff is so busy addressing students' issues that phone calls cannot be adequately answered – either the students in line or the phone would be neglected," a group of HEOs stated in the BCC chapter newsletter. "The lines that form in an unventilated hallway in the August heat are unbearable."

UNPAID OVERTIME

With so much to do and so few staff to do it, many BCC HEOs put in 30 to 60 hours of unpaid overtime during the two weeks of registration.

At John Jay, enrollment is up 5% over last year. "We've been overcrowded for quite a while," PSC Chapter Chair James Cohen told *Clarion*. Concerns about the issue led faculty to press for lower limits on class size through the college's governance body last Spring (see September *Clarion*).

"We won an initial victory on class size, and we hope to keep making progress," Cohen said. "Even with the lower caps on class size, some recent physical improvements to the building and an increase in Friday classes, the fact is we're still far over our fire code capacity in North Hall. This building still has potential for loss of life during an emergency." The PSC's contract demands on health and safety would require CUNY to meet City and State fire safety rules (see page 3).

The number of students at City College is up by 6% this fall. "It's really stunning," said Vince Boudreau, chair of political science. "Virtually every class in our department is now filled to the gills, and we've enlarged the size of several. 'Intro to World Politics' used to be 25 students, but now it's over 40."

"The biggest problem at City – and this is probably true across

Concerns on overcrowding also rise



Students at BMCC, shown here, face crowded classes and hallways, especially since September 11.

CUNY – isn't recruitment but retention," Boudreau told *Clarion*. To make sure that students stay, he contends, CCNY needs both more full-time faculty lines and more resources for advisement. "A lot of students may come for two, three semesters and then drop off because the tuition is higher," he added. "So I'm doing fund-raising now among alumni, trying to get money for student scholarships. We need to keep these students around."

BMCC, already one of CUNY's most crowded campuses, saw its enrollment rise another 4%. "We now have over 19,000 students in one building, which was built for only 7,000 or 8,000," Lisa Rose, assistant professor of social science, told *Clarion*. "It causes so many air quality problems – the physical plant is really taxed." CUNY's own space standard calls for over a million square feet for this many students, but BMCC today has barely half of that.

"There are too many people in that building," said PSC Health and Safety Officer Joan Greenbaum, citing concern over the resulting air quality (see page 3). "It's a serious health and safety issue."

NEW SPACE

On September 11, 2001, BMCC lost 370,000 square feet of classroom space in a satellite building, Fiterman Hall, located across from the WTC site. On September 29, 2003, the CUNY Board of Trustees approved rental of 185,000 square feet of space for BMCC at 125 Park Place. The first 15 new classrooms might be ready as soon as Spring semester; the goal is to have 45 ready by next Fall.

"It's still only half the space we lost at Fiterman," said Bill Friedheim, the chapter's vice chair. "But clearly if we get these 45 classrooms, it's going to make a big difference."

Other campuses with large en-

rollment gains include Queensborough (up 8%) and College of Staten Island (up 6%). The rest had smaller increases or were essentially flat. City Tech went against the trend, with a 3% decrease. But even where enrollment did not shoot up this Fall, years of underfunding and past enrollment gains still leave these campuses struggling with overcrowded conditions. City Tech faculty have been pressing their college administration on the class size issue for well over a year.

LINES AT THE DOOR

With enrollment at the highest level University-wide since 1975, many are asking how student support staff can serve more students when there are already long lines waiting outside their doors.

Lehman College has four full-time and two part-time student advisors for over 8,000 students. "We're very busy at Lehman," said Marc Ward, a HEO in the Office of Academic Standards and Evaluation. "We've just really been backlogged with new students, especially transfers."

At CUNY's community colleges, some of these backlogs will be eased when new support positions are filled as part of the community college hiring program (see page 5). However, student support staff advise on academic rules and do not provide counseling. Of the community college faculty positions that CUNY advertised in September, none is a counseling line.

"We all know that so many of the challenges our students face reach way beyond the academic realm," said Anne Friedman, PSC vice president of community colleges and professor of developmental skills. "If there are no counselors being hired, to whom will these advisors refer our students?" In contract negotiations, the PSC has raised the stu-

dent-counselor ratio as a health and safety issue (see page 3).

CUNY management maintains that CUNY's enrollment increase shows that last summer's tuition hike has not priced anyone out of college. But the tuition increase was substantial: 25% (\$800) at senior colleges and 12% (\$300) at community colleges, much more for out-of-state and international students. Has it really had no effect?

Student advocates argue that the enrollment increase would have been bigger if not for the tuition hike. Last year CUNY enrollment grew twice as much, going up 5%. "Enrollment went up, but actually there are many students who have not returned to CUNY," said Shamsul Haque, chair of the University Student Senate.

The number of students leaving, Haque contends, has just been outweighed by the fact that "when the economy goes down, enrollment goes up." Economists say this is occurs in part because there are fewer attractive jobs, but also because in a tough job market more people decide that higher education can give them an edge.

Other observers note that the new "safety net" financial aid program for community college students has softened the impact of the tuition increase on CUNY's poorest students. This \$4.5 million need-based program was developed by the PSC and sympathetic City Council members during budget negotiations this summer, based on the union's extensive research.

Council Member Charles Barron, who helped push through the scholarship, said that there is money for roughly 16,000 students. He cautioned that the Council's vote in favor of the scholarship does not constitute an approval of the tuition increase. "We're still adamantly opposed to the tuition hike," said Barron. "We believe it needs to be repealed."

"I think [the tuition increase] most affected international students," said Olga Murphy, a HEO who works in financial aid at Hostos. "You're planning to spend about \$5,000 a year, but now it's \$10,000. It's a big difference."

"Students on foreign visas are having problems," confirmed Marc Ward of Lehman. "I've met a couple who concluded that they couldn't come to school. When they saw what the bill was, they just couldn't do it. Others didn't know if they were going to cut back on classes or not come at all."

CUNY has not yet released data on the current number of international students, nor on the race and ethnicity of the current student body.

Retention, not recruitment, is seen as the problem.

New community college hires

By TOMIO GERON

450 new positions promised

In one of the largest hiring initiatives in recent years, CUNY community colleges plan to hire about 450 people, including 300 faculty.

This will raise the percentage of instruction by full-time faculty from 40% to about 55% at the community colleges, according to CUNY central administration.

The hiring plan, funded by last summer's tuition increase, includes 64 faculty at BMCC, 53 at Kingsborough, 41 at LaGuardia, 37 at Queensborough, 28 at Bronx and 17 at Hostos. Another 60 faculty positions will go to "cluster lines" – new positions in fields that the CUNY Master Plan has targeted for expansion, such as computer science or teacher education.

Non-teaching positions include a total of 20 College Lab Technicians, plus a mix of Higher Education Officers and classified staff in libraries, student support and academic support. There is also funding for new equipment and library acquisitions.

TUITION INCREASE

"The hiring is a good thing," said PSC Secretary Cecelia McCall. "It's badly needed. But it's unfortunate that the only way CUNY seems to be able to get the money is by handing

the bill to some of the poorest students in America." More full-time lines are needed at both senior and community colleges, McCall said, and it would be a mistake to fund them through tuition as well.

CUNY's community colleges have already hired over 140 people on a substitute basis, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Louis Mirrer testified at a September hearing of the City Council's Higher Education Committee. They will serve this Fall while the hiring process moves forward.

There are also many new faces at CUNY's senior colleges. Nearly 300 new full-time faculty members began working at CUNY's four-year schools this Fall, according to Mirrer, and new staff have begun work as well. However, these positions are not necessarily new hires, noted PSC First Vice President Steve London. Many are replacing the 300 faculty and 125 HEOs and CLTs across CUNY who took last year's Early Retirement Incentive (ERI).

At College of Staten Island, "most of [the new hires] are replacing retired faculty so there is no great increase," cautioned Vasilios Petratos, PSC chapter chair.

Nonetheless, faculty at CUNY senior colleges have been excited to see many new colleagues on campus. "I believe that this is the greatest number of new full-time faculty we have had in over 20 years," said Janice Cline, PSC chapter chair at York College. "The people I've had the privilege to meet are vibrant young faculty who have a lot to offer to CUNY and York. I'm very excited about it."

There are about 23 new full-time faculty at York, and Cline's department, English, has two new full-timers. "I wouldn't call it a big relief, but it'll help," she said. "It's already making a difference."

