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Activists
gain
reprieve

Students win a brief victory against student fee reform.

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PSC tells CUNY in bargaining

Time to address salary erosion

PSC research has shown that for both faculty and staff, CUNY salaries have been in decline since the early 1970s when adjusted for today's dollars. CUNY can start to fix this problem at the bargaining table.

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Higher ed MOE bill returns

The "maintenance of effort" bill is alive again in Albany. Is the current political climate right for enacting this crucial higher ed funding? **PAGE 4**

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RF workers mobilize

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ELECTIONS

New union exec. council members

The union general election has concluded with some new faces in the executive council – including a new first vice president, Andrea Vásquez. **PAGES 8-9**



WORKLOAD

An academic health concern

High-profile suicides in the news are a reminder that rising workloads in the academic sector pose real public and mental health concerns. **PAGE 11**



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

What West Virginia teachers teach us

● I visited West Virginia on the day teachers voted to continue the statewide strike against the advice of their union's leadership. While the situation of K-12 teachers in West Virginia is different than the conditions of PSC members, some of the lessons from West Virginia are very relevant to us.

First is that the victory of teachers in West Virginia should lead CUNY faculty to question the wisdom that we can never strike due to the Taylor Law. What the West Virginia teachers demonstrated was that our employer can't fire us all at once; the defense against the legal repercussions of striking is solidarity. That's as true in a citywide strike in a huge city and system like CUNY as it is in a statewide strike in West Virginia.

Many PSC members are also members of other education unions, and many of our students, family and community members are also in unions. We've let the state and city whipsaw us using the stick of the Taylor Law and the carrot of future help from "allies" and "friends" winning elections. The result is that we've not been able to overcome the inequality within our own union or to successfully confront the broad effects of austerity on our jobs, our families, our students and our city. Rather than viewing fellow workers and community members merely as allies or supporters, we should build concrete solidarity as broadly as possible.

West Virginia teachers proved that solidarity can win demands even against a hostile statehouse and legislature. In New York, people often argue, and have here in *Clarion*, that things are different in that some elected Democrats are considered to be union and worker friendly, but we have to really question the success of a strategy that relies on their good will or power to win gains for us based on the outcomes we've so far observed. As in West Virginia, cuts to CUNY and the public sector have happened under progressives and centrist leadership and under Democrats and Republicans alike.

We need concerted rank-and-file organizing campus by campus and department by department. That's the real lesson of West Virginia, and one with a great deal of possibility here in New York.

Kate Doyle Griffiths
Hunter College

CLT unionism

● Over the spring semester, I had the opportunity to visit many colleagues across my campus as I assisted with the effort to get people to sign their blue cards and commit to the union. The enthusiasm and support for the PSC was heartening. I gained so much insight from these conversations, that reinforced my belief in the importance of being a

supportive member of the PSC. The degree to which our lives, professional and personal, are enhanced by union membership is a wonderful thing.

As such, we must never take what we have for granted. Necessities such as a livable wage and healthcare are sustainable only through our continued full support of the PSC. The power of collective bargaining makes these and all of the other benefits we depend on possible.

In the coming months, opting out of fee paying may be presented as a good deal, but falling for this kind of ruse will ultimately ensure that any perceived benefits are very short term. Without our collective commitment, we have no power to bargain. That is the bottom line.

As a senior college laboratory technician, I've seen that despite not being the largest chapter within the PSC, we do have a real voice. In our work, job duties can shift in any direction: programs and new courses being added, changes to existing curriculum, new technology, administrative changes, to name just a few. This typically results in the addition of duties to our workload, rather than simply changing what we do. In terms of the CLT salary

schedule, this issue is just one of many, in one chapter of many that needs to be addressed as we move toward creating a new contract. Again, however, it takes a strong union to make things like this happen. Given the political climate we live in, it cannot be overstated how important it is that we remain a united workforce.

Brian Morgan
Lehman College

The Baruch betrayal

● We have a great many reasons to doubt the wisdom of Baruch College's new Signature School Program with the Central Intelligence Agency. Some are moral – dealing with thorny issues of right and wrong – and some are practical.

We quickly learned that arguing moral points gives us no traction with our president, Mitchel Wallerstein. Having served as an assistant secretary in the Pentagon during the Clinton administration, President Wallerstein believes that despite the mistakes it has made, our country's national security apparatus protects us in a dangerous world. He acknowledges that the CIA has been responsible for atrocities, but believes that the good it does by preserving us from

harm far outweighs any damage it inflicts.

As a consequence, I have largely abandoned my efforts to speak of my doubts about the morality of the roles the CIA has played in torturing prisoners since 9/11. But I would like to briefly share my outlook with my colleagues.

I was a Naval flier during the Vietnam War. Because I was in continual danger of being shot down over North Vietnam and taken prisoner, the Navy sent me through its SERE (Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape) program, where I was treated as a POW and trained to resist. I was tortured there – badly. We were told that we were being subjected to this torture in order to help us withstand it if we were captured. The US military felt that its troops had performed badly under torture in the Korean War and that our country's honor had been besmirched. We were undergoing this brutal regimen in order to help protect America's honor, they explained.

Now fast forward to the present, when we know that the CIA applied the expertise gained torturing those who went through its SERE program to refine the techniques it used on captives taken in

the so-called "War on Terror." This is, for me, the very essence of betrayal. I was used, to put it baldly, as a guinea pig in the development of CIA torture practices (which it euphemistically calls "enhanced interrogation").

I have no ability to ignore this. There are many practical reasons why we should oppose Baruch's alliance with the CIA – for me there is an overriding moral imperative. How, I ask, can we pretend that liberal arts education is intended to provide students with something like a moral compass when our university quite clearly lacks one of its own?

Glenn Petersen
Baruch College

Universal healthcare

● Quality healthcare for all is a basic human right. It is not a commodity only for those who can afford the ever-rising costs of treatment and medicine. "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" is wishful thinking without universal healthcare.

The PSC contingent of in-service and retiree members made that point by participating in the New York Health Care Act rally and lobbying day in Albany on June 5.

We retirees understand the need for healthcare for all, especially as we age. In-service PSC members know that they have healthcare needs now and that they are retirees-in-training.

We know that we are fortunate (based on the struggles of previous generations of organized workers) to have NYC health benefits and a PSC Welfare Fund. We know that powerful and well-financed campaigns are out to shrink and privatize the public good of healthcare for all and the whole social safety net. This month we rallied and lobbied for the direct, immediate interests of our members.

Our interests are embedded in the needs and interests of the whole working class. They are one.

To be divided on this issue is a recipe for class weakness and defeat. How can we seek solidarity in support of our interests in public higher education as a public good if we "get ours" and ignore the healthcare needs of the whole people?

We are engaged in an ongoing political process to construct a bill and a program of quality healthcare for all. Let's do it. Together. For a more developed view of the dynamics of this struggle, and of ways to participate, go to NYHA.org.

John Hyland
LaGuardia Community College
Retired

Continued on page 9

'Criminal' food service at John Jay



PSC members rallied with Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union activists outside John Jay College in May, protesting the food service provider MJB, who the RWDSU says has violated workers' rights at the campus.

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Pressing BOT for more CUNY investment

By CLARION STAFF

CUNY faculty members and PSC officers attended a CUNY Board of Trustees hearing on June 18 at Hostos Community College to testify about the need for more state investment in CUNY. Members raised the issue of staggeringly low adjunct pay and the need for the recently passed “maintenance of effort” bill.

The PSC action at the BOT in June is just the latest in several union demonstrations regarding the underfunding of CUNY. In April dozens of adjuncts, as well as full-time PSC members, went to Albany to demand that lawmakers support the call for \$7K, the campaign to increase adjunct pay to \$7,000 per course, and PSC members also testified on the issue before the City Council and at previous BOT hearings. For the PSC, bringing adjunct pay at CUNY in line with what adjuncts earn at other peer institutions is not just an economic necessity for part-time PSC members, but a critical correction to the underpayment of adjuncts that shortchanges students and undermines CUNY’s educational mission.

Below are statements from PSC member testimonies in June.

A ZERO SUM?

CUNY seems to always accept the terms imposed by the state of a zero-sum game. A win in one area means a loss in another. Despite claims to care deeply about the students, the board and the chancellor seem to care more deeply about whether they will offend Governor Cuomo, who has never expressed a deep understanding or concern about CUNY. He has consistently opposed the union’s efforts to support a maintenance of effort bill and increase the amount of state investment to hire many more full-time faculty.

Pushing for MOE and ‘\$7K’ for adjuncts



Adjuncts and other PSC activists testified about investment at CUNY, the teaching load reduction and adjunct pay.

The PSC’s vision was one that would have included adequate funding for full-time replacement lines, some of which would go to qualified long-serving adjuncts. Instead, provosts and presidents are having to make choices that diminish rather than expand academic services: the availability of computers, space, and courses for students and the investment in professional development for faculty and staff are just some of the cuts that are being considered. Hints are given to the chairs that maybe there will be less money available for sabbaticals or travel money.

The university boasts about its reputation as a center for re-

search, yet faculty who had been awarded time to do research now find that reassigned time received in the past is being challenged by administrators. Rather than using the three-credit reduction to enhance time to do research, it is being used to reduce it. Similarly, there is an expectation that time given out for departmental and college responsibilities will also be reduced. I hope that the BOT is clear that we will recommend that faculty not perform these responsibilities if their reassigned time is withdrawn.

Lorraine Cohen
LaGuardia Community College

CUNY needs more state funding.

HIGH RENT, LOW PAY

Let’s just look at rents. The average monthly rent for a one-bedroom in Staten Island is \$1,500; Bronx is \$1,600; Queens is \$2,100; Brooklyn is \$2,400; Manhattan is \$3,100. The average monthly rent for the five boroughs for a one-bedroom is \$2,140.

