



Gary Scholichet

### NEW ROUND OF CONTRACT TALKS

# DELEGATES OK DEMANDS, BARGAINING BEGINS

The union began contract talks with CUNY management on February 7, and an agreement on ground rules was reached at the second session on March 2. The PSC Delegate Assembly met twice in February, to approve contract demands

and plan the union's campaign to achieve them. Through local campus organizing, the union will build the power needed to win, PSC leaders said. Above, members of the PSC and CUNY bargaining teams at the Feb. 7 session. **PAGES 3-4**

#### RETIREMENT

### TIAA-CREF's new computer system

Poor communication has plagued TIAA-CREF's transition to a new computer system, and some accounts have had errors. Check your statement, says the PSC. **PAGE 9**

#### CONFERENCE

### Gay and lesbian student services

Staff and faculty from across CUNY gathered to discuss the state of services for GLBTQ students. Colleges need to do more, advocates say. **PAGE 12**

#### CONVERSION LINES

### 50 adjuncts hired full-time

With last year's contract settlement, the PSC secured funding for 100 new full-time lines for long-serving adjuncts. Half have now been hired. **PAGE 5**



#### BENEFITS

### Welfare Fund has new website

The PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund has launched its new website, at [www.psscunywf.org](http://www.psscunywf.org). There you can find claims forms, benefit information and more. **PAGE 10**



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

# Inconvenient truths and correctives

● Have you written a “letter to the editor” that has been rejected by a newspaper or other publication, but which you believe will enhance the quality of public awareness and discussion? We are soliciting letters to include in a new publication, to be launched in March. We want letters that transcend the systemic amnesia of the daily news; they need not be current, but should still be pertinent.

In the press, “Letters to the Editor” pages silently assert that journalism includes a place for the voice of the public. But inconvenient truths are too often absent. Visionary thoughts are rarely heard. This new independent online publication, *Rejected Letters to the Editor*, is designed to provide an important, if only partial, corrective.

Our goal at *Rejected Letters to the Editor* is to responsibly expand the visible spectrum of ideas – to publish letters that will broaden public discussion beyond the boundaries set by the gatekeepers of our mental environment. Our purpose is not to provide a dumping ground for every letter sent to a “letters page,” but to publish letters that editors knowledgeable in a variety of fields believe will add to public understanding.

Please send submissions to [reject-edletterstotheeditor@gmail.com](mailto:reject-edletterstotheeditor@gmail.com). Our website will be found at [reject-edletterstotheeditor.com](http://reject-edletterstotheeditor.com).

Stuart Ewen  
Angela Ferraiolo  
Robin Locke-Monda  
Hunter College

## Adjuncts & union action

● When I started teaching at CUNY, I asked about benefits. My employer said, “Bring your own chalk.” Among the unpaid hours I work as an adjunct are mandatory staff meetings, time spent writing quizzes, preparing for teaching, grading homework, papers, and exams, and office hours, since I teach one class.

Come on, PSC. You can do better than that. Fight for us. We’re teaching at least half the courses at CUNY, and adjuncts need the next contract to be better than the one we’ve got. Every person who teaches deserves a *living wage*. That means if you’re only going to get us paid for the hours in the classroom, get us \$100/hour. Throw in a few hours for staff meetings: that would mean about \$5,000/term per course. So, if we taught three classes a term, we would earn enough to live in New York City, someplace in the outer boroughs.

For the record, because I am a student at the Graduate Center, my tuition is reimbursed. Every person who teaches in the system, even at the level of community college continuing studies, should have their CUNY tuition reimbursed. Fight for us.

In the new contract talks, I’m asking you to negotiate to get adjuncts a *living wage*.

Andrea Siegel  
Hunter

PSC President Barbara Bowen responds: *You make the argument eloquently, Andrea, and it’s important to hear it in these pages and from a new voice. The union leadership wholeheartedly agrees: adjuncts deserve a living wage. Our demands for a new contract (see pages 3 and 4) take aim at CUNY’s exploitation of contingent academics.*

*The PSC has waged some pretty intense fights on this issue over the last five years, and we have won real advances. Thousands of adjuncts received a more than 20% raise when they started being paid for office hours. In the last contract we saved adjuncts’ health insurance through the Welfare Fund and gained an adjunct professional development fund and the first-ever conversion lines to full-time positions.*

*There is much more to be done, but all of that was possible because*

*“the PSC” is not just a few people in an office. You say, “Come on, PSC. . . Fight for us.” I take the call to action seriously – but if members think of the union as “them,” as a separate entity that is supposed to carry out the fight for “us,” then the union will be too weak to win.*

*The power of the union is the membership, in our willingness to fight for ourselves and for each other. So I will join you in saying, “Come on, PSC” – and that means I will be calling on you and every other member to take action in our contract campaign.*

## Wiesenfeld responds

● One would think that the highly educated demographic which comprises the PSC would have the elementary sense to at least attempt to cultivate a concordat with a university trustee recently reconfirmed by the New York State Senate to a 7-year term with the only two Senate holdouts being blindly beholden to the PSC’s whims.

In 1999, I chose not to dignify the columnies of then-State Senator Dan Hevesi and his rabble-rousing sidekick Isaac Abraham, an individual who creates disturbances in his Williamsburg community and operates an illegal business from his public housing apartment. Abraham’s pique was borne out of my failure to recognize him as having any standing in his community to deal with the office of then-Governor Pataki.

Dan Hevesi, a personally troubled individual who left office under suspicious circumstances, was also ani-

ated by his father’s ancient enmity towards me, due to my success in exposing his political, intellectual, and religious hypocrisy in Queens.

Of course, I categorically deny these charges – whether leveled by Abraham or repeated by Hevesi or the PSC. I sought then and will continue to seek not to dignify these charges nor the perverted individuals making them. The fact is virtually all the legislators, minority and Caucasian, made clear in the Albany hearings their knowledge of my active concern for all of our campuses.

The current PSC views itself as an institution dedicated to world revolution. They are angered because I believe that academic diversity means that left, right and center get heard. I am, therefore, proud of my stand in this regard.

Jeffrey Wiesenfeld  
Trustee, City University of New York

Clarion’s editor responds: *This letter concerns an article in the February Clarion (“Pataki picks last two trustees”), which reported as follows: “When Wiesenfeld was first appointed in 1999, Issac Abraham, a longtime activist in Brooklyn’s Jewish community, charged that Wiesenfeld had referred to African Americans as ‘savages’ and labeled Hasidic Jews ‘thieves.’ Wiesenfeld claimed that Abraham was motivated by a personal feud, but never denied the charges.”*

*Our reporting was accurate. We are glad to now publish Wiesenfeld’s denial of these charges – his first since the controversy flared nearly eight years ago.*

*It was the New York Post that first broke the story in June 1999, under the headline, “Pataki’s CUNY Pick Under Fire for Bias.” The Post article was the center of attention at Wiesenfeld’s confirmation hearing the following week. According to an Associated Press report of June 16, 1999, “Wiesenfeld became red-faced as Hevesi read last week’s newspaper story and other accounts dating back to 1995 that accused Wiesenfeld of the name-calling. But Wiesenfeld did not deny the allegations outright.” The charges – and Wiesenfeld’s failure to deny them – were also reported in The New York Times, and cited in a report by the New York-based Foundation for Ethnic Understanding.*

*Wiesenfeld’s claim that the PSC is “devoted to world revolution” is either misinformed or intentionally misleading.*

## Train robbery?

● I write in the hope that my Kafkaesque experience is not repeated by other union members

After building up a \$500 balance on my transit benefit, I decided to cancel it (instead of suspending it and continuing to pay the administrative fee). I submitted the paperwork to the college in late November and was aware of a 30-day policy to use up any remaining balance. However, I was never informed when the cancellation went into effect or when the 30-day countdown would begin. The administrative fee continued to be deducted from my paychecks – including one with “advice date” January 18, 2007.

Around January 8, apparently toward the end of my unpublished 30-day countdown, I tried to use my funds to purchase MetroCards for future use, but was only allowed to draw on about \$150 – less than a third of the amount remaining in the account. After dozens of further attempts and several hours with Chase phone support, I was finally told that my account was suspended for withdrawing too much in a 3-day period, and that since I was at the end of my 30 days, the funds would be sent back to the employer.

I immediately called City Tech human resources, explained what had happened and was told someone would call me back. After three weeks with no response, I called again and was told that nothing could be done, that I had lost the funds forever.

Ezra Halleck  
City Tech

## Research is essential Help distribute grant money

The PSC-CUNY Research Award Program needs faculty members to help distribute grants in their area of expertise. Interested full-time faculty can volunteer or nominate colleagues to join the University Committee on Research Awards (UCRA); those who serve on the UCRA will help form grant review panels, establish grant guidelines and select recipients. The deadline for nominations is March 23.

The UCRA is looking for people to coordinate awards in many areas of inquiry; the list is available at [ufs.cuny.edu/PSC-CUNY-CALL2006-07.pdf](http://ufs.cuny.edu/PSC-CUNY-CALL2006-07.pdf). Applicants are recommended by the University Faculty Senate Committee on Research and appointed by the Chancellor. An in-service allotment is provided for service on the UCRA (\$6,000 over three years of service).

For more information, or to submit a nomination (nominees should forward a curriculum vitae including grants and fellowships received, and research undertaken), contact Stasia Pasela in the UFS office:

(212)794-5538, [Stasia.Pasela@mail.cuny.edu](mailto:Stasia.Pasela@mail.cuny.edu), or The Research Committee, University Faculty Senate, 535 East 80th Street, New York, NY 10021

## PSC against war



Lee Weinberg (left) of Hunter Campus Schools and Frank Crocco of Lehman College joined the PSC contingent to the January 29 anti-war march in Washington, DC. See page 12 for a 15-minute anti-war action, and page 10 to join the PSC on March 18.

Peter Hogness

Editor’s note: *After the union chapter at City Tech contacted CUNY administration to press for Halleck’s money to be returned to him, management informed Halleck that by opening a new account, he could get credit for the balance that he had lost.*



# DA approves contract demands

By PETER HOGNESS

Bargaining for a new PSC-CUNY contract got underway in February. The PSC Delegate Assembly approved a list of bargaining demands, and PSC negotiators met with management on February 7 and March 2.

"Defining the union's bargaining agenda is important," said PSC President Barbara Bowen, "but when we hand the demands across the table, that's just the beginning. Now we must focus on how to put power behind those demands, enough power to win."

The February 7 session marked the beginning of talks in this round of bargaining. "Both sides came well prepared, and it was a productive discussion," said PSC bargaining team member Bob Cermele. "After some give and take, we moved toward agreement on ground rules for the negotiations going forward." At the next session, the two sides finalized an agreement on procedural issues.

## JOINT EFFORT

The union has called on CUNY management to make a joint effort to settle the next contract before the current agreement expires. For its part, the PSC came to the table with a focused list of 31 demands (see page 4) – about half as many as in the last contract talks. "This list represents some hard choices," said Bowen.

"CUNY has told us that they also want to settle before this contract expires," said PSC Secretary Arthurine DeSola. "But the devil is in the details." Management has not yet presented its demands, but at the first session CUNY negotiators said that they, too, have an agenda – including greater "flexibility" in job titles. "What that often means," DeSola observed, "is that they want employees to do more, while they give less." Union negotiators expect that hard bargaining lies ahead.