PSC chapters are busy signing up new union members, with large turnouts at many new member orientations. "We want everybody to join," said Petratos. "I contacted them personally and by e-mail."

When the ERI was announced, 80th Street at first put a freeze on replacing retiring HEOs or CLTs, a policy that has since been relaxed. "It looks like in critical situations they are replacing CLTs," said CLT Chapter Chair Shelly Mendingler, though not necessarily at the same title. So you may have someone doing the same job as a Chief CLT, but not getting the same pay."



Urmi Ghosh-Dastidar, a new faculty member at NYC Tech, signs a union card.

"They are doing some hiring of HEOs," HEO Chapter Chair Jean Weisman said. "But it doesn't appear that they are replacing everyone who retired. We lost 14 HEOs at City, and they have certainly not all been replaced."

LIBERAL ARTS

A key goal of the faculty hiring at the community colleges, 80th Street has declared, is "building capacity in those academic departments...that are essential to supporting the liberal arts" – and this is borne out by the broad range of disciplines in which hiring is taking place. Some faculty, however, have voiced concerns about the lack of hiring in counseling and basic skills positions.

"New faculty lines advertised at the community colleges include no faculty counselor tenure-track positions," said Anne Friedman, PSC

vice president for community colleges. "All other counseling positions are for Academic Advisors on non-faculty lines."

These advisors will only be able to refer students to counseling, said Friedman. Most counselors face a heavy workload and have difficulty reaching all students who need assistance. At BMCC, she notes for example, there are only 11 counselors for 18,000 students.

Similarly, no basic skills faculty are being hired. These positions, held by experts in developmental psychology, linguistics and ESL, are crucial to students' success in college, said Friedman. "I am greatly concerned that there might be an effort under way to eliminate basic skills departments at the community colleges and to either camouflage – or, worse still, eliminate – key foundational courses."

Affirmative action concerns

Affirmative action at CUNY will be an issue this year, as the community colleges hire 300 new faculty.

CUNY students are about two-thirds people of color, compared to just one-quarter of faculty (about 12% African American, 4% Hispanic and 7% Asian American), according to 2002 data. Most full-time CUNY faculty are men (58%) and the gender disparity is even more pronounced at the full professor level, which is 68% male.

HEOs AND CLTs

The numbers are different for non-teaching instructional staff. About half of HEOs are women and about half are people of color. A minority of CLTs are white, while two-thirds of them are male. Both HEOs and CLTs tend to earn less than faculty.

"Affirmative action is an important issue for the PSC," said PSC Treasurer John Hyland. "From educational and labor perspectives, CUNY and the PSC need the knowledge and experience of people of color and women, and all groups that have been historically discriminated against."

At a City Council hearing in late September, Vice Chancellor Brenda

Malone said that CUNY kicked off the new faculty hiring with large national advertisements to ensure that it has the largest possible pool of candidates of color. "We're doing it as a University, to make sure the word gets out there," said Malone, adding that CUNY is committed to its affirmative action guidelines.

Some are pressing for CUNY to do more. "The problem with CUNY's affirmative action plan is that, other than the ads, it does nothing to really make up for past discrimination," said Samuel Farrell, a professor at LaGuardia Community College and PSC Diversity Committee chair.

"For example, here at LaGuardia we have certain departments that have had very few people of color for as long as they have existed," said Farrell. "And the affirmative action plan has no effect on the composition of those departments."

Twenty years ago a judge ordered the University to pay \$7.5 million for discriminating against women. "It's disappointing that, despite losing the federal court case, CUNY has not made more progress in hiring women and minorities at the higher ranks," Lilia Melani, a Brooklyn College professor and lead

plaintiff in the class action lawsuit, told *Clarion*.

SEARCH COMMITTEES

Farrell offered two suggestions to help in the faculty searches this year: participation of people of color on each search committee, and providing additional funds to improve hiring offers to faculty who would improve CUNY's diversity. The PSC's budget proposals for CUNY include a \$2 million Diversity Fund for this purpose.

McCall said that it is difficult to ascertain the effectiveness of CUNY's affirmative action plan until it yields tangible results. "The only way to make a judgment is if there are results," she said. "Otherwise it's just going thorough the motions."

In the current contract negotiations, the PSC made one of its top demands the formation of a labor-management committee to address affirmative action on race, ethnicity and gender. The union sought early agreement on the issue in one of the first bargaining sessions, in the hopes of setting up such a committee before the current hiring is finalized. However, CUNY rejected this idea.

–TG

Adjuncts & new jobs

As CUNY community colleges begin to hire about 300 new full-time faculty, there is intense interest in the jobs among the approximately 8,600 part-time faculty members.

"We'd urge that adjuncts be strongly considered for full-time positions, particularly those who have served for a long time," said Marcia Newfield, PSC vice president for part-time personnel. "They've been maintaining the integrity of CUNY – despite their low wages and inadequate working conditions – because of their love for their subjects and commitment to CUNY."

Because they got their Ph.D.s during an academic job drought, they should not be denied an opportunity simply because they are older than other applicants, she said.

"When I finished my Ph.D. in 1999 it was looking very bleak because there were no jobs," said Thalia Vrachopoulos, now a full-time assistant

professor of art at John Jay. "So I kept working as an adjunct. I know brilliant people who are still working as adjuncts like I was, lecturing at the Met or MOMA on top of teaching at three or four different colleges."

"Many adjuncts have proven themselves as not only effective but even distinguished and committed instructors of CUNY students," said John Pittman, former chair of Vrachopoulos's department, "and that should rightly be considered one of the crucial considerations in the hiring of full-timers." He added that this has been widely accepted on the search committees on which he has served.

The PSC is holding an October 31 forum for adjuncts seeking to apply for the positions (see page 2), to provide information on how the hiring process works. A list of the full-time posts is on the PSC Web site at www.psc-cuny.org/cchires.htm.

–TG

The PSC/CUNY Federal Credit Union

Nonprofit = a better deal for your money

By **DAVID HATCHETT**
Medgar Evers

The PSC/CUNY Federal Credit Union has come to the aid of literally thousands of faculty and staff in its 24 years of existence, says Zuzana Kelly, its manager: "People come back to us and say things like, 'You saved us. With that education loan, I could pay my child's tuition.'"

It makes no sense for people to do their banking with a for-profit financial institution when they can get better rates and better services from a nonprofit credit union, Kelly contends.

NO FEE

"You can open a savings account for \$25," Kelly says. "We only ask you for \$100 to open a checking account. There is no fee, and the first 150 checks are free." Overdraft protection is available with no extra charges. Once you apply for it, if you do bounce a check all you must pay is interest on the overdraft amount.

Credit union members are given debit cards, compatible with STAR, Cirrus and other ATM systems, so they can access their money anywhere, at any time. And if you join the PSC credit union, you can maintain your accounts even if you switch jobs, move or retire. "Once a member, always a member," Kelly says.

PSC credit union loans have lower interest rates than loans from most private financial institutions, and it is often easier for members to get them. The reason is that credit unions put more weight on a loan ap-

plicant's "character." In deciding to extend a loan, they can take into consideration that a person's credit rating may have suffered through no fault of their own – for example, if they fell behind on bills after a layoff.

Many of the larger private banks will not make certain types of loans, such as a personal loan for tuition or a car loan, Kelly says. They feel that these loans are too much trouble and yield too little profit. But such loans are a specialty of the PSC/CUNY Federal Credit Union.

"The fact that we are nonprofit is a key reason that we can provide better rates and more user-friendly services," Kelly explains. Credit unions have no stockholders to whom dividends must be paid. Instead, they are accountable only to their members. Credit unions are democratically run, with a volunteer board of directors elected by the members. Accounts are federally insured for up to \$100,000, and no member of a federally insured credit union has ever lost money because it went under.

CLOSER, MORE PERSONAL

Before the PSC credit union was formed, PSC members had access to the Municipal Credit Union (MCU). But "those were the days before cash machines," recalls Howard Jones, one of the original members of the credit union's board of directors and later its president. Jones says that PSC members often had to wait in long lines at the MCU and felt they would benefit from a "closer, more personal" facility situated

in union headquarters.

The PSC initially invested \$100,000 in the credit union to get it started. At the time the maximum loan it could extend was \$500, says Jones. Now it makes personal loans as large as \$30,000, and has grown to over 4,000 members. Its assets have increased from \$306,000 in 1980 to over \$30 million today.

