

Clarion

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AUGUST 2012



ELECTION AAUP's new leaders

Will focus on
grassroots
action.

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Dave Sanders

OFFICERS OF HIGHER ED

WE ARE EVERYWHERE

"I help people reach their dreams," says Francine Sanchez (above) who works in admissions at the Center for Worker Education at Queens College. Sanchez is one of 3,300 members of the PSC's Higher Education Officer (HEO) chapter, the union's largest. HEOs play many roles throughout the University: register-

ing students, directing research institutes, providing academic advisement and more. Because their responsibilities are so diverse, the critical role HEOs play at CUNY is often less visible to others. Clarion recently spoke with Sanchez and four other HEOs about the work they do.

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Undocumented youth win one

Immigrant student activists at CUNY talk about how they see the impact of President Obama's no-deport order for DREAM Act-eligible youth.

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AT CUNY

Ceiling raised on exec pay

The Board of Trustees approved substantial increases to CUNY's Executive Compensation Plan, boosting salary ranges for the University's top executives.

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Students strike vs. tuition hike

Students in Québec are confronting the austerity agenda of Prime Minister Jean Charest, drawing broader support as they fight a tuition hike.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | WRITE TO: CLARION/PSC, 61 BROADWAY, 15TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10006.
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Don't sit out the election

● While European countries appear to be moving to the left, this country is moving to the right. More than two thirds of people polled by *The New York Times* in June indicated that they hoped the Supreme Court would nullify all or parts of the Affordable Care Act.

Leftists and radicals have voiced disappointment with Obama's tenure. Some expected him to be another FDR. Well, FDR, at least during his first term, had a Congress that supported him. I need not recount what has occurred in Washington over the last four years. In June the Republican House voted down a measure that would give equal pay to women – and its leaders don't intend to pass any legislation this year lest it help Obama.

I shudder to think of the next four years under a Republican regime. George W. Bush was president for his class alone and so would be billionaire Romney. Bush's tax cuts for the rich will become permanent and Romney will propose others in order to shrink "entitlements." The social safety net that retirees rely upon for benefits and income will, I fear, be shredded. Medicare may become a meager voucher system and Social Security will be altered.

The Right and its wealthy supporters have a mission – to bring Obama down by any means. They are unified and zealous. If we sit out the election and do not vote, we deserve the Armageddon that awaits us.

Cecelia McCall
Retiree Chapter

Cities in hock to the banks

● One of the consequences of the financial meltdown of 2008 is the precipitous drop in the cost of borrowing for municipalities with good credit ratings. However, many of these municipalities and public agencies have locked themselves into long-term contracts to pay fixed rates of interest to big banks, while the banks pay them based on variable rates – often what is known as the LIBOR rate.

These so-called "interest-rate swaps" are a type of derivative that was supposed to reduce municipalities' risk – and they might have made sense when rates were expected to rise. But with the fixed rates in these interest-rate swaps staying high, and variable rates at record lows, the banks are making billions from these contracts and the municipalities are having to cut back services and lay off employees to service their debt.

In NYC, the MTA has not even tried to get better terms. As Transit Workers Union Local 100 recently stated, "They would rather pay \$100 million annually in windfall profits to Wall Street banks than insist that the banks renegotiate the 'swap' agreements." This scandal is finally getting some attention in the

mainstream media, for example in Gretchen Morgenson's June 9 column in *The New York Times* (see tinyurl.com/NYTswaps).

But it gets even worse. The illegal manipulation of the LIBOR rate downward by the big banks means that the municipalities have had to pay even more. Lawsuits are being filed all over the country demanding reimbursement plus penalties.

One of the demands of municipal unions and the Occupy movement should be to insist that the banks renegotiate these interest swaps.

Robert Cowen
Queens College (emeritus)

In whose interest?

● This fall CUNY will begin implementing the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). Benno Schmidt, chair of the CUNY Board of Trustees, also heads the organization producing the CLA, namely the Council for Aid to Education (CAE). This creates the appearance of a conflict of interest, and the assessment itself is an example of reshaping of CUNY to serve the interests of business.

The CAE is focused on how American universities can meet the needs of American business. As stated in the history provided on the organization's website, "CAE's primary purpose was: 'To promote a better understanding of the substantial contribution which higher education makes to the effectiveness, skill, growth, and success of American business, and to the development of the country.'" CAE identifies its founders as Alfred P. Sloan, Jr. (General Motors), Frank W. Abrams (Exxon), and Irving S. Olds (US Steel).

Benno Schmidt himself exemplifies the wedding of business and universities. In 1992 Schmidt gave up a distinguished academic career to become chair of Edison Schools, Inc. Founded by Chris Whittle and now called EdisonLearning, it was one of the first for-profit school management organizations.

The implementation of the CLA symbolizes the many possible conflicts of interest that arise when business interests and the University grow too close together.

Joel Spring
Queens College

Be fair to 403(b)

● As a CUNY faculty member who lives in New Jersey, I have been pushing for providing New Jersey 403(b) retirement program contributors the same income tax benefits enjoyed by the for-profit equivalent retirement 401(k) program (see 403bwise.com/reform). Federal law treats both 401(k) and 403(b) retirement program contributions as pre-tax contributions, as does New York State. However, New Jersey is one state that taxes 403(b) contributions while extending tax-exempt status

to 401(k) contributions.

Recognizing this inequity, Senator Kip Bateman of the NJ Senate introduced a bill that seeks parity in tax treatment between the 401(k) and 403(b) retirement programs. The bill (Senate Bill 74) is now pending with the NJ Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. Senator Paul A. Sarlo chairs the committee.

All nonprofit employees and related employee associations should urge Senator Sarlo to immediately post the bill in his committee so that it may move to the Senate floor for a vote. (Go to tinyurl.com/Sarlo-Contact to send an e-mail.) Passing the bill would rectify an egregious wrong, and put significant income back into the hands of hard-pressed nonprofit employees in New Jersey.

Ajay Das
Baruch College

New Community College

● My purpose in writing is to point out inaccuracies in your recent article "Fear and Intimidation" at New Community College" and to suggest an alternative view of what is happening at NCC.

Regarding inaccuracies, first, the article states that faculty were deprived of contractual release time on holiday Mondays. This is false. The college community was advised of compensatory release days on February 29.

Second, the article implies that the development of a governance plan has been disregarded. This is false. A task force comprised of

faculty and staff drafted an interim plan beginning in January 2012, and it was discussed at two whole-college meetings this spring.

As for the claim that NCC administration has created an atmosphere that impedes faculty work, I respectfully disagree. The administration and staff at NCC are professionals with deep expertise in supporting student success. They have involved faculty in every aspect of building the college and, in particular, have entrusted faculty with the crucial task of developing the curriculum. Faculty who have engaged this work earnestly and in a spirit of collaboration have benefited personally and professionally, despite resistance from colleagues.

As an instructor of English at the New Community College, I am proud to work for NCC and optimistic about the difference it might make in the lives of students. I urge the PSC and its members to support our efforts to improve community college outcomes at CUNY and beyond.

Nathan Mickelson
New Community College

Clarion Editor Peter Hogness responds: *Thanks for writing – our Letters column is a place for members to share their views.*

Our reporting on administration-faculty relations at the NCC has been wide-ranging and accurate. In preparing this article, Clarion spoke with a majority of current or former NCC faculty. They, too, are dedicated to NCC students' success – but their experiences have been very

different from the description above.

Mr. Mickelson does not question our reporting on the key events that have damaged academic freedom at the NCC: the firing of a faculty member for "insubordination," and the issuing of disciplinary letters to others, because they criticized the administration. (See www.tinyurl.com/ClarionNCC.) As The New York Times reported on July 20, these incidents have left professors afraid to speak their mind. Mr. Mickelson's own experience at the NCC may have been more positive – but the fact that so many of his colleagues are afraid should give him pause.

When the NCC was established in February 2011, it had no governance plan. No plan was in place last fall when administration critics were fired and disciplined. Now a plan has been adopted, but a large group of NCC faculty says it is deeply flawed. (See tinyurl.com/ex-current-ncc-fac.) As the Times reported, faculty "protested that there were no department chairmen to advocate for them – in fact, there are no departments – and that the college has no tenured full professors. That means, they argued, that no one has the standing or the job security to stand up to the administration."

The unilateral approach of NCC administrators has led to many contract violations, including on re-assigned time. What we reported was accurate – and while there have been developments since, they came in response to union action. For more details, see psc-cuny.org/NCC-workload.

Respect for dissent, due process and academic freedom are not antithetical to NCC students' success. Rather, they are essential to achieving it.

Write to Clarion

Letters may be on any topic, but should be less than 200 words and are subject to editing. E-mail phogness@psccmail.org.

Making Con Edison see the light



Unions and community organizations from across the city marched in support of locked-out Con Ed workers on July 24. Con Ed locked out 8,500 full-time workers from UAW Local 1-2 on July 1. Two days after the rally, Con Ed and Local 1-2 reached a tentative contract agreement, ending the lockout. According to *Labor Press*, the new contract would grant an 11% pay raise over four years, impose higher medical costs and protect the company's defined benefit pension plan for current workers.

Time for an alternative

By PETER HOGNESS

With support from the PSC, the University Faculty Senate has begun work on developing an alternative to Pathways, CUNY's controversial overhaul of its policies on general education and transfer. "We recognize that the transfer process needs to be improved," said UFS Chair Terrence Martell. "But the problems students encounter are not necessarily the ones described by CUNY in the Pathways Initiative."

Pathways has drawn growing faculty opposition since it was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2011. The administration argues that by reducing CUNY's general education requirements, Pathways will help transferring students avoid delays in the pursuit of their degrees. Its critics contend that Pathways will dilute the quality of education at CUNY without really solving transfer problems. (For more, see psc-cuny.org/what-pathways.) The plan is opposed by a large majority of CUNY's elected faculty bodies.

A joint UFS-PSC statement says that developing a truly faculty-driven alternative should begin with "an examination of the scale of the current problems in student transfer, a survey of existing best practices, and a study of the success and failure of the articulation agreements currently in place."

"Our approach is to start with a systematic look at the transfer issue, which has not been done to date," explained Martell. "The one white paper that the administration produced early in the Pathways process, in 2010, was primarily focused on the cost of 'excess credits.' But it did not delineate and distinguish the reasons that students accumulate 'excess credits' on the way to their degrees."

For example, he told *Clarion*, when students take more than the 120 credits they need to graduate, the cause is sometimes a desire to change majors, which may reflect new interests awakened by that student's intellectual growth.