At the second session, on March 2, the PSC presented its demands. Union negotiators argued that adhering to austerity-level contract "patterns" from the city and state could never make up the 30-year deficit in salaries dating from the NYC fiscal crisis. CUNY needs to take a bolder approach, they said, since a major university must compete nationally for its faculty and staff.

## COMMITTED

The union's demands had been approved by its Delegate Assembly at a special meeting on February 15. They call for significant improvements in salary and workload, stability in health benefits, action against inequities, and clear paths for advancement. (See "The union's bargaining agenda," page 4.) "Our demands seek to reclaim the university as a place that is committed to the education of our students," Bowen told delegates. "We should be supported in that commitment, not undermined, by our working conditions."

## First two sessions with CUNY management held



Delegates voting at the Special DA on February 15. At center is Ingrid Hughes.

Bowen said that the PSC will fight to fix CUNY's "broken job system," which is heavily reliant on the exploitation of adjuncts. "CUNY is addicted to that job system," she said, "but the system undermines every job in the bargaining unit. It is patently unjust to part-timers – and when the employer can hire people at a fraction of the cost of a full-timer, with limited rights and worse benefits, that drags down conditions for all."

In discussion, Delegate Peter Jonas spoke in support of the demand to change the contract's broad management rights clause. "I'm a retiree, but I want to talk about how important this is – what it means for

intellectual property, what it means for privacy rights, what it means for academic freedom," Jonas said. "It impacts everyone all the time, and it has to be changed. If not, the university will continue to sneak around their bargaining obligations."

## WORKLOAD

Delegates agreed that the issue of CUNY's heavy workload was critical, and Kyle Cordeleone of City Tech asked why the union was not also demanding specific limits on class size. "We want to support departments' ability to set class size, since this is a matter of academic judgment," responded Bowen. But workload at

CUNY is a key union concern, she said: "There's nowhere at CUNY where this problem isn't felt."

Adjunct activists mobilized a strong turnout at the Delegate Assembly to support job security and improvements in pay and benefits for part-timers. Dozens of members attended as observers, and adjunct delegates held up signs with slogans such as *Equity for Part-Timers*. "It's great to see the signs," commented Bowen. "I'm glad to see people organizing for their views within their own DA."

"I teach 25 hours a week and I'm called 'part-time,'" said Cyndi Casey, an instructor in the College Language Immersion Program (CLIP) at LaGuardia. "Does that

sound right to you?" Delegates answered with a chorus of "No!"

"I'm very glad to see health insurance for graduate employees on the agenda," said Carl Lindskoog, an adjunct and a doctoral student in history. "It's just a disgrace to see so many grad students walking around without coverage, hoping they don't get sick."

On wages, PSC Treasurer Mike Fabricant noted that more than 55% of both faculty and staff are "marooned" at the top salary step within their title. "It's not just the top of the top title, but the top step of every title," he said. "It's a very widespread problem." In addition to across-the-board increases, he said, the union is therefore demanding additional money for those on the top step.

Vasilios Petratos, chapter chair at College of Staten Island, supported the demand for better pay for part-timers. "For a 3- or 4-credit course, an adjunct earns one-fifth or one-sixth of what I earn," Petratos said. "There's no formula that can justify that inequity."

## BOTH PROBLEMS

Both kinds of problems are urgent, commented Bowen. "We have to address both the erosion of the entire salary scale and the relative depression of salaries for different groups within it," she said.

A week later, on February 22, the Delegate Assembly discussed the shape of the union's contract campaign. The Executive Council proposed organizing structures at the campus level and within the EC as the backbone of the effort, with regular communication between them. "The goal is to combine strategic decisions on a union-wide basis with members' imagination and creativity at the local level," said Treasurer Mike Fabricant. The work on campus would be key, he added: "Most organizing, in my experience, is local."

# Member opinion surveyed by phone

In February, the PSC carried out a detailed survey of members' views on contract demands. "This was the most extensive scientific survey of member opinion ever done in this union," First VP Steve London reported to the February 15 Delegate Assembly. London described the survey as "a continuation of this fall's listening campaign."

In all, 1,431 members were chosen randomly and interviewed by phone. The sample size was larger than many national surveys: "We needed a large sample to have solid results for different subgroups, as well as for the union as a whole," London explained. The union's overall membership was divided into four broad categories – full-time faculty, full-time HEOs and CLTs,

teaching adjuncts, and other contingent groups – and results were obtained for each group.

"The results confirmed what we learned from our campus conversations," London said. "Salary, Welfare Fund benefits and workload are at the top of the list" for all groups of members.

A majority of all groups said it was "very important" for eligible adjuncts to receive health benefits through the regular city health plan. All groups gave the same strong support to changing the contract's management rights clause, in order to require CUNY to negotiate over employment issues such as intellectual property and student complaint procedures.

"It's noteworthy that among full-time faculty and professional staff, there is wide support for demanding pay equity for part-timers, lecturers and CLIP teachers," London said, "as well as for paid parental leave for all." Also by a wide margin, full-time faculty felt very strongly that department chairs must remain part of the bargaining unit,

## Broad support for equity

and that they want protection against arbitrary workload increases due to changes in educational technology.

Workload was a top concern of all groups of members, and London said that among Higher Education Officers the issue of unpaid overtime was cited as very important. The desire to establish HEO

titles as a promotional series "screamed off the page," London said, and advancement and promotions were also a strong focus of CLT concern.

Job security, due process rights and pay equity were among the top issues for part-timers, along with getting adjuncts on the regular city health plan. All groups rated health and safety issues as very important, and all gave strong backing to the idea of a "sick leave bank," through which members with an excess of sick days could donate them to members in need.

The detailed results are being reviewed by the bargaining team, London said, and will be used in planning strategy in negotiations.



## The union's bargaining agenda

● **Build on the structural advances of the last two contracts** – such as improved sabbatical pay and reassigned time, professional development funds, paid professional hours, equity raises, increased Welfare Fund contributions, improved access to facilities for retirees and adjuncts, agreement on additional full-time lines, and more.

● **Restore competitive salaries** – CUNY salaries were once competitive regionally and nationally; now they make recruitment and retention difficult.

● **Maintain and enhance health benefits.**

● **Secure basic human rights** – such as parental leave, family medical care leave, and health and safety protections.

● **Relieve workload speed-up** – experienced by both faculty and professional staff.

● **Address structural inequities of race and gender** by upgrading particular titles and increasing access to promotion and higher classification for professional staff.

● **Tackle CUNY's abusive job system** – CUNY is among the universities that have allowed the biggest growth in part-time positions – while trumpeting its commitment to full-time faculty. The over-reliance on part-timers, paid a fraction of the full-time salary, and on other contingent positions, is abusive of the individuals in these positions and undermines salaries, job security and academic freedom for all.

● **Reclaim the university** as a place in which all faculty and professional staff are supported in their commitment to the education of our students.



Michelle Calderón

Lenny Dick at the Feb. 15 DA

# PSC contract demands

*The PSC's demands for this round of contract bargaining were approved by the union's Delegate Assembly on February 15. (See page 3 for details.)*

## SALARY

**1. Salary Increases:** Salaries must be comprehensively lifted – for all titles and all ranks – so the University regains its salary competitiveness with other major universities regionally and nationwide. Inequities of salary must also be addressed so that there is movement toward pay equity for employees in part-time positions and other titles. All members of the bargaining unit, including bargaining unit members employed at the Educational Opportunity Centers and in Continuing Education series titles, shall receive a substantial *per annum* across-the-board salary increase. (Article 24)

**2. Enhancement of Top Steps:** Substantial funds shall be added to the base salary on the top step of each salary schedule for every title and every rank, both full-time and part-time. (Article 24)

**3. Movement in Steps:** The five-year step and the seven-year step shall be converted to one-year steps. Teaching and non-teaching adjuncts shall receive a movement in schedule after one year. (Article 24)

**4. Adjunct Professional Hour:** The provision for a professional hour negotiated in the last collective bargaining agreement shall be amended so that eligibility may be reached by service University-wide. (Article 15)

**5. Law School Salary Schedule:** A complete schedule of salary steps for all CUNY Law School full-time and part-time faculty shall be introduced. (Article 35)

**6. Upgrade Lecturer Position:** Lecturers, Lecturers on the Doctoral Schedule and EOC Lecturers shall be placed on the Assistant Professor salary schedule at the appropriate step. (Article 24)

**7. Upgrade CLIP and Similar Positions:** Employees in the Continuing Education Teacher title who teach non-credit-bearing remedial or ESL instructional programs shall be placed at the appropriate salary step in the Lecturer or Assistant Professor title. (Supplemental Agreement on Continuing Education)

## HEALTH BENEFITS

**8. Welfare Fund:** There shall be a substantial increase in contributions to the PSC/CUNY Welfare Fund for all active and retired members of the bargaining unit, including employees at the Educational Opportunity Centers. Part-time instructional staff members shall be included in the New York City Health Benefits Program. (Article 26)

**9. Graduate Employee Health Insurance:** The parties shall support and gain the necessary legislative and executive action to provide health insurance to graduate employees and their dependents. (Article 26)

## WORKLOAD

**10. Course Load:** Teaching loads for full-time faculty throughout the University shall be substantially reduced. (Article 15 and Appendix A)

**11. Reassigned Time:** All tenured Assistant Professors, Associate Professors and Professors shall receive a substantial and specific number of hours of reassigned time per academic year (or per three-year period) in order to engage in scholarly and/or creative activities related to their academic disciplines. (Article 15)

**12. Educational Technology:** Workload for courses employing new media, known variously as educational technology and distance learning, shall be governed by the workload provisions of this Agreement. The increased workload – for all members of the bargaining unit – arising from instruction in these media shall be supported by the University and fully compensated. Such support and compensation shall include but not be limited to: extra workload credit for both faculty and staff, reduced class size, and agreements on staffing levels for professional staff. Instructors shall retain control of the mode of instruction employed in their courses. (Article 15 and Appendix A)

**13. Class Size:** Class size has a direct impact on the workload of all faculty and of some staff, particularly CLTs. The University has an obligation to compensate faculty if their classes exceed specified departmental limits on size. In the event class size exceeds departmental size limits, the instructor shall receive one additional contact hour credit toward the instructor's teaching workload for each five students above the departmental limit. (Article 15 and Appendix A)

**14. Multiple Position Policy:** The Multiple Position Policy shall be amended. (Articles 14 and 15)

**15. Library Faculty:** All Library faculty, regardless of when hired, shall be placed on the full-time teaching faculty calendar. (Article 14)

## PROMOTIONS & JOB SECURITY

**16. Adjunct Seniority:** A seniority/hiring preference system for part-time instructional staff, in both classroom- and non-classroom titles, shall be established and enforced. A seniority/hiring preference system for Continuing Education Teachers who are eligible for benefits shall be established and enforced. (Articles 9 and 10, Supplemental Agreement on Continuing Education)

**17. Higher Education Officer Series Reclassification:** The Higher Education Officer series shall include increased opportunity for advancement through reclassification to a higher position, for example through peer review, preparation of a portfolio or meeting performance criteria. The reclassification process shall be amended to provide due process. After five years of service in the Assistant to HEO title, employees shall be matured automatically to the title Higher Education Assistant. (Article 13)

**18. Reasons for Non-Reappointment of Higher Education Officer Series Employees:** During their first four annual reappointments, HEO series employees shall be entitled to reasons for non-reappointment. (Article 13)

