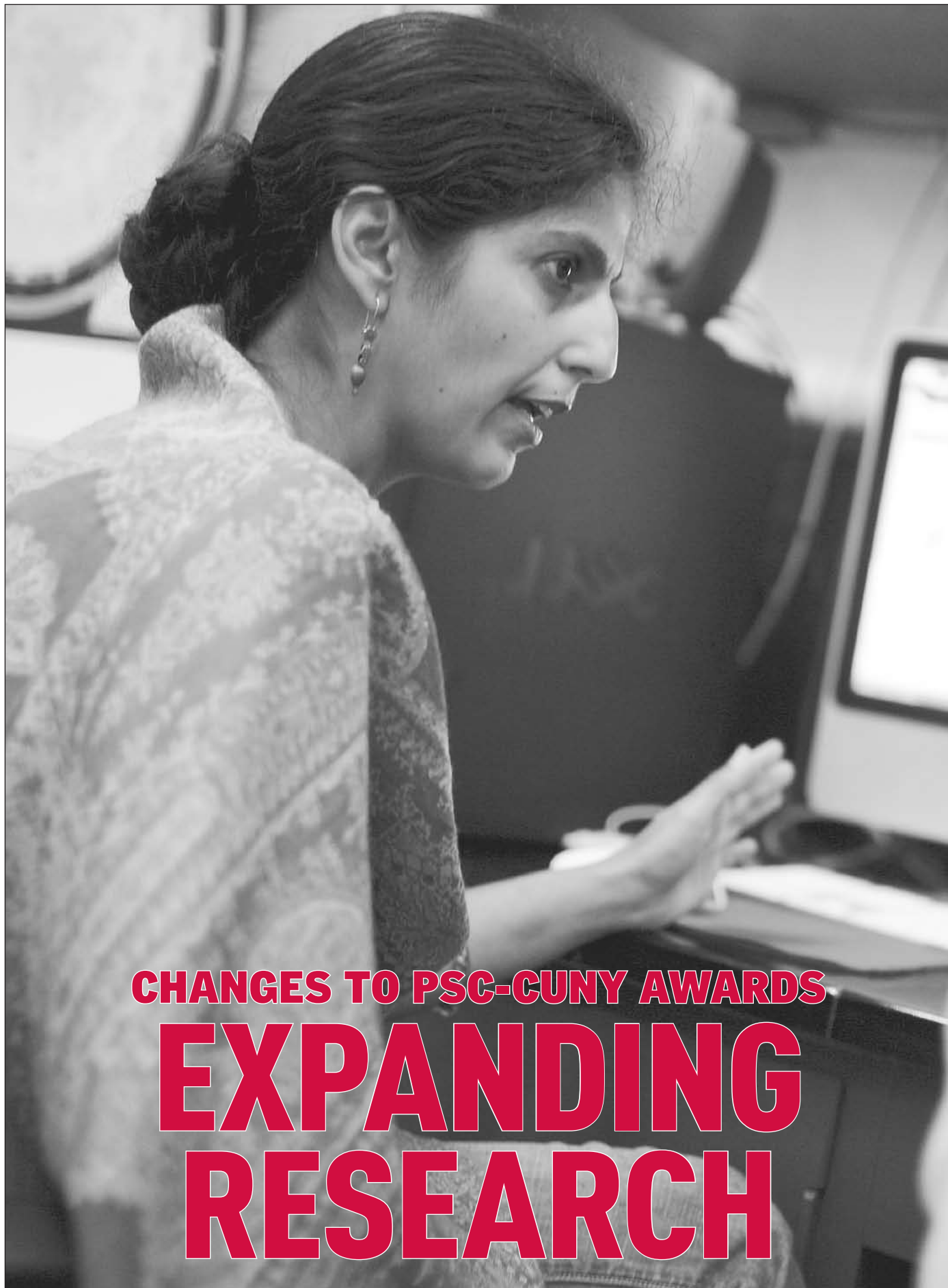


# Clarion

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



SEPTEMBER 2010



## CHANGES TO PSC-CUNY AWARDS EXPANDING RESEARCH

Thousands of City University faculty like Shaneen Singh (pictured above), an associate professor of biology at Brooklyn College, have benefited from the PSC-CUNY Research Award Program. Now, after prolonged negotiations, the PSC and CUNY management have reached agreement on a three-year pilot project that will expand and streamline the program. Top awards will range as high as \$12,000 while smaller, traditional grants will not be cut. The decision-making process for award applications will remain in the hands of discipline-based faculty panels.

PAGE 5



## PARK51 Muslim Americans & social equality

Full cultural citizenship remains elusive.

PAGE 9

### CONTRACT

## Bargaining team works on agenda

The union's 15-member bargaining team met several times over the summer. Last Spring's campus contract meetings informed their discussion of possible demands.

PAGE 2



### YORK COLLEGE

## Recent grad jumps into Haiti aid work

Gina Fleurantin (York '09) returned to her native Haiti after the quake to work for a UN agency. What she learned at CUNY has been invaluable, she says.

PAGE 4



### FUNDING

## Defeat – for now – of privatization plan

An overhaul of CUNY & SUNY funding, in which more dependence on tuition would lead to cuts in public aid, was withdrawn. But the plan's supporters vowed to bring it back.

PAGES 3, 11

# Bargaining team does its homework

By JOHN TARLETON

The PSC collective bargaining team held several all-day meetings this summer to lay the groundwork for talks on a new contract. They discussed how to advance the union's long-term strategy, first articulated in October 2007, of making improvements at CUNY across multiple rounds of contract negotiations. Union negotiators looked closely at specific suggestions from last Spring's campus contract meetings, member comment cards, and the new Committee of 500.

## A LARGER TEAM

The PSC's current contract with CUNY expires on October 19. Under state law, all the provisions and protections of the old contract will remain in force until a new agreement is reached. The bargaining team that will negotiate the new contract was elected by the union's Executive Council (EC) and serves as a committee of the EC.

Joining PSC President Barbara Bowen on the bargaining team are PSC First Vice President Steve London, Secretary Arthurine DeSola, Treasurer Mike Fabricant, VP for Cross Campus Units Iris DeLutro, VP for Senior Colleges Bob Cermele, VP for Community Colleges Anne Friedman, VP for Part-Time Personnel Marcia Newfield, University-wide Officer Costas Panayotakis, Cross Campus Officers Steve Trimboli and Andrea Ades Vasquez, Senior College Officer Diane Menna, Community College Officers Lorraine Cohen

## Preparing for Fall discussion

and Felipe Pimentel, and Part-Time Personnel Officer Michael Batson.

"For this round of bargaining, the Executive Council decided to create a larger bargaining team, in part to introduce a new generation of union leaders to the art and craft of negotiations," Bowen said. "By adding these new members to an already strong team, we have created a diverse and capable negotiations committee. Faculty and staff will be exceptionally well represented."

The bargaining team is currently preparing a bargaining agenda of contract demands that the full, 27-member EC will vote on in October and then bring to the Delegate Assembly for approval later this fall. Under the PSC Constitution, the EC and the Delegate Assembly must both approve the union's contract proposals.

Last Spring, Bowen and other PSC leaders led contract discussion meetings on every CUNY campus, as well as meetings of the HEO, CLT, Retiree and Hunter Campus Schools chapters, plus a meeting of the Doctoral Students' Council. (Meetings at the EOCs will be scheduled in September.)

## MEMBER VOICES

In total, more than 1,000 union members shared their hopes, fears, concerns, doubts and demands in those meetings. In their deliberations, bargaining team members are drawing heavily on detailed

notes from those meetings. They are also taking stock of responses on member comment cards, as well as replies that Committee of 500 members (see sidebar) have forwarded from questions they posed to their campus colleagues.

## A 'LONG PROCESS'

"We got a real sense of the members' concerns when they had a chance to have input on the contract talks. It's a good snapshot," said Andrea Ades Vásquez, a HEO who is the Associate Director of the American Social History Project/Center for Media and Learning.

Important issues being analyzed include the impact on workload of increased student enrollment; better pay and job security for adjuncts; creating more formal opportunities for advancement for HEOs; and continuing to make CUNY salaries more competitive with those at other universities.

Felipe Pimentel, an assistant professor of sociology at Hostos, said the bargaining team expects the negotiations to be a "long process." Noting the many different constituencies the PSC has within its ranks, Pimentel said the bargaining team is striving from the onset to create a contract whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

"We are negotiating for the whole membership," Pimentel said. "I am a full-time faculty member but I

cannot say I'm just negotiating for full-timers. We have to present a coherent program that represents the interests of the whole membership. We are committed to winning something that creates a culture of solidarity within the union."

This will be the PSC's fourth round of bargaining since the New Caucus took the helm of the union in 2000. "The contract can be a means of transforming the University," Bowen told *Clarion*. "Over the past ten years, we have developed a multistage plan to tackle the big structural issues for academic workers at CUNY."

The 2000-2002 and 2002-2007 contracts allowed the union to address several long-standing problems at CUNY by dramatically increasing support for research and scholarship at CUNY (through innovation such as sabbaticals at 80% pay and junior faculty release time), stabilizing the Welfare Fund and winning some improvements in the adjunct system – paid office hours, continuation of health insurance and 100 new full-time lines for long-serving adjuncts.

In the 2007-2010 contract, the PSC beat back a number of concessionary demands that would have increased management control; made measurable progress in restoring CUNY salaries to nationally competitive levels; and helped improve recruitment and retention by winning CUNY's first paid parental leave benefit.

# Committee of 500

The PSC's Committee of 500 is a group of union members who will play a central role in building the leverage the union needs to win a good contract in a challenging economic period. In joining, members commit to take six steps to advance the contract campaign, such as attending a bargaining session as an observer, or telling friends and colleagues about upcoming union actions.

If you have not yet joined the Committee of 500, you can sign up online at [www.psc-cuny.org/committee500.htm](http://www.psc-cuny.org/committee500.htm). For more information, or to get a sign-up card in the mail, contact PSC Organizing Director Rob Murray ([rmurray@pscmail.org](mailto:rmurray@pscmail.org), or 212-354-1252).

In this round, the union is seeking to address persistent inequities: developing a teaching load that allows faculty to give students individual attention, gaining fair pay for adjuncts, improving advancement opportunities for HEOs, and continuing to make progress on nationally competitive salaries.

"Strategically focusing on certain issues in each round of bargaining has allowed us to make real change," Bowen said. "This time we face a serious challenge, as both the City and the State have projected budget deficits. But I believe we can continue to make progress, and that we have to continue. There are problems at CUNY that cannot wait."



