

# Clarion

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



DECEMBER 2018



## STUDENTS Organizing for ASAP

CUNY Rising is calling to expand a popular and successful CUNY program.

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Erik McGregor

## PSC TESTIFIES FUND OUR CONTRACT

PSC members packed a CUNY Board of Trustees hearing in October to offer hours of personal testimony and urge the board to do its duty and request a budget that fully funds the next PSC-CUNY contract. Members unrolled a banner with more than 5,000 signatures of members demanding \$7,000 per course for adjuncts, raises for all and full funding for the contract.

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### BARGAINING Contract talks move ahead

In campaigning for a fair contract, the PSC pressures the administration not to defer to an insufficient state bargaining pattern.

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### COMMUNITY Amazon is on its way to CUNY

The CUNY administration welcomes the retail giant's Queens headquarters, but PSC members raise concerns about the plan.

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### CAMPUS Enrollment drop at Kingsborough

Student enrollment has declined at Kingsborough Community College. PSC members have pushed the new administration to address the problem.

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### POLITICS PSC pushes electoral wins

Democrats won big in November at both the state and national level, with substantial contributions from PSC members.

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** | WRITE TO: CLARION/PSC, 61 BROADWAY, 15TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10006. EMAIL: APAUL@PSCMAIL.ORG.

# Why we defend the tenure system

● In the September 30, 2018, issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, William Egginton of Johns Hopkins University published an essay entitled “The Left-Wing Case Against Tenure.” Rather than the usual argument against tenure of attacking faculty who have tenure-track or tenured positions as lazy slugs living off the taxpayers or the hardworking donors of private universities, Egginton argues that tenure reinforces *privilege*. At the center of his case is the claim that the tenure system is “particularly vulnerable to unconscious bias,” especially against women, people of color and young scholars whose work does not “fit” the established criteria of their discipline.

There is no question that such biases are at work in academia. It is also clear to anyone paying attention that white men who do “acceptable” mainstream research are grossly overrepresented among the tenure professoriate. However, Egginton’s diagnosis is, in many ways, worse than the disease. He advocates more “renewable contracts” with “periodic and positive evaluations of teaching, research or both.” Some positions would be evaluated more on research, others more on teaching. Put simply, Egginton’s solution would *increase* the precarity of academic labor that has driven down salaries and increased workloads for both part-time and full-time tenured and untenured faculty in the United States.

A real solution to the conscious and unconscious biases of the tenure process involves three big changes. First, we need to win equity in pay and job security between full-time and part-time faculty. As part-time work becomes more costly, universities will be compelled to hire *more* on full-time, tenure-track positions. Second, we need a commitment to affirmative action in the hiring, tenure and promotion process to make up for past racial and gender discrimination. Finally, we need clear criteria, formal evaluations and guidance throughout the process, enforced through a *union contract*. All of these proposals will require a thorough *unionization* of university faculty.

**Charles Post**  
Borough of Manhattan  
Community College

## Parity for CLIP, Start

● In a September 18 email, “Bargaining Update #4,” PSC President Barbara Bowen stated, “The PSC has also called for important changes in areas other than salary, including granting tuition waivers to the children of full-time employees.”

While I agree that the children of full-time employees should get tuition waivers, over 100 CLIP and CUNY Start instructors, all of whom are full-time, still must pay full price for all CUNY classes and education



**PSC members learned about the CUNY tenure process during an information session at Queens College.**

programs. Some CLIP and CUNY Start instructors, like me, would like to earn a second masters or obtain a PhD. Others would simply like to take a class or two for professional development. But we are forced to pay full price or attend classes at a different school because of CUNY’s unwillingness to grant us tuition waivers. Even adjuncts get tuition waivers, provided they teach a certain number of hours over several years.

CLIP and CUNY Start instructors receive no tuition waivers, which prevents us from developing professionally and being promoted. I think the PSC should first focus on getting *all* full-time employees tuition waivers for CUNY classes, and then, after that is taken care of, focus on waivers for their families.

**C. Anthony Prato**  
Queensborough Community College

*Editor’s note: The push to include CUNY Start and CLIP instructors in the contract language mandating tuition waivers is also a PSC demand in the current contract campaign. The union’s demands, including this one, were ratified during a Delegate Assembly in the Fall of 2017.*

## Underpaid, undervalued

● CUNY faculty is a heterogeneous society that consists of overlapping parts that differ in many characteristics, levels and wants. This heterogeneity manifests itself most

strikingly through the division into tenure-track faculty and a grossly underpaid and undervalued adjunct majority faculty. These extremes seem to have dictated our union’s approach to attending to the interests of the whole faculty corpus, through adoption of the middle “salary first” way, which is the crudest of all possible approaches.

More sophisticated approaches should be taken with catering to smaller subgroups of the faculty. Let us start with the most discriminated and most exploited faculty, namely scholars who have high academic degrees (doctorates), who not only do a full load of teaching, but are active in research and administration, while being paid less than graduate student salaries. This group of faculty has comparable, if not better scholarly records than the privileged faculty do, except they have to live up to higher standards when it comes to promotions (“higher” because given other equal conditions, they are essentially unsupported in their research and other scholarly pursuits).

A typical example of this kind of faculty member is paid about \$22,000, instead of what should be at least \$82,000 per year; such a scholar who has been a grossly underpaid and undervalued faculty for 10 years is thus swindled out of a staggering \$600,000 plus about \$200,000 in pension and other benefits. There is no group of faculty who is as brutally exploited as this group of scholars.

The union should start with find-

ing out an exact count of adjunct scholars and convert their slave predicament into positions of more fairly paid “regular” faculty. Short of this we will continue to see expansion of hiring of non-scholar faculty that will dictate and ensure puny salaries continue forever, as a matter and consequence of the simple principle of supply and demand.

**Radoslav Dimitric**  
College of Staten Island

## Help for pensioners

● Ruth Wangerin’s letter in the last issue of *Clarion* titled “Working for members” commented that the PSC interceded to achieve a victory in a single unemployment benefits dispute. Terrific!

How about holding the PSC accountable to resolve the pension issues for the thousands of retired faculty and staff who have not received their correct pension benefit payments as per the 2016 contract settlement?

**Geraldine Burghart**  
Bronx Community College

*Editor’s note: Over a two-year period, CUNY payroll has failed to provide the NYC Teachers Retirement System (TRS) with accurate retro-pay data to calculate increased monthly pension payments for significant numbers of recent retirees. Those affected are retirees who worked at CUNY during the years covered by the 2010–17 PSC-CUNY contract and were owed back pay.*

*TRS benefits are based on salary history, age, years of employment and other factors. Before TRS can calculate your monthly pension payments, the CUNY Payroll Office must provide that final “salary history” so that it includes any back pay owed through the 4/20/17 salary increase, if applicable.*

*To date, CUNY Payroll has not provided usable and accurate “salary history” data to TRS. PSC leadership has pushed CUNY management, but has not been informed that a data file acceptable to TRS has been submitted.*

## Response to Schulman

● As an educator, Jew, Israeli and American, I cannot remain silent on Sarah Schulman’s distorted and frankly anti-Semitic – yes,

even Jews can be anti-Semitic – views (“Silencing dissent,” letters, *Clarion* October/November 2018).

She uses CUNY’s investigation of a PhD student’s email where they criticize Israel as an example and a reflection of CUNY’s manipulation and complicity toward Israeli injustices. Just to put things in perspective, the student in question responded to a CUNY Earth and Environmental Sciences listserv advertising Fulbright grants to study in Israel with this comment: “This is some sick Zionist propaganda.” Some Jewish students felt threatened and believed his rhetoric incited hate. They utilized Title VI and IX to file a complaint and, in the end, CUNY investigated the matter and sided with the student. How is this showing complicity?

I also challenge Schulman’s accusations that Israel “murders large numbers of unarmed civilians in Gaza.” It has always been the Israeli Defense Force’s policy to alert civilians of forthcoming attacks by dropping leaflets and going door to door to warn them of impending target areas. I know of no other army that does such a thing. It is not Israel’s fault that Hamas strategically and methodically chooses heavily populated areas such as hospitals and schools to launch their attacks. This past summer, Palestinians set masses of forest land on fire with balloons that detonated, some even landed on school grounds and playgrounds.

There are thousands of Palestinians and Muslims living peacefully in Israel being active members of the economy and even government. Schulman admits in a 2013 interview, “I avoided becoming a truly informed person about Israel/Palestine...” How can one, especially an educator, make such outlandish claims while admitting they are uninformed?

I have heard from so many Jewish students that college has become a fearful and dreaded place where anti-Israel and Jewish sentiments are spewed daily. When they try to speak their truth, they are either barred from participating in pro-Palestinian meetings, denied entry, quickly shut down and silenced or labeled as racists. So I applaud CUNY, and I am proud to be a CUNY faculty member, where the First Amendment still stands tall in the face of truth and justice for all.

**Ita Yankovich**  
Kingsborough Community College

*Editor’s note: Clarion reserves the right to edit all letters for publication.*

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# Demanding an economic offer

By ARI PAUL

As this newspaper went to press, PSC members were engaging in actions to demand that the CUNY Board of Trustees (BoT) put forward a budget request to the state and city that calls for a fully funded contract with the PSC, including raises for all and an increase in adjunct pay to \$7,000 a course. More than 170 people signed up to testify at the last BoT hearing to address the contract (see pages 5-8). More union actions are planned for December as the BoT rolls out its request. A budget request that includes full funding for a contract and additional adjunct increases, and reflects PSC needs, would be a significant step toward a good contract deal, PSC leaders said.

