



Dave Sanders

500 RALLY, CUNY RESPONDS

As five hundred PSC members protested at the Sept. 26 meeting of the Board of Trustees, Chancellor Goldstein announced that CUNY will seek funding for adjunct health insurance in its upcoming State budget. The announcement marked an im-

portant step in the union's campaign to save adjunct health insurance – but it was just a first step. Now members on the campuses are organizing local actions. "This issue has to be visible everywhere you turn," one activist said.

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GOVERNANCE

PSC plans suit on Pathways

CUNY management's Pathways plan bypasses the role of elected faculty bodies in formulating policy on curriculum, the PSC says – and that violates University Bylaws.

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NYPD BUSTED

CUNY faculty vs. police spying

Faculty criticized police spying on Muslim student groups at CUNY, part of a broad surveillance effort not based on evidence of criminal conduct.

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ADJUNCT PENSIONS

Time is of the essence

If you are an adjunct who has not yet enrolled in the Teachers Retirement System, now is the time to fill out an enrollment form. Find out more inside.

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SOLIDARITY

Occupy Wall St. allies with labor

Support from the labor movement has helped Occupy Wall Street to survive and grow. Unions are also benefiting from this alliance.

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CALENDAR

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11 / 6:00 pm: Labor Goes to the Movies presents *Twenty-Four Eyes* (Keisuke Kinoshita, Japan, 1954), a film that traces the relations between a young teacher and her 12 students (two eyes each) over the course of 20 years, from the beginning of the Great Depression through World War II. PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th floor.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14 / 5:30 pm food, 6:00 pm meeting: First Environmental Health and Safety Watchdog meeting of the semester. 61 Broadway, 15th floor.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2 / 4:00 pm: First Friday monthly meeting for part-time faculty. 61 Broadway, 15th floor. For more information, please e-mail mnewfield@pscmail.org.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5 / 1:00 pm: Retirees Chapter meeting. PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Executive Director Larry Morgan will speak, plus there will be a report back from the Safety Net Working Group. PSC Union Hall, 16th floor, 61 Broadway.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6 / 6:30 pm: CLT Chapter General Membership Meeting. PSC Union Hall, 16th floor, 61 Broadway. For more information, e-mail Albert Sherman at ASherman@citytech.cuny.edu.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9 / 6:00 pm: Labor Goes to the Movies presents *Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000* (Alain Tanner, Switzerland, 1976), a film about several post-60s radicals seeking to find renewed meaning in their lives. PSC Union Hall, 16th floor, 61 Broadway.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9 / 6:00 pm: PSC Forum on CUNY and Race: Diversity in a Time of Austerity. City Tech, Namm Building, Janet Lefler Dining Room, 300 Jay Street, 2nd floor, Brooklyn. For more information see the notice below.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13 / 6:00 pm: Meeting of PSC Women's Committee. At the PSC office, 61 Broadway, 15th floor.

CUNY shifts stance on adjunct health care

By PETER HOGNESS

When Chancellor Matthew Goldstein spoke at the Board of Trustees meeting on September 26, he said something CUNY had been unwilling to say for 25 years. "I will be incorporating into the University's budget request, for the first time, funding to support health benefits for adjuncts," the chancellor announced.

What made the difference? "It was your coming here today," PSC President Barbara Bowen told hundreds of demonstrators on the street outside. "It was you and all the people who signed petitions and letters that made them move."

ON TO ALBANY

Goldstein's remarks suggested that this was now a priority for the administration. He called adjunct health insurance "a very legitimate concern," described it as "something that has not been done to any of our satisfaction" and pledged to raise

the issue in Albany the next day. But no details were provided – and while union leaders welcomed the administration's shift in position, they cautioned that members will have to make their voices heard to ensure that CUNY maintains its new stance.

When the PSC first gained health insurance for adjuncts in 1986, the union negotiated annual payments from CUNY as part of a contract settlement. In what became a significant structural problem over time, the amount that the University paid did not increase with either the number of adjuncts covered or the cost of the benefit. The amount paid remained flat, year after year.

For the 11 years since Bowen became president, the PSC has pressed for a more sustainable approach to adjunct health care. The simplest structural solution, the union has said, would be to transfer eligible CUNY adjuncts to either the New

York City or New York State health insurance plan, on the same terms as other comparable part-time workers. Neither plan lines up exactly with CUNY adjuncts' current coverage, but both would provide stable, permanent health insurance. Both would provide "a structural solution to a structural problem" – that is, a plan in which funding is linked to the number of participants and the cost of coverage. While CUNY has flatly rejected the

union's demands for such a solution in the past, it has now made a public commitment to an effort to achieve one.

Although the administration has taken a step forward, the issue is far from resolved, and union leaders urged members to keep the heat on the University administration. "As the budget process heats up next year, CUNY must continue to stand behind adjunct health insurance as a priority," said Bowen. "This fall

we need to demonstrate the depth and breadth of support for adjunct health care within the University community, so that there's no possibility 80th Street will waver." In winter, as Albany engages with next year's budget, she said the union will have to keep two balls in the air at the same time: maintain pressure on CUNY, while working to pass a CUNY budget that includes funding for adjunct health care.

"We have seen how strong support for this fundamental issue of justice is. Now we need to make that support as visible as possible on the campuses," Bowen told the October 27 Delegate Assembly. "Why the campuses? Because that's where we can apply the most pressure on CUNY, and we need to hold CUNY accountable for resolving the problem. We are also going to hold the City and State accountable – but it's CUNY's obligation, as our employer, to provide this coverage for our adjunct members."



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Urgency & calm in the Wall Street protests

● On October 21, I joined with more than 2,000 union brothers and sisters in a march organized by the Verizon workers of Communications Workers Local 1101 down to Zuccotti/Liberty Park, and from there to a Verizon store on Wall Street, where we rallied. Unions represented along with PSC-CUNY were the UAW, the Teamsters, and AFSCME.

Those who've been down to Liberty Park and taken part in the Occupy Wall Street movement know that one of its greatest breakthroughs is getting working people talking about economics and politics. Wear a provocative t-shirt, or carry a sign with a compelling fact or gripping slogan, and you'll have dozens of people stopping to ask you questions or to add to what you've brought to say. It's a remarkable development in our

culture, and only good things will come from it.

One of the big topics that Friday night at the park was the role of organized labor in the Occupy Wall Street movement. For example, several of the Verizon workers I was with expressed regret that it took so long for their union local to get involved, by which they meant two or three weeks. And that's the real essence of this movement: a rare combination of absolute urgency and calm, rational dialogue about what we should do next.

Jonathan Scott
Bronx Community College

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

● When Mayor Bloomberg announced plans to evict the Occupy Wall Street protesters from Liberty

Park on the morning of October 14, the call went out from many unions and community groups to come stand with the occupiers in solidarity against the eviction. My wife and I dutifully showed up at 5:45 am.

As I wandered around looking for other PSCers to hang out with, I chatted with a great many other folks: people from other unions like CWA, TWU, SEIU, various progressives and of course the occupiers.

I was astounded at the respect that my little old PSC-CUNY cap drew. "Ooohhh, you're PSC!" "PSC... you guys were supporting this first!" "PSC, thanks for all your

support!" I'm just paraphrasing, inadequately. It blew me away.

Thanks to the tireless work of our union's leaders and members, the PSC has developed some helluva reputation among union and community activists in NYC. It's really an institutional thing.

Of course, this was just a side story in that morning's amazing events. Thousands of people from all over the city came together to defend the right to protest, and we won. Our union was just one part of that – but it made me proud to be a part of the PSC.

David Arnow
Brooklyn College

School aides oppose layoffs



School aides in Local 372 of AFSCME District Council 37 joined parents, teachers, students and activists from Occupy Wall Street in October to protest against Mayor Bloomberg's layoff of 642 support staff in NYC's public schools.

Forum on CUNY and Race Diversity in a Time of Austerity Policies

Friday, December 9 | 6:00 – 9:00 pm | NYC College of Technology

Featured Speakers:

Carol Wright, PSC Researcher, CUNY and Race Project | Frank Deale, CUNY School of Law
Welcome by President Russell Hotzler

Join us for a discussion of the preliminary findings of a study by the Professional Staff Congress on how race, gender and ethnicity affect hiring, promotion, tenure and reclassification at CUNY. Participate in an evening of reflection and commentary, explore histories of anti-racism at the University, and strategize about how the union can intervene to build diversity into the institutional culture at CUNY.

Refreshments will be served, starting at 5:30.

New York City College of Technology

Janet Lefler Dining Room, Namm Building (2nd Floor) | 300 Jay Street (at Tillary), Brooklyn

Subways: A, C, F, and R trains to Jay Street, or 2, 3, 4, and 5 trains to Borough Hall. For more information, contact icheng@pscmail.org.

Progress on adjunct health care

By JOHN TARLETON

As hundreds of PSC members protested inside and outside a meeting of the Board of Trustees, CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein announced that the University will seek funding for adjunct health insurance in its upcoming State budget request.

The announcement marked a significant step in the union's 11-year campaign to get CUNY to provide full permanent funding for adjunct health insurance. The long-running dispute over management's refusal to fund the cost of this benefit came to a head this fall, when the Trustees of the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund concluded that the current funding structure could not sustain adjunct coverage beyond next summer. (See *Clarion*, Sept. 2011.)

FIRST TIME

"It's the first time CUNY has ever moved on adjunct health care," PSC President Barbara Bowen told the hundreds who rallied outside. But Bowen cautioned that convincing CUNY to include adjunct health insurance in its budget request was only a start: "The next step is to hold them to that priority, to insist that it's funded by the State. And then the next step, if we succeed with the State, is to negotiate the movement of adjuncts onto permanent health care." (See also page 2.)

More than 500 people participated in the protest outside the meeting at Baruch. One was Renee Mizrahi, an adjunct lecturer in English at Kingsborough Community College since 2003, who was glad to see the protest have an effect. Mizrahi received a kidney transplant in 2008 and relies on immunosuppressant drugs to remain alive.

