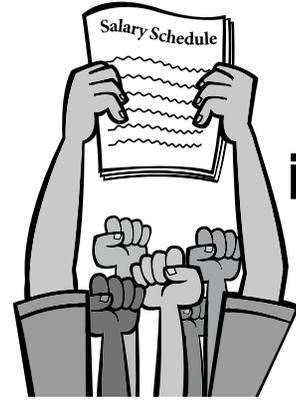


Clarion

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



FEBRUARY 2020



SALARY SCHEDULE Contract increases

A table of pay increases and retro pay dates
PAGES 6-8



Erik McGregor

STATE BUDGET

FIGHTING FOR FAIR FUNDING

The union, along with student and community groups, is moving forward with an intense campaign to push the city and state to fund public higher education.

With rallies, social media and mass action, the PSC and students are saying that it is time to end poverty funding for CUNY.

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ORGANIZING BCC members censure admin

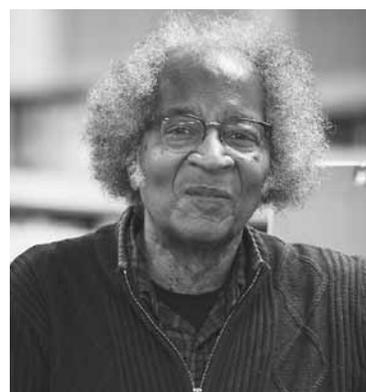
Faculty have voted “no confidence” in a vice president who they say has failed to address severe maintenance problems at the Bronx campus. **PAGE 4**

VICTORY A big win for Hunter adjuncts

Hunter admin tried to substitute new adjunct office hours for existing class hours, but the union fought back with a multi-pronged campaign and won. **PAGE 5**

ACADEMIC FREEDOM Limiting speech on Israel?

A new Trump administration executive order on anti-Semitism has some academics concerned about free speech on campuses. **PAGE 8**



FIVE QUESTIONS A law prof in the media

A CUNY law professor with a background in labor and immigration rights brings her attention to grassroots, social justice journalism. **PAGE 11**



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | WRITE TO: CLARION/PSC, 61 BROADWAY, 15TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10006. EMAIL: APAUL@PSCMAIL.ORG.

Unions can fight for health care

● The employer-based healthcare system that provides coverage for union members and about half of all Americans is failing. Healthcare costs continue to rise at twice the rate of inflation, with the result that an increasing number of employers are failing to provide any coverage at all, while those that do, provide plans with limited benefits, increasing deductibles and rising copays.

Most labor unions have long supported universal access to health care as a basic human right. Large numbers have passed resolutions at their conventions in support of publicly funded health insurance. The New York State Nurses Association and 1199SEIU are actively supporting the New York Health Act, and the PSC Delegate Assembly has supported it as a “work in progress.”

However, some unions express concerns that the taxes that would fund the program are not specified in the legislation, that organized labor’s role in the program is limited, and that there is no guarantee that the level of services would be as high as under current negotiated plans.

Replacing employer-provided health benefits with state-funded health insurance would have a significant impact on labor unions as they function today. A substantial portion of the funds they receive pay to support their health benefit responsibilities. Will their members be as attached to their union when they are no longer the source of their health benefits? This is a special concern for public-sector unions in this post-*Janus* period, when union membership is not obligatory. And what will happen to union employees who now work for health benefit programs? These concerns are raised by local labor leaders as they consider whether to support the New York Health Act.

Passage of a universal state-funded healthcare program would benefit every resident of the state, including union members. No longer would any New Yorker have to go without care because of an inability to pay, nor would the cost of care continue to consume an increasing share of our wages.

The labor movement has always led in advocating for expanded social benefits for workers, from minimum wages and shorter working hours to Medicare for seniors and expanded health benefits for all workers. They must again lead in the fight for universal health care, while recognizing and addressing whatever internal disruptions it might bring.

Leonard Rodberg
Queens College, Retired

Pennies for our thoughts

● We received the *Clarion* around



Leonard Rodberg testified about health care last year.

Christmas. As part of the teaching staff at the American Language Academy at Brooklyn College, we do not feel that the new contract was a Christmas present for us or our colleagues.

Our 2% raise this year amounts to less than a dollar increase per hour. You gloss over the fact that our “10.4%” pay increase will only come in 2% dribs and drabs over five years. Considering that Social Security has granted a 3.4% cost of living adjustment for the past two years, we view the yearly 2% increase as a slap in the face.

The system is set up so that it is rare for us to teach more than 10 hours per week at any one CUNY campus. As a result, most of us will never be paid for office hours, pensions, disability, sick leave or receive other benefits. No extra monetary consideration is given for our experience, additional training, postgraduate degrees or certification in the field of English as second language. Most can only get raises from new union contracts. Almost all of our coworkers will still have to continue working two or more jobs, including teaching at other CUNY campuses.

As a result of this inequitable raise, we predict that many of us will no longer teach at CUNY by the time our salary increase

goes up to the 10.4% that you have bragged about.

Keep in mind that while 86% of the union members voted to ratify, that does not say everything. Overall, 25% did not vote, some in part because they saw little benefit in ratifying an unjust deal. Others voted yes because some increase is better than none. Some voted yes to help the adjuncts, but 14% voted against the contract. Truly equitable and decent union contract agreements shouldn’t get such a negative response.

We are still in the category of titles with the lowest and most underpaid teaching staff and you did almost nothing to help us.

Emily Rubenstein
Peter Horan
Charulata Dyal
Brooklyn College

Editor’s note: The authors are employed as Continuing Education Teachers (CETs), an hourly title established by CUNY in the 1990s in an effort to offer “non-adjunct careers” at an ever-cheaper rate than adjuncts. They are not covered by the collective bargaining agreement but a “supplemental agreement” that contains fewer benefits. The PSC has sought to improve CET salaries and conditions per CETs, but it has been

slow, often because the programs that employ them are relatively short-lived.

Florida in 2020

● Millions of people visit Florida every year from other states – more of them from New York than anywhere else. And Florida’s vote count, unlike New York’s, could have a decisive impact on who wins the presidential election. A new website, HelpFloridaRegister.org, makes it easy for Florida visitors (or residents) to volunteer for voter registration by connecting with local community groups. A Spanish version is at RegistremosFlorida.org or PRvotaEnFlorida.org.

If you’ll be visiting Florida this year, or know someone who is, take a look at HelpFloridaRegister.org today. Select the area you’re interested in and you’ll get a list of voter-registration groups that are active there, with instructions on how to volunteer. Some groups require a training session as the first step, so advance planning is recommended.

If we can get a small fraction of Florida’s visitors to volunteer for voter registration in a state where elections are famously close, it could shape the outcome in 2020. Please tell your friends about HelpFloridaRegister.org. If you belong to a neighborhood group, a religious congregation, a political club, etc., get members informed about HelpFloridaRegister.org (through posting on social media, a newsletter item, announcing it in person, whatever).

With your support, we can help expand Florida’s electorate in 2020.

Peter Hogness

The writer is a former editor of Clarion.

Title shaming

● PSC members – especially full-time, tenure-track or tenured faculty – should take a look at an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* called, “Title Policing and Other Ways Professors Bully the Academic Staff.” It explains how a full professor in the history department at San Diego State took to task via email a senior

academic advisor at the University of Minnesota, for supposedly misstating his relationship to its history department in an essay he wrote for CNN. The email author didn’t stop there, he also copied the advisor’s department chair, just in case she was unaware of the transgression.

David M. Perry, an academic advisor and freelance journalist, happens to have left a tenure-track, full professor position at a small Illinois college because his son is disabled and the state of Minnesota offers better funding and services. He writes for several publications and the department chair herself had suggested that he include his title and affiliation with his essays to raise the profile of the program.

Some might want to dismiss these cases as extreme, or part of the toxicity of social media, but I think they reflect dynamics that are part of university culture. Perry suggests that in universities staffed by contingent faculty, and with hybrid education and work backgrounds, we ought to be careful about the assumptions we make. I think we need to go further than that.

Perry’s work isn’t more valuable because he was a full professor and has a PhD. We need to value equally all members of faculty and staff because everyone contributes something important and we depend on one another for what each person and position offers. In light of that, faculty and staff with somewhat more, or a lot more, power in the academy, despite whether they consider themselves powerful or not, need to be aware of the privileges and influence that come with their position and not use that against faculty and staff with less power in that specific arrangement. This holds true within the union as well. So many of us at CUNY are deeply committed to ending inequality, and our union solidarity should reflect that.

Deborah Gambs
Borough of Manhattan
Community College

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

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The campaign for fair funding

By ARI PAUL

Brooklyn College accounting major Fay Yanofsky was nearly a minute and a half through her allotted three minutes to testify before the CUNY Board of Trustees (BOT) during a hearing December 9 at Lehman College when she decided to yield her time to the board itself. She asked the members of the board and members of the CUNY administration to volunteer their thoughts on how CUNY students, already facing economic precarity in their daily lives, are expected to come up with the money to cover the \$320 increase in tuition hikes and a new \$60 wellness fee the board is proposing.

