

# Clarion

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



NOVEMBER 2013



**HEOs & CLTs**

## Time sheets

Professional staff at CUNY pan the new system.

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## ON CURRICULUM & CONTRACT MESSAGE TO THE BOARD

Carrying signs that read "No Austerity Contract" on one side and "No Austerity Education" on the other, more than 200 PSC members greeted the first Board of Trustees session of the new academic year with protest inside and outside the

trustees' meeting. "We're here to tell them it's time to start negotiating seriously on a new contract and it's time for them to listen to us on Pathways," said Craig Bernardini, PSC chapter chair at Hostos Community College.

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### FOUNDATIONS

## Pathways, policy & Gates

How much would you pay for a college education that was *not* designed by Bill Gates? It might cost you more than \$40,000 a year.

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### PETRAEUS PROTESTS

## PSC condemns use of force

Nonviolent demonstrators opposed to CUNY's hiring of Gen. David Petraeus were repeatedly struck by police outside Macaulay Honors College on Sept. 17.

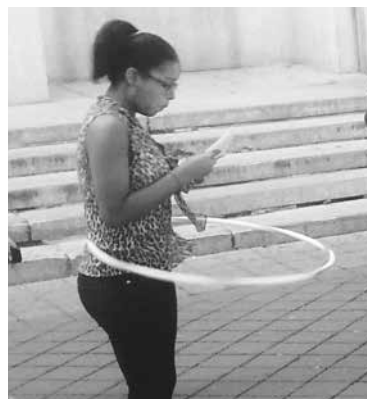
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### BRONX CC

## PSC: repairs are a capital idea

A broken fire escape, mold and a sinkhole that just kept sinking were among the health and safety issues addressed by a PSC campaign at BCC.

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### MAYOR'S RACE

## CUNY as an election issue

CUNY issues have drawn new attention in this year's City elections. What will NYC's next mayor propose for City University? A tale of two candidates.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR |

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

# Discussion on 'militarization of CUNY'

## ROTC - 1

● Glenn Petersen's article on the militarization of CUNY through a resurgent ROTC program is timely and pertinent (*Clarion*, September 2013). A discussion of this issue is important because ROTC service has serious consequences for students. At present, 1% of the eligible US population serves in the armed forces; hence, most Americans have little or no idea what military service in a time of war means. In a time when many students are going into debt to pursue a higher education, ROTC may appear as a way to gain a degree without cost. However, ROTC officers make up almost one-third of new lieutenants who are in demand due to the casualty rates suffered in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The wounded veterans of America's current military adventure in the Middle East bear serious consequences in mind and body. These individuals suffer high rates of traumatic amputations of limbs, as well as brain injuries, severe burns, paralysis, post-traumatic mental disorders and suicide. Hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqi and Afghan people, old and young, have been killed or maimed, victims of what our military leaders rationalize as "collateral damage."

All of these consequences should give anyone considering ROTC pause. As faculty and counselors we have an obligation to discuss these issues among ourselves and with our students – now.

Petersen urges all of us at CUNY to think, to inform ourselves and to reflect on the consequences of an ROTC program that specifically targets this university and its students. We would be wise to heed his counsel.

**Santiago Villafañe**  
Bronx Educational Opportunity Center  
(retired)

*Ed. note: Villafañe is an Air Force veteran who served from 1959 to 1965 on active and reserve duty.*

## ROTC - 2

● The op-ed by my Baruch College colleague Glenn Petersen strongly rebuffs the Pentagon's push to establish ROTC programs on CUNY campuses. Yet ROTC programs on CUNY campuses offer students the opportunity to have the government pay for their undergraduate education and, after

service, the GI Bill to pay for even higher learning. ROTC programs on CUNY campuses also offer the prospect of a future military leadership that is more evenly distributed among regions of the country and ethnicities. Down the road when these newly tapped leaders emerge from the military, the community benefits from a larger pool of people who have shared the military experience.

Closed systems ultimately fail. And even though the military itself is inherently a somewhat self-contained, closed system, when these leaders are re-inserted into the civilian world there are benefits to all. When the military's leadership reflects a narrow demographic, it will, in turn, reflect a narrow strategic view. Just as faculty and PSC members we encourage – at least officially – an inclusive attitude towards academic decision-making, as citizens we also need to encourage a more inclusive attitude towards a military, which, whether we realize it or not, has a strong hand in keeping us warm and safe in our beds at night.

Let us welcome the ROTC with open minds.

**Eugene Marlow**  
Baruch College

*Ed. note: Marlow is an Air Force veteran who served from 1966 to 1972 on active and reserve duty.*

## ROTC - 3

● Baruch College sociology professor Glenn Petersen's essay in September's *Clarion* is really about the Pentagon's awareness that young people are hungry – desperate – for economic opportunity. This is about an economic draft and it goes to the heart of the matter as to why the urban population at CUNY is a strategic recruitment target for the Pentagon. Unemployment in neighborhoods like Harlem hovers around 50% for African Americans between 18 and 30 years of age.

During the Vietnam War, as described in CUNY professor Penny Lewis's book *Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks: The Vietnam Antiwar Movement as Myth and Memory*, the Selective Service draft was enhanced by an economic draft – but the latter never went away. It never went away because the enormous Pentagon budget still robs our communities of investment and economic opportunity.

Let the debate Petersen calls for continue. What are CUNY's values as an academic institution – and are those values served by an ROTC program offering "military science" classes whose content is controlled by the Pentagon? Or by the chancellor offering Gen. David Petraeus a "sweetheart contract"

with no faculty discussion? Are ROTC students, or students in Gen. Petraeus's class, asked to reflect on the words of acclaimed WWII General Omar Bradley? Bradley once said, "We are a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about killing than we do about living."

**Gene Carroll**  
Joseph S. Murphy Labor Institute

## Petraeus - 1

● The September PSC Delegate Assembly unanimously supported the constitutional right of our students to peacefully protest and not be subjected to violence. As a delegate, I was among those to vote for this resolution in defense of the students who were arrested and in some cases beaten in a manner that appears unjustified.

However, I am most troubled that the protests against Mr. David Petraeus have from the start taken on a character that I think is at odds with the core values of a civil society and of higher education. The protestors have some very valid reasons to protest against Mr. Petraeus, but they resort to ad hominem attacks, question his qualifications and seek not just to raise legitimate issues but to force him out of the classroom altogether.

Mr. Petraeus has an earned doctorate, an MPA and a BS and has had a long and influential career in some of the largest and most powerful governmental organizations in the world. If he isn't qualified to teach at CUNY then who is? The focus on him as a person and as one who must be silenced by the protestors weakens the very arguments that they would like to make.

As a union of intellectuals we are often called upon to support views and people against a sometimes-hostile establishment, as was the case recently with Judith Butler and Omar Barghouti at Brooklyn College. During times like this we appeal to the principle that everyone has a voice. So does Mr. Petraeus. Maintaining the ability to express views some may find unpopular is something we depend on ourselves for.

**John Gallagher**  
BMCC

## Petraeus - 2

● I read the University Faculty Senate's (UFS) recent statement on General David Petraeus with great interest (see page 8), especially because my own case at Brooklyn College was invoked to make a point. More specifically, the UFS statement suggests that the treatment Petraeus received as he walked to his class constituted a threat to academic freedom. This is a dubious claim as the cases bear

little resemblance.

The UFS opposed the administrative overreach in my own case and supported my immediate reinstatement at Brooklyn College (as did the PSC). I was grateful for the UFS's principled stance, but I do not remember anything being said about harassment, epithets or verbal attacks – all of which I experienced as a result of the controversy surrounding my seminar. Indeed, it would have been inappropriate to make such a statement; to do so would have been to place the instructor's personal comfort above the legitimacy of free speech.

The students at Brooklyn College who opposed my presence on campus had every right to do so. We can quibble about the tone of protests, but it's not clear to me how protests alone (in a public space no less) constitute a threat to a teacher's ability to carry out their responsibilities.

My case at Brooklyn College hinged on academic freedom because I was actively barred from the classroom for what were clearly political motives. The administration sought to preclude controversy by quietly dismissing me. As far as I'm aware, General Petraeus lacks none of the institutional resources necessary to carry out his teaching duties. As for the protests, thicker skin should be all the protection required.

**Kristofer Petersen-Overton**  
Graduate Center

## Adjunct conditions and contract talks

● I have been an adjunct for 31 years inclusively, 1983-2013. This past summer I was without a job for about five weeks. I was rehired on August 20, a week before the start of the Fall semester.

Some observations:

(1) We have been without a contract since 2009. If we are lucky, we may get one in 2014.

(2) There should be a seniority system for adjuncts.

(3) Adjuncts should be allowed to save their sick days.

(4) Because of the United Federation of Teachers, I do not need PSC health coverage. However, other adjuncts may need this.

**Peter Tymus**  
Queensborough Community College

PSC President Barbara Bowen responds: *Thank you for the letter. It is important for the CUNY administration to hear about adjuncts like you – who have been consistently hired for 31 years. Certainly after 31 years of successful evaluations and rehiring, you should have job security! It is shameful that CUNY management continues to pretend that adjunct positions are temporary.*

*A system in which thousands of people are hired anew every six months is unworkable and cruel. That's why the PSC is focusing this fall, during Campus Equity Week, on the life experiences of adjuncts who need job security, adjuncts who remain committed to CUNY despite CUNY's failure to show a similar commitment to them. Please share your story (see the online form at psc-cuny.org/JobSecurity).*

*Meanwhile, the union has been able to work with CUNY management to secure dedicated funding to maintain adjunct health insurance. CUNY adjuncts who meet the eligibility criteria have been receiving excellent health insurance coverage since 1986. But more must be done for both adjuncts and full-time employees. The PSC leadership is eager to begin economic negotiations for a new contract, but we are among the 153 public-employee unions in New York City whose contract negotiations have been stalled by Mayor Michael Bloomberg's austerity policy. With a new mayor and a new CUNY chancellor on the horizon, we are preparing now for serious negotiations.*

## Demonstrations, disruptions and our future

● While I was wonderfully glad to join the PSC on the recent commemorative demonstration in DC on the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, and while I always enjoy a day with my colleagues, I found the "march" deeply troubling. The most visible sign of trouble, for us, was the almost total absence of police at the demonstration. They are simply not afraid of us anymore: we have been reduced to "ho-hum." And almost all the speeches sounded like yesterday, if not the day before: few new demands, no serious calls for new disruptions.

As our major weapon in the continuing struggle for social justice is our (remnant?) capacity to disrupt, the fact that during the whole day in DC I saw about six police was very scary.

