Clarion

NEWSPAPER OF THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS / CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK — MAY 2018

CAMPUS

Sticking to the union

100% of LaGuardia FT faculty sign union cards.

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Ari Paul

PSC TO ALBANY

WE NEED $7K!

Nearly 100 PSC activists descended on the state capital to build support for the additional funding that will be needed to raise adjunct pay to $7,000 per course. "Wage justice for CUNY adjuncts, educational justice for CUNY students," they demand at meetings and a rally, shown here with PSC President Barbara Bowen.

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CONTRACT

New director of enforcement

Renee Lasher has been helping faculty and staff with their grievances for several years. Now she takes the helm as the PSC's director of contract enforcement. PAGE 4

SOLIDARITY

Justice for CUNY food workers

A new report shows the terrible working conditions at many CUNY cafeterias. With help from the PSC and students, workers are fighting back. PAGE 5

STUDENTS

Activists blast fee reform

The student movement against activity fee reform has forced the CUNY Board of Trustees to relent slightly, but activists still see their rights at risk. PAGE 7

TRANSPARENCY

Union audit released

Independent auditors have completed their annual review of the financial statements of the PSC. See the full auditors' report. PAGES 10-11

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS ● AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS ● NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION ● NYC CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL ● NYS AFL-CIO ● NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS

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Translating West Virginia for PSC and CUNY

● The West Virginia teachers have offered an inspiring model of common-good unionism, internal solidarity and perseverance. But as Sharon Persinger's March *Clarion* column notes, their circumstances are not the PSC's.

I'd put the point more strongly than Persinger did: the circumstances that made it so feasible for West Virginia teachers to strike are the very circumstances that make their situation different from ours. West Virginia teachers have local relationships that reach throughout their state; as a New York City-centered union, our members and our work are concentrated in a small area. When West Virginia teachers withheld their labor, families in every town and county in the state were affected; because we teach adults rather than children, if we withheld our labor the immediate impact on New York City would be modest – and on the rest of the state, negligible.

Not least, school superintendents supported the West Virginia strike by closing schools, protecting strikers from possible legal penalties. It's hard to imagine CUNY management extending even tacit support to any PSC strike. What's more, the PSC has resources that the West Virginia teachers lack: a network of political and community allies, a higher membership density and the stable organization encouraged by more favorable state labor laws and by a decades-long record of collective bargaining.

What would it look like for the PSC to learn from the West Virginia teachers' courage in our own way, given our own circumstances and resources? I'd suggest that it would mean focusing on three things: fostering community support through alliances like CUNY Rising and the Working Families Party, making sure that the demands we fight hardest for are the demands that best unify our members and allies, and patiently building relationships and power in our own localities – our campus chapters.

Geoffrey Kurtz
Borough of Manhattan Community College

Teachers in West Virgina have inspired a nationwide teacher-led movement for better pay and for more investment in public education.

'No' to the CIA at CUNY

● On April 24, the PSC chapter of Baruch College hosted anthropologist David Price to discuss the decision by the Baruch College administration to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Central Intelligence Agency to initiate a Signature School Program on campus. This would entail on-campus interviews, workshops and networking activities with student organizations, honor societies and "diversity" professional organizations, notably those with particular language abilities.

Price noted worrisome facts such as how the CIA facilitates presentations and seminars aligned with university course content, using CIA agents as "campus ambassadors." Students may get financial aid (tuition, funds for books, a monthly stipend, travel expenses) for participating and are then required to serve at the CIA for the same length of time as they received their subsidy. But the CIA expects a "return on investment" on its career placement. Should the student fail to sign up with the CIA, she or he must repay the subsidy at market interest rates.

Apart from the fact that this secret agreement avoided faculty governance requirements, Price pointed out other possibly undesirable effects of having the CIA embedded at Baruch College. It can lead to classroom surveillance of faculty and students, it can import group-think to the goals of research, it can negatively affect faculty research abroad, given the notorious reputation of the CIA.

Price also pointed to covert CIA Cold War missions like the coups in Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954 and Chile in 1973, and many more. In the 2000s, the agency was known for assassinations and torture in places of "extraordinary rendition."

The teach-in was an opening gambit in an ongoing effort by faculty and staff to repeal this undemocratic decision to welcome morally reprehensible actors onto campus. Concerned faculty at Baruch are now circulating a petition to oppose the Signature School, as well as working with activists in the PSC's International Committee and beyond to create a larger network dedicated to keeping CUNY campuses free from clandestine organizations aimed at recruiting students to further proliferate geopolitical conflict and global war.

Renate Bridenthal
Brooklyn College, retired
Stuart Davis, Baruch College

Preserving governance

● The reports on governance struggles at the School of Professional Studies (SPS) and Guttman are no surprise ("Protecting faculty governance," March 2018 issue of *Clarion*). When CUNY first proposed SPS, it had a limited remit – summer programs to retrain teachers in the new math and similar subjects which the University Faculty Senate (UFS) supported. I suppose we should have known that an administrative crawl could not be contained.

CUNY defended its latest effort to undermine quality education in its historic senior colleges as a tool to serve older students whose various life and work obligations prevented them from attending the older, more expensive colleges. At Guttman, the administration argued that community college students would prosper under a nontraditional, "interdisciplinary" and hands-on curriculum. The new community college initially ignored departments, and brought in mostly untenured junior faculty.

The charter of the UFS, a document established by the bylaws, charges it with oversight of programs that cross campuses. This was ignored by CUNY Central in a manner presaging the way it ignored the UFS during the agonizing birth of Pathways.

Since the mid-1990s, CUNY Central has acted as the prime mover of what they call academic and professional innovation. Based on the Schmidt report – a result of the Pataki-Giuliani-led board – it was decided that the university needed to behave as a unit, a decision which undermined and ignored the historic uniqueness and culture of the colleges.

The result, in my view – after 55 years of college teaching, largely in CUNY – has done little beyond demoralizing a significant portion of faculty and simultaneously undermining liberal arts education – at the very moment when this country cries out for a more informed public.

A university with a large international student body along with an often poorly prepared local population surely ought to expect that its graduates have some clue about the history and culture of the nation and the world they will inhabit.

Sandi Cooper
College of Staten Island and the Graduate Center, retired

Cops vs. protesters

● Our members are disproportionately represented at various political events and, like other attendees, often "penned in" by the NYPD's unnecessarily tight control imposed on the participants. There's a connection between the progressive nature of much adversarial New York City politics and the police practices that make it increasingly difficult to participate in some events.

On March 24 I planned to attend the March for Our Lives rally kicking off on Central Park West between 72nd and 79th Street. I had intended to join PSC members on 74th Street and Central Park West at 11 am. As it turned out, police were allowing participants to join the march only on 76th Street, nowhere else between 72nd and 79th Streets.

Since people were allowed to enter only on 76th Street, the mass of people entering at that spot was huge. To make matters worse, part of the street on the south side of 76th Street was blocked by metal barriers, permitting a very narrow stream of people to join the march at any one time. Furthermore, barriers were placed at each intersection jutting out into Central Park West, fencing marchers in, preventing them from moving north or south within the ranks of the marchers.

After an hour, unable to move south of 76th Street, I abandoned the possibility of joining my colleagues a mere two blocks south and went home. I understand the need to block some streets in the vicinity of a march or demonstration: after all, others have the right to drive or otherwise navigate the neighborhood. However, the practice of using metal barriers to the extent that it's difficult to join others or otherwise move around within a mass of people lawfully expressing a political opinion is unacceptable. I was far from the only person unable to join others at this important event.

The increased use of these portable metal barriers through the years makes it difficult to participate comfortably in demonstrations permitted by the city. It's hard not to believe that there's an attempt to make this form of political activism difficult for those who wish to participate. There's no reason the police can't maintain order and allow the routine life of the city to continue without erecting literal barriers to participation in democratic acts.

Elliot Podwill
BMCC, retired

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

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PSC tells Albany: '$7K for adjuncts!'

A key contract demand

By ARI PAUL

With the backdrop of teacher strikes in Arizona and Oklahoma and a graduate employee strike at Columbia University, the PSC is adding to the growing wave of education worker activism by demanding that CUNY adjuncts be paid $7,000 per course.

Nearly 100 PSC members, full-time faculty and staff, as well as adjunct instructors, arrived in Albany on April 24 to educate state legislators about the urgency of ending low pay for CUNY adjuncts and ask for their support for providing the funding required for the critical collective bargaining demand. Adjuncts at CUNY, who teach more than half of the university's courses, work for near-poverty wages, the union told lawmakers. With starting pay for a three-credit course at a little more than $3,000, CUNY adjuncts are paid less than adjuncts at nearby peer institutions such as Rutgers and Penn State. The result is an unbearable amount of stress and hardship for union members and harm to students' learning conditions.

Part-timers at CUNY are under-paid.

May Eng, an adjunct teaching mathematics at LaGuardia Community College and the Borough of Manhattan Community College, delivered an emotional account of the poverty she and her colleagues endure at a meeting with representatives of State Senator Jose Peralta.

"I am embarrassed and ashamed to admit that I visit the food pantry quite often, and whatever I don't use, I pass on to the other adjuncts," she said. "And I have to wonder, 'Is this really a way of life?'"

A 24/7 JOB

Susan Fountain, an adjunct professor of human relations at the School of Professional Studies, said that one of the best parts of her day was teaching older adults who might not have had the chance to complete a degree when they were younger. Many of the people in her classes, however, are city employees and other union workers, and a pain settles in when she realizes that though she's the teacher, she's usually the lowest paid person in the room.

"I can forget about that when I'm teaching," Fountain said. "But it's hard to forget when the class ends."

Elise Engler, who teaches early childhood education at City College, noted that the entire concept of paying adjuncts by the number of hours they teach betrays the true nature of college teaching, which is really an all-day job, in which the instructor must answer student emails, write recommendations and grade papers. When one factors in all the work an adjunct lecturer does outside the classroom, the current per-course pay rate is barely minimum wage, she said, and certainly not a living wage. "A lot of the job becomes volunteer work," said Engler.

Full-time faculty and staff members also pressed lawmakers, saying the crisis of pay for adjuncts wasn't simply a disservice to part-time instructors or their students, but to the entire institution.

John Gallagher, director of information resources and technology at BMCC, in a meeting with representatives of State Senate Higher Education Committee Chair Kenneth LaValle, said that specialty schools at CUNY had significant trouble attracting professionals in relevant fields because of the low adjunct pay at CUNY. Susan Kang, an associate professor of political science at John Jay College, noted that it was also hard to attract new talent for the school's program in human rights. This trend, she said, was keeping CUNY back from becoming a world-class university, keeping it behind universities like Columbia and NYU, which pay part-time instructors far more than CUNY does.

PSC activists also rallied for $7K on the "million-dollar staircase" at the state capitol building.

"None of us should ever have to make this choice, 'Can I show up for my students when they most need me or do I have to run to a second or even a third job?' It's absolutely an injustice that this is a choice we would have to make," said Carly Smith, the PSC adjunct liaison at Baruch College, during the rally. "We're here to stand up and say, 'Enough. We need economic justice. We need educational justice and it's long past time that we achieve this.'"

A LONG CAMPAIGN

The demand for $7K was formally entered into the union's contract demands last year, but the PSC has pressed for parity pay and benefits for adjuncts since 2000. The union has achieved the goal of winning health insurance for adjuncts and graduate employees, has negotiated for conversion of hundreds of part-time positions to full-time positions and recently won three-year appointments for long-serving adjuncts, but the most difficult change to make has been in salary.

