



**POLITICS**  
**NYC in 2013**  
PSC Legislative Committee in middle of the action.  
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Dave Sanders

## PATHWAYS: ARBITRATOR SAYS PSC GRIEVANCE CAN PROCEED

An arbitrator has rejected CUNY management's motion to dismiss a PSC grievance over implementation of the Pathways curriculum plan. The ruling means the union's Pathways grievance should now move forward. Above, in November

2012, Suzan Moss of Bronx Community College (at right) demonstrated with other PSC members outside a Step 2 hearing on the union's Pathways grievance. (The grievance is separate from the union's two Pathways lawsuits.) **PAGE 3**

### NEW DAY NEW YORK Taking aim at Wall Street

A coalition of labor unions and community groups returned to the streets Dec. 5 to demand action on the progressive changes that New York City voted for. **PAGE 9**

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At NYU, the Graduate Student Organizing Committee (GSOC) won a December unionization vote among the school's graduate employees by a vote of 620 to 10. **PAGE 5**

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For the 40th anniversary of CUNY's Center for Puerto Rican Studies, five New York-based Puerto Rican artists created a portfolio of original prints. **PAGE 11**



### WHAT'S NEXT? Strategy after the election

Four CUNY faculty members reflect on wages and inequality, stop-and-frisk, policy for the public schools, and how the 99% can fight to win. **PAGES 6-7**





## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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# The beach is for swimming

● In a November contribution to *Inside Higher Ed*, CUNY Executive Vice Chancellor Alexandra Logue makes an injurious argument for maximum emphasis on distance and flexible learning modes ([tinyurl.com/IHE-Logue-11-2013](http://tinyurl.com/IHE-Logue-11-2013)). In “Time, Space and Learning,” Logue contends that it doesn’t matter whether you learn “in a Tuesday/Thursday 10:00-11:20 am course in your local community college,” or “on occasional Saturday afternoons while you are sitting on the beach.” Logue says that “students should have opportunities to access what they need at any time and in any place – with or without an instructor.”

Logue argues that “learning [is] becoming independent of time and place,” thanks to the drive “to standardize the assessment of learning outcomes,” the “unbundling of course learning,” the continuing development of MOOCs (massive open online courses), and awarding degrees based on a checklist of modules where sustained interaction with a human faculty member is not required. How sad a picture she depicts of self-centered learning emptied of collective and communal connections.

In Logue’s scary vision, the Platonic notion of learning in the presence of people who live for ideas and are committed to sharing their knowledge is all but forgotten and replaced by an eBay consumer approach, where customers pick up the latest piece of informational luggage at cut rates. It comes as no surprise when Logue cites Pathways as a big success.

It is a budgetary proposition that’s being promulgated here. Logue’s vision of online learning and MOOCs seem to be mainly rationalizations for shrinking the number of faculty.

It is a cost-cutting measure dressed as educational policy. This bottom-line, neo-liberal use of technology is just a camouflage to undermine faculty governance, weaken faculty unions and take control of academic policy. Indeed, Logue notes that “colleges and universities may have to change many of their labor and governance policies” before they can move in the direction she advocates.

Lost in this fire sale is what is happening on the way to the diploma. Logue takes aim at the need for the quality of the faculty, the substantive worth of the syllabus and the necessary number of contact hours, as if these criteria were merely inconvenient relics of a time gone by. Why do we need to herd and corral our students into data-accumulating graduates? Vice Chancellor Logue’s prescriptions for the reformation of higher education depict a bloodless, homogenized and pedestrian alternative to the joy of learning.

Peter Ranis  
Graduate Center & York College  
(emeritus)

## Union music

● As a York College faculty member who is also a member of the York College Big Band (YCBB), I was delighted to read Shane Gasteyer’s article “Education about the Musicians Union” in the November *Clarion*. Gasteyer correctly says that when music students learn about the union, they gain an “understanding of what resources exist to help them further their careers...[and] a firm understanding of the power of solidarity among musicians.” And I’m glad to say that this is the kind of education Dr. Tom Zlabinger, director of the YCBB, is providing to students at York.

Just the night before I read the

article, Dr. Zlabinger had taken the band on a field trip to Musicians’ Union Local 802, where they served as the house band and participated in a master class taught by two great musicians: Bernard Purdie (drummer for James Brown, Miles Davis and Aretha Franklin for 25 years) and Rob Paparozzi (world-class front man and harmonica player for the Blues Brothers and for Blood, Sweat and Tears.) It was such a great opportunity for York students to play with musicians like these. They also heard about the role of Local 802 in protecting the live music so important to New York’s culture, and in seeking economic justice for the musicians who create it.

Because I teach until six, I couldn’t play with the band that night (I’m usually on alto sax), but I was able to be in audience. It made me so proud to see York’s many talented young musicians performing so beautifully. They hold their own with these musical greats and were described by Rob Paparozzi as “a fantastic band with great charts.” They will be graduating from York as musicians aware of how crucial unions are and have been to the music we love and the musicians who make it.

Janice Cline  
PSC Chapter Chair, York College &  
Alto Saxophone, York College Big Band

## Time for a change

● To the list of ideas that the public is sending to the mayor-elect, perhaps someone can add getting him to address the CUNY trustee appointments in his power. There are at least two from previous eras whose terms have expired. Outgoing mayors and governors have a way of giving midnight extensions for expiring terms, thus sticking us with the

old boys (broadly defined) for seven more years, well beyond the moment when their political ideology has been rejected at the ballot box.

The faculty might not be aware that some of our sitting trustees were Mayor Rudy Giuliani’s deputies and it was Giuliani who appointed the commission headed by Benno Schmidt that gave us the centralized, top-down organization we have; which made presidents far less independent than previously. It was that group that pushed us into policies that eventually created Pathways and which has launched an unprecedented assault on CUNY faculty governance.

The mayor-elect should act quickly. In an ideal world, trustee appointees would include people with real intellectual strengths and a knowledge of how colleges and faculties function. Can we expect such sensibility from high-flying executives, former and current politicians and employees of the mayor or governor? Trustees accustomed to top-down administrative practices will likely appoint a chancellor who behaves as a CEO. But universities evolved from medieval models where faculty often elected a dean or chancellor – a lost tradition worth exploring.

Sandi Cooper  
CSI and the Graduate Center  
Former Chair, University Faculty  
Senate

## Public education, private profit

● A specter of reform is haunting education, kindergarten to college, and right now it is the faculty that seems to be losing its autonomy. In response to the informative resolution “New rules for ed schools” in the September *Clarion*, there are some important points to be added.

Under edTPA (New York’s new Teacher Performance Assessment protocols), the financial burden for students is enormous – a particular hardship for CUNY teacher candidates, who are the main source of teachers for the NYC public schools. But there are no considerations for those in need.

Our students are largely of middle- and working-class origin, and pay their own way through college. The edTPA system calls for four tests, five workshops, and a video, all at student expense, adding up to at least \$1,500 in addition to tuition and fees, travel costs, and the rest of the burden of student teaching. The video alone requires a \$300 fee.

What’s worse, New York State has contracted with Pearson Co. to (privately) evaluate all of the materials based on those prepared by Stanford University. There are reports that these will be graded by retired teachers at \$75 apiece, leaving Pearson with a \$225 profit per head. Not bad, a 300% return! Essentially, the State has relinquished its powers to private industry in a field that Mayor Bloomberg and Governor Cuomo have pointedly referred to as vitally important to our economy.

Jack Zevin  
Queens College

## PSC theater party Feb. 2

The annual PSC theater party is being organized this year for a matinee performance on Sunday, February 2. Jointly sponsored by the Retirees Chapter and the Women’s Committee, tickets for this event are only \$20. You can purchase tickets by sending a check payable to “Working Theater” for \$20 per ticket, along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope, to Marcia Newfield at the PSC, 61 Broadway, 15th floor, New York, NY 10006.

### THEATER GETS POLITICAL

The play is *Mercy Killers*, a one-person show by writer and actor Michael Milligan. Here’s how the Working Theater describes it: “Joe loves apple pie, Rush Limbaugh and his wife, Jane. He is blue-collar, made in the USA and proud, but when his wife gets sick and loses her insurance, his patriotic feelings are turned upside down.” The show examines “the uniquely American experience of losing your health in the land of plenty” and what it means to live “a life with dignity.”

The play won the Fringe First Award in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. It has received strong reviews here in New York City, and opened in California to an enthusi-



Working Theater

astic reaction from members of the California Nurses Association and other audiences.

*The Stage* praised Milligan’s “shattering monologue” about “the tenuous security and quality of life of working-class people in the US,” while *Broadway Baby* called the show “one man theater at its very best...a wonderfully executed piece of political theater.”

Join us for the PSC theater party on Sunday, February 2, at 3:00 pm at the Stella Adler Studio Theater, at 31 West 27th Street, 2F, followed by a discussion with the playwright. To attend, send in your check (address in the first paragraph). Be sure to order your tickets as soon as possible.

## Time out for bad policy



Faculty from CUNY schools of education including (left to right) Barbara Winslow of Brooklyn College, Stuart Chen-Hayes of Lehman and Priya Parmar of BC met at the PSC on December 13 to organize actions calling for a moratorium on the use of edTPA, a teacher evaluation tool. They say edTPA requires education faculty to use a curriculum driven by standardized assessments, deprofessionalizing their role in the university classroom, violating academic freedom and lowering the quality of teacher candidates’ education. For more information, contact Sue DelGiorno ([sdelgiorno@psccmail.org](mailto:sdelgiorno@psccmail.org), or (212) 354-1252).



# Arbitrator: contract covers faculty rights on curriculum

By PETER HOGNESS

In a December 12 ruling, an independent arbitrator rejected CUNY management's request to dismiss a PSC grievance over implementation of the controversial Pathways curriculum plan. The ruling means that the union's grievance can now proceed.

At stake was whether the PSC has a right to file this grievance under the terms of the union contract. CUNY central administration argued that issues of governance, the faculty role in curriculum, or academic freedom cannot be considered "terms or conditions of employment." Therefore, it contended, these matters are not covered by the PSC contract and cannot be challenged by the PSC.

The arbitrator, Melissa Biren, bluntly disagreed: "By their very nature, faculty duties and responsibilities with respect to curriculum development and implementation, as well as issues of academic freedom, are important elements of faculty terms and conditions of employment at an institution of higher education."

