In November the PSC did something new in the budget battle: it took the case for CUNY to Washington. Above, President Barbara Bowen and First Vice President Steve London outside the Capitol, where they pressed for federal aid to help rebuild the University. Earlier this year the union had won pledges of increased funding from the New York City Council, state legislators and Governor Pataki – but after September 11, the PSC had to change gears quickly to organize against proposed budget cuts.

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UNION’S MESSAGE

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AAUP VIEWPOINT

Academic freedom after September 11

Analysis of the September 11 terrorist attack and how to respond have been topics of bitter debate – as well as an occasion for threats and intimidation. The head of the AAUP speaks out.

HEALTH

Indoor air quality problems at CUNY

The WTC disaster has caused some unusual problems with indoor air quality at BMCC. Unhealthy indoor air is also common at other CUNY campuses: here’s what you can do.

CONTRACT

Questions & answers on the negotiations

The PSC and CUNY management are in the midst of “expedited negotiations.” What’s at stake, and where is it likely to go? News on the back page, plus answers to members’ questions.

Campus Equity Week at CUNY

PSC members join with 100 other campuses across North America.
CLIP teachers hurt by “part-time” label

The reality is full-time work

By CLARION STAFF

Those who teach English as a second language often highlight incorrect word use in student essays. So faculty in the CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP) are quick to take a red pen to their des- ignated sections as “part-time” workers.

CLIP faculty spend far more time teaching in the classroom than full-time lecturers, who have the heavy-est classroom load among CUNY “full-timers.” Of course, lecturers spend considerable time on duties outside the classroom. So do CLIP teachers, who are expected to de-vote many hours to tasks related to program development.

But CLIP teachers are classified as continuing education teachers, and all CUNY continuing education teachers not paid through the Research Foundation are defined as part-time employees, according to the bylaws of the Board of Trustees.

Unlike all other CUNY faculty, continuing education teachers have neither salary steps nor salary ranges. They only receive across-the-board contractual pay hikes. Be-cause these across-the-board in- creases have never kept pace with in- flation since inception in 1995, the program’s most senior teachers now earn 3% less in inflation-adjust- ed dollars than they did six years ago. Starting annual pay has never changed, so after inflation, new CLIP teachers today earn 16.7% less than new teachers did in 1995.

UNION NOTICES CHANGE

Benefits are also problematic. CLIP teachers receive only seven sick days per year and cannot bank unused days for future use. This compares with 20 temporary dis- ability days for full-timers, who can bank unused days. And unlike full-timers, CLIP faculty must either- teach summer classes or go without health insurance and TRS pension credit in July and August. Also un-like full-timers, CLIP faculty are in- eligible for parental leave, tuition waivers or pensions through TIAA-CREF.

The PSC has vowed to change this situation. The union believes CLIP teachers are full-time faculty, who should be classified as lan- guage immersion teachers and should have the same benefits and salary schedule as other full-time lecturers.

Late last month, the director of BM- CC’s CLIP program, agrees that change is imperative. “We believe our fa-vorite teachers in CLIP and students receive tremendous benefits from the teachers’ dedicated and highly skilled performance,” says Barnett.

“As a director, I’m seriously con- cerned about losing these superior teachers because of the unjust fi-nancial situation and inadequate benefits.”

Melissa Brand Nathan is one teacher who has already left. She taught at LaGuardia Community College in CLIP, where she found her work “rewarding and challenging.” But she chose to leave the program, to some extent out of frustration. “At CLIP,” says Brand Nathan, “the teachers were dedicated and professional and unfortunately, according to the City, expendable.”

ACADEMIC PIECEWORK?

Ellen Ballenstein, a CLIP teacher at Bronx Community College, points out that she and her colleagues are encouraged to create elaborate cur- ricula present their work at confer- ences and devote time to discussion of program-wide issues. “These re- sponsibilities imply we’re career professionals,” she says. “Yet when I attended a collective bargaining session, management’s negotia-tion team claimed CLIP teachers were hourly workers by design. This im- plies management sees us as acade-mic pieceworkers.”

Balleisen adds, “CLIP teachers take pride in helping to develop an exciting new program. But we can’t be career professionals while we’re also pieceworkers whose pay rates constantly lose value. That’s why we’re fighting to change our con-tractual status.”

DUMP TRUCKS, DIESEL FUMES AND GREAT CLOUDS OF DUST

● I am a ten-year BMCC adjunct whose class was relocated to a trailer on West St., right across the highway from the barge port. The trailers themselves are fine, but the faculty and students must walk outside along decks on West St. to get there or to reach the bathrooms. Even with win-dows closed, the dust seeps inside. Picture this scene: streams of dump trucks arrive, bringing rub- ble from the site. The debris is nois-ily dropped or hurled by cranes onto barge to the barge port. The dump trucks, diesel fumes and great clouds of dust

Free speech concerns us all

Thanks for the excellent article on the assault on First Amendment rights at Hostos, which is a puz- zlement. What about adjuncts? They can join TRS but not TIAA-CREF. How about some action to give adjuncts a choice?

— Maggie Block

Adjudants need TIAA/CREF

Recent notices indicate that full-time faculty who are paid as adjuncts for overload teaching are now eligible to have those hours applied as pensionable credit. What about adjuncts? They can join TRS but not TIAA-CREF. How about some action to give adjuncts a choice?

“Equity” should include pension systems and credit applied for by every- one’s work. Many adjuncts would prefer TIAA/CREF. It is portable (TRS is not) to other states and to private colleges. There is voting after 13 months. Our talent- ed adjuncts do find full-time work else-where and portability not only means credit for adjunct work but immediate pensionability. Addi- tionally, as one who’s contributed to TIAA/CREF (via previous teaching), I note that the dollars I’ve invested there will be worth more to me than comparable ser- vice under TRS.

PSC informs me this issue is be- ing negotiated. A colleague says that part-time administrative staff at the Research Foundation who works in the same office as she does are re- quired to participate in TIAA/CREF. Thus, a precedent ex- ists for inclusion of part-time em- ployees in TIAA/CREF at CUNY.

PSC must make a concerted ef- fort (like that to include full-timers) to have underpaid part-time faculty eligible for both systems. It would be one small step for equity for adjuncts.

— Sylvia Raczk

Bauert

Thanks for the poetry

I just read the latest Clarion, your October 2001 issue and want- ed to tell you how good I think it is. The format is inviting, concise and readable. Of course, I turned to the poetry first — what a terrific idea. The way you treat the WTC thren- der, putting it in real terms of mem- bers’ personal experiences and is- sues of free speech, etc., is thought- ful and thought-provoking. In all, the paper is a serious and action- encouraging document. Thanks.

