

## Teachers and transit workers in tentative settlements

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## AFTER PSC PROTEST STATE SHIFTS COURSE ON NEW TEACHER TEST

The PSC's statewide affiliate, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), has reached an agreement with the State Education Department to delay full implementation of the controversial new teacher certification exam (known as "edTPA") until June 30, 2015. The change came after months of organizing by education

faculty at CUNY and SUNY. The agreement calls for a task force on teacher education, with representation from the PSC and SUNY's to review and consider changes to the high-stakes exam. Above, from left: PSC First VP Steve London, NYSUT's Andy Pallotta, UUP's Fred Kowal at a hearing in Albany. **PAGE 5**

### YOUR RIGHTS

#### Check your personnel file

It's your professional and academic record and is used in promotion decisions. Reviewing your file at least once a year ensures it is accurate and complete. **PAGE 9**

### 'TAX-FREE NY'

#### START-UP NY comes to CUNY

START-UP NY gives huge tax breaks to businesses, offering them space on CUNY campuses. Will that benefit CUNY and the public? It's up for debate. **PAGE 10**

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#### Faculty defend curriculum role

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### CUNY HISTORY

#### Queens College & civil rights

Fifty years after Freedom Summer, Queens College is looking back at its history with the civil rights movement, & what it means for today. **PAGE 3**



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR |

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# Office work and healthy bodies

● At the March 13 Delegate Assembly, we learned that the City and municipal unions are talking about the possibility of introducing wellness programs in an attempt to keep health care costs under control. The examples that were shared include smoking cessation programs, exercise programs and incentives for improving key health indicators.

While these programs are worthwhile, they place the blame for health care expenses and the responsibility to change on employees, when, in fact, a growing body of research shows that one of the largest contributors to poor health outcomes is prolonged sitting at work, and that the damage done by sitting for long periods cannot be completely undone with regular exercise.

Many CUNY employees, including many PSC members, have jobs that keep us sitting most of the day. An investment by CUNY in ergonomic, adjustable-height office furniture that allows workers to stand for at least part of the day would re-

sult in improved health outcomes for employees and almost certainly save the university money in the long run.

Even better, I'm sure CUNY would find plenty of volunteers for a pilot program to investigate the feasibility of making treadmill desks available to employees who want or need them. A plan to reduce prolonged sitting should be part of any conversation between labor and management about wellness programs and health care costs.

Michele Doney  
John Jay College

## Equity in teaching load?

● I understand that CUNY Central views community college professors as second-class citizens when it comes to teaching loads, though we are required to do research and publish papers in peer-reviewed journals. I understand that professors at the four-year colleges will be most interested in reducing their

own teaching loads. What I don't understand is why *my* union is more interested in promoting a reduction in four-year teaching loads than in parity across the board! PSC has called for "contractual teaching load requirements to be reduced CUNY-wide," thereby continuing to uphold the divisive status quo, rather than striving to represent all of its members equitably.

As an academic committed both to teaching and to research, because I am teaching at a community college, my research time is mostly relegated to the summer. Teaching a 4-3 teaching load "makes it hard to sustain research or give students the individual attention they deserve," to quote a faculty member at John Jay in a *Clarion* article a year ago. Do community college students deserve less individual attention? Yet, their professors carry a 5-4 teaching load!

How can my union advocate for a course load reduction from 4-3 at four year colleges, "to support

both research and faculty activities aimed at improved student retention and graduation rates," (same article, a year ago) and then expect community college faculty to be grateful that the very same union is advocating for us a course load of 4-4? Should community college faculty not be concerned with improved student retention and graduation rates?

I feel that PSC has abandoned the community colleges on the issue of teaching load.

Margaret Dean  
BMCC

PSC President Barbara Bowen responds: *Thank you for your letter, Margaret; I have heard your concern at many community colleges. Yes, reducing the contractual teaching load for full-time faculty is an urgent priority, and no, the union has not abandoned community colleges. The real problem is that CUNY is funded as a teaching institution, but attracts – and*

*expects faculty to perform as – research faculty.*

*The PSC officers and bargaining team are aware of the increase in research demands at community colleges. There are similar increased demands at four-year colleges, where the need for a more manageable teaching load is different but equally urgent. By arguing for a reduction in the teaching load at community colleges, the PSC is taking a strong stand for the special character of community colleges at CUNY, whose faculty are part of a research university faculty – something found almost nowhere else. The national average for community college teaching loads is above the load at CUNY, but CUNY community colleges have a much higher than average percentage of PhDs and much higher research expectations.*

*Winning any reduction in the teaching load through contract negotiations will be extraordinarily difficult, in part because the economic cost is high. Our best chance of success is in taking a united position that all CUNY faculty need a teaching load that allows us to do the work we came here to do for our students, our colleges and our academic fields.*

# Union skills & sisterhood in NYC

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

The first time Jackie Elliot went to the Northeast Summer School for Union Women, she had been a PSC member for nearly three decades and was already active in the union.

But, she says, she got an "extra push" from the five-day conference last year, which left her ready to assume more responsibility. Along with classes and workshops on collective bargaining, labor law and leadership skills, the school also offered a class on grievance training. Elliot took that class last summer and earlier this year she became a grievance counselor for her CLT chapter.

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

"Everything started to fall into place. It gave me a lot more confidence," she told *Clarion*. "I plan to go there for as long as I can. It had that much of an effect."

What stood out the most for Elliot, she says, was the school's strong sense of sisterhood. She recalls talking and learning from women across the union movement: from female bus drivers to retail workers, from attorneys to home-care attendants.

"It's the ultimate connection – to hear about women's life experiences, to talk to women from 19 to 92, no matter what [their position], how big or small," said Elliot, who has been part of the PSC Environmental Health and Safety Watchdogs since 2008 and is its current co-chair.

## Summer 'school' builds leaders



Jackie Elliot (L) and Debra Bergen (R) are both on the planning committee for this summer's Northeast Summer School for Union Women that will take place on Queens College campus from July 26-31.

Elliot is helping plan this year's summer school, which will be held in New York City for the first time in its nearly 40-year history. The PSC and CUNY's Murphy Institute for Worker Education and Labor Studies are co-sponsoring the conference with the United Association for Labor Educators. It will be held on the Queens College campus from July 26-31.

The conference is rooted in the traditions of early workers' education as exemplified by the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers of the 1920's and the WPA worker education programs of the 1930's. Encouraged by the rising feminist movement of the seventies, the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), and the United Association of Labor Educators

(UALE) launched the current school in 1975. Designed by a committee of labor educators, the residential school brings together rank and file women workers, officers and staff to strengthen their knowledge of the labor movement and develop their skills, enabling them to seek leadership positions within their unions. The PSC has supported membership attendance at the school for many years and many attendees are now in leadership positions in the union.

PSC member Sarah Hughes, who works at the Murphy Institute, will be teaching leadership skills and is one of the co-coordinators for this year's school. "It's really fun to watch people get excited about getting involved with their union," said Hughes, a former staff member in the PSC's Organizing Department. "You learn something each year, and you get grounded by other people's experiences."

Hughes says what's important about the school is that both facilitators and participants work together to create a collective experience, whether it's through formal classes or workshops or role playing. The around 100 attendees reflect on what kind of leaders they are and what kind of leadership is needed in the union movement, chart out power structures in their own organizations, set goals and think about women and labor in the broader political sphere.

PSC Director of Contract Enforcement Debra Bergen has par-

ticipated in the school for over 20 years. She first attended in 1987 as a student, and since then has taught workshops in leadership skills and grievance handling, and has twice been a co-coordinator.

"The skill-building workshops offered at the school, like leadership skills are important, especially if you have just become active in your union or were recently elected to union leadership," Bergen said. "But the evening activities are equally important, because that's where the sense of community and union solidarity is really developed." Bergen says this year's conference

sessions will address topics such as new immigrant organizing and the LGBT community in labor.

## BUILDING SKILLS

With its location in New York City, Bergen hopes to have a sizeable presence from the New York labor world and beyond. Bergen says the school is both a learning and a bonding experience. She attributes her own involvement and accomplishments in the labor movement to the mentors she has met and been influenced by at the school. Like Elliot, Bergen says the school gives her many reasons to keep coming back.

"It's the sisterhood," she told *Clarion*. "It's the opportunity to reconnect with our union sisters from other unions throughout the Northeast."

*For more information or to apply to the Northeast Summer School for Union Women, go to [sps.cuny.edu/events/id/15](http://sps.cuny.edu/events/id/15). The school will be held July 26-31 at Queens College.*

**Summer School for Union Women, July 26-31**

# City, UFT reach tentative contract deal

By PETER HOGNESS

The May 1 announcement of a tentative contract settlement between negotiators for New York City and the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) signaled that the massive logjam in municipal bargaining was beginning to break up. But it's still a large logjam, and the remaining 151 expired contracts will take some time to resolve.

The proposed agreement, which will be voted on by UFT members, provides raises totaling 18% over a nine-year period. Most of the raises, and most of the contract's retroactive pay, would be paid out toward the end.

## BARGAINING RETURNS

The tentative deal came after several years in which former mayor, Michael Bloomberg, refused to engage in real bargaining with the City's workforce, demanding harsh concessions and offering nothing in return. Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration's willingness to actually negotiate was greeted with some relief in municipal labor circles: "Bargaining Back in Style," said a headline in *The Chief*, New York City's civil service weekly.

Bringing the bargaining to a successful conclusion is another story. Bloomberg budgeted no money for City worker raises for several years running, leaving the new administration in a fiscal

## Transit workers settle, too

hole. The UFT deal – with a nine-year term that may be the longest in the City's history, according to *The Chief* – includes some unique features that would be hard to apply to other unions, so the pace of other settlements is likely to vary. Historically, CUNY has not settled the PSC contract until most of the other municipal contracts are complete, in part because of the complexity of CUNY funding.

"The big question is what the UFT settlement means for us," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "One thing it means for sure is that there will now be momentum to settle other contracts. And the PSC bargaining team is ready to act fast. But we want a contract that moves our members forward – economically and in other ways – and that may take several months to hammer out, given that CUNY negotiations involve New York State as well as New York City," Bowen said.

"The needs of our union are different from the needs of the UFT, and we will seek to craft an agreement that improves our salaries and lives at CUNY," she told *Clarion*. "As a union that has been active politically and whose members have shown we are willing to organize, the PSC is in a good position to make the most of this moment."

The last UFT contract expired in 2009, and the first two years of the new agreement would cover a period in which the "pattern" for other City union settlements was 4% increases each year. The settlement would give UFT members matching raises, but they will not start receiving the raises until much later: 2% would be added to members' paychecks each year for four years, starting in May 2015. Retroactive pay for the period starting in 2009 would be paid in installments between 2015 and 2020.

In addition, members would get a \$1,000 signing bonus, one year with a 0% raise, 1% raises for three years, and raises of 1.5%, 2.5% and 3% in the final three years. (A UFT chart lays out the complex schedule of these salary changes; see [tinyurl.com/UFT-chart-2009-2020](http://tinyurl.com/UFT-chart-2009-2020).)