## 'FUNDAMENTAL'

Biren noted that in a 1977 case, CUNY management had also argued "that academic freedom was not a term or condition of employment" and thus was not subject to contractual arbitration. But the arbitrator in that case also rejected CUNY's effort to narrow the scope of the contract's protections, writing, "[I]t is difficult to conceive of a more fundamental condition of employment at any academic institution than academic freedom and the responsibilities attached to its exercise."

"The same can be said of faculty duties and responsibilities with respect to curriculum development and implementation at the college level," Biren concluded in the current Pathways case.

While Biren's ruling affirms that the faculty role in curriculum policy and issues of academic freedom can, in general, be protected by a union contract at CUNY, she did not address whether CUNY has actually violated the PSC contract when it implemented the Pathways plan. But while her ruling does not address the merits of the PSC's grievance, it means that the union's arguments on those merits can now be heard.

"The motion to dismiss our grievance is just the latest move by CUNY administrators in their ongoing attempt to eliminate shared governance of the University and vest all control in the chancellor's office, as part of remaking CUNY in

## Refuses to dismiss Pathways grievance



Union grievance counselors, chapter chairs and other PSC activists wait to enter CUNY's former headquarters on East 80th Street in November 2012, just before the Step 2 hearing on the PSC's grievance on CUNY's Pathways initiative. CUNY later asked an arbitrator to dismiss the entire Pathways grievance, but on December 9, 2013, an independent arbitrator rejected that request.

a corporate model," said PSC First Vice President Steve London. "This ruling makes clear, once again, that faculty governance rights and academic freedom are subject to contractual protection."

"The PSC will now be permitted to present evidence to establish the violation of Bylaws and college governance plans that have occurred in CUNY's headlong rush to implement its unilateral Pathways initiative," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "This is good news for both students and faculty. It means we can continue to fight to uphold the faculty's right, under the Bylaws and governance plans, to a central role in the implementation of policy on curriculum. We're confident in the merits of our case and expect that our grievance will be sustained."

## SEPARATE

PSC Director of Legal Affairs Peter Zwiebach cautioned that the grievance should not be confused with the two lawsuits filed against Pathways by the PSC and the University Faculty Senate (UFS), both of which are still moving slowly through the courts. "The grievance is limited to violations of the PSC-CUNY contract and is an entirely separate proceeding," Zwiebach said.

In court proceedings, the PSC and UFS have challenged the manner in which Pathways was adopted, contending that it violated a 1995 settlement agreement that requires policy on curriculum to be formu-

lated by the UFS and other elected faculty bodies. The lawsuits do not challenge the Board of Trustees' ultimate authority to ultimately decide CUNY policy; they assert that the faculty role in development of that policy is defined in University Bylaws and in the 1995 settlement, and that the CUNY administration is not free to simply set those procedures aside if it finds them inconvenient.

The grievance, filed by the PSC in 2012, is somewhat narrower than the lawsuits: it challenges only the implementation of Pathways, not the way in which the trustees' Pathways resolution was adopted. It specifically asserts that when CUNY implemented the Board of Trustees' Pathways resolution, the administration failed to act in accordance with University Bylaws and college governance plans established for the development and execution of curriculum changes. The grievance also claims that the implementation of Pathways resulted in a violation of academic freedom and that CUNY retaliated against members of the faculty for acting in opposition to Pathways.

In its motion to dismiss the union grievance, CUNY management argued that the first two points were beyond the scope of the contract and were therefore not subject to arbitration. (On the third point, the charge of retaliation, CUNY agreed that the contract was potentially relevant but it denies that such retaliation in fact took place.)

Arbitrator Biren, however, found that the entire grievance was subject to arbitration, or "arbitrable," and ruled against CUNY's argument on every point.

While the grievance and the lawsuits both involve key principles of university decision-making and faculty authority, they do not in themselves address the question of whether the Pathways plan, which overhauls CUNY's rules on general education and transfer, is a good or bad idea.

But Pathways, which took effect

in the Fall 2013 semester, is strongly opposed by most CUNY faculty, who see it as a scheme to speed up students' graduation "on the cheap" by watering down the curriculum. For example, Pathways rules have led Brooklyn College to drop its foreign language requirement, and sharply reduced lab sessions in basic science classes. In a referendum last May among CUNY's full-time faculty, 92% voted "no confidence" in the administration-imposed curriculum plan.

## NO TO AUSTERITY

"The faculty role in decisions on curriculum policy is essential to educational quality," said Bowen. "We are committed to providing CUNY students with the best possible education, and that is why we continue to oppose Pathways. Pathways is a formula for 'austerity education,' and it sells our students short."

The campaign against Pathways is playing out on many fronts: in addition to the lawsuits and grievance, faculty are protesting at meetings of the Board of Trustees, and the union is demanding a thorough and impartial review of the Pathways implementation thus far.

"While we're pleased that this arbitration ruling allows our grievance to move forward, we're not relying only on the courts and the arbitrators," said Bowen. "PSC members continue to speak out on their campuses, and to demand respect for the faculty's right to formulate CUNY's policy on curriculum. The board must rescind its Pathways resolution."

## LABOR IN BRIEF

### National day in defense of public education

A coalition of community groups and labor unions kicked off a campaign to defend public education on December 9, with more than 100 events in 36 states. Thousands of parents, teachers, school support staff and students participated in what was the largest coordinated protest on behalf of public education in recent memory. In New York City, the United Federation of Teachers and several allied community groups gathered 500 students, parents and educators to celebrate the end of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's term in office.

Participants in the Dec. 9 actions called for reinvestment in public school systems that have been

devastated by budget cuts in recent years and for an end to the over-emphasis on standardized testing. The protests were mentioned in more than 120 local and national press outlets.

"We know that the market-based ideologies of privatization, austerity, division and competition are failing our children," the Reclaim the Promise of Public Education coalition said on its website. "We want to reclaim our schools and improve public education for all."

Reclaim the Promise is backed by the American Federation of Teachers (the PSC's national affiliate), the National Education Association (NEA), Service Employees International Union (SEIU), as well as a number of grassroots civic groups. The coalition has vowed to follow up on the December 9 day of action with multi-city and multi-state campaigns and larger actions in the spring.



## LABOR IN BRIEF

### Seattle City Council member: Fire your bosses

When machinists at a giant Boeing aircraft manufacturing plant in Everett, Washington, recently rejected company demands for massive give-backs by a 2-1 margin. Boeing threatened to move production to a non-union locale with lower wages. At a machinists rally days later in downtown Seattle, newly elected socialist City Councilmember Kshama Sawant described Boeing's threat as "economic terrorism" and suggested that workers be ready to act if Boeing should try to follow through on its threat.

"The only response we can have if Boeing executives do not agree to keep the plant here is for the machinists to say, 'The machines are here, the workers are here. We will do the job, we don't need the executives,'" Sawant said. "The executives don't do the work, the machinists do. The workers should take over the factories and shut down Boeing's profit-making machine."

Machinists at the rally responded with enthusiastic applause.

### Central Labor Council kicks Democrats to the curb in Ohio

When Democratic officials in Lorain, Ohio, broke an agreement that city contracts be 75% staffed by unionized, local workers, local labor leaders fumed. When Lorain's new mayor personally participated as a scab in breaking a sanitation workers' strike, it was the final straw in this heavily unionized corner of northeastern Ohio. Instead of endorsing Democrats, the Lorain County Central Labor Council ran its own slate of two dozen city council candidates in several area towns. All but two of the candidates on the Independent Labor Party ticket prevailed, *Labor Notes* reported.

"This is just a first step, but we will be taking many together in the future," said Josh Thornsberry, a union teacher who defeated the president of the Lorain County Chamber of Commerce to win a council seat.

### Strike vote at UI Chicago

After 15 months of fruitless negotiations, faculty at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) have voted to authorize a strike if contract talks remain at an impasse. Nearly 80% of union members participated in the vote with 95% voting to authorize a strike. Bargaining will continue into January with a federal mediator. The faculty are seeking better pay for non-tenure track professors and a shared governance role in the university's decision-making process.

# Draft protest policy panned

By PETER HOGNESS

The PSC Delegate Assembly (DA) has called on the CUNY administration to withdraw its draft "Policy on Expressive Conduct," and to change its increasingly restrictive response to campus protest.

"The draft policy reads as an attempt to silence dissent, to stifle protest before it starts," the DA stated in a November resolution. It notes that the draft policy would limit campus protest to "areas designated...for demonstrations" and would allow administrators to issue a blanket ban on all protests inside of campus buildings. They could forbid "distribution of written materials by hand" in classrooms. Further, the policy would give campus administrators unilateral power to "terminate" a demonstration and to seek "immediate intervention of... external law enforcement authorities" against peaceful protesters. (See *Clarion*, November 2013, for previous coverage.)

Such wide powers to limit or ban protest are in no way required for public safety, the resolution says: "Safety can be maintained without stamping out protest and chilling dissent." In fact, it argues, dissent, debate and often protest are an intrinsic part of a well-functioning university and should be welcomed, not viewed as a threat. The resolution points out that some CUNY colleges still exist only because of active protest against plans to close them, such as at Hostos Community College in 1976.

The resolution therefore calls on CUNY administration to withdraw the draft policy from consideration. Until it does so, the PSC is demanding that CUNY management bargain over the proposed policy's impact. So far it has refused to do so.

Union delegates voiced strong support for the resolution and sharp criticism of CUNY's draft protest policy and the thinking behind it.

#### ANTI-DEMOCRATIC

"This policy would discourage the open and democratic exchanges among students and faculty that are essential to our educational mission," said Tom Angotti, professor of urban affairs and planning and a delegate from Hunter. "Our students and faculty don't need permission to express themselves," Angotti said bluntly, rejecting the idea of limited "free speech zones" on campus. "Yet even in the absence of any serious security threats, our schools are increasingly securitized and surveilled."

CUNY "should be a bastion of free speech and freedom of assembly," agreed Hester Eisenstein, professor of sociology and a delegate from Queens College. Instead, she told *Clarion*, the proposed protest policy is a threat to both. Its restrictions on constitutional freedoms

## Not acceptable, says PSC DA

are part of a disturbing trend of the past decade, Eisenstein added, from adoption of the Patriot Act to the NYPD's recent surveillance of entire Muslim communities. The draft policy should be withdrawn without delay, she said.

