



February 2010      Issue 5  
Academic Year 2009-2010

# Retirees Newsletter

Professional Staff Congress

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: JACK JUDD

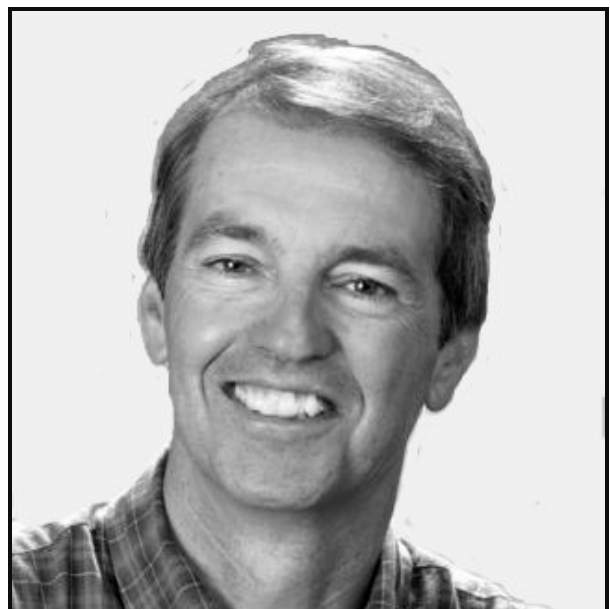
**I. Committee of 500.** Our Chapter meeting of February 8th began with an appearance by PSC President Barbara Bowen, who came to speak about the forthcoming contract negotiations. For that important union endeavor, support must be garnered from all members of the PSC. She urged those present to become members of The Committee of 500. Such a supportive element can play a major role in helping the PSC attain its goals during the contract negotiations while the City and State are grappling with financial difficulties.

**II. Panel on Shared Governance.** We now turn to Vice-Chairman Jim Perlstein's excellent summary of the panel discussion which occurred at our February 8<sup>th</sup> Chapter Meeting.

Running CUNY, Running Academe:  
Is "Shared Governance" a Thing of the Past?

Gary Rhoades, General Secretary of AAUP, and Manfred Phillip, Chair of CUNY's University Faculty Senate, offered the February meeting of the Retiree Chapter an overview of the current role of faculty in university governance and the challenges to that role that lie ahead.

When we couple the long-term trend of reduced public funding for public higher education with the impact of the current economic crisis on state and local budgets, the speakers argued, it becomes clear why the corporatization of university structures, and commercialization of the university's research and teaching, present themselves as more and more attractive options to university administrators. This, as Rhoades and Phillip demonstrated with concrete examples, has consequences for shared governance.



Gary Rhoades, AAUP



The tradition of having academics make academic decisions inhibits the “quick and nimble” responses to the marketplace desired by the class of professional administrators now running our colleges. Increasingly, new institutions, and new schools and new programs within existing ones, attempt to marginalize faculty governance bodies or eliminate them altogether. Indeed, there are now tentative steps toward the proposition that even *individual* faculty members, in their capacity as public employees, are subject to restraint of their right to speak critically of the practices at their institutions.

Faculty and staff, to a significant degree, have accepted the legitimacy of the market model of higher education. Combine this with the stratification of the university workforce, and it becomes more difficult to present administration with a united front calling for a meaningful voice in academic decision making. We win a skirmish here and there, but the tide of battle seems against us.

What is required of university staff, Rhoades and Phillip maintained, is a strategic vision of the Academe as something more than a marketplace, and recognition that academic freedom and shared governance are not individual rights but collective responsibilities.

Following their presentations, a lively discussion ensued with the audience comprised of retirees and guests.

**III. Note from TRS.** Clarissa Gilbert Weiss, PSC Director of Pension and Welfare Benefits, wishes to bring to your immediate attention the following message she received from Dorothea Dowling of the Teachers Retirement system:

From: Dorothea Dowling  
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2010 3:15 PM  
The following information will be posted to our web:

"Retirees may have noticed a decrease in the net amount of their January 2010 benefit

payments. This is a result of a change in the federal withholding tax tables.

Last year, withholding amounts generally decreased (and net payments increased) due to a tax credit under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. However, with January's payments, withholding calculations are based on the previous tax tables, generally resulting in more tax withheld and lower net amounts for monthly benefit payments.

If you would like to change the amount of federal tax withheld from your monthly benefit payments, please access our online "W-4P Filings" feature or file a paper W-4P with TRS."

**IV. Theatre Party.** On Sunday, February 7, some forty or more PSC retirees, actives, and staff members attended a performance of: "*MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE GLORY: FROM DOUGLASS TO DELIVERANCE,*" performed by the renowned actor André De Shields. Although he regarded this as a work-in-progress, it was an effective theatrical experience. Mr. De Shields, along with the Director, Alfred Preisser, graciously provided commentary following the performance. The program was part of this year's offerings under the aegis of Working Theater, a theater "dedicated to producing new plays for and about working people."

**V. Status of New York City's Five Public Pension Funds, Fiscal Year 2009**

Lawrence J. Kaplan

For the Fiscal Year (FY) ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009, New York City's five public pension funds paid \$10.2 billion in benefits to 275,139 retirees and beneficiaries, an increase of \$0.3 billion over the amount paid in FY '08. See the attached table.

Because of the continuing recession, the value of the funds' net assets shrank from \$101.9 billion for FY '08 to \$79.5 billion in FY '09, a decline of \$22.4 billion or 22.0 percent. In FY '07, the funds' net assets amounted to \$110.9 billion

The revenues of all five pension funds declined in FY '09 to a negative \$12,162.4 million from \$871.2 million for FY '08, due mainly to the decline in investment income.

Active members of the five funds who contributed to their pension funds totaled 365,739 for FY '09, an increase of 6,958 active members over the 358,781 active members in FY '08.

In spite of the shrinkages, we conclude once again that the City's pension systems are fully funded and remain in sound financial condition.

## The City of New York:

### Five Public Pension Funds, Fiscal Year Ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Pension Fund	Net Assets (\$ Billions)	Active Members	Retirees Receiving Benefits	Benefit Payments (\$ Millions)	Revenues <u>a/</u> (\$ Millions)
ERS	\$31.9	183,654	130,664	\$3,313.8	-\$4,499.6
TRS	23.1	112,472	69,775	3,824.2	- 5,396.2
BERS	1.5	22,702	13,006	321.1	-164.2
POLICE	17.4	35,337	44,290	1,846.6	-1,790.4
FIRE	5.6	11,574	17,404	928.5	- 312.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$79.5</b>	<b>365,739</b>	<b>275,139</b>	<b>\$10,234.2</b>	<b>-12,162.4</b>

a/ Revenue sources include member contributions, employer contributions, and investment income.

Source: The City of New York, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report of the Comptroller for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2009.  
William C. Thompson, Jr., Comptroller.