



**SAFETY**  
**Remote work secured**

The union extends the remote work agreement. Workers respond.

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Clarence Elie-Rivera

## THE PSC IS MARCHING FOR A CONTRACT

President James Davis has a message for members this Fall: it is time to gear up for a just CUNY budget and a just contract. These campaigns are getting started.

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LaGuardia administration threatens to chop classes in response to declining enrollment, but PSC chapter activists step in to avert deep cuts.

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Governor Hochul signs a PSC-backed bill to extend student debt relief to part-time workers, which will benefit many PSC adjunct members.

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### **FACULTY** **Full-time lines at CUNY**

Many former CUNY adjuncts begin full-time teaching positions this Fall, thanks to PSC campaigning. But there's more work ahead.

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# Remote work agreement extended

By ARI PAUL

The PSC and CUNY have agreed to extend the remote work agreement, from the end of August to the end of the calendar year. The agreement, pertains to certain PSC titles, including higher education officer (HEO), college laboratory technician (CLT), non-teaching adjunct (NTA) and librarian titles. There will be no changes to the agreement, union officials said. (The current remote work agreement can be read at [tinyurl.com/CUNY-remote-work-agreement](https://tinyurl.com/CUNY-remote-work-agreement).)

"In the coming months, we will continue negotiations with CUNY to strengthen the agreement for our members and, when possible, to make partial remote work a more permanent feature of our work lives," PSC First Vice President Andrea Vásquez said in a July 29 email to members. "Having witnessed and experienced the extraordinary commitment, flexibility and expanding skills of professional staff and library faculty during the pandemic, it is clear that, for a host of reasons, some remote work is possible and is beneficial to all."

She added, "We urge supervisors to make every effort to meet the needs and requests of members."

## VITAL PROTECTIONS

For many PSC members, flexible work schedules and remote work have been vital in terms of protecting their health, but some members say more can be done at CUNY to protect both workers and students.

"For those of us who use public transit, coming to campus less often definitely decreases our risk of COVID exposure," said Nancy Foasberg, a humanities librarian at Queens College. "As for what more can and should be done, the easy and obvious thing is to reinstate mask mandates. As masks are currently optional, I'm seeing a lot of students and even some colleagues going unmasked in the building. As the semester begins, it's going to be more difficult to keep my distance from them. I'd strongly support an indoor mask mandate and am frustrated by CUNY's insistence that masking is a personal choice."

This issue is especially concerning for library faculty, according to Ellen Sexton, a media librarian at John Jay College, because there has been "a gross disparity between library and non-library faculty in the requirements to be on campus."

## CONTRACT PROVISION

"I hope that the [remote work agreement] is permanently codified in our new contract," Sexton said. "Library faculty, pre-COVID, worked five full days a week on campus. The chancellor is now permitting us to spend three out of 10 workdays off campus, which I welcome, as a fair amount of my day-to-day work is computer-based and can be done just as well on my home computer as on my work PC."

## Calls for 'remote' in contract

Many CUNY workers have noted that after more than two years of remote work their workplaces can easily adapt to hybrid schedules.

For many PSC members, the remote work agreement is a starting point to create new flexible schedules that will benefit workers, while ensuring



Ellen Sexton wants to see remote work protections in the next contract.

students get everything they need from the classroom to the counseling services.

"The remote work agreement is an important tool in HEO and other nonteaching titles' working lives. We have demonstrated that we can do our jobs, and do them well, with workplace location freedom," said Nancy Silverman, a program liaison to the provost at the Graduate Center. "We are the best informed about what work requires being on site and what can be done from home. Instead of mandates from management...we, in agreement with supervisors, must be allowed to craft a workplace schedule, which allows for flexibility and the real situation of our jobs. And to ensure fairness, agreements about remote work must be contractual and able to be grieved."

## FLEXIBLE WORK

HEOs and others have complained over the course of the pandemic that in-person work often requires them to simply sit in an office and perform virtual tasks like participating in Zoom meetings all day. These tasks could easily be

done remotely, at least for part of the week. "A flexible work option is currently a top priority for many HEOs," said Justyna Jagielnicka, a College Discovery program counselor at Borough of Manhattan Community College. "Professional staff have been delivering remote services to students since the Spring 2020 semester. The right to make agreements with supervisors to work remotely for a portion of our work time allows us to maintain a work-life balance while delivering quality of care to our students."

Amy Jeu, who serves as a cross-campus officer on the PSC Executive Council and is a CLT in the department of geography and environmental science at Hunter College, said, "In the face of new highly transmittable infectious diseases, such as monkeypox and tomato flu, we are pleased the PSC was able to negotiate an extension of the remote work agreement with CUNY to reduce density on campuses." She added that she hopes "remote work will be a permanent feature in the next contract."

## Hopes to permanently codify in the contract

# PSC: no to MLC proposed shift

By ARI PAUL

The PSC and other unions are mobilizing against a proposal before the New York City Council that would weaken municipal workers' health-care benefits. On September 8, the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC) approved a plan to join Mayor Eric Adams' administration in calling on the City Council to change city law to remove the floor on city contributions to the cost of health insurance for city employees, retirees and their dependents.

While public-sector unions bargain wages directly with their employers, the MLC, to which the PSC belongs, negotiates with the City to determine what kind of health-care package city workers and retirees receive.

## HISTORY

The current predicament has been years in the making. The MLC, during the de Blasio administration,

## Fight moves to City Council

made a commitment to reduce the cost of health-care benefits for city workers and retirees. In 2021, the MLC agreed to transition retiree health benefits from traditional Medicare that included a supplemental city-paid private insurance (NYC Senior Care) to a Medicare Advantage Plus (MA+) program run by private insurance companies. PSC voted against this transition, which many municipal workers, including PSC retirees, adamantly objected to.

A coalition of retirees won a lawsuit on the basis that the administrative code requires the City to pay the cost of retiree health insurance up to the cost of HIP-HMO (over \$700), so the City's plan to require retirees who wanted to opt out of MA+ to pay a premium of nearly \$200 to keep their current supplemental insurance was illegal. It is this code

provision that the City now hopes to persuade the City Council to hastily amend before an appellate court gets a chance to hear arguments this October on the lower court's decision.

Mayor Adams has put tremendous pressure on the MLC to do an end run around that court decision, sources have said. Just days before the MLC decision on privatization of medical benefits for retirees, *City & State* reported that union sources

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## Remove the floor on city contributions



Retirees protest proposed privatization last year.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Marching forward at the PSC

By **JAMES DAVIS**  
PSC President

**A**s we prepared this summer for an invigorating year ahead, the union's principal leaders have enjoyed engaging members collectively in many of the meaningful ways that the pandemic made difficult if not impossible. Delegations of union members joined us at meetings with our national and state affiliates, the American Association of University Professors, the American Federation of Teachers and New York State United Teachers. Dozens of members marched up Fifth Avenue in the New York City Labor Day Parade and scores picnicked in Prospect Park to celebrate five decades of union work. The PSC is definitely on the move, especially during our 50th anniversary year.

We are excited by the opportunity to wage a strong contract campaign and grateful that so many members voiced their priorities in our contract survey and spring chapter meetings. Recent PSC contracts have pierced through the constraints of austerity to improve job security, wage equity and critical benefits, and we will build upon those breakthroughs. The principal officers and PSC vice presidents attended 25 meetings in April and May, listening to members about their concerns and aspirations for a new contract, in anticipation of the February 2023 expiration of our current contract. In these meetings and through survey responses, which drew 9,400 participants, members expressed varied and valid demands. We continue to solicit member input this fall through the efforts of PSC Campus Action Teams and elected chapter leaders, by discussing the survey results and formulating a bargaining agenda.