"We need to take a careful look at students' real experiences with transfer before the problems they encounter can be effectively solved," agreed Barbara Bowen, president of the PSC.

MISMATCH

At a June 18 hearing of the Board of Trustees, faculty and staff raised several examples of the mismatch between Pathways and transfer students' needs. "Currently, Baruch is provided limited information when accepting transfer students – and that information does not include the students' course transcripts," testified Bill Ferns, professor of computer information systems at Baruch. That means "Baruch cannot anticipate what courses the students will require," and thus cannot ensure an adequate number of sections.

"The absence of timely transcript

Faculty pan Pathways at June hearing



George Sussman, professor of history, LaGuardia Community College, testifying at the June 18 hearing of the Board of Trustees (see also page 11).

information leads to many delayed graduations," said Ferns – and this is just one of many problems for transfer students that Pathways ignores. "Solutions to these very real stumbling blocks require difficult organizational and operational work, and not just simplistic, sweeping mandates," he told the trustees.

New courses cannot be implemented unless OKed by faculty governance bodies.

The statement announcing the alternative effort, which began this summer and will continue through the Fall, was issued jointly at the end of last semester by then-UFS Chair Sandi Cooper and Bowen of the PSC.

"At the center of the process will be the faculty actually engaged in undergraduate teaching who have been elected by their peers to shape curriculum," the statement said. "With organizing support from the PSC, the UFS will bring together college faculty governance bodies, department chairs, discipline councils and other elected representatives to develop a proposal with academic integrity for facilitating student transfer. We will also invite contributions from the many other CUNY faculty who have developed special knowledge of the issue during the past year of discussions."

Unlike Pathways, the alternative plan will go through CUNY's elected faculty bodies before moving forward. "We are confident that the elected faculty representatives can produce an approach to student transfer that strengthens, rather than weakens, this great University," Cooper and Bowen said. In taking this initiative, they said, "the faculty is taking back control of the education of our students."

Meanwhile CUNY faculty and staff continue to speak out against Pathways. A resolution before the Hostos Community College Sen-

ate objects to a number of specific Pathways provisions. For example, it says, "Pathways' insistence that all core courses be limited to three credits will prevent natural science courses from including a lab section." This and other provisions of Pathways will create "a host of new transfer problems" for CUNY students, the resolution states, and it therefore asks CUNY trustees to suspend Pathways' implementation so that such concerns can be addressed. Action on the resolution is expected when the Hostos Senate meets at the start of Fall semester.

RESPONSIBILITY

"CUNY students need a chance in life; that's why they are here. A degraded education is not going to give them that chance," said Bowen. "That's why so many faculty bodies have spoken out against the Pathways plan. The courses developed under the plan cannot be imple-

mented unless they are approved by faculty governance bodies. We have the power to say yes or no. And as faculty we have the right – and the responsibility – to vote in the best interest of our students."

"Pathways is not good enough for our students," Bowen emphasized. "That is why we are determined to ensure that it is replaced with an educationally sound alternative."

The battle over Pathways is also being waged in this courts. On August 1, the PSC and the University Faculty Senate filed a new lawsuit against Pathways, arguing that the administration's efforts to implement it are in violation of New York's Open Meetings Law.

The new court action is just one part of a broader strategy by the PSC and UFS for replacing Pathways with an alternative, union leaders said. "This lawsuit holds CUNY to important standards of transparency and inclusiveness,

but it will not alone stop Pathways," Bowen said. "If CUNY continues to implement this deeply flawed plan, we will remain alert for violations of the law, and we are prepared to contest any other attempts to take illegal shortcuts."

"There is more at stake here than student transfer, important as that is," she told *Clarion*. "That's why CUNY is fighting so hard. And that's why we must approach the issue on several fronts. By approaching Pathways from multiple directions and continuing to expose its academic weakness, we will eventually be able to force a constructive change."

NOT OPEN

The new lawsuit notes that "as CUNY has acknowledged, development and approval of CUNY's curricula [must] be done in compliance with the Open Meetings Law." This means that meetings on approval of new curricula must be open and accessible to the public, held with advance notice, and minutes must be recorded and published.

CUNY's bylaws and college governance plans assign responsibility for considering changes in curriculum to the colleges' academic senates, which hold their meetings in compliance with the Open Meetings Law. The lawsuit points out that at six CUNY campuses – Baruch, BMCC, College of Staten Island, John Jay, Lehman and Queensborough CC – Pathways curricula have been either rejected or simply not approved by the college's faculty senate.

Having failed to obtain college senate approval, the administration at each of those schools submitted its own Pathways plan to CUNY central administration this spring. The content of those plans, the lawsuit charges, was thus never discussed at a public meeting as required by law. The suit asks that the plans be declared null and void.

FACULTY AUTHORITY

The lawsuit over violations of the Open Meetings Law is the second filed by the PSC and UFS. The first, filed March 20, asserts that Pathways violates a 1997 court settlement on the role of CUNY faculty in curriculum decisions. CUNY has filed a motion to dismiss the faculty suit, and briefs in the case are due on August 23.

"This is about our students," said Martell. "What has brought us into court, above all, is that Pathways would mean an abrogation of our responsibilities as an institution. The students hurt most by Pathways are likely to be those with the weakest preparation, those who need more academic guidance rather than less. Pathways would ultimately mean a cheapening of the CUNY degree, and that would limit our students' opportunities. That's why this is so important to us."

"The lawsuit poses a direct challenge to Pathways and we believe our case is strong," said Bowen. Whatever the outcome in court, she said, faculty opposition to Pathways will continue: "This is a plan that damages our students' education – and that is not something we can accept."



Margaret Tabb, professor and chair of the English department at John Jay College, adds her testimony at the June 18 hearing.

CUNY lifts executive salary ceiling

By PETER HOGNESS

On June 25, the Board of Trustees voted to raise the maximum salaries that can be paid to top administrators under CUNY's Executive Compensation Plan (ECP). Upper limits for senior executive titles were boosted by up to 41%, while maximum pay for CUNY college presidents was raised by 23% to 29%, depending on the institution (see sidebar).

Noting that the ECP approved in 2006 called for executive salary levels to be reassessed "no less frequently than every five years," the board's resolution said that action was now overdue. The trustees emphasized that "competitive, market-driven compensation for the chancellor, the presidents and other senior executives is necessary and critical to the success of CUNY."

STUDENT VOICES

A student petition said that any such raises would be "a shameful use of taxpayer and tuition dollars, especially when students are being burdened with tuition hikes," and urged the board "to reject increases in executive pay and save tuition dollars for student aid."

At a protest outside the Board meeting, Sandra May Flowers, student government president at Hostos Community College, told *Clarion* that the increases to CUNY's executive pay ranges were excessive. Flowers said she was still trying to pay off \$650 in bills owed from last semester, while coping with a recent layoff from her job as a medical assistant.

At the June 25 meeting, Chancellor Matthew Goldstein emphasized that no actual salary increase for any individual was currently being proposed. "This simply establishes new ranges," the chancellor stressed.

University Student Senate head Kafui Kouakou, who serves as a trustee *ex officio*, said he understood the rationale for a review of salary ranges. Nonetheless, he said, students want to know when any actual increase might happen. "Their fear is that this might happen in a year or two, and they wouldn't feel comfortable with that," Kouakou said. "Students feel that if there is going to be an increase in the tuition for the next five years, there should not even be a consideration" of boosting executive pay ranges, he concluded.

VARIABLES

"The best I can say is that I have absolutely no plans to recommend any salary increase for any members of the executive group," the chancellor replied. "To say when that would change is subject to lots of variables that are not clearly defined at this particular point in time."

Trustee Jeffrey Wiesenfeld condemned "this extreme striving for egalitarianism...that's forced on the Board." In Wiesenfeld's eyes, "It's just needless rancor, [when]

Stage is set for future raises

students and others could be using their energy more productively."

The resolution originally called for the maximum salary for the position of chancellor to rise from \$470,705 to \$724,470 – an increase of 54%. At the last minute, the chancellor asked that the resolution be revised to remove those specific numbers. As a result, the new ECP removes limits on the chancellor's salary that had existed before: instead, the new ECP sets no maximum for the chancellor's pay and says only, "Future salary to be determined by the Board of Trustees." Asked why the numbers were removed, CUNY spokesperson Michael Arena said only that it was at the chancellor's request.

After this amendment was accepted, Board Chair Benno Schmidt argued forcefully that "the chancellor's own compensation is considerably below market," and that a substantial increase would be well-deserved.

At the board's public hearing on June 18, PSC President Barbara Bowen spoke against the changes to the ECP. In the context of this proposal for CUNY managers, Bowen said, "it should be unthinkable [to] come to the faculty and staff and ask us to accept a contract that has anything but competitive salary increases." It should be just as unthinkable, she added, "to ask students, some of whom are among the poorest college students in the country, to pay tuition increases that will in part go to fund those future salaries."

Bonnie Nelson, a member of the library faculty at John Jay and a union delegate, told *Clarion* that faculty and staff at her college were "particularly disturbed" by several elements in the proposal, including a provision for unlimited "bonus opportunities" at the discretion of the chancellor, and continuation of

housing allowances of \$60,000 to \$90,000 per year. "People are also upset about the chancellor emeritus salary," Nelson said.

The new ECP provides, for the first time in CUNY history, for a salary to be paid to a chancellor emeritus. The position of chancellor emeritus is not new at CUNY, but in the past this appointment – like emeritus faculty positions – has been unpaid. The amount of this new salary is apparently unrestricted: the new ECP says only that "the salary will be determined by the Board of Trustees." A chancellor emeritus may draw this salary for up to ten years.

When asked why chancellor emeritus had now been made a salaried position, Arena noted that CUNY's "long-standing policy provides a chancellor with a University Professor faculty position upon completion of service or retirement," subject to approval by the Board of Trustees. The title of chancellor emeritus was added to the ECP in a recent revision of CUNY's bylaws (see psc-cuny.org/clarion/march-2012/letters-editor).

MAXIMUMS

Previous top salaries for CUNY vice chancellors ranged from about \$248,000 to \$349,000. Those upper limits have now been increased to around \$301,000 to \$453,000. For college presidents at CUNY, the former maximums were approximately \$244,000 to \$299,000. The highest allowable pay is now more than \$300,000 for presidents at all CUNY colleges, ranging from \$324,000 at community colleges to \$371,000 at "top tier" colleges such as CCNY or Queens (see sidebar).

The Board's resolution noted that the increased pay ranges "are based in large part on a market analysis



Dave Sanders

CUNY students protesting increases to the Executive Compensation Plan were barred from entering the June 25 Board of Trustees meeting at Baruch. They were subsequently ejected from the building.

conducted by [the consulting firm] William H. Mercer, Inc.," a point that was stressed by several trustees in the meeting's discussion.