The PSC resolution links CUNY's drafting of such a restrictive policy to the administration's increasingly heavy-handed policing of peaceful dissent. While administration officials have stated that the far-reaching draft originated in a single discussion at Baruch, the PSC resolution notes that "the policy was issued against [a] backdrop of increasing repression."

The resolution voices deep concern over what it terms a growing crackdown against dissent at CUNY, from strong-arm tactics in the Pathways debate (see *Clarion*, October 2012) to recent arrests of students protesting against the administration's hiring of Gen. David Petraeus (see *Clarion*, November 2013). In recent months, it states, "CUNY security personnel have stood by while NYC police used violence against CUNY students engaged in peaceful protest"; CUNY colleges have "applied harsh administrative and disciplinary penalties – as well as criminal charges – to student protesters" and administrators "have used intimidation and coercion against faculty who dissent on curriculum."

In December, Brooklyn College's Faculty Council overwhelmingly

approved a resolution criticizing the draft protest policy in similar terms, and demanding that be withdrawn. "As a university founded as the result of dissent, CUNY should uphold the highest standards for freedom of speech and assembly," the Faculty Council declared.

The growing controversy drew coverage from *The New York Times* in a December 11 news report that compared the CUNY administration proposal with one under consideration at Cooper Union. Both universities, the *Times* reported, "are considering policies that could restrict how, when and where students can express dissent, while raising the penalties for those who disobey." The *Times* noted that CUNY's draft plan had "attracted withering notice from many faculty members and students." It cited the PSC's view that "if CUNY is to be an intellectually vibrant university, it must recognize that 'expressive activity' is a vital part of campus life, not a danger to be confined within narrow limits."

#### CITY COLLEGE

In December, the PSC's Delegate Assembly followed up with a resolution in support of freedom of dissent and assembly at City College of New York (CCNY), where students activists protesting their eviction from a room long used as a student center have faced a harsh administration response.

Two students active in CCNY protests, Khalil Vasquez and Tafadar Sourov, were banned from campus for the Fall semester, a move that sparked wide concern in the college community.

#### FACULTY VOICES

The DA resolution quotes a petition signed by more than 120 CCNY faculty, which said the use of police to seize the student center "suggests that maintaining a suitable academic atmosphere must give way to maintaining a sort of order, enforced by the security forces of the University and the City. Such order is inimical to the needs of open discussion and of reasoned argument that an academic institution requires." The DA condemned restrictions on access to CCNY's North Academic Center Building, which CUNY administrators imposed as part of an effort to quash student protests.

The resolution noted that all disciplinary charges against Vasquez and Sourov have now been settled, and it urged that the criminal charges against the two (misdemeanors ranging from "criminal mischief" to "inciting to riot") be dropped immediately.

The next hearing in the prosecution of Vasquez and Sourov is scheduled for January 9 at 9:00 am, on the fourth floor of the NYC Criminal Court building at 100 Centre Street, in Part A. Proceedings against the six activists arrested September 17 during protests against CUNY's hiring of Gen. David Petraeus (see *Clarion*, November 2013) are scheduled for the same time and location.

## Time-sheet petition moves ahead



Brooklyn College HEOs and CLTs met on December 9 to plan the next steps for circulating a petition that calls on CUNY to negotiate with the PSC on the impact of the University's inflexible new time-sheet system. The petition campaign is taking place on all CUNY campuses and has garnered widespread support. To find out more, contact PSC organizer Sam Rasiotis at (212) 354-1252 or srasiotis@psccmail.org.



# Making history at NYU

By ARI PAUL

After eight years of intransigence from the New York University administration, the Graduate Student Organizing Committee (GSOC) won a December unionization election among the school's graduate employees by a vote of 620 to 10. The union victory could mark the start of a new era for private university graduate unions, which have faced legal obstacles in recent years.

GSOC was the legally recognized bargaining agent for NYU's graduate assistants from 2000 to 2005, and in 2002 had negotiated a contract that increased stipends and established a health insurance plan. But under President George W. Bush in 2004, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) reversed its earlier stance: in a case at Brown University, it held that graduate students' paid work as instructors was a form of training, not employment. Graduate employees, the NLRB then concluded, had no legal right to unionize.

NYU then shifted to a hard-line anti-union position, refusing to negotiate a new contract even in the face of a 2005-06 graduate employee strike. It shifted its stance only this fall.

## SEIZING OPPORTUNITY

On December 10, GSOC activist Christy Thornton stood with fellow history department graduate employees as they waited to cast their ballots. Thornton told *Clarion* that a confluence of factors had pressured the administration to agree to a new union vote. The announcement last summer that NYU president John Sexton would depart over scandals

## Grad workers win back their union



Members of GSOC-UAW Local 2110 gather near the NYU Kimmel Center Dec. 10 to rally workers to vote "yes" to unionization.

involving excessive pay and privileges for administrators had damaged NYU's image, Thornton said, and this encouraged the university to seek the high road in the organizing struggle rather than maintain an anti-union position that also hurt its public relations.

Another key factor, Thornton noted, was action by a lower division of the NLRB that makes it likely the national body will overturn the Brown decision in the future. Part of the NYU-GSOC agreement on holding the recent vote included the GSOC's withdrawal of its petition to the NLRB.

"The administration didn't want to look bad," Thornton said. "It was clear we were going to win in the NLRB. They wanted to take control of the narrative."

Julie Kushner, regional director of United Auto Workers (UAW) Region 9A (to which GSOC belongs), noted that thanks to constant student organizing, the administration was pressured by calls from several mayoral candidates for NYU to agree to a recognition vote.

"They organize every semester, demonstrating majority support," Kushner said. "The administration

decided it was time to listen to the students and the community. I hope this becomes a model. This is a great example of how you can vote for a union outside the NLRB."

## NYU & GSOC set a union precedent for other schools.

In negotiating the terms of a recognition vote, GSOC held out against concessions that management had initially sought. Though NYU wanted a reduction in the size of the bargaining unit, the final agreement "expands the unit beyond the number of classifications covered under the previous contract that ended in 2005," the GSOC announced. The administra-

tion agreed to remain neutral during the unionization vote, and gave up on pressing the GSOC to agree to a moratorium on organizing NYU's those research assistants (RAs) not yet included in the 1200-person bargaining unit.

The union is confident that NYU and the GSOC's ability to work out an agreement on the December vote will be the basis for a better climate of future contract negotiations.

"It will help the dialogue at the bargaining table, without the baggage of a fierce anti-union campaign," Kushner said. She noted that GSOC's previous contract at NYU included important protections for benefits and stipends, and said the union looked forward to building on that success.

## POSITIVE PRECEDENT

Andrew Ross, president of NYU's branch of the American Association of University Professors, said that he hopes a union at another private university will pursue an NLRB petition that will overturn the board's 2004 decision in the case at Brown. GSOC's new success at NYU will boost organizing at other campuses, Ross said, by providing a working model of positive graduate labor relations.

"It will be a precedent for other unions to do the same," Ross told *Clarion*. "They'd say to their administrations, 'Look, NYU's done this, there's no reason you can't.'"

Ross believes that the administration's anti-union energy began to wane as the result of the broad negative reaction to its conflicts with the GSOC since 2005. Civil disobedience in support of GSOC resulted in dozens of arrests, including several members of the PSC. "They earned a lot of disrespect from faculty, both at NYU and beyond," Ross noted. As a result, he said, "They lost a lot of the appetite for fighting over the years."

# RF-CUNY workers win 'good contract'

By JOHN TARLETON

The CUNY Research Foundation (RF) Central Office chapter overwhelmingly approved a new five-year contract on November 19 that provides a cumulative salary increase of 15.4%, slows the increase in employee health care costs and holds the line on a number of management demands to create a two-tier wage and benefit structure for new hires. The vote was 76-8 in favor of ratification.

"All in all, it was a good contract," said Dawn Sievers, a member of the union bargaining team. "It was a long hard fight, but we did everything members wanted."

The CUNY Research Foundation (RF-CUNY) processes more than \$380 million in grants annually. A significant percentage is retained for overhead, and some of those funds are used for purposes far removed from scholarship, such as paying the RF's anti-union consultants.

The RF's current administrative fees are more than enough to cover the salary increases under the new

## A 15.4% raise over five years

agreement. "RF staff are on the forefront of making our grants work," says Josh Brown, a principal investigator at the Graduate Center's American Social History Project. "I'm glad they have a contract that enables them to keep up with the cost of living."

Contract negotiations began in September 2012, and management did not agree to any salary increases of 2% or more until late in 2013. They did not drop their demand for a two-tier wage structure for new hires until the last ten days of negotiations.

PSC members at the RF office responded with an array of tactics – organizing rallies; delivering petitions to RF President Richard Rothbard; posting pro-union signs in their cubicles; wearing pro-union T-shirts throughout the office on the same day; and going on office "walk-arounds" together during their morning and afternoon

breaks, thus staging what amounted to an indoor informational picket line.

The common thread was their unity and their determination not to take a bad contract. "We were willing to fight for it as long as it would take rather than make an agreement we weren't happy with," commented Steve Lawrence, an RF chapter member and union department representative.

The most dramatic moment in the year-long campaign came on July 1. Faced with a pay offer below the rate of inflation, RF-CUNY workers organized a one-day strike, picketing in the rain outside the foundation's Midtown headquarters. The work stoppage was legal because the Research Foundation, despite its close ties to CUNY, is technically a private-sector entity; its employees are therefore not covered by New York State's Taylor Law, which bans public-sector strikes.

## Workplace unity beats back demands for concessions.

Striking RF workers were joined on the picket line by PSC members from across CUNY, including all four of the PSC's principal officers, and union activists from NY State United Teachers and SEIU 1199 also turned out. Vincent Alvarez, president of the New York City Central Labor Council, walked the line to show his support, as did then-mayoral candidate Bill de Blasio.

"Going on strike was a way to say, 'We feel there is an injustice going on here,'" Lawrence recalled. "All the support we received was encouraging."

As a department rep in Finance, Lawrence kept the 15 other members of his department informed about the state of negotiations and plans for keeping up the pressure with protests inside the workplace.