## ACROSS-THE-BOARD RAISES

We have heard clearly the preeminent need for salary increases for all; the combination of high inflation and cost of living in New York City is pressing on our members. The bargaining team will develop demands around salary and other broad issues facing our members. In addition, the PSC Executive Council has formed four demand development committees that will support and advise the bargaining team. These commit-



PSC members march up Fifth Avenue in Manhattan during this year's NYC Labor Day Parade.

tees will examine issues that our members consistently cite as important and will deepen members' engagement further around these issues. They include: 1) work-life balance and professional respect, 2) educational technology and educational quality, 3) contingent and part-time work, 4) common good and health and safety. Each committee will also ask how the union's commitments to advancing equity and combating institutional racism may be realized within their issue area. A union-wide virtual town hall on "Winning a Just Contract" is planned for the evening of Wednesday, October 26. I am confident that a sharp, ambitious bargaining agenda will emerge from this semester's efforts, an agenda that every PSC member feels truly invested in supporting.

Our ability to win a just contract depends as much on our power as our persuasiveness. And our power comes from PSC members and CUNY students and communities. We saw this collective solidarity in the most recent state budget campaign: faculty and staff in every title and rank joined students to speak with one voice about the necessity

for the New Deal for CUNY. We gathered in the streets and in the hallways and offices of the state capitol, and our efforts helped increase recurring funds of nearly a quarter of a billion dollars annually and \$1 billion in new capital funds for CUNY.

## MORE CUNY FUNDING

Fulfilling the entire New Deal for CUNY platform will require renewed engagement this year. That engagement must draw on our shared desire for a just contract. The more we win in the state budget and during the legislative session, the more resources are available for the New Deal for CUNY and for our contract. Through the concerted action of PSC members, the union recently won transformative provisions, including paid parental leave, adjunct health insurance, reduction in the full-time faculty teaching load and increased teaching adjunct salaries. Organizing together is our path to winning what we deserve in the next contract.

To be sure, the headwinds we face are formidable. The current inflation rate exceeds any in recent history, depressing our real

wages. Mayor Eric Adams is threatening additional budget cuts, which, if enacted, will harm CUNY workers and students, especially at community colleges. Enrollment declines at several campuses have prompted belt-tightening measures, including class cancellations and adjunct layoffs. And the health risks of COVID-19 continue to require our vigilance and informed judgment, as the CUNY administration wavers between the conflicting guidance of city, state, and federal officials.

## BUILDING MOMENTUM

But let's not forget the winds at our backs. I was reminded of the power of PSC collective action at a recent bill signing at Borough of Manhattan Community College. A number of us joined Governor Kathy Hochul and the bill's cosponsors, State Senator Kevin Thomas and Assembly Member Harvey Epstein, as Hochul signed into law a bill that expands the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program to make many adjunct faculty in New York newly eligible. Building on years of advocacy and agitation from our members and elected leaders, this legislation recognizes the full-time work done by many so-called part-time faculty. Our efforts in the legislative arena matter. Our concerted actions in the streets and our chapter-building initiatives matter. Our excellence in supporting and educating CUNY students matters. And these endeavors intersect in extraordinary ways.

We have union shirts that say, "Everybody Loves Somebody at CUNY," a slogan that resonates farther and more deeply than we may think. A 91-year-old retired Brooklyn teacher, waiting for coffee behind me at the AFT convention in Boston, read out loud the words on my PSC T-shirt and introduced herself. She proudly listed luminaries who had passed through her music classes over the decades – Chuck Schumer, Bernie Sanders, Judge Judy – but she saved her deepest admiration for the CUNY colleges that propel legions of New York City high school graduates to a better next stage of their lives.

Realizing the mission of the People's University is not easy after years of austerity and as we confront challenges ahead, but we must remember that we have allies, even where we least expect them, and that most of all we have each other.

## Contract and budget fights ahead

# Contract survey results guide campaign

By **ARI PAUL**

The PSC's next contract struggle with CUNY is just around the corner. The current collective bargaining agreement, representing CUNY faculty and staff, expires at the end of February 2023.

To prepare for a democratic and member-driven negotiation process, the union sent a survey to all union members across all the different titles the union represents, asking about member priorities and demands in the next contract. This Fall semester, the union's leadership will hone concrete contract demands, with the goal of winning fair pay, job

## Gearing up for contract fight

protections, professional development and promotional opportunities for PSC members of all titles, part-time and full-time, faculty and staff. (The PSC also represents workers at the CUNY Research Foundation. The Research Foundation Central contract expires at the end of this year, while the field unit contracts at the Graduate Center, LaGuardia and City Tech end on June 30, 2024.)

The survey results paint a picture of what members want to see in the next contract. In the next weeks and months, PSC organizers, along with

chapter leaders and activists, will be talking to their colleagues about how to organize for a good contract.

Nearly 9,400 people responded to the survey.

## SHOW US THE MONEY

The vast majority of survey respondents listed salary increases as "very" or "somewhat" important. Fully 95% of all respondents said they want universal, across-the-board salary increases, and 82% prioritized making the teaching adjunct hourly salary proportional to the full-time

teaching salary. Many other issues also rose to the top of general importance. Remote work agreements, improved job security for part-time titles, defending academic freedom and protections against bullying in the workplace all saw massive support.

Automatic step increases with promotion, a standard practice at other universities and workplaces, was similarly prioritized, as were improvements to the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund. The survey asked about various ways in which the PSC can fight against structural racism at CUNY, and in this area, members supported the

importance of this work in some of the biggest numbers of the survey, with more than 85% saying the following areas were "very important" or "somewhat important": the racialized salary gap, diversifying the highest paid titles and increasing promotional opportunities and advancement. Protecting quality education for CUNY students was the highest priority of all respondents, tying with universal salary increases. Ninety-five percent of respondents marked it as important and 85% selected "very important."

**Members share their contract priorities.**

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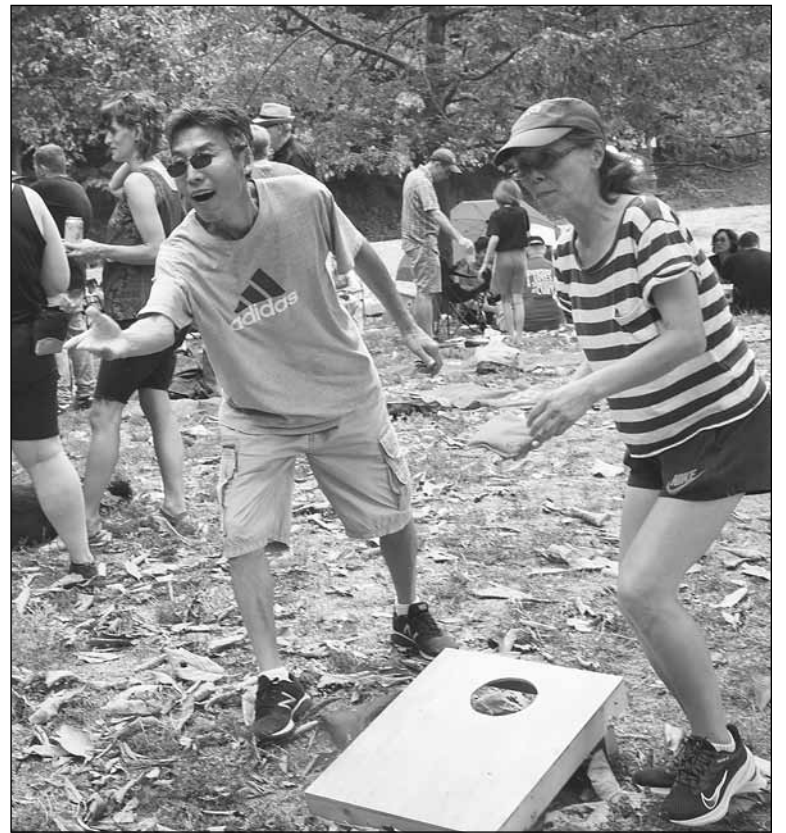


