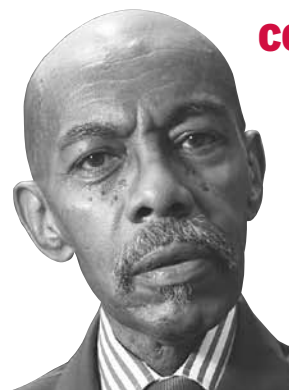


Clarion

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



SUMMER 2010



CONTROVERSY

At Medgar Evers

Program that assists former prisoners blocked by administration.

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Tom Martinez

IN A TANGLED BUDGET YEAR SPLIT DECISION

When the City Council passed a new municipal budget at the end of June, it voted to restore most of the funds that Mayor Bloomberg had sought to cut from City support for CUNY. But as Clarion went to press, the State budget was three

months late and counting, with no clear solution in sight. Resistance to Gov. Paterson's plan to "deregulate" public university tuition appeared to be holding firm – but the final result was still hard to predict.

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SUMMER READING

A fresh look at higher ed crisis

Universities have been under attack for decades. Now, two authors say, supporters of public higher education will have to think and act boldly to save it.

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ON THE JOB

In-depth faculty survey

Workload, salary and poor facilities were among the trouble spots in the recent Faculty Experience Survey from the CUNY University Faculty Senate.

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NOVEL GRAPHICS

Making sense of the crash

Examine the causes of the 2008 economic meltdown, its impact on people's lives and how organizers have responded – in words and pictures.

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ORGANIZING

Protest at RF headquarters

Research Foundation workers at LaGuardia, City Tech and the Graduate Center know they deserve a fair first contract, and they're organizing to win it.

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City Council rejects most Bloomberg cuts

By PETER HOGNESS

Just before *Clarion* went to press, the City Council approved a budget for the 2010-2011 fiscal year that restored most of the funds in City support for CUNY that Mayor Bloomberg had sought to cut. Budget restorations by the City Council totaled \$32.3 million.

"In such a difficult budget year, this is an achievement," said PSC First Vice President Steve London. "And it's thanks to everyone in the CUNY community who fought back against these budget reductions."

The Council restored \$21.4 million that Bloomberg sought to cut from community college operating aid, as well as \$1.2 million in related member-item support. This puts City operating aid above the level in last year's budget.

Bloomberg had also sought to completely eliminate a number of CUNY institutes and initiatives with separate funding streams, and here only some of the funds cut by the mayor were restored. For example, the mayor had cut all \$9.5 million in

funding for Vallone Scholarships, of which the Council restored \$6 million. The Black Male Empowerment Initiative got 90% of its \$2.5 million in funding restored, sustaining a net reduction of \$250,000.

The Puerto Rican Studies Institute and Dominican Studies Institute, saw reductions of \$220,000 and \$550,00 – or almost half their annual budgets. Also, the \$300,000 cut in Murphy Institute funds was not restored. At press time it was unclear whether some of these funding gaps would be met through other sources.

"Overall, it's clear that CUNY was prioritized by the council," said London. "And our ability to have that kind of impact began with members deciding to participate in PSC borough political action committees, and make regular contributions to VOTE COPE, which allowed us to be very active during last year's city council elections. We helped elect many council members who understand what CUNY means to the life of this city, and this June we saw the difference that can make."

\$32.3 million in funds restored.

Unions & community groups say 'Save Our City'

As City budget talks came down to the wire, the PSC joined with thousands of other municipal unionists and community groups on June 16 in a protest against Mayor Bloomberg's proposed budget cuts. Sponsored by the Municipal Labor Committee, it was a rally to "Save Our City."

"I want to make sure that they don't close the budget deficit on the backs of public workers," said Nicole Hala, an assistant professor of sociology at Queens College. "I'm here as a public worker myself." Instead of deep budget cuts, she said, "we need to have that millionaire's tax, we need to be talking about it."

VITAL SERVICES

"It's painful to me to think about what would happen to our students if there are major cuts at BMCC," said Ingrid Hughes, an adjunct lecturer in English at BMCC and Baruch. "My students need so much support. Their classes are already too big. They're struggling so hard, they're up against so much, that even small cuts can make a big difference."

The City Hall rally opposed cuts to public colleges, schools, firehouses, libraries, hospitals, senior centers and other vital City services. Layoffs of public workers would hurt NYC's many communities, neighborhood activists said.

'An upside-down world'

"We keep hearing that this is a time of economic crisis for this City. The truth is that the City has more than \$3 billion in surplus," PSC President Barbara Bowen told the crowd. "Why is New York talking about laying off thousands of people when they have a \$3 billion surplus?"

John Samuelson, president of TWU Local 100, spoke against the MTA's plan to make public school students pay for the MetroCards they need to get to school. "That's an upside-down world! We're bailing out billionaire bankers, and we're making kids pay to go to school! What happened to us, what happened to this society?" Samuelson asked. "I'm here to say that the public sector workforce needs to join together, dig our heels in, stand side-to-side and fight to defend our livelihoods. If we stand together we're going to prevail."

THE LONG HAUL

The next day, it was announced that the MTA would continue to provide student MetroCards without charge. But at the end of the month, several bus routes and subway lines were eliminated, leaving working New Yorkers with a split decision on the transit front.

"It's a partial victory, but it shows we can make a difference," said Ron Hayduk of BMCC. "Solidarity is what we need – and we need to be in it for the long haul." —PH



John Tarleton

Political literacy comes to City Hall

A June 3 rally at City Hall Park successfully urged local lawmakers to restore funds cut from adult literacy programs.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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When is a salary 'too much'?

● In my op-ed in the May *Clarion*, I noted that in the aggregate, public sector workers are better compensated than private sector-workers. Prof. Jayaraman's response in the same issue noted, rightly, that they make less when one compares jobs. But that is not the end of the story.

At the high end of the labor market (economists, accountants and lawyers), government workers earn less than their private sector counterparts, which drags down the numbers. At the low end of the labor market, for clerks and janitors, public sector work is a much better deal. Furthermore, most comparable worth studies, like the one she cites, leave out teachers, cops, firefighters and corrections officers. And monopoly service providers' unions have been among the most effective at increasing salaries and benefits.

All things considered, then, the public-private gap is real. And Jayaraman's solution of raising taxes on the rich – gratifying as it might be – to shelter the public sector from the economic storm is unrealistic and misses the point. Given recent spending increases and the proportion of New York State and City taxes the wealthy already pay, raising sufficient revenue would require raising middle class taxes. Such a move would only fuel the backlash about which I warned.

Daniel DiSalvo
CCNY

Saru Jayaraman (Brooklyn College) responds: Prof. DiSalvo is concerned that public-sector workers "at the low end of the labor market" are earning too much money. In his op-ed, Exhibit A was an administrative assistant in a government office in NYC, earning the enormous sum of "nearly \$27,000" per year.

In a year when the top 25 hedge

fund managers reported average incomes of more than \$1 billion each, this is a strange target for outrage. Anyone who has tried to find affordable housing in NYC and keep a couple of children fed and clothed on \$27,000 a year knows it is nearly impossible.

But DiSalvo argues this salary is \$4,000 too high, since the private-sector average is \$22,000. Others looking at the same picture might conclude that \$22,000 is too low, and ask whether this is related to the low rate of unionization in private-sector office jobs. Labor law reform would make it harder for private-sector employers to keep wages down by firing union supporters.

The goal should be to ensure that all New York jobs provide wages that keep people out of poverty, not keep them in it – instead of cutting lower-income public workers' wages so they match the poverty wages of their private-sector counterparts.

Clarion editor Peter Hogness also responds: Like the anti-union partisans at the Manhattan Institute or the Heritage Foundation, Prof. DiSalvo uses the public/private comparison in only one direction: to demand cuts in public-worker wages, but never raises.

This is an issue that cuts close to home at CUNY. Among the millions of public workers who are underpaid relative to their private-sector counterparts, public-university faculty are prominent. Associate professors at US public universities are paid an average of \$16,000 a year less than those at private institutions. Yet when Prof. DiSalvo wrote his original op-ed for the *Daily News*, he did not tell its 600,000 readers that public university wages are too low.

There are more important reasons why CUNY salaries should be

increased – for example, search committees often lose their top choices to other institutions where pay is better. But if one is going to take the private-sector labor market as the measure of all things, one should at least be consistent. It seems perverse to apply this rule mainly to public employees who earn the least.

The solution to New York's budget problems does not lie in scapegoating public workers. The real solution is in the progressive tax reform measures backed by the PSC, (see p.3), which would close the State's \$9 billion deficit without raising taxes on the middle class.

Promotions in the HEO lines

● CUNY's HEOs are like the water over the earth: people working in the Higher Education Officer series are everywhere in CUNY.

During the listening campaign we held last year at Brooklyn College, HEOs expressed major concern over the lack of a transparent promotion process. In place of clear promotional steps, the current re-classification process is a mystery to most staff and to their supervisors. Professional staff work long and hard hours completing all sorts of complex assignments, too often without recognition or remuneration. Managers and supervisors complain that there is no real mechanism to promote a good person.

Providing a clear promotional process within the HEO series is a key issue for contract negotiations. Some have suggested that HEOs create a portfolio, analogous to the one that faculty use, for the purpose of promotions. Whatever the steps, the time has come for CUNY to treat HEOs as the professionals that we are.

Anselma Rodriguez
Brooklyn College

Late State budget endgame

By PETER HOGNESS

As Clarion went to press at the beginning of July, the New York State budget, now more than three months overdue, was still unresolved – and public higher education was at the center of the conflict.

The Governor's Executive budget contained very controversial proposals for public higher education. It cut CUNY senior colleges by \$84.4 million and the community colleges by \$21 million. Cuts to TAP totaled \$49 million. The Governor also proposed privatizing much of CUNY and SUNY by withdrawing state support and replacing it with tuition increases and other privatizing initiatives.

By June, the governor's insistence on his higher education proposals, other public education cuts and property tax caps had brought budget negotiations between the governor and the state legislature to a standstill. Without a budget in place, the money New York State needs to function was being provided by short-term emergency spend-

ing bills. Such "extender" bills must be drafted by the governor and voted up or down without amendment – and Paterson was aggressively using this provision in his power struggle with the Legislature.

In each emergency bill, Paterson included pieces of his overall budget proposal. Since voting "no" would mean shutting down State government, legislators reluctantly approved each of these bills, and thus ended up enacting a majority of Paterson's FY 2011 budget plan in bits and pieces.

FURLOUGH

Paterson's used the same approach to pressure the Legislature into approving his furlough plan. A lawsuit by the PSC and other public-sector unions blocked implementation of the furlough measure.

One of Paterson's major goals has been to enact his Public Higher Education Empowerment & Investment Act, or PHEEIA, which would drastically restructure the financing of CUNY and SUNY. The gov-

ernor declared that June 28 was his deadline for passage of a budget – and that PHEEIA must be part of it. If no budget had been approved by that date, Paterson said, he would put all his remaining budget measures, plus PHEEIA, into an emergency extender.

The PSC, UUP and NYSUT all oppose PHEEIA as a path to the privatization of public higher education. If passed, it would allow the CUNY and SUNY Trustees to raise tuition annually without legislative oversight, at their own discretion. It would also permit different tuition rates for different colleges and even for different majors.

"The Empowerment Act would be a disaster for CUNY. It is essentially a proposal to reduce public funding and replace it with private funding, in the form of higher tuition," said PSC President Barbara Bowen. "This year's State budget is a case in point: the governor's proposal includes both the Empowerment Act and severe cuts to CUNY and SUNY." The re-

cord in other states is clear, she added. In the last two years, average public funding for higher education decreased 34 times faster in states where public colleges set their own tuition rates than in states where the tuition was set by the legislature.

When June 28 arrived, Paterson found himself outmaneuvered by the Legislature. The State Senate and Assembly resolved enough of their differences to pass a joint spending bill and sent it to the governor, which removed the legal need for an emergency bill and got the Legislature out of that procedural straitjacket. The Legislature's spending bill restored CUNY community college and TAP funding, but not senior college funding. It contained no mention of PHEEIA.

