

Clarion

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



DECEMBER 2024

PSC Members: VOTING ON THE CONTRACT

As this newspaper went to press, the Executive Council sent a tentative agreement to the Delegate Assembly to be approved and then sent to the membership for ratification. The historic proposal offers significant increases. **PAGE 3**



CONTRACT

Vote yes on pact

President James Davis speaks about the agreement.

PAGE 2

ORGANIZING

Two years of fighting

The proposed collective bargaining agreement is the result of rank-and-file mobilization, with protests across the five boroughs. We look back on nearly two years of action. **PAGES 4-5**



SAFETY

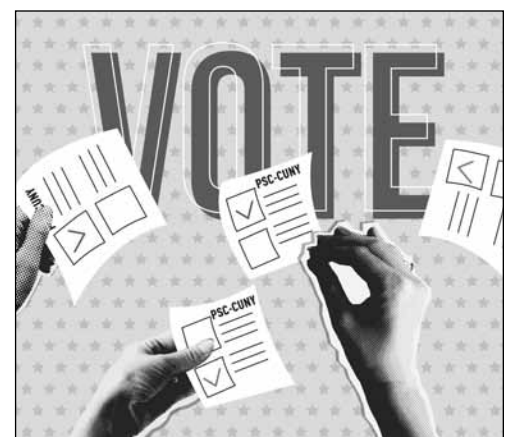
Mold in the libraries

Library members from all corners of the city have confronted CUNY's leadership about its lack of response to mold in the libraries. PSC members are demanding CUNY take bold action. **PAGES 6-7**

ELECTIONS

Chapter elections

A democratic union thrives because of participation at the local level. Chapter elections will take place in 2025. Take a look at the notice for elections. **PAGE 8**



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Vote yes for substantial raises

By JAMES DAVIS
PSC President

I am excited to inform you that the PSC bargaining team and CUNY negotiators have reached agreement on a new contract. It includes across-the-board compounded raises of 13.4%, retroactive pay, additional equity raises for many of our lowest-paid colleagues and a ratification bonus for full-time PSC members of \$3,000, prorated for part-timers. The final document, the proposed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), was signed on December 16. The PSC Executive Council has unanimously recommended this agreement. The Delegate Assembly will consider it on December 19 (as this newspaper goes to press) and vote on recommending it for a union-wide ratification vote, which will be administered online and by phone. The proposed agreement is not final until PSC members ratify it and the CUNY Board of Trustees votes to approve it. This was a hard-won agreement that involved PSC members in a campaign of nearly two years.

SUPPORTS STUDENTS

The proposed agreement supports quality education and services for CUNY students. It prioritizes raises and gains for all PSC members and provides additional equity raises for our lowest-paid colleagues. Faculty and staff at the top of their salary schedules will see extra pay in addition to the across-the-board raises, and a raise of at least one step with every promotion and reclassification will be guaranteed. The tentative agreement includes a new multi-year appointment pilot program for teaching adjuncts that provides for two-year appointments with a discretionary third year. There is new support for research, greater support for CLT promotion and HEO reclassification, and health and safety labor-management committees will be established for each campus. Many other economic and non-economic gains are features of the proposed contract, which spans four years and nine months, from March 2023 to November 2027.

The bargaining team endorses this tentative agreement enthusiastically because it will improve the work lives and the economic circumstances of all PSC members. After early CUNY delays and limited engagement, we have been in steady bargaining since the spring, committed to finishing this semester. With hundreds of hours working at and away from the table, the bargaining team knows how important it is to secure these annual raises and other strong gains now, in anticipation of likely economic and political instability ahead.

SIGNIFICANT BOOSTS

The tentative contract agreement includes annual salary increases comparable to other New York City and State contracts in this round of bargaining, but it also makes significant, creative interventions. Like our fellow unionized education workers in New York, our across-the-board increases do not make up for the inflation we all experienced prior to this contract period. But settlements vary from union to union, and the PSC has achieved higher across-the-board raises and significantly more value for PSC members than was included in CUNY's initial offer, which it described as "pattern-conforming." In addition to the across-the-board salary increases,



Members of the PSC bargaining team and PSC staff at the signing of the tentative agreement at CUNY headquarters on December 16.

teaching adjuncts, non-teaching adjuncts and other hourly workers, and graduate assistants will receive equity raises on top of the union-wide raises, as will our lowest-paid full-time colleagues in all CLT titles, assistants to HEOs, and CLIP and CUNY Start instructors. Over the term of the contract, the minimum pay for an adjunct teaching a three-credit course will increase 29%, from \$5,500 to \$7,100, as part of an agreement to base their pay structure on courses taught rather than classroom and office hours; the minimum adjunct pay for a four-credit course will increase to \$9,467. Other titles receiving equity raises will see their salaries increase by as much as 43%.

