



CAMPUS
Student
in need

Kingsborough
faculty step up
for an immigrant
family.

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Teaching

How we won the

Load

Reduction

In December, the union announced a historic agreement with CUNY to reduce the teaching load for full-time faculty. The plan gives instructors more time to mentor and support students, and more time for research. **PAGES 6-7**

BUDGET

Pushing for full funding of CUNY

The PSC and its allies went to Albany to demand the reversal of the historic disinvestment of public higher education by the state.

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ORGANIZING

Going door to door

PSC activists visit fellow members at their homes as the recommitment campaign steps up in the face of *Janus v. AFSCME*.

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ADMISSIONS

Race & justice at CUNY

Two PSC members take a critical look at the history of CUNY admissions. Armed with data, they call for changes in the current policy.

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ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Attacked by the far right

The far right has targeted Hunter College sociologist Jessie Daniels for her writing and social media activity. She responds to the firestorm.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | WRITE TO: CLARION/PSC, 61 BROADWAY, 15TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10006. EMAIL: APAUL@PSCMAIL.ORG.

On the line against the tax bill

● Responding to First Vice President Mike Fabricant's call at the December Delegate Assembly, my wife and I joined several other PSC members in Washington, D.C. to protest the Republican tax bill. That day, 84 activists were arrested outside the offices of senators Susan Collins (ME), Jeff Flake (AZ), John McCain (AZ), Lisa Murkowski (AK) and Jerry Moran (KS), and Rep. Mimi Walters (CA). Perhaps an equal number of protesters acted as support, joining the gradually dwindling number of potential arrestees in blocking the halls, chanting, etc. This was the third of four days of arrests, spread over two weeks.

My main question is: why weren't there 50 times our number to enable us to truly disrupt this Congressional travesty?

I used to teach 11th and 12th graders a course called "Facing History and Ourselves," in which we would discuss a range of violence against various "others," and why most people neither actively perpetrate or oppose that violence—they have a million reasons to be bystanders. If this administration represents fascism—or only semi-fascism—then it

is our obligation, individually, and collectively as the PSC, to do more, to protest harder, to spend shepherded money (recognizing that *this* is the rainy day), to figure out ways to leverage our resources and power to build mass resistance.

Marc Kagan
Graduate Center

Editor's note: The PSC led a civil disobedience demonstration outside the New York Stock Exchange on December 19, in which several PSC members and officers were arrested.

Cherry tales

● Robert Cherry's recent op-ed "CUNY's profs get richer, teach less—and then complain about 1 percent" in the *New York Post*, which portrays those who teach at CUNY as overpaid, underworked members of the "overclass," is inaccurate. Professor Cherry's article ignores the fact that the majority of classes at CUNY are taught by adjuncts, not by the full professors whose supposedly lavish salaries and light workloads he decries. While Professor Cherry claims

to be advocating for the interests of students, by omitting adjuncts from his narrative, he willfully lies about what is actually happening at CUNY.

I also teach at Brooklyn College. But as an adjunct I'm paid approximately \$3,200 to teach a three-credit course. For adjuncts teaching four classes per semester, this means about \$25,000 per year—an income that barely meets the cost of living in New York City.

Our job insecurity from semester to semester makes it difficult to keep our health insurance, given the requirements for maintaining credit loads in consecutive semesters, which adds to our expenses and distracts us from our work with students. We travel between multiple campuses and juggle additional jobs to supplement our inadequate teaching income.

And as any teacher knows, our work extends beyond classroom hours; though CUNY pays us for only three hours of work per class per week, we devote additional time to developing syllabi, planning lessons, grading papers, and holding office hours. We respond to student emails, support strug-

gling students, and write recommendation letters—all unpaid labor.

As the number of full-time faculty dwindles, the work of departments increasingly falls to adjuncts. We are asked to participate in committee work and mentor new instructors. This work is essential—departments can't function without it—but because we are adjuncts, this, too, is unpaid labor.

Cherry paints a false picture of lazy professors who barely work. In reality, all of us who teach at CUNY—and particularly those of us who are adjuncts—feel the ongoing pressure of the austerity budget. We are told by our administrations that we must "do more with less." We must teach in facilities that are crumbling, infested, and leaking, and in classrooms that are too small to accommodate ever-larger groups of students. If Professor Cherry truly cared about CUNY students, he would focus his ire on the working conditions of all teaching faculty, not just the small fraction he describes.

Heidi Diehl
Brooklyn College

Climate-change action

● It is a very positive development that many unions are now taking the long view on the question of climate change. It is high time; what is at stake after all is whether there will be a 22nd century at all, and if yes, for how large a part of the world. There is still woefully little correct information about the matter in the public consciousness. I am writing to emphasize that reliable and understandable information is easily available. Perhaps the best source is science2017.globalchange.gov.

Anybody can see from it the deadly seriousness of the situation. Of course, there are also a lot of websites spreading false or misleading information disguised as science.

An important study analyzing the failure of effective climate action until now comes from TUED (Trade Unions for Energy Democracy). Its last working paper, available at unionsforenergydemocracy.org, explains the economic reasons why only public ownership of the utility companies can make significant progress possible.

Adam Koranyi
Lehman College, Retired

Editor's note: Clarion reserves the right to edit letters sent for publication.

FEDERAL

A tax bill that hurts all (except the rich)

By **BILL FRIEDHEIM**

A ballpark philosopher Yogi Berra once quipped, "It's déjà vu all over again." Or to put Berra's oft-quoted malapropism into the context of the Republican game plan of tax cuts for the wealthy and spending cuts for everybody else, it's the gilded age all over again.

The cry of "tax reform" is basically code for a massive redistribution of wealth flowing from bottom to top. It is not simply a case of give-aways to the privileged and corporate few, but takeaways triggered by the resulting \$1.5 trillion deficit created by the tax legislation.

GRAD STUDENTS SPARED

The final bill did not include a provision that would have counted tuition waivers for graduate students as taxable income, a provision that would have effectively quadrupled their tax burden.

While this was a welcome reprieve for the higher education committee, the rest of the bill is a disaster.

The contempt for working people and celebration of investment

and inherited wealth was reflected by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa. Defending rollbacks to the estate tax, he told the *Des Moines Register*, "I think not having the estate tax recognizes the people that are investing as opposed to those that are just spending every darn penny they have, whether it's on booze or women or movies."

The House-Senate conference committee that crafted the final reconciled bill added a sweetener to change the mind of Tennessee's Senator Bob Corker, the only Republican to vote "no" on the original

Senate version. Corker announced a sudden change of heart once a tax break was inserted that lavishly rewarded real-estate investors—a bonanza for not only Corker (who has a big real-estate portfolio), but the Trump and Kushner families, 14 GOP senators and lots of big players in real-estate markets.

CLASS WAR

It's Robin Hood in reverse. The tax bill rewards the richest Americans with a 2.6 percent reduction in their personal rate, an enticing bundle of new tax breaks and a

Transferring wealth upward

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The PSC led a die-in outside the New York Stock Exchange the day of the Senate vote on the tax bill. Several PSC activists were arrested for blocking the entrance to the building.

generous revision of the estate tax that allows them to perpetuate their wealth over many generations by doubling to \$22 million the amount they can now pass to their heirs tax free.

But it's the largest reduction of corporate taxes in US history, from 35 percent to just 21 percent, that

will deprive the federal government of trillions of dollars. As if that were not enough largesse, the bill abolishes the corporate alternative minimum tax, a move that will enable corporations with clever accounting to pay still less in taxes—or in some instances even zero.

Continued on page 9

Pressing for full higher-ed funding

By CLARION STAFF

Governor Andrew Cuomo presented a budget proposal for higher education that continues the pattern of state disinvestment. As PSC President Barbara Bowen told state lawmakers last month, the proposal is not enough to make up for the decades of underfunding to SUNY and CUNY. “New York has invested strongly in access to education,” she said. “But the funding for access is not met with funding for resources. That’s the basic story.”

Governor Cuomo has promoted public higher education with the introduction of the Excelsior Scholarship (which grants free tuition at SUNY and CUNY to full-time students from households earning less than \$110,000 per year). At the same time, Bowen said, “state appropriations for the operating budgets have gone down year after year, so this year’s executive proposal is presented as an increase but it’s actually a decrease.”

FUNDS VETOED

What’s more, the governor’s budget proposal came after his December veto of the Maintenance of Effort bill, supported by SUNY and CUNY advocates and passed nearly unanimously by both legislative houses. The bill, had it been approved, would have annually added resources to CUNY’s budget to cover inflationary increases to operating costs such as rent, energy and collective bargaining, restoring budget stability.

The need for a more dramatic increase in state funding for CUNY could hardly be more urgent. “CUNY’s undergraduate enrollment is up by 40 percent (77,500) since 2000, the equivalent of the total number of students at Hunter and Baruch Colleges combined,” Bowen said. “It’s as if CUNY had added two colleges.”

In fact, on January 2 CUNY reported an 11-percent increase in first-year applications, in part attributed to the implementation of the Excelsior Scholarship.