"Folks went out of their way to do walk-arounds and hang up their signs," Sievers said. "We let management know how we felt."

In October management began to move on some key issues, and Rothbard met with PSC President Barbara Bowen to help move toward

a settlement. An agreement was reached at the start of November.

In addition to a 15.4% pay increase over five years, the contract delays the increase in the employee share of the health insurance premium to the third year of the contract, when it will include an additional 2% of the total cost. The new contract also establishes a form of paid parental leave by permitting both women and men to use up to two weeks of sick leave for the birth or adoption of a child. It also allows up to five sick days per year to be used for care for an ill or injured family member.

## SOMETHING TO BUILD ON

"That five days is something we can build on," Sievers said.

Lawrence said the RF chapter had done well in this contract, given the corporate onslaught against unions that has gained momentum in recent years. Sievers said this had been the most difficult round of contract talks in her 26 years at the Research Foundation. It was solidarity within their group, as well as solidarity from fellow union members, that enabled the contract campaign to succeed, she told *Clarion*.

"If we don't stand up for what we want, we'll get run over," Sievers said. "We can't be apathetic."



## NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## The new mayor's education challenges

By DAVID BLOOMFIELD

**M**ike Bloomberg was dubbed the “Education Mayor,” not only because he was the first mayor to exercise explicit control over the Board of Education, but because of his unrelenting public focus on data-based accountability, choice and competition. Though many parents, educators, policy experts and even the general public disputed their worth, the administration was unabashed in following these policy guide stars. Such consistency yielded an indelible imprint on the city's, indeed the nation's, education landscape.

Because he ran as an unapologetic anti-Bloomberg progressive, Mayor-elect Bill de Blasio now faces ideological challenges on many fronts. But few loom as large as equaling Bloomberg's educational impact while writing from the left side of the political ledger. At the same time, there is the huge managerial task of running a school system that far exceeds other districts in enrollment, staffing and budget. The Department of Education (DOE) is more than ever a flotilla than a single ship, so keeping its constituent elements afloat and moving in the right direction is daunting. And the new mayor must do all this without the ultimate Bloomberg weapon, letting his ships sink when they start to leak! De Blasio, instead, has promised to bail them out.

## A FRESH VISION

Merely reacting to Bloomberg policies, governing only as the non-Bloomberg, would be a mistake. Sure, de Blasio should keep campaign promises regarding decreasing the number of school closures; increasing parents' voice in decision-making; renegotiating the State-imposed teacher evaluation system; charging some charter schools rent for co-location in DOE buildings; and ending school-wide letter grades. While these are important goals, they are also the easy part, since all are largely within his control.

While winning Albany's approval for taxing the rich to pay for expanding early childhood education, and for after-school programs in all middle schools, will be a challenge, they are achievable goals – if not immediately, then after State elections next fall. Polls show strong support for de Blasio's plan among upstate voters, and past campaigns (the 2004 hike in New York's minimum wage, and the 2011 extension of the “millionaires tax”) have shown that it's possible to mobilize that kind of support to overcome opposition from the governor and State Senate.

David Bloomfield is professor of educational leadership, law and policy at Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center.



Much of the success of the nation's largest public school district over the next four years – and of Brooklyn kids like these – rests on Mayor-elect Bill de Blasio's future policies for education in NYC.

But even winning in Albany will not be enough to lead New York City's public schools in a new direction. The new mayor needs to shift the conversation from, “What would Bloomberg do?” to a clearly articulated mission of his own. De Blasio's “tale of two cities” approach – already a trademark aphorism – provides a ready starting point for this new educational era.

The City's Independent Budget Office recently released a report on the “Availability and Distribution of Selected Program Resources in

New York City High Schools,” finding, in part, that poor students and students of color are able to take fewer advanced courses leading to college. This lengthy statistical analysis, at odds with Bloomberg's insistence that choice levels the playing field, provides a clear opportunity for the new mayor to correct resource imbalances.

Another flagrant example of racial disparity, disproportionately low enrollment of black and Latino students in the city's specialized high schools, is already the sub-

ject of a federal complaint by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and others (in which I've played an advisory role). De Blasio promised during his campaign to correct this situation, in part by working to repeal or amend the State law that requires a single, rank ordered test to determine admissions.

## TIME TO LISTEN

Of even broader consequence would be sustained attention to the large numbers of minority students in special education programs who never graduate. According to 2013 data, public school English language learners (ELL) number 159,162 or 14.4% of the city's entire student population. Yet the graduation rate for this large group is below 50%, well under the DOE's official overall graduation rate for the same year of approximately 62%. Only 7% of ELLs from the 2006 cohort graduated on time, college and career ready, according to city data, and ELL students are disproportionately identified as requiring special education services, with over 20% classified for special education. Targeting ELLs and especially those in special education for increased academic attention, as required by State law, can lead to significant progress.

A recent report by the New Settlement Parent Action Commit-

tee, “Persistent Educational Failure: The Crisis in School District Nine and a Community Roadmap for Mayor Bill de Blasio,” makes an explicit call for reform in New York's poorest borough by suggesting four main strategies: a new community-driven process to hold schools accountable; building the capacity of local schools to meet the challenge of higher standards; harnessing community resources to close the opportunity gap; and prioritizing parent involvement to improve literacy for English language learners. Meanwhile, the Coalition for Multiple Pathways to a Diploma (of which I'm a member), a project of Advocates for Children of New York, has suggested a number of ways to increase the graduation rate while maintaining standards of college and career readiness.

These avenues to improve public education depend on the new mayor differentiating himself from his predecessor in another important way: *listening*. That is a two-way street: collaboration requires mutual respect, lowered voices, and recognition that give-and-take must replace my-way-or-the-highway demands. Through reasoned conversation among multiple constituencies, Mayor de Blasio stands a chance to change the tale of two cities.

Charting  
a new  
course for  
schools.

## POLICING

## An end to the ‘Tale of Two Cities’?

By DELORES JONES-BROWN

**T**he title of the Charles Dickens classic *A Tale of Two Cities* was a major theme in New York City's 2013 elections. And civil rights advocates and drug policy reformers have used its opening lines to describe the city's current situation. UC Berkeley Professor Frank Zimring describes New York as *The City That Became Safe*, in the title of his widely publicized Oxford University Press book, and he asserts in his subtitle that New York has valuable *Lessons for Urban Crime and Its Control*. But ample research reports, judicial decisions, public opinion polls and media accounts document a more mixed picture of the 12 years of the Bloomberg-Kelly administration.

Under their administration, the city was “safe” for corporate investors and real estate developers to do business in New York, and for some

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New Yorkers to use public streets without fear of criminals, police interference or signs of “disorder” – “the best of times.” But for other New Yorkers, this “safer” city has meant residential dislocation (i.e. gentrification), racial and economic profiling by police, disruption of religious practice and schools where young people are treated like criminals – “the worst of times.”

Millions of  
innocent  
people  
stopped  
by police

The police department's own data show clearly that for an overwhelming majority of the millions of New Yorkers who have been watched or stopped over the last decade, nearly 90% of whom are people of color, there is no evidence that they are engaged in criminal behavior. Comparatively few arrests occur as a result of police stops, and when they do, they are typically the result of private possession of small amounts of marijuana – conduct that was decriminalized in the 1970s.

Less than two-tenths of a percent of stops turn up a gun. Less than 2% of stops turn up other weapons. A recent report of by the New York State Attorney General's Office examined 2.4 million documented

stops that occurred between 2009 and 2012 and the 150,000 arrests that grew out of those stops. Of these arrests, only about 0.10% resulted in a conviction for a violent crime.

Documented stops are those that are recorded on a police department form called the UF-250 – but an untold number of stops take place without being recorded. So

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The NYPD's Demographics Unit, like its practice of stop-and-frisk, has treated entire communities as suspect, targeting groups instead of individuals.

Aisha Asif/The Brooklyn Ink



## WAGES &amp; INEQUALITY

## Minding the gap

By RUTH MILKMAN

Mayor-elect Bill de Blasio swept into office as a relentless critic of the widening divide between the haves and have-nots, with his much-mentioned “tale of two cities.” Two years earlier, Occupy Wall Street had catapulted the issue of economic inequality, formerly an obscure preoccupation of policy wonks and academics, to the center of the national political conversation. But while its success revealed the issue’s broad political appeal, the meteoric Occupy movement never faced the actual challenges of governing. In that regard, our new mayor has his work cut out for him.

In New York City, as in the nation, inequality has soared to levels not seen since the first Gilded Age more than a century ago. Working people – especially the non-college-educated – have steadily lost economic ground in recent decades, and the labor movement has been reduced to a shadow of its former self. This devolution began in the aftermath of the fiscal crisis of the 1970s, was accelerated under the Rudy Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg regimes, and has been further aggravated by the Great Recession.

New York remains the nation’s most highly unionized large city,

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with union density (the proportion of wage and salary workers who are union members) roughly double the national average. Yet New York City also has higher levels of income inequality than any other city in the US, reflecting a highly polarized pattern of workforce growth. Both before the 2008 crash and during the still-anemic recovery, low-wage service industries like retail and restaurants have expanded rapidly, along with domestic work and day labor. At the other end of the labor market, well-paid professional, managerial and technical jobs – especially but not only in the financial sector – have proliferated. In sharp contrast, the “middle class” is virtually an endangered species.

That is the dynamic underlying the tale of two cities, driving not only income inequality but also the vast disparities in access to housing, education and health care that mark New York City in the 21st century.

## SHRINKING UNIONS

Among the primary causes of the erosion of the middle class is union decline, especially in the private sector. Although the downward trend looks modest relative to that in the nation as a whole, private-sector union density in New York City has fallen sharply: as recently as 1986, it was 25%, nearly twice the current level (14%). Private-sector de-unionization began long before the Great Recession, but has accelerated since 2007. By contrast, public-sector union densi-

ty in New York has been stable and actually rose slightly after 2007; it is currently 72%. Indeed, the gap between the city’s public- and private-sector unionization rates is at a record high, putting the public-sector unions at growing risk of political isolation, as non-union low-wage work continues to expand. This complicates one of de

Blasio’s immediate challenges, namely that nearly all the city’s public-sector workers have been working under expired contracts for several years.

