

Clarion

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



OCTOBER 2001



REBUILDING Time to invest in public life

Austerity can't give us a secure future. We need to rebuild in many ways.

PAGE 10



CUNY & THE WTC DISASTER

Above, looking south from Borough of Manhattan Community College on the afternoon of September 11. Every CUNY campus and work site was touched in some way by the destruction of the World Trade Center. As the dust settled, students and those who work at CUNY came together to mourn and help each

other try to comprehend what had happened. The college closest to the towers, BMCC, remained closed until October 1, while the CUNY Research Foundation was forced to relocate to a new building. But the biggest dislocations were internal, in the way we think and feel. **REPORTS ON PAGES 2 - 4**

ESL AT CUNY

What's behind the decline?

More immigrants moved to NYC in the '90s - but students studying English as a Second Language are disappearing from CUNY's senior colleges. **PAGE 8**



BENEFITS

Health plan deadline

If you want to change your health insurance plan, the deadline is October 31. Plus news about new benefits for prescription drugs and mental health. **PAGE 9**

HOSTOS

Arrests dismissed

As students and faculty grapple with curriculum issues, Hostos College officials try to repeal the First Amendment. A judge says it's still in effect. **PAGE 7**

POETRY

Four by Kimiko Hahn

Four poems from different times and places by Kimiko Hahn, professor of English at Queens College and *Clarion's* new poetry editor. **PAGE 10**

Checks sent out but phone lines down

WTC disaster affects TRS

The Teachers' Retirement System (TRS), based in lower Manhattan, was closed for over a week after the destruction of the World Trade Center. September checks were mailed out on time but had to be based on August amounts. Adjustments will be made in October. Cost-of-living increases due in September could not be included and will be paid retroactively in October checks.

TRS office phone lines were still

out of service when *Clarion* went to press. TRS has set up a small number of phones off-site, at 1-888-8-NYC-TRS, but this temporary phone center has no access to individual records.

The best way to do business with TRS is by mail. Send forms by certified mail to TRS, 40 Worth St., NY, NY 10013, and the postmark will be honored as the date received. You can find forms to print or more in-

formation on the TRS Web site at www.trs.nyc.ny.us. (If you're not used to using the Web, ask for help at your public library.) You can also visit the TRS office in person, at 40 Worth Street between Church and West Broadway. *Be sure to bring photo identification.*

If you need emergency help with a TRS pension, call Clarissa Gilbert Weiss at the PSC Central Office, at 212-354-1252. — PH



Damage to CUNY's Fiterman Hall in Lower Manhattan.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WRITE TO: CLARION/PSC, 25 W. 43RD STREET, FIFTH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10036. E-MAIL: PSC-EDITOR@ATT.NET. FAX: 212-302-7815.

Distance learning at CUNY is not for profit

● Last issue's article by Larry Hanley, about commercial applications for academic materials on the Internet, has little application to CUNY. CUNY is not now and cannot ever be a "for-profit" anything, let alone a commercial "Internet university." There is nothing in the mission statement and charter of CUNY that provides for conducting commercial enterprises.

CUNY's mission statement does call for providing equal access to learning opportunities for diverse communities, and distance learning provides another means to do that. For some learners, distance learning is the most efficient and perhaps the only possible means.

This semester in my online classes I have: 1) a paralyzed woman who operates her computer with a voice control program and, at times, a mouthstick; 2) a woman who uses a wheel chair; 3) a woman who is bound to her home by four small children; 4) a woman who is in England.

For me, and I think for CUNY, distance education is and will be primarily about access and certainly not about commerce. As for the pedagogy involved in distance learning modalities and the achievement of learning outcomes, the article did not seriously touch on those at all and they are matters for very serious discussion.

— Philip Pecorino, QCC

A public voice

● The recent postcard campaign raised morale and taught students about the governing conditions of their lives and education. The charge to "write your congressman" has a firm hold on the American political imagination. So the public and the politicians can see that we took the prescribed steps in acting as a constituency.

But is this enough? Our leadership and the members have to am-

plify our recent efforts. Suggestions: an advertising campaign, with photographs showing the PSC at work "educating" the politicians about the state of our university, and continued pressure on media outlets to cover aspects of our struggle to rebuild CUNY. Clearly the politicians — Pataki, Bruno, and Silver — demonstrate remarkable cynicism in their budget "games." The PSC must appeal to people over the heads of such politicians.

