

# Clarion

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



APRIL 2004



**SOLIDARITY WITH PSC**

## SUPPORT FOR STRONG CONTRACT

Above, the PSC's contract campaign gets a boost from the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) in a March 26 protest in Manhattan. Thousands of teachers from across New York state marched in support of the PSC and other NYC education unions currently in contract talks. In a range of actions during CUNY Week, March 15-19, PSC members said that they will not accept a minimal, bare-bones offer from management. The union is demanding a strong contract that restores and enhances Welfare Fund benefits and continues the improvements in University life begun in the last agreement.

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**LAGUARDIA**

### "Union Yes!" say RF workers

By a huge margin, PSC wins second RF Election.

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### JUNIOR FACULTY

#### New faculty discuss tenure & the contract

Over 200 junior faculty came to a PSC junior faculty workshop to learn about the tenure process and getting active with the union.

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### BUDGET

#### Union helps stop mid-year City cuts

PSC members mobilized to urge the City Council to restore Mayor Bloomberg's cuts to the community college budget.

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### EQUITY

#### Working in the "shadow university"

Thousands work at CUNY in jobs that do not have fair pay or benefits. A closer look at the Research Foundation, continuing education teachers and adjuncts.

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# Tenure proposal stalls in Albany

By PETER HOGNESS

## No consensus on 7-year plan

CUNY management's proposal to extend the time to tenure to seven years has been a topic of discussion throughout the University – but by April the plan had moved no closer to becoming a reality. The proposal, first announced at the start of this semester, still lacks a legislative sponsor in Albany.

"The message PSC members got from legislators, in two recent lobbying trips, was that extension of the tenure clock was D.O.A. unless the chancellor and the PSC came forward with a consensus proposal," Steve London, PSC first vice president, told a March 16 meeting on the subject. London said the PSC

wants "a constructive dialogue with CUNY management about how we can truly support untenured faculty and further their success as teachers, researchers and productive members of the CUNY community."

### PSC wants reduced teaching load.

The March 16 discussion was organized by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, who billed it as a chance "to help shape implementation" of the still-hypothetical change.

Of the 48 people who spoke, half came from two colleges, Baruch and Hunter. Two-thirds of the speakers argued for a seven-year clock; most supporters came from Baruch's business school or science and engi-

neering departments at Hunter and CCNY. There were no speakers from seven of CUNY's 17 colleges, and no one from the community colleges spoke in favor of the proposal.

"Extending the tenure clock is fundamental for moving City University into a community of national research universities," said Carroll Serron, a professor at Baruch's School of Public Affairs. She said that the current five-year clock is "a strong disincentive" to young academics considering a job offer from CUNY, who need more time to conduct and publish research.

Nancy Romer, professor of psychology at Brooklyn, said that if

CUNY wants to make the conditions for new faculty research more similar to those at Harvard, Yale or Michigan, "extending the tenure clock is not the place to start." The key to real progress, she argued, is to offer more released time, more start-up funds, better child care and parental leave and a reduced teaching load. What faculty need, she said, is not more years but more time within each semester.

Several speakers criticized 80th Street for acting unilaterally.

### AT MEDGAR EVERS

Besides the "town meeting," there was also active discussion on other campuses. At Medgar Evers College, for example, the college's Faculty Senate and the PSC chapter jointly organized a public discussion. "We had a good turnout, about 50 people, and it was a lively discussion," said Edward Catapane, professor of biology and PSC chapter

chair. At this meeting and in the college as a whole, he said, "Almost nobody is in favor of the seven-year proposal."

The issue has not drawn much attention in the press, with the exception of coverage in the *Chief* and the *New York Sun*. In a subsequent letter to the *Sun*, SUNY Trustee Candace de Russy supported Goldstein's proposal and called for going further, "instituting a clearly needed process for periodic post-tenure review, so as to retrain and retain only the best faculty." Growing economic pressures and technological change, de Russy argued, "will make it necessary to redeploy or even to discharge tenured faculty members who aren't current."

De Russy, a close ally of conservative political groups such as CHANGE-NY, said that these "larger considerations" must get attention while Goldstein's proposal is debated.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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# Junior faculty need real improvements

● Extending the tenure clock to seven years doesn't sound like any kind of a favor to this junior faculty member. If the administration truly wants CUNY faculty to produce good scholarship and provide good service to students, departments and their college, we need reductions in teaching load (especially at the community colleges), or more reassigned time to conduct research – or both!

Lengthening the tenure clock will not necessarily ensure that faculty complete good scholarship in a time-

ly fashion. Reducing both the number and the size of classes would go much further toward this end and would also improve the quality of teaching.

Without improvements in teaching load and research support, the main result of a longer tenure clock could be simply a more pliant workforce, whose members can be dismissed and forced to leave with an academic career in jeopardy.

Whether faculty members (not management) should have the option to take more time for tenure

may be worth discussing. But the idea is full of potential pitfalls, and would require careful and thorough discussion before any conclusions are drawn. This underscores the folly of 80th Street's refusal to consult with the PSC and the UFS: without thorough consultation, a good decision is not possible.

Ron Hayduk  
BMCC

### More time is needed

● I respectfully disagree with our union's position on CUNY's tenure reform. While I understand that we are unhappy with the inept way it was presented by management (the invitation to the "town meeting" arrived in my mailbox a day after the event), I believe that we should focus on the outcome, not the process.

The outcome is clearly beneficial. I went through the tenure scourging last year, so I can definitely say that I would have benefited from more time. For the senior colleges, the current five-year clock is ludicrously short. Since the review begins a year before, and since the solicitation of letters of review must begin six months before that, the five-year clock is actually just three-and-a-half years. Many journals in my field (economics) regularly take 18-24 months to turn around submissions for publication. CUNY's proposal for a two-year extension would substantially increase the time available to conduct and publish research.

I understand that there are many other things that management could also do. But for the union to take this line that "nothing should get better

until everything gets better" seems unwise. I don't believe that the union should oppose this proposal.

Kevin Foster  
City College

### Don't disrespect retirees

● I arrived early to testify at Chancellor Goldstein's "town meeting" on the tenure clock. Speakers were limited to three minutes, and I believe I was fifth on the list. It soon became clear that Goldstein was calling on people out of order, focusing on those in favor of his proposal.

After an hour of this, I went to the podium and refused to move until I learned my place on the "revised" roster of speakers. Goldstein retorted that since I was retired I would be permitted to speak only after everyone else was through. Due to protest from Barbara Bowen and the diplomatic intervention of a CUNY professor who ceded her place to me, I was finally allowed my three minutes.

I must say the whole experience made me understand even more acutely the disparagement that adjuncts, HEOs, CLTs, librarians and other less-favored constituencies must feel daily. Apparently, at a public meeting on CUNY policy changes, a retired professor with 34 years of service to CUNY (and opinions on what would constitute a *bona fide* research environment) is no longer considered a member of the academic community.

I hope when Goldstein is himself retired he will understand what this means and implies for all retirees.

Peter Ranis (emeritus)  
York & Graduate Center

### Less costs more

● This letter is in response to the article on the so-called Enrollment Policy at New York City College of Technology (March *Clarion*).

Illustrative of the misinformation disseminated by the college's president in his effort to get his policy approved by the college's governance body was Prof. Pam Brown's reference to the college "...spending a high proportion of its budget on remedial education...." While this might seem a logical, budgetary argument for defunding remediation, to anyone aware of the arcane fiscal system by which Senior Colleges in CUNY are funded it is spurious.

In truth, tuition from remedial courses, taught largely by adjunct faculty, actually supports a substantial portion of this technical college's budget and these courses are the *least* expensive to offer. (Most of the college's \$59 million budget is supported by tuition, and students who take developmental courses pay the same senior college tuition as other students at City Tech. These large "chalk and talk" classes draw most of their financial support from CUNY's Instructional Staffing Model.)

Indeed, if this new policy is implemented, the college will suffer a devastating budget *shortfall* from the loss of tuition.

Bob Cermele  
City Tech



Workers at CUNY's University Applications Processing Center, including Mary Jane Brown, above, held a rally on April 1 to demand that their jobs be protected. The UAPC has announced that an outside grant funding the Center has run out, and management has refused to guarantee the jobs of UAPC workers.

### Write to Clarion

Letters should be no more than 150-200 words in length, and are subject to editing.

