THE PSC IS
TAKING THE MESSAGE TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

As negotiations drag on, the PSC tells CUNY’s Board of Trustees it is their responsibility to advocate for a fully funded CUNY and to bargain a fair contract. PAGES 5–8

STAFF
Survey shows high workloads
A survey of CUNY professional staff reveals that understaffing is forcing HEOs, CLTs and library faculty to take on gigantic workloads. PAGE 2

ACADEMIC FREEDOM
Labor defends academia
Academics from Florida joined with PSC members at Brooklyn College to discuss the right’s war on universities and how labor can fight back. PAGE 4

AUSTERITY
Baruch profs resist cuts
Members and students say cuts to programs would injure the school’s core mission. Adjunct instructors are in peril of losing work while students suffer. PAGE 9

CLIMATE
Renewable energy & CUNY
Can the city’s public university be a leader in finding alternatives to fossil fuel? Two PSC members in the climate justice movement say yes. PAGE 10
Staff say they’re overworked: survey

Understaffing is impacting our members

Professional staff and library faculty at CUNY who are represented by the PSC have spoken, and they have spoken clearly: They are working a lot more, and with fewer resources, than they did in the past.

In a survey commissioned by the PSC with the assistance of the New York State United Teachers, the union’s statewide affiliate, 52% of members in non-instructional titles said their workload has “increased significantly” over the last four years, while 35% said that their workloads “increased somewhat.” Only 2% reported that workloads had “decreased somewhat” and no one said workloads had “decreased significantly.”

The survey was sent to the union’s members in higher education officer, college laboratory technician and library faculty titles. Thirty percent responded. Full results of the survey are forthcoming.

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It’s harder to meet students’ needs.

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Members were quite clear that the increased workloads are having a negative impact on students because the work is spread too thin throughout a shrinking workforce.

“Because of the overwhelming number of students I have to work with on a daily basis, I am not having enough time for my students’ work,” said one member.

Cut services

Another said, “Because of understaffing, we’ve had to cut student services” on campus. And another said, “More of my time is spent on basic office functions such as making appointments for students,” taking away valuable time that could be spent on face-to-face interaction with them.

And members said that workload increases were causing them more stress and anxiety. Many find it difficult to do all the work within the 35-hour-per-week contractual limit. Some reported missing meals. They worry about childcare when they have to work long hours. There is an “increased difficulty in separating work-life balance” reported one member. One reported that the workload simply left them “exhausted.”

Jeanette Batiz, the PSC chapter chair for CLTs, who serves as a senior CLT at Bronx Community College, said, “We have been understaffed and overworked for decades.”

She added, “We need salary increases and we need to hire more people at every campus.”

PSC to council: Fix our buildings

Panel hears safety concerns


These are just some of the maintenance and safety issues on CUNY campuses that PSC members and our students are forced to face on a regular basis. At April 17, PSC members addressed these concerns at a hearing of the City Council’s Higher Education Committee.

Improvements?

Speaking for the CUNY administration, Mohamed Attalla, the vice chancellor of facilities planning, construction and management, told the committee that his “charge has been to improve our capital planning and construction processes, enhance the capacity of the team and develop a plan for a State of Good Repair.” He boasted that this creation of a Project Management Office, and noted that “we’ve improved our capabilities to procure our services more efficiently.”

Nice words, but for CUNY faculty and staff, the situation is dire. At the CUNY Board of Trustees hearing at the City Council on April 1 (see story, pages 5–8), Carole Harvis, PSC chapter chair at City Tech, spoke about how mold problems at the school have persisted for years.

Damage abounds

Pabila Salek, the department chair of world languages, literature and humanities at York College, told the City Council that “since Fall 2019, our campus has lacked a cafeteria, depriving students of a vital resource for sustenance and community engagement,” and she spoke to the rodent issue: “The presence of rodents such as squirrels and raccoons in the library undermines a conducive learning environment. Mice droppings have been observed over the years in all buildings.”

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Ceiling damage at York College.

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QC eviction delay spotlights CUNY exec

By ARI PAUL

On February 22, two CUNY senior colleges in Queens – Queens College and York College – received bomb threats and were evacuated. Both campuses “received the emailed threats around 12:50 p.m., “the New York Post reported, after 98 bomb threats were found the previous day by 2:30 p.m.”

But there was a critical difference in how the two evacuations were handled. The Post reported that Queens College switched to remote classes at 2:45 p.m., while York College went remote at 1:15 p.m. “We learned that York College received the same threat and evacuated their campus 1.5 hours before us,” Karen Weingarten, the PSC chapter chair at Queens, told her members in an email.

FINDINGS POINTED

During a labor-management meeting, Queens College President Frank Wu told the PSC chapter leadership that it was CUNY’s executive vice chancellor and chief operating officer, Héctor Batista, who delayed the flushing college’s evacuation, Weingarten said.

The PSC chapter, therefore, demanded an explanation from the CUNY central administration executive.

“We are relieved that the bomb threat turned out to be a hoax and no one was ever killed,” Weingarten said in an email to Batista on March 25. “However, we are alarmed that you would delay the evacuation of our campus after a credible bomb threat. The dangers of teaching and working on a college campus are not theoretical, as the news reminds us regularly. This delay could have placed our lives at risk, and we are owed an explanation for what caused it.”

He responded saying, “Events such as these must be carefully assessed and coordinated with campus officials, local responder units and additional offices to support the decision-making process. Oftentimes, threat conditions and associated events change rapidly as more information becomes available. In this case, we can assure you, and the members of both campus communities, that we were consistently monitoring the situation and we were engaged in the necessary coordination with our first-responder counterparts to support informed decisions.”