Unionized workers are the core of what remains of the city’s shrinking middle class. They have lost ground in recent years relative to top earners, yet even with the stagnating pay levels that have resulted from the impasse in collective bargaining under Bloomberg, they remain privileged vis-à-vis the vast numbers of low-wage non-union workers, who are somehow surviving in this evermore expensive city on pay at or near the minimum wage. De Blasio must address their needs too, an even greater challenge than negotiating new municipal union contracts.

In this regard he might take inspiration from a city at the other end of the country, San Francisco. Over the past decade, San Francisco has been a trailblazer: it has adopted a strong living-wage law; “pay-or-play” health insurance requirements for city contractors; and a paid sick days ordinance far more extensive (and with fewer carve-outs) than the one that the

**De Blasio must address needs of low-wage workers.**



Greg Dunkle

A fast food worker protests for a \$15 hourly wage and the right to join a union.

New York City Council finally adopted during the mayoral campaign. San Francisco also has as a city-specific minimum wage of \$10.74 an hour, indexed to inflation. Contrary to the claims of business advocates, these measures have not been “job killers”; indeed,

employment has expanded in San Francisco in recent years. The de Blasio administration should promote similar initiatives here to establish a decent wage floor at the bottom of the labor market.

Another policy aim should involve reversing the long-term trend toward privatization of public services. The available evidence suggests that over the long term privatization does not save taxpayers money – on the contrary. Moreover, pay, benefits and job quality typically deteriorate when work moves from the public to the private sector (often becoming de-unionized in the process).

## PROGRESSIVE PATH

Finally, there is an urgent need to expand labor market opportunities for new labor market entrants – recent high school and college graduates who currently face job prospects more dismal than any time since the 1930s. De Blasio should create additional opportunities along these lines, perhaps with an AmeriCorps-like initiative for NYC. Vocational training leading to placement in city jobs for recent high school graduates should also be high on his agenda.

The vast inequalities that exist in today’s New York City have been long in the making, and they will not be reversed overnight. But the new mayor could lead the way forward with initiatives like these, and put the city back on the progressive path it followed for much of the 20th century.

## SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

## Pressure from the grassroots

By JACKIE DISALVO

Though Occupy Wall Street (OWS) always eschewed electoral politics, in many ways it was Occupy that enabled the election of Bill de Blasio.

Occupy Wall Street maintained that the wealthiest 1% always rule, controlling elections and elected officials through campaign funding and a thousand other levers of power. Nevertheless, OWS catalyzed the new political environment in which de Blasio and Elizabeth Warren were elected and Mitt Romney defeated. Occupy did so by surfacing people’s widely held, but rarely acknowledged, belief that the US is divided between the 99% and the 1%. When

the right wing accused us of waging class war, we boldly embraced the idea, defending it as a response to the class war from above by the corporate elite.

Through militant direct action OWS broke through the media emphasis on the deficit as the problem and austerity as the alleged solution. Since Occupy, the political debate has become increasingly focused on economic inequality. In that context, voters are rejecting candidates tied to the 1% like Christine Quinn, Bill Thompson and Joseph Lhota.

In a surprising reversal, de Blasio, despite initially limited funds and union support, rose from polling only 5% or 10% to win the general election with three-quarters of the vote. Key to his success was adopting the OWS-style message of the “tale of two cities,” in which the rich get richer and the poor poorer. In the

election’s most important achievement, people soundly rejected the policies of billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg in favor of taxing the rich, funding education, lowering housing costs and raising the minimum wage.

De Blasio’s “tale of two cities” was not just about economics: he also voiced a sharp critique of the NYPD’s racial profiling through stop-and-frisk, and noted that his son was a potential victim of the practice. With a clear and consistent campaign message on both economics and justice, de Blasio won overwhelming support: African-Americans chose him over Bill Thompson in the primary, and he won a majority of voters of every race in the general election. The question is, what comes next?

We have a new moment of opportunity, arising from the confidence gained in the majority’s progres-

**We cannot rely solely on elected officials.**

sive choice and their new hope and rising expectations. However, no election ensures progressive policies, and the 1% is already working to “lower expectations” and block the agenda of change that voters supported. They will succeed if the people, their unions and community organizations rely solely on elected officials. Fortunately, since their disappointment after electing President Barack Obama, many have learned that political lesson.

## GRASSROOTS SUPPORT

It’s clear that Mayor de Blasio will be under intense pressure from Wall Street and the political right from his first day in office. If that is the only pressure he feels, the result is predictable. Whether you are hopeful or skeptical about de Blasio personally is really beside the point – the only hope for fulfillment of his campaign promises is grassroots mobilization to demand it.

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*Jackie DiSalvo is professor emerita of English at Baruch College and a member of the Occupy Wall Street Labor Outreach Group.*



# Being a PSC political activist

BY JOHN TARLETON

In the 2013 elections, the PSC mounted its most extensive electoral effort to date. The work paid off, with the election of PSC-backed candidates for all three citywide offices in New York City – mayor, public advocate and comptroller – and for 39 of 51 positions on the City Council. More than 40% of the council's members are newly elected this year, with sharply increased support for a CUNY-friendly agenda.

The 20-plus members of the PSC Legislative Committee have been in the middle of the action. "It's lovely to see how all this political organizing has paid off," said Ron Hayduk a professor of political science at Queens College and a Legislative Committee activist. "In New York City today, it's progressives who have the momentum."

## COMMITMENT TO CUNY

"It's the first time in decades we've had a mayor come in who has made a major commitment to CUNY," says Steve Levine, head of educational programs and the Wagner Archives at LaGuardia Community College. "That commitment was deepened in discussions with the PSC about the importance of CUNY to the future of New York," said Levine, who began working with the Legislative Committee several years ago.

Incoming mayor Bill de Blasio made CUNY a major theme in his campaign, calling for an end to tax breaks for well-connected corporations like FreshDirect in order to increase City support for CUNY by nearly 60%.

In a busy campaign year, Anselma Rodriguez, coordinator of graduate studies at Brooklyn College, said she particularly liked interviewing candidates as part of the PSC's endorsement process. "I got a big charge out of that," she told *Clarion*. "Asking the candidates questions about their positions, talking with them about policy issues – I felt I was really getting an up-close view."

City politics have such a big effect on CUNY, Rodriguez said, that deciding to join the Legislative Committee felt like a natural choice. "It's a way to contribute to something tangible and real," she explained. "I've enjoyed working with like-minded people and feeling like my contribution is respected. These people believe in the same things I believe in, and we're all working together."

The Legislative Committee began 2013 by organizing a seminar to tutor 36 City Council candidates on CUNY budget and policy issues. Dubbed "PSC-CUNY 101," the three-hour workshop gave candidates key information on the role CUNY plays in NYC and what kinds of support it needs.

In the months that followed, committee members met with and interviewed dozens of candidates for a range of offices. "Everyone on the committee came informed and with

## Legislative Committee makes a difference



Leslie deGiere (left) of Bronx Community College and Paul Washington (right) of Medgar Evers College, members of the PSC Legislative Committee, asked questions at the PSC's mayoral candidates' forum in April.

open minds," says George Sanchez, chair of the department of performing and creative arts at College of Staten Island.

"It was a really positive experience," Levine said of the candidate interviews. "We listened to them and we educated them on the City University of New York and what's needed to make it prosper." After reviewing the candidates' responses, Legislative Committee members submitted endorsement recommendations to the PSC's Executive Council (EC). Decisions on City Council races were then determined by vote of the EC, while for citywide positions the EC makes a recommendation to the union's Delegate Assembly, which has the final say.

The mayor's race dominated the headlines for most of the election season. The Legislative Committee organized a PSC forum for mayoral candidates on April 23 at the Hunter School of Social Work in East Harlem, which was attended by an overflow crowd of more than 200 people. After carefully evaluating each candidate, the committee ultimately recommended that the union endorse de Blasio, and in June the PSC's Executive Council and Delegate Assembly both came to the same conclusion. "CUNY Union Endorses De Blasio," read the *New York Times* headline; the paper noted that the PSC's "endorsement is... prized because the union's members have a track record of actually voting on Election Day."

## ON THE RISE

At the time de Blasio was drawing 10% support in opinion polls, but Sanchez says he was certain they had the right candidate. "He was great as a council member," said Sanchez, who chaired the Parent-Teacher Association at a Brooklyn elementary school in de Blasio's district, when the future mayor served on the City Council from 2002-2010.

"He really understood the issues around public education."

De Blasio soon began his rise in the polls and Legislative Committee members threw their energy into making sure the PSC's endorsements delivered results. Committee members played a key role in the union's phone-banking effort, which contacted more than 6,000 PSC members registered to vote in the Democratic primary. Legislative Committee activists also leafleted on their campuses, talking with colleagues and also encouraging students to vote – in many cases for the first time.

## HISTORY

"You get this feeling that history is in the making and that I'm in the thick of it," Rodriguez recalled.

"I especially enjoyed the person-to-person contact in handing out flyers," said Paul Washington, Director of Outreach for the Male Development and Empowerment Center at Medgar Evers College. "Here at the college I got to catch up with my colleagues and meet some new people. I love the questions, the give-and-take," says Washington, a veteran political activist. "You get to know what's on people's minds, engage with them about what they fundamentally believe. It's interesting!"

Now that PSC-backed candidates have been swept into office, Legislative Committee members are looking to convert electoral success into the enactment of progressive policies. Lobbying days in Albany and at City Hall are being planned in which PSC members can meet with their elected representatives to urge them to enact the union's agenda. This is a regular part of the Legislative Committee's work, especially during "budget season" in the winter and spring.

One member of the committee who has recently seen the payoff of being

politically engaged is Leslie deGiere, a CLIP instructor at Bronx Community College (BCC). DeGiere joined the Legislative Committee about a year ago and soon took the lead in organizing a health and safety campaign at BCC to win repairs for a number of century-old buildings on her campus. Many of those goals required that the college secure new resources.

DeGiere, whose father worked as a staff person in the California State Legislature, led an effort that generated more than 1,000 postcards and dozens of letters last spring from BCC students, faculty and staff to City Council members and the Bronx borough president, urging full funding for BCC's capital needs. PSC members and student activists followed up with in-person visits to 10 council members. The campaign's success means that BCC's capital budget should receive a total of \$30-34 million in City and State funds to be spent over the next few years.