For all full-time lecturers who have or will attain certificates of continuous employment, there is a \$2,500 onetime payment at CCE, and a promotional title for lecturers will give them access to higher salary schedules. Employees in full-time titles who are at the top step of their salary schedules and not receiving larger equity raises will receive an additional \$1,250 per year. The \$3,000 ratification bonus will help take some of the sting out of recent high inflation. Crucially, a major increase in contributions to the union's Welfare Fund, an additional \$4 million annually, will support improved benefits.

HARD FIGHT

PSC fought for a remote work provision but didn't succeed. It is disappointing, but it became increasingly difficult to move management and the state to make PSC an exception to other state contracts and formalize remote work within our contract. The Remote Work Agreement remains in effect, so this benefit has not ended and the PSC will continue to

emphasize to CUNY how important this issue is to our members.

It is important that PSC members know what is not in the proposed agreement, too: management demands. The bargaining team, supported by PSC members, rejected its initial offer which included no retroactive pay, no bonus for part-time workers and minimal equity increases. We increased the overall value for members in the contract and staved off efforts to expand managerial discretion, erode job security for HEOs, eliminate multi-year appointments for adjuncts and deprofessionalize our work with students.

GOING FORWARD

If this proposed agreement is recommended for ratification by a majority of your elected delegates on December 19, the contract will be offered to all bargaining unit members for a ratification vote. The sooner we vote to ratify, the sooner PSC members receive their raises, bonuses and back pay. Ratifying the agreement in early January will allow the governor to include these costs in her executive budget, which she delivers a few weeks later. PSC members in active employment with at least four months' standing as dues-paying members would be eligible to vote. If the delegates vote to recommend the MOA, instructions will be sent to all eligible members and voting can begin. We will also host Zoom mass meetings to discuss the tentative agreement and the voting procedure.

This tentative agreement would not have been possible without the creativity and stamina of the bargaining team. Nor could it have been achieved without the solidarity

and energy of PSC members. Hundreds of observers supported the bargaining team during negotiations and contributed essential feedback. Thirty members were arrested while demanding a good contract, and many delivered hearing testimony and shared their expertise in bargaining sessions, attended press events and spoke to elected allies. Thousands more participated in union-wide meetings, marches, pickets and protests of the CUNY Board of Trustees. The most important breakthroughs at the bargaining table were a direct result of members' action.

It's democracy time

Upon approval from the Delegate Assembly, members will vote directly to ratify the contract. You will be mailed instructions on how to vote.

Remember to check in at the union's website, psc-cuny.org, for more information about the proposed deal, and how to cast your vote in the ratification process.

If the DA votes to recommend the contract, beginning December 20, you will receive voting instructions and your pin from the American Arbitration Association (AAA) by USPS and electronic mail.

Many titles will see big dollar gains.

Clarion DECEMBER 2024

Newspaper of the Professional Staff Congress/City University of New York. Vol. 54, No. 6. PSC/CUNY is affiliated with the American Association of University Professors, National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers (Local 2334), AFL-CIO, the New York City Central Labor Council and New York State United Teachers. Published by PSC/CUNY, 25 Broadway, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10004. Telephone: (212) 354-1252. Website: www.psc-cuny.org. Email: apaul@pscmail.org. All opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the PSC.

PSC OFFICERS: James Davis, President; Jennifer Gaboury, First Vice President; Andrea Vásquez, Secretary; Felicia Wharton, Treasurer; Luke Elliott-Negri, Rulisa Galloway-Perry, Justyna Jagielnicka, David Gerwin, Heather James, University-Wide Officers; Penny Lewis, Vice President Senior Colleges; Michael Batson, Susan Kang, Stuart Davis, Senior College Officers; Kathleen Offenholley, Vice President Community Colleges; Sharon Persinger, Youngmin Seo, Emily Schnee, Community College Officers; Larry Bosket, Vice President Cross Campus Units; Zee Dempster, Lucy McIntyre, Zeno Wood, Cross Campus Officers; Marva Lilly, Nancy Romer, Retiree Officers; Lynne Turner, Vice President Part-Time Personnel; Remyseil Salas, Claudia Shacter-Dechabert, Pamela Stenberg, Part-Time Officers; Peter I. Hoberman, Vice President Emeritus, Cross Campus Units.