INVESTIGATION

He added, “In terms of some re- cipients experiencing delays or not receiving CUNY Alerts at all, I have asked President Wu to investigate their system for message failures.”

For Miles Grier, an associate pro- fessor of English at Queens College, there is a disconnect between an “increasingly remote and unaccountable administration” and the rest of the campus community.

“Batista’s letter offers no concrete answers to questions that pertain to a very serious danger. The language is telling: the possessive in ‘our students, faculty and staff and the gulf between ‘we’ and ‘you’ in ‘we can assure you,’” he said in an email. “In the letter, ‘we’ upper administration at Cen- tral are the University. You on the campuses belong to us and should accept assurances without concrete detail, which we’ve decided that you don’t need – even though you’ve identified them as such.”

He continued, “In my 12 years at CUNY, I’ve witnessed the increasing distance of upper admin- istration from faculty, staff and students.” He also said, “If they want to provide assurance that would restore trust, they need to come out of their proverbial tower and bridge that distance to meet us on the sites and in the circum- stances where we work.”

Natalie Vena, an assistant pro- fessor of urban studies, was unaware of any bomb threat when she walked to get a midday cup of coffee and saw students walking out of the library. She was told by one of them that there was some kind of threat and they were leaving. Then chaos ensued.

“The slow crawl to get off campus was crazy,” she said of the conges- tion of cars trying to leave the camp- us. “We were all in our cars. We were trapped – you couldn’t get off campus. I don’t think I got off cam- pus until 2:30.”

Vena called both Wu and Batis- ta’s explanations “just extremely confusing. Where exactly is the mismanagement?”

The PSC’s objection to the charges comes after months of union advo- cacy for academic freedom at CUNY since the outbreak of violence in the Middle East last October. The union has fought against college adminis- trations’ canceling of events about the Middle East political crisis at Lehman, Hunter and Baruch Col- leges (see news story on page 4 and op-ed piece on page 10).

NATIONAL STATEMENT

One of the PSC’s national affiliates, the American Association of Universi- ty Professors, said in a statement: “We condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the heavy-handed, militaristic response to student activism that is being directed at us across the country. At this critical moment, too many cowardly university leaders are responding to largely peaceful, outdoor protests by inviting law enforcement in riot gear to campus and condoning violent ar-REST. These administrators are fall- ing in their duty to their institutions, their faculty, their students and their central obligation to our democratic society. When university administra- tors limit when, where and how free speech may be exercised, and require advance applications for permission of such expression, they effectively gut the right itself. To insist that harsh discipline and violent repression are necessary to combat hate on a college campus is a pretext to suppress pro- test and silence speech.”

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 Protecting students’ rights

The PSC protested the mass arrests of student protesters at City College on April 30 and have demanded that charges be dropped.

The union said in a statement: “The Professional Staff Congress calls on the CUNY chancellor to urge the district attorney to drop the charges against the CUNY students and employees involved in the April 30 during the NYPD sweep of the CCNY Gaza Solidarity Encamp- ment. Sixteen individuals for Pal- estinian solidarity and divestment from Israel have now reached 80 campuses nationwide, according to The Chronicle of Higher Education. The communiqué and administrators have responded in many different ways. The CUNY administration should make every effort to prevent the students and employees who were taken into custody on April 30 from carrying criminal records into their futures and observe their due process rights under internal CUNY policies.”

The protest at City College was part of a nationwide move- ment at college campuses where students have spoken out about the ongoing humanitarian and human rights crisis in Gaza.

ARRESTS

Nearly 300 students and other ac- tivists were arrested at City College and Columbia University alone that night. Police have violently broken up protest encampments at college cam- puses around the country, prompting a national discussion about threats to academic freedom and the right to free speech at American universities.

PSC officers and staff were on hand at City College to witness the excessive force used against CUNY students and their supporters.

PSC President James Da- vis contacted the CUNY ad- ministration to insist that the arrested students be treated with leniency, union sources said.

PSC First Vice President Andrea Vásquez said, “Those who commit civil disobedience understand the risks they take. But authorities, including CCNY and CUNY lead- ership, have the discretion to under- stand the context in which protest anchored in moral values happens. In this context, no CUNY student or faculty member should be subject to the criminal justice system.”

The chauvinism of both the response to the bomb threat and its aftermath have eroded morale at a campus where tensions are already high.

HICUPPS

“The various hiccupcs such as the absence of infrastructural help to rec- ognize the urgency of the message, the walking back on sub- sequent messages, the problems with the timing – both evacuating after the campus was cleared and then the realization that the threats were treated with different levels of priority – undermine the trust that I had,” said Julie George, an associate professor of political science. “This event comes after a series of hits for CUNY our budget has barely been ap- proved, we had 25 sub lines retracted just weeks before the start of the sem- ster, with unknown implications in the dark about those plans. The physical and financial conditions of the institution are de- grading. HR has been making costly errors with pension and retirement deductions that will now harm em- ployees’ bottom lines as they must pay back interest what was not deducted. Morale was already low.”

For many faculty and staff at Queens College, the whole narrative that everything was ok during the bomb scare remains shrouded in mystery.

“The bottom line is nobody outside of security and Batista really know what the protocol is for issuing a CUNY Alert,” said Kevin Birth, an associate professor of anthropology.

“They need to get it down to at least 10 minutes.”

Birth explained that more and more students are using the CUNY app instead of waiting for CUNY Alerts to learn about possible inci- dents on campus. On the day of the bomb scare, Birth counted 25 time st udents learned of the bomb scare via that app sooner than many others.