# Members attend PSC anniversary picnic

## Celebrating 50 years

PSC members and their families gathered in Brooklyn's Prospect Park in late August to commemorate the half century since two CUNY unions came together to found the PSC. Members ate, played games, spoke to one another

and even heard a few inspirational remarks from union activists – all in the name of fun and solidarity. The picnic is one of several events that will celebrate the golden anniversary of the PSC this year.



All photos by Dave Sanders



# Members help avert LaGuardia cuts

By ARI PAUL

The PSC has been fighting class cancellations across the university. CUNY administration has cited enrollment drops as a justification for the cuts this fall. The PSC LaGuardia Community College (LGCC) chapter organized a robust campaign to fight back against the cuts, and members' hard work to keep classes open is already paying off.

The chapter presented data to the LGCC administration in a labor-management meeting, showing that students often do not retake a class after it has been cancelled once, often disrupting the continuity of their education thus jeopardizing their overall academic performance. After presenting this to management, the chapter invited department chairs to work with the chapter to help stop the cuts.

## COMING TOGETHER

"I also invited all program directors and coordinators to a meeting on August 1 to discuss the problem and met [individually] with five or six people," Lara Beaty, the PSC chapter chair at LaGuardia, told *Clarion*. "Our PSC campus action team has met weekly since August 2 also. All these meetings have been an effort to collect information and strategize. Ideas were proposed and mostly rejected by the [college] president."

Beaty, a professor of developmental psychology, added, "An important part of our discussions has been about concerns that CUNY Central has plans to shift the priorities to vocational training or even to close some community colleges. We hear from politicians that college isn't necessary, and so we are planning something, maybe...a teach-in to bring [the issue] to students about why community college is important."

Over the course of two days, chapter members bombarded the college president and provost with emails about the need to keep classes open regardless of drops in enrollment, noting how important these classes are to working-class students, who are juggling school, work and family life.

Maxine Berger, an adjunct lecturer in education and language acquisition, wrote in an email to LGCC President Kenneth Adams: "I feel privileged each year to teach the wonderful body of students who attend my classes. They are eager to learn, work hard and do not take their education for granted. Most of these young men and women are balancing work, home responsibilities and school, all at the same time. They need classes that can fit into their complicated schedules. Their education is the key for bettering their lives. By cancelling classes, these students are shortchanged by our school. It sends the wrong message about what our special college stands for."

Linda Forrester, a LaGuardia retiree, noted in her letter to the

## Chapter organizing achieves partial win



PSC LaGuardia Community College Chapter Chair Lara Beaty protesting cuts at an on-campus rally last year.

administration that drops in enrollment were not a reason to cut classes, but in fact an opportunity to allow students to participate in smaller classes.

"What a blessing this was!" she wrote, recalling her own experiences teaching smaller classes. "It was such an opportunity for students to enter subject matter deeply, explore ideas, work with one another more closely and learn more, with added support from their instructor. For me and many others, small classes provide the occasion to develop new approaches to curriculum, to see what works with whom and to add to the mix that is 'integrative learning.' It's sound, educational pedagogy."

## CLASSES NEEDED

Forrester added, "As many of my colleagues have stated, students often need the classes we offer in order to graduate. The choice and flexibility of the LaGuardia class schedule has always been a great benefit to them. These hardworking students have been through so much over the last few years. They don't need a heavier load, and we will surely lose them if we can't offer the courses that they want and need. And my colleagues need a stable work environment. As you're aware, adjuncts who are not employed will lose health coverage. As so many LaGuardia courses are taught by adjuncts, this puts the entire community at risk. Please keep the classes open even with small numbers!"

And Martha Siegel, an adjunct lecturer in education, told the administration that cancelling a class in response to a low enrollment is shortsighted, only making the problem of enrollment decline worse.

"Not only will cancelling classes affect the students this semester, but it will badly affect the school going forward, as many students whose classes are cancelled will *not* return to LGCC, but will go elsewhere or will drop out of school altogether," she said. "If you want enrollment to continue to plummet, this would be the way to do it. But I am sure that is not your intention. We owe our students, our faculty and our school so much more."

The chapter's work resulted in a partial victory at the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester. On September 6,

LGCC President Kenneth Adams and Provost Billie Gastic Rosado wrote in an email to faculty and staff that the administration had reduced the class cancellations as to negatively impact as few students as possible.

## ADMIN ACTS

"On Thursday, September 1, we cancelled 59 classes because of low enrollment. The classes we cancelled had between 1 to 11 students enrolled. Forty-five of the 59 classes cancelled had multiple sections, so most of the approximately 320 students affected by the cancellations

should be able move to another section of the same course," they said. "We provide extra advising and support to help students impacted by a cancellation to find a solution and maintain their credit load. While we would prefer not to cancel any classes, cancelling 59 out of 1,583 sections offered (.04%) this semester is not as disruptive for students as the process has been in the past. For example, recall that one year ago, in Fall 21, we cancelled 210 sections."

## BREAKING EVEN

The administrators noted that they decided to "run 751 classes with fewer than 18 students, the LaGuardia 'break-even' amount that is our typical threshold for cancellations," where the break-even amount is "the average class size needed to cover only the cost of instruction."

Beaty noted, "In my department, social science, 12 classes were cancelled though 28 had single-digit numbers. We were not unscathed, but it was less damaging than it could have been."

"Many classes, though not all, were saved by the union members' efforts and our chapter leadership, and I'm grateful for that," said Sigmund Shen, an associate professor of English at LGCC and a former PSC chapter chair. Shen added that the president and provost's message "signals that we will need to keep up pressure on the college administration" and that it "highlights the need for CUNY and the PSC to keep up pressure for full funding" from both the State and City.

"If we don't, continued class cancellations will continue to harm enrollment as students lose confidence in our programs," he said.

# Contract survey results guide campaign

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Members in all titles named pay increases for everyone as one of their five most important issues. For full-time faculty, the next priority issues were reducing the teaching load; support for research and professional development, such as paid leave and travel; and additional pay increases for those at top steps.

Besides across-the-board salary increases, the biggest issues for HEOs were remote work agreements, improvements to reclassification and improving job security (including decreasing time to attain 13.3b).

## EQUITY NEEDED

Teaching adjuncts ranked making adjunct salaries proportional to full-time salaries and improving adjunct job security as their highest concerns. In addition to overall raises for everyone, they also named increases in part-time salaries as a top priority.

College laboratory technicians (CLTs) ranked strengthening CLT

promotional opportunities, salary raises for all PSC-represented titles, and increases to the lowest-paid CLT titles and general increases to lower paid full-time titles as important in addition to salary raises for all.