I remember with pride and pleasure all the demonstrations for civil rights and against the war in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s – we were surrounded by walls of cops, a tribute to the seriousness with which we were taken. Now?

We need to do something new, something different on future actions. A union-wide discussion of strategies, not just for ourselves but for our larger commitments to social justice, which makes our union a source of pride, seems to be necessary.

**Gerald Sider**  
CSI & Graduate Center (emeritus)

## Write to Clarion

Letters may be on any topic, but should be less than 250 words and are subject to editing. Send in yours by November 7.



# A call for R-E-S-P-E-C-T

By JOHN TARLETON

Chanting “R-E-S-P-E-C-T. We reject austerity!” more than 200 PSC members greeted the first Board of Trustees meeting of the new academic year with protests inside the board meeting and on the street outside Baruch’s Vertical Campus building.

The PSC members who filled the 14th-floor conference room began chanting 15 minutes before the trustees’ meeting. As the meeting got under way, they held aloft red and white signs that read “No Austerity Contract” on one side and “No Austerity Education” on the other. “We’re here to tell them it’s time to start negotiating seriously on a new contract and it’s time for them to listen to us on Pathways,” said Hostos Chapter Chair Craig Bernardini.

## FIGHT ‘JUST BEGINNING’

“We are here to emphasize for the Board of Trustees the link between a good education and a good contract,” PSC President Barbara Bowen told the crowd outside. “This is a board that approved a \$1.99-million ‘golden parachute’ for former Chancellor Matthew Goldstein while imposing a five-year increase on students’ tuition and failing to advocate effectively for the faculty and staff raises. It’s a board that swept away an entire university’s general education

## PSC says no more austerity education



More than 200 PSC members protested inside and outside the September 30 Board of Trustees meeting.

curriculum without regard to the faculty’s role in curriculum decisions. The priorities are wrong,” she added. “We will not let it stand without protest that the board has attempted to ignore a 92% vote of no confidence.”

The new academic year marks

the debut of CUNY’s Pathways curriculum, an administration overhaul of rules on general education that was imposed despite widespread faculty objection. In May, the PSC held a secret-ballot referendum on Pathways, conducted by the American Arbitration Association. More than 60% of CUNY’s full-time faculty participated in the referendum, with 92% voting “no confidence” in the new curriculum.

The rejection of Pathways was a major theme of the demonstration, with signs that said “92%” on one side and “No Confidence In Pathways” on the other, and black T-shirts with the same slogans. “I’m outraged about Pathways and how [CUNY] continues to ignore the will of the faculty,” said Manfred Philipp, former chair of the University Faculty Senate and the Lehman PSC Chapter’s current chair.

Philipp, a professor of chemistry who has taught at Lehman College since 1977, described the impact of Pathways on faculty governance as “devastating,” saying that it shows “any administrator can write a memo changing the curriculum over the will of the faculty.” Last year, faculty governance bodies at several campuses approved moratoria on Pathways implementation, but saw their decisions overridden by college presidents.

“It shows a lack of respect for our faculty governance structure, which was very carefully developed,” said Ruth Silverberg, an associate professor of English at the College of Staten Island. “Besides being forced down our throats, Pathways is bad curriculum because it’s not nearly challenging enough for students.”

Oral arguments in the lawsuit

against Pathways by the PSC and the University Faculty are scheduled for November 6.

“The no-confidence vote gives us strength to be here today and say that this is not going away,” said Bernardini. “[The Board of Trustees]

## Focus on Pathways & the need for a fair contract

want everyone to think that the debate over Pathways is over, that it’s water under the bridge. But this is a long-term fight, and it’s just beginning.”

PSC members emphasized that CUNY’s success depends not only on its willingness to listen to faculty and staff, but also its ability to provide fair and competitive compensation and working conditions that allow academics to do their jobs. It was time, they said, for the board to make a fair contract settlement a top priority.

While salary steps continued to be paid as the PSC works under an expired contract, there have been no across-the-board raises in the past three years.

“It’s a financial strain,” said Sean MacDonald, associate professor of economics at City Tech. For those at the top of their scale, she said, “three years without any change in pay becomes incredibly difficult because the cost of everything is going up.”

## COMPETITIVE WAGES

If that’s not addressed, union members said, it has a damaging effect on both recruitment and retention. Bill Ashton, an associate professor of psychology at York College, said he enjoys his work, but that CUNY has to be mindful of the cost of living facing faculty and staff in New York City, one of the most expensive places to live in the United States. “I love teach-

ing in New York,” he told *Clarion*. “And I would hate to lose that opportunity because I can’t afford to live here.”

PSC bargaining team members say that teaching load, adjunct job security and HEO advancement are also union priorities for a new contract.

“A good contract is well-deserved. Three years has been too long,” emphasized Albert Sherman, chair of the PSC’s chapter for College Lab Technicians.

With Pathways taking effect this semester, PSC members voiced concern about its effect on academic quality. The lower limits on general education credits and class time mean that introductory science classes are dropping laboratory sessions, and foreign language instruction is being scaled back.

## ‘NO’ TO LOWER STANDARDS

“We’re going to be cheating our students of a good education,” said Maya Sharma an associate professor of English at Hostos who said she was “against the push to get students in and out as soon as possible.” The emphasis on speeding up graduation rates without providing additional resources fails to recognize the complex life circumstances of CUNY’s predominantly working-class and immigrant student body, Sharma said.

The administration is trying to improve graduation rates “on the cheap,” by lowering standards, union members say – and that’s why they see Pathways as a form of “austerity education.” This kind of corner-cutting does not give CUNY students the education they deserve, said Sigmund Shen, associate professor of English at LaGuardia Community College. “When our students graduate, they have to deal with a very harsh and competitive world,” Shen told *Clarion*. “We want to give them the best education we can.”

The Board of Trustees resolution that authorized Pathways also calls for the curriculum overhaul to be evaluated annually for the first three years after its implementation. The PSC has called for the evaluation to be carried out by an independent, unbiased panel with academic expertise – not a panel handpicked by the CUNY administration (see *Clarion*, September 2013).

“The University is always talking about assessment,” said Medgar Evers Chapter Chair Clinton Crawford. “Now, we need to assess what they have imposed on us.”

For Bernardini, who often teaches English composition classes to first-year students, protesting Pathways and asserting the need for a new contract at the same time made perfect sense.

“There’s a connection between a lack of a contract and Pathways,” he said. “For the faculty and staff who make CUNY run, and the students who we serve, the board’s approach is all about streamlining and cutting costs. What is required instead is investment, in the broadest possible sense, in CUNY’s base.”

## Demanding a contract



Workers at the CUNY Research Foundation Central Office (RFCO) including Yolande Ogbajie (front) and Sarah Reyes (behind) rallied and marched Tuesday October 8 to press their demands that the Research Foundation reach a fair contract agreement with their union. The RFCO workers’ contract expired in December 2012.



# Why are you voting for Bill de Blasio?

PSC members answer our Roving Reporter



**BLANCA VÁZQUEZ**  
Adjunct Assistant Professor of Film & Media Studies  
Hunter College

What de Blasio represents right now is the most progressive voice we've heard in New York City in decades. He's identified the most important issues that affect us where we live in our daily lives, which are issues of economic inequality. He understands that CUNY is central to addressing those issues. He's also spoken out strongly against stop-and-frisk. The majority of us who live in the city are people of color and we are scared for our children whenever they leave the house.



**FRANCINE EGGER-SIDER**  
Professor, Library Department  
LaGuardia Community College

For me, Bill de Blasio is a breath of fresh air. He seems to be for education. He's not in developers' pockets like Bloomberg. He comes out of a middle-class family and he seems to be aware that many people are struggling.

We would greatly benefit from the extra money he has promised to dedicate to CUNY. We need more time with our students because they are not properly prepared. Many of them have never set foot in a library or written a research paper. To be in a large class is detrimental to their education. They need full-time professors who can spend extra time with them.



**GRETCHEN JOHNSON**  
Associate Professor of Education  
City College

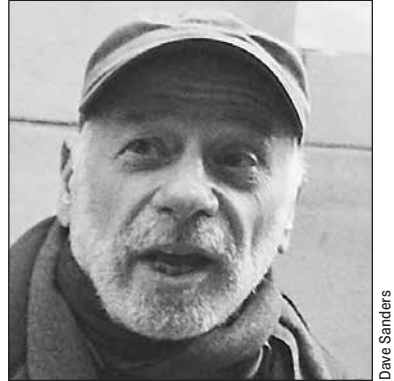
We need to bring some sanity to public education. It's refreshing to have someone in Bill de Blasio whose mind and heart are in the right place when it comes to schools. There's been a relentless drive for more charter schools, more closings of public schools, more standardized testing.

We need to stop and take stock of what's working and what's not. Some charter schools have a 50% teacher turnover rate and that's a very poor model. De Blasio's desire to expand early childhood education is a good position to take. Plenty of research shows that the quality of the preschool education children get is connected to how well students do when they enter regular school. Over time, this would be a critical part of narrowing the achievement gap.



**ANTHONY ANDREWS**  
Associate HEO  
York College

Bill de Blasio is clearly the most qualified candidate, and there's no question in my mind that he is the best choice for working families. It's been very tough over the last several years without any contract or raises. My concern is that we get a fair contract that includes present and future raises for all our members. If Bill becomes mayor, he will be someone that city employees can negotiate with to get a fair and equitable contract – and that means a lot considering that he appoints one-third of the Board of Trustees.



**TOM ANGOTTI**  
Professor of Urban Affairs and Planning  
Hunter

The themes de Blasio has advanced in his campaign are clearly progressive. His victory in the Democratic primary reflect a deep dissatisfaction with Bloomberg's pro-real estate policies that led to a rash of luxury housing, gentrification and the privatization of schools and other services.

We need to take this opportunity to organize and become even more committed to a progressive agenda in City Hall because de Blasio, once in office, will have to pacify the bankers and bondholders – or they will blackmail him. Labor and community organizations have to keep up the pressure and maintain an independent voice and not be subsumed into the new administration. People on the inside are needed, but they will be highly constrained by what journalist Jack Newfield called the "permanent government."

Interviews by John Tarleton

## Update on municipal bargaining

By PETER HOGNESS

While the City of New York has allowed contracts to expire in every one of its 153 bargaining units, not many unions are actively bargaining with the City. Most municipal unions have concluded that the Bloomberg administration is so fixated on extracting concessions that it is not willing to negotiate fair agreements.

The PSC bargains its contract directly with CUNY, but any economic offer from CUNY management must have City approval.