Paterson countered by using his line-item veto power to reject the spending items the Legislature had approved, item by item.

The Legislature still had to pass revenue bills to fund its spending

plan. As Clarion went to press, its two houses wrestled over how to proceed on the revenue bills, and PHEEIA was at the center of the dispute. While the Assembly has consistently and strongly opposed PHEEIA because it would deny access and shift funding of higher education from the State to students, several Senate Democrats are strong supporters of PHEEIA, believing it will help economic development in their regions. Since Senate Democrats have only a two-seat majority, they must be united to pass budget bills.

At the start of July, Senate and Assembly leaders had prepared a revenue resolution that did not contain PHEEIA language, but last-minute maneuvering by pro-PHEEIA Senate Democrats kept it from coming to a vote. July 19 was reported as a possible date for attempts to override Paterson's vetoes.

As this battle unfolded in Albany, PSC members gave a big response to the union's call to voice their opposition to PHEEIA. By July union members had sent 5,000 messages to their representatives opposing PHEEIA – a PSC record.

At presstime, the final outcome was still unknown. PHEEIA proponents have been relentless, but opposition has also remained strong.

PSC blocks Paterson furlough plan

By PETER HOGNESS

In May the PSC and other public-employee unions blocked Gov. David Paterson's attempt to furlough State workers, including CUNY faculty and staff, for one day per week. In a May 26 ruling, US District Judge Lawrence Kahn agreed with the PSC's lawsuit on every point and halted the furlough scheme, which would have cut employees' pay by 20%.

"This was a victory for CUNY faculty and staff and also for CUNY students," said PSC President Barbara Bowen, who was the lead plaintiff in the PSC suit. "It meant that the thousands of students who attend CUNY in the summer did not face the prospect of classes cancelled, credits denied, dreams put on hold. Judge Kahn's ruling against the illegal scheme for mandatory pay cuts was also a victory for all public workers."

POLITICAL PLOY

The union noted that Paterson's furlough plan would only have produced about \$240 million, while the State deficit stood at \$9 billion. "The furlough scheme had nothing to do with closing the budget deficit," said Bowen. "It was a political ploy, an attempt to scapegoat public workers for an economic crisis that we did not create." The only real way to solve the budget crisis, she emphasized, is through progressive tax reform.

The PSC and other unions argued in court that the furlough plan was a violation of their collec-

Victory stops pay cut of 20%



PSC and DC 37 members protesting outside Gov. Paterson's Manhattan office.

tive bargaining agreements that was both illegal and unconstitutional. The judge agreed that the governor had not shown why such a move was either reasonable or necessary. "In its submissions to the Court," Judge Kahn wrote, "the

State artificially limits the scope of alternatives for addressing the fiscal crisis to retrieving a certain amount of savings from unionized State employees." But as a matter of both law and logic, the judge continued, "the desired savings need

not come from State personnel."

In his comments to the press, Gov. Paterson insisted that furloughing public employees was necessary "because their union leadership has rejected all other reasonable attempts at compromise."

That was "completely untrue," said the PSC's Bowen. "The PSC was not contacted by the governor's office with any request to discuss alternatives to furloughs." She noted that the union had offered "numerous proposals that would provide genuine budget relief – such as closing tax loopholes for hedge funds or temporarily retaining part of the stock transfer tax."

With a new State budget weeks overdue, the governor introduced the furlough plan on May 10 as part of an emergency funding bill that had to be voted up or down without amendment. Legislators objected to inclusion of the furloughs, which they did not support, but voted in favor of the measure rather than be accused of shutting down the government. The same day, the State Senate passed a resolution stating that it considered the furloughs both unnecessary and illegal.

The next day, May 11, the PSC and other public employee unions (PEF, CSEA, DC37 and United University Professions, the SUNY faculty and staff union) filed lawsuits in federal court. On May 12 Judge Kahn put the furloughs on hold with a temporary restraining order, and on May 26 he issued a preliminary injunction against the

governor's plan.

That injunction prohibits the State from imposing furloughs while the union lawsuits against the governor's plan move forward. The final outcome is likely to be the same: Judge Kahn found that the State's argument was "transparently unsupported" by the facts or the law, and concluded that it is "substantially unlikely" that the State will prevail when the underlying lawsuit is heard.

Judge backs PSC on every point.

In addition to the lawsuit, the PSC also spoke out in public against the furlough scheme. On May 10 a PSC protest outside Paterson's office in midtown Manhattan drew nearly 150 people on less than 24 hours notice.

Protesters were angry at the unfairness of the furlough plan. "I don't want my livelihood or my students' education used as political bargaining tools," said Leila Walker, who teaches at Lehman College.

STUDENTS

Yina Chun, a senior at Hunter College, agreed. "As students in the wealthiest city in a wealthy country, for our future to be immersed in political games is not fair," she said. "It's an outrage that the teaching staff has to deal with this legislation."

Media coverage of the PSC's actions included an interview with Barbara Bowen on Channel 4-WNBC News. The CUNY administration made no public statement against the furlough plan.

"We were successful because we used our power as a union," said PSC Treasurer Mike Fabricant. "Individually, we would have been relatively powerless against the governor's furlough plan. Collectively, we had a shot at being successful."

EDUCATION IN BRIEF

Puerto Rico students beat back budget cuts

Students at the University of Puerto Rico agreed to end a 60-day strike on June 21 after the island's government agreed to almost all their demands. Opposition to Gov. Luis Fortuno's proposed plan to increase tuition while reducing student aid had fueled the protest movement. The first campus shutdown took place on April 21 at the main Rio Piedras campus in San Juan, which quickly led to takeovers at all 11 of the university's campuses. The strikers received broad public support as well as backing from an overwhelming majority of faculty and staff, who honored the students' picket lines. The students vowed to approve a follow-up strike for January if there is another attempt to increase tuition.

Arizona feels the heat

Academia has begun to shun Arizona since the state's passage of SB 1070, a controversial new law that requires police to question anyone they suspect may be an undocumented immigrant. The National Autonomous University of Mexico and the Autonomous University of San Luis Potosí (Mexico) have suspended student exchange programs with the University of Arizona due to concerns about students being harassed. SACNAS, a national society of scientists, will not consider Arizona as a site for its 2012 national conference, according to *University Business* magazine, while the American Educational Research Association's governing body voted to no longer meet in Arizona unless the law is repealed.

RF workers take it to the top

By JOHN TARLETON

Like many of their 546 colleagues at LaGuardia, City Tech and the Graduate Center, CUNY Research Foundation employees Peter Frase and Maurice Pinzon say that RF-CUNY has made them wait far too long for their first union contract. On May 24, they took their message straight to the top.

While RF workers rallied outside the foundation's headquarters, Frase, Pinzon and PSC First Vice President Steve London made their way to the eighth floor, where the RF Board of Directors was about to begin one of its semi-annual meetings. When they arrived, Frase and Pinzon presented RF President Richard Rothbard with a petition that called for a fair contract settlement.

HAND DELIVERED

"Rothbard managed a decent poker face," Frase recalled, "but he was obviously surprised to see us."

While several board members looked on, Rothbard spoke with Frase and Pinzon after they delivered the petition, which was signed by 700 people. RF management had refused the PSC's repeated requests to be allowed to address the RF Board, to present the union's case that management's anti-union stance is not in the interest of CUNY-based researchers and grant-funded projects.

"During the time that we have been bargaining these contracts, the foundation has been spending an average of \$500,000 per year for legal counsel from the firm of Nixon Peabody," the petition said – enough to pay for a 4.5% pay raise for all RF employees covered by the contract talks. "What are the priorities of RF-CUNY when funds are taken

Contract campaign continues

from hard-won grants and used for lawyers to fight the union representing its employees?" the petition asked.

PUSHING FOR JUSTICE

The "upstairs, downstairs" protest at RF headquarters in midtown was the latest attempt to push long-running contract talks to a final conclusion. A gradual accumulation of progress at the bargaining table by this spring had brought the two sides closer to

agreement than ever before, and organizers say a settlement could be achieved this fall.

"We're here to push for the kind of justice that you should have had long ago," PSC President Barbara Bowen told the picketers. Ellen Noonan, who has worked on an RF line at the Graduate Center for 10 years, agreed. "If they can afford their expensive anti-union lawyer," Noonan said, "they can afford to settle this contract."

Petition efforts help build chapters.

"It's been a long fight," said Sandra Johnson, who has worked at LaGuardia for 13 years. "We need to stay strong and united."

Both Frase and Pinzon said the petition drive helped build that unity, a task that can be challenging since RF workers are typically scattered across their campuses in various offices that rely on grant-based funding.

"It was a good opportunity to have contact with people in a fragmented workplace," said Frase, a doctoral student in sociology who works at the GC's Center for Urban Research. "Everybody was supportive and happy to sign a petition."

UNITY

Pinzon, registration coordinator at LaGuardia's Adult Learning Center and a member of the union bargaining team, said he and other RF activists at LaGuardia gathered close to 150 signatures from their co-workers at LaGuardia during a two-week period leading up to the protest. Taking petitions around during lunch hour "resulted in people starting to ask questions," which Pinzon said is the first step to getting more involved.

Members of the RF-LaGuardia chapter subsequently attended a breakfast get-together to discuss the contract on June 23. Informal discussions about the contract campaign have been taking place with increasing frequency among RF workers at LaGuardia, including in hallways and at a recent picnic.

"Whenever people see me, they ask for an update," Pinzon said. "That's a sign we're making progress."



Ellen Noonan (foreground) and Elena Gaudino, both of the Graduate Center, march outside Research Foundation headquarters on May 24.

DOJ, John Jay settle lawsuit

By JOHN TARLETON

John Jay College has agreed to a far-reaching legal settlement with the Department of Justice (DOJ) in a lawsuit that charged the college with a pattern of job discrimination against non-citizens who were legally authorized to work.

John Jay agreed to pay \$23,260 in civil penalties, as well as \$10,072 in back wages to the former employee whose 2008 complaint sparked the DOJ investigation.

The settlement provides for the John Jay administration to train its recruitment personnel on correct hiring procedures and their responsibilities to not discriminate; to implement a policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of citizenship status; and to report to the DOJ's Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair

Immigrant discrimination case

Employment Practices every three months for the next three years. In the lawsuit it filed in April, the Justice Department accused John Jay of violating the rights of at least 103 individuals since 2007 by treating citizens and non-citizens differently and requiring non-citizens to supply more work eligibility documents than those required by law.

TRAINING

Under the agreement, John Jay will provide training to all employees who are involved in employment eligibility verification, including managers and all employees who have any role in completing the I-9 employment form or instructing others how to do so. Trainees will be required to

watch a videotape provided by the Office of the Special Counsel and participate in at least three hours of employment eligibility verification training.

Under federal regulations, the types of forms that prospective employees can use to demonstrate that they are legally authorized to work are divided into three lists: A, B and C. The documents on List A establish both identity and legal authorization to work (for example, a Permanent Resident Card (aka "green card") or a US passport). List B establishes identity only (e.g., a driver's license), while List C only establishes authorization to work (such as a Social Security card, if it has no printed

restrictions on its use for employment authorization).

Prospective employees can choose to submit either a single document from List A (establishing both identity and work authorization) or one document from List B (to establish identity) and one from List C (to establish work authorization). The rules must be applied consistently to all, regardless of citizenship status.

The complainant, a part-time computer lab assistant, was fired by John Jay College after she did not provide a green card. But she had already provided her driver's license (from List B) together with her Social Security card, which was unrestricted (from List C) – which is all the law requires. Demanding that she produce further documentation was illegal under the 1996 Immigration and Nationality Act.

"Employers should understand that it's the worker's choice which documents to provide," said Rebecca Smith, coordinator of justice

for immigrants at the National Employment Law Project. Smith added this kind of violation is "pretty common," and other immigration lawyers told *Clarion* that to some extent it is fostered by an asymmetry in the law: the penalties for hiring undocumented workers are stiffer than the penalties for discrimination.