CUNY has relied on Mercer, a well-known human resources consulting company, for advice on executive pay levels since 2000. The firm was in the headlines in 2004 due to its involvement in the New York Stock Exchange's approval of a controversial \$139.5 million salary package for then-Chairman Richard Grasso. In a settlement with then-Attorney General Elliot Spitzer, Mercer admitted that its report to the NYSE's board had contained "inaccuracies and

omissions" that misled the board about how much the raise for Grasso would cost the NYSE. Some of these false statements were made at the direct request of an NYSE executive and Grasso crony.

In 2010, *The New York Times* reported that executive pay at CUNY had dramatically outpaced inflation during the preceding decade (see tinyurl.com/CUNYexecs). For example, the salary paid to CUNY's general counsel increased by about 100% between 1999 and 2009, while the chancellor's base pay was raised by 96% (see tinyurl.com/CUNYexecsGraph).

Pecking order: "We have tiered the system"

One part of the revised Executive Compensation Plan (ECP) approved by CUNY's trustees on June 25 drew some surprised attention from faculty and staff: the blunt division of CUNY colleges into five distinct "tiers," with different pay scales for the top executives of each (tinyurl.com/CUNYtiered). But while this detailed and official statement of CUNY's hierarchy was startling to many, it is not at all new.

The ECP hierarchy classifies CUNY colleges as "Research Institutions" (Baruch, Brooklyn, CCNY, Hunter and Queens, plus the Graduate Center); "Master's Institutions" (John Jay, Lehman, CSI); "Baccalaureate Institutions" (Medgar Evers, City Tech, York); "Community Colleges" (BMCC, BCC,

Hostos, KCC, LaGuardia and QCC, as well as the New Community College); and "CUNY-Wide & Professional Schools" (CUNY's schools of law, journalism, public health; the School of Professional Studies; and the cross-campus Macaulay Honors College). The ECP says that these categories are based on the ratio of doctoral faculty to full-time faculty as a whole; percentage of enrollment and percentage of degrees that are in graduate programs; "five-year average headcount enrollment"; and the "complexity of regular as well as professional programs at undergraduate and graduate levels."

According to the trustees' June resolution, these divisions are de-

signed to reflect "the complexity of specific institutions." In response to a question from *Clarion*, CUNY declined to provide numerical cutoffs for the criteria cited in the ECP.

These criteria first formally appeared in 2000 in the board's consideration of executive pay, in discussing the Mercer consulting company's first report to the trustees (see article above). The specific division of CUNY's schools into these types of tiers does not appear to have been voted on by the board outside of its decisions on executive pay, but more general references to a tiered structure ("CUNY's five top-tier colleges," discussions of "building a flagship

A blunt description of CUNY's hierarchy

environment," etc.) have been relatively common.

More explicit discussions of "tiering the system" can be found outside the record of the board's formal actions. The general idea of formally dividing CUNY colleges into such tiers appears in the 1999 report by former Mayor Giuliani's panel on CUNY, chaired by the present chair of the CUNY trustees, Benno Schmidt.

Chancellor Goldstein cited "tiering the system" as a personal goal as far back as 1997, two years before he was named as chancellor. In the middle of the last decade his speeches began to declare success. "We have tiered the system," he told a Manhattan Institute audience in 2006. While the concept has never received the same focused debate as CUNY's changes in remediation, the administration now treats it as an accomplished fact.

— PH

HEOs' work makes CUNY run

By JOHN TARLETON

"HEOs are the engine of the University," says Paul Washington, vice chair of the PSC's HEO chapter – the union's largest. Employees in CUNY's Higher Education Officer series (or HEOs) play many roles throughout the University: registering students, directing research institutes, providing academic advisement and helping students secure financial aid, to name just a few.

Because their responsibilities are so diverse, the critical role that HEOs play at CUNY is often less visible to others. "The first person a student deals with is an HEO," Washington adds. "But we work in every part of the University's operations."

As HEO titles are not defined as a promotional series, CUNY does not provide a clear path for career advancement and HEOs often have difficulty gaining recognition of the fact that they have taken on new and broader responsibilities. The union is seeking to address this situation in the current round of bargaining, to gain better recognition for HEOs' contributions to education and scholarship at City University.

Clarion recently spoke with five HEOs about the work they do.

Thomas Brennan

Higher Education Assistant
COORDINATOR, OFFICE OF EVENING
& WEEKEND SERVICES
College of Staten Island

Roughly 1,800 students attend CSI's evening and weekend classes. These are mostly non-traditional adult students who return to school on a part-time basis to train for a new career or to improve their chances of advancing in their current job. They face many obstacles - work and family obligations as well as self-doubt - and Thomas Brennan is there to help at each step of the way. For these students especially, persistence is key, and Brennan knows that a well-timed piece of information or word of encouragement can make all the difference.

"It's fun working with them and getting them from beginning to end, however long that takes," says Brennan.

Brennan, a former parochial school teacher, has worked with adult students since 1982. He joined CSI in 1998 and has run the Office of Evening & Weekend Services since 2006. In this position he works closely with both faculty and students. Brennan serves on CSI's College Council and collaborates with faculty members to ensure that course offerings are balanced so students can complete their degrees in a timely manner.

In his role as adviser, Brennan meets with individual students before registration to review their course selections. He says being a

The HEO Chapter is the largest in the PSC.

A wide range of roles across the University



Wayne Harewood, director of the Financial Aid Office at Kingsborough Community College.

good listener is essential to helping adult students who are uncertain about continuing their studies.

"You want to listen and find out what's going on in their lives," Brennan told *Clarion*. "Everybody needs an ear and encouragement. We take their situation into account and listen as one human being to another." And if a student has to stop taking classes? "We tell them to give us a ring when they are ready to start again. We'll be there."

Steven Romalewski

Higher Education Officer
DIRECTOR, CUNY MAPPING SERVICE
Center for Urban Research, Grad Center

Where are the highest concentrations of diabetes in New York City? What parts of the US were most likely to be undercounted in the 2010 Census? How did race and ethnicity change in 15 major U.S. cities from 2000 to 2010?

These are just some of the questions that Steven Romalewski of the Center for Urban Research at the Grad Center is helping to answer through interactive mapping. Beneficiaries include nonprofit

organizations and government agencies that are better able to visualize research and gain new perspectives on the challenges they face.

"We're using maps to better understand policy implications and the world around us - not just to get to the nearest restaurant," says Romalewski, who is director of the CUNY Mapping Service at the Center for Urban Research.

Romalewski pioneered computer mapping while working with the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) from 1984

to 2006, and first used it to track contaminated sites that were a focus for environmental organizing. He moved over to the Grad Center six years ago, and he says that in the time since he came to CUNY, mapping technology and publicly available databases have greatly improved. Romalewski says it is now much easier to gather large sets of data and analyze them geographically.

Among his current projects is Oasis (oasisnyc.net), a website that describes itself as "the richest source of community maps for NYC - free and all in one place." With geographical data on transit routes, property ownership, hazardous waste sites, schools, health, zoning, food networks and more, Oasis provides tools with which users can create their own maps, displaying the information they need.

"The sky's the limit," Romalewski says. "We can map almost anything." And that gives planners, residents, scholars and activists new ways to see their world.

Gina Nurse

Higher Education Assistant
OFFICE OF TRAINING & STAFF
DEVELOPMENT
Medgar Evers College

Gina Nurse conducts all faculty and staff computer training at Medgar Evers College. Since 2010 she has trained faculty and staff in how to use software tools ranging from Microsoft Office to Digication to Blackboard - the last an online course-management program that has become increasingly central to instruction at CUNY. Blackboard's features such as discussion boards and electronic dissemination of

course materials are liberating for some but intimidating for others. Nurse works to put everyone at ease. Blackboard's expanded role at CUNY means its users now go far beyond the "early adopters" who are most comfortable with new technology.

"I like to teach people new things and seeing the difference it makes when they master it," Nurse says. "I like seeing them get happy as they conquer their fears."

Too often, a lack of investment in training means that organizations do not see the increase in productivity that they expect from new computer systems. Nurse's work not only helps faculty and staff be less frustrated and more effective in their jobs; it also helps CUNY gain the full value of its investments in new technology.

Wayne Harewood

Higher Education Officer
DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL AID OFFICE
Kingsborough Community College

About three-fourths of KCC's 16,000 students receive financial aid in order to pursue their collegiate dreams, but navigating that system is not easy. Their journey through the financial aid system often begins at the school's Financial Aid Office, where Wayne Harewood has worked since 1982.

"For me, it's not a job. It's something I like to do that I get paid for doing," says Harewood who has served as Director of KCC's Financial Aid Office since 1998 and oversees a staff of 33 people.

Harewood's office helps students as they encounter a variety of programs with differing eligibility requirements, including Pell Grants, work-study, government-backed

student loans and the State of New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). The summer months of June, July and August, he says, are the busiest time of year.

Harewood told *Clarion* that much of the Financial Aid Office's work is now handled online, but the aid office still handles personal visits from students who need additional help. Some things must still be done in person, such as providing tax forms to establish income, or providing proof of citizenship or legal residency in the United States. The latter are requirements for virtually all financial aid, something that would be changed by passage of the New York State DREAM Act (see page 7).

As a fixture at KCC, Harewood's impact has been multigenerational. "There are people who remember you and come back with their children to enroll. It happens all the time," he said. "I sometimes forget a name," he added, "but I don't forget a face."

Francine Sanchez

Assistant to HEO
ADMISSIONS OFFICE
Center for Worker Education at
Queens College

The Joseph Murphy Institute's worker education programs currently assist 1,100 to 1,500 union members who have returned to college to learn new skills and gain credentials that allow them to advance in their careers.

Francine Sanchez understands both the anxieties and the aspirations of these adult students. When she re-enrolled at Queens College in 1997, she was a 37-year-old single mom working as an office assistant at QC: she needed her bachelor's degree to gain a promotion. Sanchez has now worked as an Assistant to HEO since 2005. Working on admissions to the JMI's programs from her office at Queens College, she helps other adult students make the same journey that she did.

"The adult student is always overlooked in favor of the younger student," Sanchez remarks. "Our job is to advocate for the older student and be there for them."

Many of the City's largest unions (UFT, DC 37, CWA 1180, IBEW Local 3 and others) have provisions in their contracts that support their members in going to college. Part of Sanchez's job is to conduct open houses and to visit the worksites of prospective students, encouraging them to enroll. JMI's central office is in midtown Manhattan; it also operates at Queens College and other CUNY campuses. The program uses a caseload model, and Sanchez says this allows her to stay engaged with students as they pursue their studies.