“I’m not sure that’s what CUNY wants,” he said.
Labor is fighting for academic freedom

By ARI PAUL

Brooklyn College hosted a panel on April 3 addressing right-wing threats to academic freedom and how academic unions like the PSC can fight back against this assault. The panel, titled “How to Fight Back Against Attacks on Academic Freedom,” featured two speakers from the University of Florida – political scientist Sharon Austin and the campus chair of United Faculty of Florida, Paul Ortiz – who highlighted many of the state-level attacks on academic freedom; the attempt to bar faculty from testifying about political affairs, mandates against teaching certain subjects and restrictions on partnerships with foreign academic institutions. It also featured Risa Lieberwitz, the general counsel of the American Association of University Professors, and Carolina Bank Muñoz, Brooklyn College PSC chapter chair and professor of sociology. It was moderated by Alan Aja, the chair of the department of Puerto Rican and Latino studies at Brooklyn College.

ASSAULT ON COLLEGES

Panelists observed that the assault on academic freedom in Florida went hand in hand with an attack on unionism, as the state also enacted measures to make it impossible for the UF to deduct member dues through their paychecks and mandated that the union keep a membership of 60% within the bargaining unit or risk decertification.

Measures like these are popping off across the country. A new law in Indiana “allows universities to revoke a professor’s tenure if they don’t promote so-called ‘intellectual diversity’ in the classroom,” National Public Radio reported. In Arkansas, state agencies including its universities are barred from using the word Latinx. And all the while, the panelists said, there is tremendous outside pressure on university administrations to prevent faculty from speaking out on sensitive topics.

Lieberwitz, who is also a professor of labor and employment law at Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations, said that the “current wave of attack” is a part of the “corporatization of the university,” and is a result of the private-sector model of American academia that has evolved into being since the Reagan era. Citing content analysis of recent New York Times coverage, Bank Muñoz situated the attacks in a “moral panic being created by the media today” – the story of a culture war tearing campuses apart – when in actuality little to no attention is paid to significant problems such as austerity at universities like CUNY.

PAST STRUGGLES

After the outbreak of violence in the Middle East last October, the PSC has fought the administration’s cancellation of academic events related to the conflict at Lehman, Hunter and Baruch Colleges. And this is nothing new. In 2017, Clarion investigated a right-wing smear campaign against two Brooklyn College professors – Samir Chopra and Corey Robin – who had made statements about politics in the Middle East. In 2013, Brooklyn College came under fire from politicians because of a political science department event about the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement. In 2011, Brooklyn College instructor Kristofer Petersen-Overton was briefly ousted from his job because of outside right-wing pressure, but had his job restored thanks to PSC advocacy.

Lieberwitz said it was important for unions like the PSC, UFF and AAUP to work locally and nationally to fight back against attacks on academic freedom.

“We are all in this together,” she said.

Winning a KCC grievance

By ARI PAUL

The PSC has won back pay for five members who were improperly assigned out-of-title work at Kingsborough Community College.

In a Step 2 grievance decision issued Friday, Brooklyn Junior College’s interim se- nior university executive director of labor relations, Carmelo Batista, Jr., said that the union had argued that last spring, the five PSC members were “assigned to the college’s office of the registrar...in the adjunct CLT title,” rather than in the non-teaching adjunct title, and that the union felt the former title was “inappropriate” because these members work in an academic department or laboratory and perform the same duties as their colleagues in the office who are in the NTA title.

BACK PAY

“The union had insisted that these workers be ‘reclassified to the NTA title and awarded back pay,’” Batista said. “After reviewing the information presented by the PSC and the college, the chancellor’s designee hereby grants the grievance and directs the college to reclassify grievances as non-teaching adjuncts and to pay grievances back pay.”

Fix our buildings

Continued from page 2

Peter Kolozi, the PSC chair at BCC, took this point further, saying, “According to CUNY’s own recent Facility Condition Assessment, only 8% of CUNY buildings are ‘in a state of good repair.’ That’s only 24 out of 300 buildings. In baseball terms, 24 of 300 gets you a batting average of .08. An average like that does not land you in the Hall of Fame or any palace of baseball royalty, it lands in the hall of shame.”

MORE FUNDING

The PSC is pushing the city to increase funding for CUNY in the next budget agreement. The city provides the bulk of funding to the city’s two-year colleges. Héctor Batista, CUNY’s executive vice chancellor and chief operational officer, told the PSC that given CUNY’s infrastructural needs, CUNY needs about $200 million to address issues such as these in community colleges. “Over the past five years, CUNY has received an average of $64 million for both senior and community colleges, which includes only $29 million for community colleges per year in the city capital funds, which is only about .3% of the estimated replacement value of the facilities.”

While Kolozi noted that his campus has made progress in improving the infrastructure, more needs to be done to fix CUNY overall, as he still passes leaky ceilings and windows that are so old they can’t be opened.

“A investing in CUNY facilities and in staffing to relieve the crisis is an opportunity to rebuild, and in the process, foster the real democratic, inclusive, socially conscious, proud city that we all belong to,” he said.

A sad state of the college

Queens College PSC members held an anti-austerity demonstration outside President Frank Wu’s State of the College address on April 2.

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Members take anger to the bosses

Students and members came out in force on April 1 to a CUNY Board of Trustees hearing at City Tech in downtown Brooklyn to demand that the administration advocate for more investment in CUNY and reach a fair and just contract settlement with the PSC.