**19. College Laboratory Technicians:** A new title in the College Laboratory Technician series shall be created, with a salary schedule identical to the Chief CLT schedule, to reflect the increased technological responsibilities and capacities of certain employees in the College Laboratory Technician series. Article 22.2.a. shall be amended to allow promotion to this title for individuals who meet appropriate guidelines. (Articles 24 and 22)

## WORKING CONDITIONS/QUALITY OF LIFE

**20. Health and Safety:** Article 39.1 shall be amended to improve the stated standard for violations – to include conditions that interfere with teaching and learning or with the ability of employees to perform their assigned duties. Article 39.1 shall also be amended to allow health and safety grievances to be taken to Step 3 of the process provided in Article 20.4. Article 39.2 shall be amended to establish a campus health and safety committee at each college, in addition to the central health and safety committee. (Article 39)

**21. Parental and Family Medical Leave:** Family Medical Leave shall not run concurrently with sick leave; in addition, the University shall establish full-paid semester-long leave for the introduction of a new child into the household, or for the medical care of an immediate family member. (Article 16)

**22. Access to Childcare:** The parties shall agree to jointly seek legislation to enhance current access to on-campus childcare and to provide on-campus childcare to dependents of members of the bargaining unit. (Article 30)

**23. Banked Sick Days:** Under certain conditions, employees shall have the opportunity to bank sick days to meet special needs of others in the bargaining unit or to convert sick days to support wellness and preventive health measures for themselves. (Article 16)

**24. Tuition Waivers:** CUNY tuition shall be waived for immediate family members and domestic partners of members of the bargaining unit, and for CUNY graduate students who are employed by the University. The provision for tuition waivers for part-time instructional staff shall be amended so that certain current restrictions are lifted and access to tuition remission for part-time instructional staff is increased. The provision for tuition waivers for full-time instructional staff shall be amended to include summer sessions. (Article 29)

**25. Adjunct Professional Development Fund:** The Adjunct Professional Development Fund shall be made permanent, supported by recurring funds. (Appendix C)

**26. Retiree Access to Electronic Resources:** Retired members of the instructional staff shall have access to CUNY electronic mail addresses and to electronic databases available to active employees. (Article 27)

## SPECIAL CONSTITUENCIES

**27. Educational Opportunity Centers:** Salary parity with comparable positions in the other units of the City University shall be maintained. The Supplemental Agreement on Educational Opportunity Centers shall be amended to improve certain working conditions. (Supplemental Agreement on Educational Opportunity Centers)

**28. Hunter Campus Schools:** Improvements shall be made in certain unique salary rates and benefits for employees in the bargaining unit at the Hunter Campus Schools. (Article 24 and others)

## CUNY/PSC RELATIONS

**29. Management Rights Clause:** Article 2 of the Agreement shall be amended to provide for management's duty to negotiate with the PSC and to provide for enforcement of this duty under Article 20. (Article 2)

**30. Overuse and Abuse of Temporary, Contingent and Part-Time Titles:** Temporary, contingent and part-time titles, including but not limited to non-teaching adjunct titles, teaching adjunct titles, and part-time College Laboratory Technician titles, shall not be abused. (Article 24, Article 15 and elsewhere)

**31. Increased Reassigned Time for Union Work:** The amount of reassigned time allocated to the Professional Staff Congress for implementation of the Agreement shall be increased to 250 hours per semester. (Article 6)

*The Professional Staff Congress reserves the right to amend or supplement these demands during the course of collective bargaining.*



# 50 faculty in first conversion lines

By PETER HOGNESS

This winter, City University hired faculty for its first 50 conversion lines – new full-time faculty positions for which the hiring pool is made up of long-serving CUNY adjuncts. These new lecturer lines were created in conjunction with last year's contract settlement, with another 50 to be hired for the Fall 2007 semester.

"This really is precedent-setting – not only for CUNY, but nationally," said PSC Treasurer Mike Fabricant. "These first conversion lines are a beachhead, from which we can build future campaigns for an increasing number of conversion lines, offering part-time faculty the overdue opportunity of transitioning to full-time status within the university." The union is seeking support in the state legislature for the creation of additional conversion lines.

## 100 LINES

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein agreed to create the 100 lines in a letter sent to the union on May 10, 2006. On November 21, Vice Chancellor Brenda Malone announced the allocation of the first 50 lines among CUNY's colleges: 12 schools received three lines each; York and John Jay received four apiece; while Brooklyn, BCC and Kingsborough each received two. "The lines were allocated in inverse order to the percentage of classes taught by full-time faculty in Fall 2005," explained Malone.

On each campus, the decision on which departments would get a line was made by the college president. Across the university, 11 English departments received a conversion line, followed by four for math departments and three each for eco-

## Long-serving adjuncts hired



Wayne Moreland teaches English at Queens College.

nomics and history. Positions were to be filled in time for the Spring 2007 semester, which meant that the hiring process had to follow a very tight timeline. CUNY's late decision meant that most departments were not informed until early December, and eligible adjuncts often had only a week to apply. Competition for the positions was intense.

"It coincided with the end of the semester, so it was a very busy time," said Wayne Moreland, who was hired on a conversion line in Queens College's English department. "Ours came up in the middle of December, and the deadline was December 20."

For Moreland, the process had a happy conclusion. "I'm grateful I had this opportunity," he said. An adjunct at Queens for 19 years, he has been a mainstay of the department. "I've done creative writing, fiction workshops, American literature surveys, poetry workshops, African American literature. In that 19 years, I think I've taught almost everything in the department except medieval literature." Within this range, African American literature is Moreland's specialty, and Chair Nancy Comley told *Clarion* that the department particularly needs it.

The most obvious difference in being full-time is "more security and

more money," Moreland said. "Beyond that," he added, "the job itself is more focused. And you have a greater sense of participation and responsibility within the department." Moreland, who has a master's degree, has been asked by the department to work as a mentor with its part-time faculty.

He is quick to say that he was just one of many experienced applicants who also deserve full-time positions. In his department, more than 20 were eligible and 11 applied. "You know that there were a lot of other people who also wanted the same position and also were well-qualified," he explained. "To be honest, there is a kind of awkwardness around it – even though other adjuncts have been universally supportive."

Those twin gaps – between the number of conversion lines and the number of those qualified, as well as between work conditions for full-time and part-time faculty – were acutely felt by both applicants and those making the hiring decisions. "What I said was, 'I'm going to make one adjunct very happy – and break a lot more adjuncts' hearts,'" said Brian Keener, chair of the English department at City Tech. "It was not an easy decision, because a department like ours has so many good people on part-time lines." In Keener's department, 36 people were eligible, 14 applied, and eight were interviewed.

## QUALIFICATIONS

Part-time faculty were eligible to apply for a conversion line if they had held adjunct positions in that department in eight of the last 10 semesters (excluding Summer session); had taught at least six

classroom contact hours in seven of those 10; and taught at least six classroom contact hours in the Fall 2006 semester. Other than the definition of the applicant pool, departments were to fill the positions with the same procedures as for any full-time opening.

Problems arose along the way, often because management failed to accurately determine who was eligible, and notify them in a timely fashion.

## Most CUNY colleges received three lines

Hiring for the next 50 lines could go more smoothly, if more time is available for the search process. According to the memo that announced the allocation of the first 50 positions, "The remaining 50 lecturer lines will be distributed early in the Spring semester to be filled in time for the beginning of the Fall 2007 semester." When *Clarion* went to press in early March, however, a decision still had not been announced.

Stan Wine, an adjunct at Baruch in information technology, is urging that the process be revised in light of the first wave of experience. In addition to quicker decisions on college and departmental allocations, Wine thinks eligibility requirements should be drawn with more flexibility in the future – for example, based on adjunct service across CUNY rather than at a single college.

But for all the rough spots, the most common reaction to the first 50 conversion lines is that people want more. "I'm praying that we do get another line next time," said Mary O'Donnell, chair of the nursing department at College of Staten Island. "Truthfully, we could easily use five more lines – and we have some very experienced, very effective teachers we could hire."

# Trustees OK controversial measures

By DANIA RAJENDRA

At its January 29 meeting, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved two measures that had sparked sharp controversy – a new student complaint procedure and a policy on computer use. CUNY administration had revised both in the wake of a January 22 public hearing, and critics welcomed the changes but said they did not go far enough.

Faculty across the university had harsh words for many specific details of the student complaint policy and for 80th Street's increasing tendency towards unilateral decision making. Chancellor Matthew Goldstein told the board the last-minute changes to both proposed measures came mostly from testimony at the five-hour long hearing on January 22, as well as PSC and University Faculty Senate suggestions.

Both the union and the UFS had strongly opposed the student complaint procedure as unnecessary,

## Feedback forces changes

vague and a threat to academic freedom. One of the administration's changes would allow dismissal of a complaint without investigation if the fact-finder concluded that, even if factually accurate, the complaint applied to faculty conduct protected by academic freedom.

## OBJECTIONS

Faculty advocates had objected that the procedure did not specify, at all, what kind of faculty conduct could be grounds for a complaint. The union warned that this lack of definition was an invitation to politicize the classroom. In response, CUNY added examples of the types of problems that might be covered: "incompetent or inefficient service, neglect of duty, physical or mental incapacity, or conduct unbecoming a member of the staff" – a list that comes directly from the PSC-CUNY contract.

PSC First Vice President Steve London told *Clarion* that the fact that this list came from the union contract underscores the reality that the procedure is unnecessary, since a procedure for addressing such behavior already exists. The student complaint procedure lacks the due process protections that the contract affords.

"Some of the changes are positive," said PSC President Barbara Bowen, such as strengthening the language on academic freedom. But overall, she said, the procedure still threatens free discussion and members' rights. "Students need to have their real concerns addressed," Bowen told the civil service newspaper the *Chief*, "but this policy could have a chilling effect on classroom discussion, and the students will also suffer from that."

## Computer use policy and student complaint procedure

"The union will closely monitor the university's application of the procedure," London said. He urged any member investigated under it to contact a union grievance counselor immediately and added that the union is weighing its options for further action against the policy as a whole. (Grievance counselors can be reached at (212) 354-1252.)

On the computer use proposal, both the PSC and the UFS had raised concerns about inadequate guarantees for privacy and confidentiality of research. Changes here included some additional privacy protections, such as stricter criteria for conditions under which CUNY could view users' e-mail without notice. The PSC said that the changes were an advance, but that the policy would still allow excessive surveillance by CUNY and would violate the union contract.

"There are major loopholes that would allow looking at online course materials, discussions, assignments, and so on, without notifying the faculty member," London told *Clarion*. This, he said, would violate the contract's Article 18, which requires 24 hours notice before any classroom observation. The union filed a grievance on the issue on February 25.

In another policy change, trustees approved changes to CUNY's multiple positions policy at their meeting in February. Certain changes – for example, simplifying the calculation of summer salaries – should be improvements for instructional staff members.

But the union criticized the board's decision to raise the caps on overload teaching so that a faculty member could teach as many as 12 more hours a year. "The policy is an unacceptable substitute for offering decent salaries," Bowen testified at a February 20 board hearing. "Our faculty need fair salaries, not endless overtime work. It is an admission of failure by CUNY." After the hearing and a committee meeting, which included objections from the UFS, the proposal was reduced to six additional credits.





Gary Schoichet

Jonathan Buchsbaum of the media studies department at Queens College

## TESTIMONY IN ALBANY

## Half of my colleagues are looking elsewhere

Jonathan Buchsbaum  
Professor, Queens College

My department has hired about six or seven highly qualified professors in recent years. I believe we have perhaps the best media studies department in the greater New York City area, with excellent teachers dedicated to the students, extremely productive research output, high enrollments in classes, and on the cutting edge of new technology.

