**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.

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**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.

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**Changes to PSC-CUNY Awards**

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.

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**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An overhaul of CUNY & SUNY funding, in which more dependence on tuition would lead to cuts in public aid, was withdrawn.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.

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**Muslim Americans & social equality**

Full cultural citizenship remains elusive.

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**York College**

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**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An overhaul of CUNY & SUNY funding, in which more dependence on tuition would lead to cuts in public aid, was withdrawn.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.
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 Fahricich, VP for Cross Campus Units Iris DeLatre, VP for Senior Colleges Rob Cermola, VP for Community Colleges Anne Friedman, VP for Part-Time Personnel Marcia Newfield, University-wide Personnel Officer Michael Batson, 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 those 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, 25-member EC will vote on in October and then bring to the Delegate Assembly for approval later this fall. Under the PSC Constitution, the RC and the Delegate Assembly 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, CUNY Retiree and Hunter Campus Schools chapters, plus a meeting of the Doctoral Students' Council. (Meetings at the ROCs 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 Labor and Urban Studies.

"Important issues being analyzed include the impact on workloads 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 new contract to accomplish some improvements in CUNY's first paid parental leave fund and winning the Welfare Fund and winning some improvements in the adjunct system — paid office hours, continuation of health insurance and 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.

By JOHNNY TARLETON

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 on-line at 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, 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 series of challenges as both the City and the State have projected budget deficits. But believe we can continue to make progress, and that we will continue to have more problems at CUNY that cannot wait."

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**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 institutions. In Canada and ascertaining the welfare of academic publication and the actual administration's seeming ignorance of the rights of academic publication and the actual administration's seeming ignorance of the rights of

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 operated by a community college, I can see just how impoverished CUNY was.

The most obvious aspect of scarcity at BMCC is the extreme overwork of the faculty. As a full-time faculty member knows, the inability to take reassigned time in a large chunk, prevents many from doing research without sacrifices of sleep or time at all. 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 the real world in which they work as scholars and teachers. The union's capacity for collective action makes it an excellent vehicle for challenging the administration's lack of understanding. I eagerly look forward to reading about your struggles in Clarion.

Rebecca Hill
Keensaw State University
Keensaw, Georgia

**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.

**COMMITTEE OF 500**

**Clarion | September 2010**

**NEWS & LETTERS**
**State cuts for CUNY**

*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 was supported by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, SUNY and CUNY chancellors, and other powerful figures. It would have given SUNY and CUNY trustees to raise tuition and 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 result was gridlock, and an escalating war of nerves. Stachowski's vehement support for PHEEIA made it clear they are not giving up — and with Andrew Cuomo among those favoring the measure, a return to the failed budget battle was likely. 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.”
York grad jumps into Haiti quake relief

By JOHN TARLETON

Gina Fleurantin graduated from York College in 2009 with a degree in business administration and hopes of finding work in the non-profit sector. Five weeks later, she returned to the country after the 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. She also provided individual counseling to set 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 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 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.”

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, she said. “I was mainly involved in 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 emphasized 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 plans 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. “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 a hall at a benefit concert 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 money to Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières). With a presence in Haiti for more than 20 years, the organization has responded to both the immediate crisis and the longer-term needs of the country’s health systems. PSC Executive Council had approved contributions to MSF and Partners in Health, another long-time health care presence in Haiti, immediately after the earthquake.
Process remains under faculty control

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 Phillipp wrote in an August 24 message to UFS members.

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.”

CUNY administration to cooperate in evaluating the overall effectiveness of the pilot program. The new procedures eliminate a number of administrative hurdles from the application review process. There will be only one deadline per year (January 15) and only one round of grants awarded. Few outside reviewers will be needed. The process of grant review for Traditional A and B Awards will focus on the academic judgment of panel members, made up of CUNY faculty who will meet to consider applications over a period of a few days. Enhanced Award applications will be reviewed in writing by two experts selected by the panel chairs, from within or outside CUNY.

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 by 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/eriprog.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 CUNY’s website (at tinyurl.com/CUNYonERI).

Over the summer there were some changes in application deadlines 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@pscmail.org.

By Peter Hogan

PSC-CUNY Awards expanded

After prolonged negotiations, the PSC and CUNY administration 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 in the next few days.

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 addition to the current program’s $250,000 to $350,000 annual budget.

The agreement maintains the principle that both sides greeted as a success: “The agreement streamlines the process.”

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“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 14. 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 be able to find 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 made for others. Faculty willing to work a few hours a year, a said, can make this program successful.

The most recent PSC-CUNY announcement is online at 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.
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, he considered 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 free-ways 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.

