Above, at Brooklyn College’s hearing on the CUNY budget, adjunct and graduate teaching fellow Brandy Moore provides a reality check about balancing her own budget every month. Gov. Paterson’s proposed State budget would squeeze Moore from two directions: paying higher tuition as a grad student and facing speedup or potential loss of income as a part-time faculty member. At campus hearings across CUNY, students, faculty and staff called for “Fair Share” tax reform, to provide CUNY with the resources it needs. More hearings are planned for April and May at John Jay and at Bronx, Hostos and LaGuardia Community Colleges.
Monday, March 30: 6:00 pm / IHO Chapter meeting. CUNY Graduate Center, 34th St. and 30 Ave. Room 9206/9207. Jean Weisman, chapter chair and Mike Fabricant, PSC treasurer, will discuss organizing at CUNY. Iris DeLeur, vice president for Cross-Campus Units, will discuss bullying and a hostile work environment. Dinner will be served. RSVP to Nick Cruz at (212) 354-1232.

Thursday, April 2: 4:00 pm / PSC Campus Budget Hearing at Bronx CC. Meister Hall, Schwellner Auditorium, University Avenue and 181st St. For more information, contact Acting Chapter Chair Sharon Persinger at sharon.persinger@bcc.cuny.edu.

Monday, April 6: 1:00 pm / Retirees Chapter meeting. PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th Fl. Discussion of “Public Education in a Global Context.” For more information, contact Jacob Judd, jjudd@optonline.net.

Tuesday, April 21: 4:00 pm / Women’s Committee meeting. At the PSC office, 61 Broadway, 15th Fl. For more information, contact Marcia Newfield at revolve@earthlink.net.

FRIDAY, APRIL 24: 6:00 pm / Labor Goes to the Movies showing a County: Vale Os E Por Quais (“What Is It Worth?”). Directed by Sergio Bianchi, Brazil’s most important political filmmaker, this 2005 film explores the relation between Brazil’s slaveholding past and its contemporary reality in which Afro-Brazilians are victims of pervasive discrimination and corruption. Dramatized vignettes about slavery, taken directly from the national archives in Rio de Janeiro, are interwoven with the story of a young black woman, who works in a company dedicated to producing sugar. Screening at PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th Fl. For more information contact Albert Muñoz, amunoz@pscmail.org or (212) 354-1252. No RSVPs.

Saturday, April 25: 9:30 am-12:30 pm / International Committee meeting. For location and more information, contact Renate Bridenthal at rbriden1@juno.com.

Thursday, April 30: 3:30 pm / PSC Campus Budget Hearing at Hostos, Savoy Blvd., 2nd Fl., 120 E. 149th St. For more information, contact PSC chapter chair Lizette Colón at glo rielamateix@yahoo.com.

Thursday, April 30 / PSC Campus Budget Hearing at John Jay. Location and time TBA. For more information, contact Chapter Chair Lizette Colón at glo rielamateix@yahoo.com.

Sunday, May 3: 3:00 pm / Retirees Chapter and Women’s Committee sponsored theater party for all PSC members. See story at right.

Thursday, May 7: 2:00 pm / PSC Campus Budget Hearing at LaGuardia. Location TBD. For more information, contact Chapter Chair Charli Loraine Cohen at jimi@20aol.com.

Letters to the Editor

‘Draconian cuts’ would hurt education

From processing applications for financial aid to securing our campus buildings, the members of DC-37 at CUNY are a linchpin for the students, faculty and administrators. The support services we provide make it possible for faculty to spend more time teaching, for students to have learning opportunities, and for administrators to perform their jobs in a professional and dedicated manner.

The draconian cuts proposed by Governor Pataki and Mayor Bloomberg would strip our ability to provide a quality public higher education to those most in need. Higher tuition, fewer students and less available financial aid will only make it harder to achieve the college education so critical to those who desire to reach the middle-class dream. These cuts in programs of excellence will reduce the high-quality research opportunities that CUNY is known for providing to award-winning faculty and students alike.

That is why we must stop the budget cuts and tuition hikes proposed by the governor and the mayor. The solutions are to implement fair taxation and a “millionaires’ tax,” use the rainy day fund, create public sector jobs for the future and use the stimulus package to fund much-needed service and capital improvements at CUNY.

This is the fair way to address our budget problem, not putting it on the backs of those most vulnerable in our community.

Linda Ann Bowman
Vice President, Local 2054
DC-37, AFSCME
& College Assistant
College of Staten Island

The PSC, UFT and dozens of other New York union supporters of marriage equality for their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members. Do you? Do you believe every worker deserves the right to be able to get a job free of discrimination? Do you oppose busing in schools? Whether you are a straight ally or a member of the LGBTQ community, you can make a difference in the lives of all LGBT New Yorkers by meeting with your State Senator to lobby for equal rights.

If you live in Queens, the Bronx or on Long Island, and are willing to meet with your Senator in his/her district office, the Pride in Our Unions Committee of Empire State Pride Agenda asks you to contact Joanna at (212) 627-6305 or josmonsohn@prideagenda.org.

You can also get on the bus for Equality & Justice Day on April 28. Isn’t equality worth one day? Equality & Justice Day (E&D Day) is the one day of the year when over 1,000 LGBT New Yorkers and our allies – from unions, neighbors and faith communities – go to Albany to demonstrate the power of our communities and lobby our elected officials.

We have persuaded the State Assembly to pass our community’s three most important bills: marriage equality, the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) and the Dignity for All Students Act. With an Assembly and a governor supporting these issues, we now must make sure that the State Senate takes up and passes these bills so that they can become law in 2009. Go to www.prideagenda.org to find out more and to register. If you sign up online, please indicate that you are a PSC member.

‘You’re invited…to the Working Theater’

You’re invited…to the Working Theater

The PSC Retirees Chapter and the PSC Women’s Committee are sponsoring a theater party for all PSC members on Sunday, May 3. It’s for the 3:00 pm production of Exit Cuckoo at the Clurman Theatre, 410 W. 42nd St., 6th Avenue.

The Working Theater is New York’s only professional theater company dedicated to producing theater and for working people. Exit Cuckoo is a funny and deeply moving depiction of “mothers, nannies, caretakers and the concerns they have been put through.” Also highlighted is the campaign for a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, which would remedy the unjust omission of these workers from state and national labor law.

The playwright, Lisa Ramirez, has been described as “a young black woman, who works in the television industry and writes both about television and her performances.” This wide-ranging work is co-produced by Eva Enzler.

“Lisa Ramirez gives us an inside look into the complicated, disorienting, often overlooked world of mothers, nannies and children,” said Enzler, author of The Vagina Monologues.

To reserve tickets, send a check for $19 per seat to the PSC, c/o Faye Alladin, 61 Broadway, 15th floor, NY, NY 10006. Check must be received no later than April 19 to assure your reservation.

– Steve Leberstein, Retirees Chapter

PSCmail.org. Fax: (212) 302-7815.

Your thoughts, ideas, opinions and observations are invited for consideration in the Letters section in every issue. Letters should be less than 200 words in length, and are subject to editing.
Speaking out at campus hearings

Union members, students denounce budget cuts

Professor Stephen James of City Tech encourages audience members to resist proposed cuts in State support for CUNY during a March 12 campus budget hearing that the PSC helped organize. From left: Other panel members looking on are Carol Stanger, a HEO at City Tech, Ron Leone of DC 37 and Tere Watson of City Tech’s Student Government Association.

The PSC and its allies have beat the message, “This is not just a budget cut, it’s severing a lifetime.” Eighty-five people attended the second hearing, held on March 12 at City Tech. City Councilmenber Letitia James heard testimony from students and union members, along with aides to State Senators Velmanette Montgomery and Daniel Squadron and City Councilmember Charles Barron.

“Now that we are suffering this recession, this is time to cut back on higher education,” said James. She cited the power of students to make their cause more visible to legislators.

Meanwhile, more than 9,000 PSC members voiced their opposition to budget cuts.

PSC leaders argue that the budget problems are a revenue problem and Fair Share Tax Reform (see page 2) is a viable solution.

The fight continues in Albany, where PSC leaders opposed the cuts proposed for next year in March lobbying visits with legislators.

By JOHN TARLETON

Faculty, staff and students at the City University of New York launched a semester-long series of budget hearings on CUNY campuses, highlighting the damage that proposed budget cuts and tuition hikes would do to the New York economy and to CUNY’s future.

Gov. David Paterson’s proposed State budget for 2009-2010 calls for an $85 million reduction in State support for CUNY senior colleges, while Mayor Michael Bloomberg has asked for a $30 million cut in CUNY’s City funding. Under Paterson’s budget, community college base aid would be cut by 10%, or $270 per full-time equivalent student (FTE).

TAPPED OUT

Paterson’s budget would also require students to take 15 credit hours per semester (instead of the current 12 hours) to receive their full TAP grants. Tuition would be increased by $640 per year at CUNY senior colleges and $490 per year at community colleges. Eighty percent of the money from increased tuition would not stay with CUNY, but would go into the State’s general fund.

Initiated by the PSC, the hearings are being cosponsored by the District Council 37, the New York Public Interest Group (NYPIRG) and the University Student Senate.

The hearings kicked off February 26 at Brooklyn College, where 150 students came from households that earn less than $40,000 a year. About 200 people filled the room where the gathering was held. Students expressed alarm at a proposed tuition increase. “A tuition hike of $850 more per semester means some students will not be able to attend CUNY,” said Tara Mulqueen, a BC student who helped co-ordinate the hearing.

A CLOSE LOOK

“Working students would have to work more hours to afford the increase in tuition,” said Jiaxin Huang, a sophomore physics and Spanish double major who is also pre-med and a NYPIRG member. “But by working more hours, these students are less likely to be able to concentrate on their schoolwork.”

CUNY is already severely underfunded, noted Scott Dexter, professor of computer science. “At Brooklyn College over the past several years, there haven’t been enough funds to maintain buildings and faculty,” he said.

“The CUNY system should be focused on making things work for everyone,” he said.

Tuition money wouldn’t stay with CUNY.

By DIANELLE LUCCHESI

Governor David Paterson proposed a mid-year cut of $4.2 million in State aid, or 10%, for CUNY community colleges in August, in November and again in December. The PSC and its allies have beat the proposed cuts back, but members continue to work to keep them out of next year’s budget.

The mid-year cuts were “probably the worst public policy idea I’ve heard in the entire discussion of the State budget,” PSC President Barbara Bowen told the Senate Finance Committee and the Assembly Ways and Means Committee in her testimony at the joint hearing on ALB-1, held on January 15. The cuts were the first focus of her testimony—which was not emphasized in CUNY’s testimony—and a priority in the testimony presented by NYPIRG, the PSC’s statewide affiliate.

50,000+ VOICES

Meanwhile, more than 9,000 PSC and CUP members sent letters to lawmakers opposing the cuts, plus the PSC delivered more than 50,000 postcards signed by students, faculty and staff calling for investment to come from “public dollars, not tuition hikes.” On February 3, the mid-year budget plan was passed without any cuts to community college funding.

“We really pressured the legislators to do what was right for their constituents,” PSC Legislative Committee member Ron Haydak told Clarion. “When tens of thousands of voices say ‘no’ it’s pretty hard for legislators to ignore the message,” he said.

Though the union has defeated Paterson’s proposal for community college cuts this academic year alone, the governor also included them in his proposed budget for next year.

FIGHT Goes ON

There is wide agreement that these cuts, at a time when enrollment and interest is soaring, would be terrible for CUNY. “Cuts would mean more adjunct layoffs, class cancellations, increased class size and a depletion of campus infrastructure,” Haydak, who teaches at BMCC, said. “In short, it will further erode CUNY’s capacity to uphold its mission of access and affordability.”

PSC leaders argue that the budget problems are a revenue problem and Fair Share Tax Reform (see page 2) is a viable solution.

The fight continues in Albany, where PSC members opposed the cuts proposed for next year in March lobbying visits with legislators.
Governor Paterson presses state workers

By Peter Hogene

Governor David Paterson doesn’t want New York’s wealthiest residents to pay more — but he does want State workers to earn less.

While the governor has declined to support the growing calls to make New York’s tax system more progressive (see page 5), he has proposed canceling a 3% pay raise for State employees that is due this year. In addition, his budget proposal calls for “deferring” a week’s worth of wages for each State employee, to be paid only when the employee resigns or retires. Paterson is also seeking pension changes that would require employees to pay more and pay them less for the same amount of service.

PSC’S POSITION

“The proposals to unilaterally withhold a week of State employees’ pay and take away negotiated raises guaranteed in contracts the governor signed less than a year ago are illegal,” responded the Public Employees Federation (PEF). “Similar actions taken by the Public Employees Federation year ago are illegal,” responded PSC President Barbara Bowen testified on February 4 in Albany. “But we also point out that the employees we represent are not State employees of the State. ‘We stand together with our union colleagues in opposing these proposals in their entirety,’ PSC President Barbara Bowen testified on February 4 in Albany. “But we also point out that the employees we represent are not State employees — our collective bargaining agreement is with CUNY, not the State.” (See sidebar.)

If Paterson tried to unilaterally change labor contracts signed by the State, he would find his path blocked by several courts to be illegal.”

The Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) also drew a line against the governor’s demand for wage concessions. “These proposals violate our contract and we will fight against these changes,” the union said. “These actions cannot be taken without negotiations, and CSEA will not re-open contracts.”