Going into the summer, the union is continuing to fight for a contract and securing full funding for CUNY from the city and state. Part of that battle is over, as the state legislature and the governor have finalized the state budget. According to the governor’s budget presentation, it includes $1.2 billion for SUNY and CUNY capital projects and $207 million for SUNY and CUNY operations.

Like the past two years, this year’s state budget includes more CUNY operating aid than the previous year and $40 million more than was in the governor’s executive budget in January. From the PSC’s perspective, however, this falls short of what the union and its allies have advocated for. The PSC and other progressive advocates are fighting against Mayor Eric Adams’s austerity budget proposal, City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams and other city law- makers have vowed to fight for more funding for CUNY in the city budget.

At the bargaining table, CUNY has put forward an economic offer, which the union believes falls very short of what members deserve. CUNY also wants givebacks on job security and other protections.

MANAGEMENT OFFER

The union said in a recent bargaining update: “In further response to CUNY management’s comprehensive proposal of March 27, the PSC presented an economic counterpropos al that would meet our members’ real needs. Management had proposed a four-and-a-half year contract with across-the-board raises every 13 months for four years. With pay retroactive to June 2023, the raises that management proposed total a compounded 12.82% over the contract. They included funds for additional equity raises, an increased Welfare Fund contribution to support our supplemen tal benefits and a $3,000 ratification bonus – a feature of other public-sector contracts in this round – but restricted the proposed bonus to full-time employees. The PSC’s counterproposal included areas of salary equity that will require more money than management proposed, a higher Welfare Fund contribution, pay that is fully retroactive for all members back to the start of the contract and annual across-the-board raises of 5.5% in 2023, 5.5% in 2024, 4.5% in 2025 and 3.5% in 2026 for a total compounded rate of 19.22%.”

The union continues to fight on all of these fronts. The April BOT action was a big part of that fight. Below are excerpts from some of the fiery testimony members delivered.

I started teaching as an adjunct more than 20 years ago, in the fall of 2003, and I joined the Brooklyn College part-time faculty in 2016. It will come as a surprise to exactly no one in this room that it isn’t easy to make a living solely as an adjunct – the pay is low, the job security tenuous, the benefits rare. So why do any of us do it? In my case, teaching felt like something I was meant to do. I came to it with a good deal of real-world experience in my field, and I wanted to pass that knowledge along. Working with students to achieve their academic and creative goals, and adapting to the changes this world has thrown at all of us in recent years has been an immense source of personal and professional satisfaction for me.

I’m certainly not alone. In the two decades I’ve been teaching, the dedication of my fellow adjuncts, who go above and beyond what’s required of them, who freely give of themselves both to their colleagues and their students, is a source both of pride and of awe to me.

We are now being challenged as never before. All of us have seen our courses eliminated or reassigned to full-time faculty. We’re being asked to teach at less desirable times. We have little assurance of continued employment – less than in prior years, in fact – and perhaps most damagingly, because of all this, it is now almost certain that I will lose the health insurance that took me years to qualify for.

However, I won’t say I feel unappreciated. The full-time faculty I teach alongside, and the succession of department chairs I’ve answered to, have not been reticent about letting me know that I am valued. Which is very nice. But I note here that my area of expertise is television writing and production. And I teach my students that to be effective at this, you need to show, not tell. It’s time to show us what you and we know to be true – that we are essential to the success of Brooklyn College. And the way you do that is by matching our commitment with yours.

Helen Pfeffer
Adjunct lecturer, television and film
Brooklyn College

I have only spoken here one other time – the day 10 years ago when you made me a distinguished professor. I told you that day what an honor it is to get to teach Brooklyn College students – as I traveled around the country, speaking at so many universities, I was always so glad to get back to my CUNY students. The kinds of conversations we have in class across boundaries of religion, race, ethnicity and experience, the tenderness and care students show with each other and me, the ways
Jeanne Theoharis fears CUNY has stopped seeing students as ‘future leaders.’

Jeanne Theoharis
Distinguished professor, political science
Brooklyn College

Continued from page 5

They articulate the power of education model the best of what this so...

Ten years later, I feel that more than ever. While I have spoken at hundred more places, there is probably no place I feel more optimistic about the possibilities for this country than in class at Brooklyn College. I have watched my students become lawyers and activists, teachers and committed public servants.

But I am here today because I fear that you have stopped seeing our students as the future leaders of this country. CUNY administration has put forward changes to the bylaws that seek to move control over which courses are scheduled and which professors are hired from departments and chairs to deans and provosts. This would imperil the kind of rich and wide-ranging education our students deserve. Various explanations have been offered for these changes: This would make CUNY more “efficient,” help consolidate CUNY’s resources and prioritize what students need to “get jobs” and keep us away from “boutique courses.”

No Ceiling
I got my undergraduate degree at Harvard and my doctorate at the University of Michigan. You don’t hear those students described in terms of efficiencies and education to get jobs. Those students get to shop in the boutique. They get to have education for education’s sake, decided by faculty in the departments who are the experts in their fields, because it is understood that they warrant a wide, unbound education to be able to excel in whatever they put their mind to.

So should our students. They don’t deserve a ceiling, and what those bylaw changes do is lower the ceiling over our students’ heads. Last year, when the Supreme Court came back with its wrong-headed decision against Harvard’s race-con...

From the streets to the boardroom

Jeanne Theoharis

Brooklyn College adjunct Helen Pfeffer calls on CUNY to show more commitment to students.

I currently earn. With the pass-

Assistant to HEO line offer

are on the HEO Assistant line offer

Do not hallucinate.