Yet half of these excellent colleagues are seeking positions at other schools. You need to know why that is happening, for all of these teachers wanted to come to CUNY, wanted to be in New York, love our students, and have friendly and supportive collegial relations.

## OUTRAGED &amp; FRUSTRATED

One young associate professor, who came to Queens College from an executive position at NBC, was recently promoted with an excellent publication record, including work used by the Federal Communications Commission. As a single mother of a six-year-old daughter, she teaches in January and during the summer to make ends meet, with no parental leave or child care provided by the university.

## Members speak out

Jonathan Buchsbaum, Carl Lindskoog, Martha Nadell and Marcia Newfield were among the PSC members who testified in Albany at a hearing of the State Assembly's Committee on Higher Education on January 10. Full text of the testimony is on the PSC website at [www.psc-cuny.org/budgethearing07.htm](http://www.psc-cuny.org/budgethearing07.htm), from which this material is adapted.

She has received a promotion – but with no significant increase in pay. Outraged and frustrated, she is already looking at three other universities outside of New York, one of which asked her to apply for a position. As she put it, “If they are not going to reward me for my hard work with what I am worth, I want to be somewhere where they value my contributions.”

Another young teacher, in her second year as an assistant professor, has already applied for other positions because CUNY's workload demands – number of courses, numbers of students, lack of teaching assistance – leave little time to pursue research. In addition, the college allows only \$400 per year to support presenting and discussing research at professional conferences – an essential part of a professor's work.

Yes, CUNY continues to function with highly trained and dedicated teachers. But at the current funding level, CUNY is discouraging its faculty at every rank, sowing frustration which is already driving its best hopes for the future elsewhere, ultimately showing a lack of respect for the hundreds of thousands of New York students who deserve a high quality of higher education.

How can I tell any of the 90 applicants for our open position this year – a position open after a young mother fled CUNY for the University of Minnesota, furious at CUNY's lack of parental leave and pitiful support for research – how can I tell them that CUNY is the place for them to fulfill their academic career dreams? As a colleague put it more derisively, “Come to CUNY. We do more with less.” Everyone who works at CUNY understands that message too well. If you really want quality, fund it. If you want to stop the hemorrhage, fund CUNY.

# Spitzer asks for moderate

## Reverses Pataki's push for c

By ALEX VITALE  
Brooklyn College

Governor Elliot Spitzer's first state budget proposal, released on January 31, calls for a 4.6% increase for CUNY, amounting to \$71.8 million. Breaking with the pattern set by George Pataki, the Spitzer budget does not seek major cuts to TAP or other programs, and asks for no increase in tuition. Unlike Pataki's budgets, the governor's plan would also fund CUNY's mandatory cost increases – expenses that stem from rising fuel costs, increased enrollment, and collective bargaining agreements.

But Spitzer's budget does not significantly address the erosion of CUNY's full-time faculty and staff and the long-standing underfunding of the university. For example, \$4 million is earmarked for new faculty hiring – an amount that would only add a few dozen lines. “This is essentially a budget that leaves CUNY treading water,” said PSC Vice President Steve London. “The PSC is asking the state legislature to step up to the plate and provide a real advance in funding for CUNY.”

In response to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit, the governor has proposed dramatic increases in

funding for K-12 education in the five boroughs to begin to right historic inequities in New York's funding of education. This investment is based on the idea that New York City students need a high-quality education in order to be economically successful – and the PSC argues that the governor's budget fails to take into account CUNY's role in this process, leaving it badly underfunded and understaffed.

## UNDERFUNDED, UNDERSTAFFED

“College has never been more necessary than it is today,” PSC President Barbara Bowen told a February 8 hearing in Albany. “CUNY is the only college within economic reach for the majority of the students who will be served by the enhancement in the public schools.” Bowen noted that nearly 60% of CUNY students are from families whose total annual income is under \$30,000, while 72% are people of color. “It is no accident that this is the population whose educational opportunity has been jeopardized by years of disinvestment in CUNY,” she concluded. (See page 11.)

New faculty lines are at the center of the PSC's budget agenda. Be-

tween 1975 and 2006, the number of full-time faculty lines dropped from 11,268 to 6,334, even though student enrollment is now at an all-time high. Despite significant hiring in recent years, there was a net increase of only 69 new lines in the last year because of high levels of attrition, including retirement. In fact, the number of part-time faculty has increased at twice the rate of full-time faculty over the last 6 years. The result is that more than 50% of courses at CUNY are still taught by part-time faculty, despite the university's pledge in 2000 to bring the share of instruction by full-time faculty up to 70%.

## FULL-TIME LINES

As a result, the PSC is calling for \$27.5 million to fund 500 faculty lines and 50 professional staff lines in the next year. This would be in addition to the more modest hiring proposed by Spitzer and by CUNY's administration, which CUNY says would add up to 200 new lines. New hiring should include initiatives to increase racial and ethnic diversity, the union says, and it is requesting an additional \$5 million to support recruitment efforts. To tap the talent that

## TESTIMONY IN ALBANY

## A faculty generation at risk

Martha Jane Nadell  
Associate Professor, Brooklyn College

Today, I will speak to you about what it is like for junior professors at CUNY, and the challenges faced by CUNY in its efforts to recruit, retain, and develop their ranks.

My junior colleagues are fantastic. They are first-rate academics, all of whom have graduated from the United States' finest institutions of higher learning and begun to publish significant scholarly work. They are also deeply committed to the mission of CUNY. They value and strive to contribute to the education of our students, who often are immigrants, the first in their families to go to college, or both.

Yet despite the joys of teaching and working at Brooklyn, there are great challenges that can only be met by a serious commitment from the state.

Ten years ago my department had 234 undergraduates complet-



Lisa Quiñones

Martha Jane Nadell of Brooklyn's English department

ing one of the tracks in our major. Today, there are more than double that number, approximately 480 students. In the 1970s, we had over 100 full-time faculty members, most of whom have retired. Since 1997 alone, 37 faculty members have retired, and we have added only 12 new members, leaving us with only 40 or so full-time faculty.

Who will serve on the committees that make the vital departmental and college-wide decisions?

How can full-time faculty members be effective teachers and scholars if they are overburdened with administrative work, because it is shared among too few? How will students build the relationships with faculty that are necessary for recommendations, for guidance through the course of their college careers, for help with graduate school – if faculty are overburdened or heavily part-time?

CUNY is at a crossroads. If the university invests in the recruitment, retention, and development of junior faculty, who are, undoubtedly, its fu-

ture, it can become one of the great public institutions in this country. Or, sadly, if CUNY does not build and retain its ranks, it may fail to live up to its promise.

A few days ago, a junior faculty member from the philosophy department told me that he and his wife live “hand to mouth,” because of the perfect storm of childcare for two youngsters, the cost of purchasing a modest apartment and his low salary. Our low salaries and



# Best increase for CUNY

## cuts

already exists among CUNY's adjuncts, the union proposes that a significant number of the new full-time lines be earmarked as "conversion lines," hired from among long-serving part-time faculty.

Other PSC proposals include increasing operating support for the community colleges by an additional \$150 per full-time equivalent student, providing health insurance for CUNY graduate students, and a student mentoring initiative. In all, the union is calling for a total of \$76 million beyond the governor's proposed budget of \$1.62 billion for CUNY – \$51.9 million for its own proposals plus CUNY's request for an additional \$24.3 million, which the PSC supports. The PSC also supports CUNY's capital budget proposal, which includes substantial resources for new construction.

### COMMISSION PROPOSED

Gov. Spitzer has also proposed the formation of a commission on public higher education. "The governor says he wants to see how we can move as he put it, from a good to a great system of public higher educa-

tion," said London, "and that's a goal that we share. But we don't need to wait for a commission to know that we're underfunded." State operating aid for CUNY has been cut by 26% since 1990, adjusting for inflation. Simply restoring that cut would add about \$500 million to CUNY's budget, in current dollars – and the PSC proposes to achieve that restoration over the next five years.

### Fund CUNY fairly, PSC tells state lawmakers

In his own testimony in Albany, Chancellor Goldstein highlighted CUNY's increased pass rates on teacher certification exams, the opening of the CUNY

Graduate School of Journalism, and the expansion of the CUNY School of Professional Studies. Rather than calling for significant increases in state funding, however, the chancellor continues to advocate what he calls "the CUNY Compact." This budget strategy calls for constant annual tuition increases along with philanthropy and cost savings for most funding of new initiatives. Under the chancellor's proposal, New York State would fund mandatory cost increases but would be asked to cover only 20% of any new initiatives – much lower than what the state now provides for operating expenses at the senior colleges.

Tuition has nearly doubled since 1990, and now accounts for 38% of CUNY's revenues compared to only 20% in 1990. Yet the "CUNY Compact" would regularly increase the burden on students, relying heavily on yearly tuition hikes to fund improvements at CUNY. The union argues that the goal of preparing students for economic success will be undermined if tuition is constantly increased.

### NO HIKE

Last year the legislature rejected the chancellor's plan and ruled out a tuition hike at the request of the PSC and student groups. This year, the governor's budget proposes no tuition increase.

Over the next few weeks the union's officers and Legislative Committee will be lobbying in Albany around the state budget, as well as other PSC legislative priorities such as unemployment insurance for adjuncts and pension equity.

Their next major lobbying trip will be in Albany on March 19 and 20; to find out how you can take part, contact Sabine Hammad at the PSC office (212) 354-1252. Members are also being urged to contact their representatives in Albany; see [www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org).

high teaching loads, and CUNY's policies regarding parental leave and childcare, are radically out of step with other institutions.

In my first years in Brooklyn, I have felt as though I were living through the lean years of graduate school again. My rent eats up approximately two weeks of my salary each month, and I do not live extravagantly. In fact, I recently had to move; my landlady

decided to raise the rent on my apartment by \$700, something I could absolutely not afford.

### MAKE ENDS MEET

I struggle to make ends meet, which I only manage to do by teaching two summer school classes and acting as the summer department chair for five weeks, which significantly cuts into the time I need to spend on my own re-

search, a necessity for tenure and promotion.

I urge you to invest in the future of CUNY by investing in its junior faculty, by providing the budget necessary to allow for higher salaries, reduced workload, parental leave and childcare, and creative and innovative approaches to address the lack of affordable, middle-income housing in New York City.

## TESTIMONY IN ALBANY

# Grad students can't afford health coverage

Carl Lindskoog  
Graduate Student,  
Doctoral Program in History

I chose to come to CUNY because the history department faculty featured some of the leading scholars in my field and because the program is ranked among the top 20 in the nation. I also looked forward to studying at a public university in the city of New York, an experience that I imagined would introduce me to the diversity and excitement of the city itself.

Although I do not regret the two-and-a-half years I have spent at CUNY, there are certain things that have made my experience difficult. Starting in my second year, I began teaching as an adjunct at Queens College, as this was the only form of financial assistance available. Unlike graduate students at many other institutions, who work as teaching assistants, students at the CUNY Graduate Center do not assist in a course but have to teach our own courses – a more exciting, but much more arduous assignment. This is my second year of teaching two courses per semester. The amount of time I spend preparing for class, teaching, and grading limits the time I can put toward my own studies, and will certainly lengthen the time it takes me to get my degree.