For nonteaching adjuncts, improving job security for part-timers and across-the-board salary raises were important. Other titles ranked across-the-board salary increases and equity for part-time titles as major priorities.

The upcoming contract campaign presents new challenges. This will be the first CUNY contract campaign with the next state governor, presumptively Kathy Hochul. While Hochul has been more generous toward higher education in her state budget proposals than her predecessor, she is mostly untested on contract bargaining. Her administration settled one state contract with the Civil Service Employees Association this summer. That settlement included 2% and 3% annual raises from 2023 through Spring of

2026 and a one-time COVID bonus of \$3,000.

The PSC's contract fight takes place nearly three years since the world was turned upside down by the COVID pandemic. Members' contract priorities have been shaped by record-high inflation and the need for on-campus safety precautions, including the possibility of remote work options.

## LOOKING BACK

The current 2017–2023 contract was overwhelmingly ratified by PSC members in the Fall of 2019, and was the result of the long, organized, member-led struggle that eventually won 10.41% across-the-board raises over the life of the contract, significant pay increases for adjuncts and equity raises for CLTs, lecturers and assistants to HEO.

While the contract expires next February, New York State law stipulates that the contract terms remain in effect until a new collective bargaining agreement is ratified and enacted.

Dave Sanders



# PSC helps senators win primaries

By ARI PAUL

It was a good summer for PSC-backed state senators.

Due to complicated redistricting plans, several state senators who have been vital to advancing the PSC's agenda in Albany faced tough primaries in August. But thanks partly to tireless PSC member-led advocacy, they won their party contests and are the presumptive general election victors in November.

## NEW DISTRICT MAP

State Senator Andrew Gounardes, who represents Southern Brooklyn, faced a tough primary race against David Yassky, a former New York City Council member. Gounardes, has been a strong advocate for CUNY, is a Hunter College graduate and a senate sponsor of the PSC-backed New Deal for CUNY. For Reem Jaafar, a professor of mathematics at LaGuardia Community College and a resident of Brooklyn's Bay Ridge, Gounardes' reelection campaign was of personal importance.

In 2018, Jaafar recalled, residents like her helped propel Gounardes to

## Progressives beat moderates



State Senator Andrew Gounardes

victory against the last Republican incumbent state senator representing Brooklyn, helping to shift the state senate's power to the Demo-



State Senator Robert Jackson

crats after years of Republican control and partisan gridlock.

"When he got redistricted, we got scared because it only contains 20%

of the old district. Andrew's district is really a new district when you really think about it," Jaafar said, noting that the new district includes much of the Brooklyn waterfront. "I was extremely worried because Yassky had the brand name in Brooklyn Heights and in a lot of the new parts of the new district. We were worried that all that work over the past four years would be gone."

## ELECTION EFFORTS

But Jaafar and other PSC members pounded the pavement and phone-banked for Gounardes, who overwhelmingly defeated Yassky. "[Andrew] was very productive and stood true to his values, even though he wasn't from a liberal district," said Jaafar.

PSC activists also campaigned for State Senator Gustavo Rivera, a progressive lawmaker who represents parts of the Bronx and coauthor of the New York Health Act, which aims to enact a single-payer healthcare plan in New York State. Rivera was under threat by a Democratic Party establishment challenger, Miguelina Camilo, in a redrawn district.

**In redrawn districts, progressives win.**

Rivera won his primary, thanks in part to union support. State Senator Robert Jackson, who represents the west side of Manhattan, also faced a primary challenger who he was able to defeat with the help of PSC volunteers. Jackson worked closely with the PSC in the final days of the 2022 state budget negotiations to ensure robust funding for public higher education. And over the last several years, he has been a pivotal leader in the fight for an overdue infusion of funds for New York City

public schools.

PSC members also phone-banked for State Senator Jabari Brisport, who represents parts of Brooklyn and is a vocal supporter of the New Deal for CUNY. Brisport faced Conrad Tillard, who has a history of antisemitic and homophobic views and was backed by Mayor Eric Adams. Cordell Cleare, who represents northern parts of Manhattan and serves as the chair of the senate's Women's Issues Committee, also won with PSC support.

## CENTRIST CHALLENGERS

Susan Kang, an associate professor of political science at John Jay College and a member of the PSC Executive Council, noted that in the primaries of PSC-backed incumbents

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## STUDENT DEBT

# Victory for adjunct debt relief

By CAROLINA BANK MUÑOZ

**O**n April 20, 2022, my student loan balance went to zero. Years into my career as a Brooklyn College professor, I was able to finally eliminate this debt because of the Biden administration's new and more expansive criteria to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program.

After so many years of carrying student debt, it was a relief and a joy to be free, and my family has more money at our disposal, just as the costs of launching our child into adulthood are coming into full view. Our child's life and ours are different and better without this debt.

Yet, despite my own personal relief, a feeling of unease remained. I told dozens of colleagues that my debt was gone and that theirs could be too.

But, this was not true for my adjunct colleagues.

## DEFINING 'FULL-TIME'

Adjunct faculty teach a majority of the classes at CUNY, but the new Biden criteria left loan forgiveness for these public employees far out of reach. The federal government defines "full-time" as working 30 hours a week for the purposes of PSLF. While thousands of CUNY adjuncts *actually* work 30 hours a week, on paper they are compensated for the hours they spend in the classroom, far fewer than 30, even at a maximum load.

After months of organizing by PSC members, on September 15, Governor Kathy Hochul, joined by the PSC and other CUNY advocates, signed into law a bill that was passed at the end of the state legislative session in June. The PSC worked closely with



Adjuncts like Genevieve LaForge (center) have more access to loan forgiveness thanks to the NYS bill. With her is Governor Kathy Hochul (right) and PSC President James Davis (left).

the bill's prime sponsor in the state assembly, Assembly Member Harvey Epstein, to move the bill into law. The law acknowledges, in the very formal way that laws do, that adjunct faculty conduct copious amounts of non-classroom labor. Specifically, the bill compels CUNY to multiply the number of classroom hours taught by 3.35 to arrive at the total hours worked by an adjunct employee when they seek PSLF.

Many adjunct faculty will now receive the same relief that I experienced in April of this year – debt erased. A John Jay adjunct faculty colleague, Genevieve LaForge, sat on stage

with Governor Hochul at the bill signing. With the stroke of a pen, Genevieve qualified for PSLF and tens of thousands of dollars in student debt could disappear.

## RECOGNIZING WORK

The bill also acknowledges a fact that the whole union put forward in the last round of contract bargaining: adjunct wages are too low, in part because the vital, non-formalized work that adjunct faculty conduct out of the classroom goes uncompensated. The last contract successfully secured compensation for a formal office hour for every

three classroom hours taught by adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty already spend far more than an hour for each course each week, working directly with students to address the full range of concerns that arise in office hours.

Now, New York State fully acknowledges this premise. Not only is there an hour that adjuncts work outside the classroom for every three in the classroom, but their classroom work is multiplied by more than three hours for every one hour in the classroom.

## NEW DEAL FOR CUNY

Increasing the number of full-time faculty lines at CUNY and adjunct pay parity are two key priorities of the crucial union campaign New Deal for CUNY legislation, a crucial union campaign. They are two sides of the same coin. We need thousands of professorial and lecturer hires, dedicated to existing adjunct faculty and pay parity for adjuncts. We ultimately need a system that does not rely on the contingent nature of adjunct work. The logic underlying the PSLF bill, which is now law, moves us one small step closer to making this a reality.