# RF says "Union Yes!"

By TOMIO GERON

## Big win for PSC at LaGuardia

By an overwhelming 110-25 margin, Research Foundation employees at LaGuardia Community College voted to join the PSC in a March 16 election.

The 81% "yes" vote was the culmination of over a year of organizing by activist members and PSC staff. "I feel good about the outcome," said Julie Sterling, a Research Foundation (RF) employee since 1996 and a member of the "I Want a Union" committee. "The goal is to give ourselves a safety net, in terms of job security and protections."

The vote count was witnessed by union activists and staff, including PSC Executive Council Member Samuel Farrell. After the final count was announced, the group burst into the hallway shouting, "We won!"

### HAVING A SAY

"When I found out we won I was ecstatic," said Aarkieva Smith, who has worked for the RF in the Center for Teaching and Learning for over four years. Tuition remission and health benefits are her key con-

cerns. "I'll have a say now and I feel better [knowing] that the PSC is backing me up," said Smith.

The LaGuardia election follows the December 2002 union victory at the University Applications Processing Center (UAPC), where 85% of RF employees cast ballots to join the PSC. The union is seeking to organize all of the 6,000 to 7,000 RF workers at CUNY.

### EQUITY ISSUE

LaGuardia RF workers, over 300 in the unit, have not been entitled to the same benefits and rights as their counterparts at CUNY even though many do the same kind of work. Some workers are even switched back and forth between RF and CUNY lines within the same program. Their work remains unchanged, but they can lose benefits such as vacation and sick time every time they are switched. Despite the intimate connections between CUNY and its Research Foundation, the RF is considered a



RF worker Mark Trushkowsky

"private" institution by the National Labor Relations Board and is officially separate from the University.

The RF workers, many of whom are part-time, can now collectively bargain over their compensation and working conditions. Franklin Marin, who worked at LaGuardia for 12 years, wants to make sure that no



Research Foundation employees Yndhira Felix, Jonathan Bobin, Dave Johnson and Solange Pereira

one can lose their job without due process. "I saw people fired with two days notice," he said, "or told to not come back tomorrow."

### EVERYBODY INVOLVED

Sterling is looking forward to meeting with other members to plan the next steps. She told *Clarion*, "I hope we get everybody involved, full-time and part-time, to ensure that no matter how many hours we have, everybody has some level of

security and protection."

Though benefits and job protections are important, the ability to have a voice is important as well, said Mark Trushkowsky, of the Adult Learning Center, who has been there for over three years. "I believe every labor force should be able to work together and fight for their needs and help themselves," he said. "Right off the bat, I'll be part of a community that I'm not [part of] now. That's something I'm very excited about."

# Junior faculty workshop

By TOMIO GERON

## Tenure and PSC discussed

More than 200 untenured faculty members from all CUNY campuses converged on Baruch for a junior faculty workshop that the PSC sponsored on March 12.

"We were blown away by the response," said Penny Lewis, an organizer of the event and a new faculty member at BMCC. "We originally expected about 50 to 80 people."

The meeting was a chance to learn more about the tenure process and the PSC, and Lewis said the turnout shows "there is a real need for this information." It was the PSC's first such event.

"I want to survive in this system and get tenure," said Xinzhou Wei, expressing the primary concern of many. A first-year computer science professor at City Tech, Wei said he had come to learn from the experience of others.

"The anxiety is always there when you're not tenured," said panelist Tricia Lin, an associate professor of English at BMCC. "I'm seeing many people with anxious faces here."

### SUPPORTIVE

"The fact that this was organized by the union, and by junior faculty, made it a safer and more inviting place to talk about these concerns," Lewis said.

New faculty brought a wealth of prior union experience. In a show of hands, over half indicated they had been union members before.

A casual lunch and opening plenary were followed by workshops on the tenure process, contract rights and the PSC, and workshops on grant-writing and publication in science and mathematics, the humanities and the social sciences.

### NUTS & BOLTS

At the tenure workshop, faculty who had gone through the process gave insights and advice. Glenn Petersen, professor of anthropology at Baruch, said that, contrary to some perceptions, the most important thing for getting tenure is not politicking with other faculty: it is your scholarship, teaching and service record. "The only way you can be

sure of advancing your case is what's on paper – that's your CV," he said.

Petersen and other speakers emphasized that each candidate for tenure needs to find out the particular criteria that they will be expected to meet, which can vary from campus to campus, from department to department, and even from year to year.

Despite the heavy teaching load at CUNY, it is critical to carve out time for one's own scholarship on a regular basis, said Carrie Hintz, assistant professor of English at Queens College. "You have to do it every day in small chunks," she told the crowd. "You can't go to sleep unless you do

forty minutes of your actual work. It's like brushing your teeth." Hintz also urged her listeners to find creative ways to combine scholarship and their work in the classroom, noting that she had done this by publishing articles about her teaching.

In their own work toward tenure, Hintz and Lin said that they had documented everything they did professionally and for the college in writing, submitting written materials on each activity to their respective college personnel offices.

### A chance to talk together about challenges.

Many of those attending were pleased to have the opportunity to talk with faculty from across the University, something they said is all too rare. "Seeing people from all over CUNY makes me feel more a part of CUNY," said Noriko Watanabe of the modern language department at Baruch.

The event was an introduction to the union for faculty members who did not know much about the PSC. "We offer an alternative way of understanding the University," PSC President Barbara Bowen told attendees.

Bowen told the new faculty that they are vital to CUNY's future – not only because the numbers of full-time faculty may now increase, but also as new voices after years of attacks from former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. "Your presence is part of [CUNY's] resurgence," she said.

Bowen urged new faculty to make the union part of their lives at CUNY, to help win more improvements like the new 12 hours of reassigned time for junior faculty scholarship.

Karl Madden, in his first year in the library department at College of Staten Island, told *Clarion* that attending the meeting had convinced

him to take part in the PSC's letter-writing campaign on the needs of junior faculty. "Now I realize that my participation is valuable," he said. "The plenary session made it clear that with more letters to the administration, more power in numbers, [we can] get things done."

Another topic of discussion was CUNY management's proposal to change City University's tenure clock (see p. 2). "There was much opposition to the extended tenure clock, especially among community college faculty," said David Kazanjian of Queens College, an organizer of the workshop. "All faculty I heard from also seemed to agree that decreased teaching load, increased leave time and more research funds were much more important priorities."

### QUESTIONS

Kazanjian of Queens and Penny Lewis of BMCC, who have co-chaired the PSC's junior faculty working group, are still responding to the many questions that new faculty wrote out on index cards at the event. In addition to responding to some directly, they plan to post answers to the questions on the PSC Web site ([www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org)).

Coming out of the meeting, Lewis and Kazanjian are forming a junior faculty caucus within the union – more than 80 people signed up to be involved. "We're hoping to bring a lot more people on board to implement and brainstorm how to work in the union together," said Kazanjian.

Contact Kazanjian at [dkaz@qc.edu](mailto:dkaz@qc.edu) and Lewis at [pennywilhelmina@hotmail.com](mailto:pennywilhelmina@hotmail.com), or call PSC Organizer Maggie Dickinson at 212-354-1252.



Junior faculty got a chance to meet each other over lunch during the event.

# PSC action stops \$5.4m City cut

By TOMIO GERON

Quick action by PSC members in March helped stop a \$5.4 million mid-year budget reduction for CUNY's community colleges. After hearing from hundreds of constituents, the City Council voted on March 25 to restore the funds that Mayor Bloomberg had sought to cut.

"The Council has been a tenacious watchdog and held off the assault by the mayor," said Cecelia McCall, PSC secretary and legislative coordinator. "Students, faculty and staff are grateful."

## MOBILIZING

The PSC quickly mobilized to urge the Council to restore the funds. An urgent appeal to members noted that a budget reduction

## Blizzard of faxes makes impact

this large "would erase all the gains we have made in the last two years" in City support. The response was fast and dramatic: in just three days, PSC members sent 531 faxes to Council members via the union's Web site. Along with lobbying by students and CUNY administration, the union's response won a full restoration.

Next year's budget will still be a battle, however: Bloomberg wants to reduce City support for CUNY by more than \$17 million. The \$5.4 million cut to the community colleges is back on the table for next year, and the mayor also wants to eliminate the \$5.5 mil-

## A fast and dramatic response

lion Peter Vallone Scholarships and end the \$4.5 million "safety net" program that helps community college students pay for CUNY's recent tuition hike. The budget for the Hunter College Campus Schools is slated to take a \$124,000 hit.