Contrast these rents with four upstate New York cities where there are SUNY colleges. The average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Binghamton is \$700; in Albany it is \$1,000; in Buffalo and New Paltz it is \$1,100. The rent in those four cities for a one-bedroom apartment averages out to \$975 per month. Over a one-year period, the difference in average rent for a one-

bedroom between upstate and New York City amounts to \$14,560.

Or New York City rents for a one-bedroom are 120 percent higher on average than upstate.

Mayor Ed Koch once said that one week’s salary for one month’s rent is what New Yorkers ought to be paying – or 25 percent of one’s earnings. Right now, a CUNY adjunct teaching three CUNY courses pays two-thirds of her salary on rent for a one-bedroom apartment. Often, to compensate for the nine-credit limit at any one campus, CUNY adjuncts also teach at other colleges and universities in the New York City area. This promotes a lessening of identification of CUNY adjuncts with any one college.

If we don’t achieve our contract demand for \$7,000 a course, the stressful financial and psychological circumstances that many of CUNY’s over 14,000 adjuncts endure will deepen as rents in New York City continue to rise at a rate faster than adjunct salaries.

Anthony Gronowicz
Borough of Manhattan
Community College

CUNY: STAY TRUE

I spent many years of my life working as an organizer and advocate for low-wage workers who struggled to make ends meet and often joined together with their coworkers for a living wage and just working conditions.

I am presently a doctoral student in sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center, have taught as an adjunct lecturer at the Murphy Institute and Hunter College, and will begin as a Humanities Alliance Teaching Fellow at LaGuardia Community College in the Fall. I, like other talented, dedicated, hardworking adjunct faculty at CUNY, am now also a low-wage worker joining together with my coworkers for a living wage and just working conditions.

The annual pay for the average adjunct lecturer teaching a full load of eight courses at CUNY is \$28,000. This is about \$20,000 less than the yearly income of \$48,000 required for a modest-yet-adequate standard of living for even a single person without children in my borough of Brooklyn, according to the Economic Policy Institute. CUNY’s low adjunct pay is even 50 percent less than comparable public university systems in our neighboring states of New Jersey and Connecticut. This is unconscionable.

I call on the Board of Trustees to do everything in its power to fulfill the stated mission espoused on its website and subway advertising to foster upward mobility while serving the children of the whole people within the city of New York. It cannot be true to this mission while providing poverty-level compensation to the dedicated faculty teaching the majority of its undergraduate courses.

Lynne Turner
Murphy Institute, Hunter College

Preparing for *Janus* – no matter what

By ARI PAUL

By the time this newspaper reaches members, the Supreme Court will have likely issued a decision in the case *Janus v. AFSCME*, and most observers expect that the five-justice conservative majority will overturn a four-decade precedent and rule that public-sector unions may no longer collect agency shop fees.

HIGH STAKES

The impact of such a decision cannot be understated: non-members in a bargaining unit will no longer pay the union that represents them at the bargaining table and in legislative campaigns for public funding. Dozens of cases like *Janus* have moved through the court system, all backed by right-wing and anti-union groups, with the intention of crippling unions’ financial power and undermining their abilities to

Organizing PSC members

organize workers, defend government services from privatization and negotiate for good wages and healthcare benefits.

The PSC is well prepared for such a decision. Together with union staff, rank-and-file members have mobilized on all campuses to get members to sign re-commitment cards and to get non-members to sign, solidifying their place in the union. PSC is in a strong position – around 95 percent of full-time faculty and staff members are members. Some campuses – such as LaGuardia Community College, York College and Bronx Community College – have a 100 percent membership rate among full-time faculty. Members across the university are building department

rep systems to continue this constant, on-the-ground organizing.

But that is no reason to rest, because if the expected decision comes down from the court, the PSC organizing model will be forever changed. The union will be in constant organizing mode.

A critical time for all unions

It will be the duty of organizers, chapter chairs and rank-and-file members in the days, months and years ahead to build networks on their campuses to be constantly meeting members – old and new – and to build power by making a strong union presence at each campus. As PSC members make clear to CUNY faculty and staff why a strong union is necessary for maintaining adequate pay and benefits, the PSC will not only survive in this post-

Janus environment, it will indeed thrive.

It is, of course, possible that the court may not rule against agency shop fees. However, while that might be cause for a collective sigh of relief among public-sector unions, the fight against this so-called “right-to-work” movement will continue.

THE RIGHT’S AGENDA

There are several other lawsuits in federal courts targeting the agency shop fee system. Some anti-union groups have pushed a “right-to-work” law – similar to the kinds of legislation nearly half the states have enacted – at the national level. No matter what, the far-right’s thirst to crush organized labor will continue, and workers must organize in response.

Janus is sparking a new kind of grassroots organizing and mobilizing that will be necessary for the labor movement.

Coalition pushes plan for 'free CUNY'

By ARI PAUL

In late December of 2017, a task force assembled in response to a bill sponsored by City Council Higher Education Committee Chair Inez Barron completed a 21-point plan that would increase accessibility, affordability and graduation rates at CUNY. It was formed as the result of rallies, council hearings and a task force that included students and the PSC president. The proposal was ready for a public release, calling for a return to the days of free tuition, as well as to hire more full-time faculty and to increase pay for adjunct faculty. The task force, in fact, had been established by the stroke of Mayor Bill de Blasio's executive pen in 2016.

But Mayor de Blasio's office told the task force to wait. It wasn't the Christmas present Barron had expected.

MAYORAL INACTION

The explanation, as Barron tells it, was that the mayor was eager to read and respond to the report, and eventually release it during the finalization of the next city budget. Despite the disappointment, this explanation seemed reasonable.

Spring forward to late May, as the city budget cycle was wrapping up, and the task force learned that the mayor's office was delaying its response to and release of the report.

"We're very displeased and I think it was very disingenuous of the mayor to do that," Barron said, during a May 30 rally on the steps of City Hall just before a higher education committee hearing on the subject.

Hercules Reid, the co-chair of the task force and a graduate of City Tech, said of the mayor's office's sudden retreat from the report, "Is that a shame? That's a crying shame," and said that City Hall was "disregarding what the [task force] took time to create."

A DETAILED PLAN

Stephen Brier, a professor of history at the Graduate Center and a member of the task force, argued that the 21-point plan outlined ways the city could support free tuition at CUNY and realize the necessary investment to add an estimated 3,000 full-time faculty positions, which had been lost since the 1975 financial crisis. It also detailed how to lift adjunct faculty pay to \$7,000 per course per semester.

Other recommendations included creating an emergency fund for low-income students who encounter financial hardships while in school, working with the Department of Education to hire full-time guidance counselors to assist students in the transition from high school to college and investment in free MetroCards for CUNY students.

Noting that CUNY had been tuition-free from 1847 until 1977, Brier said, "It's not ridiculous to think we could go back to that."

Of course, Brier noted, achieving a final recommendation with

A 21-point plan for more accessibility



Graduate Center historian and task-force member Stephen Brier urging the mayor to consider the group's recommendations.

City Hall would take negotiation, possibly enacting new taxes – like

a millionaire's tax on the state level or, as the PSC and other groups have demanded, implementing a 0.5 percent stock buyback tax that could achieve \$2 billion in revenue for the state. However, he said, both City Hall and the governor's office seemed to lack the political will to discuss those options (CUNY's senior colleges are funded by the

state, not the city).

"The city got a little complacent after the financial responsibility for four-year colleges went to the state," Brier said.

An 'aspirational' report that calls for more investment

Raul Contreras, a spokesperson for Mayor de Blasio, said in a statement, "The mayor believes that CUNY should be affordable and we continue to invest to help make that happen despite not having control over the system. In

fact, the city will contribute nearly \$255 million annually by 2021. We will continue to work with the City Council and state to provide high-quality, affordable education at CUNY."

TUITION COSTS

Gotham Gazette analyzed the tuition burden at CUNY thusly: "As it stands, tuition at CUNY, where half a million students pursue either undergraduate or graduate degrees, is \$6,530 per year at senior colleges

and \$4,800 per year at community colleges (for in-state students; out-of-state students pay much more). In the 2008-09 school year, tuition at senior colleges was \$4,000 and at community colleges was \$2,800. There has been a 63 percent and 71 percent jump, respectively, in 10 years."

MORE INVESTMENT

In addition to insisting on the imposition of free tuition and investing more money into faculty, the task force put forth several recommendations for repairs and upkeep at campus buildings. The task force also call on CUNY to expand Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), open up the state Excelsior Scholarship to part-time students in addition to full-time students and to open childcare centers for faculty, staff and students at all campuses.

Brier added that the real financial problem for CUNY was in Albany. Governor Andrew Cuomo has not only balked at addressing the historic underfunding of CUNY, but has implemented the Excelsior Scholarship, which Brier alleged still mostly benefits SUNY students in far greater numbers than CUNY students.

"He cares a lot about upstate constituents; he doesn't care about New York City," Brier said of Governor Cuomo, adding this is because "he's running for president."

Brier said the report was meant to be aspirational, to start a conversation on how free tuition and more investment for faculty could be achieved. Barron agreed that she didn't believe the mayor would adopt all 21 suggestions in a final budget proposal.

She said, "Maybe we can get 20."

MOE bill goes to governor, again

By ARI PAUL

If at first you don't succeed – try, try again.

That's the adage guiding a united coalition of public higher education activists who backed the reintroduction of the CUNY and SUNY "maintenance of effort" (MOE) bill, which would require each annual New York State budget to include funds for CUNY and SUNY to cover the inflationary increases in operating costs at the four-year colleges, such as rent, utilities and contractual salary increases.

A new MOE bill has passed both the Senate and the NY State Assembly with bipartisan support. The PSC is aiming, during this turbulent political season, to push for the bill's enactment into law.