"Everyone should have access to health care," she said. "Sometimes I wake up at night very scared and wonder what's going to happen if they take away my health insurance." With the first step taken toward a so-

Keep up pressure, says PSC

lution, Mizrahi said, "I feel fantastic." "It boils down to the issue of fairness," said Yunzhong Shu, an associate professor of Chinese at Queens College. "Half of our courses are taught by adjuncts."

The announcement came after about 75 PSC members crowded into the 14th floor conference room in Baruch's Vertical Campus, where the Board was meeting. The union made its presence felt when a group of about 15 women (and a couple of men) stood at the front of the room to sing an adapted version of the civil rights anthem "We Shall Not Be Moved" with verses such as:

We're standing with our union, we shall not be moved.

Full-time and part-time, we shall not be moved.

Health care is a human right, we shall not be moved.

Do the right thing, CUNY, we shall not be moved.

Bowen delivered copies of more than 2,000 petition signatures in support of adjunct health insurance to Senior Vice Chancellor Jay Hershenson. As the meeting began, union members held aloft bright red and white placards that read "Do the Right Thing, CUNY!" During the Chancellor's report a gentle, fluttering sound filled the room as the protesters shook their signs in unison.

The action at the Board of Trustees drew both full- and part-time faculty who were appalled at the thought that they or their colleagues could lose something as basic as health care coverage.

"It's an issue that full-time faculty need to care about as much as adjuncts," said Jennifer Hayashida, a distinguished lecturer who serves as the director of the Asian American Studies Program at Hunter. Loss of adjunct health coverage "would completely dehumanize the institution."

80th St. announces it will seek State funding.

"'Let them die' is not an appropriate stance for CUNY's upper-level administration to take in regard to half of its faculty," declared Jane Weiss, an assistant professor of English at KCC who worked for 16 years as an adjunct at Hunter College. "People who don't have health coverage sometimes miss diagnoses or treatments that they need to have, and some of them actually do die. It's a life or death issue."

"If I lost my health insurance, replacing it would cost a third of my wages," said Bettina Berch, an adjunct lecturer in economics at BMCC and the author of five books, including one on the political economy of women and work. "I love teaching, but I can't teach for nothing. I would have to teach somewhere else."

Ari Richter, an adjunct who teaches art at LaGuardia, said that when he taught at community colleges in North Carolina he had no union and no health coverage. When he moved to New York in 2009, Richter gained health insurance after going to work at CUNY – and he wants to keep it.

While teaching at CUNY, Richter said, "[I] know that I'm safe and know that I'm able to stay healthy. So I think it's a travesty now that they're trying to get rid of this thing that I treasure so greatly."

INVALUABLE

Mike Cesarano, an assistant professor of theater at QCC, said having health care during his seven years as a CUNY adjunct was invaluable. He said he came to the demonstration because a union's strength comes from members' willingness to fight for each other's needs.

"I want the union to be there when I need them, so I wanted to do my part," Cesarano said.



An adjunct makes her views known during the Sept. 26 board of trustees meeting. Now that CUNY has committed to pursue state funding for adjunct health insurance, the PSC will push to make sure the university keeps its promise.

What you can do

Faculty and staff across CUNY are taking action to save adjunct health care.

"This issue has to be visible everywhere you turn," said Ron Hayduk, professor of political science at BMCC. "We have to make it inescapable – so it's clear to everyone that this is an urgent issue for the whole University community."

That kind of visibility is a key starting point, union activists say, and every PSC member can take a few basic steps to make it happen: put up a poster, wear a button, give campaign stickers to your colleagues and ask if they have

signed the petition. (Materials are available from your union chapter chair; links to a printable poster and the online petition can be found at tinyurl.com/AHI-what-do.)

PSC chapters are organizing a range of campus actions, with teach-ins, street theater and other projects in the works.

At Bronx Community College, the union chapter organized a rally for adjunct health care outside Meister Hall on November 3. "You have to take it to where the people are," said Lenny Dick, an adjunct in math and computer science at BCC. "The union has had success-

ful CUNY-wide demonstrations, like the recent protest outside the Board of Trustees – now we need to spread that message everywhere in the University."

Speakers at the rally, both adjuncts and full-timers, emphasized that maintaining adjunct health care was a basic obligation for the University as an employer. "Adjuncts now teach more than half the courses at CUNY," said Dick. "We are a core part of the faculty."

FACULTY SENATES

At some colleges, governance bodies are taking a stand. A resolution adopted by Baruch's Faculty Senate declared that a loss of adjunct health insurance would "put these faculty at risk and embod[y] a disrespect for [their] contributions...and neglect of their basic

needs that the entire faculty of the College does not countenance." The resolution said it is urgent to secure either permanent funding for adjunct health coverage or an equivalent benefit from another source.

A resolution to be considered by BMCC's Academic Senate at its November meeting urges CUNY to get adjuncts covered under City or State health plans. It notes that lack of insurance coverage leads many to delay treatment, with results that can damage their health or the health of others.

A key event comes on November 21, when the Board of Trustees holds a public hearing on CUNY's budget request for next year. The union is mobilizing members to attend and to testify on the urgency of

maintaining adjunct health coverage. "We want the CUNY trustees to understand how important adjunct health insurance is to our members who receive it, how deeply all our

Making the issue "visible everywhere you turn"

members feel about this issue, and why funding it is the right thing to do," said PSC First Vice President Steve London.

Members who would like to testify can contact Fran Clark, the PSC's communications coordinator, at fclark@pscmail.org, for more information. The Board of Trustees will hold its November 21 budget request hearing at 5:00 pm in Room 14-220 of Baruch's Vertical Campus (enter on 25th Street near Lexington Ave.). A large crowd is expected, including CUNY students testifying against proposed tuition hikes.

— PH

NYPD spy scandal hits CUNY

By JOHN TARLETON

The New York Police Department has monitored Muslim student groups on six CUNY campuses, part of a broad surveillance effort that was not based on evidence of criminal conduct. The police spying was first detailed in early September by veteran police reporter Leonard Levitt on his blog *NYPD Confidential*.

According to documents obtained by Levitt and also by the Associated Press, the NYPD deployed undercover officers at Baruch and Brooklyn Colleges, and used police in its Intelligence Division Cyber Unit to monitor students at Brooklyn and Queens. In addition, police documents refer to the use of "secondary" undercovers at Hunter, CCNY, Queens and LaGuardia. Police undercovers attended events put on by Muslim student groups; the surveillance continued from at least 2003 to 2006.

PERVASIVE

These reports came in the wake of an AP investigation, published in late August, that described a vast NYPD spying operation reaching into almost every corner of the Muslim community – from mosques to restaurants to hair salons. The central role of a secret NYPD "Demographics Unit" illustrated the extent to which the surveillance had gone far beyond investigation of particular criminal acts to become a blanket investigation of entire communities.

When the NYPD denied the existence of the Demographics Unit, AP

Profiling Muslim students



Brooklyn College faculty members Moustafa Bayoumi (left) and Alex Vitale (right) have both criticized NYPD spying on CUNY campuses.

reporters posted documents from the unit online. One included a list of "Ancestries of Interest," including "American Black Muslim." A "Moroccan Initiative" conducted surveillance on cafés because they were frequented by people from Morocco.

"This kind of behavior is not acceptable in an academic environment, especially if it's a fishing expedition and there is no specific, credible threat," said Angela Burton, an associate professor at the CUNY School of Law.

On September 13, the Brooklyn College Faculty Council unanimously approved a resolution denouncing the NYPD spying on campus. The resolution also called on the NYPD to inform those they had spied upon about the nature of the information gathered.

PROFILING

"Police have the right to investigate crimes but they don't have the right to investigate people based on their religion or their ethnic identity," said Moustafa Bayoumi, associate professor of English at Brooklyn College and author of *How Does It*

Feel to Be a Problem? Being Young and Arab in America.

During the September 13 meeting, Brooklyn College President Karen Gould spoke in support of the resolution and denied that the college administration had known of the spying.

"We do not in any way condone the alleged intrusion of the NYPD into campus life," Gould said. "If true, we believe this was a violation of freedom of expression and the constitutional rights of our students, faculty, and staff."

"The faculty resolution sent a clear message to the administration and the NYPD that this will not be tolerated," said Acting PSC Chapter Chair Alex Vitale, a sociologist whose scholarship focuses on police conduct and civil liberties. Vitale expressed concern that the NYPD may have violated the Handschu Agreement, a set of court-ordered guidelines regulating police surveillance.

The AP reported that some CUNY personnel may have shared student records in violation of the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Penalties for a school that violates FERPA can potentially include loss of federal funding.

Ramzi Kassem, an associate professor and director of CUNY Law School's Immigrant and Refugee Rights Clinic, told the AP that undercover officers may also have violated a 1992 agreement between CUNY and the NYPD, which states that apart from emergency situations, police "shall enter upon CUNY campuses, buildings and other property only upon the request or approval of a CUNY official."

CUNY Law School faculty passed a resolution on October 3 condemning the NYPD's campus spying.

The free and open exchange of ideas is central to the life of a university, Bayoumi emphasized. "If covert surveillance occurs on a campus, it threatens to undermine that," he said.

"It was good to see there were many professors who were quick to speak out and pass resolutions," said Soheeb Amin, President of the Islamic Society at Brooklyn College. But for Amin, a third-year business management major, self-censorship is already a way of life.

"It happens on a daily basis," he told *Clarion*. "I don't even discuss politics and controversial topics." As an example, Amin described sitting quietly through a class discussion earlier this semester in which fellow students debated the ethics of U.S. torture policy. "If I say torturing terrorists is cruel, then I might be seen as a terrorist sympathizer," he explained.

INVESTIGATIONS

Jameel Haque, a doctoral student in history and an adjunct at City College, echoed these sentiments. "It's very unnerving because you are assumed to be a criminal," said Haque, who last year served as faculty advisor to the Muslim Student Association at Lehman.

Jeanne Theoharis, a professor of political science at Brooklyn College, says it is essential for the University's top leadership to step up and address the situation. "The CUNY administration needs to be very forceful about this," Theoharis said. "There have to be investigations into how this was able to happen, and policies need to be put in place to keep this from happening again."

PSC to administration: postpone Nov. Bylaws vote

The PSC has asked CUNY management to delay the vote on a package of revisions to the University's Bylaws that is scheduled for the November 28 meeting of the Board of Trustees.

