From left, LaGuardia Financial Aid Counselor Ganga Persaud, PSC Secretary Arthurine DeSola, HEO Chapter Chair Jean Weisman, LaGuardia Enrollment Specialist Melanie Abreu (center), HEO Chapter Vice Chair Iris DeLutro, and LaGuardia Financial Aid Counselor Robert Bandelt celebrate a settlement for unpaid overtime going back three years. Now, LaGuardia must pay time-and-a-half when the plaintiffs work more than 40 hours, as required by law. PAGES 3, 11

HEOs WIN SETTLEMENT

TIME = MONEY

From left, LaGuardia Financial Aid Counselor Ganga Persaud, PSC Secretary Arthurine DeSola, HEO Chapter Chair Jean Weisman, LaGuardia Enrollment Specialist Melanie Abreu (center), HEO Chapter Vice Chair Iris DeLutro, and LaGuardia Financial Aid Counselor Robert Bandelt celebrate a settlement for unpaid overtime going back three years. Now, LaGuardia must pay time-and-a-half when the plaintiffs work more than 40 hours, as required by law. PAGES 3, 11

BARGAINING

CUNY unveils demands

CUNY management wants many changes that would leave faculty and staff stretched thinner and less able to teach and serve students. PAGES 6-7, 10, 12

THE WAR

6th CUNY student killed in Iraq

Brian Ritzberg Jr. went into the army after a year at Queensborough CC. He planned to return to college when he got out, but in April he died in Iraq. PAGE 4

NYC BUDGET

Lobbying for CUNY funding

PSC members and students gathered to press New York City for full funding for CUNY and to support the PSC's call for more faculty counselors. PAGES 5, 10

ADJUNCTS

Reappointment, unemployment

Part-time faculty should have received their letters of reappointment by now. With a letter or not, adjuncts may be eligible for unemployment benefits. PAGE 9

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS • NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION • AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS • NYC CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL • NYS AFL-CIO • NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS
Library faculty win on leave

By PETER HOGNESS

College presidents cannot prevent CUNY library faculty from taking professional leave, according to a ruling issued April 11.

“When I heard we had won, it felt great!” said Wambui Mbugwa, a professor in the library department at BMCC who filed the grievance.

“And not just for me. When people told me, ‘Congratulations, you won the case,’” said no — I did not win the case. We won the case, because it’s the CUNY library faculty who stand to gain.

“With the librarians’ 12-month schedule, we have so little time to do research as it is,” Mbugwa said. Unlike other faculty members, library faculty receive a maximum of 20 days of annual leave, and professional leave can provide them with additional time for scholarship.

Mbugwa had requested four weeks of professional reassignment leave for a July 2005 research project. In February 2005, her request was approved by the personnel and budget committees (P&B) of both her department and the college as a whole — which is all that the union contract requires.

UNAMBIGUOUS

But in June 2005, the college’s lawyer argued that the president’s approval was also needed, even if this was not spelled out in the contract — and BMCC President Antonio Perez refused to give his OK. Mbugwa, who has worked at BMCC since 1976, filed a grievance and the issue went to arbitration.

Management argued that the president’s approval was required for any and all actions by a college-wide P&B, regardless of the contract’s exact language. It cited two policy statements by the CUNY Board of Trustees from the 1970s — for example, a 1971 statement that “the president has the affirmative responsibility for passing on all faculty personnel actions …”

But arbitrator Ralph Berger concluded that “the policies cited by the employer cannot take precedence over clear and unambiguous contract language.” In essence, Berger wrote, “the employer is asking the arbitrator to read into the contract something that is not there.”

The contract “clearly sets forth an approval procedure to be followed when librarians request reassignment leave,” Berger concluded. “It does not require approval by the president.” Berger ordered that Mbugwa’s leave be granted in the summer of 2008.

“This was a matter of principle,” Mbugwa said. “I worked very hard to get this provision in the contract, and we would expect that it be followed. But always some campus — we try to bend the contract to whatever they would prefer.”

“I was determined to go on with [the grievance], no matter what,” she added. “What I had in the back of my mind was the junior faculty member, who might be more hesitant to fight. As a semi-tenured faculty member, there was clearly nothing they could do to me, so I felt I had a responsibility.”

“I could not have done it without all the help from the union,” Mbugwa added, particularly thanking Howard Prince, her grievance counselor and Nathaniell Charnye, director of legal affairs. “When we get to the other side of a bridge, we can’t forget all the people who helped us get there.”

“Thank goodness we do have a union that will stand up for a member.”

Prez can’t nix professional leave

Wambui Mbugwa will conduct historical research in Kenya.

Karen Miller
LaGuardia Community College

DEGREES OF COMPENSATION

According to the current contract there are only pay increases for [adjuncts who] obtain a PhD and not other advanced degrees. There are some instructors who only have a bachelor’s degree and there are other instructors who have several master’s degrees in their field and other fields related to their discipline.

Perhaps part-timers with more than one master’s or PhD should be compensated more for their additional investment in their education.

Adjunct pay

In the March 2007 Clarion, President Barbara Bowen responded to a letter, “Adjuncts and Union Action,” from Andrea Siegel of Hunter who asked the PSC to do better for adjuncts. President Bowen noted that thousands of adjuncts received more than a 20% raise when they started being paid for office hours.

Now, how can extra work be called a raise? Adjuncts who teach at least six hours a week are paid for the hour at the normal teaching rate. Even though the extra dollars help a little, more work is not a raise. A real raise would be equal pay for equal work.

The highest hourly pay an adjunct lecturer gets now is $68.54. In the new contract this pay rose from $63.18 hourly to the present $68.54. Deducing $63.18 from $68.54, the difference is $5.36. This amounts to less than 10%.

A more than 20% raise would be something like $75.00 an hour, and hopefully more for adjuncts. Is President Bowen’s reply to Ms. Siegel a naive attempt to make the situation look better than it is?

Rocco Serini
BMCC

PSC President Barbara Bowen responds: Thank you for your letter. You’re absolutely right — the only real solution for adjuncts, and the University as a whole, is equal pay for equal work.

In the common disgrace that CUNY refuses to provide that. When I see the subway ads that say, “Look who’s teaching at CUNY,” I can’t help thinking, “But look better than it is?”

Since I became PSC president, equal pay for equal work has been the union’s position. In both of the previous rounds of bargaining, we argued strenuously that part-time lecturers’ salaries should be a properly-graded version of full-time lecturers’ salaries and that in exchange, part-timers should be expected to do a pro-rated share of committee and advising work. Faced with absolute management resistance to this proposal, we pressed instead for the paid professional/office hour. As a result, hundreds and hundreds of adjuncts saw their paychecks rise by over 20%. Most were already doing — unpaid — the work for which they are paid.

Perhaps we had the effect for them of a raise.

Having taken incremental steps toward improving conditions for adjuncts, the road of bargaining, the union is reasserting the demand for basic equity in the current contract talks. It will take substantial political clout to win; I invite you to join the work.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | WRITE TO: CLARION/PSC, 61 BROADWAY, 15TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10006. E-MAIL: PHOENIX@PSC.CUNY.EDU. FAX: (212) 362-7195.

Community college contract concerns

By JOSH DENTZ

BMCC

I am writing to the Clarion because I want to express my enthusiasm about the meeting held at the union for full-time community college faculty to discuss the workload issues they face. The meeting was set up as a dialogue between this group and the union’s bargaining team.

Activists from all six community colleges attended. People shared prepared and impromptu testimony about their experiences as individuals as well as observations about institutional shifts that have contributed to overwork. Many expressed an interest in fighting for a drop in the community college teaching load from 27 to 24 hours.