STAFF: Malini Cadambi-Daniel, Executive Director; Anais Surkin, Associate Executive Director; Denise Poché-Jetter, Director, Human Resources and Operations; Dan Hunt, Director, Financial Services; Faye Moore, Director, Contract Administration; Nick Devyatkin, Director, Legal Affairs; Rico Doan, Director, Organizing; Francis Clark, Director, Communications; Bettina Damiani, Director, Policy and Research; Denyse Procope-Gregoire, Coordinator, Membership Records.

Editor: Ari Paul / Designer: Margarita Aguilar / Copy Editors: Teri Duerr, Matthew Schlecht
© 2024 Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

Raises for all, boosts for many titles

By CLARION STAFF

Union reaches historic agreement

The PSC’s bargaining committee – after nearly two years of intense struggle against an often intransigent management bargaining team – agreed to a tentative contract agreement with CUNY on December 16. As this newspaper went to press, the committee transmitted the agreement to the Delegate Assembly for its approval. Balloting for the broader membership, assuming the DA grants its approval, is set to begin in December and continue through early January.

The union’s leadership enthusiastically encourages members to vote yes on the deal and vows swift and aggressive implementation and enforcement of the deal upon its full ratification. The deal includes universal raises of 13.4%, and equity raises for many of the lowest-paid titles that will have those members seeing raises of up to 40%.

ACROSS THE BOARD

Across the board, all members will receive annual increases over the life of the 57-month contract of 3% in the first year, 3% in the second, 3.25% in the third and 3.5% in the fourth, with retroactive pay going back to 2023, when the contract expired. Members will receive a signing bonus of \$3,000 (prorated for part-time workers). Members will receive voting instructions by USPS and email.

The agreement spans four years from March 1, 2023, to November 30, 2027, and includes across-the-board compounded salary increases of 13.4%, with retroactive pay. That means increases of

- 3.0% effective March 1, 2023 (retroactive).
- 3.0% effective May 1, 2024 (retroactive).
- 3.25% effective September 1, 2025.
- 3.5% effective November 1, 2026.

Members will also receive a \$3,000 ratification bonus for full-time positions, prorated for part-time titles.

The minimum pay for an adjunct will increase 29.1% (from \$5,500 to \$7,100) per three contact hour course, and 37.7% (from \$6,875 to \$9,467) per four contact hour course, over the term of the contract, as hourly compensation is changed in 2027 to per-course compensation.

BIG GAINS

The proposed agreement contains big gains for other titles:

- Additional equity raises for CUNY’s lowest-paid instructional titles: Assistants to HEOs, CLIP and CUNY Start instructors, graduate assistants, non-teaching adjuncts, adjunct CLTs and continuing education teachers.
- Effective March 1, 2027, additional \$1,250 salary increases for members who are on the top step of a salary schedule and are not already receiving an equity raise greater than \$1,250. Top-step Assistants to HEOs will receive the \$1,250 instead of the \$1,000 equity increase.



Erik McGregor

PSC Secretary Andrea Vásquez leads a walkout of a CUNY Board of Trustees hearing on October 21 at John Jay College.

- On September 1, 2026, a \$2,500 lump sum for lecturers/doctoral lecturers upon attainment of a Certificate of Continuous Employment (CCE), or for those who already have a CCE.
- A promotional track from lecturer/doctoral lecturer to new titles, senior lecturer/senior doctoral lecturer.
- Guaranteed increase of at least one salary step upon promotion or reclassification.
- Eligibility for \$2,500 assignment differentials for full-time CLT and senior CLT titles at the top salary step.
- Additional contributions of over \$4 million in our PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund over the term of the contract, protecting and improving benefits.
- Allowing department chairs, GC executive officers and SPS directors to roll over up to \$6,000 of their Department Chair Research Awards and additional time to use the accumulated funds.
- HEO assistants who have a master’s degree or a PhD in a field related to their work will receive salary differentials of \$1,000 and \$2,500, respectively.
- Workload credit for pay and benefits for adjuncts teaching “jumbo” courses, based on department and unit practice.
- The agreement also includes many non-economic gains, including:
 - A new multi-year appointment provision for teaching adjuncts allowing for two-year appointments with an additional third year at the college’s discretion.
 - For the first time, SEEK and College Discovery directors will be included in the PSC bargaining unit.
 - Extension of paid parental leave for full-time faculty and staff from 8 to 12 weeks (starting March 1, 2025).
 - Restructured PSC-CUNY Research Award, increasing awards and expanding access to course release time.
 - New post-tenure Reassigned Time Award for assistant and associate professors.
 - Improvements to process of reclassification: Notification on the outcome of reclassification requests will now be provided within 90 days of submitting an application. Additionally, there will now be at least one PSC-named HEO-series member on each college HEO committee.
 - End to sabbatical quota for Hunter College Campus Schools faculty, with up to 100% pay for sabbatical.
- New college-based labor-management committees to address local health and safety workplace issues.
- Improvements in educational technology and distance learning.
- Increase in available stipends to up to \$10,000 for defined projects of full-time faculty, including availability of stipends to adjuncts for on-line course development.

