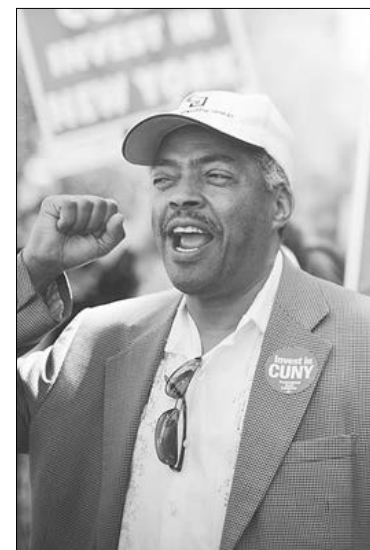




READING Summer books

Faculty
members share
their favorite
summer reads.

PAGE 8



All photos: Dave Sanders; top right photo illustration: Margarita Aguilar

CANDIDATES & CONTRACTS AGAINST AUSTERITY

With all 152 of the City's bargaining units working under expired contracts, thousands of public workers filled Broadway outside City Hall on June 12, demanding progress in contract negotiations. Speakers at the rally blamed Mayor Michael Bloomberg for turning his back on City workers and urged at-

tendees to vote in this year's elections. With the race to replace Bloomberg heating up, the PSC has endorsed Bill de Blasio for mayor in the September 10 primary. Inside, de Blasio answers questions from Clarion, and PSC members speak out on the need for a new contract.

PAGES 6-7 & 11

NEW TIME SHEETS Imposed on HEOs & CLTs

CUNY has begun to require HEOs and CLTs to fill out time sheets. Management often doesn't take into account the human variables of the job.

PAGES 9, 12

SAN FRAN SHUTDOWN You call this accountability?

The 85,000-student City College of San Francisco is being threatened with loss of accreditation – though the quality of its education has not been questioned.

PAGE 10

MAYOR'S RACE PSC endorses de Blasio

The PSC says it is backing Public Advocate Bill de Blasio for mayor because he stands for an alternative to the politics of austerity.

PAGES 7, 11



CITY AUDIT Dependent health coverage

Have your documents ready as the City of New York moves to "audit" dependents who get coverage from the City's health plan.

PAGE 9

RF-CUNY workers launch one-day strike

By JOHN TARLETON

Fed up with management's demands for more concessions, workers in the CUNY Research Foundation Central Office Chapter carried out a one-day strike on July 1, that drew scores of fellow unionists to their picket line despite heavy showers.

The 102 members of the Central Office Chapter have been without a contract since the end of December. Management's pay offer is still stuck below the rate of inflation and RF is demanding a two-tier wage structure that would compensate new hires less. After months of their employer's foot-dragging at the bargaining table, the RF-CUNY workers decided they had to take a stand.

NO TO 2-TIER

"Management has no problem paying itself greatly," Chapter Chair Tony Dixon told Labor Press. "But when it comes to paying their union employees, for some reason they become cheap. They become misers."

"We feel a two-tier system is unfair. People should get the same pay for the same work," said Priscilla Villacis, an assistant project administrator in RF-CUNY's Office of Grants and Contracts. "Everyone should have the same benefits – both new hires and existing employees."

In the interest of moving toward a deal, the union bargaining team had already agreed to increased health insurance premiums for all employees, as well as reduced annual leave and sick leave accrual. But when management negotiators dodged serious discussion of the outstanding issues, union members felt they had to show they would not wait forever.

Stalled talks spur walkout



More than 100 RF-CUNY Central Office workers and their supporters picketed in the rain July 1.

"We didn't like that we had to strike for one day," said Villacis. "But our message to management is that we're united."

The RF workers were joined on the picket line by PSC members from 15 campuses. They joined the picket line, they said, to tell RF management that its intransigence is unacceptable.

"They [RF Central Office employees] are an integral part of CUNY," said Hugo Fernandez, assistant professor of photography and vi-

sual arts at LaGuardia. Fernandez is principal investigator on a grant with which he took students on a study-abroad trip to southern Chile and Argentina during the Spring semester, and he commended RF Central Office staff for their work administering the funds. "It's only right that people who work there should be treated right and not like second-class citizens," said Fernandez.

RF-CUNY processes more than \$380 million in grants annually. A

significant percentage is retained for overhead; those funds are often used for purposes far removed from scholarship and teaching, such as paying the RF's anti-union consultants.

"The difference between the two sides on salary increases – roughly \$80,000 annually – is just 6% of what the RF paid in one year to its anti-union attorneys," said PSC Associate Executive Director Naomi Zauderer. The RF's annual report shows it is in a strong financial position, she said, and union proposals would require no increase in overhead.

Frank Mirer, professor of environmental and occupational health at the CUNY School of Public Health, said the foundation could reach a fair settlement if it wanted to. "They are collecting a lot of money for CUNY, and CUNY controls what they are doing," Mirer said. The RF "should provide equitable pay and benefits for...all their workers."

While institutionally linked to CUNY, RF-CUNY is considered a private-sector entity. Its workers thus have the legal right to walk off the job, unlike most PSC members who as government employees are covered by New York's Taylor Law forbidding strikes in the public sector. The willingness of RF members to exercise their right to strike impressed other PSCers who were on hand.

"Walking the picket line is always a good experience and an empowering experience," City Tech Chapter Chair Bob Cermele told *Clarion*. "It's a flexing of union power."

"It was refreshing to see people who still believe in union power," said Berkis Cruz-Eusebio, an assistant HEO at Hostos. "It's one thing to learn about the union in theory and another to see it in action," she said.

Portia Seddon, an adjunct lecturer in women's studies at Hunter, said that the RF workers' struggle is an important one for part-time faculty who suffer under a two-tier system. "Adjuncts are some of the most vulnerable workers at CUNY, so it's important we stand beside the RF workers," Seddon said. "This is all part of the fight for a stronger union."

The strikers and their supporters picketed outside RF headquarters at 230 West 41st Street from 8:00

am to 2:00 pm. The PSC provided brightly colored blue and green rain ponchos when the skies opened up mid-morning. In the midst of the bad weather, passing motorists enthusiastically expressed their support.

HONK FOR THE UNION

"The 'Honk if You Support the Union' signs got a lot of honks," said Sharon Persinger, PSC chapter chair at Bronx Community College. "It really does raise your energy to come out and march and chant and dance in a circle with your union brothers and sisters."

"We're stronger if we all come together to support each other," said Persinger, one of several PSC Executive Committee members who walked the line. All four of the PSC's principal officers attended, as did representatives from NYSUT and SEIU 1199. Vincent Alvarez, president of the New York City Central Labor Council, joined the picket, as well as mayoral candidate Bill de Blasio (see pages 7 and 11).

"All you are saying is pay decent wages, decent benefits," said de Blasio. "We will be with you every step of the way."

"It was very encouraging that we had other people backing us up," said Villacis. "We appreciated everybody who came out."

Given the stance of RF-CUNY management toward its workers, Villacis expects there will be more battles ahead.

"We're united," Villacis said. "We're in this to fight for a fair contract."

CSI election

A new election for PSC chapter positions at the College of Staten Island (CSI) will be held this fall, starting on or about October 1; members at CSI will receive details by mail. The PSC Elections Committee ordered the new vote following a challenge to results of the Spring 2013 CSI faculty chapter election. The committee dismissed the challenge, but found another issue that it concluded could have affected the result, and thus ordered a new vote. The committee's report is online at tinyurl.com/PSC-2013-election-CSI-report.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR |

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

Demanding a new deal for Detroit

● The threatened bankruptcy of Detroit has been widely viewed as a major moment in the decline of American capitalism. Logically, it should also be a turning point in the fight back against a rapacious, inhumane, irrational system that is decimating the most vulnerable sectors of the American working class and menacing those relatively better off. Among other things, Detroit's bankruptcy would mean the abrogation of union contracts between the city and the public-sector workers' unions. It means the replacement of a duly elected, multiracial, Democratic Party administration with plenipotentiaries of the corporations duly appointed by an unusually right-wing Republican governor. The impending coup d'état in Detroit models the mechanisms for

the elimination of public-service unions and democratic elections elsewhere.

We must demand that the Obama administration inaugurate in Detroit an urban Tennessee Valley Authority. The TVA, a comprehensive economic and social program, transformed a vast area that embraced parts of eight of the poorest states of the United States. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who in 1933 signed the authorization for TVA, declared, "It is time to extend planning to a wider field." TVA is a high point of American progressive history that demonstrates a way to prevent the collapse of what remains of a once-great city's dignity and its people's hopes.

In addition to political actions, which are urgent and crucial, there are other ways that people can help

Detroit. One is to become a member of the Detroit Institute of Arts or the Friends of the Detroit Library; the latter also accepts donations of books.

Gerald Meyer
Hostos Community College

Clarion AUGUST 2013

Newspaper of the Professional Staff Congress/City University of New York, collective bargaining representative of the CUNY instructional staff. Vol. 42, No. 6. PSC/CUNY is affiliated with the American Association of University Professors, National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers (Local 2334), AFL-CIO, the New York City Central Labor Council and New York State United Teachers. Published by PSC/CUNY, 61 Broadway, 15th floor, New York, NY 10006. Telephone: (212) 354-1252. Website: www.psc-cuny.org. E-mail: phogness@psccmail.org. All opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the PSC.

PSC OFFICERS: Barbara Bowen, President; Steven London, First Vice President; Arthurine DeSola, Secretary; Michael Fabricant, Treasurer; George Brandon, Jonathan Buchsbaum, Penny Lewis, Costas Panayotakis, Michael Spear, University-Wide Officers; Robert Cermele, Vice President, Senior Colleges; David Hatchett, Blanca Vázquez, Alex Vitale, Senior College Officers; Anne Friedman, Vice President, Community Colleges; Lorraine Cohen, Sharon Persinger, Felipe Pimentel, Community College Officers; Iris DeLutro, Vice President, Cross-Campus Units; Alan Pearlman, Andrea Ades Vázquez, Paul Washington, Cross-Campus Officers; Marcia Newfield, Vice President, Part-Time Personnel; Michael Batson, Susan DiRaimo, Steve Weisblatt, Part-Time Personnel Officers; Bill Freidheim, Eileen Moran, Retiree Officers; Irwin H. Polishook, President Emeritus; Peter I. Hoberman, Vice President Emeritus, Cross-Campus Units.

STAFF: Deborah Bell, Executive Director; Naomi Zauderer, Associate Executive Director; Faye H. Alladin, Coordinator, Financial Services; Debra L. Bergen, Director, Contract Administration & University-Wide Grievance Officer; Dierdre Brill, Director, Organizing; Francis Clark, Coordinator, Communications; Barbara Gabriel, Coordinator, Office Services and Human Resources; Jared Herst, Coordinator, Pension & Health Benefits; Kate Pfordresher, Director, Research & Public Policy; Diana Rosato, Coordinator, Membership Department; Peter Zwiebach, Director of Legal Affairs.

Editor: Peter Hogness / Associate Editor: John Tarleton / Designer: Margarita Aguilar / Proofreader: Teri Duerr.
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Deciding it's time to take a stand

BY JOHN TARLETON

Marjorie Deutsch has been a PSC member since 1998, but until the Pathways referendum, she had never been especially active in the union. That changed when Deutsch received a phone call from Judy Barbanel, then chair of the union chapter at Queensborough Community College (QCC), urging her to vote on the Pathways referendum.

"It resonated with something inside of me," said Deutsch, an associate professor of business at QCC. "I realized in that moment that doing nothing was to be a part of the problem." Deutsch decided she wanted to become active in the PSC's efforts to encourage members to vote.

PHONE CALLS

The referendum was held from May 9 to May 31 among CUNY's full-time faculty, and during the final week, Deutsch spoke with the other members of her department. She also made phone calls to other colleagues at QCC.

"I found a lot of people wanted to talk about it [Pathways]," Deutsch told *Clarion*. All it took, she said, was someone to reach out and start the conversation.