"With the rollout of the Excelsior Scholarship last year, Governor Cuomo invited more New Yorkers to further their education at our world-class higher education systems," Assembly Higher Education

Funding bill gets a chance

Committee Chair Deborah Glick said in a statement. "That commitment to students must continue with appropriate resources. The maintenance of effort legislation will make certain that SUNY and CUNY are better supported to meet the additional challenges of educating more students who have been attracted by the promise of free tuition. Enactment of this legislation will make certain that SUNY and CUNY are equipped to prepare the next generation of New Yorkers."

NEAR-UNANIMOUS SUPPORT

While the bill gained nearly unanimous support in both houses last year, Governor Andrew Cuomo vetoed the measure, and had vetoed a similar measure in 2015, as well. This new bill goes beyond the 2019 budget commitment to provide level

funding and cover fringe benefit cost increases and it also would require the state to cover the increased costs of the TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) waivers as tuition increases.

More funds for routine cost increases

While the state budget for the 2019 fiscal year has already been finalized, the union hopes that passage of the new MOE bill could relieve some of the current financial pressure CUNY faces as it negotiates the next contract with the PSC.

"This is for the next budget cycle," said PSC legislative representative Mike Fabricant, adding that a commitment on funding for negotiated increases will make a timely contract agreement more achievable.

The MOE has long been a high priority for the union as it would start the restoration of CUNY's financial

health by ensuring that the inflation-adjusted cost of operating the four-year colleges in each system is met each year (two-year CUNY schools are partially funded by the city).

Since Governor Cuomo has already vetoed the MOE twice, it is easy to see the MOE fight as a Sisyphean affair. But 2018 has already proven to be a topsy-turvy political year. With numerous challengers in various Democratic races and the possibility of a Democrat-controlled State Senate, Governor Cuomo may be inspired to change course, if advocates raise funding for public higher education as a state priority.

POLITICAL PRESSURE

"Hopefully, Governor Cuomo will do the right thing this time," said Susan Kang, an associate professor of political science at John Jay College, who is active in New York City politics.

She continued, "In this primary season, Cuomo has moved on several issues. We know access and affordability of higher education is one of the most important issues for New Yorkers."

Students beat back fee proposal – for now

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

When you fight back, you can get results. CUNY students learned this powerful lesson in May after a university-wide coalition of students, with support from the PSC, forced the CUNY Board of Trustees (BOT) to postpone a vote on controversial changes to student activity fees, changes that would have compromised the independence of student media and gutted funding for certain student groups.

“Tonight was a good example of what student organizing can do. Student power is real,” Smitha Varghese told a crowd of students gathered together on May 9 to protest the fee changes. Varghese is a Queens College junior and the chair of the board of directors for the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), a student group that is specifically targeted by the proposed changes to the students’ fees. “Keep up the momentum. We need to continue organizing,” she said.

STUDENT PRESSURE

The board’s postponement of student activity fee changes was the direct result of student activism. Students sat in on committee meetings tasked with drafting the changes, dozens spoke out at BOT hearings and students examined and protested the legal basis for the changes. Student activists also secured the support of several elected officials, as well as the PSC.

“This hasn’t been defeated. This is a cat with many lives,” PSC legislative representative Mike Fabricant told *Clarion*. “Larger numbers

Pushing against the board



Ellen Moynihan

Dozens of students packed the hallway as they waited to be let in to a May Board of Trustees meeting at City College.

of students and a more multifaceted kind of pressure will be needed in order to squash it.”

The day the board announced the fee-change postponement, more than 100 students attended a rally with several City Council members present. In a royal blue suit pinned with a “Stay Woke” button, City Councilman and Brooklyn College alumnus Jumaane Williams addressed the crowd of students, who had assembled before the BOT meeting.

“We are not going to stand by, we are not going to be quiet while you’re

taking away the power of students,” Williams said at the rally, specifically calling out the Board of Trustees and Governor Andrew Cuomo. Williams is also running for lieutenant governor.

Students protested for months over the proposed changes that they said would limit political speech on campus and, specifically, end the funding stream for NYPIRG. The changes seemed like a done deal, and they were expected to be formalized in late June despite stu-

dent protest. Students who had sat in on various committee meetings released a statement about their “collective disappointment” when they allegedly heard CUNY General Counsel Loretta Martinez specifically say that Governor Andrew Cuomo had an interest in defunding student advocacy groups. (See “Board proposal diminishes student control over fees,” in the May issue of *Clarion*.)

‘BEST PRACTICES’

CUNY’s proposal to revise its bylaws regarding student activity fees came as the result of a recent legal settlement at Queens College and, says the BOT, the need to bring university policies in line with “best practices.” But those organizing around the issue said the proposed changes did not seem to be legally mandated, as the university claims.

Hunter College senior John Aderounmu, who is the student representative on the CUNY BOT, submitted a letter to former Attorney General Eric Schneiderman’s office, the office which had represented the board in the recent QC case. The letter asked for the office’s legal opinion regarding the recent legal settlement, and the legal basis for the elimination of student referenda funding for certain groups and the ending of allocations for activity fees to organizations, such as NYPIRG, incorporated outside of CUNY.

The State Attorney General’s Office intervened. In a May 1 letter to the CUNY BOT, Deputy Attorney

General Kent Stauffer wrote that the recent settlement was only binding to Queens College. The office “did not draft” nor “review” the proposed changes, and the scope of the lawsuit and the settlement did not deal with funding to external organizations, the letter stated.

“To the extent that CUNY’s Board chooses, in its own fiduciary capacity, to amend ... bylaws governing the manner in which such organizations are funded, it does so at its own discretion, rather than at the behest of OAG in response to the [QC] settlement,” wrote Stauffer.

The letter came a week before the scheduled Board meeting when the CUNY BOT postponed their plans to change the bylaws.

“We are not voting to change the bylaws today. Any vote will include extensive input from all relevant constituencies,” BOT Chair William Thompson told those who were assembled in City College’s Great Hall. “For all of the students of CUNY, we hear you. We appreciate your voices and urge you to continue to speak out.”

ORGANIZING CONTINUES

But in a rally after the meeting, students expressed that their fight wasn’t over. Students assembled outside after the announcement.

Hercules Reid, University Student Senate legislative director, told students to pay attention to the word “postpone,” noting that the board was planning to take up the proposals in the Fall semester, and that students should prepare for the battle ahead.

“This is a victory for now,” Reid said, “but not forever.”

RF field units look for gains

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

In order to secure a contract with livable wages and benefits, PSC activists at the Research Foundation’s (RF) on-campus locations know they must engage in a multifaceted contract campaign – that’s why they’re planning their campaign now ahead of their contract expiration date at the end of June 2021. The 600 RF workers on the campuses whom the PSC represents are part of what some have called “the shadow university.” Many do work very similar to that of CUNY employees, but most are paid through grants. Through their contracts, PSC members on the RF payroll continue to make gains in pay and job security for this sector of the vast contingent workforce at CUNY.

And with the RF board having not yet ratified the current contract as this newspaper went to press, members’ emotions among members were running high.

“We’re hoping more and more RF members become very active at their sites,” Iris DeLutro, PSC Vice

Facing the hurdles



Dave Sanders

Research Foundation unit member Sharon Jones participating in a strategy session with other union activists.

President of Cross Campus Units, told RF members in attendance at a summer strategy meeting held at the PSC Union Hall in June. “This is the moment to do that,” she said.

INCREASING VISIBILITY

RF activists from the Graduate Center, LaGuardia Community College and New York City College of Technology also attended the plan-

ning meeting, and represented the three CUNY RF field units and about 600 workers in the bargaining unit. Because RF workers mostly work in grant-funded positions, their employment is often tenuous and they are scattered in different departments. A unique challenge for the RF members is identifying and contacting to all members in their unit.

At the planning meeting, members came up with ideas on how to conduct member outreach and increase chapter visibility on campus. They discussed setting up a steward structure in order to reach out to all the RF employees on a given campus.

Jay Klokker, an ESL instructor at City Tech, served on the bargaining team for the first contract. He knows that this kind of organizing takes time.

Describing the work behind the first RF field unit contract, Klokker said, “The organizers were trying to have face-to-face meetings with everybody. It was a long process... The thing that got people the most upset was year after year with no raises whatsoever.”

Ultimately with that first contract in 2011, RF field unit members were successful in winning a 2-percent annual raise, something that had

seemed impossible before organizing. The unit’s most recent contract, ratified this summer, includes a minimum of 2 percent raises per year or \$575, whichever is greater, and requires employee contributions to the health insurance premium to remain at 19 percent.

But RF workers need more than a basic salary increase; they need changes in their working conditions to ensure that they are not treated as a disposable workforce. Because

Planning ahead for a contract campaign

almost all positions in these units are grant-funded, many RF employees are sometimes required to take their vacation time before their grant cycle ends or forfeit it completely. Many RF workers want to fix this situation. This is an issue that can be addressed before the next round of bargaining, because management has the discretion to allow people to carry over the time if they will be working on the same grant.

Another major concern among workers is job security. Other important issues are continuing education reimbursements and paid holidays for part-time employees. The RF workers plan to systematically identify the issues through

Continued on page 8

The UUP, SUNY contract – a complex pay agreement

By ARI PAUL

At first glance, the proposed contract settlement struck in May between SUNY and the United University Professions (UUP), which represents SUNY faculty and staff, seems simple enough: 2 percent annual raises over the six-year life of the contract, a first-time minimum pay floor for adjuncts and an inclusion of UUP members in the state's paid family leave program.

But the agreement is actually slightly more complex than it has been reported. On the one hand, the contract, which runs from July 2, 2016, until July 2022, includes 2 percent annual raises – a similar provision to what two other unions, the Public Employees Federation and the Civil Service Employees Association, have also reached with New York State.