At the state level, the PSC has been aggressively lobbying to turn back the cuts proposed by Governor George Pataki, including \$5.6 million from the operating budgets of nine senior colleges and a 5% reduction in base aid per full-time equivalent student at community colleges.

PSC activists made a lobbying trip to Albany on March 8 and 9, to tell legislators that CUNY cannot af-

ford to lose more funds. "It would be devastating enough even without the governor's cuts," said Eileen Moran, co-chair of the PSC Legislative Committee and one of the lobbyists. "We're already struggling to continue to provide services and classes to students." Since 1990, State aid to CUNY has been slashed by \$492 million in real dollars.

## ALBANY

The PSC also held a March 9 breakfast in Albany to talk with legislators about the issues facing City University. State Assembly Higher Education Committee Chair Ron Canestrari was among the many lawmakers who attended. On April 1, Albany failed to enact a State budget by the legal deadline for the 20th year in a row.



PSC Legislative Committee Co-Chair Vera Weekes and CUNY Day award winner and City Council member Robert Jackson at the PSC's CUNY Day breakfast on March 18.

## CUNY IN BRIEF

### Dept. chairs vote 'yes'

CUNY department chairs voted by a wide margin to approve the settlement on their summer pay that was negotiated recently between the PSC and CUNY management.

The vote, which was certified on March 2, was 183 - 19 in favor of the agreement, which stipulates that chairs will be paid for summer work at a pro rated amount of the individual's annual salary.

Under the terms of the settlement, department chairs will have the ability to accept or decline the amount of work that the college president is prepared to compensate. These decisions must be made by April 30 of each year.

### Brooklyn is a bargain

Brooklyn College was named the third best value in the nation by The Princeton Review in March. *America's Best Value Colleges* profiles colleges and universities with excellent academic programs and teaching that provide the greatest bang for the buck.

Brooklyn was ranked third in the country behind University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Amherst College in Massachusetts. Brooklyn College was also named in *The Best Northeastern Colleges* by The Princeton Review.

### Mirrer moves on

Louise Mirrer, CUNY's vice chancellor for academic affairs, has resigned to become president of the New York Historical Society. Mirrer, who has been at CUNY since 1997, will start in her new position on June 1.

# Immigrants & labor in Day of Dialogue

By HILARY RUSS

Hundreds of people packed into the headquarters of SEIU Local 32BJ in February for a meeting to build grassroots connections between unions, immigrants and community-based organizations.

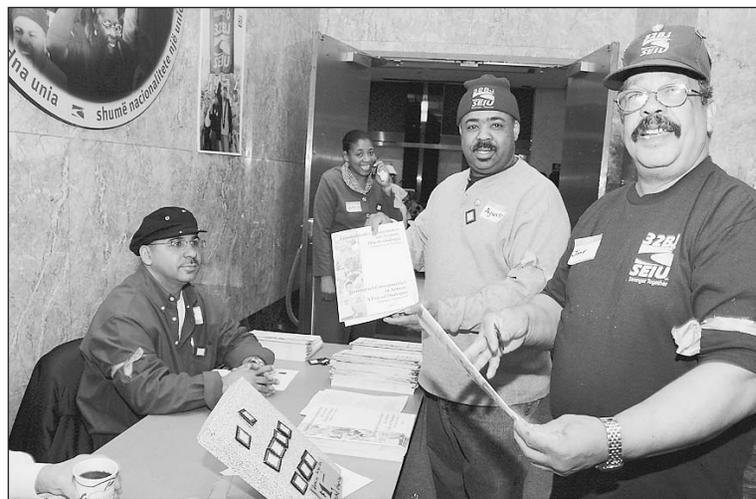
"Immigrant Communities in Action: A Day of Dialogue" was a follow-up to the labor-sponsored Immigrant Workers' Freedom Ride last fall. Busloads of immigrant workers had stopped in towns throughout the country to speak about their struggle as a civil rights issue, ending with a large rally in New York City on October 4. Organizers put forth a local immigrants' rights agenda and a four-pronged national platform.

## RANK & FILE

"We didn't see how we could just stop with a rally, because the network that was formed during the mobilization for the Freedom Ride was so valuable," Gouri Sadhwani, executive director of the New York Civic Participation Project, told *Clarion*. "Labor's challenge now is to ensure that these new leaders within their rank and file stay engaged and have opportunities to continue to build their leadership," Sadhwani wrote in the February *Labor Notes*.

The Day of Dialogue was aimed at that goal, and the broad spectrum of people who attended was a sign of success. About one-third of the 450 or so who attended the February 21 meeting were rank and file union members. The rest hailed from different community or religious organizations, advocacy groups, or were shop stewards and staffers from TWU, SEIU, DC 37, HERE and other unions.

## Making grassroots connections



A few of the 450 people who took part in the Day of Dialogue.

"I was personally thrilled that there was so much energy in the room," said Kate Pfordresher, a policy analyst for DC37. "It really was a dialogue, a diversity of opinions and thoughts."

In a session about language access to the city's social services, a welfare caseworker got to chat with a welfare recipient about availability of translation services. An HRA caseworker from DC 37 Local 371, "talked about pressures on workers where there are no specific resources to provide those services," recalls Pfordresher, who moderated the workshop.

Lionel Bajaña, vice-chair of DC37 local 1070, the court interpreters' chapter, brought three rank and filers to help as volunteer translators. "A lot of people from non-English-speaking countries come here and find themselves in culture shock,"

Bajaña said. "At one of these meetings, they may discover a right they never knew they had."

Bajaña himself got a B.A. in court interpretation and translation from the CUNY inter-campus baccalaureate program. And that points to one of the reasons that Jim Perlstein, co-chair of PSC's Solidarity Committee, was there. "It's an opportunity to get out into the communities where our students live," he said before running upstairs for a session on workplace rights. Alan Wernick of the CUNY Citizenship and Immigration Project spoke at the conference, and a half-dozen other PSC members attended.

Based on questionnaires filled out by participants, the NYCPP is developing a "measuring stick" for any future immigration reform legislation, which it will share with national advocacy groups. Amnesty, faster family re-unification, and an ongoing path to legalization are a few of

the core principles that top the list.

But most of all, the event strengthened connections among organizations and activists working to protect immigrant workers' rights.

After the Freedom Ride rally in October, critics such as Partha Banerjee, an organizer at New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE), argued that the speakers' list was too establishment-oriented and politically cautious, and should have given more of a voice to the grassroots activists who did so much to build the event. Sadhwani's *Labor Notes* article acknowledged that there had not been enough community leaders or Spanish speakers on stage.

Planning for the Day of Dialogue took that discussion into account: the event featured mostly Spanish speakers and was planned by working groups of 15 to 20 people who met regularly for months.

## A GOOD START

The results impressed even skeptics like NICE's Banerjee, who led a workshop on post-9/11 backlash. "To my knowledge, that was the first time there was such a dialogue between Latino and South Asian, Muslim, Arab, and African American workers," he says. He'd like to see many more South Asians, African Americans, and Caribbean people the next time around, but says the Day of Dialogue was a good start: "It created a space for all of us to do something to work together."

The excitement at making those connections gave the Day of Dialogue a festive atmosphere. By the time a few short skits had ended that morning, just after a panel on immigration reform, a distinct feeling was running through the crowd: it felt almost like a party.

# CUNY Week across city

By TOMIO GERON

In an array of events across the city, PSC members celebrated CUNY Week while organizing for a new contract.

March 15-19 marked the kickoff for a union petition campaign demanding adequate support for CUNY's Welfare Fund (WF). At hallway tables and campus meetings, PSC chapters asked faculty and staff to sign petitions to both CUNY and college administrations in support of increased funding for the WF (see sidebar).

"There was tremendous enthusiasm for the petition on the Welfare Fund," said BCC Chapter Chair Marianne Pita. "We distributed it to department representatives and one person soon had 50 signatures. We took that as a model - we aim to get close to 100% of our faculty and staff to sign."

## LOCAL ISSUES

Several chapters used CUNY Week to highlight specific issues of local concern. At BMCC, members circulated petitions urging BMCC President Antonio Perez to correct the severe shortage of faculty counselors. "We have eight counselors covering 18,000 students," said Anne Friedman, PSC vice president for community colleges and a professor at BMCC. "Petitions work. Sign it and pass it on."