The most inspiring part of this meeting for me was to be in a room full of activists who shared similar concerns.

We talked about pulling together interested community college faculty and staff for other meetings and gatherings in order to continue what we started that night. So, watch out for the first PSC/CUNY community college social/organizing hour sometime this summer!

Josh Dentz
BMCC
HEOs win OT payout

By DANA RAJENDRA

On May 1, nine LaGuardia employe-
es in Higher Education Officer-ser-
ties titles signed an important piece of paper – a settlement with the college granting them back pay for overtime worked beyond 40 hours. At least as important, the settlement recognizes that they are entitled to such overtime pay in the future.

Plaintiff Robert Bandelt encour-
aged other HEOs across CUNY to call the union if they are assigned to work more than 35 hours without pay. “There is a sense of change going through this Univer-
sity,” Bandelt said, “because the people who work at this school no longer go to accept business as usual.”

Seven Assistants to HEO and two HEO Assistants filed a federal lawsuit last summer, charging that LaGuardia Community College owed them money for time they were assigned to work beyond the contractually required 35 hours. The PSC worked closely with the plaintiffs and provided legal counsel for the suit.

IT’S THE LAW

Under the lawsuit settlement, LaGuardia management: 1) agreed to pay the plaintiffs double the amount of back wages they were due for time-and-a-half for work over 40 hours; 2) reimbursed the plaintiffs’ attorney fees; and 3) agreed that in the future they will comply with the law and pay plaintiffs time-and-a-half for 40 hours of work in a week. As a result of the financial settlement, each plaintiff will receive $2,500.

The two sides agreed to defer the decision on pay-
ment for work over 35 and up to 40 hours to an arbitration the PSC has filed on the issue. “The settlement at La-
Guardia and CUNY man-
agement in the arbitration is that, under the contract, HEOs are not owed any compensation for assigned work over 35 hours. In the case, the union argued that HEOs should be paid straight-time or pro-rated hourly pay based on their annual salary. The arbitrator’s decision is expected this summer.”

“We can certainly be covered, says CUNY, but this requires management in a clear financial incentive to obey the law in the future.”

Bandelt, in his capacity as a PSC member in LaGuardia’s Enrollment Services Department decided to take action after seeing some discrepancies in treatment. In Au-
gust 2005, Bandelt saw an adver-
s
tisement for an enrollment specialist with a job description similar to his own as a financial counselor. The ad, Bandelt told Clarion, specified that overtime pay was offered. “So, the question was raised, why was that position offered overtime, but we weren’t?”

The ad came shortly after another incident that had angered PSC members in the department. “A number of my colleagues worked very late during registration that Thursday before Labor Day. They worked until 11 pm,” Bandelt said. “Management had promised them cars home, but by 11 management had all gone home, and there was nobody there to approve the ex-
pense. They were uncer-
emoniously dumped onto the streets in Long Island City at 11:00 am at night,” Bandelt recalled.

In September, Ban-
delt’s colleagues met with Human Resources Direc-
tor Raymond Carozza and LaGuardia Vice Pres-
ident Peter Grant Jordan, who told the HEOs that LaGuardia did not pay overtime, period. And, moreover, that the hours between 35 and 40 were not paid at all. That spurred Bandelt and his colleagues to call the union office.

GRIEVANCE

The PSC-CUNY contract speci-
fies a 35-hour work week for HEO-
series employees (Assistant to HEO, HEO Assistant, HEO Associ-
ate and Higher Education Officer – together referred to simply as “HEOs”). The union decided on a two-pronged strategy: 1) file a grievance for the contractual viola-
tion of forcing these plaintiffs to work beyond the required 35 hours; and 2) file a lawsuit under the fed-
eral Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

“Every time you have a grievance for overtime, you have to make a decision about the amount of back pay you are owed,” said PSC-CUNY Counselor Ganga Persaud. “In some cases, we were forced to sue to get the reverse situation corrected.”

“Many of the plaintiffs worked over 40 hours a week. Some worked more than 40 overtime hours,” Bandelt said. “The only way to make manage-
ment respect the 35-hour week is to force them to do so through the grievance procedure or the courts,” said PSC grievance coun-
selor Donna Gill, herself a HEO at Hunter College. Gill worked with the LaGuardia plaintiffs as they prepared their grievance. “It’s hard for us,” she told Clarion, “because CUNY takes advantage of our pro-
fessional commitment to our stu-
dents. But if no one speaks out, our hours become endless.”

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Said Persaud, “We’re there until we see the last student.”

“We are given a schedule. If you are unlucky enough to be working that day when we have a huge crowd and the work ends lat-
er, you have no choice.” Her col-
league Melanie Abreu testified that “We’re there until we see the last student.”

“We can certainly be covered, says CUNY, but this requires management in a clear financial incentive to obey the law in the future.”

LaGuardia management now presumes the settlement to be covered under the time-and-a-half provi-
sion of the FLSA. For other HEO-
s series titles, CUNY says, its assessment of which ones are cov-
ered and which ones exempt de-
pends on a case-by-case analysis of job responsibilities, including the level of independent exercise of discretion and judgment.

SETTLEMENT

All nine plaintiffs in the lawsuit were entitled to overtime accord-
ing to CUNY’s classifications, and CUNY clearly violated the law – sometimes quite flagrantly. Per-
saud, Bandelt and other HEOs tes-
tified that supervisors doctored their timesheets, erasing the notes about overtime hours. Their colleagues who joined the lawsuit – Abreu, McKenzie, Anthony Solafani, Renee Daniels, Sutonia Boykin, Stephen Greene and Abram Bolouvi – testified to similar practices and other problems with overtime.

At a May 1 event at the PSC, five of the LaGuardia plaintiffs signed the settlement, celebrated the vic-
tory and affirmed their resolve to con-
tinue the fight. Union leaders were on hand to offer congratula-
tions, thanks and support for the future.

“This is really what a union means,” said London, “that the people on the front line are not alone.”

“We are given a schedule. If you are unlucky enough to be working that day when we have a huge crowd and the work ends lat-
er, you have no choice.” And her colleague Melanie Abreu testified that “We’re there until we see the last student.”

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**Around the chapters**

**Sinkholes and war spur action**

*By DANA RAJENDRA*

**BRONX: GIANT HOLE SPARKS SAFETY CHECK**

The weekend of April 14, the rain was tremendous. And by Tuesday, April 17, so was the hole in front of the Havemeyer Lab building on the Bronx Community College campus. In a short time, the sinkhole had grown to an alarming size, large enough to hold a small car.

Later that afternoon, the fire department evacuated the building, concerned about its structural integrity. “The fire department went into the building about 4:30,” recalled Ray Hubener, coordinator of the college’s CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP), which is based in Havemeyer Lab. “They ordered us all out of the building and we had to cancel classes that night.”

Fortunately, it was only closed for a single night. With the area around the hole roped off and the building’s safety confirmed, it was open for business the next day.

The union had responded quickly to the gaping hole, and union representatives were glad to find management wanted to move fast as well.

The chapter’s health and safety committee co-chair, Virginia Mishkin, told Clarion that she met with CLIP faculty the morning of April 17 and called the administration immediately after. They were working on the situation, she told Clarion. “The whole area was sectioned off,” said Mishkin and they called both the fire department and Department of Buildings.

**COOPERATION**

The hole has remained cordoned off, the building’s main entrance cannot be used, and the hole continues to grow, members say. But they agree that the college administration has been extremely responsive and is working to resolve the problem. “It’s the fastest ECC has ever moved,” Hubener said.