## Strike vs. Mott's rotten apples

Striking workers at the Mott apple processing plant in Williamson, New York demand a fair contract. The workers have received support from across the country since Mott's owner, Dr. Pepper Snapple Group, cut the workers pay and benefits earlier this year despite earning \$555 million in profits in 2009.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WRITE TO: CLARION/PSC, 61 BROADWAY, 15TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10006. E-MAIL: [PHOGNESS@PSCMAIL.ORG](mailto:PHOGNESS@PSCMAIL.ORG). FAX: (212) 302-7815.

# PHEEIA's false promises

● The Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act (PHEEIA) is not the remedy to the budget crises afflicting New York's public universities. PHEEIA would allow public universities to set their own tuition; its answer to the bleeding of public institutions is to absolve the state and turn towards privatization. But supporters do not consider the costs.

CUNY's historic mission has been to provide quality education to the immigrant and working classes of the city. A university relying on tuition as its primary funding source cannot serve that mission. In states where public trustees have the power to raise tuition on their own, public funding has declined 34 times faster than elsewhere over the past two years. Increased reliance on private tuition dollars has often left public universities with a net loss of funds.

PHEEIA is not the answer. Instead, the state needs to be held responsible for turning away from

one of its core functions – funding and ascertaining the welfare of public institutions. In Canada and most of Western Europe, you don't have to be either wealthy or be burdened by massive loans to receive a solid university education. There is no reason why we cannot do the same.

Nivedita Majumdar  
John Jay College

## Our working lives at CUNY

● As I begin the year at a new university, I already miss colleagues and students from BMCC. But now that I am at a university that is not operating in a climate of scarcity, I realize just how impoverished CUNY was.

The most obvious aspect of scarcity at BMCC is the extreme overwork of the faculty. As every full-time faculty member knows, the combination of five to four classes, advising responsibilities, and service expectations, along with the inability to take reassigned time in

a large chunk, prevents many from doing research without sacrifices of sleep or time with family.

Enforced scarcity also fosters the micromanagement and bean-counting that so dominates administration's treatment of the faculty. For example, in 2009 Dean Gillespie exhorted faculty to "double" their publications the following year. That statement is a distillation of the administration's seeming ignorance about the requirements of academic publication and the actual workload at their own college.

It is a shame that BMCC faculty are so often made to feel that the administration does not understand what they do, or how hard they work as scholars and teachers. The union's capacity for collective action makes it an excellent vehicle for challenging this collective lack of respect. I eagerly look forward to reading about your struggles in *Clarion*.

Rebecca Hill  
Kennesaw State University  
Kennesaw, Georgia

# State cuts for CUNY

By PETER HOGNESS

This year's New York State budget, finally approved on August 3, is not good news for City University. CUNY colleges were left with less State-funded resources per student, due to cuts in senior college operating aid and in the formula for state support of community colleges. Cuts to New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) will hurt many students' ability to pay for their education.

However, some of these cuts might still be reversed. On August 10, Congress passed a \$26 billion funding measure to preserve teachers' jobs and avoid a reduction in federal Medicaid payments to the states. The New York Legislature may reconvene this month to allocate those funds, which would give the PSC and allies an opportunity to push for restoring community college base-aid and other CUNY funding.

The budget signed by Gov. David Paterson cuts operating aid to CUNY senior colleges by \$88 million and adds a roughly equivalent amount to cover mandatory cost increases.

## Paterson rejects relief

As a result, CUNY is reducing senior college base budgets for this year by a 3.75% - 2.5% cutback, with another 1.25% put on hold because of uncertainty about whether the State may impose more cuts later in the year. Even with more revenue from increased enrollment, budgets for each campus will only be marginally higher.

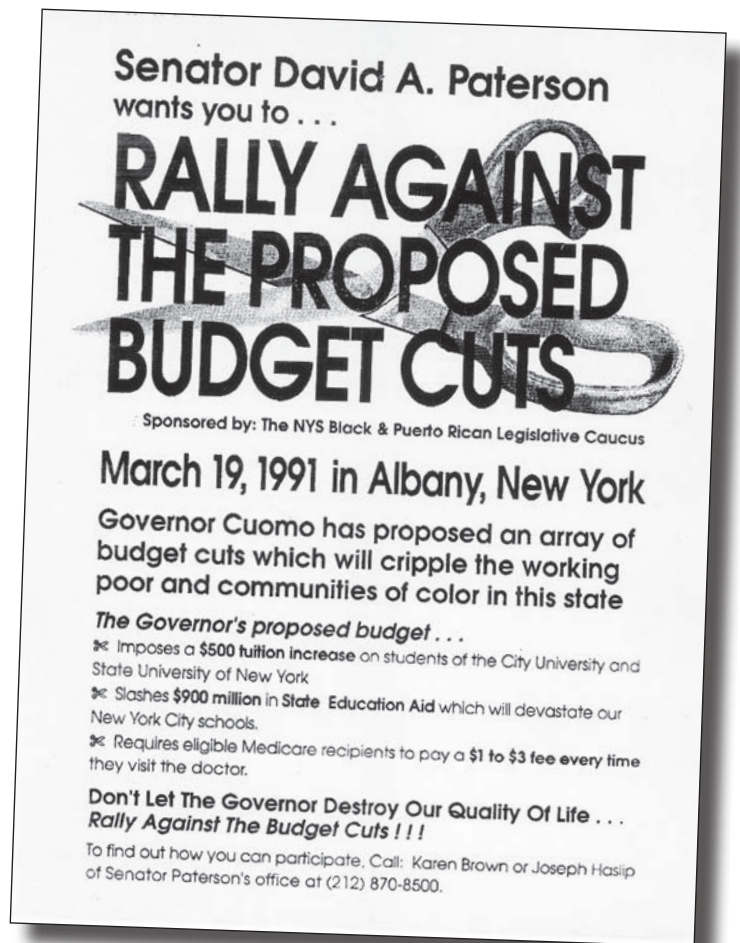
**But some money could be restored.**

Community colleges were hit with a funding cut due to a veto from Gov. Paterson. The legislature's budget had rejected Paterson's proposed reduction in state community college aid per full-time-equivalent student (FTE) and restored \$18.9 million. But Paterson vetoed that restoration, along with the legislature's restoration of funds cut from TAP. The result is that community colleges will have more students without an increase in funds to match.

CUNY did better in the city's budget adopted at the start of the summer, with an overall 8.8% increase in city funds over last year. The City Council restored \$32.3 million that

Mayor Bloomberg had sought to cut, including \$21.4 million in community college operating aid. "We helped elect strong CUNY advocates to the City Council last November," said PSC First Vice President Steve London. "The Council's budget votes in support of CUNY are a reminder that elections matter." (See also p. 7.)

The cuts to TAP, imposed by Paterson's veto, include a \$75 reduction in TAP awards, elimination of Graduate TAP, and more. Changes to the required standards of progress in accumulating credits could leave some students - estimates range close to 1000 - suddenly ineligible for TAP this semester. The State Regents will vote September 14 on whether to delay enacting this change until Spring semester, to prevent students from being ambushed by a rule change imposed without notice. "The PSC is working with NYSUT to support that vote," said London, "but the best solution would be for the Legislature to restore the funding and eliminate this rule change."



That was then, this is now: In this 1991 leaflet, then-State Senator David Paterson of Harlem rallied opposition to proposed budget cuts and a CUNY tuition increase, which he said would "cripple the working poor and communities of color in this state."

# Privatization of CUNY funding nixed

By PETER HOGNESS & JOHN TARLETON

When Gov. David Paterson proposed a radical overhaul of CUNY and SUNY financing in January, the odds looked heavily in favor of its passage. The measure had support from both SUNY and CUNY chancellors, and looser rules on SUNY's relations with private businesses drew the backing of powerful economic interests.

Opponents of the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act (PHEEIA), including the PSC, viewed it as a threat to state funding for public universities. They waged a hard-fought campaign against the bill - and in the end, after a summer of legislative brinkmanship, the measure was withdrawn by its supporters.

It was a notable victory for academic unions and student groups, but not a final one. Supporters of PHEEIA have vowed not to give up - and with Andrew Cuomo among those favoring the measure, a return engagement can be expected.

PHEEIA would have allowed CUNY and SUNY trustees to raise tuition annually at their own discretion, within certain limits, and would have permitted differential tuition, with varying rates for different campuses and different majors. It would also have given SUNY a freer hand in leasing university land for non-academic purposes, or entering into other revenue-generating deals with private business.

In other states, making it easier

## PSC & allies win - for now

for public colleges to raise tuition - and making it easier for politicians to avoid the blame - led to sharp declines in public funding, while tuition climbed higher and higher. The PSC, the SUNY union United University Professions (UUP), and the New York State Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) feared that CUNY and SUNY would see a similar privatization of their funding if PHEEIA passed.

Opponents were also concerned that charging more for certain colleges or certain fields of study would harm college access, undercutting the promise of equal opportunity that they saw as central to the mission of public universities.

Some elements of PHEEIA, such as certain changes in procurement of goods, were relatively uncontroversial. But in the proposed new rules on SUNY land use and public-private partnerships, the UUP saw a potential loophole that could foster non-union satellite operations, taking over SUNY functions at cut-rate wages.

### PRESSURE

PHEEIA was thrust to the center of the tangle over this year's state budget by Paterson and State Senator William Stachowski, a Democrat from Buffalo. At the end of June, with the state's budget weeks overdue, Paterson incorporated PHEEIA into an emergency budget measure, in an attempt to force its approval if

legislators wanted to keep state government in operation. But the governor was outmaneuvered, as the Assembly and State Senate moved toward passing a final budget and sending it to his desk.

Stachowski's vehement support for PHEEIA became the monkey wrench that kept the budget unresolved for several weeks more. With Democrats holding only a 32-30 margin in the State Senate, Stachowski vowed to oppose a final budget measure unless it included PHEEIA. The result was gridlock, and an escalating war of nerves.

Stachowski made PHEEIA such a personal priority in large part because University at Buffalo administration had framed it as the key to an ambitious plan for UB's downtown expansion (see p. 11). Passage of PHEEIA became a local election issue, with Stachowski and his main rival arguing over who could do more to win its passage.

In July, *The New York Times* reported an additional reason why top SUNY officials were pressing so hard for PHEEIA. Reclusive hedge fund manager James Simons (net worth \$8 billion) had pledged to donate as much \$150 million to SUNY-Stony Brook - if some version of PHEEIA was approved.

New York Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Assembly Higher Education Committee Chair Deborah Glick were both outspoken crit-

ics of the measure. As summer wore on, the Assembly held firm against PHEEIA. But it was under mounting pressure to agree to a compromise that would satisfy Stachowski and get the budget passed.

Stachowski's high-pressure tactics met their match at the end of July, when Senate members of the Legislature's Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus took a stand against PHEEIA, framing it as a civil rights issue.