At Queens College, the chapter asked President James Muyskens to endorse the PSC's contract demands, including pay equity and job security, reduced teaching load, salary increases, parental leave, child care and adequate health care. "I'd say 80 to 90% of the people that I've asked have signed our petition," said Jonathan Buchsbaum, chapter chair at Queens, noting that over 700 people had done so by the end of March. In addition to faculty and staff, Buchsbaum said, students have been "willing and even eager" to add their support.

## Lobbying CUNY, Albany and City Hall

## Contract campaign gets support



Activists with the Coalition for Access to Training and Education (CATE) were honored at CUNY Day for winning expanded college access for welfare recipients.

"Some students shepherded their friends over to sign after they had signed themselves," he said.

At CUNY Week events, chapters asked members to sign pledge cards for the contract campaign, through which people can volunteer for one or more specific tasks. Options range from writing a letter to making phone calls to attending a demonstration to signing up as a department activist. (You can also sign up online, at [www.psc-cuny.org/contract\\_campaign.htm](http://www.psc-cuny.org/contract_campaign.htm).)

"We need to have a mobilized membership to make progress," said Mike Fabricant of Hunter, a member of the union negotiating team. At the bargaining table, he noted, eloquence alone will not move CUNY to agree to the PSC's contract demands.

CUNY Week events also focused on grassroots lobbying in support of increased funding. PSC members asked faculty, staff and students to

write letters and send faxes through the "Act Now" page on the PSC's Web site ([www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org)). At Queensborough Community College, the PSC circulated petitions opposing cuts to CUNY's budget and also organized voter registration to increase the number of "CUNY voters."

"Students were enthusiastic," said Jay Appleman, QCC chapter chair. "We did a 'blitz' on two afternoons, and it went very well." Queensborough President Eduardo Martí stopped by the tables to lend his support, as did City Councilmember Tony Avella.

## BUDGET LETTERS

Voter registration and budget lobbying letters were featured at an event at York College on March 16, honoring Queens Borough President Helen Marshall for her support of CUNY. It was jointly sponsored by the union chapters at York, LaGuardia, Queens and QCC; the chapter at Bronx Community College sponsored a similar event

saluting Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión.

Fourteen members of the NYC City Council attended the PSC's annual CUNY Day breakfast on March 18, where awards were given to activists and politicians who had proved themselves as "Friends of CUNY." City Councilmember Bill DeBlasio and the Coalition for Access to Training and Education were cited for their work in passing Intro 93-A, a bill allowing welfare recipients to count CUNY courses and other educational activities toward fulfillment of work requirements.

## AWARDEES

In addition to his staunch support for CUNY on the Higher Education Committee, Councilmember Bill Perkins was honored for sponsoring Resolution 60, a measure opposing the attacks on civil liberties and intellectual freedom in the USA-PATRIOT Act. Councilmember Robert Jackson was praised for starting the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, which won a critical lawsuit against inequities in State funding of City schools. The other awardees were New York City Labor Against the War and PSC Health and Safety Committee Co-chairs Dave Kotelchuck and Joan Greenbaum.

Meanwhile the contract campaign continues. On March 26, over 2,000 members of the PSC's state affiliate, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) marched in solidarity with members of the PSC.

Speakers at the march included UFT President Randi Weingarten, United College Employees at FIT President Lou Stollar, and PSC President Barbara Bowen, who thanked NYSUT brothers and sisters for showing support for the PSC's contract campaign. NYSUT members from across the state held signs urging a contract for the PSC.

A CUNY-wide demonstration for a strong contract will be held outside the Board of Trustees' meeting on May 24.

## Welfare Fund a major concern

A major focus during CUNY Week was the push for CUNY to provide increased funding for the PSC/CUNY Welfare Fund to restore and enhance dental and drug benefits. Health care costs have been rising, but CUNY contributions to the WF have not kept pace.

"They have to make a major contribution to the Fund," said Anne Friedman, PSC vice president for community colleges and a bargaining team member. "Good benefits are part of basic compensation."

"The WF has been underfunded for too long," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "We are circulating the petition because everyone knows that these benefits are a key part of fair compensation. We need the increased funds now, and this should not have to wait for the contract."

The effort is drawing a strong response. "A majority of faculty and staff at York have already signed," said Chapter Chair Janice Cline. The Retirees Chapter is asking its members to sign on through the fall. And PSC members are not the only ones to offer their support.

## STUDENT SUPPORT

"A nice thing to do is take three or four people and circulate the petition at lunch hour," said Tony O'Brien of Queens College. "We get hundreds of signatures per lunch from students." Edward Catapane, chapter chair at Medgar Evers, told *Clarion*. "Even some administrators, who are also part of the Welfare Fund, have told us they're concerned about the funding level."

The petition is starting to have an effect, and has been discussed among college presidents. But getting CUNY to make these changes is "will take a tremendous fight," said PSC Senior College Officer Mike Fabricant. "The negotiating team will keep the issue front and center, but only member action can create the strength we need to win." - TG

# Update on contract talks

Below is an outline of recent negotiating sessions for a new University-wide labor contract.

The union continues to present its demands, offering research and support for each. Management has still not made a financial offer. With no agreement on money, the two sides have not yet reached agreements on any other issues.

**January 30:** PSC demands equity in annual leave for library and counseling faculty, and that these titles not be excluded from the new 12 hours of reassigned time for re-

search by new faculty. Union negotiators say library and counseling faculty need same amount of time for scholarship as those in other fields.

The PSC proposes study of faculty counselor staffing needs, with CUNY to report on ratio of faculty counselors to students on each campus. A health and safety issue, union emphasizes.

PSC asks to establish HEO titles as a promotional series, to allow for promotion and not just reclassification into a different job.

**February 26:** Union presents re-

search on current trend to overuse of substitute lines, asks new language to end this practice.

PSC demands that pathway to promotion to Chief CLT be opened up, noting that community colleges now have only one Chief CLT. Not just a question of money, but also of respect and recognition, union team explains.

PSC presents other demands for improved job security for HEOs and CLTs.

**March 15:** A smaller session, in which union seeks to resolve the few remaining issues on final text of cur-

rent contract. First thorough review in years of entire agreement has exposed numerous minor errors allowed to persist through several contracts. Both sides working to get final version published as soon as possible.

## NO OFFER

**March 31:** PSC opens session by demanding that management resolve issues of implementation for TransitChek benefit for CUNY employees. Management responds that action is being taken, more details at separate meeting on the issue.

CUNY says it still has no economic offer. In addition to real salary increases, the union says settlement must go beyond the minimum to include two additional things:

- restoration and improvement of WF benefits.

- money to fund improvements in workload, research support and professional life.

PSC calls for teaching load for all faculty to be reduced by three hours per year, and asks for increase in availability of reassigned time.

For part-time faculty's eligibility for the professional office hour, union proposes that service be calculated on a CUNY-wide basis.

PSC argues that class size is major factor in faculty workload. Union demands recognition of academic departments' authority to set and enforce class size limits; presents evidence on upward creep in class size in recent years. - PH

## Wordplay with CET titles is costly

"CUNY wants to use the CET title as a catch-all for a pool of cheap labor," says Steve London, PSC first vice president. "The lowest-paid teachers in CUNY are continuing education teachers, and the lack of standard conditions for CETs opens the door to numerous abuses."

According to the bylaws of CUNY's Board of Trustees, CETs are all officially "part-time," no matter how many hours they work.

And while most do work part-time, others spend more time in class than full-time CUNY faculty. CETs who teach fewer than 20 hours a week get no health insurance and no sick days at all.

### FAST AND LOOSE

In many cases, management plays fast and loose with the CET job title. Though CUNY's Bylaws define continuing education teachers as those "assigned to teach part-time or perform related duties," management's definition of "related" has proven very elastic.

Can someone who spends the whole day on administrative tasks be considered a continuing education "teacher"? What about a computer lab technician? CUNY has paid people as CETs even when they do the same work as Higher Education Officers or College Lab Technicians, titles with better pay and benefits.

"These practices can be dubbed 'contracting in,'" says London. "It's similar to 'contracting out,' in that CUNY is trying to get its work done at a lower rate of pay – but it's happening under CUNY's own roof. Management inappropriately uses the CET title for jobs that should be classified and paid as HEOs, CLTs, adjuncts or full-time lecturers."