Faculty and staff titles see new money.

The tentative agreement is the culmination of hundreds of hours of tough negotiations against a management that has sought to erode many of the contractual protections the PSC has fought for over the decades. The leadership is proud to report that, with the unity of the bargaining committee and the activism of the rank-and-file and the chapter leadership, the union has been able to protect existing gains in addition to the generous cash injections members will see in their paychecks.

Almost two years ago, members from across the city, from all titles, came together and voiced the problems that they had on the job: low pay, rising workloads and limited paths to promotion. This tentative agreement addresses these concerns, the union leader-

ship said, demonstrating the power and the unity of the PSC’s diverse membership.

In his message to members, PSC President James Davis (see story, page 2) said, “The bargaining team endorses this tentative agreement enthusiastically because it will improve the work lives and the economic circumstances of all PSC members. After early CUNY delays and limited engagement, we have been in steady bargaining since the spring, committed to finishing this semester. With hundreds of hours working at and away from the table, the bargaining team knows how important it is to secure these annual raises and other strong gains now, in anticipation of likely economic and political instability ahead.”

MEMBERS SPEAK

Members are already voicing their approval.

“As an adjunct associate professor at the College of Staten Island, I believe this agreement reflects a significant step forward in addressing the needs of adjunct faculty, ensuring that we are seen, valued, and fairly compensated for our contributions to the CUNY system,” said Joseph Frusci, who teaches in the department of history and computer science. “This contract agreement is the product of dedicated and tireless advocacy from the PSC bargaining team and the union membership at large. It demonstrates what can be achieved through solidarity, persistence and shared purpose.”

He continued, “The prioritization of equity raises and fair compensation for the lowest-paid members sets a powerful example for higher education institutions nationwide.

“As an adjunct faculty member who has long served CUNY students, I feel hopeful and proud to see tangible progress that values our work. I applaud the PSC leadership, bargaining team and all members who participated in this effort to secure such a strong and forward-thinking agreement.”

Elizabeth Stevenson, a senior adviser for ASAP at City Tech, said, “I’m really glad – everybody will be able to work now under a new contract with these improvements.”

PROCESS

John Gallagher, director for technology at Borough of Manhattan Community College, said the deal “exceeds my expectations,” as it “managed not to make any concessions to management but we’ve also made significant advancements in terms of equity for our aHEO and HEOa colleagues.” He added, “The extension of time to use annual leave and the enhancements to the people at the top steps are also big gains for HEO staff. The bargaining team did a great job.”

Upon approval of the DA, the tentative agreement will go to the members for a vote. Voting will be open until January 10.

Members will receive voting instructions by mail and can find more information both about the details of the contract and on how to vote at psc-cuny.org. Voting will take place online and over the phone.

Seeing raises over the life of the contract

	3/1/2023	4/1/2024	9/1/2025	9/1/2026	3/1/2027	TOTAL INCREASE 2023-2027
ASSISTANT TO HEO	3.0%	3.0%	3.25%	3.5% + \$1,000 LUMP SUM	+\$1,000 ON BASE	RANGING FROM 14.8% TO 15.6%
CLTS, ALL TITLES	3.0%	3.0%	3.25%	3.5% + \$5,000 LUMP SUM	+\$5,000 ON BASE	RANGING FROM 18.46% TO 23.9%
CLIP & CUNY START INSTRUCTORS	3.0%	3.0%	3.25%	3.5% + \$2,000 LUMP SUM	+\$2,000 ON BASE	RANGING FROM 15.5% TO 17.4%
GRAD ASSIST. A & B	3.0%	3.0%	3.25%	3.5% + \$4,000 LUMP SUM	+\$4,000 ON BASE	RANGING FROM 23.9% TO 43.4%
GRAD ASSIST. C & D	3.0%	3.0%	3.25%	3.5% + \$1,000 LUMP SUM	+\$1,000 ON BASE	RANGING FROM 16.9% TO 30.6%