Pensions

The New York State Constitution protects the pension benefits of current employees: once they have signed up with a pension system, they cannot be required to pay more, and their benefits cannot be reduced. Employee contributions or retirement benefits can, however, be changed for future employees, and Paterson has called for creating a new pension tier — “Tier 5” — with a range of givebacks.

Under New York law, public worker pension benefits are defined through legislation, not collective bargaining. On Paterson’s proposed pension concessions, the question is whether he can win legislative approval. If he does, new hires in “Tier 5” would have to be 62 years old before they could collect a pension benefit (60 for current employees). If the governor is seeking to win legislative approval, he must show that approval is necessary to prevent a crisis.

In addition, Paterson wants State workers eligible for retirement health insurance to pay more for coverage.

On both wages and pensions, State unions seem determined to fight against Paterson’s demand that they pay for a crisis they did not cause. Their attitude was captured in a headline in the civil service weekly, The Chief: “Wall Street Gets Drunk, Workers Sent to Detox.”

OTHER OPTIONS

There is no question the State is facing hard times,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “But cutting essential services and shifting more burdens to working New Yorkers without serious consideration of alternative savings and revenues is wrong. CSEA does not apologize for trying to maintain a little dignity, respect and fairness for our members when we say no to concession bargaining.”

What does this mean for CUNY?

In her February 4 testimony in Albany, PSC President Barbara Bowen made three points about Gov. Paterson’s proposal to take a bite out of State employees’ paychecks: the proposal is unfair, it is in violation of state and federal statutes, and it cannot in any case apply to employees of CUNY.

Particularly in tough economic times, Bowen said, “public employees throughout the state are the solution, not the problem.” Any attempt to arbitrarily alter public worker labor contracts would be both unconstitutional and banned by statute, Bowen said (see article at left).

But beyond the PSC’s opposition to the demands in general, Bowen said, “the PSC should not be included at all in the discussion of wage cuts or any deferral...We are not employees of the State. We are employees of CUNY, which is, as a public law, an independent, distinct corporate body.” At least four different provisions of State education law make this clear, Bowen told State Senators and members of the Assembly.

Fighting to save the Q74

By Karah Woodward

Queens College campus communities are up in arms over proposed service cuts by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) that would leave countless students and faculty members facing a longer and more costly commute.

The authority has proposed eliminating or drastically reducing service on 14 bus routes in Queens. The Q74, which serves Queens College and the CUNY School of Law, would be eliminated entirely. The MTA estimates a saving of $1.03 million, which would help plug the MTA’s projected $1.2 billion budget hole.

A CRITICAL ROUTE

“The Q74 is the only line that circumnavigates the campus, which is quite large,” explained law school student Patrick Foster, whose commute from Williamsburg includes two bus rides, a train and takes more than an hour.

On January 20, Foster joined his fellow students, faculty and staff at a public hearing in Flushing. Many criticized the scheduling of the hearing that was held on the same day as the inauguration of President Obama, and during a time when Queens College was on winter recess.

“It was clearly held at a time when we couldn’t go in there with a lot of students and the campus place,” said CUNY Law associate professor Frank Deale, who helps organize law school students and faculty to attend the meeting on short notice. “It was hard to organize students during the break,” agreed Bright Limm, president of CUNY Law School student government.

The activists who attended did not feel their concerns were heard. “I personally felt that the meeting was that this was a done deal,” Foster said. “In general, the people on the board were inattentive.”

The administration has also been fighting the cuts. “As the nearest subway links to Queens College are two and four miles away, bus routes to the campus are a must,” wrote QC President James Myskens in a letter to MTA Chief Executive Officer Elliot Sander in December.

More than 100 law student and faculty members signed a petition against the cuts, and at the hearing, CUNY Law School Dean Michelle Anderson explained to MTA board members how the cuts would hurt students at the Queens campus.

Since the hearing, QC activists joined rallies at each end of the bus route. City and State representatives showed their support. “We are trying to stay involved,” Anderson explained, “so that our student body, faculty and staff are aware of these local activities and can support them.”

Deale, who has been riding the Q74 since 1989, noted the MTA’s plan will cost riders more. “Most students and working people cannot afford to have an additional charge tucked onto their daily commute.”

WORKING CLASS: TARGET

“The MTA’s proposal is aimed at the working class,” Hester Eisenstein, QC sociology professor, told Clarion. She added that the QC campus cannot accommodate additional cars. “We have incredible problems with parking,” Eisenstein said. “I have students who are late every day because they were circling around the parking lot.”

MTA officials said the service cuts and labor costs would be stopped only if Albany adopts the plan proposed by former MTA Chairman Richard Ravitch, which includes placing tolls on East and Harlem River bridges and increasing payroll taxes in the Greater New York Region.

“It is a very dependent upon what the State Legislature decides to do,” explained Nyesa Prange, spokesperson for the Regional Planning Association. “The MTA board is set to meet again on March 25 to vote on fare increases and service cuts. Fare hikes would go into effect in June, with service cuts phased in throughout the year.”
Economist, business execs warn against higher ed budget cuts

**Government investment is key**

At the conference, Madrick emphasized the particular benefits of investing in education. “A good education system from top to bottom results in higher wages, faster economic growth, less inequality, a more equal society, a society that tends to reward its people according to their efforts,” he said.

**EROSION NOTED**

Sen. Stavisky noted the steady erosion in government support for higher education in New York and the further cuts proposed in the current budget debate. But as New York considers the best response to a projected $14 billion budget deficit, Stavisky (D-Queens) urged attendees to remember the importance of maintaining affordable, accessible higher education.

“Financing higher education is important for developing a middle class,” she said. “We have to put money into it.”

Stavisky, who did graduate work at Hunter and Queens Colleges, is one of 20 State Senate co-sponsors of the “Fair Share” tax reform proposal, which would increase taxes on those earning more than $250,000 per year (see above). “There is no reason why the family that makes $400,000 per year pays the same rate of tax as somebody making $4 million per year,” she said.

She emphasized that supporting higher education is crucial not only for New York City but upstate New York as well. “Whether it be the steel industry in Buffalo or the automobile industry in Troy or General Electric leaving Schenectady or...any place in New York State where we’ve lost industry,” Stavisky said, higher education is key to turning around New York’s economy. “If we are to keep protesting we’ll prevent the cuts,” said CUNY student Adriana Escandon.

Fair Share takes center stage

**End tax bracket racket: PSC chants at March 5 demo**

Hundreds of PSC members and CUNY students turned out for a massive demonstration for “Fair Share” tax reform, held March 5 in lower Manhattan. “For those of you who think we’re not united, you’re wrong,” Bowen said. “We say, ‘fight back!’” She spoke at a public symposium in Albany on April 6. The NYC rally was organized by the One New York Coalition, which includes the PSC and more than 200 other unions, foundations, small business groups and non-profit organizations. Simi-
lar protests were held the same day in Syracuse, Westchester, Buffalo, Albany and other towns and counties across the state.

Despite the potential devastation from the proposed cuts, the mood of the crowd at City Hall was optimis-
tic. “They say cut back, we say fight back,” was a common chant. “I think we’re keeping protest de-
veloping higher education is the key to creating a fairer and more just society.”

**Case for Big Government**

In his recently published book, Case for Big Government, Madrick, an economist and State Senator, urges his readers and the public to support government investment in education and other social programs. He argues that government spending is essential to maintaining a healthy, prosperous society. The book is available for purchase online at http://tinyurl.com/cc-biz-letter.)

**UNAFFORDABLE**

“By en
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vestment a thousand-fold,” Bowen’s speech was featured on WABC-TV Samuel B. Schwartz, executive director of the Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis, argued that the cur-
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“ECONOMY OF SCALE”

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In a sign of growing support for fair taxation, on March 9, 100 upstate business leaders echoed Stavisky’s words in a letter to Gov. David Pa-
ter, urging him to refrain from imposing severe budget cuts on higher education. “The Executive Budget proposal recommends several dramatic cuts to higher education that will dash the aspirations of many new income workers and cut off the flow of skilled work-
ers essential to our state’s economic competitiveness,” the letter wrote. “We call on the legislators and business leaders. ‘Access to col-
lege is the seed corn of New York’s economic prosperity.’”

“I think of we keep protesting we’ll prevent the cuts,” said CUNY stu-
dent Adriana Escandon.

**By JOHN TARLTON**

Economic renewal through increased investment in public higher education: that was the theme of a public symposium in Albany on March 3. Working in tandem with New York State United Teachers (NYSTU), United University Pro-
fessions (UUP, the SUNY faculty union), SUNY and CUNY, the PSC took the lead in organizing a sym-
po
dium that featured progressive economist Jeff Madrick and State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky.

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dent Adriana Escandon.
Paid parental leave news!

As Clarion went to press, negotiators were putting the finishing touches on an agreement to begin immediate implementation of the paid parental leave benefit for eligible CUNY-represented employees.

Eligible employees who became parents of a newborn or a newly adopted child between July 17, 2008, and March 20, 2009, are entitled to a retroactive benefit if they have not already received an equitable benefit. Contact the union by May 20, 2009, if you are in this category. Once the agreement is signed, it will be posted on the CUNY website (www.cuny.edu). More details in the next issue of Clarion.

TIAA-CREF pension benefit kicks in

In August 2007 the PSC gained pension equity for its members when Governor Spitzer signed a PSC-backed pension bill into law.

The hard-won victory required persistent political pressure by the union over the course of seven years. As a result an inequity that existed between members who were in the Teachers’ Retirement System (TRS) and the optional retirement program (TIAA-CREF) was eliminated.

AFTER 10 YEARS

Prior to the law’s passing, those members who joined the TIAA-CREF defined-contribution plan had been permanently required to pay an annual employee contribution of 1.5% or 3% of annual salary, depending upon when an individual was hired. Meanwhile, those members who had chosen the TRS defined-benefit plan had their entire contribution paid by the City or State after 10 years of service.

The result, which applies to those members who have 10 or more years of service, requires the City or State to also pay the employee contribution into the TIAA-CREF pension plans. Installments were scheduled to be phased in over three years, beginning in April 2008. Effective April 1, 2009, the next 1% installment – or 5% for those employees with a 1.5% annual contribution – will be paid into members’ pensions by the employer, resulting in an effective increase in take-home pay.

Members who joined the TIAA-CREF plan prior to July 16, 1992, and currently contribute 1.5% will have the total 1.5% employee contribution made by the State or the City. Employees who joined the optional retirement program after July 17, 1992, have 10 or more years of CUNY membership, and who currently contribute 3% will have 2% of their employee contribution made by the City or the State and will continue to contribute 1% for another year.

But this hard-won benefit is not entirely secure for those hired in the future. Governor Paterson is threatening both plans as he weighs a “pension reform” that would make future employees pay more (see p. 4).

Conflict over grant program

CUNY faculty have expressed a uniformly negative reaction to a CUNY management proposal to change the structure of the PSC-CUNY Research Awards.

“A working draft” proposal was circulated by Vice Chancellor for Research Gillian Small to a task force she formed, first floated at a January 29 task force meeting, would give college provosts the final say on grant applications.

In a February 19 statement, Vice Chancellor Small’s vice president said, “This and other recommendations in the ‘working draft’ violate the PSC-CUNY collective bargaining agreement.” London emphasized that the University could not unilaterally make such changes. And in a March 16 follow-up statement, the union declared, “The PSC leadership opposes the CUNY administration’s ‘working draft.’ The union is committed to ensuring that faculty control of and faculty access to the PSC-CUNY grant program are preserved.”

IN THE CONTRACT

“The contract specifically sets forth how the grants are to be awarded,” PSC Director of Legal Affairs Peter Zwieback told Clarion. “It states that the faculty committee, called the University Committee on Research Awards (UCRA), shall establish guidelines and shall make eligibility determinations regarding the awards. The language of the contract is mandatory, not discretionary in nature. It does not give CUNY any choice about bypassing the committee.”

Vice Chancellor Small submitted her “working draft” to a task force on the grant program that she convened last November. “The group had met twice, with the union actively monitoring task force deliberations. At both meetings PSC Executive Director Deborah Bell reiterated the union’s position: the University cannot make any unilateral changes in the grant program because its current structure is protected by the union contract.”

“Broad faculty opinion across the University is strongly supportive of the way in which the faculty peer-reviewed research program functions now,” stated a March 12 resolution jointly adopted by the University Faculty Senate and the UCRA. To put grant decisions in the hands of the provosts, they warned, “would open the way to arbitrarily focusing awards in certain disciplines, or to politicization of the selection process.”

The joint committee resolution, and a March 6 letter from two UFS representatives on the task force, also took issue with other aspects of the management proposal, such as allocating funds and deciding on awards on a campus basis, instead of through University-wide peer review. Both statements rejected the idea that the current peer review process is “too expensive,” arguing that the PSC-CUNY Research Awards Program functions with relatively low overhead.

Peer review process defended

The PSC-CUNY Research Award Program needs faculty members to coordinate grants in their area of expertise.

Members meet to establish guidelines for grant disbursement, form grant review panels, and select grant recipients. You can volunteer to join the University Committee on Research Awards (UCRA) or nominate colleagues. Applications are accepted by the UFS Research Committee and appointed by the chancellor. Chairs, executive officers and personnel on the executive pay plan are not eligible. Candidates may hold a PSC-CUNY award at the time of the appointment, but may not apply for an award during their three-year service on the UCRA.