Below, in testimony both to the state legislature and in statements to *Clarion*, higher education advocates reflect on the governor’s proposal, veto of the MOE and the road forward.

What CUNY needs now

New York State has invested strongly in student access to higher education through the Excelsior Scholarship and the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), but has failed to invest sufficiently in student success. Access is not meaningful without the resources to succeed. As New York invests more in access, it must also increase investment in the personnel and programs needed to educate CUNY’s growing student body so the greater access will be

Cuomo’s plan falls short



PSC President Barbara Bowen explained in testimony to the state legislature that the governor’s higher education funding proposal didn’t make up for years of disinvestment.

meaningful. The state must invest \$300 million in quality education, support for graduation and greater student success.

- The most immediate step the legislature can take to begin to restore funding for CUNY this year is to cover the \$59 million “TAP gap” caused by the legal requirement that CUNY provide eligible students with a “tuition waiver credit,” covering the difference between the rate of tuition and the maximum TAP award.

- Allocating \$16 million to increase the base aid rate for CUNY community colleges to \$3,000 per FTE (full-time equivalent) student should be the next priority.

- A further priority should be additional funding to improve student success rates for CUNY’s growing student body by increasing the number of full-time faculty positions and counseling staff and increasing support for adjunct instructors.

The 2019 New York State Executive Budget continues the strategy of decreasing per-student funding for CUNY. The PSC believes strongly that this strategy hurts CUNY students, diminishes the quality of education, contributes to students’ difficulty in graduation and undermines the progressive vision of the state. New York must have the courage, even in a difficult budget year, to change this strategy. We ask for the legislature’s help in making that change.

We commend the governor for taking a strong position on the importance of college education for the

future of New York State. But that position must be reflected in a final enacted budget that invests public funds in CUNY and SUNY.

State funding for CUNY must be measured per FTE student and must be adjusted for inflation. By that measure, direct state support for CUNY senior colleges has declined by 18 percent since the Great Recession of 2008. Using the same measure (per FTE student and adjusted for inflation), direct state support for CUNY senior colleges has declined by almost 4 percent since Governor Cuomo took office. The disinvestment in CUNY must not continue, especially at a time when New York State seeks to position itself as a leader in access and quality in higher education. Both will be at risk if additions are not made for fiscal year 2019.

In the end, the state continues to underfund CUNY.

WHAT STUDENTS DESERVE

If CUNY is to reach its full potential, students must have the resources to enable them to succeed and achieve a college degree. The investments they need include more full-time faculty, fair pay for the adjunct faculty who teach the majority of CUNY courses and more academic advisement and support.

WHAT STUDENTS DESERVE

In Fall 2000, CUNY employed 7,800 adjunct faculty. In Fall 2016, it employed 14,400 adjuncts. Those numbers reveal the secret of how CUNY has coped with the enormous growth in enrollment since 2000 without a growth in per-student funding: adjuncts.

As per-FTE-student funding went down and the demand for courses went up, CUNY tried to solve the problem by staffing its courses with thousands of adjunct faculty – whom it paid at less than half the rate of full-time faculty. That pattern must end. It is unconscionable for a university to rely for more than half of its core work – teaching – on shamefully underpaid workers. And it is unfair to the adjuncts themselves, to their full-time colleagues and above all to students to expect underpaid, part-time and contingent faculty to be able to provide the continuity, mentoring and access to research opportunities students need in order to succeed in college.

Barbara Bowen
President, Professional
Staff Congress

to hire more full-time faculty and maintain and provide necessary services for these students. It will be a strain for SUNY to meet this commitment under the proposed Executive Budget.

These problems will only become more evident and more pressing with more students coming to SUNY through the Excelsior Scholarship program.

It is time for SUNY and the state to commit to an increase in the percentage of full-time faculty, who have more time to devote to student advisement and out-of-class interaction, which is essential to improving completion rates – especially for low-income students, students of color and first-generation students.

Frederick Kowal
President, United
University Professions

A bad veto

Maintenance of Effort (MOE), or some other means of providing consistent ongoing funding that SUNY and CUNY can rely on, is essential. Without MOE, we are forced to cut programs in order to meet basic expenses, such as rent and utilities, which increase annually and which, to a large degree, we can’t control.

If CUNY’s widely lauded Accelerated Study in Associate Programs has taught us anything, it is that an up-front investment in our students will more than pay off in increased time to graduation, and more graduates leads to more working New Yorkers contributing to the tax base. CUNY is doing its part by looking for operating efficiencies, and the governor has helped with Excelsior and his most recent suggestion on food banks, but for the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who rely on public education to achieve the upward social mobility that is America’s promise, it is insufficient.

Katherine Conway
President, CUNY
University Faculty Senate

Taking the next step

The enactment of the Excelsior Scholarship Program last year was the first step in increasing access to public higher education. The program highlighted the importance of New York’s public higher education institutions, which resulted in an increase in applicants. For example, CUNY recently reported an 11-percent increase in applicants for the 2018-19 academic year, which they attributed to the Excelsior Scholarship Program.

This is the year for New York to take the second step and focus on the quality of the education offered at our institutions. We cannot speak about access to public higher education without discussing funding to preserve and enhance the quality of education. Doing so would be a disservice to the tens of thousands of students our members serve. While this budget supports the expansion of the Excelsior Scholarship Program, we are disheartened to see that it is not accompanied with additional funding for the academic programs, supports and advisement needed to help all students graduate on time. Access to public higher education is important, but we cannot stress enough that it must be paired with the necessary resources to enable them to succeed.

The Executive Budget holds SUNY’s and CUNY’s instructional core budgets flat from last year’s funding level. Unfortunately for our students, this has been the case for many years and needs to be addressed. As enrollment increases at our four-year campuses, so must the state’s investment to protect and enhance the quality of education accessed by all students.

Andy Pallotta
President, NYSUT

The SUNY situation

Full-time faculty were hit hard by the budget cuts. The university employed more than 10,000 full-time faculty to instruct 185,000 students at the turn of the century. Today, there are just over 8,000 full-time, tenure-track faculty to teach over 222,000 students. Because of inadequate resources, campuses were forced to rely on hard-working part-time academic faculty for instruction to fill the gaps.

With increasing enrollments at SUNY’s four-year colleges, campuses are in need of increased aid

KCC community rallies for an immigrant student

By BRANDON JORDAN

Rodrigo remembers the morning of November 13 well. At around 5:45 am, there was a knock at his door. His stepfather opened it to see Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents.

ICE detained Rodrigo's stepfather. Rodrigo, who was sleeping during this incident, woke up to see his mother dropping to the floor next to his bed saying, "They took him."

"At that moment," he told *Clarion*, "everything turned upside down."

Rodrigo, a student at Kingsborough Community College (KCC), and his family began to worry about the consequences of his stepfather's detention. Who would take care of the family's expenses? Could they find a lawyer to represent them in a case? Would his father be deported?

SEEKING HELP

Seeking answers to these questions, Rodrigo, who asked that *Clarion* not use his full name, turned to advisors and professors at Kingsborough for help. He went to the offices of the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) and International Studies – anyone he thought could provide some financial or legal help. He also visited Dominic Wetzel, who was his Introduction to Sociology professor.

Wetzel, a PSC delegate and an active member of the union's legislative committee, felt shocked at the news about Rodrigo's stepfather.

"When he came to me, he was freaked out," Wetzel said. "I was freaked out too," he added, saying he had never had a student approach him before about a family member being detained by ICE.

Wetzel offered what help he could. He extended the deadline on a paper, collected around \$700 at a PSC delegate assembly, and assisted in creating a GoFundMe account for Rodrigo's family, for whom Rodrigo's stepfather was the main breadwinner. The GoFundMe drive has raised over \$2,800 to date.

At home, Rodrigo began to assume a lot of responsibilities. He helped his mother pay the family's bills and take care of both his younger brother and sister. He felt overwhelmed, but felt hopeful for his dad's return.

The family received their first much-needed break when their landlord delayed the due date on their rent payment because Rodrigo's stepfather had always paid the family's rent on time.

Yet they still needed to find a lawyer to help represent his stepfather

A family haunted by ICE, and faculty respond



Emily Schnee, an associate professor of English at Kingsborough Community College, was one of the faculty activists who organized support for a student whose family was targeted by ICE.

at his court hearing in December. Rodrigo's girlfriend reached out to a friend in Boston, who offered to help the family for a reduced fee.

COMING HOME

On the day of Rodrigo's stepfather's court hearing, family, friends, professors at Kingsborough and supporters of Rodrigo's family attended the hearing hoping that Rodrigo's stepfather would get a low bail and, possibly, a way home. They were relieved when the bail for Rodrigo's stepfather was set at \$2,500.

A few days later, Rodrigo and his family received a letter notifying them that the bail had been paid. Members of the New Sanctuary Coalition (NSC) of NYC, a group that helps undocumented families with legal advice and other resources, helped pay the bail.

As a result, his stepfather was able to go home. Delighted, Rodrigo and his family piled into their car to pick up his stepfather.