## MUNICIPAL LABOR

The tentative deal is contingent on reaching a target of \$1.3 billion in reductions in the annual cost of health care for the City's workforce by four years from now. The Municipal Labor Committee (MLC), the coalition that negotiates health insurance for all municipal unions, including the PSC, identified proposed cost-savings that would not

increase expenses to members, and voted to approve the proposal. The MLC had argued for some years that the City could be more efficient in providing health coverage to its employees, but the Bloomberg administration had been unwilling to seriously negotiate over putting the resulting savings toward wages.

The City also agreed to increases in per capita welfare fund contributions for active and retired employees in each of the next four years, and to provide additional funds on a recurring basis thereafter. In addition, the MLC is committed to working with the City to shift certain very high-cost drugs, such as those for multiple sclerosis, to a City-funded program, and out of the individual welfare funds. Such a change would help thousands of New Yorkers coping with life-altering diseases.

The other development in public-worker contracts came with a tentative contract agreement for NYC transit workers. Negotiators for Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 announced the agreement April 17. It provides for raises totaling more than 8% over a five-year period, some increases in members' health-care costs and some improvements in benefits. New hires would now need five years, rather than the current three, to reach full rates of pay.

Perhaps the most notable feature of the TWU settlement was that it marked a shift away from the three

years of 0% wage increases that Gov. Cuomo had insisted on imposing on State employees in contract settlements with Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), Public Employees Federation (PEF) and UUP, the faculty and staff union at SUNY. (See *Clarion*, August 2011, November 2011, August 2013.)

In 2012, the *Daily News* reported that "Cuomo...made it clear he expects MTA workers to follow the example set by the state's two largest public employee unions – the CSEA and Public Employees Federation – which accepted contracts in 2011 that included no wage increases for three years."

## NO ZEROS

Asked about the change, State officials pointed to the MTA's savings from the provisions on health costs and new-hire pay. But those do not come close to paying for the proposed pact's wage increases: according to *The New York Times*, wages and benefits in the new agreement would be worth \$525 million more than before.

"The PSC has argued all along that there is money available to the State and the City to fund fair contracts," commented Bowen, "and we are pleased to see movement toward increased funding. The key to our success will be creating visible, organized, undeniable pressure from members. That's what has won every advance we have ever achieved."

# Taking steps to ensure timely adjunct pay

By CLARION STAFF

CUNY has instructed college administrations to make "every effort...to ensure that adjunct faculty are paid on time," and has circulated a list of "best practices" to ensure

timely adjunct paychecks.

The March 14 memo includes a measure that had been urged by the PSC: designating a specific staff member to track adjunct appointments "before and during the beginning of a semester," to "con-

tinuously monitor" the progress of paperwork and take action if hiring documents are not filed on time. "Specific attention must be directed to newly hired teaching adjuncts," the guidelines say.

Failure to pay adjunct faculty on time at the start of a semester has often been a problem at CUNY colleges (see *Clarion*, Nov. 2013, Oct. 2012, March 2009). Last year there was widespread anger at Queens College (QC) when more than a third of the school's 1,000 adjuncts got no paycheck in the first Fall pay period. About 100 were still unpaid after the second pay period, more than a month into the semester.

"I was furious that I was being put in this situation," Cameron Pearson, an adjunct lecturer in classics, said at the time; he had to borrow money from his sister to get by. He later received a 60% 'advance' on the wages he should have been paid, after he spoke with an administrator – but other unpaid adjuncts were never told that this emergency pay was available.

Pearson said the response of top college officials was evasive. "They blamed the problem on other peo-

ple," he told *Clarion* last October. "No one seemed to want to take responsibility." The PSC chapter at QC was persistent in pressing the issue, seeking detailed information on the numbers affected, the roots of the problem and what steps would be taken to avoid it in the future.

The new guidelines from CUNY central administration bear the imprint of the union's investigative work at QC. They detail a range of actions that college managers should take to identify and resolve administrative problems before they prevent timely pay. If a paycheck is going to be late, the guidelines are clear about the college's responsibilities:

"If there is a delay in payment, the affected adjunct faculty member should be notified of the delay and told when he/she may expect payment, including the availability of an emergency check under certain circumstances."

"Each of those steps is exactly what they did not do last year at Queens," Jonathan Buchsbaum, QC's PSC chapter chair, told *Clarion*. "I was very glad to see this memo from CUNY. The guidelines are exactly what I would have recommended."

Buchsbaum said he sees the memo as a response to the organized reaction by PSC members to the problems last Fall. "It's because people spoke out, and kept doing so, that CUNY recognized this was an administrative disaster. Now they are taking steps to do the right thing."

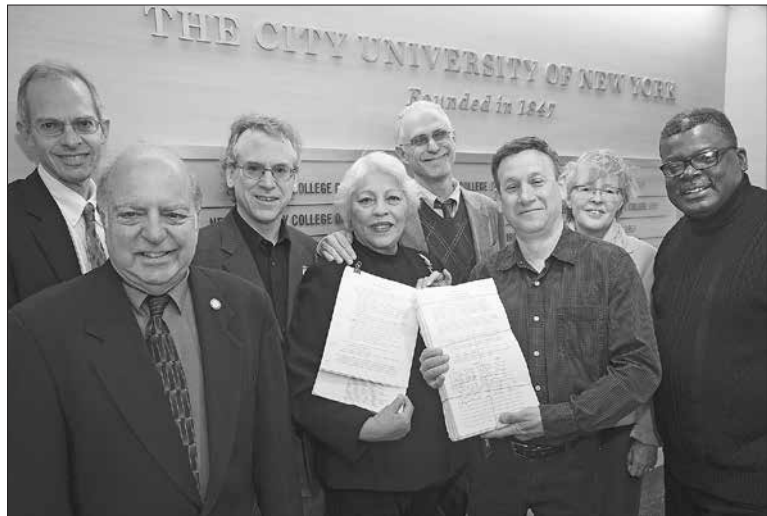
"The experience for adjuncts at Queens last year was horrible, inexcusable," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "But Jonathan and chapter activists would not give up; their focus on detail is a big part of why we have these guidelines. The designated staff person and other measures are a good start, but what CUNY really should do is agree to long-term appointments for adjuncts – then we wouldn't have this hiring chaos every semester."

## UNION ACTION

How well colleges implement the guidelines remains to be seen, Buchsbaum added. But here again, he suggested, action by union members can help: "PSC members might think about monitoring this at the local level, inquiring whether their campus is following these procedures and what has been done so far."

CUNY's first adjunct pay dates for the Fall 2014 semester will be September 12 at the community colleges and September 18 at the senior colleges.

## Timesheet petition a hit



2,521 signatures protesting CUNY's new rigid timesheets were delivered to CUNY Central on March 28. From left: Bob Nelson, Alan Pearlman, Steve London, Iris DeLutro, Mike Fabricant, Albert Sherman, Barbara Bowen, Paul Washington.

## Response to protest at Queens College

# PSC: 'A larger vision for CUNY'

By PETER HOGNESS

In testimony before a joint hearing of the City Council's higher education and finance committees, the PSC proposed a set of priorities for new investment in CUNY. These ideas represent "a larger vision for CUNY, rooted in Mayor Bill de Blasio's ambitious plans for the University," PSC President Barbara Bowen told the March 7 hearing.

## ENDING DISINVESTMENT

During last year's election campaign, de Blasio decried the "decades of State and City disinvestment" that had "undermined CUNY's historic role as a stepping-stone to the middle class for more than a generation of working-class youth."

In order "to put CUNY on a more solid budgetary footing," de Blasio called for the City to end its emphasis on tax breaks for large, well-connected corporations, and instead move to increase funding for CUNY and for small-business loans, as more effective tools for boosting employment. Such a shift, he said, would ultimately produce a \$150 million increase in the

City's CUNY funding. When fully implemented, this would boost City support for CUNY by more than 50%.

Bowen discussed several strategic priorities for additional support, which she said could realize de Blasio's vision of "restor[ing] CUNY as the central gateway to a quality education and a good job" in New York City:

- Increase City funding for community colleges to at least the per-student level of 2008;
- Hire 1,000 new full-time faculty and student-support staff in targeted programs to ensure that CUNY students graduate and find employment;
- Introduce new need-based student scholarships;
- Invest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs and programs in applied arts and sciences programs, preparing students for jobs that are in high demand;
- Support an ongoing task force on CUNY and economic inequality.

In real dollars, Bowen said, "City support for CUNY community colleges has fallen 18% since 2008-09"

per full-time-equivalent (FTE) student. "We cannot allow a university with a tradition of producing Rhodes Scholars and Nobel Prize winners to become a provider of 'good enough' degrees that provide 'just enough' education," she told councilmembers. "A priority for reinvestment in CUNY must be restoration of basic per-student funding."

"The key to CUNY's ability to address economic inequality is restoration of the ranks of full-time faculty and student-support staff," Bowen continued. That, she said, is why the PSC's proposal for 1,000 new faculty lines is crucial: "The difference between CUNY and better-funded public institutions comes down to this: students at CUNY do not have enough time with individual faculty."

## STUDENTS GAIN

CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs Initiative shows why this matters, she said: "Classes are capped at 25 students. Counselors have an average caseload of just 85 students. The results have been dramatic. The program's three-year graduation rate is 56%, well

over twice the rate for a comparison group in a recent study." This shows what investing in adequate numbers of full-time faculty and staff can do, Bowen said, and why it is something that CUNY students need.

"A substantial number of the new positions should be designated for existing part-time faculty, those most tested and experienced with CUNY students," Bowen told councilmembers. Hiring for these new lines should also include greater efforts by CUNY to hire people of color, she said, "especially in faculty positions."

Creating a needs-based scholarship program for CUNY, building on past council efforts, would be a critical step for access to college education, Bowen said. "It is a myth that financial aid protects every poor student's access when tuition increases," she emphasized. Most part-time students, students who exceed the limit of eight semesters and undocumented students cannot receive aid from New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). While TAP reform at the State level is much needed, she said, the City also has a role to play.

Programs that prepare students

for jobs in high-demand fields are important in a city with such stubborn inequalities, Bowen noted. "Such programs exist in the STEM fields and the applied science fields, such as Applied Math at City Tech, where graduates have a record of success in the marketplace," she said. They exist in other fields as well, she noted – for example, the translation program at Hunter College prepares students for work as medical interpreters. "Our astonishingly polyglot university could develop other programs that respond to the emerging needs of this diverse city," she suggested.

## "ENGINE OF EQUALITY"

Finally, she said, an ongoing task force on CUNY and economic inequality, with representatives from the City Council, the mayor's office, the CUNY administration, the PSC, CUNY student groups and faculty governance, could work to develop new ways "in which CUNY can be an engine of equality." This, Bowen concluded, "is a goal to which the PSC is proud to contribute."

At *Clarion* press time, the executive municipal budget proposal for 2014-2015 had not yet been released. Bowen told *Clarion* that the PSC hopes it will contain at least some first steps toward realizing this kind of larger vision for CUNY.

# Pre-K expansion helps PSC members

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

"We think of the union as an organization that shapes our life while we're at work," says Geoff Kurtz, assistant professor of political science at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC). "But through the PSC, we got paid parental leave in our contract and we worked to elect a mayor who expanded pre-K." That illustrates, he said, how union action "can make our whole lives more livable, more humane."