"These are issues that are going to affect the ability of children of color to be educated in this state going forward, and we want to be sure that we are satisfied that we are not going to privatize our institutions," said the caucus chair, Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson (D-Bronx, Westchester). Hassell-Thompson declared that there would

be a "stalemate" if some Senators continued to insist on PHEEIA being a part of the budget.

In an effort to get some version of PHEEIA passed, Paterson submitted a new bill that scaled back many of its provisions. Annual tuition increases would now have a lower limit (4%), and provisions for differential tuition for in-state undergraduates would now apply at only four SUNY campuses. But this version also remained stalled.

In the end it was Stachowski who folded. In exchange for Assembly agreement to a non-binding "framework" on PHEEIA, he voted for a final budget measure on Au-

gust 3. Many observers thought Stachowski had switched mainly to avoid blame for what would have been the latest budget in New York history, had the standoff lasted eight more days.

How did the PSC and allies win against the odds? Part of the answer was the strong response from the union's rank-and-file. PSC members sent 7,600 e-mails to key legislators - a PSC campaign record. Visits to legislators' district offices also made a difference. As part of the PSC's ongoing legislative work, large delegations of members traveled to Albany three times during the spring semester, including a March 9 mobilization with NYPIRG, UUP and CUNY's University Student Senate, in which 300 people took part.

### UNITED

The united position of the PSC and UUP was important, and the strong and active opposition of New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), the PSC's state affiliate, was critical. UUP conducted an extensive state-wide anti-PHEEIA media campaign, and NYPIRG's statewide mobilization against PHEEIA's provisions for increased tuition was also a major factor. Student activists lobbied in Albany and in local districts, wrote letters to the editor throughout New York, and hosted call-in days from six CUNY campuses during the height of this summer's battle.

But this coalition will likely be put to the test again in the near future, as PHEEIA supporters have made it clear they are not giving up. Fran Clark of NYPIRG told *Clarion*, "We are all going to have to be vigilant."

# York grad jumps into Haiti quake relief

By JOHN TARLETON

Gina Fleurantin graduated from York College in December of 2009 with a degree in business administration and hopes of finding work in the non-profit sector. Five weeks later, she returned to her native Haiti after it was hit by a devastating earthquake.

"I originally went there to be with my family, but I realized everyone in the country needed help," Fleurantin told *Clarion*.

Recruited to assist as a translator, Fleurantin, 27, quickly took on more responsibilities as an information management officer for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in its Child Protection Service. In that post, she helped coordinate the work of a chaotic jumble of organizations providing mental health and psychosocial services for child survivors of the quake, ranging from individual counseling to setting up safe spaces where kids could play.

## COORDINATION

Haiti has the highest ratio of foreign NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) per capita of any country in the world and the country was swarming with international aid groups in the aftermath of the earthquake. The first step in coordinating their efforts was to find out what each was doing. Fleurantin maintained spreadsheets with regularly updated information on the types of programs groups were operating, where they were working, the number of people being served and how long each organization would be able to stay.

To accomplish this, she had to reach out to more than 100 organizations on a regular basis. Fleurantin helped write monthly reports on NGO activity in her area and what needed to be done in the coming months. She also worked to make sure aid groups were aware of, and adhering to, Inter-Agency Standing

## Skills gained at CUNY are put to work



Dave Sanders

2009 York graduate Gina Fleurantin (left) discusses her time in Haiti with former writing instructor Natalie Amiama.

Committee guidelines on mental health and psychological support, which emphasize that aid groups first do no harm to the communities they have come to serve. In that spirit, regular meetings were held between local and international NGOs to increase awareness about Haitian culture and religion, and reduce prejudice.

"When you go to a place to help people, you have to make sure and not hurt them," Fleurantin said.

## LANGUAGE GAP

Fleurantin, who lived out of a tent at Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince during her first three months in Haiti, also helped bridge the language gap between foreign NGOs and the local population.

Many international aid groups in Haiti mistakenly assume that French, the language of the nation's elite, is commonly used by the rest of the island's Creole-speaking population. In one instance, Fleurantin helped translate a mental health survey that posed questions for survivors such as "How often are you unable to get out of bed?" or "Have you felt like you couldn't go places that remind you of the earthquake?" and "Have you felt like killing yourself?"

"I saw a neighbor of my mother's gradually becoming psychotic," Fleurantin recalled. "A lot of people need psychiatric and psychological support in Haiti."

Working what she described as her "first real job," Fleurantin said

she was "a bit worried," but added, "you just have to learn very fast. You should not be scared to ask questions. Even if you can't find the answer from someone, you have to keep on going and try to find out what it is."

## Bridging cultures amidst tragedy

Fleurantin said courses she had taken as a student at York proved to be invaluable to her work in Haiti, especially a senior-level research and writing course she took with Natalie Amiama, an adjunct at York's College-Wide Writing Program, and a computer science course she took with Associate Professor Chau Ou in the spring of 2009.

"Attending CUNY was one of the best ideas that I ever had," said Fleurantin, who also took a class at Baruch and did a semester abroad

in Spain through Hunter. Developing her writing, research and computer skills were especially valuable in a job that mainly involved writing reports, gathering information, preparing graphs and using spreadsheets.

"I'm glad she's doing something so productive and important," said Amiama, her former writing teacher. "She was a great student." The class that Fleurantin took emphasizes development of meticulous research and writing skills, said Amiama, as well as the ability to objectively synthesize multiple sources of information.

## RETURN TO HAITI

Today Amiama uses a paper Fleurantin wrote on the rehabilitation of child soldiers as a model for her students to emulate. "Not only was it well written, it reflected a level of social consciousness that is not very common," Amiama said. "Gina allowed the information she received to change her – not the other way around."

Fleurantin, who emigrated to the US in 2004 and lives in the Pelham Bay section of the Bronx, said she expects to return to Haiti later this fall for another stint at UNICEF. This time she'll work there for a year and will have additional responsibilities, traveling throughout the country – and filing more reports.

## GRAD SCHOOL

Fleurantin is planning to begin graduate studies in global affairs with an emphasis on human rights by 2012. She's still contemplating her future career path but thinks she gained an important insight while working in Haiti.

"I believe in really loving your job and not needing coffee or pills to stay awake when you're working," she said. "So I know what I want and I know what I don't want in a job. I need to feel like the work I'm doing is really helping people."

# PSC donations help Haiti

By JOHN TARLETON

On February 19, 150 PSC members packed the union hall for an evening in solidarity with the people of Haiti. The event raised \$5,000 to assist the earthquake-stricken nation.

The PSC donated \$2,000 of this the money to Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières). With a long history of work in Haiti, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has responded to both the immediate crisis and the longer-term needs of the country's health system. The PSC Executive Council had approved contributions to MSF and Partners in Health, another long-time health care presence in Haiti, immediately after the earthquake

The remainder of the funds from the February event were used to assist a pair of grassroots aid groups (The Batey Relief Alliance and Yéle Haiti, an organization founded by musician Wyclef Jean); and to purchase a computer, a printer and a video projector—equipment that is helping three progressive, university-based organizations carry out their work.

## TEACHERS UNIONS

The National Union of Teachers' College Graduates of Haiti (UNNOH) has used the computer and printer to help with the education program it puts on for members.

## Equipment aids academic unions.

Topics covered include the state of Haiti's education system, the politics of reconstruction and Haitian history, including the US occupation from 1915-1934. UNNOH is a member of Haiti's Public and Private Sector Workers Federation (CTSP). The PSC International Committee is working to invite the head of UNNOH, Josue Merilien, to New York in the fall.

The vast majority of university teachers in Haiti are adjuncts, and the Union of University Instructional Staff (STAIA) is waging an uphill battle for adjunct unionization. STAIA has used the donated computer and the printer as it focuses on building its membership.

"The solidarity shown by PSC members is making a real difference in the lives of independent trade unionists in Haiti," said Tony O'Brien, secretary of the PSC International Committee, who visited Haiti in July. "Their work is more important now than ever as Haiti begins to rebuild. These unions are on the forefront of the struggle to make Haiti a more just and humane society."

## RECONSTRUCTION

A third organization, the Desalinienne Association of University Men and Woman, based at the National University of Haiti, has used the equipment in research, writing and publishing for *Desalinyèn*, a journal that features articles on topics like university reform, popular social movements, political economy, environmentalism, philosophy and the politics of language

and culture. Haitian academics and union activists say that reconstruction is not just about physical structures – it is also about contributing to the country's intellectual life.

O'Brien said the organizations will be able to use the video projector when indoor facilities are rebuilt on their campuses. He also reported that three PSC members or staff have donated laptops that were used in July in computer classes for union members, and then donated to leaders of the teachers', bus drivers' and printers' unions. Further laptop donations would be greatly appreciated, says O'Brien, and can be sent to the PSC office: they should be in perfect working order and wireless-ready.

Online donations for Haitian reconstruction can be made via [doctorswithoutborders.org](http://doctorswithoutborders.org), [haitianwomen.wordpress.com](http://haitianwomen.wordpress.com), [bateyrelief.org](http://bateyrelief.org) and [www.pih.org](http://www.pih.org), among others.

# PSC-CUNY Awards expanded

By PETER HOGNESS

After prolonged negotiations, the PSC and CUNY management have reached agreement on changes to the PSC-CUNY Research Award Program, in a three-year pilot program that both sides greeted as a significant advance.

"This was a tough negotiation, but the result is an even stronger program than before," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "The new structure preserves the bedrock principles of faculty decision-making and broad accessibility of grants, while introducing a whole new category of awards that range up to \$12,000." CUNY will increase its contributions to the program in order to fund these new awards.

The program's application deadline has been changed to January 15, and the selection process has been streamlined. The goal is to enable those serving on panels that decide on the awards to spend less time on administrative details, and make decisions through a more focused period of discussion.

## BIGGER AWARDS

At press time, application instructions and the new application form had not yet been finalized. They will be posted on the PSC and RF-CUNY websites later in the semester.

The agreement maintains funding levels to permit roughly the same number of grants as in recent years. There will be "Traditional A Awards" of up to \$3,500 (last year's average award amount), which as a group will receive most of the program's funding, and "Traditional B Awards" of up to \$6,000, which will receive the next largest amount of funds. There will be up to 40 of the new "Enhanced Awards" of up to \$12,000 each, in each year of the pilot program; these will be supported through a combination of additional funds from CUNY and administrative savings.

According to the joint announcement of the agreement, CUNY will provide an additional \$250,000 to fund this three-year expansion of the awards, while the union "will seek to identify a further \$250,000 for PSC-CUNY Awards in the next round of collective bargaining."

Bowen said that the accord balanced a number of concerns. "For many years, faculty have talked to us about the need for larger grants, and now we have been able to accomplish that – without taking a penny from the money for the existing program," she told *Clarion*.