— Henry Lesnick

The current economic crisis has led to widespread layoffs and to proposals for catastrophic budget cuts at public institutions like CUNY. The business community is well represented by George Bush and the Republican Party in Con- gress. As working people, we need an independent strident voice. We cannot allow the wealthy to shift the costs of this war onto the backs of working people. During the legal battle over last year’s presidential election, local AFL-CIO leaders such as Randy Wongarten and Dennis Rivera or- ganized a large demonstration in Times Square. I was very moved to be with my brothers and sisters from other unions. As budget cuts and layoffs grow, we must do more than lobby and write letters to educate the public. I hope that the AFL-CIO leadership will see the necessity for engaging in a campaign that will put people on the streets. The prosecution of this war and calls for patriotism must not be used as an excuse for policies that enrich the few at the expense of workers and our communities. The voices of working people in this city and around the country need to be heard on the streets, in the offices of government and in the corpo- rate boardrooms.

— Lorraine Cohen

LaGuardia

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A year of gains in jeopardy
Union fights to rescue CUNY budget

By MICHAEL KRAUSER
Queen College and PETER HOMESSE

After a year of lobbying by the PSC that promised significant budget increases for CUNY, the union has seen the ground shift under its feet. Faced with the double impact of the World Trade Center disaster and an economic slowdown, the PSC had to change gears quickly to oppose a series of threatened budget cuts.

Though it has not made headlines, another factor is having a fundamental effect on CUNY’s fortunes: the cumulative effect of years of tax cuts for New York’s wealthiest citizens. “Governor Pataki has given away so much money in tax breaks for the rich that we were broke before September 11,” said State Sen. Eric Schneiderman.

In October, Mayor Giuliani ordered city agencies to put 15% of their budget into a “re- source pool,” was demanded from police, fire and the Board of Education. But the Giuliani administration demanded that CUNY’s community colleges up come with the full 15%, a total of $18.2 million. Since most of CUNY’s Fall spending decisions had already been made, this would translate into more like a 25% reduction in the Spring semester. CUNY’s central administration asked the mayor’s cuts be implemented, 749 community college employees would be laid off, and close to 300 instructional staff.

Gains in City funding that the PSC had won four months before were now threatened, and the union mounted a major campaign against the mayor’s plan. Union chapters mobilized to contact the City Council and organized meetings with senior al key members. PSC members from Borough of Manhattan Community College voted especially strong ob- jection to the cuts, given the damage the school had suffered in the September 11 attack.

A week and a half before the may- or council election, Republican Michael Bloomberg said that imposing a 15% cut on community colleges would be “penury wise, pound foolish.” PSC President Barbara Bowen, raised at BMCC on October 15, said, “The entire budget process collapsed. After months of deadlock, the legislature passed a ‘bare- bones’ budget even smaller than the governor’s original proposal, gambling that public outrage would force Pataki to agree to supplemental spending later.”

But a faltering economy allowed Pataki to delay, and the costs of the World Trade Center attacks have now allowed him and other conser- vatives to propose deep cuts in pro- grams that, in many cases, they did not support in the first place. A sup- plemental budget that finally passed in late October provided $200 million ($100 million each for the Senate and Assembly) to allocate to social ser- vices, far less than these programs have received in the past.

Throughout these twists and turns, the PSC has worked to secure support for CUNY — first with a mass postcard campaign, and then with legislative strategies to link CUNY programs to broader pools of state funding. With the Legislature expected to reconvene in mid-December, the PSC is asking mem- bers to apply some last-minute pres- sure (see page 12). At Clarion press time, plans were in the works for a mass rally on December 5, at BMCC linking arms around the building in a call to “invest in the people of New York.”

The budget crisis has sparked calls to re-examine the program of tax cuts that has dominated state fiscal policy for a decade. Legislative leaders have indicated that they might consider postponing the next round of phased-in tax breaks.

“Pataki plans to muzzle through this crisis with the same tired for- mula — tax cuts for the wealthy, an increase in the subway fare and tu- ition hikes at SUNY and CUNY,” said Sen. Schneiderman. “We need a statewide campaign against this. We have to make this unacceptable.”

On November 1, PSC officers did something new: they took the case for CUNY to Washington. “CUNY was directly hurt by the attack on the WTC, especially BM- CU and the Research Foundation,” said PSC President Barbara Bowen. “But the financial impact on the Uni- versity goes beyond the terrible physical damage. And the PSC’s ass- sessment of what is needed goes be- yond the immediate costs; we seek the kind of investment that would allow CUNY to be a central part of New York’s resurgence.”

When American Federation of Teachers President Sandra Feld- man asked Bowen how the PSC could help the PSC after this disas- ter, Bowen asked for help with Con- gress on federal aid. Feldman made this a special project, and directed the PSC’s considerable lobbying op- eration to make it a priority.

The PSC’s Legislative Depart- ment developed proposed language and briefing materials with the PSC. Bowen and PSC President Steve London then traveled to Washington and met with Ann O’Leary, deputy legislative director for Sen. Hillary Clinton, who pledged the Senator’s support.

Support from both senators
The PSC followed up with Sen. Chuck Schumer, and both Clinton and Schumer have been working to secure Congressional support for the proposal. The proposed language would provide $75 million to help colleges in the WTC area with the costs of re- suming normal operations, includ- ing “the replacement of whole build- ings and classrooms,” plus $25 mil- lion for other expenses such as lost tuition. Also part of the request was an $8.7 million proposal by the PSC to addresses the need of displaced workers and maintain open access to community colleges.

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Campus Equity Week puts adjuncts on the map
International campaign for part-timer parity comes to CUNY

Ingrid Hughes, BMCC
Rich Moser, AUP
Eileen Bobrove, Camden College
Vincent Renzi, NYU

BY MARCIA NEWFIELD
BMCC

From October 28 to November 3, every major faculty union and association in the U.S. and Canada joined together to promote equal treatment for adjuncts, who now make up 60-65% of the academic workforce. Campus Equity Week marked the first time there had ever been such coordinated action on behalf of part-time faculty.

From Acadia University in Nova Scotia to Whatcom Community College in Washington state, there were events at more than 100 colleges across North America. They ranged from rallies to teach-ins to theater. (A complete list of campuses, plus event reports and organizing resources, are available on the Web at www.cewaction.org.)

The week’s first event at CUNY was a PSC-sponsored panel on “Adjunct Equity in the University,” held October 30th at the Graduate Center. The wide-ranging discussion tackled both the big picture and nitty-gritty detail. Nick Unger, mobilization director of the NYC Central Labor Council, questioned whether the PSC’s emphasis on equal pay for adjuncts was counterproductive to developing careers. Unger argued that raising the salaries of adjuncts does not give them more job security.

For STRUCTURAL CHANGE

PSC President Barbara Bowen differed, and made the case for a two-track approach. “As a union you must address the needs of your most exploited workers,” said Bowen. “On the other hand, you have to make structural change, improving conditions for part-time teachers begins to effect structural change.” AAUP National Field Representative Rich Moser proposed conversion lines for those who have spent years serving the university.

Vincent Renzi, an adjunct assistant professor of classics at NYU, talked about the experience of other unions representing contingent labor, such as Actors’ Equity, the American Federation of Musicians, the National Writers Union and the Boilermakers Union, and the lessons they might hold for adjuncts.