"The car was really cold, the heater wasn't working and it was snowing really bad," Rodrigo recalled. "But I got that warm feeling, knowing he's coming back."

"I recommended that Rodrigo and his mother visit the [NSC's le-

gal] clinic once his stepfather was detained by ICE to seek further information and assistance with his case," said Emily Schnee, an associate professor of English and a

volunteer translator with the NSC. "Volunteer immigration attorneys who work with the NSC consulted with the family about his stepfather's case and made sure that all the legal

advice he received from a private attorney was accurate."

Schnee continued, "I attended his stepfather's bail hearing as a supporter, though only family members were allowed into the judge's chambers. It was very painful to see immigration detainees in bright orange prison garb being brought into the courtroom in shackles – given that their only crime was to come to the US as immigrants hoping to improve their lives. At the same time, it was wonderful to see Rodrigo's family, his professors at KCC and the New Sanctuary Coalition accompaniment volunteers come out in support of his stepfather's release."

KCC faculty support in the Rodrigo's family's case is just one of many examples of activism since faculty and student groups at various CUNY campuses have organized to defend undocumented immigrants at CUNY following increased crackdowns since Donald Trump, who ran on a staunchly anti-immigrant platform, took office.

MYSTERY REMAINS

Rodrigo's family still isn't sure how or why ICE agents came to their door. Rodrigo's stepfather returned home just in time for the holidays. On Christmas Eve, Rodrigo left his job early and ran home to find not just his stepfather, but his family, friends and girlfriend too. "We were very grateful to be together," he said.

Rodrigo's stepdad, who lost his job while being held by ICE, has already found another job thanks to a family friend. He has to attend another hearing to prove he should stay in the country, but he doesn't have to return to an ICE facility in the interim.

Meanwhile, Rodrigo is preparing to graduate from Kingsborough this spring. He wants to attend Baruch College to study business management and accounting.

"We're trying to build back to where we were. It's going to take some time," he said. "We're happy we're together again."

CUNY help for DACA students



CUNY Citizenship Now! held an information session for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients at the School of Professional Studies on January 23. The event was one of two held in response to a federal court blocking President Donald Trump's executive order that ends DACA protections.

Trump's agenda hits a CUNY campus.

that helps undocumented families with legal advice and other resources, helped pay the bail.

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"I recommended that Rodrigo and his mother visit the [NSC's le-

Dave Sanders

CUNY Citizenship Now!

Meeting members at home, building power

By ARI PAUL

In an ongoing effort to strengthen the union in anticipation of a Supreme Court decision in *Janus v. AFSCME* forbidding the collection of agency shop fees, union activists have been visiting members on campus – going from office to office and organizing lunch-time meetings. More recently, PSC members are using another organizing tactic: meeting members and agency shop fee payers at their homes.

A WINNING TACTIC

While a new method for the PSC, the strategy has long been used by private-sector unions for new member organizing – the philosophy being that workers are often more comfortable talking with organizers outside their place of employment.

“It is a tried-and-true campaign method,” said Jennifer Harrington, an assistant director of academic advisement at Baruch College, who participated in home visits in Upper Manhattan in January. “Before we had cellphones or whatever, it was what you did: you went out and knocked on doors.”

PSC President Barbara Bowen, who accompanied Harrington during the home visits, added, “The Trump administration is aggressively attacking the fundamental right of working people to band together and use our collective power to gain better salaries and

Preparing for *Janus*



Jennifer Harrington, an assistant director of academic advisement at Baruch College, called home visits a “tried-and-true campaign method.”

protections than any one person could gain alone. That’s why the PSC is fighting back with equal seriousness. We are returning to la-

bor-movement practices like home visits that enabled workers to win unions in the first place.” Bowen continued, “And every member

who did home visits with the PSC in January said they wanted to do it again.”

The PSC home visits are part of state unions’ larger strategy as they prepare for a ruling against unions this year in *Janus v. AFSCME*. Activists from the PSC’s parent union, New York State United Teachers, have taken this issue to the doors of 40,000 members. Much of this grassroots mobilization, which occurred last year, focused on turning out a “no” vote in the constitutional convention referendum in November; however, the union is refocusing that momentum on new member sign-ups. PSC members will have the opportunity over the next few months to participate in home visits.

A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

Harrington, who is also a part-time PSC grievance representative, said that the experience was positive. “It was really interesting – as far as the reactions, it was kind of a mixed bag at first,” she said. “They were all quite surprised, saying, ‘I can’t believe you are visiting us personally!’ or ‘Why didn’t you call ahead?’” She recalled, “But it was more positive; once they got past the surprise, it was positive.”

Harrington added, “It was also a smart move because we’re reaching the people whom it’s very hard to reach.”

Harrington noted that another positive aspect of home visits is the opportunity to organize a more diverse array of people beyond her campus.

“We saw an adjunct at Baruch, a higher education officer at John Jay, a non-teaching adjunct at Hunter. [Out-reach] was cross-title and cross-campus,” she said. “From an activist point of view, you need to meet people outside of your own title. You learn about them, and it makes people connected. The more knowledge the better, and it makes you more empathetic.”

The PSC plans to continue asking activists, many of whom have already signed up colleagues on campus, to start doing home visits to get agency shop fee payers to sign up and get current members to sign recommitment cards.

THREATS LOOM

The stakes are high for the PSC and other public-sector unions: if the Supreme Court rules against labor, public-sector unions nationwide would be forbidden from collecting agency shop fees, the payments non-members of a bargaining union pay for the representation and services they receive from the union.

Harrington became a rank-and-file PSC activist during the 2016 strike authorization vote, and it was during that campaign that she realized the power of on-the-ground, one-on-one member organizing.

“I really got on board with going up to complete strangers at Baruch and explaining why we needed a strike authorization,” she said. “I got the activist bug from that.” In future home visits Harrington hopes to encourage other members to become rank-and-file organizers themselves.

“What I don’t think a lot of people realize is that being an activist and going out canvassing – it can actually be a lot of fun,” she said. “It doesn’t have to be seen as a slog or a huge time commitment, because if you truly believe in the union, you’d want to give back in that way.”

Reaching the hard-to-reach people

Janus – what it is, and why it matters

By ARI PAUL

On February 26, the Supreme Court will hear the case *Janus v. AFSCME*. The central question of the case is whether public-sector unions have a legal right to collect the agency fee non-members in a public-sector bargaining unit pay for benefits they receive from the union. The court will issue a decision by this summer. Given the court’s conservative majority, unions expect a ruling against organized labor.

FISCAL HIT

For the PSC, that means that non-members in the bargaining unit will no longer pay these fees, even though they are protected by the union contract and receive union-negotiated salaries and benefits. The most immediate effect of this change is that it would reduce revenue to the PSC, affecting the

Organizing for the future

union’s operating budget.

A more fundamental threat is at play. The lawsuit is very purposeful: it is backed by the same right-wing anti-union organizations that have supported similar lawsuits and so-called “right-to-work” state-level legislation to weaken union power, politically and at the bargaining table. Even when unions maintain membership levels without agency shop fees in right-to-work states, the prohibition against collecting agency shop fees force unions to expend energy locating new members rather than use that organizational energy to win economic gains for workers or pressure the government for adequate public service funding.

That is why the PSC has been mobilizing for the last several months

to have as many people in the bargaining unit committed to the union before this new right-to-work regime takes hold. The PSC’s material gains for CUNY faculty and staff are made possible by the union’s ability to

Unions are under direct threat.

organize its strength in numbers, whether by bringing hundreds of members to a rally or organizing a strike authorization vote. The organized power in numbers – of rank-and-file member activists – has enabled the PSC to achieve things such as the historic teaching-load reduction, the higher education officer assignment differential and the multi-year appointments for 1,500 adjunct instructors.

The same power in numbers will be necessary for the PSC to win at the bargaining table in negotiations

for a new contract and make gains, like \$7,000 per course per semester for adjuncts, a 5 percent across-the-board annual pay increase, additional pay increase for college laboratory technicians and lecturers, and improvements to the multiyear appointment pilot program for adjunct instructors. It is people power that is needed to pressure the government to invest in public services, whether it be higher-education funding or health care.

ATTACKING THE PUBLIC SECTOR

After all, the attack on the power of public-sector unions like the PSC is also an attack on the public sector itself, a perennial target of the right.

“The Supreme Court should not ignore the fact that state and local governments have a vital interest in the benefits of collaboration that come from robust collective bargaining and unionization,” said American Associa-

tion of University Professors General Counsel Risa Lieberwitz, upon announcing the group’s amicus brief to the court supporting a ruling in favor of labor in *Janus*. “Those benefits for all public citizens include improved government services, better educational outcomes and higher economic mobility.” The PSC’s collective power is also essential for pressing for full funding of CUNY and for advocating on behalf of working-class students.

To maintain the power in numbers, organizers are having agency shop fee-payers as well as current members sign a new, blue membership card and commit to keeping the union strong. Members and fee-payers can sign cards at psc-cuny.org/UnionYes. Members are encouraged to sign up their colleagues, either through the website or with the membership cards, which they can get available from their chapter chairs or PSC organizers.