Negotiations were initiated when management advanced proposals through a Chancellor's Task Force that called for expanding the size of awards by cutting back on smaller grants, allocating funds by campus rather than by discipline, and eliminating the UCRA, replacing it with campus-based committees that many faculty feared would be dominated by college administrators.

## Process remains under faculty control



QCC professor Cheryl Bluestone: "The agreement streamlines the process."

The Research Awards are contractual, so the union stepped in to represent members' concerns in talks with CUNY management. In that role, the PSC worked closely with the chair of the University Faculty Senate (UFS) and members of the executive committee of the University Committee on Research Awards (UCRA) which guides and administers the current program. In the end, though the negotiations were not easy, the two sides worked their way

to an accord that all parties consider a step forward.

"I congratulate the PSC and the University for reaching a groundbreaking agreement that provides a significant improvement in the program," outgoing UFS Chair Manfred Philipp wrote in an August 24 message to UFS members. "The UFS thanks President Bowen and all of the other members of the PSC team for this success."

"The new framework was the product of an intense but collaborative negotiation with CUNY, and I thank my negotiating partners," Bowen told *Clarion*. "Support from the UFS was critical, and special credit should go to Cheryl Bluestone and Joe Wilson of the UCRA," she added. "They love this program, and they showed tremendous tenacity and flexibility as we worked to refashion it."

## EVERYONE WINS

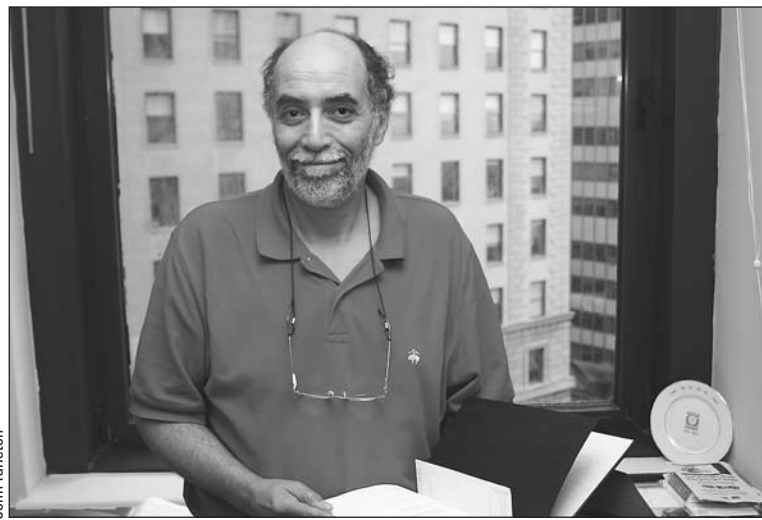
"The agreement preserves a very important tradition of faculty-guided research," said Wilson, a professor of political science at Brooklyn College. "Over the years the PSC-CUNY Awards have been a critical source of funding for thousands of faculty members, and they have also laid the foundation for a lot of subsequent research."

The new guidelines "show the creativity of the PSC leadership in

negotiating an agreement that will ultimately benefit the entire University," Wilson said. "Everybody wins in this agreement."

In addition to preserving faculty control, he noted, the traditional, smaller awards have been maintained, along with a particular focus on supporting research by untenured faculty. "But we have also expanded the financial pie to

are needed, Bluestone added. "Anything you try that's new may have to be tweaked," she said. "Hopefully we'll have a cooperative process throughout this pilot, with all parties evaluating the need for any small changes that might be helpful along the way. And at the end of the three years, it will be crucial for the union, faculty governance bodies, and



Professor Joe Wilson of Brooklyn College: PSC-CUNY Awards lay the foundation for future research.

provide the opportunity for larger awards," said Wilson, "for people in all disciplines who may have research agendas that are more expensive to pursue."

The UCRA's Cheryl Bluestone, professor of psychology at Queensborough Community College, told *Clarion* that the changes "preserve the best aspects of the program while streamlining and expanding it."

"All the parties involved did attempt to be as flexible as possible," Bluestone said. "The union did a great job of negotiating while maintaining the principles we saw as central to the program's effectiveness."

This is a pilot program, and experience with these changes may indicate that some adjustments

## CUNY's ERI

On June 28, the CUNY Board of Trustees agreed to participate in New York State's Early Retirement Incentive. Full-time employees in CUNY's instructional staff who have at least 10 years of service and will be at least 50 years old as of January 27, 2011, are potentially eligible.

The PSC has developed two separate informational brochures on the CUNY Early Retirement Incentive Program of 2010 (ERI-2010), which are available online (at [www.psc-cuny.org/pensions.htm](http://www.psc-cuny.org/pensions.htm)) or from the PSC office.

One brochure is for members of the Teachers Retirement System (TRS); the other is for members of TIAA-CREF and other plans in CUNY's Optional Retirement Program. ERI information is also available on the CUNY website (at [tinyurl.com/CUNYonERI](http://tinyurl.com/CUNYonERI)).

Over the summer there were some changes in the dates for the 2010 ERI. Most were minor, but TRS members retiring under Plan A of the 2010 ERI should note that the open enrollment dates have been changed to December 29 through January 26.

If you have further questions, contact your campus HR office, or PSC Director of Pension and Welfare Benefits Clarissa Gilbert Weiss at [cweiss@psccmail.org](mailto:cweiss@psccmail.org).

— PH

side CUNY. As in the past, deliberations will be confidential.

"Finding ways to streamline the application review process, as long as principles like faculty control are maintained, is a good thing," said Wilson.

## A STRONG COMMITMENT

There will now be 18 discipline-based panels instead of the previous 31. As before, these panels will decide on applications for the Traditional A and B Awards. Decisions on the new Enhanced Awards will be made by the UCRA, now made up of the chairs of the 18 panels. As in the past, panel chairs will be selected by the Chancellor, from names unanimously recommended by the UFS; they will be asked to serve for the three years of the pilot program.

"At this point, success depends on faculty being willing to serve as panel members," said Bluestone. She noted that similar processes have worked well at other universities. "I'm hopeful that the panel chairs will have success finding panel members to participate in the review process," she told *Clarion*. "At CUNY, a lot of faculty feel a strong commitment to this program. They're very aware of how it helped them to get started, and the difference it has made for many others." Faculty willing to work a few hours a year, she said, can make this program successful.

The joint PSC-CUNY announcement is online at [psc-cuny.org/PSC-cunyGrantAgreement.htm](http://psc-cuny.org/PSC-cunyGrantAgreement.htm). A new application form and new instructions are not yet finalized; they will be posted later in the semester.

# New York City is their classroom

By JOHN TARLETON

## Urban studies inspires LaGuardia students

When Jonathan Chavez came to LaGuardia in the Fall of 2008, he thought he had settled on a career path. Having dropped out of Monroe College after one semester as a business administration major, he was ready to pursue a career in electrical engineering.

But Chavez began to have second thoughts when he took a class in urban studies. He was intrigued by class discussions led by his instructor, Arianna Martinez, about everything from the impact of freeways on urban areas to the gender biases of 1930s-era houses, built with the primarily male areas (living room, library) in the front and the kitchen and laundry room in the back.

Noticing for the first time how a community's physical infrastructure is related to class, race and gender dynamics, Chavez began to see New York anew. Before long, he wanted to become an urban planner.

### 'EUREKA MOMENT'

"It was a eureka moment for me," said Chavez, 23, who grew up in Jamaica, Queens. "Realizing that our social interaction was a part of a bigger system was fascinating to me."

As Chavez was finishing his studies at LaGuardia this spring, he successfully applied for a \$25,000 Kaplan scholarship with Martinez's help. Accepted by a number of schools, Chavez will do a concentration in sociology at Bard College, where he began classes on August 30, and will pursue a master's in urban planning.

While Chavez's experience is exceptional, Joanne Reitano, co-coordinator of LaGuardia's urban studies program, says LaGuardia's requirement that all of its students take an urban studies class is often an eye-opening experience for students, invited for the first time to go outside the classroom and use one of the world's greatest cities as a focal point of their studies.

"A lot of our students' potential is latent, and these courses are intellectually liberating," says Reitano, a history professor and author of *The Restless City* and *The Restless City Reader*, both about New York. "Urban studies demystifies academia and makes it more accessible."

LaGuardia's 17,000 degree-seeking students can choose among urban studies-related courses across a range of disciplines, including sociology, history, literature, health sciences and business. Urban studies classes are writing-intensive and incorporate e-portfolios; all include out-of-classroom experiences that use the city as a learning laboratory.

"My message," says Richard Lieberman, a professor of history who helped found LaGuardia's urban studies program in 1972, "is, be active and question your city. You're not a tourist. Ask, 'Why is this build-



LaGuardia urban studies instructor Arianna Martinez (left) and her former student Jonathan Chavez (right) explore the nuances of the Long Island City neighborhood where the college is located.

ing so big? Why is it here? Who lived here before? Why is this neighborhood like it is now?' The questions are as important as the answers."

"We approach writing as a process where you engage and think about the world around you," says Martinez, a CUNY adjunct working on her doctorate in urban planning and geography at Rutgers. "We don't see people as 'good' writers or 'bad' writers."

Lieberman's class on the history of New York covers a broad range of historical periods and themes such as economics, slavery, housing and labor. When his students make forays into the city, they do it with specific objectives framed by their course of study. "When we go to the New York Historical Society, the documents relate to what we have discussed in class," says Lieberman, who is director of the college's LaGuardia and Wagner Archives. "I'm teaching a whole new way of seeing the city. For that you need structure."

### WRITING

Assistant Professor of English Kristen Gallagher invites students in her Literature of the City class to use New York as a learning tool for an immersive, detail-rich style of writing. "I tell them to act like an anthropologist from Mars and pay close attention," Gallagher says. "The goal is to create a descriptive representation of the city that someone who has never been here could understand."

Gallagher's students take these skills to a variety of venues such

as the MoMA, Grand Central Station and their own neighborhoods. "If you find one very interesting detail, you can write pages about it," Gallagher says, noting that the ability to write with solid attention to detail is a skill that students can use to their advantage in many different fields.

Ranging outside the classroom also gives Gallagher's students a deeper appreciation for the writings of others. When her class read Walt Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," and then followed in his footsteps by walking across the Brooklyn Bridge as a part of a field trip, Gallagher said it made a big impact.

"The students felt connected to him through crossing this water," Gallagher said. "They felt like they were walking in his footsteps. They were ecstatic and smiling from ear-to-ear. It was a great experience."

At the end of the walk, which took them from Manhattan to Brooklyn, the students visited Fulton Ferry Landing near the base of the Brooklyn Bridge, where the words from "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" are cast into the marine railings.

"Students were incredibly moved by seeing his words – words they had read – there on a wall," Gallagher recalled. "They ran their hands along the words as if they were somehow Whitman's own imprint, evidence of his having been there."