COUNTDOWN

Not a word came from the officials on stage, as is their rule.

"Absolute silence," one attendee yelled.

"The silence is deafening," said another.

Then the final countdown of the allotted time began from the crowd.

"Three, two, one," many chanted, punctuating the end with a buzzer sound.

Yanofsky, who serves as vice chair for fiscal affairs in the University Student Senate, joined dozens of other CUNY students, as well as PSC President Barbara Bowen and other PSC members, responding to the CUNY BOT's

A growing movement against austerity



PSC Secretary Nivedita Majumdar spoke about the need to fund CUNY.

budget request that once again saddles students with a \$200 tuition hike and an unprecedented \$60-per-semester wellness fee to cover mental health services.

As this newspaper went to press, PSC members had returned from an intense two-day lobbying trip to Al-

bany, where members told lawmakers that Governor Andrew Cuomo's proposed budget falls far short of what CUNY needs. This spring, PSC members are taking part in a multifaceted campaign – one with campus actions, social media outreach, lobbying in Albany and building coal-

itions with students – to say that the state cannot continue its policy of underfunding CUNY.

Members have highlighted how the new wellness fee, while perhaps intended to meet the need for more mental health services on CUNY campuses, only added to students' anxiety and financial problems. They are also showing lawmakers how the poverty budget for CUNY has resulted in campus buildings falling apart and cuts to essential campuses services. At senior colleges in particular, members are telling lawmakers how the tight budgets have forced administrations to make cuts that negatively affect faculty, staff and students alike.

The focus of the union at this moment is on Albany, and PSC members will visit the State Legislature throughout the month of February. Members are also reaching out to their elected officials at their Downstate offices. The next few weeks are a critical time for the PSC to make the case to the State Legislature, which in the last year made major progress on a range of social issues, to take the next step and challenge the governor's austerity budget proposal. At press time, the so-called annual "budget dance" at the city and state levels was just beginning. At the state level, Cuomo's budget proposal – one he said aimed to address a "looming \$6.1 billion deficit," according to the *New York Post* – included \$14 billion to improve and maintain both SUNY and CUNY buildings, but even that came with a catch.

As the *New York Post* reported, "New York's public colleges will be required to raise millions of dollars in matching funds as a condition of obtaining state aid

to renovate or build new facilities under a sweeping new proposal advanced in Cuomo's 2021 budget plan. Cuomo's '2:1 strategic capital matching program' would require CUNY and SUNY's four-year campuses to pay one-third of their current and future capital construction costs... The language in Cuomo's capital spending bill would even force CUNY and SUNY colleges to pick up one-third of the cost for construction projects before the new fiscal year kicks in April 1."

The union considers this a form of privatization that increases inequality between campuses.

PITTANCE

And the overall increase from the state to CUNY's senior colleges is, under the governor's proposal, a mere 1.7%, a pittance compared to what the PSC and others say is needed.

PSC Legislative Chair Mike Fabricant said, "Public higher education in the state and particularly CUNY is suffering because of historic underfunding. This year is not different; we need to reverse course. The state and city must make investments in CUNY that are long overdue. An important beginning is to fill the 'TAP gap', pay for a tuition freeze and invest in mental health counselors."

Union and students are fighting for CUNY.

The city has already indicated a reduction in spending in the mayor's proposed budget. As the *New York Times* reported, City Hall "released a \$95.3 billion budget proposal that called for a 2.7% increase – the smallest percentage increase in his six years in office." It continued, "Even though city revenues are expected to be strong, the mayor said that the state's projected \$6 billion deficit could loom large over New York City, and that the state could cut its funding to the city, or ask the city to increase its share of payments for things like the subway."

The proposed city budget fully funds the PSC contract.

The PSC and other progressives in the state are mobilizing this spring to push for legislative changes to increase revenue to the state in order to fund higher education. One state assemblyman has proposed doubling the state beer tax to fund CUNY and SUNY. It's a good start, advocates said, but the coalition needs to push for more to transfer wealth from the wealthiest to in-need state and city public institutions.

The campaign to pressure the state, city and CUNY officials to face the chronic problem of CUNY underfunding is already well underway. At a rally outside Governor Andrew Cuomo's Midtown Manhattan office December 5, three-dozen students and union members protested the governor's

Continued on page 10

What CUNY needs in the FY2021 Budget

Governor Andrew Cuomo's budget proposal falls far short of what's needed for CUNY, which needs \$208 million more for its senior colleges and \$24.6 million for its community colleges. Here is what the PSC is pushing for in the state budget this year.

Unmet mandatory needs	\$97 million
Offset the "TAP gap"	\$79 million
New faculty/staff	\$30 million
Restore senior college funds	\$2 million
Community college base aid	\$18 million
Restore comm. college fund	\$6.6 million
CUNY total	\$250.6 million

FULL FUNDING OF CUNY'S OPERATING COSTS (\$97 MILLION)

The Executive Budget proposes \$24 million for fringe benefit increases at CUNY senior colleges, half the amount CUNY requested for fringe benefits and almost \$100 million less than is needed to cover mandatory cost increases overall. CUNY needs funding to cover its full fringe benefit costs and collective bargaining increases, plus funding for rent, energy and critical operating maintenance.

ALLOCATE FUNDS TO OFFSET THE FULL TAP GAP (\$79 MILLION)

The "TAP gap" is the difference between the amount the state pays to support the education of the 56,000 TAP recipients at CUNY senior colleges and the actual tuition cost of their education. Tuition is currently \$6,930 at CUNY senior colleges, but the state's TAP payment to CUNY is capped at \$5,000 per student. By law, the \$1,930 difference must be waived.

The TAP gap grows with every tuition hike. The waivers of all TAP recipients this year will amount to a combined \$79 million in lost revenue. Next year's planned tuition hike would increase the TAP gap further.

INCREASE BASE AID BY \$250 PER FTE (\$18 MILLION)

The Executive Budget would reduce funding for CUNY community colleges by \$3.6 million due to enrollment declines. CUNY community college students are predominantly low-income people of color. Many are first-generation college students and new immigrants. They need more resources at their colleges, not fewer. The base aid rate of funding for community colleges

should be increased by \$250 from \$2,947 per FTE (full-time equivalent) to \$3,197 per FTE to fund education and services.

FUND NEW MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS, FULL-TIME FACULTY LINES AND ADVISORS (NYS: \$30 MILLION, NYC: \$30 MILLION)

CUNY students need expanded mental health services, counseling and other support services, and the state and city should each provide part of the funding. CUNY students, who face high rates of homelessness and food insecurity, should not be burdened with another fee. The ratio of students to mental health counselors is an outrageously high 2,700:1. CUNY has 4,000 fewer full-time faculty today than in 1975, though it has 24,000 more students, and the student-to-advisor ratios are as high as 1,500:1 at some colleges.

RESTORE LEGISLATIVE INVESTMENTS IN ASAP, ETC. (\$8.6 MILLION)

The Executive Budget eliminates funding added by the legislature to targeted programs at CUNY, including the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), the CUNY School for Labor and Urban Studies (SLU), CUNY LEADs and CUNY child care centers.

'No confidence' vote against BCC VP

By ARI PAUL

The Bronx Community College Faculty Council – one of three bodies that make up the college's Senate – passed a vote of “no confidence” against Kay Ellis, vice president of administration and finance, at the end of the Fall semester. While the resolution does not call for Ellis's removal, BCC faculty members hope that the vote pushes the administration to deal with infrastructural mismanagement and budget cuts.

The resolution accused the vice president, who was appointed in 2016, of allowing gross physical deterioration throughout campus, including a lack of proper lighting and inadequate indoor heating under her watch.

The office of the bursar cited “ongoing campus heating issues” as the reason for keeping its office closed for a day in November. BCC President Thomas Isekenegebe went as far as to send an apology to the entire campus about the lack of heating and the lack of communication about the situation.

“We understand that being cold is not conducive to effective teaching and learning and that the current environment cannot continue as temperatures drop,” Isekenegebe said in an email to the campus community. “I sincerely apologize for the inconvenience to you.”

THE COLSTON HALL AFFAIR

Maintenance issues at the college led to chaos early in the Spring 2019 semester after pipes burst at Colston Hall, one of the BCC's main classroom buildings, which caused a weeks-long disruption, severe flooding and forced 500 classes – as well as faculty offices – to relocate.

The PSC BCC chapter cited years of administrative neglect that led to the crisis. Sharon Utakis, the PSC chapter chair at BCC, told *Clarion* at the time, “We have a beautiful campus that has been neglected for decades and now all the deferred maintenance is coming due.... This disaster [at Colston Hall] makes BCC the austerity poster child.”