Winning a courseload reduction

By CLARION STAFF

Starting next Fall, full-time faculty at CUNY will see a reduction in their contractual teaching load that will free up time for them to devote to individual work with students, mentoring and research.

PSC President Barbara Bowen said, "If there is anything that illustrates the power of a union, it is this win. If I had to cite one thing that led to the victory, I would say the strike authorization vote on the last contract. The overwhelming 'yes' vote gave us the power to insist on a first-stage agreement on a teaching-load reduction."

"By Fall 2020 the contractual teaching load for professors, associate professors and assistant professors at the senior colleges will be 18 hours, and the contractual teaching load for professors, associate professors and assistant professors at the community colleges, as well as for instructors and lecturers, will be 24 hours," Bowen said.

CONTRACT WIN

The mandate for a course-load reduction was agreed upon in a side letter to the last contract stating that a settlement on teaching-load reduction must be achieved

before the next collective bargaining agreement goes into effect. But the union spent many hours over the last year with the administration negotiating how such a plan would be implemented, and dozens of members testified before the City Council and the CUNY Board of Trustees with the united message that this agreement was a restructuring of the pedagogical practices that would benefit students first and the university as a whole.

Below, a few members talk about why this accomplishment is so important, and how the union got it done.

A benefit for students

The teaching-load reduction is important for full-time faculty and students alike. Scholarship, creative work and student mentoring are all vital for the student-faculty dynamic to thrive. But CUNY's high teaching load has been an impediment. Speaking personally, the advances I've made in curriculum development, research and publication were made possible largely through teaching-load reductions, whether the new faculty reassigned time negotiated by the PSC or the sponsored reassigned time of fellowships. So, the new contract provision recalibrates our workload and codifies something all of us know from experience: that our students benefit when our careers benefit, and our colleges benefit when a research-active faculty is supported in our work beyond the doors to our classrooms. In fact,

that work invariably finds its way back into the classroom, too.

James Davis
PSC Chapter Chair,
Brooklyn College

How we won

The contractual agreement - to reduce the contractual teaching load for full-time classroom faculty by three credits - which we negotiated as part of our last contract with CUNY was one of the strongest victories of the union. It signaled an agreement to amend the section on workload in the contract after 35 years. The agreement required a labor-management committee to work on the implementation and funding of the contractual reduction. Soon after the settlement of the contract, we formed a teaching load subcommittee of the bargaining team that would represent the union for the work with management. Our subcommittee worked ahead in preparation for the meetings with management. We understood that

even though we had an agreement, its implementation would require grappling on conceptual and funding issues.

The conceptual burden of getting management on board regarding the implementation of the reduction in a way that meaningfully addresses faculty need proved to be as heavy as we had anticipated. Management's initial position was that faculty should provide a quantifiable accounting of the use of the time they gain through the reduction. Over several sessions, we argued that the nature of academic research is such that it is self-directed and time spent on such work cannot always be quantified. Further, our demand for a reduction, we reminded management, was for us to be able to better serve the needs of our current students by providing them with the time and attention they need outside class. A reduction in teaching load creates the conditions to honor and improve on the work that faculty currently do with students and on academic research. We prevailed in persuading management to measure the contractual gain in time in a way that is consistent with the specificities of academic labor.

Nivedita Majumdar
PSC Secretary

The two-year campuses win

PSC chapter chairs at the community colleges used different kinds of actions, including petitions, journals documenting workload, forums sponsored by the PSC on the issue of the teaching load, testimony at Board of Trustees hearings and the City Council, internal chapter meetings, local demonstrations and forums at the colleges, and raising the issue at labor-management meetings.



November 2010: City Tech faculty hold a bake sale to raise awareness for "No more 24," a demand to bring the courseload to 21 credits, in line with other senior colleges.

As teachers at open-admissions institutions within CUNY, community college faculty have always recognized that good teaching is our most important responsibility. Our students, as first-generation college students, children of immigrants and people from lower-income communities, need more from us both inside and outside of the classroom. They require intellectual and emotional support from us, one-on-one interaction and mentoring. In addition to teaching, we had many other demands on our time - for research and publications, college and departmental service, professional development and participation in new administrative initiatives requiring additional meetings and time.

Lorraine Cohen
PSC Vice President of
Community Colleges



February 2013: The PSC chapter at John Jay College petitions the administration to bring down the annual courseload requirement to 18 hours.



April 2017: LaGuardia Community College PSC Chapter Chair Sigmund Shen testifies to the City Council, explaining the benefits of a course-load reduction for community colleges.

n: a major union victory



Dave Sanders



Gary Schoichet

September 2013: City Tech faculty celebrate an agreement to bring the course load down to 21 credits.



Dave Sanders

December 2017: PSC President Barbara Bowen and CUNY Chancellor James B. Milliken sign the teaching workload reduction agreement, flanked by members of the PSC Executive Council and the CUNY management team that participated in negotiations.

Building PSC power through our budget

By CLARION STAFF

How your dues make the union strong

“The PSC is an organizing-focused, member-driven labor union, and our budget reflects our priorities,” explained PSC Treasurer Sharon Persinger. “Our revenue comes almost entirely from members’ dues, and we use every penny to build the union’s power. By pooling our individual dues, we generate collective power. Our dues give the PSC the financial resources to win higher salaries, improve our benefits and defend our jobs.”

Simply put, a primary part of any union’s strength is the health of its operating budget, and the PSC is not an exception. Union dues and agency shop fees fund the budget for all of the things that make the PSC strong: rent for the central office (including the union hall), signs, this newspaper, buses for lobbying trips to Albany and, of course, the staff members such as organizers, grievance counselors and contract enforcement coordinators.

CRITICAL MOMENT

In the face of the attacks on organized labor, it is more important than ever that members be able to see and understand how the PSC budget is broken down.

A closer look at the annual PSC budget shows that the bulk of the union’s net income is spent on the staff and materials needed to increase our collective power. Of the income the PSC spends directly on its own operations, roughly equal shares go to organizing, enforcing the contract, providing member services through administrative functions, like membership, and campaigns for negotiating and winning contract improvements and for increased public funding for CUNY. Almost half of the union’s income goes to support PSC’s labor affiliates to increase the union’s power at the city, state and national level.

This review analyzes PSC’s 2016-17 budget, a typical year as compared to the current fiscal year. This year, the 2017-18 projected budget reflects planning for the impact of the Supreme Court case *Janus v. AFSCME*, expected to be handed down this summer.

PSC SPENDING

The annual PSC Budget and monthly PSC Financial Statements are reviewed and approved by members’ elected representatives in the union’s Delegate Assembly.

PSC’s projected spending for last year totaled about \$8.671 million. Union spending is illustrated in the large pie chart. Nearly 60 percent of spending went to the categories that obviously relate to building power for PSC members: 18 percent on Organizing and Building Chapters; 17 percent on Contract Enforcement; 13 percent on Communications (*Clarion*, the website, press releases and advertising); and 12 percent on Contract and Budget Campaigns. Last budget year, 9/16-8/17, the union fi-

nally had a contract in place at CUNY, so more effort went into contract implementation than to winning a new contract. Even so, the union waged an energetic fight in Albany during winter 2017 for Maintenance of Effort funding for CUNY.

The remaining 42 percent of PSC spending went to rent – including the PSC Union Hall – and physical operations, like utilities, computer and copying equipment and maintenance, as well as insurance, accounting, office supplies, chapter elections,

and administrative operations to keep the union office and its support for chapters working effectively. Managing membership records and databases is a critical part of the union’s work and accounts for 4 percent of spending.

PSC is a member-funded organization. 97.7 percent of revenues (\$15.245 million) comes from dues and fees paid by members of the PSC bargaining unit covered by the CUNY contract. The balance comes from dues from Retirees and Asso-

ciate Members (\$207,000) and dues and fees paid by bargaining unit members covered by the Research Foundation contracts (\$150,000). Other sources of revenue are rent from PSC subletting a portion of its office space to the Welfare Fund and returns from the investment of its Reserve Fund. PSC received one time dues/fees on the contractual bonus paid in October 2016 and on