Max Rodriguez, a professor of modern languages and literature, makes full use of Queens's cul-

tural diversity in an introductory course he teaches on bilingualism. Each student in the class has to learn about a language they are not familiar with – first by studying such features as syntax, morphology and phonology, and then studying where the language is spoken and by how many people. The student then finds a Queens community in which the language is spoken and interviews at least three people of different generations about their language usage and the challenges of learning and speaking a second language.

"The fieldwork allows students to experience second-language learning processes in progress," says Rodriguez. One of his students described coming to understand language as not simply a technical tool, but as "the main marker of an individual's identity."

Tara Hickman, an adjunct lecturer in social sciences, has her students use a full range of technologies in the urban studies courses she teaches. They are required to post field notes and observations on Twitter two to three times a week – though she says some get hooked and post several times per day.

"Everyone is following everybody," Hickman says. "It also helps students say more with less, it helps them write more concisely," she told *Clarion*. "It promotes peer review as well."

At the same time, Hickman insists that students learn how to make use of the primary sources housed in the college's LaGuardia and Wagner Ar-

chives, including maps, photos, letters, documents and advertisements from earlier eras.

"They learn how to become scholars and develop their own voice," Hickman says. "Just because a textbook says so, doesn't mean it's true – you can interpret primary sources your own way with valid citation."

### CIVIC AWARENESS

Hickman says one of her goals as a teacher is to get students to become civically active. She requires them to attend at least one community board meeting and write a paper about it. Once piqued, a student's interest in a community board sometimes endures. "I sometimes get an e-mail from a former student who says I got involved in my community board, thanks to my class," Hickman says. "As a teacher, this is very rewarding."

Arianna Martinez says former students of hers have also put what they learned in class to good use in later life. One became a physical therapist, and used her knowledge of zoning and how to evaluate Census data to better identify where she wanted to set up her business.

"I think most of them get something out of the class even if they aren't going to go out and become urban planners," says Martinez.

Reitano says LaGuardia's urban studies classes succeed in part because they integrate so many different learning strategies, which increases the chances of reaching more students more of the time. The faculty's enthusiasm for teaching urban studies courses also affects students, she added.

### CUNY TAKES NOTICE

"The people who teach urban studies courses love the city," Reitano says. "Students pick up right away if you love your subject matter."

The fruits of LaGuardia's pioneering urban studies requirement

**Classes that integrate many learning strategies**

has not gone unnoticed by CUNY, which requires students in the Macaulay Honors College to take four seminar classes that focus on New York City in relation to the arts, science and technology, the city's immigrant history, and the social, political and economic trends shaping its future. The architects of CUNY's proposed new community college are also planning to include an urban studies component.

"Guess where they got that idea from?" says Reitano, who would like to see an urban studies requirement become the norm at urban community colleges across the country.

"For urban community colleges, I think it's the perfect marriage of the city and the curriculum," Reitano says. "Community colleges spill out into the city and so should the curriculum."

# PSC picks for Sept. 14 primary

By PETER HOGNESS

In the primary election on Tuesday, September 14, the PSC has endorsed Eric Schneiderman for New York State Attorney General.

"We need the strong, independent and progressive voice of Eric Schneiderman," said PSC First Vice President Steve London. "The attorney general is the people's lawyer, and Eric has demonstrated throughout his career that he is dedicated to the interests of working people."

## THE CANDIDATES

London cited Schneiderman's support for progressive income taxes on the wealthy to help eliminate New York's chronic budget deficits, and his lifelong opposition to the corrupting influence of big corporations. "As attorney general, Eric will insist on fairness and equal treatment for all working people, their families and communities," London said.

Schneiderman has also received the endorsement of *The New York Times*, which cited him as the best choice for an attorney general who will "protect consumers and the environment, and promote civil rights." (See [www.ericshneiderman.com](http://www.ericshneiderman.com).)

The PSC Legislative Committee is also urging members to vote and volunteer for the following candidates in key races in the September 14 Democratic primary:

**BILL PERKINS** for State Senator in Manhattan's Senate District (SD) 30. A strong supporter of CUNY, Perkins has been a vocal advocate for improving public schools and against privatizing public education through expanding charter

## Schneiderman backed for AG



Schneiderman for Attorney General

PSC-endorsed Eric Schneiderman is running for New York State Attorney General.

schools. Now he is being challenged in the primary by a charter school proponent, who is funded by hedge funds and financial-industry backers who stand to benefit.

**VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY** for State Senator in Brooklyn's SD18. Senator Montgomery has fought for expanding programs for minority youth, for humane treatment of children and families in the criminal justice system, and for greater funding for public education and CUNY. Like Sen. Perkins, she has been targeted in the primary by a candidate backed by the charter-school industry.

**GUSTAVO RIVERA** for State Senator in the Bronx's SD33. Rivera is a Hunter College graduate with deep roots in his community. Rivera has solid support from labor unions and

stresses the importance of public higher education for working people. He is challenging the incumbent senator, Pedro Espada, who is under investigation for corruption.

**GREGG LUNDAHL** for State Assembly in Manhattan's AD73. Lundahl is a UFT member and a strong supporter of public education and the employment rights of teachers. He is challenging incumbent Assembly member Jonathan Bing, a prominent backer of legislation to undermine teacher tenure.

**FRANCISCO MOYA** for State Assembly in Queens's AD39. Moya is running for an open seat. With broad support from labor unions, community organizations and Queens political leaders, London said, "Moya is a young and exciting candidate who will support our issues."

The PSC works with other locals within New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) to come up with NYSUT endorsements for State and federal office. This year NYSUT endorsed Thomas DiNapoli for reelection as State Comptroller – and made headlines when it declined to endorse a candidate for governor.

"Obviously, we could find little in common with [Rick] Lazio or [Carl] Paladino," NYSUT President Richard Iannuzzi told the *Albany Times-Union*. But while Andrew Cuomo had supported public education in the past, Iannuzzi said, "we have serious issues" with positions Cuomo has staked out in the current campaign.

There were many reasons why Cuomo commanded scant support among NYSUT locals, said the PSC's London. In the campaign so far, Cuomo has "attacked public employees, ruled out a more progressive income tax, favored an inflexible cap on property taxes – and he's come out in favor of privatizing CUNY & SUNY funding."

NYSUT's decision to not endorse a couple of dozen incumbent State Senators, both Republicans and Democrats, was similarly based on differences over key issues. Democratic Senators William Stachowski and Brian Foley were not endorsed because of their aggressive push to shift CUNY and SUNY from public to private funds. Sen. Carl Kruger was not endorsed because he has kept the PSC-backed Adjunct Unemployment Insurance Bill bottled up in the Finance Committee, which he chairs.

"We believe if the adjunct unemployment bill goes to the floor we would have the votes, so the key thing is getting it out of that committee," said Michael Batson, a PSC part-time personnel officer. "I was encouraged to see how much higher education issues like this were really part of NYSUT's thinking in the endorsement process."

The decisions not to endorse these legislators, many of whom had received NYSUT's backing in the past, was the result of broader changes in NYSUT's endorsement policy – changes supported by the PSC. Legislators are to be evaluated based on key votes, their public advocacy for NYSUT's issues, and their responsiveness to NYSUT members.

"We want elected officials to understand that they can't cake-walk and not be visible advocates for public higher education," said Legislative Committee member Paul Washington, who is a higher education associate at Medgar Evers College. Rating officeholders at midterm "will shine a light on how supportive they have been for CUNY, SUNY, public education and labor," Washington said. "We want to engage them in an ongoing dialog, and hold them accountable."

If NYSUT does not endorse any candidate in a given contest, local unions like the PSC can seek a "release" to make their own endorsement in that race. Such was the case with Schneiderman. A full list of PSC- and NYSUT-endorsed candidates is online at [www.psc-politicalaction.org](http://www.psc-politicalaction.org).

# 'One Nation' under a groove

By PETER HOGNESS & CLARION STAFF

Tired of waiting for the change we need? Feeling outfoxed? A coalition of more than 150 groups is organizing a massive march on Washington that they hope will bring as many as a million people to the steps of the nation's capitol on October 2. Their goal is to re-energize support for the progressive causes that record numbers of Americans voted for in 2008.

Organizers vow to rally for "good jobs, equal justice and quality public education for all."

The march will demand aggressive federal action to reduce unemployment. At the end of July the official unemployment rate stood at 9.6%. The total for workers who are unemployed, underemployed, or have given up seeking work hovers above 16%.

On education, to coalition calls for more resources, training and support for classroom teachers, and

## Progressives rally October 2

action against racial inequities.

"We're focused on jobs and bringing the country back together," said Marvin Bing, a 2009 BMCC graduate who is New York state director for One Nation Working Together, the coalition sponsoring the march. "It's time to get back in the streets and remind America that working-class families are the majority."

### GAINING VISIBILITY

One of Bing's teachers at BMCC was Ron Hayduk, professor of social science, who has attended some local organizing meetings for the One Nation protest. Hayduk says he'll be one of many PSC members getting on the bus early on the morning of Saturday, October 2.

"It's totally possible to build institutions that meet the needs of people of color and working people," Hayduk said. "But, people who are left-of-center need to be outspoken and

visible. If we're not going to force action on our issues, who will?"

During the past two years, many progressives have watched with increasing dismay as Tea Party groups and others on the right have seized the initiative in political debate. President Obama and Congressional Democrats have repeatedly been on the defensive over false charges about "death panels," Shirley Sherrod and more, while bills like the Employee Free Choice Act, the DREAM Act, and climate change legislation have been left in limbo.

In early July, after three months of discussions with other organizations, SEIU Local 1199 and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) issued a call for the October 2 "One Nation" protest, in an effort to pose an alternative to the energy on the right.

Calling the October protest "a March on Washington" evokes the legacy of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. On August 28, the 47th anniversary of that march, Glenn Beck led a large rally of Tea Party supporters at the Lincoln Memorial. Beck, who famously asserted that President Obama holds "a deep-seated hatred of white people," said that his rally was intended to "reclaim the civil rights movement" – a phrase that echoes the Tea Party's vow to "take our country back."

CBS News called Beck's rally "a clarifying moment" that underlined the potential impact of these forces on choosing the next Congress. The gathering drew between 78,000 and 96,000, according to an analysis of aerial photos commissioned by CBS News. With the "One Nation" protest scheduled exactly one month before the November elections, comparisons of the turnout at the two events are inevitable.

The October 2 protest has been endorsed by both the AFL-CIO and Change to Win labor federations, and by civil rights, student and faith-based groups. The PSC Executive Council endorsed the event in August, and PSC members will travel to Washington, DC together on union buses and trains.