When ballots were tabulated May 31 by the American Arbitration Association, more than 60% of CUNY's 7,202 full-time faculty had participated in the referendum with 92% voting "no confidence" in Pathways. This impressive display of faculty opposition to Pathways was aided by hundreds of PSC members like Deutsch, talking with their colleagues in thousands of conversations across the CUNY system.

"We're all inundated with e-mails," said Barbanel. "But there's nothing like getting a phone call or having a personal conversation."

At Queens College, people in departments across the campus took responsibility for speaking to their colleagues. "It was a total mobilization," said Jonathan Buchsbaum, professor of media studies and chapter chair at Queens College. "Arguably the strongest opposition [at QC] came from the sciences."

'SYSTEMATIC'

At Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), "we did the most systematic and wide-reaching outreach effort in the time since I have been here," Geoff Kurtz, associate professor of political science, told *Clarion*.

"I engaged with people I've never met before because we have so many new faculty on campus," said Anne Friedman, a professor of developmental skills who has taught at BMCC since 1986. Friedman noted that being a good listener was essential to successful outreach: "People generally like having someone from the union to come to talk and sit down with them."

Acting LaGuardia Chapter Chair Danny Lynch agreed that careful

Discussion & Pathways vote



QCC Associate Professor of Business Marjorie Deutsch was one of hundreds of PSC members who urged their colleagues to vote on the Pathways referendum.

listening was key to the union's outreach effort. "I often asked people what they want for the University," Lynch told *Clarion*. Quality education and real, shared governance were often cited, and both were widely seen as threatened by the Pathways project. Voting no-confidence in the referendum became a way for people to express those concerns, said Lynch.

SECRET BALLOT

Voting in the referendum was by secret ballot – an important factor given the heavy-handed pressure that was often part of Pathways implementation. "There were a lot of threats that went with the Path-

ways propaganda," said Hester Eisenstein, professor of sociology and women's studies at Queens College and the Graduate Center. For example, she told *Clarion*, some department chairs were threatened with loss of resources and faculty lines for their departments if they opposed Pathways implementation. "Because the referendum was anonymous, some people came out against Pathways who couldn't do so otherwise," said Eisenstein. "People used it as an opportunity to express how they really felt."

"Some chairs sent out messages encouraging department members to vote their consciences," added

Buchsbaum. "In effect, this meant to vote no-confidence in Pathways," he told *Clarion*, since opposition to Pathways is so widespread.

Sigmund Shen, associate professor of English, said that LaGuardia Community College faculty had become increasingly willing to discuss their thoughts about Pathways as a result of ongoing organizing around the issue throughout the year. The referendum both built on and contributed to this shift. "The dialogue has become broader and people are more comfortable raising problems with Pathways and speaking about the importance of governance," said Shen, who did "walk-throughs" during the referendum, visiting members in their offices and urging them to vote.

Frank Crocco, an associate professor of English at BMCC, did a walk-through in his department. When members expressed concern that their votes would be meaningless Crocco reminded them that a strong faculty rejection of Pathways could help the PSC's ongoing lawsuit against Pathways. He also noted that a strong no-confidence vote would strengthen faculty across the country who are fighting similar top-down efforts by university administrators to water down the curriculum in a time of budgetary austerity.

END OF SEMESTER

With anti-Pathways sentiment running high at Brooklyn College (BC), acting Chapter Chair Alex Vitale said he focused on making sure

people had received their ballots and remembered to cast them as they were winding up the semester.

BC Sociology Department Chair Carolina Bank Muñoz spoke with her fellow chairs about the vote; she also made phone calls to about 30 colleagues. "Ninety percent of people were favorable" to a vote of no confidence, said Bank Muñoz – a percentage that held true in the final results across the University.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

With a clear-cut majority of CUNY's full-time faculty voting "no confidence" in Pathways, the vote reflected the broad discontent with Pathways on CUNY campuses. In the wake of the vote, the administration has stopped claiming that its plan is "faculty-driven."

PSC activists say the skills and experiences gained during the referendum campaign will strengthen future union initiatives, on Pathways and beyond. "My hope is with my activity I can get other junior faculty involved in the union," said Matt Lau, assistant professor of English at QCC, who spoke with a couple dozen other members during the referendum vote. Lau is glad to be part of a democratic union, saying, "I want to get others involved, too."

"Everything on the union's agenda depends on member involvement," commented Barbanel. "The organizing we did for the Pathways referendum will definitely have a longer-term effect."

'People wanted to talk about it.'

Next steps in Pathways battle

By PETER HOGNESS

The strong "no-confidence" vote on CUNY's Pathways curriculum at the end of May sent a clear signal about the depth of faculty opposition to the plan. Now the PSC is alerting legislators to the consequences for students' education as Pathways takes effect this Fall. Within the University, the union is calling for a review of Pathways that is independent, thorough and transparent.

In a June 21 letter to Board of Trustees Chair Benno Schmidt, PSC President Barbara Bowen wrote that the American Arbitration Association's ballot count showed a 92% vote of no confidence in Pathways, with more than 60% participation, in the referendum among full-time CUNY faculty. "An absolute majority voted no confidence," Bowen wrote. She called on CUNY to repeal Pathways and work with elected faculty representatives on an alternative general education plan.

That call won the support of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) at its annual meeting in Washington.

"Pathways...has failed to win the confidence of faculty who must implement it," said a resolution adopted by AAUP delegates in June. "Faculty control of the curriculum is essential for academic quality," it said. Instead, "the CUNY administration has circumvented elected faculty bodies and college governance."

The result has been a poorly thought-out plan that does not serve students well, concluded the AAUP: "Pathways reduces academic quality and rigor at CUNY by introducing basic science courses without lab sessions, decreasing requirements for foreign language study, and replacing academic disciplines with vaguely defined interdisciplinary fields."

IMPACTS

Looking toward the Fall, the PSC is urging elected officials to be alert to impact of Pathways on the quality of students' education. "They should seek information on the consequences of such a major change at New York City's public university," Bowen said. "When problems

emerge, they can call for appropriate solutions – and they can insist that those solutions be formulated, as specified in CUNY's bylaws, by the elected faculty bodies."

And public officials are starting to listen. Brooklyn City Councilmember Letitia James, currently a candidate for public advocate (see page 7), has introduced a council resolution on the pitfalls of Pathways and the need for public attention to its consequences. Pathways is getting some scrutiny in the mayor's race as well (see page 11).

If Pathways is not repealed, the PSC says that the review of the program in its first year, required by the trustees' 2011 Pathways resolution, must be independent and the process transparent. "The most important thing is that the members of the evaluation committee must not be, and must not be exclusively appointed by, those who created Pathways in the first place," Mike Fabricant, PSC Treasurer, told *Clarion*.

Faculty must lead review of curriculum overhaul.

"The review must *not* be chaired by a CUNY administrator," agreed Bowen, adding that faculty governance bodies must select most of the panel's members.

GOVERNANCE & UNION

"Whether or not management agrees to such guarantees," said Fabricant, "faculty can and should be highly involved in the assessment of Pathways across the University. Governance structures and union chapters can act collectively to assess what Pathways looks like on their campus to date."

"For example, union chapters could convene a town hall meeting where faculty, staff and students talk about their experiences with Pathways in practice. We can ask what quantitative data should we perhaps collect, even if the University does not" Fabricant said.

"Our intention is to make sure that faculty and students are vigilantly monitoring the implementation of a program that puts the quality of a CUNY education at risk," he concluded. "It is our students' future that is at stake."

State support for higher ed plummets

By JAKE BLUMGART & PETER HOGNESS

State support for public higher education in the US has been in steep decline since 2008, thanks to repeated austerity measures enacted in the wake of the Great Recession. In some states, alternatives to deeper austerity are starting to get political traction – but the damage has been severe, and the lost ground will not be easy to regain.

According to a report from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), state funding for higher education has plummeted 28% per student since the 2007-08 fiscal year, after adjusting for inflation. In the last year alone, state funding for higher education fell 7%.

Tuition increased sharply in the same period: between fiscal year 2008 and fiscal year 2013, annual tuition at four-year public colleges grew by 27%. “The decline in state funding and the resulting rise in tuition since the start of the recession have accelerated a longer-term cost shift from states to students and families,” the CBPP notes. In 1987, net tuition made up 23.3% of public higher education revenue, but by 2012 the share from tuition rose to 47%. In 2012, net tuition revenue per student hit a historic high of \$5,189.

TUITION INCREASES

But increased reliance on tuition has left public colleges and universities with less money overall. According to an annual report from State Higher Education Executive Officers, “even after adding revenue from tuition increases,” public colleges’ total revenue per student “decreased 8% on average between 2007 and 2012.”

Cuts in state higher education funding have been near universal in the last five years: only Wyoming and North Dakota increased state spending in this period. In all, 36 states reduced funding by more than 20%, while 11 slashed it by more than one-third. Arizona and New Hampshire have cut state support in half.

Pennsylvania is a relatively typical example: its spending on public higher education sank 29.9% per student between fiscal years 2008 and 2013, slightly above the national average. As in many states, the deepest cuts have come in the last couple of years, after federal stimulus aid to the states ended in 2011. In that year, Republican governor Tom Corbett asked for a stunning 50% reduction in a single year for his state’s aid to higher education. In the end, the legislature reduced it by “only” 20%.

Corbett tried for deep cuts again in 2012, and while the Republican-dominated legislature stopped him, they did nothing to roll back the previous year’s losses. Corbett’s 2013 budget flat-funded higher education aid, locking the old cuts into place and making them the “new normal.”

The result has been both tuition hikes and rollbacks of programs and positions within Pennsylva-

But Calif. votes to tax rich

nia’s state university system, from faculty positions to cross-country teams to nursing programs to the infrastructure that helps low-income students adapt to campus life. The Advising Center at Kutztown University, for example, was recognized in the 2009 *Handbook of Career Advising* for its “exemplary practices” in academic advising. It was eliminated in 2011.

DECIMATED PROGRAMS

“I work with at-risk students, and the administration is stripping away the programs to retain and support those students,” says Kevin Mahoney, associate professor of composition at Kutztown University. “I’ve been here for ten years and every year it gets harder and harder to do my job. I’m in the best department I’ve ever worked in, with some of the most dedicated people I’ve ever worked with. I work with awesome

This push to tax the rich was led by the California Federation of Teachers (CFT), which built a coalition around a straightforward “millionaires’ tax” proposal. Two rival tax initiatives, one of them launched by Gov. Jerry Brown, relied on tax increases that would apply broadly across income levels, since their backers did not want to “demonize the rich.” But the CFT’s plan consistently polled better than its rivals, and Brown eventually asked to join forces with the CFT around a compromise proposal: Proposition 30 was the result.

While somewhat less sweeping than the CFT’s original plan, Prop. 30 marked a major change in California’s fiscal direction. “It is the single largest progressive tax passed in the state since World War II, both in the amount of revenue raised and as a percent bump

opposes further tax increases now that Prop. 30 has passed, additional revenue sources will be required if California’s public universities are to regain lost ground. As the CBPP has stressed, “Economic growth in and of itself will not be sufficient to propel higher education funding to previous levels any time soon.”

Additional revenue is needed to reverse the damage.

Passage of Prop. 30 thus meant victory in one battle, not the war – but it did change the terrain on which the next battles will take place. As the CFT’s Glass observed, its 55% approval has “reshap[ed] the decades-old understanding of California as an ‘anti-tax’ state.”

Free state-provided higher education was once normal practice in several states, including New York; today it is usually seen as a utopian idea. But in 2013, a version of that idea has been advanced in an unexpected corner of the nation: Arkansas.

While campaigning for the Demo-

the state of Arkansas, cannot do the same thing,” Halter said.