Last year, when the Supreme Court

Continued from page 5

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STEP BY STEP
I have worked for over 12 years in an Assistant to HEO line, and while I could be censured for want of ambition, I could also be praised for my dedication. I have had a good home for the past many years, and had thought to move, preferring to place my ambition elsewhere. I have always been of the view that, if CUNY is intended as a vehicle to propel students into the middle class, they should hold true for its faculty and staff members, so I think it is a reasonable request to allow for continued growth in a position in which I have excelled while waiting for an opportunity for a forced choice to present itself.

Brad Rappaport
Coordinator, Continuing Education Programs
Hunter College

NEED MULTYEAR APPOINTMENTS
I was asked to speak today about the devastating effects of dismantling the three-year contract program for adjuncts, and that’s what I planned to do. Removing the paltry job security I now have will, indeed, be devastating for me and many others – it will make our lives even more hand-to-mouth, more stressful, remove any respite from the looming specter of financial insecurity and desperation we all face.

But you know that already. Just like you know, because you have already heard it dozens of times from people like me, that we adjuncts are the victims of massive wage theft at CUNY’s hands, that we and our students are being deprived of basic resources, that we are underfunded and exploited. You already know this.

The question is, “Why is it this way?” The answer we get is that there’s no choice. We have to balance the books, to run CUNY like a business. And that would seem to be your mandate, given that there’s only one faculty member and one student among you. The rest of you are in banking, law, finance, PR,
Jessica DeCoux: ‘CUNY is being murdered, choked of resources.’

**NEWS**

**DEFEND THE OUTER BOROUGHS**

I am here today to testify and advocate for the colleges in the boroughs other than Manhattan. In times of austerity and scarcity, the distribution of resources is not the same at every campus. For several years now, and especially in the science disciplines, there has been an unequal allocation of resources for the oldest senior college campuses. After the Decade of Science, CUNY decided to provide more support to the campuses in Manhattan (mostly City and Hunter College). Thus, from 2010 to 2020 there were more hires, and CUNY established the Advanced Science Research Center, and supported the construction of new buildings and laboratory rental space at outside medical schools. Now there are construction projects underway at Baruch and Hunter. Do not get me wrong, I am happy for these colleges, and I collaborate extensively with the ASRC. I am not advocating for removing resources from those places. On the contrary, I came to tell you that providing resources is strategy that works. When you invest and allocate resources, you can hire faculty members who in turn will excel, providing outstanding education, scholarship, prestige, grants, initiatives and resources for their colleges and the University, enhancing the overalliversity classification ranking and students’ education experience.

**AFTER COVID**

However, in moments of austerity when CUNY makes cuts and stops, reduces or slows down meaningful capital projects, this is not done equally across the University. The colleges in the outer boroughs have suffered a real disinvestment. They have suffered accumulative hiring cuts over the years, and they have not undergone necessary renovations and maintenance of buildings. Many students are forced to go to other Manhattan colleges in CUNY, which affects enrollment and makes the outer borough colleges look like the bad guys. You may think that we should have a consolidation of resources, and that students can travel. This would be true for a typical young college student, not working and without family obligations. This profile only represents a fraction of our students. When you do not invest in personnel and infrastructure in the outer boroughs, you are forcing students to travel, limiting their educational opportunities due to long commutes. Our students deserve to choose campuses that are convenient to them geographically and close to their communities. Our faculty and staff members also deserve better.

Board members, this is an issue of equity and CUNY needs to address it now. At the outer borough colleges, we need investment to support our educational mission, and initiatives that will bring funds to the whole University and will increase enrollment. NYC is not only Manhattan, and CUNY is also not only Manhattan but the biggest urban university in the world! Please, board members, do not forget the outer borough colleges. Please advocate for a more generous budget from New York State.

**WILL CUNY meet the students’ needs?**

In October 2022, during a daylong convention entitled “Beyond Recov- ery: Seizing Opportunities to Trans- form Education in a Post-COVID Era,” U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona shared, “One of my greatest fears is that we go back to how education was in 2020.” Specifi- cally, a system “that didn’t work for too many students who look like me. Returning to the same system would be failing our students.” He went on to note, “Those who were vulnerable were hit the hardest.”

When challenged to list the chang- es he considered most critical, Car- dona named mental health support,
Continued from page 7

which he went on to say, “has to be pervasive.”

It is with this ethos I encourage you to view our coursework and imbibe such practices in our code of conduct.

We must strive to do more than return to the way things used to be after these missteps caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main purpose of student conduct systems is education. The goal is to have each incident of misconduct create a learning opportunity for the student. In addition, conduct officers strive to repair any harm done to the community. People make mistakes. Our students are going through a pivotal developmental time in college. We want students to be successful, and that includes providing support that helps them to learn from mistakes, and more importantly, with the goal of the holistic development of the student experience.

**REIMAGINE**

Charting many of our actions from the remnant that is the Rules and Regulations for the Maintenance of Public Order Pursuant to Article 129-A of the Educational Law will not meet this goal. It is time we as a University community begin to address and resolve behavioral concerns that may come through the student conduct process. One that focuses on a restorative, educational approach, and collaborative conflict resolution to empower students to make better decisions in the future. Embedding restorative practices in student conduct is an approach adopted by many institutions of higher education. Across the nation, these practices have proved to be an effective method to address such behaviors and help participants better understand the root cause of behaviors that often surface as mere student conduct violations.