**LOCAL CAMPUS ACTION AGAINST IRAQ WAR**

PSGC members and their students organized antwar activities on several CUNY campuses this semester.

At Queens College, some 80 people joined a May 7 protest. The event included chants, poetry, speeches and political theatre. The latter included three students dressed Guantánamo-style in hoods and orange jump suits, which provoked strong reactions from passing classmates.

Student organizer Ana Giraldo noted that military recruiters have already targeted her high-school age sister. “A 16-year-old shouldn’t be thinking, ‘Oh, I need to go and kill because I cannot pay for college?’ We need more financial aid, more scholarships, more opportunities to go to school.”

PSGC member Bob Cowen said that in addition to this month’s demonstration, members and students have worked together against military recruiting on campus. “We have reached an agreement with the administration that we, the PSGC Faculty/Student Anti-War Committee is to be notified when the military comes on campus to recruit and we are then provided a nearby table to antirecruit,” he told Clarion. “This seems to work well and the military have few enough students to talk to when we are there.”

This semester PSGC activists worked on antitwar events at several other campuses, including John Jay, College of Staten Island, and Bronx Community College. “We had an event with Gold Star Families Speak Out and Iraq Vets Against the War that was very powerful with very good turn-out,” said Suzan Moss, professor of physical education and wellness at BCC. A similar event at CSI sparkled planning for a campus protest that was covered in the Staten Island Advance.

PSGC Peace and Justice Committee Chair Lenny Dick told Clarion that most CUNY campuses are home to a persistent, antitwar, anti-military recruitment sentiment. “Well over 1,000 signatures to the US Labor Against the War petition have been collected CUNY-wide,” Dick said. (You can see the petition at www.psc-cuny.org.) “It’s significant that we have more people doing antitwar activity. It’s bringing people into the union,” he said.

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**QCC student killed in Iraq**

*By PETER HOGNESS & JENNIFER MANLEY*

It would have been his 25th birthday celebration. But instead, he lay lifeless in a coffin that looked too big for his frame. To the right, equally still, his frame. To the right, equally still, his frame. To the right, equally still, his frame.

It’s so sad that Brian won’t be coming home. It’s so sad that Brian won’t be coming home. It’s so sad that Brian won’t be coming home.

Brian Ritzberg became an MP, as his military service was over, he returned to return to college. It’s not improving anything.

It’s not improving anything.

---

**Sixth CUNY student to die in conflict**

He had planned to return to college.

At the memorial service for Brian Ritzberg, his widow Clara is comforted by her sister, Katherine Cordero.

At Morisco Funeral Home, antiwar sentiments were threaded through the memorial service, and Ritzberg’s relatives seem to be of one mind about the occupation of Iraq. His mother, Margaret Fields, expressed her opinion forcefully to NY1, just after her son was killed. “It’s unnecessary. It’s senseless. It’s killing people; it’s killing soldiers,” she said. “Things are not getting better. Twenty-five get killed, they send 50 more. It’s just wiping the soldiers out. It’s not improving anything, just more loss for families.”

“I don’t believe in this war,” Katherine Cordero told Clarion. George Bush should enlist and put his own life at risk, she said. “This is all a set-up by our corrupt president – so many innocent people dying for no reason.”

Her sister, Clara Ritzberg, has created a MySpace memorial to her fallen husband, “dedicated to those who miss Brian.” The slideshow on her web page shows Brian looking serious, joking around, on duty in Iraq, relaxing at home.

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**A SOLDIER’S VIEW**

Below that she’s posted a YouTube video, titled Fallen Heroes. “Don’t make another family feel the pain of losing a loved one,” it says at the start. “Bring our troops home.”

What follows are photos of one grieving family after another, for three long minutes. It’s hard to watch. Clara Ritzberg is still in the army, on active duty. She last spoke to Brian an hour after their wedding anniversary – one day before he was killed.

Jennifer Manley is an assistant editor of the Queens Chronicle, where her report on Brian Ritzberg’s memorial was first published in April. Peter Hogness is editor of Clarion.
PSC members and their students lobbied City Council members for more money for CUNY at the union’s “Day of Action” on May 9. Dubbed “CUNY at the Council,” the day began with a protest, host-

ed by Charles Barron, who chairs the City Council Committee on Higher Education. At the reception, PSC activists talked with Barron and other City Council members about more support for CUNY. Six council members joined the press conference later in the day.

“You get over there and show your strength!” Council Member Robert Jackson told the gathered PSC members. He led the group in a round of chanting “PSC! PSC! PSC!” and the pumped-up PSC contingent moved to the steps of City Hall.

They brought 15,000 postcards with them, which were displayed for the press and then delivered to Speaker Christine Quinn. The union’s message? With a record-set-

ting City budget surplus and enrollment at a 31-year high, cutting CUNY is simply unconscionable.

$4 BILLION SURPLUS

“This city is rich,” said PSC Pres-

ident Barbara Bowen. “There is a $4 billion surplus, yet the mayor has called for $35 million in cuts from CUNY.” Despite some im-

provements in recent years, Bowen noted, City funding is still 17% lower in real dollars than it was in 1990. The PSC has asked the Council to reject Bloomberg’s cuts, fully fund CUNY’s budget request and approve an additional $6 mil-

lion for new faculty counselors and a student mentoring program (see below).

Bloomberg’s proposed cuts go in exactly the wrong direction, Barron told reporters. “If there is $106 mil-

lion for Rattner and the Nets, and $105 million for the Mets, what are you doing cutting CUNY?” the council-

man asked.

“This should not be an issue every year,” agreed Council Mem-

ber Jimmy Vacca. “I’m here to support restorations and en-

hancements. I’m here to say, help the kids at CUNY, and also help the adults at CUNY who are going back to school.” Vacca herself enrolled at Queens College in 1998 when I was 40-something,” he said, and earned a master’s degree. “You are never too old to go back to school,” he said.

While many other Council members appeared at the press confer-

cence to show their support, it was CUNY students and faculty who took center stage.

“What’s at stake here are not ab-

struct numbers on a page, but real people — people like me,” said Sarah Eley, student Jesuit Urbane. “CUNY is the only way I can afford a college edu-

cation and have a chance at a secure future.”

“Most of my classes are in rooms too small for the number of stu-

dents,” Eley noted. “For our teachers, it means they have less time for each individual student. For

me and my fellow students, it means we can’t always get the attention and advice we need.”

OVERCROWDED

PSC members from BMCC con-

cluded. “I came today because at BMCC there is so much we could do with more money,” said Saavik Ford, who teaches astronomy. “We have several problems — in my office, we are five full-time, tenure-

track faculty in a tiny space.” Ad-

junct faculty have it even worse, with as many as 40 students in a sin-

gle room. Ford summed up her feel-

ings in four words: “Bloomberg’s cuts are insane!”

Shane Correia, a BMCC student who was formerly homeless, wrote a statement that was read by one of his professors, Ron Hayduk. “The cuts the mayor wants to make in CUNY’s funding request are…dangerous and economically self-de-

structive.” (See page 10 for more.)

Students from York also turned out to back the PSC’s call for more City support. “Students, the de-

sure for an education is there,” stu-

don Stacy Ann Brown told Clarion. “The government should be encour-

aging that.” Brown went on to say four weeks in a week in a nursing home in order to qualify for health benefits, while pursuing her BA in social work and occu-

pational therapy.

Also on May 9, members and stu-

dents went together in small groups to lobby several City Council mem-

ers for their support. The law re-

quires final action on the City bud-

get by June 30.

PUSH CONTINUES

Bloomberg’s proposed cuts in-

clude basic operating funds and the Council’s “Safety Net” financial aid program, among others. The PSC is pressing the City Council to fully fund CUNY’s budget request, plus allocate an additional $8.3 million to fund the union’s counseling and mentoring plan.