Members wage a long, tough fight

By CLARION STAFF

Achieving a PSC-CUNY contract isn't just about the talks at the bargaining table. It is also about engaged and energetic protests in the streets and on campuses. The activism of rank-and-file members from all campuses and all titles was a central part of this arduous contract campaign.

PSC members have struggled for nearly two years to reach a contract with CUNY, which expired in Febru-

Power in the streets led to this agreement

ary 2023. To kick off the campaign, members delivered their demands to CUNY management during a spirited rally outside CUNY headquarters. The contract campaign has taken many forms, with a variety of activist tactics to pressure the CUNY administration to agree to a good and fair collective bargaining agreement.

Members fought hard for this contract.

Members marched in the heat and in the cold, in the early morning hours and after sundown. They participated in a civil disobedience action outside of a CUNY Board of Trustees hearing. They protested outside CUNY headquarters and the office of Bill Thompson, the chair of the BOT. They held

actions on campuses across the five boroughs, engaging students, community members and other union workers at CUNY. They attended numerous trainings and strategy

sessions over the course of 2023 and 2024.

In short, it is the tenacity of the PSC membership that makes this union strong, and it is the membership's dedication to activism that has allowed the PSC to wage a successful contract campaign.



FEBRUARY 2023: Launching the contract campaign on the day of the contract's expiration outside CUNY headquarters.



MAY 2023: Faculty members hold a "grade-in" at John Jay College.



JUNE 2023: Lehman College members raise awareness at graduation.



DECEMBER 2023: A "sing out, shout out" action takes place outside the governor's office.

for a contract



Erik McGregor



Erik McGregor

MAY 2024: Demanding job security for adjuncts and HEOs.

MAY 2024: Filling the Board of Trustees meeting at Bronx Community College.



Erik McGregor



Erik McGregor



Erik McGregor

JUNE 2024: Outside Bill Thompson's office.

OCTOBER 2024: PSC members get arrested blocking the entrance to John Jay College during a Board of Trustees hearing.



Erik McGregor

NOVEMBER 2024: Members picket outside CUNY headquarters.

Speaking out: mold in the libraries

By CLARION STAFF

Mold problems have been a concern for PSC health and safety activists for many years. The dilapidated conditions at CUNY campuses – a result of systematic disinvestment by the city and state combined with lackluster action from the University administration – have made it possible for such dangerous problems to fester.

During the October 21 CUNY Board of Trustees hearing at John Jay College, PSC library activists spoke out about the many instances of mold in the libraries.

MEDGAR EVERS

I am speaking now on behalf of Medgar Evers College Library faculty and staff who are dealing with such a crisis in their library that they cannot take time away to be here to deliver this testimony.

Since 2014, when we moved into our beautiful, renovated library, we have experienced damage throughout the library due to multiple leaks and floods caused by rain, improper drainage and faulty pipes. Then, in 2021, Hurricane Ida flooded the whole lower level, and library faculty and staff were forced to work remotely for over a semester while the library was being repaired. Many of our library and archival holdings were damaged.

In the spring of 2022, the staff of the archives were moved out of the archives area because of a black mold outbreak. Sometime in the fall of 2022, the HVAC system was upgraded. After that, humidity levels actually went up, and temperatures could not be controlled.

In August 2023, there was a mold outbreak in the Technical Services area, where cataloging and new book processing takes place. Books, archival materials and chairs were affected. Library faculty and staff members had to be evacuated from that area.

SPREADING

In the spring of 2024, a crew from DASNY [Dormitory Authority of the State of New York] came in to do mold abatement on the books and archival materials in the Technical Services area. They cleaned the materials. But since then, mold has spread on all three floors of the library. Laptop bags, chairs, desks and personal belongings at other locations and people's offices in the library are moldy as well.

Some of the newly acquired books that were stored in the chief librarian's conference room for two months are covered with mold. Facilities may have discarded the books without consulting us. There is a library procedure for deleting books from the catalog before discarding them. This information was communicated to Facilities, but it has been disregarded.