**Kevin Adams**

Director of Community Standards
Medgar Evers College

**LESSON LEARNED?**

Hello, and welcome to our first day of ENG 110 Expository Writing at Hostos Community College. My name is Craig Bernardini. You can call me Professor Bernardini, or Mr. Bernardini, or Professor; you can call me Craig, if you feel comfortable doing so. I need to get a certified roll, so please make sure to sign the sheet that’s going around. We may also need to check your bursar’s receipt, so make sure you’re in the right place. I’m going to spend a fair amount of time today reviewing the syllabus with you and taking any questions you may have. And this is a writing class, so we’re going to write almost every day in class, sometimes a little, sometimes a lot. One of my goals this semester is to persuade you that writing isn’t simply transcribing some pre-existing thought; it is actually a way of shaping thought, and by doing so to come to think more clearly and with greater sophistication. As the saying goes, “How do I know what I think until I read what I write?”

My colleague Professor Robertson, from whom I have learned a great deal, uses the term “thINK” (like “thinking in INK”) to describe these in-class writing activities (and they needn’t always be in class) that give us the opportunity to articulate our ideas in writing, and hence come to know our thoughts better and indeed think more clearly. Sometimes I’ll use these thINK activities to present you with hypothetical or “what if” scenarios, which I like to call thought experiments, a term scientists use to describe experiments carried out in the mind instead of in the lab. Here, our lab is the sheet of paper in front of you.

**THOUGHT EXPERIMENT**

Our thought experiment for the day—one that is, alas, far from hypothetical—is on the screen behind you. Follow along with me as I read:

In the classroom next to ours, a teacher is teaching the same course, Expository Writing, ENG 110. Quite possibly she has the same degree I do, a doctorate; at minimum she has an MA or MFA. She produces scholarship, as I do. She has been employed at the college for almost as long as I have. However, this teacher makes about a third of what I make. Again, same classes, and quite possibly same degree. I also have tenure, which is a form of job security. Because she’s been here for several years, she’s on a three-year contract, which ensures she’s able to get a couple of classes here every semester for those three years. That gives her a little bit of job security, too, so she can breathe a little easier, and worry a little less about how she’s going to pay the rent next year, how she’s going to feed her kids—though her salary is far from adequate to make ends meet in New York, it must be said. These three-year contracts are part of a pilot program that’s sunsetting this year, which means that, when her contract expires (and her does at the end of the school year), she goes back to having almost no job security at all. Most egregiously, our employer, the City University of New York, is trying to weaken these three-year contracts, by shorten-
Demanding job security for adjuncts

Restoring a hard-fought union victory

By ARI PAUL

When 1,000 adjunct instructors at CUNY received three-year appointments in May of 2017, the situation was game-changing, not just for the University, but for academia nationally. The PSC had fought for and secured a pilot agreement for three-year appointments for part-time faculty.

Many more adjuncts would go on to enjoy this benefit, but this groundbreaking job protection provision is now under attack. With the pilot program winding down, the PSC is negotiating with CUNY over a new contract.

“The gig economy is not sustainable for workers,” said PSC President James Davis during a May 2 press conference outside CUNY’s Midtown headquarters. “CUNY has a gig economy. We have a gig academy.”

SOLIDARITY

Joined by dozens of education union leaders and members from around the city and state, Davis demanded that the University agree to reinstate the multiyear appointment provision from 2017 in the next contract. Lynne Turner, the PSC vice president for part-time personnel, said that, at present, adjuncts are vulnerable to layoffs without the multiyear appointments, because administrators find that it’s easier to lay off part-time faculty than to demand more funding for their campuses.

Larry Bosket, the PSC vice president for cross-campus units, said that the University was also attempting to weaken job protections for professional staff titles, something that he and the rest of the union were “vehemently opposed to.”

Rather than roll back these protections, CUNY management could be taking the high road on job security for adjuncts, said Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, the PSC’s national affiliate.

“How do we go from a pilot to the norm? That’s what they should be doing,” Weingarten said of the CUNY administration. “No more precarity.”

NOT GIG WORKERS

Jessica Ramos, the chair of New York State Senate Labor Committee, added, “We need the chancellor to put it in ink.”

Melinda Person, the president of the New York State United Teachers (the PSC’s state-level affiliate), told the crowd that it was important for all educational unions that the PSC win this fight and send a message about ending precarity in the teaching profession.

“We are not gig workers,” Person said.

Mario Cienfuego, the president of the New York State AFL-CIO, said that the PSC’s push for adjunct job security had the support of the rest of the state’s labor movement.

“You are not alone in this fight,” he said.

Baruch chapter says ‘no’ to cuts

By ARI PAUL

The Baruch College administration has moved to reduce instruction in communications (COM), English and modern languages, as well as to lift caps on class sizes. The PSC chapter is organizing against this, saying that it puts adjunct jobs at risk and sacrifices students’ education.

At a rally in one of the school’s main buildings on April 4, PSC members and students said that reducing the sections for these vital classes would mean some adjuncts would face non-reappointment and risk losing pay and health insurance. “It’s a total attack on the most exploited,” said Evan Smith, a lecturer in English. “It just seems like they’re doing a big hatchet job this year.”

DIRE SITUATION

Smith is a former adjunct who recently became a full-time lecturer thanks to PSC’s work urging colleges to move part-time instructors onto full-time lines. But, he said, the administration is now insinuating this has drained the budget to the point that it must look to make adjunct cuts. “It’s classic-class warfare strategy,” Smith said.

The situation is dire, said Donovan Bisbee, a lecturer in communication studies.