"CUNY survives deliberate underfunding largely because it relies on low-wage workers to teach the majority of its courses," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "That is a scandal and a slap in the face to every CUNY student. It's time for a revolution in CUNY adjunct pay."

The dollar figure of $7,000 per course isn't a random one – it is approximately the per-course equivalent for an adjunct lecturer of a starting full-time lecturer.

PSC officials and members said they were inspired by their meetings with lawmakers, although with the budget already settled, many agreed that this would be the first among many trips and demonstrations to force Albany to provide the funding necessary to support this demand in full in the next contract settlement. The demand already has the support of many key lawmakers, including the chair of the State Assembly's Higher Education Committee, Deborah Glick.

"It is crucial that we ensure that our adjunct professors receive a living wage. It is wrong for students to have highly qualified teachers who cannot stay for an extra hour or half hour because they have to run to catch a bus or catch the subway to get to another campus in order to teach another course because they aren't getting paid a decent wage at each of those colleges," Glick said during the rally. "The state needs to invest more in our public systems."

The demand also has the support of Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon and State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky.

RACIAL JUSTICE

State Senator Marisol Alcantara offered support to fight for $7K, adding that she felt there was a historic imbalance between higher state funding for institutions like SUNY-Stony Brook and underfunding at places like CUNY, where a majority of students are from the working class and are people of color. Raising adjunct salaries, she said, through funding $7K, was a part of addressing that classist and racist imbalance.

"Count me as your partner," she told PSC members at the rally.

PSC's First Vice President Mike Fabricant drove the point home in a message to all state lawmakers: "You champion this campaign, you are challenging inequality in New York City."

Contract bargaining goes forward

Talks with CUNY ahead

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

PSC is back at the bargaining table with CUNY management. After two months of union pressure, CUNY management came to the table to begin negotiations. Sessions were held on March 14 and 16, another is scheduled for May 15, and the parties met in several bargaining subcommittees during April.

"We are making progress," said PSC president and chief negotiator Barbara Bowen. "At the first session the union argued forcefully for our full bargaining agenda, stressing the need for a timely contract and higher salaries, including equity increases to lower-paid full-time employees and an increase in adjunct pay to $7,000 per course." Since those sessions, she continued, "The two sides have focused in detailed discussions in subcommittees on issues such as faculty rights in online teaching and new protections sought by the union in response to the anticipated decision in the Supreme Court *Janus* case."

NO CUNY OFFER YET

At the sessions in mid-March, labor and management teams agreed upon ground rules, which include the union's right to invite rank-and-file members to observe bargaining sessions. As of press time, CUNY management had not presented their list of demands. The PSC, though, has presented a comprehensive bargaining agenda, which was approved by the union's Delegate Assembly in October.

Ellen Moynihan

Joanne Schultz, an adjunct assistant professor of performing and creative arts at the College of Staten Island, attended a PSC contract rally on May 1.

In addition to demands for across-the-board raises of 5 percent per year, equity increases for lower-paid titles and $7,000 per three-credit course for adjunct instructors, the PSC is seeking provisions that strengthen job security, protect the union's relationship with its membership, add new contractual protections for those engaged in online education and consolidate structural changes for HEOs and others achieved in the last contract.

The union's bargaining team is hard at work.

The bargaining agenda was developed through rank-and-file working groups and in response to results from a membership survey completed by nearly 9,000 PSC members and other input from union members. Under New York state law the current contract, the 2010–2017 agreement, will remain in effect until a new agreement is reached. CUNY salaries are funded through the state and city budgets, and the union continues to press elected leaders to increase funding for CUNY so that it can meet the needs and aspirations of its students.

While no city unions have recently settled new contracts, collective bargaining is happening at the state level. The United University Professions is currently in contract talks with SUNY. In the fall of 2016, the second-largest state union, the Public Employees Federation, settled a three-year contract with annual raises of 2 percent.

MEMBER POWER

The PSC began negotiations by citing its growing strength. Since the signing of the last contract, union membership has grown – the union has a 94 percent membership rate among full-time faculty and staff. It's this membership power – demonstrated by sustained member support, thousands of emails and messages to CUNY management, scores of members testifying and rallying, two mass civil disobediences, labor and community coalitions and 92 percent of voting members supporting strike authorization – that made the raises and the benefits achieved in the last contract possible, union officials said.

"It is important for the bargaining team to call upon the membership to engage in action in order to put pressure on CUNY," said Lorraine Cohen, a bargaining team member and PSC vice president for community colleges. "[We need] to demonstrate our power and our desire for a fair and timely settlement."

On May 1, PSC members at the College of Staten Island demonstrated on campus, insisting that CUNY answer the union's demands – especially for $7K – but also joining student activists in calling for more state investment in CUNY and making CUNY tuition-free.

FT faculty membership 100% at LaGuardia

Preparing for *Janus* decision

By ARI PAUL

Drum roll, please: the PSC chapter at LaGuardia Community College, after weeks of grassroots mobilization and organizing, has achieved a 100 percent membership rate among the full-time faculty.

Union activists in every chapter have been engaged in getting both members and fee payers to sign blue recommitment cards in the face of a Supreme Court decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*, which observers expect will forbid public-sector unions from collecting agency shop fees from non-members in a bargaining unit, a decision that would severely compromise the financial clout of unions.

A SYSTEM IN PLACE

After months of PSC outreach across CUNY campuses, the rate of full union membership among full-time faculty and staff is, at the time of this writing, 94 percent, but LaGuardia is only the second campus to achieve 100 percent recommitment from full-time faculty. The other is York College. LaGuardia also has only a handful of fee-paying, full-time staffers left to sign up.

LaGuardia organizers explained that the LaGuardia chapter systematically identified fee payers, and activists met one-on-one with fee payers in their respective departments between classes.

Dave Sanders

Reem Jaafar holds one of the union's recommitment cards. She and others have been organizing in light of a possible negative outcome in the case of *Janus v. AFSCME*.

"I've been involved with the union for many years, so I just felt the need to double down on my effort and ensure that all of my colleagues, especially the ones hired in the last four years, were informed about the consequences of the impending verdict," said Reem Jaafar, a professor in the math, engineering and computer science department, who has been working on the sign-up campaign. "If the union has no financial basis to operate, then we're all going to be wiped out."

Rebekah Johnson, an associate professor in the education and language acquisitions department, attributed the chapter's success rate to a strong activist spirit.

"We have a strong union membership and there are quite a few active people – we hold events, we've done picketing, tabling for information," she said. "I think because of the strong message and the strong leadership of our chapter, the benefits of the union are well known. Faculty have seen results recently, like the agreement on the teaching load reduction, the ratification of the last contract. People are seeing what happens when we have a union and solidarity."

At LaGuardia, as with other campuses, activists are also continuing to sign up adjunct instructors, who often lack any dedicated office space and are harder to track down on campus. Youngmin Seo, an adjunct lecturer in the social sciences department, explained that he took a list of fee-paying adjuncts and waited by their classroom doors before and after classes in order to meet adjuncts who were not already members.

Goal achieved through months-long organizing

"It sounded really hard to get those fee payers to sign up as members, but, in fact, I found out that 90 percent of the time the fee payers didn't know that they weren't union members, and immediately – it doesn't take a lot of time – they signed up as soon as I explained the difference between union members and fee payers," he said. "They're very grateful that the union is reaching out to them."

Rachel Youens, an adjunct associate professor in the humanities department, noted that one silver lining of the blitz to sign up adjuncts in the face of the impending Supreme Court decision is that it is encouraging grassroots organizing among the adjuncts and helping to reach new hires who might need help navigating the CUNY system.

ONGOING PROCESS

"Some people have just gotten hired and they don't know how CUNY operates yet," she said. "I've been asked very good questions from people who are new to the system. It's a good conversation to have. I think that an unexpected element of the *Janus* case is that it is democratizing this union a bit. We're telling adjuncts about their rights and benefits – they're not aware of how the union governs itself, but that's what full-timers know about from the time they're hired," said Youens.

Union activists at LaGuardia are proud of their success rate, but they know that it's only the beginning of the journey in a post-*Janus* world. Chapters will have to be vigilant in finding new faculty and staff in the bargaining unit and ensuring that they become full dues-paying members.

"We have to maintain this strong presence, and inform anyone who is new about the union," Johnson said. "We need to always reach out."

Lasher: Here to serve members

New contract director

By ARI PAUL

Dave Sanders

Renee Lasher has longtime experience in administering collective bargaining agreements.

"There are very few certainties in what we do."

That's how Renee Lasher explains the often moving, often unpredictable and often evolving work of contract administration.

After six years as a coordinator of contract enforcement at the PSC, Lasher became director of contract enforcement at the beginning of 2018, taking over the position at a critical moment.

Lasher, who has already handled hundreds of PSC grievances over the course of her career, takes over for Debra Bergen, who served for more than two decades in the position before retiring at the end of 2017. Lasher says she enjoys the surprising range of contract enforcement at PSC, working with members in different titles at different campuses.

INTERPRETING THE CONTRACT

Contract administration and dealing with the minutiae of collective bargaining might sound tedious and repetitive, but it's not, she insists. Lasher compares the debates about the contract between management and labor to constitutional arguments at the Supreme Court, calling the collective bargaining agreement "an organism that is not static," even calling the process "Talmudic," referring to the Jewish tradition of finding deeper meaning in religious law.

"What was the intent at the time this provision was bargained? What is past practice? How has technology changed things? Demographic changes, political changes – they all impact how the contract functions on a day-to-day basis," she said. "Circumstances and interpretations change how the contract is being implemented and understood."

A CUNY FAMILY

Lasher grew up in New York City in an activist family. She has early childhood memories of attending rallies in support of the Equal Rights Amendment and against apartheid in South Africa. After completing her master's degree in theater management at Brooklyn College in 2000, she landed a job as a business agent at what was then called the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, which served as her first introduction working with a professional union.

The contract is 'an organism that is not static.'

After 12 years of representing members in the theater world, the PSC – at nearly 10 times the size of the choreographers' and directors' union in terms of membership – presented a new challenge to Lasher.

"It was an 'expand my universe' moment – it was super exciting," Lasher said about joining the PSC staff.

It was a natural transition for Lasher, who comes from a CUNY family. Both her parents and she graduated from CUNY institutions. What's more, many members of her theater union are also PSC members, she said.

Lasher takes on the director's role at a particularly tumultuous time. The Supreme Court is expected to hand down a decision in *Janus v. AFSCME* this summer, one that most likely will prohibit collection of agency shop fees for public sector unions, a move that would endanger union finances.

But Lasher is optimistic nonetheless. In April the union hired two full-time contract coordinators: Emma Powell, formerly a PSC organizer, and Faye Moore, who previously served as president of Social Service Employees Union Local 371 (District Council 37) and, prior to that, as the union's vice president of grievances and legal services. Lasher is working closely with part-time grievance officers and rank-and-file activists on day-to-day contract enforcement. After all, she said, "The contract is only as effective as we can enforce it."

BEYOND GRIEVANCES

Lasher also noted that while filing grievances and representing members was a vital part of her work, it wasn't the only thing her department does. Much of the job involves on-the-ground organizing assistance to the membership when it comes to the often complex world of the academic workplace.