A key goal of the credit union today, Kelly tells *Clarion*, is to strengthen its relationship with CUNY's adjunct population. Few of its members are part-time faculty, Kelly says, despite the fact that they are the majority of instructors in the CUNY system. "Adjuncts are some of the

people who could benefit the most from being credit union members," Kelly says. "If you don't make as much money, the financial advantages of joining could be especially helpful."

Kelly says the credit union would like to invite adjuncts not only to become members, but also to consider becoming active on one of the credit union's committees. "Our committees are very important in deciding what services we should offer, based on what's most important to our members," Kelly says. "And adjuncts will have the best ideas about what adjuncts need."

For more information on the PSC/CUNY Federal Credit Union, see www.pscunyfcu.org on the Web, call 212-354-2238 – or stop by the office, at 25 W. 43rd Street in Manhattan (Monday to Friday, 10 am to 3:00 pm).

The Credit Union can provide user-friendly services.

Credit union history

Credit unions are financial co-operatives, and their origins lie in the co-operative movement of the mid-nineteenth century.

After crop failures led to widespread hunger in Germany in 1846, Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch worked with farmers to found a cooperative mill and bakery, which sold bread to its members at low prices. Schulze-Delitzsch soon moved to apply co-operative principles to the financial sphere. Around 1850 he launched the first "people's bank," which gave its members access to credit on favorable terms.

The first credit union in North America was La Caisse Populaire in Levis, Quebec, organized in 1900 by a court reporter named Alphonse Desjardins. Desjardins had seen too

many court cases involving loan sharks and was deeply concerned at how workers' lack of access to credit left them open to exploitation

At turn of the century, workers in Massachusetts were forming unauthorized savings and loan



groups to meet their credit needs. In response to this grassroots trend, Massachusetts Banking Commissioner Pierre Jay wrote to Desjardins to ask about the Quebec

The work th

By **TOMIO GERON**

October 27-31 is *Campus Equity Week*, an international event highlighting the challenges faced by part-time faculty. (See p. 2 for schedule.) Adjuncts in the PSC have made some recent gains, such as the new paid office hour for many part-timers in the current union contract. But fundamental inequities remain – on job security and academic freedom; health benefits, sick leave and disability; equal pay; and more.

"CUNY could not function without the talent and experience of its adjunct faculty members, yet management refuses to treat them equitably," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "Management pays adjuncts less, stunts their benefits and denies them job security – and then uses this to undercut conditions for everyone. The result is that, until recently, a shrinking pool of full-time faculty saw workloads escalate and real wages decline. We've begun to turn that around, but the fight has to begin again with this contract. The key is seeing our common cause."

"The PSC is demanding fair pay and benefits for adjuncts in our contract negotiations," said Marcia Newfield, PSC vice president for part-time personnel. "We're demanding job security, seniority, due process rights and support for professional development. It's time for CUNY to show respect for the work we do."

In this issue *Clarion* looks at a small number of the many CUNY part-time faculty on whose labor the University depends.

YOUNGMIN SEO

Youngmin Seo, who teaches 3 to 4 courses per semester, says that his teaching load comes with a few small perks – like the potluck food festival he'll have in November with his cultural anthropology class at LaGuardia Community College.

"Thanksgiving is all about sharing, having dinner with friends, family or even strangers. The first time I did this, two years ago, I expected them to bring some small dishes – but instead they brought huge big ones," he says, laughing. Seo likes the potato dishes from Poland, the sushi and tempura from Japan and the Dominican beet salad.

The event is a way for students to learn about other cultures, up close and hands-on. Students are delighted to have Seo as their teacher: LaGuardia's Student Government selected him for the Professor of the Year Award in 2001. He also teaches Urban Anthropology and Introduction to Sociology at LaGuardia, and a medical anthropology class at Lehman.

In addition to being a star teacher, Seo is also an active scholar. He is currently completing his dissertation at the Graduate Center on street peddler and housing movements in South Korea in the mid-1990s.

"The organizing by the street peddlers and people who lost their homes because of redevelopment projects, that was truly resistance from below," he says. "My interest lies always in poverty and peoples' way of life – obviously as a scholar, not an activist. We have limited power to do something meaningful, but we can be a voice with them."

But Seo's modesty about the practical effects of his scholarship is belied by his current project, a study of Korean dry cleaners in New York City. While researching this small-business industry, he put together a



Youngmin Seo

conference at LaGuardia in May for the merchants to learn about impending changes in State environmental laws. What they learned will contribute both to their businesses and to a cleaner environment.

MONICA SHIE

Monica Shie's students at BMCC learn quickly. "It's extremely rewarding because it is a language immersion program, so their improvement happens very quickly," she said. "For them it's very surprising and also sometimes very emotional."

In her third year as a Continuing Education Teacher in the CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP), Shie teaches academic reading and writing, listening and speaking to the students through use of a different theme each semester. This term's theme is war through the twentieth century.

"Students are very interested because they hear about Iraq, Israel and Palestine and they don't know about the sources of these conflicts," Shie says. It's a topic that motivates students to learn how to express themselves precisely in their new language, and the five-hour per day

at adjuncts do

From nuclear medicine to the vibraphone



Tomio Geron

Monica Shie

class allows for intense discussions.

"One girl wrote in her essay that they – Muslims, Arabs – teach their kids to hate Americans," she recalls. "This came up in class and I turned to one Muslim student who's very nice and asked him, 'Do you teach your kids to hate Americans?' Everybody laughed. I think it was the first time she connected a statement like that to a human being."

Shie's career as an ESL teacher has its roots in her stint as a Peace Corps volunteer in Thailand, which sparked a long-standing interest in Southeast Asia.

After coming back to New York, she got a master's degree at Teachers College, then taught ESL and helped develop ESL programs in the NYC public schools. She then got a U.S. government grant to work as an English teaching fellow at Cambodia's Royal University of Phnom Penh, and helped to develop the English program there.

ROB WALLACE

Biologist Rob Wallace does research on the ecology and evolution of HIV. With Ramona Hernández, director of the City College Dominican Studies Institute, he is involved in a public health study comparing the strains of HIV in the Dominican

Republic with those in the Dominican community in New York City. Their research examines how transnational migration affects the epidemic in the two areas.

"When Dominicans move to New York City, they typically live in neighborhoods where people from their hometowns have settled," Wallace notes. "In a way, we're trying to see if HIV does the same thing."

Wallace, who finished his Ph.D. in biology at the Graduate Center last year, studied in its Ecology, Evolutionary Biology and Behavior program. As part of his thesis research, he analyzed the incidence of HIV cases in Manhattan and the Bronx from 1993 to 1998, and how HIV evolves in response to combination drug therapies.

Wallace started working at CUNY in 1996. Today he is an adjunct fac-

ing mental cognition, the immune system, even our sense of smell."

His current course at CWE, on environmental imperialism, looks at topics such as global warming, the politics of oil and HIV.

"We grapple with how humans got to the point of affecting the very geology of the planet," he said. "That involves coming to grips with the history of humans and the politics involved in environmental choices." Last semester he taught a course on HIV and the global city; next semester's class is on the ecology of infectious disease.

"[The students] are fantastic in bringing their life experience into the course," he says. "In the HIV course there were some students who were HIV counselors. They had more experience on some aspects of this subject than I ever will."



Tomio Geron

Wilson Moorman

ulty member at the CCNY Center for Worker Education (CWE), where his classes often link science to an analysis of society.

"I'm interested in the ways culture shapes things that we often imagine as strictly biological," Wallace says. "Culture has been shown to have fundamental roles in mold-

WILSON MOORMAN

Working as a professional musician means stringing together one gig after another, and Wilson Moorman says so far it's been an interesting journey.

A jazz and classical percussionist, Moorman has played for Broadway musicals, performed with the Santa Fe Opera and the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and worked with stars ranging from Marvin Gaye to Tom Jones. He has taught music to young people with the Jazzmobile Workshop, now at PS 197 in Harlem, for over 20 years. Today he is part of the Symphony of the New World in Staten Island, the Harlem Festival Orchestra, the Richmond County Orchestra – and CUNY.

City University is a good gig, says Moorman; he has taught here since 1991. "CUNY at this point is so multicultural there's nothing like it," he says with a smile. "It's so refreshing to work with such diversity." Moorman teaches music theory, introduction to music and elementary percussion, and has also taught Caribbean, African and African American music. Currently at BMCC, he has also worked at LaGuardia, Medgar Evers, York and John Jay.