Because CUNY does not provide health insurance to graduate students, I have had to choose between going without or paying for it myself out of my meager wages as an adjunct. Added to this is the cost of tuition. Almost all top-notch graduate schools provide

tuition remission for their students, but at CUNY many graduate students are not so fortunate.

Having to pay tuition and health insurance on top of expensive city life forces them to teach more courses or to go into deeper debt. One of my graduate-student colleagues at Queens College

has stopped taking courses, completely halting progress toward her degree because she simply cannot afford tuition.

CUNY's inability to support graduate students hurts students like me, but it also puts the university at a disadvantage when competing with other schools for top graduate students. I have met with prospective students in the past two years and they always ask me about assistance to graduate students at CUNY. I wish I could tell them that CUNY values us enough to fully fund our study, but I cannot and I am afraid this is keeping some of the best students from joining our otherwise outstanding institution.



Michelle Calderon

Carl Lindskoog teaches and studies history

## TESTIMONY IN ALBANY

# 60 adjuncts, 1 office

Marcia Newfield  
Adjunct Lecturer, BMCC

The chronic underfunding of CUNY hurts our students in countless ways. Students often work full-time and go to school full-time. When I see my students, they are tired and often discouraged and/or resistant to getting the skills they need. How much better it would be if I were available to meet with them in my office on days when we do not have class to give them extra help. But there are several obstacles to that: as an adjunct faculty member, I only have one office hour a week for 28 students, and I share my office and computer with 60 other adjuncts. This

makes privacy and focus difficult if not impossible – try counseling someone six inches away from an irrepressible basso!

In order to piece together a living, many adjuncts have to work at several colleges. A "part-timer" teaching an equal or greater number of courses than full-timers earns \$30,000 a year, or less, if they are teaching in one of CUNY's many language immersion programs. We have health insurance only if we teach six credits a semester, and if a class is cancelled at the last minute, we have to pay \$413 dollars a month to continue coverage under COBRA. Most adjuncts cannot afford it.

Graduate students have no health insurance. I received a call



Gary Schoichet

Poet Marcia Newfield has taught English at BMCC for 19 years.

yesterday from a 50-year old adjunct/graduate student who had just broken her leg. She had been teaching chemistry and was scheduled for the Spring semester. She was frantic, asking if we could pro-

vide any help, since she depends on the money, yet has to be immobile for several weeks and may need an operation. NYSUT is working on a bill for short-term disability for adjuncts, but right

now there is nothing. Neither do we get accumulated sick days, unemployment, health insurance upon retirement, or sabbaticals.

### MEAGER PENSIONS

Pensions, even for those teaching 20 years or more, are so meager (for example, I would receive only \$4,000 a year) that few who have depended upon adjuncting as a livelihood can afford to retire. With the prospect of \$11,000 per annum from Social Security and the doughnut hole for drugs, I know I have to count on working until I die.

When the state treats its teachers so poorly, what kind of message does this send to our students about how their society values education? The contingent workforce is composed of dedicated people who have followed their passion for their discipline and who love their students. New York can and must do better.



## WORLD LABOR IN BRIEF

### Iraqi unions raided

In Baghdad, US and Iraqi armed forces raided the main offices of the General Federation of Iraqi Workers on February 23, turning the office upside-down. They also detained a security guard and confiscated computers and other equipment. The soldiers returned two days later, damaging the headquarters again.

On the same day, armed forces also raided the offices of the Iraqi journalists' union and shot at the building.

Both unions and many others are calling for the return of the seized property and compensation. To add your voice, go to [www.labourstart.org](http://www.labourstart.org) and search for "Iraqi unions."

### US unions at the UN

Last month, the United Auto Workers and the AFL-CIO petitioned the UN to restore graduate assistants' human right to form a union. The two labor organizations filed a complaint against the US government with the UN agency devoted to workers' rights, charging the Bush administration with violating internationally recognized standards.

Also at the UN last month was PSC President Barbara Bowen, who spoke on a panel about growing threats to workers' pensions. Her remarks drew on PSC retirees' activism to protect their Welfare Fund coverage, as well as efforts of other local union members fighting for the right to retire with dignity. The latter include NYC transit workers and New Jersey public sector employees. Other panelists included Mark Levinson of the Economic Policy Institute and Robin Blackburn of Essex University.

## Around the chapters

# Organizing launched in 3 boros

By DANIA RAJENDRA

### BROOKLYN: ONE ON ONE ORGANIZING BLITZ

In an "organizing blitz," a dozen members of the Brooklyn College PSC chapter contacted junior faculty members on February 8. "We tried to reach every untenured, full-time faculty member on that single day," said Alex Vitale, acting chapter chair. "We split up into teams of two, knocked on office doors, and left calling cards for people we missed. For many people we spoke with, it was their first face-to-face contact with the union," he told *Clarion*. "Because of the blitz, we found faculty members who had been active in unions before they got to Brooklyn. We hope to tap their expertise."

"People had fun, and those we spoke with really appreciated getting a visit from other junior faculty in the union," said Carolina Bank Muñoz of the chapter's organizing committee. "We learned about [their views on] contract priorities,

as well as what people are willing to do to win those demands in the next contract," she said.

The chapter is also setting up a legislative committee that plans to meet with [area] lawmakers in their Brooklyn home offices. The chapter is also creating a new legislative committee that plans to meet with city and state lawmakers in their Brooklyn offices, Vitale said. "We are doing outreach to full- and part-time faculty and HEOs. Our first focus will be meeting with legislators about the CUNY budget."

### LAGUARDIA: STEWARDS' COUNCIL LAUNCHED

At LaGuardia Community College, faculty and staff have formed a Stewards' Council with representatives from the college's different departments. "Shop stewards" are a common part of many unions, local activists who work to organize and provide information to co-workers. At LaGuardia, the Stewards' Council serves as an informal support system for developing union leader-

ship, networks and knowledge, said Karen Miller, assistant professor in social science. Miller, who is spearheading the effort, says it helps members stay informed across campus. "HEOs, in particular, have been consistently participating," she told *Clarion*. "We're tackling workload – and while that is a problem for all of us, it's a huge problem for them."

Renee Daniels, an assistant to HEO who works in the admissions office, has been participating since the start. "I would like to help the union capture the most meaningful HEO concerns," Daniels told *Clarion*, adding that the nature of her job duties motivated her to join the council. "As a college recruiter, I work on- and off-campus during the year and need to be informed and clear about my rights as an employee and a union member. I need to know how my union can assist me and help create a voice for HEOs within the union."

LaGuardia PSC Chapter Chair Lorraine Cohen called the project "one of the chapter's most important initiatives ever." She added, "I believe that the Stewards' Council has the power to strengthen every campaign in which the chapter is engaged."

### HOSTOS: UNION VS. RATS

Last semester, a student worker in Hostos's behavioral and social sciences department reached for a book in a department supply room – and a rat landed on her arm. It scratched her as it scuttled off, but fortunately she was not bitten.

Not long later, Assistant Professor Marcella Bencivenni spied a rat in her office, which is also in that department. "It was around 4:30 in the afternoon, and he came from the ra-

diators. He crossed the room twice," Bencivenni recalled. "I was terrified – I can't stand them. My office is very clean, I don't eat there. I thought, wow, if he managed to come here, where there is nothing to attract him, there must be a major infestation."

These incidents inspired PSC chapter leaders to pick up a camera and tour their own campus, documenting evidence of rats and other health and safety problems. Their PowerPoint presentation – featuring pictures from the December 7 walkaround – was the highlight of the first chapter meeting of Spring semester. Images included

rat droppings, rat traps cut in half, and other problems such as uncovered electrical outlets, filthy floors, and air vents clogged with black dust. Members shared their own stories after the presentation.

The rat problem forced management to create a committee, which includes representation of the PSC chapter and other college constituencies. The chapter planned to bring the presentation to the next committee meeting.

The rats and other problems are hard on faculty morale, Bencivenni told *Clarion*. "My first reaction was, 'I didn't study so hard and earn a PhD to deal with a rat in my office!' I felt really insulted. And for days, I did not want to sit in my office, I was always checking to see if the rat was back."

"No one, student or faculty, should worry about rats in their classrooms. We are entitled to a healthy workplace," said Hostos PSC Chapter Chair Norma Peña de Llorenz. "These problems are an affront to all of us who work and study here, and management must take them seriously."



Karen Miller and HEOs discuss the LaGuardia Stewards' Council.

# Champion of women's and union rights dies

Judith Vladeck, a labor lawyer famous for winning a landmark lawsuit against CUNY for discriminating against women faculty, died on January 8 at the age of 83. A memorial service at Hunter College, from which she graduated in 1945, drew people from across the university.

Vladeck was known for her wit, her passion for justice and commitment to underdog plaintiffs. When a reporter asked whether she had ever represented an employer, she responded, "Are you kidding? Never." She was a partner in the firm of Vladeck, Waldman, Elias & Engelhard in Manhattan, which she called "the last socialist law firm in America."

The CUNY lawsuit, in which Lilia Melani of Brooklyn College was the lead plaintiff, charged CUNY with systematic discrimination against

## Judith Vladeck argued key CUNY case

women faculty in pay, promotions and hiring. CUNY fought the suit for 10 years until 1983, when a judge ruled that there was strong evidence of discrimination in wages. The university paid a \$7.5 million settlement, but Vladeck told *The New York Times*, "If we were to calculate the real back pay in this case, they'd have to take Brooklyn College and City College and auction them off to pay for the damages."

"It was a tremendous legal victory, a landmark piece of litigation," said Irwin Bluestein, outside counsel to the PSC. "Melani established the principle of gender equity in pay." He noted, however, that CUNY's practice still falls short. As

of Fall 2005, women accounted for 45% of CUNY's faculty, but only 35% of full professors and just 25% of distinguished professors.

### FORCE OF NATURE

Bluestein worked with both Vladeck and her husband, Steve Vladeck, for decades. "She was a force of nature," he recalled. "She was a pioneer, intrepid, a real dreadnaught." Bluestein told *Clarion* that the Vladecks helped negotiate the formation of the PSC, and that their firm provided outside representation to the PSC until 1999. During the discrimination suit against CUNY, he said, the union provided substantial support to the litigation.

"As an alumna of CUNY, Judy Vladeck knew what was truly possi-

ble from the opportunity offered by the university," said Irwin Polishook, former president of the PSC. "This passion inspired her defense of CUNY, of women in the struggle against discrimination, and her recognition that a union made better things possible for our many thousands of students," he told *Clarion*. "The PSC and its members were the beneficiaries not only of expert representation, but also, particularly in the early days, of times when Judy allowed us to defer paying legal bills without any diminution of commitment in defending our rights."

"The lawsuit was a catalyst for CUNY women to come together as feminists," remembered Lorraine Cohen, chair of the PSC Women's Committee. "We all have a debt to

Judith Vladeck. Looking at and analyzing inequality of not only gender, but race and ethnicity, is something that needs to be done in an ongoing way. And that's also her legacy."

Joyce Barrett, a former PSC vice president for senior colleges, was a plaintiff in the *Melani* lawsuit and worked with Vladeck on an earlier gender discrimination suit against Western Electric. Barrett said it had been a privilege to learn from Vladeck, whom she called "a stubborn and tough fighter of employment discrimination."