WORKER'S CHOICE

Carl Williams, chair of the PSC chapter at John Jay, expressed support for the planned training sessions. "We need to properly train all our employees so they can carry out their jobs without violating the law," he said. Williams suggested that budget cuts at the college may have led to reduced training for human resources personnel and that a recent increase in retirements has added to the college's administrative difficulties.

"When you take on that amount of new employees, you need to focus on training," Williams said. "You can't assume the people coming in know everything."

Can't ask non-citizens for more than law requires

MEC blocks ex-prisoner project

By JOHN TARLETON

For the past six years, the Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions has been the go-to place at Medgar Evers College (MEC) for formerly incarcerated people pursuing a college degree. It helps them navigate the financial aid system, provides counseling services and assists them with completing remedial coursework. Staffed by former offenders who have used higher education to transform their own lives, NuLeadership also engages in a range of research and public policy work.

"We help people who have chosen to turn their lives around and come to Medgar," said NuLeadership co-founder Eddie Ellis.

That could soon change.

When NuLeadership moved from its original home in Harlem to the Medgar Evers campus in 2004, it operated as a program of the college's Center for Law and Social Justice. By the spring of 2009 its work had grown, and the Medgar Evers College Council approved NuLeadership's request to operate as a separate center.

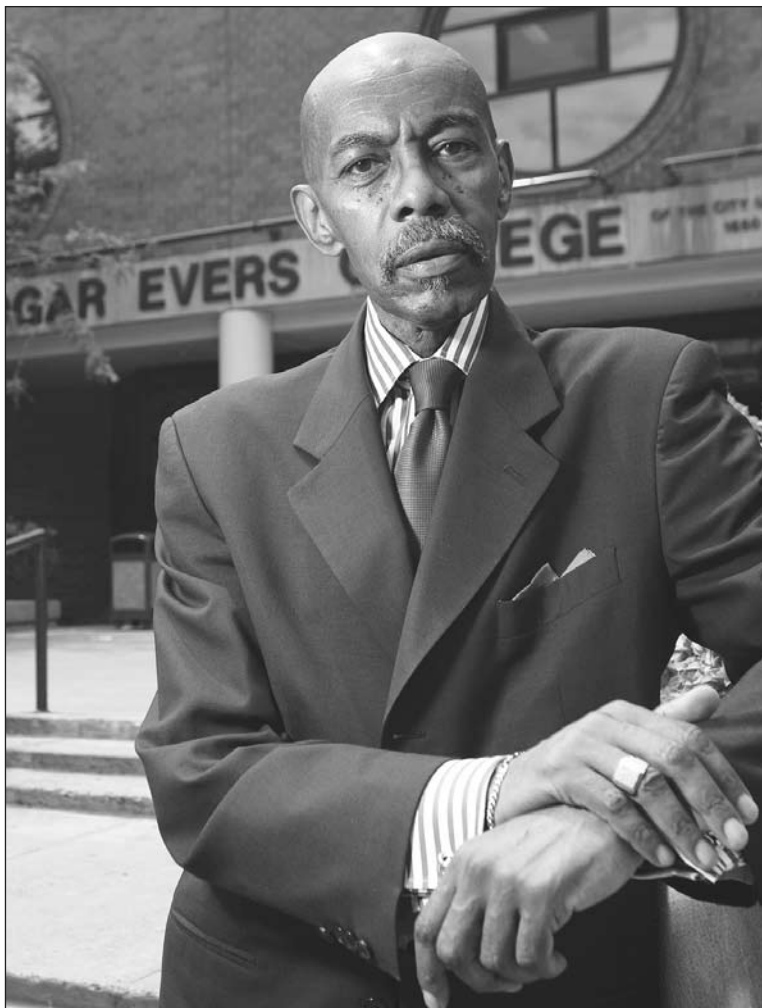
But in May 2010, Ellis and NuLeadership Executive Director Divine Pryor learned to their surprise that the Medgar Evers administration did not recognize their organization's legal status at the college, though they had been operating since August 2009 with the understanding that they were one of the college's academic centers. (The Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions is listed as such on the Medgar Evers College website, on its own page and on more than a dozen others.)

COURT TO COLLEGE

After a couple of unsuccessful attempts to meet with MEC's new president, William Pollard, Ellis and Pryor met on June 4 with Provost Howard Johnson and Chief Operating Officer Lloyd Blanchard to clarify what they thought was a misunderstanding. According to Ellis, Johnson told him that the previous provost had never forwarded the College Council's action to CUNY central administration for final approval by the Board of Trustees, nor did Johnson plan to do so. The college also refused to release already approved funding for NuLeadership's work, Ellis said, and declined to support NuLeadership's grant applications for future projects.

One project they discussed was a three-year \$2.4 million grant proposal to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, through which first-time nonviolent drug offenders would attend college or other educational programs under court supervision, instead of being sent to prison. Ellis said that over the past year NuLeadership staff had arranged for a small number of

Admin questions its status



Eddie Ellis, co-founder of the Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions

people to be given this option by the Brooklyn Treatment Court, with the concurrence of the Kings County District Attorney's Office, and the proposed Court to College (C2C) program would expand this work.

According to Ellis, Blanchard described the students who would be served by the C2C initiative as a "criminal element" whose presence on campus would be a "threat to the security of the college and an insurance liability." Johnson affirmed Blanchard's comments, Ellis told *Clarion*, and expressed concern that students in the C2C program would also represent a danger to a nearby high school and day-care center.

"We were shocked," said Ellis, who earned a BA in business administration and a master's degree in theology while serving 25 years in New York State prison. The Center for NuLeadership went public with the dispute in a written statement on June 14.

In its own press release on June 22, the MEC administration portrayed the issue as one of organizational and fiscal accountability. It said that the C2C grant proposal had "serious deficiencies" – for example, that it did not have a principal investigator who is a CUNY employee – and objected to the fact that neither Ellis nor Pryor (whose salaries are paid by grants) is an employee of CUNY or the college.

The administration's press release did not dispute the accuracy of the comments attributed to Blanchard and Johnson by NuLeadership. In response to subsequent questions from *Clarion*, the MEC administration asserted that NuLeadership's press release had "misrepresented statements made in the June 4 meeting." It added, however, that "certainly the administration is concerned with the security of its students, faculty and staff and whatever fiscal or legal liability may befall the college."

The confrontation at MEC sparked an outpouring of support for the Center for NuLeadership from advocates for criminal justice reform.

NuLeadership has "a stellar reputation," said Vivian Nixon, executive director of the College and Community Fellowship, which helps formerly incarcerated women attend college. She praised NuLeadership's research and public policy work, which is carried out by formerly incarcerated individuals with post-graduate degrees.

UNINFORMED

"There are a lot of people screaming from the sidelines about policy," Nixon said, but NuLeadership emphasizes "that people [must] get the skills and the education they need in order to be effective."

Like many others, Nixon strongly objected to the idea that a program like C2C would prove a liability. "There has been absolutely no research, no data that proves that a person who has a criminal conviction who decides to go to college post-conviction is any more dangerous to society than any other person who is going to college," she told *Clarion*. "There's no scholarly argument for this."

Glenn Martin, vice president for public policy at the Fortune Society, a New York City-based non-profit that helps formerly incarcerated persons rebuild their lives, agreed that such concerns were uninformed.

SUCCESS STORY

"That's evening-news risk assessment," Martin said. "People need to be looked at on an individualized basis." Martin cited himself as an example. He said that NuLeadership had helped him access community resources after a six-year stint in prison and gave him guidance in navigating child support and employment issues. A decade later, Martin works in a senior position at one of the most respected organizations on criminal justice issues in New York State.

"If any president of [a] CUNY [college] is willing to take the approach that he should paint everyone with the same brush," Martin said, "then I question whether or not he should be the president at a community-based college, such as Medgar Evers College."

On June 19, a delegation of Central Brooklyn elected officials led by Congresswoman Yvette Clarke met with President Pollard to air their concerns. "There is a lot of support for a program like that because the elected officials of

Central Brooklyn have been working on issues of re-entry, and NuLeadership addresses that," said a source familiar with the discussion. "They [the elected officials] see the effect of the prison-industrial complex on New York City and Central Brooklyn in particular."

More broadly, the source said, the Central Brooklyn officials wanted to make sure that the new administration would not distance MEC from the Central Brooklyn community it has been a part of since its inception in 1970. President Pollard, who took the helm of the college after longtime President Edison Jackson stepped down last year, has been reviewing past college priorities and practices.

Medgar Evers officials and the Center for NuLeadership give different accounts on some basic points in their dispute. "We have blocked no funds," an MEC spokesperson told *Clarion*. "There

is no evidence of funds being in the 'pipeline' to be blocked."

Ellis said that the college had not disbursed funds from a pair of past member-item grants from State legislators: one for \$10,000 from State Senator Eric Adams and another for \$25,000 from State Senator Velmanette Montgomery. "It's very urgent," Ellis said. "We're running out of money for the copying paper and toner."

MEC administration says that the C2C grant application did not include sufficient information on the background of project staff or enough details on how funds would be used, a criticism Ellis disputed. In addition, the administration said, "CUNY policy requires the principal investigator of grant funding to be an MEC or CUNY employee." Ellis said that NuLeadership's work at MEC had been funded by grants for years and that this concern was raised for the first time in 2010. NuLeadership met this condition on its subsequent grant application, he added.

MEC's June 22 statement said the administration was willing to explore how NuLeadership's work "might be reorganized and integrated into the college, according to existing college and University policies and guidelines." The administration is concerned about "potential violations of CUNY policy, which prohibit[s] centers from duplicating the academic efforts of the college," a spokesperson told *Clarion*. Since NuLeadership's proposal says its goal is to produce "scholars and scholarship," he said, this would "run afoul of CUNY policy," because that is a core mission of the college.

"It sounds like these guys are grasping for straws," responded Ellis. "If they were serious about supporting our work, they wouldn't be looking for some arcane rule or regulation to prevent us from doing it."

COST-EFFECTIVE

Ironically, the debate over NuLeadership's role at Medgar Evers is taking place at a time when budget-conscious federal and State policymakers are looking for innovative ways to keep former offenders from returning to prison. As Michelle Fine, distinguished professor of psychology at the Graduate Center told *Clarion*, "A college education is probably the most cost-effective, multi-level impact you can make in transforming the lives of people who have been incarcerated or arrested."

Ellis knows that from his own experience. Describing himself as a "perpetual optimist," he said he was confident about NuLeadership's future at MEC. "It doesn't make sense for Medgar to go right when everybody else is going left. Ultimately, this will get resolved and we will be able to continue going in the direction we are going."

Chapter elections show New Caucus gains

By PETER HOGNESS

Members increased their support for New Caucus (NC) candidates in the PSC's Spring 2010 chapter elections. The chapter at Medgar Evers College saw a political changing of the guard, with NC candidates winning for the first time in the chapter's history. A New Caucus slate was again elected to lead the Higher Education Officer Chapter, and again defeated at Kingsborough Community College, but in both cases NC candidates significantly increased their share of the vote.

Clinton Crawford, a professor of mass communication, won 56% of 138 votes in this year's vote at Medgar Evers College, defeating long-time chapter chair Ed Catapane's re-election bid.

"It's a real breakthrough," said Crawford. "People rallied around a relatively new group of candidates because they knew it was time for a change. They showed confidence in the slate we put forward."

OFFICE SPACE

One key issue facing the chapter, said Crawford, is the college's physical plant. "For example, in the School of Liberal Arts and Education we have more than a hundred adjuncts – and only one small room, about 9' x 12', for their office space." Other issues, he added, include fairness in faculty pay and inequitable treatment of faculty members who

Three local races contested



PSC staffer Ana Torres counts votes in an uncontested chapter election. Ballots in contested elections were tabulated by the American Arbitration Association.

had spoken critically of college administration.