The UCRA is looking for faculty to coordinate the following areas: anthropology, chemistry, computer science, creative writing and English, education, health sciences, health and human services, and sociology.

Criteria for selection are:

1. evidence of continuing involvement in scholarship;
2. experience in receiving and administering grants and fellowships;
3. representation from a variety of CUNY colleges.

In-service allotment is available to faculty performing this service ($8,000 over the three-year term).

Nominees should forward a CV, including grants and fellowships received and research undertaken to: The Research Committee, University Faculty Senate, 535 East 86th Street, New York, NY 10075. Or e-mail this information to Stasia.Pasgalcuny.cuny.edu. Closing date is April 30. For information, CALL THE UFS at (212) 794-5538.
Adjunct pay delays cause hardship

By KARAH WOODWARD

The PSC filed a University-wide grievance in February after hundreds of adjuncts at CCNY, John Jay, Medgar Evers and York Colleges were late in receiving their first paychecks weeks into the Spring semester. The grievance aims to stem a widespread problem that has existed to varying degrees throughout the CUNY system.

This semester, adjuncts in departments throughout Medgar Evers received no checks on the first pay date of January 29, Debra Bergen, PSC director of contract administration, told Clarion. “Over the years there have been ongoing problems with colleges meeting their adjunct pay schedules,” Bergen said, but at certain campuses the late payments have been more widespread and more persistent. Initially Medgar Evers was the only campus cited in the grievance, but growing reports of late payments at John Jay, York and City College led the PSC to reflect the grievance on a University-wide basis.

“These are the most vulnerable people, and they must be paid on time – especially in this economic period,” said Kathleen Barker, campus grievance counselor at Medgar Evers and a professor of psychology.

At CCNY, 65 adjuncts in the School of Education received no checks at the start of the semester. At John Jay, an entire department was not paid on time, while at York, all adjuncts in one program were left out.

David Hatchett, who served as an adjunct professor for seven years, said he would call about late paychecks from all over the CUNY system. “By the time it got to me, it was really bad,” he explained. Hatchett, who is now on a full-time line. “There were adjuncts who had still not received checks for six weeks, months or the check was lost altogether. I would take calls all the time from adjuncts at the Medgar Evers campus. It was excruciating for them.”

PROMISES

This is the fourth grievance over the adjunct payroll issues at Medgar Evers in the last five years. College administrators had made promises to the union to fix the problem, but these were unfulfilled.

As a result, Barker told Clarion, “This was raised as the priority concern in our labor-management meetings in previous years. Whenever we would go to them in advance, in a preemptive attempt to prevent payroll problems from resurfacing. We said that if you were honest, this would be unacceptable, and they promised to take action.”

Yet this Spring, “huge numbers across all colleges at Medgar Evers were missing payment,” said Nancy Thompson, an adjunct lecturer who first taught at the college in 1986. “It has been standard operating procedure at the campus, but this semester it has been particularly egregious.”

In response, the PSC filed a grievance against the college administration on February 2. A letter from college Vice President Arthur A. Taylor pledged that the college’s adjuncts would be paid this semester by February 12, but a number of Medgar Evers adjuncts were still waiting to get compensated after this deadline.

“It’s insulting to have professional people scrambling for money,” said one who had still not been paid as of February 19.

John Jay College had also been cited in a past union grievance over late paychecks for part-timers, but until this semester, the college’s record appeared to have improved.

“People’s pay should be treated more seriously,” John Jay Chapter Chair Carl Williams told Clarion. This semester, a paperwork problem meant that a number of adjuncts at John Jay did not receive their first paychecks, and Williams said this shows the need for a system of administrative checks and balances.

“The provost’s office should have an idea of how many adjuncts are needed in any given semester, and how many corresponding Personnel Action Forms (PAF) have been processed,” Williams explained. “It shouldn’t wait until someone fails to get a check and then complain before there’s the realization that a whole department didn’t get paid.”

Adjuncts who are not paid on time (for a wide variety of reasons) and experience “financial hardship” can request an advance through their campus’s human resources department. While an advance certainly helps, it is not ideal. Often it is only for a portion of the amount owed, and the adjunct still has to spend his or her own time applying and waiting for the advance.

And an advance can have other drawbacks. Usually when adjuncts miss a pay period, the college “makes up” the amount by adding the missing period to the check issued on the next pay date. However, adjuncts spoke of missing their third and fourth paychecks, which results in additional bundling of their pay. This means that an adjunct is placed into a higher tax bracket for that pay period. This results in additional withholding of taxes for workers who often live paycheck-to-paycheck with little to spare.

Taxes are not the only problem a large check can cause. “I have two classes and no other income and we’re on food stamps,” one adjunct told Clarion. “If you give me a check that says I made $4,800, guess who is not getting food stamps.”

BREADWINNERS

Other adjuncts paid late this semester told Clarion of needing funds to pay their mortgage, visit family overseas or fill their responsibilities as single parents and breadwinners – while waiting two and three pay periods to receive a paycheck. Many expressed a fear of retribution and did not want to be quoted by name.

Lack of job security leads many adjuncts to suffer in silence, failing to report a missed paycheck until more than one pay period has passed. Because payroll information is confidential, chair chapters and department representatives may be unaware of a problem until individual members have brought it to their attention. And many adjuncts have been conditioned to expect that their campus will miss the first pay period – even though CUNY’s own adjunct payroll guidelines provide procedures to pay adjuncts on time. “We’re between a rock and a hard place,” said a Medgar Evers adjunct still waiting to get the first paycheck of the semester in late February. “We don’t really have a secure job, and we are subject to the whims of others. Therefore you don’t want to make noise.”

Persistent collective action by union chapters at BMCC and at Queens has been able to resolve late payment problems in the past. Diane Menna, an adjunct grievance counselor and union officer for part-time personnel, told Clarion that City Tech had also had ongoing difficulties with paying adjuncts on time. But Menna said that after stubborn pressure from the City Tech PSC chapter, this campus may also be on its way to getting the pay problem under control.

Rob Carmelo, PSC chapter chair at City Tech, said that at every labor-management meeting, the Executive Council would bring up the issue of adjunct pay. “For people who are among the poorest paid, it is devastating to miss a paycheck,” said Carmelo. “We told management they should be ashamed. They finally set up a new system, and Fall 2008 was the first semester when adjuncts were generally paid on time.”

This term was definitely a big change,” said Wendy Scribner, an adjunct professor who teaches at City Tech. “Somehow they managed to have our paychecks in the first cycle,” said Scribner about her entire term. “I’ve been there 14 years and this was the first time the college managed to pay us in the first cycle.”

There is a long chain of paperwork for getting an adjunct on pay roll for the semester. It starts with a PAF being submitted by a department chair to the dean’s or provost’s office, which in turn sends the form to the human resources department, which forwards the PAF to the finance/payroll department and then on to Albany, for the college’s tax checks, or the City, for salary earned at the community colleges. Each college has its own payroll deadline for submitting PAFs in order to meet the payroll schedule arranged by CUNY.

GUIDELINES

When problems arise, fingers are often pointed at individuals. But employers consistently perform better than others, and CUNY announces pay dates to all of its campuses well in advance. In May 2008 a university-wide memo with the payroll dates for the 2008-2009 school year was submitted to business managers, labor designees, personnel officers and payroll officers. And the University’s own guidelines acknowledge that colleges are responsible for adopting procedures that ensure that adjuncts are paid beginning with the first scheduled pay date.

But sometimes courses are not assigned to adjuncts until the last minute, and that can have a domino effect,” said Menna. In other industries – temporary labor agencies, for example – face the same problem, but manage to meet their legal obligation to pay people in a timely manner. And the contrast between different CUNY campuses, she said, shows that when a college administration makes timely pay a priority, it can be accomplished.

WHY NOT ALL?

“I think if one college can pay on time, then all colleges can do it,” Menna told Clarion. “If this were happening to college administrators, they’d be missing paychecks less or three, you can bet they would be taking this problem more seriously. Whatever the cause, we must fix it, it would be fixed immediately.”

Activists say the real solution is for the University to enforce its own guidelines, and that college presidents would do whatever it takes to get people paid on time,” said PSC Vice President for Part-Time Personnel Garcia Newfield. “But it shouldn’t take a war to get a paycheck.”
CUNY’s Problematic School of the Future

Community college plan unraveled

By LENORE BEAKEY

In February 2008, CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein charged University Dean John Mogulescu with creating a “bold and imaginative plan” that would “reimagine community college education from the ground up.” Following an October 2008 concept paper (available at http://tinyurl.com/new-cc-plan) and public hearings at five of the six community colleges, Dean Mogulescu and others are now embarking on the second phase of the planning for this college. But while some aspects of the plan are intriguing and attractive, others raise profound doubts as to both process and substance. The need for a new community college is apparent: enrollments throughout CUNY are growing sharply, and some colleges are already full to bursting. CUNY’s community college graduation rate, however, is an unimpressive 28% after six years. Low completion rates at community colleges are a national problem, and CUNY hopes that a series of innovative, or at least different, configurations will result in significant improvements. The preceding report of the proposed college is to graduate its students with associate degrees at a rate of 30% after three years, 35% after four years, and 40% after five years.

There are some attractive aspects to this proposal. Given the rising demand for community college education within CUNY, the need for another college is there, and it’s good that CUNY is considering establishing a new one. The plan calls for student advisors to work with cohorts of students, a welcome plan. If that model could be adopted everywhere in CUNY. Eliminating the remedial/credit curricular divide is another intriguing idea, one that is definitely worth trying. And it’s great that the ACT COMPASS tests in writing, reading and math would not be used for any of the assessments; the COMPASS has proven to be unreliable, invalid and destruc- tive to good pedagogy.

Problematic

But too many other particulars of the proposal are problematic, in a variety of ways. The curriculum is designed to be narrow and regimented, with little room for exploration. Required core courses, taught in blocks, take up the entire first year; in the second year, students choose one of a limited number of majors, such as Supply Chain Management. The proposal’s overemphasis on data collection and “accountability” is troubling. Neither the University Faculty Senate nor the PSC — indeed, no CUNY faculty member — was part of the group that wrote the proposal. Perhaps as a result, a number of its elements raise the likelihood that faculty rights and responsibilities will be diminished to the benefit of administrators.

Tracy Meade, university director for Collaborative Programs (including College Now), led a planning team supported by a national advisory board, a local steering committee, and consultations with national and local administrators and some faculty — but not the UPS or the PSC. With hopes of securing support from the Gates Foundation, the second planning phase for this college has begun. It will fill in questions of governance, costs, and administration and structure that have been deliberately omitted from planning.

The planners envision “new roles and expectations for all faculty and staff hired to participate in the creation and the workings of the Center for College Effectiveness?” What are the implications for workload and staff of the proposal for accountability and the workings of the Center for College Effectiveness? How much of this high-concept design is derived from the concept paper, as the so-called “cooling out” function? Since representatives of CUNY faculty were not part of the group that wrote the concept paper, this is a serious question. More generally, active faculty participation in the earliest process of planning could have resulted in a stronger, more substantive proposal.

In “The Cooling-Out Function in Higher Education” (1960) by Burton Clark (cited, interestingly, in the references at the back of the paper), Clark adapted an idea developed by Erving Goffman in “On Cooling the Mark Out — Some Aspects of Adaptation to Failure.” The concept paper makes no mention of ESL students. Employers will work with faculty to create curricula. The proposal’s stress on few or no options for students, sent out on their required core curricular “pathways” but prevented from wandering its by- ways, coupled with a sense of unrelenting data collection and dispersal, contributes to an atmosphere of control and surveillance. The group workspace, which the concept paper describes as “a required City Seminar and a Professional Studies course,” would be arranged into learning communities.

Student advisors, working with cohorts of students, would serve as faculty in the City Seminar and Professional Studies courses. The advisors would work with faculty and students in a “Group Workspace.”

The proposal puts great stress on data collection and dissemination, and the term “accountability” gets heavy emphasis. A Center for College Effectiveness will “continuously disseminate information derived from data analysis to faculty, students, staff, and administrators as well as college and University officials.” A Standing Committee on Accountability and Self-Study would be created to prepare for Middle States accreditation. The planners envision “new roles and expectations for all faculty and staff hired to work at the new college.”

As an example, “faculty who are recruited for the new community college should be committed, by contract or obligation, to help develop and sustain relationships that facilitate work-based learning and student internships and employment.” The new college will be fundamentally defined by lack of choice, by a limited number of programs with well-defined pathways to degree, transfer and/or employment. The planners “recommend the creation of prescribed pathways for each major that limit chance exploration but nevertheless fulfill degree requirements in a clear and timely way.” They cite an author who warns against “the risk of making mistakes” or “directionless exploration, unneeded courses or unexpected timetables.” They concede that some might even describe the frequent and varied advisement activities as intrusive.

And though the planners purport to prepare students for transfer as well as terminal degrees, of the 12 majors, only Earth and Environmental Studies, Urban Education, and Urban Studies would prepare students for transfer to baccalaureate programs, and only three paragraphs (half a page) of the concept paper discuss articulation and transfer. The curricula, as described, seem designed to prepare students for careers as lower level city bureaucrats.