Kurtz benefited from paid parental leave when his son Lewis was born almost four years ago, and is looking forward to enrolling Lewis in a public pre-kindergarten class this fall.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

The PSC was an early supporter of Bill de Blasio's campaign for mayor, in large part because of his emphasis on increasing support for public education. The union backed Mayor de Blasio's fight for universal, full-day pre-K, which secured \$300 million in State funding this year. The city is now expanding pre-K programs throughout the city, with a goal of offering 53,000 full-day seats by this September. Next year, the goal is 73,000 slots – "enough for every four-year-old in the city," reported the *NY Daily News*.

More than 4,000 of the new pre-K slots will be in programs located in public schools and will be run by the New York City Department of Education. In April, Kurtz and his wife Alyson Campbell applied

## After gains in parental leave



Jade and David Michaels play with their two sons, Eric and Michael. The Michaels hope their son Eric, who turns four this year, will benefit from the pre-K expansion.

to two public pre-K schools near their home in Kensington, Brooklyn. Their son Lewis has a good chance of getting into one of them: his elder sister already attends the school, which is the zoned school for their neighborhood. The application deadline for the public school programs was April 23, with parents expected to hear back by early June.

Thousands more new slots will be available at community-based organizations across the city; fam-

ilies can apply to those programs individually. There are varying application deadlines and most slots are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. (A list of pre-K options at community organizations is online at [schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/PreK](http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/PreK). Parents can also text 877877 and enter "prek" and their ZIP code to find pre-K programs near them.)

PSC member Jade Michaels lives only a block from the Staten Island Broadway YMCA, which already of-

fers half-day public pre-K. Michaels hopes that her soon-to-be four-year-old son, Eric, will be able to attend full-day pre-K at the Y this fall. She visited the school and is excited about its focus on the whole child and its commitment to building a rich and nurturing environment. Michaels also says that a full-day program will allow her to go to work with ease and prepare her son for the routines of kindergarten.

"Entering kindergarten can be a shock for many five-year-olds," said Michaels, a Higher Education Assistant at Hunter College's School of Education. "By having Eric in [pre-K], he will have exposure to the classroom environment and routines so that when he starts kindergarten he will be prepared."

Michaels has two sons, and with both she was able to benefit from the paid parental leave provided under the PSC contract.

"When I became pregnant with the second son, I had so little sick leave and annual leave accrued. I was starting from scratch," Michaels told *Clarion*. "Paid parental leave really saved the day, since it guaranteed at least eight weeks of paid leave." The expansion of pre-K and paid time off for new parents offer additional support in the crucial early years of a child's development, PSC members say, and children and parents benefit.

Geoff Kurtz knows the reality of not having time off when a new child is born. When his first child was born, paid parental leave at CUNY did not exist. Kurtz remem-

bers how difficult it was to juggle work with the addition of their new daughter to the family. But Kurtz was able to spend eight weeks at home after his son was born.

"It made all the difference in the world to have time together as a family at this unique time. It's so precious," said Kurtz. "It was easier for my wife, recovering from childbirth and exhaustion. It was easier for our daughter, because she wasn't robbed of parental attention."

## PERMANENT PART OF CONTRACT

Originally a pilot program with a limited amount of funds, paid parental leave was made a permanent part of the PSC contract in December 2011. The change is one of several agreements the PSC has negotiated with CUNY since the expiration of the old contract (see *Clarion*, Dec. 2011).

City College Associate Professor Emily Greble has a son turning four next year. Greble used paid parental leave when he was born, and she is looking forward to enrolling him in pre-K next year when the rollout for universal full-day classes is set to happen.

"With the combination of more seats in more schools and the subsidizing of community groups, it seems like there are more opportunities, more possibilities," Greble told *Clarion*. "I feel more optimistic than I felt a year ago."

At present, Greble says, her neighborhood of Park Slope has "way too many people and way too few spots" for pre-K, leading to a lot of uncertainty for parents of young children. Greble says parents around her are hopeful that all that is about to change.

**Union action  
'makes our  
whole lives  
more livable.'**

Dave Sanders

# Ed faculty protest makes gains

By PETER HOGNESS

The PSC's statewide affiliate, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), has reached an agreement with the State Education Department to delay full implementation of the controversial new teacher certification exam (known as "edTPA," short for education teacher performance assessment) until June 30, 2015. The change came after months of organizing by education faculty at CUNY and SUNY, and it marked a significant change in course for New York State.

EdTPA is a multipart assessment of student teachers put forth as a requirement for teacher certification beginning May 1, 2014. The PSC, NYSUT and SUNY's United University Professions (UUP) have opposed edTPA, arguing that it effectively reduces teacher education to preparing for a high-stakes test. The unions also strongly objected to outsourcing the test's evaluation to Pearson, a for-profit corporation. EdTPA's rushed implementation, faculty said, left insufficient time to prepare, potentially excluding many effective new teachers from the profession.

The delay "provides an important safety net for aspiring teachers," a NYSUT statement said. The agreement provides that student teachers must still take the edTPA starting this spring, but offers the option of taking New York's current certification test, the Assessment of Teaching Skills-Written (ATS-W), to those who don't pass the edTPA.

## RUSHED EXAM

The agreement also calls for a task force of teacher education experts, with representation from PSC and UUP, to review and consider changes to edTPA going forward. In response to concerns about edTPA's steep \$300 fee, student teachers who are eligible for Pell grants will not be charged to take it.

"All told, these changes protect the student teachers who would be hurt first by edTPA, and give education faculty a formal structure for pressing their concerns about it," said PSC First Vice President Steve London. The changes were approved by the NYS Regents on April 29, after days of intense discussions between NYSUT, state legislators and the NY State Education Department (NYSED).

At a joint hearing the following day, the NY Assembly's Higher Education and Education committees heard testimony from education faculty from across the state. Noting that the PSC represents nearly 1,000 academics working in teacher education, London told legislators that "very little has roiled these professionals as much as edTPA."

"The 'education reform' movement has, in part, been sold using buzzwords to obfuscate practices that are unproven or, worse, suspect," said London. "Standards' is often the buzzword of choice. Who

## PSC wins a delay on edTPA



Priya Parmar, Peter Taubman and other PSC members testified in Albany.

can be against standards?" But often, he noted, this cry "is used as a shield to obscure serious examination of the programs in question. Such is the case with edTPA."

"EdTPA weds a high-stakes testing regime to a for-profit testing outfit,...outsourcing professional assessment and certification," argued London. "Most teacher educators with whom I have spoken say that this is actually a *reduction* in standards," and one which results in a narrowing of the teacher education curriculum.

A common theme at the hearing was the lack of research supporting New York's plans for edTPA. Ruth Powers Silverberg, associate professor of education at the College of Staten Island, described how, at the first meeting she attended about edTPA, she asked about the research it was based on, and was told she could find it on the website. "I went to the website, where I found eight articles. One of them was about edTPA. The other seven were on a variety of topics and all but one article had been authored by the creators of edTPA," Silverberg said. "None of the articles provided evidence of edTPA's ability to predict good teaching."

## RIGID RUBRICS

The rigid rubrics with which edTPA measures success force education faculty to spend their time "preparing our students for the equivalent of high-stakes tests," said Peter Taubman, professor of secondary education at Brooklyn College. "A colleague...who teaches our social studies methods courses...told me yesterday that she now spends all her class time focusing on the 15 rubrics and, as she put it, explaining 'their opaque language,' rather than on how to approach historical content," Taubman said. "She told me that she has to suspend analysis of primary sources and developing arguments and support-

different," she told the hearing. "This does not appear anywhere on edTPA. Teachers need skills to communicate and partner with parents. These do not appear anywhere on edTPA."

Arthur Salz, professor emeritus (and now an adjunct) in education at Queens College, voiced strong agreement. "EdTPA is an absolute misnomer," he told legislators. "It doesn't measure actual performance in teaching."

Many faculty strongly objected to the State's decision to entrust evaluation of edTPA results to Pearson, Inc. This move reflects "the deep penetration of corporations into education," Taubman told legislators. "By outsourcing assessment...edTPA explicitly severs the relationship between professor and student." With Pearson in charge, he said, edTPA results are evaluated by "someone not familiar with the students...someone who...may not even hold a doctorate in the field, someone hired by a large corporation to do piecemeal work." Yet this, he said, is somehow presented as raising standards.

"It has recently been in the news that Pearson protects itself from public scrutiny by contractually prohibiting education professionals from speaking about their concerns and views of test content developed by Pearson for the Common Core tests," London said in his testimony. This practice has now spread to CUNY: earlier this year, London said, "non-disclosure agreements [NDAs] were a required part of an edTPA training workshop."

## LACK OF TRANSPARENCY

David Gerwin, professor of social studies education at Queens College, described how he had been kicked out of an edTPA workshop at CUNY when he refused to sign the NDA. Those who did sign, he said, "were not even allowed to keep a copy of the NDA." While he would have been allowed to discuss workshop content with colleagues at Queens College, Gerwin said, signing would mean "I could not pick up the phone and call a colleague at SUNY Binghamton or Vanderbilt...or share an example in an email with board members of our professional association."

"I want to be specific about why this makes a difference," Gerwin continued. "The Regents Examinations are all publicly released. That makes it possible for scholars in the field to study them, to conduct research and to contribute to public discussion about how these high-stakes tests define what it means to know history...This kind of scholarly back-and-forth is essential for the public good."

London said that giving Pearson a central role in edTPA is a profound mistake. "Historically, 'gag orders' and lack of transparency are anathema to those concerned with real performance standards. Covering

up potential problems and silencing potential critics with such heavy-handed methods is unprofessional and does not place the interests of the students first."

"Simply put," London concluded, "Pearson is a bad actor, cannot be trusted, and should have no place in teacher assessment and certification."

Several faculty members said that there are some positive aspects to edTPA. The NYSUT resolution made this point also, stating, "edTPA contains important components of good teaching...and good practice, such as the use of portfolios and multi-dimensional assessments." But these pluses are lost, faculty said, in its use as a high-stakes exam.

Jack Zevin, a professor of education at Queens College, gave this example: "I am very much in favor of videos. Having a diagnostic video, where teachers study themselves - that's terrific. But going up for certification [based on one] 10 or 15-minute video...? That's only a sample of one, so this is not very scientific. Yet based on this one sample, you're going to make it or break it."

Salz contrasted the personal teaching observations by education faculty with edTPA's one-shot video component. "In our program, faculty observe student teaching repeatedly," he said. "It comes out to about 550 minutes of teaching - compare that to one 15-minute tape."

Gerwin and others said that economic differences can affect edTPA's video results. At wealthy private universities, Gerwin said, "they have hired videographers to take care of the video requirement.... Meanwhile, in the public education world, our students use iPhones to record their videos [and] other student or the college supervisor fill in as camera crew."

The delay in full implementation of edTPA was won through persistent efforts by education union activists. Education faculty in the PSC began organizing in late 2012, and held a series of meetings that resulted in the PSC taking a position against edTPA. Discussion and joint organizing with UUP colleagues at SUNY, led to a joint proposal for a NYSUT resolution, which was adopted at NYSUT's Representative Assembly at the beginning of April. Legislation to establish a moratorium on the start of edTPA began moving forward in the Assembly, sponsored by Higher Education Committee Chair Deborah Glick, and Ken LaValle, chair of the State Senate's higher ed committee, soon sponsored a companion bill. Shortly afterwards, the NYSED became willing to discuss changes in implementation of edTPA.