Halter recently withdrew from the race, saying that he was endorsing his rival Rep. Mike Ross in order to spare the party a divisive primary. (Ross has raised \$1.7 million, more than twice as much as Halter.) But the Arkansas Promise proposal was described positively in news coverage of both Halter’s campaign and his withdrawal, and the fact that a savvy, ambitious politician would advance such an idea caught the attention of the state’s political insiders. Arkansas is currently ranked 49th in the nation in the percent of adults with college degrees.

The political limits of Halter’s plan could be seen when he insisted that no new taxes would be needed to pay for it, saying that several existing revenue streams, including a state lottery that funds college scholarships, could do most of the job.

In Arkansas, state support for public higher education has declined 19% per student since the recession began, a reduction of \$42 million overall. If that \$42 million is to be restored, it has to come from somewhere. (Arkansas, it should be noted, is also the home state of Walmart’s Walton family, collectively worth about \$93 billion.)

CBPP analysts emphasize that the damage caused by austerity in public higher education cannot be overcome without additional revenue measures. Even if spending rises in tandem with an economic recovery, they say, this growth alone will leave public colleges and universities at a net loss.

COST SHIFT

“The cost shift from states to students has not occurred in a steady, straightforward way,” the CBPP explains. “During and immediately following recessions, state and local funding for higher education has tended to plummet, while tuition has tended to spike. Funding has tended to largely recover, and tuitions have tended to stabilize, during periods of economic growth.” But the recovery never quite catches up with the cuts, resulting in a long-term negative trend.

Overall, “states have been reducing their contributions to public higher education, while students have been picking up a larger share of the costs.”

On the ground, that means that college has become less accessible over time. “Temple is one of the best equalizing institutions in Pennsylvania because they do accept a lot of students who really wouldn’t be able to go to a good school on their parents’ incomes,” says Brett Wise, a junior at Philadelphia’s Temple University and a member of student government. But Wise has several friends who may drop out if tuition continues to rise: “If it keeps going up, it is going to become less and less of an equalizing institution and more just another school where you’ve got to pay a lot to get in.”



Pennsylvania students protest a 20% cut in state support for public higher education enacted by a Republican governor and the state legislature. The cuts have led to tuition hikes and program rollbacks.

students, but I walk away at the end of the day and I hate my job. Because of that constant drumbeat of cuts, we are not able to do the very thing we are supposed to do.”

These deep cuts were not unavoidable. As the CBPP points out, “states could have reduced the size of spending cuts by enacting significant new revenues,” but most legislatures chose not to. Last year in California, however, voters made a different choice.

Higher education spending by California has declined by 29.3% per student in the five years since the start of the recession. But in November 2012, Californians approved a measure raising taxes on the rich, along with a quarter-cent sales tax increase, to secure \$6 billion for public schools, higher education and a variety of other social services. Ninety percent of the new revenue will come from higher taxes on the wealthy.

on the income taxes of the wealthy,” CFT Communications Director Fred Glass wrote in *Labor Notes*.

The new funds have allowed every level of the state university system to avoid the budget cuts and tuition hikes that had been expected this year. But this is not enough to roll back the tuition increases and budget cuts inflicted on the state’s public colleges in recent years.

“It wasn’t that Prop. 30 added more money to the university budget, but it prevented even more cuts from happening,” says George Kieffer, one of the 26 members of the University of California’s Board of Regents. As the president of the California Teachers Association, Dean Vogel, told the Huffington Post, “Prop. 30 stopped the bleeding” – and that’s a major change. But the limits of its success show just how deep a hole California has dug itself into.

While Gov. Brown has said he

cratic nomination for governor, former Lieutenant Governor Bill Halter advanced a proposal he called “The Arkansas Promise.” The plan called for an in-state tuition scholarship for any student graduating from an Arkansas high school with at least a 2.5 GPA. After a student received federal, state, local or private financial aid, the state would cover the rest of the tab, up to a maximum equal to tuition at the priciest public university in Arkansas.

ARKANSAS PROMISE

Halter said he was inspired by the “El Dorado Promise,” created by Murphy Oil Corporation to provide tuition-free college education to students in the central Arkansas town of El Dorado, where Murphy Oil is based. “If a company, whose main concern is its shareholders, if a company can make that investment, then I defy you to tell me why we,

Petraeus retreats from \$150K pay

By JOHN TARLETON

After coming under a barrage of public criticism, disgraced former CIA Director David Petraeus turned down the six-figure salary he was offered for teaching one class at CUNY's Macaulay Honors College. Instead, his attorney announced, Petraeus will accept a payment of \$1 per year.

News of Petraeus's lucrative deal with CUNY broke July 1, when the website Gawker.com revealed that former Chancellor Matthew Goldstein had offered Petraeus \$200,000 per year to teach a once-a-week seminar class for 16 students at Macaulay – over 30 times what most CUNY adjuncts receive for teaching a three-hour course.

Petraeus's course is titled "Are We On the Threshold of a North American Decade?" It will focus on developments in energy, advanced manufacturing and life sciences and their economic implications.

Goldstein first broached the lavish pay package in a February 22 e-mail to Petraeus, one of several communications obtained by Gawker under New York's Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). On March 6, Goldstein formally offered Petraeus a position as a visiting professor at Macaulay with a \$200,000 annual salary. The former chancellor also promised Petraeus a team of graduate students "to assist you with course research, administration, and grading." Petraeus's appointment was approved by the CUNY Board of Trustees in April.

Nowhere in the e-mails or letters from CUNY is the job described as a part-time or adjunct position. When former Governor Elliot Spitzer taught a class at City College in 2009, following his own sex scandal and resignation, he was hired for the course at the highest rate for an adjunct full professor – about \$4,500 per semester.

When Petraeus's appointment was first announced, it provoked sharp criticism from many in the CUNY community, who asked why the former general's record in Iraq and Afghanistan should be viewed as a reason to hire him at CUNY. Many of those voices were raised at Macaulay. "This is outrageous – I can't believe Macaulay can actually appoint this war criminal as a professor," commented Macaulay graduate Maha Akhtar, according to a report in the Macaulay Messenger, the school's online student paper. "This brings complete shame to me as a Macaulay alumnus and reflects terribly on Macaulay, as a 'scholarly' community." The revelations on Petraeus's pay sparked a new wave of questions about this use of the University's scarce resources.

SECOND CONTROVERSY

CUNY soon became embroiled in a second controversy after it released a series of e-mails purporting to show that Petraeus had in fact agreed to work for \$150,000 per

After controversy just kept growing



Former CIA Director David Petraeus was slated to receive a six-figure salary for teaching a once-a-week seminar at Macaulay Honors College. After the news broke, he decided to work for \$1 per year.

year instead of the \$200,000 per year that Goldstein had offered, and that Gawker had reported. In an e-mail from Macaulay Dean Ann Kirschner to Petraeus, time-stamped 1:15 pm, July 1, Kirschner states that she is "memorializing our discussions over the past few months regarding your appointment as Visiting Professor at Macaulay Honors College at \$150,000."

Republican State Assemblyman Kieran Michael Lalor, a Marine veteran of the Iraq War, quickly questioned the veracity of CUNY's response. In a letter to interim Chancellor Bill Kelly, Lalor noted that Kirschner's "letter" to Petraeus appeared two and a half hours after the Gawker story and that there was no prior documentary evidence of a \$150,000 salary offer.

"That's strange," Lalor wrote, "given the fact that there are numerous back-and-forth e-mails discussing the salary written before the Gawker story. All of those e-mails conclude that the salary will be \$200,000."

After the July 1 letter "failed to convince critics," the University "released a document that was described as an early draft of the agreement" on a \$150,000 salary, reported *The New York Times*. "But that draft had never been sent, making its relevance unclear, and it was not included with the original cache of documents that had been released" in response to Gawker's detailed FOIL request, noted the *Times*. "A chorus of observers accused CUNY of a cover-up."

Skepticism was heightened by the fact that CUNY posted this latter document, bearing a date of May 29, on its website in several different formats that shifted over the course of the day. Corey Robin, an associate professor of political science at Brooklyn College who blogged extensively about the Petraeus affair,

posted screen shots of the different versions, asking: "Did CUNY administrators fabricate a document trail after the Gawker story broke in order to make it seem as if they had already decided to offer Petraeus a lower salary...?" CUNY insists that the May 29 date on the unsent draft is accurate.

Whether \$150,000 or \$200,000 per year, the proposed compensation for Petraeus elicited outrage from many quarters.

"It is obscene for a university that operates on a bare-bones budget to pay anyone \$150,000 for a single course," PSC President Barbara Bowen said in a statement released to the media. "Every dollar raised at CUNY, whether from public or private sources, should go to providing broad access to a quality college education."

TOP SALARIES

"What's the mission of CUNY?" Martin Snyder, acting executive director of the AAUP, asked on ABC News. "To teach students of New York City, not to create an exclusive discussion group with a general." (Students in Macaulay's already selective pro-

gram must be approved by Petraeus in order to take the class, and must complete an application with a faculty recommendation in order to be considered. See *Clarion*, June 2013.)

Elected officials were critical as well.

REPUBLICAN CRITIC

An online petition launched by City Councilmember Brad Lander quickly received more than 3,000 signatures. "It is outrageous to spend so much on one class, when some CUNY classes are so over-subscribed that students sit on windowsills and radiators because all the seats are full," Lander's petition said. "These funds surely could be better spent...to help students who cannot afford to pay the 30% tuition increase that CUNY has been implementing over five years," it argued. "CUNY's mission is to provide a college education to the children of the whole people, and these expenditures of funds are an insult to the people of New York."

Public Advocate and mayoral candidate Bill de Blasio voiced a similar position, urging CUNY to renegotiate Petraeus's salary and devote the savings to projects "that will better serve CUNY students."

Assemblymember Kieran Michael Lalor, the upstate Republican who was an early critic of the deal, blasted CUNY for offering Petraeus so much money when its students face five consecutive years of tuition increases. "Students and taxpayers are both subsidizing this cushy new job for Petraeus," Lalor said.

According to the e-mails published by Gawker, a three-member faculty committee to consider Petraeus's appointment was first created on April 2 – nearly a month after the chancellor formally offered Petraeus the job. In response to questions from *Clarion* about the process for Petraeus's appointment, a statement from Dean Kirschner said that this committee "recommended his appointment on April 2, 2013."

In one e-mail published by Gawker, a Macaulay official tells committee members that, in response to their request to meet with Petraeus in person, he is trying to schedule a session for April 12. *Clarion* also asked Kirschner when the committee actually first met with Petraeus, but she chose not to respond.

Asked whether the process for Petraeus's appointment violated the union contract, PSC officials said only that they have made an official request under the contract for information on the terms and conditions of the appointment, but have not yet received a response.

While CUNY initially dismissed concerns about Petraeus's salary following the revelations by Gawker, the controversy only continued to grow. The former four-star general eventually decided to retreat. On July 15, his lawyer, Robert Barnett, announced that Petraeus would teach at Macaulay for \$1 per year "to remove money as a point of controversy."

On July 17, the *New York Post* editorial page blamed the Petraeus debacle on the union, saying that "the outcry against [the Petraeus] appointment was led by the Professional Staff Congress."

Gawker, however, seems to think that its own reporting had something to do with the explosion of controversy. "We're Sorry for Costing David Petraeus \$199,999," said the headline on its article of July 15.

AUGUST 24: MARCH ON WASHINGTON

By CLARION STAFF

Reserve your spot on the bus and join the PSC at the new March on Washington on Saturday, August 24.

Civil rights, faith-based and community groups and labor

unions, including the PSC, are mobilizing to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom – the occasion of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

It's time to take a renewed message of anti-racism and human rights to Capitol Hill, especially in the wake of the Trayvon Martin verdict and the legal assault on the Voting Rights Act.

PSC will provide transporta-

tion to Washington, DC, and back for members who travel by bus with the union. Students and friends and family of union members can also travel on a PSC bus for a \$15 fee. Expect a departure time as early as 4:00 am; see tinyurl.com/PSC-2013-march-on-washington for details.