Limited Choice

The concept paper makes no mention of ESL students. Employers will work with faculty to create curricula. The proposal’s stress on few or no options for students, sent out on their required core curricular “pathways” but prevented from wandering its by-ways, coupled with a sense of unrelenting data collection and dispersal, contributes to an atmosphere of control and surveillance. The group workspace, which the concept paper is quick to describe as “not a study hall,” will be populated by students, faculty and advisors, held together “so that the expectations we set for students can be closely observed and supported.”

The planning bodies included no CUNY faculty. The national advisory board was composed of professors of education, people from educational think tanks, administrators and the vice president of the College Board. The concept paper was presented at a meeting of CUNY vice presidents, two community college presidents, university deans and no faculty: the planning team was chaired by Dean Mogulescu, led by Tracy Meade and included program directors from the NYC Department of Education and CUNY, again, no faculty. No member of the elected leadership of the University Faculty Senate or the PSC was consulted before the paper was published.

Silence

The lack of CUNY faculty involvement shows in the final product. The concept paper is silent on many conspicuous and important issues of academics — for example, which of these courses or programs will be transferable, with which CUNY or to another college or university? The same silence occurs on terms and conditions of employment for faculty and staff. Will the college employ full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty organized in departments with chairpersons, or will there be mostly adjuncts in programs with part-time faculty? It may be significant that the proposal is led by the dean of the School of Professional Studies, which is organized into programs with deans and staffed with mostly part-time faculty.

How will professional autonomy and academic freedom be protected? What are the implications for workload and TAP regulations of the proposal to award credit on a sliding scale or to perform interviews and teach during the summer pre-college session? What are the implications for faculty and staff of the proposal for accountability and the workings of the Center for College Effectiveness? How much of this high-concept design is derived from the concept paper, as the so-called “cooling out” function? Since representatives of CUNY faculty were not part of the group that wrote the concept paper, this is a serious question. More generally, active faculty participation in the earliest process of planning could have resulted in a stronger, more substantive proposal.

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Re-imagining or ‘cooling out’?
The concept paper and the contract

The proposal from CUNY Central Administration for a new community college has provoked sharp debate (see article at left). In a February 26 letter excerpted below, PSC President Barbara Bowen outlined the PSC’s concerns and posed a number of questions to Chancellor Goldstein.

"The union contract is one guard against a purely vocational concept of education — a concept suggested too often in this proposal," Bowen told Goldstein. "CUNY will have to negotiate with the union if they seek to make changes that would violate the contract."

February 26, 2009

Dear Chancellor Goldstein:

I write on behalf of the leadership of the Professional Staff Congress in response to the “concept paper” on a new community college.

The PSC welcomes academic innovation and strongly supports the goal of better serving the people of New York through community college education. We share the proposals of CUNY’s president about enrolling more students to achieve the college degree. As you know, the union has a deep interest in student retention, especially as it is affected by differences in race, ethnicity and family income. In part to address this issue, the PSC proposed a new contractual provision in the last round of collective bargaining for a pilot project on student mentoring, and we are delighted that the University accepted that proposal as part of the final agreement.

The concept paper, however, raises several concerns. First, we strongly object to the University’s failure to include the Professional Staff Congress in the discussions that led to its development. To develop a 120-page “concept paper” that makes no mention of university employment and workloads for faculty and staff without ever consulting the elected representatives of the instructional staff on issues of terms and conditions of employment and workload of faculty and staff is disrespectful to the people the union represents.

Counterproductive

It is also counterproductive. The concept paper would have been strengthened by including the PSC leadership — and the University Faculty Senate — from the outset, rather than forcing the elected representatives of the faculty and staff to add our comments after the fact. We are grateful that a number of individual faculty and staff members, invited by management, added their comments during the conceptualization process, and we are sure that their participation enriched the final product. But soliciting individual comments is no substitute for including elected representatives.

One source of our concern is the effect the concept paper sometimes has of devaluing the work of current faculty and staff. We assume this was not its intention, but comments such as the following, in the section on “Professional and Curriculum Development,” are troubling: “The kind of teaching required will represent a significant departure from traditional classroom practice, which is most often an isolated and isolating activity. . . .” (page 27). The implication is that teaching in a way that is not “isolated and isolating” would be something new. Where is the recognition that CUNY’s community colleges include nationally known experts on interactive pedagogy? Or that innovative, participatory methods of teaching for decades? The concept paper seems to disregard their expertise.

Concept

Despite our concerns, we approach the concept paper open to considering any changes that would benefit students. We hope, however, that the proposal does not offer merely a cosmetic solution to a structural problem. According to the Fiscal Policy Report published last month, New York State support for CUNY community colleges on a per-FTE basis has fallen by 26 percent since 1991-92. Only 38 percent of the faculty at the CUNY community colleges are full-time. Sixty-two percent of CUNY community college students come from households whose annual income is under $30,000 (2006 Student Experience Survey). We suspect that student retention would be dramatically improved if the burden of tuition on students were lightened, class size reduced, and the percentage of full-time faculty doubled. CUNY has an extraordinary part-time faculty, but a largely part-time faculty is structurally unable to provide the continuity and one-on-one attention students need to succeed.

Terms & Conditions

The concept paper also raises a number of specific questions concerning terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to the following:

● The concept paper is unclear on the manner in which the new community college would use existing instructional staff titles, as specified in Article 1 of the collective bargaining agreement. We would like clarification.

● The concept paper does not specify that the faculty of the new community college would be employed in tenured-bearing titles. Given that several of the majors envisioned for the new community college would be employed in tenure-bearing titles. Given that several of the majors envisioned for the new community college would be employed in tenure-bearing titles, as referenced in Appendix A of the workload settlement agreement.

● What is the expectation with respect to employment of faculty and professional staff in part-time or hourly positions at the new community college?

● Article 18 of the contract includes “course and curricula development” in the list of elements that may be considered for the calculation of faculty teaching contact hours, as referenced in Appendix A of the collective bargaining agreement?

● The concept paper does not discuss departmental organization and governance, or the role of department chairs. We would like clarification of these areas, given their relevance to the contractual provisions on evaluation, observation and other areas.

● Section VII of the concept paper discusses “Accountability,” with a heavy emphasis on testing. It describes “a whole college approach to accountability” and proposes to “locate accountability and institutional research in a Center for College Effectiveness.” This appears to bypass the department chair and, in the case of professional staff, the chairperson or supervisor, who have responsibility for evaluation under Article 18 of the contract. We would like clarification of the plan on evaluation.

Lack of faculty input weakens proposal.

"The union contract is one guard against a purely vocational concept of education — a concept suggested too often in this proposal," Bowen told Goldstein. "CUNY will have to negotiate with the union if they seek to make changes that would violate the contract."
Immigrant students gain allies

Eligibility rules explained

Navigating CUNY’s bureaucracy should be easier for undocumented immigrants following a November training session at City Tech that brought together immigrant rights activists like Anthony Barrientos and professional staff representing each of CUNY’s campuses.

Barrientos training CUNY has ever had in terms of admitting immigrant students said Jean Weismann, PSC’s HEO chapter chair.

In this increasingly globalized economy was dethroned by a round-the-clock service sector centered around international finance. If there are more Big Apple bankers staying up to watch stock exchanges in Hong Kong, Sharman explains, there’s going to be a corresponding increase in the number of night shift workers feeding them and shuffling them around.

Classroom connections: Many of Sharman’s students have parents who are first generation immigrants and work the night shift in order to pay for their children’s tuition. These workers “often overwhelmingly prioritize education,” Sharman says, “and their children — certainly their grandchildren — will not be having a rosy retirement.” Some of these families provided Sharman with introductions that led to some of the book’s best interviews.

One person in story... Aali, a native of Bangladesh, earns $8.50 per hour as the night manager of a corporate-franchise deli in Penn Station. “I am here to buy food for my little kids,” he says in a Mumbai accent.

Barrientos recounted his experiences as an undocumented teenage applicant to Baruch who had emigrated to the US from the Guatemala as a young child. “You have to understand the fear students like me experience coming to your office,” said Barrientos, now 24. “It’s the first time an official is asking about your immigration status. Students like me don’t even know that they are undocumented. It’s a shock. Even though they may not show it, they’re afraid. They were never asked to prove their immigration status to go to high school, and understandably their families are extremely reluctant to have them say anything about their status — much less sign an affidavit.

“If they do sign,” Barrientos added, “they fear the information will get to the government or immigration services or even to their professors and be used against them or their families. Even immigrant students who are themselves citizens (because they were born here) worry about revealing anything that would expose their undocumented parents.”

Natalia Ariztahak, a Queens College student and member of the community group Make the Road New York, concurred, saying “You’re maybe 18 years old and you’re lost. If you’ve given misinformation over the telephone, it is discouraging and some students stop there and don’t even try to apply.”

The rules defining eligibility status have become increasingly complex as US immigration policy has become more restrictive. This was reflected in the many complicated questions that were put to the panelists.

Baruch College graduate Walter Barrientos has a world of experience with the challenges faced by undocumented immigrant students.

However, University Associate Dean for Enrollment James Murphy emphasized “that our objective is to enroll students.” In that vein, Murphy reminded registrars not to create unnecessary hurdles for undocumented students transferring from one CUNY college to another. “If a student established their residency status when they were accepted to community college, we shouldn’t be asking them to do it again — or sending them back to the community college to retrieve their documentation. You should admit the student and e-mail your colleague.”

FIRST STEPS

While CUNY’s newfound willingness to train its staff in the intricacies of immigration law was appreciated, activists continued to push the University to reimburse students for past tuition overpayments.

Katherine Raymond, CUNY’s senior counsel, said that all appeals “should be in writing and must be timely. The central office makes the final decision and does not reimburse overpayments for more than one year.”

To avoid more confusion in the future, PSC Vice President of Cross Campus Units Iris DeLeoustra suggested to CUNY publish a brochure, which Murphy agreed would be useful.

She also appealed for broader staff training — including work study students and staff that answer the telephone — so that they properly direct students to someone who can answer complicated questions about residency and immigration status. “If they say, ‘no’ then they should say ‘why’.”

The training session was the product of months of organizing and networking with CUNY officials. The effort was led by Make the Road New York, the New York State Youth Leadership Council, Calibrini Immigrant Services and the PSC.

BROADER TRAINING

“As far as I know, this was the first time in the eight years of this legislation that CUNY actually provided a training for admissions staff on how to counsel undocumented students,” DeLeoustra said. He hopes that the opportunities undocumented students have at CUNY will expand with the passage of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, which would grant temporary legal residence to undocumented students who came to the US as children and require them to earn a two-year degree or serve in the military for two years to be able to earn citizenship. Those who fail to do so would face deportation.

The DREAM Act came within eight votes of passing the US Senate in 2007 and supporters are hoping to fare better this time. The Democratic president and increased Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress. According to www.dreamact.info, the measure currently has the support of 53 senators with another 20 listed as undecided. A super-majority of 60 votes in the Senate would ensure the bill’s passage. The DREAM Act would apply to at least 60 to 70% of undocumented students at CUNY, Barrientos recently told Clarion. “They would go from being undocumented to having conditional lawful permanent residency.”

By KATE PZOREDSIEN & JOHN TARLETON

Passing the DREAM Act is the next step.
PSC elections – April 2009

Vote for union-wide officers

On the following pages are statements from candidates and their slates. They are printed in accordance with the PSC’s election rules, which provide all candidates access to union publications in order to put their views before the members. Each candidate for PSC office is given a certain number of words for a statement; candidates running on a common slate may pool this amount and devote some of it to a statement from the slate as a whole. Candidates may also purchase advertising space, with slates allowed to purchase up to one page each.

PSC elections occur on a three-year cycle. In 2010 there will be elections for chapter level positions in half of the union’s chapters, and chapter elections in the other half will follow in 2011. The next election for union-wide offices will be held in 2012. If you are eligible to vote and you have been a PSC member in good standing for at least four months before April 8, you will receive your ballot by April 11. If you have not received your ballot by April 8, contact Barbara Gabriel at the PSC office (212-354-1252) for a duplicate ballot or to check your membership status.

NEW CAUCUS candidates for delegates to New York State United Teachers and American Federation of Teachers conventions

CUNY ALLIANCE candidates for delegates to New York State United Teachers and American Federation of Teachers conventions

AAUP ANNUAL DELEGATES

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NEW CAUCUS candidates for delegates to New York State United Teachers and American Federation of Teachers conventions

CUNY ALLIANCE candidates for delegates to New York State United Teachers and American Federation of Teachers conventions

AAUP ANNUAL DELEGATES

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I’m Voting New Caucus Because...

Grounded in progressive commitments to labor, the New Caucus also represents a deeply democratic vision for public higher education. With strong leadership, substantial experience negotiating in Albany, powerful coalitions with other unions across the city, well developed communications with all of the campuses and a strong dose of chutzpah, the New Caucus is a national force for educational justice and a political life-raft for CUNY. The slate embodies the vibrancy and diversity of the CUNY system. They will work to protect us in hard times and still expand a progressive vision of labor and education.

Walking a delicate line, the leadership of the New Caucus advocates for the needs and rights of faculty and staff as they advance the rights and needs of our diverse student body. In fiscally difficult times, a vote for the New Caucus is a vote for strong leadership, experience, honesty, dedication to the faculty, staff and students of the City University of New York.

— Michelle Fine, Distinguished Professor of Psychology, Urban Education and Women’s Studies, CUNY Graduate Center

I have been a trustee of the PSC/CUNY Welfare Fund for two years. During that time I have watched Barbara Bowen and Steve London address many important issues facing the Fund. Without exception they acted in a professional, ethical manner consistent with a high standard of good governance. They consistently sought to balance the need for fiscal prudence with the imperative of serving the members. I would defend their leadership of the Fund in any forum.