Bing told *Clarion* it is important for young people to turn out for the October 2 event and then stay engaged beyond this next round of elections. "These elections are going to impact us," he said, noting that many recent college graduates have been unable to find jobs. "We voted for change in 2008. But that just began our work. We have to show that we are not just a sometime movement."

### GET ON THE BUS

The NAACP and AFL-CIO have expressed an intent to continue "One Nation Working Together" long-term, but their focus is now on getting people to Washington October 2, and to the polls in November.

For more information, see [onenationworkingtogether.org](http://onenationworkingtogether.org). To reserve a seat on a PSC bus to Washington on October 2, e-mail [pyoung@pscmail.org](mailto:pyoung@pscmail.org) or call Patricia Young at 212-354-1252.





## CORDOBA HOUSE

# Muslim citizenship at Ground Zero

By MUCAHIT BILICI

The plan to construct a Muslim community center (Park51 or Cordoba House), which will include a mosque space in lower Manhattan (two blocks from the site of World Trade Center), has generated a new wave of Islamophobia. At a recent rally against the project, one of the protestors carried a sign that read, "Everything I need to know about Islam, I learned on 9/11."

The Islam depicted in these rallies can be called "Ground Zero Islam" – a religion defined solely on the basis of terrorist attacks, which lives in the imagination of those who willfully reject Islam's history and place in American culture.

The single most important fallacy propagated by the community center's opponents is the assumption that all Muslims, including American Muslims, are collectively responsible for the terrorist acts of 9/11. It is this projection of malevolent foreignness that allows some American citizens to demand that other citizens give up their constitutional rights to freedom of religion and to private property.

## CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP

The debate about Park51 represents a soon-to-vanish moment in our nation's history, when Islam is perceived as a foreign entity shamelessly forcing its way across our political, cultural and psychic borders. When you remove the election-year grandstanding from the debate, the real popular sentiment that remains is seen in the characteristic mood of the protestors. While at times expressed in extreme and even overtly racist fashion, the protestors' objections find their most coherent and reasonable form in the statement, "They have the right to build it, but it is insensitive." That is, emotionally they object, while legally they acknowledge the right.

What does this say about the status of Islam and Muslims in the United States? It tells us that while Muslims may hold legal citizenship in America today, they lack cultural citizenship. The "insensitivity" claim implicitly poses the question: "Are they *us* [Americans, victims] or *them* [terrorists]?" And answers with a resounding, "Not 'us'!"

Some protestors say this directly: Muslims should not build so close to Ground Zero because "they are the ones who took down the twin towers." But if that is the case, shouldn't law enforcement be called in to arrest them? The protestors know very well that the American Muslims building Park51 are citizens who have not committed any crime. In the eyes of the law – and from the standpoint of the facts – they are as far from the crime of 9/11 as any other American. Why, then, should they be seen as responsible? The answer is because they are Muslim.

It seems that Muslims are accepted into American *law* and protected by it as legal citizens, but they are not (yet?) accepted into the American *nation* and thus remain unprotected by its sentiment and public opinion. Their legal citizenship is complete, but their cultural citizenship is still undergoing a painful birth.

Is Islam an American religion, or is it in essence a religion of foreign terrorists? The

extent to which all Muslims are seen as dangerously foreign is reflected in public opinion surveys. In a recent *Time Magazine* poll, 28% of respondents said that Muslims should be barred from serving on the US Supreme Court, while 32% said that Muslims should not be allowed to run for president. There is no serious movement to amend the Constitution along these lines, but such sentiments express the distance Muslims have yet to travel to gain full cultural citizenship.

Islam is in fact an American religion, even if is not necessarily perceived as such (except for the fact that 20% of Americans believe that their president is a Muslim). While the bulk of the 6 million Muslims living in this country belong to post-1965 waves of immigration, a significant part of the Muslim community has been in America for more than a century.

In the case of African American Muslims, that history can be traced back to the days of slavery. Who can say that a mosque in Harlem is not American? If a project like Park51, or a mosque on Staten Island, were proposed by a figure like Muhammad Ali or Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, black Muslims who have come to be seen as iconic Americans, one can be sure there would still be opponents. One wonders whether they would use the same arguments.

Islam has become an integral part of the American religious landscape – particularly in New York City, where approximately 600,000 Muslims live and about 10% of public school children are Muslim. Muslim New Yorkers make up a true cross-section of the city – and nothing makes this more sharply, painfully clear than the list of Muslim New Yorkers killed on 9/11: an accountant, a police cadet, a waiter at Windows on the World, a commodities trader, a lab technician, a systems administrator at Cantor Fitzgerald, are among the dozens of Muslims who lost their lives. Sweeping statements about how "the 9/11 families" feel about Park51 treat Muslim New Yorkers, and their families, as non-existent.

## LIVING &amp; WORKING

Muslims have long lived and worked in the neighborhood around the World Trade Center. They were an integral part of "Little Syria," an immigrant community dating back to the 1880s that grew up around Washington Street. Today in the streets around the WTC site, one finds halal food vendors on every corner. Even the protestors at a recent rally against Park51/Cordoba House, carrying signs with the word "shariah" dripping blood (or the slogan "Stop shariah before it stops you"), were standing next to a street vendor – some enjoying shariah-compliant shish kabob.

Denying Muslim Americans the right to build a community center is a dangerous exercise in de-nationalization and the revocation of citizenship rights. It goes against the

idea of the inalienability of rights enshrined in our constitution. It is like attacking the brother of a serial killer and demanding that he must suffer because of the severity of the crimes committed by his brother. We might understand the emotions behind such a demand, but they are not a reliable guide to action.

## RIGHTS

No matter how small the breach, once the door to the sacrifice of a group's basic rights is opened, there is no doubt that soon it will appear normal to sacrifice more of those

community center in this location is tantamount to telling them that they are citizens but not equals. That which is negotiable cannot be a right. We negotiate something we tolerate – this much or that much, this close or that far. As soon as we make a right negotiable, we have already altered its status: it becomes a charity, a favor, no matter how compassionate and generous it may be. The seemingly generous offer made by Governor Paterson is one such move that violates both the universality of the law and the secular bona fides of the state.

This country, initially conceived (depending on whom you ask) as a deistic, secular or Protestant country, has successfully become a country for Jews and Catholics and is fast becoming one for Hindus and Muslims. Its streets are rich with the smells of Mexican and Chinese cooking and its inhabitants pray in all manner of houses of worship. If the Muslims who live and work here have a right to this city, why should they not have an equal share in its spiritual landscape?

It is unfortunate that in this controversy, Cordoba – a name that symbolizes peaceful coexistence – has been wrongly described as a symbol of conquest and triumphalism. Newt Gingrich, for example, insists that "Cordoba House" is a deliberately insulting term and "a symbol of Islamic conquest," because the city of Cordoba was at one time under Muslim rule.

This can only be described as a deliberate distortion of the meanings American Muslims associate with Cordoba. As they became increasingly active in interfaith dialogue, American Muslims have come to appreciate the importance of Abraham as a common interfaith ancestor and the multicultural legacy of Islamic Spain. They remember Andalusia, not as a place of conquest, but as a site of peaceful coexistence of the three Abrahamic religions.

The name Cordoba House refers to the peaceful experience of Western Islam and establishes continuity between Muslim culture and the Western world. The statements and actions of Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf and his wife, Daisy Khan, over a period of many years, make it clear that this is exactly why their project bears that name.

Ironically, if unsurprisingly, it is the most liberal-minded and self-effacing Muslim group that finds itself accused of being radical and triumphalist. If the most apologetic, most self-critical Muslim Americans, those who have consistently gone the extra mile in ecumenical and interfaith activity, are treated as a radical group supporting terrorism, what must Muslims in general think of their efforts at dialogue and their prospects for inclusion?

*Mucahit Bilici is an assistant professor of sociology at John Jay College. His research interests include cultural sociology, social theory and Islam in America.*



myneighbors.org

rights. Hannah Arendt, a past resident of this city, knew this fact well and wrote about it in the *Origins of Totalitarianism*. Commenting on statelessness (that is, the condition of being denied inalienable rights) she observed that, "once a number of stateless people were admitted to an otherwise normal country, statelessness spread like a contagious disease."

The weakest link in the chain of basic rights is often the treatment of a nation's most recent minorities. Today Islam, as a minority religion on the American cultural scene, appears to be the weakest link in the chain of religious freedom. If we treat it as normal to block the lawful construction of a mosque in one place, then we will have no basis to object to the blocking of mosque construction anywhere else.

This is not a distant, theoretical problem. It has already happened in New York, in the case of the Staten Island mosque. Recently a vacant Catholic convent on Staten Island was set to be sold to the Muslim community of Staten Island for use as a mosque. But once the so-called "Ground Zero mosque" controversy erupted, Archbishop Timothy Dolan, who had previously been happy to dispose of the property, backed away from the deal and decided not to sell.

Recognizing that they have a legal right and yet asking Muslims not to build their

## Cultural acceptance remains elusive

## UNIONS &amp; EDUCATION

# Defending public school teachers

By KAREN LEWIS

President, Chicago Teachers Union

In recent years the label of "education reform" has increasingly been used to justify attacks on public school teachers, blaming them for most of what is wrong with American education. Educators are presented as the problem, and reducing their rights and power is presented as the solution.

Karen Lewis, a high school chemistry teacher recently elected president of the Chicago Teachers Union, says this is a false picture, advanced to serve a particular political agenda. Below, in excerpts from a speech on June 12, Lewis lays out what she hopes to achieve as president of Local 1 of the American Federation of Teachers, in the hometown of US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

Today marks the beginning of the end of scapegoating educators for all the social ills that our children, families and schools struggle against every day. Today marks the beginning of a fight for true transparency in our educational policy – how to accurately measure learning and teaching, how to truly improve our schools, and how to evaluate the wisdom behind our spending priorities.

This election shows the unity of 30,000 educators standing strong to put business in its place – out of our schools. Corporate America sees K-12 public education as \$380 billion that, up until the last 10 or 15 years, they didn't have a sizeable piece of. This so-called school reform is not an education plan. It's a business plan and mayoral control of our schools, and our Board of Education is the linchpin of their operation.

Fifteen years ago, this city purposely began starving our lowest-income neighborhood schools of greatly needed resources and personnel. Class sizes rose, and schools were closed. Then, standardized tests, which in

this town alone are a \$60 million business, measured that slow death by starvation. These tests labeled our students, families and educators failures because standardized tests reveal more about a student's ZIP code than a student's academic growth. And that, in turn – that perceived school failure – fed parent demand for charters, turnarounds and contract schools. People thought it must be true, and it must be the *teachers'* fault, because they read about it every week in the papers. And our union that has been controlled by the same faction for 37 of 40 years didn't point out this simple reality: what drives so-called school reform is a singular focus on profit. Profit, not teaching, not learning. Profit.