EUROKA 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 and applied sciences 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 Retano, coordinator of LaGuardia’s urban studies program, says LaGuardia’s requirement that all students take an urban studies class is often an eye-opening experience for students, including those who have had 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 Retano, 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 fields, including sociology, history, literature, health sciences and business. Urban studies classes are involving-intensive and incorporate e-portfolios; all include out-of-classroom experiences that use the city as a learning laboratory.

“My experience at LaGuardia,” says Retano, a physical therapist, and used her second language. “I think it’s the perfect marriage of civic awareness and technology, the city’s immigrant history, and economic trends shaping its future. The architects of CUNY’s proposed new community college classroom to the city’s pio- neering urban studies requirement has not gone unnoticed by CUNY, which requires students in the community colleges to be able to integrate many learning strategies, including maps, photos, letters, documents and advertisements from the area.

“They learn how to become scholars and develop their own voice,” Hickman says. “Just because someone 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 be- come civically active. She requires them to attend at least one community board meeting and write a paper about what they observed, a student’s interest in a community board sometimes endures. “I sometimes get 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 their lives. One became a physical therapist, and used her knowledge of zoning and how to evaluate a building 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.

Retano says LaGuardia’s urban studies classes succeed in part be- cause they integrate so many different learning strategies, which increases the chances of teaching more students more of the time. The faculty’s enthusiasm for teach- ing urban studies courses also af- fects students, she added.

“Everyone is following every- thing they are reading. They are building a personal representation of the city and so should the curriculum.”

NEWS

New York City is their classroom

Urban studies inspires LaGuardia students

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.

By JOHN TARLETON

When Jonathan Chavez came to LaGuardia in the Fall of 2008, he thought he had settled on a career path. Having dropped out of Mon- roe College, he considered a business administration major, he was ready to pursue a career in electrical engineering.

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NEWS

New York City is their classroom

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

“The People need a 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.eric Schneiderman.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) 36. A strong supporter of CUNY, Perkins has been a vocal advocate for improving public schools and against privatizing public education through expanding charter 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 SD 18. 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 SD 35. 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.

**FRANCISCO MOYA** for State Assembly in Queens’ AD 39. 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.”

Schneiderman backed for AG

The PSC works with other locals within New York State United Teachers (NYST), UFT and the NYSUT endorsements for State and federal office. This year NYSUT endorsed Thomas DiNapoli for re-election 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 positive endorsements from unions, issuing challenges in the current campaign.

There were many reasons why Cuomo commanded scant support among NY- SUT 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 not to 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 Krugier was not endorsed because he has kept the PSC-backed Adjunct Unemployment Insurance Bill bottled up in the Finance Committee, which chairs.

Schneiderman for AG

We believe if the adjunct unemployment bill goes to the floor we will have a strong bill, 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 encouraged to take a stand on key votes, their public advocacy for NYSUT’s issues, and their responsive- ness 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 passionate at Medgar Evers College. Rating officeholders at midterm “will shine a light on who’s fighting 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.

The October 2 protest has been endorsed by both the AFL-CIO and Change to Win labor federations, as well as with support from political and faith-based groups. The PSC Executive Council endorsed the event earlier this week. Attendees will travel to Washington, DC together on union buses and trains. Billings 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.

“Their 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 somet ime movement.”

GET ON THE BUS

The NAACP and AFL-CIO have expressed an intent to continue the One Nation Working Together work for the long-term, but their focus is now on getting people to Washington October 2, and to the polls in November. For those who wish to join, see onenationworkingtogether.org. To reserve a seat on a PSC bus to Washington on October 2, e-mail youngpeople@psc-union.org or call Patri- cia Young at 212-354-1252.
### ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion. We express no opinion on the effectiveness of Professional Staff Congress/CUNY’s internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we express no opinion on the effectiveness of the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY’s internal control over financial reporting.

### LEASE COMMITMENTS

PSC/CUNY rents space for its administrative offices. The lease includes provisions for escalations and utility charges. The lease expires June 30, 2022. Rent expense for the year ended August 31, 2009 was $104,464.

### NOTE 5 – PENSION PLANS

CUPN provides collective bargaining and other union-related services to its members. Expenses are charged to the Union activities account. CUPN has not made any contributions to the Union activities account during the year.

### NOTE 6 – FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

PSC/CUNY invests in various securities. Investments are recorded at cost for financial statement purposes, in accordance with the methods described above. Actual results could differ from those estimated.

### NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

**Basis of Accounting**

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these statements.