"We spend more time on issues that are not grievances," Lasher said, noting that grievance counselors in the union office and on campuses often spend a lot of time listening to faculty and staff who need advice about problems that are not contract violations – for example, how to respond to an evaluation the member believes is unfair. "So much of what we do is about helping members succeed at CUNY."

CUNY food workers serve up protest

Report finds poor pay, abysmal working conditions

By ARI PAUL

Students and faculty at Kingsborough Community College marched to the college president's office to protest the poor treatment of food service workers.

What's the main course today? Economic justice.

CUNY food service workers – employed by nonunion, private-sector contractors – have upped their campaign for higher wages and better working conditions with a report about the widespread misery in the workforce.

The report – issued by the Retail Action Project, an arm of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) – has startling data: 70 percent of CUNY food service workers earn minimum wage and only 6 percent of workers were on record receiving employer-provided health coverage. Fifty percent didn't receive paid sick days, according to the report, and 48 percent were on Medicaid or another government program. Twenty percent said they agreed with the statement "I struggle to meet my family's basic needs."

UNSAFE WORKING CONDITIONS

The New York Times, reporting on the union's finding, told of a Kingsborough Community College worker who suffered an on-the-job fall, forcing him to go on nearly a half-year of disability, and a City Tech worker who has never seen a dime of overtime pay despite regularly working more than 40 hours per week.

"The main cafeteria at Kingsborough Community College was forced to close for a period in December after the city's Department of Health found mice and flies. John Jay College announced in January that it would search for a new food service vendor after its Dining Commons received a C inspection rating," the *Times* reported. "According to the survey, 19 percent of the workers reported being injured on the job – with most suffering falls, cuts and burns. Nearly half reported an annual household income of under $30,000, and one-fifth said that they had more than one job. Only seven workers said that they had health insurance through their job, while about four-fifths said that they received Medicaid."

CUNY's food service workers are not public-sector workers like PSC and DC 37 members, as the university "relies on nonprofit organizations at each campus, typically known as auxiliary services corporations, which are affiliated with, but legally separate from, the university," the *Times* explained. In particular, the vendors MBJ and Metropolitan Food Services, which operate services on nine campuses, have fallen under heavy criticism for poor working conditions.

PSC SOLIDARITY

The report follows worker-led action over the last several months. In December food service workers testified at a CUNY Board of Trustees hearing about conditions at their work sites. Students and workers circulated petitions to raise awareness, and in March they demonstrated for better pay at the KCC cafeteria, before marching to the president's office.

Ryan Schiavone, a PSC member at KCC who participated in the protest, said that after the march the administration sent a campus-wide email that the college would switch to a new food vendor. As a result, Schiavone reported to other PSC members, workers received notice of their terminations, and that PSC members and other activists would be raising money for the fired workers.

Workers cited unjust environments.

PSC delegate Dominic Wetzel said, "Why should cafeteria workers lose their jobs because of the vendor's poor management, food prep and working conditions? This is what we call in sociology 'blaming the victim.' What is all the more disturbing is to learn some of these cafeteria workers have CUNY degrees, yet no health care or livable wage."

WORKPLACE DIGNITY

RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum said in a statement regarding the survey of CUNY food service workers, "Many members of the RWDSU and its Retail Action Project are current or former CUNY students. When we learned about the working conditions and health and safety issues at campus food vendors and cafeterias, we were shocked. We launched this campaign to change those conditions. CUNY is taking aggressive action to change this, and we look forward to continuing to work with CUNY to change the way in which food service providers are chosen to ensure that their workers are treated with dignity and respect and that students and faculty get the services they deserve at CUNY."

In a statement, CUNY Board of Trustees Chair William Thompson said the "allegations brought to our attention are outrageous and we are simply not going to stand for it." Thompson told trustees in March, "The Board has been concerned about this issue since the November 29, 2017, hearing when it asked the general counsel to advise the college presidents of these allegations and remind them that their auxiliaries are responsible for monitoring vendor compliance with contract and law, including employment practices, and further asked them to investigate specific allegations. Additionally, on December 18, 2017, the Office of General Counsel wrote to each of the university's food service providers, advising them of the allegations raised at the public hearing and that the colleges and their auxiliaries would be conducting a review of their operations to confirm, among other things, the payment of New York State minimum wages, compliance with the New York City Earned Sick Time Act, required meal and other breaks, and documentation of such."

CUNY OVERSIGHT

Thompson continued, "Based on the findings of these reviews, the board has been advised that the Central Office has formed a committee, consisting of Central Office staff and campus representatives, to craft an RFP [request for proposal] for the selection of a CUNY-wide food service vendor. Any such award will include strong language regarding compliance with employment laws, audit rights for CUNY and a labor harmony agreement to help protect the rights of food service workers."

CUNY's reforms may make it easier for these private-sector workers at CUNY to unionize. An RWDSU official told *Clarion* that the union expects that "the new contracting requirements from the board of trustees will include provisions requiring labor peace agreements and neutrality from any future contractors or subcontractors."

Solidarity with Columbia strikers

Columbia University graduate student workers went on strike on April 24 to protest the university's failure to engage in collective bargaining. Observers suspect the administration is waiting for the National Labor Relations Board to reverse an Obama-era decision that grants graduate workers union recognition. PSC members joined the strikers.

With small gains, CUNY still lags in budget

Labor law amended to help public unions

By ARI PAUL

Four percent? Is it that simple?

That's the nominal increase in funding for CUNY senior colleges under the state budget finalized at the end of March. The increase of $97 million – bringing the total state funding to these colleges to $2.53 billion – includes $43.5 million to fund employee fringe benefit cost increases, $31.3 million in tuition assistance to accommodate a $200 increase in tuition and $4.7 million for CUNY's Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) program.

For the PSC, this increase constitutes a paltry response to the union and other advocates' demand to bring CUNY up to full funding after decades of disinvestment and underfunding. With Governor Andrew Cuomo vetoing a bipartisan bill at the end of 2017 that would have provided funding for CUNY's collective bargaining agreements and for badly needed physical plant upkeep on its campuses, the faculty, staff and students made it clear to Albany and the CUNY Board of Trustees in February and March that a substantial increase to CUNY's budget was paramount.

But to no avail.

The final budget agreement did include a few pieces of new funding for CUNY. PSC President Barbara Bowen told the union's executive board that the budget included "a slight increase ($100) in per-FTE (full-time-equivalent) funding for community colleges, and it did restore funds ritually cut every year by the governor for programs such as SEEK, but it did not add funding for our major priority – increased operating budget for the four-year colleges."

DECREASED INVESTMENT

The union had demanded an increase of the Community College Base Aid by $253 per FTE student, raising the total to $3,000 per student. The state, in the final budget agreement, will provide $2.5 million for Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) and increase two-year college programs by $5 million, with nearly $1 million going to childcare centers.

However, Bowen noted, these increases were a pittance when compared to the chronic funding problems CUNY faces in light of years of state disinvestment from public higher education, nor does this budget address workforce issues, namely, to provide funds to implement the historic teaching load reduction and funds for increased adjunct pay in the next collective bargaining agreement.

"That is, no closing of the $59 million 'TAP gap' ... no funding for the teaching load reduction's first year. These will all have to be carved out of existing CUNY funds, short-changing other essential things. It is not the worst budget we have received from Albany, but it does not include any progress on the PSC's number-one priority," Bowen said. "Additions were made in other areas – where there was the political will and the leverage to make them."

Dave Sanders

Ken Estey, an associate professor of political science at Brooklyn College, told a representative of the governor's office that campuses were in desperate need for more funds for physical plant maintenance.

During a public presentation on the budget at Brooklyn College in April, students and faculty peppered a representative of the governor with a list of problems at the campus and the university, ranging from a lack of funding for badly needed structural repairs to a CUNY budget that has not kept up with rising enrollment.

While the governor's representative, Shareema Abel, touted the aforementioned increase in funding for CUNY and SUNY in this year's budget, PSC Chapter Chair James Davis responded, "There's been a 4 percent decrease for senior colleges over Cuomo's tenure," when adjusted for inflation and changes to enrollment.

"All arrows, frankly, are not pointing up," said Ken Estey, an associate professor of political science at Brooklyn College. "Take a tour of this campus. There's three-fourths of a billion dollars in deferred maintenance. It's literally falling apart. It's a dangerous campus. It reflects badly on the governor's office."

SUPPORT FOR 'MOE'

Students at the Brooklyn College meeting also pressed Abel on why the governor did not sign the bipartisan maintenance of effort (MOE) bill, which would have required each annual New York State budget to include funds for CUNY and SUNY to cover the inflationary increases of operating costs at the four-year colleges, such as rent, energy and contractual salary increases. The governor had vetoed the bill on grounds that such funding mandates should not be legislated outside the normal annual budget process.

Abel, in her presentation, said that the state's allocated increase for campus maintenance was paired with the state's ongoing roll-out of providing tuition-free admittance to students who meet certain requirements. "That's a huge balancing act," she said.

"Abel's presentation included several impressive dollar amounts for spending on CUNY, but failed to take into account inflation and increases in enrollment. So what has actually been a nearly 4 percent decrease, once FTEs and inflation are factored, in direct funding from New York State to the senior colleges under Cuomo's tenure was falsely represented as a supportive increase," Davis told *Clarion*. "There was no acknowledgment of how troubling it is to include revenue from CUNY tuition hikes lumped into the figures cited as New York State funding for CUNY."

Davis continued, "Nor was there any response to the challenge from the audience about lifting the 2 percent cap on state agency spending or progressive taxation measures – carried interest tax, stock transfer tax – that could generate tremendous revenue for the state and potentially shift the burden from tuition hikes to real public funding."

The PSC's state-level parent union, the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), cautiously embraced the budget as it granted "more state funding for community colleges…and the restoration of a lifeline for SUNY hospitals."

The budget news comes after an intense lobbying campaign for full funding from the PSC and other CUNY advocates. PSC members joined students for two lobbying blitzes in Albany and delivered testimony to the CUNY Board of Trustees addressing the issue of chronic underfunding and how it has negatively affected student learning conditions. The third lobbying trip to advocate for $7,000 per course per semester for adjuncts took place on April 24 in Albany (see page 3).

Campuses still lack necessary funding.

Also in the budget was a major win for public-sector labor, signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo. The agreement alters the state's labor law to soften the blow that a potential negative ruling in the Supreme Court case *Janus v. AFSCME* could deal to unions like the PSC. (Most observers anticipate the court will rule that public employee unions may no longer collect agency shop fees from non-members in a bargaining unit, threatening organized labor's finances.)

A briefing from NYSUT explains that the new measures require employers to provide information about a union's members and potential members to make it easier for workers to join their union:

- It would require all public employers to "provide the names, locations and contact numbers of all new hires and rehires to the employee organization within 30 days of employment."
- The language mandates public-sector employers "to provide time during work hours within 30 days of the above notification for the employee organization to meet with all new hires, without loss of employee leave time."
- The new language makes it easier for workers to become members, as it "codifies that individuals may sign dues authorization cards via means allowed by state technology law, allowing emails and other electronic means to be accepted."
- In addition to simplifying the process, it also expedites the process by requiring "employers to begin dues deduction within 30 days of receiving a member's dues authorization card and requires remittance of the dues to the union within 30 days of making the deduction."
- The mandate also addresses what happens to members if they take or are placed on a leave of absence. The budget states that "members who have left service and who return within a one-year period will automatically have their membership reinstated and a member who is placed on voluntary or involuntary leave will automatically have membership reinstated upon return to the public payroll."
- It also "codifies that the withdrawal process from the union may be determined by the dues authorization card."