"One of the things that I loved was visiting City Council members together with students," deGiere told *Clarion*. "When we went to the office of Fernando Cabrera, who's the City Council member for the area around BCC, we met with his chief of staff. But when he saw how many constituents were there, he called up Cabrera and said, 'You've got to get over here,'" deGiere recalled. "It was very exciting for the students to see the effect that their presence had."

Successful campaigns like the one at BCC depend in part on the union's success in electing CUNY-friendly candidates to public office – and that requires financial resources. Ron Hayduk, coordinator of PSC-CUNY COPE, the union's political action arm, is currently leading a campaign to boost PSC members's voluntary donations to COPE, which can be done through payroll deductions or directly by check. "What-

ever members can give will make a difference," Hayduk told *Clarion*. "When we expand COPE, we expand our political capacity." (For more information, see [psc-cuny.org/cope](http://psc-cuny.org/cope).)

As much as they are involved in electoral campaigns and meeting with legislators, committee members agree that much of the union's political muscle comes from outside those arenas. "We didn't get to this juncture in history just through lobbying and legislating," said Washington.

Hayduk, who participated in the 1991 student movement against tuition hikes at CUNY that occupied buildings on 11 campuses, says the ideal approach is one that combines pressure both inside and outside the corridors of power. "Without broader popular mobilization or pressure, they can ignore us," Hayduk said. "Public protest provides the inside strategy with greater leverage."

As an example, Hayduk cited the 2011 campaign to win approval in Albany for an extension of the State's "millionaires tax." Governor Andrew Cuomo took a hard line against any extension, and mobilized his business allies against the idea. As late as October, the governor insisted there would be no extension. But as Occupy Wall Street continued to grow that fall, Cuomo sensed a shift in the political winds and agreed to a partial extension. "He didn't want to be known as 'Governor One Percent,'" Hayduk recalled with a laugh.

## INSIDE & OUTSIDE

The lesson, agrees Washington, is clear: "We can't allow ourselves to be demobilized. That's why we have to stay in the streets." What helps make the PSC an effective political organization, he told *Clarion*, is in part that it can combine electoral campaigns, mass marches, legislative lobbying and direct action to achieve its goals as part of a broader movement.

"Activists on the outside raise the temperature around a particular issue," says Washington. "Then when you are on the inside, you can create substantive solutions to problems" that activists have identified.

Inside or outside, the new political winds blowing in NYC make it look likely that 2014 will be another busy year. And the members of the Legislative Committee say they wouldn't have it any other way.

To join the PSC Legislative Committee, call Amanda Magalhaes at (212) 354-1252, or email her at [amagalhaes@pscmail.org](mailto:amagalhaes@pscmail.org).

## Correction

Due to an editing error, prior publication credit was not published with Stephen Leberstein's article, "Academic Freedom Under Fire," in the December 2013 *Clarion*. A longer version of that article originally appeared in *Working USA* (Vol. 16, No. 3). More information at [tinyurl.com/Working-USA-Leberstein-Heins](http://tinyurl.com/Working-USA-Leberstein-Heins).



# Ready to fight for change

By JOHN TARLETON

As Mayor-elect Bill de Blasio prepared to take office, a broad coalition of labor unions, community groups and veterans of Occupy Wall Street organized a “Wall Street Week of Action” for economic justice in the first week of December. At a December 5 rally in Foley Square that drew about 1,000 people, organizers said they were ready to fight for the changes so many New Yorkers had voted for.

“New York is the most unequal city in the country. The richest 1% of New Yorkers take home an estimated 39% of the income,” said a statement from the New Day New York coalition. “For too long, New York has been a city that only works for billionaires, run by a mayor who spent too much of his time listening only to billionaires. It’s high time for a New York that works for *all* of us.”

## PRESSURE

Many of the activists in New Day New York worked hard to elect de Blasio and progressive candidates for City Council. But they know that those newly elected will be under tremendous pressure to abandon or water down their promises of change.

“The mayor-elect and the incoming City Council have to be reminded that New Yorkers not only support the agenda on which they ran, but also expect them to deliver on their commitments,” the PSC said in a statement in support of the December 5 rally.

With community organizations like Make the Road New York and New York Communities for Change playing an important role, the rally focused on the struggles of insecure, low-wage workers such as fast-food workers, Walmart employees, airplane cleaners, “carwasheros,” bank tellers – and CUNY adjuncts (see related article on this page).

Earlier that day, thousands of fast-food workers went on one-day strikes at a number of locations in New York City and more than 100 other cities around the US, part of an organizing campaign dubbed Fast Food Forward, which is demanding a wage of \$15 an hour.

As day quickly gave way to night, rally participants placed artificial candles in a circle on the plaza. Inside the circle, more candles were set down to spell out “One NYC for

## New Day New York targets Wall Street



At the December 5 rally in Foley Square, the New Day New York coalition brought different groups together.

All of Us.” Standing behind, well over a dozen people carried glowing signs that named the groups they were marching with: teachers, artists, tenants, adjuncts, youth, nurses, fast-food workers and others. Some signs were in Spanish: *padres*, *inmigrantes*.

“The time has come,” said Héctor Figueroa, president of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 32BJ, which represents build-

ing service workers. “We need to change the rules. We need a new rule that says no one who works in New York City should live in poverty.”

“The city is moving in a more progressive direction,” said Letitia James, who was elected public advocate with strong backing from the PSC and other unions. “The power lies in your hands. You’ve got to recognize that power,” she said.

The PSC was one of several local unions that turned out for the march. De Blasio has pledged to provide an additional \$150 million per year in City funding for CUNY, and Elizabeth Tompkins, a librarian at Kingsborough Community College, said the money is badly needed. “Since the economy crashed in 2008 we’ve had an increase in enrollment,” she said,

# Adjuncts & economic insecurity

By JOHN TARLETON

The December 5 rally at Foley Square put a spotlight on the fight against growing economic inequality in New York City – and the demand for justice for the insecure, low-wage workers who have suffered as a result. In the crowd were many part-time CUNY faculty members, who talked about their common interests.

## SPEAKING OUT

“We don’t get enough pay. We don’t get retirement. We don’t get enough health insurance,” PSC Vice President for Part-Time Personnel Marcia Newfield told the crowd of about 1,000 people. “We teach you, we teach your family. Help us! We are with you!”

“What we all share in common,” said Blanca Vásquez, an adjunct assistant professor in film & media studies at Hunter College and a member of the PSC Executive

Council, “is that we have to pay rent and educate children and do everything else that others have to do, [but] we’re not doing it on a full-time wage.”

Bonnie Lucas has worked for 18 years as an adjunct art lecturer at City College. She has endured low wages and the uncertainty of not knowing from semester to semester whether she will have a job. To Lucas, attending the rally at Foley Square was a natural thing to do. She told *Clarion* she was there not only for herself, but also for her students who work at insecure, low-wage jobs. Their situations are not identical, she said, but there are similarities.

“There’s been this whole shift in the economy toward lower pay and less security, and somebody who is a university professor is not exempt from that,” Lucas said.

Lucas spoke of one of her students

who works as a night manager at McDonalds for \$7.25 an hour. Another one of Lucas’s students works part-time at a supermarket and does not know which hours or how many hours she will work from week to week.

“The insecurity is week to week instead of semester to semester, but it’s the same kind of loss of civility and lack of honoring of people’s work,” Lucas said.

## Common interests among contingent workers

Employees at Walmart and some of the nation’s largest fast-food chains have been at the forefront

of low-wage and contingent worker struggles over the past year, with an escalating series of job actions in scores of cities. In November, voters from New Jersey to Washington State approved minimum wage increases. Other groups of economically insecure workers have begun to receive more attention, including

pointing to the need for more counselors, librarians and others. “We need more supports for students.”

Howie Letzelter of the PSC Retirees Chapter said reversing the trend toward growing inequality couldn’t come a moment too soon. “This has been going on since the ’70s,” Letzelter told *Clarion*. “People are just losing purchasing power, getting paid less for work, losing their rights, and at some point it has to stop.”

## WALL STREET WEEK

New Day New York kicked off its Week of Action on December 3 by releasing a report on changing the terms on which the City does business with Wall Street, concluding that the City could save \$1 billion by instituting some basic reforms. Noting that New York City and its pension funds control \$350 billion that circulates through the financial system, the study argued that the City should use this market power to renegotiate bad deals and unnecessary fees with its bankers, as well as use the \$300 million in existing city subsidies for banks to insist that they keep commitments to the community.

On December 5, the protesters who convened at Foley Square finished the evening by marching down Broadway and gathering in Zuccotti Park, the birthplace of the Occupy Wall Street movement.

“It’s the people who make change happen,” a coalition statement said the next day. “And we’re not going to stop until we win.”

the 13,000 adjuncts who teach more than half the classes at CUNY. Many members of the public are shocked to learn that someone can be a college teacher for many years, be paid so little, and not know if they will have a job the following semester.

Ed Ott, former executive director of the New York City Central Labor Council and a distinguished lecturer at the Murphy Institute, spoke about CUNY adjuncts when he appeared on the *Melissa Harris-Perry Show* on MSNBC. Other organizations in the New Day New York Coalition, such as New York Communities for Change, Citizen Action of New York, and Walmart Free NYC were very receptive to including adjunct faculty in their messaging during the coalition’s Week of Action, in public outreach and in social media.

## ON THE MARCH

The protest at Foley Square coincided with a one-day strike by food-service workers in more than 100 cities. Afterwards, syndicated columnist Jim Hightower wrote that “there’s a growing army of the working poor in our USofA, and big contingents of it are now on the march.” Colleges are among the immoral employers being challenged, Hightower wrote: “More education makes you better off, right? Well, ask a college professor about that – you know, the ones who earned PhDs and are now teaching America’s next generation.”

“People are recognizing that we are in similar situations,” said Andrew Bartels, an adjunct lecturer in English at Brooklyn College. And from new unity might come new strength.

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## Police reform

Continued from page 6

the actual scope of the problem is even worse than that revealed by police data.

When grassroots and advocacy groups have complained about oppressive treatment of the poor and people of color, or blanket surveillance of Muslim communities, the billionaire mayor and his entrenched police commissioner essentially told critics to be quiet, and tried to paint this dissent as a threat to public safety. They answered data-based critiques with broad assertions that their policies “save lives,” “target criminals,” “get guns off the streets” and “keep the city safe from terrorism.” In this paternalistic discourse, authority is always right, and its critics are always wrong.