The union and CUNY management have engaged in several bargaining sessions in the last several months, and while the union has made presentations on its economic

## Contract talks continue

demands, the university has yet to make an economic offer.

### PATTERN BARGAINING

Looming over the contract talks is an economic “pattern” that appears to be firmly set for public sector union bargaining with both New York City and New York State. District Council 37 (DC 37), which represents 10,000 clerical and blue-collar workers at CUNY, recently reached a yet-to-be-ratified agreement. That contract is similar to the one established by the same union for its more than 100,000 citywide workers, with 2 percent yearly raises over a little more than four years. And the United Federation of Teachers reached a deal with the city that offers yearly raises of 2, 2.5 and 3 percent, with the final 3-percent raise covering 18 months, rather than 12.

The United University Professions, the union representing SUNY faculty and staff, settled a six-year deal with the state, including 2-percent annual raises. The other major unions that bargain with the state have reached similar agreements, all with annual raises of 2 percent.

CUNY management representatives have stated across the table that CUNY’s economic offer is likely to follow the economic pattern set by other public sector union contracts, despite the PSC’s strong presentation on the need for higher increases to raise CUNY salaries to competitive levels.

“When will the trustees finally take a stand against austerity patterns and for what CUNY actually needs?” asked President Barbara Bowen. Bowen added, however, “Both state and city governments

are likely to insist on an offer for the PSC that aligns with the very modest annual increases agreed to by other unions. But the PSC has a history of standing up for what our members need and making gains against the odds, as we did in the last contract with back pay.”

### Raising CUNY salaries to competitive levels

In this contract, the union is demanding salary increases for all, additional equity increases for the lowest-paid full-time titles, substantial noneconomic gains for all and an end to poverty pay for adjuncts.

It isn’t certain, of course, that this is what the university will put forward, and the union continues to argue that the state pattern shouldn’t be imposed on CUNY faculty and staff—those increases don’t address decades of salary erosion. The DC 37 deal and the other recently settled contracts don’t address a direly unpaid part-time workforce, whereas the PSC is in a unique position of attempting

to lift CUNY adjunct wages. CUNY, unlike most state and city agencies, must also compete nationally for attracting full-time employees.

The union leadership said that the administration has acknowledged the union’s demand for \$7K for adjuncts, which Bowen hailed as a “huge step forward.” The union, over the course of the last year, has presented data on the need for addressing historical salary erosion that would require wage increases beyond 2 percent each year and the need for raises beyond across-the-board increases for college laboratory technicians and lecturers.

At a recent contract bargaining session, the union presented its demands for workers in higher education officer titles. Iris DeLutro, a bargaining team member and vice president of cross campus units, told *Clarion* that the union pushed the need to stipulate that HEOs who self-nominate themselves for a salary differential are given the same level of consideration as HEOs who are recommended by a supervisor. DeLutro also noted that the union demands that the contract grant job protection language for HEOs after five years on the job rather than the current eight years.

# Queens adjuncts push president on \$7K

By ARI PAUL

Queens College President Félix V. Matos Rodríguez listened attentively in a packed conference room on the eighth floor of an administration building, as more than a dozen part-time instructors and other activists told him why they were pushing for \$7,000 per course for adjuncts.

Busking on the subway to make ends meet. Sharing one-bedroom apartments. Skipping meals. Contemplating quitting the profession altogether for higher-paid but less-skilled jobs. These were just some of the realities adjuncts wanted Matos Rodríguez, rumored to have been a finalist for the next CUNY chancellorship, to know about.

### CAMPUS ORGANIZING

The meeting, which took place November 7 in a room hastily covered with \$7K posters and banners, was the result of local adjunct organizing and a broader PSC campaign to deliver petitions to campus presidents about the necessity of \$7K, raises for all and full funding for the contract. At Queens, the chapter was one of a few around the university that went a step further and demanded a face-to-face meeting with their boss, and got one.

“I felt like it was powerful,” said Jane Guskin, an adjunct instructor in urban studies who organized the meeting, remarking on the testimony PSC members delivered to the president. “I think he heard us, but we didn’t expect that this was going to be enough. It was more about making it clear that we’re organized and ready to escalate,” Guskin told *Clarion*.

This was one of several meetings adjuncts had with college presidents

## Other actions take place around CUNY



Adjunct activist Jane Guskin, left, led union activists in a meeting with Queens College President Félix Matos Rodríguez, right.

about the \$7K demand – Brooklyn College, Lehman College and John Jay College had similar meetings between PSC adjuncts and campus presidents.

### PRESSING PRESIDENTS

For his part, Matos Rodríguez said that he would look at the signed petitions including the \$7K demand and relay the message to the interim chancellor, Vita Rabinowitz. He told the Queens College adjuncts that he cannot unilaterally up the pay for adjuncts, saying that this was a part of the ongoing bargaining between the PSC and the CUNY administration. He voiced hope that an increased budget for Queens College

could result in more full-time faculty lines being offered for current adjuncts at the college.

And Matos Rodríguez noted that he could reach out to the college’s donor base and highlight the need for funding for faculty pay. But, he noted, the real fight was up to the union and what it could do in Albany to increase funding and to push for a fair contract with CUNY Central administration. In short, his message, like that of other presidents, was that the issue of pay was out of his control.

This response was similar to responses other college presidents gave

to adjuncts. “Brooklyn College President Michelle Anderson said that her advocacy will be confined to discussions within the council of presidents, with the Board of Trustees and in her new role as a member of the Fiscal Affairs Committee,” Brooklyn College PSC Chapter Chair James Davis wrote in an email.

### Some administration support but not enough

For the Queens chapter members in attendance, Matos Rodríguez offered encouragement, but it was not enough to materially change CUNY’s low pay for adjuncts – the union has made it clear to CUNY management in recent contract talks that CUNY

part-time instructors, some paid as little as \$3,100 per course, are paid significantly less than their peers at institutions like Rutgers.

“Mostly, what I heard were reasons he couldn’t do anything,” said Ben Chitty, a higher education associate at the college and a PSC delegate who attended the meeting.

And Anthony Malagon, an adjunct assistant professor of philosophy, had similar thoughts about the president’s response. “He was trying to wash his hands of it. It didn’t seem reassuring,” he said.

On the plus side, Malagon said he was inspired by the intensity of the local adjunct organizing for \$7K at Queens College, where adjuncts rushed between classes to attend the meeting with the president to offer their personal experiences and to make clear that they were open to escalating tactics to realize their demand.

“I am surprised we picked up so much momentum this quickly,” Malagon said. “It’s encouraging.”

### ADJUNCT REPRESENTATIVES

Many of the adjuncts said that they believed the low pay for adjuncts was hurting Queens College students. Some talked about how little time they were able to devote to student needs, or how they felt forced to consider other careers. Vadim Acosta, an adjunct lecturer in environmental science, recalled having to work as a gardener between days on campus in order to sustain his career in academia. “I had to find a real job in order to do my hobby of teaching, but it’s not a hobby,” he told the president.

In response, Matos Rodríguez vowed to make clear to the interim

Continued on page 9

# Members blast CUNY's support for Amazon

By ARI PAUL

As community activists, tenant advocates and Queens lawmakers decried the billions of public subsidies given to Amazon to build a new headquarters in Long Island City, CUNY management effectively told company CEO and world's richest person Jeff Bezos, "CUNY is at your service."

"It's exciting to see Amazon recognize Long Island City, where our college serves as the educational anchor, as *the* place to be in New York," LaGuardia Community College President Gail Mellow said in a statement. "Having Amazon in our backyard will be transformative for our students – particularly the 3,500 in our tech programs each year. Many of our students are sure to be future Amazon employees. We're ready to develop partnerships with Amazon and look forward to getting to work."

LaGuardia, situated right off the 7 line in Long Island City, will be, along with the CUNY School of Law, the most directly impacted CUNY campus if and when the Amazon facility is completed. Interim Chancellor Vita Rabinowitz and Board of Trustees Chair Bill Thompson made it clear in an op-ed in the *New York Daily News* that they will dedicate assets for training students for jobs for the online retail giant, a place constantly under fire from labor activists for reports of poor working conditions and low pay. In separate statements, Rabinowitz said that the university "stands ready to work with Amazon... to provide skilled graduates ready to compete for Amazon's 40,000 new jobs" and Thompson said CUNY will "commit our considerable college assets to ensure that Amazon has a strong pipeline for talent, ideas and innovation."

## THEFT OF PUBLIC FUNDS

Many PSC members saw CUNY administration's unified commitment to Amazon as a betrayal of the university's mission by turning it into a vocational school and a pipeline to an unaccountable private business. PSC President Barbara Bowen said, "The key issue is the giveaway of public resources to the world's richest company – one with a horrible labor record. Billions in state resources are being handed over to Amazon while CUNY is being starved of funds."

John Whitlow, an associate professor at the CUNY School of Law, told *Clarion*, "If recent history is a guide, the benefits of this plan will inure overwhelmingly to the already well-off, and the rest of us will be left living more precarious lives in an increasingly unequal city."

For PSC members working in Long Island City, fears about overstraining already crumbling infrastructure, rising housing costs and the cheapening of LaGuardia's status to an Amazon workforce pipeline abound.

"I worry that it will push the already gentrifying neighborhood to further gentrify and become a place of the haves and the have-nots," said

## Betraying CUNY's mission to the public



Laurie Gluck of LaGuardia Community College worries what Amazon will do to the campus neighborhood.