— Terrence F. Martell, Saxe Distinguished Professor of Finance, Director, Weissman Center for International Business, Baruch College

These people think hard, work hard, and fight hard, with a clear-eyed understanding of the lessons of the past and a bold strategic vision of the imperatives and possibilities of the future. Through their actions they’ve proven themselves neither timid, nor complacent, nor cynical. I trust them wholeheartedly, and stand with them because I believe CUNY is worth fighting for.

— Sigmund Shen, Assistant Professor of English, LaGuardia Community College

Under the guidance of the New Caucus leadership our union has had a prudent and balanced approach to fighting for our rights and benefits. There is still a long way to go, especially for adjunct faculty, and we all face dire economic circumstances. I am confident that the New Caucus team will continue to provide strong and determined leadership.

— Vincent Tirelli, Adjunct Assistant Political Science, Professor, Brooklyn College

The New Caucus fights for: all members: senior and junior full-timers, tenured and untenured, adjuncts, HEO’s and others. In recent contracts under New Caucus leadership, the union has won the approval for 200 new full-time lines for existing adjuncts and an increase in sabbatical pay from 50% to 80%. As someone who is interested in pursuing research, this last improvement is particularly gratifying to me.

— Jacob Segal, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Kingsborough Community College

New Caucus leadership works hard for workers’ rights, does not back down before the unjust demands from administration and is sensitive to the needs of all the members of the bargaining unit, be it faculty, part time, HEOs or CLTs. This leadership also has vision that goes beyond our mere circle of immediate needs. The support it gives to other struggling working people is a source of strength and pride to the labor movement beyond our own confines.

— Anselma Rodríguez, HEO, Brooklyn College

In 2000, CLIP teachers had no contractual sick leave and no raises based on experience. Our starting rate had been the same since our program started in 1995. In the first contract New Caucus negotiated, we got sick leave and raises; the second one increased our starting rate. We hope we’ll get full-time status in the next contract.

— Ellen Ballisen, CLIP, Bronx Community College

The leaders of the PSC, running on the New Caucus slate, recognize retirees as a vital part of the Welfare Fund and the union. They have preserved the Welfare Fund, continued to maintain equality for retirees in the programs of the Fund, and recently provided a voting retiree representative as a trustee of the Welfare Fund. They also fully encourage the participation of retirees in the work of the union and of NYSUT. This record deserves our support, and I urge you to join me in voting for the New Caucus slate.

— Irwin Yellowitz, Chairman Emeritus, PSC Retirees Chapter

HEOs recently won overtime pay and compensation, professional development opportunities, and preservation of our 13.5% job security. Guided by the New Caucus, the PSC is consistently vigilant in protecting our working rights and visionary in improving our working lives.

— Joshua Brown, HEO, Executive Director, American Social History Project/Center for Media and Learning, The Graduate Center

In its leadership of the PSC, the New Caucus has always shown dedication to principles of fairness in defending the rights and interests of all members, from professors to adjuncts to HEOs to CLTs. I am especially indebted to the leadership for representing us so effectively and in so timely a way in the last round of contract negotiations. Had it not been persistent and politically and economically astute, I know where we’d be: working without a contract.

— Ellen Temper, Chair, English Department, Brooklyn College

If for no other reason than its consistent refusal to play along PSC constituency against another, I’m voting for The New Caucus! The New Caucus vision of CUNY includes us all.

— Barbara Katz Rothman, Professor of Sociology, Baruch College and the CUNY Graduate Center

The New Caucus leadership of the union has fought for the protection of academic freedom across the university when the right of faculty to speak their minds has been under attack across the country.

— Gerald Markowitz, Distinguished Professor of History, John Jay and the CUNY Graduate Center

The New Caucus leadership of the PSC has always worked hard on behalf of CLTs, providing supplemental salary increases for those of us on the low end of the pay scale, differentials for advanced degrees and access to the staff professional development funds. All of this is in addition to the regular increases in salaries and benefits for all members.

— Albert Sherman, CLT Chapter Chair

I particularly appreciate the innovative and imaginative provisions that the New Caucus has won in our last two contracts, specifically the 80% sabbaticals, professional development funds for HEOs, CLTs and adjuncts, full-time conversion lines for adjuncts, and for my junior colleagues, research leaves and parental leave.

— Lenore Beaky, Professor of English, LaGuardia Community College, Vice Chair, University Faculty Senate

To read other voices of support, visit our website at www.newcaucus.org
The New Caucus was founded in 1995, at another moment that CUNY was worth fighting for and that the union could be a leader in that fight. We rejected the premise that CUNY would always be poor, that second-class conditions are good enough for our students or for us.

We also understood that the union would be effective in the fight for change only if it became more than a narrowly defined service organization. Attempting to address members’ individual needs while leaving the underlying conditions untouched was a failed strategy. To make real change in our working conditions—which are our students’ learning conditions—the PSC would have to become a serious political force.

And that’s what the union has become. During nine years of New Caucus leadership the Professional Staff Congress has established itself as a power at the bargaining table, on the campuses, in City Hall, in Albany and even in national policy debates. Under our leadership the union in conditions at CUNY have stopped, salaries have risen, health benefits have been preserved, support for research has increased, adjunct conditions have improved, and the freefall in CUNY funding has been ended.

More Effective for Members

And it turns out that the PSC is stronger in defending individual members’ salaries, benefits and rights because it has a commitment to a collective politics. The union is more powerful on bread-and-butter issues when it embraces a bolder vision.

A Record of Success

The New Caucus is proud of our record, a few highlights of which we offer here. What we are proudest of is that we have involved thousands of CUNY faculty and staff in this work. The accomplishments are ours together.

1. Under New Caucus leadership, the union anticipated the crisis in the State budget, and reached one of the best contracts the PSC has achieved—in record time. Early last summer, the union realized that the State would face a massive deficit and that gaining approval of our contract in Albany would become increasingly difficult. On June 6, PSC president Barbara Bowen told CUNY management that the union wanted to settle the contract within two weeks, when the legislature was expected to adjourn. Both sides worked virtually around the clock, and reached an agreement at 4:00 AM on June 20. Within days, it won approval by the legislature and the governor. One of the union’s fastest contracts was also one of the best: it includes salary increases above inflation, special increases that raise all the top steps, paid parental leave, graduate employee health insurance and more.

2. Under New Caucus leadership, the union has energized labor’s response to the current economic crisis. Last September, when the federal government proposed the largest outlay of federal stimulus funds, working both in Washington and Albany to press for a fair share for public higher education.

3. Under New Caucus leadership, the union stopped a 23-year slide in the real value of our salaries. We were unafraid to name the failure of many CUNY salaries to keep up regionally and nationally—and to address the gap that had developed between the highest and the lowest salaries. Under our leadership, the union organized rallies, signed petitions and took out ads to force a change. And we focused especially on top steps in every title, creatively stretching the funds in each contract. As a result, top salary steps will have increased by at least 30% by 2020 and October of this year. For example, the top step of full professors increased even more: 39% for Lecturers and 41% for CFTs (check new-caucus.org for details). Even with a modest rise in inflation over the next eight months, those increases are well above the rate of inflation.

4. Under New Caucus leadership, the union has been at the forefront of reversing a 20-year pattern of CUNY budget cuts. When we took office in 2000, State and City support for the CUNY budget was in deep decline. Now, State support has risen even more than last three years and City funding has increased even more dramatically. Much of that change is due to the union. We have systematically built a formidable legislative operation, starting from the grassroots. The power of the union’s political arm became clear this year, when the PSC, with NYSUT, led the effort to block a proposed 10 percent cut in State funding to the community colleges. Three times this year we beat that proposal back, engaging more than 9,000 faculty and staff across the state to send letters. This year the PSC under our leadership has made the case for the State budget; we need to continue the momentum we have developed.

5. Under New Caucus leadership, the union won 80 percent pay for sabbaticals and 24 contact hours of released time for junior faculty. We came into office determined to break the grip of the idea that decent support for research was a luxury, out of CUNY’s reach. Sabbaticals at 50 percent pay had been essentially unavailable for many faculty members, but few believed CUNY could do better. In 2004, New Caucus leadership of the PSC organized mass membership support for our contract campaign, and won sabbatical pay at 80 percent. Mobilizing the pressure of the membership, we made a similar breakthrough for junior faculty. Unencumbered faculty at every CUNY college are now entitled to the equivalent of a year, on average, of full-paid released time for research before the tenure decision.

6. Under New Caucus leadership, the union made significant gains for adjuncts, other part-timers and graduate employees. The New Caucus was founded on the recognition that the labor system in higher education must be changed, and we have worked consistently to bring parity to part-time and hourly faculty and staff. The battle is far from over, but drawing on adjunct leadership within the union, the PSC under our leadership has made significant inroads against this system. We preserved adjunct health insurance, specifically by CUNY, won paid office hours and professional development funds for adjuncts, sick leave and other improvements for Continuing Education faculty. One of the biggest breakthroughs of the current contract was health insurance for graduate employees, a longtime goal of the New Caucus and achieved in coalition with doctoral student organizers.

7. Under New Caucus leadership, the union defended the 35-hour workweek for HOEs, and won rights to overtime pay and comp time. Since the 1960s CUNY had routinely violated the contract obligation to pay for employee overtime. Individual complaints went unheeded. The New Caucus has been collective—breaking through years of silence by organizing. That’s a hallmark of PSC strategy under the New Caucus: combining meticulous contract enforcement work with big, energetic organizing.

And the results can be stunning. Thousands of professional staff across the University are now entitled to compensation for work assigned beyond the contractual limit, and a pattern of disrespect has been broken.

8. Under New Caucus leadership, the union has defended academic freedom and freedom of speech. To take one example: when the president of LaGuardia Community College issued a ban in 2008 on the use of college e-mail for union communications, the chapter leadership fought back. They organized hundreds of faculty and staff to sign a petition, and then worked with the union’s leaders and legal staff to file both a grievance and a First Amendment lawsuit. The courage and strategic thinking of the New Caucus chapter leadership paid off: CUNY management effectively gave up access to e-mail as part of the contract settled in June.

9. Under New Caucus leadership, the union restored the finances of the Welfare Fund, and refused to sell out adjuncts or retirees. During bargaining for the 2007-08 contract, as the union fought back against the war in Iraq, and we were instrumental in shifting the position of our national union. Locally, we are strong partners in coalitions to support quality education, and we will be stronger as we work with other unions, especially now, as labor comes under intense pressure for concessions.

Our Opponents

Our opponents have no record in PSC leadership; they have only criticism and promises. We have a record of success and seriousness, a deep and honest commitment to building the power we need to make real change. As a caucus that once challenged the incumbents for union leadership, we respect serious challengers. But the CUNY Alliance candidate for PSC president has never been a chapter chair, nor even been a member in the 2007 election for chair of the HEO chapter), never been a PSC delegate, never joined us in lobbying in Albany, never negotiated a PSC contract or even served on the negotiating team. We believe his slate are the wrong choice—especially for this moment that calls for experience, leadership and a bold vision for change.

The Current Crisis

The next three years could be the most important for working people in half a century. The New Caucus has shown that we can make progress for members even during economic downturns and that we have the vision to be part of rebuilding the labor movement the current moment demands. We ask you not just to vote for us, but to join us.

PSC ELECTION MATERIAL – NEW CAUCUS
FOR PRESIDENT
Barbara Bowen has been president of the union since 2006, when she led the New Caucus effort to revitalize the PSC. Under her leadership, the PSC has emerged as a powerful, effective union, and Barbara herself has earned a national reputation as a principled and articulate labor leader. As the PSC’s chief negotiator, Barbara is the architect of a remarkable series of gains for PSC members – breakthroughs on sabbatical and leave, professional development grants for adjuncts and professional staff, paid office hours for adjuncts, and research leave for junior faculty. She has been a leader in the union’s sophisticated legislative operation, which has delivered victories on pensions for members and increased funds for CUNY. As a vice president of the American Federation of Teachers, Barbara initiated a national legislation campaign to address the staffing crisis in higher education; as a vice chair of the Municipal Labor Committee, she has been a leading force in the effort to preserve health benefits for all City workers. The author of numerous publications on Renaissance and social movements, Barbara earned her Ph.D. in English at Yale, and holds faculty positions at both Queens College and the Graduate Center.

FOR FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
Steve London, first elected in 2000 and reelected twice, is an associate professor of Political Science at Brooklyn College. A founder of the New Caucus, he served three terms in the 1990s as Brooklyn College’s chapter chair and as University Faculty Senator. A member of the Negotiations Committee for the last three contracts, he is also the PSC’s Legislative Representative, leading the union’s member-based political action campaigns and CUNY budget advocacy. Working with the union’s experienced and professional staff, he molded contract enforcement into an effective, member-oriented operation. Under his leadership in this arena, the PSC has won significant arbitration and legal victories, including the 35-hour workweek for HEOs. Steve is the Welfare Fund’s Executive Officer, initiating reform of the Fund and preserving benefits. As a NYSUT Board Director, he was instrumental in increasing NYSUT’s focus on higher education and gaining more resources for the PSC. Co-editor of two books, Steve brings his expertise in political science to the union’s work.