The PSC, and other unions, underscored that the new measures weren't a cure-all for the problems a "right to work" scenario would pose for public-sector unions; labor would still need to engage in a permanent campaign of meeting new workers and getting them into the union. The measures, however, would mitigate some of the damage the anti-union backers of the Supreme Court lawsuit intend to inflict on public-sector unions.

PRO-UNION MEASURES

Many in the New York State labor movement hailed the inclusion of these changes in the budget.

"The *Janus v. AFSCME* case before the US Supreme Court is an attempt to weaken all sectors of the labor movement, but here in New York State workers will have the protections they need to be able to continue to have a unified voice in the workplace," New York State AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento said in a statement.

He continued, "This legislation is about New York State pushing back against a well-funded attack by corporations and billionaires. The *Janus* case is an attempt by right-wing ideologues to diminish wages, benefits, worker safety and worst of all, silence the voice of workers."

Board proposal diminishes student control over fees

Activists say NYPIRG is being targeted

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

A proposal before the CUNY Board of Trustees has forced student groups and newspapers to speak out about how the changes would restrict their ability to direct their activities and function independently. Students are continuing to fight what they see as an assault on free speech and organizing.

For months, students across CUNY have spoken out against proposed changes that would diminish student control, and threaten the existence of the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), one of the largest student-governed groups in the state and an organization that has existed at the university for decades. CUNY students who have been organizing around the issue have called the proposed changes "targeted," "unjustified," and "proposed in haste."

For campus media, the potential revisions would require that funding be approved annually by the student government. For student press, the conflict is obvious.

ELIMINATION OF NYPIRG

"If the student government does something corrupt and a campus paper exposes it, what is going to stop the student government from saying, 'We're going to decrease your funding?'" said Anthony Viola, a junior at City College and the editor-in-chief of *The Campus*, a student publication at the college.

CUNY officials say that the board is considering changes as part of a legal settlement and in an effort to bring CUNY in compliance with existing law. But those opposing the changes say missing from the legal analysis is one of the most recent and relevant court cases, and the settlement requires broad changes instead of the very specific changes that seem to be aimed at eliminating NYPIRG.

"NYPIRG has been central to campaigns against tuition increases and increasing public investment, particularly state investment in the university," PSC First Vice President Mike Fabricant said. "Since NYPIRG was the only group singularly identified by the counsel [to be dramatically affected], I'm left to question the motivation for the change."

NYPIRG is a nonprofit advocacy group whose core mission is to promote civic engagement in the student community. It's a student-governed organization and is partly funded through money collected from a portion of the student activity fees at nine CUNY campuses. Every year, NYPIRG receives more than one million dollars in funding from student activity fees. Students can request a refund of the money collected by NYPIRG, and every year the group publishes an extensive accountability report to CUNY Central and each of the colleges that it collects money from. NYPIRG officials say that their most recent report, submitted in November, was accepted without any concern from CUNY officials. The proposed changes have perplexed NYPIRG and their repeated attempts to meet with CUNY officials have gone unanswered.

Dave Sanders

Queens College junior and chair of NYPIRG's board of directors Smitha Varghese told the CUNY Board of Trustees that her group was being 'singled out' by the proposal.

"NYPIRG is being singled out because we're effective. We are a student-run organization that works for the public – not private – interest," said Smitha Varghese, a Queens College junior and the chair of NYPIRG's board of directors, a majority of whom are CUNY students. Varghese and several other students who talked to *Clarion* think the proposed changes come from Governor Andrew Cuomo's office and are aimed at punishing NYPIRG for advocating for college affordability and adequate funding for public higher education.

"This semester alone we sent hundreds of students and faculty from all across the state to Albany to tell legislators that Cuomo's proposed budget would negatively impact CUNY students," said Varghese.

STUDENT OPPOSITION

As a result of student organizing against the proposal, the Board of Trustees' chair, Bill Thompson, set up a communications and outreach plan to keep all sides informed about the process.

"CUNY and this Board of Trustees is committed to continuing the long-standing tradition of students shaping the ways in which student activity fees support student life and essential student services," said Thompson at a March 19 board hearing, where dozens of students testified against the revisions. A CUNY spokesperson contacted for this story referred to the transcript from the board hearing, and did not comment on specific questions about the proposed revisions.

Currently, a majority of the board's voting members are Cuomo appointees, including Robert Mujica, the state budget director. After stating that it wanted to address "legal compliance issues" and "best practices" last year, the board offered an initial draft of proposed changes that caused intense student opposition, and since then CUNY officials have walked back some of their initial proposals. But the ability for students to fund their own student groups from the fees that they elect to pay will not be in their control.

> 'Only the convenient facts are being considered.'

"It's reminiscent of Pathways. The Board of Trustees had the right to change the curriculum, [but] they usurped faculty purview over curriculum," said Hugo Fernandez, who is the University Faculty Senate representative to the CUNY BOT Committee on Student Affairs, a committee overseeing the changes. Fernandez attended student town halls and supports the students' desire to direct how student fees are being spent.

"This is between students, their funds and what oversight they feel that they're entitled to and to what extent the administration needs to oversee that process," said Fernandez.

One of the major changes that CUNY General Counsel Loretta Martinez proposes is creating a "viewpoint neutral" funding system that would replace the current student referendum process to fund student groups that engage in political work.

In CUNY's view, funding based on student voting would favor majority opinions and thus not be neutral. The changes are aimed at student groups that engage in speech activities – this could be anything from a veteran student group to campus media that report on issues important to students. Another major change is ending the practice of sending money from student activity fees to external organizations, which would only affect NYPIRG.

LEGAL JUSTIFICATIONS

Martinez cites several court cases to support the revisions and argues that it's "settled law" that public universities may collect mandatory student activity fees, and in doing so there needs to be "viewpoint neutrality" as established in a case argued before the Supreme Court, *Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin v. Southworth.*

But missing from the counsel's legal analysis is the most recent court case that deals specifically with viewpoint discrimination in the allocation of CUNY student activity fees to NYPIRG. In the case, *Almengor v. Schmidt*, a federal judge cited the same Supreme Court case, which allowed portions of a student activity fee to fund political groups as long as allocation is viewpoint neutral or there is an established refund process, a process that NYPIRG conducts and publicizes. Requests to CUNY officials on why the *Almengor* case was missing from the legal analysis went unanswered.

CUNY students who sit on the committee overseeing the recommendations remain unconvinced that there's a legal necessity for some of their changes, specifically ending NYPIRG's funding.

"It is difficult to have a conversation about an issue when only the convenient facts are being considered," said Fernando Araujo, one of the student members who sits on the committee overseeing the changes. He said he was perplexed by why the most recent case dealing with student activity fees is not presented in the legal analysis to the board.

At rallies, board committee meetings, board hearings and through resolutions, students have spoken out and continue to oppose changes that would diminish the power to control fees that they've elected to pay. At a recent CUNY Rising Alliance event attended by local politicians, several students spoke about their concerns over the student activity fee changes.

"Student-run and student-initiated projects exist because students are able to control these finances, the only finances of the college that students have actual control over," said Pedro Freire, a graduate student at the Murphy Institute. "Using referendum to start new organizations is a right that should not be taken away."

The board will likely take action on the proposals to revise student activity fees at their June 25 meeting. Prior to that meeting, the CUNY community can speak about the proposed changes at a BOT hearing on June 18.

CUNY activity fees, explained

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

CUNY students pay student activity fees along with their tuition. The amount allocated varies from campus to campus, anywhere from around $40 per full-time student at Hostos Community College to a little less than $165 at Queens College. Students elected to pay these fees, unlike other fees that are implemented by the Board of Trustees. In turn these fees fund groups, services and programs for students.

How these funds are distributed on each campus varies. One way students can fund a specific group can be determined by a referendum or a vote by the student body after 10 percent of a campus's student body has signed a petition to bring an issue to referendum.

A University Student Senate analysis found the vast majority of fees cover services, often those that have been cut due to austere state funding. The fees have covered career services, health centers, a nurse at John Jay College and construction of a student building at Baruch College. CUNY officials initially sought to revamp this process and have college associations, consisting of faculty, administration and community members appointed by the college president and elected student leaders, approve funding.

DIMINISHED STUDENT CONTROL

CUNY students across the university organized against the dismantling of the student-led process for determining how their fees are spent, and they were successful in getting the university to revise some of their initial proposals – but not all. With the revisions, students can now hold referendums, but not to fund student groups. They can hold referendums to fund student services with administrative staff, and funding for student groups would be decided annually by the student government.

Faculty question remediation reform

Some see a threat to Open Admissions

By BRANDON JORDAN

Katherine Figueroa, at right, a lecturer at BMCC, said that CUNY's overhaul was causing 'confusion and frustration.'

Dave Sanders

The CUNY administration is moving forward with a sweeping change to remedial education at the university's community colleges – but PSC members are flagging what they see as a threat to the quality of education.

The CUNY plan was launched in 2016 after recommendations from the University Task Force on Developmental Education, and it redesigns placement algorithms to end high-stakes testing and places students who need remedial instruction into co-requisite classes or paired credit classes with support, rather than in stand-alone remedial courses.

"Data showed that conventional remediation delivered in sequences of non-credit courses has not served CUNY students well. Failure rates in these courses have been far too high, and too many students have become discouraged and dropped out of higher education altogether before completing remedial instruction," CUNY spokesperson Frank Sobrino said.

But Marianne Pita, an English professor at Bronx Community College, called these policies a "really radical shift" in how CUNY would handle developmental courses.

RUSHING THROUGH

"There will be no more need for developmental education. Everybody is going to be rushed in composition and math classes. Reading will go the way of math and writing. That's the overall picture," she said.

She remarked that CUNY would value high school GPAs over tests when accepting students to community colleges. The change may affect someone applying from a low-performing school compared to a school with more resources. As PSC Treasurer Sharon Persinger, who is an associate professor in BCC's math and computer science department, explained, "A student can place out of math remediation in several ways – Regents exam scores for math courses, math SAT or ACT scores, or scores on the math placement exam administered at initial enrollment. There are certainly problems with these exams, but serious effort has gone into making them standardized so that scores have a uniform meaning. High school grades do not have a uniform meaning; an A from a low-performing school probably doesn't mean the same as an A from a higher-performing school."

Students sometimes drop out due to frustration with these classes because of work commitments, family responsibilities or lack of college credit, Pita said, and added that there is a likelihood that students would still fail and drop out since they would be underprepared for composition courses.

"It seems to me the current initiative all together adds up to push these students out of colleges," she said.

Katherine Figueroa, a lecturer in academic and critical reading at Borough of Manhattan Community College, told *Clarion* that the reforms, while genuine, have caused confusion and frustration among faculty. Those hired for developmental classes are shifted to courses not in their areas of expertise.

MORE SUPPORT

She agreed that developmental outcomes should be improved and noted this required more resources to help both students and professors.

"A lot of us teach developmental courses because we enjoy working with students who haven't had the privilege of having a great education that prepares them for college. We're working hard to get them there. That's sort of our mission," Figueroa said.

Charles Post, a sociology professor and PSC grievance officer at BMCC, also viewed the policy as the wrong message to both students and instructors.

"As far as I'm concerned, this is to end the last bastion of Open Admissions at the City University of New York," he said.