"We have a mandate given to us, and we will work to represent all of the faculty," Crawford told *Clarion*.

At Kingsborough, incumbent chapter chair Rina Yarmish won re-election by a margin of 55% to 45% for NC challenger Susan Farrell, out of a total of 412 votes. The result represented a drop in sup-

port for Yarmish, who had received 72% of 341 votes in KCC's last election for chapter chair in 2007. A major increase in turnout heavily favored the NC slate, and Yarmish's absolute number of votes fell from 244 in 2007 to 228 this year. But the NC candidates still came up short, leaving Yarmish's Faculty First slate with a solid win.

In response to a request for com-

ments on the election and key issues facing the chapter, Yarmish provided the following statement.

"The Kingsborough faculty has again demonstrated its wisdom in re-electing the competent, experienced team that has represented its interests with expertise and integrity over the past 12 years. It is unfortunate that the New Caucus would, in the name of partisan politics, attempt to foist upon KCC an inexperienced group, potentially endangering the welfare of the faculty. Common sense and wisdom prevailed."

ON THE ISSUES

Iris DeLutro won election as the chair of the HEO Chapter, at the head of a New Caucus slate that won all chapter posts. DeLutro received 72% of 814 votes against Fred Brodzinski, running on the HEOs United slate. It was an increase for the New Caucus of nearly 10% over the previous HEO Chapter elections in 2007, when Brodzinski also ran for chapter chair.

DeLutro said the chapter will continue organizing on HEOs' top concern: making HEO titles into a promotional series. "Requiring reclassification into a new title is a system that doesn't really work for us in terms of upward mobility," DeLutro said.

Increasing workload is another major issue for HEOs, she added –

and "that makes the union's strong victory on comp time and overtime pay especially important."

"Our organizing challenge is getting the membership more involved in addressing these problems," DeLutro said. "So I am particularly happy that we have a lot of wonderful new people, young and energetic, in this chapter leadership. It's a good sign." She also paid tribute to Jean Weisman, who served as HEO chapter chair for the past nine years. "We are very grateful for Jean's leadership," DeLutro said. "She has been very instrumental in raising awareness about HEO issues, in CUNY and in the PSC."

Half of union chapters held votes this year.

The rest of this year's chapter elections were uncontested. Among the larger chapters, New Caucus slates were elected unopposed at College of Staten Island, BMCC, City

Tech and Queensborough Community College. The new chair of the Retirees Chapter, Jim Perlstein, was elected on a slate from the Retiree Caucus. At Lehman, long-time chapter chair Helene Silverman was re-elected on the Fusion Academics slate.

In the Manhattan EOC and Hunter Campus Schools Chapters, local slates were elected without opposition. Uncontested votes in the Bronx EOC, Research Foundation and Registrars Chapters went to candidates who ran without a slate.

Spring 2010 PSC chapter election results

PSC elections are staggered on a three-year cycle. Approximately half the chapters hold elections one year, the other half votes the year after, and union-wide elections are held the year after that.

In the list below, those new to their position are listed in italics.

Bronx Educational Opportunity Center: Chairperson, *Francisco Muñoz*; Vice Chairperson, *David Smith*

College of Staten Island: Chairperson, Vasilios Petratos; Vice Chairperson, Roslyn Bologh; Secretary, *Gloria Gianoulis*; Officers at Large, *Emile Chi*, Satyapraka Das, Stephen Stearns, *Howard Weiner*; Delegates to the DA, *Jessica Burke*, Richard Flanagan, *David Krit*, *Sonia Ragir*; Alternates to the DA, *Myra Hauben*, *Irving Robbins*, *Susan Rocco*, *William Smith*; Welfare Fund Council, *Gloria M. Cortopassi*, *Cheryl Wu*

Higher Education Officers: Chairperson, *Iris DeLutro*; Vice Chairperson, *Paul Washington*; Secretary, *Janet Winter*; Officers at Large, *Sherrian Grant-Fordham*, *Wayne Harewood*, *Janet Leslie-Pierre*, *Marc Ward*; Delegates to the DA, *Melanie Abreu*, *Anthony Andrews*,

Gregory Baptiste, *Stephen Barreira*, *Thomas Brennan*, *Arthur Chitty*, *John Gallagher*, *Nicholas Irons*, *Douglas Medina*, *George Muchita*, *Robert Nelson*, *Mary Nevins Costas*, *Gina Nurse*, *Geniece Pacifici-Elejalde*, *Maureen Pierce-Anyan*, *Anselma Rodriguez*, *Karen Thomas*, *Jewel Escobar*, *Paul Washington*, *Janet Winter*, *Cheryl Wu*; Alternates to the DA, *Mario Caruso*, *Jeff Clapp*, *Linda Crownover*, *Marci Goodman*, *Zoraida Hernandez*, *Marva Lilly*, *Lisanka Soto*, *Vera Weekes*

Hunter Campus Schools: Chairperson, *David Towber*; Vice Chairperson, *Lee Weinberg*; Secretary, *Sylvia Schaindlin*; Officers at Large, *Jose Diaz*, *Barbara Ghnassia*, *Sonya Glasser*, *Cristina Moore*

Kingsborough Community College: Chairperson, *Rina Yarmish*; Vice Chairperson, *Michael Sokolow*; Secretary, *Stephen Majewicz*; Officers at Large, *Donald Hume*, *Denis Sivack*, *Silvea Thomas*, *William Winter*; Delegates to the DA, *Michael Barnhart*, *Gordon Bassen*, *Ronald Forman*, *Cliff Hesse*, *Theodore Markus*, *William Rooney*; Alternates to the DA, *John Acosta*, *Susan Aranoff*, *Donald Donin*,

Alfonso Garcia-Osuna, *Florence Schneider*; Welfare Fund Council, *Gregory Aizin*, *Richard Staum*

Lehman College: Chairperson, *Helene Silverman*; Vice Chairperson, *Rosalind Carey*; Secretary, *Duane Tananbaum*; Officers at Large, *Norma Auerbach*, *Amod Choudhary*, *Joseph Rachlin*, *Kevin Sailor*; Delegates to the DA, *Jonathan Halabi*, *Wayne Halliday*, *John Mineka*, *Manfred Philipp*; Alternates to the DA, *Arto Artinian*, *Mary Carroll*; Welfare Fund Council, *Dana Fenton*, *Christy Folsom*

Borough of Manhattan Community College: Chairperson, *Rebecca Hill* [now at another university]; Joyce Moorman is acting chair; Vice Chairperson, *Joyce Moorman*; Secretary, *Geoffrey Kurtz*; Officers at Large, *Rafael Corbalan*, *Gail Mansouri*, *Margo Nash*, *Linda Wadas*; Delegates to the DA, *Francesco Crocco*, *Kathleen Saavik Ford*, *Anthony Gronowicz*, *Geoffrey Kurtz*, *Howard Meltzer*, *Joyce Moorman*, *Kathleen Offenholley*, *Charles Post*; Alternates to the DA, *Carol Bilsky-Bieniek*, *Will Hutchison*, *Hyacinth Martin*, *Yolanda Medina*, *Shirley Rausher*; Welfare Fund Council, *Kenneth Levinson*, *Marcia Newfield*

Manhattan Educational Opportunity Center: Chairperson, *Karen Berry*; Vice Chairperson, *Samuel Paul*; Secretary, *Gwynette Kears*; Officers at Large, *Evelyn McCatty*, *Mabel Ramharack*, *Carolyn Watford*, *Lawrence Williams*; Alternate to the DA, *Michael Hatchette*

Medgar Evers College: Chairperson, *Clinton Crawford*; Vice Chairperson, *Jean Gumbs*; Secretary, *Ivor Baker*; Officers at Large, *Verna Green*, *David Hatchett*, *JoAnn Joyner*, *Anthony Udeogalanya*; Delegates to the DA, *Obasegun Awolabi*, *William Daly*; Alternates to the DA, *David Hatchett*, *JoAnn Joyner*, *Anthony Udeogalanya*; Welfare Fund Council, *Darius Movasseghi*, *Earlean Smiley*

NYC College of Technology: Chairperson, *Robert Cermele*; Vice Chairperson, *Stephen James*; Secretary, *Tess Tobin*; Officers at Large, *Mary Browne*, *Kyle Cuordileone*, *Ana Marciano*, *Sharon Swacker*; Delegates to the DA, *Kyle Cuordileone*, *Andrew Douglas*, *Lise Hunter*, *Stephen James*, *Joel Mason*, *Patricia Rudden*, *Benjamin Shepard*; Alternates to the DA, *Malcolm Ebanks*, *Carole Harris*, *Konstantin Panayotakis*, *Abubakar Tidal Jr.*, *Gerald*

Van Loon; Welfare Fund Council, *Jackie Elliot*, *Helen Frank*

Queensborough Community College: Chairperson, *Judith Barbanel*; Vice Chairperson, *Joel Kusai*; Secretary, *Michael Cesarano*; Officers at Large, *Wilma Fletcher-Anthony*, *Anthony Kolios*, *Alexandra Tarasko*, *Lana Zinger*; Delegates to the DA, *Manette Berlinger*, *Aranzazu Borrachero*, *Michael Cesarano*, *Joel Kusai*, *William Marsh*, *Alicia Sinclair*; Alternates to the DA, *Wilma Fletcher-Anthony*, *Elaine Klau*, *Andrew Levy*, *Sharon Reeves*, *Roland Scal*; Welfare Fund Council, *Roland Scal*, *Lana Zinger*

Registrars: Chairperson, *Jayne Zweig*

Research Foundation Central Office: Chairperson, *Anthony Dixon*; Vice Chairperson, *Dawn Sievers*; Alternates to the DA, *Victor Caceres*

Retirees: Chairperson, *James Perlstein*; Vice Chairperson, *Joel Berger*; Secretary, *Mary Bryce-Jennings*; Officers at Large, *Francine Brewer*, *Judith Bronfman*, *Martin Kaplan*, *Eileen Moran*; Delegates to the DA, *John Hyland*, *David Kotelchuck*, *Stephen Leberstein*, *Cecelia McCall*, *Ezra Seltzer*; Alternates to the DA, *Miriam Balmuth*, *Joel Berger*, *Peter Jonas*, *Robert Wurman*; Welfare Fund Council, *Irwin Yellowitz*

Faculty survey rich in detail

By LENORE BEAKY

“The fullest and most complete expression of faculty opinions and attitudes at the City University that we have to date”: that’s how the recent UFS Faculty Experience Survey is described in its introduction, and it’s a fair assessment of this detailed and careful study.

Sponsored by the University Faculty Senate and supported by the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs, the survey is available online at cunyufs.org/FES. The response rate was a strong 39% for full-timers and 22% for adjuncts. (Adjunct faculty were included in a systematic pilot study. Since this was a UFS project, only faculty members were surveyed.)

The list of faculty dissatisfactions at CUNY was not short. Among full-time faculty, the greatest dissatisfaction was found on workload, salary and availability of travel funds to attend professional meetings. Similar percentages said they were very to mildly dissatisfied with workload and salary (44% and 43% respectively), while 53.6% were unhappy with support for conference travel. The next biggest problem area was with reassigned time for research, with 35% unhappy with current arrangements.

POOR FACILITIES

More than a third of part-time faculty respondents expressed dissatisfaction over salary, which was the biggest area of part-timer discontent in these survey results. Class size, health care benefits and support for conference travel were the other biggest topics of dissatisfaction among adjuncts. (There were no questions specifically on job security or academic freedom in either part-time or full-time questionnaires.)

The survey found widespread unhappiness with the physical plant, a sentiment shared by full-timers and adjuncts. Adjunct and full-time faculty both reported significant dissatisfaction with their office spaces, computers and tech support. Nearly 40% of adjunct and full-time faculty alike rated health and safety enforcement as poor or fair.

Research laboratories were rated fair or poor by 33% of full-time respondents; similar ratings were given to basic research equipment by 31%. Over one-third of full-time faculty described as poor or fair the faculty development activities on their campuses, the availability of small internal grants and help with grant applications. These responses are reflected in the campus-by-campus tables as well as the campus-wide results.