Writing your congressman is only one way to voice our needs and represent our values. Today's forms of political expression are often compromised. We can offset this by using a wide variety of approaches: a public voice with many registers and many tones.

— Charles Molesworth, Queens College

Looking good

● The new *Clarion* is well down the right road: attractive, readable, substantive, focused and open to contention. You've struck a nice balance between Big Ideas and the Nitty-Gritty. Keep it up!

— Jim Perlstein, BMCC

Congratulations

● Congratulations on the transformation of *Clarion*. It's not only lively and attractive but serves to maintain the spirit of militancy and democratic participation — both so necessary for a union.

— Israel Kugler, PSC Deputy President Emeritus

Worth defending

● Ashes are still smoldering over the former World Trade Center, ashes that include the incinerated remains of people who had lived, loved, worked and studied in this city of which we are so proud. Wounded to the core, we have risen to hold and help each other

grieve and survive.

At the same time, we are asked to mobilize to defend our way of life. But this involves sometimes contradictory things. For workers, the call to patriotism seems to mean taking their pink slips of unemployment directly to the malls to exhibit consumer confidence. For those still employed, there are calls for austerity, while CEOs continue to claim large bonuses. Airlines are bailed out, but schools remain underfunded.

Our union must resist falling into the trap of such hypocrisy. It is not selfish to demand a decent contract. It is fair to us, and it is a service to the children of the stricken population of New York. Enhancing the public sector and distributing wealth more fairly is a way of life worth defending, both at home and abroad. In the end, it will defeat our enemies better than any other means.

— Renate Bridenthal, Brooklyn College

US not at fault

● After the September 11 tragedy, I feel not only profound sympathy for the victims but also moral outrage at such profoundly criminal acts. For anyone to attempt to hold the US responsible is to perpetuate the damage the attacks themselves inaugurated.

It is also to demonstrate a deep lack of understanding for the complex forces and motivations that drive terrorism generally and this act in particular. This is not just an instance of class warfare, or fear of globalization, or injured pride. What drove the hijackers is a complex stew of historical circumstance, infantile political instincts, and a religious bigotry that embroils all socioeconomic layers and covers many cultures.

Furthermore, to hold the US responsible is to infantilize the terrorists themselves. There is an in-

sufferable smugness in thinking that we alone are capable of being responsible for our actions while the Third World terrorist is not. In a curious way, to bring those responsible to justice is to treat them with greater respect than is any attempt to lay blame on the US. It is one thing to attempt to understand motivation and another to assess blame. The hijackers and their protectors deserve the blame even as we attempt to understand their place in the world.

— Michael Barnhart, Kingsborough

Everyday people

● As we mourn the dead from the terrorist attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon, we must nevertheless take stock of the continual victimization of workers throughout the world and the retreat of the secular welfare state.

The attack may heighten neglect among those in the U.S. and abroad who create, construct, and maintain the industries, farms and services — everyday people who punch the clock and answer the bell. At the same time, this terrorist attack and the resultant counter-terrorism will further weaken the nation-states' responsibilities for the health, education and welfare of their peoples. As we seek to respond, we will move ever further from our democratic and social welfare principles that emerged from the Great Depression and World War II. Governments and legislatures will become further colonized by employer demands, fundamentalist critiques, and war-making budgets.

We must defend the role of a secular state, independent from the uncompromising claims of corporate interests and the siren song of moral certainties. Academic labor must work for a state that acts as a trustee for the nameless people who create the wealth that is

defended on their behalf, but for which they are increasingly uncompensated and unrewarded.

— Peter Ranis, York College & Graduate Center

For peace

● Montauk is beautiful in the early morning. But when I jog on the beach I see the fish that recreational anglers have just caught. The fish lie on the sand, gasping for oxygen.

The commercial fishing boats go out to sea, a picturesque sight. But many of the boats use longlines, fishing lines that are 20 to 30 miles long with hundreds of baited hooks. The crews retrieve the fish they are after and discard the rest. Longlines are used around the world, depleting entire fish populations.

During Iraq's war with Iran, Saddam Hussein used poison gas on his own people. We supported Iraq but sold arms to both sides. When we fought Saddam, he killed people and wildlife with huge fires and oil spills. We shot his retreating soldiers in the back.