“CUNY at the Council” was the culmination of weeks of campus-

based organizing that kicked off with CUNY Week in late March. That’s

how the 15,000 postcards were signed and collected — members tabled in campus hallways, circulated post-

cards at union meetings, and dis-

cussed the issue with students and colleagues. To boost the lobbying ef-

fort, the PSC ran a television ad. Af-

ter May 9, the union’s Delegate Assembly members called Council mem-

ers’ offices in a second wave of pressure for stronger City support.

The postcard, the TV ad, plus photos and statements from “CUNY at the Council” can all be seen at www.psc-cuny.org. PSC leaders urged members to keep the pres-

sure on in June.

By DANIA RAJENDRA

Lobbying local lawmakers

Increase faculty counselors at CUNY

A PSC proposal to NYC

A need newly visible after the Virginia Tech tragedy

Below is an excerpt from the PSC’s proposal to increase the number of facul-
	y counselors at CUNY community colleges. (New York City provides the main financial support to the commu-

nity colleges, while CUNY’s senior col-

leges are funded mainly by the State.)

The Professional Staff Congress/ CUNY proposes an additional $6.3 million for CUNY. Six more Council

councilors for expanding the number of facul-
	y counselors at CUNY community colleges. (New York City provides the main financial support to the commu-

nity colleges, while CUNY’s senior col-

leges are funded mainly by the State.)

ACUTE SHORTAGE

For several years, the PSC has fo-
cused on convincing City Council members and faculty counselors at the community colleges… The PSC’s initial propos-
al called for a general increase in full-time counseling positions at the community colleges, with a special focus on di-

versity among the faculty and the need for more faculty counselors.

The events of April 16 at Virginia Tech

mobilized us to change our propo-

sition. While the causes of the mas-
sacre at Virginia Tech are multiple and com-

plex, one clear issue that emerged was the importance of psy-

chological and mental health counseling. The long-stand-

ing shortage of faculty coun-

selors at CUNY suddenly appeared more urgent.

We are asking [for $4.3 million] for an additional 51 full-time faculty counselors at the CUNY community colleges, and $2 million for a program to al-

ow closer mentoring of individual students by full-time faculty in oth-

er academic disciplines.

A history of budget cuts from both the City and the State has left CUNY short of full-time faculty in every area. The shortage has been particularly acute among faculty counselors. At the CUNY communi-

ty colleges, the ratio of faculty counselors to students is 1 to 1,628.

That ratio is unacceptable on any college campus; it is especially unac-

ceptable at CUNY. If any students in the country should be provided with adequate counseling facility, it is CUNY students. Statisti-

cally among the lowest-in-

come college students in the nation, CUNY stu-

dents face pressures unknown at many academic institutions. They hold down jobs, they support families, they contend every day with racism and poverty, they trans-

late and mediate for parents, siblings and community. Among all CUNY students, 72% are people of color; 48% work at least 20 hours a week; 21% support children; 48% speak a native language other than English.

We in the Professional Staff Con-

gress, who are privileged to teach

and advise we need.”

Members from the 20,000 faculty and professional staff we represent – and of the 400,000 students we serve – we submit that CUNY cannot wait to address its crisis of counseling faculty. The City University must be given the funds to support this need. Not to do so, when the need is both longstanding and newly urgent, could be dangerously short-sighted.

NOT ENOUGH

The conversation nationwide in the aftermath of Virginia Tech has focused on campus security, but few public universities have yet an-

nounced a program to increase psy-

chological counseling. With this initiative, New York City could demonstrate that while security is vital, it is not enough. Some of the deepest needs are met only by counseling. . . . The addition of 51 fac-

ulty counselors would offer a blue-

print of a responsible way for a community to answer some of the questions raised for every college by Virginia Tech.

A critical element of the PSC ini-
tiative is the proposal that a sub-

stantial number of the 51 new faculty counselors hired be people of color. Diversity within CUNY is not just a goal; it is a statutory re-

quirement, codified in the 1979 New York State Education Law.

Arguably, there is no academic discipline in which diversity is more important than counseling. Many students feel more comfortable speaking to a counselor if the coun-

seller is a person of a similar race, gender, sexual orientation or age. If this proposal is funded, CUNY colleges could be encouraged to draw on the outstanding pool of diverse men and women who enter into the counseling field.

On behalf of the 20,000 faculty and professional staff we represent – and of the 400,000 students we serve – we submit that CUNY cannot wait to address its crisis of counseling faculty. The City University must be given the funds to support this need. Not to do so, when the need is both longstanding and newly urgent, could be dangerously short-sighted.
Management wants CUNY to do more

By PETER HOGNESS

PSC-CUNY contract negotiations continued on April 20 and May 4, with another session scheduled just as Clarion went to press at the end of May. Perhaps the biggest news to emerge was management’s list of contract demands, which CUNY gave to the union on April 20. “CUNY to PSC: Do More, Get Less.” That’s how the headline in The Chief, the civil service weekly newspaper, summed it up. The union bargaining team warned that a number of the proposals appear to “call for a weak and lump-sum payments, in particular, is not something that would work.”

At the meeting, Beveridge told other chairs that department chairs at Queens College had signed a letter in support of paid family leave, a change that has been proposed by the PSC. Addressed to CUNY’s chancellor, trustees, college presidents and also the PSC, the letter says, “We realize that family leave is part of collective bargaining, we urge management to work together with labor to resolve this crucial matter…. It is imperative that the University design a modern family leave policy.” Beveridge encouraged department chairs, other colleges to consider statements of their own.

Anne Friedman, PSC vice president for community colleges, told Clarion that chairs “repeatedly cited difficulties in recruitment and retention,” due to such issues as salary, health benefits, parental leave, and the workload. “These problems become particularly acute when departments seek to improve racial and ethnic diversity in their ranks,” Friedman noted.

CONSTANTLY BUSY

Department chairs must contend with and help manage all the time pressures on faculty members in their department, said Mary Alice Browne, chair of radiologic technology and medical imaging at City Tech. But chairs themselves urgent-ly need more support, she said. “Chairs don’t have the time we need to do scholarly research work, because we’re constantly busy,” she said. “We don’t have the time we need to release time, but the demands of the job are a lot more than the time we get – it’s very difficult. We need a more realistic amount of released time, and it should be written into the union contract.” Management is demanding that department chairs be removed from the bargaining unit, a change that Frederick DeNaples, chair of the English department at Bronx Community College, does not support. “The demand that chairs be out of the union is very troubling,” he said. “It’s clear that 88th Street takes it very seriously, because they keep asking about it.” Department chairs should be elected by the faculty and be members of the faculty, DeNaples said. “We have a strong tradition of shared governance at CUNY, and part of what makes that work is that chairs are part of the faculty and not the administration.”

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DeNaples noted that a similar meeting with chairs was held last fall to explain provisions in the new contract and said he found both sessions helpful. “I hope the union will continue this sort of meeting, whenever we have a new contract or enter bargaining,” he said.

Friedman, a member of the PSC Executive Council, said that this is exactly what the union’s leadership has in mind – and more. To provide ongoing input on issues in negotia-tions, an advisory committee of department chairs was formed at the union’s demands – management’s demands call for a weakening of some of the basic rights and professional conditions.”

CLEAR CONCERNS

Management negotiators have not yet begun the formal presenta-tion of their demands, and union nego-tiators pledged to “listen with an open mind… and bargain in good faith.” But they were clearly con-cerned by what they had seen so far. One statement at bottom. Full text of management proposals is at www.psc-cuny.org/Contract/CUNY Demands.pdf.