PSC Community College Officer Ingrid Hughes, an adjunct at BMCC, focused on the practical challenges of enrolling adjuncts in the union. “Adjuncts are often too much on the run to stop and get educated on how the union can benefit them.” While the PSC’s adjunct membership has grown from 800 to 2200, Hughes noted that there are 5000 more to sign up.

Eileen Bobrove, executive vice president of the Camden College Adjunct Faculty Federation, whose contract includes an agency fee provision, described how her local had tackled the problem. “We try everything,” she said. “We had a bus with bagels and wine raffles and the Solidarity Singers.”

Larry Gold, Director of AFT High Education, added an optimistic note from the floor: “The biggest historical shift is that the majority of full-time faculty now has come around to see that this issue involves them.” He noted that pay equity falls passed in Washington and California have set new standards. Panelists pointed out that wages for full-time academics, adjusted for inflation, are at the same level as in 1972. Thus, contrary to “zero-sum thinking,” the evidence suggests that low pay for adjuncts has not been good for full-timers.

CULTURAL ACTION

On November 1 at BMCC, “Campus Equity Day” featured 15 adjunct performances of prose, poetry, guitar and song. Kate Walter read a moving piece about the “job” she became attached to during the weeks that BMCC was closed: greeting rescue workers. Mary Ann Carlesse, the PSC’s organizing director, did a juggling routine – an appropriate metaphor for adjunct life.

Thane Doss’s lyrics served as a postscript: “My teeth are decaying, my glasses are old, so teach with your mouth shut! The message I told: I’ve no time for dentistry! But grading’s hard when you simply can’t see... Where’s the eye that’s for my eyes? Where’s the teeth for my teeth?”

To obtain Adjunct Equity stickers or buttons, contact Mary Ann Carlesse at 312-354-1252.

CFD: Call for Diaries

The Committee on Adjunct Affairs is gathering information on the lives of CUNY adjuncts and would like to document what a typically busy week involves. The Committee is asking all adjuncts to select one week during the semester to keep a comprehensive diary (what you did, where, for how long, etc. – i.e. not just your teaching). Please send completed diaries to the PSC, Attn: Eric Marshall (25 W. 43rd St, NY, NY 10036) or email them to empjc@ad.com.

Segarra won’t turn over her schedule
Ignores demand from CUNY’s top lawyer

BY PETER HOGNESS

The top lawyer for the City University of New York has demanded that Ninfa Segarra turn over records of her work schedule at her CUNY job, but Segarra has refused to comply.

Segarra is paid $115,000 a year as a Vice President of the CUNY Research Foundation. A close ally of Mayor Giuliani, she is also President of the Board of Education.

Last summer Clinton reported that Segarra is rarely seen in her CUNY office, and that she refused to answer questions about how many hours a week she works at that job. But since CUNY is a public institution, Segarra’s schedule is public information. On August 29, Clinton filed a request under New York State’s Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), asking for copies of all records of Segarra’s work schedule “in performance of her duties as Vice President for Intercampus Collaboration.” The request specifically included “computer software and records used to schedule appointments.”

On September 6, CUNY Records Access Officer David Fields asked Segarra’s staff for this information. Six weeks later, CUNY General Counsel Frederick P. Schaffer wrote to Segarra, telling her he was concerned by “your failure to cooperate.”

Schaffer noted that when the two had spoken in early September, Segarra had told him she had no such records for her CUNY job and that her only schedule was maintained at her Board of Education office for her Board of Education responsibilities.

However, Schaffer wrote, Segarra’s assistant and Segarra later told the records access officer that she did in fact “maintain an appointment calendar on a computer at [Segarra’s] CUNY office that includes appointments relating to [her] work for the University.” But he had not been allowed “to obtain a calendar, or related notes, memoranda or telephone logs.”

Schaffer wrote that he had decided to put these concerns in writing because “I have left several messages for you over the last two weeks, but you have not returned my calls.” CUNY’s top lawyer insisted that Segarra turn over her schedule records so that the University can “fulfill its obligation under the law.”

Segarra and Schaffer did not respond to requests for comment. Clinton obtained the Schaffer letter through a second FOIL request, which asked for any correspondence related to the first. “Our CLTs work their hearts out for CUNY for $27,000 a year,” commented PSC President Barbara Bowen. “Our adjuncts are paid $13,000 for an entire semester’s labor. It’s not just a question of how many hours a week they work. I hope it’s not true that CUNY is paying someone $115,000 a year to do little or nothing – especially when there is such pressure on the budget.”

By MARCIA NEWFIELD

Ingrid Hughes, BMCC
Nick Unger, Central Labor Council
Rich Moser, AUP
Eileen Bobrove, Camden College
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City College teach-in at center of storm

BY PETER HOGNESS

City College’s October 2 teach-in on terrorism and war began with a moment of silence in honor of the victims of the September 11 attacks. The panelists who followed included the director of a Middle East research center, the head of CCNY’s political science department, an anthropologist who teaches on peoples of the Middle East and the head of the school’s student government. They spoke on the history of Islamic movements, the nature of terrorism, backlash against Arabs and Muslims in the US and more. Panelists expressed both opposition and support for US military action, and both sides received applause.

THOUGHT-PROVOKING

At the program’s end, Sarah Williams, wife of CCNY President Gregory Williams, summed up her reaction: “I feel so grateful to the University, because since September 11 I’ve been spending probably at least an hour every day with the New York Times trying to get information and I feel so cheated and empty-handed. But I’ve heard so much today in this really terrific forum, with substantive...thought-provoking information.”

To most who attended, the articles in the next day’s New York Post read like a description of some other event. “CCNY Bashes America,” one headline screamed. “Once-er event. “CCNY Bashes America,” another screamed. “Sedition” and “un-American,” according to the Associated Press. Federal law states that those found “seditious” and “un-American,” according to the Associated Press. Federal law states that those found guilty of sedition can be jailed for up to 20 years. Clarion’s staff, said, “Once proud Campus a Breeding Ground for Idiots,” declared another. The Post declared that “the fuzzy headed academics” had “ranted” for two hours of “anti-Americanism.” The Post’s account was full of errors. For example, it reported that “the terrorists were foiled described as ‘freedom fighters.’” In fact, a videotape of the entire event shows that this phrase was only used once, to make the point opposite. Moderator Marma Fernandez, head of CCNY’s International Studies Program, said “Freedom fighters engage in acts of war; terrorists engage in criminal acts. What happened on September 11 was done by criminals.”

The Post’s inaccurate attack on City College, its professors and the Post itself, based on a nerve among members of the Board of Trustees. CCNY trustees Jeffrey Weisenfeld and John Calladina said that they would introduce a Board resolution condemning those who spoke at the teach-in. “I would consider that behavior seditionist at the time,” Weisenfeld told the Post. Calladina and Weisenfeld’s resolution slammed the teach-in as both “seditionist and ‘un-American,’ according to the Associated Press. Federal law states that those found guilty of sedition can be jailed for up to 20 years. Clarion later asked Weisenfeld whether he in fact believed that CCNY faculty should be jailed for their remarks at a public forum. “There’s the criminal aspect and the moral aspect,” Weisenfeld replied. “Morally speaking, it was sedition.” He insisted that “this has nothing to do with freedom of speech.”