Rebekah Johnson, an associate professor of education and language acquisition (ELA) at LaGuardia. "Is Amazon going to provide affordable housing for employees and other local people?"

For Laurie Gluck, who has been teaching at LaGuardia for 32 years, currently in the the ELA program, the news about Amazon is, as Yogi Berra would say, *déjà vu* all over again, as she recalls how concerned residents were when the Citigroup building in Long Island City was completed in 1990.

"I don't think they fulfilled their promise to improve the neighborhood," she said, noting that area's transformation from a gritty industrial neighborhood to a landscape of bland luxury condos. "The proliferation of glassy high-rises is just soul-sucking. To think Amazon will make that any better is outlandish."

Gluck added, "I have serious doubts that this will benefit LaGuardia at all. CUNY's off the radar of private institutions."

Lara Beaty, an associate professor of psychology, noted that the addition of another corporate headquarters would exacerbate the ongoing deterioration of public infrastructure in the area. "All these buildings have gone up, and the city hasn't upgraded the infrastructure – sewage, transportation, et cetera," she said. "The traffic around here is already pretty bad, and this will make it worse. Parking is impossible, we don't have enough parking spaces. So that's going to get worse."

Even if Amazon promised to hire LaGuardia students and graduates, it would still be troubling, Beaty added. "My personal concern is that we'll suddenly be preparing students to go work at Amazon. We will become more about worker training rather than transitioning students to a four-year college," she said. "The job that looks good when you're 20 looks very different when you're 40 or 60. There's been

so much written about how poorly Amazon workers are treated. That is a real concern."

## ACTION AHEAD

As this newspaper went to press, the LaGuardia PSC chapter was planning a teach-in about the effects of the Amazon deal on the campus, and some PSC members were planning to denounce CUNY's support for the deal at the December 3 CUNY Board of Trustees hearing. Also at press time, CUNY advocates had scheduled a demonstration outside Thompson's Financial District office demanding that he rescind his support of the Amazon project.

In other words, many PSC members are joining a growing movement

engaged in the resistance to the plan. The deal has received criticism for the enormous public subsidies provided – the company will reportedly get up to \$2.5 billion in tax breaks and subsidies – as well as the lack of public oversight, as Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that the city and state did not intend for the plan of the new headquarters to go through the normal public-approval process.

The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, citing a long and well-reported record of low pay and abysmal working conditions in Amazon's grueling warehouses, also joined the chorus against the Queens headquarters.

Opposition is mounting in the political arena, too. State Senator

Michael Gianaris called for a boycott against Amazon and other Queens lawmakers, including City Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer and Congresswoman-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, blasted the deal. Asserting that there has never been a "statistical correlation between corporate welfare and jobs," State Assemblyman Ron Kim and State Senator-elect Jessica Ramos in a *Daily News* op-ed called for more state legislative oversight of the deal and vowed new legislation that "would charge companies like Amazon extraction and automation fees for taking their profits out of state and replacing human labor with robots" and prevent Amazon from monetizing its incentive package upfront to a third party for an immediate cash-out."

## HURTING THE PUBLIC

For Sam Stein, a PhD student at the Graduate Center and an urban studies instructor at Hunter College, whose book *Capital City: Urban Planners in the Real Estate State* will be released by Verso next year, the tax giveaways to Amazon by two Democratic elected officials is a finger in New Yorkers' eye, as the city suffers from record-high rates of homelessness, reports of public housing units going without heat and the possibility of a subway and bus fare increase as commuters deal with more delays and overcrowding.

"Our budget priorities are truly backward. CUNY? Underfunded. NYCHA? Underfunded. MTA? Underfunded," he told *Clarion*. "The world's richest human wants to help gentrify the world's most diverse urban area? This is a sell-out of historic proportions, calling to mind some of the worst episodes in New York City urban planning."

## Forcing Columbia to bargain with grads



Columbia University graduate student workers are considering a management proposal that would move the bargaining process forward after months of stalling by the administration.

# PSC demands: fund our contract

By CLARION STAFF

More than 100 PSC members from various backgrounds, disciplines and campuses spoke for several hours at the October 22 CUNY Board of Trustees meeting, delivering passionate and often personal testimony as to why the trustees must live up to the board's duty and make a budget request that fully funds the PSC's contract demands, including \$7K for adjuncts.

Members touched on every aspect of the contract campaign – poverty wages for adjuncts, management's unfulfilled promise to reduce the teaching load and the need for across-the-board raises and to dedicate resources to protect CUNY's mission of serving the public.

Below are a few of the testimonies that were submitted at the meeting. Others are available on the union's website.

## Pick a side

By BARBARA BOWEN

Ask labor's fundamental question: which side are you on?

The 2020 budget request presents an opportunity to answer that question in the language that matters: funding. Will you continue to sit by while CUNY colleges eviscerate their own inadequate budgets to make up for the state's underfunding of the contract? Continue to lament but not address the fact that full-time faculty salaries at CUNY are 30 or 40,000 dollars below those at comparable institutions? Continue to accept the underfunding of an agreement made in your name last year to reduce the teaching load? Continue to allow CUNY to pay near-poverty wages to half of its teaching force?

And will you continue to send the unforgivable message to CUNY students that their college education – their future, their survival – is not worth adequate investment? The budget request you submit this fall will reveal whether you take the position that CUNY trustees are primarily answerable to the governor or mayor who appointed you, or whether you see yourselves as accountable to the people of New York.

Which side are you on?

Many CUNY trustees and administrators seem to view your job as managing scarcity. There is even a sense of pride in being able to manage scarcity well. I submit that that is not your job. Your job as trustees is to challenge the premise that inadequate funding is the best CUNY can hope for. CUNY represents opportunity for working-class and poor New Yorkers, for immigrants and communities of color, in this cruel, neoliberal, racist economy. As trustees you have a choice between normalizing the neoliberal lie that there is not enough money to go around – or fundamentally challenging that lie and demanding the investment CUNY needs. Stop normalizing poverty.

The PSC is now the only public voice making the case that it is not acceptable for CUNY to have to accommodate every year to decreasing per-student funds. We have worked hard to develop that political power, but we should not be alone. The budget request you submit is your voice. Use it to demand an alternative to austerity for CUNY. The moment demands political courage. Imagine the impact nationally, at a time

## Scores of members deliver hours of testimony



PSC members packed a recent Board of Trustees meeting, urging board members to fulfill their duty and advocate for an adequate budget for all of CUNY.

when murderous racism and anti-immigrant fervor have been newly mobilized, if you were to take a stand for investment in the college education of CUNY students by insisting on a fully funded contract and a fair wage for the adjuncts who teach most of their courses.

Which side are you on?

*Barbara Bowen is the president of the PSC.*

## Yeats's lesson

By SIGMUND SHEN

My students inspire me, but I'm also terrified for them. Life is objectively harder for this generation of students than it was for ours. Many of my students juggle their coursework with paid employment. With the cost of housing and healthcare, more of them are caring for their parents, their siblings and their own children. Family incomes, after inflation, are about the same as they were 30 years ago. And yet, CUNY's tuition is 500 percent higher.

Where generations past were defined by our hope, optimism, brash ambitions and dreams, our students are beset by uncertainty, precarity, the gig economy, climate change and the resurgence of fascism, both globally and at home. When I was an undergrad at Queens College, I thought I understood the metaphor of Yeats's "The Second Coming": "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity."

I didn't know shit about "The Second Coming." For our students, there is no metaphor. It's literally happening in front of us.

Maybe that's why this generation is so politically aware to sexism, racism and crony capitalism. Me Too, Black Lives Matter. They call it being "woke." It means it will fool no one if you are not doing your part. It will be clear if you praise our adjuncts' "hard work, dedication and commitment" and then cry over your own poverty when it's time to talk \$7K per course. It will be clear if you have your picture taken signing off on the course reduction to give students more individual attention from their professors and then turn around and cut the tutoring budget by 16 percent.

Don't worry about history judging us; we should be so lucky. Our students are judging us right now and it will be plain as day if you self-censor your own budget request. At best they will lose faith in us, and at worst they will emulate our example. We will know your commitment to CUNY and to this city by the message you choose to send upstate. Remember that every disgraceful concession the governor asked of CUNY in the last three years, he has withdrawn and disavowed in the face of solidarity and organizing.

So we all are the ones who need to be full of passionate intensity, and we can no longer afford to lack conviction. Your budget request can send a signal that you at least are fighting as hard as you can for a better university, one the working class, women, people of color and immigrant students of this city need and deserve. I call on you as trustees to oppose austerity for CUNY. Take a public stand for a contract that is fully funded, includes real raises for all and increases adjunct pay to \$7K per course.

*Sigmund Shen is the PSC chapter chair and an associate professor of English at LaGuardia Community College.*

## A family issue

By SAMI DISU

The one issue that I need to bring to your attention immediately is the plight of part-time professors. My wife is also an adjunct lecturer in my department. So let me assure you that between the both of us we understand the reality of trying to raise a child on adjunct incomes.

Between the two of us, we are teaching five courses this semester and we love teaching the next generation of police officers, emergency personnel and legal professionals who will go on to providing public safety for our beloved city. Our love for teaching is the only reason we haven't moved on to better-paying professions. The situation of the economically unviable lives we live as adjuncts is worsened by the fact that the students we teach are historically from an underfunded, and under-resourced, public-school system to begin with.