The extensive changes were originally scheduled for a vote last June, but in a May 20 letter the PSC asked that this be postponed. The union expressed concern about some of the proposals, such as those eliminating many job descriptions from the Bylaws, removing language governing retrenchment, and assigning college presidents unilateral power to remove any member of a department's personnel and budget committee. To ensure that members' rights in the workplace were not undermined, the PSC said that public discussion of the proposed changes was necessary – which a June vote would not allow.

Within 24 hours, nearly 1,000 PSC members had sent messages to CUNY supporting the union's request, and management agreed to postpone the vote. Since then there have been discussions, and CUNY has been willing to make a number

of changes to the proposed revisions. Some of the union's concerns have been resolved, but others have not – and union leaders say that while management's willingness to make changes is positive, the many and frequent revisions have created a moving target, making a broad public discussion impossible. In addition, the union-management discussions have not yet been completed, according to PSC leaders.

UNFINISHED TALKS

CUNY management says that the changes are intended as a general "housecleaning," essentially technical changes to elements that may be unclear or have become obsolete. That goal will not be harmed by postponing the vote from November, the PSC says – and a postponement would allow the union and management to complete their talks, and would better provide for public discussion in the University community.

As *Clarion* went to press in early November, CUNY had not yet responded to the request to postpone the vote.

—PH



A protester used her copy of *Clarion* as a picket sign at the October 11 "March on the Millionaires of Park Avenue." The paper's back-page article debunked the myth that higher taxes on the rich will make them flee New York.

Clarion sweeps awards

Clarion was named the best local union newspaper in the country by the International Labor Communications Association (ILCA) in its annual labor journalism awards contest. This marks the fourth time in seven years that *Clarion* has won the top prize for general excellence from ILCA.

ILCA also awarded first-place for Best Feature to *Clarion* Associate Editor John Tarleton for an article on LaGuardia Community College's urban studies program. Retired professor William Tabb won Best Analysis for his look at the origins of right-wing attacks on Frances Fox Piven, a CUNY

sociologist who angered critics with her support for poor people's movements.

Clarion also shared a first place with *California Teacher* for Best Print Publication from the American Federation of Teachers. Judges cited the PSC paper for being "well-written, clean and crisp" and "loaded with great information for members and many thoughtful article written by members themselves."

NEW YORK HONORS

Here in New York, *Clarion* tied for first among area papers and earned a total of eight awards from the Metro Labor Communications Council for excellence in areas including reporting, writing, photography and design. First place for Best Reporting went to Tarleton for uncovering dangerous health and safety conditions at a campus building under renovation at City Tech.

PSC First-Vice President Steve London won first place for Best Editorial/Column for his writing about a State-backed scheme to deregulate higher education in New York, and the recently redesigned PSC website took first place for website General Excellence.

PSC prepares Pathways lawsuit

By PETER HOGNESS

The PSC is preparing a lawsuit against CUNY's "Pathways" process that is overhauling colleges' general education and transfer requirements.

"We do not take this step lightly," said PSC President Barbara Bowen, "but we listened to faculty across the University and concluded that the way this process bypasses faculty governance goes right to the heart of our responsibilities as faculty members. That's why we have begun to prepare litigation."

"The PSC does not take a position on which courses should be part of general education or required for a major," Bowen noted. "But we do take a position on respecting the University's governance procedures, and a strong position in support of the role of elected faculty bodies."

The Pathways process involves the biggest change in curriculum at CUNY since the elimination of remedial courses in the senior college, Bowen said. "Yet this impor-

Defending shared governance

tant change is being designed by a committee that is hand-picked by the chancellor," she told *Clarion*. "This bypasses the role given to the University Faculty Senate in CUNY's Bylaws, and it bypasses the faculty senates on each college campus."

While individual faculty members on this committee may be distinguished and may have the best intentions, Bowen said, "the fact remains they were selected by the Chancellor, the very person to whom they will report. They were not chosen by their peers."

As the PSC Delegate Assembly pointed out in a resolution it adopted in June, Article 8.13 of CUNY's Bylaws identifies the University Faculty Senate's role in formulating policy on curriculum. The resolution declared that CUNY's Pathways process "violates both the spirit and letter of Bylaw 8.13 and the principle of shared governance."

No faculty governance body has

supported the Pathways process. Resolutions opposed to the administration's plan were adopted by faculty bodies at 11 of 12 senior colleges and at Queensborough

among the community colleges. Pathways has come under continuing criticism as it moves forward this fall.

The Executive Committee of CCNY's Faculty Council said

in September that it "strenuously objects to CUNY Central's circumvention of the faculty's historic authority with respect to curricula."

In an October statement at Hunter, 26 department chairs and program directors declared, "While we recognize the need to address the issue of student transfer policies, this proposal as implemented will reduce the overall quality of a CUNY education and will erase the identity of its individual colleges."

"It's really demoralizing for facul-

ty," said Glenn Petersen, chair of the sociology and anthropology department at Baruch. "We've dedicated our careers to creating an education for our students that will serve them well, and 80th St. is unilaterally taking that apart."

Some of CUNY's procedures or ways of thinking about academic success may have been due for a shake-up, Petersen said – but "that's a debate that should be had among faculty," not imposed by central administration.

On October 31, the Pathways Task force released a draft of the new general education rules – the criteria for courses that are to be part of a college's "Common Core." Comments are due by November 15, a time frame that many faculty felt was inadequate for the serious discussion that this initiative should be promoting.

A frequent topic of concern in campus discussions on the criteria has been their restrictive effect on language requirements. "In an increasingly globalized world," said the Hunter chairs' and directors' statement, "we do not see how

CUNY can justify eliminating foreign language requirements and imposing curriculum changes that undermine the value of pluralism and diversity."

As the general education changes were debated, the Pathways process moved on to other areas. Manfred Philipp, professor of chemistry at Lehman and a union delegate, told *Clarion* the centralization of authority through Pathways will ultimately give CUNY administration control over key classes in each department. New committees have been appointed to decide what introductory courses can be required for a given major.

DISCIPLINE COUNCILS

"They are not elected, they are appointed," emphasized Philipp, a former chair of the UFS. "This takes control of the major itself out of a department's curricular committee. These people will actually decide which courses can be required for your department's major – and that is a fundamental change in how this University operates."

CUNY's immigrant & ethnic press connection

By JOHN TARLETON

With its nexus of high-powered publishers, broadcasters and advertising agencies, New York is often known as the "media capital of the world." But New York City is also home to a parallel media universe made up of hundreds of ethnic and community publications that reach into nearly every neighborhood in the metropolis.

These community-based newspapers and websites often receive little recognition or support – and that's something that CUNY's Graduate School of Journalism aims to change, as it prepares to launch the its New York Community and Ethnic Media Center.

UNDER THE RADAR

"Mainstream media gets lots of attention, [but] these people are under the radar," says Professor Sarah Bartlett, Director of the Journalism School's Urban Reporting Program. "We want to keep the playing field level."

New York City has the largest ethnic press in the country. Its roughly 400 publications include 54 in Spanish, 7 in Chinese, and about a dozen in Bengali. Operating in a city in which 36% of residents are foreign-born and nearly half speak a language other than English at home, the ethnic press is able to develop a close bond with its readers that larger counterparts cannot match.

The Community and Ethnic Media Center will assist publications like these, which face similar technological and economic challenges to their larger mainstream

New center at J-School

counterparts, as journalism finds its way in an uncertain future. A major focus of CUNY's Journalism School is finding the forms through which good journalism can have a sustainable future, and ethnic and community-based publications may be able to play an important role.

"We want to be the place for innovation for ethnic media," says Project Director Garry Pierre-Pierre, a Pulitzer winning reporter formerly at the *New York Times* who founded the Brooklyn-based *Haitian Times* in 1999.

The *Haitian Times* circulates in central Brooklyn and southeast Queens. Its print run has dropped from a peak of 15,000 to 5,000, but it has built a growing online readership in other areas – South Florida, Boston, San Francisco – that are home to large numbers of Haitian immigrants.

The Center will help such publications navigate today's changing media landscape. "I live and breathe this," says Pierre-Pierre. "I know how to avoid dead ends so we can get down to the things that work."

Blackandbrownnews.com, which covers stories and perspectives of interest to the black and Latino communities, could be an example of ethnic media's future, and the role that the Community and Ethnic Media Center might play. Based on the internet since its inception in 2006, BBN has broken news stories that were later picked up by larger publications like *The New York Times*. BBN's

website was overdue for a redesign, but it lacked the resources to make this happen.

Now, with support from a Journalism School student, BBN is looking forward to the launch of a new website this fall. Its founder and managing editor, Sharon Toomer, who has previously been a CNN producer and communications coordinator for the PSC, has attended

J-School training on sustainability models, multimedia production and social media strategies. "We entered 2011 not sure how we could continue," she told *Clarion*. "Now we see endless possibilities for how BBN can better serve NYC."

Bartlett says she expects funding to be in place to formally open the Center in 2012. Meanwhile, the Journalism School is moving rapidly to assemble various parts of the project.

VOICES

This summer it acquired *Voices That Must Be Heard* (since renamed *Voices of New York*), a weekly electronic newsletter established by the New York Community Media Alliance (NYCMA), which aggregates and translates work from the city's ethnic and community papers. *Voices* will become a 24/7 website and the Journalism School will provide its members with training in production of videos, podcasts, and photo slideshows for the web.

Other projects in the works in-

clude recruiting more translators in a wider range of languages; providing advice on market research; launching an internet radio station; and helping publications deliver content via mobile phones.

Fifteen percent of CUNY Journalism School students intern with community and ethnic papers, and 40% of its graduates are people of color and/or first generation immigrants. "The newsrooms in this

city will become more diverse," says Pierre-Pierre, and the Community and Ethnic Media Center will play a role in that process.

Using New York City as a laboratory, the Center will experiment with how to help community and ethnic media strengthen and grow. Pierre-Pierre and Bartlett hope eventually to replicate the Center's successes in other cities. For now, much work remains to be done here in New York.

"We're moving in the right direction," says Bartlett, "but it's going to take time."