"Going forward, we need to keep the pressure on," said London. "While we will work with the task force and argue for the needed changes, we must also continue our own mobilization."

**'It's not teacher education, it's teacher automation.'**

# Queens College and civil rights

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

It was the summer of 1964 – nearly 50 years ago – when about a thousand civil rights activists went down to Mississippi for Freedom Summer.

During Spring semester, Queens College students involved with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) were working to recruit volunteers. In an effort dubbed Freedom Week, they organized speakers and fundraisers with the goal of supporting a summer campaign to register African Americans to vote and teach classes in “Freedom Schools” in Mississippi, then one of the most disenfranchised states in the union.

## THE SUMMER’S BEGINNINGS

Barbara Omolade, then a senior at Queens College, sat at one of the recruitment tables. She recalls Freedom Week as having a visible, but small presence on campus at the beginning – much like many organizing campaigns today. It was during this week in April 1964 that an anthropology student named Andrew Goodman signed up for Freedom Summer.

“He was a regular student and what he did was extra brave,” said Omolade, who years later was a faculty member at CCNY’s Center for Worker Education. “Everybody was aware that Mississippi was dangerous. People had been killed. Medgar Evers had been murdered [in Jackson, Mississippi] the year before.”

That June, at the beginning of the campaign, Goodman and two other civil rights workers, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner, did not return from a trip to investigate a church burning. While federal officials searched for the three missing men, other volunteers continued the movement’s work. The bodies of the three men were not discovered until August; investigators learned they had been lynched by members of the Ku Klux Klan. James Chaney was an African American civil rights worker from Mississippi; New Yorker Michael Schwerner had been working in Mississippi as a CORE field worker since the beginning of 1964; his wife, Rita Schwerner, was a Queens College student.

## FROM APATHY TO ACTIVISM

Outside the Queens College Rosenthal Library, the Chaney-Goodman-Schwerner Clock Tower stands as a memorial to the lives and work of the three young activists. Inside the library, documents chronicling the movement and the summer of 1964 are part of the Queens College Civil Rights Movement Archive, now six years old. The collection includes many fragments of history, donated mainly by QC alumni: Essays of Freedom School students on “What does freedom mean to me?”; letters home about a civil rights workers’ daily routines; an activist sign-in sheet with Andrew Goodman’s signature.

## Alumni and faculty look back 50 years



Mark Levy (far right), Queens College Class of 1964, talking with Mississippi high school students Lelia Jean Waterhouse, Roscoe Jones and Caroline Tartt (front row, left to right) outside the Meridian Freedom School in the summer of 1964.

Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner were just three of the many thousands who took part in the civil rights movement’s campaigns despite threats of violence. Among the students who came from up north to support the fight waged by African Americans in the South, Queens College was well represented.

Longtime SNCC worker Dorothy Zellner graduated from Queens College in January 1960. Zellner was an editor at the campus paper, *The Crown*. Decades later, she returned to Queens to work on press and publications at the CUNY School of Law. Zellner recalls Queens College in her student years as pretty apathetic.

“Compared to City College, it was dead as a doornail,” said Zellner. “But there must have been things percolating.”

Months after graduation, she went down to Miami to participate in a sit-in organized by CORE. For her, that marked the start of nearly 20 years of living and working in the civil rights movement in the South. By 1964, through SNCC, Zellner was recruiting students from Northeastern colleges to go to Mississippi that summer. After organizing in the South for a couple of years – getting arrested, being pulled over and patted down by police for no reason, being knocked on the head by a cop – Zellner knew that this would not be just a summer trip.

“We were very concerned about divas and nutcases,” said Zellner. “We wanted people who had respect for the black community, who would not do something crazy like wearing shorts to church. We didn’t want

prima donnas who said, ‘Oh okay, I’ll do this, but I won’t do that.’”

Mark Levy, Queens College ’64, remembers talking to Zellner about Freedom Summer while traveling on a commercial bus line between Massachusetts and New York. Levy had been reluctant to join other campaigns, but the way Zellner talked about Freedom Summer was different.

“[She] talked about it not as a bunch of white freedom riders going down South, but as a request by local Mississippians to ‘Come on down and help us,’” said Levy. “So we were not going down as missionaries. It was something that I could say ‘Yes’ to.”

The Queens College that Mark Levy attended was far from apathetic. In 1961, Levy recalls, the majority of students boycotted classes to protest a speaker ban that had blocked Communist Party Secretary Benjamin Davis, Malcolm X and William F. Buckley from addressing students.

## CAMPUS ACTIVITY

Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, Queens College ’63, was one of the students who participated in the strike, which according to the college’s student newspaper involved 70% of the student body.

“I’ll never forget. My speech teacher was going to have a test that day and I thought, ‘Oh well, I’ll fail this,’” said Terborg-Penn. But she did not join the walkout alone. “It turns out that for a class of 35 students, only three students showed up.”

Terborg-Penn, who was one of the roughly hundred African-American

students on campus at the time, recalls that there were no black professors when she first came to the college in 1959. When she graduated in 1963, there were three. Today Terborg-Penn, professor emerita of history at Morgan State, is a leading scholar of African American women’s history.

Terborg-Penn was a member of the campus chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In the early ’60s, the group organized an ongoing picket outside of a Manhattan Woolworth’s in solidarity with Southern sit-ins against segregation. In August 1963, the group traveled to DC for the March on Washington on a bus chartered by QC’s student government.

In the months before the historic march, close to 20 Queens College students traveled south to Prince Edward County in Virginia, where schools had been shut down in defiance of *Brown v. Board of Education*, to support the work of black churches in organizing their own classes.

“A lot of them did have the idea of saving black students in Virginia,” Terborg-Penn told *Clarion*. “I raised the question in the [NAACP] meeting. You’re going to send all these people, and they’re going to be in culture shock if they don’t live in a diverse community. They’re going to have problems.”

As training for the Virginia project, Terborg-Penn helped organize a tutoring program at her family’s church, St. Albans Congregational

Church in Jamaica, Queens. The following year, a number of activists from Queens College took part in Freedom Summer.

In the summer of 1964, Mark Levy and his former wife Betty Bollinger were among about ten current or former Queens College students who volunteered for the campaign in Mississippi. Their assignment was to teach at a Freedom School set up in a Baptist seminary in Meridian, Mississippi.

“The essence of the school was to ask questions.... What’s this world we want to make? And how do we go about changing the world?” said Levy. “None of us had absolute answers. We were discussing those questions with six-year-olds, eight-year-olds, 16-year-olds, and then 80-year-olds. It was very exciting.”

While Levy and Bollinger were in training in Ohio, the news broke that James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner had gone missing on June 21. Those still training, Levy recalls, felt strongly that they had “to keep on, keep on,” despite the risks.

Michael Schwerner’s brother, Steven Schwerner, was working in the Queens College counseling department at the time. “After the news came out, everybody I knew and people that I didn’t know rallied around me at Queens College,” Schwerner said. Their support was welcome, he recalls: “I felt like I wasn’t walking alone and being stared at. I was walking on campus and people were concerned.”

## NATIONAL ACTION

Rita Schwerner, Michael’s wife, was a Queens College student. In a statement to the press when the three men’s bodies were discovered, she put their deaths in sharp perspective: “It is only because my husband and Andrew Goodman were white that the national alarm has been sounded.”

Her words were born out by federal investigators: the search for Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman also unearthed the bodies of eight black Mississippians. They included Charles Eddie Moore, a student who had been expelled from college for taking part in civil rights protests, and 14-year-old Herbert Oarsby, who had been wearing a CORE T-shirt. None of eight men’s disappearances had attracted more than local attention. “The people who killed them have never been prosecuted,” Steven Schwerner noted in 2005.

But the national attention did help build the movement, spurring others to take action across the country. In one of many examples, seven Queens College students went on a fast on campus during the July 4 weekend, to raise awareness and money for the movement in Mississippi. That same week, the national reaction to the murders was seen as a significant factor in passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Levy came back to Queens College to teach in the SEEK program, from 1968-73. Like many Freedom Summer volunteers, he went on to become a lifelong activist, in his case working in the labor move-

Continued on page 9

Betty Bollinger Levy, Queens College Civil Rights Movement Archive

# Brooklyn College vote affirms faculty role

By PETER HOGNESS

In one of the most direct challenges to Pathways so far, full-time faculty of Brooklyn College (BC), voted for a resolution demanding that the Brooklyn College and CUNY administrations abide by decisions of local faculty in designing a new general education program at Brooklyn College. The April 8 vote came at the Stated Meeting of the Faculty, a special college-wide gathering held once each semester.

"Too often, the Stated Meeting has been a place just for speeches and announcements," said Ken Estey, assistant professor of political science at BC, reporting on the vote at the PSC Delegate Assembly two days later. "What we did was to reassert its governance role."

## STRONG TURNOUT

The vote on the resolution was 298 in favor, 9 opposed and 18 abstentions. The lopsided result reflected BC faculty members' deep discontent with the CUNY administration's imposition of the controversial Pathways general education program, which was opposed by 92% of full-time faculty voting in a CUNY-wide referendum a year ago.

Pathways, the resolution contends, "has significantly undermined the educational standards at Brooklyn College, including the elimination of science labs, speech, and foreign language requirements." It notes that according to Brooklyn College's governance plan, "it is the faculty who determine the college's curriculum and degree requirements."

With the school's Faculty Council now "undertaking a process to develop new general education requirements at Brooklyn College," the resolution urges BC's administration "to implement whatever general education requirements are adopted by the Faculty Council." It calls on CUNY's central administration "to respect the historic role of

## Another 'No' to Pathways



Elaine Brooks, co-chair of the Brooklyn College Faculty Council's general education committee, and PSC Chapter Chair Alex Vitale.

the faculty in developing curriculum" and do the same.

"I was impressed and pleased with the turnout," said Elaine Brooks of the Faculty Council's General Education Committee. "I have been at previous meetings where there was not a quorum, so it's a testament to the faculty's concern that they showed up to speak out."

One reason for the strong response, she said, is that her committee is currently in the midst of a review of Pathways and has been seeking faculty input throughout the semester. "We've been sending around surveys, asking people to come to Town Hall discussions, and so on, as part of this review. I've been at Brooklyn College a long time now, and each time that there's

been a review of the general education program, a lot of the faculty have been involved in articulating what they would like it to be," she told *Clarion*. "I think it's something the Brooklyn College faculty have taken pride in for the past 30-odd years. So this was on their mind, and it's to the faculty's credit that it motivated them to come."

## SPREADING THE WORD

Brooks, who is deputy chair of BC's English department, also gave kudos to organizing by the college's union chapter. "The PSC chapter really made an effort to encourage people to show up," she said. "Not to push them one way or the other, but mainly to make sure they were aware that there would be a vote and that it was

important that they attend."