### SAFE FOR WHOM?

Evidence suggests that in their zeal to portray New York as “safe” or “safer” than other cities, police managers adjust the recording of reported crimes, a practice documented by John Eterno of Molloy College, formerly of the NYPD, and Eli Silverman, professor emeritus at John Jay, in their 2012 book *The*

*Crime Numbers Game: Management by Manipulation*. If these adjustments cease once Ray Kelly is no longer commissioner, crime in the city may appear to rise even if the actual level of crime does not.

The appearance of a crime increase will also occur if the incoming commissioner successfully repairs the relationship between the police department and communities of color, and black and Latino victims begin to fully report the crimes committed against them. A recent report by the Vera Institute of Justice notes that young males of color who are repeatedly stopped by police are unlikely to report their own victimization by crime, even for serious offenses. Without this information, the City’s current reporting of crime is inaccurate, and underplays the problems faced by some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

If such problems in the city’s crime data are corrected, the well-orchestrated appearance of a “safer” city may begin to unravel without any real change in criminal behavior. The public-relations consequences for the new administration would be severe.

### Drop City’s appeal of the court decision on stop-&frisk.

Under the outgoing administration, the image of a safe New York, whether real or imagined, has been linked to policies that treat entire communities as suspect. Discourse on the causes and prevention of crime is oversimplified and overtly racialized. By claiming that blacks and Latinos “are under-stopped” in comparison to reports of them as crime suspects; and, that “we

go where the criminals are,” the mayor and police commissioner expressed, and attempted to validate, the kind of overt racial oppression adamantly fought against during the Civil Rights era. Their net of criminal suspicion is cast so wide that it includes most non-whites, non-Christian, non-heterosexual, non-affluent persons appearing on the public streets, under the guise of keeping the city safe and secure for “everyone.”

In reality, among the roughly 2.2 million non-Hispanic blacks in NYC, 2012 police data reveal that a black suspect or arrestee was identified in just over 19,000 reported offenses designated as violent crimes. Comparing stop data to crime data, blacks were 15 times more likely to be stopped than

they were to be reported as a suspect in any violent crime category; and nearly 2,000 times more likely to be stopped than be reported as a suspect in a homicide. These comparisons are based on a total of nearly 300,000 stops in the same period, during which 88% of those stopped were not arrested or issued a summons. In fact, of the 2,398 black firearm arrestees, 517 shootings suspects and 154 suspects in homicides during 2012, nearly none were apprehended as the result of a stop and frisk; and combined, these numbers for black “suspects” represent less than 0.13% of NYC’s black population.

### “USUAL SUSPECTS”

By focusing on the “usual suspects” in its discourse about crime and terrorism, the outgoing administration has normalized a social order once recognized as illegal, immoral and unethical. It is a social order that the new administration must work hard to reverse. But naturally, no one wants to be seen as the leader(s) who made New York City “unsafe again.”

Tabloid editorials and status-quo politicians continue to predict that refusing to target entire communities, and instead limiting police action to cases of individualized

reasonable suspicion and actual probable cause, will open the floodgates to danger.

The incoming administration must have the fortitude and patience to implement reforms in the face of some well-resourced opposition. Ending police enforcement practices with an unwarranted disparate impact on multiple vulnerable groups is essential to stemming the tide of lawsuits, payouts, protests, negative publicity and destabilizing disagreement that robs New Yorkers of their humanity and pits them against each other in ways that are potentially crime-generating and otherwise counterproductive.

The new administration must be strong enough to resist the lure of oversimplified strategies touted as the “key” to producing and maintaining public safety. It must be able to see crime as more a symptom of what ails the city than a primary cause. Most of all, the new administration must be willing to engage with all New York communities to produce truly innovative approaches that actually make the city safer and more secure for all.

To better understand where policing went wrong, the NYPD needs to engage with academic researchers at CUNY and elsewhere to survey police managers, supervisors and patrol officers to gather the information necessary to design and implement new and reformed training. Thoughtful decisions based on accurate information can ensure better police-community relations, crime prevention and detection.

An immediate step in the process of reform is to drop the City’s appeal of the *Floyd* and *Ligon* decisions on stop-and-frisk, and its suit against the anti-profiling provision of the Community Safety Act.

### AGE OF TRANSPARENCY

To improve accountability and transparency between the department and the public, the new commissioner can mandate that during all police-initiated encounters with the public, officers must identify themselves verbally and through a contact card providing their names, badge numbers and a number to call to register complaints or issue compliments about the encounter. Online options should also be made available. Research shows that the removal of officer anonymity improves the quality of these interactions and reduces the number of complaints.

Though not without some privacy concerns, use of body-worn cameras will allow supervisors to better monitor the behavior of officers on the street and design or redesign training to fit legal, professional and community concerns.

Though police unions have joined the city in opposing the proposed reforms, some of their own members have been brave enough to go on record as opponents of existing policing practices. In the political battles that lie ahead, we must all speak out and encourage the new administration to be as brave and forthright as those “whistle blowers,” who have had the courage to tell the truth and take a stand to correct policing that has gone terribly wrong.

## Movement strategy

Continued from page 7

For the people’s will to be implemented, there must be a higher than usual level of activism and unity. With all municipal unions without contracts in the face of a Bloomberg budget that set aside no funds for decent raises, let alone retroactive pay, the need for solidarity and activism is greater than ever. In that manufactured scarcity, there is a danger that City unions will simply compete for available funds or that one will accept a poor contract, which will then be imposed on the rest. And if unions merely depend on Democratic Party politicians “to deliver,” they will not break out of that bind. Unless the unions unite behind a common program that not only demands fair contracts but also serves the working and middle class as a whole, they will fail and lose people’s trust.

### RAISING THE BAR

To convince the public to support public workers requires showing how our struggles are connected. We cannot win this fight alone. Consistent and visible public-worker support for private-sector organizing, like the recent fast-food strikes, is one way to make this connection. “New York needs a raise!” – and that goes for all of us.

It’s not clear if many unions are ready to move in this direction, but there are some positive signs. Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO President, and Vincent Alvarez, NYC Central Labor Council President, have repeatedly warned that if the

labor movement, despite the increasing class war from above and a declining membership, continues to only seek a few contract gains for their own members, it will die. Hopefully unions in NYC will heed that warning.

One promising attempt at a more effective strategy was the early December “Wall Street Week of Action” organized by the “New Day New York” coalition of

### NYC unions must unite behind a common program.

60 unions, community organizations, Occupy and particularly low-wage workers. While unions’ level of mobilization for this action was less than what we need, the alliances that the coalition represents and the focus of its demands have a lot of potential power. Going beyond OWS, it linked opposition to the 1% to specific grassroots needs. That coalition intends to continue and we should make sure that the December protests are just a beginning.

De Blasio’s proposal to tax the rich to fund universal pre-K is fairly modest – but still faces tough opposition. If this plan is approved, that could open the door to more ambitious proposals. But if Albany blocks it, we need to follow the example of the “Moral Monday” protests in North Carolina and Florida’s “Dream Defenders” and respond with bold and creative direct action. Labor should be ready to mobilize tens of thousands of people, both from above by union leadership and from below by organizing the rank and file, to go to Albany and occupy the capitol.



PSC members were among the 30,000 labor unionists and other Occupy Wall Street supporters who gathered at Foley Square on October 5, 2011, for a mass rally and march. Similar unity of purpose will be needed to achieve the progressive program that New Yorkers voted for.

We should demand that de Blasio’s proposal be adopted, but we should not be afraid to go beyond it. For example, most global financial centers collect a tax on financial transactions (often known as the “Robin Hood Tax”). Such a tax is already on the books in New York; unfortunately, current law refunds 100% of the amount collected. If New York simply ceased refunding this tax, which is a tiny amount on each transaction, contract demands and social needs could easily be met.

Furthermore, we should call on Mayor de Blasio to immediately take measures not dependent on Albany, such as ending privatiza-

tion through the outsourcing of unionized city jobs to non-union, for-profit businesses and ceasing attacks on the teachers’ union by the replacing of public schools with non-union charters. Voters supported these ideas in November – and where Albany’s approval is not required, there is no reason to wait.

### MOBILIZE

Occupy activists understand that the class struggle has not been ended, but intensified by de Blasio’s election. With other community and labor groups, they are already organizing to counter the efforts of the 1% to maintain their domination of City policies.



## PUERTO RICAN ART IN NYC

## 40 years of Centro

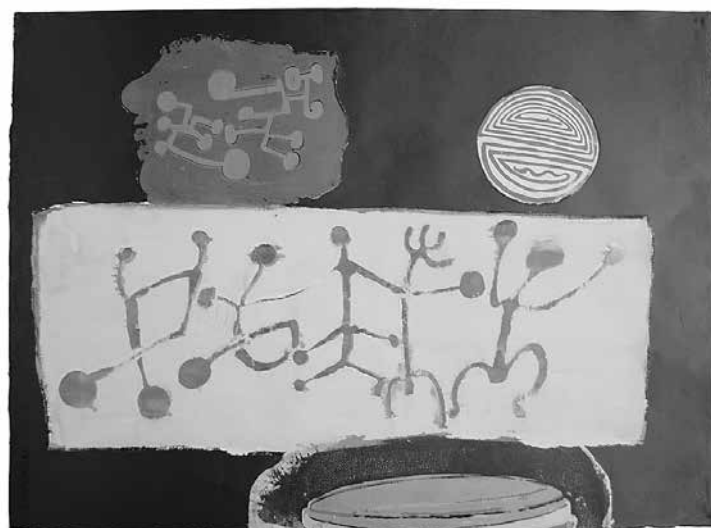
CUNY's Center for Puerto Rican Studies/Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños at Hunter College – often referred to simply as Centro – notes that it “was founded in 1973, amid the era of the great wakening of demands for social justice for minorities of all types – by ethnicity, race, color, gender, physical ability, and age. Centro, with its base within the academy, was born as part of these efforts.”

In honor of Centro's 40th anniversary, several New York-based Puerto Rican artists have joined forces to create a portfolio of silk screened prints. The title given to both the print project and an associated exhibition held this fall at the East Harlem Art Gallery in the Hunter School of Social Work was “nu-YO-Rican.”