After the flood: aid to Binghamton



PSC members show off donations of books and educational supplies for a Binghamton elementary school decimated by flood, part of a statewide NYSUT effort. Checks can be made to "BCSD/MacArthur Flood Fund," & sent to BCSD/MacArthur Flood, 164 Hawley St., Binghamton, NY 13901.

PEF members discontented

By ARI PAUL
& PETER HOGNESS

Members of the Public Employees Federation (PEF) voted in September to reject a concessionary contract agreement with New York State, despite Governor Andrew Cuomo's threat of 3,500 layoffs if the deal was not approved. The 54% to 46% vote marked the first time in the union's history that PEF members had voted against ratification of a tentative contract agreement.

PEF members were subsequently asked to vote a second time, on a revised version of the proposal. Those ballots were set to be counted November 3, and Cuomo warned that a second "no" vote would be followed by layoffs the very next day.

DEEP CUTS

After the first deal was defeated, PEF President Ken Brynien assessed the result. "The cuts that have been demanded of [PEF members] in this tentative agreement were just too many," Brynien told reporters, "and they cut too deep."

State Senator Diane Savino took it a step further, telling *The Chief Leader*, "I quite frankly am not surprised it was voted down. If you're gonna negotiate with your foot on people's necks, sometimes they're gonna rise up and say, 'I'm not gonna take it anymore.'" Savino is former chair of the State Senate's civil service committee.

The vote against the tentative settlement was 19,629 to 16,906, and the rejection drew close attention in the New York labor movement. In his 2010 campaign Cuomo had pledged to take a hard line against public-sector unions, and in April the governor announced that he would seek \$450 million of concessions from State employees. In the following months he effectively used the threat of layoffs to win union givebacks (see psc-cuny.org/clarion/august/2011).

SACRIFICE

But PEF members' vote in September broke with the concessionary pattern set in the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) contract this summer – and John Samuelsen, president of Transport Workers Union Local 100, welcomed the news. "This puts Local 100 in a stronger position when the [TWU] contract expires Jan. 15," Samuelsen told the *Daily News*. "It's a huge boost for us."

The outcome of PEF's second vote, on the new version of the settlement, was hard to predict. The union's leadership urged ratification of the revised proposal on essentially the same grounds that it supported the original version in September – that while the concessions were painful, it was a price worth paying to avert the layoffs.

"Ratification of this agreement will demonstrate that our members are willing to sacrifice to save the jobs of 3,496 of their co-workers and preserve the level of service to taxpayers," Brynien said on Oct. 17.

Nix 1st deal, vote on 2nd

The tweaks to the proposal included reducing its length from five years to four and eventually reimbursing members for all nine of the unpaid furlough days they would have to take over the next 18 months; in the previous version they were only to be paid back for four. But this improvement was funded by dropping a \$1,000 lump sum payment that the first version would have paid to each member. As in the original version, workers would go without raises in the first three years, and would get a 2% wage hike in the final year. A PEF statement said the revised deal would allow "greater opportunity to use vacation time to offset health insurance costs."

Within PEF, a small group called PEF Proud (Professionals Reclaiming Our Union Decisions) has been organizing for a second "no" vote, contending that in the long run "concessions won't save jobs." PEF Proud includes some members of the union's executive board, which voted 92 to 18 to support the altered accord. Another group of members, PEF Families, is asking members who voted "no" the first time to change their minds; it emphasizes the devastating effect that layoffs could have on those who lose their jobs. Both groups took the same positions during the earlier vote in September.

Cuomo has stressed that the revised proposal would not cost the State any more than the first version – and he has been blunt about the limits of the accord's "no layoff" provisions. "It is not a 100% guarantee that there will be no layoffs," he said on October 17 when the revised deal was announced. "We have a current intent that there be no further layoffs, but...with this economy, who knows what next year will bring? So...I can't say anything with finality about layoffs. I understand what they wanted. We couldn't do what they wanted."

The governor has argued that cutting labor costs is essential if New York is to close its budget gap – but his credibility in terms of budget balancing may be starting to fade. Cuomo's hard-line opposition to renewing New York's "millionaires' tax" has become a target of increasing criticism.

MILLIONAIRES' TAX

Inspired by the Occupy Wall Street protests, unions and community groups have stepped up their calls for the "millionaires' tax" to be extended past its scheduled expiration at the end of this year. "It is unacceptable to allow a \$5 billion dollar tax cut to be enacted on December 31," said Ron Deutsch, an organizer of a new coalition dubbed "99 New York." "If anyone in this state needs a tax cut, it is not mil-

lionaires and billionaires."

The group's name was inspired by the Occupy Wall Street slogan, "We are the 99%." Protesters in NYC, Albany and elsewhere have recently dubbed Cuomo "Governor 1%" for his opposition to taxing the rich.

Opinion polls show strong public support for keeping New York's "millionaires' tax" in place. In a recent Siena poll, for example, 72% backed its extension. But Cuomo insists that poll results will not change his mind. "The fact that everybody wants it, that doesn't mean all that much," he told reporters in mid-October, as he urged PEF members to ratify their latest contract proposal.

An hour before Clarion went to press, the Albany Times-Union reported that the revised agreement had been ratified by 27,718 to 11,645.

**First
vote was
54% yes
versus
46% no.**



Stuart Chen-Hayes (left), associate professor of education at Lehman, and Tony Gronowicz, adjunct associate professor of history at BMCC, at the October 11 "March on the Millionaires" of Park Avenue, supported by Occupy Wall Street.

PSC members assist Occupy W

By John Tarleton

Many people from CUNY have been involved in the Occupy Wall Street protests, in a wide variety of roles. Here are a few of the ways that PSC members have taken part:

Jackie DiSalvo, professor of English (emerita), Baruch
A lifelong activist and a recent retiree, Jackie DiSalvo has been involved with Occupy Wall Street from the beginning.

In its early planning meetings, DiSalvo found that she knew many of the young organizers from their work together in "Bloombergville," a three-week, round-the-clock protest encampment across from City Hall that sought to rally opposition to the Mayor's proposed budget cuts. DiSalvo was one of many who slept on the sidewalk during the Bloombergville protests, which a judge ruled was protected by the First Amendment as a form of free speech.

What OWS and Bloombergville had in common was a search for more effective forms of resistance to political and economic policies that favor the wealthy at others' expense. That could also be said of Wisconsin's labor upsurge earlier this year, where DiSalvo – an alumna of the University of Wisconsin – took part in the occupation of the State Capitol. Joining the organizing in Madison was "inspirational," she says. "It was the first time I felt I was participating in an actual labor movement."

Soon after the OWS encampment was established in Liberty Park, DiSalvo helped organize Occupy Wall Street's Labor Commit-

Many ways to get involved

tee, which went on to play a pivotal role (see above, also page 10). She's excited about the new level of labor solidarity that's started to develop since Occupy Wall Street began.

What does DiSalvo want to happen next? "Get the unions to take up each others' struggles. If this happens," she says with a smile, "that would make my life complete."

Penny Lewis, assistant professor of sociology, Murphy Institute
When Penny Lewis saw coverage of the NYPD attacking and pepper-spraying peaceful demonstrators during a September 24 march near Union Square, she was outraged.

"I felt somebody had to have their back," said Lewis. "They were protesting the right things, police were trying to shut them down, and we needed to support them."

When Lewis couldn't find anyone organizing a protest, she checked in with Jackie DiSalvo. "Well, why don't you do it?," DiSalvo asked.

Lewis reached out to Alex Vitale, an associate professor of sociology at Brooklyn College who has written extensively on policing and civil liberties. They chose a date and divided the work: Vitale publicized the demonstration through Facebook and Twitter, while Penny worked through what she calls the "old-fashioned" technologies of phone and e-mail. They put together a leaflet, announced the rally at an OWS General Assembly and wondered how many would come.

On September 30 upwards of 1,500

people turned out for the rally at One Police Plaza, a milestone in the growth of Occupy Wall Street's public support. It took the organizing work of many people to make it a success – but it started when one union member saw a video and was outraged.

Manissa McCleave Maharawal, graduate assistant, Baruch, & PhD student in anthropology

As Occupy Wall Street activists considered their first declaration of principles in late September, Manissa McCleave Maharawal says there was one line "that hit me in the stomach." A draft of the "Declaration of the Occupation spoke of 'being one race, the human race, formerly divided by race, class...'"

As Maharawal later wrote, this framework essentially "erased all power relations and decades of history of oppression" from consideration – though she and the other South Asian activists with her knew well that those power relations are still very much alive. So they took a firm stand in the consensus-driven meeting, persisting when their concerns were initially brushed aside. And they got the language changed.

That discussion and the discussions that followed were a "crash course on racism, white privilege, structural racism, oppression," Maharawal wrote in an article that's gained wide circulation online. "It was hard. It was real. It hurt. But people listened. We had to fight for it. I'm going to say that again: we had to fight for it. But it felt worth it."

Labor & OWS, natural allies

By JOHN TARLETON

When a small band of protesters set up their Occupy Wall Street encampment in Zuccotti Park on September 17, few people in the labor movement noticed. But that quickly changed as the cry of “We Are the 99%!” captured the public imagination.

“They definitely seem to have figured out a way to touch a nerve that perhaps we have been less successful at doing,” said Bob Master, political director for District 1 of the Communications Workers of America. “Their boldness and creativity, their willingness to put their bodies on the line and make personal sacrifices, have been inspirational,” he told *City Hall News*.

In New York, local unions have responded by providing everything from rain ponchos to meeting spaces and have brought thousands of their members into the streets. It’s a rapidly evolving relationship between two groups with very different organizational cultures, both of

Wall Street

The experience of that night helped spur the formation of an Occupy Wall Street People of Color (POC) working group, which now holds twice-a-week meetings that draw upwards of 60 people. The POC working group has played a key role in furthering an anti-racist analysis at OWS, and has inspired POC working groups to form at Occupy protests in other cities.

“A movement that is inclusive on race, gender and class is the only way you can have transformation on a bigger level,” Maharawal told *Clarion*.

Luis Barrios, professor of psychology, Graduate Center

In the Old Testament, the Golden Calf symbolizes the worship of false gods. On Sunday, October 16, Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious leaders carried aloft a modern-day Golden Calf made of papier-mâché in a procession from Washington Square to Liberty Park.