First established in 1970, Open Ad-

Continued on page 9

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Opposing a 'one size fits all' education

By SHARON UTAKIS

On April 5, 2018, *The New York Times* ran an article titled "Middle-Class Families Increasingly Look to Community Colleges," which argues that "as middle- and upper-middle-class families … face college prices in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, more of them are looking for ways to spend less for their children's quality education."

RAISE GRADUATION RATES

As a middle-class parent whose child will soon be applying to colleges, I understand the desire for an affordable education, but as a community college faculty member, this trend worries me. As community colleges try to attract more middle-class students, will they push out some of our current students? We can already see the CUNY administration taking actions that could lead to this result. When success is measured only in graduation rates, what happens to students whose lives don't allow them to make rapid progress to graduation?

In January, organizations such as Complete College America held a conference at Lehman College. The group advocates that students should complete 15 credits each semester and has been accused by *Inside Higher Education* of declaring war on remediation.

Complete College America and similar organizations are affecting CUNY policy. At a recent ESL discipline council meeting, CUNY administrators said that CUNY planned to eliminate "stand-alone" ESL and developmental courses at CUNY within the next three years. At Bronx Community College (BCC), where I teach, the department chairs of the departments with ESL, developmental reading, developmental writing and developmental math classes were told that an organization called Strong Start to Finish would provide CUNY with "$2.1 million over three years to support faculty-led work replacing traditional, stand-alone remedial courses with high-impact corequisite courses and workshops." Many faculty in those departments are interpreting this as a push to eliminate developmental classes.

RESOURCES NEEDED

In the English department at BCC, this push has taken the form of ALP courses (accelerated learning programs), in which developmental students are placed in the same freshman composition classes as more advanced students, where they will also receive supplemental non credit class hours. The stated purpose of the Strong Start to Finish grant is to raise college completion rates, particularly among students of color, by eliminating stand-alone remedial courses and replacing them with ALP courses or others.

ALP courses have been shown to be effective under some circumstances, but BCC already has a successful course combining freshman composition and remediation, ENG 110, which serves students with near-passing scores on the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing (CATW).

The proposed ALP course would instead place *low-scoring* students in class with traditional freshman composition students. And since fewer and fewer class sections of developmental and ESL courses have been offered as CUNY Start and CLIP (the CUNY Language Immersion Program) have grown, these courses will preempt stand-alone courses. What is offered as a new choice will leave no alternatives.

In my department, this has been divisive. Faculty have been encouraged to develop combined courses for reassigned time, in spite of opposition by most of the faculty with ESL and developmental expertise. But if these courses are developed by faculty, CUNY administration can call these changes "faculty-driven."

Second, CUNY's overhaul is a one-size-fits-all solution. While there is a need to improve retention and graduation rates, this proposal eliminates options. Students will be directed to either the pre-college programs or to the ALP program, all of which are time-intensive, and will leave part-time students with no options if they have developmental needs.

ONE OF MANY CHANGES

Either our most academically vulnerable students will be unable to attend BCC or standards will be lowered and students will move on before they're ready, and faculty teaching credit-bearing classes will feel the effects.

Overhauling remediation is one of a number of dramatic changes being implemented all at once by the administration. This semester other changes include eliminating the free summer USIP (University Skills Immersion Program) courses, instead having only short workshops (for which CUNY has said instructors will be paid at continuing education, rather than adjunct, rates, a move which was previously attempted in 2016). CUNY is also eliminating entrance exams by Fall 2019.

Providing more resources to help students graduate quickly is good. Providing choices and a variety of opportunities for students with remedial or developmental needs is good. Setting students up for failure or discouraging students is not.

Sharon Utakis is the PSC chapter chair at Bronx Community College.

Faculty say new policies are 'divisive.'

Welfare Fund: saving on drug costs

By CLARION STAFF

YOUR BENEFITS

The cost increases of prescription drug benefits now exceed the increases of inpatient hospital and physician claims. Drug expenses are the fastest-rising cost element for health plans. It's partly due to the growth in new specialty medications, which have an average annual cost of more than $50,000 and are driving 30 percent of drug benefit costs, despite being used by only 1 to 2 percent of the population (*Benefits Magazine*, June 2017).

Another contributing factor is the onslaught of drug marketing, pushing doctors and consumers to request expensive brand-name drugs that may not offer the most effective treatment.

Several ways to save

MANAGING COSTS

Managing these exploding costs is a challenge. The PSC Welfare Fund works hard with CVS Caremark (for active employees and retirees under the age of 65) and its Medicare Part D affiliate, SilverScript (for Medicare-eligible retirees), to provide our members with prescription medications at the lowest co-pays we can.

By taking advantage of 90-day refills through mail service or your local CVS pharmacy, you can further reduce your co-pays. You can find more opportunities to make sure you aren't paying more than necessary by registering at Caremark.com. There are three ways to register:

- Go to Caremark.com, click the "Register now" button, and follow the instructions;
- Download the CVS Caremark mobile app and create an account; or
- Call CVS Caremark, 866-209-6177, or SilverScript, 866-881-8573, to receive a personalized registration email or text.

Once you've registered, you can refill prescriptions, check the status of your orders, track your annual spending, locate pharmacies near you and more.

Remember that active employees and retirees under 65 use their basic health insurance card (EmblemHealth, Aetna, etc.) for diabetic medication and the NYC PICA card (call 212-306-7464) for injectable and chemotherapy treatment. Medicare-eligible retirees use their SilverScript card for all prescriptions.

Your CVS ExtraCare Health Card saves you 20 percent on thousands of CVS Pharmacy brand health-related items. The discount applies to regularly priced items of $1 or more at any CVS Pharmacy locations (except for Target) or online at CVS.com. To get the discount, simply present one of the key tags you received in the mail at the register and you will see your savings on your receipt. If you did not receive the key tags, call CVS at 866-209-6177.

A version of this article appeared in the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Benefits Bulletin.

Remediation reform

Continued from page 8

mission guarantees almost all high school students a spot at a CUNY college. Since then, officials have balanced high graduation rates and providing opportunities for students. This has led to major changes such as banning remedial courses at all four-year colleges in 1999.

Post feared these solutions would convert community colleagues into vocational or technical colleges, where students would not transfer to four-year colleges.

He compared the idea to Pathways, the 2011 plan that established a uniform curriculum system that elicited fierce controversy among the faculty. Pathways' goal was to "increase students' efficiency…by reducing time to [get a] degree and credits acquired," according to a resolution passed on June 27, 2011, by the CUNY Board of Trustees.

"Ninety-two percent of the full-time faculty in a referendum voted against Pathways," Post said. "They still didn't listen to us."

POSITIVE CHANGES

Kenneth Levinson, a Borough of Manhattan Community College professor in the academic literacy and linguistics department, told *Clarion* there were some positive changes.

For instance, student complaints about these noncredit courses led to a simpler path toward a degree. Furthermore, faculty are given autonomy in evaluating students and engaging more with them in the classroom, he said.

Figueroa suggested that, in addition to existing services, the university offer more resources to help students that come from backgrounds that haven't adequately prepared them for college. She cited homelessness and full-time work as examples that could affect students in developmental courses.

Sobrino clarified to *Clarion* that grant funds, such as the recent $2.1 million from the Strong Start to Finish initiative, will replace standalone remedial courses with corequisite courses and workshops. In addition, the grants would work toward doubling the number of new students who complete both math and English gateway courses.

He added that these changes have led to more students succeeding in the credit courses.

"Last fall, approximately 4,000 more students were able to take credit-bearing math courses than in fall 2016 with little impact on pass rates in those courses," he said.

The overall pass rate in credit-bearing math courses decreased 7 percent from 2016 to 2017, but more students passed because more could enroll in these classes, CUNY said.

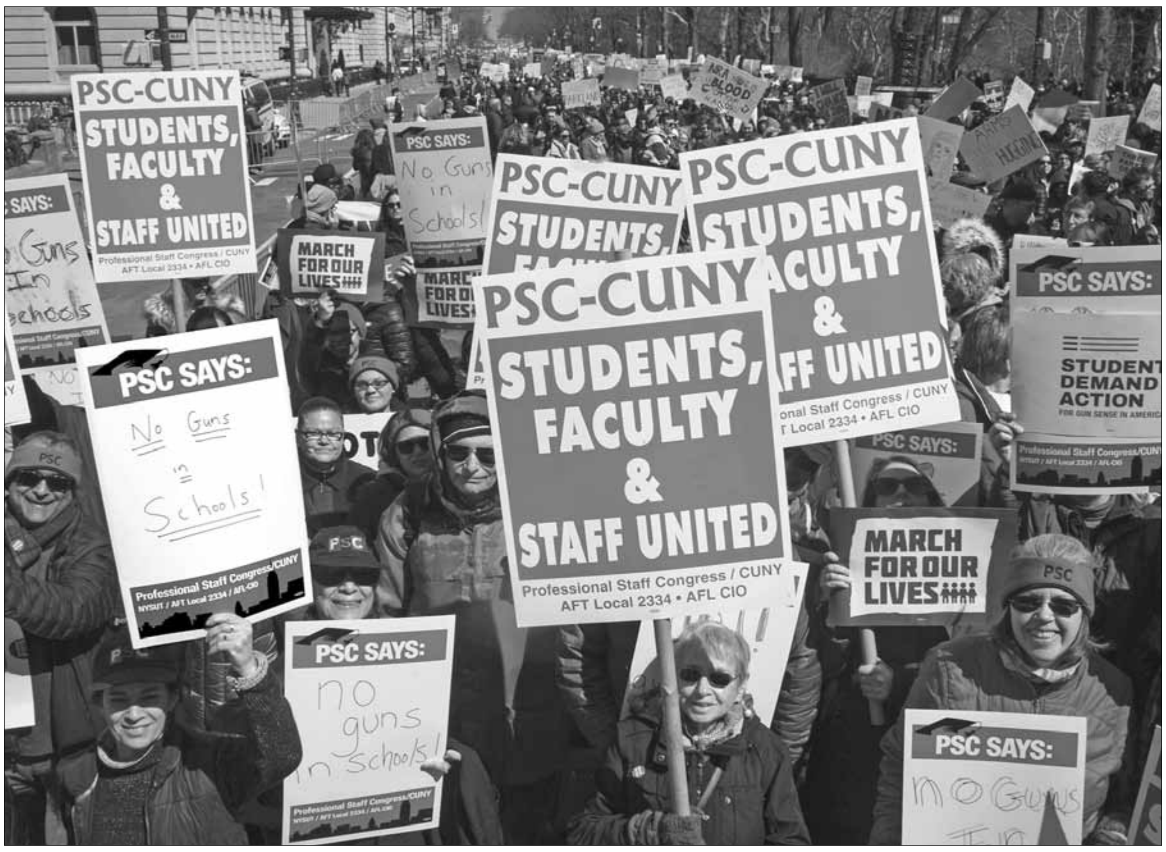
"This program seems to be mainly aimed at getting students in non-STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Math] majors through just enough math to graduate. I have concerns about the definition of 'just enough' and what seems to be an attack on the integrity of learning math," Persinger said. "Math is a subject where the sequence of ideas is important; it is very hard to teach someone about the slope of a line when the person doesn't know about adding and subtracting positive and negative numbers."

She continued, "BCC has another remedial-level course – intermediate algebra and trigonometry – that STEM students take after they have shown proficiency in elementary algebra, the requirement for exiting remediation. What is happening to this course? Will they try to create just-in-time modules for it that go along with the pre-calculus course? I fear passing rates will drop significantly."