Significant numbers of full-time faculty reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their influence over college policies, the hiring of top administrators and budget allocations. Thirty percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had a voice in how resources are allo-

Concerns on workload, salary

cated. And an interesting split was revealed in whether full-time faculty felt respected by their presidents and provosts: 40% or more felt that they were respected, but 17 to 19% felt that they were not. These figures varied widely by campus: for example, 88% of full-timers at

For example, both full-time and adjunct faculty who work at community colleges consistently expressed less satisfaction than senior college faculty with their authority to make decisions regarding course content, methods, standards and grading policies. Full-time faculty

percentage of faculty who disagreed with this statement was different for different racial groups. For example, more than one-third of black full-time faculty in the survey disagreed with this statement, about three times the figure among white respondents. Results on this question varied widely by campus. At Medgar Evers College, 64% mildly to strongly agreed, as did 62% at Hostos. At City College the figure was 39%, and it was 40% at the Graduate Center.

As with the 2005 Faculty Experience Survey, certain campuses consistently ranked high in the campus-by-campus tables, and others consistently ranked low. Campuses frequently in the top five include the Graduate Center (frequently #1), Queens, Hostos, Kingsborough and Baruch. Those often in the bottom five included Medgar Evers College, BMCC, Bronx Community College and City College (frequently last).

CAMPUS GAPS

Items that attracted a greater than 50% spread between the highest and lowest rankings included the categories of office space, labs and smart classrooms, physical plant and bathrooms, photocopying, bookstore, food services, class size, respect by college presidents and provosts, and administrative support for free expression and intellectual life. For example, 82% of full-time faculty respondents at Lehman College said they were very to mildly satisfied with class size, compared with 38% and 43%, respectively, at Hostos and Bronx Community Colleges. Among adjunct respondents, spreads of more than 50% turned up in difficulties with payroll and mail service.

The 2009 UFS Faculty Experience Survey was conducted in spring 2009, with analysis of the data released at the start of the Spring 2010 semester. The study’s principal investigator was Kathleen Barker, professor of psychology at Medgar Evers College.

Some gaps on race and gender

Barker told *Clarion* the study was only possible thanks to the thousands of faculty members who took the time to respond. She also praised the contributions of UFS officers and staff, particularly UFS Chair Manfred Philipp and Executive Director William Phipps.

The 2009 survey built on the UFS’s 2005 survey, but differed in that the 2009 survey was administered online and included adjunct faculty as a pilot. (See the January 2006 *Clarion*, at psc-cuny.org, for coverage of the 2005 survey results.)

Additional reports have been released for individual campuses with comparisons to CUNY-wide results. To obtain these reports, “faculty should ask their campus faculty governance leader for a copy,” Barker told *Clarion*. “We hope strategic discussions and actions are developing or will develop at each campus.”

CUNY and the nation

According to Kathleen Barker, professor of psychology at Medgar Evers and principal investigator on the CUNY UFS 2009 Faculty Experience Survey, some interesting comparisons between CUNY faculty and those at other US public universities can be found in the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) released in 2004, the fourth (and last) study in a now discontinued series.

“Many of us regretted that the NSOPF was dropped during the Bush administration,” commented Barker, “but [this] survey [was] the last federal project that generated norm points for public-sector faculty in the US.”

Analyses of only those individuals who had faculty status in public universities in Fall 2003 showed that regardless of full- or part-time status, public university faculty were overwhelmingly satisfied with their authority to make academic decisions. Using a four-point scale (very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied or very satisfied), 92% of these full-time faculty and 93% of their part-time counterparts were very or somewhat satisfied.

SATISFIED OR NOT?

This is broadly similar to findings from the CUNY UFS survey conducted in 2009. Using a seven-point scale with a neutral point, the UFS survey found that 92% of full-time and 90% of part-time faculty were mildly satisfied, satisfied or very satisfied.

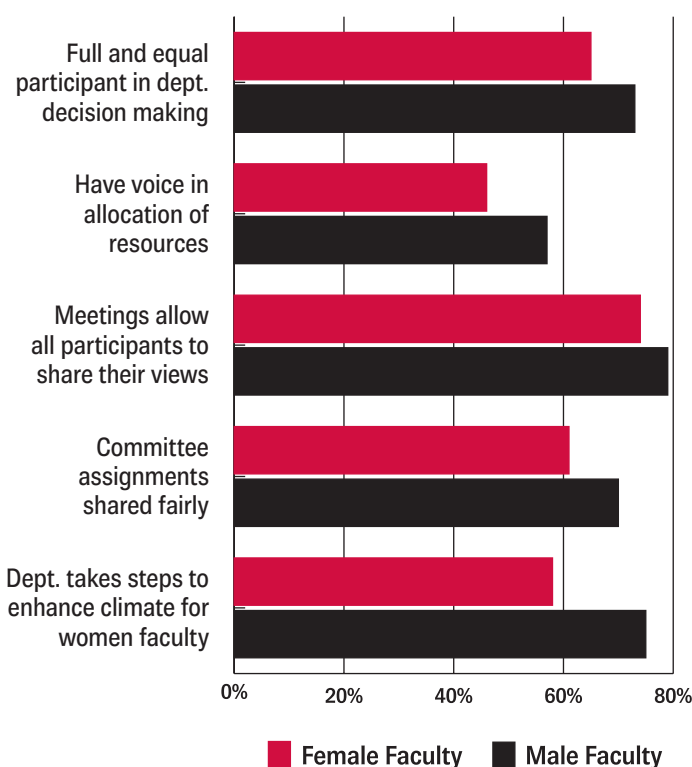
“This is a common finding in studies of faculty and sometimes defies our expectations due to how they rate other campus life issues,” Barker said. “Part of the problem with surveys is that reactions are often measured by single items, such as our question on authority and decision-making. However, by using this single item, we can make comparisons with NSOPF.”

Multiple indices are not inherently more valid, but they often provide “greater substance and insight for complex lived realities,” Barker said. “The problem remains, however, that lengthy surveys discourage participation and completion and thus a wide net is often cast in lieu of multiple-item scales.”

Workload is an issue where the 2009 UFS survey and the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty found markedly different results. CUNY full-time faculty reported far less satisfaction (48% mildly to very satisfied) than the US average in 2003 (73% very to somewhat satisfied) on workload.

Although the NSOPF data grows a little more dated with each passing year, Barker noted that with differences this large, the national data can still provide useful comparisons. “It is highly unlikely that faculty satisfaction on workload has dropped 25 percentage points over the past five years in the public sector [nationally],” she told *Clarion*. On workload CUNY appears “considerably out of step with the rest of the nation,” Barker said.

**Full-Time Female and Male Faculty:
Level of Agreement with Statements about
CUNY Departmental Life**



Adapted from *The Spring 2009 Faculty Experience Survey (FES:09): Report for full- and part-time faculty*. New York, NY: The University Faculty Senate of The City University of New York. Analyst: Kathleen Barker, PhD, Principal Investigator.

the Graduate Center said they felt respected by the institution’s president, compared with just 35% at City College.

In one striking result, an average of only about 50% of full-time faculty reported being mildly to very satisfied with administrative support for intellectual life and free expression of ideas.

However, CUNY full-time faculty expressed high levels of satisfaction with their influence over the direction and development of their curriculum and over faculty hiring. Both full-time and adjunct faculty reported satisfaction with their authority over the content, methods, standards and grading policies in their own courses. (See sidebar for nationwide comparisons.) Adjunct faculty were somewhat less satisfied with their class sizes and workload.

Is CUNY an “integrated university”? The Faculty Experience Survey indicates that CUNY is divided in many ways. The teaching and research experiences of the faculty differ depending on their institution, institutional type, gender, and race or ethnicity.

at the community colleges reported significantly more dissatisfaction with class size and workload. This dissatisfaction was repeated when full-time community college faculty were asked about the numbers of courses and students they teach. Adjunct community college faculty also reported less satisfaction with class size than their counterparts at the four-year schools.

DIVERSITY

Full-time women faculty were consistently less likely than males to state that they are full participants in departmental decision making, resource allocation, meetings and committee assignments. (See chart.) Among full-time faculty, more women than men disagreed with the statements that their departments actively recruit women faculty or faculty of color, or that their departments take steps to enhance the climate for women faculty or faculty of color.

Majorities of all racial groups said that their departments are taking steps to enhance the climate for faculty of color – but the

A teaching life ESL expert 'taught it with love'

By JOHN TARLETON

When Sylvia González first met Linda Kunz in 1976, she was a freshman at Hunter College and Kunz was her teacher in a developmental English class. "I remember very vividly the feedback she gave me," González said of journal entries Kunz encouraged her to write about the beauty of her native Ecuador.

A decade and a half later, González and Kunz met again – as fellow faculty members at The English Language Center (TELC) at LaGuardia Community College, the largest ESL program in the metro area. "I couldn't believe after 17 years I would be with her again," González recalled. "As colleagues and co-teachers, we were always communicating, collaborating and talking about our students' needs."

MASTER TEACHER

Kunz, who died suddenly at age 69, was remembered at a May 8 memorial as a tireless classroom teacher and a gifted pedagogue. Friends and colleagues spoke of her profound influence on ESL education, in both theory and practice. The event drew teachers from many CUNY colleges, from NYU and other institutions, and former students from as far away as China. *The New York Times* posthumously honored Kunz at its ESOL teaching awards ceremony in March, "for her extraordinary work in the field."

"From the first time I saw Linda teach in 1969 to the last time in 2006 when we taught a graduate course



Janice Cline (right) of York College speaks at a May 8 memorial service for Linda Kunz.

together for ESL teachers at Lehman," York College Chapter Chair Janice Cline told *Clarion*, "I always knew I was in the presence of a master teacher. That is why she became my mentor – and eventually, my best friend. Her students learned what she taught because she taught it with love, with imagination, with humor and joy."

Kunz moved to LaGuardia in 1981, where she taught at TELC, which serves about 7,000 students a year, until her death last December. She also taught ESL at York, led ESL classes at John Jay for teachers from abroad, and taught graduate-level courses at Lehman and at NYU's Steinhardt School of Education. While working as an adjunct at each of these institutions, Kunz left her mark on the pedagogy of ESL.

Kunz is known for her books, articles and workshops on X-Word Grammar, a method based on the Sector Analysis approach to teaching English that Kunz learned from her mentor, pro-

fessor Robert Allen of Teachers College at Columbia University, where Kunz earned a doctorate in applied linguistics. X-Word Grammar emphasizes the word order of

English and the regularity of its syntax; its name is derived from the auxiliary verbs that English uses in relatively simple and consistent ways.

Kunz mentored many ESL teachers in the CUNY system. "I wanted to find out more of what she knew," recalled Laurie Gluck, a full-time faculty member at LaGuardia who switched from using traditional ESL textbooks to X-Word Grammar after meeting Kunz at TELC in 1985. "Sentence grammar is actually a much more concrete organizing principle for students to grip onto. It absolutely changed the way I teach forever."

"Linda had an original way of listening to students and adapting her way to their learning styles," John Jay professor of English Effie Cochran told *Clarion*. "In other words, she 'subordinated teaching

to learning.'" Kunz was also known for welcoming struggling students into her home for personal tutorials on her days off.

A woman of wide and varied interests, Kunz was an active member of both the PSC at CUNY and UAW Local 2110 at NYU. She was active in the successful fight to preserve health care coverage for adjunct faculty at TELC after administrative changes at LaGuardia put it in danger.

MENTOR AND FRIEND

Four years ago Kunz began receiving dialysis treatment. Still, she plunged ahead with her work, rewriting two of her books in the summer of 2009 and conducting workshops on X-Word Grammar throughout the city. She was looking forward to conducting an X-Word seminar with several colleagues at her Upper West Side apartment on December 21, but passed away at home earlier that day.

"Up to the minute she left us, she was doing what she wanted to be doing," said González.

Linda Kunz celebrated as a gifted teacher and pedagogue.