To reserve a seat on a PSC bus go to tinyurl.com/PSC-2013-bus-to-washington online; or e-mail amagalhaes@psc-cuny.org; or call the PSC office at 212-354-1252.

Unions press City for fair contracts

By PETER HOGNESS & JOHN TARLETON

"Twelve years of policies that favor the richest New Yorkers have failed the rest of us.... It's time to turn things around." That was the message of the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC), the coalition of New York City's public-worker unions, in radio ads announcing a mass rally for fair contracts.

On June 12, thousands of public workers from more than a hundred unions filled Broadway as they rallied outside City Hall, demanding progress in contract negotiations. In every one of the City's 152 bargaining units, union members have been working under expired contracts. The lack of agreements is a result of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's insistence that the City has little money for raises – and none for retroactive pay.

Bloomberg contends that retroactive raises for City employees are unaffordable, given the fiscal effects of the recession.

"The City's position means that people would do the same work for less real income," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "No retroactive increases would leave public workers falling behind inflation."

When the mayor says there is no money for raises, he is not telling the whole story, Bowen told *Clarion*. "The reason his ledger shows no money for raises is that he chose not to budget for them, even while the City ran multibillion-dollar surpluses year after year."

Speaking at the rally, Bowen told the crowd, "This is about developing our power together, the power to win a fair contract for each of us." The demonstration, she said, is a first step: "This is the beginning of the fight."

The PSC negotiates its contract with CUNY management, not New York City – but any settlement requires approval from both the City and the State. So, contracts for PSC members are linked to those of other public workers, as CUNY's bargaining position is influenced by the City's negotiations with other unions.

Fair raises for NYC's public workers are largely a matter of political will, Bowen told *Clarion*. "The City has had multibillion-dollar surpluses for several years," she pointed out, although the Bloomberg administration regularly predicted a deficit. "The City decided not to include funds for workers' salary increases in its budget, and now it declares that New York can't afford pay increases. We are witnessing the creation of austerity."

'PLENTY OF MONEY'

Other labor leaders raised the same theme. "Each year there's been a surplus," said Harry Nespoli, head of the Sanitation Workers Union and chair of the Municipal Labor Committee, yet Bloomberg stonewalled in negotiations. "He [Bloomberg] just didn't want to settle the contracts."

"It's unconscionable," said PSC

PSC joins big June 12 rally



Workers from more than 100 City unions rallied outside City Hall on June 12.

member Ron Hayduk, professor of political science at Queens College. "There's plenty of money. The 1% control this town, but we are the ones who make it run. And we are not going to pay for a crisis that we did not create." While the Bloomberg administration maintains that the recession has left it unable to afford raises, Hayduk pointed out that the mayor has opposed any additional taxes on the richest New Yorkers. "I hope labor itself will feel its power today," said Hayduk, surveying the large and diverse crowd.

Stuart Chen-Hayes, associate professor of counselor education at Lehman College, says he needs a raise. From the costs of raising his son to higher bridge-and-tunnel fees on the commute from his New Jersey home, his expenses are rising. "The cost of living goes up, and my bank account goes down," he told *Clarion*. Olga Steinberg, an associate professor of biology at Hostos Community College, agreed. "Goldstein is given \$300,000 to be 'chancellor emeritus,' and the college presidents get their raises – but not the workers, the faculty, the HEOs, the CLTs," Steinberg said.

"We work so hard educating the young people of New York City," said Leslie deGiere, a CLIP teacher at Bronx Community College, "and to be treated this way is unacceptable."

Winning a new contract is "the number-one issue on HEOs' minds," said Paul Washington, vice chair of the PSC's Higher Education Officer Chapter and an associate HEO at Medgar Evers College. Working under an expired agreement "is demoralizing for HEOs working 12 months a year."

"The fact that Bloomberg hasn't settled any contracts is an evasion of his responsibility as mayor,"

Washington told *Clarion*. "He's trying to shift this to the next mayor, and that's not right." Washington panned the mayor's demand that municipal workers pay for a chunk of their health insurance premiums, which are currently covered by the employer. "He's paying off all the private consultants, while asking teachers and firefighters and other public workers to pay more."

The administration's spending on private contractors was a frequent target for union leaders who spoke at the June 12 rally. "Rather than paying City workers, this mayor has hired high-priced consultants under contracts that give them cost-of-living increases of 3% to 7% annually," said District Council 37 Executive Director Lillian Roberts. "Some of these contracts have been marked by fraud [or] incompetence – the 911 system is the most recent example."

"CityTime, they flushed a billion dollars down the toilet. The 911 system: another billion dollars, thrown



A PSCer demands contracts for all.

away," said Uniformed Firefighters Association President Steve Cassidy. "They say they don't have money for us? Stop throwing money away."

PSC member Andrew Parker, assistant professor of math at City Tech, said that rallying together with other public unions was an eye-opening experience. "I didn't realize so many public agencies had expired contracts just like we do," he told *Clarion*. "We're all in the same situation." Bloomberg's failure to settle outstanding contracts is inexcusable, he said: "You create this problem, and then you run from it." Meanwhile, he added, too many public employees "can't afford to live in the city they are serving."

COMING TOGETHER

Bill Smith, an adjunct lecturer in philosophy at College of Staten Island, attended with his wife – a member of the United Federation of Teachers – and their grown son. The different City unions need to come together more often, said Smith: "It's important for workers to stand up, because they are being pushed around."

Bloomberg's decision to budget zero dollars for retroactive raises

will be a problem for the next mayor. Some observers say that while Bloomberg has run surpluses in past years, his strategy now is to "empty the cupboard," thus making it harder for a liberal successor to be more liberal in labor agreements.

MLC Chair Harry Nespoli said that while unions are prepared to be flexible, money for retroactive pay is a must. "We want to sit down and bargain in good faith," Nespoli told the *Daily News*. "There are ways for retroactive money to be paid without it coming out in a big lump sum."

ELECTIONS

Many speakers urged workers to make sure to register and vote. With former Rudy Giuliani aide Joe Lhota and supermarket billionaire John Catsimatidis both backing Bloomberg's hard line against retro pay, there were many voices raised against returning another Republican to City Hall. But rally participants also said that whoever the next mayor is, unions will have to mobilize to win what they deserve.

"Do you know why you don't see any politicians on this stage?" asked correction officers union head Norman Seabrook. "Because this is our rally. Yes, Bloomberg is going to be out of office – but we've got to set the stage for the next mayor."

Alex Wolf, assistant professor of biology at BCC said that the city's elite "are very good at getting workers to blame other workers." Public and private sector workers are often pitted against each other, or union vs. non-union workers, or native-born citizens vs. immigrants. "This event shows we have to be organized together," said Wolf. "It shows the numbers we have, and the power we could have" when united.

After the election, said PSC member Hayduk, "There's going to be pressure on the new mayor to make unions suck it up." The finance industry and real estate interests, and the policy groups they fund, will denounce any suggestion that City workers deserve a raise, Hayduk said. "But that's all the more reason that our side has to organize."

SUNY union ratifies five-year contract with

By JOHN TARLETON

Members of United University Professions (UUP), the union representing 35,000 faculty and staff at SUNY, have ratified a new five-year contract that runs until July 2016, with 77% voting to approve the deal.

The agreement provides for no percentage pay increases in the first three years, followed by a 2% raise in 2014-15 and another 2% hike in 2015-16. In addition, a "Deficit Reduction Plan" will reduce SUNY faculty and staff paychecks during the next two years. Employees will have their salary reduced by the value of a total of nine days in that period,

with seven days' pay returned, without interest, during fiscal year 2017.

Cash amounts of \$500 will be added to all members' base salaries in 2013, followed by \$250 in 2014 and \$500 in 2015 – paid for with funds that are normally given "in the discretion of the chancellor." One-time \$500 awards will also be added to salary for bargaining unit members at certain career milestones. (The UUP contract does not provide salary steps: titles instead have salary ranges with minimums and maximums.)

UUP was the last major state worker union to arrive at a settle-

ment, and terms of the deal are broadly similar to the contracts

between the state and its two largest unions, the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) and the Public Employees Federation (PEF), in 2011. Governor Andrew Cuomo had threatened to lay off 10,000 state workers if those concessionary contracts were not approved, and members of both unions were bitter about negotiating "with a gun to our heads."

The UUP settlement was first announced on February 19, by then-President Phillip Smith, who called

New deal calls for no raises in first part of contract.

PSC backs de Blasio for mayor

By CLARION STAFF

The Professional Staff Congress has endorsed Bill de Blasio for mayor of New York City, Letitia James for public advocate, and Scott Stringer for comptroller in the September 10 primary election. The union also announced endorsements in a range of contests for City Council and borough president.

"We support Bill de Blasio because he stands for an alternative to the politics of austerity that have dominated New York for too long," said Barbara Bowen, president of the PSC. "De Blasio understands the strategic importance of CUNY and has a vision of its place in a city where opportunity is not limited to the richest 1%. New York must not continue to be the most unequal city in the country. We believe that de Blasio can win and can be part of making the change this city needs."

MAYORAL ENDORSEMENT

The PSC's Delegate Assembly voted to endorse de Blasio and other candidates at its meeting on June 20, on the recommendation of the union's Executive Council. Forty-one City Council candidates also received the union's support (see tinyurl.com/psc-city-council-2013; find your district at www.mygovnyc.org).

PSC members are considered among the "best informed in Democratic circles," said a *New York Times* article on the PSC's decision ("CUNY Union Endorses de Blasio," June 24). "The endorsement is also prized because the union's members have a track record of actually voting on Election Day," the *Times* reported.

De Blasio's stances on issues such as housing, poverty and taxation weighed heavily in PSC's decision. His public education plan was also critical. With a surcharge on incomes over \$500,000 per year, de Blasio would fund universal pre-K and after-school programs for middle school students. And money from tax giveaways to

And other candidates in Sept. 10 primary



Members of the PSC Legislative Committee discuss the union's endorsements for the 2013 city elections.

well-connected developers and businesses would be redirected to CUNY, funding a new \$150 million investment in the University.

These proposals "reflect an agenda of economic justice and public investment supported by our union's membership," said First Vice President Steve London. "Bill de Blasio and the other candidates we've endorsed will support a movement to invest in the public good, protect critical services, and demand a fair share of taxes from the 1%."

"CUNY would thrive in an environment like that," said Bowen. "City funding could finally be increased to keep pace with increased enrollment, students could have smaller classes, tuition could be kept in check, and long-neglected facilities could be repaired and improved."

PUBLIC ADVOCATE

In the race for public advocate, the PSC is supporting **Letitia James**, a longtime progressive who has represented City Council District 35 in Brooklyn for three terms. As chair of the Council's Committee on Contracts, she demanded an investigation of the disastrous CityTime payroll project, which was found to

involve \$600 million in fraudulent billing. James has also been at the forefront of efforts to preserve community interests in the Atlantic Yards development and in the campaign to end the racial profiling practiced in the NYPD's "stop-and-frisk" policy,

Act, priority legislation for the PSC.

The 2013 elections offer a special opportunity for unions and community activists to move NYC politics in a more progressive direction. Every citywide office will be held by someone new, and more than a third of

"The PSC is demanding an alternative to austerity. From Greece to Brazil to Detroit to New York, working people are being told that we must accept less and that inequality must grow. Like many other unions and progressive groups, the PSC asserts that austerity is a false solution. That's why the union is pressing for a fair contract, supporting anti-austerity candidates – and rejecting austerity education for our students. All of these campaigns are part of the same fight, the same vision."

– PSC President Barbara Bowen

which often affects CUNY students.

For NYC comptroller, the PSC has endorsed **Scott Stringer**, the current Manhattan borough president, because of his record of support for CUNY. Stringer has been a vocal advocate for increasing college access for undocumented immigrant students with the NY State DREAM

City Council seats are up for grabs. The PSC has been working with the newly formed Progressive NYC (an alliance formed by members of the City Council's Progressive Caucus), the Central Labor Council, and the Working Families Party (of which the PSC is a member) to take advantage of that opportunity.

th concessions

it "the best deal possible" in a difficult situation. Smith retired this year and was succeeded by Frederick Kowal, professor of political science at SUNY-Cobleskill, who was elected by UUP delegates in May. Kowal said the ratification vote "affirms that our members understand the challenging times in which the negotiations took place."