Any college professor – adjunct or full-time – understands this fact when we grade assignments. Yet, many adjuncts make the sacrifice to spend numerous unpaid hours outside class helping students overcome their limitations. And if you understand that most students who attend CUNY are from black and brown communities, then you will understand that underpaid college professors combined with austerity funding levels for the CUNY system amounts to racial injustice – whether deliberately designed or not. You don't need to be a professor of African American history like me to understand this issue.

Continued on page 6

## Fund our contract

Continued from page 5

Let me be blunt in saying that my wife and I have applied for public welfare assistance in order to raise our child. Since we can't pay for childcare on adjunct incomes, we take turns looking after our daughter on days one partner does not teach. So, even though we could aim to teach more courses for a little more income we simply cannot because paying for childcare is impossible on adjunct wages.

*Sami Disu teaches in the department of African Studies at John Jay College.*

## Falling short

By HESTER EISENSTEIN

Before coming to CUNY in 1996, I taught at Yale, Barnard and SUNY-Buffalo.

Of all these, CUNY is the institution that is least faithful to its mission, because of the regime of artificial austerity that has been imposed on the staff, faculty and students by the budgets of the last few decades. You know that CUNY is an economic engine for the city of New York, and that CUNY graduates are the backbone of the city's economy.

If I were a CUNY trustee, I would do everything in my power to make sure that our students, who struggle with economic deprivation, balancing paid work, family and schoolwork, have the best of everything to ensure their success. This extends from chalk in the classroom to books in the library to adequate systems of heat and ventilation, not to mention staff and faculty salaries.

I call on you as trustees to oppose austerity for CUNY. Take a public stand for a contract that is fully funded, includes real raises for all and increases adjunct pay to \$7K per course.

*Hester Eisenstein is a professor of women's and gender studies and sociology at the Graduate Center.*

## People's CUNY

By BILL FRIEDHEIM

For retirees, CUNY was and is a cause. Why? Because we believe in the vision of democratic, urban public higher education, articulated in 1849 by the first CUNY president, Dr. Horace Webster, when he proclaimed that our role is to educate "the children of the whole people" of New York City.

It's a cause because members of our retirees' chapter have logged over 90,000 cumulative years at the university as educators, professionals, scholars and champions of public higher education. It's a cause because in those 90,000 cumulative years we have witnessed how CUNY transforms and empowers the lives of its students, and in the process transforms our city and state.

It's a cause because CUNY students are the face of 2018 New York City, representing multiple cultures, speaking over a hundred languages, often juggling working, parenting and education as first-generation college students and ready to give back to New York.

But the vision Dr. Webster so eloquently championed in 1849 has been undermined

by serial austerity budgets in a time of a booming economy. Our governor is adamant in his refusal to include any monies to pay for new public-sector contracts in his budget.

The board compounds the problem by deferring to the governor if it does not include a strong request to fund the contract. Failure to do so cannibalizes CUNY. Fighting over crumbs from an already small pie, such a failure pits faculty against students and the union against academic and student services.

It is zero-sum economics and politics at its worst. Decades of underfunding tell us that such failure results in robbing Peter to pay Paul. A fully funded CUNY is a robust engine of social mobility and economic equality. But meager public financing deprives that engine of necessary fuel by contracting rather than expanding programs like ASAP; paying adjuncts, the majority of faculty, poverty wages; and shortchanging the "children of the whole people" and the part-time teaching faculty.

*Bill Friedheim is the chair of the PSC retirees chapter and a former historian at Borough of Manhattan Community College.*

## Moving up

By DEBORAH GAMBS

When our previous contract was ratified more than a year ago, my personal financial life improved in ways that were very significant for me. I no longer needed a roommate in my studio apartment, and I was able to pay off two debts that were weighing on me every month. As a member of the PSC, I fought hard for that contract and we do not intend to let this next contract go six years. Because the last contract was so meaningful for full-time faculty, we now have an ethical imperative to fight for an equivalent improvement for adjunct faculty.

As it happens, one of my oldest college friends is also now teaching at CUNY – as an adjunct. When my pay improved by nearly \$20,000 over a period of a few years, hers improved by \$59.41 per hour. As far as an hourly wage increase goes, that's nothing to sneer at in some industries. But as far as the overall impact on the earnings of a college professor who teaches the same course load I teach, it is paltry. She struggles to schedule five to six courses every semester, three to four classes during summer, and travels between multiple schools. She is one of the 70 percent of adjunct faculty teaching at colleges in the nation as the AAUP recently reported.

State government plays an incredibly important role in funding higher education. For the last few years we have seen a scary pattern of defunding higher education by governors and legislatures in states with historic public universities. We are in a state with a self-proclaimed progressive governor, and CUNY is a progressive public university by many measures. However, when 60 percent of your faculty is underpaid and overworked, you fail to be able to call yourself progressive. We must end this inequality and we can begin to do it in this contract.

I call on you as trustees to oppose austerity for CUNY. Take a public stand for a contract that is fully funded, includes real raises for all and increases adjunct pay to \$7K per course.



CUNY administration and Manhattan Borough President

*Deborah Gambs is an associate professor of sociology at the Borough of Manhattan Community College.*

## Pride, shame

By CURTIS IZEN

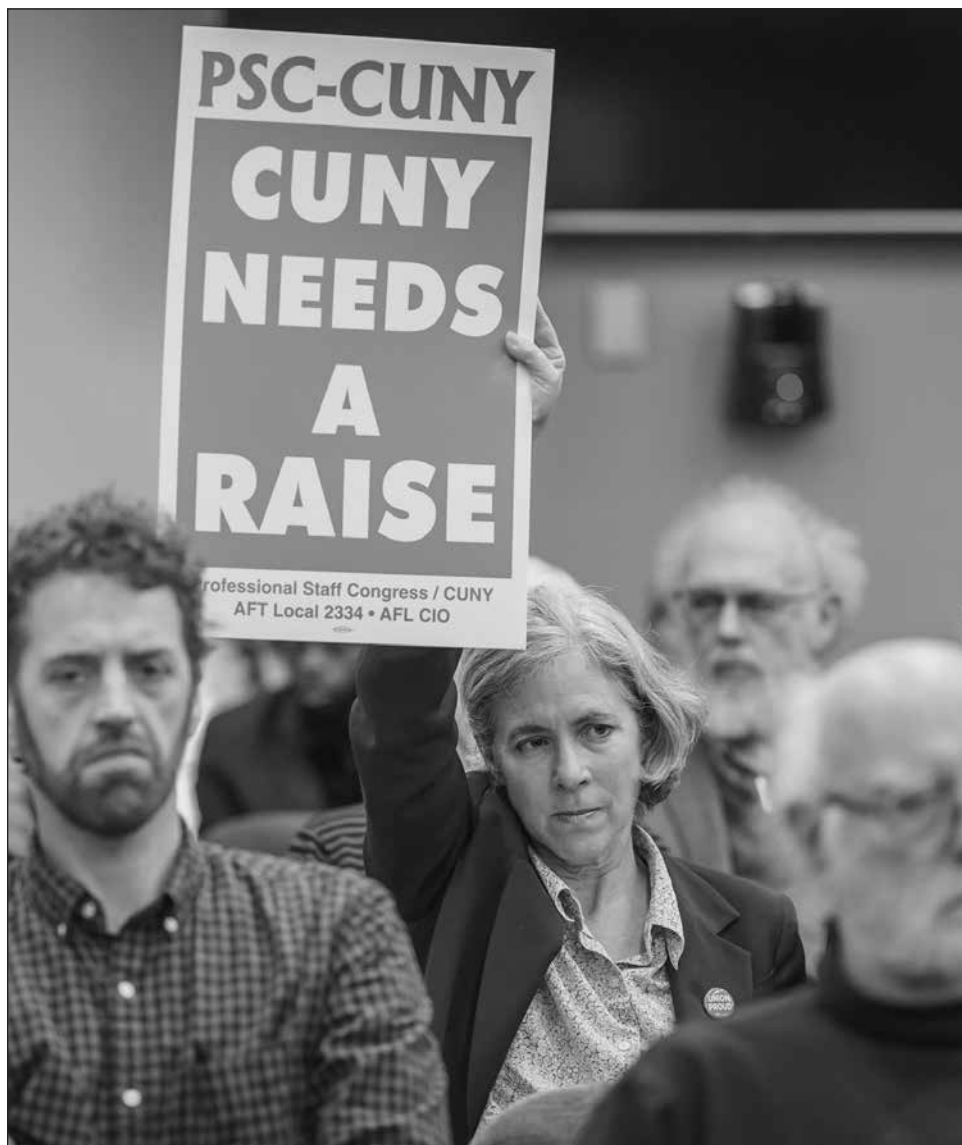
I am also a proud alumnus of the CUNY system. What I am not proud to say is the lack of financial advancements I have received in the past 25 years of teaching.

The cost of living goes up every year, but not my salary. My responsibilities and professionalism increase each semester, but not my salary. My class size increases as well, but not my salary.

Like many of my colleagues, I am a dedicated instructor who finds the current adjunct pay deeply unfair. The technology supplementing our courses has changed but not the realization that adjuncts deserve more financially. Let me explain what it's like to be an adjunct for CUNY – a position that truly seems to go unrecognized. It is subject matter experts working in the field being able to give cutting-edge skills to our students. It is answering emails on weekends and evenings because you know that if this is what someone else would do for you.

It is creating dynamic lessons and video recordings to explain difficult concepts and incorporating new technologies to engage your students. It is meeting students before or after class on your own time when they ask for help. It is finding open-resource course material to help alleviate the high cost of textbooks that students endure each semester. It is spending countless hours grading papers and exams while working around the clock to get grades in so students can register for the upcoming term.