"I just don't stop when they are admitted. It's full service until they are graduated," she says. "That's the kind of thing I love about working in admissions. In some small way, I help people to reach their dreams."

Across decades: Gerald Meyer & Hostos

By JOHN TARLETON

It was the summer of 1975, and Gerald Meyer was spending his days in the reading room of the main branch of the New York Public Library, researching his dissertation on New York's legendary left-wing congressman Vito Marcantonio. Taking a break one day, Meyer looked at the front page of *The New York Times* and read some news that would change his life.

In response to the City's fiscal crisis, the *Times* reported, the Board of Higher Education planned to close two CUNY campuses. Though the colleges were not named, it was clear to Meyer that one would be Hostos Community College, the school where he worked.

When the PSC chapter at Hostos was formed in 1973, Meyer became its first chapter chair. Now quick action was needed, or he would also be its last.

SAVING HOSTOS

The then-assistant professor of history went to work, reactivating a faculty-student alliance he had helped organize to win additional building space for HCC. Over the next year the Save Hostos Committee petitioned and lobbied, registered new voters, held marches and rallies and sold buttons for \$1 apiece to finance its activities. Students occupied the campus for 20 days in an action led by another group, the Community Coalition to Save Hostos. In the end, Hostos survived.

"It was an incredibly intense experience," Meyer recalls. "People weren't just fighting for buildings. They were fighting for a college that served the needs of the community."

Meyer's passion for Hostos and its students has continued in the decades since. He retired in 2002 but couldn't stay away, returning in 2004 to teach as an adjunct. This year Meyer donated \$25,000 to the college, money that can be used for everything from funding student travel abroad to the school's lobbying in Albany. He was honored on April 25 when the college named a conference room in the school's 500 Building after Vito Marcantonio, whose 1989 biography by Meyer is now in its fourth printing.

HISTORIAN

Meyer's scholarship has been acclaimed for its close examination of an era in New York history that had been ignored after the onset of McCarthyism and the Cold War. "Professor Meyer has been a pioneer in unearthing the history of the vibrant New York political left of the 1930s and 1940s, especially the largely unknown Italian-American left," Joshua Freeman, professor of history at Queens College and the Graduate Center, told *Clarion*. "In his work, the streets of East Harlem and the fierce battles over labor and politics come alive."

Marcantonio was a complex politician with deep local roots, who

'Hero' prof honored at HCC



Gerald Meyer (left) with Nydia Edgecomb, Hostos's Director of Alumni Relations, at a ceremony in honor of his work at HCC and his many years of support for the college.

counted both the Communist Party and the Republican Party among his bases of electoral support. By drawing on extensive correspondence between "Marc" and the voters he represented, Meyer's biography reveals Marcantonio's "deep passion for the welfare of his poverty-stricken Italian American, Puerto Rican, and African American constituents, a concern which made his office a model of constituent service and advocacy for the poor," wrote Pennsylvania State Rep. Mark B. Cohen, a member of the Democratic Leadership Council.

Meyer, 72, is also co-editor with Philip Cannistraro of *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*. He has published more than 60 articles, and his historical research continues today. But at the April celebration, he was also lauded for his work as a teacher and a mentor to several generations of Hostos students.

"He really is a hero. His heart is with the college," said Sandy Tejada (HCC 2004), a former student of Meyer who works at a Bronx nonprofit and is an active Hostos alumna. "He understands the struggles of immigrants and other students who could be shut out of the system."

Meyer grew up in a poor, working-class family that lived in a series of small towns around Hoboken, New Jersey; he was the only one of three brothers to complete high school. "I experienced a lot of deprivation and it was very scarring and really unforgettable," Meyer said.

His first act of political protest occurred when he was 15. Attending a Catholic school during the McCarthy

era, he was confronted by a nun who caught him with a copy of a book by an anti-McCarthy writer and warned the rest of her homeroom class not to speak with Meyer. He threw his books on the floor and walked out of the room, never again to return.

"That was very liberating," Meyer says today.

Enrolled in a public high school in Weehawken, Meyer volunteered with the 1956 Adlai Stevenson presidential campaign, spoke out against McCarthyism and collected petition signatures from his fellow students calling for the racial integration of their all-white school. Though he is no longer religious, Meyer says his activism was inspired in part by Catholic teachings on social justice and the moral responsibility of the individual to stand for what is right regardless of the consequences. "I think I look upon Left politics as good works," he says.

In the years that followed, Meyer worked on an Israeli kibbutz, took part in Civil Rights-era freedom rides, and organized protests against the Vietnam War, while working and going to school – first as an undergrad at Rutgers, then as a graduate student at City College.

DISENCHANTED

As the 1960s unfolded, Meyer became disenchanted with the countercultural aspects of the New Left and a movement culture that was increasingly alienating to many working-class people. "It just seemed so childlike and counter-productive," he told *Clarion*.

Instead, Meyer found himself drawn to the ethos of the Old Left that had flourished in the 1930s and '40s and that helped elect Marcantonio to seven terms in Congress. In particular, Meyer admired the earlier generation's commitment to building enduring working-class institutions.

"I had an impulse towards building things, creating structures of some sort or other," Meyer says.

Meyer found an outlet for his organizing energies when he arrived at Hostos in 1972, following four years teaching as an adjunct (including stints at QCC and KCC in the CUNY system). Hostos had opened in 1970, just after CUNY's move to open admissions, and was primarily intended to serve New York's growing Puerto Rican community. It was founded as CUNY's only bilingual college, and much of the faculty and the student body were politically conscious and socially active.

HOME

"I really had the sense I was home," Meyer said. "I felt very welcome there from the administration on down. They were very interested in building something that worked, and I was eager and willing to participate in that from the very beginning."

At the time, the entire college was housed in a refurbished tire factory. The five-story building was crammed with students and faculty and lacked an auditorium, a bookstore, a daycare center or adequate lab space. During the "heroic years" of 1973 to 1978 (as Meyer refers to them), the campus community repeatedly mobilized to procure the resources it needed and to defend its gains.

These days, Meyer laments that Hostos is in danger of being "homogenized into a general CUNY

culture" – a trend, he says, that is being exacerbated by the Pathways Initiative. Still, he remains devoted to Hostos and its largely working-class students.

CIRCLE OF 100

In 2006 Meyer helped start the Hostos Circle of 100 Scholarship & Emergency Fund. The Fund has raised almost \$200,000 since its founding, distributing both \$1,000 scholarships and \$500 emergency grants to stand-out students who are close to graduating but need a final boost.

Meyer sees no contradiction between these charitable donations and being a committed leftist who advocates a reversal of the deep cuts to CUNY's public funding.

"We need a political solution," Meyer told *Clarion*. "But in the meantime you have a student who's burned out of an apartment, what do you do?" he asks. "You can't just preach that the system is evil and that at some point there will be a transformation of society."

"These scholarships are validating experiences for students," said Tejada, who co-chairs the Hostos Circle of 100 with Meyer. "It increases their confidence to hear people saying, 'we believe in you.'"

Meyer has also remained active over the years with the PSC chapter. "He has kept practicing the same approach that he and others used when they were able to save Hostos," says PSC Chapter Chair Lizette Colón. She points to Meyer's emphasis on coalition-building, both on- and off-campus, as key to the chapter's effectiveness today. "Jerry's wise advice has helped me enormously in my role as chapter chair," says Colón. PSC members also know Meyer for his sense of humor and his attention to "the thoughtful little details which count so much," she adds.

STILL WORKING

"I get up in the morning, I still have to work," says Meyer – though he has now been a pensioner for a decade. "He stays very busy," comments Luis Romero, Meyer's partner of 34 years. The two registered as domestic partners in 1993, and Romero says that "retirement" has not slowed Jerry down. "He's not in a rocking chair looking at a sunset."

Besides his work with the Circle of 100, Meyer teaches a writing intensive course on world history to the year 1500, co-chairs the Behavior Social Science Writer's Group at Hostos, continues his research on the culture and history of the Left in America, is active in the campus PSC chapter and is organizing his own extensive files, which he has donated to the Hostos Community College Archives.

"We're fortunate that Professor Meyer had the good sense as a historian to save this material," says Matt Flaherty, a reference librarian at Hostos and its assistant archivist. "It's the cornerstone of our collection. It's what we build on."



Gerald Meyer speaks at a mid-1970s rally to save Hostos. The school was targeted for closure during New York City's fiscal crisis.

Dreamers turn a corner

By JOHN TARLETON

Every year, the ranks of seniors graduating from US high schools include 65,000 undocumented immigrants, brought to the US by their parents when they were younger. Many of these young people aspire to attend college and have a career in the country that is now their home.

But their immigration status hinders them in many ways: they are ineligible for almost all scholarships or financial aid; they can't work legally; and they are under constant threat of detention and deportation. Even if they can't remember living anywhere else, they have no clear path to citizenship or legal status.

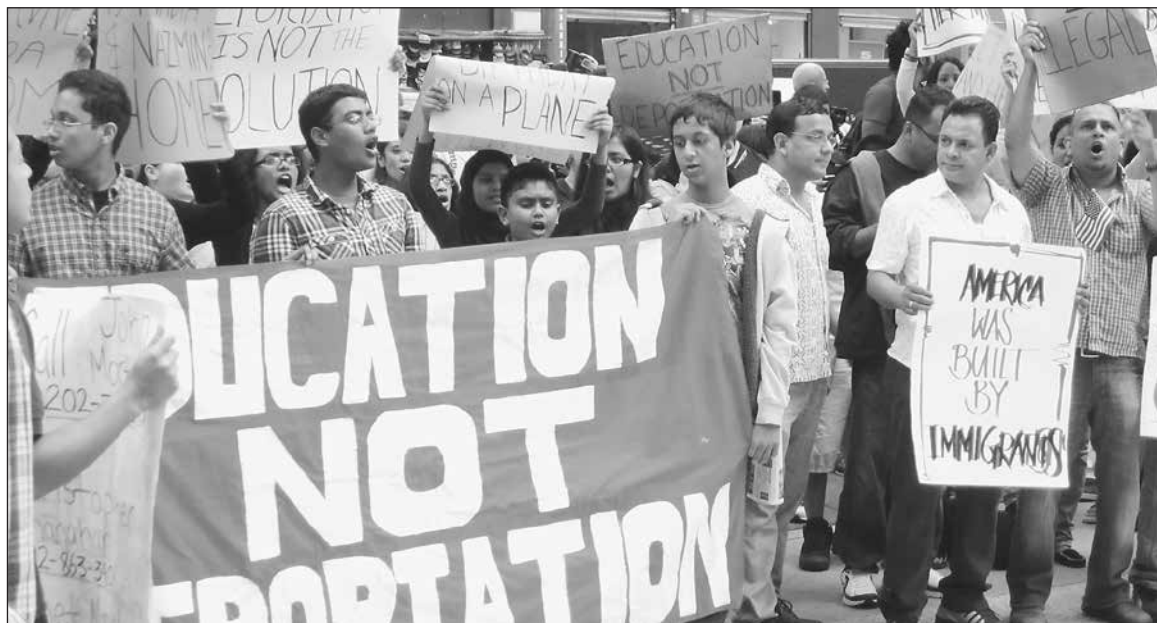
LIVING IN FEAR

"Living in fear, in the shadows, is not a humane way to live your life," says Emilia Fiallo, 21, an undocumented Hunter College student who came to the US from Ecuador when she was eight years old.