A dozen rank-and-file PSC mem-bers attended the April 20 session as observers. “The union has to think carefully about these de-mands and respond with substance and evidence,” said one observer, Felipe Pimentel, an assistant pro-fessor of sociology at Hostos. “But some are clearly unacceptable.” For example, Pimentel noted, the proposal to eliminate step in

Department chairs meet at PSC

Below is an excerpt from the PSC bargaining team’s statement on management’s contract demands, released on April 24. Full text of the CUNY management proposals is at www.psc-cuny.org/Contract/CUNY-Demands.pdf.

The PSC bargaining team will listen with an open mind to management’s presentation of their demands, and we will bargain in good faith. We will seek to identify common ground where it exists. But the list of de-mands delivered by management on Friday does not signal an interest in compromise and resolution of key issues in the new round of contract negotiations. Rather than presenting a vision of our university, management’s proposed changes would weaken professional autonomy and the expectation of research and academic freedom. CUNY proposals to increase the limit on the number of part-timers; to expand the un-limited salaries and micro-managing of in-dividuals; to weaken tenure: to weaken the union’s!” Beveridge said that management’s demands “call for a weakening of some of [our] most basic rights and professional conditions.”

6. Weaken professional autonomy and faculty governance: The first de-mand on CUNY’s list is to remove department chairs from the union. That would mean that department chairs, who have always at CUNY been considered and elected by the faculty, would become management – an-swerable to 8th Street, not to the faculty in their department. This demand has been consistently re-jected by the membership of the PSC.

7. Weaken the union: Management’s demands include: reducing the union’s ability to consult, to the extent that the union would mean a university with

Department chairs from across CUNY met for the second time this year at the union office, to discuss the PSC contract and their work as chairs on May 11. Much of this session focused on key issues in the new round of contract negotiations.

“I looked at the manage-ment demands,” said Andrew Beveridge, chair of Queens College’s sociology department. “If possible, my view of them may be even more negative than the union’s!” Beveridge said that management’s proposed changes would make the work of department chairs harder. “Buried in there is post-tenure review and more – it’s crazy. The combination of salary increases under the discretion of the president and lump-sum payments, in partic-ular, is not something that would work.”

At the meeting, Beveridge told other chairs that department chairs at Queens College had signed a letter in support of paid family leave, a change that has been proposed by the PSC. Addressed to CUNY’s chancellor, trustees, college presidents and also the PSC, the letter says, “We realize that family leave is part of collective bargaining, we urge management to work together with labor to resolve this crucial matter…. It is imperative that the University design a modern family leave policy.” Beveridge encouraged department chairs, other colleges to consider statements of their own.

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Friedman, a member of the PSC Executive Council, said that this is exactly what the union’s leadership has in mind – and more. To provide ongoing input on issues in negotia-tions, an advisory committee of department chairs was formed at the union’s demands do – management’s demands call for a weakening of some of the basic rights and professional conditions that make a university a university. They would restructure the University in the fol-low ing ways:

1. Weaken tenure: With this set of de-mands, CUNY goes on record trying to further diminish the percentage of faculty who are protected by tenure and academic freedom. CUNY proposes to allow unlimited expansion of the Distinguished Lecturer position, which is currently capped in number and limited to an appointment of five years, so it po-tentially becomes a whole new tier of full-time faculty, serving at will. CUNY also proposes to increase the permitted teaching loads of part-timers, creating a position with a full-time teaching load at part-time wages and without the protection of tenure.

2. Weaken job security for HEJs: Professional staff in the higher education officer series are currently eli-gible to earn job security after eight years under Article 13.3.b. of the contract. CUNY management is again trying to erode this provision which makes it easier to fire long-time professional staff.

3. Replace salary steps with discre-tionary pay and micro-managing of in-dividuals by college president: The management demands include no offer of an across-the-board salary increase. Instead, for almost all full-time titles, they propose elim-inating regular salary increments and replacing them with a mini-mum/maximum salary range and a system of lump-sum awards. Col-lege presidents would decide individual salary increases, if any, within the range. Adjuncts and CLTs are not included in the system of lump-sum “performance” awards.

4. Weaken academic freedom: the ex-pansion of contingent, part-time and non-tenure-track positions would mean that only a minority of CUNY courses would be taught by instructors who have the essential pro-tectio of academic freedom. Acad-emic freedom at the University as a whole is undermined if most of the courses are taught without freedom from the fear of reprisals and dismissal based on academic content.

5. Increase contingent and part-time positions: With the best uni-versities across the country are trying to decrease their reliance on under-paid part-time and contingent faculty, CUNY is seeking to add con-tingent positions. Manage-ment wants to create a new “fractional” HEJO position; to increase the limit on the number of courses taught by part-timers; to expand the un-limited Distinguished Lecturer po-sition; and to permit HEJs to teach courses “for no additional compens-ation.” These demands, if accept-ed, would mean a university with
Do more with less, PSC members are told.

By DAN NORTH
CUNY Center for Worker Education

The PSC’s contract demand for a semester of paid parental leave (CUNY presently has none) is about the big issues involved in building a great university.

It’s about recruitment and retention. It’s about matching benefits provided by competing institutions. It’s about respect for the needs of CUNY’s growing number of younger faculty and staff.

But perhaps most important, like many union demands, paid parental leave is about the daily lives of people trying to juggle jobs, health and family responsibilities.

SICK AND TIRED

Robin Rogers-Dillon, associate professor of sociology at Queens College, had her daughter Dashiell in July 2003. Because she and her husband needed her salary and health insurance, she went back to work that September.

“I got very sick with bronchitis in October and ended up on strong antibiotics that were passed on to my nursing baby,” said Rogers-Dillon.

“I’m sure my illness was because of the severe exhaustion I suffered. It was immensely difficult. This shouldn’t happen to anyone. No woman should have to choose between sacrificing her health or her family’s economic security to have a child.”

UNTENABLE

Karen Strassler, assistant professor in anthropology, continued working at Queens College until a week before her due date in December 2005. Her pregnancy and the birth of her son Leo were relatively easy, she says, but the part that bothered her came when she took an unpaid leave for the following semester.

“I was a privileged position because of my husband’s income, even though it was a stretch economically. But as a principle, it’s completely untenable that someone has to have another source of income to get by. I was appalled that CUNY is so out of step with other institutions. My department and the people around me were very supportive, but there’s a disconnect with CUNY-wide policy. I feel we’re at the mercy of a heartless bureaucracy that’s not concerned about our well-being.”

Julie George, assistant professor of political science at Queens, worked this Spring virtually up to her due date of May 31. Anticipating that she and her husband would be unable to get by on just his salary, she decided she had to work the entire semester.

“It’s starting to wear me down,” George said in early May. “It’s a rough commute, driving to Queens from our home in New Jersey across New York City traffic. In class, I don’t have as much energy – I don’t move around the classroom like I generally do. And my students eye me with trepidation, wondering if I’ll go into labor right in front of them. CUNY needs to pay attention to the needs of the people they’re hiring.”

PSC members are beginning to organize local support for winning paid parental leave in the next contract. At Queens College, John Jay and elsewhere, PSC chapters are circulating petitions and asking to meet with their college president to discuss the issue.

The frustration voiced by Rogers-Dillon, Strassler and George is widely shared, said Queens PSC Chapter Chair Jonathan Buchsbaum, and the petition has been a way to make that visible. About 30 union members met with Queens College President James Muyckens on May 21 and urged him to lobby other campus presidents and CUNY Chancellor Goldstein for paid parental leave.