FOR SECRETARY
Arthurine DeSola, secretary of the PSC, was the first HEO elected as a principal officer, in 2006. She is a graduate of a High Education Assistant in the Counseling Department at Queensborough. A member of the PSC’s Executive Council for over thirty years, she has extensive experience, having served as a faculty member at LaGuardia Community College and a member of the professional staff at Queensborough Community College. Currently she is a member of the union’s Contract Enforcement Committee, Legislative Committee, and Women’s Committee. She served on the PSC bargaining team during the last round of contract negotiations. Arthurine has chaired the HEO/CLT Professional Development Fund Committee since its inception in 1997. She is a founding College Laboratory Technicians and members of the Higher Education Officer series to receive funding for professional development activities. She believes that now more than ever, we must continue to educate and organize in order to advance the labor movement.

FOR TREASURER
Michael Fabricant, Professor at Hunter College and executive officer of the Ph.D. Program in Social Welfare at the Graduate Center, has been treasurer of the PSC since 2006. As treasurer, he has been instrumental committed to the transparency of PSC’s financial reporting. Mike has been a member of the Executive Council and the Negotiating Team for the past nine years. In his leadership role, he has been particularly active in building the power of the PSC through membership organizing. He has also led the union’s development of collaborative relationships with stakeholder groups in CUNY in order to promote greater investment in academic and student services. The past three years, Mike has also been a member of the national board of the American Federation of Teachers. The author of numerous publications, he has recently completed his sixth book on organized crime and educational justice. He has served as the treasurer of the National Coalition to House the Homeless and has been a lifelong activist on issues ranging from housing to public education.

FOR UNIVERSITY-WIDE OFFICERS
George Brandon is an Associate Medical Professor in the Department of Behavioral Medicine in the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education, as well as an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Biomedical Engineering Department of the Grove School of Engineering at the City College of New York. He earned a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Rutgers University in 1983. Joining the PSC soon after arriving at CCNY in 1989, George has served on the CCNY Faculty Organization’s Contracting Committee, has been the PSC chapter chair, a chapter delegate and a member of the chapter’s Executive Committee.

Jonathan Buchsbaum is Professor of Media Studies at Queens College, where he has been the PSC chapter chair since 2000. As chair, he has championed many issues, including health and safety, adjunct equity, family leave, promotion raises, and antiwar organizing. He has served as an Adjunct Organization Wide Officer since 2003 and as the coordinator of Labor Goes to the Movies from 2000 to the present. He is currently working with the Executive Council subcommittee on antiracism, one of its strategic priorities. Jonathan works on political filmmaking, and is the author of Cinema and the Sandinistas: Filmmaking in Revolutionary Nicaragua and Cinema Engagé: Film in the Popular Front. His current book project is Exceptional Times: National Cinema and Global Culture.

Carl Lindskoog is a writing fellow at Queensborough Community College and a doctoral candidate in the History Department at the CUNY Graduate Center. His research is in the area of post-World War II labor and immigration history. As the Coordinator of the Adjunct Project of the Doctoral Student Advisory Committee, the PSC in a successful campaign to win health insurance for doctoral students who work for the University. He has been a member of the Delegate Assembly and actively participates with the PSC Part-timers’ Committee. He was recently elected to the Governing Board of the New Caucus and served as a member of the nominating committee.

Costas Panayotakis, Associate Professor of Social Science at New York City College of Technology, received a Ph.D. in sociology from the CUNY Graduate Center. A union activist since the 1980s, he worked with CUNY Adjuncts United to organize New York City teachers. Co-founded City Tech, became a member of the Delegate Assembly. Costas has also participated in college and university governance by serving on the Executive Council of City Tech’s College Council and as University Faculty Senator. His publications include numerous articles on political economy, education, ethnicity, and social theory; he is currently writing a book on the relationship between capitalism and scarcity. His priority as a University-wide officer will be to increase PSC’s leverage by strengthening solidarity within its ranks, fighting against cuts in full-time positions, and organizing part-time faculty, and reaching out to students and the broader CUNY community.

Nikki McDaniel is Associate Professor of Biology at Bronx Community College and was elected chair of the union’s BCC chapter in April of 2008. Nikki has been an activist with the PSC since coming to BCC six years ago and has helped organize many events, involving adjuncts in faculty development Days and New Faculty Orientations. She previously served as secretary of the BCC PSC-CUNY delegate to the NYSUT and AFT conventions. The issues on which she has focused are health and safety, reassignment time, paid family leave, and part-time compensation. She has organized events to oppose the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

FOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR SENIOR COLLEGES
Robert Cermele, an Associate Professor of Mathematics, has taught at New York City College of Technology for nearly 37 years and has been chapter chair since 2001. He has served two terms on the Executive Council as Senior College Officer and is currently Vice President for Senior Colleges. Bob has been the Welfare Fund Treasurer Officer, initiating reform of the Fund and preserving benefits. As a NYSUT Board Director, he was instrumental in increasing NYSUT’s focus on higher education and gaining more resources for the PSC. Co-editor of two books, Steve brings his expertise in political science to the union’s work.

FOR SENIOR COLLEGE OFFICERS
Kathleen Barker, Professor of Psychology at Medgar Evers College, is currently a Senior College Officer of the PSC and the grievance counselor for her college chapter. Kathleen’s social psychological research examines contingent work and its effects on workers in higher education and other sectors. Her recent research has detailed the problems associated with citation analyses used for tenure and post tenure reviews in the U.S. and Europe. She was twice appointed to national task forces on the future of the psychology workforce by the American Psychological Association. Kathleen has served as a UFS Senator for nine years and co-authored the forthcoming UFS Faculty Experience Survey (FES). The survey will report on a broad range of institutional experiences of both full-time and part-time CUNY faculty.

Diane Menna, adjunct lecturer in English at Queens College, has taught at CUNY for more than 23 years. She is an activist who serves on the Executive Council and Contract Negotiations Committee. Diane has fought for reassignment time, paid family leave and part-time compensation. She has organized events to oppose the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Alex S. Vitale is Associate Professor of Sociology at Brooklyn College. He has served on the Executive Council for the last three years and has been active with the New Caucus and the Brooklyn College chapter. Alex is a member of the PSC Legislative Committee and a delegate to the Delegate Assembly. When a student at the Graduate Center, Alex was a member of the Student Delegates and then the Ranuc Project. In the early 1990s he was a community-labor organizer in San Francisco, focusing on health care and organizing students and faculty in the Graduate Center. Alex has significantly contributed to the lives of students and faculty.
Press is City of Disorder: How the Quality of Life Campaign Transformed New York Politics.

FOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Anne Friedman, Professor of Aca - demic and Critical Reading at Bor - ough of Manhattan Community College, is PSC Vice-President for Community Colleges; she has also served for nine years on the union’s bargaining team. Anne is a member of organizing community college mem - bers around workload issues. She is a member of the PSC’s anti-racism and two-tier labor committees and has been active in Open Admissions struggles for 40 years, beginning as a student at City College. Anne is also a delegate to NYSUT, AFT and the AAUP, she has been appointed to the community college advisory committees in both NYSUT and AAUP. For decades, Anne has been immersed in governance issues, and she has been on the Executive Committee of the University Faculty Senate and served on the Lehman’s biochemistry laboratories.

FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE OFFICERS

Penny Lewis is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the Borough of Manhat - tan Community College. Penny has been active in the PSC since her days as a student at the CUNY Graduate Center; she has also been an organizer of junior faculty. She served as co-chair of the union’s Solidarity Committee and represented the PSC at the City of New York Jobs with Justice. She is also on her chapter Executive Committee, an alternate delegate, and chairs the chapter’s committee on workload. Penny’s academic work expertise is on social class and the relationship between labor and other social movements in the United States.

Lorraine Cohen, Professor of Sociol - ogy at LaGuardia Community College, was elected in 2006 to the PSC Execu - tive Council. In 2008 she was reelected to a three-year term as the LaGuardia Community College chair. In 2007 under Lorraine’s leadership, faculty and staff waged a protracted – and successful – battle to stop CUNY management from han - ning the use of college e-mail for union-related communication. Lorraine also took a leading role in winning reinstatement at CUNY for thousands of students on public assistance. A former activist, Lorraine strongly in grassroots org - anizing and the development of a labor movement that fights for a progressive social and political agenda. She is a member of the New Caucus Governing Board.

Felipe Pimentel, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Hostos Community Col - lege, holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the CUNY Graduate Center. He has taught at several other CUNY colleges, includ - ing Lehman, BMCC, York and Hunter. A member of the PSC since 2001, Felipe is the vice chair of the campus chapter and worked with the union’s Contract Organizing Committee. Following the publication of Felipe’s report, The Decline of the Puerto Rican Full-time Faculty at the City University of New York (CCNY) from 1981 to 2002, Chancellor Goldstein established an initiative to increase the number of Latino faculty at CUNY.

FOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR CROSS-CAMPUS CHAPTERS

Iris DeLutro, a senior counselor and coordinator of the LEAP Program (CLIP), has taught at York College for more than ten years and has been on the York Chapter’s Executive Committee. He has served as Alternate Delegate, Delegate, Acting Chapter Chair, and Vice Chair. He serves on the Delegate Assembly Part-timers Commit - tee. His union activism began with the Communication Workers of America where he served as shop steward. While he has particular in - terest in and concern for issues that impact contingent work - ers, he will represent all PSC constituencies.

FOR CROSS-CAMPUS OFFICERS

Donna Veronica Gill is Assistant Di - rector of the Office of Financial Aid at Hunter College. A member of the CUNY community since 1986, Donna has devoted 14 years of service to the PSC. For the past five years, she has been a tireless grievance counselor in the union’s central office. Donna cur - rently serves on the PSC’s Executive Council and its Grievance Policy Com - mittee. She is also a member of the selection committee for HEO/CLT professional development grants, and active in the union’s peace and justice work. Most important, she has contributed to achieving significant gains for the HEO chapter. Her most significant contribution has been in winning the HEO overtime grievance and lawsuit. A committed activist for social change, she has developed and honed her organizing skills to benefit the labor movement.

Steve Trimboli, a Senior College Laboratory Technician in Biological Sciences at Lehman College, is responsible for the efficient operation of Lehman’s biochemistry laboratories. He has been an active participant in the CLT chapter of the PSC for 26 years and a Cross-Campus Officer for twelve. Steve is currently a member of the PSC Grievance Policy and the HEO/CLT Professional Development Committees. He is also a longtime member of the union’s bar - gaining team, where he brings an understanding of both fac - ulty and staff as well as full-time and part-time employees. He serves as chapter delegate to the PSC Delegate Assembly and a delegate to the NYSUT and AFT conventions.

Andrea Ades Vásquez, is a Higher Education Officer who has worked at the American Social History Project since 1989. She is currently associated director of the History Project and the Center for Media and Learning as well as Managing Di - rector of the Center. Andrea is a co-producer and designer of many U.S. history websites that are currently used in CUNY, other colleges and high schools. For the past nine years, Andrea has been involved in union activities with a particular concern for contract issues. She has served as an alternate deleg - ate, helped produce the union newsletter, and recently joined the Graduate Center’s HEO labor management committee.

FOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR PART-TIME PERSONNEL

Marcia Newfield, adjunct lecturer in English at BMCC, was recently elect - ed Vice President for Part-Time Per - sonnel in 2003. She initiated monthly First Friday meetings of the Delegate Assembly Part-Time Personnel Com - mittee, serves as a grievance coun - cilor for part-timers, co-chair of the Women’s Caucus, and has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of professional staff issues, includ - ing “bullying at the workplace” practices that many HEOs expe - rienced. She has led workshops on this topic for professional staff at state and national higher education conferences.

FOR OFFICERS FOR PART-TIME PERSONNEL

Michael Batson has been an Adjunct Lecturer in History and Women’s Stud - ies at the College of Staten Island since 2000. He has been active in the PSC since then, and for the past three years he has been a PSC delegate and cam - puser organizer of part-timers, work - ing successfully to build a campus infrastructure of activism leaders. Michael is committed to maintaining CUNY as a quality, affordable, and humane institution, and has concentrated on improving both the working conditions of his colleagues and the learning environment of the students.

Susan DiRaimo, currently an Of - ficer for Part-Time Personnel, was first elected in 2003. She has been an adjunct in the English Department at City College since 1981 and at Lehman College since 1999. She is currently an ESL Textbook, Life, Language and the Urban Experience. She has worked for a semester system for part-timers and has advocated for a plan that no - tifies adjuncts that they qualify to participate in the TRS pension system. For the past six years, Susan has been a member of the HEO Organizing Community College, is PSC Vice-President for Part-Time Personnel, has been Vice President for several courses in the Sociology De - partment at Queens. Before her retire - ment, she was a member of the Delegate College PSC Chapter and served on the Welfare Fund Advisory Committee. For the past six years, she has co-chaired the PSC Legislation Committee including the union’s elec - tional work and regularly advocating with state legislators and members of the City Council on behalf of the PSC, the Univer - sity and its students. Eileen currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Retirees Chapter. She is a member of the Gover - ning Board of the New Caucus.

Bill Friedman, a long-time labor ac - tivist, served as a union chapter chair at BMCC in the sixties, seventies and nineties. A former educator, Bill believes strongly in grassroots org - anizing and the development of a labor movement that fights for a progressive social and political agenda. She is a member of the New Caucus Governing Board.