Over the past decade, immigrant youth activists like Fiallo have built a grass roots campaign to win support for the DREAM Act. This reform legislation would offer potential relief to undocumented immigrants who entered the US before the age of 16, have lived in the country five consecutive years, have no major criminal record and have graduated from a US high school or earned their GED. The DREAM Act would give them permission to work and reside in the US, opening a path to citizenship for those who earn a college degree or serve in the military by age 30.

The Act has been blocked in Congress for several years – but

CUNY students respond to Obama decree



Protest last September against deportation of undocumented student activist Nadia Habib.

the Dreamers (as the young activists are known) saw their fortunes take a potential turn for the better in June when President Obama announced a package of measures that would grant them some interim relief. The President's executive order came on the heels of escalating protests across the country, in which Dreamers occupied a number of Obama campaign offices.

TEMPORARY PROTECTION

Under the Obama plan, DREAM Act-eligible youth could apply for "deferred action," which would protect them from deportation for two years and allow them to apply

for permission to work. If deferred action is granted, they could renew that status in two-year increments. Their ultimate immigration status, however, would still remain to be determined by Congress.

The executive order applies to individuals who meet the DREAM Act's criteria and were under 31 years of age on June 15 of this year. The order could affect almost a million immigrants nationwide (out of a total of 11 million undocumented immigrants estimated to be in the US), including roughly 4,500 to 5,000 CUNY students. The government announced that applications would

be accepted starting August 15.

"It's the first time we have seen the conversation move toward justice and away from the restrictionist right wing," said

For many, the US is the only country they know.

Alyshia Galvez, an associate professor of anthropology at Lehman and director of the CUNY Institute of Mexican Studies.

Galvez was the keynote speaker at the annual awards dinner of the New York State Youth Leadership Council (YLC) held July 26. She hailed member-led groups like YLC for putting a face on the immigrant rights movement, with individual activists

publicly "coming out" about their immigration status despite the risk of deportation.

The YLC (nysylc.org) is also campaigning for the New York State DREAM Act, which would allow undocumented students who meet in-state tuition requirements to access state financial aid for higher education. To date, they have not been able to gain the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo or the Republican-led State Senate.

With the breakthrough at the federal level, YLC members and other Dreamers must now decide whether to apply for deferred action. Under guidelines put forward by the Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) – an agency within the Department of Homeland Security – applicants must undergo background checks and provide biometric data such as fingerprints and retinal scans. The total cost of applying is \$465.

Seeking to allay fears about what might be done with the information, CIS has announced that information gathered from applicants will not be shared with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for enforcement purposes, even though these two agencies are also part of the Homeland Security Department.

Angy, 21, a sophomore majoring in criminology at John Jay, emigrated to the U.S. from Colombia with her mother when she was three. Her mother has since had three more children, now aged six to 17, who are US citizens by birth. But Angy worries that if she applies, the government may someday round up and deport her mother.

QUESTIONS

"If something happens to me or my mom, I worry what would happen to them," she said of her siblings. "My mom's mentality is that as long as I get papers and some relief, that's OK. She says whatever happens to her is God's will."

Emilia Fiallo says she is wary that Obama may be playing "a political game," but she says she can't pass on the opportunity. "When you have a promise from someone like the president that offers a ray of light in what is a very dark future, you have to take it and hope for the best," Fiallo says.

Many community groups are holding meetings to inform undocumented youth about their options. The YLC held deferred action workshops in East Harlem, South Bronx and Jackson Heights in early August.

Allan Wernick is a professor at Baruch and director of CUNY Citizenship Now, which provides immigrants with legal advice. Wernick said that CUNY Citizenship Now will provide free counseling sessions for undocumented youth at all CUNY campuses within the first six weeks of the new semester. (See cuny.edu/citizenshipnow for details.) The sessions will be staffed by senior attorneys who will be available to advise applicants on their paperwork.

"We're ambitious. We want to put people through this as soon as we can," Wernick told *Clarion*. "It's an opportunity of a lifetime, and those who are eligible should take it."

Making progress at City Tech

By JOHN TARLETON

City Tech's full-time faculty have long been frustrated by the requirement that they teach a larger course load – currently 24 credit hours per year – than their peers at CUNY's other senior colleges, where 21 credit hours is the rule.

This spring the campus PSC chapter organized the largest expression of that discontent to date, with a petition drive calling for action on course load equity. Chapter activists canvassed their colleagues, visiting departments throughout the campus. By the end of the semester, 325 of City Tech's 400 full-time faculty had signed the petition.

MEETING

When members of the PSC chapter executive committee met with City Tech President Russell Hotzler in May, they received some long-awaited news – Hotzler agreed to request funding for the course load change in his annual budget request to the CUNY Central Office.

Support on course load equity

"As City Tech has developed programmatically, it has also been moving towards a workload comparable with that of other senior colleges," Hotzler told *Clarion*. "I fully support this effort and trust that through collective bargaining a comparable workload will be attained."

Chapter members lauded Hotzler's announcement but noted that their work is not done. "There is one other hurdle," said PSC Chapter Chair Bob Cermele. "We have to get CUNY to agree and then they have to get the State to agree. It's on us to follow up and keep the pressure on until this is done."

Associate Professor of English Carole Harris, who spearheaded the petition drive, said the 16 members of the chapter executive committee who met with Hotzler took a collaborative approach, asking him to back this reform in order to strengthen City Tech for the future.

"We wanted to support him in this request," said Harris, who thanked Hotzler for bringing more than 150 new tenure track faculty to City Tech since becoming president in 2004. "He hired us and we are asking him to invest in us," Harris added.

The delegation was joined by PSC President Barbara Bowen and First VP Steve London, who attended to show the support of the union as a whole.

Harris described to Hotzler and other top City Tech officials how the petition campaign was conducted on a face-to-face basis, with all signatures gathered in person following one-on-one conversations.

"Each signature is a story of a conversation we had with someone," said Reneta Lansiquot, an assistant professor of English who helped gather nearly 100 signatures across a number of departments.

Faculty seek fair course load.

During the meeting, chapter members emphasized to Hotzler that the 24-credit rule interferes with their scholarship, makes it more difficult to fill new faculty lines and reduces the amount of time they can spend with students.

"It's also a matter of basic respect for the faculty and our students," said Associate Professor of Sociology Costas Panayotakis.

STUDENTS

Lansiquot attended City Tech as an undergraduate from 2001 to 2003 when City Tech had a 27-credit course load that subsequently was reduced to 24 credits in 2006 through a collective bargaining agreement. She recalled how many of her friends at that time did not receive adequate guidance because their teachers were carrying such a large course load. Now a faculty member, she says the shortage of faculty time for students continues to be a problem and leads to many City Tech students taking more classes than they need to graduate.

"Inequity in course load needs to be removed," Lansiquot said. "It discriminates against both faculty and students at City Tech."

HIGHER ED IN BRIEF

Faculty revolt speeds return of UVA president

University of Virginia President Teresa Sullivan was reinstated to her post on June 26, 16 days after she was forced to resign by members of the University's Board of Visitors who wanted the school to be run more like a corporation. Sullivan's unexpected dismissal ignited protests across the university community, with faculty who admired her consensus-oriented approach to governance taking the lead.

"The Faculty Senate here has transformed itself into a major player, the guiding force that galvanized alumni, students, and community members in demanding that the university bring Ms. Sullivan back," reported the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in the aftermath of Sullivan's return.

The Board members behind Sullivan's ouster all had ties to the UVA's Darden School of Business and advocated that the university cut "unprofitable" humanities courses, embrace low-cost online teaching technologies and embrace "strategic dynamism," a corporate management theory that emphasizes swiftly shifting short-term goals as the business environment changes.

NLRB revisits grad student unions at private colleges

Graduate students at private universities may get another chance to unionize following a June 22 announcement by the National Labor Relations Board that it will reconsider a Bush-era ruling that denied them the right to union representation. The NLRB agreed to hear appeals of two cases, involving efforts to unionize teaching assistants at NYU and graduate research assistants at the Polytechnic Institute of NYU. Teaching assistants at NYU won union recognition from NYU in 2002, a first at a private university in the US. They lost legal guarantees for collective bargaining with their employer following a 2004 NLRB ruling that said that teaching assistants were essentially students and not employees. A 2005-2006 strike by NYU grad students failed to win union recognition.

SUNY downstate medical in critical condition

Faced with hundreds and possibly thousands of layoffs at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, members of the United University Professions (UUP) have held multiple protests outside of the facility this summer. Downstate Medical, located in Crown Heights, serves nearly 400,000 patients a year, 85% of whom are African American. One of three doctors in Brooklyn have graduated from Downstate. Let Gov. Andrew Cuomo know that you support quality health care for all New Yorkers and go to savejobsatsunydownstate.org to sign the petition to Cuomo urging him to stop the layoffs.

AAUP elects new leaders

By JOHN TARLETON

Faced with a growing assault on shared governance and academic freedom, the American Association of University Professors elected a new leadership this spring that has vowed to emphasize grass roots organizing.

Rudy Fichtenbaum, a professor of economics at Ohio's Wright State University, won the race for AAUP president with 64% of the vote. He ran on the Organizing for Change slate, which promised to boost support for collective bargaining and other efforts to build the AAUP as a more activist organization.

PSC Vice President Steve London said the union supports the shift in priorities advocated by the new leadership.

"We're looking for a stronger, more visionary AAUP," London told *Clarion*. "We need that organization during this time of increasing corporatization."