Moorman, who plays the drums, tympani, vibraphone and African drums, finds teaching helpful for his performance as well. "Teaching is very good therapy," he explains. "A lot of what a performer does is very subconscious, but when I have to break it down for someone else, it makes me more aware of what I'm doing while I'm performing."

In October, Moorman performed at BMCC with his wife, Joyce Solomon Moorman. Now a full-time assistant professor in the BMCC art and music department, Joyce is a



Lisa Quiñones

Sherman Heller

composer who was previously an adjunct at LaGuardia and City Tech.

ANN DAVISON

Ann Davison has been an adjunct at Queens for 18 years, and she has responsibilities that go beyond her particular class.

Davison is the project coordinator for Queens College's Freshman Year Initiative (FYI), which groups first-year students into "learning communities" of 40 students each. Each group takes two classes together plus a writing class; all three courses are linked by a common theme.

"The point of the program is that it offers them an experience of community that's both social and academic, and that's hard to come by on a commuter campus," Davison says.

This semester, Davison is teaching a writing class that shares a focus on ancient Greece with FYI courses in history and philosophy. "We're going to have a common event where we bring all the students together for a classics work-



Tomio Geron

Ann Davison

shop, with students performing the Greek texts," she said. "We've invited other faculty – including the provost, who happens to be Greek – to read from the original ancient Greek. It's great fun."

In a previous year her writing students focused on the design of Central Park, a topic they also explored in courses on environmental science and urban studies. As coordinator of FYI, Davison works with students who have finished the program to act as liaisons with each learning community. "The students are endlessly interesting," she says. "There's such a range of diversity, and in more ways than just the obvious fact of being from every conceivable continent. They're also diverse in their preparation and

goals for college, in their sense of themselves and the way they see their place in the community and the city."

Davison is also active in her union chapter. An elected PSC delegate, she is a member of the union's working committee on academic freedom – an issue, she says, that's particularly crucial to adjuncts because of their lack of job security.

SHERMAN HELLER

Sherman Heller directs Bronx Community College's Nuclear Medicine Technology Program. The program, which operates at Montefiore Medical Center, graduates students who are expert in the technical applications of nuclear medicine. Different from radiology, nuclear medicine often involves analyzing a patient who has been injected with a radioactive isotope. The program is completely taught by adjuncts.

Students may go on to work for a nuclear medical company, at a hospital or in research. The popular program, which starts each January, is already filled for 2004 and is two-thirds full for 2005. Because of this popularity, it may expand from the current 15 students per year.

"I think it's a great program for students and for teachers who like to teach," says Heller, an adjunct professor in the Physics and Technology Department at BCC. He has been involved with the program since 1985 and its director since 1992.

The program plans to expand its curriculum to include new technology. "New instrumentation is expanding the need for nuclear medical technologists. There's computerized tomography, which is an X-ray procedure," he said, "and positron emission tomography, or PET, a new very, very popular area. We're expanding to take advantage of that, to allow our students to become certified in these new areas." In addition to coordinating the program, Heller teaches parts of various classes.

Heller got his Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin. Today, he runs the BCC program, does clinical work, such as thyroid therapy, and serves as Montefiore's radiation safety officer. In the last post he's responsible for everything from equipment training to radiation badges, and also chairs the hospital's overall safety committee. "It's a full-time job in and of itself," he said.



Tomio Geron

Robert Wallace

How are you using your research time?

Roving Reporter asks new faculty how they're using the union contract's 12 hours of reassigned time



THALIA VRACHOPOULOS
Assistant Professor of Art
John Jay College

My co-author Dr. John Angeline and I received a contract to write a book about Hilla Rebay, founder of the Guggenheim Museum. An accomplished German artist, she advised and bought art for Solomon R. Guggenheim, whom she taught about European modernism. When she met him in 1927 while painting his portrait, she convinced him to fund abstract art purchases and later to build the museum. The documents prove that she not only founded the museum but also directed it and was its curator, seeing to its many needs with an infinitesimal staff. Rebay has not been afforded the credit she deserves.



CHITRA RAGHAVAN
Assistant Professor of Psychology
John Jay College

I'm interested in risk factors that increase rates of male-to-female domestic violence. Some are more linked to the individual – drinking, for example. Others, like living in an awful neighborhood, are societal. I want to know how these factors interact to make it more likely that women will be hit by their partners. It's exciting to be at CUNY because there's such a diverse student population. I encourage students to work with me on my projects – for instance, on a study I'm developing on dating violence among John Jay students. I'm really glad the PSC negotiated for this release time. I couldn't do my research without it.



ENRIQUE DESMOND ARIAS
Assistant Professor of Government
John Jay College

When the mainstream media discuss the shantytowns of Rio de Janeiro, they make it seem that drug traffickers have created a parallel state where the police have no control. But I ask this question: How can one of the most disempowered groups in the city, non-white men between 15 and 25 with no primary school education, pose such a persistent threat to public security? The answer: these drug traffickers are linked with police officials, politicians and civic leaders. My dissertation was about how these connections operate to the mutual benefit of both sides. I'm now expanding it into a book.



NICHOLE McDANIEL
Assistant Professor of Biology
Bronx Community College

I'll be using the release time to continue research that I began as a post-doc. I have a grant from the USDA to study a fish intestinal protein that absorbs phosphate from food. Fish must consume phosphate in order to grow, but they are not efficient at absorbing it, so most of it is excreted. Downstream of fish farms, this is particularly problematic because the excess phosphate causes algae to grow rapidly, then die. This depletes oxygen and causes the native wildlife to suffocate and die. A better understanding of the regulation of this transporter may help to protect aquatic wildlife.



CHARLES MALITI
Assistant Professor of Biology
Bronx Community College

Sixty percent of the world's population eats rice, so it's very important to improve rice production methods. My current research looks at a strain of bacteria that appears to stimulate growth of rice plants. Right now I'm examining how these bacteria work at the cellular level. I'm also looking at how it interacts with rice seedlings. In the long term, the study may help to develop a substitute for chemical fertilizers and could also improve crop yields.

By ELLEN BALLEISEN

VA can help with assisted-living costs

By HUMBERTO CRUZ & DIANE LADE

The Veterans Administration will pay for long-term care besides a nursing home?

Florida attorney Alice Reiter Feld, board certified as an elder-law specialist, was a little skeptical when one of her senior clients insisted that her husband's assisted-living bill was being partly paid through his veteran's benefits. So Feld decided to check it out and discovered yes, it indeed is true.

Under a little-known provision called Aid and Attendance, the VA provides an extra benefit for many frail or disabled veterans that's enough to cover about half the tab for an assisted-living facility or a home health aide. And no, you don't need to be impoverished to qualify.

FINANCIAL PAYOFF

"It's a nice benefit and most people don't know about it," Feld said. Even many VA staffers are unaware of Aid and Attendance, so getting signed up for it may take some persistence. But the financial payoff can be great.

Little-known benefit

The program is available to qualified veterans who require the "aid and attendance" (hence the name) of another person to "avoid the haz-

YOUR BENEFITS

ards of his or her daily life," according to Feld. Those eligible could receive a maximum of \$1,328 a month, or \$1,575 a month with one dependent, payable directly to the veteran. A veteran's surviving spouse could receive up to \$853 a month, as long as they were married at least one year prior to the veteran's death.

To be eligible, veterans must have served 90 days or more of active duty, with at least one day in wartime, and have been honorably discharged.

Veterans must be certified as permanently and totally disabled, although the condition does not have to be service-related. The VA usually accepts a letter from a personal doctor, Feld said, that states "the

person has an incapacity that requires care or assistance on a regular basis" to protect them from "the hazards or dangers" of their daily environment.

Those already residing in assisted-living facilities usually are automatically presumed eligible.

As with Medicaid, the VA then looks at two different economic factors to determine eligibility: applicant's net worth and income. But the requirements can be more lenient than with Medicaid.

For starters, a couple can have up to \$80,000 in assets, excluding their residential home, and apply for Aid and Attendance, according to the Broward County Division of Elderly and Veterans' Services. The allowable amount for a single person fluctuates according to insurance actuarial tables: it used to be around \$25,000 but apparently has been raised. (There is no fixed amount.)