It is writing recommendation letters and helping students win scholarships. It's taking educational workshops and getting certified on topics so your students will benefit from your knowledge.



PSC members listened to scores of testimony delivered by CUNY faculty and staff.

Erik McGregor



Gale Brewer (center, with microphone) listened to hours of member testimony.

Adjuncts teach thousands of courses each semester at CUNY. To ask us to continue without the proper financial support undermines the work we do inside and outside the classroom.

How can CUNY expect to recruit and retain truly dedicated and passionate professionals when we are not compensated as such? I call on you as trustees to oppose austerity for CUNY. Take a public stand for a contract that is fully funded, includes real raises for all and guarantees \$7K per course for adjuncts.

*Curtis Izen is an adjunct instructor in information systems and statistics at Baruch College.*

## Eviction notice

By MARIAMA KHAN

As an adjunct, I have the right academic qualifications that were earned in North America, Europe and Africa. I also have a rich and a diverse professional experience from these three continents. I'm a scholar with an excellent practitioner background. I love the work I do at Lehman College. I bring commitment, passion and all the energy in me to my work.

My work at Lehman College means a lot to me. I confess that before getting this job, I've previously faced extended underemployment and unemployment. Irrespective of my academic qualifications and professional experience, I've done low-skilled jobs just to survive. I've worked in a laundry facility, folding clothes. I've worked at Dunkin' Donuts, selling coffee. And I've even tried working in a chocolate factory as a factory hand.

As a single parent with two sons, I faced acute deprivation with my children. Following months of lack of employment and an excruciating job search, it was a huge relief to get an adjunct lecturer position in the Africana Studies department at Lehman College. I remember the day I rushed to

my kids to break the good news to them. My younger son sighed and said, "Thank God. We have to pray for the people who gave you this job."

So, for me and my children, my job at Lehman College is like a dream come true. I finally came across an employer who saw the merit of my qualifications and experience, to offer me a job. However, I come to realize that while this job gives me more income than all other jobs I've previously had in the US here (except one), my total earnings on the job were still not able to adequately provide us with our basic needs like shelter, food, clothing, educational and medical-insurance-related expenses.

As I speak to you, my sons and I continue to live in a tight single room located in a degraded basement in Brooklyn. On September 23, I returned from doing our laundry and found that my landlord had thrown our things out and locked us out of the room. I had to call the police because we had nowhere to go. When the police came they got into the basement to speak to me. Surprised at the conditions there, one of them asked me, "How did you come to live here? This is not a good place to live."

I explained that I was facing poverty. I've not been able to make enough income to get us a decent place. Later, I received an eviction notice from my landlord's attorneys asking me to leave the room before or by the end of November. Our bad living environment has come along with constant insults and bad words from the landlord. For countless times, I have looked into the dejected faces of my young sons and asked, "How can I get a supplementary job to get us out of this cruel situation?" I've contacted several brokers and apartment owners to get a house, but always. I'm told my income is small.

As things stand today, I'm still not able to find us a decent place from the income I'm making as an adjunct.

*Mariama Khan is an adjunct lecturer in the department of Africana studies at Lehman College.*

## K-12 to CUNY

By TED KESLER

During 15 years of service, I became a celebrated New York city public elementary school teacher. *The New York Times* did a nine-part series about my third-grade class. I literally became the most *public* public-school teacher in the world. In 1997 I earned the prestigious Bank Street College Early Childhood Teacher of the Year Award, and in 2001 I earned my National Board of Professional Teaching Standards license. I was now ready to become a teacher educator and researcher of strong pedagogical practices.

When I made the transition to teacher education, I was so proud to accept a full-time position at Queens College, one of the senior colleges in the renowned CUNY system. Queens County is also the single most diverse county in the United States.

I firmly believe that public education is one of the stalwarts of what makes America great. Empirical studies bear this out. For example, a 2017 op-ed in *The New York Times* reports that CUNY propels "almost six times as many low-income students into the middle class and beyond as all eight Ivy League campuses, plus Duke, MIT, Stanford and the [University of] Chicago, combined."

In other words, CUNY does more to enable people to achieve our increasingly elusive American Dream than any institution out there. What could be a more productive use of taxpayers' money?

I maintain unwavering commitment to this purpose as a tenured, associate professor, co-director of Queens College's graduate program in elementary education. However, I also live in a constant state of frustration under the weight of austerity that glares at me and my students as we proceed with our mission of producing the next generation of great New York City public school teachers. The classroom where I teach this semester is decrepit and depressing. Three weeks ago, during class, a water bug dropped from the exposed ceiling onto one of my students' notebooks.

For years I worked without a raise, so with inflation, I was earning less each year. Had I remained a public-school teacher – a job I loved – my salary would still pay me \$25,000 or \$27,000 more than my current salary.

Based on my personal story, I call on you, as trustees, to oppose austerity for CUNY and to take a public stand for a contract that is fully funded, includes real raises for all and increases adjunct pay to \$7K per course.

*Ted Kesler is the interim PSC chapter chair at Queens College, where he teaches elementary education and children's literature.*

Continued on page 8



Members stayed late into the night to ensure their voices were heard.

# Fund our contract

Continued from page 7

## A chair's view

By JOHANNA LESSINGER

**M**y own department, with at present eight full-time faculty, also hires some 40 adjuncts each semester to teach all the courses we are committed to offering. This is not unusual – all of CUNY depends heavily on an adjunct teaching force to fulfill its educational mission. It is exploitative. It is not an ideal system. But it is what we are stuck with for the moment. How do we make it viable? One answer is raising adjunct pay, as has already been done in other parts of the country.

My own job consists, along with teaching, in hiring, mentoring and supervising our department's large adjunct work force. It is in the interests of our department, and its students, to keep this work force stable – to attract the best teachers, and to nurture them so that they mature, learn to teach a range of courses and become able to give the best education possible to our students.

Unfortunately, CUNY's current inability or unwillingness to pay adjuncts adequately has a shattering effect on our ability to maintain that stability. Because of poverty, our adjunct work force, despite our best efforts to retain our most talented teachers over the long term, is constantly churning. We lose people each year – not, alas, to the full-time teaching jobs they deserve, but to other institutions that pay better, or to nonacademic jobs in the private sector. Person after person has told me how much they enjoy teaching at John Jay, how much they love their students, but that they simply can no longer afford to teach at CUNY.

*Johanna Lessinger is the department chair of anthropology at John Jay College.*

## Access denied

By ELLEN SEXTON

**I**am aware of the good work that is being done throughout CUNY with opening up scholarship and creating open educational resources. But open resources are not cost-free, and cannot be used to excuse an austerity budget. They may be free to the reader, but their creation, curation, description, discovery and distribution require workers.

Our students and faculty require access to scholarly literature that currently resides behind paywalls, and tools to search that literature. They need to read secondary materials that describe, analyze and contextualize our world. They need to see films and documentaries. They need books. This content is not free, and costs increase every year. Our vendors typically raise their prices 5 percent each year.

If our materials budgets do not also increase at at least the same rate, our funds are effectively cut. That manifests as a reduction each year experienced by our students and faculty in the library resources available to them.

I've been at John Jay College of Criminal



David Unger, a program coordinator, has seen CUNY austerity both as a student and a staff member.

Justice for 23 years and I've seen what the university and college can do to ensure our students succeed. To support student success, professors, including library faculty, must be present. Our last contract increased the annual leave available to library faculty to pursue their research agendas, as they are required to do, but did not include funds to cover additional full-time library faculty, so we have had to cut library services on campus. This is a reduction in services despite an increase in the numbers of students using the library.

*Ellen Sexton is an associate professor in the library at John Jay College.*

## On workload

By DAVID JONES

**I**n the statement announcing the agreement, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Vita Rabinowitz specifically highlighted the intended benefits of "the additional time faculty will now spend meeting and advising students, as well as on their research and scholarship." She stated that this additional time was "critical...to CUNY's goals of increasing graduation rates and remaining a premier research university."

Unfortunately, since this statement, a major threat has emerged to the achievement of these goals.

Contrary to the stated intent of providing faculty with additional time, the senior colleges are currently responding to the agreement by taking away existing processes for providing faculty with time outside the classroom. The result has meant that for a majority of faculty on these campuses, there will be zero net increase in time outside the classroom. Hence, there can be no reasonable expectation that the agreement will in fact increase graduation rates or benefit CUNY's scholarly reputation.

What is the reason for this counterproductive cannibalization of existing processes? College administrators have informed us, quite explicitly, that the direct cause is the failure of CUNY to fully fund

the Teaching Load Reduction Agreement. Colleges have not been provided with the money to allow replacement of current courses by new full-time faculty. Consequently, they feel compelled to cut existing programs in order to pay for the Teaching Load Reduction Agreement.

As bad as failing to achieve the agreement's stated goals might be, this is not the only problem with its current implementation.

Even more troubling, the retrenchment actions on the part of the senior colleges may actually be creating a perverse disincentive for scholarly excellence. Why? Some of the programs that colleges are phasing out in order to pay for the agreement are programs that incentivize and reward faculty publication. If this is done, the practical result will be that the only faculty who will receive an effective reduction in their workload as a result of the agreement are those who are non-research active. Accordingly, faculty who are currently research-active will rightly perceive diminished incentive and appreciation for scholarly productivity at CUNY.

In summary, while the shared goals of the Teaching Load Reduction Agreement are laudable, in practice its outcomes may be the opposite of what CUNY intended. These perverse outcomes can only be avoided if the agreement is fully funded.