Demanding health and safety action



Mariana Regalado says the mold problems are citywide.

There is so much moisture in the air that Facilities placed dehumidifiers in several areas including the archives. The dehumidifiers are constantly on, and their tanks need to be emptied several times a day.

Mold has spread to the book stacks on the lower level of the library. But this is not the only problem there. There have been no lights in the area for years, and staff and patrons need to use flashlights to be able to read call numbers. Mold has also spread to the reserved textbooks collection on the main floor.

WORSENING

The vinyl seats of the student chairs throughout the library have deteriorated excessively from the climate conditions.

The administration has not been communicating with anyone in the library about how things are being resolved. No one deals with our complaints properly. For example, we were told that the suspicious stuff on the table in the chief librarian's office is bacteria from food, though the office has been vacant for over a year because we don't have a chief librarian, and no one has been in there.

We still have no chief librarian, having only interim chiefs since 2016, and no chief for the past year. Library faculty have not been replaced. We are down from nine to five library faculty; we have no acquisitions librarian, no cataloging librarian, no evening/weekend librarian and one reference librarian was not replaced. We also haven't

been able to replace any retired COA/CLT/HEO staff. We had to reduce library hours.

Overall, the current administration's attitude toward the library staff has been dismissive and/or punitive. We are told that we have been complaining too much. The measures they take are cosmetic and do not address the causes of the situation: Simply wiping the affected surfaces or painting over them does not resolve the issue. Library faculty and staff are all worried about the effects of mold in our work environment on our health.

Frans Albarillo
Brooklyn College

CITY TECH

We have a mold and staffing crisis that campus administrators, President Russell Hotzler and Provost Pamela Brown have failed to address or even fully acknowledge.

In August 2024, part of the library – including institutional archives and special collections, a classroom and three faculty offices – had to be closed and vacated because it is full of mold. I moved out of my office of nine years and had to discard personal books, clothes and student artwork that were covered in mold. These spaces are unsafe to use or inhabit. Institutional records continue

to deteriorate, including a rare science fiction collection and ophthalmology collection that is essential for accreditation of a unique vision-care technology program.

We started systematically collecting documentation of mold, leaks, ceiling collapses and temperatures regularly exceeding 80 degrees in 2017. However, facilities issues, including decades-long noncompliance with ADA standards, long predate this.

OVERTAKEN

People entering spaces overtaken by mold, even for short assessment walk-throughs, have reported difficulty breathing, headaches, eye and skin irritation and sinus pain. Campus administration and our designated environmental health and safety officer, Luis Venegas, have tentatively agreed to clean the most affected uninhabitable spaces, but maintain that there is no mold and do not support mold remediation or testing.

The City Tech library also faces a dire staffing crisis and struggles to provide core services and keep desks staffed. We have only nine full-time librarians and two adjuncts to support more than 15,000 students. We have two tech workers to manage all library technology, an e-classroom, tech help desk and computer labs.

City Tech administration does not care about the physical health of workers and students. They don't care whether students have safe environments in which to study, ADA-accessible facilities or minimal support services to succeed in college. They are even unwilling to acknowledge the basic reality of the conditions of the library.

City Tech library workers demand that campus administrators openly acknowledge the presence of mold and account for the literal toxic conditions of the physical plant and the human impact of their neglect. We demand professional testing and remediation of moldy areas. We demand

Continued on page 7



Medgar Evers College is a major site of outbreaks, according to members.

Dave Sanders

Erik McGregor



Members protest the mold issues at City Tech in downtown Brooklyn.

Continued from page 6

mand open and frozen lines be filled and are concerned that the severity of the staffing crisis will impact our upcoming Middle States accreditation. We implore the Board of Trustees to intervene in the interest of current and future students, faculty and staff at City Tech.

Nora Almeida
City Tech

CCNY

I am speaking today in place of my colleagues in the City College Library who cannot take time away from their jobs to deliver this testimony.

On August 28, staff in the Cohen Library discovered mold on a number of library books. In the past there have been issues with mold in this library, usually due to leaking infrastructure.

But this fall the mold is different. We are now experiencing a mold infestation.

We initially thought it was caused by damp air coming out of HVAC blowers in the library. And yet it has not been possible to isolate the mold to these areas near the blowers alone. The mold-affected books are located in scattered clusters in sections of shelves. There are not clear patterns to explain the areas where the mold is currently growing. It has been difficult to tape off or mark the affected areas and warn patrons of the shelves which we know to have mold. We are concerned for our students who go into these sections of the library.