Eileen Geil Moran retired in 2002 from her position as Research Asso - ciate at the Queens College Michael Harrington Center, where she taught several courses in the Sociology De - partment at Queens. Before her retire - ment, she was a member of the Delegate College PSC Chapter and served on the Welfare Fund Advisory Committee. For the past six years, she has co-chaired the PSC Legislation Committee including the union’s elec - tional work and regularly advocating with state legislators and members of the City Council on behalf of the PSC, the Univer - sity and its students. Eileen currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Retirees Chapter. She is a member of the Gov - erning Board of the New Caucus.
The CUNY ALLIANCE Wants to Save Your Union

The New Caucus has failed you in every way

Our Philosophy

• Your Union should focus on the well being of its members — salary, benefits, working conditions and job security.
  • Equal benefits for retirees and active members.
  • An open books policy is essential to sound governance.
  • Union members should help guide union policy.
  • Probity, not profligacy: disciplined, responsible expenditure of union funds

Our experienced slate includes:

• Two current PSC Chapter Chairs
• Several former Chapter Chairs
  • A founding member of the PSC
  • Experienced negotiators, grievance officers, and others with years of commitment to the union
• Representatives from the entire spectrum of CUNY

Nine years of New Caucus failures have cost you dearly

• The New Caucus negotiated raises that failed to keep up with cost of living increases. Since 2002, our base salary increased 11.9% as the result of New Caucus negotiated contracts (covering the 2002-2007 contract, and the first year of the 2007-2010 contract), far short of the 19.5% cost of living increase over that period. That means we lost 7.5% in real purchasing power in that time.
• They drove the Welfare Fund Reserve into near-nothingness. Union members were required to give back $31 million of retroactive pay in 2006 to save the Reserve. A typical member lost between $1000 and $2000 in retroactive pay, and some gave up as much as $2600.
• Under the New Caucus, we suffer catastrophically degraded dental benefits and lost our free life insurance.

Tellingly, our sister unions achieved better contracts than we did under the New Caucus

• During the last 9 years, our sister unions District Council 37, the public school teachers (UFT), and the United University Professions (SUNY) negotiated salary increases far higher than the New Caucus negotiated for us.
• If those unions reached better deals than the PSC in the same city, in the same tough economic times, and under the same hostile government administrations, the blame for our worse contracts rests solely on New Caucus incompetence and mismanagement.

Our Plan

• We will focus your funds and our efforts on union business to help restore your benefits. To better achieve that goal, we will end the union’s current focus on global political issues.
• We will devote our energy to tough and sustained negotiations, but will deny the university a contract until our need for better benefits and working conditions is met.
• We will post all financial records and minutes of meetings on the web. When tough choices have to be made, we will let your informed views guide our decisions.
• We will do justice to adjuncts, HEO’s and CLT’s. The University must acknowledge, by way of salaries, benefits and security, their essential roles in the work of the University.

End nine years of New Caucus Failures

The 9-year record of New Caucus failures stands as evidence of their incompetence and mismanagement. The New Caucus management’s unrelenting focus on global politics is to the detriment of union business. We’ve paid the price for that distracted management for too long. The CUNY ALLIANCE is different. We focus on the bread and butter issues of members of the educational community.

Refocus our union on the issues that count

Help us clean house

Vote the CUNY ALLIANCE in April
Put YOUR interests at the top of the union agenda

• President: Fred Brodzinski  • First V.P.: James Blake
• Secretary: Thea Pignataro  • Treasurer: Rina Yarmish

See the CUNY ALLIANCE profile in this issue of the Clarion for information on all 27 PSC Executive Council candidates.
See our website for a more detailed description of our plans.
To contact us via email write to: ca@cunyalliance.org  For more information go to: www.cunyalliance.org
CUNY ALLIANCE INTEGRITY AND LEADERSHIP

We have joined together as the CUNY ALLIANCE in order to provide the membership with an alternative vision for the union in the April Executive Council elections. We are a group of your colleagues who will provide union representation that is committed, first and foremost, to the needs and well-being of CUNY’s faculty and staff: part-time and full-time, active and retired. We intend to change the leadership and the current direction of the PSC. We believe the leadership should focus on the interests of its members: our salaries and benefits, our working conditions, grievances and job security.

The Alliance has members from across the university, representing all constituencies. Among our candidates are two current and, several former, chapter chairs; a founding member of the PSC and a former elected union official; members of campus chapter executive committees; grievance officers; and others with years of experience in, and commitments to, the history of the PSC. CUNY ALLIANCE also includes new members with new ideas. We provide the right mix of experience and fresh approach.

FOCUS

The PSC was formed to serve the interests and concerns of CUNY faculty and staff. The New Caucus management has embarked on a campaign to recruit, as members, workers who are not CUNY employees. Recruiting those workers in large numbers vastly reduces the ability of CUNY faculty and staff to influence the policies of our own union. Why has the NC leadership done this? We believe that it is partly because they want power within the union movement, and partly because every new member brings dues. Both of the latter extend the leadership’s ability to broadcast its message. What is that message? One of social and political activism, activism that has no relevance over the essential tasks of a faculty-staff union. The CUNY ALLIANCE, by contrast, has pragmatic aims: to focus on issues of faculty and staff welfare.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The past 9 years have been marked by unrelated losses for union members. The New Caucus management has used strategy to further reduce our benefits and working conditions. Costs of living increases. Since 2002, our base salary increased 11.9% as the result of contracts negotiated by our opponents, far short of the 19.5% cost of living increase over that period. We lost 7.5% purchasing power in that time! These losses are a result of the New Caucus focus on global politics to the detriment of union business. We’ve paid the price for that distracted leadership for too long. The CUNY ALLIANCE is different. We will focus on the bread and butter issues of members of our educational community.

THE WELFARE FUND

The Alliance will serve your interests by competently managing the Welfare Fund, something that our opponents have failed to do. The PSC will reorganize the Welfare Fund into near-bankruptcy. All active faculty (part-time and full-time) and professional staff were required to relinquish $31 million of retirement benefits. Many members paid to lose $10000-$20000 in retroactive pay, with some losing as much as $26000. As a result, we suffer degraded dental benefits and loss of free life insurance. When elected, we will survey the membership about priorities, make those survey results public (our opponents are fond of conducting surveys and keeping the results to themselves), shift funding accord- ingly, and make an agreement that substantially greater in-fusions into the Fund. We will restore your benefits in the most cost-effective ways with the best possible providers.

RETIREE’S WELFARE BENEFITS

There should be no distinction between the benefits of retirees and active faculty and staff. This is a principle that the current officers overturned when they applied to retirees a $50 deductible for prescription drugs. A small amount, but a dangerous precedent. The contributions that retirees have made to CUNY entitle them to equal consideration and benefits. We are committed to negotiating a better benefit package for retired and for active faculty and staff.

COMMITMENT TO OUR CONSTITUENTS

The Alliance recognizes that many constituencies comprise the PSC. In consultation with them, we identify and address the needs of our members. Please see our website, www.cunyalliance.org, to view our platform.

Part-Time Faculty. We are committed to increasing the base pay for part-time faculty. Adjuncts, especially those with long-term service to the university, deserve improved job security, working conditions, salaries and benefits. HEOS, CLTs, Librarians. HEOS, CLTs and Library faculty all deserve increases in annual leave and development opportunities. HEOS’s deserve true job security.

Counselors. We will fight to restore the status of faculty counselors, which was decimated under New Caucus management.

FOR PRESIDENT

Dr. Frederick R. Brodzinski has 39 years of successful administrative and managerial experience directing large organizations with significant budgets, complex structures and multiple funding sources. He has served on both sides of the bargaining table and has a lifelong history of campus activism and membership. An extremely competent leader, Dr. Brodzinski has served as dean, chief student affairs officer, and chief operating officer of a multi-billion dollar research institute. He has taught continuously every semester for the last 22 years. He has taught on four continents, three Caribbean islands, and led several feasibility studies. His research focuses on leadership. His research topics vary from quality management, personnel budgets, to future studies and forecasting. His books, articles and lecturing complement his practical skill as a manager. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, a Master of Science degree from Indiana University in Bloomington, and a Master of Arts and a Doctorate from Columbia University. A long time Adjunct at John Jay and CCNY he knows well the difficulties of teaching part time. A certified basketball referee, he trained as an artist and worked as a professional musician for 10 years. He has the skills, ability, and vision to restore professionalism to the PSC.

FOR FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Professor James Blake is a Professor in the Department of Student Life at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. Prior to coming to City University, Professor Blake was an active member of DC 37 Social Service Employees Union, Local 371, and the beneficiaries of the Social Service Employees Union of the University. Professor Blake has a long history of campus activism and community leadership. He served as faculty representative to the PSC at NYU, and as faculty representative to the Student Government. He is a member of the executive committee of the New Caucus. Professor Blake has a master’s degree in mathematics and a master’s degree in education.

FOR SECRETARY

Thea Pignataro is Chair of the Math-ematics Department at City College. She came to CCNY in 1996, after receiving her PhD in mathematical physics from Princeton in 1984 and holding postdoctoral positions at the Institute of Theoretical Physics in Maine and the Courant Institute of NYU, and at Columbia University. She was an Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellow from 1990 to 1994. She served her Department as Assistant Chair
FOR TREASURER

Rina Yarmish is a Professor of Mathematics at Kingsborough Community College, and has been Chair of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science since 1983. She was a Chapter Chairperson for over 30 years and has been on the executive board for 20 years. She has been a member of the Board of Trustees of the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund for over 25 years. She previously served as a PSC Chapter Chair for 10 years and has been on the executive board for 15 years. She has a comprehensive understanding of the Welfare Fund, its operation and finances. A product of CUNY, Rina received her BA in Mathematics from Queens College, and her MS (Applied Mathematics) and PhD (Mathematics) from New York University. She has authored three books on Programming Languages; her book Assmblery Language Fundamentals has been translated into both Russian and Malaysian. She has published extensively in the fields of programming languages, mathematics and mathematics education. Her experience as department chair and with the PSC and Welfare Fund along with extensive and detailed understanding of issues affecting our professional lives, make her eminently qualified to assume a leadership role in the PSC at this very critical time. Rina believes that the PSC should focus on the needs of its members—fully funded and well paid—by re-focusing its energies and funds on the needs of CUNY faculty and staff and job security, salary, working conditions, the welfare of students and the community in general. She is concerned about the possibility of cuts in public funding, and believes that the PSC should focus on issues of broad-and-butter unionism and leave world politics to other organizations.

Lilia Melani’s commitment to our Union has moved her to run for office again. As a founder of the PCS, member of the Executive Board, and member of several contract-negotiating committees, she finds it incomprehensible that contract negotiations can drag on for years and yet repeatedly be on the verge of settlement, as e-mails and Clarions have alleged. Action, not rhetoric, is needed. Lilia believes that the union should focus its energies and funds on the needs of CUNY faculty and staff—job security, salary, working conditions, the welfare of students and the community in general. She is concerned about the possibility of cuts in public funding, and believes that the PSC should focus on issues of broad-and-butter unionism and leave world politics to other organizations.

FOR UNIVERSITY-WIDE OFFICERS

Edward Catapano is a Professor of Biology at Medgar Evers College. He was Chair of the Department of Biology for 13 years. He has been heavily involved in grant funded programs designed to increase the number of underrepresented individuals completing undergraduate degrees in science and going on to graduate and professional schools in biology and medicine. He is working on having an active physiology research program, with over 100 articles and presentations on his research work. Edward has been an active member of the PSC for 30 years. He is a member of the executive board of the Queensborough Community College chapter—then as Vice-Chair and currently Chair for the last 3 years. He has also been active in the college’s Faculty Senate throughout his career and has been an Executive Member for most of his term. Monica Fabricant is a Chair of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science at Queensborough Community College. She currently serves on the Executive Board of the QCC chapter of PSC-CUNY. Monica served as Secretary of the CUNY Senate of Mathematics Chairs (1995 – 1999). She received the QCC Award for Excellence in Faculty Scholarship (2002), the MAA Metropolitan New York Section Award for Distinguished Mathematics Teaching (1997), and the NYS – MATFYE Distinguished Contributions to Mathematics Education Award (1992). She has published numerous articles in refereed journals, and other journals, and served on the PSC-CUNY math panel. Her political point of view was shaped by a summer spent as a voter registration volunteer for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in the Mississippi Delta in 1965. Michael believes that organizing of an attempt to form a union of teaching fellows. As the child of a NYC public school teacher, he is a second generation member of the AFT. He is a certified instructor and holds a 5th degree black belt in Aikido. Michael believes the PSC should focus on issues of broad-and-butter unionism and leave world politics to other organizations.

FOR VICE-PRESIDENT FOR SENIOR COLLEGES

Rishi S. Raj has been teaching Mechanical Engineering at City College for the past 30 years, where he also served in the City College Senate for more than 15 years and also served on the CUNY Senate. He served as a Distinguished Fellow of ASEE-USR. Last year, he was appointed as a professor of Mechanical Engineering at City College. He has been at the forefront of many initiatives at CUNY to improve the quality of education and to attract top faculty and staff. He has been heavily involved in the ASEE-USR, and a technical specialist in the U.S. Army. Rishi has written four books: Science and Logic of the Absolutely Pure, Violence, Turning Points in Mathematics. He was recently appointed by the Governor of the State of NJ to serve on the State Board of Engineers and Land Surveyors. He was also the founder and president of the Society of Indian Academics in America (SIAA) and has lectured extensively in India, Russia, Australia, Israel, UK, Germany, Canada, Holland, Belgium, and the US.