"It's obvious that he doesn't want to settle," Ed Mullins, head of the Sergeants Benevolent Association, told the civil service weekly *The Chief*. "Everyone's just waiting for the next guy."

### "A SLAP"

That impression was confirmed when the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (PBA) reported on the City's contract proposal in its second formal negotiating session, held on September 17: three years of zero wage increases, followed by two an-

## Bloomberg offer to PBA: first three years at 0%

nual raises of 1.25% and labor concessions such as increased health coverage costs for union members, a reduction in vacation days and lower holiday pay.

PBA President Pat Lynch called the proposal "a slap in the face of our police officers." A PBA statement noted that "the proposed cumulative raise represents less than a third of the increase in the cost of living in our area" during the covered period.

### BAD BUDGETING

"These demands come as no surprise, given City Hall's failure to set aside any labor reserve and its repeated insistence on zero retroactive raises and health care cost-sharing as a precondition for settling any labor agreement," the PBA observed. The union, whose contract expired in 2010, said that the negotiating environment under Michael Bloomberg has been "one of the most difficult we have ever faced." Like other unions, the PBA criticized the mayor for refus-

ing to budget for city worker raises in recent years, even when there has been a large surplus, and then claiming that there is no money in the budget for any retroactive pay.

While talks between the PBA and the City seemed to be going nowhere fast, municipal labor activists were on the lookout for a forthcoming arbitrator's decision on the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) contract covering nurses employed by the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC).

"The nurses of HHC have been working without a contract for more than three years and have been forced to go to binding arbitration to get a fair wage package," said a NYSNA statement this spring. NYSNA is one of a minority of public-sector unions in New York City that have recourse to binding arbitration, and whether or not the arbitrator grants back pay to city nurses could affect the settlements achieved by other

unions down the road. "The unions have been counting on retroactive pay, which has been a feature of the municipal labor scene for at least 50 years," noted *The Chief*.

Meanwhile, City unions in the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC)

### Unions block unilateral City push on health insurance.

scored a victory in their effort to force negotiation over changes the Bloomberg administration is seeking in employees' health insurance coverage. This summer NYC moved unilaterally to issue a request for proposals (RFP) from insurance providers that would revamp the NYC Health Benefits Plan, and the MLC went to court to block the move. "This isn't Wisconsin," MLC Chair Harry Nespoli said at the time. "In New York, we don't unilaterally abolish the negotiating rights of unions."

The MLC won a temporary restraining order blocking the RFP until a September court hearing could be held, and on September

30, a state judge ruled in the MLC's favor. The court's injunction against issuance of the City's unilateral RFP cited past agreements between the City and the MLC, particularly one from 1992, which held that any restructuring of the health plan must be the result of negotiation.

"The unions have never been against an RFP on health insurance," said PSC President Barbara Bowen, a member of the MLC Steering Committee. "There are things in the current health program that could be modernized."

"If they had done it in the right way, we never would have been pushed into a corner with this thing," agreed MLC Chair Nespoli, who is also head of the City's sanitation union. Instead of negotiating with the MLC, however, Nespoli said, the City tried to set the terms for a revised health plan on its own with an outside consultant. "They came to us and handed us a 1,000-page RFP and said, 'This is what we want to do,'" he told *The Chief*. "This would affect [us] for the next 20 years."

### THE NEXT MAYOR

The City has said it will appeal the ruling. Nespoli said that while the MLC was willing to sit down and talk with the City at any time, the right thing to do would be to leave the issue in the hands of the next mayor.



# CUNY as an election issue

By PETER HOGNESS

A recent article in the *Daily News* detailed Democratic mayoral candidate Bill de Blasio's proposals for addressing New York City's severe income inequality. "He took aim at the Bloomberg administration's recent deal with food provider Fresh Direct," the *News* reported. "De Blasio insisted the money could have been better spent. Instead of giving big companies subsidies, he suggested using the money to fund the City University of New York, which has had its budget slashed by a third over the past two decades."

Funding for CUNY has emerged as a prominent issue in this year's mayoral election. That's due mainly to de Blasio's emphasis on making the city work better for the poor and middle class, and his vision of CUNY's role in that process. A PSC statement on the union's endorsement of de Blasio in June cited "his strategic vision for CUNY and his focus on ending economic inequality" as central factors.

De Blasio's main rival, Republican Joe Lhota, has addressed some CUNY issues in his policy proposals. But Lhota has given City University far less emphasis than de Blasio, despite the fact that Lhota is a CUNY trustee. In fact, Lhota's 12 years as a trustee are not mentioned in the biography on his campaign website.

## DE BLASIO'S PLAN

De Blasio says the City gives too many tax breaks to "large, well-connected corporations" and that these subsidies are not an effective way to build good jobs at good wages: the \$130 million break that Bloomberg has given to Fresh Direct is a prominent example. Instead, the Democratic candidate calls for strengthening New York City's economy at its base. He would redirect funds from large corporate tax breaks to expand City support for CUNY and to provide loans to small businesses, which de Blasio contends are a more effective generator of jobs.

Instead of "hundreds of millions of dollars to office towers on Park Avenue and unaccountable, one-shot subsidies to companies who can do without them," de Blasio says, these City funds should go "to reinvest in real paths to economic opportunity, like our sorely underfunded CUNY system." Redirecting some of these funds would pay for a 50% rise the City's funding of CUNY – a significant increase. (New York City currently provides about one-third of CUNY's public support, while about two-thirds comes from the State.)

As noted in the *Daily News* article, de Blasio puts his CUNY funding proposal in the context of the accumulated damage from past budget cuts. "Decades of State and City disinvestment have undermined CUNY's historic role as a stepping-stone to the middle class for more than a generation of working-class youth," he told *Clarion* in August. "We need to put CUNY on a more

## Gets attention in mayor's race



Democratic candidate Bill de Blasio would boost City support for CUNY by 50%.



Republican Joe Lhota has repeatedly voted for tuition increases as a CUNY trustee.

solid budgetary footing to make sure it can provide high-quality and affordable higher education for all New Yorkers."

De Blasio's proposal for increased CUNY funding is a central part of his overall economic development plan. In a policy speech at the New School in May, he noted that high-tech and health care, "the two fastest-growing sectors of New York City's economy, are dominated by workers who aren't from New York." In response, de Blasio says he wants to "strengthen CUNY programs that can bring underrepresented populations into technology and other key, high-paying sectors of the New York economy."

That means helping CUNY "expand critical programs, particularly those focused on 'middle skill' science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) training," de Blasio told *Clarion*, and he backs a proposal by Scott Stringer, the PSC-endorsed Democratic candidate for comptroller, along these lines. "Our goal should be that within

eight years, the majority of skilled technology-related jobs in New York City are hiring people educated in New York City," de Blasio says. "I want to restore CUNY as the central gateway to a quality education and a good job in NYC."

Part of making that happen, de Blasio says, is restraining the growth of CUNY tuition. An important goal of increasing City support for the system, he says, is "to make CUNY affordable again."

## LHOTA'S VIEWS

In the economic policy proposal he developed for the mayoral campaign, Republican Joe Lhota says that "we need to lower the barriers to a quality higher education and invest in our City University system." Unlike de Blasio, however, he does not commit to increasing the City's CUNY funding, nor does he discuss particular budget figures.

Since Lhota first became a CUNY trustee in 2001, he has voted to approve tuition increases that raised senior college tuition from \$3,200 to

\$5,730 per year. He also supported tuition hikes at the community colleges, which raised the annual price tag from \$2,500 to \$4,200.

"My academic future is uncertain and that scares me," a Brooklyn College senior told *Clarion* after Lhota and other trustees approved an \$800 increase in 2003. "With only six classes left, I don't know if I can afford to finish my degree."

A former New York City budget director and former Commissioner of Finance, Lhota has chaired the Board of Trustees' Committee on Fiscal Affairs since shortly after he joined the Board. On his watch, the proportion of CUNY's operating budget that comes from student tuition has steadily climbed. Lhota has been an advocate for CUNY's current tuition plan, which provides for five years of automatic annual increases, for a total tuition hike of \$1500.

Lhota's policy book includes support for expanding some specific CUNY programs, though no sources of increased funding are discussed. Lhota also points to NYC's growing technology sector as a source of better-paying jobs, and proposes that CUNY "create a small business/technology business taskforce" that can consider how to "adapt the CUNY system to the needs of local employers so as to produce the best-trained workers for local businesses."

"New York City relies too heavily on finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE) for jobs and tax revenue," Lhota's policy book contends, and he proposed building on "the spectacular growth in tourism" as one path to greater economic diversity. Here Lhota envisions an expanded role for CUNY, proposing creation of "a flagship CUNY Hospitality Management School incorporating both the senior and community college level," and seeking "active cooperation of New York City hospitality industry leaders" in developing the new school. Lhota's plan does not specify how this proposed new school would relate to existing CUNY programs, such as the well-known hospitality management program at City Tech.

Lhota's economic plan also includes promises to "create a tech campus in every borough, beginning on Staten Island," and to "establish free online community college programs." These proposals are not further described, and it is unclear whether the online courses he envisions would be for-credit, or how they would relate to earning a degree. The Lhota campaign did not return calls requesting comment.

## PATHWAYS

Bill de Blasio has voiced some concerns about Pathways, CUNY's overhaul of its general education curriculum (see pages 3 and 10). Pointing to the 92% "no confidence" vote in Pathways among CUNY's full-time faculty in a referendum last May, de Blasio said that the Pathways

plan needs another look. "As mayor, I would take additional steps to evaluate the effectiveness of a curriculum that has been rejected so dramatically by faculty," he said this summer. "The experience and training that faculty members bring to their profession must be taken into consideration during curriculum development, or we risk sacrificing the academic quality of our city's institutions."

As a CUNY trustee, Joe Lhota voted for the administration's resolution creating the Pathways plan, and has supported its implementation since. When the PSC wrote to CUNY's trustees about the results of the no-confidence vote, Board Chair Benno Schmidt replied with a short two-paragraph note referencing an earlier letter by then-Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. Lhota, like other trustees, did not individually respond.

## PETRAEUS

When press reports revealed that former General David Petraeus had been hired by CUNY at a salary of \$150,000 per year to teach a single seminar (an amount that Petraeus reduced to \$1 after the controversy exploded), de Blasio was sharply critical of the move. He joined other elected officials such as City Councilmember Brad Lander, a Democrat, and Assemblymember Kieran Lator, a Republican, in criticizing CUNY's decision.