At John Jay, 20 PSC members met on May 10 to exchange their concerns and organize for future action. The meeting was jointly sponsored by the union, the college’s Department of Study Centers, and the John Jay Faculty Senate. Although the college has hired more than 100 new full-time faculty members in the last couple of years, retention is threatened by lack of parent-friendly conditions, Chapter Chair Jim Cohen told Clarion.

Cohen reported that at least five members told him they would have attended the May 10 meeting, but couldn’t because they didn’t have child care – another issue that the union is pressing in contact talks.

ARCHAIC

“CUNY’s current policy is archaic,” Buchsbaum told Clarion. “Paid parental leave is an idea whose time has come. Like CUNY offers only unpaid childcare leave. An expectant or new mother can use paid sick leave only with a doctor’s note and is obviously not an option for fathers at all. Using CUNY’s unpaid childcare leave means employees don’t have their regular health insurance coverage, requiring them to pay COBRA as much as $4,000 a year to maintain it – which many junior faculty cannot afford. (For more information, see www.psc-cuny.org/Clarion/ ParentalLeave.pdf.)

Buchsbaum said that in his own department, media studies, half his co-workers, most of them younger faculty, report that CUNY’s lack of competitive pay and benefits, are looking for jobs elsewhere. Many are surprised that CUNY has not paid parental leave – and may discover this exactly when they need it. “We’ve put in so much time and effort in our work and training, one thing must do is offer excellent benefits for parents.”

CUNY Chancellor Goldstein for paid parental leave.

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PSC participates in NYSUT RA

By Greg DuKkel
Central Office

The resolutions the PSC brought to the NYSUT Resolution Assembly (RA) of New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) reflected members’ concerns for a decent workplace, a selected retirement and social justice.

Why do local unions like the PSC affiliate with a statewide body like NYSUT? One delegate from the United Federation of Teachers put it this way during floor discussion of a PSC-sponsored resolution on workplace bullying and home retirement: “What we say and pass here is carefully considered by our bosses and the politicians in the State of New York.”

587,000 EDUCATORS

The reason for this attitude is that the PSC and other member unions of NYSUT, combined, represent 587,000 teachers and professionals in New York, working at all levels of education from pre-K to post-gra.

“It is important to have a voice for public higher education at such a large table,” said Arthurne DeSola, PSC secretary. And that voice has been effective, DeSola said; the PSC’s resolutions and sparked increased attention to higher education, from the State budget to issues of academic freedom. Today NYSUT’s Board of Directors includes three leaders of the PSC: President Barbara Bowen, First Vice President Steve London and Vice President for Cross-Campus Units Iris DeLu Santo.

At this year’s Representative Assembly (RA), there was vigorous discussion of a resolution from the PSC calling for NYSUT to “reaffirm its position that cuts to pensions and health care will not be tolerated.” The resolution was opposed by a number of locals that voiced concern that it would interfere with their ability to reach a contract with their employers, and they cited NYSUT’s strong tradition of local autonomy. When PSC delegates responded that the resolution was designed to strengthen the hand of locals with the support of the larger NYSUT, although a resolutions committee had recommended that the PSC propose the resolution, PSC delegates supported that resolution be sent from delegates from the UFT and other locals and the RA voted to refer it to NYSUT’s Board of Directors for further discussion.

END BULLYING

A PSC resolution on workplace bullying and employers who create a hostile environment passed unanimously. NYSUT will work for legislation that will make it easier for workers to deal with this kind of conduct.

The PSC’s resolution calling on TIAA-CREF to consider a company’s labor policies when selecting companies for its socially responsible investment fund, Social Choice, passed unanimously and is to be forwarded to TIAA-CREF’s management.

The PSC co-sponsored a number of resolutions through the Finance Committees in NYSUT. One supported New York State legislation to permanently protect retirees against “unilateral diminution of their retiree health benefits by their for-mer employers.” Another called for a repeal of “means-testing” for Medicare premiums, which it said was “at odds with the premise of social insurance.”

On civil liberties, delegates passed a PSC resolution calling for repeal of the Bush administration’s Military Commissions Act, on the grounds that it violates the right to a writ of habeas corpus. The resolution cited a New York Times editorial describing the act as “a tyrannical law that will be ranked with the low points in American democracy.”

Two major social justice issues that the PSC brought to the NYSUT RA concerned the war in Iraq and justice for the teachers who waged a long strike in Oaxaca, Mexico.

SUPPORT OAXACA

NYSUT adopted a PSC sponsored resolution calling for an “end to the repression of the people of Oaxaca...and support [for] the just de-mands of the teachers of Oaxaca” by a voice vote with no significant oppo-
sition. One delegate from the UFT put it simply: “An attack on a teacher anywhere is an attack on us all.”

The PSC resolution on the war in Iraq called for the “immediate withdrawal of all troops, bases and military operations” and a halt to funding to continue the war; this was rejected in a resolutions committee by a vote of 102 to 77. After a debate on the convention floor, NYSUT adopted a resolution calling for both “rapid” withdrawal and continuing funding, similar to the current stance of congressional leadership.

Lenny Dick, an adjunct in the math department at Bronx Community College and chair of the PSC’s Peace and Justice Committee, was not encouraged. He remembered four years when the PSC first raised an antiwar resolution at NYSUT; it sometimes seemed to be a lonely po-sition. But the PSC persisted, and last year NYSUT passed a resolution favoring troop withdrawal - short of the PSC’s position, but NYSUT’s first such stand during a US war. “Now we meet delegates from throughout New York State who agree with the PSC’s antiwar resolution,” said Dick.

On this and other issues, PSC delegates to the NYSUT RA say their arguments and organizing have had an impact.
Reappointment notices and unemployment

If you teach at CUNY part-time, you ought to have received your Fall 2007 appointment letter. For appointments for the Fall semester, letters should have been received by May 1. For appointments for both Fall and Spring '07 semesters, letters should have been received by May 15.

Appointment letters must include your title and hourly pay rate. If either is incorrect, now is the time to notify Human Resources — though you do have until 30 days from the first day of the semester. Corrections to your pay will be retroactive to the beginning of the semester. Information about the contractual increase, which goes into effect September 19, should come in the Fall. Call an adjunct grievance counselor in the PSC office at (312) 354-1252 with any questions.

Whether or not you’ve been reappointed, you can apply for unemployment insurance if you are not working over the summer. If you’re not reappointed, you should have no problem. Call (800) 299-8124 to apply over the phone. If you are reappointed, the situation is more complicated. See the story on page 9 of the May 2005 Clarion (find it at www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm) for more information.

The PSC continues its push to convince New York State lawmakers to change the law to give adjuncts an unequivocal right to unemployment insurance. Add your voice to the chorus of support by signing and e-mailing a letter to your assembly member and state senator by clicking on Act Now at www.psc-cuny.org.

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Adjunct and HEO/CLT professional development

The committee that awards Adjunct and Continuing Education Teacher Professional Development grants will meet again on June 15. If you teach at CUNY part-time, you can apply for unemployment insurance if you are not working over the summer. If you’re not reappointed, you should have no problem. Call (800) 299-8124 to apply over the phone. If you are reappointed, the situation is more complicated. See the story on page 9 of the May 2005 Clarion (find it at www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm) for more information.

The committee that awards Adjunct and Continuing Education Teacher Professional Development grants will meet again on June 15. So far, PSC staff report that since the fund’s inception on March 23, sixty-four applications have been approved. Application forms and eligibility requirements are available at http://www.psc-cuny.org/AdjunctContinuingEdDev.htm. “Adjuncts have long complained about being isolated and outside the loop,” said PSC VP for Pastimers Marcia Newfield. “Support for their projects is a step towards inclusion. Their chairs must approve their applications and, in doing so, have the opportunity to share adjuncts’ work with their colleagues.” The ADJ-CET Profession- al Development Fund members are Steve Trimboi, Elizabeth Olana, Norah Chase and Michael Seitz.