CUNY MISSION

"They want to teach students who would not otherwise have the opportunity to get a college education," Pita said.

She added, "They want to teach the immigrants, they want to teach those who have been poorly served by public education. They want the possibility of getting them a chance at a college education."



Dave Sanders

AFT dumps Wells Fargo over NRA ties

Supports more gun control

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) severed ties with Wells Fargo after the bank's CEO failed to meet with union leaders about its relationship with the National Rifle Association (NRA) and gun manufacturers. Wells Fargo is the "go-to bank for gunmakers and the NRA," according to a report in *Bloomberg News*, which found that the bank holds NRA's main account and has been a main lender to the gun rights organization and major US firearm and ammunition companies.

"As educators and school staff, our first responsibility is to ensure our schools and campuses are safe and welcoming environments for teaching and learning," wrote AFT President Randi Weingarten in a March 29 letter to Wells Fargo CEO Timothy Sloan, asking the extent of the bank's relationship with the gun advocacy organization. "The NRA, with the backing of gun manufacturers, has used its wealth and power to actively resist gun safety measures that even its own members support," continued the letter.

Teachers are supporting Parkland students.

The AFT divestment comes on the heels of student and teacher protests against inadequate gun control measures and the NRA's influence on Congress following the February mass shooting at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, that left 17 people dead.

The AFT, with which the PSC is affiliated, chose to end its participation in Wells Fargo's mortgage lending program after Sloan failed to follow through with meeting union officials. More than 20,000 AFT members hold mortgages through the program.

"Other companies like Bank of America, BlackRock and Vanguard have stepped up and engaged in meaningful conversations about what responsible relationships with gun companies look like, but Wells Fargo won't," said Weingarten in a statement.

PSC SUPPORT

PSC members participated in the March for Our Lives in Manhattan on March 24 to protest gun violence and to call for gun control measures.

"Students have historically been at the forefront of many powerful movements for justice," said PSC President Barbara Bowen in a message to members, adding that the union supports the "Parkland students and [the call] on Congress to act."

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS with SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION
AUGUST 31, 2017 and 2016

CONTENTS

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Executive Board of Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York (PSC/CUNY), which comprise the statements of financial position as of August 31, 2017 and 2016, and the related statements of activities and of cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements: Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility: Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the PSC/CUNY's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the PSC/CUNY's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion: In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York as of August 31, 2017 and 2016, and the changes in its net assets and cash flows for the years then ended, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Report on Supplemental Information

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The supplemental Schedules of Expenses by Category are presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements. Supplemental information is the responsibility of the PSC/CUNY's management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

NOVAK FRANCELLA, LLC
New York, New York, March 8, 2018

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AUGUST 31, 2017 AND 2016

NOTE 1. ORGANIZATION AND TAX STATUS

The Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York (PSC/CUNY) was created by a merger of the Legislative Conference of The City University of New York and the United Federation of College Teachers. It was created to be the collective bargaining representative of the instructional staff of the City University of New York (CUNY). The Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York is a Local (Local 2334) of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Through the AFT, PSC/CUNY is affiliated with The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).

The purpose of PSC/CUNY is to advance and secure the professional and economic interest of the instructional staff of the CUNY and other members of the bargaining units of PSC/CUNY. The objectives of PSC/CUNY are to improve the quality of education, research and scholarships at the CUNY; to negotiate and administer collective bargaining agreements; to cooperate with other educational, professional, and labor organizations in order to enhance the quality of education in the nation and to promote the professional and economic interests and the welfare of all workers; to serve as the public representative of the instructional staff of the CUNY and other members of the bargaining units of the Professional Staff Congress; and to cooperate with other CUNY employee and academic organizations and student bodies in order to advance the interests of the faculty, staff and students of the CUNY and the community it serves. The benefits members receive are paid for by contributions from the employer, the CUNY, which are negotiated during bargaining as part of members' compensation. PSC/CUNY and its affiliated organizations have arranged for various special economic benefits for its members. PSC/CUNY also sponsors certain welfare benefits, which are paid from a separate trust fund and are not included in these financial statements.

PSC/CUNY is exempt from Federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code under a blanket exemption of the AFT.

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require management to evaluate tax positions taken by PSC/CUNY and recognize a tax liability if PSC/CUNY has taken an uncertain position that, more likely than not, would not be sustained upon examination by the Federal, state, or local taxing authorities. PSC/CUNY is subject to routine audits by taxing jurisdictions; however, there are currently no audits for any tax periods in progress. Typically, tax years will remain open for three years; however, this may differ depending upon the circumstances of PSC/CUNY.

NOTE 2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Method of Accounting - The accompanying financial statements are prepared using the accrual basis of accounting. Net assets are classified as unrestricted, temporarily restricted or permanently restricted. Net assets are generally reported as unrestricted unless assets are received from donors with explicit stipulations that limit the use of the asset. PSC/CUNY does not have any temporarily or permanently restricted net assets.

Cash and Cash Equivalents - PSC/CUNY considers all unrestricted cash and highly liquid investments, including certificates of deposit with initial maturities of three months or less, to be cash equivalents.

Investments - Investments are carried at fair value which generally represents quoted market prices, or the net asset value of the mutual funds, as of the last business day of the fiscal year as provided by the custodian or investment manager. Certificates of deposit are carried at cost which approximates fair value. Certificates of deposit that have initial maturity dates of more than three months are considered to be investments.

Property and Equipment - Property and equipment are recorded at cost. Major additions are capitalized while replacements, maintenance and repairs which do not improve or extend the lives of the respective assets are expensed currently. Depreciation is computed over the assets' estimated useful lives, three to thirty years, by the straight line method. Depreciation expense was $92,831 for the year ended August 31, 2017 and $92,629 for 2016.

Accrued Compensated Balances - Future employee absences that have been earned but not yet taken are accrued within the contract limits. The accrued compensated balances were $631,836 for the year ended August 31, 2017 and $510,012 for 2016.

Membership Dues and Dues Receivable - Membership dues are recognized as revenue over the membership period. Dues come from members through payroll deductions and direct payments. Dues receivable are recorded as revenues are recognized. PSC/CUNY has determined that no allowance for doubtful accounts for receivables is necessary as of August 31, 2017 and 2016.

Deferred Rent - Operating leases are recognized on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease. Deferred rent has been recorded for the difference between the fixed payment and the rent expense. Deferred rent was $800,715 for the year ended August 31, 2017 and $881,203 for 2016.

Estimates - The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect reported amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Reclassifications - Certain reclassifications have been made to prior year amounts to be in conformity with the current year presentation.

NOTE 3. CONCENTRATION OF CASH

PSC/CUNY places its cash with financial institutions deemed to be creditworthy. The balance is insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) up to $250,000. Cash balances may at times exceed the insured deposit limits. As of August 31, 2017, PSC/CUNY's cash in excess of FDIC coverage totaled $1,934,584.

NOTE 4. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

The framework for measuring fair value provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (Level 1) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (Level 3). The three levels of the fair value hierarchy are described as follows:

Basis of Fair Value Measurement:

Level 1 - Inputs to the valuation methodology are unadjusted quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets that the PSC/CUNY has the ability to access.

Level 2 - Inputs to the valuation methodology include: quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets; quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets; inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability; inputs that are derived principally from or corroborated by observable market data by correlation or other means.

If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

Level 3 - Inputs to the valuation methodology are unobservable and significant to the fair value measurement.

The asset's or liability's fair value measurement level within the fair value hierarchy is based on the lowest level of any input that is significant to the fair value measurement. Valuation techniques maximize the use of relevant observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs.

The availability of observable market data is monitored to assess the appropriate classification of financial instruments within the fair value hierarchy. Changes in economic conditions or model- based valuation techniques may require the transfer of financial instruments from one fair value level to another. In such instances, the transfer is reported at the beginning of the reporting period.

For the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016, there were no transfers in or out of levels 1, 2, or 3.

SEE TABLE 1

NOTE 5. SINGLE-EMPLOYER PENSION PLAN

PSC/CUNY contributes to the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York Pension Plan (the Plan), a single employer plan covering all non-collectively bargained employees who meet age and service requirements. Contributions are actuarially determined.

The Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York Pension Plan is a defined benefit plan paying 2.2% of Final Average Compensation for each year of service, up to 25 years. Final Average Compensation is the average compensation over the last highest 5 consecutive years (or highest 60 months) of service. Plan assets do not include any securities of the employer or related entities. No amount of future annual benefits of plan participants is covered by insurance contracts. There were no significant transactions between the PSC/CUNY or related parties and the Plan during the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016.

The following are the balances as of or for the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016 as provided by the Plan's actuary:

	2017	2016
Projected benefit obligation	$(6,999,054)	$(6,825,437)
Fair value of plan assets	3,834,805	3,021,253
Funded status	$ (3,164,249)	$ (3,804,184)
Accumulated benefit obligation	$ (1,386,967)	$ (1,094,107)
Amounts recognized in the statement of financial position:		
Noncurrent assets	$ -	$ -
Current liabilities	-	-
Noncurrent liabilities	(3,164,249)	(3,804,184)
Amounts in net assets not recognized as components of net periodic benefit cost:		
Accumulated net gain or (loss)	(1,777,282)	(2,710,077)
Weighted-average assumptions:		
Discount rate (to discount plan benefit obligations)	3.60%	3.00%
Discount rate (to measure net periodic pension cost)	3.00%	4.50%
Expected return on plan assets	7.00%	7.00%
Rate of compensation increase	4.00%	4.00%
Employer contributions	$ 540,490	$ 215,004
Benefits paid	$ -	$ -
Net periodic pension cost	$ 777,123	$ 502,636

The change in unfunded pension benefit obligations consists of the following:

	2017	2016
Net periodic pension cost	$ 777,123	$ 502,636
Add: Administrative expenses	56,277	
Less: Employer remittances	(540,490)	(215,004)
	292,860	287,632
Increase (decrease) in unrecognized accumulated net gain or loss	(932,795)	1,568,248
	$ (639,935)	$ 1,855,880

For the year ended August 31, 2017, the Plan's actuary made a change in the presentation of accrued pension cost. Administrative fees, other than investment fees, were isolated as a separate item of the reconciliation for immediate recognition. In prior years, these fees were reflected as an investment loss and were incorporated as a part of the gain/loss on the Pension Plan's assets.

In 2017 and 2016, PSC/CUNY has recorded a gain of $932,795 and a loss of $1,568,248, respectively, to its net assets for the additional change in accrued pension payable beyond the current-year pension expense.