Jocelyn Wills, an associate professor of history and a PSC activist, said the vote reflected the depth of faculty concern for the quality of BC's curriculum. "Even people who were on sabbatical, or were going to be out of town, made sure to attend," she said. "Anti-Pathways feeling is strong at Brooklyn College."

"The fact this was a nearly unanimous vote – I think that's a very important statement, which should be recognized by all," said Yeddyah Langsam, chair of the college's Faculty Council. "Curriculum is something that has always been in hands of the faculty at Brooklyn College, because we know what is best for our students."

"What our own administration will do next, I don't know," said Langsam, who is also chair of the college's computer and information science department. "I do know that we are going to continue to do our own, faculty-run evaluation of general education – not just Pathways, but general education as a whole. A draft report is due to be distributed around the end of the semester. It will be discussed over summer, and the Faculty Council will consider action on it in the Fall."

The resolution was introduced at the Stated Meeting by Alex Vitale, associate professor of sociology and PSC chapter chair. The goal, he said, was "to support the Faculty Council's general education development process" and "develop the best possible educational program for our students."

"Across the country faculty are experiencing attacks on their control over the intellectual direction of their programs and colleges," noted a union statement. "Too often administrators are using cost savings as an excuse to undermine educational standards. The faculty at Brooklyn College feel strongly that their daily interaction with students and in-depth knowledge of the

fields they work in best qualify them to make decisions about educational content."

The resolution declares that Brooklyn College faculty "have no confidence in the CUNY Board of Trustees as currently constituted to make curricular decisions."

"The current board of trustees is almost completely devoid of educators," the union statement explained. "It is comprised of political appointees, whose main qualification was political support for current and former mayors and governors, rather than their expertise in educational policy."

The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* described the vote as a move to "retake control of curriculum decision making" by the college's

faculty, sparked by opposition to both the content and process of the administration-imposed Pathways curriculum. "Professors complain that Pathways 'waters down' the core curriculum and is meant as a cost-cutting measure," the paper reported. "Faculty members say they were excluded from the planning stages of the program," which served "to 'consolidate power at the top.'"

## "CAN'T SIT BACK"

A college administration spokesperson acknowledged to the *Eagle* that "the president of Brooklyn College must transmit recommendations of the Faculty Council to the chancellor," but added that "the college is obligated to be guided by the broad framework of the Pathways initiative approved by the CUNY Board of Trustees."

That response highlighted that fact that "we can't just sit back" in the wake of the vote, Estey said. "We've got to follow up and really hold their feet to the fire." A thorough, independent review of Pathways' first year and continued expression of dissent are both key, he said.

"This vote is about much more than just Pathways or general education. It's ultimately about faculty power," Vitale wrote in a campus-wide email. "So far, in higher education we have avoided some of the worst abuses meted out on K-12 teachers, but there are many out there who would like to see us disempowered in the same way, through high-stakes testing, one-size-fits-all curriculum and the erosion of faculty governance."

PSC Treasurer Mike Fabricant called the overwhelming vote for the BC resolution "a remarkable victory." In discussion at the union's April Delegate Assembly, Fabricant said the timing was important: "With a new chancellor coming in, CUNY faculty need to make clear where we stand."

That sentiment seemed to have wider support. "Faculty governance leaders at other CUNY campuses have already approached us about replicating our strategy," Vitale said.

## LABOR IN BRIEF

### NYSUT leadership change

Karen Magee, a veteran elementary school teacher and president of the Harrison Association of Teachers, is NY State United Teachers' (NYSUT) new president. Magee and the "Revive NYSUT" slate of officers and at-large directors were elected this April by a majority vote at the union's annual Representative Assembly in New York City. Magee is the first woman elected president of NYSUT. She replaces Dick Iannuzzi, who served as president for nine years.

News reports detailing why PSC delegates supported the new leaders and more about the

new leadership team are online at *Capital New York* ([tinyurl.com/bowen-nysut](http://tinyurl.com/bowen-nysut)) and *The Journal News* ([tinyurl.com/nysut-change](http://tinyurl.com/nysut-change)).

### UPS rehires 250 workers fired after strike

In an about face, UPS reversed its dismissal of workers who took part in a spontaneous 90-minute strike in February. The workers were protesting the sudden firing of Jairo Reyes, a longtime UPS employee and union activist.

The unionized workers were based out of a Maspeth facility in Queens. The Atlanta-based company reversed its decision after public uproar over the mass firing. UPS announced in April that the terminations will be "reduced to two-week suspension[s] without pay."

A petition circulated by the drivers and the Working Families Party drew over 100,000 signatures, and was delivered to UPS at a March 21 rally led by NYC Public Advocate Letitia James.

"The drivers delivered their message to UPS about unfair treatment," said Teamsters Local 804 President Tim Sylvester. "Now every one of them will be back delivering packages."

### PSC hosts contingent academic conference

Activists fighting for better working conditions for contingent academics will converge at the 11th annual Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL) Conference. The two-day conference takes place in New York City this summer August 4-6.

The gathering will include activists from US, Mexico and Canada who are fighting for job security, livable wages, academic freedom and better working conditions for contingent academics, who include adjuncts and other precarious academic workers. This year's theme is "Shaping an Equitable and Democratic Future for Higher Education: The Way Forward."

Participants will work in groups, devising platforms in five areas: legal strategies, student issues, media advocacy, national agendas and bargaining.

This year's COCAL conference takes place at John Jay College, from August 4-6. Early registration is \$225; attendees registering after May 20 pay \$250. For further information, visit [www.cocalinternational.org](http://www.cocalinternational.org).

# Big Pharma's profits & the public interest

By CLARION STAFF

In the past several decades, advances in prescription medications have cured diseases that had been incurable, relieved pain that once had to be suffered, and controlled the symptoms of many chronic conditions. The increased efficacy of pharmaceuticals has kept people out of the hospital, living longer and living more active lives.

At the same time, while prescription drugs are marketed as simple cure-alls, they are not. Some drugs are easy to administer and have very few side effects; some are exactly the opposite, with the cost to the body potentially outweighing the benefit. Some don't work very well at all, or are effective for certain people but useless for others. Some drugs can be powerfully addictive, even when used as advised.

## BIG PHARMA

Yet studies have shown a majority of patients consider a visit to a physician to be a failure if it doesn't result in at least one prescription for their ailment. There is an ever-increasing belief that drugs exist to cure or relieve almost anything. That belief is magnified by \$27 billion a year in drug company advertising.

"Big Pharma" is not altruistic, of course. Drug companies are in business to generate the maximum possible profits, and that goal shapes their decisions on how money will be spent. A 2012 paper in the *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* concludes that pharmaceutical corporations spend \$19 dollars on marketing for every dollar they spend on research and development.

Profitability also determines how the research dollars themselves are used. Diseases that mainly affect the world's poor people, like malaria, get little attention. But chronic diseases like hypertension, common in wealthier countries, are high research priorities: a chronic condition can generate years or even decades of repeat business.

## SMALL DIFFERENCES

"[P]harmaceutical research and development turns out mostly minor variations on existing drugs," the *BMJ* authors note. "Sales from these drugs generate steady profits throughout the ups and downs of blockbuster coming off patents."

Of course, the drugs that get the heaviest promotion are those that are the most profitable – not the most effective.

To sell a drug to consumers, a company needs to demonstrate to the FDA that the product performs better than a placebo – but it may perform worse than drugs already on the market. An art form has developed in setting up clinical trials that can find some niche that otherwise identical medication can't claim, providing a technically accurate basis for competitive advertising claims.

You've seen countless ads for prescription drugs and they gener-

## Marketing vs. medicine



Jud Guiteau

ally look the same: healthy, attractive people enjoying their lives in sunny settings. Millions of dollars are spent to generate the impression that a given drug – still under patent and highly profitable – is superior to lower-cost alternatives, even when its actual advantages may be slim to nonexistent.

An enlightened 2004 exposé, *The Truth About the Drug Companies* by Marcia Angell (former editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*), provides some relevant examples. For instance, an eight-year study examined the effectiveness of three

types of hypertension drugs, comparing the newer calcium channel blockers and ACE inhibitors with one that is tried-and-true (a diuretic). Considerably cheaper, a diuretic such as hydrochlorothiazide worked as well or better in most cases with fewer side effects.

Angell's book details the failure of legislative efforts in the 1980s and 1990s to contain costs, with the National Institute of Health (NIH) in 1995 essentially abandoning its policy of insisting on "a reasonable relationship between the pricing of a licensed product, the public invest-

ment in that product and the health and safety needs of the public."

Note that drug ads, unlike those of almost any other industry, don't mention price or affordability. Most doctors are unaware of large cost differences among drugs that are identical or highly similar. (Meanwhile 90% of drug company advertising is directed at doctors.) There is essentially no limit on what can be charged the end user, with the result that drugs in the United States cost far more than in any other nation. Medicare is in fact banned by law from using its bargaining power to bring drug prices down.

The pricing for many new drugs, such as the large-molecule biologics dubbed 'specialty' medications, has been set at a level so high that companies don't even try to claim that it's all just to pay for research and development (R&D). The newest rationale for excessive pricing is that it factors in the savings in medical and hospital costs that can now be avoided!

## TIME FOR A CHANGE?

With some medications now sold – in the US reaching \$1,000 a pill, calls for a different model are growing. "Why can't we have a system that ensures that research and development is paid for without needing to recoup those costs through high prices – most of which is not plowed back into R&D?" asks Brook Baker, a professor at Northeastern University.

Baker "favors an idea gaining currency among critics called delinkage, in which governments support pharmaceutical R&D as a public good," reports National Public Radio. Drugmakers would "largely confine themselves to manufacturing, marketing and distribution" – with a likely drop in their outsized

**Spending  
\$27 billion  
a year  
on  
advertising**

profits. (Publicly funded research is already a key part of drug development today, but that is forgotten when drug prices are set.)

In the absence of serious reform, benefit providers like the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund must act to counter Big Pharma's predatory practices. That means ensuring, if an expensive medication is going to be prescribed, that the money is in fact providing particular benefit to the patient, and not just boosting drug company profits.

The Welfare Fund's policies, such as having a formulary of medications, aim to make sure that the Fund's limited resources are used effectively, so that your medical needs are met both today and in the future. The Fund recently announced some new rules toward that end (see below). Such controls on coverage can be an inconvenience, but they are a way to make sure that, at some point in the process, someone asks, "Is this expense necessary?"

When it comes to drug sales, we know this is a question that Big Pharma will never ask.

# A guide to WF drug plan changes

By LARRY MORGAN

Executive Director, PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund

In 2014, significant changes are being made to the prescription drug benefit administered by Express Scripts for the Welfare Fund, changes that will allow the Fund to continue to offer an affordable and reliable drug program, while helping you maintain your health and also reducing your out-of-pocket costs.

Be aware that most changes concern prescriptions for long-term, maintenance medications, not the occasional treatment of acute illness.

## FORMULARY CHANGES

As the Fund's pharmacy benefit manager, Express Scripts negotiates with drug manufacturers to provide the most cost-effective package available. This can lead to medications being dropped from the "formulary" – the list of medications covered by our Fund. When a drug is dropped, Express Scripts will offer one that is clinically equivalent and will inform doctors of the change. A prescription for medication dropped from the formulary can be filled if a member chooses to pay the full cost, but the

Welfare Fund does not recommend this: your doctor should be able to find an equivalent medication on the formulary at a lower cost to you.