On October 3 CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein issued a statement that appeared to take the Post’s description of the teach-in at face value, condemning “those who seek to justify or make lame excuses for the attacks on the WTC” and the Pentagon. Goldstein added that the nation must avoid “compromising the free exchange of ideas,” but never specified what that means.

The “PSC defends absolutely the First Amendment rights of our members and our students,” said an October 5 statement from the PSC, which noted that “it is the responsibility of scholars to seek understanding of even the most horrific of acts.”

NOT ON THE AGENDA?

Beth Schmidt, the BVO’s vice chair, opened the Board’s October 15 public hearing by saying that there would be no resolution regarding CCNY on the Board’s agenda for the following week. That was welcomed by faculty and students in attendance, who testified that adopting Goldstein’s statement would mean official censure by the Board and would have a chilling effect on dissent, especially among those without tenure. But at the BOV meeting on the 22nd, former deputy mayor Randy Mastro moved that the Board endorse the Goldstein statement. This surprise move was greeted with cries of protest from faculty and students in the audience. Mastro’s motion was seconded by Calladina and the only discussion was Weisenfeld’s statement in support. It passed without opposition, Trustees John Mourning and Richard New Obtain Lawrence abstaining. Afterwards, Schmidt told Clarion that he had known of Mastro’s intentions for several days.

Since there has been many

Free speech or “sedition”?

A PSC Profile: Fran Geteles

Retired counselor helps WTC survivors

BY ELLEN BALESENN

Rome Community College

In the wake of the events of September 11, many PSC members answered the call for volunteers with special expertise. One was Fran Geteles, a retired SEEK counselor from City College who also served as the school’s coordinator of services for disabled students. Geteles isn’t the type to spend retirement relaxing. For more than eight years she’s been doing psychological evaluations of torturers and victims of WTC detention who are seeking political asylum. After the World Trade Center attack she knew she could be of use to those who survived the terrorist attack but felt traumatized by what they had experienced. The week following the attack Geteles worked out of the office of the NYC Central Labor Council (CLC), fielding phone calls from people who had been working at or near the WTC. Sometimes these calls lasted over an hour. “I was on hand both to do the practical things like helping people who had lost their jobs figure out how to find new ones, and to handle calls from people who needed to talk to a psychological expert,” she said.

One caller had serious problems both practically and psychologically. A food server who worked mostly for tips in a restaurant beneath the WTC, he had no pay stubs and was having trouble proving that he had worked there. He was also plagued by nightmares. “He had seen body parts and people jumping from the window,” Geteles recalled. “He is also of Indian descent, so he was experiencing prejudice because of his complexion.”

But he himself was feeling angry toward Muslims, which he acknowledged as a contradiction. “The whole experience was very painful but eventually I worked him up and agreed to try therapy,” Geteles said.

Another caller was a woman who worked for the Transit Authority whose asthma made it impossible for her to work at her customary location in Lower Manhattan. “She couldn’t get in touch with her union, because it was also located near the WTC and she was worried she would be penalized for missing work,” said Geteles. “So I made a lot of phone calls to find out how she could find a union person who could help her.”

Shortly after September 11, the Uniformed Fire Officers Association asked the PSC to help provide counselors for widows and children of firefighters who died in the attack — especially those who worked in the fires and expected the need for mental counseling will continue. Geteles was among over 500 who responded, and she volunteered to help PSC counselor Penny Lewis coordinate the effort. As the immediate shock of the attack is wearing off, the counseling is now taking a different direction. “We’re trying to set up group counseling in the firehouses,” Geteles said, “so we’re looking for counselors with experience working in groups and with issues of grief and trauma.”

CUNY’s WTC survivors have much in common with counseling torture victims from repressive countries, according to Geteles. “In my mind the only difference is that the Trade Center is here and it’s more immediate,” she told Clarion. “In both cases, you’re dealing with extreme trauma that’s man-made. For torture survivors it’s more long-lasting, and the pain and suffering becomes embedded in their personalities. And, on top of all the trauma they’ve experienced in their own countries, we in this country add the trauma by throwing them in jail.”

Geteles testifies in court at the asylum hearings of these torture victims, and is an expert witness in a lawsuit filed in 1997 on behalf of asylum-seekers in INS detention. She worked for a year on evaluations of the psychological impact of conditions in detention, which the lawsuit says are abysmal.

Geteles plans to continue helping WTC survivors and their families, and expects the need for mental health counseling to grow as more people begin to grasp the full extent of what has happened.

“I have all this skill and I’m in a position to be helpful,” she says. “So I tried to use it to help other people.”

At the same time, she adds, “what needs to be done is so huge that I feel I haven’t done very much.”
LABOR’S AGENDA FOR REBUILDING

Jobs, economic security & social justice

From the Five Borough Institute

The thousands who were killed, injured or made homeless in the attack on the World Trade Center include many working people, in many unions affiliated with the Central Labor Council. That alone calls for the Institute, as an academic-labor collaboration, to have a voice in how New York will respond to this tragedy. There will be many dimensions to this response.

Basic Economic Security: The loss of thousands of jobs has deprived thousands of workers and their families of basic economic security. We must insist that they be made whole, not just for weeks or months but for as long as they lack the necessities of life. Help from government should be prompt, generous and readily accessible. For the large numbers of union members who have lost their jobs, one-stop centers should be brought into union halls to make it as easy as possible for them to receive income, health care, housing and help in finding new jobs.

Using Federal Funds: Government is already providing massive financial support to industries that have been affected. A significant share of those funds should go to replace the lost jobs and incomes of ordinary workers. We are especially concerned about those jobs that may never come back - those held by members of UNITE who manufacture clothing, members of Local 32BJ who cleaned the buildings that no longer exist, members of Actors Equity and IATSE hurt by the closing of Broadway shows and loss of tourist; members of Local 100 of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers who prepared and served food in shops that may never reopen.

Job Creation: A generous program of direct job creation funded by the federal and state governments should put people to work repairing the enormous damage we have suffered and replacing lost City tax dollars that support teachers and overturned the home-bound elderly, health care in the city's clinics, and a host of other needs that will help heal the wounds and renew a better quality of life for our people.

Reconstruction: Rebuilding the lost structures must be done thoughtfully and with full participation of organized labor. The very best talent should be enlisted to plan how best to reconstruct the economy of lower Manhattan. Bringing the financial sector back to life is important, but it is not all that is needed. A city facing critical shortages of affordable housing, antiquated schools and an aging infrastructure can put to work the resources that a generous nation will provide to make New York City once again the embodiment of progress, social justice and opportunity for all who seek it. What we do now, and how we do it, will long resonate in our nation and around the world.

The Five Borough Institute (5BI) works to develop sound and progressive public policies. This article, the product of a discussion between the 5BI Executive Committee and NYC Central Labor Council President Brian McLaughlin, originally appeared in 5BI’s October newsletter, available on the Web at www.fiveborough.org.