### CLIP

The history of the CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP), a growing part of continuing education at CUNY, is instructive. When the first CLIP site was created on 125th Street in Fall 1995, its teachers were paid partly as College Assistants and partly as "non-teaching adjuncts."

Thus, CUNY has claimed that teachers can be "non-teaching," that those who never teach can be defined as "teachers," and that a "part-time" faculty member can teach more hours than one who is "full-time." When language starts to mean its opposite, it's a sure sign that you've stepped into "the shadow university."

– EB & PH

# Continuing Ed. in focus

By ELLEN BALLEISEN  
CLIP / BCC

Let's shine some light on a corner of CUNY's "shadow university": continuing education. It's a place where all faculty are classified as part-timers, even when they teach 25 hours per week. New teachers can be hired at higher pay rates than veterans with the same or lesser qualifications. Faculty who regularly spend as many as 18 hours per week in the classroom receive no sick days and no health insurance. There is no job security – and with no contractually required evaluations, teaching quality need not factor into who gets rehired.

These are the conditions faced by CUNY's continuing education teachers, or CETs. They teach a wide range of courses, which fall into three broad groups. Some classes lead to a certificate in fields such as database administration, bookkeeping or construction management. Others provide intensive remedial and language instruction to students who plan to enter CUNY degree programs, through the College Language Immersion Program (CLIP), Bridge to College and a portion of College Now. Still others are general-interest classes on topics such as photography or memoir writing.

### NO SALARY SCHEDULE

The PSC-CUNY contract includes a supplemental agreement on continuing education, which provides a minimum hourly pay rate for CETs but no salary schedule. CETs can be hired at any pay rate as long as it is not under the contractual minimum – \$27.43 per hour, compared to a bottom step of \$53.60 for adjunct lecturers.

"For teaching the same type of class, people are [often] paid at very different rates," said a CET at Baruch. "It's totally based on the discretion of the person in charge."

The minimum CET rate is so low that most programs do pay more, and many CETs have full-time jobs elsewhere. But others teach more than 15 hours per week, get most of their income from CUNY and are among the University's lowest-paid faculty. The starting pay rate for CLIP has remained the same since 1995 – in effect, a 22% pay cut after inflation.

### HEALTH INSURANCE

To qualify for health insurance and sick days under the PSC-CUNY contract, CETs must teach at least 20 hours per week and have appointments of at least six months. These CETs become part of the regular City health plan, and their sick days can accumulate. But very few CETs outside CLIP meet both requirements, according to Jeremy Boren-

## Among CUNY lowest-paid faculty



Naomi Machado, center, a continuing education teacher in BMCC's CLIP program

stein, a CET who is a part-time PSC organizer.

"A CUNY adjunct receives health insurance for teaching six hours per week," notes Borenstein. "Adjuncts also receive one-fifteenth of their teaching load as sick days regardless of their hours. But in the program where I work, we have many [CETs] who teach between 6 and 18 hours per week. They get no health insurance and no sick days."

Borenstein adds that adjuncts can earn a full year of pension credit in the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) by teaching 360 hours. By contrast, CETs who are paid for fewer than 30 hours per week are ineligible for TRS; if they want pensions they must join the New York City Employees' Retirement System, which grants only about half a year's credit for 900 teaching hours.

### GRIEVING

The continuing education supplement to the PSC-CUNY contract spells out separate grievance procedures that are much weaker than those that cover all other bargaining unit members. "CUNY abuses CETs and treats them like they are second-class citizens under the contract," says Debra Bergen, PSC director of contract administration. "CETs are being terminated without cause and do not even have the right to see their personnel files. They need to have the same terms and conditions of employment as other CUNY employees."

At present, CETs are covered by only 10 of 44 articles in the PSC-CUNY contract. In the current contract negotiations, PSC demands include:

- That CETs be covered by the same disciplinary and grievance procedures as all other members of the bargaining unit;
- That CETs who teach at least 15 hours a week for 30 weeks a year get health insurance benefits;
- That a seniority/hiring preference system be introduced for CETs who receive benefits;
- That annual salary and steps equal to those of lecturers be established for continuing education teachers in language and remedial programs such as CLIP.

Outside of negotiations, the PSC is working to make all CETs eligible for pensions through the Teachers' Retirement System.

The union has also been fighting to enforce advances won in the last contract, with a recent victory for CETs who qualify for health insurance. In the most recent contract they also became eligible to earn up to 14 days of sick leave per year, and

won base pay additions of \$1,000 after their second, fourth and sixth anniversaries of employment.

### SPEAK UP

However, Baruch College refused to implement these new provisions, and in 2003 a group of Baruch CETs filed a grievance. They have since been getting the sick leave, and thanks to a settlement reached in March will soon receive their longevity increases with back pay.

Borenstein, who will benefit from this settlement, has a message for other CETs: "Don't hesitate to contact the PSC if you think you're getting a raw deal. We're working on improving working conditions for CETs and everyone's input is extremely important."

Borenstein can be reached via e-mail at [cetaction@yahoo.com](mailto:cetaction@yahoo.com), or you can leave a message for him at (212) 354-1252.

## Fuzzy math at Shadow U.

According to data from CUNY's Central Administration, there are 935 CETs on the CUNY payroll. But *Clarion* inquiries on several campuses indicate that this is a severe undercount: the total number of CETs represented by the PSC is actually over 1,200 and possibly far higher. For example, CUNY's data lists 65 CETs at Hunter – but the Hunter Web site lists 144.

There is also a large number of people who teach in continuing education but are not CETs: they are paid by the CUNY Research Foundation (RF) and most have no union

protections at all. When *Clarion* asked how many RF employees teach in continuing education, RF management responded in writing, "We do NOT maintain such data in our records" (capitals in original).

Student enrollment figures for 2002-2003 show that about 40% of continuing education students at CUNY are taught by RF employees. This suggests that there are 1,000 or more RF employees in continuing education, bringing the total number of continuing ed faculty to about 3,000.

– PH

## Marsh catastrophic coverage

# The right choice for bad times

By **ESTELLE GIAMMUSSO**  
PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Associate Administrator

High and increasing medical costs and the onset of a serious illness can be an overwhelming combination. As detailed in a mailing going out later this semester, PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund members can have a powerful answer to this situation in the Marsh Affinity Catastrophe Plan. (Marsh was formerly known to Welfare Fund members as Seabury-Smith, and before that as Wohler's.)

Here's how it works. There is a deductible of \$10,000 that can be met by eligible expenses paid for by your health insurance policy, as well as

### YOUR BENEFITS

medical expenses paid out of your own pocket, in any 12-month period. After that, the Marsh plan pays 100% of all eligible medical expenses at a reasonable and customary rate to a

maximum of \$2,000,000 for up to 10 years from when the first eligible expense was incurred. Because of recent changes in the GHI/CIGNA coverage, GHI participants especially may want to consider the Marsh Catastrophe Coverage.

Active and retired members with a City health plan or Medicare will be receiving a mailing shortly from Marsh offering this coverage. (Adjuncts who receive health insurance are also eligible; Marsh's coverage applies to expenses incurred when

their basic health plan or COBRA is in effect.)

You can pay for it directly or through payroll or pension deduction. You can enroll yourself, your spouse or domestic partner, and/or any dependent children. (Children can be up to age 21, or age 27 if a full-time student, and must be unmarried.)

#### MAILING COMING

Other details will be included in the mailing. If you have any questions it does not answer, you can call Marsh Affinity at (800) 503-9230.

You may never have more than \$10,000 in medical expenses in a 12-month period, so you may never have to use this coverage. But if you ever do need it, it will save you both expense and worry – and you'll be glad that you signed up.

## Welfare Fund benefits help

Have a question about your Welfare Fund benefits? Members who need to speak with someone about coverage or reimbursements under Welfare Fund benefits can contact their respective provider at the phone numbers below.