Terrorists have killed thousands of New Yorkers. We mourn, and we go after the likely culprit, Osama bin Laden, whom we trained to fight Russia. It's not yet clear what our other targets will be.

Alliances shift, but the killing goes on and on. Fish, mammals, trees, humans — it doesn't seem to matter. It's as if killing has a mind of its own. It's time to work for peace.

— Bill Crain, City College

Write to Clarion

Letters should be no more than 150-200 words in length, and are subject to editing.

CUNY & WTC tragedy

By PETER HOGNESS

Entire University is affected

Any reckoning of how CUNY was affected by the World Trade Center disaster must start with the human toll.

The stories came slowly, one person at a time. A HEO at John Jay who lost his son, a firefighter like himself. A computer science student from LaGuardia, who died while working at his job at Cantor Fitzgerald. A lawyer who worked as a continuing education professor at Baruch.

Eighty-one alumni, former and current students from the College of Staten Island, 111 from John Jay. The University was still adding up its loss a month after the disaster. "We need not await the final tally of death and destruction," said Trustee Benno Schmidt, "to know that the City University of New York has suffered the greatest loss of life within its academic family from a single cataclysm of any university in American history."

Less tragic but still shocking was the physical effect on CUNY's buildings. Fiterman Hall, home to the CUNY Research Foundation (see page 5) and 39 BMCC classrooms, was damaged when WTC Number Seven collapsed. Large chunks were torn away from its façade, and several stories of debris were piled up against its side. Fiterman sustained severe structural damage and may have to be torn down.

The Centers for Worker Education on Hudson Street were closed until September 24, while BMCC did not re-open until October 1. Lower Manhattan was shut down for days, and BMCC was taken over as a staging area for the search-and-recovery effort. The acrid smoke could be smelled throughout the city, as far away as Queens College and LaGuardia.

Emotionally and intellectually, every college was profoundly affected. Special crisis counseling services were quickly organized. College-wide meetings to share thoughts and feelings, memorials and teach-ins were held throughout

the university.

The day after the attack, LaGuardia Community College held a moment of silence and a panel discussion on political violence and world peace. A September 20 memorial service at Baruch featured readings from Jewish, Moslem, Protestant and Catholic religious leaders. That afternoon, students at Hunter held a "Candlelight Vigil for Peace." One of the speakers was James Creedon, a Hunter student who was working as a paramedic half a block away from WTC Number One when it began to collapse.

On September 25, the University Faculty Senate sponsored a program on dealing with the September 11 attack as teachers. One of the speakers, Central Asia specialist Stuart Schaar of Brooklyn College, has created a Web site with teaching resources (academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/tiiap/history/schaar/). Queens College Director of Counseling Elizabeth McCaffrey noted that there had been an increase in harassment of people thought to look Arab or Moslem, including incidents on CUNY campuses. "It's important for us to make it clear that this type of behavior is unacceptable," McCaffrey said. (See page 12.)

Throughout CUNY, faculty grappled with how to respond in the classroom – especially at BMCC, where so many students had seen the destruction first-hand.

"It was probably the most intense class I've taught in 35 years," said Bill Friedheim, associate professor of social science. "While we were closed, I thought constantly about what that first class was going to be like. Up to the last minute I wasn't sure what I was going to do." After writing together, Friedheim had the class break into small groups. Discussion focused on the terrible things students had witnessed, and virtually every student spoke. When the class came back together, there was passionate discussion about racial profiling and civil rights.

September 11 has changed Friedheim's plans for the rest of his course: "It's on early American history, and I've decided to spend much more time on our founding documents and the tension between freedom and order."

All in all, the re-opening of BMCC was something of a minor miracle. Surplus equipment was donated by colleges and universities as far away as Kalamazoo, Michigan and Normal, Illinois. BMCC staff worked with volunteers from unions in the building trades to build over a dozen new classrooms in a few days' time to replace the space that was lost in Fiterman Hall. On opening day faculty and staff greeted students at the subway, handing out maps directing them to the one entrance that was open.

"Every single person at BMCC said how glad they were to be back," commented PSC Associate Executive Director Mary Ann Carlese. "You could see what CUNY meant to the community, how important it is to continue the work we do."



Looking down West Broadway on September 11, towards Fiterman Hall three blocks away.

Susan Lerner

"I put her head on my shoulder...."