In calling Ellis's treatment of the faculty and staff “unacceptable,” the resolution stated that Ellis had engaged in the “continued intimidation of staff” and that when “confronted with requests to test for mold in the aftermath of the Colston catastrophe [she responded], to paraphrase: ‘This is the Bronx.’” It noted that Ellis told a “faculty member concerned about the cold temperatures in offices and classrooms to ‘Wear a sweater.’”

“If you compound the Colston disaster with the lack of heat this semester, the lack of communication from the vice president, the overall issues with maintenance, rodents and garbage, the facilities really come up as our number-one issue,” said Roni Ben-Nun, an associate professor of art and music and the chair of the College Senate. “This vote of ‘no confidence’ is no surprise.”

Faculty cite maintenance problems



Bronx Community College PSC Chapter Chair Sharon Utakis has documented the disrepair at her campus.

Diane Price Banks, an assistant professor in biological sciences and a PSC delegate, told *Clarion*, “The vote of ‘no confidence’ in Kay Ellis was based on several factors: Delays in supplying heat to the college community, lack of addressing health and safety issues, rodent infestations, lack of transparency, her supervision of subordinate staff and several hired contractors who performed inadequately. For example, two years ago, a hired contractor installed the wrong pipes throughout campus. This mistake led to the existing issues with providing heat to the campus by October 1 of last year.”

In testimony to the CUNY Board of Trustees in December, Utakis outlined how the cuts have affected the campus: “There are fewer

custodians, which means cleaning happens less often. Students and faculty complain about trash overflowing in classrooms and hallways.

Lack of heat and other major problems

Bugs and rodents are more prevalent than in the past... A department assistant in my department found rodent droppings all over her desk and office when she returned to work after the weekend. She later found out they were rat droppings. She was asked to leave the droppings there until the exterminator came...so for a whole day she sat in a room with rat droppings everywhere.”

CAMPUS CUTS

The text of the no-confidence vote also blamed Ellis's “budgetary mismanagement” for a variety of cuts on campus, including a “reduc-

tion in course sections, raising caps on class sizes [and] cutting full-time faculty lines.”

Indeed, in October, the college released its proposed financial plan, one that the college's Executive Legal Counsel Karla Renee Williams said in an email included, “significant delays to all administrative hiring,” “additional reductions in faculty lines” and “an overtime cap of \$608,000.”

Like PSC members throughout the CUNY system, BCC faculty and staff have lambasted the cuts. “The budget cuts that are being enacted at BCC are racist to their core. BCC students are overwhelmingly black and Latino and their education is being attacked,” said Alexander Wolf, the deputy chair of the biology department. “If the president and other administrators at BCC have

students' best interest in mind, as they consistently claim they do, then they should go to CUNY Central and refuse to accept the budget cuts.”

Wolf told *Clarion* that the vote against Ellis will not solve the problems the campus is facing. “She is not the only administrator who has proven to be incompetent. Her incompetencies are just the most obvious,” he said. “More importantly, the problems at BCC are not simply problems of personnel. There are structural, institutional problems that replacing a vice president or two will not address. Ellis did not cause the budget crisis. The attack on our students' education is primarily coming from CUNY, Albany and City Hall. Our administration deserves blame, but certainly not the entirety of it.”

A FIGHTING HISTORY

This is not the first time PSC members at BCC have organized against administrative shortcomings. In the Fall semester of 2014, CUNY announced the sudden departure of then-President Carole Berotte Joseph. And as *Clarion* reported at the time, the announcement “was made five days after BCC's Faculty Council voted to create a select faculty committee to investigate areas of ‘widespread concern amongst the instructional staff regarding the administration’” of the president.

When reached for comment about the Faculty Council vote on Ellis, a spokesperson for the college told *Clarion*, “We have no statement at this time.”

But some BCC chapter members hope that the no-confidence vote will not go unnoticed – various sources told *Clarion* that administration officials are taking the vote seriously. Ben-Nun said, “I would like the administration to take responsibility for this and make some visible changes to the way we maintain our buildings and classrooms.”



PSC members have seen evidence of disrepair at Bronx Community College across the campus and are pinning the blame on the administration.

Dave Sanders

Photos: Dave Sanders

Hunter adjuncts win

By ARI PAUL

In the final week of the Fall semester, Hunter College administrators attempted to circumvent one of the most talked-about achievements of the newly ratified contract, the paid office hour for adjuncts. But a multifaceted union campaign quickly put a stop to that.

Some background: throughout CUNY there are courses in English composition, computer science, mathematics and other subjects that carry more credits than classroom contact hours. For example, students earn three credits for the course, but the course meets for four hours a week, allowing for extra time for hands-on workshops, group work or instruction. Full-time faculty teaching a three-credit/four-hour course receive four workload contact hours, and adjunct faculty teaching such a course are paid for four hours a week, 60 hours a semester. English 120 and English 220 at Hunter are among these classes.

BAD NEWS

In mid-December, adjuncts in the Hunter's English department were told that the new contractual office

Admin tried to skirt contract



Jennifer Gaboury: 'We will take encroachments seriously.'

hour would replace the fourth contact hour, keeping their hours at 60 even though they were entitled to 75 paid hours under the new contract.

What happened next speaks to the power of the PSC to protect the contract and stand up for members' rights. An adjunct immediately in-

formed the PSC chapter chair at the time, Jeremy Glick, who brought the matter to the union's leadership. The PSC quickly filed a grievance and met with campus union leaders to plan how to fight back. Glick and PSC president Barbara Bowen sent a message to chapter members.

"We are actively pursuing resolution right away," they wrote. "It's not fair, and we will fight it."

Meanwhile union leaders were getting ready to mount a public campaign against the plan.

REACHING OUT

Bowen contacted CUNY's chief negotiator and reached Chancellor Félix Matos-Rodriguez on Christmas Eve. The union argued that the decision at Hunter violated both the new contract and the course descriptions for English 120 and 220 as four-contact-hour courses, approved by college governance and the State Department of Education. The new adjunct office hour was negotiated as an additional paid hour; it cannot be used to reduce existing course hours. Doing so would sabotage exactly the provision of the contract that was celebrated by the CUNY chancellor, the mayor and the governor as a major achievement: the provision of new office hours for 12,000 adjuncts during which students can meet with their instructors.

CUNY Central leadership listened. "They have a stake in the integrity of this contract, too, and they took the right position," Bowen said. "They know we have a strong union, and I think they recognized how disastrous it would be if colleges were allowed to undermine the big-

gest achievement of the contract in a cynical effort to save money." On January 2, English department instructors teaching 120 and 220 were told that they would be paid for four contact hours as well as the contractual paid office hour.

"We were happy that PSC leadership was right on top of this and responded really quickly," said Jennifer Gaboury, the interim PSC chapter chair at Hunter.

Protecting a major part of the new CUNY contract

"Clearly what needs to happen is to get the word out to both administrators and department chairs about what is and what is not appropriate use of the contractual office hour and that encroachments will be taken seriously."

Gaboury acknowledged that management's attempt to appropriate the office hour was the result of a lack of state funding for senior colleges, which has forced college administrators to cut corners.

"The attempt to double dip in this case was in what is a kind of fiscal panic," Gaboury said.

Bowen commented to *Clarion*: "The victory shows the power of collective action and immediate response to infringements of the contract. This victory shows the power of our collective action and immediate response to infringements of the contract."

She added, "You can't mess with the contract."

Grad Center members blast hiring freeze

By ARI PAUL

Long-simmering budget problems are taking their toll on some campuses. Union officials reported that Hunter College did not reappoint nearly a dozen non-teaching adjuncts (NTAs) in the Spring, effectively terminating them. And the Graduate Center's (GC) newly imposed hiring freeze is being met with intense union opposition.

On January 9, Interim President James Muyskens, said in a message to the GC community that in order to "return to a balanced budget," the center would "impose a hiring freeze going forward on all new full-time positions, as well as new part-time college assistant and non-teaching adjunct positions" and "enact a hiring pause going forward on all replacements of full-time positions, as well as part-time college assistant and NTA positions..."

BACK TO THE NINETIES

The cuts, which are effective immediately and are expected to last until June 30, also include "a freeze on all step and merit increases" and a "freeze on all tax-levy funded travel."

"This situation is as bad as the retrenchment of the 1990s, and we need a way out," PSC Chapter Chair Luke Elliott-Negri said in a message to members. "It is time to sharpen a strategy to get the money we need

Budget cuts hurt NTAs

and pursue a laser-focused plan to get full funding from Albany."

Penny Lewis, the PSC vice president for senior colleges and an associate professor of labor studies at the School of Labor and Urban Studies, said, "The current budget crisis at the GC is not caused by the contract that was just passed. It has much deeper roots, and has been anticipated for months, if not years."

Lewis continued, "The GC is a unique institution among CUNY schools, not just in that it does not rely on adjunct labor to the extent that other schools do, but also in that it is not tuition-funded to the extent that other schools are. Students cost the school; the GC is a cost, not 'profit,' center for the system, as former GC President Chase Robinson used to remind us at our labor-management meetings."