VENERABLE

Founded in 1915 by John Dewey, the American Association of University Professors has been a leading defender of academic freedom for decades. It has more than 48,000 members and over 300 chapters including roughly 70 chapters which operate under collective bargaining agreements that represent nearly 35,000 of the group's members. The PSC pays dues on 1,000 memberships annually, which are held by members who are active in the union or faculty governance.

Focused on organizing



Michael Ferguson/AAUP

Rudy Fichtenbaum of Ohio's Wright State University is the new president of AAUP.

Fichtenbaum succeeds Cary Nelson, who had been the AAUP's president since 2006 and could not run again due to term limits. Along with Fichtenbaum, other new officers from the Organizing for Change slate include First Vice President Hank Reichman, a history professor at California State University, East Bay; Second VP Susan Michalczyk, an adjunct at Boston College; and Secretary-Treasurer Michele Ganon, a professor of accounting at Western Connecticut State University.

Fichtenbaum has been active in the AAUP and faculty governance at his campus over the past two decades. He spoke at mass rallies and

testified before the Ohio State legislature in early 2011 when the Republican majority voted for SB5, which eliminated collective bargaining rights for 350,000 public employees – including university faculty. He subsequently traveled the state building support for a November 2011 ballot referendum to repeal SB5, which voters approved by a landslide of 61% to 39%.

Fichtenbaum told *Clarion* that Organizing for Change will bring the same passion for organizing and mobilizing to the AAUP.

"Working in a coalition with others is what allowed us to be successful," said Fichtenbaum, who wants to make organizing the membership central to the group's work. "Being organized is what gives you power," he added.

In addition to building more collective bargaining chapters and strengthening existing ones, Organizing for Change promised during its campaign to build AAUP membership among all academics, including tenure- and non-tenure-track faculty, graduate students, librarians and advisors.

NEW REALITIES

"These folks recognize that the AAUP needs to pay attention to the reality of the faculty as it actually exists," added PSC Vice President for Community Colleges Anne Friedman, who was a part of a delegation of PSC activists that attended

the AAUP's June national convention in Washington, D.C.

Elected to the Executive Committee (EC) of the AAUP's National Council, Friedman is the only EC member who comes from a community college. She previously served 12 years on the AAUP's Community College Council. "The same issues of academic freedom and tenure affect us, too," Friedman said.

Facing systemic attacks on academic freedom.

Historically, the AAUP has played a strong role in setting standards for academic freedom and calling individual colleges and universities to account when they violate these standards. However, many members have voiced concern that the organization was not responding effectively enough to more systemic attacks on shared governance and academic freedom, which have grown as corporate models of management have become the norm in academe.

Debate over the direction of the organization intensified in the last year when AAUP General Secretary Gary Rhoades was forced out by Nelson. Rhoades had helped organize new collective bargaining chapters in Illinois, Ohio and Oregon, and the AAUP's Collective Bargaining Conference had criticized the process that led to his departure. The success of Organizing for Change is seen by many as a validation of Rhoades's emphasis on collective bargaining and on organizing at the base.

Though Nelson had endorsed Fichtenbaum's opponent Irene Mulvey, a professor at Fairfield University, after the vote he said that the new president was well-positioned to strengthen the AAUP's collective bargaining work. "I hope they also support the traditional strengths that define what the AAUP is: Committee A policy statements and reports [on academic freedom], amicus briefs from the legal department, recruitment of new members devoted to our core principles, and government relations work," Nelson told *Inside Higher Ed*.

CORE VALUES

"There are private institutions where having a union might not be possible but we can still have collective action to defend academic freedom and shared governance," Fichtenbaum responded in an *IHE* interview. "What is the best way to achieve academic freedom, shared governance and protect economic interests of faculty members? I think the answer is being an organization of activists, where the core values of the AAUP remain a centerpiece."

"We have to organize ourselves and demand that our policies and standards be enforced," Fichtenbaum told *Clarion*. "It's not just about protecting a bunch of professors. It's about protecting the public interest."

1972-2012: PSC marks 40th anniversary



The Professional Staff Congress celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. The PSC was established through a 1972 merger of two faculty organizations – the Legislative Conference, led by Belle Zeller, and the United Federation of College Teachers, led by Israel Kugler. Retiree Chapter members have produced an exhibit on the union's history that is on display in the PSC Union Hall. Above, Zeller (2nd from left) and Kugler (3rd from left) lead a 1973 picket at Baruch calling on CUNY to respect faculty rights.

Chicago teachers win longer day battle, but war not over

By THERESA MORAN

In late July, the Chicago Teachers Union won a major victory in its contract battle when the city halted its effort to increase teacher work hours.

Chicago teachers are now on the front lines of the national battle over what “education reform” should really mean. “Our students deserve smaller class sizes, a robust, well-rounded curriculum, and in-school services that address their social, emotional, intellectual and health needs,” said CTU President Karen Lewis. “Parents, teachers and community leaders across Chicago have been unanimous in saying we want a better school day for our students, not just a longer one.”

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago school board announced in April that they were unilaterally increasing the school day by 20% in the fall – without increasing teaching staff or providing proportional compensation for the additional hours.

Chicago teachers work an average of 58 hours a week, according to a recent report. This demanding work schedule contradicts the idea, fed by local media, that public school teachers in Chicago are not pulling their weight. Blocking the mayor’s plan is particularly significant because, under Illinois labor law, the board is not required to negotiate with teachers over work hours.

INTERIM AGREEMENT

The interim agreement requires that students spend more time in the classroom beginning next month, but teacher work hours won’t spike higher. Instead, the city will create 500 new positions. This new investment comes at a time when Chicago has been slash-

92% vote to authorize possible Sept. strike



Chicago Teachers Union Local 1

The Chicago teachers union has energized teachers, parents and students to fight for better public schools.

ing resources and cutting programs across the system, especially in low-income black and Latino communities. Many schools have lost such basics as libraries and recess. The 500 new positions and additional resources will begin filling some of these gaps.

A key gain for the union in the interim agreement was winning recall rights for teachers who lose their jobs due to downsizing or school closures. If more than three tenured teachers displaced within the last three years apply for one of

the new positions, the job must go to one of them. Currently, Chicago teachers have no recall rights.

While not as strong as recall rights enjoyed by teachers in New York and other cities, the provision is still “precedent-setting,” says CTU Financial Secretary Kristine Mayle. “This is the first recall of any sort that we’ve ever had. It kicks the door open to us getting real recall for our people.”

The retreat by Chicago politicians and the subsequent agreement comes after months of member mobilization. Union members have been a regular presence at school board meetings and school closure hearings. In May, a sea of 6,000 red shirts marched on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange shareholders’ meeting to protest government handouts for the Exchange while education and other public services are cut.

STRIKE VOTE

After negotiations deadlocked, the union held “practice strike authorization votes” in schools across the city. Practice made perfect: in June, an overwhelming 92% of the union’s membership voted to authorize a strike.

According to Mayle, yesterday’s agreement proves that people power and direct action get the goods. “It only took 10,000 people in the street, a strike authorization vote, and a fact finder to tell them that they’re crazy but, hey, whatever works!”

The longer school day has been an especially contentious issue in the heated negotiations between the

union and the city. Teachers were angered by both the imposition of more work without a raise and the city’s lack of any strategic plan for

500 new hires for enrichment subjects

the use of this extra time to improve students’ academic performance. Teachers and parents were allied in their objection to additional classroom time with no increase in strategic investment or new programming.

The union has been advocating for guaranteed art, music, and physical education for all students, and calling for increased funding for school nurses and social workers.

The 500 new hires will likely fill gaps for much-needed “enrichment” subjects like music, library science, and languages.

“We’ve been pushing for a better school day, and this is our chance to get it,” said Mayle.

Negotiations between the union and the city are far from over. The interim agreement leaves salary and health care costs unresolved, and doesn’t address disputes over evaluations and discipline procedures.

And while new teachers will increase the variety of classes offered, the increase amounts to only one additional teacher per school, on average. The change will do nothing to fix the problem of too-large classes.

Until those issues are resolved, says Mayle, the CTU is still “going full speed ahead” with preparations for a possible strike in September.

An earlier version of this article was published at labornotes.org.

LABOR IN BRIEF

Privatizers put Postal Service in peril

On August 1, the US Postal Service defaulted on a \$5.5 billion payment to the U.S. Treasury. The default doesn’t immediately threaten mail delivery, but the agency is closing mail processing centers, scaling back overnight delivery and reducing post office hours.

The Postal Service’s deficit is mainly due to a 2006 law that requires the post office to pre-fund retiree healthcare benefits 75 years into the future within 10 years – an artificial target imposed on no other employer. Payments totaled \$38 billion through 2011, with further installments of between \$5.6 billion and \$11.1 billion a year due through 2016, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Supporters of the post office say the crisis has been manufactured by conservatives intent on privatizing the mail while also breaking the Postal Service’s contracts with its highly unionized workforce.

Cleaning up the car wash industry

Time to clean up your act. That’s the message to car wash owners as their workers step up demands for fair treatment. Workers at car washes in the Bronx and Queens have sued their bosses for failing to pay minimum wage and overtime. In July, another Bronx car wash owner received a \$150,000 fine as well as weekends in jail for four months after pleading guilty to wage theft.

“This prosecution makes clear that dishonest employers of low-wage workers are not above the law,” said Attorney General Eric Schneiderman.

The effort to end wage theft and improve unsafe working conditions in the car wash industry is being led by WASH New York, a joint campaign of Make the Road New York, New York Communities for Change and the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, which hopes to unionize New York’s car wash workers.

No solidarity for Romney

When Mitt Romney visited Poland on July 30, he made a point of posing for photos with Lech Walesa, the former Polish president and labor leader. However, Solidarnosc (Solidarity), the union that Walesa helped to found in 1980, disavowed the visit by the presumptive Republican presidential nominee. “Solidarnosc is in no way involved in the organization of this meeting nor had the initiative to invite Mitt Romney to Poland,” the 700,000 member union said in a statement.

The Polish union noted that it has spoken out forcefully in recent years against attacks on collective bargaining in the United States, including those launched by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, and that Romney has been on the wrong side in those fights.

Ready for the Fall



Amanda Magalhaes

PSC Vice President for Senior Colleges Bob Cermele strategizes with Anthony Andrews of York College and other members of the union’s Legislative Committee during the group’s summer retreat June 19. The Legislative Committee ensures that the PSC’s voice is heard at City Council and in the State Legislature.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Québec student strike vs. tuition hike

by ZOLTÁN GLÜCK
& MANISSA MCCLEAVE MAHARAWAL
Graduate Center

MONTREAL – Québec students have been on strike now for six months against a planned 75% tuition hike at the public universities over the next five years. It may be the largest student strike in the history of North America – and as the fall semester begins, Québec’s student movement seems ready to keep going.