Finally, while the Biden criteria to PSLF was transformative for me personally and this New York law is transformative for my colleagues like Genevieve, the political agenda we as a union express in the New Deal for CUNY points to a world in which means-tested "loan forgiveness" would be unnecessary. CUNY would be free. When we build a world in which higher education is truly, fully a public good, we won't need relief because there won't be debt.

## NYS expands debt relief to adjuncts

Carolina Bank Muñoz is the PSC chapter chair at Brooklyn College.



## POLITICS

# Winning in November and beyond

By PETER HOGNESS

Nationwide election polls are shifting and the previous predictions of a massive Republican wave in the midterm elections have faded. But the answer to who will control the US Congress still hangs in the balance. “This election will be decided by razor-thin margins in key races across the country,” said Darrell Tucci of the Movement Voter Project’s (MVP).

Most analysts now favor Democrats to retain control of the Senate by a narrow margin and Republicans to capture the House. But the outcome is uncertain. “These midterm elections are all about turnout,” MVP’s Zo Tobi said. “And nobody does turnout better than community-based grassroots groups.”

## GRASSROOTS GROUPS

That’s the reason for Seed the Vote (STV), which helps volunteers from New York and elsewhere connect with locally rooted organizations in Pennsylvania, Arizona, Georgia and other battleground states.

“Because they’re organizing 12 months a year, grassroots groups know what works best in their local conditions,” said Seed the Vote’s Rose Mendelsohn. Because these organizations are active on issues

that voters care about, they’re often more trusted than politicians. Seed the Vote helps its partner organizations expand their reach and build a bigger base by providing out-of-state volunteers to help with canvassing and making calls.

“We want to win these elections in a way that builds power for our movements in the long term,” said STV’s Kara Murray-Badal. Unlike a candidate’s campaign, Seed the Vote’s partner organizations don’t close their doors when the election is over.

## OTHER PARTNERS

STV’s partners include New Georgia Project, Living United for Change in Arizona, Pennsylvania Stands Up, North Carolina’s Durham for All and others. In three states this year – Pennsylvania, Nevada and Arizona – its main canvassing partner is the hospitality service union UNITE HERE.

“To win, it’s going to take thousands of people in motion,” said Mario Yedidia, UNITE HERE’s national field director.

In 2020, UNITE HERE canvassed with 400 STV volunteers in Arizona. Most volunteered for at least a week. They had in-person conversations with 16,000 voters in a state Trump lost by just 10,000 votes.

Seed the Vote also organized more than 450 volunteers to travel to Georgia for the Senate runoffs. About half of these volunteers worked with UNITE HERE.

“Seed the Vote is a solidarity project that’s shown it can make a difference,” said Luke Elliott-Negri, the PSC legislative representative. “If you’re a PSC member who wants to affect the 2022 elections outside of New York, there’s no better way to volunteer.”

“The midterms will decide what terrain the trade union movement can fight on,” UNITE HERE’s Yedidia said in a September 7 discussion sponsored by Seed the Vote. “If we had two more Senators who would act without the filibuster, we could pass the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act), which would change unionization in our country.” (A video of this discussion, also featuring longtime labor strategist Bill Fletcher, Jr., is at [tinyurl.com/seed-the-vote-discussion](https://tinyurl.com/seed-the-vote-discussion).)

## CRUCIAL RACES

A lot is on the line this year. “At stake in this election is whether we’ll have free and fair elections in 2024,” Yedidia said. “There are outright election deniers running at the top of the ticket in a number of

battleground states. Doug Mastriano, the Republican nominee for governor in Pennsylvania, was at the January 6 insurrection, and he chartered two buses to bring his supporters. If he’s elected, he’s promised to force all voters to reregister in order to vote and move to ban abortion when he takes office.”

## GET INVOLVED

PSC members interested in volunteering with Seed the Vote can sign up at [seedthevote.org](https://seedthevote.org) to find out more. They can canvass for a week or a weekend in Pennsylvania or another state, or they can join a phone bank and call voters in Georgia, Pennsylvania or Wisconsin. For canvassers, there is available support for the costs of hotel and transportation to all who need it.

Jessica Siegel, a retired journalism professor at Brooklyn College, said, “I feel the best way to be of help is to connect with groups already working on the ground that can give us some direction.”

*Peter Hogness was editor of Clarion from 2001–2015. Since 2016, he’s worked to support grassroots organizing groups in voter swing states. He has volunteered with Seed the Vote since 2020 and has written about this work for the Guardian and other publications.*

## Taking action for national politics

# PSC: no to MLC proposed shift

Continued from page 2

claim City Hall has been delaying contract negotiations with unions including District Council 37 and United Federation of Teachers due to the court’s decision. City unions that support the proposal to amend the administrative code point to the near insolvency of the Health Insurance Stabilization Fund that supports welfare benefits to city workers and retirees. The report notes the change, if enacted, would require the City to negotiate any change in contributions with the MLC, and some city unions hope passage of the measure will encourage City Hall to begin bargaining with them.

## DELAYED NEGOTIATIONS

The situation puts these city unions in the position of making a permanent concession on the City’s contribution to health-care coverage in order to achieve a short-term fix in the stabilization fund and kickstart delayed contract negotiations. Critics of the proposed measure argue that the Adams administration is not displaying any intention to act generously when it comes to the city workforce. The *New York Post* reported that the mayor has ordered 3% across-the-board agency reductions and is demanding further cuts in subsequent years. These cuts come at a time when an inflation rate over 8% is compounding economic woes.

In a message to both PSC members and CUNY retirees, PSC President James Davis said that the PSC and a minority of MLC-affiliated unions voted against the proposal.

“The proposed change eliminates the HIP-HMO rate as the single standard for determining the City’s obligation to pay for health insurance for city employees, retirees and their dependents,” he said. “Under current law, the City is required to ‘pay the entire cost of health insurance coverage for city employees, city retirees, and their dependents, not to exceed 100% of the full cost of HIP-HMO.’

“Currently, the HIP-HMO cost is over \$700 per month.... Under the modified language the City and the MLC could agree jointly on a different plan as the standard for either retirees and their dependents or active employees and their dependents and provide only the cost of that plan. The modified language does not specify what if any elements of health insurance coverage a new ‘benchmark’ plan must include.”

## OTHER CONSEQUENCES

Both retirees and in-service employees worry that the new medical coverage schemes could lead to higher costs and less coverage.

Glenn Kissack, a delegate from the PSC Retirees Chapter, told *Clarion* he feared the proposed legal

change “opens a Pandora’s box that will likely have a deleterious effect, not only on the health care of retirees, but on that of active members as well.”

“[The current law] guarantees that the City pays for the health care of both active and retired municipal workers,” he said. “The City and the MLC are now agreeing that there can be new categories of members created that can be charged for their health-care plans.

Think of the potential consequences, remembering that business-financed groups like the Citizens Budget Commission have insisted for years that city employees pay a big part of their premiums.”

## SWIFT ACTION

The Adams administration and the MLC leadership remain undeterred. The *Daily News* reported that they have both “dismissed the complaints from retirees as overblown, arguing the Advantage model would provide the requisite care,” adding that the new scheme, due “in part to its private administration” would “save the City upward of \$600 million a year.”

Observers believe action on the bill will be swift. The City would like to see the new law enacted before the October hearing on the appeal of the retirees’ legal victory, and the bill cannot come to a full

**Could lead to higher costs and less coverage.**



Opponents of the MLC proposal plan to put pressure on the City Council, including Council Speaker Adrienne Adams (shown above).

