



LETTER FROM BARBARA BOWEN ON THE NEW TENTATIVE CONTRACT

June 27, 2008

Dear Colleagues:

After working till 4:00 a.m. on Friday, June 20, negotiators for the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY and the City University of New York reached a tentative collective bargaining agreement covering the period September 20, 2007 through October 19, 2010. I want to thank the union's extraordinary bargaining team for their dedication and heart, and to congratulate every faculty and staff member who participated in the campaign for a fair contract. The gains in this contract are a direct result of our organized pressure. You will see the imprint of that pressure as you read the terms of the tentative agreement.

As soon as all details are finalized, the union will publish the complete new salary schedules and proposed new contract language. CUNY's Board of Trustees Executive Committee unanimously approved the tentative settlement last Friday, and the PSC will begin its process of approval and ratification at the Executive Council and Delegate Assembly next Tuesday. The settlement remains "tentative" until all approvals and ratification are complete. Members will be given full information before they are asked to vote on ratification, the procedure for which will be announced shortly.

Both union and management negotiators worked under intense time pressure after CUNY made an initial economic offer on May 12—nearly nine months after the expiration of our previous contract—in order to negotiate a tentative settlement before the end of the legislative session in Albany. We met that deadline, reaching agreement on economic and non-economic issues. In the final hours of the legislative session in Albany this week, both the New York State Senate and Assembly passed the paybill necessary for our contract. It now awaits the governor's signature.

The tentative contract is a principled, creative settlement that combines increases throughout the salary scale with special increases at the top and the bottom. It includes a breakthrough on parental and family care, introduces a system for sharing sick days with those in need, is accompanied by a separate agreement that adds a hundred new Lecturer lines reserved for experienced part-time faculty, and holds

the line against management's agenda of corporatizing the University. The tentative settlement also includes new equity features, such as a salary differential for College Laboratory Technicians and Assistants to HEO with relevant master's or doctoral degrees, and an extra increase in each step of the Lecturer title. The tentative agreement comes with the strong support of the PSC negotiating committee.

One of the ways we sought to improve the competitiveness of CUNY salaries was to combine across-the-board salary increases with a concentrated increase to the top salary step. The tentative contract calls for an additional increase of 1% in October 2009 to be applied strategically to the top step of all annual full-time salary schedules and to all adjunct schedules. Faculty and staff on the top step of the professorial titles, Lecturer titles, CLT titles, HEO titles, adjunct titles and others—many of whom have been on the top step for several years—will receive an additional increase to their base salary. Equally important, the value of the top steps themselves will rise, lifting the maximum salary for each title.

Features of the tentative agreement include:

- across-the-board salary increases in each of three years:
 - 3.15%, effective September 20, 2007
 - 4%, effective October 6, 2008, compounded
 - 3%, effective October 20, 2009, compounded, with an additional increase to base salary applied to the top step of annual full-time titles with salary step schedules, and to the top step of teaching adjunct, non-teaching adjunct and adjunct CLT titles, and to full-time incumbent employees in titles with salary ranges
- rejection of management's concessionary demands to reshape the University by eliminating salary steps, removing department chairs from the union, introducing "performance pay," weakening HEO job security, and hiring an unlimited number of non-tenure-track full-time faculty
- an increase in management's contribution to the Welfare Fund
- funds set aside for a parental leave benefit
- a sick leave bank and dedicated sick leave policy, allowing full-time faculty and staff to contribute a portion of their own sick days for another member in acute need; discussion of implementation will consider participation by adjuncts
- ability to use up to 3 accrued sick days per year for the care of an ill family member
- contract language giving the right to use college email systems for distribution of PSC communications
- ability for faculty and staff to use college email addresses after retirement
- renewal of the adjunct professional development fund (as well as continuation of the existing HEO/CLT fund)
- a committee to design a voluntary pilot program for student mentoring, with appropriate compensation for mentors—to enhance students' educational experience and assist in student retention
- extension of the maximum number of years of service for Distinguished Lecturers from 5 to 7
- the creation of a new full-time title, Clinical Professor, with a maximum of 7 years of service, and with a limit of 125 on the total number of Distinguished Lecturers and Clinical Professors combined
- improvements in several contract articles concerning the way service in Substitute titles is counted toward continuous adjunct service, for purposes of determining eligibility for movement in salary steps, one-year appointments and other provisions
- in the final year of the contract, subject to mutual agreement, new equity provisions, including:
 - an annual differential added to salary for CLTs, Senior CLTs, Chief CLTs and Assistants to HEO who hold master's or doctoral degrees in a field related to their job duties

- an increase in each step of the Lecturer salary schedule, in addition to the contractual increases above
 - improvements in compensation for CLIP teachers
 - equalization of the top of the salary range of the Law School Library series with the top of the salary range of other relevant Law School faculty
- a separate agreement covering the terms to be applied to the Educational Opportunity Centers, to be negotiated promptly.

In a separate agreement, CUNY has made a commitment to add 100 new “conversion lines”—in addition to the 100 such lines added in 2006. These are full-time faculty positions reserved for experienced CUNY adjuncts.

In addition, progress has been made on one of the union’s other major priorities, securing health insurance for doctoral employees. The PSC, as a member of the Municipal Labor Committee, is also actively engaged in seeking inclusion of eligible CUNY adjuncts in the New York City Health Benefits Program.

In the coming days and weeks, the union will publish more information about the tentative settlement, including salary details and answers to frequently asked questions. I look forward to meeting with faculty and staff in person and discussing the contract with you. Even though this agreement comes in the summer, the bargaining team will make every effort to create opportunities for open discussion of its terms.

While the proposed settlement does not meet all of our hopes, it does contain some major advances—on everything from increasing the top salary step to use of college email for union communication to acknowledgement of the professionalism of CLTs and HEOs. The priority we found most difficult to achieve, not surprisingly, was reform of the adjunct labor system, a system that continues to disfigure both CUNY and higher education nationwide. As we approach this battle and others in the future, our collective achievements in this contract should give us confidence.

Thank you for all of your personal messages of support and encouragement throughout this process.

In solidarity,

Barbara Bowen
President