Let’s not repeat mistakes of the 1970s

By RANDI WEINGARTEN, President
United Federation of Teachers

Since September 11, the labor movement in New York City has been confronted with a new reality, with rebuilding Lower Manhattan and rejuvenileating the city’s economy as top priorities. While the events that brought us to this point are unprecedented, the circumstances we face are not. In fact, they are similar in many respects to those the city grappled with during the fiscal crises of the 1970s, namely a struggling economy, an impending budget deficit and the threat of massive cuts in city services.

As we plan for our future, we must endeavor not to repeat the mistakes of the past. Rebuilding New York City has to involve a partnership of sacrifice, but that sacrifice can’t mean that essential services are so reduced that they can’t recover. The fiscal crisis of the mid-1970s, despite critical investments by the unions, inflicted damage to the city’s schools from which they still have not recovered. We cannot afford to deny another generation the sound basic education they deserve.

Teachers are willing to look at a variety of possible methods to deal with our current problems, but the city can’t make the same mistake in this crisis as it did the last time. A real rebuilding plan will include prudent investment strategies, shared decision-making, maintaining vital services and a commitment by the city and state to look at revenue sources and tax policy, including issues such as reinstating the commuter tax.

In fact, if we are going to rebuild this city as the economic engine it has been for the region and the nation, then good schools for our families and a skilled workforce for our employers must be key elements of any long-term economic recovery. That will require an investment to ensure that we have schools with adequate supplies and equipment as well as competitive salaries to maintain a teaching force with highly qualified educators.

Neither New York nor its economy is permanently crippled by the disaster of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Other cities have recovered from catastrophes to become stronger than ever, and so will we. And there is no economic reason to abandon the goals we had before. It’s true that circumstances have changed, but the fact remains that the needs and goals of the city are still there. And we will never advance these goals in a real and sustained way unless we improve our public schools.

Labor has a history of coming to New York City’s rescue during its times of need, fiscal and otherwise. We can always be counted on to provide the bricks and mortar, the concrete and steel as well as the spirit and sweat to rebuild Lower Manhattan. The disaster of September 11 stands as the greatest tragedy this city has ever experienced, but labor will rise to the challenge once again to help the city move forward, as we always do.
New York
Investing in New York’s future

By ROGER TOUSSAINT, President
Transport Workers Union Local 100

New York is a union town. But, as became tragically evident after September 11, too many New Yorkers are not union members. Alongside many union members hurt by the attack on the World Trade Center, countless nonunion workers also became victims or lost their jobs in the aftermath. For those underpaid professional, clerical, food service, security and maintenance workers and their families, including many women, immigrants and minorities, lack of union representation has made it hard to cope with the impact of the tragedy.

Labor’s vision for rebuilding New York must include improving the living standards and working conditions of nonunion New Yorkers—full-time and part-time, private and public. Organizing efforts like the greengrocery workers’ campaign, Justice for Janitors or the recent organizing efforts at NYU need renewed support.

What would NYC look like if most unionized workers became union members? Working families would be better prepared to face different challenges. Among other things, they would be better positioned to preserve vital public services amidst fiscal austerity. Working New York could have greater influence in City Hall, Albany and Washington, DC.

Public and private sector unions need to partner with community organizations to advocate for job protection, job creation and living wages, including improvements in unemployment insurance and other “safety net” benefits. Measures that require work, such as workers’ compensation, should be preferential hiring when employers change at a given worksite. This would help stabilize union jobs while costing workers or their companies nothing.

Cleancup and rebuilding contracts, as well as government subsidies, should be given only to companies that act as responsible employers, paying living wages and benefits to their workers and respecting their rights. Downtown should be cleaned, built and protected with union labor. All these measures could help ensure that government and private industry do not walk away from their responsibilities to those whose labor keeps our city running. “To do the right thing” is in the city’s self-interest: it will stimulate entire communities and expand our tax base for the future.

Labor must help make New York the safest city in the world. A true partnership between government, business and labor needs to be created to raise the standards and requirements of both unions and non-union security officers. Laws that require security companies to provide adequate training to their workers and pay them good wages and benefits could increase public safety while costing taxpayers nothing. They would also help increase economic justice, most guards are from African American, Afro-Caribbean and Latino communities.

Our movement must also respond creatively to the looming fiscal crisis. Public and private-sector unions must forge a common agenda to rescue our city from an economic abyss. These experiences share important common elements. Workers organized in unions, but also in their communities and in the political arena. They reached across racial, ethnic and gender lines which had divided them, putting into practice that old saw, “An Injury to One is an Injury to All.” They sought to enrich their communities by raising standards for all workers and by increasing the resources available to the public sector. They demanded the revival of a public culture in which workers would receive due recognition, and their own actions directly contributed to its construction. As New York City workers wrestle with how to rebuild the city’s spirit as well. The challenge is for unions to adhere to the core values of our movement as we formulate new policy. Only an organizing, politically active and united labor movement can make sure that the rebuilding of this great city makes our city a better place to live and work.
**NEWS FEATURE**

How has Sept. 11 entered your scholarship or teaching?

In November, Clarion spoke with three PSC members about how the attacks in September 11 affected their work — both in their research and in the classroom.

“**To study communities affected by the backlash...**”

MEHDI BOZORGMEHR
Assistant Professor of Sociology, CCNY & Graduate Center
Co-director, Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center, CUNY Grad Center

Immediately after the World Trade Center was destroyed, the National Science Foundation called for proposals for what they call “quick response” research awards. I contacted them and submitted a grant application within two days; within three-and-a-half days we heard that we would receive it. Out of 14 quick response awards awarded by NSF, we are the only one in NYC.

The focus of our proposal is to study US communities affected by the backlash after the September 11 attacks, particularly South Asian & Middle Eastern American. We are looking at the response of community-based organizations, which have acted as intermediaries between these communities and the larger society. They have set up hotlines to report hate crimes, given talks to educate the public; they have lobbied government. They have been coping with bias incidents and also trying to prevent them.

The project of CUNY’s Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center, which was officially established after September 11, also got final approval from the Board of Trustees six days before September 11. People from outside might think that the Center sprang into being right away, in response to September 11, but in reality it was four years in the making.

Beth Barron and I, the Center’s co-directors, started with the idea of combining ethnic studies and area studies, looking at them together. Within Middle Eastern studies, the Center is the first to explicitly address the Middle Eastern American experience. Other research centers on the Middle East do not focus on the diaspora.

A basic part of the Center’s agenda is to bring together CUNY faculty who are working in these areas. It turns out there are over 50 faculty in the CUNY system who study and teach about the Middle East and Middle Eastern communities here in the US, but nobody had ever pulled them together before.

One way we are doing this is by sponsoring a series of talks. The most recent was on Middle Eastern American philanthropy. This is a topic that’s been in the media and has been somewhat sensationalized but philanthropy is a very integral part of Muslim societies. One of the five central pillars of Islam requires that you give alms; you cannot be a good Muslim if you do not do that.

We have developed a curriculum guide on this, which was finished in August and recently published by the GC’s Center for the Study of Philanthropy.