"The salary offered to Gen. Petraeus is dramatically out-of-step with CUNY professors in similar arrangements," de Blasio wrote in a letter to Interim Chancellor William Kelly. "According to the American Association of University Professors, many adjunct CUNY professors would earn approximately \$3,000 to instruct a similarly structured three-hour course during a semester." De Blasio urged Kelly to renegotiate the arrangement with Petraeus, and redirect the funds toward "resources that will better serve CUNY students."

To offer such an outsized salary to Petraeus when "many New Yorkers are struggling to afford higher education" is "symptomatic of what's gone wrong in higher education," de Blasio later said.

Lhota chaired the Board of Trustees' Committee on Fiscal Affairs throughout the Petraeus controversy. Minutes of the committee and the board do not indicate that he asked any questions about the salary offered to Petraeus, though he could possibly have done so when the Board met in executive session. Lhota has not spoken publicly on the Petraeus hire.

## BEYOND NOVEMBER

During this mayoral campaign, CUNY issues have received a new level of attention in citywide political discussion. While that will not automatically bring new resources to the University, it does put advocates for CUNY in a stronger position. When debates over next year's budget get underway, CUNY faculty, staff and students can build on this greater awareness – among both elected officials and the public at large – to secure the support that City University needs.

## A tale of two candidates



# BCC repairs 'on the right track'

By CARLA MURPHY

The depression in the middle of the running track at Bronx Community College (BCC) was around so long it earned a campus nickname: Sinkhole, Jr. Its larger predecessor, The Sinkhole, had opened up in the middle of a campus road and was big enough to swallow a car. Though smaller, Sinkhole, Jr., was no slouch – it grew to measure 35 feet across and could be seen on Google Earth. The growing gap in the middle of the track left only a single lane on either side, where runners had to pass through single-file.

While the original Sinkhole was repaired five years ago, Sinkhole, Jr., just kept on growing. “Instead of being repaired, a fence was built around it. As [the hole] grew, the fence started to fall into the hole. Instead of fixing the hole, a larger fence was built around it,” a statement from the campus PSC chapter explained. Meanwhile students, faculty and staff at BCC, the first community college in the country to be designated a National Historic Landmark, walked past the eyesore every day.

## 'HOLE-ISTIC' APPROACH

But after eight years of unchecked growth, Sinkhole, Jr., met its end this summer – and the chapter celebrated the victory with an “End of the Sinkhole” party on October 3.

Taking a “hole-istic” approach, PSC members offered donut hole pastries and hula-hoops for a quick morning workout to passing students, faculty and staff. A large photo to display showed “before” pictures of the sinkhole and other conditions that have recently been addressed.

The repaired running track is a testament to the persistent organizing and lobbying by BCC’s PSC chapter and evidence of its long fight for capital funds, with more than \$30 million now secured. Union members hope that these funds and other recent health and safety fixes will mark a turning point in the problems of disrepair that have long plagued the BCC campus.

“I feel good about stuff getting fixed,” said Jennifer Ortiz, a sophomore math major on her way to morning classes. She had stopped to support her teacher, Leslie deGiere,

## PSC-led push nets \$30 million in capital funds



(Top photo) Students spin hula-hoops in symbolic celebration of the filling of a hole in the track at BCC (below, before).

who led the PSC chapter work in documenting issues and organizing faculty and students to demand more funding for repairs.

“Students wrote letters, sent postcards, called and visited their elected representatives,” said deGiere, in a moment between passing out apple-cider donut holes and urging students to begin their morning with a hula-hoop session under a canopy of

trees. (Quite a few did.) “It’s exciting, knowing that our voices got heard and that we can make a change if we work together,” she said.

## 'FULL-COURT PRESS'

DeGiere refers to the more than 1,000 postcards and dozens of letters that students, faculty and staff mailed this spring to City Council members and the Bronx borough

president, urging full funding for capital needs at BCC. The postcards featured photos of conditions in need of repair at BCC, and many faculty, staff and students included photos in their individual letters. PSC members and student activists in the NY Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) followed up in April with in-person visits to 10 councilmembers. Soon after, City Council Higher

Education Committee Chair Ydanis Rodriguez asked then-Chancellor Matthew Goldstein about BCC’s needs during a public hearing.

The full-court press yielded success: this year BCC’s capital budget is expected to receive \$15 million to \$17 million at the City level, plus the same amount in matching funds from the State, for a total of about \$30 million to \$34 million. BCC’s PSC chapter said this amount was “unprecedented.”

## PRESIDENT SETS A NEW TONE

The success this spring was built on organizing efforts in previous years. A 2009 event played an important role in raising awareness on campus about the backlog of overdue repairs. In a photo display dubbed the “Hall of Shame,” a play on the campus’s renowned Hall of Fame with busts of 98 great Americans, organizers chose photos that illustrated the deep contrast between these vaunted American heroes and their crumbling surroundings. In addition to raising the problems regularly at labor-management meetings over the years, in 2011 and 2012 the chapter took a comprehensive census of outstanding repairs and fixes, an effort spearheaded by deGiere. A chapter report in November 2012 pressed for the repair of Sinkhole, Jr.

“It’s taken an enormous amount of work to get this done,” deGiere says, as the tinny sound of a hammer meeting a nail echoed in the air. A short distance behind her, a maintenance worker is on his hands and knees working on the athletic field. “While we’ve made a lot of progress, we’re only 25% of the way there,” she said.

Repairs to date go beyond the sinkhole: they include repair of a broken fire escape at Havemeyer Lab, remediation of mold in that building’s basement, replacement of crumbling pipe insulation in Nichols Hall, and repaired lighting in Meister Hall.

Such gains are due in large part, deGiere says, to the relatively new administration of BCC President Carole Berotte Joseph. “There’s been a marked difference in terms of attitude towards health and safety on campus,” says deGiere, who marks Joseph’s arrival by the rhythm of the campus clock overlooking BCC’s main quad. Before Joseph took office, deGiere explains, the clock was always wrong.

## ROOM FOR OPTIMISM

John Athanasourelis, a professor of English and an executive committee member of BCC’s PSC chapter, is pragmatic but optimistic about the fate of BCC’s outstanding repairs. Standing back to look at the athletic field, he says, “I can’t even tell you where the hole was.”

A union leaflet sums it up: “Although the race is far from over, we’re on the right track!”

## NYC IN BRIEF

### Renters welcome Oct. 31 extension for Sandy aid

In late September, the City of New York extended the deadline for enrollment in Build It Back, an aid program for those affected by Superstorm Sandy last year. Make the Road New York (MRNY) said the extension was especially welcome news for renters, few of whom have signed up.

“In the weeks before the deadline, MRNY found that only 11% of renters had registered for the program, pointing to the critical need for more outreach and time to address renters’ needs,” said MRNY Co-Executive Director Deborah Axt. “Rents have skyrocketed in affected areas, and many renters are still living on friends’ and family’s couches, in garages, in their cars or sleeping in hallways because they cannot afford to move back home.” Axt said MRNY will advocate for additional deadline extensions if they are needed.

### NYC aids family defense against deportation

New York City now has the nation’s first public program to defend immigrants who are threatened with deportation. With \$500,000 in City funding, a pilot program called the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project will support non-profits that provide free legal counsel to immigrant families who need representation.

“As a judge, I have been struck by the too often poor quality

of lawyering for immigrants, indeed, the too often absence of counsel for immigrants, which all but dooms an immigrant’s case,” federal judge Robert Katzmann told NY1. The judge said that immigrants represented by an experienced immigration attorney succeeded two-thirds of the time, while less than one-tenth of those who had no legal representation were able to win their cases.

The project is administered by the Vera Institute of Justice.



# Time sheet outrage

By JOHN TARLETON

Higher Education Officers and College Lab Technicians packed the PSC Union Hall on September 17 to air their concerns about a rigid new time-sheet system that CUNY is imposing on professional staff.

In the joint meeting of the PSC's HEO and CLT chapters, 150 members from at least 14 campuses voiced anger about feeling that they are no longer being treated as professionals. But sharing their stories sparked some hope for change.

"People felt unified and galvanized like I had never seen before," Brooklyn College Chief CLT Ed Coppola told *Clarion*. "I felt like we had a lot more voice, a lot more power, because we got together for those couple of hours in that room."

## THE ROLLOUT

The new time-sheet system was recently introduced at several CUNY colleges; it is now in use at nine campuses and is scheduled to be implemented at four more this semester. Union members say they do not have a problem accounting for their time, but decried the rigid design of the time sheets and their application. Many described working long hours or irregular schedules in order to meet the needs of students and their departments. They wondered how they could fit their varying activities into the time sheet's rigid format.

In response to the concerns the new policy has provoked, CUNY central administration has reaffirmed that all employees should record the hours they actually work. The expectation that employees report all

## HEOs & CLTs knock CUNY's rigid approach



HEOs and CLTs filled the PSC Union Hall on September 17 to discuss CUNY's controversial new time-sheet procedures. Members of the professional staff, including Vanessa Jennings (center, hand raised) and Syed Abdali (at right), say the new time-sheet system is rigid and does not acknowledge the multiplicity of roles they play at CUNY.

hours worked is at odds with what many CLT- and HEO-series employees have been told locally, and members say the time sheets cause other problems as well.

For example, one HEO said she was unsure how she would record "working lunches" with her supervisors. A CLT who is a microbiologist described going into work on weekends and holidays to check on the condition of projects

for which she is responsible. Many members said the time sheets are not set up for such frequent variation of working hours. Iona Samuels, a senior CLT in BMCC's business administration department, told the meeting she sometimes stays at work until 11 pm because when she's installing computer software, she doesn't leave until the job is done.

"If they are going for a one-size-

**The PSC is planning a petition campaign.**

fits-all model, that may not be the right model for the flexible work force they expect," Berkis Cruz-Eusebio, an assistant to HEO at Hostos, told *Clarion*.

Cruz-Eusebio's versatility and willingness to go the extra mile proved invaluable last August when a colleague brought a suicidal student to Cruz-Eusebio's office at the end of the work day. Cruz-Eusebio, a career & employment specialist

## If you have a conflict about your time sheet

If you accurately reported your time, including overtime, and did not get compensated...

If your time sheet was not approved by your supervisor or timekeeper...

If you're told to put down different hours from what you actually worked or will work...

If you're assigned overtime hours but have been told that you will not get paid for them...

**...call the union.**

Call the PSC at (212) 354-1252 and ask to speak with a grievance counselor.

in Hostos's ASAP program, helped calm the student while signaling a colleague to contact police, who eventually came and took her to a psychiatric hospital. Two hours later, Cruz-Eusebio went home.