I call on you as trustees to oppose austerity for CUNY. Take a public stand for a contract that is fully funded, includes real raises for all and increases adjunct pay.

*David Jones is a professor of political science at Baruch College.*

## Deadly lesson

By SUSAN DIRAIMO

**A** few years ago I had the honor of having Lowell Hawthorne, the founder and owner of the Golden Krust Bakery, which opened in 1989, as my student. I require my students to do an investigative report and do volunteer work in a soup kitchen, food pan-

try or homeless shelter. Lowell Hawthorne did his report and after doing the report and volunteer work he donated \$16,000 to the soup kitchen to fix their kitchen.

Lowell was an exceptional student. Last year, I was going to call him to ask him to set up a scholarship in his name at Lehman College, because he was so successful and continued to be part of the Lehman community.

But I was too late – he shot himself to death. If only I had called him the week before his death, he may have lived. As an adjunct I was running from college to college that week, too busy to call him. I was running from Lehman to City College to earn a decent wage. I wished I had called him. His obituary appeared in *The New York Times*. He was the hardworking son of a Jamaican baker who opened his own bakery in New York. Many mourned and we still do.

I am not arrogant enough to think I could have saved him, but I know that I need to have more time with students and former students.

Adjuncts need a living wage, \$7K a course – we should not have to run from campus to campus. Call on the governor to fully fund our contract. I call on you as trustees to oppose austerity for CUNY.

*Susan DiRaimo is an adjunct instructor at Lehman and City Colleges.*

## Tell it to Albany

By DAVID UNGER

**T**he majority of our courses are taught by adjunct instructors, many of whom have been teaching with us for years. They continue to teach our students – to give of themselves and their time – though we pay them poverty wages. As an administrator, I have been in the position of telling adjuncts that they do not have classes for the upcoming term, of watching as they begged for additional work so they could cover their rent or pay for their healthcare expenses.

As a grad student, most of my courses have been taught by adjuncts – also remarkably dedicated, giving people – given the poverty wages they are receiving. This is not OK.

You have the ability and power to fight with everything you have to ensure that contracts are fully funded by Albany. You have the ability and responsibility to fight for a budget that includes money for \$7K per course for adjuncts and real raises for all.

There are, unacceptably, major problems with equity – not only for adjuncts, but among full-time staff as well. There are major issues of racial and gender-based discrimination in wages – issues that will require a fully funded CUNY to solve.

The "greatest urban university in the world" should be an example of raising standards and pushing boundaries to ensure equity and justice, not complicity in lowering them and keeping people in poverty and discriminated against.

In this past year, you signaled with the creation of the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies that the dignity of work and the people of this city matter. Now is your opportunity to make sure those same ideals are upheld in the budget and the contract. We will be watching.

*David Unger is a program coordinator at the School of Labor and Urban Studies.*

# Campaigning for CUNY ASAP

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

Anyone working in higher education knows that there is no silver bullet to improve academic success, but there are programs with proven positive results. One of those is CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), a nationally recognized model that has more than doubled community college graduation rates at CUNY. Now the CUNY Rising Alliance, a coalition of more than 30 labor, community and student organizations, is pushing to build upon that success and expand the program with its Fund CUNY ASAP campaign.

"No program that I know of better exemplifies elements of what this university needs in order for students to succeed," PSC Legislative Representative Mike Fabricant said. "This is a program that understands that access and success is not just about free tuition. It's also about MetroCards. It's about books and it is about intensive counseling, advising and mentoring from faculty."

## EXPANSION

This semester, CUNY Rising began a petition campaign, urging Governor Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio to make the program available to all CUNY students. CUNY Rising is also pushing for the expansion of ACE (Accelerate, Complete, Engage), an initiative for senior colleges modeled after ASAP. Currently, ACE is a pilot program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. The petition was rolled out on November 14. So far, the campaign has collected almost 6,000 signatures, and it hopes to get many more across the five boroughs. (To add your name to the petition, go to [tinyurl.com/fund-cuny-asap-petition](http://tinyurl.com/fund-cuny-asap-petition).)

Hussein Abdul, an ASAP student at Bronx Community College, said that getting people to sign the CUNY Rising petition has been easy. "There's no reluctance," Abdul said. They say, "Of course, why wouldn't I support this?"

Bronx Community College currently offers ASAP to all eligible students in most majors.

## MATERIAL SUPPORT

ASAP and ACE provide textbook vouchers, one-on-one advisement, free unlimited MetroCards and tuition waivers for eligible students. Students have to be enrolled full-time, must be eligible for tuition at the resident rate and ASAP students who qualify for partial financial aid receive tuition waivers. With these supports in place for students, the programs deliver results – and ultimately save money.

ASAP's most notable accomplishment is that it has more than doubled graduation rates, according to a 2017 CUNY report, "Significant Increases in Associate Degree Graduation Rates." ASAP's

## Expanding a positive academic program



PSC activists joined CUNY Rising during its ASAP campaign for a tabling event at Kingsborough Community College. Union members conducted similar events at other CUNY campuses.

average community college graduation rate is 53.2 percent, while the graduation rate for a comparison group of students was 24.1 percent, the CUNY study found. The cost of ASAP is relatively modest and has significant fiscal benefits. The CUNY report cited a cost-benefit study done at Teachers College at Columbia University, which indicated that on average the cost of a three-year ASAP graduate leads to an average savings of \$6,500 per graduate over those in the study's comparison group of students.

## A KNOWN PROGRAM

These findings have resulted in ASAP's being nationally recognized for its significant accomplishments. The Obama White House singled out the program for its "promising" results, and it has been used as a model at community colleges in Ohio. At CUNY, ASAP has served 37,000 students and has been singled out by academic observers nationally and the academic press as one of the most successful community college initiatives.

"[ASAP] has consistently doubled the three-year graduation rate of participating students since its inception in 2007," said Donna Linderman, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs at CUNY. "Rigorous evaluations of ASAP show that the right mix of financial resources, structured pathways and integrated support systems enable students to succeed."

CUNY Rising is also advocating to expand the program so

undocumented students can receive full tuition waivers. CUNY Rising is asking the city and the state to expand its support for ASAP and ACE. With a \$170 million state allocation, the program's services could be available to incoming freshman at CUNY's senior colleges who are attending school full-time. CUNY Rising plans to advocate for the inclusion of part-time students in the future. The city, which is the major funder of CUNY community colleges, should support another 26,000 students. CUNY Rising recognizes that these expansions should not be at the cost of cutting other financial aid and opportunity programs.

Presently, State Senator Luis Sepúlveda has introduced Senate Bill 08913 in the state legislature that would amend education law and phase in increased support for both ASAP and ACE, appropriating \$35.25 million for ASAP and ACE beginning in fiscal year 2019-2020 with 25 percent annual increases until both programs are fully funded by the state.

## OUTREACH STRATEGY

PSC members, along with CUNY students, have been gathering petition signatures and testifying to the CUNY Board of Trustees about the importance of expanding ASAP and ACE. At John Jay College of Criminal Justice, PSC Chapter Chair Dan Pinello developed an outreach strategy where representatives from different

departments took the petition to their colleagues. PSC members at Kingsborough Community College tapped into already organized structures to promote the petition signing, created around the sanctuary movement to protect undocumented immigrants.

## CUNY Rising outreached to students.

"Because we already had a sanctuary committee with a mailing list in place of Kingsborough activist [faculty and staff], I was able to ask professors to take this petition to their classrooms," said Meg Feeley, an adjunct lecturer in the English department. "That conversation was already in existence."

## A PATH FORWARD

Feeley said ASAP's structure makes it hard for a student to slip through the cracks. One of her current students is struggling in her class. But because he is an ASAP student, Feeley said he felt "respect" even though he is not a top performer. Feeley suggested that the student knew that people were looking out for him. He felt supported in relationship to his academic performance by Feeley and his ASAP advisor.

Other ASAP students said that support from the initiative made it easier for them to have a full college experience. Abdul said that because of ASAP support, he has been able to develop as a student leader. He can now boast on his resume that he was president of the

Muslim Students' Association, vice president of student government. In addition he is also a delegate to the University Student Senate.

"ASAP has given me the opportunity to do more than just attend classes. I have the time and resources to do all these extra things," Abdul told *Clarion*. "So if I didn't have these ASAP benefits, I would not be doing any of these things. I would probably be at work right now."

The community groups who are part of the alliance are clear that these additional supports are not just a matter of policy but of equity.

"CUNY provided a path for me to become the first member of my family to graduate college and gain access to good-paying jobs. It does so every single year for low-income and predominantly immigrant families and families of color," said Renata Pumarol, deputy director of New York Communities for Change. "The CUNY ASAP campaign is important for the communities we serve because it provides them with every tool they need in order to graduate. It's not only a racial justice issue, it's an economic justice issue."

What is at the heart of this campaign is that according to those who have gone through ASAP and ACE these programs have been largely positive parts of the college experience – in short, students say the programs transform their lives.

For example, Rianna Figueroa, a first-generation college student at John Jay, said in a prepared statement for a recent CUNY Board of Trustees meeting that once she enrolled in ACE with the support of a tuition waiver, winter and summer scholarships, monthly MetroCards and textbook vouchers, she knew that she would not only attend college but graduate.

"When I got home and told my family that I had joined ACE, everyone in the room was moved to tears," Figueroa said.

Figueroa added, "It was at that moment when my family realized that I could graduate with a bachelor's degree."