Another of our goals is to catalog the resources in New York City for studying the Middle East and Middle Eastern Americans. We have the richest Persian and Arabic library collections in the country here in the New York Public Library. The largest collection of Islamic art in the US is at the Metropolitan Museum. Now that there is an even greater demand for learning and knowledge about the Middle East, we feel that New York City has a lot to offer.

“I have never had such a bond with my students.”

YI-CHUN TRICIA LIN
Assistant Professor of English, BMCC

I’m teaching an online course on Asian American literature. On September 11, we were supposed to discuss the Japanese American experience in WWII in our first face-to-face meeting. It was scheduled for noon — in Piterman Hall. Obviously we didn’t meet, but we immediately began a very active discussion over e-mail. Later I set up a forum on September 11 for the online class on its Web site. I felt that this event sort of crashed down on us, we couldn’t just look at the history alone.

I invited Greg Robinson, author of By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans, to visit the class online. He facilitated a discussion on parallels and differences between the situations of Japanese Americans in WWII and Arab and Muslim Americans after the second Pearl Harbor of September 11. The posts were thoughtful and intense — when I finished reading, one student’s post, I almost cried.

In my other class, a remedial writing course, I feel it’s been important to use curriculum materials current to what’s going on — international politics, the domestic situation, interfaith relations. I find that by and large the students in this class are very aware. They look at the history of US foreign policy in the last two or three decades, and they are able to conduct a rather sophisticated discussion.

What I do worry about is that, discussing these intense issues, not all express themselves. Often non-native speakers of English — as well as the most emotionally affected ones — tend to stay quiet. A few of my students lost family members. In one class, when one student argued strongly for his political analysis, another couldn’t console herself thinking of a sister who has not yet come home. Over all, I do find it a delicate balance in moderating such discussions.

The salvation in a writing class is that you can talk in writing — and they have been writing a lot. Initially they were reluctant to write, but then when asked to revise, many make their papers three, four times as long.

In all, I have never had such a bond with my students, and I have never seen so much camaraderie among them. It’s not just the intellectual material we deal with in the classroom: there’s a hunger for a human touch and interaction. It’s unusual how quickly they’ve become attached to each other. When asked by a student if all college classes are like this, I told them that mostly likely they would never have another class like this.

In my work in Asian/Pacific American studies, I have always paid attention to ethnic tension. I emphasize the notion that to understand “the other” is to understand ourselves. I have always tried to bring forward the writings of “the other,” such as those from the Pacific islands, and I feel this is even more urgent now, to understand who the other is. September 11 has made more acutely aware that this other — the Muslim other, the Arabic other, etc. — is but part of the fabric of our multicultural self.

“**It could tell you if anthrax is present.**”

DAVID CALHOUN
Professor of Chemistry, CCNY

One of my students is on call as an EMT worker here at the college. She went down with some other students to work at Ground Zero. After a while she couldn’t take all the gore & destruction. It had a huge emotional impact.

I have another student who’s a New York City police officer. She’s taking the biotech courses that are a prerequisite for Columbia’s PhD program in pathology. She missed more acutely aware than this other — the Muslim other, the Arabic other, etc. — is but part of the fabric of our multicultural self.

I’m writing a grant application to the National Science Foundation to develop a new class of pathogen detectors. An idea for how to devise one, so I’m writing a grant application that I go out in December, including results from some preliminary experiments. If successful, we’ll have a little box that will tell you if anthrax is present, a device that’ll cost less than $100. You could put it in a backpack or a shirt pocket, and it would signal if a spore falls on the detector.

Sometimes the idea of it could apply to any bacteria. So we’re not going to test this with anthrax — I don’t want anthrax in my lab. We’ll test it with E. coli.

This is a collaboration between chemical engineers, biochemists, one that has made it possible to develop new ideas. Separately, neither of us would have come up with this. It’s our overlapping expertise that makes it possible to develop a new class of pathogen detectors.
Indoor air quality at CUNY

HEALTH & SAFETY

By DAVID KOTELCHUCK
Hunter College

Hats off to our colleagues at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) and the CUNY Center for Workers Education (CWE), who have been struggling with unusual indoor air quality problems since September 11. While toxic dusts and vapors, such as asbestos dust and lead, have appeared to have returned nearly to pre-September 11 levels, many BMCC and CWE members are still experiencing throat irritation, headaches and unpleasant, musty odors.

PSC activists have been working with the NY Coalition on Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH) and several unions to keep a record of these problems. The widespread and often unexplained symptoms were reported by faculty, staff and students encouraged by UFT members at Stuyvesant High point to an epidemic of "sick building syndrome."

While tests of outdoor air in low Manhattan can be interpreted in different ways, our main focus has been on the symptoms felt by people inside BMCC and the CWE. The union recommends that those affected see a doctor at Mt. Sinai. Patients should report their exposure to the workplace. For most of us at CUNY, air quality problems arise from conditions within our buildings – chemicals, toxic molds or poorly maintained heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.

We’ll discuss HVAC systems in a future column, below we take a look at chemicals and molds. If you notice any problems on your campus, contact your chapter building committee. If the problem is not corrected right away, put your request in writing and give a copy to your local PSC health and safety committee or chapter chair. CUNY management is responsible for ensuring a healthy work environment.

TOXIC CHEMICALS

Formaldehyde is used to make resins, synthetic fabric and plywood, and may be emitted by new rugs, new office furniture and plywood partitions. It can cause eye, nose and throat irritation and is a suspected cancer agent. So when new rugs or furniture are installed in your office, open the windows (if you can) and let the room air out overnight or over the weekend – an exhaust fan in the window helps. Many rug and floor covering agents are sold in concentrated form. If not properly diluted they can cause nose, throat and respiratory irritation. Some rug cleaners contain sodium lauryl sulfate, which can cause allergic reactions. If you notice unusual odors after a cleaning, check the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) of the agent’s contents and speak to the custodial staff about the problem.

TOXIC MOLDS

Molds exist throughout the natural environment. If they land on a nice damp indoor surface made of wood, drywall, ceiling tiles, fabric or paper – they’re in mold land. The key to dealing with molds is moisture control. If moisture problems remain, undiscovered or undressed (for instance, in basements), a mold growth may soon follow. To clean mold off hard surfaces, scrub the surface with a solution of 10 parts water to 1 part bleach (to 10 parts water). Rugs which remain flooded or floored for more than 24 to 48 hours need to be replaced. Most important, humidity and moisture problems will be

PSC is working with NYCOSH to evaluate the steps taken so far to improve indoor air quality and to recommend further measures. The indoor air quality problems at BMCC and CWE stem from pollution external to the workplace. For most of us at CUNY, air quality problems arise from conditions within our buildings – chemicals, toxic molds or poorly maintained heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.