For Travis Sweatte, a graduate assistant in sociology, the recently announced cuts were a continuation of cuts he has seen at the GC over time. "People definitely saw it coming," he said. "The number of fellowships were cut before this announcement. At Hunter, the cuts to NTAs were also expected, as the administration had made significant cuts over the past three years."

"We've had NTA hours cut as a part of budget cuts more generally," said Sarah Chinn, chair of the Hunter College English department.

CALL TO ACTION

The PSC chapter at the Graduate Center held an emergency meeting

about the hiring freezes to decide how to organize for the future.

"We really want to dig into how the budget is structured, about how are these decisions being made," Elliott-Negri said after the meeting. "We also need to recognize that we are a senior college and the state's decision-making over the last decade has affected us. The deeper crisis is in Albany."

Muyskens attended the meeting and took questions from members about the cuts. He insisted that the cuts at the GC would be temporary.

In his letter to the GC community, Muyskens said, "The Graduate Center will weather this temporary financial adjustment" and added that the Graduate Center will "emerge a more robust and more efficient institution."



Penny Lewis, PSC senior colleges VP, spoke at an emergency union meeting at the Graduate Center.

SALARY SCHEDULE

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	1/1/20*	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
COLLEGE LABORATORY TECHNICIAN							
\$	40,627	41,440	42,268	44,768	45,664	46,577	47,509
	42,023	42,863	43,721	46,221	47,145	48,088	49,050
	43,477	44,347	45,233	47,733	48,688	49,662	50,655
	45,201	46,105	47,027	49,527	50,518	51,528	52,559
	46,708	47,642	48,595	51,095	52,117	53,159	54,222
	48,756	49,731	50,726	53,226	54,290	55,376	56,484
	50,069	51,070	52,092	54,592	55,684	56,797	57,933
	51,378	52,406	53,454	55,954	57,073	58,214	59,378
	52,692	53,746	54,821	57,321	58,467	59,637	60,829
	54,003	55,083	56,185	58,685	59,858	61,056	62,277
	55,642	56,755	57,890	60,390	61,598	62,830	64,086
	57,281	58,427	59,595	62,095	63,337	64,604	65,896
	58,921	60,099	61,301	63,801	65,077	66,379	67,707
	60,561	61,772	63,008	65,508	66,818	68,154	69,517
	61,838	63,075	64,336	66,836	68,173	69,536	70,927
	65,011	66,311	67,637	70,137	71,540	72,971	74,430

*\$2,500 equity increase on 1/1/20 for all steps of the College Laboratory Technician schedule.

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
ADJUNCT CHIEF COLLEGE LABORATORY TECHNICIAN						
\$	40.51	41.32	42.15	42.99	43.85	44.73
	42.13	42.97	43.83	44.71	45.60	46.51
	43.82	44.70	45.59	46.50	47.43	48.38
	48.92	49.90	50.90	51.91	52.95	54.01
	55.95	57.07	58.21	59.37	60.56	61.77

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
ADJUNCT SENIOR COLLEGE LABORATORY TECHNICIAN						
\$	34.87	35.57	36.28	37.00	37.74	38.50
	36.27	37.00	37.74	38.49	39.26	40.05
	37.68	38.43	39.20	39.99	40.79	41.60
	40.73	41.54	42.38	43.22	44.09	44.97
	46.25	47.18	48.12	49.08	50.06	51.06

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
ADJUNCT COLLEGE LABORATORY TECHNICIAN						
\$	28.28	28.85	29.42	30.01	30.61	31.22
	29.38	29.97	30.57	31.18	31.80	32.44
	30.58	31.19	31.82	32.45	33.10	33.76
	34.62	35.31	36.02	36.74	37.47	38.22
	40.86	41.68	42.51	43.36	44.23	45.11

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
GRADUATE ASSISTANT A						
\$	22,967	23,426	23,895	24,373	24,860	25,357
	23,846	24,323	24,809	25,306	25,812	26,328
	24,762	25,257	25,762	26,278	26,803	27,339
	26,062	26,583	27,115	27,657	28,210	28,775
	27,540	28,091	28,653	29,226	29,810	30,406
	28,577	29,149	29,732	30,326	30,933	31,551
	30,052	30,653	31,266	31,891	32,529	33,180
	31,091	31,713	32,347	32,994	33,654	34,327
	32,134	32,777	33,432	34,101	34,783	35,479
	34,175	34,859	35,556	36,267	36,992	37,732

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
GRADUATE ASSISTANT B						
\$	11,969	12,208	12,453	12,702	12,956	13,215
	12,409	12,657	12,910	13,169	13,432	13,701
	12,869	13,126	13,389	13,657	13,930	14,208
	13,511	13,781	14,057	14,338	14,625	14,917
	14,253	14,538	14,829	15,125	15,428	15,736
	14,775	15,071	15,372	15,679	15,993	16,313
	15,523	15,833	16,150	16,473	16,803	17,139
	16,043	16,364	16,691	17,025	17,365	17,713
	16,567	16,898	17,236	17,581	17,933	18,291
	17,600	17,952	18,311	18,677	19,051	19,432

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
GRADUATE ASSISTANT C						
\$	17,471	17,820	18,177	18,540	18,911	19,289
	18,129	18,492	18,861	19,239	19,623	20,016
	18,812	19,188	19,572	19,963	20,363	20,770
	19,786	20,182	20,585	20,997	21,417	21,845
	20,897	21,315	21,741	22,176	22,620	23,072
	21,678	22,112	22,554	23,005	23,465	23,934
	22,785	23,241	23,706	24,180	24,663	25,156
	23,566	24,037	24,518	25,008	25,509	26,019
	24,347	24,834	25,331	25,837	26,354	26,881
	25,888	26,406	26,934	27,473	28,022	28,582

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
GRADUATE ASSISTANT D						
\$	5,268	5,373	5,481	5,590	5,702	5,816
	5,554	5,665	5,778	5,894	6,012	6,132
	5,859	5,976	6,096	6,218	6,342	6,469
	6,179	6,303	6,429	6,557	6,688	6,822

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	4/1/21*	11/15/21	11/1/22
CUNY START INSTRUCTOR							
\$	49,315	50,301	51,307	52,333	53,833	54,910	56,008
	52,258	53,303	54,369	55,457	56,957	58,096	59,258
	54,862	55,959	57,078	58,220	59,720	60,914	62,133
	56,939	58,078	59,239	60,424	61,924	63,163	64,426
	59,890	61,088	62,310	63,556	65,056	66,357	67,684
	61,972	63,211	64,476	65,765	67,265	68,610	69,983
	64,053	65,334	66,641	67,974	69,474	70,863	72,280
	66,131	67,454	68,803	70,179	71,679	73,112	74,575
	68,210	69,574	70,966	72,385	73,885	75,363	76,870
	70,293	71,699	73,133	74,595	76,095	77,617	79,170
	72,373	73,820	75,297	76,803	78,303	79,869	81,466
	77,389	78,937	80,516	82,126	83,626	85,298	87,004
	82,709	84,363	86,050	87,771	89,271	91,057	92,878

*\$1,500 equity increase on 4/1/21 for all steps of the CUNY Start Instructor schedule.

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	4/1/21*	11/15/21	11/1/22
CLIP INSTRUCTOR							
\$	44,038	44,919	45,817	46,733	48,233	49,198	50,182
	45,750	46,665	47,598	48,550	50,050	51,051	52,072
	47,499	48,449	49,418	50,406	51,906	52,944	54,003
	49,315	50,301	51,307	52,333	53,833	54,910	56,008
	52,258	53,303	54,369	55,457	56,957	58,096	59,258
	54,862	55,959	57,078	58,220	59,720	60,914	62,133
	56,939	58,078	59,239	60,424	61,924	63,163	64,426
	59,890	61,088	62,310	63,556	65,056	66,357	67,684
	61,972	63,211	64,476	65,765	67,265	68,610	69,983
	64,053	65,334	66,641	67,974	69,474	70,863	72,280
	66,131	67,454	68,803	70,179	71,679	73,112	74,575
	68,210	69,574	70,966	72,385	73,885	75,363	76,870
	70,293	71,699	73,133	74,595	76,095	77,617	79,170
	72,373	73,820	75,297	76,803	78,303	79,869	81,466
	74,454	75,943	77,462	79,011	80,511	82,121	83,764
	77,389	78,937	80,516	82,126	83,626	85,298	87,004
	82,709	84,363	86,050	87,771	89,271	91,057	92,878

*\$1,500 equity increase on 4/1/21 for all steps of the CLIP Instructor schedule.