Salar Abdoh is an adjunct in the English Department at BMCC. He came to the US from Iran with his father at the age of 14. His mother, sister and a younger brother live in Iran.

Abdoh spoke with Clarion in October. He is the author of The Poet Game, published in 1999 – a novel about an agent of the Iranian secret service who attempts to prevent a second attack on the World Trade Center. At 8:45 am on September 11, Abdoh was teaching in the BMCC annex in Fiterman Hall – across the street from WTC Number Seven.

There was a very loud noise, but not so loud you'd think something had blown up. You hear loud noises a lot in New York City. We couldn't see much out the window. We saw paper being blown down the street, but it didn't register.

Then a very harassed-looking man – I don't know where he came from – ran in and said to get out in the street.

It was very crowded outside and I lost track of about half of my students. When we saw people falling, that's when some students really started to lose it. They just started weeping. One student, I just physically turned her around, put her head on my shoulder so she wouldn't see any more.

Almost as soon as I did that the second plane hit. When we saw the

ball of flame, I knew what had happened. I felt strangely self-conscious: "You have come to live in the time of your own fiction."

After the flame came, the force of that explosion made windows start to burst all around. That's when people got really scared and everyone started to run. I lost my eyeglasses in the mayhem.

I was going north on West Broadway when the first tower fell. I have no words to describe it. This livery cab driver, an African man, was screaming to the heavens. "Jesus why have you done this to us?" Just screaming, over and over, I thought he was going to have a heart attack. I went up to him and grabbed him just like I'd done to my student, to calm him down, and it did a little but he was still really upset.

I didn't know what to do. I came home and there were all these calls and everyone was glued to the TV.

A couple of days later some students began to call me to tell me their situations. I called a few more who'd been with me that day. Two ended up hospitalized for trauma. One basically had a nervous breakdown. She can't leave her apartment, much less come to the city. I had one former student from Israel call. All she did was weep. I didn't know what to say. Afterwards I found myself yelling at the wall, "God, I'm not trained to deal with this!" I called Ruth Misheloff, vice



Salar Abdoh

Susan Lerner

chair of the department, and she gave me the number for the counseling department.

The first class after we came back, we only talked about what happened. They were shaken up and didn't mind talking about it. Since then we've gone back to normal but there's always a point at which we almost automatically go back to that. And what they think about what's happening in the US, and in the world.

I feel sort of helpless about a lot of what's probably going to happen. The premise of my book was the idea of a group of Moslem radicals trying to draw America into a protracted war in the Middle East, thereby strengthening the hand of the radicals in that part of the world. This is a real possibility.



Imam Sheik Ahmed Dewidar (left) and Rabbi Ian Azizolaholf (right) talk after memorial at Baruch. Dewidar's assistant is at center.

Peter Hogness

PSC leadership and members respond to disaster

Solidarity with others, action on CUNY problems

By PETER HOGNESS

Like everyone else in New York City, PSC members and staff at first responded to the terrorist attack of September 11 with shock and disbelief. But the union moved quickly to support those who had been most directly hurt, and to protect its members in the days that followed.

"Union and management worked together to solve some tough problems under difficult conditions," said PSC President Barbara Bowen.

The PSC made an immediate contribution to the NYC Central Labor Council's relief fund, and decided to set up its own fund as well. A resolution at the September Delegate Assembly (DA) expressed the union's sorrow and solidarity with those who had lost people they loved.

Many members and staff volunteered for relief efforts. An appeal on a PSC e-mail group led Debra Bergen, Director of Contract Administration, to work at a Labor Council telephone hotline. The hotline (800-506-0036) connects people with the services they need, such as a woman Bergen spoke with whose



PSC President Barbara Bowen (left) talks with Cheryl Fish (center) and Ruth Misheloff (right) on their first day back at BMCC.

health insurance was in danger after her husband was thrown out of work by the disaster. (Call the same number to volunteer.)

Steve Dauz and David Gechlik of LaGuardia's Mentoring Program worked at a Red Cross shelter in Chinatown. The shelter provided food, showers, a place to stay – and

dust masks. "The cloud of smoke was still so thick, people came to us begging for masks," said Gechlik. "Some people had not had time to pick up wallets, purses or any necessities."

In response to a request from the Uniformed Fire Officers Association, PSC staff identified members

with counseling skills who could help surviving family members. The PSC also shared its office space with staff from DC 37, the city workers' union representing many CUNY employees, who were displaced from DC 37's headquarters on Barclay Street.