OTHER MONEY

However, according to a memo from the UUP explaining the deal, “In each of the final four years, it includes an additional 1 percent pool of on-base money split evenly between dollars for discretionary salary increases and money dedicated to address salary inequity and compression. The

Raises, adjunct minimums

first year's discretionary payment, though not to base, provides for a \$600 lump sum payment to full-time employees, prorated for part-timers.”

SUNY employees, unlike PSC members, do not receive step increases – they may receive increments to salary at the chancellor or their college president's discretion.

The UUP's explanation continued, “With the across-the-board increases, members will see an effective increase in their paychecks of 6.1 percent compounded as soon as practicable following ratification. Over the life of the agreement, the across-the-board increases will boost salaries by approximately 12.6 percent compounded.”

It's difficult to compare the SUNY adjunct deal to the PSC demands, as SUNY adjuncts have been paid differently than CUNY adjuncts. While part-time faculty members at CUNY and SUNY have been demanding better pay, CUNY adjuncts have been demanding a raise to their contractual minimum wage, whereas SUNY adjuncts never had a minimum wage until this contract.

Two percent raises and other benefits



UUP President Frederick Kowal

As of July of 2019, the new minimums will be \$3,000 per course for part-time faculty at university centers and health science centers and \$2,500 at comprehensive and tech campuses – those numbers will rise, over time, to \$3,750 and \$3,250, respectively, by July of 2022.

By contrast, CUNY adjunct lecturers earn a minimum of \$3,222 for a three-credit course per semester. It is not immediately clear how

much beyond these minimums many adjuncts earn per course across the state and how many adjuncts will experience significant increases. The UUP summary indicates that SUNY adjuncts paid at the minimum will see a 25 to 30 percent increase in pay per course between 2019 and 2022.

The UUP memo states that the “contract establishes an executive-level labor-management committee charged to develop a methodology for analyzing and addressing salary compression on campuses for full-time and part-time employees, and provides that each campus will devote on-base discretionary funds to redressing salary inequities.”

PSC leaders point out that adjuncts at CUNY have different needs. After all, the minimums in the UUP pact are a new feature for SUNY, and while many adjuncts may earn much more than that at certain SUNY campuses, the cost of living for CUNY faculty is often much higher than for SUNY faculty in upstate areas. “The PSC remains dead-serious about addressing erosion of all salaries and continuing our fight for \$7K,” PSC President Barbara Bowen told *Clarion*.

Also notable in the contract was the inclusion of UUP members in the

state's paid family leave program – it's a first for a public sector union since the program was enacted as a law affecting private companies in New York State earlier this year, although full-time PSC members have enjoyed contractual paid parental leave since 2009.

While the healthcare plan for UUP members doesn't change significantly, there are a few cost increases – the most significant increases are a \$95 ambulatory surgery copay (a \$35 increase) at in-network hospitals and a \$50 ambulatory surgery copay for “participating medical professionals” (an increase of \$20).

HEALTH BENEFITS

The state will also realize cost savings on the health benefit front by ending the “opt-out program” next year. “This program, first implemented with the 2014 plan year, allowed certain employees who have alternate (non-NYS) health insurance coverage to receive a cash credit for opting out of [state coverage],” the memo said. “Employees who have alternate coverage may still choose not to enroll in [a state plan] (thereby avoiding the bi-weekly cost of the employee share of premium), but will not receive the additional cash credit.”

The contract must still be ratified by the membership this summer before it is fully implemented. UUP President Frederick Kowal said in a statement, “This is a fair and equitable agreement that meets the unique needs of our members and provides them with reasonable salary increases, paid family leave benefits, a new minimum salary for part-time faculty and other enhancements that address members' concerns.”

Rabinowitz starts as interim chancellor

By ARI PAUL

As of June 1, Vita Rabinowitz began serving as interim CUNY chancellor – while a search committee looks for a permanent replacement for James B. Milliken. The PSC has been communicating with Rabinowitz directly on pressing CUNY matters such as contract negotiations and implementing the teaching load reduction.

HUNTER ADMINISTRATOR

Before being tapped as CUNY's temporary chancellor, Rabinowitz served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at Hunter College in addition to serving as a CUNY-wide provost. She is also a former faculty member and department chair of Hunter's psychology department.

“She was a great colleague – enthusiastic, supportive and just a really solid colleague. When she became the provost, I found her to be absolutely delightful to deal with,” said Tami Gold, an alternate delegate from Hunter College and a former PSC chapter chair. “When there were difficulties, if I negotiated with Vita, there was

Former Hunter provost

always a good chance at a positive resolution.”

In terms of what to expect as an interim chancellor, Gold said of Rabinowitz, “I feel optimistic. Vita has always been a supporter of public higher education and appreciates the nuance of what that means.”

Mike Fabricant, who until recently served as the union's first vice president and is a professor of social work at Hunter College, said that Rabinowitz had showed admirable tenacity by staying on as an administrator under Hunter College President Jennifer Raab during a time of high turnover among administrators. “She was the one person who kind of endured over a decade,” he said.

CHANCELLOR SEARCH

Fabricant added that while she has a record of being “congenial” and “respectful” toward faculty and staff, the real question remains whether CUNY will ultimately end up with a strong and independent permanent chancellor

– he noted that Rabinowitz is not under consideration by the search committee, which includes two faculty members, for the permanent position.

“We have an interim chancellor. I feel like the university has been more or less rudderless for about six months, because Milliken was a lame duck chancellor,” Fabricant said. “They have moved Rabinowitz into that role, but fundamentally the university has no stability in its leadership roles. That really is damaging. So, the hope is they find a permanent chancellor who is given the autonomy and the discretion to move the university forward.”

Upon her appointment, CUNY Board of Trustees Chairperson William C. Thompson said of Rabinowitz, “Her distinguished scholarly accomplishments, commitment to student success and tireless devotion to the university make her ideally suited to provide the direction and stability the system needs until a new chancellor assumes office.”



Vita Rabinowitz will serve as interim chancellor until a permanent chancellor is appointed.

Demanding fair CUNY salaries

By ARI PAUL

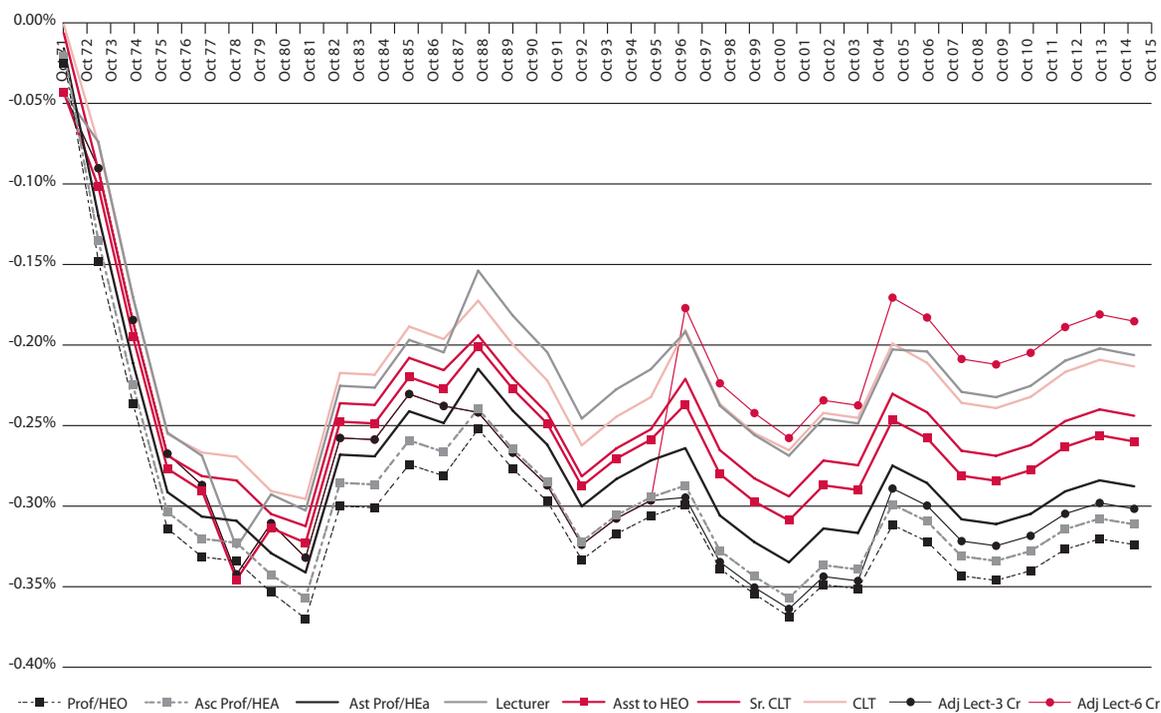
When the PSC bargaining team met with CUNY negotiators in May, the spotlight was on the demand for 5 percent annual salary increases in each year of the contract for all titles. Current contracts for public-sector workers in New York State have uniformly been settled with raises of 2 percent per year. While achieving higher raises and exceeding the “pattern” set by other contracts is rarely accomplished, PSC negotiators made a compelling case.

It is important to understand the history of how CUNY salaries became substantially lower than those at comparable institutions in and around New York City and other prestigious universities around the country.

FISCAL CRISIS

Flash back to 1971 (the year of the first PSC contract negotiations, ratified in 1973): CUNY full-time faculty salaries were the envy of those at peer institutions – CUNY pay was substantially higher than salaries even at Columbia University, New York City’s lone Ivy League institution. CUNY was made to be an inclusive institution, and having the opportunity to teach at such a place and to live with a decent salary in New York City was considered a coveted job in the academic job market.

