

Conducting PSC New-Hire Orientations and Individual Conversations — August 2018

We offer these suggestions as a guide to what can be covered in orientations for new hires at CUNY. Many of you have a lot of experience doing orientations but since we will be running many more than in the past, more PSC leaders will now be involved. The manner and style in which this information is covered can vary depending, among other things, on the title and time allotted for the discussion. We suggest that you not spend time on how things were before Janus (fee payers, reimbursements, etc.) but instead focus on what our strong union and strong union contract offer new employees. Remember, have everyone sign in (or get a copy of the sign-in sheet) and leave time for questions that are directly related to the PSC. If members wish to talk about their personal situations it is best to take advantage of that interest by asking them to become a member and schedule a follow up meeting for a 1-on-1 conversation. Be sure to hand in all blue cards IMMEDIATELY and report back to the chapter chair and to the PSC organizer. We know that you will make the most of this opportunity to build union membership and strength!

Introduction:

- Welcome to your union, the Professional Staff Congress, and to your PSC chapter at ____ College. You are fortunate to be working in a union environment, one that has a long tradition of fighting for our rights and benefits on a city-wide level and locally, here at ____ College. Despite the recently decided Janus Supreme Court case, the PSC is stronger than ever. Powerful corporate interests were behind the case and they are intent on weakening and defunding public sector unions, lessening our political and earning power, and diminishing the quality of public higher education. In order to stay strong, we ask you to join the PSC community on your campus by signing up to be a member today!
- There is not enough time to go through **all** of the PSC contractual rights and benefits but we want to introduce you to your union contract, our structure and our city-wide and campus campaigns. All of the provisions and protections that your contract offers you were hard fought. Right now, we are again in contract bargaining and we aim to retain all past benefits—including things like salary steps. And, we want to make new gains!
- We will have a Q+A at the end but if you have questions about your new position, we would like to set up a separate time to meet with you. We look forward to you becoming a member **today**. **The university employs you, the union protects you!**

What is the PSC?

- We are a union of 30,000 covering all professional staff and faculty titles at CUNY. We are one of the largest locals affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) on the national level and with NYS United Teachers (NYSUT) on the state level. Our membership is at its highest ever for all titles. Full-timers are at nearly 96%; part-time membership grew by several thousand over the past year to nearly two-thirds of all part-timers and is stronger than ever.
- PSC is a member-driven union based on the principles of advancing the professional lives of its members by negotiating and enforcing our PSC/CUNY contract, a collective bargaining agreement. Beyond that, **we fight for State and City funding for CUNY** because we are funded by both entities. We also campaign around issues that will build a better university and provide an affordable quality education for all CUNY students.

- You are a part of our bargaining unit and through our contract, we fight to improve the terms and conditions of your work, including the health and safety of your workplace. Union representatives and staff will provide you with advice when you ask and will file a complaint or grievance on your behalf should that become necessary.

Our local PSC chapter:

- Here at ____ College, we also organize and represent you locally. We hold union meetings for faculty and staff, have labor management meetings with the President, and launch campaigns about our issues.
- Our next chapter meeting (or HEO or CLT) is on _____. Part-time faculty, full-time faculty and professional staff (HEOs, CLTs and other titles) are welcome to attend campus chapter meetings.
- *[Discuss details of your chapter's past and present issues, struggles, and campaigns. Workload, safety and health, etc. If your chapter has a social media presence and/or a local website, introduce them. Provide chapter handouts - see below.]*

PSC structure and dues:

- Each faculty member is part of a PSC campus chapter; each professional staff member is part of a cross-campus (University-wide) HEO or CLT chapter.
- Each PSC chapter has delegates (1 per 100 members) who attend open Delegate Assembly (DA) meetings at the union once a month. The DA is the policy-making body of the union. The 27 general officers of the union comprise its Executive Council. The names of your delegates and all elected representatives can be found on the PSC website.
- Dues are 1.05% for full timers and 1% for part timers. Right now, **union membership is at an all-time high** because of the PSC's recent "Sticking to the Union" organizing campaign. The Janus Supreme Court case was intended to break union power but union members across the country have stepped up to defend our organizations so please join your union today! It makes sense in every way!
- New employees should use the PSC website to get news/updates, find the contract and salary schedules, and learn what different committees of the union are up to.

Why be a member?

- Strong membership ensures that the PSC is able to maintain and strengthen current rights and benefits and win new, strong contracts with raises and broader benefits. In order to continue to offer all that we do, we need new hires to join with their PSC campus community and become members.
- Strong membership allows the union to continue to advocate politically for increased funding for CUNY, for free tuition, against austerity cutbacks and for a better university.
- When you become a member, you can fully participate in the union. You may vote in chapter elections, vote on contract ratification join us in contract actions and run for office in the PSC.
- Some of NYSUT and AFT's benefits are offered only to members (catastrophic medical insurance, auto, home, life insurance.) Health insurance is provided through the NYC Employee Benefits Program to all eligible employees. The PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund provides supplemental benefits to all employees who receive health insurance. The PSC is involved in stabilizing and increasing health and Welfare Fund benefits; we have won increased investment in the Welfare Fund in each contract.

- Strong membership allows us to continue to build strong alliances with community-based organizations, student groups and other unions in order to advance our common goals.
- Like you, thousands of your CUNY colleagues have chosen the union because they know that by joining forces and resources **we gain power as a union that we would never have alone.**

Where do we stand now?

- Currently has its highest membership ever, PSC Full time membership is nearly 96% and part time membership is at nearly two-thirds. Because we have the collective power that union membership creates, the PSC has negotiated salary increases, back-pay and annual salary steps.
- For full-time faculty: Union power won 24 hours of reassigned time for junior faculty, paid parental leave, salary steps, sabbaticals at 80% pay, and a reduced teaching load.
- For professional staff, union power has won salary differentials, paid parental leave, administrative tenure called 13.3b for HEOs, a professional development fund, salary steps and salary parity for many titles with full-time faculty.
- For part-time faculty: Union power has made breakthroughs by negotiating stable health insurance for graduate employees and for eligible adjuncts, as well as paid office hours, three-year contracts for teaching adjuncts. And now we are in a monumental fight for fair pay for adjuncts—\$7K per course.

Conclusion: The rights and benefits that come with this job are the result of decades of PSC involvement and collective action. We can only retain these victories and win further gains if we join together in our union! We are now in the midst of bargaining our next contract. We need strong membership numbers in order to continue to win good contracts and protect the right we have won! Join today and become an *active* member of the Professional Staff Congress!

Always feel free to contact the Professional Staff Congress with questions or concerns:

phone: 212-354-1252

website: psc-cuny.org

FB: @PSC.CUNY

Twitter: @PSC_CUNY

Handouts for New Hires (some of which are still in production):

- Blue card if not signed and updated membership brochure
- Chapters should create: 1-page handouts with contact info that includes general PSC contact info, chapter EC members, grievance counselor, social media accounts and local chapter website. List upcoming PSC meetings if scheduled. (This should also be on the PSC bulletin board.)
- Clarion, PSC buttons, stickers
- Attendance sheet asking for contact information and sign up sheets for specific union activities, information on our legislative work, 7K campaign, contract campaign... .
- Flier for Sept 27th contract activity
- As relevant: HEO handbook, CLT handbook, adjunct and junior faculty “What You Need to Know” one-pagers.