'DIFFICULT'

"We knew when we started our negotiations this was going to be a difficult contract because of the state's demands for givebacks," said Jamie Dangler, head of the UUP's bargaining team. UUP

leaders said they gained improved procedures for evaluations, promotions and grievances.

The contract ratification comes at a time when UUP is seeking to prevent the downsizing or privatization of SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn. To date, 400 UUP members at Downstate have received termination notices; the future of 3,100 other UUP members, and of a key health care institution in underserved central Brooklyn, remain uncertain. (You can support union members at SUNY Downstate by sending a message to Albany at tinyurl.com/SaveDownstate.)

LABOR IN BRIEF

Judge rules against prevailing wage

A State Supreme Court judge has overturned a prevailing wage law the NY City Council enacted last year over a mayoral veto. The law was expected to boost wages for service workers in buildings that receive government subsidies. In his ruling, State Judge Geoffrey Wright said precedent required him to rule that the state's minimum wage law trump the prevailing wage law. However, Wright added, "This court does not see wisdom in the mayor's zeal for wel-

coming... a business that would pay its building service employees less than the prevailing wage."

Fast-food strikes expand to seven cities

Thousands of fast-food workers in seven cities went on strike July 29, demanding a living wage of \$15 per hour. With walkouts in Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, Detroit, Flint, Michigan, and New York City, it was the largest round of strikes in the fast-food industry since the one-day strikes first kicked off in New York last November. In New York, more than 100 workers marched on a McDonald's at Union Square calling on the restaurant to "super-size" their wages. For more, see fastfoodforward.org.

The full list of 41 council candidates endorsed by the PSC is online at tinyurl.com/psc-city-council-2013. (You can identify your own district at mygovnyc.org.) Those candidates include:

CITY COUNCIL ENDORSEMENTS

Ritchie Torres (Bronx, CD 15): Torres, running in the district next to Bronx Community College, is an exciting young candidate who grew up in Bronx public housing. As a City Council staffer, Torres organized tenant associations in dilapidated buildings throughout the district and rallied them to fight for building improvements and rent reductions.

Yetta Kurland (Manhattan, CD 3): Kurland was a student activist at the height of the George Pataki budget cuts in the 1990s. A real fighter, she understands the importance of CUNY and whom it serves. As a civil rights attorney, Kurland won a landmark decision allowing same-sex couples to change their last names based on their relationship as domestic partners. She has represented activists fighting the closure of St. Vincent's Hospital and participants in Occupy Wall Street.

Igor Oberman (Brooklyn, CD 48): Oberman came to the US in 1981 as a refugee from the former Soviet Union. He attended KCC and graduated from Brooklyn College and NYU Law School. Currently an administrative law judge, he has also been an adjunct lecturer at Hunter and Baruch. A longtime supporter of public higher education and CUNY, Oberman has been an articulate defender of academic freedom at Brooklyn College.

I. Daneek Miller (Queens, CD 27): Miller is president of ATU Local 1056, which represents drivers and mechanics working for NYC Transit's Queens Bus Division. A community activist in southeast Queens for the past three decades, he is currently the target of a big effort by the real estate industry to block his election to the City Council.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT

The union has also endorsed two candidates for borough president: **Robert Jackson** in Manhattan and **Eric Adams** in Brooklyn. Jackson was an activist in his children's public schools before he was elected to the City Council, and was the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit against underfunding of NYC public schools that sparked formation of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity.

Currently a state senator, Eric Adams is a graduate of both City Tech and John Jay, and a retired NYPD officer who has organized against "stop-and-frisk." A strong advocate for public education, this year he helped win an increase in state funding for community colleges.

PSC members can learn how to help elect Bill de Blasio and other PSC-endorsed candidates by going to psc-cuny.org/psc-endorsed-candidates online.

'Read any good books lately?'

Clarion asks faculty about summer reading

SAAVIK FORD
Associate Professor of Astronomy
BMCC

I've read *Scurvy*, by Stephen R. Bown, a fascinating history of our scientific understanding of the disease, how the cure was empirically



Dave Sanders

found and lost repeatedly because it didn't comport with then-current theoretical understanding of illness, and because the empirically evident cure was expensive. A cautionary scientific and social tale. As a scientist, I lean towards empiricism, so I found it by turns engrossing and aggravating.

Rabid, by Bill Wasik and Monica Murphy, is another medical history – about a terrifying killer for which our understanding was long stymied by theoretical blind alleys, similar to those with scurvy (with some of the same characters). A little graphic, with some claims that are a stretch, but I'm a total sucker for medical mysteries. (I also like reading the "Think Like a Doctor" column in *The New York Times*). The path to the vaccine made me remember the sacrifices of earlier scientific generations, who often put themselves in far greater physical danger than most of us have to face today. It also made me slightly paranoid about bats....

Closer to home, I've read *Dinosaurs in the Attic*, by Douglas J. Preston. It's an older history of the American Museum of Natural History, where I'm a research associate. It's fascinating to read about what's hidden away down the hall, and the people who brought it there. Probably, it's of a type with some of my other reading – I love to find out how we found out what we know. Textbooks usually present this in a very linear, logical fashion, but histories show that this is never the case.

LINDA ALCOFF
Professor of Philosophy
Hunter College

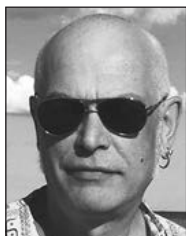
I have been reading Hilary Mantel's book, *A Place of Greater Safety*, on the French Revolution, one of my favorite historical eras. It's very entertaining, with believable renditions of George-Jacques Danton, Maximilien Robespierre and Camille Desmoulins, but with a more contemporary feminist sensibility. And as always, this revolution provides much food for thought about strategy and tactics, the role of leaders, and the challenges of cross-class collaborations.

I've also read Nicola Gavey's book *Just Sex?* It's a wonderful sociological analysis of current thinking about rape, how to relate it to "normal" heterosexual sex, and to power. It's a smart analysis that disagrees with Catherine MacKinnon but also reveals what she calls the "cultural scaffolding" of rape in heterosexual norms.

And I've read *College Girl*, by Laura Gray-Rosendale, an old friend of mine, about her own harrowing experience of rape in college. It's a very well-written memoir that vividly relates her 19-year-old self (before and after) and the difficult aftermath of the assault, as well as her 20-year-old self today and how she has come to a greater understanding of what happened and how it affected her and the others in her life.

HUGH ENGLISH
Assistant Professor of English
Queens College

Among other things, Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood*. Atwood's readers enter a dystopian, fictional world that resonates



powerfully with our contemporary world of corporate exploitation of the environment for profit, a world in which human greed and arrogance, together with profound inequality, lead to crisis for humans as a species. Sound familiar? Like other dystopian worlds, Atwood's fictional world is our present, not some distant future.

I loved this novel so much that it lead me back to *Surfacing*, in which Atwood's protagonist travels into the Canadian north (in this case, northern Quebec) where much of what passes as civilized sanity loosens and unravels in the face of the mystery of her father's disappearance, her gendered interactions with her companions, the threat of "American" (i.e., USAmerican) exploitation, and of course her own deep encounter with the wild world. I had the great pleasure to re-read this novel – 40 years after I first encountered it – on my own wonderful adventure on the north shore of Lake Huron/Georgian Bay, Ontario, exploring a land of lakes and mountains that I knew previously from the early 20th-century Canadian "Group of Seven" painters.



BEN LERNER
Associate Professor of English
Brooklyn College

I've been reading *White Out*, a memoir of heroin addiction by the Case Western English professor Michael Clune, who recently



spoke at the Graduate Center. It's outrageous and quite brilliant about the relationship between addiction and memory. Clune is an impressive literary critic as well as a memoirist. In a way, this book is a companion to his compelling critical work just out from Stanford, *Writing Against Time*.

I've also been reading Geoffrey G. O'Brien's new book of poetry *People on Sunday*, which is a masterpiece. It's a book that explores, among other things, the connection or disconnection between the resources of poetic form and the necessity of contemporary political imagination. Both of O'Brien's parents teach at CUNY.

And at the moment I'm reading an unpublished manuscript by the great and unclassifiable Maggie Nelson that deftly mixes criticism and memoir. I only realize now that she took her PhD at the Grad Center – so it seems my current summer reading is quite connected to CUNY!

JENNA LUCENTE
Adjunct Lecturer in Art & Design
City Tech

I use my summer reading time to relax, and renew my mind.

I've read *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn. It's one of those number-one bestsellers that is completely gripping. I can't wait to see what happens next!

You Are Here: Discovering the Magic of the Present Moment, by Thich Nhat Hanh, has been my reading for self-improvement. Thich Nhat Hanh's lessons are applicable to everyday life, and this book continually reminds you to be at peace with your present moment, which is critical in New York, where we face many kinds of stresses.

And of course, to keep up with my software skills, I am reviewing a desk copy of the book *Photoshop CC: Visual QuickStart Guide* by Elaine Weinmann and Peter Lourekas.



Dave Sanders

GLORIA BROWNE-MARSHALL
Associate Professor of
Constitutional Law
John Jay College

This summer has been nearly consumed by work on my new book and media requests to discuss voting rights, affirmative action,



and the Trayvon Martin verdict. Dispirited, my summer reading has often focused on other people's problems. Reading David McCullough's *The Johnstown Flood* and *Brave Companions* made me feel a little better, seeing how people persevere.

I admire McCullough's historical storytelling and his journalistic detail. *The Johnstown Flood* is of course about the 1889 Johnstown Flood, while *Brave Companions* is about various people who were tremendous forces in their own times, but who get little attention today. Often they made great contributions that we still live with today, but we've largely forgotten who they were. It's so interesting what history chooses to maintain – who we speak of with a sense of reverence, keep in public discourse, and who we do not. Like Alexander von Humboldt, an early scientist and a great researcher of the natural world. I remember a high school named after him, but I hadn't really known anything about him until this book.

I've also been reading Louis Armstrong's autobiography *Satchmo*, and Madeleine Albright's *Prague Winter*. In between books, I'm reading selections from *Submersion Journalism*, edited by Bill Wasik, a quirky book of first-person articles from *Harper's Magazine*. Speaking of *Harper's*, I am enjoying the variety and depth of writing found in magazines – especially *The New Republic*, *Mother Jones*, *The Nation*, and *Harper's*.

CLARENCE TAYLOR
Professor of History
Baruch College

One book that has been fun to read was Eric Foner's book on Lincoln, *The Fiery Trial* – the best book on Lincoln I have read. Foner does not focus on Lincoln's greatness. Instead, he examines the forces that moved him from supporting colonization to emancipation and citizenship for former slaves. I've also been reading *The Coup* by Ervand Abrahamian, a colleague at Baruch. *The Coup* examines the 1953 coup in Iran that was planned by the CIA, and how it shaped modern Iran.

Most of my reading this summer has to do with a scholarly project on the Holocaust. In July, I delivered a paper on African Americans and Holocaust memory at a conference in Germany. Because of the interest and discussion it sparked, I have decided to focus on a book project on the subject. I've been reading a number of books as a result, including Jesse Owen's biography, Laurence Thomas's *Vessels of Evil: American Slavery and the Holocaust*, and Peter Novick's *The Holocaust in American Life*. I have also been reading a number of books claiming the existence of a "Black Holocaust," including John Henrik Clarke's *Christopher Columbus and the Afrikan Holocaust*.

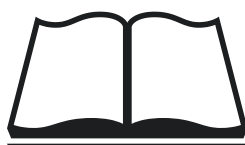


I am writing this summer – both poetry and a follow-up to my first book, *How to Make Books* – and when I write I don't read so much.