At the same time, the PSC was taking care of its basic responsibilities as a union. "In the face of such grief, anything else can seem trivial," said Bowen. "But we wanted to make sure none of our members suffered additional stress from loss of income."

The PSC negotiated with CUNY management to guarantee that no one would be penalized because of inability to get to work in the days immediately after the tragedy, and that BMCC and Research Foundation employees got their paychecks on time. Union and management worked out a revised academic calendar for BMCC, which allows the semester to end before December 31.

Information was critically important in the wake of September 11 and often hard to come by. "The PSC Web site became a centralized source of CUNY-related information, on classes, closings, re-openings, counseling, paychecks, emergency data, vigils, teach-ins and relief efforts," said union Webmaster Bill Friedheim of BMCC. Information on the Web site (www.psc-cuny.org) was sometimes updated two or three times a day.

Union health-and-safety officers and chapter activists made sure that air quality was carefully inspected before the re-openings of BMCC and the Centers for Worker Education on Hudson Street. Asbestos levels inside these buildings and on the streets were found to be within federal safety limits, and BMCC reopened as scheduled on October 1.

PSC Health and Safety Officer Joan Greenbaum emphasized that this did not mean health issues were

no longer a concern. "First, not everyone is the same," she told *Clarion*. "Faculty and staff with prior respiratory problems will be more likely to have problems." Greenbaum encouraged members to keep a "health log," recording how they feel. "Dust and debris can cause respiratory irritation even when not toxic," she explained, noting that many at BMCC have experienced scratchy throats and irritated eyes. All problems should be reported to management, she said, as well as to BMCC PSC chapter health-and-safety contacts Lisa Rose, Susan Price or Mike Vozick, or to chapter chair Jane Young.

Greenbaum said that there is a serious problem at BMCC: barges are being loaded with debris from the WTC site right next to the school on West Street. This puts dust into the air just yards from the new modular classrooms and from air intakes for BMCC's main buildings. "That loading site needs to be moved," Greenbaum said. CUNY management has agreed to its own tests of outdoor air; at press time the issue of the barges was unresolved.

Other actions by the PSC had to do with the union's place in our larger society. Another resolution passed by the DA called on members to "insist that CUNY be a safe harbor for people and ideas for our campuses and neighboring communities, providing spaces free from intimidation and violence" (see page 12).

The PSC also sponsored a discussion on October 3, on the attack of September 11 and its aftermath (see left). "As an academic union," said Executive Council member Nancy Romer, "we have a special responsibility to provide a forum for analysis of what has happened."

To make a donation to the PSC's relief fund, call Treasurer John Hyland at 212-354-1252.

"A chance to stop and think..."

On October 3, the PSC sponsored a forum on the WTC disaster. Speakers included Jed Abrahamian, distinguished professor of history at Baruch; Corey Robin, professor of political science at Brooklyn; Alisa Solomon, professor of journalism at Baruch; and William Tabb, professor of economics at Queens.

The forum also provided an opportunity to share approaches to teaching, with members invited to bring copies of materials being used in their classrooms.

Below are excerpts from the introduction by Frank Kirkland, chair of the Philosophy Department at Hunter, who served as moderator. Full text available from fkirklan@shiva.hunter.cuny.edu.

This evening the Professional Staff Congress offers us a special opportunity to take a collective breath, to speak candidly yet reasonably among ourselves about issues emanating from the events of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath. It provides an opportunity to find insight, alongside the continuous efforts to find survivors and bodies. It provides a chance to stop and think with others, while sustaining hope and dashing fear.

None of this is to suggest that what we do here tonight ranks with the heroic rescue efforts of our brethren at "Ground Zero" or with the complex security efforts of our

brethren responsible for public safety. At the same time, however, I do not believe intellectuals and teachers must submit to the city's and CUNY's characterization of faculty and staff as "non-essential personnel," which I have seen in official New York City and CUNY documents and pronouncements of recent weeks.

ESSENTIAL ROLE

If anything, as the American reality fully bears the features of a "work in progress," this is a time for the active creation, not just the protection, of peace and public safety. As intellectuals and teachers, we are essential to that effort.

As the nation's security concerns rise to inordinate levels of paranoia, this is a time for institutions to be more nurturing than the military or police, for institutional arrangements to be more respectful of human life. As intellectuals and teachers, we are essential to that effort.