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
COLLEGE PHYSICIAN						
\$	37,414	38,162	38,926	39,704	40,498	41,308
	38,872	39,649	40,442	41,251	42,076	42,918
	40,387	41,195	42,019	42,859	43,716	44,591
	43,260	44,125	45,008	45,908	46,826	47,763
	45,792	46,708	47,642	48,595	49,567	50,558
	47,813	48,769	49,745	50,740	51,754	52,789
	48,832	49,809	50,805	51,821	52,857	53,914
	49,840	50,837	51,854	52,891	53,948	55,027
	50,858	51,875	52,913	53,971	55,050	56,151
	51,869	52,906	53,965	55,044	56,145	57,268
	52,882	53,940	55,018	56,119	57,241	58,386
	55,941	57,060	58,201	59,365	60,552	61,763

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	4/1/21*	11/15/21	11/1/22
EOC LECTURER							
\$	45,750	46,665	47,598	48,550	50,050	51,051	52,072
	47,499	48,449	49,418	50,406	51,906	52,944	54,003
	49,315	50,301	51,307	52,333	53,833	54,910	56,008
	52,258	53,303	54,3				

Trump's 'Israel' order could affect CUNY

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

Academic freedom at risk

Targeting the State of Israel through boycotts or claiming that Israel is racist could now be construed as a violation of federal antidiscrimination law following a new executive order to combat anti-Semitism signed by President Donald Trump in mid-December. Schools and colleges, including programs and activities that receive federal funding, are at risk of losing millions of dollars if sanctioned under the new order.

How Trump's order is exactly implemented is the question. Social justice advocates – both those fighting anti-Semitism and those advocating for Palestinian rights – have raised concerns that it could violate fundamental free speech rights.

"It's not Jewish interests or safety that are served by targeting academic freedom, speech, scholarship, dissent and activism," said David Unger, a Higher Education Assistant at the School of Labor and Urban Studies.

Noting that his grandparents were subpoenaed to testify during the McCarthy hearings because of their political activities, he added, "Coming from four generations of Jewish activists who have faced repression due to their political views and activities, such suppression of political speech and action – both on campus and in society – feels incredibly familiar."

Trump's executive order reiterates and expands on Obama administration guidance on how to respond to anti-Semitic incidents under current federal civil rights law. At issue is Title VI of the Civil



Frank Deale, a professor at the School of Law, is concerned about freedom of speech under the new Trump executive order.

Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination "on the ground of race, color, or national origin" for programs and activities that receive federal funding.

DEFINING JEWISHNESS

The original 1964 law does not include religious discrimination, so Trump's order explicitly pro-

hibits "forms of discrimination rooted in anti-Semitism," an order consistent with Obama and Bush administration policy. That is not what is at issue for many academics. Instead, it is how the order defines Jewish identity and anti-Semitism that raises concern.

The day after the order was issued, the Middle East Studies

Association of North America (MESA), a leading organization in the academic field, wrote a letter to President Trump, asking him to "revoke this executive order immediately."

STIFLING

MESA cited the order's design to "delegitimize and stifle scholarship and teaching" and its essentializing of Jewish identity by, in effect, construing that Jews share a common national origin.

"As you surely know, Jews in the United States and elsewhere identify themselves in a wide variety of ways, so the implication that all Jews share a common national origin is not a statement of fact but an ideological assertion," wrote Dina Rizk Khoury, MESA president, and Laurie Brand, the chair of the group's Committee on Academic Freedom. "Like all other citizens and residents of the United States, Jews are entitled to protection against discrimination, but we deem this an ill-informed and potentially dangerous approach to securing such protection."

What is also a concern for many academics is how anti-Semitism is defined. When evaluating incidents, federal agencies and departments will consider the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of and examples of anti-Semitism that include, "targeting of the State of Israel" and claiming that "the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor."

Even the lead drafter of which the IHRA definition is based upon, Kenneth Stern, thinks the definition should not be applied to colleges and universities, as he wrote in the *Guardian*, "I'm worried that faculty, who can just as easily teach about Jewish life in 19th-century Poland or about modern Israel, will probably choose the former as safer."

Censorship and potential self-censorship concerns many academics.

"There can be little doubt that such 'illustrations' of anti-Semitism will force universities to police speakers seeking justice in the Middle East, especially those supporting the BDS [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions] Movement,"

Scholars examine the new federal order.

Frank Deale a professor at the CUNY school of law who teaches civil rights and constitutional law, told *Clarion*. "Under the Trump order, such statements will trigger complaints that could lead to the termination of federal funding to such universities, even though such statements would be deemed First Amendment protected speech when made at public universities."

The Trump order explicitly states that "agencies shall not diminish or infringe upon any right protected under Federal law or under the First Amendment," but that is little consolation to schools and colleges that have already been singled out for perceived anti-Semitism. Complaints can be made to any federal agency or department that administers Title VI, and an investigation could be launched, typically within the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR), where investigators visit the campus and make assessments.

If a "severe, pervasive or persistent" environment is created and if having known of the incidents a college still failed to take appropriate action, the college could lose federal funding.

THE TRUMP EFFECT

Already, the US Department of Education during the Trump administration has launched investigations at Rutgers University, Duke University, the University of North Carolina and Williams College for "anti-Semitic" speech critical of Israel, according to a source cited in *Vox*.

A week after the order was announced, the Lawfare Project filed a complaint against Columbia University, asking OCR to investigate "Israel Apartheid Week," where students display a mock apartheid wall and discussed Israel's treatment of Palestinians, according to Palestine Legal.

"NYC has been the epicenter for censorship attempts when it comes to speaking out for Palestinian freedom. That said, professors should not be cowed by

Continued on page 9

New salary schedule

Continued from page 7

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
MEDICAL SERIES (HOURLY)						
Adj. Med. Professor (Clinical)						
\$	275.68	281.19	286.82	292.55	298.40	304.37
	286.71	292.44	298.29	304.26	310.34	316.55
	298.19	304.15	310.24	316.44	322.77	329.23
	318.64	325.01	331.51	338.14	344.91	351.80
	342.41	349.26	356.24	363.37	370.64	378.05
Adj. Asst. Med. Professor (Basic Sciences)						
\$	127.59	130.14	132.74	135.40	138.11	140.87
	132.67	135.32	138.03	140.79	143.61	146.48
	137.99	140.75	143.56	146.44	149.36	152.35
	158.01	161.17	164.39	167.68	171.04	174.46
	172.04	175.48	178.99	182.57	186.22	189.95
Adj. Assoc. Med. Professor (Basic Sciences)						
\$	162.22	165.46	168.77	172.15	175.59	179.10
	168.72	172.09	175.54	179.05	182.63	186.28
	175.46	178.97	182.55	186.20	189.92	193.72
	192.50	196.35	200.28	204.28	208.37	212.54
	209.60	213.79	218.07	222.43	226.88	231.42
Adj. Med. Professor (Basic Sciences)						
\$	196.89	200.83	204.84	208.94	213.12	217.38
	204.80	208.90	213.07	217.34	221.68	226.12
	212.96	217.22	221.56	225.99	230.51	235.13
	233.36	238.03	242.79	247.64	252.60	257.65
	257.28	262.43	267.67	273.03	278.49	284.06
Medical Lecturer						
\$	65,427	66,736	68,070	69,432	70,820	72,237
to	101,228	103,253	105,318	107,424	109,572	111,764

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
Adj. Med. Lecturer						
\$	35.37	36.08	36.80	37.53	38.29	39.05
to	55.02	56.12	57.24	58.39	59.56	60.75
DISTINGUISHED LECTURER – MEDICAL SERIES						
\$	65,427	66,736	68,070	69,432	70,820	72,237
to	188,322	192,088	195,930	199,849	203,846	207,923
CLINICAL PROFESSOR – MEDICAL SERIES						
\$	65,427	66,736	68,070	69,432	70,820	72,237
to	188,322	192,088	195,930	199,849	203,846	207,923
RESIDENT SERIES (HOURLY)						
Resident \$	2,913	2,971	3,031	3,091	3,153	3,216
Professor	3,031	3,092	3,153	3,217	3,281	3,346
	3,153	3,216	3,280	3,346	3,413	3,481
Resident \$	2,473	2,522	2,573	2,624	2,677	2,730
Associate	2,571	2,622	2,675	2,728	2,783	2,839
Professor	2,675	2,729	2,783	2,839	2,896	2,953
Resident \$	2,037	2,078	2,119	2,162	2,205	2,249
Assistant	2,117	2,159	2,203	2,247	2,292	2,337
Professor	2,203	2,247	2,292	2,338	2,385	2,432
Resident \$	1,748	1,783	1,819	1,855	1,892	1,930
Instructor	1,818	1,854	1,891	1,929	1,968	2,007
	1,892	1,930	1,968	2,008	2,048	2,089
Resident \$	1,748	1,783	1,819	1,855	1,892	1,930
Lecturer	1,818	1,854	1,891	1,929	1,968	2,007
	1,892	1,930	1,968	2,008	2,048	2,089