## NEGOTIATIONS

"How would that have worked if I told my co-worker that I was required to leave by 5:30 pm?" Cruz asked.

PSC First Vice President Steve London told the meeting that the union had filed a Public Employment Relations Board charge over CUNY's failure to negotiate with the union over the impact of the new time-sheet system. The PSC is planning a petition campaign on the issue; if you'd like to get involved, contact Deirdre Brill at dbrill@pscmail.org, or (212) 354-1252. In the meantime, the PSC urges members who encounter conflicts over time-sheet issues to call the union (see sidebar above).

# QC pay delay frays adjuncts

By JOHN TARLETON

More than one-third of the roughly 1,000 part-time faculty at Queens College (QC) received no paychecks in the first pay period of the new semester. By the end of the second pay period on October 3, about 100 adjuncts remained unpaid. Throughout this time, the QC administration failed to notify adjuncts of the payroll problems or of existing procedures that allow them to receive a 60% "advance" on unpaid wages.

"I think it's unconscionable that the administration allowed this to happen and then did not inform unpaid adjuncts of what was happening or take rapid steps to repair it," said Jonathan Buchsbaum, the PSC Chapter Chair at Queens College.

QC part-timers were supposed to receive their first paychecks on September 19. Within days, Buchsbaum began to hear reports of adjuncts going unpaid. Over the next two weeks, Buchsbaum and Renee Lasher of the

## More than 300 went unpaid

PSC's contract enforcement department pressed top QC administrators for information on the scope and source of the problem.

On October 9, QC Director of Human Resources Oswald Fraser reported to the college's Personnel and Budget Committee on how many of the school's adjunct faculty had not received their first paycheck of the semester by the end of the first pay period, September 19, and how many had still not been paid by October 3.

## STUNNED

"I was stunned," said Buchsbaum, who attended the P&B meeting. According to CUNY central administration, about 340 adjuncts were not paid in the first period, while 94 would not receive a paycheck until October 17 – seven weeks after the start of the semester.

QC's failure to properly pay its ad-

juncts affected them in a variety of ways. For Cameron Pearson, an adjunct lecturer in Classics, the back-to-back payday failures came as he tried to cover his regular bills and \$600 to renew his British wife's green card, the government document that allows immigrants to live and work legally in the US.

"I was furious that I was being put in this situation," said Pearson who is teaching two classes this semester and had to borrow money from his sister to get by. "My wife could have been kicked out of the country." He eventually received a 60% advance on the wages he was owed, after speaking with an administrator. But other unpaid adjuncts never learned that this emergency pay was an option.

When Pearson and two other adjuncts interviewed by *Clarion* individually sought explanations from

Fraser, they were told that the fault lay with their departments. But these adjuncts said that they had checked with their departments, and that the required paperwork had in fact been submitted in advance of the August deadline for the necessary personnel forms.

Pearson said the response from Fraser and top human resources officials was not helpful. "They blamed the problem on other people," Pearson said. "No one seemed to want to take responsibility."

Buchsbaum told *Clarion* he learned that a bureaucratic bottleneck developed after an overworked Human Resources employee responsible for approving the personnel forms abruptly quit his job in August. Part-timers were particularly

angry by the college's failure to notify them of the looming problems with meeting payroll or the option of receiving a 60% advance on unpaid salaries.

"They knew beforehand that they weren't going to pay us, but they just kept quiet," said Kristine Rosales, an adjunct lecturer in sociology who wasn't paid in the first pay cycle.

**College failed to warn part-timers of problems.**

"I try to teach my students that they should let me know if they are going to be late with a paper so we can work something out," said Arthur Shippee, an adjunct lecturer in English. "I'm surprised that leaders at my own college won't follow that advice."

"Virtually all" adjunct personnel forms that were submitted on time were processed in a timely manner by Human Resources, maintained Queens College spokesperson Maria Matteo. She offered no explanation of why the number of unpaid adjuncts was suddenly so high this fall.

"Departments have access to tracking [personnel forms] online," Matteo added, "which provides them with the ability to identify those who had been processed too late and alert them to contact HR."

Adjunct pay delay problems have occurred repeatedly at other campuses in the CUNY system. For Rosales, who has been a QC adjunct for six years, it highlights the irrationality of CUNY's system of constantly rehiring all 13,000 adjuncts as if they were new employees.

"I absolutely believe there should be a seniority system for adjuncts," she said. "They clearly can't handle things with the current system."



## LABOR IN BRIEF

### Teaching Kaplan to 'speak union'

Nearly 100 English as a Second Language teachers at Kaplan International teaching centers in New York City voted to unionize last year, with union supporters carrying two-thirds of the vote. Serious contract negotiations got under way with Kaplan last November, but the teachers are still without a union contract.

"Progress is real slow at each negotiation," said Paul George Hlava, who has taught ESL classes at Kaplan for the past four years.

The vote last year marked the first time teachers at Kaplan International, a private language school that teaches English language courses to students from around the world, voted to join a union. Union members intend to be persistent about teaching management to "speak union."

### 'Carwasheros' tell boss to clean up his act

Workers at the Webster & 'Rico Pobre' car washes in the Bronx walked off their jobs September 28, to protest ongoing harassment and retaliation against union supporters. Joined by members of New York Communities for Change (NYCC), Make the Road NY and the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), the "carwasheros" demanded that owner John Lage put a stop to the harassment and address their health and safety concerns.

During the walkout and protest, workers and their community allies handed out flyers urging motorists to take their business elsewhere. The walkout happened "because we are tired of the tyranny and abuse from management," said Ernesto Salazar, 39. "We are demanding that Lage sit with the union and negotiate a fair contract that will protect our rights."

### Taxi workers' leader wins AFL-CIO post

Bhairavi Desai, executive director of New York City's Taxi Workers' Alliance (TWA), was elected to the national AFL-CIO's Executive Council in September. The National Taxi Workers Alliance, which New York City's TWA helped to found, became the 57th affiliate of the AFL-CIO in 2011.

Taxi drivers in New York and elsewhere are legally classed as independent contractors. They are not covered under federal labor legislation, and Desai's election to the AFL-CIO leadership was a first for any representative of a non-traditional workers' organization.

To win basic gains for taxi drivers, "we had demonstrations, work stoppages, and strikes," Desai said after her election. "And that sense of militancy – we need to set that ablaze throughout all the industries in our country."

# Petraeus protesters attacked

by PETER HOGNESS

The controversy that erupted this summer over CUNY's decision to hire former General David Petraeus as a visiting professor continued with his arrival at Macaulay Honors College this fall. In one of a series of demonstrations in September and October, students peacefully protesting outside Macaulay on September 17 were punched repeatedly by police, and six activists were arrested. The protests have drawn national attention, and organizers vow that they will continue.

The PSC, while not an organizer of the demonstrations, has strongly condemned the use of violence against nonviolent activists and has affirmed their right to protest.

### ONGOING CONTROVERSY

This summer the website Gawker.com published internal e-mails showing that prior to any faculty input, former CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein offered Gen. Petraeus a \$200,000 salary for a position teaching a single seminar at Macaulay. In the wave of criticism that followed, the proposed salary was reduced to \$150,000, and Gen. Petraeus eventually said he would accept just \$1 a year. His lawyer said Petraeus hoped this would "remove money as a point of controversy."

But even at a reduced salary, the controversy over CUNY's hiring of Petraeus showed no signs of dying down. The general's seminar, "Are We on the Threshold of the North American Decade?" was greeted with a picket line outside Macaulay on September 9, the first day of the class. The demonstration was sponsored by the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY and other organizations.

"CUNY Must Not Be a War College" and "Petraeus Out of CUNY" were among the signs protesters carried. Leaflets argued that Petraeus was guilty of war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, cited articles in *The New York Times* and the UK's *Guardian* that described

## Upcoming pre-retirement conferences

**REGISTRATION** for this semester's PSC Pre-Retirement Conference filled up quickly; this continues to be a popular event with PSC members. "This conference is a wonderful opportunity for our members five years or less from retirement to learn how to better plan for their health and pension benefits in retirement," said PSC Coordinator for Pension and Health Benefits Jared Herst. If you were not able to sign up for the union's Pre-Retirement Conference this fall, be sure to sign up for a future session; there will be one in Spring 2014 and one in Fall 2014. Signing up for the PSC's weekly e-mail newsletter, "This Week in the PSC," is an easy way to get informed when registration dates for these conferences are announced. (See [psc-cuny.org/form/sign-me-week-e-newsletter](http://psc-cuny.org/form/sign-me-week-e-newsletter).)

## Videos of police violence go viral



**NYPD officers repeatedly struck CUNY students at a peaceful September 17 demonstration outside the Macaulay Honors College protesting CUNY's hiring of former CIA Director David Petraeus. Six activists were arrested, including several who were filmed being beaten by the police.**

killing of civilians and torture by forces under Petraeus's command, and said his appointment "should be rescinded."

A smaller group of demonstrators confronted Petraeus on the sidewalk, chanting and yelling that he was a "murderer" and "war criminal." A video of the episode, during which Petraeus did not respond to the shouts and kept walking straight ahead, soon drew more than 300,000 views on YouTube, and national media coverage followed. Many pundits expressed outrage that Petraeus was treated with such disrespect and accused the students of "harassment."

### 'WAR CRIMINAL'

A statement from Macaulay Dean Ann Kirschner declared that "dialog within the academic setting [must] always be conducted civilly." The Executive Committee of CUNY's University Faculty Senate went further, sharply criticizing the tone of the protests. "Because they disagree with Professor Petraeus's views, these demonstrators intend to deprive him of his ability to teach," it said. "Members of the university community must have the opportunity to express alternate views, but in a manner that does not violate academic freedom." (See [tinyurl.com/UFS-Exec-Petraeus](http://tinyurl.com/UFS-Exec-Petraeus).)

That drew swift dissent from within the ranks of the UFS, with a flurry of comments on its blog ([tinyurl.com/UFS-Petraeus-Discuss](http://tinyurl.com/UFS-Petraeus-Discuss)). "I thought organized protest was a legitimate form of free speech in a democratic society – so what's the problem?" wrote Roberto Visani, associate professor of art at John Jay, in one response. Jen Gaboury, associate director of Hunter's program in women's and gender studies, asked, "How [do] political protests on

city sidewalks or common spaces on our campuses impair a faculty member's ability to teach?"

Things escalated during a demonstration on September 17, outside a fundraiser at Macaulay that featured Petraeus and Mayor Michael Bloomberg. As protesters marched in a picket line on the sidewalk, police pushed them back from the street entrance to Macaulay and set up metal barricades blocking it off. Protesters then marched partly in the street, and a few minutes later police moved suddenly to arrest several people. Videos of the incident show repeated police assaults on demonstrators without apparent provocation.