One of the eight people who carried the Golden Calf on their shoulders was Father Luis Barrios, a priest at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Harlem. Barrios is also a faculty member at CUNY, where he has taught since 1992. “We’re doing this so people can wake up and see what’s going on,” Barrios told *Clarion*.

Barrios is a professor of Latin American studies at John Jay College, and a member of the Graduate Center faculty in social-personality psychology. “This country has created a false god: the idea that money and greed are all that matters,” he told the *Daily News* after the procession was over. “There are many people to blame for this, but Wall Street is the beating heart of the problem.”

Unions rally in support

them battered by the recession and both frustrated by policies that favor the wealthy over those who are losing their jobs and their homes.

On October 5, a massive labor-community march in support of the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement made clear that the hundreds of activists sleeping overnight in the park speak for many thousands more. Upwards of 20,000 protesters filled the streets of Lower Manhattan as they headed down Broadway to Zuccotti Park (which OWS has redubbed “Liberty Park,” the site’s original name). About half of those marching were union members, including several hundred from the PSC. Members of the Transit Workers, Service Employees, Communications Workers and the National Nurses’ Union also turned out in force.

“We support the Wall Street protesters and their goal to reduce inequality,” declared Transit Workers Union Local 100’s Executive Board in backing the march. “The shared sacrifice preached by government officials looks awfully like a one-way street.”

Solidarity was the theme of the October 5 march, as union members put their own demands in the context of a wider struggle. Lorraine Towns, a CUNY Research Foundation employee who works in the provost’s office at the Graduate Center, said that New York’s policies of tax cuts for the wealthy and funding cuts for CUNY and other public services must be reversed. “If we don’t get our act together, [the U.S.] is going to be like a Third World country,” said Towns. “At CUNY, we already face constant shortages.”

“It’s good to see the movement growing,” said Costas Panayotakis, an associate professor of political science at City Tech. “It’s important to dispel the pessimism that says you can’t challenge the power structure.”

STEPPING UP

Labor’s strong presence on October 5 was due in part to the work of activists from more than two dozen unions who formed a Labor Support/Outreach Committee within OWS, going back to their unions to seek political and material support for the emerging movement. Many unions stepped up in response to these appeals, while other labor leaders decided independently to get on board. “It’s become too big to ignore,” a political consultant told *New York* magazine. In September the PSC became the first union to back OWS, but others soon followed.

National labor groups have increasingly spoken out in support of the Occupy Wall Street protests, including the national AFL-CIO, AFT, Teamsters, Laborers, Auto Workers, Steel Workers and the

public employees’ union AFSCME.

“RWDSU will do everything it can to learn from and assist Occupy Wall Street,” said Stuart Appelbaum, president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). “They offer a clear perspective,” he said: “Wall Street should not control our economy, our democracy, or our lives.”

Support from thousands of union members strengthened Occupy Wall Street at a critical time – and OWS has also put wind in labor’s sails.

Union protests have become larger and more energetic, drawing on both new participants and a new spirit.

One case in point is the labor-supported campaign to renew New York’s “millionaires’ tax,” currently scheduled to expire at the end of this year. An Oct. 11 “March on the Millionaires’ of Park Avenue,” to spotlight the legislation, ended up far larger and livelier than its organizers had originally imagined.

PARK AVE.

After a raucous rally of more than 1,000 people from the Plaza Hotel, hundreds marched to bring the demand for taxing the rich to the doors of some of New York’s wealthiest residents. Protesters paraded past the posh penthouses of Park Avenue, with stops at the residences of News Corp. Chairman Rupert Murdoch, billionaire Tea Party financier David Koch and JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon. The

media-savvy event drew massive coverage, focusing attention on growing income inequality in New York and across the US.

“I thought today’s march was right on the money,” quipped Cecilia McCall of the PSC retirees chapter.

On October 21, hundreds of OWS supporters joined members of the Communications Workers to march on a Verizon Wireless store next to the NY Stock Exchange. They blasted Verizon for “corporate greed” in demanding \$1 billion in concessions from the union despite making \$22 billion in profits in the last four years.

OCCUPY VERIZON

In a sign that OWS’s militance may be contagious, they carried union-printed signs that read, “Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Verizon.” The store decided to close before they arrived.

The OWS Labor Committee has organized its own actions in support of embattled workers around the city, including 43 art handlers from Teamsters Local 814 who were locked out of their jobs at Sotheby’s auction house after refusing to accept deep contract concessions. OWS labor activists have peacefully disrupted auctions inside Sotheby’s Upper East Side headquarters and have energized the workers’ campaign to regain their jobs. The committee has also turned out support for public school aides, postal workers, and other unions fighting layoffs and giveback demands.

Labor support has been especially important to OWS as it has faced

pressure from hostile City officials. When Mayor Bloomberg announced plans to evict the OWS protesters on October 14, several groups – including the PSC, TWU Local 100, SEIU 32-BJ, and the Working Families Party (WFP) – urged members to be there at 6:00 am to link arms with the occupiers. Unionists – including PSC officers and scores of PSC members – were a major part of the crowd of well over 2,000 people who were there at dawn. When word spread that the eviction had been called off, labor activists joined in the celebration. One called out, “Our movement is ‘too big to jail!’”

In Oakland, California, a police assault on the Occupy Oakland encampment was followed by a call for a one-day general strike on November 2. Many unions expressed political support and urged members to attend the day’s rallies. Though few called their members out on strike, many workers did stay off the job.

WINTER

As fall heads toward winter and harsher weather settles in, the future of the encampment at Liberty Park remains uncertain. As temperatures began to drop, a Working Families Party petition demanded that Bloomberg let the protesters set up tents, which police have previously not allowed. By late October, tents were in place across Liberty Park and for at least the first week police took no action against them.

Occupy Wall Street protesters say they are in it for the long haul – and New York unions have pledged to be there with them.



Several hundred PSC members joined a massive Oct. 5 march in support of Occupy Wall Street.

Adjunct pensions – the time is now

By ELLEN BALLEISEN

If you are an adjunct who has not yet joined the New York City Teachers' Retirement System (TRS), please fill out an enrollment form immediately. Eligible adjuncts are entitled to a pension benefit; by enrolling now in TRS you can make full use of a benefit that you have worked to earn but there will be serious financial consequences for adjuncts who delay enrolling in TRS if the New York State legislature agrees to pension changes recently proposed by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

Cuomo wants major changes in pensions for New York's public employees that would hurt employees' interests (see *Clarion*, Summer 2011), and his plan may get legislative attention early next year. The PSC and other labor unions will be fighting hard to make sure that this proposal does not become law. It would do almost nothing to address current budget shortfalls, while extending the "millionaires' tax" – which the governor opposes – would make a real contribution.

But the outcome of this struggle is unknown. What's certain is that adjuncts whose TRS applications are processed before any new pension legislation may go into effect would be covered under the current rules.

FUTURE HIRES

The governor has said his proposal will only affect employees who have not yet been hired. But this is true only for full-time public employees, who are required to join a pension system at the beginning of their employment. For CUNY adjuncts, participation in a pension plan is optional. If the governor's plan is approved, it will apply to all employees who join a pension system after that legislation takes effect. This means that adjuncts who delay joining TRS could end up in a new, inferior pension tier no matter how long they have worked at CUNY.

So CUNY adjuncts should protect their interests in two ways: (1) by responding to union alerts to take action against Cuomo's plan; and (2) if you are not already a TRS member, sign up immediately so you can lock in current pension terms. (Note that your enrollment does not take effect until TRS has completed processing of your application, which can take several weeks – so don't delay.)

TIGHT BUDGETS

CUNY adjuncts often live on very tight budgets, and some put off joining TRS because of the 3% employee contribution that is initially required (details below). But CUNY also makes an employer contribution – money that adjuncts who don't join TRS will never see. Deciding not to join TRS could mean walking away from thousands of dollars in retirement income that you may badly need later.

At present, CUNY adjuncts who join TRS become members under

Enroll now, ensure your rights



George Bates

New York's Tier 4 pension terms. Vesting – the right to collect a pension on retirement – occurs after an adjunct has the equivalent of five years of full-time service as a pension system member. TRS considers 360 paid adjunct hours equivalent to one full-time year, so adjuncts in Tier 4 need a total of 1,800 hours to qualify for a pension. Since adjuncts do not all have the same workload, it takes them different amounts of time to be vested. Let's look at one fairly typical example: an adjunct who teaches two 3-hour courses in both fall and spring terms, and is paid for one office hour per week. In Tier 4, this adjunct will be vested in about 8½ years.

But under Cuomo's proposed new pension tier, vesting would not occur until an employee had the equivalent of 12 years of full-time service. This means the adjunct in the example above would take about 20½ years to be vested. Since many adjuncts work for fewer than 20 years, and most do not teach more than two courses per term, far fewer adjuncts would qualify for pensions if Cuomo's proposal becomes law.

The longest-term adjuncts would still qualify for pensions under the governor's proposal, but they would contribute much more of their own money and could get smaller pensions.

In the current Tier 4, adjuncts contribute 3% of their gross pay

to the pension system for 10 years. Once the ten-year threshold is reached, CUNY takes over the adjunct's contributions. But under Cuomo's proposed new pension tier, all members of New York public pension plans who join after it takes effect would contribute 6% of their gross pay for their entire careers. For an adjunct who does qualify for a pension, this could mean a fourfold increase in employee pension contributions.

Despite this spike in employee contributions, the governor's proposal would reduce the pension payout for employees with at least 20 years of credited service. For example, under the current Tier 4, an employee with 20 years of credited service receives an annual pension equal to 40% of final average salary. Under Cuomo's proposal, the same employee would receive an annual pension equal to 33.4% of final average salary. In Tier 4, twenty-five years of service equals 50% of final average salary; under Cuomo's proposal, it would equal 41.75%.

TIER FOUR

Here's an example of the how this works in practice. Under Tier 4, an employee with 25 years of credited service and a final average salary of \$40,000 receives a pension of \$20,000 per year. But under Cuomo's plan, the pension for the same

employee would be \$16,700. Over 20 years of retirement, this sample retiree would receive \$66,000 less under the governor's proposal.