**Applicability of Accounting Standards**

The following table sets forth, by level, within the fair value hierarchy, the assets at fair value of PSC/CUNY as of August 31, 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset Category</th>
<th>Fair Value Hierarchy</th>
<th>Total Fair Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>$1,017,146</td>
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**Significant Assumptions**

The following table summarizes the benefit obligations and plan assets of the retiree health care plan as of August 31, 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year End</th>
<th>Accumulated Retiree Health Care Benefit Obligation</th>
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<td>0.15</td>
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<td>2014</td>
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**Contributions and Distribution Costs**

The following information, which reflects contributions expected to be paid in future years, is expected to be paid as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Contributions</th>
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By MUCAHI 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 deny that other citizens in their country have 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 characteristically modest of the protestors. While at times expressed in extreme and 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 we [Americans, victims] or them [terrorists]?” And answers with a resonating, “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 our law enforcement be called 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 writing 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 it 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, was 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 & 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 surrounding 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’s too late”), were standing next to a street vendor – some enjoying Shariah-compliant shish kabob.

Denying Muslims the rights 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 centers 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 democracy with a democratic 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 cuisine 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. New 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 sought to appreciate the importance of Abraham as a common interfaith ancestor and the mutual respect (and difference) that 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 American Muslims, those who have consistently gone the extra mile in ecumenical and interfaith efforts, 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.
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 16 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 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.

EMPPOWER 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

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 hold on to you, my city,
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something nasty is always
around the corner, but we are
still surprised at how crude 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 sup-
port and resources for public higher educa-
tion. It would privatize CUNY and SUNY
financing and remaking them more dependent
on tuition—which radically changes the
way they do business. It would give CUNY
trustees the authority to establish dif-
f erent tuition rates for different majors and
programs and would have allowed CUNY to
set differential tuition rates by campus.
Allowing such broad discretion over tuition will
eventually lead to reduced state support, while the burden of funding
CUNY shifts more and more onto the backs of its students. Given the experience of other states is instructive: when public trustees can
decide on tuition hikes, legislators will cut
out expenditures on educational programs.
Inevitably, such broad discretion over tuition will inevitably lead to reduced
state support, while the burden of funding
costs more to major in engineering, fewer
opportunities would be reinforced. If it
were to go into effect, State University of
New York (SUNY) would find itself in the
wrong direction.
Given the current recession and state fis-
cal 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 leg-
lislation as a lifeline to underfunded colleges and
programs. But, in the past, this lifetime
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
resources. The record shows that in-
creasing 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
supporting our students and we and our students cannot afford that
continued cutoff. In CUNY, giving up
rarefied academic opportunities is not
the only cost. Annual tuition hikes and differen-
tial tuition by major and campus would reduce access to
college for CUNY's poor and middle-income
students. The majors that charge higher
would likely be those that offer the highest
salaries to their students. Since poor
students would be less able to afford
tuition to these high-earning fields, exist-
ing inequalities would be reinforced. If it
were to go into effect, State University of
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has proved to be ephemeral.

OPERATION PRIVATIZATION

By STEVE LONDON

PSC First Vice President

As we assess how PHEEIA would af-
flect CUNY, we must remember that it was
time the PSC moved a proposal for a
corporations (not-for-profits and businesses)
corresponding to the CUNY and SUNY op-
portunities, and resources for public higher
education that are a drain on SUNY's educa-
tional resources.

Gold Rush

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

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 SUNY, and we and our
students cannot afford that mistake.

Tuition hikes lead to less state aid.

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Grad Center HEO wins a Guggenheim

Exploring Civil War imagery

By JOHN TARLETON

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.joshuabrown.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 Telman, has won recognition as an exceptional archive. “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 scholarly arm of that has vastly changed our understanding of the Civil War. It is about the broader public visual culture that in many ways defined the Civil War. It is about 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 equal rights for African Americans and public images of African Americans re- gressed 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 seminars as an adjunct professor and over-seeing dissertations. He is also serving along with ASHP colleagues as a his- torical adviser to WNET Channel 13 in New York on a five-part series of online history games called “Mis-sion US,” which explore key mo-
ments 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 land-
scape, including the Boston Massa-
crre, while making difficult choices about how their character should respond to different situations. Other segments will focus on the ex-
perience 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 evalu-
ate evidence. We want students to challenge and consider information they encounter, not to accept it as given and incontestable.”

LABOR IN BRIEF

Domestic workers win rights

New York State’s domestic work-
ers 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 $850,000 per year.

Beyond nostalgia: a look at visual culture

Brown’s Guggenheim, supple-
mented 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 meanings by which a newly emerging pictorial industry told the story of America’s bloodiest conflict. It will also con-
trast the themes that were empha-
sized 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, individ-
ually published prints, money, sheet music covers and illus-
trated 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 nostal-
gia and simplicity that, to a great extent, has been how the visual me-
dium of the war has been treated.”

One example Brown cites sug-
gest how a closer look at the visual evidence can deepen our un-
derstanding 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 equal rights for African Americans and public images of African Americans re- gressed back into crude caricature.

“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 evalu-
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15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

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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.