I'm taking Lisa Jarnot's "Writing from the Senses" workshop. Lisa has taught in Brooklyn College's Poetry MFA. I have been reading her books, *Joie De Vivre* and *Night Scenes* – I enjoy her language and the way she plays with poetic forms. Lisa lent me artist/poet Joe Brainard's *I Remember*. I love the way memoir sneaks through his nostalgic, visual lists, how 1940-50's Oklahoma juxtaposes with 1960-70's New York City.

I also read Gene Kerrigan's *Midnight Choir*, a portrait of contemporary Dublin inside a fascinating crime novel. With realistic women characters and a compelling plot, it's an unsentimental view of Dublin and Ireland today. The city and the nation almost become characters.

I was a "Giver" for World Book Night – distributing 20 copies of Walter Mosley's *Devil in a Blue Dress* in a pro-bono edition to people who might not otherwise have read it. I opened the hard-boiled novel – set in 1948 Watts, Los Angeles, to remind myself what I would be giving – and did not put it down until I finished. The receptionist in my doctor's office had the same experience – once she started, she did not move until she read the last page.



CUNY imposes new HEO/CLT time sheets

By CLARION STAFF

CUNY management is implementing new time sheets for HEO and CLT series titles, as well as the titles Research Associate and Research Assistant. The new time sheets were first implemented in July at Lehman College, Kingsborough Community College and City Tech. On September 5, Brooklyn College and City College of New York are scheduled to have the time sheets implemented. Other colleges will be implementing time sheets during the Fall 2013 semester.

In a joint statement at the start of July, HEO Chapter Chair Iris DeLutro, CLT Chapter Chair Albert Sherman, and PSC President Barbara Bowen said, "As union leaders, we understand that the new time sheets, which record daily hours

PSC says record *all* your hours

worked over a two-week period, represent a significant change from the way most CUNY professional staff have been asked to report their time. For many of us, the imposition of daily time sheets feels like a deprofessionalization of our positions. Many of us in professional staff titles may work more than seven hours in a given day and/or work through our lunch hours."

IMPLEMENTATION

Union leaders emphasized that CUNY professional staff understand their professional responsibilities, and said there is no objection to a fair and appropriate method for reporting time worked. But while the University and CUNY's colleges have the legal

right to keep track of time worked, the PSC has demanded that CUNY negotiate with the union over the time sheet changes and implementation. To date, the University has rejected the demand, and the union may have to take legal action.

"It is important to understand that as an employee of the college, you must comply with management and fill out the time sheets even if the union is engaged in legal action against CUNY," the PSC leaders' statement noted. The union is recommending that employees complete the time sheets and submit them to their supervisors, indicating *all* hours worked and the actual length of a lunch break, if taken.

Union guidelines for HEOs & CLTs differ.

If a lunch hour is not taken on a given day because of the nature of an employee's assignment, then that is how the time should be recorded. "CUNY asserts that the college has the right to schedule a lunch break of at least one-half hour for you, but if your current assignment does not

allow for such a break, record the time you actually work," the PSC leaders said.

Employees required to complete time sheets should always keep a copy of each filled-out, signed time sheet for their records, along with a record of whether the supervisor approves it.

The contractual workweek for HEOs and CLTs is 35 hours as assigned. For CLTs the 35-hour workweek is to be scheduled in not more than five days in any week. The imposition of the biweekly time sheets may lead to employees having to meet with their supervisors to clarify assignments and weekly work schedule.

Some of the union's specific guidance is different for HEO-series and for CLT-series employees, as follows:

FOR HEOs

If you are an HEO-series employee and expect to need to work more than 35 hours in a week to complete your assignment/s, you should submit a Request for Overtime/Compensatory Time Form (even if you have been denied in the past). HEOs are entitled to receive overtime/compensatory time, but it

must be approved in advance. This procedure is the result of a Settlement Agreement between CUNY and PSC in 2008.

● If your overtime request is approved, attach the form to your bi-weekly time sheet.

● If the request is not approved, you should work only the hours assigned and record the time worked on your time sheet.

● If you must work overtime in order to complete a special project or assignment and the overtime has not been approved in advance, record the time you actually worked. If the supervisor refuses to sign the time sheet, contact Albert Muñoz at the PSC, at 212-354-1252 or amunoz@pscmail.org.

As a result of the Overtime Settlement Agreement, HEOs should receive quarterly statements of accrued compensatory time. PSC is aware that most HEOs do not receive a quarterly statement, and a grievance about this issue is in arbitration.

FOR CLTs

If you are a CLT-series employee and you work beyond 35 hours in a week, you should record the time you actually worked. It is the practice on most colleges to pay CLTs overtime pay at the appropriate adjunct rate or to credit them with compensatory time, based on Article 24.7 of the contract, which permits compensation "for work performed in special sessions (evening, weekend, or holiday sessions).

Continued to page 12

'Audit' of dependent coverage

By CLARION STAFF

The City of New York, which administers the health insurance program that covers full-time CUNY faculty, staff and retirees, has begun an "audit" of dependents on City health insurance. The announced purpose of the audit is to determine whether dependents covered under the City health insurance plan are in fact eligible for coverage. If you have a spouse, child or other dependent covered under the City health plan, you should have received correspondence from the City about the audit. This article describes what the City is doing, and how municipal unions have responded to date.

FOCUS ON DEPENDENTS

The audit is not on behalf of or approved by PSC or any other municipal union; it is a NYC initiative. The City says its goal is to determine whether dependents receiving health coverage are legitimately entitled to be covered, and it has hired a for-profit consulting company, Aon Hewitt, to conduct the audit.

As described below, the specific procedures used for the audit are being challenged in court by a coalition of NYC worker unions, including the PSC. But *do not ignore the audit*. The City has said it will cut off coverage for any dependents for whom no response is received by September 20 – so it is very important to pay attention to any letters you receive, and keep yourself informed.

On June 3, the City's Office of Labor Relations (OLR) sent a letter to all current employees and retirees who have a spouse, child, or other dependent covered under their City health insurance plan. The letter asks those who receive it to prepare to submit documentation of the eligibility of their dependent(s). (If you do not have

dependents covered on your health plan, you should not have been sent the letter. Retirees over 80 years old should not have been sent the letter, either. (Adjuncts with family coverage through the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund should also not have been sent the letter, since their coverage is not through the City's plan.)

The NYC OLR sent a second letter in June to those with covered dependents, specifying the documents to submit for each dependent.

The second letter stated that the eligibility of dependents needs to be verified by September 20, 2013, to avoid their being removed from coverage. Recipients were given instructions about how to submit copies of the required documents by mail, by fax or by scanning and e-mailing them. (Anyone responding to the audit must *never send in your original documents. They will not be returned.*) The City's letters directed employees and retirees to a website for instructions on how to comply with the audit, and a phone number for questions.

LEGAL CHALLENGE

The Municipal Labor Committee (MLC), a coalition of NYC's public-worker unions that includes the PSC, filed a legal challenge to the way NYC is conducting the audit. "We're not against the survey, we want some rules," MLC Chair Harry Nespoli told the *Daily News*. The lawsuit says that the City's unilateral implementation of the audit, without negotiating the procedures with the MLC, is illegal under NYC collective bargaining law. The City unions are primarily seeking to assure 1) that employees are held harmless for any prior discrepancies; 2) that personal security and privacy are protected; and 3) that efficient, timely appeals

procedures are in place.

A lower court judge granted the unions a restraining order in July. "This stops the City from proceeding...until the court can consider if a longer injunction is also appropriate," said an MLC statement on July

Ignoring the issue could put your coverage at risk.

18. The City has appealed the restraining order, and the final outcome is not yet known.

The PSC will keep members informed of further developments. But if the audit proceeds as planned by New York City, the consequences of ignoring the letter or failing to produce the necessary documents would be serious. Dependents for whom the required information is not supplied risk losing their health coverage.

MAKING COPIES

So it's important to pay attention to any letters you receive about the City's plans for the audit. Members should prepare to submit all requested documentation in the event that successful terms are negotiated or the restraining order is lifted. CUNY employees who receive a letter should therefore compile and make copies of the necessary documents now. It will be important to have copies available because, again, you must not send original documents – they will not be returned to you.

The union will continue to monitor the conduct of the audit aggressively and to work with other unions for guarantees of fair procedure, PSC leaders said. "While the need for accurate health insurance coverage information is obvious, the rights of members must also be protected," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. The union, she said, will keep bargaining unit members informed.

Teachers against the tests



Public school teachers, parents and students from across New York State rallied in Albany June 8 calling for an end to over-reliance on standardized testing and the harvesting of student data by corporate interests. The rally came on the heels of anti-testing protests that popped up in cities across the country this spring. A contingent of PSC members attended the event. They noted that initiatives like Pathways, which water down curriculum in public higher education, are backed by many of the same wealthy interests that have pushed a corporate "reform" agenda in K-12 schools.

Pat Amow

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

Shutdown threat in SF

By HANK REICHMAN & PETER HOGNESS

Late on the afternoon of July 3, as San Franciscans were preparing for a four-day holiday weekend, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, which accredits two-year institutions in California, dropped a bombshell. The commission announced that it was revoking its accreditation of City College of San Francisco (CCSF), effective July 2014. Because non-accredited institutions may not receive public funds, this decision, if not rescinded, will compel CCSF, with 85,000 current students and eleven campuses and sites, to close its doors, leaving more than 2,700 faculty and staff without employment and the city of San Francisco without a public community college. CCSF would be the largest US institution ever to lose its accreditation.

What happened to produce such a dramatic decision? First, it's important to clarify what *hasn't* happened. ACCJC has not questioned the quality of the education offered at CCSF. Yes, you read that correctly. In fact, there is considerable evidence that education at CCSF is not only sound but in many respects even exemplary. Data from the state's community college system shows that CCSF almost uniformly scores better than most other community colleges in the state on common metrics. For students deemed unprepared for college, the completion rate at CCSF is one of the five best among California's 112 community colleges. And CCSF graduates are more likely to succeed at four-year institutions than the typical California community college alum.

ABOVE AVERAGE

CCSF is virtually unique among community colleges in its commitment to rely on tenure-track faculty for as much of its teaching as possible. Sadly, this has somehow been seen as a fault by many commentators, including the administrator-heavy ACCJC accrediting team. Part-time contingent faculty at CCSF tend to be compensated more fairly than at comparable institutions and enjoy greater reappointment rights. All these practices help CCSF maintain a sound educational environment, and contribute to its above-average results.

ACCJC's concerns were not really about education, but about finances, administration and assessment.

With respect to finances, CCSF, like all higher education institutions in California, has faced daunting challenges. In the last few years it has been hit with budget cuts amounting to \$53 million at an institution with an annual budget of about \$200 million.

At a December 2011 board meeting, then-Chancellor Don Griffin described the college's chosen response: "We're going to concentrate the money on the students," Griffin said. Some call for deep cuts in classes, but, he said, "We don't believe in that. Cut the other stuff first, cut it until it hurts, and then talk about cutting classes."

In a July 2012 report, the ACCJC found CCSF deficient in 14 areas, and issued a "show cause" order – the most serious sanction short of withdrawing accreditation. "The commission gave the college credit for a committed, student-centered faculty and high-quality libraries and counseling, but said the college's governance, planning and leadership were inefficient," labor reporter David Bacon wrote

in the California Federation of Teachers' community college magazine. "The unions and previous chancellors had avoided layoffs through temporary concessions. But the ACCJC said there had not been enough cuts or cancelled classes, that too much (92%) of the budget was spent on personnel, and that too few administrators were on staff. In other words, CCSF was faulted for keeping the cuts away from the classroom."

As CCSF Trustee Chris Jackson wrote in 2012, "The commission is asking City College to shrink its mission of providing a high quality, affordable education to all who come to its doors. The ACCJC wants City College to step away from its San Francisco value of 'chopping from the top' – cutting administration instead of teachers."