NEWS/HEALTH & SAFETY

Nominations of an individual or of a slate of candidates for the Delegate Assembly according to the following listing:

Chapter Members Delegates Alternates Required

Bronx Community College 288 chair + 2 3
Brooklyn College 107 chair + 1 2
City College 149 chair + 1 2
City College Juilliard School 76 chair + 1 2
CUNY Cortland 197 chair + 1 2
Hunter College 212 chair + 1 2
LaGuardia Community College 281 chair + 1 2
Linden State College 156 chair + 1 2
Medgar Evers 33 chair + 1 2
Queens College 386 chair + 1 2
York College 225 chair + 1 2

ELECTION RULES

Eligibility for Holding Office shall be permitted to hold chapter level office who have been members in good standing at any CUNY college or institute for a period of one year prior to the close of nominations, March 1, 2002.

PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Advisory Council

The CUNY tuition change comes at a time when colleges are seeing a change, announced in November, that will have profound effects on foreign students. The new policy was announced two days after a New York Times report that President Jose Echenique of the University of Costa Rica has told CUNY that allowing illegal immigrants to study there would be both a national security issue and an insult to every citizen and legal immigrant in the United States.

TEXAS AND CALIFORNIA

The 1996 law says that foreign students “not lawfully present in the US shall not be eligible on the basis of residence within a state” for higher education benefits unless all U.S. citizens got the same benefit.

But both California and Texas public colleges charge thousands of non-resident students the same rate of tuition. Patti De Val, a counselor at Santa Monica Community College, told Clarion that California law was recently changed so that all high school students who live in California high school for three years would qualify for lower tuition. By using a residence other than residency, it avoids a conflict with federal law. Texas uses a broader interpretation of the federal law, one that CUNY believes is invalid. The Texas state Board of Education comes among other things to tighten restrictions on foreign students, such as requiring foreign students to sit a second month moratorium on student visas - which account for only 2% of US visas overall.

Undocumented students hit Tuition hike

BY PETER HOPKINS

Starting next semester, undocumented immigrant students at CUNY will be charged a higher rate of tuition. CUNY officials said the change, announced in November, was required by a 1996 federal immigration law. Since 1989 residency rules had been the same for all CUNY students, regardless of immigration status. But now from on, undocumented immigrants will have to pay the higher out-of-state tuition rates no matter how long they have lived in New York. The new rates mean an increase of 876% annually at community colleges and $3600 at CUNY's four flagship institutions.

Last year almost 3,000 CUNY students told the University that they were in the US without legal status, the actual number of undocumented students may well be far higher.

"This race to tuition will adversely affect English As a Second Language students at CUNY," said Susan DiBattico, vice president of the CUNY ESL Council. "Some of my students who were in tears when I told them the news." The number of ESL students at CUNY senior college has fallen by 50% since 1994.

The new policy was announced two days after a New York Times report that State Sen. Frank Padavan had "told CUNY that allowing illegal immigrants to study [there] was both a national security issue and an insult to every citizen and legal immigrant in the United States." Any connection? They say that the conflict with federal law came to a head recently when the IRS sent a letter to the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Advisory Council members running at their respective colleges.

Eligibility for Holding Office:

All members in good standing of the PSC at the above colleges who have been members in good standing for at least four months, including Higher Education Officers, Registrars and College Laboratory Technicians, as well as faculty, will vote at the CUNY-CUNY Welfare Fund Advisory Council members running at their respective colleges.

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Results include favoritism, anxiety and resentment

**Merit pay: the California experience**

**By HENRYKA NASLOWSKI**

For at least 30 years, the administration of the California State University has been attempting to impose some form of “merit pay” on the faculty. And until recently, the CSU faculty had been successful in resisting such schemes. While there had been various one-time awards for “merit,” the pay scale–15 steps with salary increments of 5%—remained intact.

But in 1995, merit pay came to CSU. The results have not been good. Instead of a smoothly functioning and equal system of teacher-scholars putting forth their best efforts and greatest creativity, secure in the knowledge that they will be properly rewarded, merit pay has produced backbiting and anxiety. Relations between faculty and administration are increasingly antagonistic; contract negotiations are now at an impasse for the second time in five years.

**Propaganda Term**

The term “merit pay” has good propaganda value. Who could possibly oppose paying good professors more and bad professors less? In fact, there are many flaws in this seemingly simple idea, and at least three bases for opposition to merit pay can be identified.

Some oppose merit pay schemes in principle. They note that faculty undergo rigorous evaluation and review before they are granted tenure and before they are promoted to associate or full professor. Additional merit review is excessive and punitive. Since all faculty have essentially the same job description, they say, we should consider narrowing the pay range rather than increasing it. Those whose opposition is more pragmatic fall into two groups. The first fears that awards are not likely to be made fairly, and that “merit pay” will tend to degenerate into “patronage pay.” The other group holds that, even with the most scrupulous and impartial efforts to distinguish those more meritorious than others, the ways in which we can be meritorious are so various and so subtly different that it is impossible to make just awards. Our experiences at the CSU supports each of these positions.

The first version of permanent merit increases in pay, in 1996-97 and 1997-98, consisted of one, two or three salary step increases in the existing pay scale with several supersteps added at the top of the range. They were awarded by campus presidents to no more than 20% of the faculty and there was to be no right of appeal. Their name—“Performance Salary Step Increase”—led to the theatrical acronym, “PSS-I.” We saw a curious split in the faculty between those who thought it more professional to carefully say “P-SS-I” and those who freely adopted the natural pronunciation, “pissy.” A new argot was quickly born: if you got a pissy, you were “pissopissous.” If you got several pissies, you were “poly-pissopissous,” no pissy and you were “impissapissister.” If there was no way you could get a pissy, you were “impissible.” On my campus, the president felt no obligation to be polite: in a tone that indicated it was exactly what we deserved, he told faculty that “you are stuck with pissies.” Pissies were part of a contract that CSU faculty approved reluctantly and under duress—the classic “hold your nose and vote yes.” But CSU Chancellor Charles Reed, a big merit pay booster, always makes a point of referring to it as “the contract approved by faculty.”

The next round of contract negotiations produced an impasse, then faculty rejection of a proposed contract, then the imposition of conditions of employment by Chancellor Reed. The pissy was then replaced by the Faculty Merit Increase or FMI, which quickly became known as “the F-me.” An apparent concession by administration, the F-me was more palatable than the pissy in that there was more faculty input. Faculty members could apply for them and more money was allocated to fund them. The awards were no longer integral numbers of salary steps, but varying dollar amounts. Thus, the pay scale has been mangled. Campus presidents, in preening magnanimity, promised they would more or less abide by faculty recommendations.

**How It Used to Be**

Most of us recognized this new set up as an instance of what the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls the “principle of Socrates’s shackles,” in which constraints are alternately tightened by a large amount and relaxed by a small amount. Achieving the small relaxation appears to be a victory. A successful application of Socrates’s shackles can be terrifically damaging to our cause, for it serves to peel off those who accept the small concession and separate them from those who remain intact.

**Corrosive Effect**

Merit pay at CSU has had a corrosive effect, damaging the collegiality that is vital to a university. It is a “divide and conquer” strategy that produces ill will and antagonism, part of a hard-line approach to management that leads to constant conflict with both the union and faculty governance bodies. The Trustees have praised Chancellor Reed for his “leadership” and for the “initiatives he has brought to the system.” Faculty have a different view: academic senates on 13 out of the 22 CSU campuses have passed resolutions censuring the Chancellor.