Within the formulary there is a distinction between "preferred" and "non-preferred" medications. The difference may affect the amount of your co-payment, but only at "lower" costs. There is a 20% co-payment with a minimum of \$15 for a 30-day supply of a preferred drug and a 20% co-payment with a minimum of \$30 for a 30-day supply of a non-preferred drug. If a preferred drug and a non-preferred drug each cost \$50, the former would have a co-pay of \$15 and the latter would have a co-pay of \$30. However, if a preferred drug and a non-preferred drug each cost \$400, each would have the same \$80 co-pay.

Express Scripts has sent a targeted letter to every current user of a medication that will be changing status or coming off the formulary completely. Adequate time will be provided to adjust to any necessary changes.

## LIFTING THE CAP

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) prohibits health plans such as ours from imposing annual or lifetime

dollar maximums on essential benefits. As of July 1, the Welfare Fund's \$10,000 annual limit on drug coverage for active (employed) members will be removed. Now, instead of a member paying the entire cost of a prescription after the \$10,000 level, the co-pay will be 50%. If a member's annual drug spending by the Fund reaches \$15,000, the co-pay will become 80%. Given the Welfare Fund's financial limits, it is not possible to both remove the cap and maintain the customary 20% co-pay at the higher spend level without putting the entire program at risk.

Other measures the Fund trustees are taking to assure the best use of resources include the introduction of "prior authorization" and "step therapy" (see below).

## PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

This program involves a review of a few, select medications before dispensing, to ensure proper application and dosage. Express Scripts will notify you if and when a medication requires approval. If so, your doctor will need to contact Express Scripts before the prescription is filled again. You will be responsible for the full

cost of the medication unless your doctor gets approval. Once prior approval is granted, you are responsible only for the relevant co-pay.

## STEP THERAPY

This program asks you to use a lower-cost, clinical equivalent to the medication you have been taking. Express Scripts will notify you of alternatives and ask you to share this information with your doctor. If you and your doctor agree that the alternatives are not right for you, your doctor may request a coverage review. When appropriate, your doctor can request an override, allowing you to take the current medication without penalty.

The Fund is aware that the formulary changes, as well as the prior authorization and step therapy programs, can be inconvenient at the start, but these programs are essential to the Fund's ongoing efforts to maintain an affordable and reliable prescription drug benefit for you and your family.

More detailed information, contained in a letter sent to all Fund participants, is online at [tinyurl.com/WF-letter-March-2014](http://tinyurl.com/WF-letter-March-2014).

# 'Review Your Personnel File Week'

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

The PSC encourages all of its members – full-time and part-time teaching and non-teaching faculty, Higher Education Officers and College Lab Technicians series – to review their personal personnel file at least once a year. To help make this review an annual practice, the union launched Review Your Personnel File Week this year in the first full week of May.

When it comes to your career and your professional rights, accurate, complete and up-to-date information is crucial.

Article 19 of the contract states that you have two personnel files at the college: the “personal personnel” file and, the “administration” file. Under the union contract, you have the right to review your personal personnel file, not the administration file. (The administration file is available only to those involved in decisions on your reappointment, promotion, certification or tenure.)

Your personal personnel file should include your academic and

professional accomplishments at the college. Observation reports, annual evaluations, materials related to professional performance and documents submitted at your request are all included in the personal file.

## FILE CONTENTS

Decisions about reappointment, promotion, certification and tenure are made, in part, based on the contents of your personal personnel file – so this file plays an important part in your career. You can request copies of materials that are in your personal file, and it's a good idea to

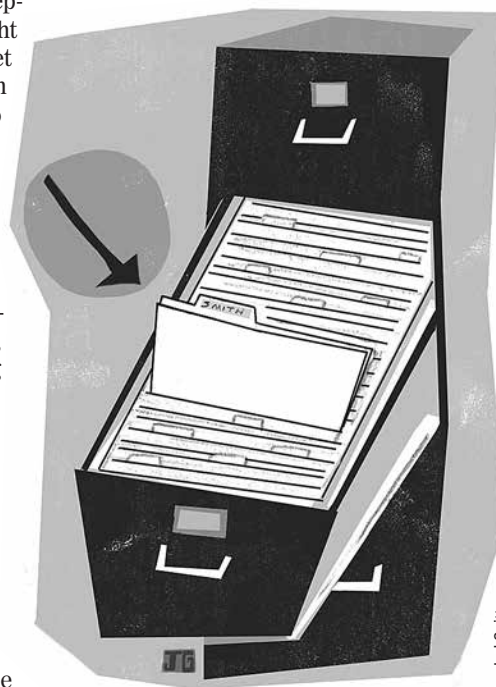
request a copy of any document that you don't already have for your own records.

Douglas Medina, associate director of Baruch College's honors program, checked his personal personnel file a few years ago and found some problems. “I discovered that previous evaluations were not in my file,” Medina told *Clarion*. “Also, there was a form in my file folder that belonged to someone else.”

This May, because of the union's reminder, Medina decided to check

his file again. “The HR representative responded right away and managed to get me an appointment within a few days. I was happy to see that my file had been updated as I'd requested. It's now complete, with all my evaluations and with different actions that have been taken related to my title,” said Medina. “I'm glad I checked, and I am encouraging colleagues at Baruch to do the same.”

What's in your personal personnel file should come as no surprise, since management is required by the contract to let you review, and initial materials before they are placed in your file. You have the right to rebut any document placed in your file. It's important that you've previously seen all the documents in your file, and that any notes that you made to those documents have been included. If



Jud Guiteau

your chapter grievance counselor. (More details on reviewing your personal personnel file are on the PSC website, at [tinyurl.com/PSC-Check-File-Details](http://tinyurl.com/PSC-Check-File-Details).)

How to find and arrange to review your personal personnel file varies depending on your title and your campus. Some college offices may require you to make an appointment; others may allow you immediate access. Some may have someone present while you look at your file – which is permissible as long as it doesn't interfere with your review in any way.

## FINDING YOUR FILE

Specifics on how to find your personal personnel file at your college are listed on the union website at [psc-cuny.org/our-rights/time-review-your-personnel-file](http://psc-cuny.org/our-rights/time-review-your-personnel-file). If you come across any concerns or problems contact your PSC chapter chair or chapter grievance counselor, or call the PSC office at 212-354-1252.

While Review your Personnel File Week is a good reminder to check your file each year, you can request to review your file at any time.

## Queens College & Freedom Summer

Continued from page 6

ment. Over the years, he says, he kept running into people connected to Queens College who had been active in the civil rights struggle. In 2008, he donated things he had saved from the movement to the college library, and that donation became a push to establish the school's civil rights archives. The archives now include around 35 collections, about 20 of them donated by alumni.

The QC volunteers saved things from daily life, often things that might have been thrown away by someone living in Mississippi. The student essays, the letters home, the incident reports, the Polaroids give a glimpse of their everyday experiences, while also revealing interior lives during a period of intensive self-reflection.

Ben Alexander, head of QC's special collections and archives, says

the materials capture “what happened when the television cameras were off and no one was looking.”

The archive has grown to include donations from others with little prior connection to Queens College. The family of SNCC activist James Forman donated his books and other documents, in part because they wanted them to have a home at a public university. (Forman's personal papers are at the Library of Congress.) Another Freedom Summer volunteer, Susan Nichols, recently donated items that had been hidden in her closet in Montana. These included phone logs of various movement field offices in the hours immediately after Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner had disappeared. (These documents and other documents can be viewed in the QC library this fall.)

## COMING TOGETHER

Norka Blackman-Richards, assistant director of Queens College's SEEK Program, uses the archive in teaching her English 162 class. She says students get excited by what they learn.

“They had no clue about Freedom Summer. They had no clue that students around their age went down South into these dangerous conditions,” Blackman-Richards said. “They're completely floored by the races coming together for this cause.”

Dean Savage, a professor of sociology at QC, has also donated materials to the archive. Savage went to Orangeburg, South Carolina, in 1965 to register black voters. At the time, he was busy with his graduate studies at Columbia University. “Even though I didn't have time,” he

said, “once there was an invitation, I felt that I had to go.”

Savage's materials recreate certain moments from his time in the South: transcripts of speeches given by civil rights leaders in Atlanta; press clippings about arrests in an Orangeburg sit-in; a snapshot of a Klansman walking past a burning cross at an openly announced Klan rally.

Ryan Hartley Smith, an adjunct lecturer at QC in graphic design, asks his students to take these pamphlets, buttons and photos from the past and relate them to today. In one of his classes, students went to the archive to choose an image or a slogan from the 1960s to relate to a current issue.

Smith's students showcased their work in an event billed as a “Mass Meeting,” this spring. The students' images were projected on a screen, people sang freedom songs and students listened to a panel discussion of activists involved in current and past struggles for equal rights.

The event was one of a series at QC this year, coordinated by Levy as part of a Civil Rights Anniversary Initiative sponsored by the college president's office, and which included discussions on how to teach about the civil rights movement and a special advance screening of the PBS documentary *Freedom Summer*, which airs nationally on June 24

## DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

At the “Mass Meeting” event, one of Smith's former students, Richard Ortega, moderated the panel discussion. Ortega, a graphic design major, has also spent time working with the archive. He says he's gained a fuller understand-

ing of the movement. “It's not just something in the history books,” he said. “It feels real.”

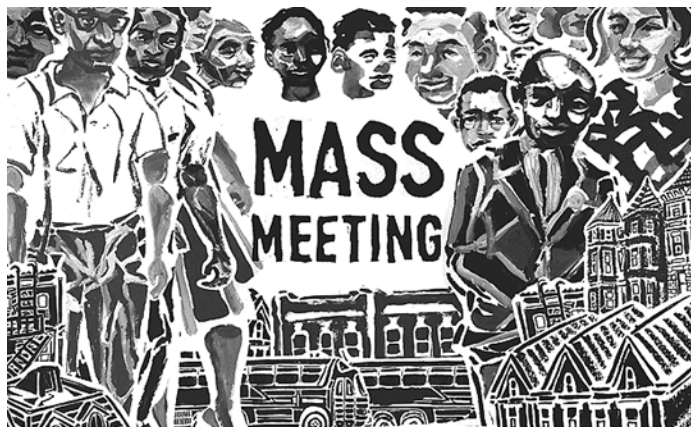
“In our own way, at Queens College, we try to make a difference,” added Ortega, who is involved in organizing for LGBT and immigrant rights. “What I learned from talking to all these activists is that nothing happens overnight.”

## NYSUT journal on P-12 practice

*Educator's Voice* has called for papers on the theme of “Critical Thinking and Problem Solving for the 21st Century Learner.” The journal, focused on P-12 education, is published by New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and aims to provide “research-based, field-tested strategies that have been used by experienced educators to help schools close achievement gaps and ensure all students have a solid academic foundation.” Contributions from higher education faculty analyzing P-12 education are welcome.

The call for the next issue requests article proposals on “investigations into ways in which learning that is authentic, collaborative and hands-on can capture the essence of real-world tasks and prepare students for a global society defined by fast communications, ongoing change and increasing diversity.” Examples of topic areas range from STEM education to inquiry-based learning to environmental literacy.