AFFILIATE COSTS

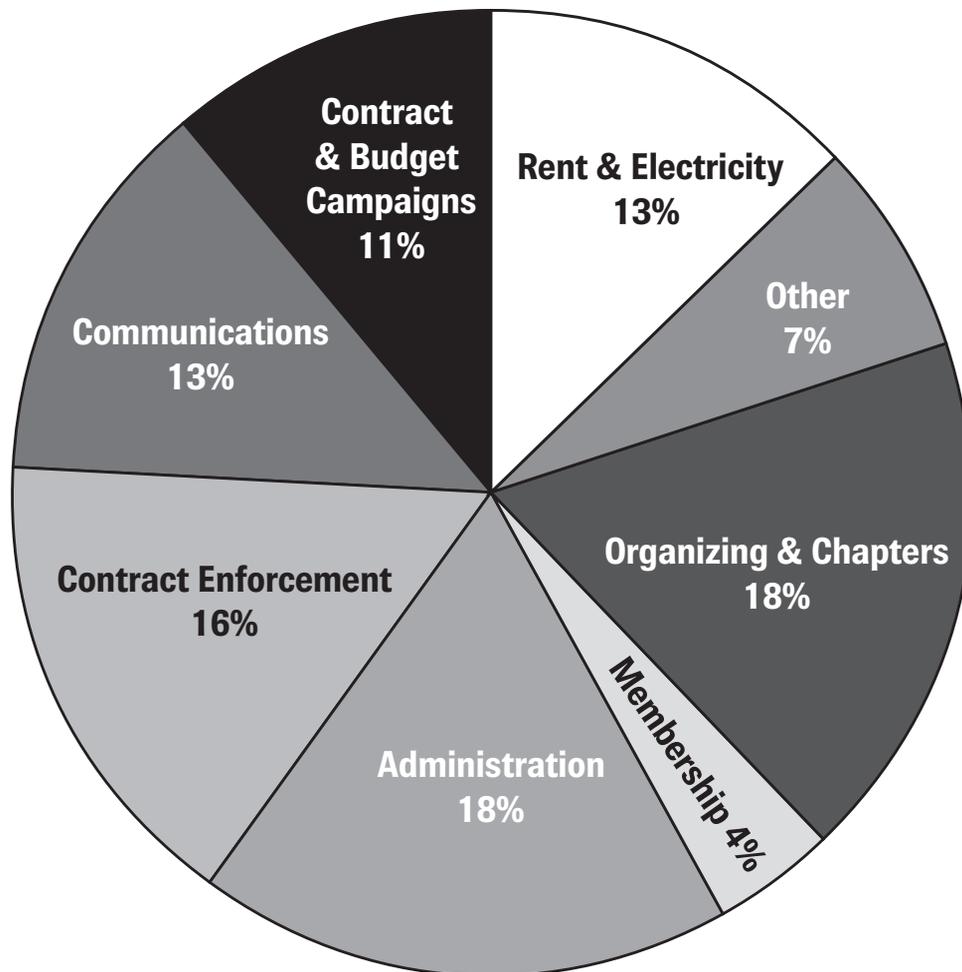
Payments to our national and state affiliates, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), were budgeted at \$10.6 million last year, based on formulas applied to the head count of PSC bargaining unit members. NYSUT dues are \$7.1 million and AFT dues are \$3.5 million. Dues to other affiliated organizations, like the Municipal Labor Committee, the municipal union coalition that bargains health care, are only \$300,000.

Reimbursements from NYSUT and AFT are spent in several of the functional categories of the spending pie chart. The second pie chart shows the net payment to the national and state affiliates, 45 percent of PSC’s total spending budget. Of the \$7.1 million paid to NYSUT, PSC received \$3.7 million in reimbursements. So about half of the dues that the PSC pays to NYSUT is returned to the PSC as reimbursement. AFT reimburses the PSC for organizing and American Association of University Professors dues. For 2016-17 the total reimbursement was \$300,000, so net dues to AFT were \$3.2 million. In prior years, AFT has provided one time support for special projects, like communications funding for the contract campaign.

The budgeting process involves thoughtfully allocating funding for staff and resources to build power for the PSC time while at the same time supporting members’ activism on important issues and maintaining the flexibility to respond to management’s or government’s actions over a given year. PSC’s elected delegates’ ongoing involvement in budget decision-making is critical because the budget is essentially a statement of the union’s political strategies for building power.

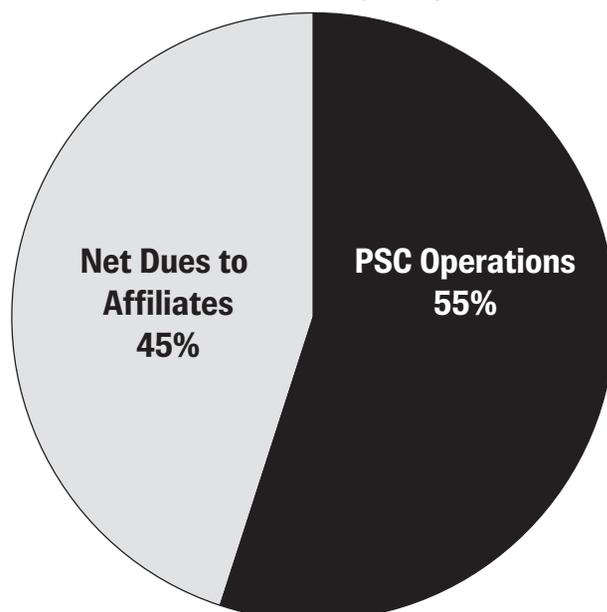
PSC Operations Spending

Total = \$8,671,000



PSC Spending

Net total = \$15,625,000



ciate Members (\$207,000) and dues and fees paid by bargaining unit members covered by the Research Foundation contracts (\$150,000). Other sources of revenue are rent from PSC subletting a portion of its office space to the Welfare Fund and returns from the investment of its Reserve Fund. PSC received one time dues/fees on the contractual bonus paid in October 2016 and on



PSC Treasurer Sharon Persinger explains the PSC’s budget during a delegate assembly last fall.

PEOPLE POWER

HEOs using gains to build for the future

By ANDREA VÁSQUEZ

In the last PSC contract with CUNY, Higher Education Officers (HEOs) made some important gains for improving our opportunities for reclassification and salary advancement. HEOs do not have a promotional system, as faculty have, and many of us experience the frustration of being unable to advance in salary and responsibilities. The 2010-2017 contract included a new provision for a salary increment of \$2,500 for HEOs at the top step for their rank, and introduced improvements in the system of reclassification to higher ranks. Since the contract was ratified, HEOs have been the driving force in implementing these provisions and have shown how a strategy of member-driven contract enforcement can build union power. We now find ourselves in a strong position to confront the anti-union Supreme Court decision expected in *Janus v. AFSCME*, and we are better prepared to begin negotiating our next collective bargaining agreement.

ACTIVE MEMBERS

At every CUNY campus HEOs have stepped up to serve as PSC representatives on labor management committees whose charge is to be the first to review applications for a salary assignment differential. At a time when conservative forces are counting on weakening worker organizations, this increased activism and contract enforcement has led to a feeling of “ownership” of our benefits, our contract and our union. Members have participated in contract training sessions, informational meetings on the new benefits and PSC HEO chapter meetings. These actions, along with the support work of HEO delegates and PSC staff, led to the formation of all 22 labor management committees. Many HEOs have begun to receive the \$2,500 raise. Additionally, there was an upswing in the number of applications and approvals for reclassification, as members have been educating themselves and each other on all opportunities for advancement.

Letters of commendation, excellent evaluations, skills certificates and a clear ability to master additional duties over time – these are some of the ways that HEOs have met the criteria for the new salary increase. The successes have often been smooth and swift. At Queensborough Community College, over

a dozen applications went all the way through to presidential approval. And at the Graduate Center and the College of Staten Island, a total of five differentials went through the process successfully in less than a month.

We have seen 64 submissions: 30 have received the differential, and more are in the pipeline; three have applied for reclassification instead. Members are monitoring the applications locally and the union is diligently following up and intervening when necessary.

ISSUES AHEAD

Serious problems persist on several campuses, particularly those that relate to funding. Initially, the Hunter College administration attempted to postpone implementation of the new contract provision for 18 months, claiming there wasn't enough money in their budget. The PSC began grievance proceedings (because a college may not unilaterally decide to postpone implementing our contract), which led the administration to consider the applications. Ultimately, Hunter granted the differential to four HEOs. At City College, members who were approved in the HEO labor management committee passed the recommendations along to the College HEO Committee

(also known as the Screening Committee) and were then told that the applications were being put “on hold” due to budget. The College HEO Committees are charged with evaluating the applications based solely on the contract language: “accretion of duties or excellence of performance.” The College HEO Committee may not use the college's budget as an excuse to deny the differential. The PSC is now filing a grievance against City College and two other colleges because of “improper application of criteria for eligibility.”

At John Jay College and the Borough of Manhattan Community College members and HEO labor management committee members waited from three to six months to hear about the decision, and at Hostos Community College an application inexplicably languished in human resources for many months. Members should not be subjected to these wildly uneven implementation experiences. CUNY agreed to this provision and members deserve a smooth and respectful process that encourages this opportunity for advancement. In the PSC's demands for the upcoming contract, we will fight to improve the process and guarantee that the work HEOs do for CUNY and its students is recognized.

There are still more than 400 HEOs across CUNY who are eligible for the salary differential, and they are encouraged to consider applying. Others who are not yet at the top step should begin to create a portfolio of material that can be used in the future to make the case for the salary differential or reclassification.