CUNY approves early retirement incentive

On June 28, just before *Clarion* went to press, the CUNY Board of Trustees voted to approve CUNY's participation in the 2010 early retirement incentive announced by New York State.

Details will be posted on the PSC website (www.psc-cuny.org) as they become available. For further information, contact your campus Human Resources office, or if you need additional help, call Clarissa Gilbert Weiss at the PSC office, (212) 242-3518.

Get Welfare Fund news via e-mail

The Welfare Fund is inviting members to join an e-mail notification list to receive word anytime significant changes are made to WF benefit programs. You can sign up for the notification list on the home page at psccunywf.org.

As new health care regulations affecting Welfare Fund benefits are implemented, e-mail announcements will allow the Fund to inform members on a more timely basis. All e-mail addresses will remain confidential. Key information will still be sent as necessary by postal mail – but the new e-mail list can get you more information, more quickly, without increasing costs.

Welfare Fund survey on benefits

By ELLEN BALLEISEN
Bronx Community College

In a survey released this Spring, PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund (WF) participants were asked about their knowledge of WF benefits, how much they use them and their level of satisfaction. The survey was sponsored by the WF Advisory Council.

A randomly selected sample of 1,750 retirees and 3,475 full-timers were invited to participate; 31% of retirees and 18% of full-timers responded. All 1,300 adjuncts with health insurance through the Welfare Fund were also invited to participate, and 6% did so.

STAY INFORMED

Overall, only 34% of respondents say their understanding of WF programs is either good or very good, 42% rate their knowledge as fair, and 24% admit their understanding is limited or poor. Forty-one percent of retirees consider their benefits knowledge good or very good, com-

Many members need better information

pared with just 27% of full-timers and a mere 21% of adjuncts.

Even those who consider themselves informed need to be sure they stay current, said Thomas Gerson, a QCC retiree on the committee that designed the survey. He noted that a quarter of retiree respondents rated the Extended Medical Benefit as valuable or most valuable, even though retirees over 65 are not eligible for this coverage. Gerson suggested that all WF members, whether active or retired, sign up for the new WF e-mail list to help stay well-informed (see sidebar).

Two-thirds of full-timers and retirees felt that prescription drugs were their first or second most valuable benefit, while 54% consider the dental benefit the first or second most valuable.

On which benefits should be targeted for improvement, two-thirds

(67%) of the full-timers and retirees felt that improving dental benefits should be priority number one or two. About half (46%) chose prescription drugs as the first or second priority, followed by just over one-third (36%) who felt that improving optical benefits was the first or second priority.

Of full-timer respondents, 62% said their dentist is a plan participant, and 68% said the dental care they received was good or very good. Delta Dental was the choice of 15%, while the rest opted to remain covered by Guardian. On the available choice of dentists who are plan participants, 22% of respondents were positive, 27% were neutral and 41% were critical.

The optical benefits are used frequently or very frequently by just 33% of full-time respondents and their family members. Satisfaction

with the optical benefit was evenly distributed among those who rated it from very good to poor.

Adjuncts receive basic health insurance, prescription drug coverage and minimal optical coverage through the Welfare Fund. Because

Drug benefit rated as most valuable.

adjunct WF benefits are substantially different from the benefits for full-timers and retirees, adjunct survey responses were dealt with separately. (A small number of continuing education teachers receive the same WF benefits as full-timers, and were therefore included in the full-timer sample.)

The lower response rate among adjuncts may have been due to fewer adjuncts using campus e-mail, which is how those on the active payroll were contacted about the survey.

An overwhelming majority (93%) of adjunct respondents said they

used their health plan three times or more. Most (84%) have chosen Blue Cross HMO; 16% have HIP. Slightly under half (42%) rate their satisfaction with their health plans as high and 32% rate it as fair.

Just over half (53%) of adjuncts surveyed consider their understanding of their benefits to be fair. One-fifth (21%) say their knowledge is high. Only one-third (32%) were aware that they could opt for participation in the WF's voluntary catastrophic or long-term care plans.

COMMENTS

In the survey's comment section, some adjunct respondents asked for better optical coverage; others mentioned the need for broader adjunct dental coverage. (Adjuncts in Blue Cross currently have no dental coverage, while those in HIP have oral exams and cleaning for a \$15 co-pay with dental care on a reduced fee schedule.) Eligible adjuncts currently receive basic health insurance without charge for individual coverage, but must pay between \$2,400 and \$3,900 per quarter for family coverage; several called for family coverage to be offered without additional charge.

PSC brings broad agenda to AFT

By KARAH WOODWARD
& PETER HOGNESS

At this summer's American Federation of Teachers' convention, July 8 to 11 in Seattle, the PSC is working to influence the AFT's agenda on professional and political issues for both educators and the labor movement. PSC-sponsored resolutions address higher education issues, government austerity, labor solidarity and labor's stance toward US foreign policy.

Decisions made at AFT conventions shape policy for the 1.4 million-member union for the next two years. In the past, PSC delegates have had an impact on issues ranging from the war in Iraq to academic staffing in higher education.

PUBLIC WORKERS

A proposed resolution on the economic crisis and public workers notes that the past two years have seen "a sharp increase in attempts to privatize the public sphere and impose fiscal austerity on public employees." The collapse of financial markets has led to government budget deficits – but even though the causes of the crisis "had nothing to do with the costs of maintaining a modestly paid public workforce," there has been "a barrage of political and media attacks on public employees" demanding reductions in their pay, job security, pensions and health care. This same pattern has been repeated "from New York to California, from Florida to Oregon, from Greece to Chile."

The resolution lists some of the damage so far. In the US, 23 states have imposed mandatory pay cuts on public sector workers in the form of furloughs over the last two fiscal years. Meanwhile the public is hurt as services are slashed: "since 2008, 30 states have cut funding for health care; 25 states have cut funding for services to the elderly; 30 states have cut funding for K-12 education; and 41 states have cut funding for higher education."

FIGHTING BACK

Emphasizing that "the role of a union is to fight back in the interest of all working people," the PSC resolution commits the AFT to mounting a national campaign to oppose these attacks on public workers and to provide support to local and state unions as they fight against austerity measures.

"In the context of increased national attention to community colleges...new models for community colleges...can have profound national implications," says a PSC-sponsored resolution on CUNY's plan for a new community college. The PSC's position was shaped by months of discussion (see *Clarion*, March/April & Dec. 2009).

As a starting point, the resolution declares that the AFT "strongly supports expansion of public higher education and welcomes opportunities for genuine academic innovation."

Education issues & solidarity

From that standpoint, it notes that "while the AFT is open to the possibilities of a new CUNY community college, CUNY's current colleges already contain a rich vein of innovation." It also questions "the strategy of proposing a new community college that is not designed to offer significant relief to overcrowding."

The resolution "commend[s] the CUNY faculty and staff who have worked to enrich the [new community college] proposal," but goes on to raise a number of specific concerns that are not addressed by the proposal to date:

- A new community college must have permanent, tenured and tenure-track faculty, whose primary appointment is at the new college. Its faculty must be organized in departments with elected chairs, with "faculty control over admissions, degree requirements, [and] curriculum," and primary responsibility for hiring and tenure decisions.

- A new community college must maintain a minimum full-time/part-time faculty ratio of 70/30, a goal established in CUNY's Master Plan and in the AFT's Faculty and College Excellence proposals. "A faculty comprised mainly of adjuncts or of faculty whose primary appointments are at other colleges is unacceptable," the resolution argues, since it would leave academic freedom, faculty members' role in governance and the research capacity of the new institution all on shaky ground.

- Under CUNY's plan, only students who can attend full time would be admitted for the first year – but the plan does not include stipends to replace the money that part-time students could otherwise earn. The resolution criticizes this as "economic discrimination"; together with the requirement that incoming students not need any remediation, it "violates CUNY's policy of open admissions at the community colleges."

- A new school "must offer students a rich liberal arts education, not a diminished version of college." The resolution notes with concern that CUNY's plan calls for "only 12 majors, all of them designed to speed students to graduation." While student success is a critically important

goal, "to start with the instrumental goal of maximizing graduation rates and then design a curriculum to fit that goal is to work backwards," the resolution says.

"K-12 issues of privatization, charter schools, innovation and reform, and relying on test scores as the primary measure to assess student, teacher and institutional effectiveness are in the forefront of the AFT agenda," Anne Friedman, PSC vice president for community colleges, told *Clarion*. "CUNY's proposed new community college raises parallel concerns for public higher education."

On another issue of higher education policy, a PSC-sponsored resolution would express the AFT's support for restoring federal financial aid for prisoners seeking a college education. Prisoners were eligible for Pell Grants until 1994, and programs offering higher education in prison had served as many as 27,000 students. After Congress made prisoners ineligible for Pell Grants in 1994, such programs were decimated. The PSC resolution notes that many studies have confirmed the benefits of college study for prisoners, including increased employment opportunities and lower rates of re-imprisonment, and calls for the AFT to develop "written and electronic media" that explain its support for such programs.

PRISONERS' RIGHT TO AID

In 2009 the AFT passed a resolution on "dignity, respect and justice in the workplace," which identified the harmful work environment caused by workplace bullying. Anti-bullying bills have been introduced in 17 state legislatures, including New York's. A new PSC resolution on the subject calls for continued support for State-level efforts, but also proposes the involvement of other national unions to advance federal legislation. "This time, we are asking for stronger language," said PSC Vice President Iris DeLutro, who has spoken out on workplace bullying for several years. "We are very hopeful that this resolution will pass and help us move toward the federal legislation we need."

Another PSC-sponsored resolution would foster healthy

workplaces in a different way, supporting comprehensive workplace programs in response to potential epidemics such as last year's H1N1 flu outbreak.

A proposed resolution on Honduras would reaffirm the AFT's solidarity with the Federation of Teacher Organizations of Honduras, which has faced repression since the forced removal of President Zelaya in a coup last year. It urges the US to withdraw recognition of the current government, which has permitted ongoing human rights violations against journalists, teachers, nurses and municipal workers.

AFGHANISTAN

A final PSC resolution urges the national union to shift its policy of support for US foreign policy on Afghanistan and instead act in the interest of all working people and oppose continuation of the war. The resolution opposes expansion or extension of the war and calls instead for an immediate start to withdrawal of US troops. It argues that "the war and occupation of Afghanistan have demonstrably not removed the threat of terrorism by

Al-Qaeda or other groups," since "Al-Qaeda has largely left Afghanistan, but continues to operate elsewhere." The war has nonetheless claimed the lives of more than one thousand Americans and 20,000 Afghani civilians, at a cost approaching \$300 billion. The resolution calls for funding human needs instead of an open-ended continuation of the war and demands adequate health care, employment and educational support for returning troops.

During the annual meeting of New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) held in April, the PSC introduced a similar resolution on the war in Afghanistan, which passed in committee, with a substitute motion from the UFT passing on the floor. The PSC gained NY-SUT support for its resolution on CUNY's proposed community college and for a joint resolution with the faculty and staff union at SUNY that opposed budget cuts to public higher education. NYSUT also adopted resolutions co-sponsored by the PSC against taxation of retiree pensions and in favor of financial disclosure requirements for charter schools.

Focused on the future



Maura Donohue, a third-year assistant professor of dance at Hunter College, listens intently during the Junior Faculty Professional Development Day program at the PSC Union Hall on May 7. Donohue said she wants to help other junior faculty "make their way through the maze that is CUNY."

Clarion SUMMER 2010

Newspaper of the Professional Staff Congress/City University of New York, collective bargaining representative of the CUNY instructional staff. Vol. 39, No. 4. 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, 61 Broadway, 15th floor, New York, NY 10006. Telephone: (212) 354-1252. Website: www.psc-cuny.org. E-mail: phogness@psccmail.org. All opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the PSC.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The crisis in public higher ed

By ASHLEY DAWSON

College of Staten Island & the Graduate Center

The perennial crisis of higher education in the United States is getting a lot worse. California, the harbinger of so many dire political trends in this country, has provided a stream of ominous news for over a year: drastic budget cuts, unpaid furloughs and major tuition hikes. Strikes, building occupations and state-wide political demands have sprung up in response – but even the strongest wave of campus activism since the Vietnam war has not been enough to turn the tide.