#### MEDCO

Customer service:  
866-386-3797  
Refill prescription home delivery:  
800-473-3455  
How your doctor can fax a script:  
888-327-9791  
Web site:  
www.medcohealth.com

#### PICA PROGRAM

(Psychotropic, Chemotherapy, Injectable & Asthma medication)  
NYC Office of Labor Relations:  
800-233-7139  
Refill by mail:  
800-233-7139  
Web site:  
www.expresscripts.com

#### GUARDIAN (dental)

Customer service:  
800-541-7846  
Web site:  
www.glic.com

#### NYSUT (life insurance)

Member benefits:  
800-626-8101  
Web site:  
www.nysut.org

#### Marsh Affinity Group (catastrophic plan)

Customer service:  
800-503-9230  
Web site:  
www.marshaffinity.com

#### Cigna Major Medical

Customer service:  
800-223-9601  
Web site:  
www.cigna.com

**PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund:**  
212-354-5230

## PSC legal pioneer Russo retires

By **PETER HOGNESS**

PSC Legal Affairs Director Nick Russo retired last December, after serving as the PSC's lawyer for almost 30 years.

Russo started working for the union on December 15, 1975 – and received a baptism by fire from NYC's fiscal crisis. "The night before I started, the Board of Higher Education had voted to impose a two-week payless furlough," Russo recalls. "So on my first day, we went to NYSUT and strategized about how to get an injunction against it."

The hundreds of arbitrations that Russo has handled resulted in some very happy union members. "Helping people made this job very satisfying," he says. "Last August I was on vacation in Prague, and ran into a man we had helped to get tenure. 'This man saved my life!' he said to the two friends I was with – and this had happened 20 years before."

Russo won about 60% of the arbitration awards in cases he handled at the PSC. "That doesn't include the large number of cases that we settled, some of which were quite significant," he explains. "The other thing it doesn't reflect is that some cases took a day to put on while others took 16 days, spread out over a year and a half."

In the beginning, Russo says that academic departments had many conflicts among themselves, but those extreme cases based on personal conflict tended to disappear.

Over the years CUNY's union-management relationship "matured a great deal, in the legal sense," he adds. "We were able to professionalize it and avoid some of the more egregious mistakes."

As new labor designees are appointed and new faculty and staff are hired, Russo says, "it's important to train and educate people, so that they know what's appropriate and what is not." This is important, he says, to avoid repeating some of



Nick Russo, soon after he started at the PSC in 1975.

the mistakes of the past.

"Nick's legacy goes beyond the individual cases," says PSC President Barbara Bowen. "The impressive record of arbitral victories he won for the PSC provides the framework of precedents on which the union continues to rely in defending the rights of our members. Members for years to come will benefit from the work Nick has done for the PSC."

Russo earned his B.A. at the University of Pennsylvania and got his law degree from Case Western Reserve in 1971. Prior to the PSC, he worked for a labor law firm and NYC's Human Resources Administration.

He was a founding board member of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, the first national legal organization devoted to securing equal rights for gay and lesbian people. For the past six years Russo has served as a member of the New York Democratic State Committee; last year he was a delegate to the Manhattan convention nominating

Democratic candidates for New York Supreme Court judge.

On his 30th birthday, Russo swam a mile for the first time. He has done long-distance swimming indoors ever since, and regularly swims a mile freestyle. "I believe in the Latin saying, 'mens sana in corpore sano,'" he says – a sound mind in a sound body. It seems to be a good motto to live by; many people take him for a decade younger than his 58 years.

#### NOT BORED

Russo currently has a small private practice, mainly dealing with wills and trusts. "I'm also trying to relax a little, and taking on some personal projects that I never seemed to have time to get to before."

If you ask what's on the horizon, Nick says he'll be interested to find out himself. "I know what I'm doing now, but I don't know what I'll be doing six months from now," he explains. He thinks for a minute, and adds, "I sure haven't found any time to be bored!" On his face is the easy smile that co-workers know so well.

## CALENDAR

**APRIL 16-17:** "Fighting for Our Rights: The Grievance Process and Contract Enforcement," training workshops for PSC members. At BMCC, Friday in Room S251 and Saturday at the faculty dining lounge. To register contact Michael Fikes at 212-354-1252.

**MONDAY APRIL 19 / 6:00 pm:** PSC Solidarity Committee meeting. At the PSC, 25 W. 43rd St. Contact Jim Perlestein at 212-354-1252.

**THURSDAY APRIL 22 / 12:15 – 2:00 pm:** Ceremony to commemorate the 35th anniversary of open admissions at CUNY. At CCNY South Campus, behind the Aaron Davis Center. Sponsored by CCNY Concerned Faculty. That evening at 6:30 pm, CCNY SLAM is holding a forum with Henry Foner, Carol Smith, Ron McGuire, and others. At Sheperd Hall, Room 250 at CCNY. Contact 212-650-5008 for additional information.

**FRIDAY APRIL 23 / 9:30 am – 1:00 pm:** "The Politics of Tenure." University Faculty Senate conference on the CUNY "time to tenure" issue and national issues related to tenure. Speakers include new faculty, department chairs, a college president, and PSC and AAUP officials. At John Jay, 445 W. 59th St., 2nd Fl. Registration required: contact Vernice at 212-794-5539 or Vernice.Blanchard@mail.cuny.edu.

**FRIDAY APRIL 23 / 6:00 pm:** Labor Goes to the Movies presents "Blue Collar." At the Center for Worker Education, 99 Hudson Street. E-mail tgeron@psemail.org for additional information.

**FRIDAY APRIL 23:** Deadline to apply for the University Committee on Research Awards, which distributes grants for the PSC-CUNY Research Awards Program. E-mail Stasia.Pasela@mail.cuny.edu.

**SUNDAY APRIL 25:** March for Women's Right to Choose in Washington, D.C. For more information contact Norah Chase of the PSC Women's Committee at 212-354-1252.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28:** The PSC negotiating team will present demands for Welfare Fund improvement that afternoon. Members will demonstrate outside in support. For time and place, check www.psc-cuny.org or call (212) 354-1252.

**FRIDAY APRIL 30 / 3:00 pm:** PSC Academic Freedom Committee meeting. At the PSC, 25 W. 43rd St. Contact Steve Leberstein at 212-354-1252.

**MONDAY, MAY 24:** The CUNY Board of Trustees meets in the afternoon; PSC members will rally to demand a strong contract. Check www.psc-cuny.org or call (212) 354-1252 for time and details.

**FRIDAY JUNE 4:** PSC pre-retirement conference. More details next issue.

## LABOR &amp; MANAGEMENT

# Labor relations on campus

By JAY APPLEMAN and ALEXANDRA TARASKO

One of PSC's slogans is, "Another university is possible." The transformation of the University will require not only a major infusion of money, but also a new climate and culture on our campuses.

The state of campus-based labor-management relations varies widely across CUNY. Some chapters enjoy good relations, others "tolerable" ones, and some face outright antagonism.

At Queensborough Community College, we are fortunate to have a good working relationship with the college administration. From other PSC chapter chairs and grievance officers, we know that every union chapter is not so lucky. At QCC, it is taken as a simple, commonsense premise that good labor-management relations result in a win-win-win situation – for administration, faculty and staff, and students.

Although the labor-management relationship is by nature "adversarial," it need not be difficult, contentious or rancorous. Both labor and management can set a tone that is respectful and productive for both sides, with little or no expenditure of negative energy. At QCC, both sides are committed to a holistic, positive model of the labor-management relationship, and this has been a great boon to the campus community.

Good labor-management relations depend on work and commitment by both parties in three interrelated areas: respectful communication; organization; and education.

## RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION

President Martí came to QCC in Fall 2000. He was soon faced with a very difficult departmental leadership situation and needed to act decisively. This he did in a manner consistent with CUNY Bylaws and in consultation with the affected faculty. Early on, he made a point of reaching out to faculty and staff, to make it known that one of his highest values was mutual respect between the administration and *all* other college constituencies – faculty, staff, students, alumni and the community at large.

Labor welcomed the opportunity to forge a new relationship with management. For example, we initiated the inclusion of CLT and HEO representatives at our labor-management meetings, and management welcomed the idea. We jointly agreed to rotate meeting sites between the president's office and a faculty lounge, and to rotate the chairing of the meetings. Both sides realize that a key function of these meetings is "grievance avoidance": when either side anticipates a possible conflict concerning the contract and/or the bylaws, it will carefully outline to the other the issues at hand.

## AGREEMENTS

For example, the QCC administration was interested in increasing the involvement of faculty in academic advising and mentoring. The union viewed this as a workload issue, which is covered by the contract. Management therefore agreed that faculty could not be mandated to take on additional advising. In another instance, management informed

us that they wished to fully exercise their prerogative to conduct annual HEO evaluations, as provided for in the contract.