In one video, a student is held to the ground by three uniformed officers. Though the student is lying still and not resisting, a plainclothes officer, wearing a striped hoodie and a NYPD handgun holstered at his belt, can be seen repeatedly striking the student fast and hard in his exposed midriff ([tinyurl.com/Petraeus-NYPD-Punch](http://tinyurl.com/Petraeus-NYPD-Punch)). In a second video, another student is surrounded by more than a dozen police officers and held down against the hood of a car. At least two officers repeatedly punch the student in the head as he holds up his arms to protect his face ([tinyurl.com/Petraeus-NYPD-Hit-Hood](http://tinyurl.com/Petraeus-NYPD-Hit-Hood)).

"One of the most brutal things I saw was that five police officers slammed a Queens College student face down on the pavement across the street from Macaulay, put their knees on his back, and he was then repeatedly kneed in the back," said Hunter student Michael Brian.

The six arrested activists were charged with riot, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. To date, no police officers have faced charges.

The PSC Delegate Assembly condemned the police action at its meeting on September 19. "We deplore the use of violence and brutal tactics against CUNY students and faculty who were peacefully protesting outside the college," the DA resolution said. "We affirm the right of students, faculty and staff to engage in peaceful protest against actions of the City University of New York." The union called

for charges against those arrested to be dropped, and urged a formal investigation of the police use of force.

In his Fox News show on September 23, Bill O'Reilly called for the firing of one of the protest organizers, Sándor John, an adjunct associate professor of history at Hunter. "Professor John does not have tenure. New Yorkers pay his salary," said Fox correspondent Jesse Watters. "But the university...refuses to take disciplinary action against the professor." O'Reilly was incredulous, saying "The school...they're tolerating this! They should have fired this guy!"

### UNDETERRED

John told *Clarion* that while he has received a lot of hate mail, the call for his dismissal seems to have no traction. "It actually backfired," he said. "A lot of students, faculty and fellow union activists reacted strongly against the attempt to whip up a campaign for me to be fired for expressing my views."

Petraeus's class has been moved from Macaulay to a building on West 57th Street, but the protests have shown no signs of dying down. On October 16, a CUNY fundraising gala with Petraeus at John Jay College drew a robust demonstration, and organizers said it would not be the last.

Dave Sanders



# Next steps on audit of dependent health coverage

By CLARION STAFF

PSC bargaining unit members and retired faculty and staff under 80 who have dependents covered by their City health insurance plan have been receiving notices from the NYC Office of Labor Relations over the past few weeks concerning the “audit” of dependent coverage. The audit requires those with dependent coverage to submit certain documents showing that their dependents are eligible; those who do not do so face loss of dependent coverage.

While most bargaining unit members and retirees have had their dependents’ eligibility confirmed without major problems, some have faced difficulties complying with the audit. This article outlines where things stand after the audit’s October 4 deadline, and what you should do if eligibility for your covered dependents has not yet been confirmed. The City has said that no one will be dropped during the process for a Stage 1 appeal.

When the audit was announced this summer, the City had not negotiated with the unions in the Muni-

## Extended deadline of Nov. 4

pal Labor Committee (MLC) about the audit’s procedures. In response, the MLC, which includes the PSC, filed a lawsuit that led to some improvements, including an extension of the deadline to October 4 and the promise of an appeal process. It has become clear since that the City and Aon Hewitt, the consultant hired to carry out the audit, did not have an effective plan for dealing with the volume of responses they have received.

The City has not yet finalized the appeal process, and now says that employees should get their dependents’ documentation to Aon Hewitt by November 4, even if they did not submit anything before the initial October 4 deadline.

The PSC will post information on the City’s appeals process on the union website ([psc-cuny.org](http://psc-cuny.org)) as soon as it is available.

The City states that no dependent will lose coverage until the employee through whom they are covered

has received a notice of dependent coverage being terminated and a description of the appeal process, and has been given an opportunity to appeal. The City has advised the unions that such letters will not go out until sometime after November 4, and that coverage will not be terminated while an appeal is in progress.

PSC members say that to date, phone calls to Aon Hewitt seeking answers to questions have been frustrating, with members reporting hold times of up to 45 minutes before being connected to a representative.

“Aon Hewitt sold the City a bill of goods about how to conduct the audit, and then didn’t provide the staff or adequate planning to make it work smoothly for members,” said PSC President Barbara Bowen. “The unions had to go to court to achieve even a modest level of accountability in the audit process. The idea of conducting the audit over the summer

months was ridiculous.”

In the wake of the October 4 deadline, those with covered dependents will likely find themselves in one of the following four categories:

(1) all documents submitted and eligibility confirmed;

(2) incomplete response submitted, additional documents required;

(3) dependents’ eligibility denied, resulting in notice of cancellation of coverage;

(4) no notice of the audit ever received, which could result in cancellation of dependents’ coverage that members may not discover until after an event where insurance coverage is denied.

Information on each case follows below.

### ELIGIBILITY CONFIRMED

Most who submitted the required documents should have received a notice saying that the eligibility of their dependents has been verified. In this case, no further action is required.

### INCOMPLETE SUBMISSION

Many of those with covered dependents had to submit an incomplete

response. For example, hundreds of City employees have faced delays in acquiring needed documentation because getting copies of birth and marriage certificates from foreign countries can take months. Even those whose documents are here in NYC found that the NYC City Clerk’s Office was unprepared for the flood of requests for copies of marriage certificates. As a result, it has taken the clerk’s office five to six weeks to send out requested copies. “The whole system stinks,” said one PSC retiree. For those who submitted an incomplete response, Aon is now telling callers they have until November 4 to get the additional required materials submitted. Given the backlogs and processing delays that have been seen in the audit so far, you should submit these materials as soon as you have them.

Aon Hewitt now says that all materials must be submitted by fax or by uploading them to Aon Hewitt website – not by mail.

### ELIGIBILITY DENIED

Some members and retirees are receiving “notices of cancellation of coverage for unverified dependents.”

In a move that adds insult to injury, this group includes some members who submitted documentation by October 4, and whose covered dependents are clearly eligible. It seems likely that Aon Hewitt advised the NYC Office of Labor Relations to send out these letters before a complete review of all the submissions that had come in. (Throughout the audit process, Aon has told callers that it needs at least two weeks to process submissions.) “This is the kind of thoughtless harassment that has characterized this entire process,” said the PSC’s Bowen. “Those potentially affected are, understandably, very upset.”

If you are also among those who had to submit an incomplete response, submit any additional required documents as soon as you obtain them, following the instructions in the notice you received.

### NO NOTICE EVER RECEIVED

Those members with dependents covered by their City health plan as of May 30, 2013, who *never* received notice of the audit from the City should contact the PSC office (e-mail [pyoung@psccmail.org](mailto:pyoung@psccmail.org)) so the union can assist you. This is important: If no documents for a covered dependent were ever submitted, coverage of dependents could be cancelled without your knowledge.

(Note: For members who started City health coverage *after* May 30, 2013, or who got married or had a child after May 30 – and therefore added dependents – those newly added dependents are not subject to the audit. Note also that CUNY retirees over 80 with dependents are not subject to the audit; adjuncts with covered dependents are also not affected, since their coverage comes through the PSC/CUNY Welfare Fund, not the NYC Health Benefits Plan.)

## A call to music professors

# Education about the musicians’ union

By SHANE GASTEYER

Local 802, American Federation of Musicians

Every year, large numbers of music students leave school with a limited understanding of what resources exist to help them further their careers. Union awareness is not always a part of a music education, and students often make it through music school without a firm understanding of the power of solidarity among musicians.

American Federation of Musi-

cians (AFM) Local 802, the musicians’ union local covering the New York City area, prevents a race to the bottom in performers’ wages and acts as a firewall to protect live music in theatres, operas and ballets. The union’s Justice for Jazz Artists campaign works for fair pay and benefits for jazz club performers, and to ensure that they don’t have to retire in poverty.

For musicians, this is obviously important, but audiences also ben-

efit from the efforts of the union. That’s particularly true for Local 802’s defense of live music in performance: if it weren’t for the union, many producers would switch to canned music, while still charging the same amount for tickets. It’s the union that keeps the pressure on producers to make sure that live music continues to play a full role in these performances.

“As a longtime member of Local 802 myself, I think it’s invaluable for both aspiring musicians and the larger student body to know about the union’s role,” said Howard Meltzer, associate professor of music at BMCC. “Students can have a romantic notion of music as a business, and talking with a union member introduces an important dose of reality.”

Unfortunately, misconceptions about what the musicians’ union does and what being a member means are not uncommon. In new-member orientations at Local 802, recent college graduates often have impressions about the union that turn out to be false, such as the notion that the union would reprimand them if they were “caught” doing any non-union work. We at Local 802 need to do a better job dispelling myths and ensuring that as students learn about the music business, they learn how the union can be an advocate for their interests, and a vehicle for musicians to exercise their collective power.

If you are a music professor, especially in the field of music business,

you have an opportunity to give students a better understanding of what the union does as you guide them in beginning their professional careers.

Several NYC-area music professors already integrate union issues into their curricula. For example, Gene Perla, a professor at the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, invites a Local 802 rep to speak in his music business class each semester. “Response from my students has been positive,” says Perla. The chance to talk directly with someone from Local 802, he explains, gives students “a better understanding of the benefits of collective bargaining.”

“The AFM has a long history in the labor movement,” adds Meltzer, “and that’s often something students find interesting to hear about.”

### CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE

Representatives of Local 802 already visit a small number of classes every year, and they are interested in expanding this effort. Local 802 also wants to consult with professors on how they might include appropriate information on the union in their curricula.

If you teach music and you would like a union representative to speak in your class, or if you would like information or materials to help you discuss the union’s role, you can contact Local 802 by phone (212) 245-4802 x143, or by e-mail at [Sgasteyer@Local802afm.org](mailto:Sgasteyer@Local802afm.org).

### Students, the union & becoming a working musician

## New faculty welcomed to PSC



Associate Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science Mercedes Franco (center) shares a moment of laughter with her new colleagues Andrew Bulawa and Azita Mayeli during the QCC chapter’s lunch for new faculty on October 9.



## PRIVATE CONTROL OF PUBLIC POLICY?

# The price of philanthropy

By ROBIN ROGERS

*Our Goal: to ensure that all low-income young adults have affordable access to a quality postsecondary education that is tailored to their individual needs and educational goals and leads to timely completion of a degree or certificate with labor-market value.*

— The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, *Postsecondary Success*

**H**ow much would you pay for access to a college education that is *not* designed by Bill Gates? By my estimate, it may soon be more than \$40,000 a year.