“Faculty who were depending on courses for both summer and fall have suddenly been set adrift, as cancellations affected approximately 22% of listed sections of COM 2020 and 31% of listed sections of COM 3021 for Fall 2024,” he said. “Several recent hires have not been reappointed, and several well-qualified new adjuncts will no longer be joining us in the fall. Most of our long-term adjunct faculty have seen a reduction from full workload to two classes for the next semester. In terms of faculty workload, faculty in these courses are now being asked to teach and evaluate the work of an additional four or eight students, depending on the course. With these classes being packed full of material and assessments, this equates to the work of nearly another entire section for an adjunct faculty member teaching three full classes of COM 2020. For adjunct faculty teaching COM 3021, it is even worse. For those teaching a full nine credits, they would be now grading an additional 300 items per term – equivalent to nearly another three credits of work.”

GUTTING CURRICULUM

Bisbee continued, “For students, the impact is a pedagogical gut-job. The only answer has been to offer fewer assignments – to teach less – which means that students who were supposed to learn advanced business speaking techniques will now be limited to four-minute speeches. Nearly half of the assignments will need to be cut from COM 3021 to make the course work with the increased cap. So long as we don’t intend our student – who are supposed to get a world-class education and go out there and compete with people with BAs from Columbia or NYU or Penn in business – to speak for longer than four minutes during their future academic or professional career, no harm done.”

Elizabeth Gareis, a professor of communication studies, said that since she came to the college in the 1990s, the administration has often rolled back vital educational programs, only to realize that the rollback was a bad idea. She believes that is what is happening with courses like public speaking, which are considered central to the school’s business focus, as employers are looking for candidates who can pitch ideas before large audiences.

MISGUIDED ADMIN

“We’ve seen the administration eliminate things; it doesn’t work and they need to be doing,” Weingarten said of the rally happened just days before The New York Times recognized the campuses as an engine for social mobility. “Everyone who works at Baruch takes pride in the college being recognized by The New York Times and others as a powerful engine for social mobility,” said Stuart Davis, the PSC’s chapter chair at Baruch. “However, if students are increasingly crammed into overenrolled courses in key areas like public speaking and analytical writing, they will lose their ability to compete with students from peer institutions.”

After the demonstration, members and students marched to a meeting of the Baruch College Faculty Senate to confront the provost about the cuts. Before the marched, Smith said, “We need the chancellor to put it in ink.”

“Do they care about you and your education?” he asked. “They don’t, or else they’d be here with us right now.”
CUNY faculty, staff and students all know that our infrastructure is in terrible condition. Whether it’s dilapidated buildings, freezing or overheated classrooms, leaky roofs, rodent infestations, strange odors or dangerous conditions on our campuses, we’ve all experienced the infrastructural crisis. The CUNY Trustees agree, arguing in a recent report that “Only 8% of all CUNY buildings were found to be in good repair.”

But it’s not just that things are falling apart on our campuses. CUNY’s infrastructure is also contributing to the climate crisis. According to Inside Climate News (“When It Comes to Reducing New York City Emissions, CUNY Plants the Seeds”), CUNY is one of eight city agencies that have seen emissions increase instead of decrease in recent years. From 2014 to 2019, carbon emissions intensity across a subset of 11% (out of 300 plus) CUNY buildings rose 15%, while in comparison, carbon emissions dropped 6.6% in other city government buildings. CUNY administration challenges those numbers and instead reports significant progress: an overall decrease in carbon output by 25% from 2006, before much attention was paid to the problem, to 2022, a much wider time period. This is promising, but we feel that CUNY’s decarbonization goals for the near future can and should be even more ambitious.

GOOD NEWS

The good news is that the new federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provides billions of dollars over the next 10 years for decarbonization efforts, including those for public universities. The IRA will provide 50% or more of all funding for decarbonization projects, including replacing old carbon-spewing infrastructure with new renewable energy, solar roofs, geothermal networking, new energy-saving windows and microgrids, to name but a few of the game-changing upgrades covered.

We must not leave federal money to improve CUNY on the table. In addition to fixing many of our chronic infrastructural challenges and diminishing our collective carbon footprint, the upgrades that the IRA funds also mean a massive future decrease in CUNY’s utility bills. More good news is that New York State enacted the Build Public Renewables Act (BPRA). This law, which our union had a hand in passing, empowers the publicly owned New York Power Authority to build and deliver renewable energy to public buildings, including CUNY. As a result of the IRA and BPRA, CUNY has a unique opportunity to become a cutting-edge laboratory for rapid, planet-saving energy transition. We can be a model that will change the rest of the country—and many other countries, to boot—seek to emulate. If we embrace this unique opportunity for change, it will mean safer, healthier environments for CUNY students, faculty and staff, and also for members of the communities surrounding CUNY campuses. Most of those communities are low-income, populated by people whose lives and health are significantly affected by their neighbor campuses. With CUNY campuses generating and storing clean power, we could establish neighborhood microgrids and district heating and cooling so that local communities benefit from the transformation we are helping to forge. Our campuses will become demonstration sites and job training facilities for clean power. This physical transformation can be fed back into our curriculum so that CUNY becomes an important site for pedagogical innovation around environmental justice, energy democracy and just transition.

SEIZE THE MOMENT

How can we seize this exciting opportunity? Members of the PSC’s Environmental Justice Working Group are working with the Public Power NY campaign to organize a series of town halls on CUNY campuses this coming autumn to help galvanize support for the CUNY clean power project. We have met with Mohamed Attalla, CUNY’s recently appointed vice chancellor for facilities planning, construction, and management, who has expressed strong support for this work. CUNY has developed an Energy Master Plan and is participating in the New York State Decarbonization Leadership Program focused on City, Hunter and Brooklyn Colleges. These are important steps that we applaud. But more political and popular push is necessary to fully decarbonize our campuses and create healthier working, learning and living conditions for our members, students and community residents.