Each side acknowledges, of course, that the grievance process must be used when all other avenues have been exhausted, and indeed, grievances at QCC involving non-reappointment and denial of promotion have been handled in a straightforward and *timely* fashion. Meeting the deadlines in the grievance procedure is a critical part of respectful communication and is treated as such by QCC management. As we know

president for academic affairs, collectively referring to themselves as the "kitchen cabinet," meets to tackle issues arising from CUNY Central or college governance. The chair of the chairs' group, Maureen Wallace, says, "We feel free to communicate openly with members of the Administration... without feeling politically threatened when disagreements occur." We consider the chairs' group to be an integral link in the communications loop between labor and management. This might seem like common sense, but colleagues tell us that some CUNY col-

partment has an individual who serves as the "eyes and ears" of the chapter in that department. We also have an adjunct coordinator, Peter Bales, to provide part-timers with information on their contract rights and encourage them to sign union cards.

Including HEO and CLT representatives at labor-management meetings makes the meetings more effective. "Communication between labor and management is at an all-time high," says CLT representative Tom Shemanski. "The dialogue with management has been meaningful and productive," says HEO representative Arthurine DeSola, "and has given us the opportunity to build bridges." DeSola says this has also been true in the campus HEO labor-management committee created under the current contract.

## EDUCATION

Both labor and management need to do a good job of educating the appropriate individuals about how contract provisions play out in the day-to-day operations of the college. In addition to new faculty orientations, the QCC chapter organized a day-long program for department reps at which PSC President Barbara Bowen spoke, and has worked closely with our department chairs to answer questions in the recent CUNY-wide dispute over summer pay for chairs.

On the management side, the labor designee on each campus plays a key role in keeping all individuals in campus administration "up to speed" on contract provisions. QCC's labor designee, Liza Larios, conducts thorough informational sessions for newly elected department chairs and apprises them of the contractual responsibilities inherent in their new position. The PSC's grievance officer at QCC has been invited to attend these sessions, and the two worked on a joint presentation to the chairs on both the labor and management perspectives of the grievance process.

In the end, this is all about making QCC a better place to work. When the input of faculty and staff is valued, the result is not only a more pleasant atmosphere but better decisions. "The establishment of administrative procedures that protect the tenets of the academy is the most important benefit of good and honest communication," says President Martí – and we strongly agree. Dr. Martí may have adopted some aspects of the corporate model in running the college, but the culture is still definitely that of an educational institution.

When labor and management understand three things: 1) despite differences, there is great potential for cooperation based on a common goal of advancement of the college as a whole; 2) problems can often be seen as opportunities; and 3) mutual respect is an ethic to be highly valued – then we will be doing our part to show that "another university is possible."

Jay Appleman is Chapter Chair and Alexandra Tarasko is Grievance Officer of the Queensborough Chapter of the PSC.

The authors wish to thank QCC Chapter Vice Chair Phil Pecorino for supplying the original impetus for writing this article, as well as for his valuable ideas and suggestions.



from our colleagues at other campuses, when management ignores contractual deadlines it can cause friction that is both severe and unnecessary.

Beyond immediate contractual issues, both sides at QCC also use labor-management meetings as a forum to elicit reactions from each other on concerns ranging from CUNY's proposed extension of the tenure clock to campus scheduling patterns.

On occasion, serious issues arise that require immediate attention, and one side requests a meeting with all concerned parties. In a culture of respectful communication, a meeting takes place as soon as possible. When a building was undergoing repairs, faculty were concerned about possible asbestos exposure and wanted answers fast. A meeting took place within 24 hours among the affected department members, health and safety officers for both labor and management, the dean responsible for campus facilities, the B&G supervisor and the contractor doing the work. At the end of a sometimes heated discussion, faculty were satisfied that their concerns had been addressed.

At QCC, department chairs have regularly scheduled meetings, open only to themselves and their invitees, and will consult with the union chapter when contractual issues arise, such as summer chair salary or reassigned time for new faculty. A subset of the chairs' group, together with the vice

lege presidents have resisted recognizing any role for independent meetings of department chairs.

Over time, on a campus where there is respectful communication, a sense of trust will develop. Neither side will be concerned about the other "pulling a fast one." This trust, however, is fragile and needs to be nurtured and valued by all.

## ORGANIZATION

Labor-management relations are strengthened when each side operates in an organized and consistent fashion. Meetings are more productive when the same cast of characters is always present. At QCC, labor is represented by the chapter chair, vice chair, secretary, grievance officer and the same HEO and CLT representatives. The president is always accompanied by the same cabinet members and the labor designee.

On many campuses, the administration conducts orientations every semester for new adjunct and full-time faculty and staff. At QCC, the PSC chapter is invited to be a part of these sessions, to make a presentation to the union to all new hires.

Active member involvement is required for the union to fulfill its role of representing faculty and staff concerns. To that end, in addition to a newsletter and regular meetings, we have formalized a departmental representative structure, wherein each de-

**Mutual respect is a win-win.**

## CONTRACT ENFORCEMENT

# An injury to one is an injury to all

By STEVE LONDON

PSC First VP and Chair, PSC Contract Enforcement Committee

The PSC-CUNY contract is just words on a page unless our members know their rights and are willing to enforce them. While most CUNY managers attempt to apply the contract in good faith, too often the contract's language is ignored or creatively dismissed. In response, the PSC has stepped up membership education and its efforts to enforce members' individual and collective rights.

The union has broadened the traditional grievance approach, which focuses on individual dispute resolution, to an organizing model of contract enforcement that aims to strengthen legal union rights through member action. A broadened approach is needed because CUNY management's persistent violations of the contract are part of its strategic plan to reshape the University.

The contract is an agreement between CUNY and the PSC; it belongs equally to both sides. Yet CUNY routinely fails to meet time limits at the first and second steps of the grievance process, delaying resolution of disputes. Letters of appointment for adjuncts are not issued on time, titles are misused, contractually guaranteed released time is not granted, terms and conditions of employment established by past practice are unilaterally changed, contractually guaranteed course load maximums are ignored – and the list goes on.

## CHEAP LABOR

So what motivates CUNY management to violate its agreement? The reasons are large and small. First, part of the chancellor's strategic response to the lack of adequate funding is the creation of a "shadow university" based on low-cost, contingent labor. CUNY is underfunded and management seeks to perform instructional work as cheaply as possible, often in ways that violate the contract: using existing titles inappropriately, not paying correct pay rates, negotiating prohibited individual contracts, etc. *Clarion's* articles on the shadow university (see pp. 6-8) describe some of these practices.

Second, the national trend to reorganize higher education along corporate lines is being applied here at CUNY. Increased centralization, hierarchy, commercialization, arbitrariness in decision-making, insecurity, and a resultant loss of faculty and professional staff autonomy are all aspects of the process of corporatization.

Since many provisions of the current contract stand in the way of a more centralized,



Adam Vanderhoof

corporate management for CUNY or restrict expansion of the shadow university, the contract is viewed as an impediment to be circumvented, not an agreement to be honored.

Third, some campus presidents and labor designees are less than collegial in their approach to the instructional staff. Whether this is a response to corporatization or stems from more personal attributes, contract enforcement on these campuses is a constant struggle.

In response to these trends, the PSC is now devoting more resources to contract enforcement. Defending and extending our contract rights is a job for every union member, so education and training are key. If members don't know their rights, we can be sure of one thing: those rights will be violated.

Director of Contract Administration Debra Bergen conducts workshops for new members on campuses across CUNY. A CUNY-wide workshop April 16-17 will educate members about their contract rights

and the attacks on those rights by CUNY (see Calendar, p. 9). Contract enforcement committees are being organized on each campus to help develop a team of members who can work with chapter leadership.

## MORE RESOURCES

More resources are being devoted to grievance handling. Michael Fikes has been hired to fill the new post of Assistant Director of Contract Administration, and the number of grievance counselors in the union's central office has been increased. Bergen has developed an 8-week training program for grievance reps, and in the last three years a whole new generation of grievance counselors has been recruited and trained as veteran counselors have retired. The union now has a diverse corps of counselors able to respond to all of our members, full-time and part-time, across all job classifications.

The union Executive Council established a Contract Enforcement Committee (CEC) to coordinate all the union's efforts and devel-

op new policies to help members use and defend their rights. The CEC has been on the lookout for problems that recur, which may require a broader response, and has taken an aggressive stance toward CUNY's contract violations. While relying on the traditional tools of grievances and arbitration, the CEC has also emphasized membership mobilization and use of the Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) to challenge unfair labor practices.