Medicaid allows the applicant only \$2,000 in assets, excluding the

home, although the well spouse can have \$89,280.

Another big advantage over Medicaid: a veteran can become eligible for Aid and Attendance by transferring assets to other family members as little as one day before making an application. Medicaid has a three- to five-year "look-back" period for most assets, meaning transfers must have occurred years before.

On the income side, the threshold is set lower than for Medicaid (\$1,533 for a couple, \$1,328 if single). But unlike Medicaid, veterans can deduct non-reimbursed medical costs, such

as prescription drug costs or payments for a home health aide, from their income in order to qualify.

Veterans must also be under the VA's overall income limits, which vary according to where you live. Funding of veterans' benefits continue to be cut, and the VA has been making qualifying for health benefits harder. If your income is over a certain level, you may be assigned to "Priority 8," which makes you ineligible for all VA health benefits.

Because Aid and Attendance is so little known, even inside the VA, many vets who do meet all the criteria may at first be told there is no such benefit. Just try again; the next person you speak with may well be better informed. PSC members who have persistent difficulty signing up for Aid and Attendance can get help from NYSUT Social Services, at 800-342-9810, x6206.

PAPERWORK

Interested veterans and their families should bring paperwork showing dates of military service, their medical records and proof of honorable discharge to their local VA office to apply. Approval can take from four to six months, but payments will be retroactive to the first day of the month that follows the month of the application. For example, if you apply on July 28, your payments would be retroactive to August 1 even if the VA doesn't approve you until November 1.

This is an edited version of an article published July 22 in the South Florida Sun-Sentinel.

Labor rights in Iraq

By PETER HOGNESS

Occupation authorities in Iraq have used a law enacted by Saddam Hussein to ban unions in Iraq's public sector, according to an internal memo from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the world's largest trade union organization.

US officials with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) have indicated that "they would only countenance organization in the private sector," the ICFTU's August 26 memo states. "Workers in the public sector would not be allowed to unionize."

A group of Iraqi unionists "who tried to organize in the public enterprises were evicted by application of the law of 1987," the memo adds, citing a representative of the UN's International Labor Organization (ILO) who was in Iraq in early August. This Hussein-era legislation banned all public unions, prohibited independent unions and virtually outlawed strikes.

FACTORY ELECTIONS

In some Iraqi enterprises – for instance, at the oil refinery in Basra – workers have demanded the right to elect their managers, to replace departed Baath Party officials who previously ran the show. "Unable to speak their minds for decades under Hussein's regime, workers in industries such as oil want to use their newfound freedom to pick their bosses," Bloomberg financial news

Union efforts are blocked

reported in May. But the CPA has said this cannot be allowed.

According to National Public Radio (NPR), "Paul Bremer, the head of the US-led administration, has banned these factory elections." In June, NPR described efforts by workers at a Baghdad cigarette factory to vote for a new manager and a new director general. At Iraqi Airways, employees were angered by a notice from current management and US advisors to the Transport Ministry prohibiting such elections, according to the *Boston Globe*.

Workers voting on managers is apparently not the kind of democracy that the US government has in mind for Iraq. It would certainly be in direct conflict with Bush administration privatization plans. *The Wall Street Journal* reported in May that officials of the US Agency for International Development and the Treasury Department have developed plans for a "mass privatization program" that would "remake Iraq's economy in the US image." According to the August ICFTU memo, "138 of 600 state-owned enterprises have been offered for privatization."

Nor will attempts to form private sector unions get a warm welcome from occupation officials. The ILO's representative found that "the US authorities were focused on privatization and they did not wish to be engaged with the ILO on issues related

to unions and trade union rights," the ICFTU memo states. "They were not interested in promoting social dialog or the emergence of an independent trade union movement."

CORPORATE INVASION

A study of 18 US corporations that have been awarded contracts for reconstruction work in Iraq – many without competitive bidding – finds that they are mainly non-union and in many cases aggressively anti-labor. "The Corporate Invasion of Iraq," prepared by US Labor Against the War, profiles such firms as the construction giant Bechtel, scandal-tarred MCI/Worldcom and Halliburton, the petroleum services company formerly headed by Vice President Dick Cheney. It uncovers past scan-

dals of some lesser-known firms, such as violent strikebreaking by Fluor Corporation in apartheid South Africa in a labor dispute that left several workers dead.

"Consistent with their anti-labor records...we expect that some US corporations now operating in Iraq are likely to violate the labor rights of Iraqi workers," the report concludes. (Full text available online at www.uslaboragainstar.org.)

While there have been some nascent union organizing efforts in post-Hussein Iraq, their scope has been limited because most Iraqis are unemployed. The left-wing Union of the Unemployed in Iraq (UII) has organized a series of demonstrations to demand that the CPA provide either work or \$3 a day in unemployment benefits. Many of the UII's protests have been held outside CPA headquarters in Baghdad, including

a 48-day "sit-in" – a tent encampment across the street from the CPA's gates that began on July 29. The action kept going despite 120-degree heat and the arrest of over 50 participants in early August. Those detained were released after 24 hours, after UN officials intervened.

UNEMPLOYED UNREST

On October 1, Iraqi police opened fire on a Baghdad demonstration reportedly organized by the UII. The crowd was protesting corruption in hiring by police: several participants said they had paid as much as \$100 to have their names added to a hiring list, but never got jobs. Protesters set fire to two cars, and at least one demonstrator was wounded. On the same day in Mosul, police fired in the air to disperse a march of hundreds of unemployed workers, but no injuries were reported.

In September the World Bank urged Bremer to slow the pace of privatization plans, out of concern that a quick sell-off of state firms would aggravate Iraq's unemployment crisis, and World Bank officials told the *Boston Globe* that Bremer had agreed.

On September 23, ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder and AFL-CIO officials met with US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage to express concern over the situation of Iraqi workers. (The AFL-CIO is one of the ICFTU's 225 affiliates.) Ryder said that labor rights "have been marginalized in the work of the CPA and that decent work remains a distant prospect for the great majority of the Iraqi people," and announced that the ICFTU would soon send a delegation to Iraq. USLAW representatives visited Iraq with an international labor delegation in October; their report will be available at www.uslaboragainstar.org.



US troops disperse unemployed Iraqis demonstrating for jobs in Mosul.

Social Choice tops in long-term returns

By CLARION STAFF

By several measures, the TIAA-CREF Social Choice Account is showing the best long-term returns among CREF options that invest in the stock market. As of the middle of this year (6/30/03), it had the best returns over the previous one, five or ten years – and it was the only one with positive returns every time:

	Returns		
	1 year	5 year	10 year
Social Choice	6.3 %	2.4 %	9.0 %
Stock	-0.2 %	-1.9 %	8.3 %
Global Equities	-3.4 %	-4.1 %	6.4 %
Equity Index	0.4 %	-1.3 %	*
Growth	2.0 %	-6.3 %	*

*[founded 4/94]

Much of Social Choice's performance is attributable to its being a "balanced fund," investing in bonds and the money market as well as stocks, in a period when bonds often outperformed the stock mar-

Activists push for new fund

ket. But compared with bonds, the Social Choice Account was still a long-term winner: in the ten years prior to 6/30/03 it outperformed the CREF Bond Market Account, earning 9% compared with the bond account's 7%.

Social Choice does not have the best performance in every time period. Since the start of this year its returns have lagged behind the other four TIAA-CREF accounts that invest in the stock market, and as of 9/30/03 it was in last place for the previous year. But it still posted a one-year gain of 17.9%, and remained in first place over five and ten years.

Maximum investment return is, of course, not the only reason why those in TIAA-CREF may choose the Social Choice account. "I don't want to just 'do well' with my investments, but to 'do good' for society as well," said Paul Sheridan, a CLT in

the Art Department at Brooklyn College. "I would be willing to take a few points lower – but it's nice to see that I may not have to."

Some experts say that the criteria used in social investment can contribute to long-term financial gains in several ways. "One clear example is liability issues, such as those faced by the tobacco industry," said Michael Lent of the New York office of Progressive Asset Management, a socially conscious investment firm not affiliated with TIAA-CREF. "Another factor is workplace conditions, since good conditions generally mean higher productivity."

LOBBYING

In the 1980s, a national group of professors and staff, including many from CUNY, lobbied TIAA-CREF for

five years before it set up a socially responsible account. Its criteria include avoiding companies that earn money from tobacco products, military weapons, or electricity generation from nuclear power.