## EMPOWER EDUCATORS

In Chicago, we've seen Chicago Public Schools close 70 neighborhood schools and open 70 charters that do no better. Six thousand Chicago Teachers Union members have lost their livelihoods, their jobs, their

dignity, in the process. Countless children have lost their friends, and families have lost their schools that, for most, are a source of pride, tradition and safety.

Of course, just as our city's social conditions must improve, many of our schools must improve, too. But we have hundreds of thriving schools filled with dedicated, loving, and professional educators and administrators who are wise enough to empower teachers to lead.

Outside of the classroom, we need society to recommit to bettering *all* communities. We also need our parents to recommit to the education of their children. But inside the classroom, the only people who can improve our schools are professional educators. Corporate heads and politicians do not have a clue about teaching and learning. They have never sat one minute on this side of a teacher's desk. But they're the ones calling the shots and we're supposed to accept it as "reform."

As a union of 30,000 united educators, we have a lot of work to do...and we know we can't do it alone. We need to work together and rethink education policy here in Chicago. I am asking that Mayor Daley and Mr. Huberman [CEO of Chicago Public Schools] line up their allies in Springfield, and we'll line up ours, to stop this annual ritual of "crisis budgeting." Once and for all we need to change how Illinois funds its schools – 60% from property taxes and 30% from the state. We need to reverse that, flip it on its head, so *all* children, no matter the value of their family's home,

have equal access to quality education....

Now, back home here in Chicago, we need to put *all* the financial details on the table, because teachers got pink slips this week – and yet Chicagoans have not seen a clear, transparent and detailed Chicago Public Schools budget.... It's time for the Board to give citizens all the specifics – how Chicago Public Schools spends our money, on what and to whom.... Chicagoans need to know how charters spend their taxpayer dollars because, to date, we have not seen one charter school's financials. Not one.

[We need] budget transparency and a clear read on how social ills outside the schools impact our classrooms on the inside. Then we can start to change the conversation.

## NO 'SILVER BULLET'

Not what or who to cut, but how to save money and lower, yes lower, classroom sizes. Not whether yet another one-size-fits-all policy – the latest silver bullet – will work, but how each school can rebuild itself into a responsive learning environment. And certainly it is not whether open access for *all* children to high-quality public education is a luxury society simply cannot afford, but rather that true public education – great schools with great teachers – is the most important civil rights battle of our generation.

And we will change that conversation because the Chicago Teachers Union is now unified. Our teachers and paraprofessionals are poised to reclaim the power of our 30,000 members and protect what we love – teaching and learning in publicly-funded public schools.

## New leader targets the real problems

## POEMS

# Three by Nicole Cooley

## Tear Outs

Found poem, signs stuck in the dirt along Carrollton Avenue

Tree Service. Wood Preservation. Flood Car Repair.  
Debris and Trash Removing.  
Stump Removal. Tree Removal. Mold Removal.

Trailer Homes Delivered.  
Demolition 4 Less. House Gutting.  
Dear Santa, All We Want for Christmas is Gas.

New Orleans: One Block at a Time.

## Breach

[Origin: bef 1000; ME *breche*, OE *broec* breaking]

Like a mouth packed shut, the levee wants to open *the act or a result of breaking; break or rupture* it desires the water's fluorescence, the water's depth, the water's dirt *an infraction* and so the water, no pale lace collar fashioned of delicate mud, no mistress of careful spilling, the water in a storm surge cracks the floodwall apart *gap made in a wall, fortification, line of soldiers* sound of a gun shot and shot, sound of a bomb blast *a rift, a fissure, a severance of friendly relations* then silence as water erases, as water fills streets and takes everything with it: a hole of 200 feet *the breaking of waves, the dashing of surf* later you look on the city map *a violation, as of a law, trust, faith or promise* and it will be marked with a small red star like a bitter lipsticked kiss.

## Dear City

For days the water holds on, will not release the city

\*

and from up here I can't hold on to you, my city,

\*

can't reach my parents who refused to leave the city.

\*

In school we were taught: shaped like a bowl this city

\*

can't withstand the weight of too much water, city

\*

braced by dirt levees, all the floodwalls cracking. City

\*

where I no longer live, where I am locked out, city

\*

I lived in for so long, that has since lived in me, city

\*

I must now watch on this computer screen, late-summer city –

\*

"Watch the video of the worsening saturation of the city."

\*

"Watch the video account of unanswered screams." City

\*

fringed by a river, by a wide lake that spills over the city,

\*

Oh, pale green city of my imagination. Now I can't carry you, city,

\*

can't shutter you tight within my body to stop the repeating

\*

of our jump rope rhyme: Lost a city. Lost a city. Lost a city. Lost

*Raised in New Orleans, Nicole Cooley is professor of English at Queens College, director of its MFA program in creative writing and literary translation, and Clarion's new poetry editor. These poems are from Breach, a collection published in 2010. Her fourth book of poems, Milk Dress, will be published this November.*

## PRIVATIZATION

## PHEEIA robs us all

By STEVE LONDON  
PSC First Vice President

A friend complained to me recently about the attacks on universities in France, “We know something nasty is always around the corner, but we are still surprised at how crass it is.” Governor David Paterson’s proposed Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act (PHEEIA) fits both sides of this description.

Enactment of PHEEIA or its successor proposals would mean reduced state support and resources for public higher education. It would privatize CUNY and SUNY financing – making them more dependent on tuition – while radically changing CUNY’s mission. That’s the nasty part. The crass part is that these changes have little to do with funding higher education, and more to do with real estate deals and local economic development.

PHEEIA was mainly designed with SUNY, not CUNY, in mind – but the impact on CUNY would be severe. In the effort to muscle PHEEIA through the Legislature as part of this year’s difficult budget negotiations, several versions of PHEEIA were offered and all were defeated (see p. 3) – but PHEEIA’s backers have made it clear that they will try again.

If passed, PHEEIA’s effects on CUNY would be twofold. Its most recent version would give CUNY trustees the authority to set annual tuition increases of up to 4%. The governor’s original proposal would also have given them authority to establish different tuition rates for different majors and programs and would have allowed CUNY to set differential tuition rates by campus.

Allowing trustees such broad discretion over tuition will inevitably lead to reduced state support, while the burden of funding CUNY shifts more and more onto the backs of its students. The experience of other states is instructive: when public trustees can decide on tuition hikes, legislators will cut public funding more deeply. Over the last two years, according to a New York Public Interest Group study, public higher education funding declined 34 times faster in states that allow public universities to raise their own tuition, compared with others.

## SHRINKING ACCESS

Annual tuition hikes and differential tuition by major and campus would reduce access to college for CUNY’s poor and middle-income students. The well-intentioned claims that financial aid will protect them are not credible, given that New York’s Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) does not give adequate support to large numbers of CUNY students today. This is especially true for part-time students and financially independent students without dependents. Many CUNY students can barely afford college as it is; for them, PHEEIA would unleash changes that may make it impossible to continue in college.

In the very year when Gov. Paterson fought tooth and nail to win passage of PHEEIA, he also fought for – and won – deep cuts to TAP. If TAP is really to mitigate the financial difficulties of our students, increasing CUNY and SUNY tuition would make TAP an extremely costly program to maintain.

Differential tuition by major would have particularly negative effects on college access. The majors that charge higher tuition

would likely be those that offer the highest salaries in subsequent employment. Since poorer students would be less able to afford entry to these high-earning fields, existing inequalities would be reinforced. If it costs more to major in engineering, fewer low-income students will become engineers. Differential tuition would move CUNY away from its role as a gateway of opportunity, and toward acting as an “engine of inequality.”

## WRONG DIRECTION

PHEEIA does not contemplate increases in state funding, now or in the future. It does not even include a maintenance of effort provision on state funding, which would at least protect against deep cuts. Quite the contrary: the governor’s PHEEIA proposal has been accompanied by major cuts in funding to both the CUNY and SUNY operating budgets and significant reductions in TAP support. The basic premises of PHEEIA also run counter to the CUNY administration’s “CUNY Compact” strategy, which at least called for increases in state support as tuition was raised. The Spitzer Administration’s commission on public higher education concluded that a significant increase in state funding was long overdue. In contrast, PHEEIA would take increased state support off the table. It would move New York in the wrong direction.

Given the current recession and state fiscal crisis, it is understandable that some are pessimistic about the prospect that the State will ever adequately fund CUNY. They may see the tuition increases in the PHEEIA legislation as a lifeline to underfunded colleges and programs. But, in the past, this lifeline has proved to be ephemeral.

The history of tuition increases at CUNY has been clear. Every time tuition goes up, the State withdraws funds. Often, the net result has been to leave CUNY with less revenue overall. The record shows that increasing tuition is not a solution to CUNY’s underfunding. The solution is increased state funding, and it is achievable. In the period before the onset of the recession, we had begun to make progress in increasing CUNY’s state and city support. These gains were achieved by persistently making our case, organizing, and increasing our political presence.

As we assess how PHEEIA would affect CUNY, we must remember that it was not mainly designed with CUNY in mind. Indeed, PHEEIA’s economic development proposals, the public-private partnership and funding provisions, would not explicitly apply to CUNY. If PHEEIA is enacted, however, it will set New York State policy toward public higher education for a generation.

The main elements of PHEEIA are not



CUNY will pay a high price if PHEEIA passes.

new. Legislative proposals for “rational” and differential tuition, public-private partnerships, and procurement reform have been kicking around the Legislature for years. PHEEIA packaged these elements together into a complex set of proposals geared toward funding public-private partnerships. University at Buffalo President John Simpson is promoting PHEEIA as an anchor for the economic redevelopment of Buffalo and western New York State. SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher has tried to sell the Act as a boon for statewide economic development. But the real-world economic development impact of PHEEIA is unlikely to match the sales pitch. And PHEEIA may well fail to produce significant revenue for SUNY’s educational mission.

## PRIVATE INTEREST

The heart of PHEEIA is a public authority-like mechanism for funding public-private partnerships. Tuition increases and the leasing of state-owned property are supposed to provide partial funding for university capital projects and public-private partnership start-ups, which in theory would also reduce the need for state investment in economic development. SUNY-affiliated organizations (like the SUNY Research Foundation, college research foundations, and auxiliary services corporations) would be able to use the State

Dormitory Authority and other development authorities to raise funds for capital projects and partnerships. The university is supposed to benefit from this arrangement in two ways: increased revenue from tuition dollars and new revenue streams from the public-private partnerships, thus relieving the state of its obligation to increase funding for public higher education.

Sound too good to be true? That’s because it is. PHEEIA is a bad policy model for funding public higher education, and would fail as a solution to the funding crisis facing SUNY and CUNY.