The Plan's expected long-term rate of return on as-

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY
STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AUGUST 31, 2017 AND 2016

	2017	2016
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 2,184,873	$ 134,955
Investments – at fair value		
Certificates of deposit	992,000	992,000
Mutual funds	7,850,374	5,890,354
Total investments	8,842,374	6,882,354
Receivables		
Dues	724,000	1,067,000
Due from related entities	527,884	713,649
Total receivables	1,251,884	1,780,649
Property and equipment		
Equipment	683,028	673,927
Leasehold improvements	529,641	529,641
Furniture and fixtures	340,407	339,612
	1,553,076	1,543,180
Less: accumulated depreciation	(1,297,101)	(1,204,270)
Net property and equipment	255,975	338,910
Total assets	$ 12,535,106	$ 9,136,868
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current liabilities		
Accrued expenses	$ 328,990	$ 337,475
Accrued compensated balances	631,836	510,012
Due to related entities	1,785,050	1,670,575
Total current liabilities	2,745,876	2,518,062
Long-term liabilities		
Deferred rent	$ 800,715	$ 881,203
Unfunded projected pension benefit obligation	3,164,249	3,804,184
Total long-term liabilities	3,964,964	4,685,387
Total liabilities	6,710,840	7,203,449
Unrestricted net assets	5,824,266	1,933,419
Total liabilities and net assets	$ 12,535,106	$ 9,136,868

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2017 AND 2016

	2017	2016
Revenue		
Membership dues and agency fees	$ 18,595,041	$ 14,521,393
Organizing assistance	4,072,166	4,384,739
Investment income		
Net realized and unrealized gains (losses)	110,071	238,679
Interest and dividends	188,363	150,286
Less investment fees	(19,395)	(16,578)
Rental income	237,402	230,220
Total revenue	23,183,648	19,508,739
Expenses		
Affiliation fees	11,140,665	10,526,299
Salaries, employee benefits, and payroll taxes	5,755,598	5,245,666
Representational and governance	165,474	142,898
Public relations	184,846	170,962
Building expenses	1,389,890	1,393,907
Administrative, office and general	448,355	404,365
Professional fees	403,478	451,183
Contract & budget campaigns	180,293	558,421
Stipends and reassigned time	464,166	398,465
Depreciation expense	92,831	92,629
Total expenses	20,225,596	19,384,795
Net increase (decrease) in net assets	2,958,052	123,944
Net assets, unrestricted		
Beginning of year	1,933,419	3,377,723
Adjustment to pension liability funded status	932,795	(1,568,248)
End of year	$ 5,824,266	$ 1,933,419

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY
STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2017 AND 2016

	2017	2016
Cash flows from operating activities		
Change in net assets	$ 2,958,052	$ 123,944
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities		
Depreciation	92,831	92,629
Net realized and unrealized (gains) losses	(110,071)	(238,679)
Pension liability funded status	932,795	(1,568,248)
(Increase) decrease in assets:		
Dues receivable	343,000	(96,000)
Due from relates entities	185,765	(89,649)
Due from other	-	774
Increase (decrease) in liabilities:		
Accrued expenses	(8,485)	110,829
Accrued compensated absences	121,824	28,540
Due to related entities	114,475	(564,707)
Unfunded pension liability	(639,935)	1,855,880
Deferred rent	(80,488)	(11,967)
Net cash provided by (used for) operating activities	3,909,763	(356,654)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of property and equipment	(9,896)	(25,332)
Purchase of certificates of deposit	(199,000)	(199,000)
Liquidation of certificates of deposit	199,000	199,000
Sale of investments	19,395	2,873,607
Purchase of investments	(1,869,344)	(3,189,380)
Net cash used for investing activities	(1,859,845)	(341,105)
Net increase (decrease) in cash	2,049,918	(697,759)
Cash and cash equivalents		
Beginning of year	134,955	832,714
End of year	$ 2,184,873	$ 134,955

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

sets assumption is 7.00%. This assumption represents the rate of return on Plan assets reflecting the average rate of earnings expected on the funds invested or to be invested to provide for the benefits included in the benefit obligation. The assumption has been determined by reflecting expectations regarding future rates of return for the investment portfolio, with consideration given to the distribution of investments by asset class and historical rates of return for each individual asset class.

At August 31, 2017 and 2016, the Plan's net assets available for benefits were allocated as follows:

	2017	2016
Mutual funds	21.10%	21.11%
Common stock	44.85%	53.16%
United States Government and Government Agency obligations	25.00%	23.61%
Cash and cash equivalents	9.05%	2.12%

The major classes of Plan investments at August 31, 2017 and 2016 are:

	2017 Fair Value	2016 Fair Value
Mutual funds	$ 809,141	$ 637,680
Common stock	1,719,991	1,606,195
United States Government and Government Agency obligations	958,480	713,194
Cash and cash equivalents	347,193	64,184
	$ 3,834,805	$ 3,021,253

For the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016, there were no transfers in or out of levels 1, 2 and 3.

Fair Value Measurements at August 31, 2017	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 347,193	$ 347,193	$ -	$ -
Common stock:				
Basic materials	180,210	180,210	-	-
Consumer goods	146,818	146,818	-	-
Financial	117,163	117,163	-	-
Healthcare	$ 447,216	$ 447,216	$ -	$ -
Industrial goods	66,733	66,733	-	-
Services	215,683	215,683	-	-
Technology	546,168	546,168	-	-
U.S. Government and Government Agency obligations:				
United States Treasury	815,014	815,014	-	-
Government agencies	143,466	-	143,466	-
Mutual funds:				
Fixed income	688,635	688,635	-	-
Equity	120,506	120,506	-	-
	$3,834,805	$3,691,339	$143,466	$ -

Fair Value Measurements at August 31, 2016	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 64,184	$ 64,184	$ -	$ -
Common stock:				
Basic materials	235,349	235,349	-	-
Consumer goods	167,521	167,521	-	-
Financial	178,652	178,652	-	-
Healthcare	138,941	138,941	-	-
Industrial goods	51,131	51,131	-	-
Services	335,602	335,602	-	-
Technology	498,999	498,999	-	-
U.S. Government and Government Agency obligations:				
United States Treasury	279,632	279,632	-	-
Government agencies	433,562	-	433,562	-
Mutual funds:				
Fixed income	409,637	409,637	-	-
Equity	228,043	228,043	-	-
	$3,021,253	$ 2,587,691	$ 433,562	$ -

PSC/CUNY's investment policies are designed to ensure that adequate plan assets are available to provide future payments of pension benefits to eligible participants. Taking into account the expected long-term rate of return on plan assets, PSC/CUNY formulates the investment portfolio composed of the optimal combination of cash and cash equivalents, equities, fixed income and mutual funds.

Future Cash Flows

The projected contribution for next fiscal year is $372,000.

The following benefit payments, which reflect expected future service, are expected to be paid as follows:

2018	$ -
2019	-
2020	1,569,136
2021	1,327,403
2022	706,269
2023	69,939
2024 - 2028	1,134,778

NOTE 6. MULTIEMPLOYER DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN

PSC/CUNY participates in the Office and Professional Employees International Union, Local 153 Pension Fund, a multiemployer defined benefit pension plan, under the terms of a collective bargaining agreement that covers its union-represented employees who meet age and service requirements. The risks of participating in multiemployer defined benefit pension plans are different from single-employer plans in the following aspects:

a. Assets contributed to the multiemployer defined benefit pension plan by one employer may be used to provide benefits to employees of other participating employers.

b. If a participating employer stops contributing to the multiemployer defined benefit pension plan, the unfunded obligations of the multiemployer defined benefit pension plan may be borne by the remaining participating employers.

c. If the Plan chooses to stop participating in the multiemployer defined benefit pension plan, the Plan may be required to pay the multiemployer defined benefit pension plan an amount based on the underfunded status of the multiemployer defined benefit pension plan, referred to as a withdrawal liability.

PSC/CUNY's participation in the multiemployer defined benefit pension plan for the annual periods ended August 31, 2017 and 2016, is outlined in the table below. The zone status is based on information that PSC/CUNY received from the multiemployer defined benefit pension plan and is certified by the multiemployer defined benefit pension plan's actuary. Among other factors, pension plans in the red zone are generally less than 65 percent funded, pension plans in the yellow zone are less than 80 percent funded, and pension plans in the green zone are at least 80 percent funded.

See Table 2

* PSC/CUNY participates in the Local 153 Pension Fund through a collective bargaining agreement between PSC/CUNY and the Office & Professional Employees International Union, Local 153AFL-CIO (Local 153). The collective bargaining agreement has a three year term of October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2018.

See Table 3

* The employer contribution rate of the Pension Plan was $215 per week per employee effective June 1, 2016, and $236 effective June 1, 2017.

See Table 4

NOTE 7. MULTIEMPLOYER PLAN THAT PROVIDES POSTRETIREMENT BENEFITS OTHER THAN PENSIONS

PSC/CUNY contributed to one multiemployer defined benefit health and welfare plan during the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016 that provides postretirement benefits for its full-time support staff employees. PSC/CUNY's contributions to the welfare plan on behalf of its full- time support staff employees, contribution rates, and number of employees covered are as follows:

See Table 5

* Under a collective bargaining agreement between Local 153 and PSC/CUNY, PSC/CUNY established coverage through an insured Preferred Provider Organization Plan to provide medical, dental and prescription benefits. PSC/CUNY contributed $66 per month to Local 153 Health Fund per active employee and $8 per month per retiree under a collective bargaining agreement between Local 153 and PSC/CUNY to provide supplement benefits for life insurance coverage and vision benefits.

NOTE 8. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Identification of Related Organizations

PSC/CUNY has the following related entities:

- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)
- Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York Welfare Fund
- The American Association of University Professors (AAUP)

The entities listed above share common trustees, officers or affiliation with PSC/CUNY.

PSC/CUNY is affiliated with New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) through arrangements whereby PSC/CUNY pays dues to each entity in order for its members to participate in affiliated programs and, in turn, is reimbursed for various expenses, including reimbursements for meetings, organizing, legislative representation, training programs, and arbitration.

Dues paid to NYSUT for the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016 were $7,267,213 and $6,868,292, respectively. As of August 31, 2017 and 2016, PSC/CUNY owed NYSUT $1,169,000 and $1,103,000, respectively for dues. Dues paid to AFT for the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016 were $3,588,825 and $3,373,994, respectively. As of August 31, 2017 and 2016, PSC/CUNY owed AFT $603,000 and $559,000, respectively for dues.

Reimbursements from NYSUT for the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016 were $3,766,775 and $3,641,829, respectively. As of August 31, 2017 and 2016, NYSUT owed PSC/CUNY $416,000 and $447,649, respectively. Reimbursements from AFT for the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016 were $305,391 and $737,081, respectively. As of August 31, 2017 and 2016, AFT owed PSC/CUNY $111,884 and $266,000, respectively.

PSC/CUNY pays NYSUT a monthly fee for dues processing. Dues processing fees totaled $72,600 and $70,200 for the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively. As of August 31, 2017 and 2016, PSC/CUNY owed NYSUT $6,050 and $5,850, respectively for dues processing.

PSC/CUNY reimburses the Welfare Fund for shared computer services. PSC/CUNY's portion of shared computer expenses totaled $38,108 and $29,557 for the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively. As of August 31, 2017 and 2016, PSC/CUNY owed the Welfare Fund $7,000 and $2,725, respectively for shared computer services.

Office Space Leases

PSC/CUNY leases office space from 61 Broadway Owner, LLC (the Realty Corp). On September 30, 2005, PSC/CUNY entered into a sixteen year lease with the Realty Corp for Suites 1500 and 1615 of the 61 Broadway building. The lease was amended on August 4, 2009 and May 17, 2012 to include Suites 1630 and 1610, respectively. The leases, all which expire on August 31, 2022, are classified as operating leases and provide for minimum annual rentals, plus certain additional expense escalations and utility charges. Per the agreement, PSC/CUNY is also responsible for its portion of real estate taxes.

The minimum annual future rental payments under the three leases are summarized as follows:

Year ending August 31,	
2018	$ 1,195,401
2019	1,219,899
2020	1,247,967
2021	1,282,830
2022	1,309,149
Total	$ 6,255,246

Rent including utilities was $1,191,945 for the year ended August 31, 2017 and $1,197,099 for 2016.