"We will not apologize for resisting the downsizing of our students' educations, for saving jobs, and for protecting educational programs that benefit...our most vulnerable students," Alisa Messer, an English instructor at CCSF and president of AFT Local 2121, said in July of this year.

SERVING IMMIGRANTS

Community colleges in California have multiple missions. In addition to helping students earn terminal degrees in important fields like nursing, they prepare many students for transfer to four-year institutions. They also provide vocational training and non-credit-bearing courses for continuing adult education – the latter including English as a Second Language and citizenship courses for California's many new immigrants.

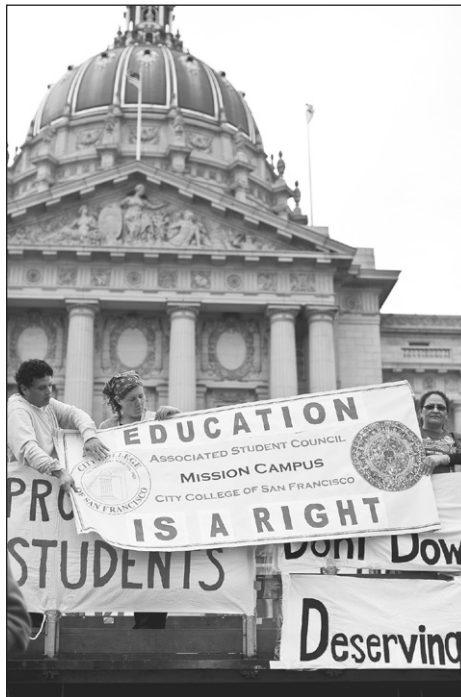
In the wake of huge state budget cuts, CCSF sought ways to sustain all these missions. The college had already committed to building a network of off-campus centers, which offered mainly non-credit courses. These are extremely popular in the community, but can be costly to maintain and staff and it was difficult to retrench on this front just as new facilities, planned before the financial crisis, were opening.

Administrators were thus compelled to dip into reserves, and at the time of ACCJC's initial review CCSF's financial picture was troubled – albeit far from what AAUP would categorize as financial exigency.

But the electorate responded. California voters in November passed Proposition 30, which began to restore needed state funding to public higher education (see page 4). That election also saw the passage in San Francisco, with 73% support, of Proposition A, which enacted a property tax generating \$16 million a year for CCSF. The college may not be fully out of the financial woods, but its situation is vastly improved.

"The San Francisco City College district is financially secure," wrote CCSF Board of Trustees President John Rizzo. "This year's audit was 'clean' and the budget is balanced, thanks to multiple cost-saving reorganizations [and] large spending cuts." City College now "has a healthy reserve fund well above that of state requirements," he added. City College is also increasing spending in areas that ACCJC wanted, such as \$3 million a year for new technology and building maintenance.

Finances are linked to the question of administration, and ACCJC has faulted CCSF for how cuts have been made. "The college had more than 70 [top] administrators before



CCSF students protesting closure threat.

2008, and it now has fewer than 40," according to the *SF Bay Guardian*. Given the usual response of administrators to financial stress, this is not only quite admirable, it's astonishing. Faculty at other institutions, who work under a seemingly metastasizing array of vice-presidents, associate and assistant vice-presidents, deans, deanlings, and deanlets, may read this and shout, "Hallelujah!"

And in fact CCSF has been not so much under-administered as it has been at times poorly administered. It's questionable whether administration and trustees have always handled the pressures facing the school as well as they might. One problem CCSF faced during its accreditation review was that Griffin, its respected and popular chancellor, suffered a brain tumor in the middle of the process. For some time, the institution's response to the review was therefore leaderless and mismanaged.

FACULTY ROLE

But quality or effectiveness of administration does not appear to be ACCJC's true concern. Instead, they seem to fault CCSF's system of shared governance, its powerful department structures and academic senate, and most of all its faculty and staff unions. ACCJC seems to think the strength of these faculty groups means that the inmates are running the asylum. But to most faculty, it means that educators, not itinerant managers and privatizing trustees, are in charge – at least in the sphere of curriculum and academic standards.

To be sure, shared governance can be messy. But overall, shared governance at CCSF has been effective: the school's completion rates and other measures testify to that. Whatever disagreements they may have among themselves, CCSF faculty get to choose their representatives democratically. And in the main they have supported those representatives.

In fact, the ACCJC seems somewhat allergic to democracy. In April, an ACCJC visiting team warned CCSF Trustee Rafael Mandelman about an op-ed he wrote that was critical of the commission. Their message, Mandel-

man told the *SF Chronicle*, "was that my piece was a troubling violation of the accrediting standard that the trustees speak with one voice." Mandelman was amazed. "I don't think accreditation requires elected officials to give up their First Amendment rights," he said. "And if that's what the standards require, there's a problem with the standards."

ASSESSMENT

A major part of the ACCJC's critique of CCSF has to do with assessment. California's community colleges have seen the growth of elaborate Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for each course and program. (At CUNY, the heavy emphasis on SLOs in the administration's Pathways curriculum is one of the many sources of its unpopularity.) Apparently CCSF had lagged somewhat in institutionalizing such a system of assessment. But in the past year, much progress in meeting the ACCJC's demands on SLOs has reportedly been made.

Unfortunately, progress is not enough for the ACCJC. "To the commission...a college is either in compliance with its accrediting standards or it is not," the *SF Chronicle* reported. "There is little in-between."

One reason ACCJC seems deaf to faculty concerns is that it does not appear to involve faculty adequately in its work. The AAUP has stated that "appraisal of the academic program should be largely the responsibility of faculty members." Faculty, the AAUP has stressed, should be well represented on visiting accreditation teams and should be responsible for assessing curricular matters at institutions they visit. Yet of the 17 review team members who visited CCSF, 13 were active or retired college administrators, 1 was a trustee, and only 3 were faculty.

The California Federation of Teachers (CFT) reports that at community colleges across the state, there is a "widely shared perception that the people at the top levels of the ACCJC are vindictive and vengeful, and are believed to have bumped sanction recommendations...up to higher levels 'to teach people a lesson.'" In private, professors note that ACCJC Chairperson Sherrill Amador was the subject of a faculty "no-confidence" vote when she headed Palomar College.

SF Bay Guardian reporter Joe Fitzgerald quotes ACCJC President Barbara Beno as saying that pressure from the US Department of Education is the source of her commission's hard line. That statement could be viewed as self-serving, and the CFT charges that the ACCJC is a "rogue agency," severely out of step with other accrediting bodies.

Some 25% of California community colleges are now on some sort of sanction by ACCJC. Although ACCJC oversees just 5% of US community colleges, some 35% of US two-year institutions on sanction have been placed in that status by ACCJC.

In April, the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) filed a complaint with the US Department of Education questioning ACCJC's impartiality and its compliance with its own policies as well as state and federal law, and challenging the ACCJC's treatment of CCSF and all California community colleges. Meanwhile students, faculty and staff are mobilizing to demand that the school remain open, and are pressing San Francisco politicians to take action.

Certainly if the ACCJC follows through on its decision with respect to CCSF, they will only be hurting the very students they are supposed to serve.

Hank Reichman is professor emeritus of history at California State University, East Bay, and first vice president of the AAUP. Peter Hogness is editor of Clarion. Another version of this article was published July 8 at academeblog.org. For a PSC solidarity statement on CCSF and more info on the crisis, go to psc-cuny.org/CCSF-info.

Quality of its education not questioned

Q&A WITH BILL de BLASIO

‘Reasserting fairness’ in NYC

[The PSC has endorsed Bill de Blasio in the September 10 Democratic primary for mayor (see page 7). Below are Clarion’s questions, and the candidate’s answers, on some key issues in the 2013 election. For more information, including de Blasio’s views on affordable housing, health care and the environment. See www.billdeblasio.com.]

1) How would you take New York City in a different direction from the one we’ve experienced under Michael Bloomberg?

I think this election is about whether we’re going to reassert fairness and progressive ideals into our government, or whether we’re going to continue a Bloomberg tradition that is unfortunately turning New York into a tale of two cities.

Nearly 400,000 millionaires call New York home, while nearly half of our neighbors live at or near the poverty line. Our middle class isn’t just shrinking; it’s in danger of vanishing altogether. Addressing the crisis of income inequality isn’t a small task. But if we are to thrive as a city, it must be at the center of our vision for the next four years.

2) As an advocate for austerity, Bloomberg has often acted to keep down wages for hardworking New Yorkers. Every municipal union in NYC is now working under an expired contract. How would you get city labor relations back on track?

Our workforce is part of the solution, not the problem. When this city has faced fiscal challenges, organized labor helped us through it. Unions brought us the middle class and it’s time to start working with them again. There’s a lot of scare-mongering going on regarding union contacts, but let me tell it to you straight: as mayor, I’ll balance the budget, but I’m not going to demonize teachers, building workers and firefighters in the process. I’m going to sit down at the table in good faith with the workers who keep our city moving and settle on contracts that are fair for all New Yorkers.

3) Unlike some of the other Democratic candidates, you have proposed an additional tax on incomes above \$500,000 a year to fund public education. How would your plan work? Are you prepared to introduce other tax policy changes, such as permanently making the current tax structure more progressive?

I have called for an increase in income tax on the wealthiest New Yorkers – changing it from 3.86% to 4.3% on income above a half million a year – to pay for full-day universal pre-kindergarten and for after-school programs for every middle school child. This is a smart and strategic investment in our city’s future. As we move forward, we’ll assess what changes may or may not be necessary to reduce the drastic inequality gap in our city.

4) You’ve highlighted the problem of NYC’s growing income inequality. How can that be changed – and what’s CUNY’s role in changing it?

New York City spends too many dollars in one-off deals for large, well-connected corporations, while too many industry sectors and small businesses are neglected – especially those in outer-borough neighborhoods. We need to diversify NYC’s economic base, expand opportunity by in-

vesting in education and workforce development, help small businesses expand employment, and raise wage standards as a bottom-up driver of economic development.

I want to restore CUNY as the central gateway to a quality education and a good job. Decades of State and City disinvestment have undermined CUNY’s historic role as a stepping-stone to the middle class for more than a generation of working-class youth. We need to put CUNY on a more solid budgetary footing, to make sure it can provide high-quality and affordable higher education for all New Yorkers.

The City must also strengthen CUNY programs that can bring underrepresented populations into technology and other key, high-paying sectors of the New York economy. Our goal should be that within eight years, the majority of skilled technology-related jobs in New York City are hiring people educated in New York City.

While we increase New Yorkers’ access to higher-paying jobs, we also need to raise the floor. I will fight in Albany to give NYC the ability to set the minimum wage rate at a level appropriate to the high cost of living. Low-income workers’ own organizing efforts, like Fast Food Forward, also deserve the support of all New Yorkers.

5) You’ve proposed a significant increase in City support for CUNY. What have you called for, and how would it be funded?

I want to restore CUNY’s role as the preeminent pathway to opportunity for all graduating New York City high school students, reversing the cuts of the Bloomberg years.

CUNY’s budget has been slashed by a third in the last two decades, but as mayor, I plan to increase New York City funding of CUNY by 50%. This will help to make CUNY affordable again and help expand critical programs, particularly those focused on “middle skill” Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) training. To do this, I’ll redirect \$150 million a year from funds the City gives to big companies in unneeded tax subsidies and shift that money to CUNY, where a new range of educational and training programs can empower New Yorkers with the skills needed to compete for good-paying, family-sustaining jobs.

6) In a referendum among CUNY’s full-time faculty, 92% voted “no confidence” in the administration’s Pathways curriculum. What does that vote say to you?

As mayor, I would take additional steps to evaluate the effectiveness of a curriculum that has been rejected so dramatically by faculty. The experience and training that faculty members bring to their profession must be taken into consideration during curriculum development, or we risk sacrificing the academic quality of our city’s institutions.

7) Seventy-five percent of CUNY undergraduates are people of color, and CUNY students are often among those unfairly targeted by the NYPD’s “stop-and-frisk” policies. How would you change the NYPD’s practices?