LOOKING FORWARD

Raises are great and should be fought for and received. And reclassifications are great and should be granted whenever someone is working out of title. But the picture is broader than that; it is about engaging and activating members. As a result of the work HEOs have done and as we kick off the next contract campaign, we find ourselves in a strengthened position. The contract work has made the PSC more visible on campus, and the membership-building that has accompanied contract enforcement has fortified our numbers. In the face of *Janus* and other attacks on working people, the link between contract enforcement, member activism and union power is apparent. As always, it's on us to continue to strengthen, improve and defend our gains as we move forward together in defense of our working conditions, the students we serve and this public university system.

Andrea Vásquez is the HEO PSC chapter chair.

Rank-and-file HEO action

A tax bill

Continued from page 2

The rest of us will have to reconcile the difference, not necessarily with higher taxes, but with diminished benefits and federal programs.

SMASHING THE STATE

In a December 3 analysis in its news pages, *The New York Times* sounded the alarm that “Republicans are preparing to use the swelling deficits made worse by the [tax] package as a rationale to pursue their long-held vision: undoing the entitlements of the New Deal and Great Society, leaving government leaner and the safety net skimpier for millions of Americans.”

It's the old conservative refrain of “starve the beast.” Using the projected \$1.5 trillion deficit triggered by the tax bill as cover, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan has already announced a wish list of cuts to safety net initiatives.

Cuts to Social Security and Medicare are all but inevitable.

The starvation food chain starts with the federal government, but ultimately works its way down to state and local entities, particularly in higher-taxing blue states like New York and California. Under the GOP legislation, whether you file individually or as a married couple, deductions for state and local taxes (SALT) will cap at \$10,000. This includes property taxes, the primary source of K-12 funding for many communities. Unable to soften their tax burden with unlimited deductions, taxpayers, not surprisingly, may push for lower SALT. Combined with a starvation diet of federal funds from Capitol Hill, states and local governments will face tremendous pressure to downsize their tax burdens.

Starving state and local governments by targeting SALT deductions “was our point from the start,” said Jonathan Williams, chief economist at the American Legislative Exchange Council

(ALEC), a right-wing advocacy group that has successfully crafted fiscally conservative legislation for dozens of state governments.

“We hope that it [SALT caps] engenders more fiscal discipline at the state level in those high-tax states,” Williams added.

RIPPLE EFFECT

The consequences will ripple through public K-12, and higher education and multiple safety-net programs, not least being health care (compounded by the tax bill's removal, starting in 2019, of the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate).

The good news is that most Americans oppose these monstrous policies. That's why we need to re-imagine the political landscape and reframe the political dialogue, as Occupy Wall Street briefly did earlier this decade, with a laser focus on inequality – and how we fight it.

Bill Friedheim is the chair of the PSC retiree's chapter.



Vincent Boudreau

Boudreau to lead CCNY

By ARI PAUL

After serving as interim president of City College of New York (CCNY) for more than a year, Vincent Boudreau has been appointed the college's permanent president.

Initially, union officials on campus were dismayed when they learned Boudreau, who had previously served as dean of CCNY's Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership and came to CCNY as an assistant professor of political science in 1991, was not in the running for the permanent choice despite being chosen as the interim leader. He was nevertheless considered for appointment late last year, but the CUNY Board of Trustees delayed his appointment in October after local politicians publicly criticized his pending appointment. CUNY announced Boudreau's appointment in December.

Boudreau came to the interim position at a critical moment – he took over when then-President Lisa Coico abruptly resigned amid an ongoing investigation into financial improprieties at CUNY campus administrations.

UNION RESPONDS

PSC chapter members hailed Boudreau's appointment as permanent president, citing his good leadership in relations with the union, and the fact that he is well suited to address issues of discrimination and inclusiveness on campus. Kathlene McDonald, PSC chapter secretary and chair of CCNY's department of interdisciplinary arts and sciences, told *Clarion* that the chapter looked forward to working with Boudreau to “build a more diverse and inclusive campus, as well as to develop a strong stance against discrimination, sexual harassment and retaliation against faculty, staff and students.”

“He is one of us, and he will take CCNY through this turmoil period,” said City College PSC Chapter Chair Carol Huang. “Now that he has been appointed as permanent president, his attention can shift from internal troubles to seeking more external funding as all university presidents do. His appointment will enable him to carry out his vision.”

RACIAL JUSTICE

Revisiting open admissions at CUNY

By STEPHEN STEINBERG

Open Admissions at CUNY was born in the cauldron of grassroots protest. It came on the heels of a movement by blacks and Puerto Ricans for community control of local schools. In 1964 the police shooting of a black youth galvanized a march by 8,000 people, largely African Americans, in Harlem. In 1968, the nation was reeling from violent uprisings following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., and it was also the year that a clash between teachers and the community school board in Ocean Hill-Brownsville led to a two-month teachers strike.

The specter of “cities burning” and the deepening split between the white establishment and aggrieved minorities stoked fears that New York City would suffer a similar fate. Then, in April 1969, over 200 black and Puerto Rican students padlocked the gates of City College of New York (CCNY) and renamed it the “University of Harlem.” Their major grievance was that African Americans and Puerto Ricans comprised 40 percent of high school students and 98 percent of Harlem residents, yet 91 percent of CCNY’s day students were white. In CUNY as a whole, whites comprised 87 percent of students in senior colleges and 68 percent in community colleges.

PROACTIVE CHANGE

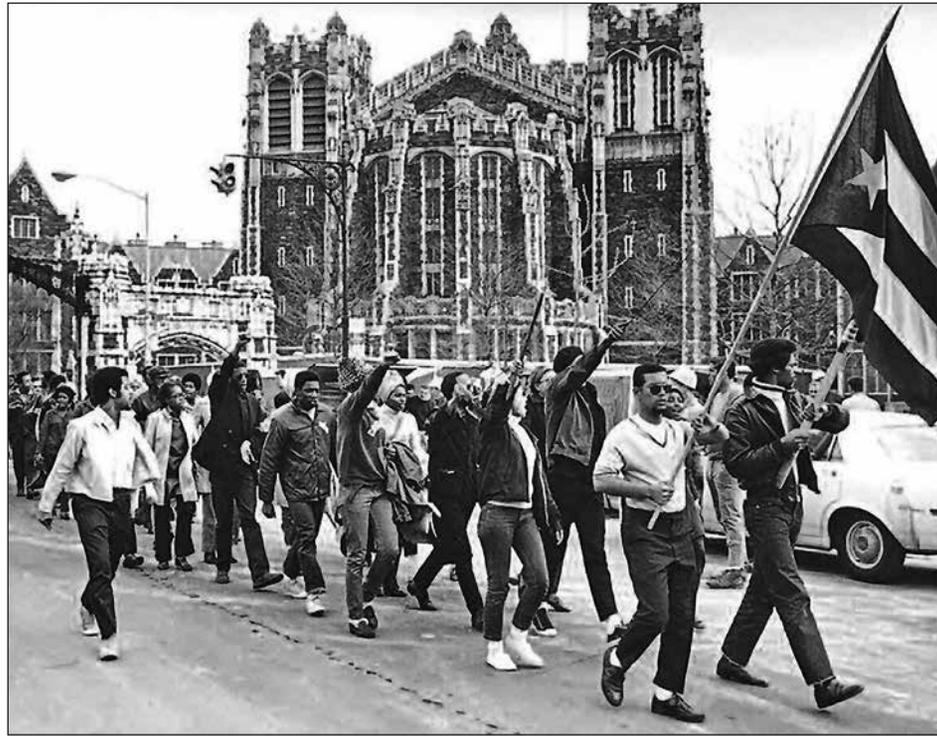
As early as 1964, the Board of Higher Education (precursor to the Board of Trustees) expressed a commitment to “expand opportunities for poorer minority students” and established the CD College Discovery Program in community colleges and the SEEK Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge Program in senior colleges. In 1968 the board approved plans for the construction of York College, Medgar Evers College and Hostos Community College. It also conceived of an open admissions program that would guarantee every high school graduate a seat in a community college, to be phased in from 1971 to 1975.

However, the sheer force of the 1969 CCNY student strike led the Board to launch open admissions precipitously in the fall of 1970. Enrollment for first-time students leapt from 19,959 in 1969 to 38,256 in 1972. Black students increased from 16,529 to 44,031; Puerto Ricans from 4,723 to 13,563. Notably, white students also increased from 106,523 in 1968 to 125,804 in 1972.

Unfortunately, open admissions was destined for a short life. The 1975 fiscal crisis pushed New York City to the verge of bankruptcy. Consistent with Naomi Klein’s concept of “disaster capitalism,” power brokers seized the opportunity to cut back open admissions and the SEEK Program. They also instituted tuition for the first time in 129 years.

MINORITY DECLINE

As PSC First Vice President Michael Fabricant and Professor Stephen Brier write in *Austerity Blues*: “While open admissions at CUNY remained in place, at least officially, the decision to charge tuition and tighten admissions standards, especially at the senior colleges, dramatically eroded the underpinnings of a truly open admissions policy.... CUNY suffered a decline of 62,000 students in its total enrollment by the end of the 1970s, with 50 percent fewer black and Latino freshmen among CUNY’s entering



In 1969, black and Puerto Rican students demonstrated at City College, protesting what they say was an under-representation of minority students.

class than in 1980.”