The major student unions have called for a massive convergence in Montréal in mid-August, during the first week of the academic calendar. A giant march planned for August 22 could be the largest protest in the history of Québec. These actions will set the tone for the struggle over the coming months, as student unions continue their confrontation with the government of Prime Minister Jean Charest.

Media in the United States have hardly mentioned the Québec student strike, but those of us who have been following the movement have been amazed by the sheer numbers that it has mobilized. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets on major days of action: the protest on May 22 drew an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 people.

This turnout is all the more impressive considering that the march was held in direct defiance of Law 78, the Charest government’s draconian anti-protest law that bans any unpermitted gathering of more than 50 people. The vaguely worded measure threatens enormous fines against organizers, unions and potentially anyone who participates in an unpermitted assembly. But the mass defiance of the law has made its enforcement more or less impossible. On the website “Arrêtez-moi quelqu’un!” (or “Arrest me, someone!”), people post photos of themselves holding signs that declare “I am disobeying Law 78.” Other more everyday forms of resistance are also prevalent.

The red squares that symbolize the student strike are omnipresent in Montréal: pinned in the hair of a girl on the metro, worn as earrings by another, attached to a baby carriage, or duct-taped on backpacks, shoes, bike helmets and cell phones. Most often, the small, red felt squares are safety-pinned to people’s jackets or shirts. The squares are derived from the expression “carrément dans la rouge,” or “squarely in the red.” Besides identifying those who are on strike, they serve as everyday reminders of the crushing student-loan debt that Canadian students already face – on average \$27,000, according to the Canadian Federation of Students.

POTS AND PANS

In late May we traveled to Québec to talk to student organizers and marched with them in their nightly demonstrations. High-energy marches snaked their way across Montréal for hours, through residential and commercial neighborhoods. People in bars, restaurants and apartment leaned out their windows, cheering and chanting. Often they banged on pots and pans, inspired by the Latin American tradition of *cacerolazo* protests: Montréal now has its own tradition of *les marches des casseroles*.

During conversations with our comrades we often expressed disbelief at the size and success of the strike and at the prevalence of red squares. In response people simply said: “Yes, but we have been working for two years to get here.” And it is true. The



Quebec students and their supporters march through the streets of Montreal in April. The banner reads, “It’s a student strike, it’s a people’s struggle.”

tuition hikes have been on the table since 2010, when Québec’s tuition freeze ended. In March 2011, Québec announced its plan to raise tuition by \$325 a year over five years. In response, protesters occupied the finance minister’s office.

HOW THEY DO IT

When asking how, over that time, so many students have been mobilized and politicized, the answer is both simple and complex. As student organizer Myriam Zaidi said, “We’ve been standing on corners handing out leaflets and having conversations with people about this for years. Just opening up that space of conversation has been hugely important. This didn’t happen overnight.” These basic forms of disseminating information about the tuition hikes and fostering debate about these issues have been pivotal in mobilizing massive on-the-ground support behind the call for a strike.

The movement’s dynamism also stems from the organizing structure and history of student unions at universities in Québec. Organized at many levels – from the whole Québec province down to individual academic departments – these unions provide a way for students to organize politically, granting them both legitimacy and power. Longer-term mobilizing strategies include campaigns to build strike votes at general membership meetings, carefully navigated negotiations with governments and university administrations, and coalition-building between the various unions. These have been pivotal in securing a unified front during the current strike. This round of protests are also only the most recent expressions of a much longer history of radical student unionism: Québec has seen nine student strikes since 1968.

Thanks to this deep organizing, student unions at the Université du Québec à Montréal began with a very strong base of support when they called for a strike on February 14. Picket lines were organized in front of classrooms, and efforts to blockade buildings and

shut down the university required constant organizing and action. As one student organizer told us, “In those first few weeks, it was very tedious. We knew the class schedule, and we would stand outside the classrooms with signs....Many students would know this was going on and just stay home.” The support of professors was pivotal; many simply canceled classes in solidarity. Others were less supportive: one day a right-wing professor charged the picket line.

The university didn’t take these actions lightly. In March, fed up with the pickets and the strike, the university hired a notorious strike-breaking security firm. Armed guards patrolled its hallways, interrogating people about why they weren’t in class, stopping professors and students alike to bully and harass them. This, however, only lasted a few days until widespread outrage from faculty of all political leanings forced the administration to withdraw the guards. The strike continued and grew throughout the spring, prompting the provincial government to call for an early end to the semester in an unsuccessful attempt to break the strike.

EXPANDING

While students are still at its core, the movement in Québec has now grown much wider. Their struggle has resonated with other parts of Québec society in part because the tuition hike is just the latest of many efforts by the Charest government to restrict availability of social services through imposing hefty “user fees,” while reducing taxes on corporations and the rich. Many non-students thus back the student strike as an effective form of resistance to the government’s overall neoliberal agenda. Widespread outrage provoked by Law 78 has also buoyed the movement, and while the government has so far held off from any real attempt to enforce the new law, incidents of police brutality and arbitrary arrests have also rallied others to the students’ side.

There are varying levels of support for the strike at different universities and in

different parts of this province of eight million people. At the English-speaking, elite McGill University, support has been sporadic, and the strike there has not been successful (despite a student occupation of McGill’s administrative offices in the winter). In some ways, this is emblematic of historic divisions between the French-speaking and English-speaking communities in Montréal and Québec, and how these divisions also fray along class lines. Occasionally this has meant that the protests have a nationalistic flavor to them, with people carrying the Québec flag and chanting things like: “A qui le Québec? A nous le Québec!” (Whose Québec? Our Québec!)

STUDENTS OF COLOR

These nationalist undertones have been continuously contested by student organizers of color who have been actively working to articulate an anti-racist and anti-colonial analysis within the movement, while also combating the false view that the movement is dominated by white students. These efforts are increasingly successful, as shown by the creation of the students-of-color and anti-racist coalitions that had a presence at the massive May 22 march.

In the broader frame of electoral politics the student movement is a wild card, with uncertain implications for the Québec elections set for September 4. With the corporate media generally hostile to the strike, polls show public sympathy for both the students’ and the government’s positions. But Law 78 is largely unpopular, drawing around 60% opposition in recent surveys. Some student groups will be mobilizing voters against Charest’s Liberal Party, while others are keeping their focus on street mobilization and direct action.

For our part, during marches, or while banging pots on street corners with our Montréal comrades, the question most often on our minds was how we in the CUNY system, as students and workers, can stand in solidarity with this struggle. The first answer, of course, is to build our own movement and to build it in explicit connection with the one happening in Québec. We too are facing tuition hikes at public schools, from New York to California. We too are met with repression and violence when we express dissent. The core issues at stake are fundamentally the same for students and workers around the world: the implementation of austerity measures and the increasing privatization of education. What was once a common good is being purposefully transformed into an elite commodity available to only those who can afford it.

We here at CUNY should keep a close eye on what transpires in Québec in the fall, and what student and labor unions are able to accomplish through working together. Movements like Occupy Wall Street grew out of solidarity with the Tunisian, Egyptian, Spanish, and Greek uprisings, after people began asking themselves, “How do we do that here?” Our generation of students in the United States has yet to mobilize on a mass scale, but after watching what’s happening in Québec, perhaps that will start to change.

Adapted from an earlier article on wagingnonviolence.org. For links to good news sources about the movement in Québec, see psc-cuny.org/Quebec-Update.

Tapping a broader desire for change

TESTIMONY

Perspectives on Pathways

At the June 18 public hearing of the Board of Trustees, 30 faculty members spoke about problems with Pathways, CUNY's overhaul of rules on general education and transfer. The comments below are excerpted from their testimony.

GLENN PETERSEN

**Professor and Chair of Anthropology
Baruch College**

The chancellor has insisted from the outset that the Pathways process is “faculty-driven.” This suggests that it does not consider simply involving the faculty to be sufficient; rather, the chancellor appears to maintain that if this process is to succeed it is imperative that the faculty believes in and supports it.

Why is it, then, that with an overwhelming voice the CUNY faculty as a whole has expressed its opposition to nearly every facet of the process?

JOACHIM OPPENHEIM

**Lecturer
Kingsborough Community College**

My colleagues and I need every minute of the four hours of instruction time we currently have in order to teach elementary and intermediate level foreign languages. Four hours a week is the amount of time that students around the country typically receive for equivalent courses. Languages with different alphabets, such as Arabic, Hebrew and Chinese, are taught around the country in five or six hours a week.

The Pathways Initiative, as it has evolved into the CUNY Common Course Mission Form, stipulates that all courses must be taught at three credits, three hours a week, with no exceptions except for a very limited amount of math and science courses. For the many classes at CUNY that are taught right now at four hours a week, how is it possible to offer these same courses in 25% less time? This is a quarter of a reduction in the time that we have with our students.

There is no answer to this question except to dilute the content of the course. But if we do this, we cannot say that the quality of our courses has not been seriously downgraded. Indeed, if we were to tell students that they were going to now receive the same quality of education, the same chance to achieve academic success, we would be making a false promise to these students.

FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ

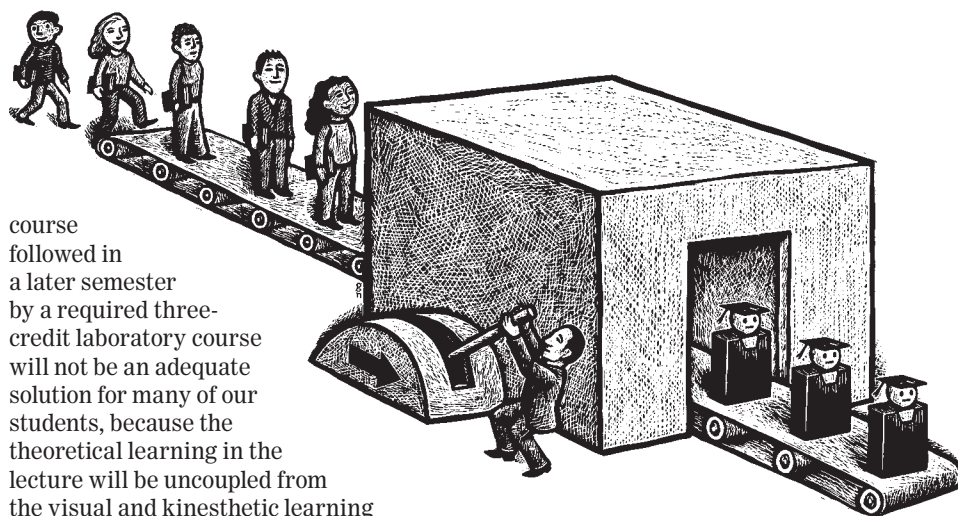
**Chair of Natural Sciences Department
Hostos Community College**

Pathways decreases the amount of contact hours required for Liberal Arts students in our college, from 8 credits/11 contact hours to 6 credits/6 contact hours. This is a decrease of 45% in the amount of contact hours dedicated to sciences. Development of laboratory skills will be affected in particular.