### MAGNETIC

Vladeck's strong personality helped make her a good litigator – and also "a marvelous public speaker," Lilia Melani told *Clarion*. "Whenever Judy came and spoke to us during the lawsuit, it was to a packed audience. Even last year, she and I spoke at a women's studies conference and she came with her homecare attendant. She held those women in the palm of her hand, even though she was ill. She was magnetic – she really was." –DR



## RETIREMENT MONEY

# Rough transition at TIAA-CREF

By PETER HOGNESS

Transition to a new computer system at TIAA-CREF has led to confusion and concern among CUNY employees and retirees who are part of this retirement program. The most widespread problem has been unclear communication about the change, but a number of TIAA-CREF participants at CUNY have also encountered errors in the handling of their accounts.

While most people in TIAA-CREF at CUNY were unaffected or have experienced only an inconvenience, the union is advising all participants to check their accounts, and, if they are retired and receiving systematic withdrawals, to check payments that were made this year. Those who spot a problem should call TIAA-CREF's New York office at (800) 842-2011. "These problems serve as a reminder that everyone should check their account statement on a regular basis," said Clarissa Gilbert Weiss, the pension expert on the PSC staff.

## APOLOGY

"Everyone at TIAA-CREF apologizes for the problems that some of our CUNY clients have experienced," said Chad Peterson, TIAA-CREF's director of media relations. For the few dozen people who received an incorrect pension payment, he said, "we have made or will make the participant whole...by retroactively crediting the late payment with the correct investment returns as of the originally scheduled date." Other costs, such as fees for returned checks, would also be reimbursed on "a case-by-case basis," Peterson told *Clarion*.

In January, more than one-quarter of participants at CUNY received a letter from TIAA-CREF stating that "we are updating our systems and technology to enhance the services we provide" – and that "this requires" that TIAA-CREF split the member's existing pension account into two or more separate accounts. The letter was received by some on the active payroll and some retirees.

What the letter did not explain – at least to most members' satisfaction – was *why*. It stated that TIAA-CREF had to split all accounts "that contain contributions originating from separate sources" – such as contributions "from more than one employer or from more than one plan under the same employer."

But to many who received the letter, this made no sense. Many had only contributed to TIAA-CREF while working for CUNY, and not under any other employer. And while at CUNY, they had always been in TIAA-CREF – never in another pension plan. "I've worked for CUNY for 21 years," said Phyllis Gray, who works at City Tech in student affairs. "I've always been in TIAA-CREF and my paycheck has

## New computer system

always been from CUNY. I called for clarification, but I couldn't get a clear answer."

It turns out anyone who was a member of TIAA-CREF at CUNY both before and after January 1, 1990, has been through two different plans under TIAA-CREF – even if they did not know it. The TIAA-CREF plan at CUNY was a 403(b) plan until December 31, 1989, after which it was replaced by a 401(a) plan. These are technically "different plans under the same employer," even if most members paid little attention to the change. People in this category were among those who had their accounts split, separating their contributions under each type of plan.

"Don't get nervous when you see the 403(b) account listed as 'frozen,'" Rosemary Markowski of TIAA-CREF told a PSC Retirees Chapter meeting on March 5. "It's been 'frozen' since 1990," she explained, with these accounts gaining investment growth and interest but taking in no new contributions.

Others had their accounts split because they had contributions from more than one employer – and this includes some people who have worked only at CUNY. The CUNY Research Foundation is a separate employer from the university itself, so anyone who contributed to TIAA-CREF through paychecks from both CUNY and the CUNY RF has had two different employers – and had their account split.

Unaffected by the split were those who have been in TIAA-CREF only while employed by CUNY and were hired after January 1, 1990. Also unaffected were retirees who have "fully annuitized" – that is, who have exchanged 100% of their accumulated retirement funds for an annuity, which provides a guaranteed annual payment.

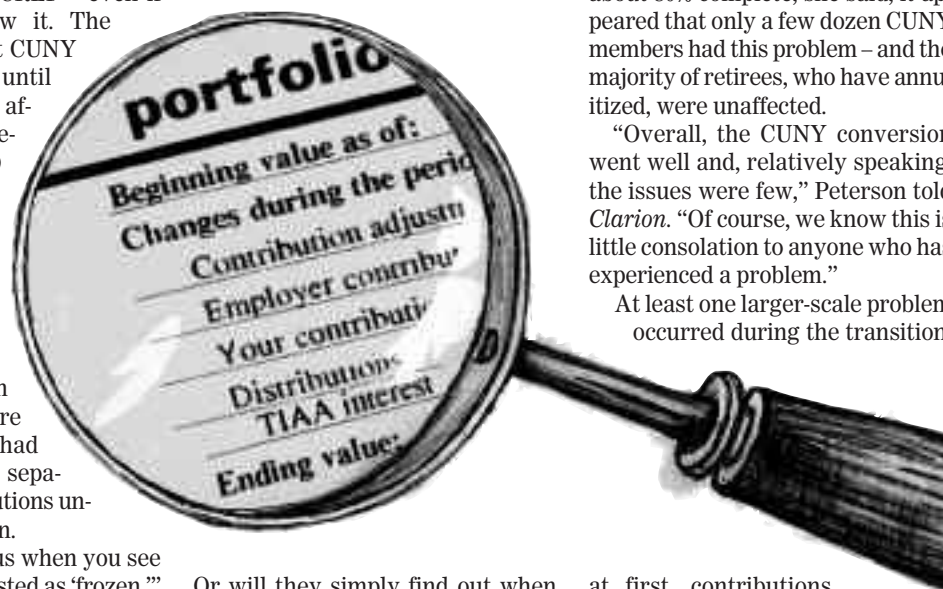
## SUCCESS?

TIAA-CREF says that the central reason for the change was to be able to offer "new products and services" in the future, as well as the general problems of maintaining a computer system that was out of date. It promises "exciting enhancements" in the future. But for the present, during the transition, participants at CUNY widely perceive the new system as "user-hostile," instead of "user-friendly."

The letter announcing the split in accounts told members who receive pension checks that "you may begin

receiving multiple payments that, added together, equal your original payment amount. It's possible that these payments may arrive on different days."

Will these members get advance notice of the new payment schedule?



Karen Callicott

Or will they simply find out when the checks arrive? *Clarion* asked this question two days before we went to press, but TIAA-CREF spokespeople could not provide an answer.

"I've had my mortgage maintenance and credit cards on automatic payment!" retiree John Gillespie told *Clarion*. The timing of those bank transfers, he explained, was based on the dates when he got his systematic withdrawals from TIAA-CREF. After experiencing a problem with his account, Gillespie complained to TIAA-CREF that he felt obliged to cancel all his automatic billing arrangements, "given the unreliability of payments."

Gillespie was one of those who received an incorrect pension payment during the switch to the new computer system. "I discovered by accident," he said, "that I received about 30% of my retirement for the February 2 payment." While the shortfall was corrected the day after he complained, he received no specific explanation – despite repeated requests.

Another retiree, who asked not to be named, told *Clarion* that he also received only about a third of his regular amount, in two payments in February. "On February 12 I received a letter about the successful implementation of the software upgrade," he added. "Some success!"

TIAA-CREF's Peterson said the company regrets the incorrect payments and that "a very small number of CUNY members" among those receiving systematic withdrawals were affected. "In every one of these cases," he said, members will be made whole.

What happened, Markowski explained, was that these members should have gotten a second pay-

ment from their newly split account, but that "the money remained in that account." This happened when the split was carried out on the same day that a check should have been issued, she said – and she added that TIAA-CREF is reviewing all 1,000 CUNY members who receive systematic payments to identify any errors. With that review about 80% complete, she said, it appeared that only a few dozen CUNY members had this problem – and the majority of retirees, who have annuitized, were unaffected.

"Overall, the CUNY conversion went well and, relatively speaking, the issues were few," Peterson told *Clarion*. "Of course, we know this is little consolation to anyone who has experienced a problem."

At least one larger-scale problem occurred during the transition:

at first, contributions for TIAA-CREF members working at CUNY's four Educational Opportunity Centers were not made. TIAA-CREF says it has now corrected the problem.

Some members who have a loan from TIAA-CREF are also affected by the split in accounts: they now have to make two loan payments instead of one. "You can still make your one payment in one check, but just enclose the two separate coupons," said Markowski. "We apologize for any inconvenience." TIAA-CREF will work to change the system in the future, she said, so that two coupons are not necessary.

## INFORMATION, PLEASE

At the Retirees Chapter meeting and in interviews with *Clarion*, many members complained about poor information from TIAA-CREF phone centers. "When you call, no one can give you a solid answer," said Gray. "One person told me she was not familiar with the system."

"I would recommend that you call our New York rather than the general number," Liliam Quintero of TIAA-CREF told the March chapter meeting. "Our consultants in the New York office are really up to date on the specific plan at CUNY." There are two numbers for the New York office, she said: (212) 916-5800 and (800) 842-2011, "both ring on the same line." Markowski said that on its national number, TIAA-CREF now ensures that callers from CUNY are connected to the most senior consultant available.

In at least some cases, there have been misstatements of members' retirement accumulations. On February 17, one member told *Clarion*, he called TIAA-CREF's automated phone system to check his total accu-

mulation. "It was down over a million dollars," he said. This was before late February's drop in the stock market, which in any case could not have accounted for nearly that much of a decline. As of March, the discrepancy had still not been resolved.

This retiree, the former director of computer services at a CUNY college, was quite calm for someone who, on paper, was down a million dollars. "Look, I want to be fair to them," he said. "I don't believe that the money is gone." Though he expects the numbers to get straightened out, he was severely critical of TIAA-CREF's computer operations.

"Those of us who were in information systems can't believe that they put modifications in without adequately testing them or without notice," he said.

He also said that while such problems have been worse with the transition to the new system, they have been growing for some time. "Most of it seems to have occurred in the last three or four years," he said, "since TIAA-CREF went beyond academia and started marketing themselves to the general public."

Howard Reznikoff, of the Retirees' Chapter TIAA-CREF Issues Committee, agreed. "We've been accumulating problems," he said. "Now they have gotten worse."

## FOCUS

At the Retirees Chapter meeting, Hank Stroobants, a recent retiree from BMCC, told Markowski, "I think you have lost focus with these 'new products and services.' This group is not so concerned about that – I think you have lost focus on servicing us."

"I wouldn't want to have your job no matter how much it paid," Jim Perlstein, a retiree officer on the PSC Executive Council, told Markowski. "But I hope you would take a message back to your superiors, that TIAA-CREF is running a tremendous risk. There are alternatives, and there is nothing to stop the PSC and UUP from reconsidering the relationship with TIAA-CREF."

"We fully recognize that," Markowski responded, "and also that you as individuals have alternatives. This is a serious concern for us." She added that top TIAA-CREF management "is very aware of these issues," and focused on resolving them. The problems, she added, were not mainly with the new computer system itself, but with transferring the data from the old format.

Weiss told the meeting that the PSC has pressed TIAA-CREF to improve its phone support, and that the union is monitoring the situation. Members should check their statements carefully, she advised. "If you have a problem, call TIAA-CREF's New York office," she said. "If it does not get resolved, contact the PSC."

TIAA-CREF's New York office can be reached at (800) 842-2011.



## CALENDAR

**SUNDAY, MARCH 18: 1:00 pm** / March against the war in Iraq – to join the PSC contingent, call (212) 354-1252. There is also a march in Washington, DC, the day before.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 20: 6:00 pm** / Diversity Committee meeting, at the PSC office, 61 Broadway, 15th floor. Photo ID required to enter building. For more info, e-mail Samuel Farrell at samf@lagcc.cuny.edu.