Top-Step Salaries: Percentage Change 1971-2017, Expressed in April 2017 Dollars



PSC research shows that, starting in 1971, salaries at CUNY began a precipitous drop in value, first because inflation was increasing faster than salary rates, and second, because of the New York City financial crisis of 1975. The chart above shows that inflation-adjusted top-step salaries for full- and part-time titles lost

25 percent to more than 30 percent of their value during the first half of the 1970s and then dropped even further during the second half of the decade. CUNY suffered even more significantly from changes as a result

of the 1975 financial crisis, when the city was at the brink of insolvency. Many remember the tension of the era – such as the *Daily News* headline “FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD” – but sometimes forgotten is what hap-

pened to the city’s social democratic institutions, including CUNY. As a result, most notably, the state served disproportionate budget cuts to CUNY. Very few full-time faculty were hired – an entire generation of faculty was lost. A period of disinvestment in CUNY, which has persisted for decades, commenced.

The PSC has, indeed, won increases over the years, but those increases have been offset by the general decline in wages, in part thanks to inflation. The ongoing “salary erosion,” as Brooklyn College political scientist and PSC bargaining team member Steve London calls it, has occurred while CUNY wages are “trying to walk up a down escalator.”

FALLING BEHIND

The result today for CUNY is staggering. Look at the lists below – a Columbia University professor, on average, earns twice what a CUNY senior college professor earns, and often has subsidized Manhattan housing as part of the compensation package. Other public university systems in the region – Rutgers-Newark, University of Connecticut, SUNY-Stony Brook – offer more in salary on average than the CUNY senior colleges.

But that’s not even the whole story: public universities located in places where the cost of living is significantly lower than in New York still offer higher salaries. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill might pay “only” \$33,000 more, on average, than the \$126,500 offered at CUNY senior colleges, but factor in that it can be much easier, and cheaper, to move into a spacious house in the Triangle region than it is to find a one-bedroom in a walk-up within easy commuting distance of a CUNY campus.

ATTRACTING TALENT

The effect on CUNY – as the union has told the CUNY Board of Trustees, the City Council, the State Legislature and the press – has been that talented academics, despite being drawn to CUNY’s mission and its location in New York City, are often reluctant to accept full-time faculty jobs at CUNY. Why should one struggle paycheck to paycheck in New York City when one can live more comfortably and have a lower teaching load at, for instance, Penn State?

“This precipitous decline was due to the double impact of inflation and the New York City fiscal crisis,” London said. “The salary-steps’ real value decline hit bottom in 1982, and rebounded somewhat during the mid to late 1980s. But, the city and state austerity policies of the 1990s – along with tax cuts for the wealthy, under the first Governor Cuomo, Governor Pataki and Mayor Giuliani – led to five years of 0-percent increases over two contracts.”

As contract talks continue over the summer, the union’s bargaining team will continue to highlight this trend and press the need of correcting historic salary erosion.

National Comparison of CUNY Salaries, 2017-2018
Full-Time Professorial Faculty, Senior Colleges

Institution	Professor Average Salary	Assistant Average Salary
Columbia University in the City of New York	\$251,300	\$126,200
New York University	\$214,500	\$115,200
University of California-Los Angeles	\$204,000	\$106,000
Cornell University	\$178,700	\$116,600
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	\$170,200	\$95,600
Fordham University	\$169,900	\$100,300
Rutgers University-New Brunswick	\$165,900	\$86,300
University of Miami	\$164,200	\$98,200
University of Maryland-College Park	\$160,800	\$95,400
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	\$159,300	\$95,700
St John's University-New York	\$158,600	\$93,300
Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus	\$157,000	\$90,400
Michigan State University	\$154,600	\$82,600
University of Massachusetts-Amherst	\$153,400	\$91,200
University of Connecticut	\$153,400	\$91,200
Stony Brook University	\$152,900	\$88,700
Ohio State University-Main Campus	\$150,000	\$89,400
Hofstra University	\$145,200	\$95,600
Pace University-New York	\$142,500	\$85,200
CUNY Senior Colleges	\$126,500	\$86,900
Kean University New Jersey	\$125,700	\$84,000
University of Rhode Island	\$122,900	\$83,700
LIU Post	\$119,800	\$89,100
University of Maine	\$112,700	\$68,500

Regional Comparison of CUNY Salaries, 2017-2018
Full-Time Professorial Faculty, Senior Colleges

Institution	Professor Average Salary	Assistant Average Salary
Columbia University in the City of New York	\$251,300	\$126,200
Princeton University	\$238,000	\$115,200
New York University	\$214,500	\$115,200
Yale University	\$214,300	\$109,600
Rutgers University-Newark	\$183,100	\$107,500
Cornell University	\$178,700	\$116,600
Fordham University	\$169,900	\$100,300
Barnard College	\$168,700	\$89,600
University of Rochester	\$166,700	\$106,900
Rutgers University-New Brunswick	\$165,900	\$86,300
Yeshiva University	\$163,600	\$100,900
St John's University-New York	\$158,600	\$93,300
Rutgers University-Camden	\$154,700	\$89,100
University of Connecticut	\$153,400	\$91,200
Stony Brook University	\$152,900	\$88,700
Hofstra University	\$145,200	\$95,600
The New School	\$143,900	\$82,600
Adelphi University	\$143,000	\$86,000
Pace University-New York	\$142,005	\$85,200
New York Institute of Technology	\$133,100	\$91,400
SUNY at Binghamton	\$129,400	\$76,700
CUNY Senior Colleges	\$126,500	\$86,900
Kean University - New Jersey	\$125,700	\$84,000
Manhattan College	\$124,500	\$84,800
LIU Post	\$119,800	\$89,100
College of Mount Saint Vincent	\$99,100	\$72,200

Vásquez brings experience as First VP

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

Growing up in a union household in Brooklyn, Andrea Vásquez, the recently elected PSC first vice president, is no stranger to unions. Her father, a typesetter, was a member, a delegate and a grievance counselor for the International Typographical Union, and her mother was involved with unions and progressive causes.

Vásquez became involved with the PSC while working at the Graduate Center's American Social History Project, and she has moved from alternate delegate to delegate, and from bargaining committee member to chair of the Higher Education Officer (HEO) chapter. This spring, she became the PSC's first vice president, replacing Mike Fabricant.

"I'm really excited to work alongside the other principal officers and member leaders in order to confront our current challenges," Vásquez said.

CRITICAL TIMES

Vásquez assumes her role as first vice president at a critical moment for the labor movement. By the end of June, the Supreme Court is expected to rule, in the case *Janus v AFSCME*, in favor of making the collection of agency fees by public sector unions unconstitutional. As this newspaper went to press, a final ruling by the Supreme Court was still pending.

Vásquez joins three other women who are PSC's principal officers. While the PSC has a long tradition of female leadership, it is the first

A HEO from a CUNY family



Andrea Vásquez spoke during a PSC contract rally in December.

time all four principal officers are women, and Vásquez is the second HEO to assume a principal officer position since 2000.

It was strong female union members, HEOs at the Graduate Center, who originally inspired her to get involved with the PSC.

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

"They taught me about the major issues facing HEOs. They taught me about the limits of promotion and its significance in their work lives," Vásquez said. "Many worked in the same department, same title for

20 years. They were just outraged and appalled that they could not get promoted."

As a member of the bargaining committee, Vásquez was proud of breakthroughs in the latest contract, which created opportunities for the financial advancement of her fellow HEOs. As HEO chapter chair, she, along with other HEO leaders, established nearly two dozen labor-management committees, one at each college, to review applications for differentials according to the new provisions in the PSC-CUNY contract that allow for HEO advancement.

Identifying leaders in the HEO chapter and getting workers more involved with union work is also a goal for Vásquez. For the past year, she has been signing up workers as full, dues-paying union members.

"People need to make a conscious decision [about joining the union]. This is not something that they can be passive about," Vásquez told *Clarion*. "Many of our rights and benefits could be undermined or lost, so it is important for us to stay active and stay members."

LOOKING AHEAD

Committing to the union involves a lot of one-on-one and follow-up conversations, she said. It's routine and, oftentimes, unglamorous work, but it's necessary to build a powerful union.

"The hardest part of organizing is moving people from step to step," Vásquez said. "You listen, get to know people and build independent areas of activity."

Under her leadership, the HEO chapter has reached 95 percent membership. As HEO chapter chair, she has visited every campus, talked to every constituency and also knows the concerns of other titles. One advance that she would like to see in this round of bargaining is increased salary schedules for staff in CLT titles. She is committed to the union's coalition work, especially at a time when ordinary people are facing pressing concerns around health-

care, education, housing and immigration. As first vice president, she plans to be active in progressive initiatives in the state and city that would better the lives of union members, CUNY students and the larger New York City community.

Solidarity is nothing new to Vásquez, who grew up going to rallies and supporting workers, including her father, on the picket lines. A Hunter College graduate herself, Vásquez comes from a CUNY family. Two of her children went to CUNY colleges. Her husband, Gerald Markowitz, is a PSC member and a distinguished professor of history at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Her father attended Brooklyn College and City College and her mother studied at John Jay.

Commitment to CUNY and activism are reflected in the CUNY Digital History Archive, one of her recent projects at the Graduate Center, where she is an associate director of the American Social History

Assumes post at a critical time

Project and a managing director of the New Media Lab. The archive preserves and presents documents related to CUNY's history, as experienced by students, faculty, staff and community members.

As a student of history, Vásquez learns from the past and lets it inform her current work. "Unions are only as strong as their organized membership," she said. "More power comes from the involvement of more and more members."

New union executive council

By ARI PAUL

President Barbara Bowen, Treasurer Sharon Persinger and Secretary Nivedita Majumdar were re-elected to new three-year terms following an uncontested union-wide election in April. Andrea Vásquez was elected as first vice president, replacing Mike Fabricant, who remains on the executive council and acts as the union's legislative representative. Vásquez will also continue in her role as chair of the higher education officer chapter.

"All of us who were elected thank the members for their support," said Bowen. "We take seriously the trust you have invested in us and the privilege of being accountable to you, especially in these terrible political times."

The names of new executive council members are in italics.