JULIE TRACHMAN

**Professor of Natural Sciences
Hostos Community College**

[There is a] reason why the national standard for science courses includes a laboratory component that typically runs in parallel with the lecture. Without such a concurrent laboratory component, many more of our students will fail and will have to repeat the science courses. A three-credit lecture



course followed in a later semester by a required three-credit laboratory course will not be an adequate solution for many of our students, because the theoretical learning in the lecture will be uncoupled from the visual and kinesthetic learning that occurs in the laboratory.

ALAN FEIGENBERG

**Professor of Architecture
City College**

On every level of education in the United States, administrators, politicians, CEOs and bureaucrats are pushing for a unified, standardized, oversimplified approach to education, an agenda that is in direct opposition to the process of real, authentic learning.

[Pathways] is an affront to all of us as critical educators and to our students, who are treated as faceless statistics, reinforcing the image of education as an assembly line process to produce predetermined results with predetermined efficiency. This is not the way to facilitate the development of critical, creative problem-solving for future needs and challenges.

MARGARET TABB

**Professor of English
John Jay College**

Our students come to CUNY lacking adequate academic preparation in or knowledge of the disciplines. This is a serious problem which the learning outcomes pedagogy of Pathways, with its paucity of disciplinary requirements, will not address. The humanities – history, philosophy and literature – may have similar learning outcomes, but their superficial resemblance in this regard conceals, of course, marked differences in their texts, in their intellectual history and in our methods of analysis. A curriculum based on learning outcomes will not allow students to parse these differences. They will graduate from college without understanding how variously the world is configured when examined through

different disciplinary perspectives and methodologies.

GEORGE SUSSMAN

**Professor of History
LaGuardia Community College**

At LaGuardia Community College, four different departments propose to offer 116 courses in [the “World Cultures and Global Issues” area of Pathways’ Flexible Core]. The courses include foreign languages and literatures, the novel, the art of Renaissance Italy, photojournalism, eastern philosophical traditions, an introduction to macro-economics, Western civilization and the politics of Latin America and the Caribbean – a mind-spinning range of courses. What Pathways tells the student is that academic disciplines, subject matter or knowledge do not matter. What matters is something that the initiative calls learning outcomes, which appear to be unverifiable skills.

CHARLES COLEMAN

**Associate Professor, English
York College**

Pathways will not only end cultural diversity as a required study at York, it will also lessen the value of the Understanding Cultural Diversity course itself. For those who elect to take it, Pathways requires that the course be reduced from a three-credit, four-hour interactive course to a three-hour course without a lab. This loss of 15 hours every semester for the face-to-face application of the principles studied in the Understanding Cultural Diversity course will seriously limit its ability to open minds and change attitudes. We need that class time for students to interact, to confront their own ethnocentrism and to learn firsthand

about understanding and working with people of different cultures.

CARL SCHLACHTE

**Adjunct Lecturer, English
Brooklyn College**

If the Pathways changes are at all concerned with student graduation rates, core composition classes must be allowed to maintain the fourth contact hour for the sake of the students’ performance.

There is a reason composition classes are required for all students. The material covered is crucial to any college or working career. These classes teach students how to read, analyze and discuss any text that is presented to them. It is a very demanding course, and the fourth contact hour allows me to give personal attention to students who need help to pass the class beyond what I can offer in an actual class period.

For example, I frequently have ESL students in my classes. Regardless of their writing abilities, by virtue of the fact that these students are still learning English, these students tend to face persistent but unique grammar issues.

One of my students, whose native language was Russian, was having difficulty with article usage. This makes sense because Russian doesn’t have articles. But it wouldn’t make sense to do an entire lesson on the usage of articles for the whole class. Having the fourth contact hour allowed me to do a specific lesson for this specific student on the usage of articles in English.

ARTHURINE DESOLA

**Secretary
Professional Staff Congress**

A new general education framework is not the most important thing we need to facilitate the students’ transfer throughout CUNY. What we need are resources. Money to hire more academic advisement advisors and more counselors, more money to improve our technology and information-sharing systems and money to keep our class sizes and advisement case loads down to a level that allows for real mentoring and guidance for our students. Pathways has been called austerity education because it accommodates to public disinvestment in CUNY, rather than seeking to overcome it.

HOLLIS GLASER

**Academic Senate Chair
Borough of Manhattan Community College**

Of course you have a flurry of resolutions, a petition of over 5,000 signatures and a lawsuit on your hands. It really couldn’t have gone any other way. There was no possibility that the faculty would simply accept Pathways as it has come down to us.

Now I’ll tell you how to get out of this mess – and fix the transfer issues. Simply give this problem back to the faculty, to our elected bodies and departments, where it belongs. Give us time to come up with many solutions. You have our attention. We’re good at this work. You’ll have faculty buy-in and most importantly our students will be able to transfer easily among the CUNY colleges.

Plan is called “austerity education.”

Clarion AUGUST 2012

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15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Adjunct contact info needed

The PSC and CUNY are nearing agreement on a new adjunct health care plan. The union is encouraging all potentially affected part-timers to make sure the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund has their current e-mail address or phone number to facilitate communication about plan changes and enrollment.

Adjuncts can provide their e-mail address via the Welfare Fund website, pscunywf.org, by clicking on the link under "Attention Adjuncts." If you don't have e-mail access, or will not have access to e-mail at some point in the coming weeks, please call the Welfare Fund at 212-354-5230 and provide a phone number.

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BENEFITS

Clarion | August 2012

Adjunct health insurance update

By PETER HOGNESS

Members of the PSC's negotiating team have been meeting on adjunct health care with representatives of CUNY management throughout the summer, and they report that they are close to a final agreement.

When funding was secured this spring, CUNY management and the PSC agreed in principle on moving adjuncts from their old plan to a plan that covers other public workers. That set the stage for negotiations on the exact terms of the new coverage. The union's key goal has been to ensure a comparable benefit, without a gap in coverage.

EARLY PROGRESS

"We made progress on some of the biggest issues early in our discussions, and that was encouraging," said Michael Batson, an adjunct lecturer in history at College of Staten Island and a member of the bargaining team's subcommittee on adjunct health care. "But when it comes to medical coverage, every detail is important, and settling these issues has required many, many hours of discussion. We know how important it is to get this right."

"This is about people's lives, their health, and in some cases their survival. I can imagine how difficult it is for adjuncts to wait for news about something as intimate and fundamental as health insurance," said PSC President Barbara Bowen, the union's lead negotiator. "Management has been working hard in partnership with us to get this done. I can understand the anxiety it may cause to wait for information when your own health care is involved. We will let you know the minute news is available."

To keep eligible adjuncts informed before the start of the semester, the PSC is organizing an informational meeting for participants on Wednesday, August 22, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm at the PSC Union Hall (61 Broadway, 16th floor). Please check the union's online cal-

August 22 meeting for those affected

Union, management negotiators close to agreement



Members of the PSC bargaining team's subcommittee on adjunct health care en route to an August 7 meeting at CUNY's 80th Street headquarters. From left, Bob Cermele, Vice President for Senior Colleges; Steve London, First Vice President; Mike Fabricant, Treasurer; Barbara Bowen, President; Diane Menna, Bargaining Team Member; Arthurine DeSola, Secretary. (Not shown in photo: Michael Batson, Part-Time Personnel Officer; Deborah Bell, Executive Director; Marcia Newfield, Vice President for Part-Time Personnel.)

endar (at psc-cuny.org) to confirm the time and location.

The union is also encouraging all potentially affected part-timers to make sure the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund has their current e-mail address and/or phone number.

"We need to have a reliable way to reach you as quickly as possible, as there may be a need to enroll in a new in-

surance program on very short notice," said Larry Morgan, executive director of the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund. The most practical method for contacting members quickly is via e-mail, Morgan said. Members can provide their e-mail address via the Welfare Fund website, pscunywf.org, by clicking on the link under "Attention Adjuncts."

"If you do not have access to e-mail, please call the Welfare Fund and give us a phone number," Morgan said. The PSC-CUNY Welfare

Fund can be reached at 212-354-5230.

"A year ago we faced a very real danger that adjuncts who rely on CUNY for their health insurance could see that coverage end," PSC President Barbara Bowen told *Clarion*. "For the union, that was unacceptable. We developed a plan to make sure it did not happen, and that plan got us to where we are today. But our success was possible only because thousands of members gave their time to this campaign. Full-timers and part-timers stood together, and that made a huge difference."

UNSUSTAINABLE

When adjunct health coverage was first established at CUNY in 1986, it was a big advance. But its funding was structured in a way that was ultimately unsustainable. The program was financed through a flat-sum contribution from CUNY – which meant that when the number of covered employees and the

cost of health care went up, CUNY's contribution did not. In every round of bargaining since 2000, the union pressed for a structural solution, but management would only agree to stopgap measures. Over time this produced chronic and growing deficits in the Welfare Fund, and by 2011 the program simply could not survive without a structural change.

PLAN FOR ACTION

Last summer, the Welfare Fund's trustees concluded that the current adjunct health plan could not survive beyond another year on its current basis. The union's plan to save adjunct health care first targeted CUNY, demanding that it budget the funding needed to continue adjunct coverage. Thousands of members spoke out, urging CUNY to "do the right thing" – and in September, the administration announced that support for adjunct health care would be part of its State budget request. As

budget season in Albany unfolded, CUNY worked to secure both this specific financing and full funding for the University's budget request.

"Adjunct health insurance will now rest on a more solid foundation," said Bob Cermele, a member of the PSC subcommittee bargaining on adjunct health care, "and that's good news for everyone who works at CUNY, whether part-time or full-time. First, because it's bad for the University if our colleagues lose their health insurance. And second, because this change strengthens the Welfare Fund's finances for the future."

To stay current on developments with adjunct health insurance, check the PSC website (psc-cuny.org). If you are a potentially affected adjunct, get the latest news right away by making sure the Welfare Fund has your e-mail address: fill out the web form at tinyurl.com/PSC-WF-email.

Dave Sanders