City Council vote until after two public committee hearings. In the next weeks, union members both for and against the proposal are expected to put heavy pressure on city lawmakers. The PSC is urging members to voice their opposition to the plan.

Members’ messages about opposition to the proposal have apparently already made their way to lawmakers. One city lawmaker, speaking anonymously to the *Daily News* said, “I think City Hall is dreaming if they think they can just slip this through.”



# Adjuncts get full-time positions

By CLARION STAFF

This summer, *Clarion* reported on a major PSC victory to create over 500 new full-time positions and the union's subsequent demand to prioritize current adjunct faculty to fill those positions. Part of the union's proposed legislation in the New Deal for CUNY (ND4C) calls for the creation of new full-time faculty positions. In last spring's state budget negotiations, the union won a commitment from the state to create the new full-time faculty positions at CUNY, a significant step toward achieving the goals of the ND4C. Scores of people have already been hired into new full-time positions.

Immediately after securing the commitment, the union began a campaign to pressure the CUNY administration to "Hire from Within." For years, adjuncts have provided excellent instruction to students despite not having adequate compensation or the job protections of their full-time colleagues. The only "just" thing to do, from the union's perspective, is to fill the new full-time lecturer positions with CUNY adjuncts. Hence the campaign: "Hire from Within for Excellence and Justice."

## A PSC CAMPAIGN

Thanks to the hard work of union activists, many CUNY adjuncts across the university have been hired in full-time lines this Fall. For these PSC members, the new jobs have made their lives materially better.

Union activists argue that the university can and should do more to advance veteran CUNY adjuncts to full-time positions, including pushing the state legislature to pass the full New Deal for CUNY and advocating that both the State and City fully fund public higher education.

*Clarion* heard from former adjuncts who are now in full-time positions.

## Winning stability

I have worked as an adjunct for 10 years. I love teaching at CUNY. Working with CUNY students is the most challenging and rewarding work I've ever done. What makes the work challenging, however, is less the nuances of pedagogy and more the fact that adjuncts are severely underpaid.

When I started as an adjunct, I was in my mid-20s. I was single, had recently graduated from law school with massive debt and had not yet started graduate school. I didn't make much money, but I didn't need to at that time in my life. Over the course of 10 years, however, a lot changed. I started graduate school, got married and had kids. In other words, I lived my life. But the reality of working as an adjunct made "living my life" hard to do.

**Many CUNY adjuncts were hired.**

## But union campaigns for equity continue



Goretta Ng now teaches mathematics as a full-time lecturer at Borough of Manhattan Community College.

Until the union's last contract, when we won a significant increase in adjunct pay, my wages barely covered the cost of part-time childcare. Even with that raise, though, my family continued to struggle because of my low adjunct pay.

## PANDEMIC PROBLEMS

When COVID hit, my family was lucky because my partner and I were able to work from home. But our home wasn't big enough for two adults to work full-time, while two toddlers ran rampant. We had to move, thus increasing our rent. We also faced increased medical costs. My daughter has a club foot and needs occasional surgeries. Despite being on graduate student insurance, we faced routine and increasing medical costs, higher rent and ongoing childcare costs. It became increasingly clear that the instability and underpaid nature of adjunct work just wasn't working for my family. I started looking at open positions in high school teaching jobs.

When [Andrew] Cuomo resigned and [Kathy] Hochul became governor, for the first time in many years, the union was able to win significant funding in the state budget for CUNY. That funding opened up hundreds of lecturer lines. I applied for an open lecturer position.

Thankfully, I was hired. Because of that, I am able to keep working at CUNY. I have the time to focus on students, lesson plans and grading. I can also contribute service work to my department, something that I was barred from as an adjunct. I am able to keep doing the work that I

am passionate about while also providing for my family.

That's not all. Being hired as a full-timer means I'll have time. I won't have to work winter and summer breaks. I'll finally be able to start working on my dissertation again, since between my family, my work and union activism, there was never time for scholarship. Being hired as a full-timer has given me two things every teacher, every scholar (and every person) needs: a good salary and time.

## MORE FULL-TIME LINES

The union needs to push for more funding in the state budget to open more lecturer lines. We need the New Deal for CUNY to achieve real job security and wage equity for adjunct workers. But, also crucial, hiring committees need to look seriously at adjunct candidates for available lecturer lines. Full-time professors need to recognize us as experts and as colleagues. The adjunctification of CUNY must end, but for that to happen, the union needs to work hard internally at CUNY as well as externally with lawmakers.

**Rosa Squillacote**  
Political Science  
John Jay College

## Achieving the dream

My childhood dream was to become a teacher. In my home country, Malaysia, this dream would likely have

never become a reality. My immigration to the United States provided me with a new opportunity that I was determined to take. I wanted to follow the direction of my childhood dream, to get a college education and become a teacher. After working for some years, I was able to save enough money and attend evening and weekend classes at Borough of Manhattan Community College.

I earned an associate degree at BMCC and was then accepted by NYU's Steinhardt School of Education. Following the completion of my bachelor's degree, I earned my master's degree at Lehman College.

## STUDENT SUCCESS

In the Fall of 2009 I was hired as an adjunct at BMCC. During my time as an adjunct, I attended many workshops hosted by the Open Educational Resources (OER) team, which helped me hone my teaching skills and techniques. I saw my successes in the success of my students. My Summer Immersion Program classes saw as high as 100% passing rates. Through the years, I have continued to teach and learn, to better serve BMCC and my students. The pandemic brought special challenges to us all with remote learning and online platforms.

After 13 years as an adjunct, beginning in the Fall of 2022, I was hired in a new full-time lecturer position. As a full-time lecturer, I will get the opportunity to attend more conferences and to further my teaching

abilities. I will have a greater number of students to teach, motivate and encourage.

I am living my childhood dream. I am helping my students expand their learning and enrich their education. I've attained the American dream. Hard work and perseverance brought me to where I am, and I could not be prouder to be a part of the BMCC family. I look forward to many years of teaching ahead.

**Goretta Ng**  
Mathematics  
Borough of Manhattan  
Community College

## What is to be done?

My field, English composition, had many open lines across CUNY, almost all of them at senior colleges. I applied to 11 of those positions. I was very fortunate to be offered a lecturer position at City College of New York this year.

Above all, this job gives me *stability*. This was going to be my last year with PhD funding and I didn't know what I would do for money or for health insurance after that, since my fellowship was close to half of my income. This job means my partner and I are able to begin to seriously discuss when we want to start a family. A New York State pension means I have a retirement plan beyond "hope that capitalism is overthrown before 2065." (Although, I do still hope for that.)

## CONVERSION SYSTEM

However, many of these lines are going to external hires. Someone I know found out that the hiring committee in her department was specifically looking for folks with research experience, postdoctoral fellowships and publications, even though these CUNY lines are supposed to be for dedicated teachers.

I think the union should negotiate for new lines dedicated explicitly to CUNY adjuncts, as we have done in the past, by creating a system of conversion, where any adjunct who wants to be hired full-time will automatically be converted into a full-time lecturer once they meet the conditions. Adjuncts teaching as much as they can under

the 9-6 rule are already teaching a full-time teaching load, so I think in many cases, adjuncts are teaching the course sections needed in order to be converted to full-time roles. The need is there. CUNY just doesn't want to pay for the salaries and benefits of lecturers, when adjuncts are so much cheaper.