The university-wide officers are Michael Fabricant, Steve London, George Sanchez, Luke Elliot-Negri and Alia Tyner-Mullings.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP

The new vice president for senior colleges is Penny Lewis and the senior college officers are *James Davis*, Michael Batson and David

Changes come at a critical time



Carly Smith, the new vice president for part-time personnel, speaking at a rally for "\$7K for adjuncts" in Albany in April.

Hatchett. The vice president for community colleges is Lorraine Cohen and the community college officers are Michael Spear, *Sharon*

Utakis and *Howard Meltzer*.

The vice president for cross-campus units is Iris DeLutro and the cross-campus officers are *Janet Win-*

ter, *Jacqueline Elliot* and *Myrlene Dieudonne*. The retiree officers are *Joan Greenbaum* and *Steve Leberstein*. The new vice president for part-time personnel is *Carly Smith* and the part-time officers are *Susan DiRaimo*, *Blanca Vásquez* and *Meg Feeley*.

Two vice presidents, *Lewis* and *Smith*, are new in their vice-presidential roles.

CHALLENGING YEARS

"These next three years should be critical years for our union and for public sector unions more widely. In addition to the *Janus* decision, we continue to face austerity from the political sector and increasing corporatization from CUNY management," *Lewis* said. "As daunting as these conditions are, they also give us a chance to infuse our union work with more urgency and creativity and to engage our colleagues directly in the meaningful and politically relevant work ahead."

Smith told *Clarion*, "It's long past time that we prioritize the fundamental, non-negotiable demand for equal pay for equal work in higher education. I'm excited to join the struggle as vice president for part-time personnel and am committed to help create a winning strategy for \$7,000 per course per semester and comprehensive job security for CUNY part-time faculty."

RF gains

Continued from page 5

one-on-one conversations with members and surveying members across the unit.

Many RF members say their jobs are more tenuous because of funding cuts at the federal and state level, and they reiterated the importance of joining the PSC's legislative work.

Another perennial issue is the large number of employees hired for 19 hours or less per week who are unable to increase their hours and therefore do not qualify for benefits. In addition, CUNY health and safety issues plague campuses. The challenge for the RF activists is building cohesion within a workforce that is scattered and largely part-time, but they're developing a plan to win their next contract.

"I've seen it all. I've seen [the union] progress to what it is today," said *Migdalia Ramos*, an ACE enrollment specialist, who has been at LaGuardia Community College for almost 30 years. She has seen the chapter's presence grow and she plans to be involved in increasing its visibility for her own benefit and that of all RF workers. "When we unite as one – and in numbers – that's what makes our union strong," she said.

Fabricant reflects on union career

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

For Mike Fabricant, who stepped down from his role as PSC first vice president this spring, every role that he has assumed in his career – professor, union leader, community organizer, published writer – would have seemed impossible to his childhood self, a Brooklyn boy from a working-class family: his mother a waitress, his father an intermittently employed truck driver, both of whom never attended college.

Fabricant told *Clarion*, “The only thing that allowed me to imagine [a different future] was challenging myself to do the things necessary to take the next step.”

‘COLLEGE FOR NOTHING’

At around seven years old, Fabricant decided that he would go to college. It was his ticket out of poverty and a way in to the things he enjoyed, such as history, literature and taking care of others. While he didn’t have grand plans about what he would study or where he would go, his uncles talked about the “college for nothing,” tuition-free CUNY.

He didn’t attend CUNY. He received his bachelor’s in history at the University of Pittsburgh and his PhD in social welfare at Brandeis University, but CUNY was always a symbol for Fabricant, a “lighthouse,” he said, that showed him that there was a way for a kid like him.

Fabricant’s background informs his career. He began teaching at Hunter College in 1979, and he became active in the PSC in the late 1990s as the New Caucus was organizing at local chapters. When he first got involved with the union, he did so because of the students. As his involvement increased, his

Leaves First VP position

perspective evolved. He saw how intrinsically students’ learning conditions are connected to faculty and staff’s working conditions.

“The union has just been an enlarging experience,” Fabricant said. “I have gotten to visit every campus. I have gotten to know people from every part of the bargaining unit. I have gotten to understand the text and the subtext of our contract. I have had the privilege to shape a number of organizing campaigns with others.”

When he and other union activists organized the New Caucus slate at Hunter College, they thought they had no chance of winning a union election – but they did. He began as vice chair of that chapter and then steadily increased his commitment, from vice president of senior colleges to PSC treasurer to PSC first vice president. He served as a principal officer of the union for more than 10 years.

UNION CAMPAIGNS

He recalled the early days of union involvement as “exhilarating,” with around 2,000 members showing up for a contract campaign rally. But he also recalls the grit, the day-to-day organizing that made contract wins possible, including junior faculty reassigned time, adjunct health insurance, advancement provisions for HEOs and paid office hours for adjuncts.

In the most recent contract campaign, where union pressure helped defeat Governor Andrew Cuomo’s proposed \$485 million dollar cut to CUNY in the state budget, Fabricant, who oversaw

the union’s legislative work, knew a multipronged campaign was necessary, one that could gain the support of elected leaders and the larger community. It was during this campaign that CUNY Rising, a coalition of labor, community and student groups that campaign for adequate investment for the university, formed. Fabricant was instrumental in setting up the group.

“We don’t win big change unless we have powerful relations with community-based organizations and students,” Fabricant said. “It’s only by scaling that up, building these relationships and making affordable public higher education a

citywide issue that we’re going to gain the power to win.”

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Outside of the PSC, Fabricant has worked on local organizing efforts around housing and homelessness in Elizabeth, New Jersey, where he lives. He’s one of the founding members of Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless and other area groups focusing on affordable housing and social service.

PSC President Barbara Bowen said, “For Mike, the cornerstone of union work is building relationships, and he has spent almost two decades nurturing the relationships that contribute mightily to the PSC’s power. Mike embodies the word ‘loyalty.’ His fierce commitment to the

people with whom he works, both inside and outside the union, has been essential to developing the CUNY Rising Alliance and to expanding the PSC’s influence in Albany. Every PSC member, whether they know Mike or not, has been the beneficiary of his devotion to a sense of what our union should be.”

While he’s no longer the first vice president at the PSC, he remains active with the union. He is an executive council member, a bargaining team member and the union’s legislative representative. He will continue to teach at Hunter.

Fabricant said, “It’s time for other people – the next generation – to have their good time of doing this work, putting their imprint on the union, the university [and] the larger city.”



Mike Fabricant being arrested during a civil disobedience event outside the New York Stock Exchange.

Letters

Continued from page 2

Feeling top heavy

● This spring, the Graduate Center (GC) administration requested that the CUNY Board of Trustees add an “excellence fee” of \$100 per credit to our new master’s programs, plus two of the existing ones. Considering students paying the current tuition rate of \$440 per credit hour could finish a 30-credit master’s degree for under \$15,000 – including fees – that amounts to a 20 percent increase in a new master’s student’s bill.

GC administration promised the extra dollars would go toward the master’s programs directly, allowing them to enhance student experiences and outcomes. It has become increasingly clear that the fees are necessary because the GC wants to spend more on salaries for high-level administrators.

This summer, the GC will add two entirely new dean positions. How much will they earn? What

will their budgets be? How many new staff do we think they will get? Numbers may vary, but even being conservative in our estimates, it will be a lot more money than the \$100 fees will raise.

Even if the GC keeps increasing master’s student numbers, it would take years to make up the yearly expense of these extra deans. Basically, the GC has the money to better fund master’s programs, plus have some left over, but they are choosing to spend it on administrative salaries. And the center’s office of communications and marketing will see a large increase in staff (at one point this spring they had six job openings listed).

Meanwhile, the master’s programs themselves have not gotten their own assistant program officers; they share them with existing programs (adding to the workload of already overworked academic program officers in the building). And offices like mine, in admissions, are expected to recruit and process more applicants without increases in staff or resources.

I can’t help but be angry with the fact that students are being asked to fork over more money when the GC administration is spending so much to increase executive-level administrative costs. CUNY is following the trend of many other schools in being top heavy, a trend we should be bucking instead.

We have to ask: How many adjuncts could get a raise to \$7K with all the extra money going to upper-level management? We still need more money from the state and/or city to fully fund CUNY, but management is digging a hole and expecting workers and students to get them out. It’s time someone took away their shovels.

Gerry Martini
Graduate Center

All for one

● When our union is operating at its best, HEOs, adjunct faculty, full-time faculty, CLTs, graduate assistants, research associates and the many other PSC titles all have one another’s backs. Each group operates not just in its own self-interest, but in and for the interests of the others.

Because full-timers, especially those with tenure or Certificate of Continuous Administrative Service (13.3b) have more power and job stability, I suspect that we often think of this solidarity running one way – the better-off helping out the not-so-well-off. But it isn’t always this way, and it shouldn’t be, if we’re serious about having a powerful wall-to-wall union.

Anh Tran is the appointed grievance counselor at the Graduate Center, as well as the vice chair of the chapter. To my knowledge, she is the only campus-level counselor who is a part-timer. Due to what I can only understand as a product of the historic inequities in the PSC, typically full-time faculty have a campus-level grievance counselor, while HEOs, CLTs and adjunct faculty have to call 61 Broadway with their issues (this is something we should change, but that is for another letter).

Anh is, to say the least, incredibly talented at her job. In less than a year, she has met with more than 50 potential grievants and has resolved five cases outside of the formal grievance process. She currently has five

pending cases, and seven more potential cases. She has attended Weingarten Rights meetings and has supported HEO and adjunct grievants, even though that is not her turf.

In May, a grievance she filed was affirmed at Step One, something the union’s contract enforcement department told me “almost never happens.” The very same day, Anh successfully defended a member in a Weingarten meeting. What is most striking about these two cases is not just that Anh is talented – she is – but that they are concrete examples of a part-timer successfully defending full-timers formally to management.