MOBILIZE

We need to mobilize administrators and officials on each of our campuses to back this project, and we need to turn up the heat on the CUNY Board of Trustees so that this issue becomes a priority for them. We also need to put pressure on local and state elected officials to shake loose further funding for CUNY’s transformation. And we must make sure that the New York Power Authority and the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (which does much of the building on our campuses) convene experts and resources to upgrade CUNY buildings to integrate renewables.

We are trying our best to educate our students to create a livable world that they can thrive in. We need to create livable campuses and laboratories to clean up our collective act through the smart use of federal funds and the know-how of state agencies. CUNY administration expects that most of our senior college campuses will reach the 2024 New York City carbon goals enshrined in Local Law 97, but they will have to sharply accelerate efforts to reach the 2030 requirements of the law. While increased capital funds from the state will go a long way, they won’t go far enough. But we’ve got federal help—the IRA—and we’ve got the agency—NYP— to make it happen. We can do this!

If you’d like to organize a town hall for the CUNY clean power project on your campus, please reach out to us at ashley.dawson@csi.cuny.edu and nancyromer@gmail.com.

Ashley Dawson is a professor of English at the College of Staten Island and the Graduate Center. Nancy Romer is a professor emerita of psychology at Brooklyn College.
According to the United States Constitution, the role of the president is to “take care that the laws are faithfully executed.” As educators at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, we take our responsibility to educate for justice seriously, because we believe that no one is above the law. At John Jay, an institution of higher education that is part of CUNY, many of our students are disadvantaged and understand that there are consequences when people break the law. With this in mind, we must not remain silent when our elected officials abuse their authority to subvert our democracy and the values that we hold dear.

**NOT FREE SPEECH**

Our leaders should not lie or hide behind the First Amendment to encourage or engage in speech that incites violence, witness intimidation or denial of a fair and free election. The right to vote is a civil right, and for former President Donald Trump to try to deny this right by lying about the results of our election should give us more than just pause. Like our college’s namesake, who was one of our country’s founding fathers and the first chief justice of the Supreme Court, we believe that our democracy is based on the three branches of government to maintain the balance of power. John Jay’s leadership, faculty and alumni are composed of former and current Department of Justice officials, federal and state prosecutors, members of Inspectors General offices, law enforcement, as well as other public service professionals whose mission is to see that our system of justice is fair and that people who break our laws are held accountable. In addition to justice, our core values include integrity, equity and respect. Our community not only believes in the rule of law, but it also believes in holding people accountable regardless of their status. We understand that to preserve the public trust, public service requires credibility and character beyond reproach.

**THE FACTS**

As our democracy struggles against the chaos created by a man who endangers our opponents with veiled threats and obfuscates his behavior by blaming everyone but himself, let’s consider the facts when deciding on whether a former president running for reelection should be held accountable. Our former president has been:

1. Impeached two times and the subject of a bipartisan congressional investigation into his role in the January 6 insurrection based on his lie that the election was stolen.
2. Criminally indicted four times by four different grand juries in four different jurisdictions by three different prosecutors. He will be tried by four different judges and four different juries composed of everyday citizens from different parts of our country with different political affiliations. These criminal indictments range from stealing our national secrets; lying about the results of our election to remain in power; inciting an insurrection; and making hush-money payments to a porn star to try to withhold derogatory information from voters that could have negatively impacted his election.
3. The subject of numerous civil lawsuits, being named personally along with companies owned or controlled by him and his family – most notably a civil lawsuit brought by the New York State attorney general who has proven that the former president and his family engaged in material financial fraud. After an 11-week trial, the former president was ordered to pay in excess of $355 million in disgorgement of ill-gotten gains, and his ability to conduct business in New York is now strictly curtailed.
4. Found responsible by a jury in a civil trial for sexual assault and continued to defame the victim even after the jury imposed fines and penalties in excess of $80 million.
5. Litigating whether he should be immune from being held responsible for his alleged crimes.

Regardless of whether we decide to hold the former president accountable through our legal system, we should consider whether he is deserving of holding the highest office that our citizens can bestow on any one individual. The former president has made fun of the handicapped and those of our veterans who have lost their lives defending our freedom; he has glorified dictators who have repressed their people; and his behavior, which continues to incite violence and could arguably be considered a national security threat, should not be tolerated by our citizens.

**CONSTITUTION AT RISK**

The preamble to the United States Constitution talks about establishing justice, insuring domestic tranquility and promoting the general welfare. January 6 has proven that if the former president is reelected, these ideals are at risk. Can we trust that if he is reelected, he will uphold the Constitution? As president, is he capable of taking care that the laws be faithfully executed? Let’s not lose sight of the forest for the trees. We need to be vocal about what is at stake, lest our silence signal complicity. Given the facts, let’s think about the big picture and not be influenced by others but by common sense. Donald Trump has a history of skirt- ing the law because he has demonstrated he does not believe that the law applies to him. As witnessed on January 6, without truth and the rule of law will come chaos.

The authors are faculty members at John Jay College.

**DONNY FACES THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Demonstrators say the law of the land applies to ex-presidents.
Raffle winners

On page 2 of this issue you can find a story about an important survey of HEOs, CLTs and library faculty about workload and understaffing across the university. Those who returned the survey also took part in a raffle, and several PSC members won prizes as a result. The winning PSC members are Tara Smith of Baruch College, Alba Lynch of Hostos Community College, Annabella Bernard of the Graduate Center and Edgardo Sanabria-Valentín of John Jay College.

Check out the story for the eye-popping results of the survey and what they mean for PSC members.