And that isn't all. Many adjuncts join TRS several years after they begin working at CUNY. Adjuncts in Tier 4 are able to get credit for their prior service by paying 3% of past earnings, plus 5% interest, compounded annually. The governor's proposal would double this cost to 6% of past earnings, making buying back prior service twice as expensive as it is now.

ELIGIBILITY

Finally, the retirement age would increase under Cuomo's plan. In Tier 4, employees with 5-29 years of credited service can receive an unreduced pension at age 62 and a reduced pension at age 55; employees with at least 30 years of credited service can receive an unreduced pension at age 55. Under the governor's proposal, employees could not receive a pension until they reach age 65.

A note on eligibility: adjuncts are not eligible to join TRS if they are currently receiving a pension from any New York City or State pension system, or if they are active members of any other New York City pension system. (Active members of NY State pension systems who are not yet collecting benefits, however, are allowed to join NY City's Teachers Retirement System.)

CUNY adjuncts who already belong to the TIAA-CREF pension system as a result of previous CUNY employment may also be ineligible. If you have a TIAA-CREF account from previous CUNY employment, please contact me at eballeisen@psc-mail.org to discuss your situation.

Adjuncts who are also full-time teachers and administrators in the New York City public schools already

belong to TRS and do not need to fill out a new application, but do need to provide their TRS membership number to the Human Resources office at their CUNY campus.

All other adjuncts are eligible to join TRS as long as they are appointed for at least 45 hours in the semester they enroll. There's no length of service requirement; adjuncts can join TRS in their first term at CUNY. (Adjuncts who leave CUNY before their pensions are vested can receive a refund of their contributions plus interest, or they can remain members of TRS for up to seven years while their contributions continue to accrue interest.)

Retirement age would increase to 65.

To join TRS, adjuncts must fill out two forms, an enrollment form and a beneficiary form. The enrollment form can be downloaded at tinyurl.com/adjunctTRSenroll. The beneficiary form, which must be notarized, is at tinyurl.com/adjunctTRSBene. Both forms need to be submitted to the campus Human Resources office, along with proof of birth – either a birth certificate or a passport.

MEMBER PARTICIPATION

Adjuncts can find more information about the advantages of a Tier 4 pension at psc-cuny.org/our-benefits/adjunct-pensions-surprising-return. Anyone with questions after reading this article can contact me at eballeisen@pscmail.org.

In 2009, the PSC successfully resisted efforts by then-Governor Paterson to impose inferior terms on new pension plan members at CUNY. With your participation, the PSC and other public unions aim to defeat Cuomo's cutback plan. Support those efforts – and if you're an adjunct not enrolled in TRS, get signed up without delay. Protect yourself both ways.

New PSC election rules

By MARILYN NEIMARK

Chair, PSC Elections Committee

In September, 2011, the Delegate Assembly approved a revision of the PSC's election rules to improve the transparency and accountability of the nominations process. The new rules ensure that all candidates have given prior consent to their nominations and that petitioner signers know the names of the candidates they are supporting. In order to implement these revisions, we've had to move the election calendar forward.

SIGNED DECLARATIONS

Under the new rules, candidates for PSC offices, and NYSUT/AFT and AAUP delegates, will have to submit a signed declaration of candidacy to the PSC central of-

fice. Declaration of candidacy can be submitted as early as December 1, 2011, but no later than January 9, 2012. Slate or caucus candidates should submit their declarations through their slate or caucus designees. Petitions with the names of all candidates will then be made available in print or electronic form by January 30. (For other election dates and deadlines, see announcement on page 9.)

In addition to the above, the revised election rules include a number of other changes to simplify language, improve clarity and accuracy, take greater advantage of digital communications and clarify the handling of challenges. You will find a copy of the new election rules and a suggested form to use to declare candidacy at www.psc-cuny.org/about-us/2012-psc-elections.

Social Security under threat

More than 200 people attended the October 25 PSC forum, “Defending the Social Safety Net.” The article below is adapted from the keynote by Dean Baker, an economist at the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington. For more on the forum, which included panelists Kim Phillips-Fein of NYU, James Parrott of the Fiscal Policy Institute, and CUNY’s Frances Fox Piven, see tinyurl.com/SNForum.

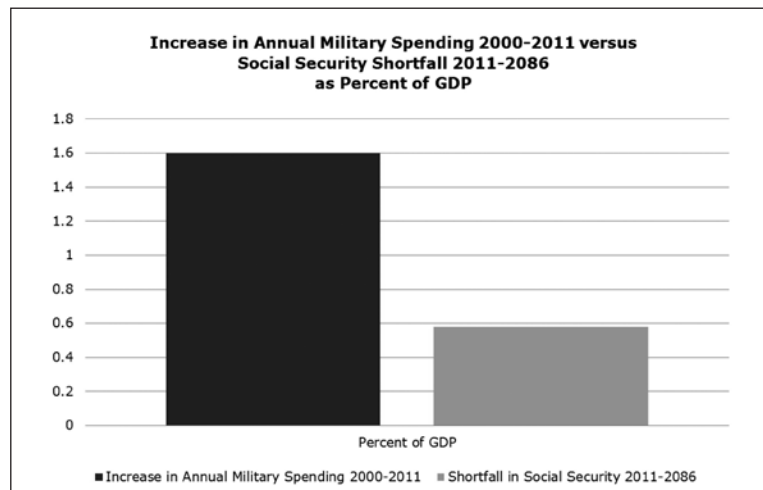
The forum took place as Congress’s so-called “Super Committee” considered trillions of dollars in budget cuts, including cuts in Social Security and other safety net programs. The Super Committee’s report is due on November 23; you can send a letter opposing cuts to the safety net at psc-cuny.org/SafetyNetLetter.

The PSC’s Social Safety Net Working Group has prepared a brochure about what is at stake in these debates, available online at psc-cuny.org/safetynetbooklet. If you’d like to find out more about the Working Group, contact John Hyland at Lag-Soc@aol.com

You often hear people in Washington say we need to raise the age for Social Security retirement benefits. We’ve already raised the age for full benefits to 67 – although lot of people don’t know that – and you have politicians and pundits saying, “Let’s raise it to 70.” Most of them are working at desk jobs, and their attitude is, “I love my job, I’m in good shape, I want to work until I’m 70.”

For a lot of people, though, that’s not a reasonable thing to expect.

Super Committee wants cuts



Dean Baker/CEPR

That includes factory workers and construction workers, and also people who are the custodians at CUNY, people who are working in restaurants, or working as a nurse’s assistant or a nurse. Most jobs in this economy, in fact, are not that easy for someone who is well into their 60s.

RICH GET SOFTER

The federal Labor Department keeps statistics on the percentage of people working in physically demanding jobs or difficult working conditions. Not surprisingly, the percentage of people in these jobs varies hugely by income. In the bottom fifth, close to 60% are working in these demanding, difficult jobs. But even in the top fifth, it’s almost 20%.

This is worth remembering in relation to life expectancy. You often hear pundits say, “People are liv-

ing longer, so let’s raise the retirement age.” But life expectancy also varies by income – and that’s more true today than it was 20 or 30 years ago. As the Congressional Budget Office noted in 2008, “Low-income and low-education groups have seen little gain in life expectancy” in the United States.

So is it fair that someone who debones chickens or cleans floors all day should be forced to work longer because lawyers or Senators have longer lives, and still enjoy their jobs?

We get a lot of misleading talk about budget deficits, how entitlements are supposedly breaking the bank. For the most part this talk is very dishonest, because that is not the real story.

People are being particularly dishonest if they paint this as a So-

cial Security problem, or some general problem of out-of-control public spending. The problem isn’t Social Security, or even “Social Security and Medicare” – the problem is our broken health care system. Fix health care, and you can fix the deficits.

We pay more than twice as much per person as in any other wealthy country. Take your pick – Canada, Germany, whomever you like – we’re paying more than twice as much per person. And we don’t have anything much to show for it: we have the shortest life expectancy of the wealthy countries.

So what would our budget deficits look like if we paid the same amount per person for health care as Canada or Britain? The answer is that we wouldn’t have these huge budget deficits – in fact, we’d start having budget surpluses.

Of course, military spending has also been a big contributor to the deficit. In comparison to recent increases in military spending, the amounts at issue for Social Security are not that large.

You hear pundits and politicians yelling that there’s a huge Social Security shortfall – they talk about something like \$5 trillion over its 75-year planning horizon. People in Washington like to use trillions of dollars over long periods because they know that sounds really scary, even if no one has any clue what it means.

I had a conversation with an economist once where I asked, “Why are you expressing this as trillions of dollars when you know no one knows what it means? Why don’t you ex-

press it as a share of GDP [Gross Domestic Product], because we can all understand percents.” And he said, “If I express it as a share of GDP it doesn’t sound big but we know it is big.” I told him just to flap his arms when he says it. *[Laughter]*

Now, if you look at the Social Security shortfall as a share of GDP over the next 75 years, it’s a bit less than 6/10ths of a percent of GDP. For comparison, how much did we increase military spending between 2000 and the present as a share of GDP? The answer to that is 1.6%.

MILITARY INCREASE

I’m not talking about the whole military budget, this is just the *increase* in military spending from 2000 to 2011. It’s almost three times the size of the shortfall in Social Security. That doesn’t mean it’s a small number, so I’m not going to say it’s trivial – but it didn’t bankrupt the economy. Neither would an amount that’s just 1/3rd as large. What I’m saying is that if we solved the projected shortfall in Social Security

totally by raising revenue, it would not have a devastating economic impact.

I don’t know how many times I’ve heard people around Washington say, “It’s going to be a long time before jobs come

back, we’re just gonna have to tough it out.” Or when they say we should cut Social Security and call it “tough medicine.” Well, the “we” in this sentence is never the people who are going to be unemployed. It’s never the people who will have their income slashed when benefits are cut. The people who say this are doing fine. And they’re not so tough. Let’s keep that in mind when the Super Committee comes out with its report.

The Super Committee report is due Nov. 23.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS — SPRING 2012

PSC GENERAL OFFICERS

Term of Office: 3 Years

President, First Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, 5 University-wide Officers.

Vice President, Senior Colleges, and 3 Senior College Officers.