To see full-color images of all works in the portfolio, visit [tinyurl.com/nu-YO-Rican-prints](http://tinyurl.com/nu-YO-Rican-prints) or *Clarion's* online edition at [psc-cuny.org/clarion](http://psc-cuny.org/clarion). To learn more about Centro visit [centropr.hunter.cuny.edu](http://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu).

**Aguas de Libertad / Adrian "Viajero" Roman**

This print is based on one of Roman's “cutout” works of the same title that uses charcoal and graphite on wood and pastels on cardboard. Roman describes of its genesis: “*Aguas de Libertad* was created for an exhibit at the Brennan Gallery (NJ) called ‘ves-sel.’ A fusion of both literal and metaphorical interpretations of ‘container,’ ‘ship,’ ‘body,’ and ‘blood,’ ‘ves-sel’ seeks to emphasize American-ness of Black History.... *Aguas de Libertad* was inspired by the abolitionist movement in Puerto Rico, led by Ramón Betances, to free children who were slaves, taking advantage of their need to receive the sacrament of baptism at the town church. Buying the freedom of slave children cost more if the child had been baptized. [So] before the child was baptized, Betances or his partners gave money to the parents, which they in turn used to buy the child's freedom from his or her master. However, the child, once freed, was baptized minutes after. This action was later described as having the child receive the *aguas de libertad* (waters of liberty).”

**Areito Jam / Marcos Dimas**

Areito is “a ceremonial dance, music and storytelling [in] the tradition of the Taino people,” says Centro's catalog for the portfolio. Here is some of what Dimas has written about his use of Taino imagery in this and other works: “I was born on a sugar plantation in Puerto Rico.... During my childhood explorations, I discovered shards of pottery carved with images created by the Taino Indians. Following my involvement with the Art Workers Coalition during the late '60s and then co-founding the Taller Boricua, an artists' collective, in 1970, I decided to forsake my early training in modern art to begin a quest for alternative sources. This led me to embrace the art of the extinct Taino Indian peoples of my homeland, Puerto Rico. My mission would be to pay homage to, and encourage the revival of, the art of my spiritual ancestors.”

**Un Verano en Nueva York / Sofía Maldonado**

From the portfolio catalog: “Painter and muralist Sofía Maldonado loves summers in New York City. She admits she loves them more than in her tropical Puerto Rico because, says Maldonado, who lives in Brooklyn and was born and raised in Puerto Rico, ‘New York in the summer is the most Puerto Rican feeling time in the city. As the song [the salsa classic ‘Un Verano en Nueva York’] says, it is the best time to be in New York. A summer in New York is so different from Puerto Rico.’ She mentions open fire hydrants in the barrios as an example. In New York, you only have the summer to enjoy the heat and ‘you just want to go outside and go to the water.’ For Maldonado, summers in New York are simply ‘one of the most authentic Nuyorican moments.’”

**Newyorican Manifestation / Manifestación Nuyorican / Diógenes Ballester**

From Ballester's remarks in a panel discussion at the exhibition opening: “When I immigrated to New York City in 1981 from La Playa de Ponce, Puerto Rico... I did not share the unique experiences of the Nuyorican who had come to New York as...[a] youth or had been born here. They had navigated a school system that had not yet learned to embrace bilingualism. They had experienced, growing up, the northeast US brand of racism. They resisted oppression and created their own institutions, including el Centro. These common experiences, among many others, contributed to the forging of a collective Nuyorican identity that both looked back to the island roots, but also embraced what it meant to have grown up on these streets.... So when I was invited to be part of this portfolio, my reflections on the differences between my Nuyorican brothers and sisters and myself served as a starting point.”

**Amanece / Rodríguez Calero**

(The powerful and multilayered *Amanece* is not depicted here, due to the limits of reproduction on newsprint. Look for it online at [tinyurl.com/nu-YO-Rican-prints](http://tinyurl.com/nu-YO-Rican-prints) or [www.psc-cuny.org/clarion](http://www.psc-cuny.org/clarion).)

From the portfolio catalog: “The title *Amanece* comes from the awakening, the start, the new dawn, the inner strength and never-ending struggles that we deal with as a people and...as individuals it represents dignity and elevates our spiritual values, which manifests our destiny and resilience in the Puerto Rican diaspora.”





## Dear Mr. Mayor...

Mayor Bill de Blasio takes office this January as New York City's first Democratic mayor in two decades. But while de Blasio was elected with progressive pledges for education, economic equality and police reform, the work of change is just beginning. It's critical for New Yorkers to hold government accountable with our activism and voices. Start this month by

penning a letter to the editor – to Clarion, The New York Times, or the NY Daily News – letting de Blasio know what issues are important to you and what you expect from your next mayor. Letters can be submitted to Clarion at phogness@psccmail.org, the Times at letters@nytimes.com, and the NY Daily News at voicers@nydailynews.com.

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# Cuomo names allies to CUNY board

By JOHN TARLETON

Governor Andrew Cuomo has moved to replace two outgoing members of the Board of Trustees with allies from the political and business world.

Retiring Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro was named to the Staten Island board seat previously held by Kathleen Pesile, while business executive Barry Schwartz will replace Jeffrey Wiesenfeld. Both outgoing board members have served two seven-year terms.

Since the State Legislature is not now in session, the two can begin to serve immediately as recess appointees, but only for a limited time. State Senate confirmation hearings are expected in January. Both the PSC and the University Faculty Senate have proposed legislation that would fundamentally alter the selection process for trustees. The two organizations have called for a blue-ribbon panel to propose qualified candidates, ensuring that candidates would be able to exercise independent judgment on educational policy as trustees.

## THE POLITICIAN

Molinaro, 82, has been a fixture in Staten Island politics for decades. He was chief of staff to Rep. Guy Molinari in the 1980s, and served as deputy borough president for 12 years before being elected borough president in 2001. Molinaro, who has been Staten Island's borough president for the past dozen years, could not run for re-election in 2013 due to term limits. He is executive vice chair of the New York State Conservative Party; in 2010 he broke ranks to endorse Cuomo's gubernatorial bid.

Molinaro does not have a college degree or extensive experience with higher education. But he has championed increased funding for the College of Staten Island (CSI) and has hailed CUNY as "a world-renowned network of the finest academic resources available."

"I'm proud the governor felt I was

## Appoints two new trustees



Governor Andrew Cuomo has appointed Barry Schwartz as a CUNY trustee. Schwartz is a top executive at MacAndrews & Forbes Holdings Inc.

qualified," Molinaro told reporters when his appointment as a CUNY trustee was announced, according to the *Staten Island Advance*. "My education comes from practical experience in life," he added. "And the governor is satisfied with that." Molinaro said he particularly values CUNY's role in opening up opportunities to students "who can't afford the tuition you pay at Harvard and Yale."

Molinaro will take the seat formerly held by Kathleen Pesile, a Staten Island businesswoman, former JP Morgan executive and CUNY graduate who began teaching at CSI as an adjunct lecturer in international business in 1995. Pesile's original nomination to the board was expedited through the State Senate in May 1998 so that Pesile could vote on a controversial measure to abolish remedial classes at CUNY's four-year colleges.

Cuomo's other pick, Barry Schwartz, is the executive vice chair of MacAndrews & Forbes Holdings Inc., its second-highest corporate officer. Schwartz arrives with experience in higher education at private colleges. He is the chair of the Board of Trustees at Kenyon College, a lib-

eral arts college in Ohio where he received his bachelor's degree, and is also on the Board of Visitors at the Georgetown University Law Center, where he earned his law degree. He is a member of the board at Human Rights First, a New York City-based non-governmental organization.

The CEO at MacAndrews & Forbes is Ronald Perelman, whose net worth of \$14 billion makes him the 27th richest person in America, according to *Forbes Magazine*. In April 2013, Schwartz donated \$25,000 to Cuomo's re-election campaign, while Perelman and his wife, Dr. Anna Chapman, each donated \$50,000. In March, Cuomo's campaign received an unspecified in-kind contribution from MacAndrews & Forbes, valued at \$11,768.

## THE BUSINESS EXECUTIVE

Also a top officer and MacAndrews & Forbes is Cuomo's former chief of staff, Steve Cohen, who joined the firm this year as the company's executive vice president and general counsel. While Cohen no longer works for the governor, the political newspaper *City & State* describes him as "Andrew Cuomo's

most trusted confidant, even though he stepped down as [chief of staff] to the governor in 2011."

Schwartz is a board member at several other companies that MacAndrews & Forbes controls, including Revlon and Scientific Games, Inc., which provides services to the gambling industry. Last June, MacAndrews & Forbes agreed to pay \$850,000 to settle SEC charges that it deceived Revlon shareholders when it tried to buy all the company's outstanding shares in 2009, as well as paying \$720,000 to settle technical antitrust charges related to its purchase of stock in Scientific Games.

In addition to chairing the Kenyon College board, Schwartz has headed its Admissions and Financial Aid Committee. His donations to the college include a \$2.5 million scholarship fund, which aims in part to support diversity in Kenyon's student body.

In succeeding Wiesenfeld, Schwartz ends the tenure of the board's most controversial and polarizing figure. A principal in Bernstein Global Wealth Management who worked for four years in FBI counter-intelligence, Wiesenfeld was appointed to the board by for-

mer Gov. George Pataki in 1999. He soon took to the role of being a conservative ideological enforcer who was often accused of disregard for academic freedom.

After City College faculty spoke at an October 2001 campus antiwar teach-in, Wiesenfeld told the *New York Post*, "I would consider that seditious behavior." While CUNY could not fire faculty who spoke, he added, "They're fortunate it's not up to me." In 2011, he called for Brooklyn College adjunct Kristofer Petersen-Overton to be fired because he disagreed with Peterson-

Overton's views on the Israel-Palestine conflict; a few months later, Wiesenfeld demanded that John Jay College be blocked from awarding Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tony Kushner with an honorary degree, again because of disagreements on the Middle East. In both cases he was briefly successful, but Brooklyn College and CUNY's trustees soon reversed themselves in response to intense waves of academic protest, including quick responses from the PSC. In the Kushner episode, both former Mayor Ed Koch and *The New York Times* called for Wiesenfeld to resign.



Retiring Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro has been appointed to serve on CUNY's Board of Trustees by Governor Cuomo.