The HEO/CLT Professional De- velopment Fund Committee will meet on June 25; applications for that fund are also accepted on an ongoing basis.

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Pre-retirement conference

The annual PSC Pre-retirement Conference will be held on Tues- day, June 12, from 9:00 to 4:00 at the CUNY Graduate Center.

[Registration form]

I will attend the PSC Pre-retirement Conference. Enroll is ___. A: in registration fees is ___. Total is ______, each: $35 each.

Name ________________________________
Address ________________________________
City __________________ State __________________ Zip __________________
Retirement System __________________
College __________________
Date of original CUNY employment __________________
Make checks payable to the PSC
Address: Clarissa Gilbert Weiss, PSC/CUNY, A1 Broadway, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10006.

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Two labor strategists join the PSC staff

Communications & policy

By DANA RAJENDRA

The PSC has recently added two la- bor movement veterans to the union’s staff, experienced in work- ing with academics and with union- ized professionals.

Dorothee Benz was hired in De- cember to head up the union’s com- munications efforts outside of Clarion. Benz, as she is known to her colleagues, led design and planning of the new “This Week in the PSC” e-mail — an idea that came out of the union’s “listen- ing campaign” last fall. (If you’re not getting this weekly up- date, you can sign up on the union’s website, www.psc-cuny.org.) With projects like this one, she is working to build the PSC’s communications capacity and to better integrate the different parts of the union’s media work — with each other and with union strategy.

FORMER MEMBER

Benz received her PhD in political science from the New York Graduate Center and was a PSC member for two years while teaching at Baruch. Her dissertation was on labor law and union organizing. She’s an award-winning labor journalist and strategist who has held staff posi- tions at UNITE, CWA and SEIU, and has worked as a consultant for other organizations such as the Labor Council for Human Rights.

Pfordresher holds a master’s de- gree in public policy from Columbia University. She has worked for the Committee of Interns and Resi- dents/SEIU, and for AFSCME DC 37 and its Local 375, which repre- sents engineers, archi- tects and other city professional.

She has led labor- community initiatives including the People of Faith Net- work, a national multi-faith coal- ition of local congregations, clergy and faith-based activists. The group has campaigned to end sweatshop abuses and allied with CUNY ac- tivists fighting the ban on remediation in the senior colleges.

Most recently Pfordresher head- ed Urban Agenda and the NYC Apollo Alliance, a coalition formed by unions and environmental jus- tice groups. “The Apollo Alliance advocates for clean and renewable energy and job creation,” Pfordres- cher told Clarion, and it sees the tran- sition to sustainable environmental practices as a source of good jobs for New York.

ALLIANCES

Pfordresher and her husband, an associate professor of archeology at Queens College, live in Brooklyn.

“As the PSC becomes increasingly focused on listening to and communicating with members, it is essential to have top people in policy and communications. That’s what we have in Benz and Kate, and we’re fortunate to have them join the many staff who bring valuable experience and passionate commit- ment to the work of the PSC.”

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Assistant professor Nikki McDaniel, Bronx Community College, at a protest of the college’s practice of short-changing adjuncts their last hour of pay during exam week. Go to www.psc-cuny.org to sign the petition and see pictures from all five protests held at the end of May.
Don’t cut our hope

By SHANE CORREIA 
Student at BMCC

Editor’s note: This statement by BMCC student Shane Correia was read on the steps of City Hall on May 9, as part of the PSC’s “CUNY at the Council” Day of Action on the City budget. See page 5 for more details.

Today I send you this letter as a student of BMCC. One year ago I stood in the world as a homeless high school student. I was forced to flee from a home life full of physical and emotional abuse that I was subjected to simply because I am gay. Were it not for the federal and state funding which guaranteed me, as a citizen of New York City, a grant to attend college, my time living on the subway, working and trying to graduate high school would have ended with me living my life as nothing more than a statistic.

While I lived on the train and worked for a better life, I never once asked for money from anyone, and yet today, I find myself joining the voices of other students and faculty asking for better funding so that the economically disadvantaged may have a shot at a better future. To the mayor and the City Council I say that unless you restore CUNY’s funding, you are lessening scholarship opportunities and retracting aid for those who need it. In addition to all that you would take away from us, you would most importantly take away our hope. By cutting us off, you would be discarding the neediest in my generation.

DANGEROUS

I am not the last student who was homeless who will attend BMCC, as there are many smart, homeless youth in NYC – and I have met them, scraped with them, talked with them, I know them and their abilities. Without CUNY, I would not be a student of anything, but I would be that kid on the train you avoided sitting next to on your commute to this press conference.

The cuts the mayor wants to make in CUNY’s funding request are not harmless and practical – they are dangerous and economically self-destructive. You have the opportunity to invest in New York City through those who need it, those who wish to escape the condemnation of the ghetos and the future of blight. Take this opportunity to realize that all of us here are invest-ments and to shortchange us is to condemn us all to a future of no change at all.

What do you think of management’s demands?

Clarion’s Roving Reporter asks members at City Tech to take a look

I’d say I’m against all the management demands. There’s been no financial offer – but instead they’re saying that in place of a uniform salary structure, college presidents would have discretion to decide who would get salary increases or not. This would increase the power of college presidents, and people would be more under the thumb of the administration than before.

They also want to expand distinguished lecturer positions without limit, so you have more faculty without tenure. And they want to change evaluations – they want HEOs and CLTs evaluated not just by the chairperson, but potentially by a representative of the dean or president, too. Basically they don’t want evaluations left in the hands of department chairs.

Based on what they’re saying in their demands, they want to increase work for HEOs and faculty, especially part-time staff – and they haven’t come to any agreement on the monetary increase. It still remains the same.

I feel very cheated. They’re asking for us to do a lot and not giving us anything in return. Even past improvements that were proposed are not being acknowledged, like childcare and advancement opportunities for HEOs. Instead, they want to cut our job security, so there’s no security for long-term professional staff. It doesn’t sound like it’s starting out very well at all so far.

I’d like to see our health benefits improve in this contract, especially dental. I think that management should definitely increase their contributions to the Welfare Fund.

One of the big efforts I see in management’s proposals is an effort to “part-time-ize” the workforce even more than it already is. The administration might as well be running the United Parcel Service – UPS tried the same thing with their staff years ago. I’m appalled, because CUNY’s management is proposing that we go backwards.

It’s an attempt to take resources out of the bargaining unit – in an odd way, it’s an effort to de-fund CUNY’s faculty and staff, and further deprive our students from working with full-time faculty and staff.

I do get sick and tired of paying for management’s salaries out of my lousy wages. My students deserve better and I deserve better.

From a technical standpoint, I’ve always believed in the step process [for raises] because it’s controlled – you know it’s coming and if you’re in line for the next step, you’re going to get it. That way you know what to expect.

I’m always fighting for the rights of the technical staff. My biggest concern would be for my technical staff and providing enough Apple/Mac open labs. We have over a thousand students who need open lab time, and it’s going to be a problem.

When additional equipment is added to the department, our responsibilities increase, and I feel that if our responsibilities increase, our pay should increase in kind. In the 14 years I’ve been here, my responsibilities have grown tremendously. We’re adding faculty, but we’re not adding technicians.

As a faculty member, I feel the chair is part of the department, he should be under the protection of the union. To make him part of management – that would put him in an awkward position. I’m not saying the president is an outsider, but his norms and criteria would be different from ours. I think it’s better for faculty members to choose our own representative.