**MARCH 22-24** / Facing Race: A National Conference. Explore innovative strategies for racial justice. At the CUNY Graduate Center, see [www.arc.org](http://www.arc.org).

**FRIDAY, MARCH 30: 9:00 am** / Open Access Committee meeting. For location and info, contact Susan DiRaimo at SDRCC@aol.com or (718) 601-7963.

**MONDAY, APRIL 9: 1:00-3:00 pm** / Retirees Chapter meeting. At the PSC union hall, 61 Broadway, 16th floor. Photo ID required to enter building. For info, call Linda Slifkin at (212) 354-1252.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 13: 4:00 pm** / Financial planning workshop for part-timers. At the PSC office. For info, contact Marcia Newfield at (212) 354-1252 or [mnewfield@psccmail.org](mailto:mnewfield@psccmail.org).

**SATURDAY, APRIL 14: 9:30-12:30 pm** / International Committee meeting, location TBA. For location and more info, contact Renate Bridenthal at (212) 662-0934 or [RBriden1@juno.com](mailto:RBriden1@juno.com).

**TUESDAY, APRIL 17: 6:00 pm** / Women's Committee meeting, at the PSC office. For info, contact Debra Bergen at (212) 354-1252 or [dbergen@psccmail.org](mailto:dbergen@psccmail.org).

**FRIDAY, APRIL 20: 6:00 pm** / Labor Goes to the Movies shows *Bolivia*. At the PSC union hall. For info, contact Dania Rajendra at [drajendra@psccmail.org](mailto:drajendra@psccmail.org). No RSVPs.

**APRIL 26-29** / Labor's Voices 3: Media for a New Workers' Movement brings together pro-worker journalists, media workers, academics and activists from unions and workers' centers across the country and around the world. At the CUNY Graduate Center. See [www.laborsvoices.org](http://www.laborsvoices.org).

## New WF site

The Welfare Fund has launched a new website, [www.psccunywf.org](http://www.psccunywf.org).

Printable forms, a schedule of dental fees, and links to helpful resources for part-timers and full-timers are all available at the new website. "We view this as a 'work in progress,'" said WF Executive Director Larry Morgan. "If your website isn't always a work in progress, it quickly loses its value."

The site identifies staff, trustees and advisory council members, and members can share information about good dentists. "It's a real opportunity for us to step up the level of communication between the fund and the membership," Morgan said.

## KENTUCKY RIVER

## Workers lose union rights

By DABNEY LYLES and PETER HOGNESS

**W**ith Democrats in control of Congress, unions are seeking to reverse six years

worth of anti-labor policy decisions by the Bush administration – and a key target is the *Kentucky River* decision by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

Last fall the Republican-controlled NLRB ruled that nurses with regular assigning tasks are supervisors and stripped them of their federally protected right to organize. The implications of the decision go far beyond nurses and could ultimately deny union rights to millions of professionals.

The ruling came in a dispute at Oakwood Healthcare, in one of three cases collectively known as *Kentucky River*. When nurses at Oakwood organized with the United Auto Workers (UAW), hospital executives argued that two-thirds of them were supervisors and therefore had no collective bargaining rights.

## HIRE, FIRE, DISCIPLINE

Previously the NLRB applied the title 'supervisor' only to individuals with the power to hire, fire, promote and discipline other employees. But in a September 29 ruling, the board's majority decided that a nurse need only direct other nurses, and may spend as little as 10% to 15% of his or her time doing so, to be classified as a supervisor.

The distinction is crucial because supervisors are not covered by the National Labor Relations Act. They can still try to form a union – but employers can legally fire them for doing so and face no legal penalties if they refuse to negotiate. (This has been the situa-



Stephanie Densmore, RN, UNAC/UHCP activist in San Diego, speaks out at a July 2006 news conference warning the NLRB that silencing nurses with a bad decision in the *Kentucky River* cases would harm patients. UNAC/UHCP has negotiated with two employers – Kaiser Permanente and Tenet – to protect nurses' union voices despite the negative ruling.

tion of graduate employees at NYU since 2004, when the NLRB reversed itself and stripped them of their federal union rights.)

A dissent by the NLRB's two Democrats, Wilma Liebman and Dennis Walsh, warned that the *Kentucky River* decision "threatens to create a new class of workers under federal labor law – workers who have neither the genuine prerogatives of management, nor the statutory rights of ordinary employees." They noted that most professionals could fall into this category because they often direct another's work – for example, teachers may direct the work of a teacher's aide.

## NLRB targets professionals

side, but they did find the name of a relative and after many phone calls reached the passenger – a jeweler from out of town.

"I'm not going to take someone else's money or property to make me rich," Osman told the *Daily News*. The TWA organizes cabbies around workplace problems, immigrants' rights and other issues.

## Immigrant meatpackers fight union-busting

Workers at Smithfield Foods, Inc., the world's largest pork processor and hog producer, contend that the company is using federal immigration enforcement to squelch pro-union sentiment.

Last spring, Smithfield volunteered to participate in a federal immigration enforcement program. In the fall, the company fired 50 workers from its Tar Heel, NC, plant, where workers have been or-

Liebman and Walsh wrote that by 2012 around 34 million workers, or 23% of the private-sector workforce, could be categorized as supervisory and denied union rights. (The NLRB has jurisdiction only over private employers, so its decisions do not apply to employees of CUNY or other public universities.)

Nurses and labor leaders around the country greeted the decision with anger and vowed to continue organizing. "We're the voice of patient care and the union gave us that voice," Anne Goldman, chair of NYSUT's Health Care Professionals Council, told *New York Teacher*. "When you're under the cloak of your employers, how are

you going to say patient care is deteriorating?" she asked. "How dare [the NLRB] try to silence us?"

"This continues a trend of anti-union decisions by the NLRB," said Denis Hughes, president of the New York State AFL-CIO. "This agency, which was created in 1935 to protect the rights of workers, now appears determined to take those rights away. Today it's charge nurses. Tomorrow it could be police officers or computer analysts."

## PRECEDENT?

More than 60 other cases addressing the definition of supervisor are now before the NLRB. While the *Kentucky River* decision sets a dangerous precedent, unions will fight case-by-case to minimize the number of workers who are classified out of their bargaining units.

"*Kentucky River* violates the spirit of the [National Labor Relations] Act," said Kate Bronfenbrenner of Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations. "But it's going to take a different board to make that determination."

Unions hope that a change in the White House in 2008 will produce a more labor-oriented labor board – but they say action is needed now. A broad court challenge to the NLRB ruling is expected, and the case may well end up in the Supreme Court. But AFL-CIO President John Sweeney vowed to press congressional Democrats to reverse *Kentucky River* as part of a broad package of labor law reforms.

By a vote of 241 to 185 the House recently approved the Employee Free Choice Act, which would allow workers to join a union if a majority of employees sign authorization cards. The measure is awaiting Senate action. A bill that would restore airport security workers' right to join a union was passed by the House and Senate. Both measures face likely presidential vetoes.

## QUESTION OF POWER

But unions don't want Congress to stop there and are seeking action to reverse *Kentucky River* as well. "Some members of our new Congress may caution that we are demanding too much, too soon," Sweeney told an organizing summit in December. "Our answer is this: we didn't elect you to hesitate."

Whatever the outcome in Congress, Bronfenbrenner notes that workers can and do organize even without legal protections. It is riskier, she says, but possible. "Teachers are organizing in Texas, where public employees have no collective bargaining rights," Bronfenbrenner said. "Atlanta's city workers are organized, and farm workers have organized for years. It comes down to a question of power."

## LABOR IN BRIEF

## Taxi union activist returns diamonds

Chowdhury Osman, a member and organizer of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance (NYTWA), made headlines in February when he returned a bag full of diamonds – to a passenger who'd given him a 30-cent tip.

Osman discovered the bag on February 5, some time after dropping off the passenger, who had paid him a \$10.70 fare. Osman brought the unopened bag to the taxi union's office; with Executive Director Bhairavi Desai as a witness, he opened it to look for the owner's contact information. Inside they found 31 diamond rings.

The owner's number was not in-



## STATE BUDGET

# Lift CUNY out of poverty

By BARBARA BOWEN  
PSC President

On February 8, I testified before the New York State Legislature's fiscal committees on the need for a significant increase in public funds for CUNY. The PSC is the leading voice for the importance of making a major investment in CUNY this year, when New York is poised to make historic additions to K-12 education funding. This column is adapted from my testimony, updated to reflect the most recent budget figures; the full testimony and budget testimony by rank-and-file PSC members is on the union website at [www.psc-cuny.org/budgethearing07.htm](http://www.psc-cuny.org/budgethearing07.htm).

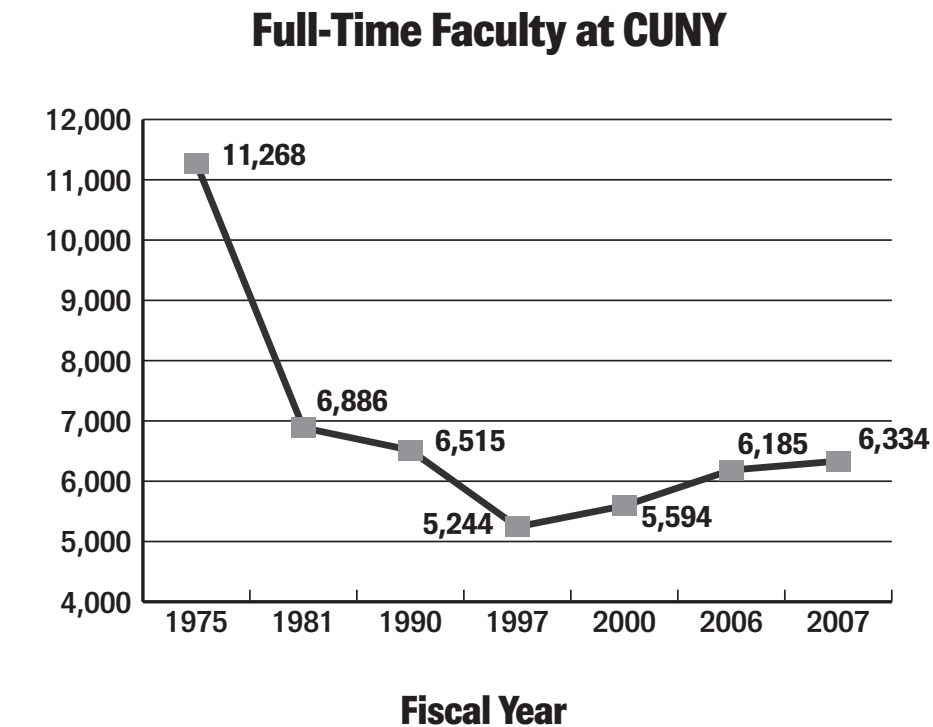
We start from a different place this year, not only because we have a different governor, but because you, the legislature, heard our message. In your budget last year, you demonstrated that you understood the importance of public higher education, you registered that public higher education in New York has historically been underfunded, and you were willing to invest political capital in starting to make up that deficit. Rejecting the notion that public higher education can be restored through tuition increases, you refused the requests from Governor Pataki and from CUNY for increased tuition.

This year, when we begin with a higher platform in the Executive Budget, we ask you to build on that platform and make an investment that would make a difference. Because Governor Spitzer's budget this year does not call for tuition increases, does not significantly reduce TAP and does not underfund mandatory costs, the legislature has the opportunity to do more than bail CUNY out. For the first time in more than a decade, you have an opportunity to make CUNY great. I am here to ask you to do that.