Vice President, Community Colleges, and 3 Community College Officers.

Vice President, Cross Campus Chapters, and 3 Cross-Campus Officers.

Vice President, Part-Time Instructional Staff, and 3 Part-Time Instructional Staff Officers.

Two Retiree Executive Council Officers.

NYSUT AND AFT CONVENTION DELEGATES

Term of Office: 3 years

100 Convention Delegate Positions

AAUP ANNUAL MEETING DELEGATES

(Only PSC members designated as members of the AAUP are eligible to run and vote)

Term of Office: 3 years

15 Annual Meeting Delegate Positions

ELECTION SCHEDULE:

1. Nominating petitions will be obtainable upon request from chapter chairpersons or from Barbara Gabriel, Coordinator of Office Services, at the PSC office from January 30 to March 1, 2012.

2. Petitions must be received at the Professional Staff Congress, 61 Broadway, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10006 by 5:00 pm, March 1, 2012.

3. A candidate or his/her designee may inspect the list of eligible voters at the American Arbitration Association offices at 1633 Broadway – 10th Floor, on March 23, 2012, between the hours of 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.

4. Ballots will be mailed to members by the American Arbitration Association on Monday, April 2, 2012. Anyone who does not receive a ballot by April 9th should call Barbara Gabriel at the PSC office, 212-354-1252, for a duplicate ballot or to check your membership status.

5. All ballots received by the American Arbitration Association by 5:00 pm on Friday, April 27, 2012, will be included in the count.

6. Ballots will be counted on Monday, April 30, 2012, at 10:00 am at the American Arbitration Association offices, 1633 Broadway – basement.

DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY

Candidates must submit a signed declaration of candidacy no later than January 9, 2012, to Barbara Gabriel at the PSC office. The declaration must specify the office(s) being sought, the candidate’s name, college and department and, if the candidate intends to run as part of a slate or caucus, the name of the slate or caucus. Slate or caucus declarations should be submitted through the slate or caucus designee. A sample declaration form is available on the PSC website: psc-cuny.org/declarationofcandidacy or from Barbara Gabriel at the PSC office.

ELIGIBILITY TO SERVE:

To hold a position as a general officer (serving on the Executive Council), one must have been a member in good standing of the PSC for at least one (1) year prior to the close of nominations, March 1, 2012. Among the general officer positions, retiree members may only serve as Retiree Executive Council Officers.

ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE:

To be eligible to vote in this election one must have been a member in good standing for at least four (4) months prior to the mailing of the ballots, April 2, 2012.

NOMINATIONS PROCEDURE:

1. Nominations shall be by written petition signed by

no less than fifty (50) members of the appropriate constituency in good standing. For the AAUP Delegate positions the written petition must be signed by no fewer than twenty-five (25) of the identified members in good standing of the PSC Chapter of the AAUP.

2. Slate nominations shall be permitted.

3. Petitions with names of candidates will be available from the PSC Central Office or from your chapter chair beginning January 30th.

SLATE REGULATIONS:

A slate of candidates will be recognized if it consists of candidates for twenty-five percent or more of the officers to be elected, and if it submits, prior to the close of nominations: (1) a listing of caucus officers, all of whom must be members in good standing, including the person designated to authorize nominees for that caucus’ slate; and (2) a nominating petition including the printed name, signature, department and college of each petitioner, and the signature of each candidate running on the slate. The candidate’s signature on the slate petition shall constitute that candidate’s acceptance of the slate designation.

ELECTION RULES:

A copy of the Rules Governing All General and Chapter Elections is available for inspection by all eligible voters from Barbara Gabriel at the PSC central office, and at the PSC website. Relevant sections are summarized below:

1. All voting must be on an official ballot. Write-in votes are permitted. The intent of the voter must be clear, whether the name of the candidate is written, printed or typed. In order for a write-in vote to be considered valid, the candidate must meet the same eligibility requirements as a regular candidate. A write-in candidate must receive at least 10 or 10 percent (10%) of the total votes cast in the election, whichever is less, to be elected. Write-in candidates who are elected must

submit written acceptance of office to the Elections Committee within ten days of the notification of election results.

2. Each candidate, or a representative designated in writing, is entitled to observe the counting of the ballots.

3. The issue of *Clarion* published in March 2012 will allot each candidate 200 words for a biography and/or statement. Slates of candidates for general officer may pool their allotment of words in whatever fashion they choose. The deadline for typed copy is 5:00 pm, March 2, 2012. For information on existing *Clarion* photos, contact the editor by February 22, 2012. Candidates for delegates to the NYSUT, AFT and AAUP conventions will be listed, but they will not receive further space.

Candidates for general officers may purchase not more than one-half page of advertising space in the issue of *Clarion* published in March 2012. Slates may purchase not more than one page of advertising space in that issue. The deadline for camera-ready mechanicals or an equivalent digital file is 5:00 pm, March 2, 2012. (Note: It would be helpful to *Clarion* if candidates can give newspaper staff advance notice of their intention to submit statements or advertisements, by February 15, 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter.) Space limitations preclude an offer of space to candidates for delegates to the NYSUT, AFT and AAUP conventions.

All candidates may mail literature at their own expense through Century Direct, 30-00 47th Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101-3415, the PSC mailing house. The PSC computer service will provide Century Direct with home-addressed labels or electronic downloads of the membership, or will provide candidates with college-addressed labels, lists or electronic downloads of the membership at cost. The computer service must have five days of advance notice to provide these.

AAUP Candidates running for office can purchase the complete list for \$5.00. The list will be mailed to the candidates’ home address. List will not be faxed.

In drawing labor into this kind of joint action, OWS is facilitating the development out of separate unions of a real labor *movement*. The OWS Labor Working Group now brings together people from more than 30 unions, and one of its main goals has become promotion of mutual support among the unions themselves. If this takes hold, it might begin to reverse labor's long decline.

CHANGING THE DEBATE

Defending public higher ed

By GARY RHOADES

Gary Rhoades is a professor at the University of Arizona's Center for the Study of Higher Education, and has been general secretary of the American Association of University Professors from 2009 through 2011.

Rhoades was a speaker at "Defending Public Higher Education," an October 7 conference at the CUNY Graduate Center co-sponsored by the PSC; the article below is adapted from his presentation. Full text of Rhoades's talk is available at psc-cuny.org/RhoadesDPHE. More information on the conference, including audio of speakers and discussion, is at tinyurl.com/DefPubHE.

There is an opportunity today for New York to define a different policy model for public higher education – to help shape the future not just for CUNY, for New York City and State, but for public higher education nationally.

In Ohio and Texas and in state after state, governors, state legislators and boards are putting forward models of public higher education that influence what's possible and what seems reasonable here in New York. That's why I think this conference is such a heartening thing. I encourage you to take up that gauntlet, to see your role as a national one – to redefine what is possible, in the way that California did 60 years ago.

These state-level models are worked out within a national discourse. It is a discourse shaped by politicians and by foundations, not only Gates but also Lumina. And by other groups, as in the McKinsey report, *Winning By Degrees*. Published late last year, this report declares that to graduate up to one million more students per year without increasing public spending or compromising quality, the US higher education institutions would need to improve their degree completion productivity by an average of 23%.

'PRODUCTIVITY'

Now, instead of stopping at that point and saying, "This is foolish, this is silly, this is unachievable," instead they say, this sounds like a formidable challenge but our research shows that it is feasible by boosting graduation rates and improving cost efficiency as has been demonstrated by top quartile US institutions that have increased their productivity 17%–38% over their peers.

So we face this constant litany about productivity and measurement. We have a confluence of policy makers, policy wonks, reporters, administrators and frankly too often faculty as well, invoking a "new normal" of austerity that identifies the problem as productivity or lack thereof – not as revenues or lack thereof. This perspective claims to focus on human capital, but it demonizes higher education employees as an obstacle. And it's in this context that these state models emerge.

In the states today, we see three main models for public higher education. I'll call them assembly lines, flagships, and compacts for privatized decline. Let me describe the first: production assembly lines and the return of Frederick Taylor.

Texas is a quintessential example of productivity metrics at their counter-productive worst. Odds are you haven't heard of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, but the state is implementing productivity measures generated by the TPPF, working with Governor Rick Perry.



Gary Rhoades at the Oct. 7 conference.

The first measure promoted by the TPPF is, in a sense, like paying K-12 teachers according to narrowly measured gains in their students' performance on standardized tests. Only the TPPF model is worse, if that's possible, because the outcome metric is simply student credit hours generated, *period*. You get rewarded by volume of credit hours.

Measuring professors' productivity by student hours is a little bit like measuring physicians' productivity by the number of patients they see. Students, like patients, are not well served by an assembly line model of professional work that mistakes volume of immediate output for quality of treatment.

Texas-style, a productive arrangement is one in which a single, low-paid faculty member, probably an adjunct, teaches hundreds of students. If it's thousands of students that's even better. The students might not learn much, they might not have much opportunity to interact with faculty, they might not graduate, they might not get jobs, but what matter? Because in the eyes of the TPPF and Governor Perry, they will have insured that the professors are being productive.

Now Texas has also moved to calculate the costs and productivity of each individual faculty member in terms of their salaries, and the credit hours – and revenue – that they generate.

There has been some pushback against these proposals. But this assembly-line model and these productivity metrics are none-

theless being picked nationally, in different ways. They're picked up by the National Governor's Association and by the Lumina Foundation, and so on.

As these metrics are being defined nationally, we can either rail against them in a blanket sense and watch them get implemented nonetheless, or we can try to play some sort of role in defining alternative metrics that benefit our students and our commitment to a public mission for higher education.

For example, we could develop a metric not unlike what David Lavin and colleagues did in evaluating the open-access experiment at CUNY. We could ask, what is the contribution of CUNY to upward mobility and to diversifying New York City's middle class? That would be a socially useful metric that could help shape the national debate.

The second state-level model is focused on flagships, with a "trickle-down" model of higher education. This is the return not of Frederick Taylor, but Ronald Reagan. In Ohio, for example, university presidents and the board of regents have proposed what were at first called "charter universities," which they have now renamed "enterprise universities." The starting point for this model is a focus on the elite research universities – everybody wants to be a flagship. The idea is to let flagships fund themselves.