Once the country with the undisputed best higher-education system in the world, the United States now ranks 12th in the percentage of young adults with degrees. Graduation in four years is becoming the exception rather than the norm, and states continue to cut funds while tuition at public colleges has climbed, but not enough to cover the gap left by that loss.

Tuition at private colleges often runs well over \$40,000 a year and, at the elite campuses, can top \$60,000 annually with room and board and other costs included. Despite a public focus on serving disadvantaged students of merit, disproportionately few high-achieving middle- and low-income students get enough financial aid to attend private colleges without taking on huge debt. Nationally, outstanding student loans hover around \$1 trillion.

Higher education, both public and private, is challenged to meet the demands of a new economy and students with very different expectations, needs and skills than in previous generations. Moreover, it must do so in a time of profound economic inequality.

## 'PHILANTHROCAPITALISM'

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has stepped in with hundreds of millions of dollars to finance programs and invest in partnerships to improve college attendance, graduation rates, and the connection between public higher education and the labor market for low-income students. On its face, this seems like an ideal solution.

The reality, however, is that the focus of the Gates Foundation and its partners on public higher education could further institutionalize the divide between the roughly 72% of American students who attend public colleges and the 28% who attend private colleges, even if it improved economic mobility between the lower and middle classes.

Philanthropists have always donated to American higher education. Why be concerned now? Some kinds of grants build a stronger civil society by supporting scholarships, new buildings, improved libraries, art collections and even new colleges. My own institution, CUNY, just received a major gift from the Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation for a new community college that focuses on the same vocational goals that the Gates Foundation promotes. It is too soon to know whether or not it will be successful. If it succeeds, that will be

wonderful; it will offer another option for our students. If it fails, not much harm will have been done. In either case, the institution of higher education itself will not have been jeopardized.

The new trend in philanthropy, exemplified by the Gates Foundation and known as “philanthrocapitalism,” however, is to transform whole institutions through strategic giving. This movement brings the tools and technologies of the market to nonprofits. Perhaps most important for higher education, philanthrocapitalists seek to leverage public money and to engage in “catalytic giving” that ripples far beyond the reach of the original donation. According to the Gates Foundation’s website, “Our primary approach is to play a catalytic role – to support the development of solutions that are unlikely to be generated by institutions working alone and that can trigger change on a broader scale.”

Reform movements that shift the institution of public higher education, but not private higher education, deserve close scrutiny. At CUNY, for example, a Gates-style system-wide reform effort known as Pathways recently received a 92% vote of no confidence from the faculty. Faculty criticism has focused on Pathways’ decreased academic standards, reductions in

required course credit hours and cuts to nonapplied areas – including philosophy and languages – to increase graduation rates. It is unclear what form Pathways will ultimately take, but, unlike the new community college, the outcome will affect all of CUNY in perpetuity.

In the fall of 2012, David Humphries and the English department of Queensborough Community College became the cause célèbre of opposition to CUNY’s Pathways reform. In what was widely perceived to be retaliation for a vote by the college’s English department against dropping the four credit hours they required for English composition to the three credits required by Pathways, Queensborough’s interim president overturned Professor Humphries’s election as chairman of the English department. After much heated discussion, he was reinstated.

## THE BEST INTENTIONS...

As Humphries told *The New York Times*, “It’s hard to understand how teaching less English, less math, less science and less foreign languages could be good for students.” He continued, “Under the guise of streamlining transferability we’re actually water-

ing down the students’ education.”

One Gates-supported project that deserves scrutiny is Degree Compass software, which enables colleges to collect students’ demographic data and prior grades to match them with courses and majors in which similar students have been successful. George Orwell could not have created a better system to reinforce social stratification and inequality.

Changes in higher education are necessary; I think we can all agree on that. Philanthropy, however, can become de facto public policy making. The continued existence of an informed, educated, independent citizenry will be possible only if leaders in the philanthropic sector are accountable to the public whose tax money is being leveraged to shape America’s future.

Philanthropy is no longer, if it ever was, benign and benevolent – it is powerful. This shift of power to the economic elite via philanthropy makes it even more important to our democracy’s health that we support a viable public option in higher education that is not determined by the priorities and judgments of the very wealthy, however well-intentioned they may be.

## Decision-making and economic clout

## On anniversary of Occupy: ‘Robin Hood was right’



Hundreds of nurses from Global Nurses United marked the second anniversary of Occupy Wall Street on September 17 by joining a 1,000-person march in Manhattan in support of a financial transaction tax. Also known as the Robin Hood tax, the measure would tax Wall Street transactions at a rate of less than 0.5% and would generate as much as \$350 billion per year that could be used to rebuild the US public sector. Eleven European countries currently have a Robin Hood tax and a bill to create one in the US has been proposed in Congress. For more, see [robinhoodtax.org](http://robinhoodtax.org).

## Clarion NOVEMBER 2013

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*Robin Rogers is an associate professor of sociology at Queens College and the Graduate Center. This article originally appeared in Chronicle of Higher Education.*



## CLTs &amp; HEOs CLOCK IN

## CUNY's unworkable new time-sheet regime

By STEPHEN MARGOLIES

At Brooklyn College and other CUNY campuses this semester, HEOs and CLTs are being forced into rigid work schedules by the administration's insistence on a new, oversimplified, inflexible time sheet procedure.

Much of the initial reaction of HEOs and CLTs has centered on two issues: First, the humiliation we feel being suddenly redefined by the University as non-professional assembly-line-type workers who can no longer be trusted, even under the direction of our supervisors, to organize our schedule variations so as to best manage our many responsibilities. Second, the difficulty – even the impossibility – many of us will now experience in carrying out all our regular duties, let alone any extra initiatives or responses to the myriad unpredictable situations that so often arise in an institution as complicated as a university.

## INFLEXIBLE TO A FAULT

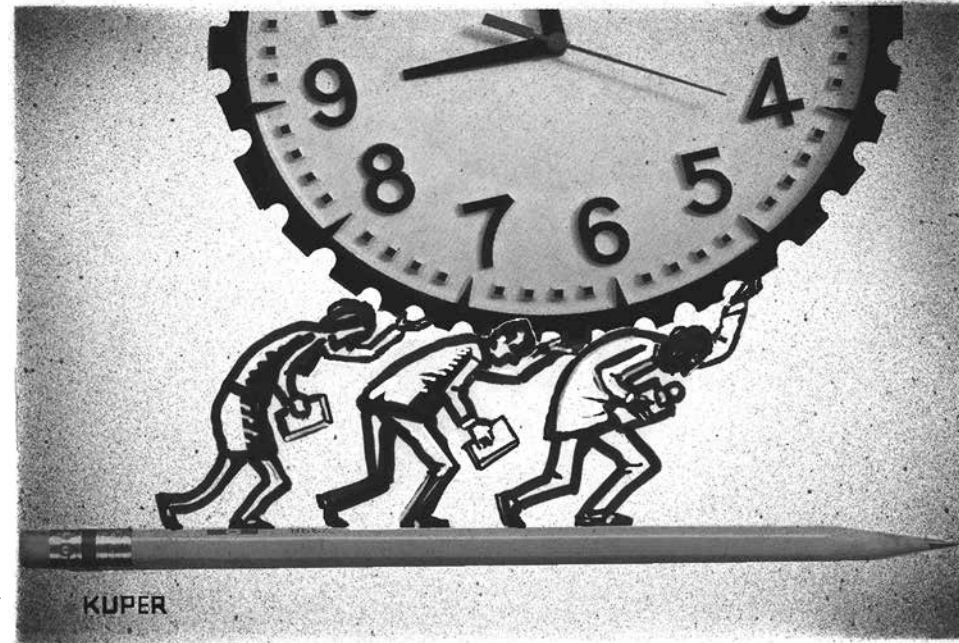
At a joint meeting of the PSC's CLT and HEO chapters on September 17, with a huge turnout, these concerns were amply and sometimes poignantly articulated. But it should be pointed out these are not just HEO or CLT problems; they could have a real impact on the faculty, on students, on teaching and on CUNY's educational mission in general.

With the new time sheet, we have been told that any deviation from a standardized schedule must be proposed and justified in writing and signed by senior administrators in advance. But since such deviations are often impossible to anticipate and since the forms required for this are not adapted to short-term or frequent schedule variations, we are concerned that the flexibility many of us require to support instruction and meet varying other needs will be severely curtailed.

For those of us in libraries, IT centers, science labs, language labs, admissions, counseling, financial aid, etc., it is obvious the effect of these uncompromising arrangements will make it much harder to serve faculty and student needs. In some academic departments and areas where we support faculty and teaching directly, the results could be devastating. Faculty may find themselves running lab classes without us and doing their own setups and cleanups. Students at times may not have anyone to turn to when they need help. Department activities outside regular classes may have no one to set up or run them. Chairpersons and supervisors will find they no longer have the flexibility to assign us tasks according to the most pressing needs of their departments and offices.

## COMPROMISED COLLEGIALLY

Because the new time sheet allows only one meal break daily, those who cover day and night classes on the same day may have to skip either lunch or dinner. Because meal breaks will be compulsory



Peter Kuper

and recorded, we will certainly not be inclined to extend our work time for free by eating a sandwich at our desks while we work, as so many of us do now. And where supervisors need to address some of these problems by temporarily reassigning HEO or CLT work schedules, they will find it takes up their own time repeatedly filling out the forms, writing justifications and seeking the approval and signatures of the appropriate vice presidents. We even worry that we personally, rather than the new system, may be blamed for depriving others of needed support, thereby diminishing collegiality and creating an enduring conflict of interest when decisions are to be made on our reappointments and promotions or reclassification.

## QUESTIONS UNANSWERED

With all these new scheduling strictures, it is not hard to imagine the kind of situations that will arise: Who will be able to take the extra time to set up an unusually complicated lab, or clean up the acid spilled just as one's shift is ending, or come in at night to feed the lab rats because the assigned person is sick, or keep the registration tables staffed past quitting time when the lines are still long, or manage the stage lights at a theatrical or musical performance that runs late into the night, or keep a studio or a department library open extra hours before finals so students can finish up their projects and study, or stay late or even work over the weekend at home to finish a report that's needed first thing Monday morning?

Why did CUNY do this? What were they thinking? Was this new system devised by non-educators who do not have the slightest idea how a university really works? Or, like Pathways and CUNYfirst, is it part of the trustees' effort to impose systems that fulfill their need for consistency, order and control – whatever the

educational consequences (and however sloppily executed)?