FOR SENIOR COLLEGE OFFICERS

Linda Weiser Friedman is Professor of Statistics and Computer Information Systems at the Baruch College Zicklin School of Business and the Graduate Center, where she served as a Doctoral Faculty of the CUNY Ph.D. Programs in Business and Computer Science. She has served as Department Chair, the Baruch Senate, and on the PSC’s Executive Committee, among others. She is the author of many scholarly articles and the books, Comparative Programming Languages (Prentice Hall) and The Simulation Metamorph (Kluwer) as well as fiction and poetry.

Melvyn B. Nathanson is Professor of Mathematics at Lehman College and the CUNY Graduate Center. He has published more than 150 research papers in number theory and related areas of mathematics, and is author or editor of 20 books. In recent years he has also held visiting positions at Princeton University, Tel Aviv University, and the Institute for Advanced Study, where he also served as President of the Board of Trustees of AMIAS, the Association of Members of the Institute for Advanced Study. Well acquainted with the internal operation of the University, he served as a member of the CUNY Senate Senate. He served as a Distinguished Fellow of ASEE-USR and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Lehman. Before coming to CUNY he was Professor of Mathematics and Dean of the Graduate School of Rutgers University, Newark.

Robert Klibaner has been at the College of Staten Island for over 40 years. He also served as Chair of the Department of Computer Science since 1987. Currently he is the secretary of CSI’s College Council and is the faculty representative to the CUNY FIRST Steering Committee. She served as a member of the Supervisory Committee of PSC-CUNY Federal Credit Union, and was the Chair of the committee from September 1992 to August 1996. Strongly committed to improving pedagogy at the University she was a University Trainer for Distance Education and is a faculty mentor for online instruction at CSI.

FOR VICE-PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Ronald Forman began his CUNY career more than 40 years ago at Brooklyn College. Following his Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts in Mathematics degrees, he completed his studies at New York University’s Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences. While at NYU, he began his teaching career as a lecturer and adjunct professor at Brooklyn College.
before taking a faculty position at Kingsborough Community College in 1969. Ronald currently teaches mathematics and statistics for a period of approximately two years. He was elected to the Welfare Fund Advisory Council and is attempting to make that body more responsive to the membership’s needs and its financial practices. For 4 years, he served as the first Chair of the CCNY Labor Management Relations Committee that was formed to address workload and classification concerns raised by employees in the HOE Series.

FOR CROSS-CAMPUS OFFICERS

Abraham Malz joined CSI’s Department of Chemistry in 1977. As a Senior College Lab Technician at the College, he has been responsible for the maintenance and the implementation of advanced nuclear magnetic resonance instrumentation as well as student instructional laboratories in physical, analytical, and polymer chemistry. He earned a Master’s degree in Environmental Science from CSI in 2003.

Jeffrey Sigler was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. He is co-director of the Freshman Year Program at Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York (CUNY). Completing his fourteenth year at Medgar Evers College, Mr. Sigler has also served as Director of Student Life and Development (1999-2000) and as Director of Housing. He is also a member of the Freshman Year Program at Medgar Evers College. Mr. Sigler also regularly participates in learned conferences in the United States and around the world. Because of his chosen field – the classical sources of Spanish Renaissance Literature – he has attained a solid working knowledge of Koine Greek, Latin, and Italian, and is also fluent in Spanish regional languages.

Michael Simmonds is the Coordinator of Recruitment at Medgar Evers College. He is also a graduate of Medgar Evers College, Class of 1997. Throughout this period, he has been an active member of the PSC, becoming a Delegate to the PSC in 2008 after serving for a period of approximately two years. He was also a member of the HEO Series.

FOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR PART-TIME PERSONNEL

Frank W. Marousek has served in a variety of instructional and instructional roles at John Jay College for over ten years, he has taught courses in Introduction to Criminal Justice/Police Studies, Police Community Relations. Frank has been a member of the New Programs Committee, the Standards Committee, the Graduation Committee and as Chapter Chair. He brings years of union experience and a fresh point of view. He is interested in bringing to the table the interests and needs of his fellow retirees, i.e. the dental plan, prescriptions, eyeglasses, hearing aids, etc.

Sheldon Friedland served as a faculty member of Kingsborough Community College for 31 years. He started the Tourism and Hospitality Department in 1982 and served as its Chair for 10 years. Shelly served on the College and Department P&B committees for many terms and worked under the Department of Student Services in the area of Student Activities for 20 years. Among his other activities, he was a hearing officer of the Faculty Disability and Appeal Committee for over ten years and also was the Faculty Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor for 5 years in the ’70s when then Mayor John Lindsey mandated such posts in all NY City agencies. Prof. Friedland is passionate about protecting the rights of faculty and has been a member of the PSC since early in his teaching career.

FOR OFFICERS FOR PART-TIME PERSONNEL

William (Bill) Rooney has been serving as the Adjunct Coordinator for the Kingsborough Chapter of the PSC for the past four years. In that regard, he has helped many part-time faculty resolve issues and problems, and has advocated for them very successfully. He is also a member of the KCC-PSC Executive Committee, and attends Delegate Assembly meetings representing the regular instructional staff at his college. At the KCC chapter meetings with the administration, he raises issues related to part-timers, for which he has been teaching English at KCC since 1989. He always teaches all four semesters. He was a Class of 2003 nominee for “Favorite Teacher.” He considers himself quite fortunate to be representing such an outstanding slate of colleagues who have sensitive priorities.

Karl Ruddock is an Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Physical, Environmental and Computer Sciences at Medgar Evers College, serving since 1990. He also has adjuncted at other colleges, including Borough of Manhattan Community College and New York City College of Technology. He received his Ph.D. in Science and Engineering and a Master of Science Degree in Environmental Health from Hunter College.

There is still one vacancy on this slate for the officers for part-time personnel. See ballot or PSC website for final list.

FOR RETIREE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OFFICERS

John (Jack) Donoghue is a Professor Emeritus at NYU. He was recently elected to the position of Alternate Delegate to the Retiree Chapter. He graduated from Brooklyn College with an AB & MS and joined the Navy and saw the world. He taught chemistry at Merrickam College and New Hampshire Technical Institute. In the 1980s he changed his academic objectives to history and enrolled at NYU in a Ph.D. program in the School of Arts and Science. He received his Ph.D. in Architectural History; his dissertation was selected as one of the ten best in 1977-78 and was published by Arno Press. Jack has taught at NYU for over 29 years and was an adjunct at SUNY in Staten Island and at University of Rhode Island at Kingston. He served for over 20 years in the Faculty Senate, including six years on the Executive Committee. Jack has been involved in the PSC since it was founded, serving on the Executive Committee and as Chair Chapter. He brings years of union experience and a fresh point of view. He is interested in bringing to the table the interests and needs of his fellow retirees, i.e. the dental plan, prescriptions, eyeglasses, hearing aids, etc.

Sheldon Friedland served as a faculty member of Kingsborough Community College for 31 years. He started the Tourism and Hospitality Department in 1982 and served as its Chair for 10 years. Shelly served on the College and Department P&B committees for many terms and worked under the Department of Student Services in the area of Student Activities for 20 years. Among his other activities, he was a hearing officer of the Faculty Disability and Appeal Committee for over ten years and also was the Faculty Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor for 5 years in the ’70s when then Mayor John Lindsey mandated such posts in all NY City agencies. Prof. Friedland is passionate about protecting the rights of faculty and has been a member of the PSC since early in his teaching career.

PSC ELECTION REMINDER

Make sure to cast your vote!

- April 1: Ballots mailed out by American Arbitration Association (AAA), which is supervising the vote.
- April 8: If you are eligible to vote and have not received a ballot, call Barbara Gabriel at (212) 354-1252 to request one.
- April 29: All ballots must be received by AAA by 5:00 pm.

There is still one vacancy on this slate for the officers for part-time personnel. See ballot or PSC website for final list.
Stimulus plan helps higher ed

But facilities spending takes a hit

By CHARISSE WAUGH

While the $787 billion economic recovery bill approved in February includes money for higher education, universities will get far less than originally expected. Direct aid to institutions took a particular hit after bruising negotiations that led to a scaled-back stimulus package.

The legislation provides substantial new money for student aid and for scientific research, but billions of dollars for modernizing college and university facilities were eliminated from the bill at the behest of the trio of Senate Republicans whose support enabled passage of the bill. A “stabilization fund” designed to help states plug holes in their budgets will aid public colleges — but the final amount is one-third smaller than the amount approved by the House.

The fiscal stabilization fund will provide $55.3 billion to states over the next two years and $39.5 billion of that amount is to be used to restore cuts in education. An additional $8.8 billion is for “high priority” items, which may include education; and the remaining $5 billion is essentially reserved for K-12.

SMALLER BILL

To get the 60 votes needed to avoid a filibuster and win final passage, Democratic lawmakers sought to placate three Republican Senators, Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine and Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, who worked together to shrink the size of the spending package. As part of a program of school construction, the original Senate legislation included $3.5 billion for universities to modernize their facilities. But at the GOP triumph’s insistence, the entire school-facilities construction program was compromised right out of the bill.

The facilities fund and its subsequent deletion encapsulated many things about the whole stimulus fight. This provision was both “green” and an economic stimulus, producing jobs now to help save energy and educate the nation’s workforce for the future. Yet it ran afoul of three Republicans who, while willing to compromise, maintained their party’s aversion to public spending and its traditional deference to states. As Sen. Collins told The Washington Post, “I do not support the establishment of a new federal school construction program, because school construction traditionally has been a state and local responsibility.”

After the Senate agreed to a smaller stimulus bill, economist Dean Baker calculated that the changes would create 500,000 fewer jobs. “Trying to save money on [the] stimulus is like finding a shortcut for your jogging route,” Baker remarked. “We can do it, but it undermines the whole point of the effort.”

Back in January, when the House approved $6 billion for higher education facilities, college administrators began dusting off long-dormant repair, renovation and construction projects. The executive director of New Jersey’s Commission on Higher Education asked each college in her state to submit a list of shovel-ready projects in order to have a head start on spending the money.

Despite what was lost in the compromise, the final legislation still provides a large amount of new money for student financial aid and for scientific research. Students and their families will receive about $30 billion more in 2009 and 2010. This includes roughly $16 billion to increase the maximum Pell Grant from $4,850 to $5,350 and $14 billion in expanded higher education tax credits for low- and middle-income families.

For science and research spending, the stimulus provides $16 billion to several federal agencies that will channel most of these funds to academic institutions. This includes $10 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for research and infrastructure, $2 billion for research at the Department of Energy, and $3 billion to the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Scientists monitoring the fight over the legislation had been on an emotional roller coaster, and they generally applauded the final result. Collins, Snowe and Specter had supported a proposal to zero out the additional funds for the NSF — and while this idea lost out, the Senate version of the recovery package provided less than half as much as the House for the science funding agency. It was only at the eleventh hour that the full $3 billion for the NSF was restored to the spending package.

Biomedical research was one area in which Specter sought a significant increase, even as he worked to shrink the package overall. A two-time cancer survivor, Specter extracted a promise from Democrats that in return for his vote, the bill would include $10 billion in funding for the NIH, three times the amount approved by the House.

New York State’s portion of the federal recovery package is $24.6 billion over the next two years. That includes $476 million in higher Pell Grant funding, according to the Department of Education, and hundreds of millions more through the expanded tuition tax credit. This is aid that is badly needed; New York has consistently earned an “F” for affordability in annual reports from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

BADLY NEEDED AID

The State of New York will get $1.25 billion this year from fiscal stabilization funds targeted for avoiding cuts to education budgets. But this money must be spent according to a fixed formula — and due to the way New York counts its spending for public higher education, only $38 million of this amount will go to CUNY and SUNY.

Other parts of the federal stabilization funds are less restrictive, however. The pot of money designated for “high priority” items is discretionary, and this year this “flex-fund” will provide New York with $275 million to support any government service, including higher education.

A third source of funds, called FMAP money, is most often described as being for increased Medicaid reimbursement. In fact, the Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) are the percentage rates that determine matching funds to states for various medical and social service expenditures. As one Albany observer told Clarion, “This money is also discretionary — it can be used for anything.” A case in point is Governor Paterson’s move to use $1.3 billion of the $5 billion in FMAP funds provided to New York this year to replace his unpopular proposals to tax soda, haircuts and music downloads. That leaves $3.7 billion in FMAP money that New York can use for other budgetary purposes.

DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

Although the intent of the federal stimulus bill was to encourage higher state spending, Paterson insists that it would be a mistake to spend every available federal dollar. While wavering on the details, he remains reluctant to impose higher tax rates for the wealthiest New Yorkers and insists that deep cuts are still needed to balance New York’s budget for future years.

“The PSC, working together with NYSUT, has been relentless in trying to squeeze every possible dollar for public higher education out of New York’s federal stimulus funds,” said PSC President Barbara Bowen. “Higher education is much more than a jobs program, of course, but it’s the best jobs program we have — there is no better investment to revitalize the economy. The only lasting way to fix the State budget is to end New York’s Bush-style tax cuts for the rich, but much could be done right away by the best use of the stimulus funds. It would be a crime to waste those funds on measures that do nothing to stimulate the economy, while continuing to starve public higher education.”