**Olivia Wood**  
English  
City College

**'Union needs to push for more funding.'**

**'The adjunctification of CUNY must end.'**

Dave Sanders



# New York City leads union trend

By SHOMIAL AHMAD

Amazon warehouse organizing, shop-by-shop Starbucks unionization efforts, strikes at John Deere and Kellogg's in October 2021, dubbed the month Striketober, have catapulted labor organizing into the news. A spotlight on these efforts has contributed to a swell in support for unions, with more than 70% of people surveyed in a 2022 Gallup Poll approving of labor unions, the highest level since 1965. A new report by the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies (SLU) describes these efforts and examines new organizing in the past year and a half, from January 2021 to June 2022.

"New York in particular has a kind of leading role in some of the new organizing [in the country]," said Ruth Milkman, a distinguished professor at SLU and the Graduate Center, during a presentation at a PSC Retirees Chapter meeting in September. Milkman is a coauthor of the report, "The State of the Unions 2022: A Profile of Organized Labor in New York City, New York State and the United States."

## NEW ACTIVISM

Unionizing at media companies, Starbucks and nonprofits, Milkman noted, often have new leaders. "It's not the usual suspects leading the charge in these campaigns. [They] are mostly young college-educated workers who are underemployed in some way."

But Milkman isn't celebrating yet. New organizing has not been able to make a significant dent in declining union density, a trend that has been led by an organized right-wing anti-labor assault on unions since the 1980s.

The overall numbers are still "grim," with a "continuing relentless decline in union density," Milkman said. Labor unions only represent 6% of private-sector workers and a third of public-sector workers nationwide. In the past two decades, union density has declined nationally, from 13.5% in 2002 to 10.2% in 2021-2022. In those nationwide numbers, New York City stands out. Union density in public and private sectors is around double the nationwide percentages. It's also the city that has seen the most growth in new organizing.

## AMAZON UPRISING

In New York City, newly organized union members in the private sector, including Staten Island Amazon workers who have organized but have not yet been officially recognized as a union, grew by 0.50%. That number may seem low, but it's significant. New York City leads other cities in terms of union density growth, including Seattle (0.27%), Boston (0.16%), Chicago (0.11%) and Los Angeles and San Francisco (0.10%). Even without the 8,325 Amazon workers in the equation, New York City would still lead the pack at 0.29%.

That 0.50% growth translates into nearly 20,000 newly organized pri-

## SLU report examines new labor organizing



The successful organizing drive at an Amazon site in Staten Island is one of the year's biggest stories in American labor.

vate-sector workers. And to put the number in even clearer perspective, it means that over the course of the 18-month study, one in five new private-sector union members in the country came from New York City.

And while the workers at the Staten Island Amazon facility represent a big chunk of those new union members, there have been significant organizing efforts in other fields, including school bus drivers, home health-care workers, journalists, security guards and non-profit workers.

## A new generation of organizers

"There's a connection between the COVID-19 pandemic and growing unionization among school bus drivers and security guards. There is a shortage of school bus drivers across the State of New York, as a result of COVID retirements, low pay and more challenging working conditions," said Joseph van der Naald, a coauthor of the report and a PhD student in sociology at the Graduate Center. "The combination of a tight labor market (in this industry as well as more generally), low pay, and wors-

ening job quality all contribute to growing interest in unionization."

## SHOPS ORGANIZED

Van der Naald explained to *Clarion* the broader context behind the report's numbers, specifically around new organizing in New York. More than 1,600 workers became members of the Amalgamated Transit Union through organizing efforts of drivers, attendants, mechanics, dispatchers and clerical staff at major school bus companies. More than 2,500 home health-care workers joined Home Healthcare

# AAUP affiliates with the AFT

## New higher ed alliance

By CLARION STAFF

The American Federation of Teachers Convention in Boston this June was a historic meeting for labor in higher education, as it finalized the affiliation of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) with the AFT.

The new AAUP-AFT affiliation creates the "largest higher education alliance" in the country, uniting "more than 300,000 faculty, graduate assistants and others," *Politico* reported. The AFT-AAUP agenda "includ[es] pushing for more investment in higher education; ending employment of low-cost contingent faculty; and cancelling student debt."

## PSC AFFILIATION

The PSC has long been an affiliate of both national organizations.

Nivedita Majumdar, a professor of English at John Jay College who serves on the National Council of the AAUP, said "We at the PSC have been an integral part of both the AFT and the AAUP. The affiliation of the two organizations is a historic moment for academic labor. It has

increasingly become clear that organizing and unions are indispensable, not only for labor justice, but also for the defense of freedom of thought and expression. AAUP has a century-old history of fighting for academic freedom and professional standards, and AFT with its formidable organizational muscle provides the necessary ground to wage that fight. The two organizations have had a successful organizing partnership for the past 10-plus years, resulting in increased unionization all over the country."

Majumdar, who previously served two terms as PSC secretary, added, "The affiliation allows us to continue organizing higher ed workers, strengthen local chapters and fight legislative battles from a stronger and more unified platform. Given the resilience of the forces that are stacked against us, we need an organized higher ed with the resources and the vision that makes it possible to not only wage battles but also win them."

## Building a strong national movement

AAUP President Irene Mulvey, from Fairfield University in Connecticut, said in a statement that the new united organization will be "much better equipped to take on the challenges facing higher education," such as the "anti-intellectual attacks on the teaching of history, legislative intrusion into the academy, disinvestment and chronic underfunding of public higher education and the resulting casualization of academic workers."

AFT President Randi Weingarten said in a statement, "Through this affiliation, we double down on the work to make colleges and universities excellent places to teach and learn."

## ATTACKS ON HIGHER ED

As *Clarion* and other news outlets have reported, a concerted effort by right-wing politicians and media outlets has sought to suppress the honest teaching of racial history in the United States, ban books and in-

timidate teachers from addressing any topics that might make students feel uncomfortable.

Workers of America, which is affiliated with the International Union of Journeymen and Allied Trades (IUIAT). Workers at the *New York Times* (591), MSNBC (322) and Insider Inc. (307) all organized. Non-profit workers at Housing Works (604), American Museum of Natural History (205), Whitney Museum of American Art (176) and the Guggenheim Museum (144) all became union members, too.

## PROMINENT CAMPAIGNS

These wins are significant and are in public-facing companies. Milkman highlights that recent college graduates are a part of this organizing, noting that they are often both interested in labor and in critiquing capitalism. PSC members who teach and work with college students can support these efforts and advocate for labor-friendly national legislation, including the PRO Act (Protecting the Right to Organize Act), that can help erode the systemic hurdles facing labor.

"Really the heavy lifting is being done by millennials and Gen Zers themselves, but anything union members in the PSC and elsewhere can do to push for passage of the PRO Act and to help build public support for the new organizing would be valuable," Milkman said.

To read the full report, "The State of the Unions 2022: A Profile of Organized Labor in New York City, New York State and the United States," go to [tinyurl.com/state-of-the-unions-2022](https://tinyurl.com/state-of-the-unions-2022).

Marcia Newfield, a PSC Retirees Chapter activist, reported on the convention for the PSC Retirees Chapter newsletter, noting that several PSC-endorsed resolutions were considered by AFT delegates. One PSC resolution, originally submitted by the union's Retirees Chapter, was widely embraced after being folded into an AFT resolution to divest pension plans from fossil fuels and reinvest in workers and communities.