We will need to assess which books can or cannot be saved from these mold outbreaks. The loss of books that will be discarded compounds because our library budgets remain stagnant and do not include extra funds or allocations for replacing moldy books. It is also likely that many of the books will be impossible to replace. This work to assess, potentially replace, clean, sequester and arrange damaged books demands library faculty and staff hours that we do not have. After years of understaffing and underfunding our libraries,

time devoted to managing this mold robs time away from our other library duties and diminishes the time we have to provide direct support for CUNY researchers.

STUDENTS SPEAK OUT

Our students have complained about this issue to the City College president. We have had many meetings with Health and Safety and Facilities. Facilities has cleaned some of the books, but we are not certain that such cleaning is effective for the mold outbreak we have. We've seen cleaning and recleaning of the same spaces, which implies that cleaning alone will not solve this problem. We were told by our health and safety officer that the air in the library was tested, but we cannot see the results of these tests. He claimed that the humidity levels were safe for books, but the amount of mold we have found shows otherwise.

There were some upgrades made to the HVAC system back in 2022–2023, and since then the air has not been the same. Many of us have had respiratory issues over the years; we don't want to get sicker.

We have immediate demands for a fleet of industrial dehumidifiers until the HVAC system can be assessed. We are using gloves and masks to handle books in our collection, but we will need additional supplies if this situation continues. We would like further testing and diagnosis of the issues to be done by a professional mold remediation company. We would like assistance from trained professionals to assess the affected collections, and for a systematic way that environmental issues could be addressed throughout CUNY instead of being swept under the rug – or taped off and left to bloom into a larger problem.

Alycia Sellie
Graduate Center

CUNY-WIDE

CUNY has acknowledged that only 8% of its buildings are in good repair. We understand that building conditions are not fixed overnight. Yet

the mold situation in these libraries is not only a resource problem or a building problem, it is also a policy problem with the way our libraries are managed on our campuses.

Mold is a known threat to library collections everywhere, not just at CUNY. Mold spores live in the air, and print books – with their cloth bindings, adhesives and paper interiors – are very attractive to mold. Librarians and museum curators are professionally trained in basic conservation and preservation standards that are required to protect these materials. But CUNY's chronically understaffed libraries cannot keep up under current conditions.

MANY FACTORS

It appears that mold was reactivated recently in several libraries because of a combination of factors:

- We had an unusually hot and humid stretch this summer.
- The energy savings program in NYC had some campuses running the HVAC a little lower than usual, with no special consideration for the requirements of library spaces.
- Recent upgrades to HVAC systems created new humidity issues that were not properly addressed.
- Many buildings were closed for Summer Fridays and on weekends, and we suspect the HVAC is shut off during those periods to cut costs.

The affected locations have been unable to maintain temperatures and relative humidity levels that we know will prevent mold growth. Shutting off the HVAC entirely creates conditions where inactive mold that has been improperly cleaned can be reactivated and begin to spread. So it is not surprising that librarians are seeing mold blooms during the summer months. What is surprising is the pushback they receive from their building engineers, campus facilities and local administration. We have heard some reports of humidity rising to 80% with indoor temperatures in the low 80s. Professional librarians know that you cannot sustain paper collections in these conditions.

Worse, these are spaces where many students congregate, placing them at risk. Libraries are our most beloved and most heavily-used campus spaces and we should be dedicating resources to support their activities.

Members organizing for health.

Mold remediation is very expensive. It is much cheaper to prevent mold blooms through proper maintenance of our spaces. But CUNY

librarians have been ignored, dismissed and even blocked from managing our own collections. This is a structural problem:

- Some of these campuses have not had a chief librarian for years.
- Chief librarians are charged with administering the library facilities, but in practice most are at the mercy of their campus provost and have little say over the library as a space.
- The Central Office has no authority over campus practices for collections care or facilities maintenance.
- There is no dedicated funding line for CUNY library facilities and they are chronically understaffed.

RING THE ALARM

The librarians here today are sounding the alarm and asking the Board for help because no one else seems to be listening. We need a baseline funding level for libraries across all campuses. For the safety of our faculty, staff and students, and for the safety of our collections, we need a stable environment within set ranges of temperature and humidity. We need to maintain this stable environment at all of our campuses. And we need to staff the libraries with trained professionals who are given the necessary resources to do their jobs. Librarians have tried locally to make these corrections, but we cannot do it without centralized institutional support.