	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
Adjuncts in the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism and in the Executive Programs in the Zicklin School of Business Baruch College (HOURLY)						
Adjunct Lecturer						
\$	71.59	73.02	74.48	75.97	77.49	79.04
to	142.48	145.33	148.24	151.20	154.22	157.31
Adjunct Assistant Professor						
\$	80.76	82.38	84.02	85.70	87.42	89.17
to	163.70	166.97	170.31	173.72	177.19	180.74
Adjunct Assoc. Professor						
\$	88.31	90.08	91.88	93.72	95.59	97.50
to	218.31	222.68	227.13	231.67	236.31	241.03
Adjunct Professor						
\$	100.90	102.92	104.98	107.08	109.22	111.40
to	300.16	306.16	312.29	318.53	324.90	331.40
Non-Teaching Adjunct I						
\$	60.54	61.75	62.99	64.25	65.53	66.84
to	180.09	183.69	187.37	191.11	194.94	198.83
Non-Teaching Adjunct II						
\$	52.96	54.02	55.10	56.20	57.33	58.47
to	131.00	133.62	136.29	139.02	141.80	144.63
Non-Teaching Adjunct III						
\$	48.45	49.42	50.41	51.42	52.44	53.49
to	98.22	100.18	102.19	104.23	106.32	108.44
	4/20/17	10/1/18	10/31/19	11/15/20	11/15/21	11/1/22
CONTINUING EDUCATION TEACHER (HOURLY) MINIMUM*						
\$	36.64	37.37	38.12	38.88	39.66	40.45

*Many CETs are paid at an hourly rate higher than the minimum. Individual CETs employed on or before the day before the effective date of a contractual increase will have their individual hourly rate increased by the contractual amounts on the listed effective dates.

US Dem bill for college affordability

By ARI PAUL

The right-wing publication the *Federalist* called it “garbage,” while *Teen Vogue* said it “doesn’t go far enough.” So call it the Goldilocks of federal higher education funding bills.

The College Affordability Act introduced in the House last fall is backed by congressional Democrats and would reauthorize the federal Higher Education Act in such a way that, as American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President Randi Weingarten put it in a statement, it would meet “the needs of the struggling and the striving by creating a genuine pathway to college affordability, revamping loan forgiveness so it is there for people who need it, and increasing the investment in colleges and universities – institutions that have long suffered terrible disinvestment.”

DEFYING DEVOS

The proposal is meant to be a rebuke, not just to the systematic disinvestment in higher education over the decades, but to recent anti higher education policy crafted by US Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

The bill’s most important proposals, as stated by the AFT, are:

- A federal-state partnership to make tuition and fees for all community college students free.
- A 625 increase in the minimum Pell Grant.

Funding for higher ed



- Availability of Pell Grants to incarcerated students and undocumented students, and also for qualifying short-term programs.
- Improvements to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program so that administrative hurdles no longer stand in the way of the loan forgiveness public employees have earned.
- Restoration of subsidized loans for graduate students.
- Increased accountability in Title IX language so that there is more accountability regarding sexual assault and harassment on campus.
- More wraparound services to increase student retention.
- Restoration of the gainful em-

ployment rule, which Education Secretary Betsy DeVos repealed. (The rule requires that career education programs – including all those at for-profit institutions – show that their graduates are able to find “gainful employment” upon graduating, preventing the perpetuation of shoddy programs.)

- Restoration of the borrower-defense rule, also repealed by DeVos. (This rule ensures that students who were defrauded by their institutions can have their student loans discharged.)
- Closing the 90-10 loophole and restoring it to 85-15. The 90-10 rule requires that for-profit colleges get at least 10 percent of their funding from sources other than federal financial aid – but a loophole exists in current law that means aid for military veterans (the GI Bill, for example) is excluded from that category.
- Additional grant aid for students who attend minority-serving institutions (including historically black colleges and universities).

The bill is meant to strengthen federal oversight. The Center for American Progress said, “Legislation would strengthen the Department of Education’s role in overseeing the agencies it authorizes as gatekeepers. Today, agencies essentially pick minimal examples of their best work to put up for review by the department. Changes would ensure that the

department evaluates a representative sample of the accreditors’ work and reevaluates how those examples are chosen.”

CUTTING COSTS

Representative Bobby Scott (D-VA), who chairs the House Education and Labor Committee, said of the College Affordability Act, “This proposal immediately cuts the cost of college for students and families and provides relief for existing borrowers. At the same time, it improves the quality of education by holding schools accountable for their students’ success, and it meets students’ individual needs by expanding access to more flexible college options and stronger support – helping students graduate on time and move into the workforce.”

Improving the US Higher Education Act

The problem facing the Democratic plan is in the Republican-controlled Senate, where Scott’s Republican counterpart, Lamar Alexander (R-TN), offered in September what the press called a narrower reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

Olivia Golden, executive director of the Center for Law and Social Policy, dismissed the Alexander plan, and in a statement said that it “reflects a piecemeal approach to higher education that fails to promote economic security and equity for millions of students with low incomes.”

CUNY scholars and activists respond to Trump’s ‘Israel’ order

Continued from page 8

Trump’s agenda,” said Radhika Sainath, senior staff attorney for Palestine Legal. “Your academic freedom and First Amendment rights to teach, research and advocate for Palestinian rights remains unchanged.”

CUNY has been the focus of scrutiny on the issue of Israel in the past. Faculty members on a variety of campuses have been targeted by pro-Israel groups for their views on the Middle East.

Posters with illustrations of two Brooklyn College professors, who have been outspoken about Palestinian rights, featured the two PSC members labeled as “Terrorist Supporters.” (*Clarion* reported on this incident in November 2017).

“Anyone writing, or teaching, or being an activist [on Palestinian issues] has good reason to worry that what they do will be described as anti-Semitic,” said Philosophy Professor Samir Chopra, one of the professors who was singled out in the Brooklyn College poster incident. Chopra has not fully studied the order, but does have concerns about it.

“What this does is add governmental persecution to the political and cultural hostility directed at Pal-

estinian issues or criticism of Israel’s policies or even raising concerns about the disproportionate role that a candidate’s views on Israel have in American elections,” said Chopra.

FIGHTING ANTI-SEMITISM

The union and its members recognize that anti-Semitism – and other forms of discrimination – are problems in the greater public. In 2018, when 11 Jewish congregants were murdered at Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, the union’s executive council immediately issued a statement stating, “any re-emergence of anti-Semitism must be taken with extreme seriousness – and resisted.”

But for many, Trump’s executive order is not the answer to fighting the rise of anti-Semitism, a sentiment affirmed by Jewish scholars.

“Anti-Semitism is real and it is a danger to Jews, and of late, is also to people who socialize with Jews, attend synagogue services on High Holidays, or simply shop in a kosher market,” wrote Michael Zank, the Director of Boston University’s Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies, in an op-ed in a campus publication. “But the executive order neither combats white supremacy nor



David Unger, a Higher Education Assistant at the School of Labor and Urban Studies, sees McCarthyism.

offers law enforcement a useful tool to fight bigotry in its many forms. It merely instigates a new era of government interference in American campus life and policing of speech that feels like the beginning of a new McCarthyism.”

For many faculty and staff, now is the time to express solidarity

among groups facing discrimination and intolerance.

“As union members dedicated to the rights of faculty, students and staff to be politically active, including on behalf of Palestinian rights, we need to speak out against this cynical move,” said Laura Tanenbaum, a member of Jewish Voices

for Peace and an English professor at LaGuardia Community College. “Those of us who are Jewish must also make clear that we stand in solidarity with our Muslim and Arab brothers and sisters and have no illusions that anything this Islamophobic administration does will make us safer.”

The campaign for fair funding

Continued from page 3

annual practice of proposing cuts to CUNY opportunity programs like CSTEP (Collegiate Science & Technology Entry Program), ASAP (a proposed \$2.5 million cut last year), SEEK (a proposed \$4.68 million cut last year), College Discovery (proposed a nearly \$250 thousand dollar cut last year) and others. Brooke Smith, a SEEK student at Medgar Evers College, told *Clarion*, “Every year we have to go to Albany to put a face [on these programs].”

These cuts were ultimately averted.

BIG TENT

There is a coalition fighting for the fair funding of CUNY. In December, Public Advocate Jumaane Williams issued a report calling for increased funding from both the state and the city. (He said the latter should kick in an extra \$108.2 million and take on a greater share of funding responsibility for the senior colleges.) Williams cited that the per-student funding at CUNY had decreased 18% between 2008 and 2017 when adjusted for inflation.

In December, Williams toured York College with student activists to inspect the disrepair on campus. He passed by a dining facility that has been closed since last Spring semester, spoke to Muslim students who didn't have a proper prayer space, and was informed that the main per-



Erin McGregor

Students have blasted the tuition hike and new fee.

formance arts facility was closed due to mold problems.

But what really shocked Williams – himself a Brooklyn College graduate – was the fact that academic departments had approached the York College student government for critical funding because their yearly allocations had fallen short of what faculty believed was needed.

“The student government is a stopgap for a lot of things,” Williams told reporters after the tour.

“That really threw me for a loop.”

Building power this year for CUNY funding.

While calling on the city and state to kick in more funding for CUNY, he blasted the new proposed tuition hikes as well as the new \$60 wellness fee.