At the September 17 PSC meeting, people testified that some workshops and training sessions explaining the new system were run by lower-level administrators who could not answer questions or resolve the contradictions posed by such an ineptly designed time sheet. (Perhaps the vice presidents who should have been present, knowing none of this will work but not wishing to upset those above them, were in hiding.)

## INSULT TO INJURY

I have been a CLT at CUNY for a long time. I love my job – well, much of it anyway. As a professional with degrees and advanced skills who has believed in and felt a part of the University's educational mission, I have gone out of my way to advance it even when this required, with the full knowledge of my chairperson, irregular or extra hours. I have known dozens and dozens of HEOs and CLTs over the years who did the same.

But here is where anger is overshadowed by a certain sadness: by discounting our professionalism and self-motivation, the University is implying we are no longer trusted and must be strictly controlled, diminishing our ability to support education in order to fulfill a senseless bureaucratic mandate. And so, with decreased respect – but not decreased workloads – and with this new time-sheet regime making everything we have to do more difficult, most of us will feel far less willing to undertake those extra initiatives that benefited the University in the past and, not unimportantly, yielded satisfaction and meaning in our jobs. What a loss that is both for CUNY and for us.

Stephen Margolies is Chief College Laboratory Technician in Brooklyn College's Art Department.

## CALENDAR

**MONDAY, OCT 28 TO SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2:** CUNY "Campus Equity Week" with events designed to draw attention to working conditions of adjunct and contingent faculty, who teach the majority of college courses but hold insecure part- and full-time non-tenure track jobs, often subject to exploitative employment conditions. For more information visit [cunyadjunctproject.org/get-involved/organizingeducation/](http://cunyadjunctproject.org/get-involved/organizingeducation/).

The PSC wants your adjunct stories of job security struggles. Go to [psc-cuny.org/JobSecurity](http://psc-cuny.org/JobSecurity) to add your testimony to our collective bargaining voice. Your story can help expose the vagaries and privations that are built in to the current two-tiered labor system at CUNY.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1:** Deadline for HEO-CLT Professional Development Fund for activities during or after December 2013. Printed applications are due at the PSC by the first of the month at least one month prior to the proposed activity. For guidelines and an application visit [psc-cuny.org/our-benefits/heo-clt](http://psc-cuny.org/our-benefits/heo-clt) or e-mail [pyoung@psccmail.org](mailto:pyoung@psccmail.org) for more info.

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4 / 1:00 pm:** The Retirees Chapter meeting will host Larry Morgan, executive director of the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund, speaking on "Your Welfare Benefits." PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th floor.

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5:** Vote! And encourage your students and colleagues to join you. Locate your poll site and see a sample ballot by plugging in your address at [nyc.pollsite-locator.com](http://nyc.pollsite-locator.com). Consider who is up for election in your district and plan a time to go exercise your right. A list of PSC-endorsed candidates is also available at [www.psc-cuny.org/political-power/endorsements-nyc-council-2013](http://www.psc-cuny.org/political-power/endorsements-nyc-council-2013).

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8 / 6:00-9:00 pm:** Labor Goes to the Movies screens *Leviathan* (2012), directed by Pierre-Benoist Varoquier. The film depicts the sounds and images of a commercial fishing boat off the coast of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Without a word of commentary, with virtually no audible dialogue, smothered under the unceasing roar of the machinery and the sea, the filmmaker shared the multiple lightweight cameras with the crew, capturing the intensity of the work on the boat. PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 15th floor.

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18 / 5:30-6:00 pm dinner, 6:00-8:00 pm:** The Environmental Health and Safety Watchdog Committee meets for light dinner and discussion focusing on CUNY-wide health and safety issues. PSC Union Hall, Justice Room, 61 Broadway, 15th floor. Contact [hswatchdogs@psccmail.org](mailto:hswatchdogs@psccmail.org) or call (212) 354-1252 x208 for more info.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21 / 6:30 pm:** PSC Chapter Chairs Meeting. PSC-CUNY Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th floor. For more information e-mail [pyoung@psccmail.org](mailto:pyoung@psccmail.org) or call (212) 354-1252.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13 / 6:00-9:00 pm:** Labor Goes to the Movies screens *Séraphine* (2008), a poignant and visually intriguing exploration of the mysteries of art-making, based on the true story of outsider artist Séraphine Louis, aka Séraphine de Senlis (1864-1942), who began to paint at age 41, while working as a housecleaner and laundress. The film won four French Academy awards (Césars), including Best Film of 2008. PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16th floor.

## At odds with the real work we do





## 15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

### Hit the polls November 5

You have a say in who will be New York City's next mayor – but only if you get out to vote on Tuesday, November 5.

Locate your poll site and see a sample ballot by plugging in your address at [nyc.pollsite-locator.com](http://nyc.pollsite-locator.com). Consider who is

up for election in your district and make a plan and a time to go exercise your right.

A list of PSC-endorsed candidates is also available at [www.psc-cuny.org/political-power/endorsements-nyc-council-2013](http://www.psc-cuny.org/political-power/endorsements-nyc-council-2013).

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NEWS

Clarion | November 2013

# City Tech faculty win 21-hr. victory

By JOHN TARLETON

## Same teach load now as other senior colleges

As of Fall 2014, the teaching load for full-time faculty at the New York College of Technology will, for the first time, be the same as the annual teaching load of their peers at other senior colleges. Under the agreement reached by PSC and CUNY, the course load for full-timers at City Tech will be reduced from 24 hours to 21 hours per year. This marks the final step in eliminating an inequity whose origins go back more than three decades. The accord came after a sustained organizing campaign by the City Tech chapter.

The agreement was signed by PSC President Barbara Bowen and Interim Chancellor William Kelly at the PSC office on the morning of September 26. That afternoon Bowen, PSC First Vice President Steve London and City Tech President Russell Hotzler joined a festive meeting of City Tech's PSC chapter that drew 120 faculty members.

"We fought for this for so long," said Bob Cermele, chair of the union chapter and a professor of mathematics. "People felt like second-class citizens in their own university, and that's no longer the case."

"Everybody wins with this agreement," said Bowen. "The administration, the faculty and, above all, the students. Nothing matters more in college than giving students individual time with professors – and that's what the agreement will provide."

Bowen praised Kelly for responding to the union's initiative and "moving quickly and decisively" to make the agreement happen after he became Interim Chancellor on July 1. She also saluted City Tech President Hotzler for his commitment to moving the agreement forward.

"We got there because you got us there," Hotzler told the audience at the union chapter meeting. He lauded the faculty for scholarship and teaching that have boosted City Tech's research profile and made it the largest public four-year college of technology in the Northeast, attracting more than 16,000 students.



City Tech President Russell Hotzler, PSC Chapter Chair Bob Cermele, PSC First Vice President Steve London and PSC President Barbara Bowen celebrate the agreement to reduce City Tech faculty teaching load to 21 hours at a Sept. 26 chapter meeting.

For long-time faculty members like Cermele, who has taught at City Tech since 1972, the change was especially satisfying. "I'm still numb," he told *Clarion*. "It will eventually sink in. We've been working on this a long time, and it's been a heavy lift."

"This is a critical step in making us the kind of school we want to be – one that integrates scholarship and teaching," said Aaron Barlow, an associate professor of English.

### HISTORY

Founded as a community college in 1947, City Tech became a senior college in 1980. The full-time faculty teaching load, however, remained at 27 hours – the standard for CUNY community college faculty. The PSC made reducing City Tech's teaching load a priority in contract talks starting in 2000. In consecutive collective bargaining agreements reached in 2002 and 2006, the City Tech teaching load was reduced to 26 and then 24 hours.

The campaign for teaching-load equity gained force at the local

level in recent years, propelled by the large cohort of new City Tech faculty hired in the past decade under Hotzler. These faculty members have seen their scholarship flourish, in part due to the junior faculty re-assigned time that the union won CUNY-wide. But, upon receiving tenure, they found themselves straining to sustain their teaching and meet the scholarly expectations of a four-year college under a 24-hour teaching load.

"What gets sacrificed is health and not quite doing the job you would like to do," said Carole Harris, an assistant professor of English.

"I wrote three books in five years while I was on the tenure clock and I want to do three more books in the next five years," added Associate Professor of Human Services Ben Shepard. "But now I've got a bottleneck. You need time to do that fifth edit."

Such factors are key reasons the PSC has identified teaching load as a key area for change at CUNY (see *Clarion*, August 2012). "Workload

reduction is something where everybody wins," said Cermele, who expressed support for also reducing the teaching load of community college faculty. "If our teaching load is bad at 24 hours, then theirs is worse at 27 hours per year," noted Cermele, who is a member of the PSC contract bargaining team that put forward a demand to CUNY that the community college course load be reduced to 24 hours.

At one point, members of the City Tech chapter dramatized their call for equity by holding a bake sale on campus, in which they sold cookies for a symbolic 21 cents apiece. "This gave us an opportunity to talk to our students," said Costas Panayotakis, an associate professor of sociology. "It made the administration uncomfortable."

In January 2012, the chapter began a petition campaign to highlight the extent of faculty anger with the 24-hour teaching load. Harris, who spearheaded the petition effort, and other members of the chap-

ter's executive committee worked with teams of four and fanned out through the college's 30 departments, gathering signatures while discussing union issues. By the end of the semester, the petitioners had gathered signatures from 350 of the college's roughly 400 full-time faculty members.

"It brought us together. I got to know people in so many other departments," said Harris, who called the petition campaign "a testament to the power of conversation."

### MORE TIME FOR STUDENTS

At the end of the Spring 2012 semester, the City Tech chapter executive committee presented the petition results in a labor-management meeting with President Hotzler that was also attended by Bowen and London. Several faculty members offered testimonials about why they felt so strongly about City Tech's achieving course-load equity. By the end of the meeting, Hotzler had committed to seeking the additional funds in the college budget to enable the change.

The final decision rested with the CUNY central administration, which had in the past failed to sanction the change or provide the required funds. Bowen reinforced the chapter's efforts by discussing the importance of the change with CUNY management, and Interim Chancellor Kelly made the decision to say yes. Final details of the agreement were negotiated in September.

For chapter activists, the lesson from their long campaign was clear.

"The only way we get what we want is if we push," said Shepard who urged all PSC members to bring the same spirit to building a successful contract campaign in 2014: "If we don't push, we won't get anything."

"Organizing and bringing pressure are what gets results," agreed Panayotakis. "And the big winners are our students who will now be able to have more time with their professors."

Gary Schoichet