Mariana Regalado
Brooklyn College

Top court rejects MA+

By CLARION STAFF

The Court of Appeals has rejected Mayor Eric Adams' appeal to move city retirees into a privately managed health care plan.

The December 17 decision marks a huge victory for the PSC leadership and PSC retiree chapter, which has fought against moving city retirees away from traditional Medicare and into a privately managed plan that could increase wait times and deny service. The plan had been agreed upon by City Hall and the Municipal Labor Committee, a coalition of unions that bargains over city health benefits (the PSC had joined a minority of affiliate unions in voting against this plan).

RETIREES WIN

The plan was also opposed by many elected officials, including the city's top fiduciary, Comptroller Brad Lander, who said that the "ruling is the final win for the 250,000 some retirees fighting to keep the health care they worked for and were promised! Seniors will continue to have access to all providers who accept Medicare, a victory for our public sector retirees."

He added, "The City's Medicare Advantage plan would have constrained our retirees to a smaller network with more restrictive requirements on care. Many public servants entered the municipal workforce with the promise of middle-class wages, pensions, and a re-



Brad Lander

tirement plan. The shift to anything less than that full promise was a hard pill to swallow."

Nancy Romer, a retiree officer on the PSC executive council, said, "This ruling proves that political struggle with a broad group of allies can beat the constant drumbeat of privatization and decline in the benefits and living conditions of workers. Together, with hundreds of retirees from most of the city unions, we PSC retirees had the backing of our leadership and staff to join in the successful campaign to keep our publicly funded Medicare and Senior Care."

Bonnie Nelson, vice chair of the PSC retiree chapter, hailed the ruling, adding, "the attempt to force NYC retirees into an inferior Medicare Advantage plan was legally wrong—and just plain mean."



15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

VOTE COPE

Donald Trump and his reactionary agenda are coming back to the White House. Next year is a citywide election year. PSC members can fight for labor and progress in state and city elections when they contribute to VOTE COPE, the union's political action fund.

Unlike union dues, VOTE COPE contributions are voluntary, so it is important for members to sign up. Want to contribute to VOTE COPE? Not sure if you already do? Find out more at psc-cuny.org/issues/issues-cope/.

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY
25 Broadway, 15th Floor
New York, New York 10004
Return Service Requested

NonProfit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
New York, N.Y.
Permit No. 8049

ELECTION NOTICE

- The deadline for filing for candidacy for the upcoming union-wide elections is January 10, 2025.
- The declaration of candidacy form is available online: tinyurl.com/PSC-declaration-candidacy.
- For questions, contact elections@pscmail.org.

The spring elections are for the PSC's following chapters: Brooklyn EOC, Bronx EOC, CSI, Hunter Campus Schools, HEO, KCC, Lehman, BMCC, Medgar Evers, Manhattan EOC, NY City Tech, Queensborough CC, Queens EOC, Retirees, RFCO, RFFU.

To vote, one must be a PSC member as of December 1, 2024. To run for elected office, one must have been a PSC member for at least one (1) year at the time of nomination.

The number of signatures slates will need:

BY CHAPTER	GRAND TOTAL	Delegates	Alternate Delegates	Officers at Large	Petition Signatures Required	Welfare Fund Reps
BEOC	24	chair + 0	1	4	6	1
BXOC	12	chair + 0	1	4	3	1
CSI	609	chair + 5	4	4	25	2
HCS	119	chair + 0	1	4	25	1
HEO	4228	chair + 41	8	4	25	
KCC	525	chair + 4	4	4	25	2
LEH	640	chair + 5	4	4	25	2
MCC	966	chair + 8	5	4	25	2
ME	271	chair + 1	2	4	25	2
MEOC	38	chair + 0	1	4	9	1
NYCT	927	chair + 8	5	4	25	2
QCC	600	chair + 5	4	4	25	2
QEOC	15	chair + 0	1	4	4	1
RET	2968	chair + 6	5	4	25	1
RF	82	chair + 0	1	4	20	
RFFU	416	chair + 3	4	4	25	



DEADLINES & DATES FOR THE 2025 ELECTION

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10, 2025 – Deadline for submitting a signed declaration of candidacy form.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2025 – Pre-printed nominating petitions will be available.

MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2025, 5 PM – Deadline for completed nominating petitions.

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2025 – Ballots mailed and emailed.

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2025, 5 PM – Deadline for ballots.

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2025, 10 AM – Ballots counted.