“There are always more fees upon

more fees,” Williams said. “Sixty dollars is a lot of money if you don't have it.”

PSC members around the CUNY system have engaged in similar forms of activism. At Hostos Community College, activists hung up photos showing building deterioration on campus on clotheslines, where students passing could also leave notes about problems they face at the college. Last semester, members at Queens and the College of Staten Island held town halls where faculty and staff could hear from one another about the budget cuts they were facing.

The CUNY Rising Alliance (CRA) also held a series of events with students, faculty, lawmakers and their representatives where people spoke openly about the problems facing CUNY and what to do about them.

“We learned how little pressure legislators feel about supporting CUNY,” Jennifer Gaboury, a Hunter professor of gender studies and political science, said at one such meeting at her campus December 4. “That is what needs to be changed,” she said, adding that this would require mobilizing faculty, alumni and students.

“The city and state need to know what students are dealing with daily,” said CUNY Rising Alliance organizer Jamell Henderson, an adjunct political science instructor at Brooklyn College. “There are professors now teaching classes in extremely cold places. Some are still in trailers,” he told the meeting, as well as science labs “one wind away from falling down.”

Gaboury said that the lack of mental health services was “a huge issue,” and Santana Alvarado, a Hunter senior and New York Public Interest Research Group

member, quipped that between CUNY cuts and the rising costs of going to school, she was pursuing a “degree in anxiety.”

LOOKING AHEAD

For the next few months, the union will be engaging in a variety of actions to pressure the city and state into committing to fully funding CUNY. There was a lobbying trip to Albany on February 3 and another is scheduled for February 27. The union will intensely lobby legislators with the message that the state must invest in public higher education and end the austerity regime. There will be more rallies and more opportunities to testify to the need for the full funding of CUNY.

PSC President Barbara Bowen said, “Restoration of a progressive tax structure in this rich state is the only way to generate the revenue needed to fund public schools, universities and hospitals as they should be – and could be – funded. New York could easily have well-funded public schools, colleges and hospitals; the majority of state lawmakers have consistently made the decision not to do so. One of our challenges as unionists and academics is not to allow ourselves to be mesmerized by the drumbeat of messages about how full funding is unrealistic or utopian. It's not.”

TAX THE RICH

Bowen continued, “The only reason we have the current ‘millionaires’ tax’ in New York State is that in 2009, in the wake of a recession, coalitions like the revenue coalition this year built the power to push it through. The PSC was an active member of that 2009 coalition and we are an active member of the coalition this year. What's different this year is that the state is facing a \$6 billion deficit, and pressure for increasing revenue is growing. Changing the tax structure – and thus defeating the ruling class interests it serves – will take a combination of urgent, detailed policy work and unrelenting, disruptive public pressure. The PSC is involved in both.”

Bowen noted that the union is working closely with other advocates like CUNY Rising in order to intensely focus on building a more robust funding agenda for higher education. Union members are encouraged to keep checking with the union online about upcoming actions and other ways to participate in the campaign.

“We will also show how every PSC member can participate in the budget fight,” she said. “The planned, deliberate impoverishment of CUNY can be stopped. It will take all of us to do it.”

Steve Wishnia and Shomial Ahmad contributed reporting.

The speaker reaches out to PSC



Art Paul

City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, right, met with PSC activists during a reception last December, including Clinton Crawford, left, the PSC chapter chair at Medgar Evers College.

Five Qs: Chaumtoli Huq

By CLARION STAFF

Chaumtoli Huq is more than a professor at CUNY School of Law.

Huq is a former manager at Legal Services NYC (LSNYC), and her career has long been centered in the struggle for worker justice, often outside the realm of traditional trade unionism. Huq was the director of both the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund and the South Asian Workers Rights Project. She was also the first staff attorney for the New York Taxi Workers Alliance.

Today, Huq is interested in social justice journalism and using her experience to build *Law@theMargins*, a mostly volunteer-run news site that brings a legal eye to issues of immigration and, more recently, homelessness; the organization manages websites centered on the issue of homelessness in four cities across the United States.

As a part of *Clarion's* ongoing *Five Questions* series, Huq spoke to the paper about her experiences.

You've worked in labor advocacy outside the traditional trade union structure, like the Taxi Workers Alliance. What do you think unions like the PSC could learn from that type of organizing?

I love PSC, but I think traditional trade unions can learn a lot from the Taxi Workers Alliance and other similar workers' centers that are committed to mass-based mobilizing.

Public-sector unions are facing a direct attack, and we need to organize and maintain boldness in our work. We have to lead and negotiate with clear principles,

Social justice, media and the law



Chaumtoli Huq during a class at CUNY School of Law.

specifically that we demand what our members deserve to live and work with respect and dignity, and not organize based on the best we can get.

You've been running social justice news site *Law@theMargins* for some time; what inspired you to recently focus on homelessness?

Law@theMargins was always intended as a platform to share new ideas on law and social justice. Initially, it was mainly to share in-

formation among organizers and legal activists on issues they were working on, because we tend to get siloed in our respective issue areas and do not see the common threads that unite our work, or we have blind spots on certain issues.

In fall 2018, we received a grant from the Solutions Journalism Network to develop a series of articles on how immigrant communities were responding to national immigration policies.

The series is called *We the Immigrants*. The idea was to show that these policies were not simply affecting people, but that communities were organizing and resisting.

Don't hate the media. Instead, become the media.

We began to develop our collaborative journalism model, which was to pair a formally trained journalist and a community reporter to develop the story. We figured if reporters were connected to community collaborators then they

would be more accountable to the community.

We wanted to apply this model to another issue of national urgency and importance – homelessness. We approached Alastair Boone, editor of San Francisco East Bay's homeless advocacy newspaper *Street Spirit*, who suggested that we reach out to other papers and our *Right to a Home* project was born with *Street Spirit* in Berkeley, California; *StreetWise* in Chicago; *The Contributor* in Nashville, Tennessee; and *Street Sense Media* in Washington, DC.

Immigration and inequality have been featured in the mainstream press; how do you think corporate media fail to cover these subjects adequately?

We did not see coverage of the ways communities were mobilizing around immigration issues. The corporate media, if they covered immigration issues, takes a top-down approach. Rarely did we see stories of how communities were self-organizing.

What do you think are the most difficult aspects of running an independent, social justice news site?

Many independent news sites are financed by those who have capital or they are connected to large corporate donors. The hardest part of running a social justice news site is lack of resources – not just money, but also in-kind support.

Our mission is to be member-supported, but that is hard because unless we can attract people committed to the vision of building a social justice news site and paying for it, membership will not cover costs if we want to staff up.

Right now, many of my evenings have been spent editing articles, getting insurance for our organization, dealing with tech issues and other administrative hassles, like PayPal withholding a payment to a writer because the invoice had the word "Iran" on it. In those cases, it's helpful to be a lawyer.

Running an alternative media outlet is a big job, but it's a necessary role. What advice would you give to young people who want to start their own media?

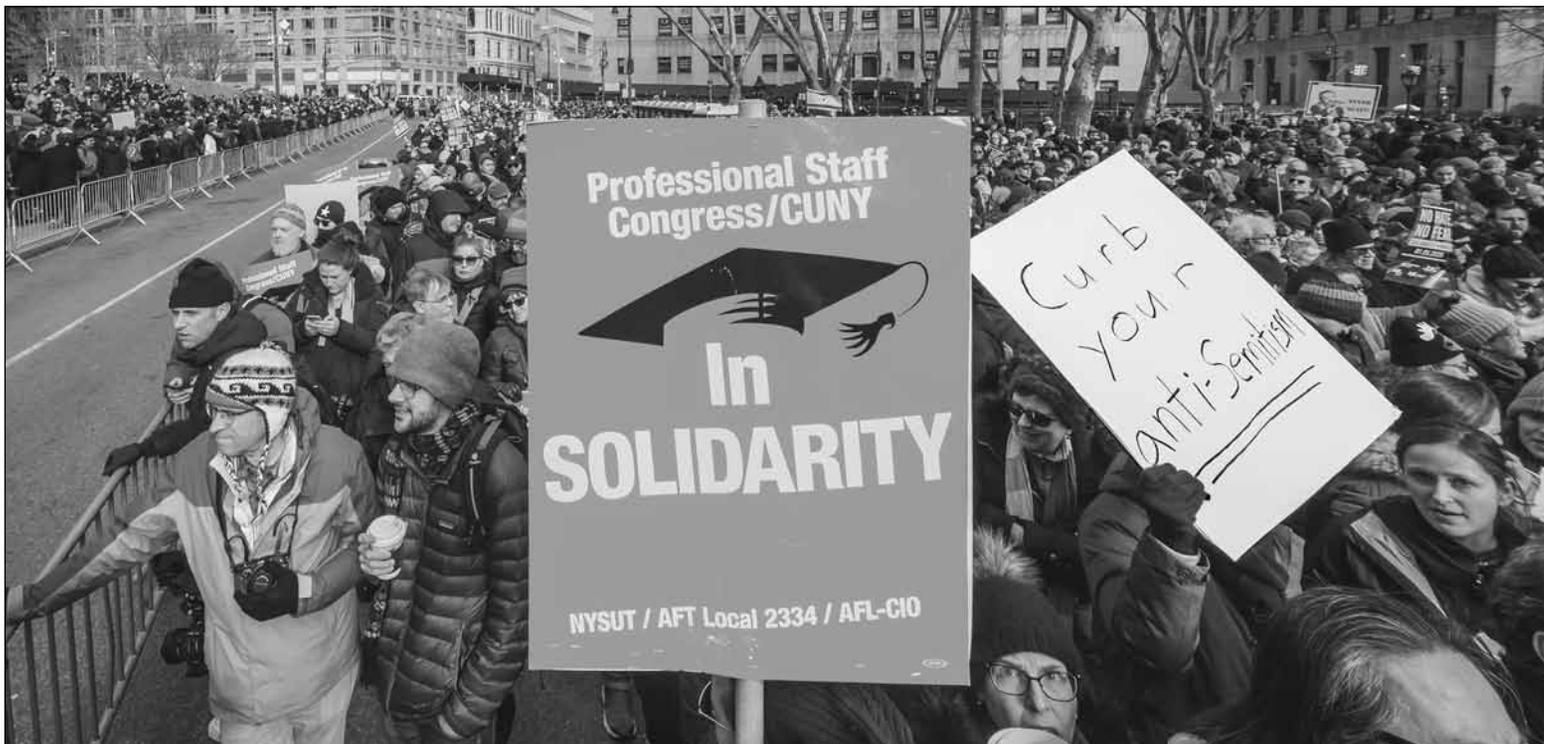
Take time thinking through the foundational values of the media site, its values, ethos, and, as you are building your organization, continually evaluate whether you are building it out based on those values.