Social investment can contribute to long-term financial gain.

"Now we've been lobbying again for a fund that would not only avoid certain companies, but would invest in particularly responsible ones," said Sheridan. This approach, known as "positive screening," is becoming common in socially responsible investing, Sheridan said. Proposed criteria include companies that build affordable housing in low-income areas, those developing new environmentally responsible products such as solar power, or those who insist that suppliers comply with strict codes of conduct on human rights.

TIAA-CREF's CEO has publicly stated that he would support setting

up such a new option, but said he first wants to see a commitment from participants to transfer some of their current TIAA-CREF assets to the new account. As of October, over \$17 million had been pledged. "But we have a long way to go to reach the \$25 million target set by TIAA-CREF," noted Sheridan, urging participants to visit www.manchester.edu/links/socialchoiceforso to find out how to pledge.

WORLD BANK

TIAA-CREF recently dropped World Bank bonds from its portfolio, after a number of US unions (including the PSC) and community groups called for a boycott to protest World Bank policies that they called environmentally and socially destructive.

Academics and activists will press social justice issues at the CREF annual meeting here in New York on November 13. There will be a 9 am rally outside TIAA-CREF headquarters at 730 Third Avenue (at 47th St.). At 10 am shareholders who retain their proxies can attend the meeting. More information is available at www.maketiaa-crefethical.org.

TUITION REMISSION

A great plan or a shell game?

By **ARTHUR REBER**
Brooklyn College and Grad Center

Before the PSC gets too carried away celebrating the new tuition remission plan, there are a few things about it that have not been explicated carefully.

As noted in the September *Clarion*, the plan only covers students in particular categories, specifically those holding GTFs (Graduate Teaching Fellowships), Gilleece Fellows and Science Fellows. But the union, and many others, have given little attention to the fact that the new arrangement does

tive on what has been happening.

Previously (i.e., before the introduction of the GTF lines a decade or so ago), Ph.D. students who were fortunate enough to receive fellowships were typically supported on the above-mentioned Grad A and Grad B lines. These positions carried either research or teaching responsibilities, with most students asked to function as teaching fellows. Those on B-lines taught or functioned as TAs in one course per semester; those on A-lines two courses. Using current pay scales, the starting salary on the A-line is about \$16,500 per year.

PAY CUT

The GTFs have the same teaching requirements as the A-lines (and, importantly, with no possibility of having their responsibilities defined in terms of research) but the starting pay for this position is in the neighborhood of \$12,500 a year. In short, the University has been sliding students from A-lines to GTFs with no reduction in duties accompanied by a \$4,000 pay cut.

Adjunct Fellows will be in a similar situation to GTFs – or worse. With the same teaching duties as GTFs (2 courses per semester) and wages determined by the adjunct rate, they would end up being paid just a bit over \$9,500 per year. If the entire 6-hour load is always taught on the same campus (which I haven't yet seen promised in writing), they would also get the extra "office hour" compensation and this would raise their income – but only to the same level as GTFs. Thus, at worst the Adjunct Fellows will be paid \$6,000 less than someone on a Grad A line, and at best they will only lose \$4,000.

Of course, the GTF lines and the new Adjunct Fellows will have some advantages over the traditional A- and B-lines. They have multiple years of support guaranteed and both will get the tuition bonus. But these perks are, as everyone appreciates, aspects of doctoral

training that are enjoyed everywhere else in the country and shouldn't be seen as bountiful gains (as the PSC seems to view them). The value of the support is reduced year-by-year as students move up from tuition Level 1 to 2 to 3. The funds lost by the reduction in salary are far greater than the gains provided by the tuition waivers.

In addition, the tuition remission package has a built-in liability: the in-state tuition ceiling on support. This limitation is oddly parochial in a university that promotes itself as an international intellectual force that attracts students from around the country and

the world. For Americans coming from out of state, the additional tuition burden only lasts one year, until they establish official residency here. For foreign students, it remains for their entire tenure here. If we really wish to support doctoral training at CUNY, this ceiling needs to be removed.

Moreover, these new tuition support plans are, unhappily, linked either with teaching responsibilities (GTF lines and Adjuncts) or require that programs that award them take on future financial responsibilities. In the case of the Gilleece and Science Fellows (for those who do not know how these operate), both provide students with large first-year support packages but require individual programs to pick up the responsibility for the later years of support. Most programs, literally, cannot afford to appoint such Fellows because doing so entails "mortgaging the future" for support of these students in later years of study. Gilleece and Science Fellowships tend to be used in programs that have sufficient external support in the form of grants and contracts.

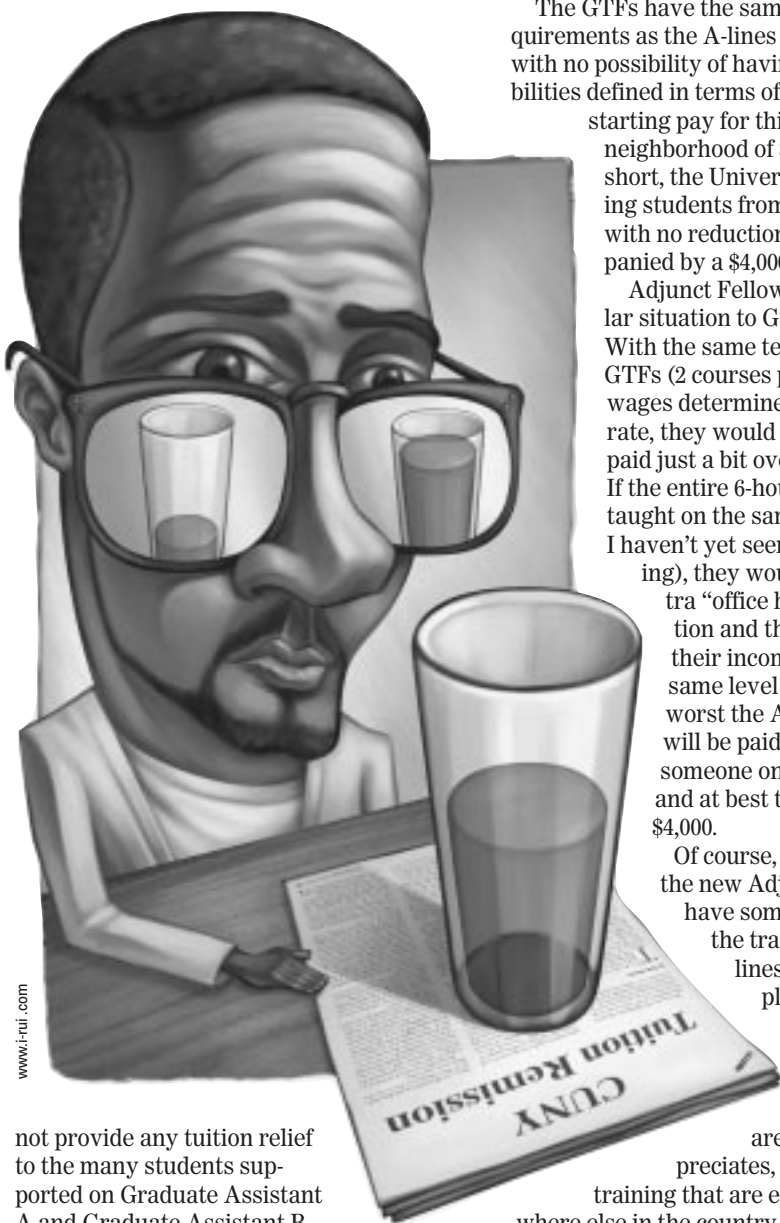
The teaching responsibilities of the GTFs and the forthcoming Adjunct Fellows are bothersome. They require graduate students to take on what would be a full course load at almost all research universities (four courses a year; two per semester). Such a demand is callous and certainly not what I

would call the appropriate way to train a doctoral candidate. Taking a full load of courses and doing the research that will lead to the successful completion of the doctorate is full-time work. Adding what amounts to the teaching burden of a full-time faculty member as the means of receiving support is not pedagogically sound.