We should not demonize Chancellor Reed (though he’s hard not to). Merit pay is only one of many threats facing public higher education, and good arguments alone are not enough to defeat it.

Ultimately it is a question of what a university should be. Instead of a self-governing community of scholars, too many universities now model themselves after for-profit corporations, with centralized management measuring each employee’s worth by his or her contribution to the bottom line. In place of policies that are shaped by faculty and staff, we get a college administration that gives orders and expects them to be carried out.

Those of us who believe in a different vision must organize to win the kind of university we want.

Henryka Naslowski is a professor of mathematics at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and a member of the California Faculty Association.
S
ince September 11th questions have been flooding in from mem-

bers concerned about the impact of shifting economic and political

conditions on the PSC’s work. It’s a sign of the union’s vitality that members

think through the union about the current political climate, and I want to continue

in that spirit by addressing some of the most prominent questions directly.

Why did the Negotiating Team agree to an expedited process on the contract?

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A faster pace at the bargaining table

Union and management push to resolve differences

By PENNY LEWIS

Contract negotiations have been moving at a faster pace since late October. After months of foot-dragging, CUNY management proposed that the two sides enter into a process of expedited negotiations and the PSC quickly agreed. The shift in part reflects the changed atmosphere after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center.

"This was an opportunity to do what the president Barbara Bowen said. "In the con text of September 11, both sides feel that the two sides enter into a meeting that has been done to CUNY," Bowen said. Bowen said that past year's activism had position the PSC for this new round of talks. Events like "Teach CUNY" and pickets at the Board of Trustees broke through management's refusal to make an economic offer. "The agenda of these negotiations remains advancing the University, even in these tough economic times," Bowen said.

"Expedited negotiations" has marked a shift in the frequency of meetings while simultaneously narrowing the scope of the demands that both sides bring to the table.

Starting in late October, the teams met six times in less than a month. The two sides have agreed to keep these discussions confidential. Though the particulars of each side's positions are covered by this confidentiality agreement, the four major areas that the union has stressed throughout negotiations are still priorit es: salary restoration for all members, achieving a competitive workload (for classroom faculty, counselors, CLTs, HBs and others), progressing towards adjunct equity (including both pay parity and professional concerns) and an overall enhancement of professional academic conditions (faculty governance, money for research, etc.). The bargaining team is putting periodic updates on the PSC Web site, at www.psc-cuny.org.

LESS THAN 2%

Management's original economic offer proposed annual increases of 2%, 2% and 2.5%, compounded over a three-year contract. But the resulting wage increase under this proposal would have been less than 2%: these small percentages were also supposed to cover the costs of any other demands, such as workload reduction or improvements for HEOs and CLTs. The PSC negotiating team has responded that management's offer does not come close to what CUNY needs. Even if used for salary alones, management's proposal is still below the rate of inflation and thus would amount to a pay cut.

The PSC has made an economic counterproposal of 9% compounded annually, or a 29.5% increase in overall funding over the course of the contract. "Their figures do nothing to help reconstruct the University," said Cecilia McCall, PSC Secretary and negotiating team member. "Our proposed numbers would take us to such a significant step in the right direction - and even then, it will take future rounds of negotiations to get us where we need to be."

Bowen explained that the new, expedited phase of negotiations is "provisional - we'll see how far we get. The union has the right to return to its original demands, which convinced the union's negotiating team that the process was worth exploring. At Clari on press time, PSC bar gaiming team members report that they are getting a more detailed response from management and have found some areas where they may be able to make progress.

Since September 11, every campus has been visited at least once by members of the bargaining team, at meetings that have drawn anywhere from 25 to 150 members. "Immediately after September 11, a lot of people were disheartened," said Mary Ann Carlese, the PSC's organizing director. "But people soon got back on board, realizing that the things CUNY needed before are even more important now."

GRADUATION ACTION

La Guardia's graduation in October, parents, students, faculty and staff sported stickers on their suits and shirts that read, "Rebuilding New York, Rebuilding CUNY: Support the PSC Contract, Fund CUNY Now."

A petition with a similar theme was signed by a majority of faculty and staff at Brooklyn Community College. "Rebuilding has to go far beyond real estate and leases," the petition states. "Rebuilding means providing viable alternatives - education, retraining, career programs - for the tens of thousands of New Yorkers of all nationalities whose lives have been disrupted...CUNY has played that role for thousands in the past. We can do it again - if we are given the chance." The petition called on CUNY management to negotiate in good faith, and urged gov ernment to recognize what CUNY can contribute.

For the latest on the contract, check the Web at www.psc-cuny.org or call Mary Ann Carlese, 212-254-1552.

"Merit pay" scheme at Baruch is dropped

But 80th Street rejects negotiations on RRIs

By PETER HOGNESS

In an October 24 memo, the dean of the Zicklin School of Business at Baruch declared that the school would adopt a "merit pay" scheme for future raises in salaries. Dean Sidney Lirtzman's "directives" on raising salaries at the top of the Zicklin's MBA program, stated that some of the new funds would now go towards "merit supplements for current faculty." A committee was established guidelines, but the memo specified that "all recommendations for increases are advisory to the dean." In other words, the dean, not faculty or staff, would decide who had "merit" and who did not.

"The PSC is absolutely in favor of raising salaries at the top of the scale," said first Vice President Steve London. "But we already have merit pay at CUNY. We have constant peer review, and decisions on promotions and tenure are evaluated by our colleagues. London also noted that management already has discretion to raise someone's pay within a given salary schedule. "The main problem at CUNY is that our entire salary structure is too low," he said, "not a lack of merit or discretion."

The last contract tried an experiment to allow management discretion to pay above the scale. The Re cruitemnt and Retention Initiative (RRI) provided for additional salary supplements of $15,000 or $20,000 above the top pay step. The experi ence with RRIs indicates that lack ing a few discretionary sweeteners onto a non-competitive salary scale is no solution.

EXTREMELY DIVISIVE

"I think the RRI has been extremely divisive," said Sheldon Weinbaum, a distinguished professor of mechanical engineering at CUNY who receives an RRI. "It can put new hires on a different pay scale than the top people you have in-house and that creates a good deal of bad feeling," Weinbaum added that existing CUNY faculty can only qualify for an RRI if they go out and get competitive offers from other institutions. "Looking else where may prompt faculty to leave," he said, "because our salary scale is so bad that even with an RRI, CUNY usually comes out behind." Some RRIs have resulted in some assistant jobs that are pitiful salaries. London cites one faculty member who negotiated a $10,000 RRI for himself - and was later dis satisfied with the results. London said that management would have given him $20,000. "He thought management was negotiat ing with him in good faith," said Len don. "But nobody told him that $10,000 wasn't the maximum."

"The PSC recognizes that special market circumstances exist," said London. "And we're willing to deal with this in the context of negotiations. But we need an overall salary structure that can accommodate most cases. Neither 'merit pay' nor RRIs will solve that problem."