The other shoe fell with the 1993 election of Rudolph Giuliani as mayor of New York City. In 1998, Herman Badillo, chair of the Board of Trustees, sponsored a resolution to phase out remedial courses at CUNY’s senior colleges. A few months later Giuliani impaneled a task force, led by Benno Schmidt, to undertake a sweeping review of CUNY. Within a year it issued “An Institution Adrift,” which described CUNY as “moribund” and in “a spiral of decline,” and it urged CUNY to “reinvent” open admissions with “...the placement of the remediation function in the community colleges.”

Four years later, Schmidt declared that CUNY had made “stunning” progress and was now “the pride of the city.”

BAD RESULTS

The deleterious consequences of dismantling open admissions were brought to light in *The Atlantic*: “Since it went through an aggressive, system-wide overhaul that began in 2000, the City University of New York’s top five colleges – Baruch, Hunter, Brooklyn, Queens and City – have been raising admission standards and enrolling fewer freshmen from New York City high schools. Among the results has been the emergence of a pro-

gressively starker two-tier system: CUNY’s most prestigious colleges now increasingly favor Asian and white freshmen, while the system’s black and Latino students end up more and more in its overcrowded two-year community colleges.”

The Atlantic wrote: “This race disparity within the CUNY system widened most noticeably after the 2008 recession, when CUNY’s bargain tuition rates began drawing more middle-class families. Applications surged. That same year, CUNY increased its math SAT admission requirement 20 to 30 points for the five highly selective colleges. Department of Education records show that by 2012, the number of black public high school students enrolled as freshmen into the system’s top five colleges had decreased by 42 percent. Latinos dropped by 26 percent.”

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Not only have recurrent increases in tuition and SAT scores cut into minority enrollment in the top five senior colleges, but also since 1992, the SEEK Program has been cut in half. For decades SEEK offered racial minorities a doorway to senior colleges, but that door, too, has been steadily closed.

African Americans and Latinos now make up 72 percent of public school students. Their gross under-representation in CUNY’s senior colleges is a patent case of institutionalized racism and cries for redress.

What can PSC do to address the inequities that are baked into the system and result in a two-tier system, whereby the top five senior colleges are populated primarily by white and Asian students and the community colleges by black, Latino and other minority students? We have a responsibility and the power within our own domain to influence policy and enact change.

Stephen Steinberg is a distinguished professor of urban studies at Queens College and the Graduate Center. He thanks Dean Savage, a professor of sociology at Queens College, for his insights for this article.

Addressing a historical inequality

CASE STUDY

A closing door? Black admission at Queens College

By MAUREEN PIERCE-ANYAN

Queens College has earned a national reputation. It was ranked eighth in the *Princeton Review* list of America’s Best Value Colleges and 10th in the *U.S. News & World Report* list of top public regional universities in the Northeast. In 2013 *Washington Monthly* ranked Queens College second among 1,540 US colleges as “best bang for the buck,” and in 2015 a study ranked Queens in “the top 1 percent of US colleges that move students from the bottom economic quintile to the top.” Queens College revels in and publicizes itself as being one of the most diverse colleges in the nation, reflected in a student body where over 140 nationalities and 85 languages are repre-

sented. The problem is that black students continue to be underrepresented in CUNY’s top-tier colleges, including Queens College.

DIRECT ACTION

In 1969 black and Latino students occupied City College of New York (CCNY). The attendant publicity brought to light the extent to which the doors to several CUNY colleges were closed to them. At CUNY’s five most selective senior colleges in 1967, the undergraduate student bodies were 89 percent white, 5 percent black and 3 percent Puerto Rican. At Queens College, the student body was 92 percent white, 4 percent black and .5 percent Puerto Rican.

The CUNY Board of Trustees hurriedly adopted a more expansive “open admissions” policy, guaranteeing New York

students a seat in a community college and changing the admission requirements for senior colleges.

Between 1969 and 1972, the number of black students CUNY-wide leapt from 16,529 to 44,031. Puerto Ricans increased from 4,723 to 13,563. At Queens College, the number of black students increased from 1,494 to 2,156.

Above all else, open admissions was about access, which has always been about admission standards. In 1999, the Schmidt Commission, appointed by Mayor Rudy Giuliani, published its report “The City University of New York: An Institution Adrift,” which recommended that a critical goal for CUNY should be the cultivation of “flagship senior colleges” that could withstand

Continued on page 11

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Far-right attacks on faculty hurt us all

By JESSIE DANIELS

The orderly rhythm of my life was thrown into a tsunami of sustained chaos this fall when I was attacked online by the far right. The hate began pouring through my Twitter account, my website and my Facebook page. Finally, a deluge came through two email accounts, where I got hundreds of repulsive messages every day for over a month. The vitriol was several fathoms beyond uncivil, including messages calling me a whore, a disgrace to my alma mater UT-Austin, a “Jewess,” fat, a moron and a c*nt. My email inbox was flooded with rape threats, death threats and, for those who couldn’t be bothered to commit murder themselves, invitations to kill myself. As someone who survived the suicide of a parent, the suggestions that I kill myself were especially painful. It is disorienting when one’s email inbox, that intimate, integral part of work and life, fills with the effluvium that is the worst part of human nature. A great many also found the email addresses and phone numbers of my department colleagues, my dean, the provost and president of my college, acts that escalated the intensity of the attack by alarming the people I work with and insisting that I be fired.

WAR ON HIGHER ED

The experience was upsetting, not chiefly because I feared for my personal safety or loss of my job (I am a full professor and a PSC member), but because the angry people who took the time to send me a message are part of a war on public higher education (groups like Media Matters have listed more than a dozen major funders and conservative advocacy groups targeting American campuses). The increasing attacks on faculty are part of a well-funded and orchestrated campaign by the far right. Their strategy is to use social media to discredit academics and thereby devalue higher education.



Jessie Daniels of Hunter College says the attack on her is part of a campaign against academics.

Yet the organized, political nature of the attack got lost in the melee, as everyone, particularly college administrators, asked, “What did you say?” Such a question shifts the blame away from the attackers. And it misses the fact that social media is the weapon of choice of the far-right to target faculty. By threatening academic freedom, they aim to destroy public higher education – all the while, this is happening as states like Missouri and Iowa are attempting to strip tenure from faculty at public institutions.

My remarks that so inflamed the far right were in answer to a question from a friend and colleague who asked on Twitter: *For those who have lost family and friends for challenging white racism, how do you cope?* Because I was estranged from my father for the last two years of his life because of his racism and my opposition to it, I responded. You need to build new worlds for yourself, I said. Then, I said that in my experience, the white nuclear family was one of the most powerful forces upholding white supremacy. It was a state-

ment almost identical to one I’d written in my first book – *White Lies: Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality in White Supremacist Discourse* – about the way extremists framed the white family and how it resonates in popular culture. I went on to talk about racial wealth disparities, driven by home ownership and the intergenerational transfer of wealth within white families, something we’d just discussed in my Introduction to Sociology class. But on the mean streets of Twitter, this got cherry-picked by the far right as a call for “white genocide,” one of their favorite talking points, which ended up on FoxNews, Tucker Carlson, the UK-based *Daily Mail* and *New York Post*. For 10 years, I have had a fairly active presence on Twitter, with over 18,000 followers I was recently listed as the “14th most followed sociologist.” The main focus of my research is white supremacists online (*Cyber Racism: White Supremacy Online and the New Attack on Civil Rights*). In the past few years, I’ve also written about being a scholar in the digital era, including some about its perils. I wrote

that if an attack by the right wing “hasn’t happened to someone on your campus yet, chances are it will.” By my own estimate, then, it was only a matter of time before it was my turn. The chilling effect on academic freedom from such attacks is very real. I find myself speaking out much less often now, including on the GOP tax bill, a policy that ensures the intergenerational transfer of wealth within a handful of white families, precisely the point I was attacked for making.

Those who think that not being visible on social media will save them from such attacks deceive themselves. The foot soldiers in this war on higher education are well-funded and adept at taking routine facets of academic life – a class lecture, a graduation speech – and turning it into fodder for a targeted campaign. Faculty who are women, who identify as queer, who are people of color and, of course, who reject the right’s orthodoxy are vulnerable to attack. One far-right group has started a “film your Marxist professors” Facebook group and is enlisting students to surreptitiously record instructors with their cellphones.

RESPONDING TO THE RIGHT

In my current research, I’m following the ways the far right has been emboldened through the tweet storms of the current occupant of the White House, who regularly retweets white supremacists and gets his funding from the same billionaires fueling the far-right attacks on public higher education.

We must understand that the attacks on us are part of a systematic effort to destroy public higher education. Social media is used against faculty, and it is often the most vulnerable among us who are attacked. As a union, we must develop collective ways to support each other by making it clear that comments on social media should be protected as a form of academic freedom.

Jessie Daniels is a professor of sociology at Hunter College and the Graduate Center.

Daniels today could be you tomorrow.

A closing door?