PSC/CUNY subleases office space to the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York Welfare Fund, a related party. The Welfare Fund pays PSC/CUNY a sum equal to 23.90% of the lease of Suite 1500. The sublease expires on August 31, 2022.

The minimum annual future rental income under the sublease with the related party is summarized as follows:

Year ending August 31,	
2018	$ 204,056
2019	208,137
2020	212,300
2021	216,546
2022	220,877
Total	$ 1,061,916

Total rental income for the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016 was $237,402 and $230,220, respectively.

NOTE 9. FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

PSC/CUNY expended $20,225,596 for the year ended August 31, 2017 and $19,384,795 for 2016. PSC/CUNY has estimated that on a functional classification basis these expenses would be allocated as follows:

	2017	2016
Union activities	78%	79%
Management & administrative	22%	21%
Total	100%	100%

NOTE 10. LITIGATION

Certain claims, suits, and complaints arising in the ordinary course of business have been filed or are pending against PSC/CUNY. In the opinion of PSC/CUNY's management and legal counsel, the ultimate outcome of these claims will not have a material adverse effect on the financial position of PSC/CUNY.

NOTE 11. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

PSC/CUNY has evaluated subsequent events through March 8, 2018, the date the financial statements were available to be issued, and they have been evaluated in accordance with relevant accounting standards.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION
SCHEDULES OF EXPENSES BY CATEGORY
YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2017 AND 2016

	2017	2016
Affiliation fees		
New York State United Teachers	$ 7,267,213	$ 6,848,292
American Federation of Teachers	3,588,825	3,373,995
The American Association of University Professors	232,167	251,653
Municipal Labor Committee	20,835	20,584
Other	31,625	31,775
	11,140,665	10,526,299
Salaries, employee benefits, and payroll taxes		
Salaries	3,685,874	3,560,621
Payroll taxes	275,780	271,117
Health benefit expense	792,142	736,669
Pension benefit expense	961,374	629,946
Other	40,428	47,313
	5,755,598	5,245,666
Representational and governance		
Conferences and conventions	133,206	114,908
Elections	12,104	15,095
Committees	20,164	12,895
	165,474	142,898
Public relations		
Mobilization and outreach	139,152	135,989
Community relations	41,342	27,890
Cultural activities	4,352	7,083
	184,846	170,962
Building expenses		
Rent and services	1,191,945	1,197,099
Real estate taxes	99,982	87,557
Repairs and maintenance	97,963	109,251
	1,389,890	1,393,907
Administrative, office and general		
Office	$ 286,349	$ 252,805
Postage	41,836	36,262
Insurance	39,399	38,692
Dues processing	72,600	70,200
Other	8,171	6,406
	448,355	404,365
Professional fees		
Legal	128,915	168,336
Consulting	141,813	147,755
Accounting and auditing	40,000	40,000
Computer	92,750	95,092
	403,478	451,183
Contract and budget campaigns	180,293	558,421
Stipends and reassigned time	464,166	398,465
Depreciation expense	92,831	92,629
Total expenses	$ 20,225,596	$ 19,384,795

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

Table 1

Fair Value Measurements at August 31, 2017	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Certificates of deposit	$ 992,000	$ 992,000	$ -	$ -
Mutual funds:				
Fixed income	6,316,525	6,316,525	-	-
Equity	1,533,849	1,533,849	-	-
	$ 8,842,374	$ 8,842,374	$ -	$ -

Fair Value Measurements at August 31, 2016	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Certificates of deposit	$ 992,000	$ 992,000	$ -	$ -
Mutual funds:				
Fixed income	4,768,949	4,768,949	-	-
Equity	1,121,405	1,121,405	-	-
	$ 6,882,354	$ 6,882,354	$ -	$ -

Table 2

Legal Name of Pension Plan	Pension Plan's Employer Identification Number	Pension Plan's Plan Number	Pension Protection Act Zone Status: Zone Status	Extended Amortization Provisions Used?	Zone Status	Extended Amortization Provisions Used?	Expiration Date of Collective Bargaining Agreement
Local 153 Pension Fund	13-2864289	001	Red as of 01/01/17	No	Red as of 01/01/16	No	*

Table 3

Legal Name of Pension Plan	Contributions paid by the Plan directly to the Pension Plan 8/31/2017	8/31/2016	Contributions to the Pension Plan greater than 5% of total Pension Plan contributions (Plan year ending)		Employer Contribution Rate of the Pension Plan 8/31/2017	8/31/2016	Number of Employees Covered by the Pension Plan for which the Plan contributes directly to the Pension Plan 8/31/2017	8/31/2016
Local 153 Pension Fund	$ 128,024	$ 127,310	No. Plan year ending 8/31/17.	No. Plan year ending 8/31/16.	*	*	13	13

Table 4

Legal Name of Pension Plan	Funding Improvement Plan or Rehabilitation Plan Implemented or Pending?	Surcharge paid to Pension Plan by the Benefit Funds?	Minimum contributions required in future by CBA, statutory requirements, or other contractual requirements? No?	If yes, description
Local 153 Pension Fund	Rehabilitation Plan Implemented	Yes	No	N/A

Table 5

Legal Name of Plan providing postretirement benefits other than pension	Contributions to Plan 8/31/2017	8/31/2016	Employer contribution rates 8/31/2017	8/31/2016	Number of employees covered by Plan 8/31/2017	8/31/2016
Local 153 Health Fund	$ 11,845	$ 11,312	*	*	19	18

15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Recommitment – almost there

The next time you receive *Clarion*, it's likely that a decision will have come down in *Janus v. AFSCME*, ruling that unions like the PSC will be unable to collect agency shop fees.

Members can take advantage of the next few weeks to ask their chapter chairs or staff organizers who on their campus has not signed a recommitment card. The union has already made impressive gains to achieve full membership across the university. Now the union is in the final stretch.

You can get the new, blue recommitment cards either from your chapter chair or organizer, or sign up a colleague at http://psc-cuny.org/UnionYes.

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

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THE FIGHT CONTINUES

Courseload reduction

By **BARBARA BOWEN**
PSC President

Many members have contacted me with questions and anger about the information you are receiving from college administrations about how they plan to implement the agreement to reduce the contractual teaching load. I share your anger, but we should not be surprised. Every major agreement the PSC has won – increased sabbatical pay, HEO salary differentials, three-year appointments for adjuncts – has required sustained union pressure to be implemented properly. Pressure about the teaching load agreement is already being applied by PSC chapter chairs and leadership, but it will be most effective if it is amplified by the thousands of faculty whose fundamental working conditions are at stake.

PSC members broke a 30-year stalemate on teaching loads because faculty on the campuses spent years organizing and the union as a whole prioritized the teaching load in the last contract. We gained the support of students and community groups for our contract priorities – with especially strong support from students on the teaching load issue – and PSC members authorized the union to call a strike by a vote of 92 percent. The teaching load agreement comes out of that fight. It delivers a major blow to the premise that austerity conditions are the best we can hope for at CUNY.

LASTING GAINS

The language of the agreement is simple: the contractual teaching load will be reduced by one teaching contact hour each year, starting next fall, until the full three-hour reduction starts in Fall 2020 semester.

The agreement establishes that a teaching load of 18 or 24 hours will now be a *right* under the contract, and will no longer be dependent on your college's ability or president's inclination to provide reassigned time. Many full-time faculty currently receive reassigned time for unsponsored research or other professional activities, but the new contractual agreement means that a lower teaching load is *guaranteed.*

A second and equally significant gain is that faculty who routinely teach the full contractual load because they are in less well-funded colleges or departments will now experience a reduction. The fact that none of us will be required to teach 27 hours at the community colleges or 21 for professorial faculty at the senior colleges is an advance for the faculty as a whole. And it will also be a tremendous gain for students. Virtually every study of the factors that help students to succeed in college shows that time spent individually or in small groups with faculty is decisive.

Ellen Moynihan

Faculty testified to the City Council last year about the importance of the teaching load reduction.

While the agreement reduces the full-time faculty's contractual obligation, it does not necessarily reduce each individual faculty member's teaching load because individual teaching loads can currently be adjusted through reassigned time. Almost all reassigned time is provided at the discretion of the college president. CUNY management refused during the negotiations to freeze current reassigned time in place and add the contractual reduction to that total. Much of the struggle about implementation has been around this issue.

REASSIGNED TIME

Reassigned time at CUNY is not ornamental. It's not the result of "deals." It is the essential currency of a university that is systematically starved of funds and whose teaching load, until now, has been prohibitive.

Many college presidents have found ways to provide discretionary reassigned time to fairly large numbers of faculty, using funds from college budgets. At some colleges, reassigned time for research activities is routine. These colleges would not be able to compete for the research-active faculty they seek if they did not provide some relief from the heavy teaching load. Even at the new level of 18 hours, the senior college teaching load will not be fully competitive. Many of our publicly funded competitor universities have a load of 12 hours.

ADDITIONAL TIME

At other colleges, reassigned time to direct academic programs or lead pedagogical initiatives is common – and essential if the colleges are going to serve their students. All CUNY college presidents have recognized that elected department chairs, on whose labor the entire academic enterprise depends and whose role is included in the collective bargaining agreement signed by CUNY management, need substantial reassigned time.

When the teaching load agreement was signed last December, CUNY Chancellor James B. Milliken said it would "strengthen the university's competitiveness in attracting and retaining talented faculty." University Provost Vita Rabinowitz spoke about "the additional time faculty will now spend meeting and advising students, as well as on their research and scholarship." If the agreement is implemented in the narrow way that is currently being pursued, neither of these claims will be justified. Much of the value of the contractual reduction will be squandered if the de facto teaching loads of many hard-working, productive faculty remain unchanged.

IT'S ALWAYS THE MONEY

It comes down to a question of funding. Only one-third of the total cost will be needed in the first year, however, as the reduction is phased in. *The PSC's position is that the agreement should be funded to enable current reassigned time for research, department leadership and academic activities to remain in place, in addition to the reduction in the contractual load. We also take the position that the courses no longer taught by current faculty should lead to the creation of new full-time faculty positions, with an opportunity to increase diversity with new hiring and make openings for current part-time faculty.*

CUNY management relies on the old argument of scarcity. The administration failed to secure additional dedicated funding for the contractual reduction in the most recent New York State budget. (The city budget, which provides funding for the community colleges, is not yet determined.) Yet university administrators have expressed satisfaction with the state budget result. It is their responsibility to find funding in the current budget. If CUNY Central can find funds for all kinds of other priorities – new deans and their staffs, new programs and initiatives, not to mention CUNYfirst – then they can find the relatively modest funds needed to implement this agreement. They should do so without further delay and damage to their credibility with the faculty.

The PSC signed the agreement without having the funds in place because we saw the chance to change one of the most important parts of the contract, and we seized it. We also knew that the city and state would not fund an agreement if it was not signed. The union leadership is now pushing hard for additional funding from both city and state, and we will continue until funding is provided.

We call on the CUNY trustees, all of whom are political appointees of the governor and the mayor, to use their political leverage and secure the funding required to implement the reduction in a way that maximizes its value. Our message: For a fairly modest sum compared to CUNY's total teaching budget, it offers a blueprint for transforming the experience of students, boosting the university's competitiveness and enriching our shared academic life. For once, do something at CUNY right.

Holding the university accountable