What do such public authorities tend to look like in the real world of New York politics? Think of the Metropolitan Transit Corporation with constant fare hikes, the scandal-ridden Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation, or the many other unaccountable authorities in New York State rife with inefficiencies and corruption. PHEEIA would allow SUNY administrators to lease land to private corporations, and establish public-private partnerships while serving on the boards of the new corporations. There is little in the legislation to provide checks on the possible sweetheart deals such an arrangement encourages. Campus services, now provided by public entities employing public workers, could be contracted out to private firms with a non-unionized, private workforce.

Currently, SUNY does have a number of public-private partnerships. Whatever their economic utility, there is little to no evidence that they generate significant revenues for the university’s educational operating budget. In fact, reports from our colleagues in United University Professions indicate that these entities are a drain on SUNY’s educational resources.

## GOLD RUSH

Whatever the merits of PHEEIA as an economic development strategy, the projects it seeks to emulate have not been effective as mechanisms for funding SUNY.

So what is driving proponents of PHEEIA to keep pressing for its passage? One answer is that SUNY has a lot of land to lease or sell. Real estate developers and private businesses see gold there. Businesses that lease state-owned land and enter into public-private partnerships would also benefit by reducing their tax burden. While such projects might be good for the bottom lines of these businesses, they appear likely to fail as revenue sources for SUNY’s educational mission.

For faculty, staff and students, the bottom line is that PHEEIA is a bad deal for public higher education.

To be politically effective, we need to be united as a community and clear about our objectives. We need to build support for a policy framework that increases state funding for public higher education. We can succeed in that task, if we are consistent and persistent. Adopting PHEEIA would be a step backwards for New York State, and we and our students cannot afford that mistake.

## Tuition hikes lead to less state aid.

## Clarion SEPTEMBER 2010

Newspaper of the Professional Staff Congress/City University of New York, collective bargaining representative of the CUNY instructional staff. Vol. 39, No. 5. PSC/CUNY is affiliated with the American Association of University Professors, National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers (Local 2334), AFL-CIO, the New York City Central Labor Council, and New York State United Teachers. Published by PSC/CUNY, 61 Broadway, 15th floor, New York, NY 10006. Telephone: (212) 354-1252. Website: www.psc-cuny.org. E-mail: phogness@psccmail.org. All opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the PSC.

**PSC OFFICERS:** Barbara Bowen, President; Steven London, First Vice President; Arthurine DeSola, Secretary; Michael Fabricant, Treasurer; George Brandon, Jonathan Buchsbaum, Carl Lindskoog, Nikki McDaniel, Costas Panayotakis, University-Wide Officers; Robert Cermele, Vice President, Senior Colleges; Kathleen Barker, Diane Menna, Alex Vitale, Senior College Officers; Anne Friedman, Vice President, Community Colleges; Lorraine Cohen, Penny Lewis, Felipe Pimental, Community College Officers; Iris DeLuro, Vice President, Cross Campus Units; Donna Veronica Gill, Steven Trimboli, Andrea Ades Vasquez, Cross Campus Officers; Marcia Newfield, Vice President, Part-Time Personnel; Michael Batson, Susan DiRaimo, Steve Weisblatt, Part-Time Personnel Officers; Bill Freidheim, Eileen Moran, Retiree Officers; Irwin H. Polishook, President Emeritus; Peter I. Hoberman, Vice President Emeritus, Cross Campus Units

**STAFF:** Deborah Bell, Executive Director; Naomi Zauderer, Associate Executive Director; Faye H. Alladin, Coordinator, Financial Services; Debra L. Bergen, Director, Contract Administration & University-wide Grievance Officer; Moriah Berger, Assistant to the President; Barbara Gabriel, Coordinator, Office Services and Human Resources; Rob Murray, Director of Organizing; Kate Pfordresher, Director, Research & Public Policy; Dania Rajendra, Coordinator, Communications; Diana Rosato, Coordinator, Membership Department; Clarissa Gilbert Weiss, Director, Pension and Welfare Benefits; Carol Wright, Research Associate, Project on CUNY & Race; Peter Zwiebach, Director of Legal Affairs.

Editor: Peter Hogness / Associate Editor: John Tarleton / Designer: Margarita Aguilar / Proofreader: Teri Durrr

© 2010 Professional Staff Congress/CUNY



## 15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

### Be sure to vote on Sept. 14

The PSC has endorsed six solid, progressive candidates who will be on the ballot in New York's September 14 Democratic primary. (See p. 7 for details.) Please consider giving them your vote. They are: Eric Schneiderman for State Attorney General, Bill Perkins (Senate District 30 – Manhattan), Velmanette Montgomery (Senate District 18 – Brooklyn), Gustavo Rivera

(Senate District 33 – Bronx), Gregg Lundahl (Assembly District 73 – Manhattan) and Francisco Moya (Assembly District 39 – Queens). Remember, every vote counts – especially in party primaries, where turnout is often low. Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. To contribute to PSC/CUNY COPE, the political action arm of the PSC, go to [psc-politicalaction.org/VoteCope.htm](http://psc-politicalaction.org/VoteCope.htm).

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY  
61 Broadway, 15th Floor  
New York, New York 10006

Return Service Requested

NonProfit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
New York, N.Y.  
Permit No. 8049

# Grad Center HEO wins a Guggenheim

By JOHN TARLETON

## Exploring Civil War imagery

When Joshua Brown of the Graduate Center and two other City University faculty members received Guggenheim Fellowships in April, CUNY issued a press release celebrating the achievements of the “three CUNY professors.” However, it did not mention that one of those professors – Brown – is a Higher Education Officer and an adjunct.

Brown is executive director of the American Social History Project (ASHP), based at the CUNY Graduate Center. He received his bachelor's degree from City College in 1975 and earned a PhD in American history from Columbia in 1993.

### ART MEETS ACADEMIA

A talented artist who designed buttons and posters for the antiwar movement in the late 1960s and early '70s, Brown covered much of the cost of his education through his work as a fabric designer in the Garment Center and with freelance mural painting. (More recent artwork and cartoons can be seen at [www.joshibrownnyc.com](http://www.joshibrownnyc.com))

When Brown landed at the American Social History Project at its inception in 1981, he found what he needed: a place where he could fuse his artistic and academic lives.

ASHP, created by historians Stephen Brier and the late Herbert Gutman, was launched with the goal of creating a multimedia curriculum on the history of working people and it has been a spectacular success. Its signature project, *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History*, is in its third edition; it includes a two-volume college-level textbook and a series of ten half-hour video/DVD documentaries with accompanying viewer guides. ASHP has also produced a number of websites, and in the 1990s developed the first CD-ROMs used for teaching US history.

Drawing from the best scholarship on ordinary Americans, ASHP's print, documentary, and multimedia projects use a panoply of voices from letters, diaries, au-

tobiographies, poems, songs, journalism, fiction, official testimonies, oral histories, and other historical documents to teach US history. It also leads professional development programs for middle school and high school teachers, connecting them with the latest scholarship while also providing primary materials, classroom activities and syllabi that can be downloaded.

“It's not about just saying, ‘you should be teaching these facts and figures.’ We provide primary text and visual evidence that we hope will assist teachers in effectively and interestingly teaching the past,” said Brown. ASHP's work is critical, he added, because teachers have so little time to keep up with the scholarship that has vastly changed our understanding of US history.

### VISUALIZING HISTORY

As underscored by Brown's Guggenheim award, scholarly work at CUNY is not limited to tenure-track faculty. “The work I and my colleagues have done in ASHP is intellectual work, it's research work,

it's analytical,” he observed. Brown, who is author of *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America*, has won recognition as an expert on 19th century US history and visual media. ASHP's emphasis on using visual evidence to teach and learn about the US past is grounded in one of the developing areas of US history scholarship.

Brown's Guggenheim, supplemented by a fellowship from CUNY, will allow him to take half a year away from his regular responsibilities and focus on researching and writing his latest book, *The Divided Eye: Studies in the Visual Culture of the American Civil War*. He will be looking at the different means by which a newly emerging pictorial industry told the story of America's bloodiest conflict. It will also contrast the themes that were emphasized in the North and the South, as well as overseas, where the progress of the war was followed closely.

Most historians have tended to privilege photography – which was extremely limited in what it could

show at that time – when looking for visual evidence from the Civil War era. Brown plans to examine a plethora of other visual sources: wood engravings in weekly pictorial newspapers, cartoons, posters, individually published prints, money, sheet music covers and illustrated envelopes, which were quite popular at the time.

“This isn't an art history of the Civil War. It is about the broader public visual culture that in many ways defined the war,” Brown said. The impact of such a large body of evidence cannot be accurately understood, he says, when viewed “with a type of nostalgia and simplicity that, to a great extent, has been how the visual medium of the war has been treated.”

One example Brown cites suggests how a closer look at the visual evidence can deepen our understanding of an era. He notes that depictions of African Americans changed significantly during the course of the Civil War and early Reconstruction – before racist forces extinguished the dream of equality for another 100 years, and public images of African Americans regressed back into crude caricature.

### LOOKING AHEAD

“If there is a lesson we can learn from this, it's that you can gain and lose,” Brown said. “The fact that there were victories that were subsequently lost in history should caution us that various recent vic-

tories and social policy changes could also be lost.”

When Brown finishes his Guggenheim, he will return to a full load of responsibilities that includes teaching graduate level seminars as an adjunct professor and overseeing dissertations. He is also serving along with ASHP colleagues as a historical adviser to WNET Channel 13 in New York on a five-part series of online history games called “Mission US,” which explore key moments in US history.

In the first installment of these games, supported by a major Corporation for Public Broadcasting grant, students take on the role of a young printer's apprentice living in Boston in 1770 at the onset of the American Revolution. They explore the city's turbulent social and political landscape, including the Boston Massacre, while making difficult choices about how their character should respond to different situations. Other segments will focus on the experience of slavery and abolition in the 1850s, and the Progressive era in the city at the turn of the century.

“Getting students to appreciate history is not just about getting them to memorize facts and dates,” says Brown. “It's also about promoting critical thinking and how to evaluate evidence. We want students to challenge and consider information they encounter, not to accept it as given and incontestable.”

**Beyond nostalgia: a look at visual culture**

Self-portrait by Josh Brown



## LABOR IN BRIEF

### Domestic workers win rights

New York State's domestic workers now have a Bill of Rights that guarantees a 40-hour workweek, at least one day off per week, and at least three days off with full pay per year. Gov. David Paterson signed the law into effect Aug. 31, capping a six-year campaign by the Domestic Workers Union,

which advocates for an estimated 270,000 nannies, housekeepers and caregivers statewide.

Meanwhile, efforts to win basic rights for the state's farmworkers have yet to bear fruit. In early August the State Senate voted 31-28 against a bill that would have required time-and-a-half wages and 24 consecutive hours of rest each week. The measure would have also extended collective-bargaining rights to workers on farms with gross revenues of more than \$650,000 per year.