Anh spends the bulk of her time organizing some of the most exploited segments of the workforce – adjuncts and graduate assistants. But when management takes a swipe, she fights on behalf of *all* titles. This is real wall-to-wall unionism.

Luke Elliott-Negri
Graduate Center

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

US Higher Ed Act overhaul efforts stall

By ARI PAUL

On March 22, US Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos spoke before congressional leaders about Republican-led efforts to take advantage of the reauthorization process for the Higher Education Act (HEA) to make major changes to how colleges and universities are governed.

Calling the HEA “outdated,” the secretary held up the PROSPER Act, a Republican-backed bill that would reform the HEA. DeVos said, “In the coming months, we intend to announce negotiated rulemaking to address higher education regulations which stifle innovation by limiting opportunities for students, and unnecessarily burdening agencies and institutions.”

STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS

That sounds innocent enough, but the PROSPECT Act – introduced by North Carolina Republican Congresswoman Virginia Foxx – set off a wave of controversy on all sides of the political spectrum, especially when it came to a provision gutting Public-Sector Student Loan Forgiveness (PSLF). “[The bill] would eliminate a program that allows borrowers in full-time public service jobs to have their student loans forgiven after making payments for 10 years – a move that military and veterans

Targeting loan forgiveness

groups say would hurt their members,” the *Military Times* reported.

A group of Republican lawmakers also dissented to Foxx’s reform bill in a public letter, saying, “Teachers, firefighters, police officers, military veterans, prosecutors, social workers, doctors, nurses, veterinarians and charitable employees are among the dedicated professionals that have told us PSLF provides the financial feasibility they need to dedicate their careers to serving our communities.”

In an op-ed in the *The Hill*, American Association of State Colleges and Universities President Mildred Garcia and Association of Public and Land-grant Universities President Peter McPherson said that in addition to the loan forgiveness issue, “[T]he bill would eliminate Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants (FSEOGs). These grants leverage funding matches by colleges and universities and provide up to \$4,000 to the neediest students so they can pursue a college education that unlocks a lifetime of opportunity. But just as access to college becomes more important than ever, the elimination of Federal Supplemental Education

Opportunity Grants would make college less accessible for students who stand to gain the most from a college education.”

But DeVos’s dream of overhauling the Higher Education Act may not come to fruition – at least not yet. The *Washington Post* reported in June that congressional disagreement over the PROSPER Act kept it from reaching a full floor vote in the House of Representatives in June.

The HEA, signed into law in 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson, is reauthorized every several years, sometimes with significant amendments. Higher education advocates are concerned that in light of the presidential election of Donald Trump in 2016, a Republican-led Congress could significantly alter federal governance of higher education.

PROPOSED CHANGES

In April, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the PSC’s affiliated national union, was among 46 organizations – including civil rights groups, educational advocates and disability rights groups – who publicly outlined priorities for any changes to the act.

Guiding principles outlined by the AFT included,

1. “Ensure robust implementation and enforcement of civil rights laws.”
2. “Remove barriers to enrollment and promote meaningful access.”
3. “Increase student persistence in and completion of a quality, racially equitable postsecondary education.”
4. “Make college affordable for low-income students.”
5. “Provide for the collection and reporting of higher education data.”
6. “Design accountability systems to ensure students receive value from their higher education, and not in a way that limits opportunity.”
7. “Exclude for-profit colleges from federal financial aid programs unless they have demonstrated their value to students.”
8. “Protect student loan borrowers.”
9. “Ensure safe and inclusive campus climates.”

Even though the PROSPER Act might have hit a road block this congressional session, other legislation to reauthorize the HEA is inevitable. And according to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, DeVos has promised to achieve her preferred policy goals through the department’s regulatory process if she cannot attain them expeditiously through HEA reauthorization.

The paper reported, “Among DeVos’s targets for reregulation

or deregulation are rules aimed at protecting students from being defrauded by colleges, most of them for-profit institutions; rules that cracked down on colleges, also mostly for-profits, that saddled students with loan debts they could not pay off; rules that fostered state-level authorization of for-profit chains; and perhaps most controversial, the enforcement of Title IX, the part of the law that has been central to a crackdown on sexual harassment and assault on campuses.”

IMPROVE ACCESS

AFT President Randi Weingarten said, “Any reauthorization of the Higher Education Act must make it easier for every person in this country to pursue higher education successfully, regardless of where they grew up, the color of their skin, their religion or their immigration status. Congress has a responsibility to ensure that everyone who wants to go to college can go to one that will support them.”

The Senate also has little sign of movement on HEA this session, as Senator Lamar Alexander – a Tennessee Republican who chairs the Senate Committee on Health, Education and Pensions – told *The New York Times* that his committee will not produce HEA reauthorization legislation this year.

PSC tells BOT: fully fund CUNY

Continued from page 3

TAKING ON OTHER JOBS

These bags of paper represent the workload an adjunct carries day to day. And as the semester progresses, the workload gets heavier. Not only paper grading – the list of job duties is multifarious: answering emails, creating lesson plans, completing student progress reporting, posting material on Facebook, posting grades on Facebook, posting grades on CUNYfirst, writing recommendation letters, organizing class trips outside of campus, attending class trips outside of campus, studying approaches to pedagogy, solving student dilemmas, volunteering time to help students prepare for big project or big tests – the list goes on! Adjuncts deserve 7K for the work they do.

Imagine going to a job where you know 10-20 hours of your hard work and effort is not being compensated, and yet you still do the job without any qualms. In fact, you put more effort into this job because you know that there are 30 or more people depending on your efforts, and yet you struggle to make end meet. You are two months late on paying your rent and you earn – as I did in 2017 – around \$19,000. I have held various jobs in my life, from construction to sales, restaurant work to working

on the set of Law and Order SVU. Never have I worked as hard as when I have been an adjunct professor – and yet never have I been compensated so meagerly.

We should ask ourselves if it is really fair to work and not be paid for the work you do, and does un-

derpaying adjuncts have a negative impact on our students’ quality of education?

Last year, when one of my classes was cut at the last minute, I had to find other employment. I worked at a non-profit where I manage a building used for artistic events. I had to

clean bathrooms, change toilet paper, empty garbage and mop floors. One day I saw a former student, she saw me mopping a floor. For a moment, I saw a perplexed look on her face, and while I shouldn’t have felt embarrassed because work is work, I did.

She looked at my mop, she looked at the shiny floor, and my sweaty face and she said, “Professor?”

Camillo Almonacid
Hostos Community College



Lynne Turner was one of the PSC members who testified in June about adjunct pay.

CAN'T SURVIVE

As an adjunct, I typically work for at least three colleges simultaneously. It is the only way I can make ends meet and even then it is difficult, especially in the face of rising costs for everything else. When I get the amount of classes I need, I am in a continuous state of exhaustion. It is practically impossible to stay up to date on the grading, incorporate new teaching methods, and keep up to date in my field. I simply have little to no time to work with students who are struggling. I love teaching and I love working with the students. It devastates me when I can’t give the time needed to students who need me the most.

Summer time is an especially difficult period. I have little to no income from CUNY and the other school for which I teach simply does not pay enough to make up the difference. I end up having to live on credit cards and so go deeper into debt with every passing year. This is a time when I should be working on my own research and writing, but instead I battle daily with depression and despair. Currently, I cannot pay my bills or my rent. It is exceedingly difficult to focus on intellectual pursuits when I’m worrying about how I can afford to live. By the time the fall semester starts, I will be in a state of desperation. It is very difficult keeping that out of the classroom.

Marga Ryersbach
Queensborough Community College

WORK AND LIFE

The politics of workload and suicide

By NICHOLE MARIE SHIPPEN

Recently, the media has highlighted a rash of suicides by well-known celebrities such as chef and travel journalist Anthony Bourdain and fashion designer Kate Spade, but it was the coverage of a non-celebrity's suicide that caught my attention. A Cardiff University tutor, Malcolm Anderson, took his own life at his workplace precisely because of the interrelated issues of workload and overwork. Every working professor and teacher recognizes that their individual workload is unsustainable, but the question is, while mental health is also a factor, what are the political-economic factors most contributing to this ever-increasing workload and what can be done about it in conjunction with our union?

NEGOTIATING WORKLOAD

The political answer is not necessarily the "common sense" answer. The supposedly common sense answer looks for individual solutions because it is based on the wrong assumptions. It ultimately fails because it does not recognize the structural factors, which most determine our time use and time poverty. Overlooking these factors only increases

pressure on individuals who by themselves have little to no actual control. In other words, individual time management and time-saving technology are not going to cut it.

Neoliberalism's tendency toward "responsibilizing subjects" means that more and more aspects of what used to be considered public goods – such as education, housing and healthcare – and which were once regulated and subsidized by the state, are being annihilated. As isolated individuals, we have even less control than neoliberal ideology would lead us to believe.

Academic workload is increasingly difficult to negotiate at the individual level because the politics of time in general is shaped by structural tendencies, described by political theorist Wendy Brown, among others, toward "privatizing public goods and responsibilizing subjects." How this translates into the politics of higher education is fairly straightforward. First, it means funding for public education is under attack in general, but more specifically attacks against higher education target the most secure jobs made possible by tenure and unions. Second, it means that work that was once distributed more equally across the greater college com-

munity is being piled up on fewer and fewer people. At least in relative terms, the number of full-time faculty available to fulfill administrations' service demands is fewer. Meanwhile, adjunct faculty earn meager salaries that force them to teach more courses, often in different institutions across metropolitan areas to make ends meet.

OVERWORKED

In his chapter on the "The Working Day" in *Das Kapital*, Karl Marx recognizes that under capitalism all time is considered as the source of profit, which means that if the state puts no limits on the length of the working day, people will work themselves to death out of necessity. For this reason, we should recognize suicide, premature death and slow death as fundamentally political and very much related to workload and overwork, even if it is not mentioned in a self-authored suicide note, as was the case with Malcolm Anderson.