DEREGULATION

This model is similar in important ways to the PHEEIA [Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act] proposal recently debated in New York. It calls for a level of deregulation, with university presidents thinking like CEOs of independent firms. The deregulation increases tuition, and public oversight over the construction of facilities is eliminated under the label of "construction reform." In exchange for this deregulation, schools get less state money.

The incentives in this plan are all wrong for addressing affordability, accessibility and quality. It supports the rich and disinvests in quality education for the rest. In fact, this model opens up public monies to a variety of forms of abuse with which Ohio has been all too familiar.

Let me move to the third model: a social compact for privatized decline. As with the recent budget deal in New York, this systematically shifts the funding burden from the state to the student. It projects an increase in student tuition well above the higher education price index, while the state's contribution in real dollars gradually falls.

The claim is that somehow universities can generate their own revenues to replace state revenues – but we have 30 years of evi-

dence in academic capitalism in higher education that indicates the opposite. There are very serious limits to a university's ability to generate new businesses, or to generate royalties. What's worse, this model ignores the most fundamental ways in which universities do in fact impact the economy.

A BROAD EDUCATION

The biggest economic benefit that universities provide is educating the broad population. Survey after survey indicates that what employers want, both private- and public-sector employers, is people who can communicate, who can write, who can present themselves, who have a broad education. That is the consistent and overwhelming message from the people who hire our graduates.

That runs completely counter to this model's narrow idea of universities' economic impact, where the key is to pick a few fields that will be entrepreneurial winners, like nanotechnology or biotech. To pay for those initiatives universities eliminate humanities – because after all, how will graduates get jobs? But the evidence from 30 years of moving away from a broad education is that this runs completely counter to our biggest potential economic impact.

Similarly, our greatest contribution, especially in an institution like CUNY, is in providing upward mobility for growing numbers of students who are the growth population across the country, and not just in New York City – low-income, first-generation immigrant, both documented and not, and students of color. If we're going to succeed as a nation culturally, socially and economically, we need to counter the pattern of the last 30 years, of expanding the gap between not just the haves and the have nots, but between the 99% and the 1%.

POSSIBILITIES

We've been colonized by this culture of constraint and fear. The counter-narrative that we have to organize around is one that speaks to priorities and possibilities. We need to not just defend public higher education as it now exists, but advance new ways of thinking about what it is for – because the world is changing.

This is a time when the scale of our thinking and of our mobilization and action needs to extend beyond our battles at the local level. In the national debate, faculty and professionals from institutions like CUNY should play a central role. So I would encourage you, as you continue thinking about the role of CUNY and of the PSC in shaping public higher education, that you see yourself on a national stage. You are fundamentally important to the future of public higher education, and we need to hear your voice.

Thinking about what's possible

Clarion NOVEMBER 2011

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Editor: Peter Hogness / Associate Editor: John Tarleton / Designer: Margarita Aguilar / Proofreader: Kristy Eldredge
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15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Save the social safety net

With the country hurting from a deep recession, now is not the time to weaken safety net programs that protect the economically vulnerable – protections such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, employee health benefits, public-sector pensions, unemployment benefits and others. But Congress's

"Super Committee" is set to begin its recommendations for slashing spending and reducing the budget deficit with a report on Nov. 23. Take action against the committee's short-sighted campaign to impose hardship on those who can afford it least. Send a letter opposing the cuts to psc-cuny.org/SafetyNetLetter.

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OPINION

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WHERE WE STAND

The contract, the political moment

By BARBARA BOWEN
PSC President

Something unprecedented happened at CUNY this fall. The central administration, under intense pressure from the union, shifted a position it has held since 1986 and accepted that the cost of health insurance for eligible adjuncts instruction should be a normal part of the University's budget. That was only the first step in the process of achieving permanent health insurance for adjuncts who teach multiple CUNY courses, but it's the step without which nothing else is possible.

Another seismic shift, less welcome, is the implementation of Chancellor Goldstein's "Pathways" resolution, which ushers in the most profound change in the University's curriculum in decades – and totally bypasses the governance role of elected faculty bodies. This management-driven initiative on General Education is a defining moment in both the meaning of a CUNY degree and the concentration of power in the central administration. The union has taken a strong position in response: we are preparing to litigate the violation of the Bylaws.

RESISTANCE

But the biggest shift in terrain came from an unexpected place. Occupy Wall Street brilliantly focused national and world attention on economic inequality by naming Wall Street as its source. Organized at a moment when income inequality in the U.S. is greater than at any time since the eve of the Depression – and in the city and state with the most extreme inequality in the nation – Occupy Wall Street has opened new political space. A successful effort to prevent New York from giving a scheduled tax break to millionaires now appears possible, as does resistance to the

imposition of further austerity on "the 99%."

It is in this changed – and changing – political landscape that we are negotiating our contract.

By way of a quick review: the PSC's most recent contract expired a year ago, in October 2010. Since then, however, we have been working under the full protection of that contract, because of the terms of

timing. The job of the union bargaining team is to be responsive to members' sense of urgency while also being smart about the political conditions in which we bargain – and how those conditions can be changed.

The PSC is fully prepared to negotiate and campaign for our demands. Our priorities are unchanged: salary increases; a more

to expire on December 31 of this year. We have also signed agreements with CUNY about improvements in the way salary is paid to new employees, and have begun discussions of further improvements to the PSC-CUNY Awards. These are real gains, but we still have not had an economic offer from CUNY and economic bargaining has not begun.

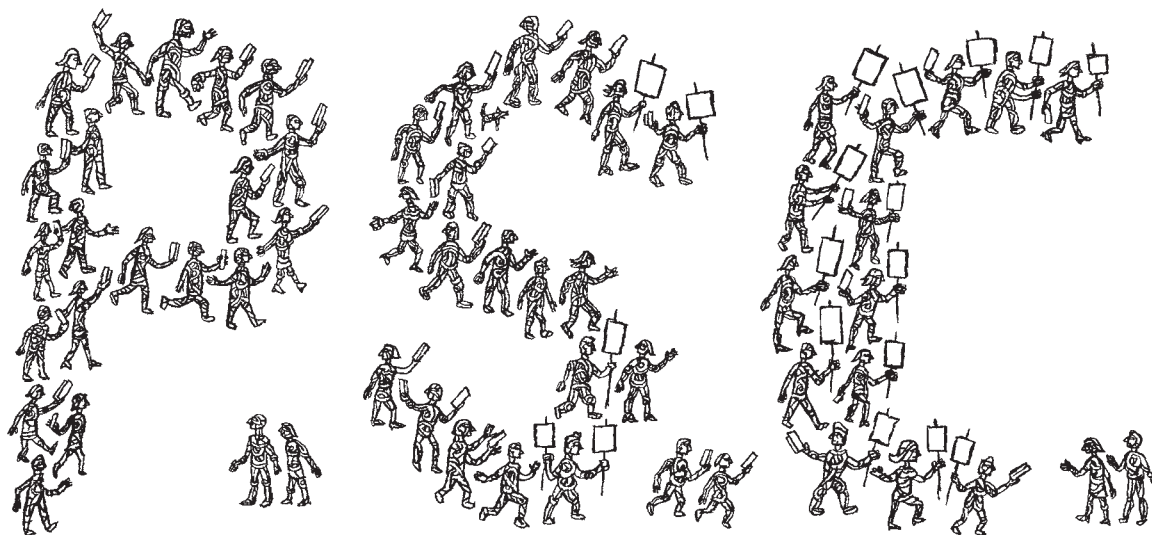
to make deep slashes in the pay and working conditions of their workforces. It's the "disaster capitalism" Naomi Klein describes: create a crisis and use it to ram through anti-worker, anti-middle-class policies.

CHOICES

The State and City deficits are real, but they are caused by political policies that have led to inadequate revenues. In the climate for collective bargaining the policies have created, we have not demanded an immediate contract offer. The PSC is in one of the most complex bargaining positions of any union in the state, because our contract must be funded by both the City and the State. Thus it involves approval by the mayor as well as the governor. In addition, because of the expiration date of our last contract, the PSC (like the United Federation of Teachers and a few other unions) should receive an increase that was received by most public-sector unions in New York City for 2010.

But the bargaining team is not just waiting, or asking you to wait. While we continue informal talks with CUNY on contract issues, we are also part of the union's larger campaign to contest the policies of "disaster capitalism." The PSC is a leading force in the effort to prevent New York from giving a tax break to millionaires, a change that would transform the budget from deficit to surplus.

The best way to campaign for our contract is to campaign for a change in economic policy. I believe we may have a chance we have not had in a long time to change at least our corner of the political and economic landscape. While we stand ready to force movement at the bargaining table, we will also work toward a movement that would shift the ground on which the table stands.



George Bates

the 1982 Triborough Amendment to the Taylor Law, which governs public-sector union negotiations in New York State. Even during the Great Recession, we have continued to benefit from the substantial gains of our most recent contract, and those of us eligible for annual salary increases continue to move up in steps each January. (That's one of many reasons we fought so hard in the last round to maintain the salary steps.)

What does not occur until a new contract is negotiated, of course, is any across-the-board raise or other economic advance. Costs are rising, conditions at CUNY are becoming even more pressured as enrollment rises; there is urgency on our side. But if contract negotiations are about power, they are also about

manageable teaching load; promotional opportunities for higher education officers; and significant progress toward fair salaries, benefits and job security for adjuncts. One priority, adjunct health insurance, was brought to crisis by CUNY's historical underfunding of the benefit, but we have already begun to make progress on it by gaining CUNY's agreement to seek funding from the State.

The union bargaining team has also advanced in other areas, through informal and productive talks with University management. We have reached an agreement in principle to extend paid parental leave, which had been set

Why not? In other rounds of bargaining, when economic offers had been made to other public-employee unions but not to us, the PSC campaigned aggressively for CUNY to put an offer on the table. This round is different. Contract offers have been made by the City and State to other public-sector unions, but the "offers" consist largely of wage freezes and concessions – sometimes enforced through the threat of layoffs. Both New York City and New York State, which jointly provide the funding for PSC contract settlements, have declared budget deficits and, to various degrees, are using the framework of austerity

Power, politics & timing