## QC meeting

Continued from page 3  
chancellor about the pedagogical concerns adjuncts had about low pay at CUNY.

As for next steps, Guskin said the chapter will develop at least one, preferably two, adjunct representatives in each department on campus to help intensify adjunct organizing in the future.

Marisa Holmes, who teaches in the urban studies program, added in regard to a department adjunct representative system, "It makes us all stronger. [The administration] can't go after one person."

# Stopping enrollment decline at KCC

By ARI PAUL

## Affecting the faculty and the budget

One of the first jobs for Claudia Schrader, the newly appointed president of Kingsborough Community College (KCC), will be to address the student enrollment crisis at the South Brooklyn campus.

Since 2013, student enrollment has plummeted a whopping 19.3 percent, according to CUNY figures, a stark contrast to the 11.4 percent increase at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), the 2.9 percent increase at Hostos Community College, or even small dips at places like LaGuardia Community College, which saw a 2 percent loss in enrollment over the same time period. Brooklyn's flagship four-year campus, Brooklyn College, has seen increased enrollment for that time period, and CUNY recently reported a 4 percent overall increase in freshman enrollment this Fall. CUNY records show that the number of full-time undergraduate students CUNY-wide has gone up by 0.7 percent since 2013.

### REMOTE CAMPUS

While it's natural for campuses and programs to see dips in enrollment – for example, City College has seen a total annual head-count decline of about 200 students across both graduate and undergraduate numbers in the last several years – the nearly 20 percent fall since 2013 for Kingsborough, which is the only two-year campus in Brooklyn, is an anomaly when it comes to CUNY enrollment numbers.

The implications of this trend on KCC's budget are profound. According to documents obtained by *Clarion*, the college's spending on adjunct teaching pay has decreased



Enrollment at Kingsborough Community College has plummeted by nearly 20 percent since 2013. One factor for the declining enrollment is the college's somewhat isolated campus.

28 percent from 2014 to 2017, roughly mirroring the downward trajectory of enrollment.

PSC members and KCC officials agree that the decline can partially be blamed on the previous administration's decision to curtail advertising efforts for the school combined with the campus's location off the beaten path – it's tucked away in Manhattan Beach, accessible after a bus transfer from the Q, N, D and F lines terminating in Coney Island.

"We are infamously difficult to get to," said Mary Dawson, the chair of the department of biologi-

cal sciences at KCC. "Even if you live in Brooklyn, it could take 90 minutes to get here using public transportation."

As observers have noted, places like BMCC have lots of advertising in the subway and elsewhere, and for North and Central Brooklyn residents, it's an easier commute to Lower Manhattan.

### LACK OF ADVERTISING

In response, KCC, under new administration, is working to increase visibility with new advertising for the school, but there are

other issues contributing to the problem. According to the KCC administration, the number of high school graduates from feeder districts within a 5-10 mile radius of KCC has declined.

"KCC and BMCC have substantial overlap in applications, meaning students list both colleges on their CUNY application. Over this period, we know students state the main reason for choosing one over the other is that transportation is easier from most areas of Brooklyn to BMCC," said Thomas Friebel, a KCC spokesman.

KCC wasn't always in the advertising dark, however. According to Rina Yarmish, the PSC chapter chair at KCC, the college used to advertise the campus throughout the borough, but former KCC President Farley Herzek reduced the school's advertising budget from more than half a million dollars a year to zero – and the KCC administration confirms this.

"He didn't really do the advertising that had been done before," she told *Clarion*. "There used to be a lot on buses and in print media, and he did not fund that. I would definitely say it's my impression that this decline began under his stewardship... [The interim president had] been very aware of this."

Before Schrader's appointment, according to members, the KCC interim administration had indicated to the faculty that it was interested in several initiatives to reverse the enrollment trend, including doing more advertising.

### DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

And Rick Armstrong, an associate professor of English, said, "In the past the publicity budget was significantly reduced. Before that

action, one would watch a Knicks game and a KCC commercial would come on, featuring former president Regina Peruggi, or walk into a Brooklyn movie theater and see a KCC ad while waiting for the film. KCC used to be on buses as well."

But Armstrong said advertising wasn't the only issue.

"When the economy is strong, we tend to lose enrollment, which might also tell part of the story," he said. "The more alarming explanation might relate to the gentrification of the city. As poor and working-class families are displaced due to high housing prices and new construction, wealthier people whose children will not attend a CUNY community college move in. Thus, it is possible that our student demographics do not exist in the numbers they had previously."

### ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

The good news for the PSC chapter at KCC is that the new administration has listened to the concerns of faculty about the decline in enrollment. Friebel confirmed that the administration planned to increase advertising and marketing funding for the Fall. He noted that the community college will also conduct more outreach through programming with the Brooklyn Public Library as well as through public and private high schools.

### Members cite a previous lack of outreach.

Despite the challenges, the chapter remains optimistic that the right advertising campaign and other recruitment efforts will attract students. Despite its physical isolation, KCC is still the only two-year CUNY campus in Brooklyn, and it's the closest two-year campus to Staten Island, which has one four-year CUNY campus.

"From providing shuttle buses to looking at academic master plans, the new administration has given all indications that they're firmly committed to addressing holistically and looking at what this fall in enrollment is attributed to," Dawson said.

### EFFECTS ON TEACHING

For the KCC union chapter, the decline in enrollment is a worrying trend with real consequences for faculty. Specialty and elective classes have been canceled and instructors have been known to cancel sections due to a lack of enrollment. Fewer classes to go around means that full-time faculty end up teaching more remedial classes than they might have expected, and, of large concern, members said, fewer adjuncts get hired or reappointed.

"The biggest impact is on the cutting of required sections," said KCC English professor Eben Wood, "which doesn't necessarily impact full-time faculty, but impacts adjuncts."

## Adjunct members recommit



PSC activists at Hunter College reached out to adjuncts to sign PSC recommitment cards, part of a major campaign to strengthen the union in the wake of an anti-labor ruling in the Supreme Court case *Janus v. AFSCME*.

Ellen Moynihan

# PSC turns out for House, State Senate wins

By ARI PAUL

Lisa Rose, a social sciences professor at Borough of Manhattan Community College, was still feeling “so surreal” during a celebration at the PSC’s office two days after the mid-term elections. For many in America seeking a political change, the shift of the House of Representatives to Democratic control was welcome news. For Rose, it was personal. Her son, Max Rose, was elected as a new Democratic congressman for the previously GOP-controlled district that covers Staten Island and South Brooklyn.

Describing her son as someone with a “strong moral compass” and who has long had political ambitions, Rose noted that friends and colleagues thought his chances of winning were slim.

“There’s a huge misconception about what Staten Island is,” Rose told *Clarion*, describing her days going door to door for her son’s campaign, noting that she met Asian, Latino and Haitian households while canvassing. “It is more diverse than people think. There’s this real sense of community that Max tapped into.”

## UNION BACKING

Max Rose’s campaign was one of several that the PSC focused on this fall, and not just because of Rose’s union connection. More than 1,000 PSC members live in the district, and the union had the potential to get out the vote. “Knowing that my union was behind him was so important,” Rose said.

Max Rose will join several other new progressive Democrats in the state’s congressional delegation next year, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who won a huge upset primary victory in the Bronx and Queens,

## Canvassing efforts in Staten Island, Brooklyn



PSC First Vice President Andrea Vásquez was among many PSC members canvassing at the Staten Island Ferry terminal for Max Rose’s ultimately successful congressional campaign.

and Antonio Delgado, who replaces a Republican in the Hudson Valley, where numerous PSC members were actively involved.

For the PSC, flipping the House is a significant victory. PSC legislative representative Mike Fabricant sees a Democratic lower house of Congress as a “goalkeeper” in federal government, thwarting potential challenges to the Affordable Care Act and other right-wing legislative actions.

“PSC members coming out in support was important for Max Rose. He had a lot of get-out-the-vote volunteers, because people in New York City wanted to participate in a red-to-blue seat and it was important that we were in that,” said John Jay College political scientist Susan Kang, who is active in the union’s political outreach work and was just named one of the top ten up-and-coming leaders from Manhattan by the *City & State* magazine.

Perhaps more momentous was the New York State Senate’s flip to Democratic control by a significant margin. The past Republican control of the State Legislature’s upper house – in part due to Democrats who caucused with Republicans, many of whom were ousted in the primaries – has frequently been a roadblock preventing ambitious progressive legislation, such as the DREAM Act, campaign finance reform, teacher evaluation reform and a statewide single-payer healthcare plan. PSC members made thousands of get-out-the-vote calls to members. Some, like Borough of Manhattan Community College counselor Justyna Jagielnicka and former PSC Secretary Cecelia McCall made more than 1,000 calls. In addition, many members canvassed door-to-door in districts the PSC Legislation Committee prioritized.

“Legislative work for me is highly personal – flipping the House, New York State Senate and a Staten Island seat was the ultimate goal,” Jagielnicka said. “As an immigrant woman who has experienced firsthand racism, xenophobia and lack of respect for human dignity, it is my duty to fight for all brothers and sisters.”

## DEFYING EXPECTATION

One PSC electoral priority that resulted in a State Senate victory was the election of Andrew Gounardes, a pro-labor Democrat and Hunter College graduate who ousted longtime Republican incumbent Marty Golden.

Many observers thought that Golden, an entrenched local leader, would be impossible to beat. But for Reem Jaafar, a professor in LaGuardia Community College’s math, engineering and computer science department who lives in Golden’s district and is active in local politics, it seemed even a year ago there was enough ammunition against Golden.