Continued from page 10
comparison with the best public colleges across the nation. A major recommendation was to end all remedial education at the senior colleges and to outsource all remediation to the community colleges. The implementation of these recommendations, particularly that the SATs be required of freshman – but not transfer students – applying to senior colleges, resulted in what amounted to a front-door path and a side-door path for admission into senior colleges.

IMPACTING BLACK STUDENTS

The SAT requirement had a disparate impact on black students. Freshman enrollment of black students at Queens College fell from a high of 10.3 percent in 1990 to a low of 6.3 percent in 2014. In 2010, when admission standards were raised to their highest level, the ratio of applications to admissions was 1:10 for black applicants as

compared to 1:2 for white applicants.

On the other hand, transfer enrollment at Queens College rose from 19 percent of its entering students in 1974 to 56 percent by 2014. The transfer path into the selective colleges – the side door – quickly became the predominant admission path for black and Latino students. At Queens College in 2014, 68 percent of its black students and 75 percent of its Latino students entered as transfer students.

What difference does it make if a student enters the college as a freshman or as a transfer student? The answer is a significant difference, according to the Foundation of Excellence study commissioned by Queens College in 2012. Compared to freshmen who enroll in their first semester, transfer students are deprived of academic communities. They have more limited access to faculty, fewer support services and experience more difficulty getting into needed courses.

What actions have been taken by Queens College over the years to address the gross underrepresentation of black students?

There have been no studies centered on black students and no incentive packages like those developed for the Macaulay Honors College students. Queens College did hire a minority recruiter in 1986 and a director of minority affairs (yours truly) in 1993. Neither position had a budget. If there is any truth to the biblical precept that a man’s treasure is where his heart is, then one can only conclude that the heart of the college lies elsewhere.

LACK OF ACTION

Unlike past years, the 2017 Middle States Team Report to the Commission on Higher Education failed to provide any recommendation that would have required that the underrepresentation of black students be addressed by the next review. Nor did Queens College address the underrepresentation of black students in its recommendations for itself. Instead, in its conclusion the Middle States Report declared that “your diversity and the transformational impact you have on your students are your biggest assets.” Clearly, diversity no longer means what it historically has meant at CUNY.

How would the students in 1968 who stormed what they perceived as CCNY’s

“shut doors” judge CUNY’s success at opening those doors in 2014? CUNY-wide they would see a huge increase in the percentage of black students (26 percent), a plummeting of white students (now 18 percent), and a sharp increase in the percentage of Asian, and other students of color.

A closer look would reveal that black students are concentrated in the “second” tier senior colleges (23 percent) versus (12 percent) in the first tier. On the other hand, they would observe that white students make up only 28 percent of students in the community colleges. Finally, they would observe that black and Latino students are most often admitted by the side entrance, and too frequently fail to be admitted into CUNY’s best institutions and programs because of supposedly race-neutral criteria. Surely they would protest the heavy reliance on SAT scores.

It is time to modify the admissions practices that have resulted in this underrepresentation of black and Latino students. It is time to put the lie to a diversity that is not inclusive of all. Is it time to sound the clarion again?

Maureen Pierce-Anyan is the Director of Minority Student Affairs at Queens College.

‘Two-tier’ CUNY is not acceptable.



15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

Train a new activist

Have you already signed a new blue membership card? And have you already asked a colleague on campus to sign one? If so, that's great. Now it's time to take the next step: train a new membership activist.

Do a simple role play – help your colleague learn how to

approach other members and agency shop fee payers. A practice interaction will help your colleague explain to others why it is so important for everyone to sign a new membership card for the union to maintain strength in the face of *Janus v. AFSCME*.

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FIGHTING BACK

Austerity can be beaten

By **BARBARA BOWEN**
PSC President

"I almost wept." That was how one Lehman College professor responded to the contractual teaching load reduction.

There was no need to ask why. The reduction in the teaching load changes a fundamental condition of work for full-time faculty. But it also changes how the union is positioned to take on other challenges to the assumption that CUNY will always be poor – especially the campaign for \$7,000 per course for adjuncts.

The teaching load reduction agreement phases in a change in the number of hours full-time faculty are contractually required to spend in the classroom – and therefore the number of hours they cannot spend doing everything else: mentoring students, writing recommendations, developing their own work as scholars. Even though not every full-time faculty member will instantly see his or her teaching load reduced by three hours, the change represents recognition by CUNY management that the current teaching load sabotages our ability to do our jobs. Full-time faculty will be more productive with a lower contractual teaching load because we will be able to devote more time to our students' work and our own. The reduction will change full-time faculty's professional lives, make CUNY more competitive nationally and deeply benefit our students.

A WIN FOR STUDENTS

The reduction will create more time for our own research and scholarship, the fruits of which we bring into our classrooms. CUNY students will have greater access to the kind of mentoring, guidance and individual support that is the norm in better-funded colleges and for higher-income students. Multiple studies nationally about time spent with students suggest that reducing the teaching load will have a measurable effect on students' ability to stay in college and graduate with the degrees they seek.

Those are huge gains, and they are the reason the union fought so tenaciously for the reduction. But I heard something else in the Lehman professor's response. I think she was registering that we had finally beaten a condition of austerity.



Hundreds of PSC members rallied in December demanding major contract gains, including \$7,000 per course per semester for adjuncts.

At a time when almost all industries, including higher education, are being defined by speed-up and when public higher education managers focus more on quantity than quality, a reduction in the contractual teaching load goes gloriously against the grain. It signals that austerity can be beaten, that an aspirational demand can be achieved. As we press to achieve what some of our critics call unrealistic goals – like the proposed increase to \$7K per course for adjuncts – we should learn the lessons of this fight.

How did the PSC achieve a goal it pursued for over 30 years? We organized; we used the power of the union and we didn't give up.

A LONG CAMPAIGN

You will see on pages 6 and 7 of this issue some of the milestones in our campaign. (And it's also worth reading, in this context, about the progress in implementing another major accomplishment of the last contract, advances for HEOs, described on page 9.) The current PSC leadership started campaigning for the teaching-load reduction in the 2000-2002 contract, and we made the first inroads there, for two colleges with anomalous loads, City Tech and Staten Island. Then full-time faculty at colleges throughout CUNY, but especially at the community colleges, organized, met,

pressed their presidents, demanded change. Years of organizing followed, with an exceptional effort at City Tech, a senior college that had had a community college teaching load. The strategic, collaborative efforts of full-time faculty at City Tech, accompanied by beautiful testimony about what the change would mean for their students, resulted in a breakthrough in 2013.

VARIOUS TACTICS

Heartened by these victories, and as the fight for the last contract heated up, the union organized scores of faculty – and several students – who testified at City Hall and the CUNY Board, bearing witness to the way the high teaching load prevented us from serving students as we should. Members on campuses demonstrated in support. PSC bargaining team members and staff spent hundreds of hours determining the cost of different ways of implementing a teaching load reduction, and had these numbers ready for final contract negotiations. Thousands of faculty members sent messages to Chancellor Milliken in a single weekend as the last round of bargaining came to a close, demanding that a reduction in the teaching load be part of the deal. More than 200 department chairs later sent a letter calling on the university to implement the change.

\$7K, teaching load challenge austerity

What finally turned the tide was the strike authorization vote. The 92 percent vote gave the PSC bargaining team the ability to say, and be believed, that we would not settle without progress on the teaching-load demand. CUNY management knew they had to take us seriously. Every person who voted "yes" on that question, and every member who urged other members to vote, gave power to the bargaining team. It was your organized action, supported by union resources and years of grassroots member-driven organizing, that enabled us to accomplish something that had eluded the PSC for 30 years. Our victory flies in the face of every claim that austerity is the only future for public higher education.

THE BATTLE CONTINUES

The battle is not over. We will have to continue to press college presidents to add the new contractual reduction to any reassigned time they currently allocate. The union has already called on the city and the state for the funds to hire full-time faculty to teach the additional courses, and we have publicly asserted that some of those positions be dedicated to current adjuncts.

The battle is not over for other members of the bargaining unit, either. Where is the logic in a system that acknowledges that full-time faculty need more time to be able to give individual attention to students and then staffs half the courses with part-time faculty, many of whom have no paid office hours at all? And where is the logic of acknowledging that students need more guidance, but failing miserably to provide an adequate number of advisers or counselors?

One victory, even a major victory, does not resolve all contradictions. What's important is that working together, as a union, allows us to take on an austerity condition and win.

So on the eve of a campaign for the next contract, a campaign that includes an even more ambitious demand – \$7K for adjuncts – we should be invigorated by the teaching-load agreement. The campaign wasn't quick and it wasn't easy, but it shows that when we pool our resources, pay our dues and claim our right to be union members we have much more power than when we stand alone. The teaching-load victory is an assertion that CUNY students do deserve time with their professors, that working-class and poor students, immigrants and students of color are entitled to the same level of support their richer counterparts take for granted.

We can make that assertion and make it count because we are part of a union. The next time you are asked to affirm your union membership and pledge to keep paying your dues, think about this victory and think about the power we need in the fights to come. Say yes.

Dave Sanders