Serious cuts to public universities have been the order of the day in states across the nation. With the Obama administration's Recovery and Reinvestment Act limiting some of the damage from the economic crash, most have not been as draconian as California's. But this is the difference between bad and worse, and a new wave of proposed cuts threatens unusually hard times for CUNY.

Given the depth of this crisis, it behooves us to step back from the barricades briefly and take stock of how and why we got to our present calamitous state. Nancy Folbre's *Saving State U* (New Press, 2010) and Christopher Newfield's *Unmaking the Public University* (Harvard University Press, 2008) offer particularly useful, complementary perspectives on the crisis of our times.

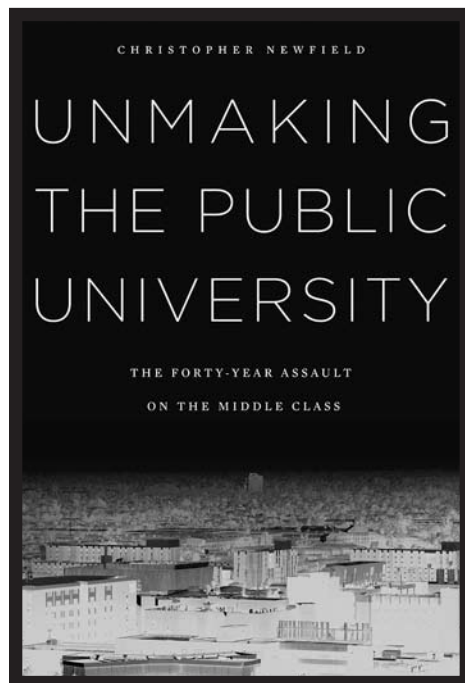
DISMANTLING PUBLIC HIGHER ED

Folbre, an economist who teaches at UMass, begins her book with the admission that, despite her academic discipline, she had known surprisingly little about the fiscal nuts and bolts of the crisis roiling states today. I dare say that she was not alone. Her book underlines the urgency of building such knowledge and the targeted interventions that flow from it if public education is to be saved and even strengthened in states such as California and New York.

Folbre takes readers through a whirlwind history of the US public university, offering condensed accounts of the founding of state colleges and universities in the 19th century, the expansion of higher education after World War II, and the ethnic and gender integration of public institutions that followed the civil rights movement and the Great Society programs of the 1960s.

Folbre also offers an account of the assault on public education that has unfolded since the 1970s. In this, one of the most valuable sections of the book, she examines how a rebellion against spiraling property taxes in California mutated like a virulent virus into a national attack on public spending in general. Even more valuably, Folbre explains exactly how measures such as California's notorious Proposition 13 created a fiscal crisis for the states, one which they have "solved" by slashing funding for higher education and other public programs.

Folbre's *Saving State U* also looks at the Great Recession that began in 2008. This crisis, she argues, offers advocates of public higher education an opportunity since it underscores the foolhardiness of tax cuts favoring the wealthy and other policies that have fueled spiraling inequality in the US over the last generation. Folbre shows how such programs have produced not only a less just and stable country, but have also



contributed to the dismantling of public higher education. For instance, *Saving State U* includes a detailed discussion of the way in which federal financial aid programs have softened the blow of reduced state funding for public higher education – at the cost of ensuring that the public subsidizes private colleges and universities attended predominantly by students whose families are more well-to-do.

Saving State U concludes with a rousing call to expand access for all qualified students by making public higher education free, as in most economically developed countries. Folbre points to states such as Georgia that have already pioneered programs of free higher ed for students graduating in the top percentiles of their high school class. Rather than seeing such programs as an entitlement, however, Folbre suggests that advocates for public education emphasize responsibilities as well as rights; more specifically, she champions work programs for all students attending state-supported institutions (rather than just for the economically needy).

To fulfill this vision of equity and access would require a return to progressive taxation on the federal, state and local levels and a move away from the inequitable labor practices that have made public universities paradigms of precariousness rather than social justice. And that is a tall order.

CULTURE WARS

The project of fiscal education and reform that Folbre advocates may be attractive and even empowering for champions of public education. But while better public understanding of economics may be necessary, it is unlikely to be *sufficient* to reverse the ideology that associates all spheres of government with corruption and ineptitude.

We may be living through the bitter outcome of deregulation's failures – but ideologies of privatization seem to keep returning from the grave like hungry zombies. Anti-government doctrines can live on like the undead because they are not primarily grounded in rational examination of the impact of dismantling the public sphere, but rather in deep-seated cultural reflexes.

This is why Christopher Newfield's *Unmaking the Public University* is such an important book. Newfield, who's seen the struggles over the University of California's fabled system from the inside, insists that the "culture wars" of the last 30 years are not a distraction from economic struggles but in fact *are* a form of economic war. The attacks on multiculturalism and "political correctness" that have animated well-funded commentators such as Allan Bloom, Dinesh D'Souza and David Horowitz have, for Newfield, served to erode the cultural framework that empowers college-educated members of the US middle class.

Like Folbre, Newfield turns to history to unearth the roots of the present crisis. He argues that the rise of the knowledge economy in the decades after World War II, and with it a mass college-educated middle class, presented a threat to conservative US elites. Writers such as John Kenneth Galbraith heralded the rise of this new class of knowledge workers in the 1960s by celebrating their capacity to generate not simply economic growth but also far more capacious forms of human development. The university was a key locus of these attempts to challenge widespread forms of social alienation. Activist academics such as Herbert Marcuse argued that while advanced capitalism had generated notable economic development, it was simultaneously producing underdeveloped people who channeled all their energies into the office cubicle in the service of monolithic corporations. This critique of one-dimensional humanity, voiced

riors, such critique was not only wrong but dangerous, since it threatened to fatally compromise the strength of the nation.

Newfield argues that this cultural attack by the right effectively diminished economic claims of the middle class by trashing some of its key sources of cultural legitimacy. Why should public funds be spent to support the work of professors if those professors are "dangerous" to our country and its values?

ACADEMIC CAPITALISM

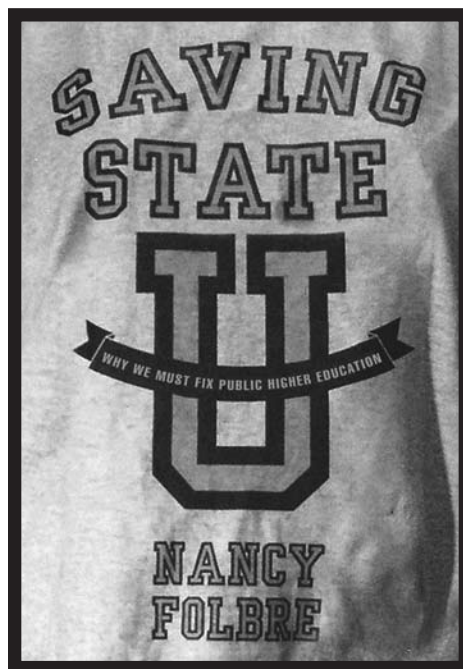
In place of an expansive and inclusive approach to intellectual development, cultural warriors championed the effective resegregation of public education and the dominance of narrowly economic benchmarks that critics such as Gary Rhoades and Sheila Slaughter have termed "academic capitalism." In this increasingly pinched worldview, non-quantitative disciplines such as those in the humanities are a drag on the university since they produce far less lucrative intellectual property.

Challenging the assumptions that undergird academic capitalism is a key element of Newfield's project. For instance, Newfield interrogates the common perception that scientific research brings in external funds and therefore supports the university, while fields like art history and cultural anthropology are a non-marketable boondoggle. The truth, Newfield shows, is completely the opposite: scientific research is important, but seldom leads to immediately profitable applications. Instead, it is the high enrollments in relatively inexpensive fields such as the arts, humanities and social sciences that subsidize the natural sciences.

Newfield makes these arguments not to score points for one hemisphere of the academic brain against the other, but rather as part of a call for a renewed sense of public vocation on the part of all of higher education – one with a far broader vision of human potential than the one embodied in academic capitalism. Against the popular saw that a university education is an investment that will pay off in higher wages (and that therefore should be financed by loans), Newfield notes that higher education better equips people to be effective civic actors by providing them with the tools for critical thinking.

But *Unmaking the Public University* also aims to avoid a narrowly political reading of the intellectual engagement that college promotes. Countless people have emerged from college with a completely different and far richer sense of themselves, their interests and their abilities. It's this kind of transformation, of which being an informed civic actor is just one part, that Newfield wants to highlight. Wide access to college is important, he believes, because it enriches people's lives, not just their bank accounts. It enhances more than career prospects, and Newfield calls on advocates for public higher education to make that case as intrinsic to why public colleges and universities need more public resources. As he puts it, defenders of public education "need to explain again the power of the imagination."

Against the quickening enclosure of the academic commons, in other words, we need to imagine bold and inclusive new practices of social solidarity. Nancy Folbre and Christopher Newfield are powerful guides to such a new collective imagination of the place of public universities in our society.



from within and to a certain extent against the mass university of the postwar period, overlapped with sweeping denunciations of the racist, imperialist, sexist, homophobic values embraced by the country's elite and embodied in much of the established curriculum. This upsurge in the academy is often shorthanded as "the 1960s," but Newfield looks more carefully at its material roots and philosophical implications.

The reaction of elites, according to Newfield, was to unleash a renewed wave of red-baiting, one that attacked any form of politically aware critique in academia as "political correctness." For the culture war-