## ‘INSTITUTIONAL OPENING’

“He has taken no responsibility for the lack of reliable transportation,” Jaafar said. “He voted against marriage equality and made egregious claims against Muslims in his community in an effort to defend the Muslim ban, including a lie stating that 9/11 hijackers came from Bay Ridge.”

The PSC support, Jaafar said, was integral to Golden’s defeat. “The union’s endorsement for Gounardes helped bring in more volunteers; we knocked on thousands of doors together,” she said. “One day, about 18 union members showed up for canvassing. We knocked on over 1,500 doors that day alone. Some members kept coming back for volunteering up until election day.”

What does the shift in the State Legislature mean for PSC members? “The change comes at a crucial time for the PSC,” said union president Barbara Bowen. “When we reach a contract settlement we will need to work with the legislature to demand that it be fully funded, and we will also need their support to end poverty pay for adjuncts.”

Of course, political change won’t happen instantly – newly elected state senators will take time to get

## Significant democratic majority in state senate

their footing and create relationships within the chamber and the governor’s office. But with an entirely Democratic legislature, organized labor and public higher education advocates have new leverage when it comes to dealing with Governor Andrew Cuomo. “In the past, there have been institutional blocks to going forward – now there’s an institutional opening,” Kang said. “Cuomo is still a pro-austerity and pro-private corporation governor, so he needs to be pushed on fully funding CUNY and the state’s public schools. Now is the time to hold Cuomo accountable.”

Kang noted that PSC members and leaders must follow up on these election victories to advance the union agenda in the new State Senate. “It’s really important that the union leadership engage with elected officials,” Kang said. “But it is also really important for PSC members to go to senators as constituents and communicate to them directly what they think is important.”

Fabricant added, “Our work is to hold them accountable.”



PSC members canvassed in south Brooklyn for Democrat Andrew Gounardes, who will be a state senator after defeating incumbent Marty Golden.

INSURANCE UPDATE

Attention HIP/HMO participants

All active employees and pre-Medicare retirees who receive their health insurance through the HIP/HMO preferred plan or are switching to the HIP/HMO preferred plan as of January 1, 2019, should watch for two important mailings in December or early January: a new HIP/HMO "Gold" preferred plan membership card and a membership kit describing the new, improved HIP/HMO preferred plan. Active employees and pre-Medicare retirees who are HIP or other Emblem HMO or Point of Service (POS) plan participants will receive new PICA cards in December. Most PSC members' prescription drugs are covered by the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund, but injectables and chemotherapy drugs are covered by the citywide PICA program.

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PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS-CUNY  
NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS – SPRING 2019

Chapter Officers, Delegates and Alternates to the PSC Delegate Assembly and PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Advisory Council  
Term of Office: 3 Years

ELECTION SCHEDULE

- 1. Deadline for filling Declarations of Candidacy will be January 11, 2019.
- 2. Pre-printed nominating petitions will be available upon request from the PSC office on February 1, 2019.
- 3. Fully completed nominating petitions must be received at the PSC office, 61 Broadway, Ste. 1500, New York, NY 10006, by 5 pm, March 4, 2019.
- 4. Ballots will be mailed to members' home addresses on April 1, 2019.
- 5. Ballots in uncontested elections must be received at the PSC office by 5 pm on April 30, 2019.

Ballots in contested elections must be received at the office of the designated ballot-counting organization by 5 pm on April 30, 2019.

Ballots will be counted at 10 am on May 1, 2019.

OFFICERS TO BE ELECTED

In each of the chapters listed below, voters will elect the Chapter Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, four Officers-at-Large, Delegates to the Delegate Assembly (in addition to the Chapter Chairperson, who shall automatically be the initial delegate to the Delegate Assembly) and Alternates to the Delegate Assembly according to the following listing: (see below left).

Relevant portions of the ELECTION RULES are summarized below. The complete rules may be obtained from Barbara Gabriel at the PSC office, or viewed on the PSC website at <https://www.psc-cuny.org/sites/default/files/Rules%20Governing%20Elections%206-15.pdf>.

DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY

Candidates must submit a signed Declaration of Candidacy no later than January 11, 2017, to Barbara Gabriel at the PSC office.

The declaration must specify the office(s) being sought, the candidate's name, college and department and, if the candidate intends to run as part of a slate or caucus, the name of the slate or caucus. Slate or caucus declarations should be submitted through the slate or caucus designee. A sample declaration form is available on the PSC website: [psc-cuny.org/declarationofcandidacy](http://psc-cuny.org/declarationofcandidacy) or from Barbara Gabriel at the PSC office.

**Eligibility for Holding Office:** Members shall be permitted to hold chapter-level office who have been members in good standing of the appropriate chapter for at least one (1) year prior to the close of nominations, March 4, 2019.

**Voting Eligibility:** Members shall be permitted to participate in the nomination process and to vote who have been members in good standing of the appropriate chapter for at least four (4) months prior to the mailing of the ballots on April 1, 2019 (i.e., they must have been a member as of December 3, 2018).

**Nominating Procedures:** Nominations of an individual or of a slate must be by official nominating petition signed by no fewer than twenty-five (25) members of the chapter in good standing, or by no fewer than twenty-five percent (25%) of the members of the chapter in good standing, whichever is less. For all candidates, petitions shall include:

(a) the printed name, signature, department and college of each petitioner; and (b) the printed name, signature, department and college of the nominee, as well as the office being sought by the nominee. For chapter elections, members may only sign nominating petitions of the chapter to which they belong. A candidate's signature on a Declaration of Candidacy shall constitute that candidate's acceptance of the slate designation.

SLATE REGULATIONS

A slate of candidates will be recognized if it consists of candidates for twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the officers to be elected, and if it submits, prior to the close of nominations: (1) a listing of caucus officers, all of whom must be members in good standing, including the person designated to authorize nominees for that caucus' slate; and (2) a nominating petition including the printed name, signature, department and college of each petitioner, and the signature for each candidate running on the slate. The candidate's signature on the slate petition shall constitute that candidate's acceptance of the slate designation. A sample slate form is available on the PSC website: <http://www.psc-cuny.org/sites/default/files/Slate%20Form.pdf> or from Barbara Gabriel at the PSC office.

**Balloting:** All voting must be on the official PSC ballot. Write-in votes are permitted. A write-in vote shall be valid if the intent of the voter is clear; written, printed and typed names are acceptable. A write-in candidate must meet the same eligibility requirements as a regular candidate. In chapter elections, any nominated or write-in candidate must receive at least ten (10) votes or ten percent (10%) of the votes cast for that office, whichever is less, in order to be elected. Write-in candidates who are elected must submit written acceptance of office to the Elections Committee within ten (10) calendar days of notification that their election has been certified.

**Campaigning:** Declared candidates may mail literature at their own expense, either directly or through the PSC mailing house (Century Direct, 30-00 47th Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101). At the request of the candidate and at cost, the PSC will provide Century Direct with home-addressed electronic download of the membership, or will provide candidates with college-addressed list, labels and/or electronic download of the membership. Candidates must notify the PSC five (5) business days in advance of the mailing to allow sufficient time for the ordering of downloads. Please see Barbara Gabriel at the PSC for further information, and to file the required forms.

**Election Tally:** Each candidate, or a representative of the candidate, is entitled to be present at the counting of the ballots.

PSC-CUNY WELFARE FUND ADVISORY COUNCIL

College	WF Council Members
Bronx EOC	1
Brooklyn EOC	1
College of SI	2
Hunter Campus Schools	1
Kingsborough	2
Lehman College	2
Manhattan CC	2
Manhattan EOC	1
Medgar Evers	2
NYC Tech	2
Queens EOC	1
Queensborough	2
Research Foundation	1
RF Field Units	1
Retirees	1

At each of the colleges listed below, voters will elect the designated number of members of the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Advisory Council, in accordance with the above schedule and rules and the bylaws of the PSC/CUNY Welfare Fund: (see below right).

**Voting Eligibility:** All members in good standing of the PSC at the above colleges, who have been members in good standing for at least four (4) months, including Higher Education Officers, Registrars and College Laboratory Technicians, as well as faculty, will elect the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Advisory Council members running at their respective colleges.

**Eligibility for Holding Office:** PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Advisory Council members must be CUNY instructional staff members who have been members in good standing of the PSC for two (2) years prior to the close of nominations, March 3, 2019.

**Nominations:** Advisory Council members shall be nominated by written petition signed by no fewer than twenty-five (25) or twenty-five percent (25%) whichever is less of the CUNY instructional staff members at each unit who are also PSC members. Slate nominations will be permitted.

Chapter	Members	Delegates	Alternates	Petition Signatures Required
Bronx EOC	12	Chair	1	3
Brooklyn EOC	20	Chair	1	5
College of SI	813	Chair + 7	5	25
Hunter Campus Schools	109	Chair	1	25
HEOs	4404	Chair + 43	8	25
Kingsborough	775	Chair + 7	5	25
Lehman College	780	Chair + 7	5	25
Manhattan CC	1361	Chair + 13	6	25
Manhattan EOC	43	Chair	1	11
Medgar Evers	411	Chair + 3	3	25
NYC Tech	1114	Chair + 10	6	25
Queens EOC	17	Chair	1	4
Queensborough CC	907	Chair + 8	5	25
Registrars	1	Chair	1	1
Research Foundation	94	Chair	1	24
RF Field Units	231	Chair +1	2	25
Retirees	2694	Chair + 6	5	25