We have used PERB as an effective forum to enforce our rights. For example, the PSC won two favorable PERB settlements to stop management violations of State labor law at Hostos and Bronx Community Colleges. The settlements strongly endorsed the PSC's right to information needed to enforce the contract, and prohibited interference with union representatives' ability to communicate with members and advocate on their behalf.

## INCREASED ACTIVITY

The clash between management's corporate agenda and the union's response can be seen in the number and type of individual grievances filed. The number of grievances initiated for the 2002-2003 academic year was 40% above pre-2000 levels.

Because CUNY's managers are pursuing structural changes, many more grievances are now group and University-wide actions. Recent examples include grievances over CUNY's failure to pay department chairs appropriately for summer work, its failure to include child care teachers in the bargaining unit and safety and health grievances at CCNY and Queens that involved all affected members.

Whether University-wide or on a single campus, group grievances can help to mobilize members to enforce important collective rights. When City Tech management refused to implement the one-credit teaching load reduction won in the current contract, the City Tech PSC chapter and supporters from other campuses rallied in front of 80th Street as a Step II hearing went on inside.

If union members across CUNY know their rights and act when those rights are violated, they not only protect themselves against abuse – they also oppose the corporatization of CUNY.

Every member has a role to play, by being alert for contract violations. And every member should know that whenever the contract is violated, the union stands ready to fight for members' rights. Contract enforcement is properly the concern of the entire union... because an injury to one is an injury to all.

## Mobilizing members through grievances

## Clarion APRIL 2004

Newspaper of the Professional Staff Congress/City University of New York, collective bargaining representative of the CUNY instructional staff. Vol. 33, No. 3. PSC/CUNY is affiliated with the American Association of University Professors, 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, 25 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036. Telephone: (212) 354-1252. Web site: www.psc-cuny.org. E-mail: phogness@psccmail.org. All opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the PSC.

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## Word for word

"KFC is committed to the well-being of chickens."

— A company representative speaking to the *Daily News*, responding to charges that KFC suppliers raise chickens in cruel and abusive conditions.

## POLITICS

# Free higher ed!

By MARK DUDZIC & ADOLPH REED JR.

**A**s the 2004 election campaign heats up, Democrats are sounding feistier than at any time in years. But is that posture enough to defeat George Bush in 2004? Probably not.

It's not just their greater combativeness that has given Republicans an electoral edge. They have been much more adept than Democrats at articulating neat, clean positions and yoking them to a larger social vision that speaks to people's hopes and anxieties and that contrasts sharply with the worldviews attributed to their opponents.

A key part of this strategy is defining wedge issues that divide the electorate in ways that will deliver a voting majority. A good wedge issue works because it can fasten a broad constituency to an apparently simple program that resonates symbolically with widely shared concerns and notions of a properly ordered society.

For decades now, Democrats have generally confined their use of wedge issues in defense of the remnants of the New Deal social contract and the more recent advances of the civil rights and women's movements. Not since the Medicare debates of the mid-1960s have Democrats attempted to mobilize a national consensus around a new social right that applies to all Americans.

## WHOSE PARTY?

It surely is more than a coincidence that during this same time period, the public image of the Democratic Party has shifted from the "party of the people" to the "party of special interests," the label devised by its opponents. It certainly doesn't help that the Democratic defense of those battered programs is often pro forma and concessionary.

This campaign season offers a wedge issue that has real potential for progressives – and for any politician bold enough to see its significance: free higher education. Make every public institution of higher education free for all who meet the admissions standards. No means testing, no service or work requirements, no minimum or maximum ages. Just make it free for all.

Free higher education is a simple idea that has a profound resonance with the shared values of the American people. Recent polls have shown that more than 80 percent agree that a college diploma is essential

to success. Seventy percent think higher education is being priced beyond the income of the average family – and they're right. Tuition at public colleges and universities (where 83 percent of all students are) rose 47 percent for the ten years ending with 2003-04. Last year every state in the union raised public-college tuition, while staff and services were severely cut.

## WEDGE ISSUE

Unlike other needed reforms, such as national health insurance or adequate pensions for all, free higher education does not require a massive redirection of private capital. All that is needed to pay the tuition of anyone attending a public institution is the injection of an additional \$30 billion to \$60 billion of public money.

There really is no mystery here. The numbers are not complex. Public money already flows into the system from state and local sources, while federal funds are committed to Pell Grants, subsidies, loans and myriad other programs. If you stir in the cost of several months of Iraqi occupation, or reinstate the estate tax, everyone who qualifies can go to college free!

Millions of Americans fondly recall the time when huge public institutions like the City University of New York and the California state system were virtually free for all who met the admissions standards. Another potent model is the post-World War II GI Bill of Rights, widely regarded as one of the most successful social programs in US history. Its benefits (free tuition at public or private college plus a living stipend) returned nearly \$7 to the economy and to government for every \$1 spent on GIs' higher education.

During the recent presidential primary season, each of the Democratic candidates spoke to the American people's concerns with the growing crisis in access to higher education. But nearly all of them responded

to the issue by making it overly complicated, calling for a dizzying variety of tax credits, service requirements and grants available to some, but not others. What all these proposals share is a wonkishness that makes them all but incomprehensible to Americans.

By definition, wedge issues must excite the imagination, or fears, of broad sections of the American people. If you need a calcu-



Sacramento Bee/John Decker

Thousands of California community college students protested fee hikes on March 16.

lator to determine whether the proposed solution will benefit you, the issue has pretty much lost its "wedginess."

Only Dennis Kucinich, whose campaign was declared a nonstarter by the news media and punditry and who therefore couldn't be heard, has the right idea – free college for all who qualify, period.

## WORTHY VS. UNWORTHY

Most of the Democrats' proposals also display a tendency to divide the country into those who "play by the rules" and those who don't. This division between the worthy poor and the idle poor has been with us since the days of the workhouse. It was elevated to a high art in the Clinton years. Unlike the children of the rich, the rest of us must prove our worthiness for education by engaging in national service, displaying academic excel-

lence and committing to years of debt service. This elaborate focus on defining subcategories of the population who would be eligible for different benefits in different ways does just the opposite of appealing to a broad constituency. Once again, it sets the stage for the right to pit one group against another.

What causes grown men and women to turn simple public policy proposals into gibberish comprehensible only to pundits inside the Beltway? This failure of nerve can only be explained as a perverse and self-defeating attempt to play the game according to the rules as rewritten by the Republican right. In this game, social rights are bad. They are now called entitlements, and their continued existence will bankrupt the unborn generations. Only property rights are good and must be expanded and enhanced.

Taxes are evil no matter whom they are levied upon so that all new policy proposals must be framed in the language of tax credits or spending offsets.

The desperate desire to appear "responsible" in the eyes of the news show hosts and op-ed writers who appear to control the doors of public discourse is doomed from the start. As any shop steward can tell you, once you start to bargain against yourself you begin the downward spiral of concession after concession. Your opponents perceive you as weak, and your base becomes demoralized and demobilized.

Progressive politics

has to be about more than a set of elaborate policy proposals. We must tie our proposals to a compelling social vision. Our narrative must animate voters and inspire those millions who have written off politics as nothing more than a corrupt rich man's game.

In its arrogance and its hubris, the Bush regime has overplayed its hand and proved its vulnerability. The 2004 elections provide an extraordinary opportunity to be a referendum on what kind of country we want and what its priorities should be. The call for free higher education as a social right could help frame that debate, through election day and beyond.

*Adolph Reed Jr. is professor of political science at New School University and national co-chair, Campaign for Free Higher Education ([www.freehighered.org](http://www.freehighered.org)). Mark Dudzic is national organizer of the Labor Party. A longer version of this article appeared in the February 23 issue of The Nation.*

## Mobilizing for a new social right

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## 15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

### Note to self: save the dates

This month's task takes just a moment – but it's important. Take out your calendar now and write down these two critical dates:  
 ■ **Wednesday, April 28:** The PSC negotiating team will present our demands for Welfare Fund improvement that afternoon. Members will demon-

strate outside in support.

■ **Monday, May 24:** The CUNY Board of Trustees meets in the afternoon; we're marching and rallying to demand a strong contract.

Check [www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org) or call (212) 354-1252 for times and details – and we'll see you there.