"It was enthusiastically endorsed," said Newfield. "The AFT Climate Justice Task Force initiated a special follow-up meeting, [in] which 26 people, including most of [PSC's] delegation, attended. Plans have been initiated to build a labor network to support climate justice."

## LABOR NETWORK

PSC President James Davis said, "At a time when academic unionization is resurgent, the AAUP-AFT affiliation promises new organizing at campuses around the country. As importantly, in states without enabling legislation to support collective bargaining, the affiliation will give so-called "advocacy" chapters access to a labor federation with political influence."







# Research profs win contract terms

By ARI PAUL

After more than a year of negotiations, the PSC and CUNY came to a final agreement on securing contract protections for around two dozen research professors, who are nonteaching faculty who perform valuable scientific research at the university. The research professors ratified the proposed agreement with 100% approval in May. (The agreement terms can be read here: [tinyurl.com/CUNY-research-prof-agreement](https://tinyurl.com/CUNY-research-prof-agreement). It is part of the PSC-CUNY contract.)

The research professors no longer have separate contracts but now fall under the general PSC-CUNY contract, said Naomi Zauderer, the union's former associate executive director, who led the negotiations.

## CONTRACT GAINS

"The union's position was that the PSC contract should apply to them in its entirety. Management created the position outside the bargaining unit in 2012 because they refused to give them tenure," Zauderer told *Clarion*. "The research professors decided to organize because they were not given the salary increases in the 2017-2023 PSC contract. We negotiated to have as much of the PSC contract apply to them as we could."

Most of the professors are based at the Advanced Science Research Center at the Graduate Center, although others work at Hunter College, John Jay College and the CUNY Graduate

## Bargaining with CUNY ends with results



PSC President James Davis (right) signs an agreement concerning CUNY research professors with CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez.

School of Public Health and Health Policy.

## Retroactive pay increases negotiated

From a PSC summary of the memorandum of agreement:

- "Salary increases identical to those in the current PSC contract: 2% per year in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, plus a final 2% increase in November 2022. Depending on the

date of hire, the total raise under this agreement could be as high as 10% plus compounding. The salary ranges for research professor titles will also increase."

- "Lump-sum retroactive pay for the salary increases applied during the time they were on payroll from 2018 until now."
- "Protections fundamental to being

covered by a union contract, such as the grievance procedure (Article 20) and coverage by 'just cause' for discipline and discharge under the same terms as HEOs (Article 21.9)."

- "All aspects of the once discretionary 'terms and conditions of employment' are now enforceable through the contractual grievance procedure."

- "Rights and benefits not specified in the 'terms and conditions of employment,' such as paid parental leave (Article 16), travel funds (Article 28), tuition waivers (Article 29), PSC-CUNY awards (Article 25), Welfare Fund benefits (Article 26) and voluntary phased retirement (Appendix K) are enforceable under the contract rather than ambiguous unwritten conditions that may or may not apply."

- "The agreement sets a 35-hour-per-week workload as a benchmark with the provision that research faculty have a professional obligation to devote the time necessary to accomplish all required work. Research faculty are protected, however, against being assigned an excessive number of hours or an unreasonable schedule."

- "Research professors gain an official evaluation procedure and an enforceable timetable for re-appointment that conforms to CUNY's fiscal year."

- "A new part-time research professor title will be created. Importantly, colleagues in this title will be paid on the basis of parity with those on full-time lines and are eligible for full health benefits and prorated leave if they work at least 20 hours per week and have an assignment of more than six months."

Salary increases and retroactive pay negotiated in this contract are scheduled to be included in research professors' paychecks on October 6.

## PSC helps senators win primaries

Continued from page 6

Jackson and Rivera, they faced challengers who had the support of US Congressman Adriano Espaillat. Kang saw these challengers as a reincarnation of the state senate's Independent Democratic Conference, a group of conservative Democrats who caucused with Republicans, thus allowing the Republicans to maintain control of the state senate. Many of those IDC senators were defeated in the 2018 primaries by progressives. One of those victors was Senator Robert Jackson. The Espaillat-backed challengers to Jackson and Rivera, Kang said, were "trying to replace progressives in the state senate with people aligned with [Espaillat's] pro-real estate machine," a plan that "didn't work."

## A PROGRESSIVE AGENDA

The PSC hopes that more progressive lawmakers in Albany will make it easier in next year's state budget negotiations to push for more robust investment for public institutions, including CUNY, and advocate for measures to protect reproductive rights and LGBTQ equality in the state, things that are under attack nationally by the



Reem Jaafar, a mathematician at LaGuardia Community College, led efforts to reelect State Senator Andrew Gounardes.

cultural right. In the state assembly primaries, the PSC successfully convinced the New York State AFL-CIO to endorse Ron Kim, a Queens assembly member who was one of the first lawmakers to publicly confront former Governor Andrew Cuomo's nursing home scandal.

Kang added that the incumbents faced "well-funded challenges from

moderate Democrats," but "electoral results show that New Yorkers find these senators to actually support the issues that remain important to New Yorkers, including funding for CUNY."

Luke Elliott-Negri, the PSC legislative representative and a member of the PSC Executive Council, added, "When legislators fight for CUNY, we fight for them."

## Notice of special elections at Bronx EOC, Brooklyn EOC and Medgar Evers College

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 5:00 PM

Deadline for filing a signed Candidate Declaration. A sample form can be found here: [tinyurl.com/PSC-sample-candidacy-form](https://tinyurl.com/PSC-sample-candidacy-form). Forms must be received at the new PSC office by the deadline. (See address below.)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

Pre-printed nominating petitions will be available for candidates upon request, by emailing [elections@pscmail.org](mailto:elections@pscmail.org).

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 5:00 PM

Deadline for completed nominating petitions to be received at the PSC office.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Ballots will be mailed to members' home addresses.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 5:00 PM

Ballots in an uncontested election must be received at the PSC office.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 5:00 PM

Ballots for contested elections must be received at the American Arbitration Association by mail (to the American Arbitration Association address on the return envelope).

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 10:00 AM

Ballots will be counted.

Any questions about elections can be emailed at [elections@pscmail.org](mailto:elections@pscmail.org). Forms can be emailed to [elections@pscmail.org](mailto:elections@pscmail.org) or delivered to the PSC office. Please note the PSC office has moved. The new location is 25 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10004. When mailing documents, please put it to the "Attn of the PSC Elections Committee."



## Student loan forgiveness

Special waiver applications for the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF) must be submitted by the end of October with documentation from employers and an application for loan consolidation.

Adjuncts who may qualify for PSLF should make sure their federal student loans are in the process of being consolidated into the Direct Loan Program. They should begin submitting their application forms to CUNY campus HR departments to document public service. When requesting employment verification forms from HR, adjuncts should write an explanatory letter that documents by semester and year, courses taught in what department, including a calculation of hours taught. Additional PSLF resources for adjuncts and full-time CUNY employees can be found at the union's webpage: [psc-cuny.org/issues/public-service-loan-forgiveness-program/](https://psc-cuny.org/issues/public-service-loan-forgiveness-program/). The webpage includes webinars and links on how to apply.

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CONTRACT

Clarion | October 2022

# MASS MEETING **WINNING** A JUST CONTRACT

All members are invited to  
a mass meeting.

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26**  
**ON ZOOM**  
**6:30–8:00 PM**

The union is building a campaign for a  
just collective bargaining agreement.  
And that campaign starts with YOU.

Check the PSC website and your email  
in early October for the meeting link.