We were very clear that we wanted to be a site that centered on the voices and perspectives of people and communities that are marginalized by our laws and legal system and that our programs would take into consideration the views and perspectives of those impacted by the issues and policies we focused on.

We have built an organization structure that relies on collective modes of decision-making and relies on financial sources from members and supporters.

This meant taking time to build up subscribers, engage them to become involved, participate or become members.

Union marches against anti-Semitism



PSC members marched with thousands of other New Yorkers in January to condemn a wave of anti-Semitic incidents across the city.



15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Social media team

The PSC encourages members to join its new Social Media Action Team. You'll receive, by email and text, a weekly insider's update on the campaign. It will include the targets and theme for the week's social media, and a link to a digital toolkit. We'll count on you to amplify the union's messages and to post messages and create content with your own take on the week's theme. Sign up at <https://www.psc-cuny.org/form/join-our-social-media-action-team>.

We are targeting legislative leaders with messages demanding full funding for CUNY. Keep up to date with Tweets and messages by signing up, and remember the hashtags #FundCUNYNow, #NewDeal4CUNY and #MakeBillionairesPay.

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BUDGET

Impoverishment by design

By **BARBARA BOWEN**
PSC President

The PSC's intense campaign to increase public funding for CUNY before the New York State budget is finalized on April 1 combines mass action with advocacy and policy analysis. PSC president Barbara Bowen was invited to testify before the State Legislature on February 4 about the union's position on Governor Andrew Cuomo's proposed budget allocation for CUNY for the 2021 fiscal year. What follows is an edited version of her testimony; the full text can be found at the union website.



PSC President Barbara Bowen rallied with students before a Board of Trustees hearing at Lehman College in December.

CUNY cannot withstand another year of New York State's current funding policy. New York's policy on CUNY funding is planned poverty, impoverishment by design. State budgets that consistently fail to cover even mandatory costs and collective bargaining increases amount to a policy of sabotaging CUNY and CUNY students. To make up for missing State funding, CUNY either cuts resources or increases tuition, or both. Neither approach is acceptable, or sustainable.

CUT AFTER CUT

Incremental cuts and flat budgets may look innocuous, but repeated year after year they add up to a policy of destroying the University. Here is a statistic you will not hear from others who testify today: on a per-student basis, State funding for CUNY senior colleges has been cut by 21 percent in the last decade.

How is a university supposed to continue to educate students when operating funds have been cut by more than a fifth? If one in five students cannot get into a class needed for graduation, if college libraries have to close one day out of five, if one in five full-time faculty positions is cut, if every advisor is

responsible for hundreds more students, if buildings are dilapidated, roofs leak, rats and mold endanger the classrooms, and students have to navigate around buckets catching rainwater as they try to make their way to class?

That any state would allow – or even *cause* – such shortfalls is shameful, but it is especially so in New York. This state prides itself on leading the nation in progressive policy. And in many areas, it does. We celebrate the legislature's landmark policy achievements last year. But in fiscal support for public higher education, New York is far from a progressive leader. New York is failing CUNY students.

The consequences are heaviest for those least able to bear them, and that, too, is by design. CUNY undergraduates are overwhelmingly from poor communities of color. They are 80 percent Black, Latinx or Asian. They have average family incomes of less than \$30,000. They work at low-wage jobs. They raise children and support parents. They have survived

under-resourced public schools, immigration, refugee status and poverty. Why does New York erect barriers to their success? That many of them manage to stay in college, thrive and graduate is testimony to their own determination and the support they receive from the faculty and staff. Whether we as a state support their college education is a measure of our policy and of our humanity. We can and we must do better.

As the PSC calls on Albany to meet its obligation to public college students, we are also calling on New York City to shoulder a higher share of the costs of CUNY's senior colleges and on the federal government, to create a Title I appropriation for high-needs public colleges, akin to the Title I funding for public schools.

The PSC believes that New York can change its CUNY funding policy, just as you in the Legislature have led changes in other seemingly intractable policies. The 30,000 CUNY faculty and staff call on you to make this the year you reject New York's *policy*

of impoverishing CUNY and pass a budget that covers CUNY's basic costs. Doing so will take new revenue and political will, but the legislature demonstrated last year that this state can overcome resistance and achieve major progressive change.

Make sure that full funding for CUNY's essential needs is a priority in your legislative agendas and that the leaders of each house take a stand in favor of the new revenue that will be needed to achieve it. Refuse to pass a budget unless it includes new revenue from progressive taxation and covers CUNY's basic operating costs – without raising tuition.

CUNY FUNDING NEEDS IN FISCAL YEAR 2021

The PSC is requesting \$208 million more for CUNY senior colleges and \$24.6 million more for CUNY community colleges in next year's State budget. The funding is needed to cover mandatory cost increases, including collective bargaining increases, to close the TAP Gap, to add vitally needed full-time faculty and counselor positions, and to increase community college base aid.

The current funding model for the senior colleges is not sustainable. Before 2011, State funding cuts to CUNY and SUNY were sporadic and deep and were accompanied by large tuition increases. Now the tuition hikes come every year, and the underfunding is normalized, built into the funding model. The disinvestment may be less obvious, but it is no less intense.

CUNY senior colleges face shortages of supplies and equipment, reduced course offerings, limited hours for writing and tutoring centers, reduced hours for libraries. Faculty and staff positions are being left unfilled. Adjunct budgets have been reduced for academic departments throughout CUNY, department chairs in some departments have been asked to increase class size,

and fully enrolled course sections have been cancelled. Students are directly affected.

CUNY needs to accelerate its hiring, not freeze it. There is only one mental health counselor at CUNY for every 2,700 students. The nationally recommended ratio is 1: 1,000. There are 4,000 fewer full-time faculty today than when CUNY served fewer students. In 1975, CUNY had 11,500 full-time faculty and 250,000 students. Today, it has 7,500 full-time faculty and 274,000 students. Without its reliance on underpaid adjuncts, CUNY would have had to close more than a third of its colleges.

Closing colleges has been averted, but the crisis has not. There are a thousand silent crises at CUNY every day.

Increasing tuition is not the solution. A recent analysis from NYPIRG estimated that CUNY and SUNY students have paid \$2.5 billion in increased tuition since the enactment of SUNY/CUNY 2020 in 2011. That figure excludes tuition costs that were paid by the State through TAP.

FAIR AND PROGRESSIVE TAXATION

The only real solution, especially in a year with a \$6.1 billion budget deficit, is progressive taxation. It is absurd that working-class New Yorkers pay a higher effective tax rate than billionaires.

New York needs a new approach to CUNY funding. There is money in this rich state for free, high-quality public higher education for all who need and desire it. There is money for a New Deal for CUNY – and for universally great schools, quality health care, better public services and an expanded, well-maintained stock of public housing, too – if we make the progressive political choice to redistribute a fair measure of resources from those who have the most to those whose labor creates their wealth in New York State.

Increasing funding for CUNY would be an investment in racial justice, in educational justice, and in redistributive economic justice for the tens of thousands of New Yorkers who attend CUNY seeking to remake their lives. Investment has to start this year.

Erik McGregor