The deadline for proposals is June 9. More details, as well as guidelines and submission forms, are online at [tinyurl.com/loalggq6](http://tinyurl.com/loalggq6).



A concert & discussion on Queens College & the Civil Rights Movement  
GODWIN-TERNBACH MUSEUM, SPRING, 2014



Ryan Hartley Smith

Politics & culture: poster for the April 3 “Mass Meeting” event this spring.

# START-UP NY comes to CUNY

By SHOMIAL AHMAD, PETER HOGNESS  
& NEIL deMAUSE

## Tax giveaway plan is slammed

“Tax-Free New York” was the program’s original title when it was first proposed by Governor Andrew Cuomo a year ago. Soon rebranded as “START-UP NY,” its terms are extraordinarily generous. Using space at SUNY and CUNY college campuses, participating businesses would pay no state or local taxes at all for ten years – no payment of sales, business or property taxes. Their employees would pay no state or local income tax for five years, and for the next five years, individuals would pay no taxes on income of up to \$200,000.

START-UP NY was approved by the Legislature last summer, and slick 30-second commercials promoting it were aired during the NFL playoffs. The TV ads showed hard-working people in high-tech jobs, from corporate offices to factory floors. But many economic development experts are skeptical about the program’s future results, and what it will mean for CUNY is only starting to be defined.

Marilyn Rubin, professor of public management at John Jay College, describes the tax breaks in START-UP NY as “sweeping” and “unusual.”

“I was very surprised when I saw ‘no taxes,’” said Rubin. “I haven’t seen anything quite as expansive anywhere, certainly not in such a wide geographic area.”

### UNSUPPORTED BY RESEARCH

Rubin is co-author of a report on business tax credits prepared for the New York State Tax Reform and Fairness Commission last November. There is “no conclusive evidence from research studies conducted since the mid-1950s to show that business tax incentives have an impact on net economic gains to the states,” the report concluded. “Nor is there conclusive evidence from the research that taxes, in general, have an impact on business location and expansion decisions.... Other costs of doing business generally take precedence over taxes in [these] decisions.”

“Any program that gives a 100% tax break is not a good idea,” says Josh Kellerman, a policy and research analyst with ALIGN (Alliance for a Greater New York). “It just seems overboard.” In business location decisions, factors like infrastructure quality or the education of the workforce are far more important than taxes, he told *Clarion*. “Those are funded through tax revenue,” he noted.

ALIGN is not against all tax credits, said Kellerman. “Strategically targeted, transparent subsidies” have a role to play, he said – but clear standards are key. [Last year ALIGN examined 15 New York incentive programs, and found that only three set any specific performance goals. “While ostensibly intended for job creation, the vast majority of programs do not require the creation of a single job,” it concluded.

START-UP NY rules do require new job creation and impose some penalties if job targets are not met. But the program’s outreach materials note that “there is no minimum requirement for the number of net new jobs that must be created.”

Leslie Whatley, a former Morgan Stanley executive whom Cuomo appointed to head START-UP NY in October, says the governor’s office hopes the program will create 10,000 new jobs per year, though she readily acknowledges that’s only an estimate. “We are taking land

of lost revenue may well be higher. Local governments will lose the associated property tax revenue that those businesses otherwise would have paid. The State will not reimburse them for this loss, which could affect some of the poorest school districts in the state.

“The governor’s START-UP NY program creates more loopholes at a time when the state can least afford it,” Andy Pallotta, executive vice president of NY State United Teachers, said last year. “It would greatly diminish much-needed rev-



Gov. Andrew Cuomo's START-UP NY gives ten tax-free years to businesses.

and space that is currently underutilized and trying to put business in it,” said Whatley. “So what we’re counting on is that we’re going to create an economic multiplier with excess capacity that’s in the system that creates a net positive.”

Joining campuses and startups together on business development and research can create “a very powerful economic engine,” Whatley says. “The fundamental of the knowledge economy is a partnership between business and academia.”

While the ads and press releases for START-UP NY emphasize high-tech employment, Whatley’s own past experience is not in the technology sector. “Ms. Whatley has had an accomplished career in real estate,” said the press release from the governor’s office announcing her appointment. “Most recently she served as Global Head of Corporate real estate at Morgan Stanley. Prior to that she was the Global Head of Corporate Real Estate at JPMorgan Chase.”

The governor’s office has estimated that the state will lose \$323 million in tax revenue over the next three years thanks to companies that would have located in New York anyway, but which will now take advantage of the new tax-free zones; other experts say the amount

enues that could be going to schools, four-year campuses and community colleges. It is bad policy.”

Another criticism leveled at START-UP NY has been its potential to undercut existing employers in New York. It’s a legitimate concern, says Ron Deutsch of the progressive tax reform group New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness: “You could have a local business that’s not expanding, but doing okay; then you have a competitor coming in from another state setting up a similar business. And not only do you now have to compete with someone who’s not paying any taxes, but you, as an existing business, are subsidizing them to pay no taxes.”

START-UP NY’s regulations say that businesses “that would compete with other businesses in the same community” cannot participate. However, nothing in the rules would keep a START-UP NY participant in Rochester from using its tax-free status to undercut an existing business in Syracuse, and the issue is hard to define with precision. More clear-cut are START-UP NY rules excluding businesses such as restaurants, medical practices or real estate brokers – types of businesses that, by their nature, must be locally based and cannot “run away.”

“We have many reasons to be skeptical, because past economic development programs have been spotty in terms of what they’ve delivered to the public,” comments Elizabeth Bird, a research analyst with Good Jobs New York. “Generally the research shows that it’s a much better investment to use government resources to strengthen infrastructure, educate the workforce and invest in quality services.”

Many economic development specialists say that there are strong arguments for colleges and universities to play host to “business incubators,” that can help locally based small businesses get off the ground. Young companies can tap faculty expertise, they say, while students get real-world experience and connections for future employment. “Campus incubators are growing,” *The New York Times* reported in 2012. “New data from the National Business Incubation Association show that about one-third of the 1,250 business incubators in the United States are at universities [in 2012], up from one-fifth in 2006.”

But when experts list the factors that make a business incubator succeed or fail, the key elements they cite are mentorship, access to capital and shared services. Tax incentives don’t tend to come up. A 2013 *Forbes* profile of “The 10 Hottest Startup Incubators” notes that they are “typically attached to universities,” but does not mention tax incentives once. A list of “best practices” from the National Business Incubator Association also says nothing about taxes.

“Business incubators are especially good for businesses that are just trying to get off the ground,” says ALIGN’s Kellerman. “Low-cost rent, shared space – these are great ideas.” By making it easier for a business to pay its initial start-up costs, he said, they allow the fledgling company to put more of its capital toward production. In contrast, with START-UP NY the companies operating on the largest scale – the ones with the largest profits, or that make the most purchases – will reap the biggest financial rewards from their tax-free status. Most of START-UP NY’s cost to the public may thus be spent helping companies that are already well-established.

### ON CUNY CAMPUSES

START-UP NY actually stands for SUNY Tax-free Areas to Revitalize and Transform Upstate NY – and as the name suggests, it was designed primarily with SUNY in mind. But it also includes one CUNY school in each borough: Bronx Community College, City College, Medgar Evers College, York College and the College of Staten Island.

To participate in START-UP NY, each CUNY college must submit an overall plan for approval by the State. These campus plans must include: a description of the space or land “proposed for designation as

a Tax-Free NY Area”; the type of businesses that could be included; how this plan serves the academic mission of the school; and the process that will be used to select businesses for participation. Companies that then apply must be approved by both the college and the State.

In January, Bronx Community College President Carole Berotte Joseph noted that BCC offers a degree program in biotechnology, “and yet we don’t have a lot of biotech companies in the Bronx. We have students who are going through this program who will need internships, who will need jobs, so it would be an excellent match.”

### ‘A 100% tax break is not a good idea.’

But while the SUNY schools that were the original target of START-UP NY often have open land or space, CUNY campuses are more often bursting at the seams. When Berotte Joseph made an announcement about START-UP NY at a College Senate meeting this semester, Sharon Persinger, BCC’s PSC chapter chair, says the lack of available space was raised as an issue. “We’re pretty much filled to capacity. We continue to use classrooms in basements without windows,” said Persinger. “I don’t know how a company that needs be here from 9 to 5 will fit in.”

### NO FUNDING

Joseph says her school has been “looking at spaces adjacent to the college”; the Medgar Evers College administration said earlier this year it hopes to rent the vacant Bedford Union Armory, slated for redevelopment, to provide startup space. While START-UP NY includes no funding for rented space, colleges could try to cover such costs by the rent they charge to participating businesses. This would make it more difficult, however, to offer the kind of low-cost rent that business incubators often provide.

START-UP NY rules state that “no academic programs, administrative programs, offices, housing facilities, dining facilities, athletic facilities, or any other facility, space or program that actively serves students, faculty or staff may be closed or relocated in order to create vacant land or space to be utilized for this program.”

City College is still considering what spaces on campus it might use for the program. PSC Chapter Chair Alan Feigenberg says the college administration is expected to have a proposed plan ready for review in May. The proposal will be presented to CCNY’s Faculty Senate, the campus PSC chapter, student government, community groups and local officials – all of whom will have a chance to review and comment before the proposal is forwarded goes to CUNY central administration.

The process hasn’t been as transparent at York College. Delegate Assembly Member Scott Sheidlower said York College President Marcia Keizs announced at a recent College Senate meeting that York’s application has been sent to Empire State Development, without any review from the college community. START-UP NY regulations require sharing the campus plan with a college’s faculty

Continued on page 11

## MEDIA'S SUDDEN INTEREST

## Adjuncts get attention

By JANINE JACKSON

Adjunct professors and their struggles seem to have made the big time. *The New York Times* has issued editorial alarm about the “college faculty crisis,” pointing to increased reliance on “abysmally paid” adjuncts, and carried a news story featuring a dedicated instructor – a PSC member – who sometimes “lies sleepless in the dark, wondering how long he will be able to afford the academic life.”

Adjuncts were described as leading lives of “Dickensian misery” in the *Los Angeles Times*, and as “an undervalued, invisible population,” in the *Boston Globe*. *The Atlantic* reported on adjunct faculty members’ determination to challenge their “unjust working conditions.”

A profile by the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*’s Maura Lerner of an adjunct with “no benefits, no job security or even a desk to call her own,” was reprinted under headlines from “Teaching College Courses for a Barista’s Pay,” to “Part-Time Professors Revolt.”

Disgruntled adjuncts talked about living on food stamps or leaving teaching altogether in a *PBS NewsHour* segment on the

## START-UP NY

Continued from page 10

senate, union representatives and student government at least 30 days before it is submitted to the state.

“Telling us about it is not consulting us,” said Sheidlower, who raised this concern at a heated labor-management meeting in May. “Consulting is taking a program and asking for feedback, not notifying us.”

When asked by *Clarion* about the lack of notice, York officials said the plan had not been officially submitted, but only shared with the State to seek guidance. The same day that *Clarion* inquired, York’s administration shared its draft plan with the college’s Faculty Caucus for the first time. It did not share the plan with the union, as START-UP NY regulations equally require.