And I’m for union demands for paid maternity leave and family medical leave. CUNY is run by us – and everybody should have basic rights. CUNY is not just a building. Everybody gets sick – and I think it makes sense not to have to worry about your financial situation when you or a family member is in the worst condition.

It’s like a marriage – in sickness and in health. CUNY should be with us in sickness too.

Interviews by Heather Appel.

For more on management’s demands, see page 6.
**PENNY WISE, POUND FOOLISH**

**CUNY’s dirty little secrets**

By BARBARA BOWEN  
PSC President

I
numered in the intensely and largely private work of teaching and research, full-time faculty can easily lose sight of what it means to be an employee. The desire to believe that academic employ- ers are different from others—in fact, that they are hardly employers at all—goes deep. None of us would be doing this work, after all, if we hadn’t some point in our lives fallen in love with school. It’s hard to end that romance; we want to believe that we and our institution are partners.

Many times, we are. There are instances throughout CUNY of genuine collegiality between labor and management, of good people in management positions trying to do what’s best for faculty, staff and students. And there is a powerful record of institutional cooperation between CUNY and the PSC, our partnership on legisla- tive issues is responsible for the begin- ning of a turnaround in CUNY funding, and every month we continue to have all sorts of conversations that quietly resolve problems and reach agreements.

ILLUSIONS

But no one who has worked as closely as I have with this CUNY management can hold onto illusions about the nature of our employer. We see every day the arbitrary application of rules, the attempts to grab power, the tendency to ignore the views of the faculty and impose unilateral deci- sions. At the bargaining table I have listened – and objected—to management’s reflexive insul- tions about how faculty use their time, their slights to the professionalism of staff, their frequent contempt for adjuncts, and their appallingly insensitive responses to members. When a group of young faculty recen- tly presented a cogent plea for manage- ment to provide paid parental leave, CUNY’s chief negotiator commented, “Timed my pregnancy.”

I thought I had lost my illusions about CUNY as an employer and that after six years of being exposed to CUNY at the bar- gaining table nothing could shock me. I was wrong. Two things that came to light this year reveal CUNY as an employer in ways for which I was unprepared. Significantly, both involve employees who do not have the same visibility or relative autonomy as full- time faculty, one concerns professional staff in the Higher Education Officer title, the oth- er involves adjuncts. You can read about the HEO issues in this issue of Clarion for years, CUNY has routinely violated the contract provision limiting the HEO work week to 35 hours. I have yet to meet a single HEO who reports that she or he (most often she in this title) is not routinely expected or required to work overtime. Stories of HEOs staying at registration till near midnight are routine. CUNY cynically trades on their professional- ism and commitment to their students, confi- dent that they will stay as long as it takes to get the job done. And with the University now furiously advertising for more students, the job takes longer and longer. HEOs are often responsible for enrollment, registration and financial aid, and CUNY’s drive to fill seats in classrooms has put them under enormous pressure.

UNPAID LABOR

Yet when a change in the federal Fair Labor Standards Act made it illegal to deny overtime pay to certain categories of HEOs, including many of the lowest-paid at CUNY, it took a lawsuit by nine courageous HEOs at LaGuardia to force CUNY to offer back pay for years of overtime work. Meanwhile, CUNY still refuses to admit that it must pay all HEOs for hours worked beyond the contrac- tual 35 hours work week. But even after CUNY has admitted that many HEO-series employees must be paid overtime for work beyond 40 hours, they may still have to li- tigate to get the back pay CUNY owes them. Employees at a university – employees anywhere – should not have to sue their em- ployer to receive the money they are owed. An institution that purports to be about trans- mitting knowledge and values should not maintain policies that routinely cheat employ- ees out of salary. CUNY can say anything it wants in its multi-million dollar advertising campaign and still defend itself and defend itself and its unwilling to pay the price of doing the right thing.

Sometimes CUNY is embarrassingly cheap.
DEBT INSTEAD OF DEGREES

Higher education access at risk

By JOANNE REITANO

The current plight of public higher education is explored in two books with revealing titles: America’s Untapped Resource: Low-Income Students in Higher Education and Defending the Community College Equity Agenda. They suggest that, like the nation, public higher education is at a crossroads.

For much of our history, public higher education was intrinsically interwoven with democratic concepts of opportunity, meritocracy, and social mobility. The objective (and the struggle) was to make higher education more accessible to more people in more places. Over the past few decades, however, this quest has been undermined by conservatives who prioritize the private over the public interest, the few over the many. As evidence, consider the rise and fall of open admissions at CUNY.

America’s Untapped Resource: Low Income Students in Higher Education, edited by Richard D. Kahlenberg (The Century Foundation Press, 2004), tries to reposition public higher education in America today, to demonstrate the structural problems and ideological challenges cut by affirmative action, the nation’s most bedeviling all access institutions.

Community colleges are the campus mine of public higher education. Despite understanding that community colleges have multiple missions and that different students are served in different ways, the TC researchers remain fixed on completion rates. However, the authors admit that focusing on outcomes may have mixed impacts, such as those we see at CUNY. Barriers may further disadvantage already disadvantaged students.

Impeding restrictive entrance requirements and demanding better graduation rates may encourage community and senior colleges alike to seek more middle class students who bolster their statistics, require fewer services and can pay higher tuitions. Not CUNY’s honors college, flagship programs and middle class-oriented publicity materials. No wonder people support who the access revolution view much of the pressure for “accountability” as a counter-revolution.

What can be done to better align access and success? Aside from asserting the need for more research on the subject, the TC book endorses better links between high school and college, restored counseling services, more cohesive developmental education programs, more cooperation between credit and non-credit divisions and more attention to transfer issues. As the authors concede, community colleges are already pursuing most of these strategies, but all warrant strengthening.

Dare we wonder how community colleges can constantly be expected to “do more with less”? FUNDING

The Century Foundation supports much the same agenda, but also makes several innovative suggestions regarding funding. They fear that placing GPA requirements or time limits on student aid might increase grade inflation and/or decrease graduation. Instead of their restrictive strategies, they suggest that states pay senior colleges a premium for enrolling low-income students and community college transfers.

They also believe that states should assume the full costs for remediation, this is not just a community college issue. At CUNY, the lack of financial aid for developmental education, which must be completed before students enter for-credit courses, makes college even less accessible. Oddly enough, neither book pays much attention to faculty – their struggles or their contributions. The “adjunctification” of the faculty is briefly noted, but workload issues are totally ignored. These omissions might be due to the fact that, though the researchers’ credentials are impressive, none identifies mainly with the undergraduate classroom.

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SOBERING

These are sobering books. In the process of presenting data on the challenges facing public higher education in America today, they prove that recurrent questions about access and success are easier to ask than to answer. They also demonstrate that structural problems and ideological challenges cut across the academy as national support for public higher education wanes, tuition rises and the conservative agenda prevails. Most importantly, they document how much the conversation about high-er education has changed and how fragile our democratic, egalitarian convictions have become.

Joanne Reitano is professor of history at LaGuardia Community College. Her latest book is The Restless City: A Short History of New York from Colonial Times to the Present (Routledge, 2006).

Community colleges & the ‘equity agenda’

The PSC’s push for a good contract this round is part of the union’s agenda to make CUNY what it could be, and to make our professional lives what they should be. Say “enough” to doing more with less — our students, our research, our families all deserve better. It is critical to send this message strongly to management – their contract demands (see pages 6-7 and 10) are bad for us and bad for CUNY. Read and sign the statement supporting the PSC’s vision for a new contract at www.psc-cuny.org.