As human beings who must sell their labor time in order to survive, we must be ever vigilant to the ways the system and its agents commodify and profit from almost every single aspect of our lives, both inside and

outside of the workplace through the related processes of production, consumption and leisure. But we should be especially aware and critical of how overworked and underpaid our fellow adjunct faculty are in our own departments and across higher education.

The fight for \$7,000 per course per semester for adjunct faculty across CUNY is especially important in this regard in that it *might* allow adjunct faculty to teach slightly less for the same amount of money. It is a step in the right direction, but as the labor slogan goes, "We want bread, but we want roses too!" Why should adjunct faculty pick up the extra teaching that full-time faculty will pass along to them because of the newly won course reduction? How do we strategize going forward so that a win for full-time faculty doesn't automatically become a burden to adjunct faculty? Full-time faculty should demand that more full-time faculty be hired.

Please take a moment to read about the suicide of Malcolm Anderson so we can begin to think collectively about what we can do to decrease workload for everybody across the board.

Nichole Marie Shippen is the author of Decolonizing Time: Work, Leisure and Freedom and an associate professor of political science at LaGuardia Community College.

Selling our labor in order to survive

ADJUNCT PAY

The email I will not send

By TOM WATTERS

When I tell people how much I'm paid, they usually tell me I'm a fool. As a CUNY adjunct faculty member, I make \$3,500 for every class I teach, about \$25,000 a year. When I tell someone that, they usually say: "Well, why don't you get a different job? You're an educated, ambitious guy. Why don't you just quit? Why work at Brooklyn College?"

After all, in America, anyone who works or performs labor for less money than they're worth is a sucker. And maybe I am.

DEDICATED ADJUNCTS

Maybe every day I come to work at Brooklyn College, every paper I grade, every conference I have with a student, every time I stay up past my bedtime, nodding off over a novel I've read three times just to make sure I know it front to back so I can teach it the next day, every time I go out of my way to track down a source that might illuminate a comment one of my students has made in

class, I'm making a fool of myself. In short, every time I provide what you might think of as the "professor experience," I am impoverishing myself.

But the requests from students don't stop coming. Already this semester, I've written three letters of recommendation for students applying to law school, graduate school and scholarships, and fielded desperate midnight emails from students looking for clarification before the midterm.

Maybe I should start replying like this:

"Dear Student,
Look, I made \$25,000 last year. It doesn't make economic sense for me to help you with this request. Really. It simply does not. Despite how I might seem in class, how passionately you say I talk about literature and the life of the mind, this college is a business, and your request is cutting into my bottom line. Please do not email me again with these kinds of questions. Just come to class and write the papers and take the tests. If you really wanted some kind of deeper intellectual engagement, the stuff you saw in movies, what your teachers and family told you to expect from college, you should have gone to a school that pays their instructors a living wage. I'm truly sorry, but that's how the world works. It is best you learn that lesson now. I wish you luck."

Of course I don't send that email. Instead, I give my students as much help as I possibly can. And so do CUNY's 12,000 other adjunct instructors.

After years of underfunding by the state and city, CUNY balances its budget by relying on part-time faculty – adjuncts – to teach the majority of its courses. We continue to do our utmost for our students, however economically irrational that may be. And our dedication, despite poverty wages, is one of the reasons CUNY is such a ladder to a better life for its mostly low-income student population.

But how long can I go on? And how long can New York educate the next generation while paying thousands of their professors near minimum wage? Something has to give. Some CUNY adjuncts will decide finally to get a higher-paying job. Often these are the adjuncts with years of experience, and they take that institutional knowledge and subject-matter expertise with them when they go, to the detriment of our students and the larger university community. There's something very backward about this. Others will decide that between running from campus to campus, class to class, they don't have time to answer every email. And the people who will suffer are our students.

A LIVING WAGE

There is a solution: stop devaluing CUNY students and the people who teach them. My union, the Professional Staff Congress, is demanding \$7,000 per course per semester for adjunct faculty so that CUNY students don't have to suffer – and adjuncts like me are no longer exploited. It's time for the administrators at CUNY and the politicians in Albany and City Hall to do the right thing and pay adjuncts what we are worth.

Tom Watters is an adjunct faculty member in the English department at Brooklyn College. A version of this article originally appeared at AFT Voices, and was also based on testimony presented to the CUNY Board of Trustees.

Junior faculty day at PSC



The PSC held a daylong event for junior faculty members, hosting discussions on how to navigate tenure and how to receive research grants.

Stop devaluing adjuncts' tireless work.



15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Sign up for PSC COPE

The midterm elections are coming up this November. As PSC members are aware, the first year and half of the Trump administration with a Republican majority in Congress has taken its toll on workers rights, civil rights and the environment.

As unionists, we have a chance to mitigate the

damage by reducing the Republicans' hand in Congress in the midterms, or even put the GOP in the minority in one or both houses. Sign up for PSC COPE and contribute to the union's political actions. Go to www.psc-cuny.org/issues/psc-cuny-cope for more information.

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Implementing the courseload reduction

By CLARION STAFF

At the end of 2017, the PSC won a long-fought victory, one that took a combination of rank-and-file pressure, political lobbying and toughness at the bargaining table: the union reached a final agreement on a teaching load reduction for full-time faculty that would allow members more time to engage one-on-one with students and conduct their own research. It was, without a doubt, an enormous victory for a union in the face of austerity, cutbacks and a nationwide attack on the public sector.

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Now comes the hard part. The union is fighting for the fair, judicious and expeditious implementation of that agreement on all CUNY campuses. On May 30, more than 200 department chairs – from two-year and four-year campuses, in sciences and humanities departments, from all boroughs – delivered a letter to Chancellor James Milliken and CUNY Board of Trustees Chair William Thompson demanding action. It is as follows:

Dear Chairperson Thompson and Chancellor Milliken:

We write as elected department chairs from academic departments throughout CUNY. We commend you on reaching the landmark agreement with the PSC on reducing the contractual teaching load. Few changes have greater potential to enhance the ability of CUNY students to achieve their formidable aspirations, and few have greater potential to expand the intellectual life of the university through its academic departments.

But the potential of the agreement will not be fully realized if the university fails to allocate adequate funding and takes the position that current discretionary reassigned time allocated by the college presidents must be eliminated or sharply reduced. Such an approach will defeat the agreement's important purpose. We urge you in the strongest terms to fund and implement

Dept. chairs press admin

the new teaching load reduction agreement so that its full benefit for the university will be achieved. Even though the coming academic year is just the first in a three-year phasing-in of the reduction, the approach established in the first year may well set the pattern for the years ahead.

The CUNY administration publicly recognized the value of the agreement when it was announced on December 8, 2017. Chancellor Milliken reported that the contractual reduction would “strengthen the university’s competitiveness in attracting and retaining talented faculty.” University Provost (and incoming Interim Chancellor) Vita Rabinowitz cited “the additional time faculty will now spend meeting and advising students, as well as on their research and scholarship.” The language of the agreement itself, which was signed by Chancellor Milliken, asserts that “the additional time resulting from

the reduction in the undergraduate contact teaching hour workload... will be devoted to such activities as student and academic advisement, office hours, academic research” and other activities that promote student success.

A big chance to improve CUNY's stature

There will be very little “additional time” and very little increase in the ability of the full-time faculty to do mentoring or research if the CUNY administration persists with the current plan for implementation. Under the current implementation plan, academic departments will largely be no more competitive in “attracting and retaining faculty.” The potential of the agreement – and even the explicit terms of its language – will not be achieved unless the university administration rethinks its current limited approach to funding and implementation.

We understand that the teaching load agreement reduces the contractual obligation, and we recog-

nize the value of that change. We are pleased that full-time faculty who have regularly taught the full teaching load, without access to any discretionary reassigned time, will immediately benefit from the change and will begin to have a more manageable teaching load. That is a significant gain for CUNY faculty and students.

FUNDING NEEDED

But reassigned time at CUNY is not an add-on. It is essential to accomplishing the university’s mission. College administrations have long relied on the allocation of discretionary reassigned time to achieve their college’s priorities. Some colleges have carved out funds to support reassigned time for research-active faculty; others have used reassigned time to ensure that programs and initiatives are staffed, to support their educational priorities. The only way to ensure that the faculty as a whole experiences “additional time” for student mentoring, support and research is to maintain colleges’ current reassigned time *in addition to the con-*

tractual reduction.

We call on you to allocate the funding necessary to preserve all existing reassigned time in addition to implementing the contractual teaching load reduction. We also call on you to cover the instructional hours that will no longer be taught by existing full-time faculty by creating new full-time faculty positions. If the university covers these courses in the cheapest way – by hiring more adjuncts, who often receive no paid time to meet with students – the purpose of the reduction will be largely defeated.

Only a third of the total funding will be needed in the 2018-19 academic year, as it is the first year of a three-year phasing-in period. The CUNY administration failed to secure even this modest amount of additional dedicated funding in the most recent New York State budget. Yet university administrators have expressed satisfaction with the state budget result. CUNY management can find funding for many other priorities within the existing budget allocation. If creating “additional time” so that faculty can enable the university “to improve our students’ success and outcomes” is a priority, then it should be a priority for funding.

YEARS-LONG EFFORT

The agreement on the teaching load represents years of discussion and negotiation. We ask you not to squander its value by failing to stand up for the benefits you yourselves identified on the day it was announced. Do not accept the premise that austerity is the best we can expect of CUNY. The teaching load agreement provides a rare chance to do something that would make a tremendous difference to CUNY students and the university’s academic stature. We urge you not to miss that chance. As department chairs responsible for academic leadership among our faculty peers, we call on you to find the money – and the vision – to implement the agreement so that it fulfills its abundant potential.



Dave Sanders

PSC faculty members have fought for – and won – a courseload reduction, but implementation remains an issue.