In an emailed statement, York’s administration said it is working with its partners on finalizing a proposal. “Once the York College final draft is ready,” the email stated, “we will submit it to our stakeholder groups for the requisite 30-day review.”

At the College of Staten Island, PSC Chapter Chair George Sanchez recommended that the college include a PSC representative on its START-UP NY advisory committee.

“START-UP NY is bad policy for New York State,” said PSC First Vice President Steve London. “Instead of handing so much revenue over to private interests and hoping for the best, it would make much more sense to invest those funds in the public services that can strengthen New York’s economy in lasting ways.”

At the campus level, London said, it’s essential that any plan, and any application by individual businesses, receive thorough, transparent discussion by the entire college community. “No enterprise that wants to offer real benefits to students, faculty and staff should fear such scrutiny,” London said.

Some portions of this article previously published in Neil deMause’s article “Launch Sequence,” in the January 8 Village Voice.



There's been a wave of media coverage on adjuncts' struggles. But is it enough?

issue the show’s correspondent insisted on labeling “the adjunctivitis epidemic.”

As the precarious situation of adjuncts is not new, one might wonder what has prompted this recent groundswell of media attention. It appears to be due to a confluence of union activism on campuses and official pronouncements on the issue, like a January report from House Committee staff, thrown into relief by “human interest” stories like that of Mary Margaret Vojtko, who died destitute in 2013 after being dismissed without pension or severance from the university where she’d taught French part-time for 25 years.

Vojtko’s story “resonated for a lot of people,” as Maria Maisto of adjunct advocates New Faculty Majority told *The New York Times*, “as a symbol of how they could end up themselves.”

But if big media are reporting on adjuncts – for the moment – is this the sort of coverage that can inspire real-world change?

With a few exceptions (like the *Denver Post* editorial arguing that while area adjuncts’ pay is “anything but lavish,” efforts to rectify that would damage “the ability of college officials to manage their workforce intelligently”), most media coverage certainly seems sympathetic to adjuncts’ struggles, including their moves to unionize.

Indeed, numerous stories are cast in what might be called “plight” mode, highlighting the difficulties of working out of cars, unpaid class preparation time, classes canceled at the last minute – and the love of the job that drives teachers nonetheless.

As with many other labor stories, the media falls short not so much by failing to show the humanity of struggling actors, but by

largely sidestepping the corollary interrogation of the powerful forces driving the plot.

Against the backdrop of undeniably growing inequality, one reason elite journalists may have picked up on this story is that, while they likely don’t know any fast-food workers, they do know a PhD or two who are hoping, or struggling, to make a living teaching college. That these workers should be treated like...*like workers!*...may have some particular resonance for reporters in downsizing corporate media.

Much of the coverage, though, frames adjuncts’ stories as unique or somehow “ironic,” not part of the broader story of what columnist Jim Hightower called “the corporate culture of a contingent workforce” that’s seeing “highly educated, fully credentialed professors...become part of America’s fast-growing army of the working poor.” This idea – that adjuncts’ fates are tied to broader class and political conflicts, or to universities’ adoption of a corporate model, too often goes unmentioned.

## CORPORATE MODEL

Most articles note adjuncts’ low pay, for example, but few note it alongside the multi-million dollar paychecks and perks given to college presidents, as history professor Lawrence Wittner did at Huffington Post, or point out, as law professor Glenn Harlan Reynolds did in an op-ed in Alabama’s *Montgomery Advertiser*, that colleges’ outsourcing philosophy is selectively employed: “Who ever heard of an ‘adjunct administrator?’”

Outlets like *USA Today* point to an ongoing nationwide “push for better pay, greater job security and access to health insurance,” but few make clear, as did Baltimore’s

*City Paper*, that the crisis is “not a product of the economic crash,” but dates back at least “three decades,” or that it’s “not limited to those who teach commonly denigrated subjects like art and literature,” but extends to “engineering – a field for which industry hacks are constantly claiming they can’t find qualified workers.”

In fact, the growth in universities’ reliance on exploiting adjunct labor parallels the dramatic decline in state support for higher education from coast to coast. State funding for public higher education stood at \$10.58 per \$1,000 of state personal income in fiscal 1976. By fiscal 2011, that figure had dropped to \$6.30 per \$1,000, adding up to a 40% decline.

“Disinvestment...led to radical changes in the academic workforce,” noted a 2012 report from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), with “colleges...increasingly relying on contingent faculty to do the bulk of undergraduate teaching.” In 1971, more the three-quarters of US university faculty were still full-time – but by 2011, it was just 50%, according to The Century Fund. And many of the full-timers also lack job security: contingent faculty, both part-time and full-time, “now comprise more than 70% of the instructional corps,” the AFT reports.

With three-quarters of US college students enrolled in public colleges and universities, winning equity for adjuncts will require a restoration of the billions that have been cut from public institutions’ budgets. That in turn means reversing the wave of tax cuts favoring the rich, which swept the US in the years after the victory of California’s anti-tax Proposition 13 in 1978.

“The decline in funding for higher education is not simply a matter of not enough money; it is a matter of political will,” argues the AFT. “Decision-makers have been unwilling to make the funding of higher education a priority in their states.”

Mainstream outlets rarely put things so bluntly, or ask decision-makers directly about these bigger choices. The *NewsHour* segment did include some Q&A with a representative of the American Council of Education, Terry Hartle. But rather than question Hartle’s line that more than 70% of college teachers are contingent because colleges are “economic enterprises that need to stay in business,” or challenge remarks like, “Nobody forces someone to become an adjunct,” the PBS correspondent simply paraphrased them: “Look, says Hartle, bottom line, schools have no choice.”

This is just a 21st century version of Margaret Thatcher’s declaration that “There is no alternative” to the requirements of austerity. And without a willingness to challenge that easy assumption, all the human interest stories in the world will do little to challenge the structures of adjunct exploitation.

It is undeniably refreshing to see some overdue press attention to the injustices that have confronted adjunct faculty for more than a generation. But it is also striking to see so many articles that connect so few of the dots.

Janine Jackson is program director at Fairness Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR).

## When does coverage lead to change?

## Clarion MAY 2014

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## Share your thoughts on Pathways

With the academic year coming to a close, now's the time to record your experiences with Pathways while they're still fresh in your mind. How has it affected your classroom, your students, your department's curriculum? Specific examples are key in detailing the detrimental effects it has had on CUNY students.

At a recent City Council hearing, CUNY faculty described how Pathways has reduced offerings

for upper-level math courses at City Tech, cut a quarter of content from a history course at the College of Staten Island and slashed science requirements almost in half at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. It will take many such examples to show Pathways' full effect across the CUNY system – in the classroom, in advising and during enrollment. Email your response to [sdelgiorno@psc-mail.org](mailto:sdelgiorno@psc-mail.org) before semester's end.

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# Push for trustee selection reform

By SHOMIAL AHMAD & PETER HOGNESS

One of Governor Andrew Cuomo's nominees to the CUNY Board of Trustees was confirmed by the State Senate at the beginning of May. And a number of mayoral appointees to the board will soon see their terms expire, opening seats for Mayor Bill de Blasio to fill.

This turnover on the board has again put a spotlight on the process by which CUNY trustees are chosen – and the PSC is renewing its calls for reform.

### EXPERIENCE NOT REQUIRED

"CUNY needs trustees who have deep experience with the issues of public higher education," PSC President Barbara Bowen told *Clarion*. "CUNY trustees should be known as intellectual leaders and independent thinkers on university policy questions."

That is not the case today.

Current law provides that ten

## Bill calls for review panel

CUNY trustees shall be appointed by the governor and five by the mayor, subject to State Senate confirmation. (Two others serve *ex officio*.) A certain number of trustees must be CUNY alumni, and there must be representatives from each borough. Yet, nowhere in the law is higher education experience required.

"Too often governors and mayors have appointed their senior staff to the boards of SUNY and CUNY as a means of controlling a bloc of votes on those boards, preferring toadies to trustees of higher education in the truest sense of the word," Assemblymember Rory Lancman told the *Queens Courier* in 2010.

"The current board of trustees is almost completely devoid of educators," the PSC's Brooklyn College chapter noted this April. "It is comprised of political appointees,

whose main qualification was political support for current and former mayors and governors, rather than expertise in educational policy." (See page 7.)

The PSC supports legislation that would change that. A current bill in the Assembly (A1669) and a companion bill in the State Senate (S4466) would create a blue-ribbon review panel to "recruit and screen trustee appointments" to recommend to the governor and the mayor, similar to the screening panels that currently exist for judicial nominations. Under this bill, potential nominees to the CUNY Board of Trustees would be recommended based on their professional expertise, demonstrated commitment to public higher education, and "actual and perceived" independence from political interference.

**Needed: Trustees with higher ed experience.**

### RUBBER STAMP

"Over the years, many trustee appointments have been made based on political alliances rather than qualifications and real connections to public higher education," the bill stated in its justification. "This has created at times real and potential conflicts of interest and political influence that have interfered with the ability of trustees to responsibly carry out their duties."

A more modest proposal, sponsored by Lancman and supported by the PSC, was passed by both the Assembly and State Senate in 2010: it required that CUNY or SUNY trustees not be direct employees of either the governor or mayor. That bill was vetoed by then-Governor David Paterson.

The lack of expertise has led to a decline in CUNY trustees' independence, with the board increasingly acting as a rubber stamp. In

## A CUNY Trustees' Index

Number of appointed CUNY trustee positions. . . . .	15
Number of current appointed trustees who have a PhD . . . . .	0
Number who have made their living by working at a university. . . . .	2
Number who have published an article on higher education policy in a peer-reviewed journal. . . . .	1
Number who have made campaign donations to the governor or mayor who appointed them. . . . .	7
Length of time since a labor leader last served on the CUNY Board of Trustees . . . . .	25 years
In the past 25 years, number of trustees who have been corporate executives. . . . .	24
Proportion of current appointed trustees who have been corporate executives . . . . .	53%
Proportion of current appointed trustees who have been corporate lawyers . . . . .	27%

Above figures include all CUNY trustees appointed by a governor or mayor. Heads of the University Student Senate (USS) and University Faculty Senate (UFS) who serve *ex officio* (the latter without a vote) are not included.

Sources include Bingham.com, Businessweek.com, CUNY.edu, Google Scholar, International Journal of Higher Education Leadership and Management, JSTOR, MacAndrewsandForbes.com, NYS Board of Elections, OpenSecrets.org, PittaBishop.com, among others.



Jud Guitteau

past decades, critical issues like open admissions or the fate of remedial instruction would find trustees with strongly held positions on either side, and several who argued for views different from CUNY's central administration. Today the board's decisions are typically unanimous – even on a contentious issue like Pathways, where faculty opinion has been overwhelmingly on the opposite side.

The need to reform the trustee selection process was highlighted

in a report from the New York City Bar Association more than decade ago: CUNY trustees should not "serve as a rubber stamp for the chancellor or any elected official," the report said. "We recommend in the strongest terms the adoption of legislation eliminating conflicts of interests and establishing a nominating/screening panel."

Fourteen years later, with a new wave of trustee appointments about to happen, the PSC says this is an idea whose time has come.