Our current administration, through fear-mongering and misleading the public, offers a false choice between public safety and our

constitutional rights. As it stands, stop-and-frisk has been disproportionately applied to young black and Latino men – and nearly 90% of those stopped are not arrested or cited for any crime. This overuse of stop-and-frisk, affecting hundreds of thousands of innocent New Yorkers, is having a negative impact on community security by destroying police-community relations.

The City Council recently passed two important pieces of legislation that can change



Mayoral candidate and NYC Public Advocate Bill de Blasio joins a picket line of striking RF Central Office workers on July 1 (see page 2).

this picture: a strong anti-racial-profiling bill, and a measure creating an independent Inspector General for the NYPD. Both were vetoed by Mayor Bloomberg. Unlike some candidates, as mayor I would sign both bills, and I urge the Council to override Bloomberg’s veto.

We need to be fighting crime with a scalpel – not an axe. That means using technologies like gunshot detection and more street cameras, working with the community to target criminals and gangs, and maintaining a police force that is at least 34,000 strong. With smart policing, we can restore the trust in police-community relations and further strengthen public safety.

8) What would be your approach to issues affecting immigrant New Yorkers, who make up such a large part of CUNY’s student body and workforce?

Immigrants have always been – and continue to be – a valued part of our community, but more than 700,000 hardworking members of our communities live in the shadows. These people are subject to extortion by abusive employers and landlords and their relationship with law enforcement fosters a climate of fear and alienation.

As mayor, I would create a Universal City ID card available to all residents regardless of documentation status. This would grant

access to basic services, such as the ability to sign a lease or open a bank account. Additionally, this policy will encourage better immigrant-police relations and increase reporting of crimes, including for immigrant domestic violence victims. I support legislation that would make New York the fifth state to give undocumented workers access to drivers’ licenses.

As Public Advocate, I also supported immigrant groups’ demand for an investigation of abuse allegations in private detention centers. As mayor, I will end cooperation with federal “detainer requests” for minor violations.

9) You have spent the last three years as Public Advocate. What does your record tell us about what you would do as mayor?

My role as Public Advocate is to give a voice to all New Yorkers, help when the bureaucracy fails them, and to serve as a public watchdog.

As Public Advocate, I created NYC’s Worst Landlords Watchlist, which is now one of the most-used resources in city government. Thanks to tenant organizing and media pressure spurred by the Watchlist, more than 320 buildings have been substantially repaired and removed from the list. The Watchlist is now featured on Craigslist.org as a tool for apartment hunters, and it’s been replicated by the City of Vancouver.

I worked with the New York Immigration Coalition and the Korean American Community Foundation to create the DREAM Fellowship – a scholarship and leadership development program for undocumented college students. It’s helped dozens of students, and highlighted the need for national and state DREAM Act legislation.

As Public Advocate I’ve successfully fought unfair school closures, for example at P.S. 114 in Canarsie, Wadleigh in Harlem, and Maxwell High School in East New York. We’ve helped public-housing tenants in need of repairs, and rent-regulated tenants facing unfair evictions.

Our office, by its very nature, is not about preserving the status quo. We fight against bureaucracy wherever it fails New Yorkers. I bring this same sense of advocacy to all of my work, and as mayor, I would continue the fight to make sure city government is working for every New Yorker.

10) PSC members want to support a principled, progressive candidate who understands the strategic importance of CUNY, but they also want to support a candidate who they can elect. Why do you think you can win?

Voters are looking for a true progressive voice, one who is not afraid to support a ban on racial profiling or raise taxes on the wealthy to pay for universal pre-K and after-school programs. Over the last 12 years, New Yorkers have watched as our city’s middle class has shrunk to the point where it is now in real danger of disappearing altogether. While high- and low-wage jobs are growing, middle-wage jobs are becoming harder to find – narrowing the route into the middle class and endangering the stability of those already there. People are feeling squeezed – and that’s why the time is ripe for voters to choose a progressive alternative. The volunteers in our field organization are second to none, and they’ll make sure we mobilize that support on election day.

Candidate vows to reinvest in CUNY.



15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Save SUNY Downstate Medical Center

Public hospitals in New York City have been closing at an alarming rate in recent years. Now, the SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn is at risk of being downsized or privatized. To date, 400 members of United University Professions (our sister union at SUNY) have received termination notices; the future of 3,100 other UUP members,

and of a key health care institution in underserved central Brooklyn, remains uncertain. To help preserve public and affordable health care for Brooklyn residents and public education that trains dedicated physicians, go to tinyurl.com/SaveDownstate and send messages directly to Governor Andrew Cuomo and state legislators.

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

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HEO, CLT time sheets

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ning, summer evening) beyond their normal assignments." If you work more than 7 hours in a day as part of your normal assignment (not in a "special session"), and it results in your working more than 35 hours in a given week, and the time is not approved, contact Albert Muñoz at the PSC, at 212-354-1252 or amunoz@pscmail.org.

Given that the new time sheets are being implemented during the summer, it is unclear whether department chairs have been fully briefed about the possible scheduling implications of the time sheets for CLTs, for example, the need to provide a lunch break of at least one-half hour.

Again, it is important for all affected employees to keep a record of their time, assignments and their supervisors' responses to requests and concerns, such as approvals/non-approvals of overtime requests.

TITLES

For all affected employees, the title to fill in on the time sheet will come from a drop-down menu of titles that includes the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) designations "exempt" or "non-exempt." The FLSA designation for a position determines whether the employee is entitled to compensatory time or to overtime pay, based on their functional title and their contractual HEO or CLT series title. All employees are either exempt or non-exempt under FLSA. If you don't know or don't understand your FLSA status, ask your supervisor or your HR Office. (Non-exempt employees earn compensatory time for the first 5 hours of overtime worked over 35 hours in a week and cash overtime at time and a half for time worked over 40 hours in a week; exempt employees earn compensatory time for all hours worked over 35 hours in a week.)

If you have any questions or concerns, contact the PSC Office of Contract Enforcement, by phone at 212-354-1252 or by e-mail amunoz@pscmail.org.

A CLT'S PERSPECTIVE

Regimenting the workplace

By PETER MALONE

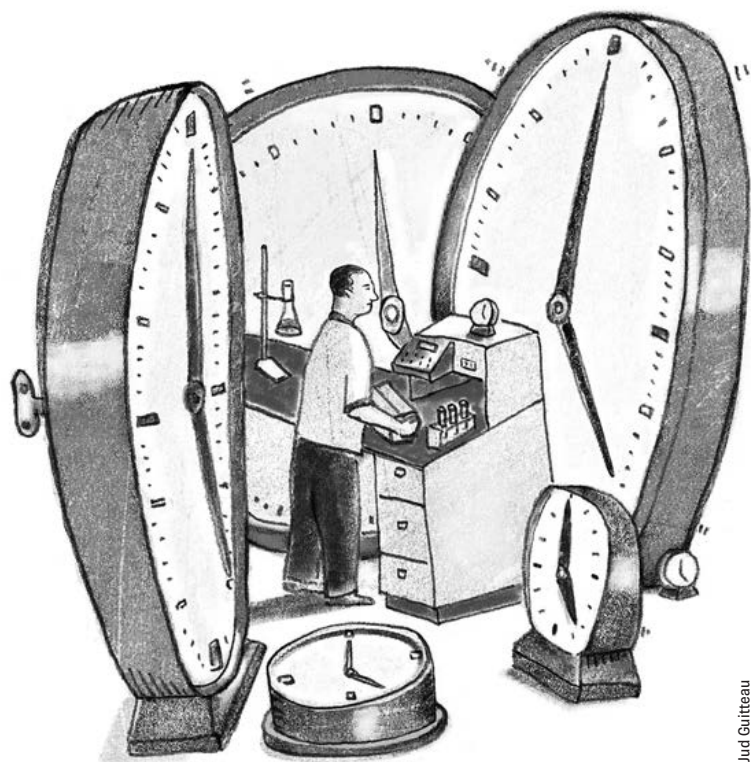
Among numerous complaints I've heard from colleagues regarding the University's top-down management proclivities, those voiced in protest to the time-devouring interface of CUNYfirst pale in comparison to responses I've heard regarding the recent decree directed at College Lab Technicians (CLTs), Higher Education Officers (HEOs) and related titles. It demands not only daily time sheet reporting, but the absurd and utterly unworkable addition of supervisory pre-approval for any deviation in a fixed set of hours and lunch breaks.

NOT A WALMART

We are the City University of New York, not Walmart. I do not see why this fact is not as clear to everyone at the University level as it is to us down here among the students. The idiosyncrasies inherent in the daily operations of any modern university are not so complicated that they cannot be absorbed by an administrator responsible for efficient accounting, provided that administrator takes the time to look. In a spirit of cooperation, I offer this assistance:

1. Not all CUNY lab technicians work in laboratories.
2. Even laboratories deviate from neat, weekly schedules.
3. Not all problems requiring the special attention of a lab technician correlate to a strict schedule. It's the reason why they are perceived as problems and require a person to solve them.

Getting pre-approval for a deviation in a schedule calls not only for each lab technician to foresee problems with prophetic specificity, but as deviations occur they must then get clearance from a supervisor who is not under the same time-clock strictures, and therefore not always available for consultation. More-



Jud Guiteau

over, the reason so many supervisors are not available is because they are doing the other things that they are *paid* to do, which is one of the reasons why technicians and other support staff are so important. As anyone paying attention already knows, the job of a City University Lab Technician is inadequately illustrated by the title itself.

ARCHAIC

I thought we left the factory model behind us when we stepped into the information age. Apparently some administrators still think in terms of Henry Ford's lunch whistles. It's stunning to me – and from the tone of the e-mails I've read from other technicians, it is stunning to them as well – that whoever decided to launch this effort appears to have no sense of the human variables that make up a day in a college department. We are here to serve the public. We cannot do so by dismissing a student, or an

instructor in need, in order to comply with some fantasy timetable that threatens to transform the office into a pumpkin at the stroke of 12.

We all understand that as a public institution, there are responsibilities that must be met. And if this time sheet nonsense was the best way the University administration could respond to a legitimate demand on the part of those elected to govern our institution, then we are not in disagreement with the goal, just the method. Personally, I find it insulting. In a kind mood I would characterize a minute-by-minute time sheet as unimaginative. Acquiescing to my emotion – and I dare say to that of my colleagues – I would be more inclined to characterize it either as the work of an administrator ignorant of the human fundamentals of their charge, or a management bureaucrat who, cowering at the sight of their own supervisor, chooses to throw everyone else under the bus.

No one at the college level that I have spoken to on the matter thinks this is an improvement. Many seem tempted to concoct strategies to overcome its built-in irrationality. And to be honest about it, such strategies are not necessarily rebellious. They represent a sample of what most of the college staff, particularly lab techs and HEOs, accomplish on a daily basis with professional integrity.

Such strategies are an expression of the same imaginative and energetic spirit that inspires us to come to work each day and untangle red tape, so we can better serve the public. At the college level, the public does not appear exclusively as data, percentages and indices. They are people, often with their children in tow, attempting to overcome serious odds in order to earn an education and improve their lives. And we often help these people at the expense of time initially dedicated to our lunch and to our own families.

When the job requires it, we stay. We do not look at the clock when there are people to serve. We keep our own hourly balance – in the best of circumstances with the cooperation of the chairperson – and the work gets done.

PRODUCTIVITY

These new rules reveal a basic disrespect, not only for the work we perform, but for the enthusiasm, imagination and, most of all, the flexibility we bring to that work. We're all interested in making each college function more efficiently. We all want maximum productivity. But if an administrator's job is to look for ways to increase productivity, it is their managerial duty to increase it *throughout the system*. Any method that advances the productivity of one office by sabotaging that of another is not improving anything.

Peter Malone is a chief CLT and art gallery director at Kingsborough Community College.

New rules vs. the real world