DECLINING SUPPORT

While the PSC has heralded the tuition remission plan announced by CUNY, my feelings about it are, obviously, more muted. Our doctoral students are being provided with declining levels of support but with no adjustment in the work we ask of them. Moreover, the University is making it appear as though these changes are to their advantage when they are not. As virtually everyone involved in these decisions has noted, tuition remission funds are a basic aspect of the support packages that students receive routinely as part of their training in research universities throughout the country. So it should be with CUNY. Unfortunately, this new plan simply functions as a cleverly disguised exploitation of our students.

Arthur Reber is Broeklundian Professor of Psychology, Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center. He is head of the Ph.D. Sub-Program in Experimental Psychology.



not provide any tuition relief to the many students supported on Graduate Assistant A and Graduate Assistant B lines, nor to those currently on adjunct lines. Interestingly, the contract approved in 2002 did provide tuition relief to many of these students, and I, for one, was dismayed when they were excluded from the new plan.

While it is correct that there is a plan to introduce a new Adjunct Fellow position that will carry tuition remission, this move is part of a very dangerous shell game that has now been played for some time, with serious implications for graduate education in general and for our union in particular. A little history here will help give some perspec-

A note in response

By **MIKE FABRICANT**
Hunter School of Social Work

Professor Reber is right: the new tuition remission plan does not give CUNY all that we need or deserve. Tuition remission is the norm at research universities across the country – yet even when the new plan is fully implemented, it will cover only about half of our graduate students.

That is why the union is continuing to press the State Legislature on this issue. At a minimum, CUNY must have parity with SUNY, which receives about \$29 million a year in State funds for graduate student support. As *Clarion* reported last issue, CUNY receives nothing. Some legislators have pledged to put member item money toward tuition remission at CUNY, but we still have a long way to go.

The main question, however, is one that Professor Reber does not address: overall, does the tuition remission plan announced by CUNY represent an advance?

In my estimation it is a substantial advance. The wider availability of tuition packages enables faculty to recruit students to CUNY in a way that simply was not possible before. The fact that the packages cover a five-year period, and that the related fellowships are also multi-year, gives grad students an important measure of security.

Clearly there is a trade-off regarding teaching load and compensation. But we should not look for purity in an arena where

it never exists. Union struggles always unfold in a complex, muddy social circumstance, and victories rarely arrive when or in the way that one might expect.

PSC members who have worked for tuition remission at CUNY can be glad about what we've begun to achieve. The new tuition remission plan is a major step forward, both for graduate students and for CUNY as a whole.

Mike Fabricant is PSC vice president for senior colleges and head of CUNY's graduate program in social welfare.

CALL FOR COMMENT

Clarion would like to hear from other PSC members, particularly graduate students, on this issue. We hope to print a selection of letters in our next issue.

What do you think? Is the new tuition remission plan an improvement or not? What are the implications of the plan for your own life at CUNY?

As noted on page 2, letters to the editor must be under 200 words. Send them to pogness@pscmail.org, or by regular mail to PSC *Clarion*, 25 W. 43rd St., NY, NY 10036.

Clarion's coverage of the tuition remission plan, in our September issue, is available on the Web at www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm. For a printed copy, call 212-354-6231.

Disguised exploitation of students

CAMPUS EQUITY

The “Adjunct Problem”

By **BARBARA BOWEN**
PSC President

Something catastrophic and largely invisible has happened to CUNY since 1990: the University has lost almost 40% of its public funding. Maybe I should say that again: 39.3% of the funds. We are living in the fallout of that disaster, and one of its most insidious results is a simmering resentment between full-time and part-time faculty.

Of course not all relations between full-timers and part-timers are characterized by mistrust: union activism itself is a place of coming together, and hundreds of us have established significant professional relationships across the imagined divide: teaching together, developing curriculum or sharing research. And then there's our undeniable bond: we share students. But in many places, an atmosphere of mistrust remains.

In honor of Campus Equity Week, an international initiative to focus attention on issues of contingent labor in the university, I want to use this column to take on, once and for all, the “adjunct problem.” My point is that there *is* no adjunct problem; what we really face is a funding problem, a political problem, a labor problem, an academic freedom problem. Higher education, for all its air of gentility, is one of the most shocking labor abusers in the country. Nationwide, over 60% of instructional staff are on contingent or part-time lines, only a small fraction of whom are offered benefits.

LABOR SYSTEM

The mystery is why academic managers have gone along silently with this amazing restructuring of their workforce – and why we, an unusually well-educated group of workers, can be duped into thinking that the real problem is competition between full-time and part-time faculty. In any industry that relies heavily on underpaid part-time workers without job security or full benefits, full-time workers will see their pay and benefits erode. This will come as no surprise to those whose field is labor studies, but many of us are unaccustomed to realizing that being professors doesn't isolate us from the pressures that operate in any labor system.

The *least* productive way for workers to understand the situation is in terms of competition among themselves. Only management benefits when we see ourselves in conflict with each other.

Yet competition is often the theme of comments I hear from members. There's proba-

bly no other single issue on which the PSC membership is so polarized. On the one hand, I get angry calls from part-timers complaining that the union leadership hasn't done enough for them, that some teach more courses per semester than most full-timers and are still far from a living wage, that they will have to work until they drop dead in the classroom because they have no post-retirement health benefits. On the other hand, I receive just as many angry comments from full-time faculty, accusing the union leadership of giving away the store to adjuncts, or allegedly bankrupting the Welfare Fund to support adjunct benefits. Both of these approaches are political dead ends: they naturalize the unbearable cuts to CUNY's funding as a fact of life, and fail to understand that salaries and conditions for full-timers will improve when it becomes harder for the University to exploit and underpay part-timers. (And that's leaving aside the obvious educational argument that students receive a far better education when their instructors have the job security that protects academic freedom as well as paid time for professional development.)

WELFARE FUND REVENUES

Let me lay to rest a couple of persistent falsehoods. First, speaking to full-timers: the cost of health insurance for adjuncts is *not* the cause of the Welfare Fund deficit. In fact, in the last fiscal year the adjunct portion of the Welfare Fund showed a positive balance. The area running the greatest deficit is the fund for retirees, as is natural and as occurs in almost every other welfare fund. Your union dues do not support the Welfare Fund (it's funded by employer contributions, for which the PSC negotiates); union dues do not provide Welfare Fund benefits for adjuncts or anyone else. It's also worth remembering that the “speed-up” many of us feel as our committee and advising loads balloon is the direct result of replacing full-time positions with part-time ones. As the total number of full-time faculty at CUNY plunged from 11,500 in 1975 to 5,500 today, with part-timers not paid to participate in the shared responsibilities of departmental life (though many of them generously do), the small cadre of full-time faculty who remain are bound to shoulder a bigger share of the work.

Now one for part-timers: full-time faculty are *not* the cause of your unconscionable



pay and conditions. The cause is the right-wing political lobby that has succeeded in arguing that any expenditure on public goods is a waste of taxpayers' money. And the cause is the anti-intellectual, and in CUNY's case racist, political agenda opposed to expanding higher education. Salaries for *full-time* faculty (and staff) at CUNY – like academic salaries nationally – are also depressed, in large part because academic managers have little incentive to increase them when part-timers can be hired and exploited. Full-timers at CUNY, with inordinate teaching loads, overstuffed classrooms and little research support, are victims in a different way of the same budgetary ideology that underpays part-timers. Everyone suffers – most of all students – in a scandalous labor system. I'd argue that students suffer in a subtler way, too, when the example of labor practices offered by their university is so much at odds with higher education's self-representation as a model of democratic, enlightened values.

So what's the answer? Ultimately, it's to take back the academic labor system from the hands of corporate managers and create a system that serves the interests of students and the project of generating knowledge. More immediately, we can make it a priority to insist that part-timers be paid what their labor is worth. Doing so will put

both full-timers and part-timers in a stronger position.

For that fight, we are fortunate in the PSC to be in a single union. At universities with separate full-timer and part-timer unions, it's up to management to decide how resources will be allocated – with the predictable result that both sides get less because they are pitted *against* each other. Our ability to negotiate *together* for full-time and part-time faculty – and for other contingent workers such as graduate employees, substitutes and Continuing Education faculty – allows for far greater control over our work lives.

LABOR CRISIS

Meanwhile, the union leadership is exploring proposals to press the State and City – which are primarily responsible for our labor crisis – for funding to provide a living wage for adjuncts, along with more funds to rebuild the full-time faculty. Finally, on our own terrain, I want to risk a plea to my full-time colleagues. A luxury of the empowered group is that they are not forced to understand the lives of the less empowered, while those in subaltern positions have always had to see more. (DuBois's brilliant analysis of “double-consciousness” might help us here.) On that principle, I'd like to ask full-timers to consider asking an adjunct you know for his or her “reading” of the labor situation at CUNY; I'd also like to suggest that you take a look at the profiles of adjuncts on pages 6 and 7 of this month's *Clarion*. The impressive histories you see there are not untypical.