## OUT OF POVERTY

But I will be frank with you. Restoring CUNY, lifting the university out of poverty – because that's where it is – will take more than minor adjustments. It will take a visionary investment. The PSC supports CUNY's request for additional funding but differs with Chancellor Goldstein on the nature of the crisis in our institution. It is true that the faculty, staff and students do more and more with less; it is true that we publish books and produce prize-winning students and make major contributions to the state's economic, intellectual and cultural life. But we do that in spite of the conditions in which we work, not because of them.

Fortunately, we have before us this year a powerful model of what can be done by going



beyond business-as-usual. Building on the courageous grassroots effort of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Governor Spitzer has pledged a major new investment in K-12 education. His proposal for a massive infusion of funds recognizes historic inequities and responds to the need for a dramatically different approach. This is the education year for New York State. Make it the investment year for CUNY.

CUNY is the only college within economic reach for the majority of the students who will be served by the enhancement in the public schools. And CUNY has by far the state's largest enrollment of students of color and students from new immigrant families. 72% of CUNY students are people of color; 59% are from families whose total annual income – in New York City – is under \$30,000. It is no accident that this is the population whose educational opportunity has been jeopardized by years of disinvestment in CUNY.

If New York is to attain the real value of its new investment in education, an investment in CUNY must be part of the plan. Not to invest in CUNY at this critical juncture is to put at risk both our children's future and the state's historic investment in education.

The good news is that a relatively modest investment in CUNY would be transformative. While the funds needed to enhance opportunity in the public schools are in the

billions of dollars, an additional investment of \$76 million beyond the governor's proposed budget would *remake* the City University of New York. Because of CUNY's historic importance to the project of public education, the renewal of CUNY would also be a landmark educational achievement nationwide. It is within your power to create a university worthy of the twenty-first century's "children of the whole people."

The PSC requests that you invest in six major priorities for CUNY:

### #1: Funds for Programmatic Improvements:

The governor's budget does not authorize a tuition increase, but leaves a \$24.3 million gap in critical operating funds CUNY expected to achieve from increased tuition. That gap should be filled by public funds – not by our students.

**#2: Aid to Community Colleges:** The governor's proposed increase of \$100 per full-time-equivalent student will not bring the state near its statutory requirement for community college funding. The PSC calls for an additional \$150 per student, for a total of \$9.4 million.

**#3: Full-Time Faculty:** Our sharpest need is for full-time faculty. In 1975, when CUNY enrollment was close to its current level, CUNY employed 11,268 full-time faculty.

Even with recent hiring initiatives, the total is still only 6,334 – a loss of about 5,000 positions. We request funding this year for an immediate increase of 500 full-time faculty lines, at a cost of \$25 million. Our initiative includes proposals for increasing racial and ethnic diversity among the faculty and for converting a number of part-time positions to full-time.

### #4: Additional Full-Time Professional Staff:

We propose that CUNY be funded to hire 50 additional professional staff, at a cost of \$2.5 million, in positions that directly serve students – both to respond to the increased enrollment and to provide a richer base of support for our students.

**#5: Student Mentoring Fund:** We propose the creation of a new fund to support intense, hands-on mentoring of CUNY students, with an investment this year of \$5 million. One of the secrets of small private colleges and large elite universities is that they work to ensure that their students do not fail. CUNY students are entitled to no less.

**#6: Support for Graduate Students:** At almost every other graduate institution, certainly at institutions whose programs rank as high as CUNY's, doctoral students receive full tuition fellowships, plus stipends and health insurance. A small investment, of \$5 million annually, would stabilize graduate student support and allow the university to offer these students healthcare.

## A VISION OF RENEWAL

On behalf of the faculty, staff and students of the City University – and on behalf of the people of New York State – the PSC requests additional funding in these six areas, for a total of \$76 million in increased funds. That may sound ambitious – and it is. But small plans will not lift CUNY out of decades of enforced poverty. Governor Spitzer said in his State of the State address that "we must begin an effort to make our higher education system the best in America." After 20 years of disinvestment, it is a delusion to imagine that that can be done without significant funding.

There is a wonderful poem by the British poet Stevie Smith, in which a dead man lies on the beach and moans:

*I was much further out than you thought  
And not waving but drowning.*

For the past 20 years, CUNY has been not waving, but drowning. The Executive Budget allows us, for the first time in many years, to tread water. What we're asking is to swim.

## Enough of doing more with less.

## Clarion MARCH 2007

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## Take action

Ask your state elected representatives to support CUNY by visiting the PSC website, [www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org). Sign onto a letter urging your state lawmakers to add \$76 million to Gov. Spitzer's proposed CUNY allocation and continue last year's commitment from the legislature to address the years of underfunding. This increase will fully fund CUNY's budget request and allocate almost \$52 million for the six PSC priorities listed above.



# 'Gay Today at CUNY'

By MICHELE FORSTEN  
City Tech

## GLBTQ services assessed

"If students don't feel safe on campus being who they are, their academic achievement will suffer," says Terri Clark, director of the Student Wellness Center at City Tech. "When students feel included, they can focus on learning. They'll be more likely to stay enrolled and go on to graduate."

That shared concern brought faculty, staff, students and administrators from across CUNY to the recent colloquium, "Gay Today at CUNY: The State of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (GLBTQ) Student Services on Our Campuses." Held at City Tech on December 5, the event drew 50 people from 15 CUNY campuses and the central office.

"We need to provide appropriate services to GLBTQ students to help ensure their academic success and personal well-being, as we aim to do for all of our students," said Dr. Marcela Armoza, vice president of enrollment and student affairs at City Tech. "While CUNY campuses individually have been addressing gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender student concerns for some time, much remains to be done." Her remarks drew murmurs of agreement.

### UNSAFE

Looking at the national picture, GLBT students do not feel safe. According to a National Gay and Lesbian Task Force study of several US college campuses, one in five GLBT respondents had feared for their physical safety because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, 43% considered their campus homophobic, 41% stated their college/university was not addressing issues related to their sexual orientation and gender identity, and 51% concealed their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid intimidation.

"The colloquium was an eye-opener in that it showed us that there is a population of students –

those who are GLBTQ – whose needs we are not addressing," said Marie Carrese-Araoz, associate professor of counseling at York. "We have no services specifically for GLBT students on our campus."

### BACKLASH

Estelle Miller, a higher education associate who is director of Kingsborough's Center for Women and Non-Traditional Students, said the extent of the problem became clear to her when she heard about the homophobic backlash that greeted a showing of the film *Brokeback Mountain* in an English class. (Based on Annie Proulx's short story in the *New Yorker*, the film depicts a love relationship between two cowboys.) "I think there is a tendency for homophobic slurs not to be taken as seriously as racial or ethnic slurs," Miller said.

City Tech's Clark said that this type of behavior highlights the need for colleges to provide personal and institutional support to their GLBTQ students and to educate heterosexual students, faculty and staff about GLBTQ issues.

"We know that homophobia and heterosexism greatly contribute to GLBTQ youth's high rates of attempted and completed suicide, homelessness, violence victimization, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, and HIV-associated risky behaviors," said Clark.

Colloquium participants discussed the challenges involved in building GLBTQ student support programs at CUNY. Where programs exist they vary widely, ranging from straight/gay alliances at CCNY and College of Staten Island, to a gay and lesbian club at Hunter, to a part-time GLBTQ coordinator at Lehman, to a weekly support group at City Tech. While CUNY's Graduate Center is home to the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, the first

university-based research center in the US on GLBT issues, the center's focus is on research, public programs and conferences – not campus-based student services.

City Tech had already established itself as a pioneer of sorts in GLBTQ student services by being the first CUNY campus to offer the Safe Zone program, which offers a voluntary opportunity for faculty, staff and administrators to become allies for GLBTQ students. Volunteers participate in a three-hour training conducted by Clark and Daniel Fictum, director of student life, which introduces them to the issues that GLBTQ individuals face and explores how they can be supportive allies. The City Tech Safe Zone program was replicated at Kingsborough and for a time at John Jay.

### UNCOMFORTABLE

"Most of our GLBTQ students are not comfortable disclosing their orientation or gender identity and so are not 'out' to their peers," said the director of City Tech's counseling center, Cynthia Bink. "That's why it's so important for us to create a positive atmosphere backed up by strong support services and visible role models of faculty and staff who are GLBT," added Bink, a higher education associate. With this in mind, last June a GLBT Pride group photo was taken of "out" City Tech faculty, staff and students, and displayed on easels at the entrances of three campus buildings.

"It was a breath of fresh air to see that at least on the City Tech campus, there are staff and faculty who are not afraid to speak openly about their sexual orientation," said York's Carrese-Araoz. "This supports GLBTQ students and says 'it's okay to be who you are.' This is so important for young people."

Bink, Clark, Fictum and others at City Tech went on to organize "Gay Today at CUNY," and they credit VP Armoza with giving this and other diversity efforts strong institu-



City Tech Student Wellness Center Director Terri Clark (left) with student Yamil Lay.

tional backing. "Individuals can express their support but this can go only so far," Bink told *Clarion*. "Institutions should provide leadership, resources and commitment to GLBTQ student issues." Without this backing, she said, the colloquium would not have been possible.

Working in small groups, colloquium participants brainstormed possible services and programs to satisfy the unmet needs of this student population, which includes a wide range of sub-groups, such as those who are gender-questioning, immigrants, HIV-positive or at-risk, and people of color.

### SAFE ZONE

Suggestions included establishing a CUNY-wide GLBTQ resource center, implementing faculty development around GLBTQ issues, making an effort to incorporate GLBTQ issues into the curriculum, having a CUNY Coming Out Day and Pride Month, requiring newly hired employees to undergo Safe Zone training, and building alliances with other multicultural groups, on campus and off. "At CUNY student development retreats, for example, GLBTQ issues should be a permanent item on the agenda," said Ma'at Lewis-Coles, assistant professor of counseling at John Jay.

The colloquium's program was facilitated by Christopher Murray, a counselor at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) Community Center and a therapist in private practice. Murray, who earned his MSW at the Hunter School of Social Work, is currently a Revson Fellow at Columbia University.

Participants left the colloquium feeling buoyed by the opportunity to network with other concerned colleagues and by the strong start that was made in dealing with the issues. "Attendance by so many faculty and staff from the various CUNY colleges demonstrated a commitment to bring issues of GLBTQ diversity to the forefront," said Lewis-Coles. "The next step must be made by the university, to issue a charge for the development of more GLBTQ programming and initiatives university-wide. It's important to have organizational commitment from the highest levels of leadership."

Adam Rockman, a higher education assistant in student affairs at Queens College, voiced a sentiment shared by many others. "It was a good first step," said Rockman. "We have a long way to go, but this was certainly an encouraging beginning."

Additional reporting by Carol Feinman.

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### 15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

## Make Congress act

As the union enters into a new round of contract negotiations, members are sure to hear about "scarce resources" in the city and state. Few policy decisions have as much impact on those resources as the escalating war in Iraq.

To date, the war has cost \$405 billion – NYC's share is \$13.5 bil-

lion. The labor movement is acting together to demand an end to the war and its waste of both lives and money. Hundreds of thousands of working people are participating in a petition drive directed at Congress; add your signature by going to the US Labor Against the War website, [www.uslaboragainstawar.org](http://www.uslaboragainstawar.org).