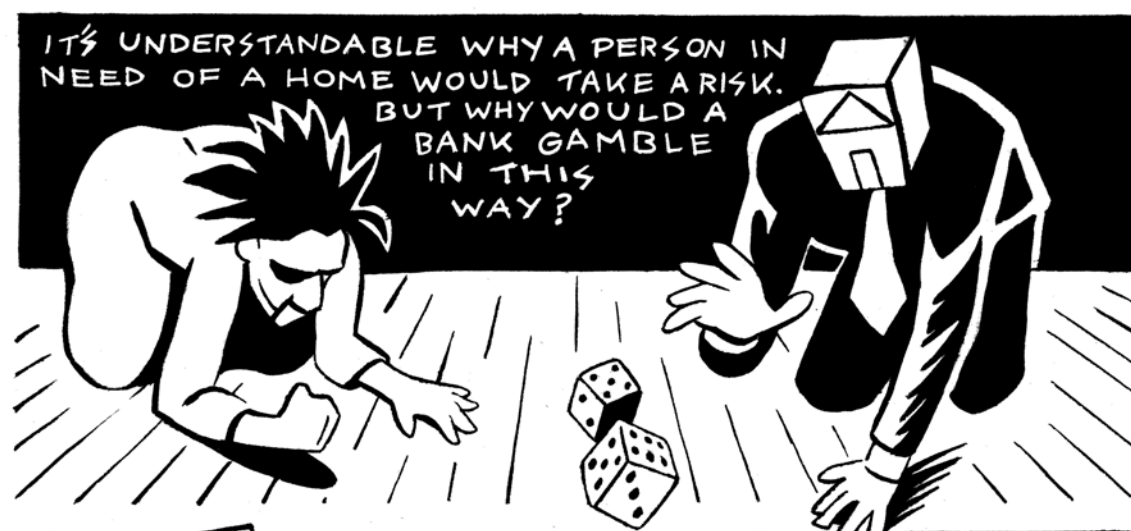
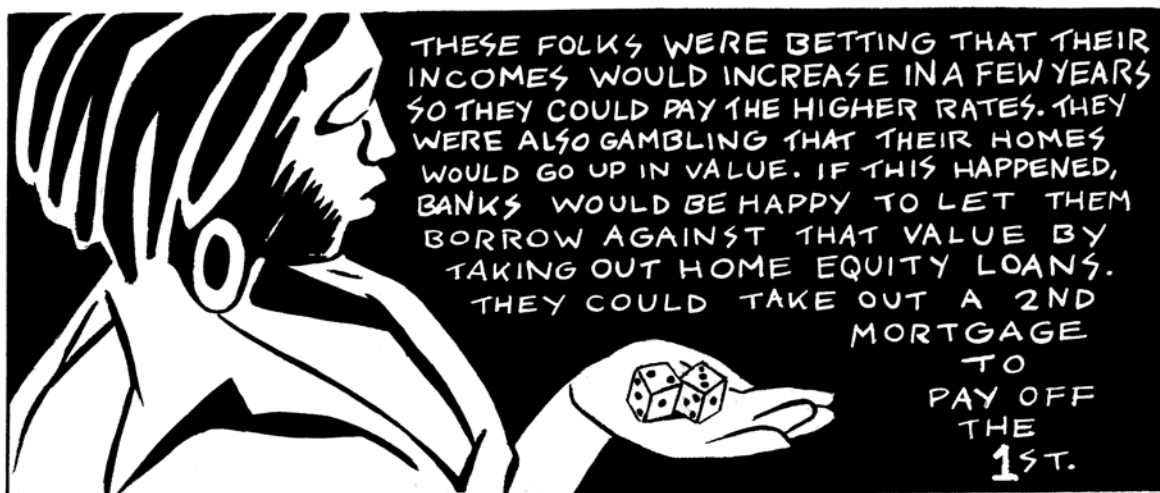
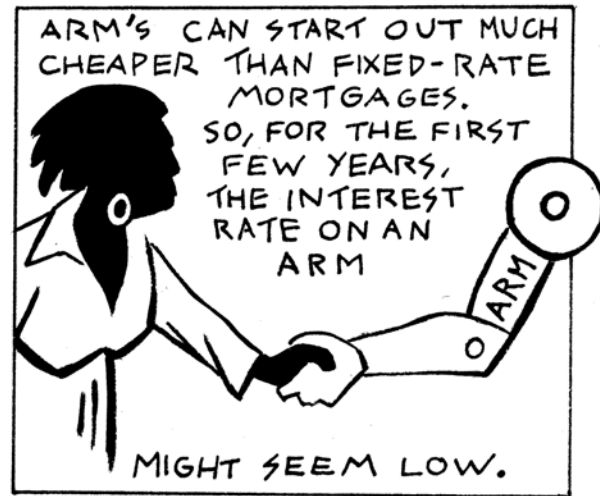
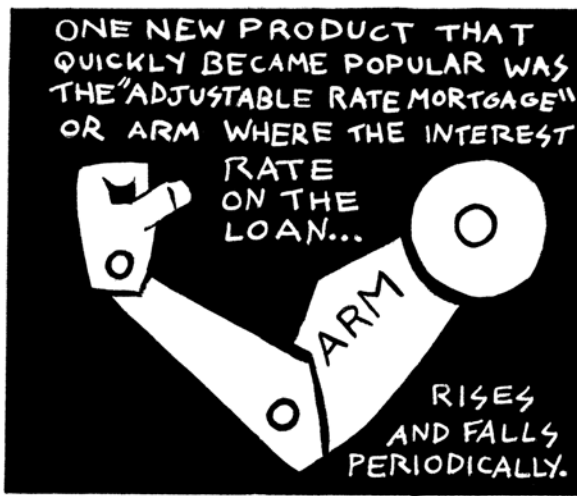
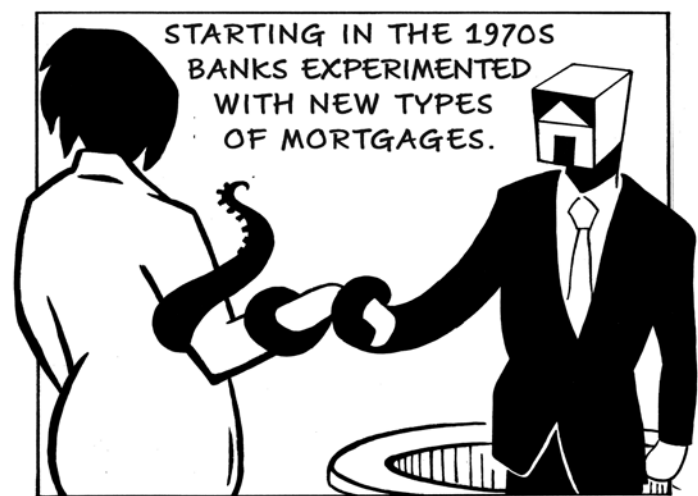
The right wages war against State U.

ECONOMIC PICTURE

The crash

In their new book, *Understanding the Crash*, financial writer Eric Laursen and artists Seth Tobocman and Jess Wehrle harness the grammar of graphic novels to a non-fiction purpose: providing a clear explanation of the 2008 economic crash.

With striking images of barracudas in business suits and tumbling dice, the book examines what caused the crash, how it has affected people's lives and how community organizations have responded. Below is an excerpt from *Understanding the Crash*.





15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Make their DREAM real

Ten DREAM Act activists have ended their 10-day hunger strike outside Senator Charles Schumer's mid-Manhattan office. But now, more than ever, we need to join with them to keep the pressure on our elected representatives.

The DREAM Act would provide temporary legal status to tens of thousands of young people – including many current or for-

mer CUNY students – who were brought to the US by their parents before the age of 16. It would give those who commit to college study a path to citizenship.

Call Senators Schumer, (202) 224-6542, and Gillibrand (202) 224-4451, and your congressional representatives and tell them to move the DREAM Act as a first step toward achieving comprehensive immigration reform.

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NEWS

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Starving for an education

By DANIA RAJENDRA &
KATE PFORDRESHER

On June 1, ten students and recent college graduates went on a 10-day hunger strike outside Senator Charles Schumer's office building in midtown.

They sought was to prod Schumer, a supporter of the DREAM Act and chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration, to move the legislation forward now for passage this year. Though the activists ended their strike 10 days later without a commitment from Schumer, it was clear they had raised the national profile of the issue, NYSYLC activist Marisol Ramos said. "We ended our strike, but Dreamers in North Carolina picked up where we left off. And we're taking the struggle to Washington, DC, July 19 to 21."

LIMBO

Wearing T-shirts reading "Starve 4 Our DREAMs," the activists braved the heat and rain, sleeping on the sidewalk in front of the office building and a Wachovia bank branch, consuming only water and vitamins while they talked with passersby, supporters and the media about why undocumented immigrant students need the DREAM Act, and why they need it now.

The DREAM Act would provide temporary legal status to undocumented immigrant young people who were brought to the United States by their parents before the age of 16, have lived in the US for five years and graduate high school. If they complete two years of college or military service, they would be eligible for permanent resident status and, eventually, citizenship. The legislation has been in serious discussion for 10 years.

The activists – 10 full hunger strikers, 15 partial strikers and a "street team" of supporters who kept the strikers safe, hydrated, and in the media – are part of the New York State Youth Leadership Council (NYSYLC), an organization by and for immigrant students, many without legal immigration status. It works "on improving access to higher edu-

Youth fast for DREAM Act



José Luis Zacatelco on June 10 when he and nine others ended their hunger strike.

cation and creating equal opportunity for immigrant youth, regardless of immigration status, through leadership development, organizing and advocacy."

For lack of the DREAM Act, NYSYLC says, some 75,000 immigrant students have seen their dreams wither. Without legal status, students are left with few options for their future. They are unable to work legally. They are also unable to qualify for student aid, which puts college out of reach for most. Those who can afford to pay for college without financial aid cannot work legally in a job in their field – a loss not only for the individual but for the city and society in which she resides, the students and their allies say.

"I have a BA in psychology," said CSI graduate Daniela Guzman, 26, outside Schumer's office. "I was doing a master's in special education, but because I can't get financial aid, I had to stop. Now I'm working. And even if I get my masters, I can't get a job." She paused. "It's really hard to see your goals and be limited." It's why, she explained, she was hunger striking.

Most of the hunger strikers are

CUNY students or recent graduates.

"I'm a DREAMer," said Violeta Gomez-Urbe, 25, a BMCC graduate, current Hunter student, undocumented immigrant and a member of the NYSYLC street team supporting the strikers. "We immigrants can do physical labor – we are very good at it – but we can also do intellectual work," she said.

PSC'S ROLE

The PSC led the way in local union support for the strikers. The union's donation of \$250, a case of water, a statement of support and publicity about the struggle to its members all helped build support for the students' cause. The activists used the money to pay for a Porta Potty with water for hand washing. They said it was a big improvement.

"We are proud that among the students of the NYSYLC are several of our students at CUNY," PSC President Barbara Bowen said. "We see every day how the failure to pass comprehensive immigration reform robs these students of their futures, and denies us their leadership and their enormous potential."

"The DREAM Act could be a step

towards comprehensive immigration reform," Bowen said.

"As an assistant professor of English, I have seen what having 'no hope' does to students in the classroom," said Joel Kuszai, who teaches at QCC. "They struggle to complete their work; with no direction, they coil in upon themselves and self-destruct."

"I think that even while some people may have disagreed with their strategy, it is important to stand with students when they take the initiative," Kuszai added.

NEW ACTIVISTS

Community, labor and immigration activists came out in support. SEIU 32BJ Secretary-Treasurer Hector Figueroa and John Delgado of Laborers Local 79 delivered a letter urging Senator Schumer to meet with the hunger strikers immediately.

Though comprehensive immigration reform with strong labor protections remains the goal, some differ on legislative timing and tactics. Long-time activists say that despite these differences, the hunger strike was an important moment. It drew new activists from many communities, as supporters rallied at Schumer's office several times during the action and on June 10, when activists ended their hunger strike.

That rally was Julie Cameron's first ever. Cameron, 24, is an NYU graduate and white Arizonan. "I'm on my lunch break," she said. "I was a resident of Arizona when they passed SB 1070, and I called my senators [to oppose it] every single day, and nothing happened." So, she said, she took to the street with her homemade sign and joined the chant of "Schumer, shame on you."

"This is how we build a progressive movement," long-time activist Eric Weltman told *Clarion*.

The DREAM Act hunger strikers agreed. On day four, when *Clarion* first talked with them, they were strong and determined. "I'm striking for my friends, my relatives, for all immigrant students," said Osman Canales, 21, a psychology

student at Suffolk Community College. Canales came with his parents from El Salvador at age 10. "It's human – letting another person achieve their dreams. We all have the right to pursue our dreams."

He added that support, like that from the PSC, buoyed him through his hunger. "It's a great experience, even though it's a sacrifice. We are so strong from the love we get."

Schumer, however, showed the strikers no love. He was in New York during the strike but did not meet with the young people camped outside his door. In fact, they told *Clarion*, early in the strike they saw him exiting a side door. They ran, trying to catch his attention, before he got in his car and, they said, flipped the locks and rolled up the windows.

On June 10, when Canales broke his fast, he was the one to speak into the bullhorn: "Senator Schumer doesn't care about me as a human being, doesn't care about me as a student, doesn't care about me, because he doesn't care about our community," he said, between bites of apple, and then led a chant of "shame on Schumer."

To mark the end of their fast, the NYSYLC orchestrated events for the media and supporters in midtown, and sit-ins at Schumer's Long Island and DC offices, where activists met with his top aide on immigration.

POTENTIAL

National momentum for the DREAM Act is building. In a high-profile speech about immigration in late June, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka reiterated the labor movement's support for the DREAM Act. The NYSYLC's counterparts in North Carolina began their own hunger strike, while 30 activists staged a mock Immigration Control and Enforcement raid at California Senator Diane Feinstein's office. Students and their allies have also held rallies and actions in other states, and three days of action in Washington, DC, are planned for July to push for passage of the DREAM Act before Congress adjourns for its summer recess.

The student activists post news to their website, nysylc.org, and their Facebook page (NYS Youth Leadership Council).

Legislation offers citizenship path to some youth.