Together, let's use Campus Equity Week to expose and address the labor scandal on which most of American higher education is built. In no other profession is nearly half the work done by part-timers, most of whom have no health insurance, no pensions and no retirement benefits. If that were true of public school teachers, doctors or lawyers, it would rightly be considered a national staffing crisis. Higher education in America *is* in crisis, and the crisis is not going to end until we stop the exploitation of contingent academic labor.

Roots of a national staffing crisis

Clarion NOVEMBER 2003

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Editor: Peter Hogness / Assistant Editor: Tomio Geron / Designer: Margarita Aguilar
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PSC opposes nonpartisan elections

By PETER HOGNESS

On November 4, voters in New York City will choose a new City Council – but the most important contests may not involve any candidates at all. Voters will also decide on Question 3, Mayor Bloomberg's proposal for nonpartisan city elections, and Question 6, a ballot measure that could lead to smaller class sizes in the public schools.

The PSC and other New York unions have come out against nonpartisan elections, and strongly support the class size measure. Bloomberg is on the other side of both issues, and at press time the mayor was still fighting to get the class size referendum kicked off the ballot.

LESS INFORMATION

"Nonpartisan elections would be bad for New York City," said Ron Hayduk, a member of the union's Legislative Committee and PSC VOTE/COPE coordinator. "Voters would know less about what candidates really stand for."

The first version of the nonpartisan election proposal would have banned any reference to political parties from the ballot. This was widely criticized as depriving voters of important information, and Bloomberg's Charter Revision Commission (CRC) then decided that candidates would be "allowed" to cite party affiliation if they wish. But other critics say that this is meaningless – or worse, misleading.

Under this plan, "candidates' listed party affiliation may not reflect any commitment to party platforms or principles," the PSC Executive Council warned in an October 2 resolution. "Nonpartisan elections take away the right of rank-and-file party members to choose the candidates in primary elections that most represent their political positions."

PSC endorsements

CD	NAME	BOROUGH
2	*Margarita Lopez	Manh.
3	Christine Quinn	Manh.
5	Gifford Miller	Manh.
6	*Gale Brewer	Manh.
7	Robert Jackson	Manh.
9	*Bill Perkins	Manh.
10	*Miguel Martinez	Manh.
11	G. Oliver Koppell	Bronx
12	*Larry Seabrook	Bronx
16	Helen D. Foster	Bronx
19	Tony Avella	Queens
20	John Liu	Queens
21	Hiram Monserrate	Queens
23	David I. Weprin	Queens
24	*Jim Gennaro	Queens
31	James Sanders	Queens
35	Letitia James	Bklyn.
38	Sara Gonzalez	Bklyn.
42	*Charles Barron	Bklyn.
45	Kendall Stewart	Bklyn.
49	Michael McMahon	S.I.

* Member of Higher Education Committee

Favors study of class size limits



UFT President Randi Weingarten speaks at a recent press conference for Question 6, which could reduce public school class size.

According to Ken Sherrill, chair of political science at Hunter College, "Nonpartisan elections have the effect of emphasizing candidates' personalities at the cost of discussing issues and ideas. This benefits candidates who can get high name recognition – which tends to be those who spend the most, or those who can get the most free publicity by being a flamboyant demagogue."

RICH OR FAMOUS

Hayduk agreed: "Nonpartisan elections increase the power of money and celebrity. Candidates who are already rich or famous, like Arnold Schwarzenegger, are the ones who gain the most."

Black, Latino and immigrant voters are disproportionately registered as Democrats, thus the primary election allows them to influence who will be the leading candidates in the general election. "Eliminating party primaries would make it harder for minority candidates to win elections," the NYC Central Labor Council, the UFT and others noted in a joint statement. "David Dinkins has said he would never have been elected without a party primary."

As most of CUNY's student body is made up of immigrants and students of color, Hayduk noted, "it would be bad news for CUNY and for our students."

Nonpartisan elections would also mean no more third-party endorsements. "Third parties play a vital role in New York politics," commented Hayduk. "If a candidate is endorsed by the Conservative Party, or by the pro-union Working Families Party, that's an important cue to voters about what he or she

stands for," said Hayduk. "With nonpartisan elections, we'd lose that information."

The Commission contends that the change is needed to make local elections more competitive, due to Democrats' big edge in voter registration. "If that's the case," asked Hayduk, "how is it that Republican candidates have won the last three elections for mayor?"

If the CRC and the mayor really want to open up the system, Hayduk contends, they could support a host of simple reforms. "For example," he said, "election-day voter registration exists in six US states, and they have the highest rates of voter turnout. This is a proven method to increase voter participation, whereas nonpartisan elections would likely do the opposite."

The other major ballot proposition, Question 6, would establish a commission to consider whether limits on class size in the public schools should be part of the city charter. If the panel supports the idea, a future referendum would decide the issue.

BALLOT BUMPING

Question 6 was put on the ballot by the United Federation of Teachers with support from parent groups, education advocates and other unions, including the PSC. After the coalition gathered 115,000 signatures, the Bloomberg administration argued in court that the proposal should be bumped off the ballot.

City lawyers cited a state law that gives priority to any charter revision

commission appointed by the mayor, but on October 2 a state judge found that law unconstitutional. "The 'bumping' provision gives unfettered power to a mayor" and thus deprives "petitioner-citizens" of their rights, ruled Judge Louise Gruner Gans. The City appealed and won an October 20 ruling, but at press time the final outcome was unknown.

"Educators know from firsthand experience that smaller classes can be critical for many kids," said UFT President Randi Weingarten. "Solid

Rank-and-file, black, Latino and immigrant voters would be hurt by nonpartisan elections.

research shows the merits of small class size." Weingarten pointed to a range of studies, including a multi-year study of students in Tennessee that linked class size reductions to "greatly improved student achievement, particularly for students in poverty." Class size mandates are a growing national trend, Weingarten said, with legislation to reduce class size adopted in 20 states.

"Certainly rich people don't need to be sold on the advantages of small classes," NYSUT President Tom Hobart observed in an earlier discussion in *New York Teacher*. "Many pay steep tuition for exactly that privilege" for their own children.

"Winning legislation on class size in the public schools could open the door to winning similar legislation for CUNY," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "This is an important vote for us because it's a step towards providing public school students with the kind of learning environment to which every child should be entitled."

The PSC's state affiliate, NYSUT, has endorsed Question 2, which would raise the stricter debt limit now imposed on small city school districts. "This change is necessary to put small city school districts on a level playing field," said NYSUT's Alan Lubin.

CITY COUNCIL

The PSC has endorsed 21 candidates for City Council (see list). "The Council has been a strong ally of CUNY and the PSC," said Eileen Moran of the union's Legislative Committee. "This is in large part thanks to the Higher Education Committee and its Chair, Charles Barron, and we strongly endorse its members for re-election."

Moran also highlighted two close races as particularly important for PSC members.

In Brooklyn's District 35 (Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Prospect Heights), the PSC is backing Letitia James, a former chief of staff for progressive Assemblyman Roger Green, who is running on the Working Families Party line. The union's Legislative Committee noted that James has far more experience than her rivals, and added that a WFP victory in this race "would help strengthen labor's political clout."

In Staten Island's District 49, the PSC has endorsed Councilman Michael McMahon, who has been a supporter of the PSC's legislative agenda and is running on both the Democratic and WFP lines. His Republican opponent has attacked his support for the City budget that raised property taxes and restored cuts to CUNY and other public services.

"These are both tough races, and PSC members' votes could make the difference," said Moran.



15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Follow the money

Do you know where the money for the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund comes from? Take a minute to look at the union's Web site, at www.psc-cuny.org/wfmoney.htm, and find out.

Here's a hint: your union dues DO NOT go to the Welfare Fund. Not one penny. The Welfare Fund is financed by contributions from the City of New York, and the amount is jointly negotiated by NYC's municipal unions, including the PSC. And that adds up to an important reason for PSC members to support the struggles of other City workers. When it comes to our welfare benefits, we're all in this together.