As political leaders are subject to about-faces and pious mendacities, disdainful or fearful of the truth, this is a time for *more* reasoned critique and vigilant skepticism, not less. As intellectuals and teachers, we are essential to that effort.

In recent days, however, those who have attempted to engage in this line of defense have come under attack. Accusations of anti-Americanism, anti-Semitism, anti-

Islamism, and even appeasement and sedition have been foisted on them for seeking insight, for stopping and thinking, because that activity is alleged to be contrary to the sentiment of real outrage, contrary to the primacy of collective healing in the face of bereavement, contrary to the need for real security, contrary to the sentiment of even genuine patriotism. But the pursuit of reasons and critical insight into all the dimensions of this crisis is not necessarily at odds with any of these sentiments. Critical inquiry must go hand-in-hand with feeling, to better guide understanding of what is now swirling around us.

To accede to such accusations is to accede to the criminalization of one's views and to accept the role of a defendant submitting proof for the harmless and innocuous character of them. Pushed into the role of "the accused," the efforts to which we are essential, particularly in these times, come to a standstill.

We should not be in the business of criminalizing ideas, especially those of colleagues with whom we may disagree.

Tonight the PSC provides a forum for us to do what we do best – engage historical knowledge and embrace critical thought in order to broaden the public discussion and develop an informed analysis about issues surrounding September 11 and its aftermath.



PSC members Steve Dauz (left) and David Gechlik working at a Red Cross Shelter.

State budget picture uncertain

WTC disaster affects negotiations

By MICHAEL LUMELSKY

Negotiations over the New York State budget are in disarray after the World Trade Center disaster, and the prospect of winning new resources for CUNY is now uncertain.

In early August, Republican Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno and Democratic Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver joined forces to pass a so-called "bare-bones" budget – a version of Governor Pataki's own proposal that cut state spending to \$4 billion less than last year. The Legislature had hoped to focus public discontent on the governor and thus force him to accept a supplemental budget with a higher level of spending.

This stripped-down budget includes less money for CUNY than the University received last year. In response, the PSC launched a postcard campaign urging Bruno, Silver and Pataki to give CUNY the resources it needs. Over 50,000 postcards signed by faculty, staff and students were sent to the capitol in Albany, more than twice as many as the union's target. Thirty-seven thousand were personally delivered to Albany in a PSC lobbying visit on September 10.

At BMCC alone, PSC members collected 6,500 signed postcards. "We just couldn't give faculty enough cards to give out," said the vice chair of the PSC chapter, Bill Friedheim. "This was despite the logistical problems of starting a postcard campaign on August 27 – the first day of classes. But faculty, staff

and students fully understand the situation that the university system is in."

As at other campuses, a majority of the cards at BMCC were signed by students. "This shows the power of the alliance with students that we started to build last year, with 'Teach CUNY,'" said PSC Secretary Cecelia McCall. "Those cards represent a lot of votes."

Though the Legislature's high-stakes confrontation with Pataki made all calculations uncertain, the odds looked good for winning supplemental state funding for CUNY. But the state's political landscape was transformed by the terrorist attack on September 11. The Legislature immediately gave up on one of its main tactics for pressuring Pataki – withholding all of the "reappropriations" from last year's budget.

Spending bills often include authorization for funds to be used one or two years in the future; this money must be reauthorized each year or it cannot be spent. The "bare-bones" budget did not include any reappropriations, and in many cases these funds would have evaporated if not reauthorized by September 15. After the overwhelming losses on September 11, no one wanted to play "chicken" with vital programs, and the Legislature passed the reappropriations without dissent.

With state revenue projections in flux, it is unclear whether or not a supplemental budget will be adopted. "If a supplemental budget is passed, it will not be as generous as



A small fraction of the 50,000 postcards collected by the PSC.

it might have been a few weeks ago," said McCall. "Bruno and Silver took a gamble with the governor, and he called their bluff. We have said all along that the budget process should be more than three people in a room trying to agree on a revenue figure, and this shows the worst of what can happen."

CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein had planned CUNY's initial spending for the Fall semester on the assumption that the state would pass some sort of supplemental appropriation. At present, the university is therefore running on a "deficiency budget," says Goldstein – spending money it doesn't have. But CUNY management is not yet resorting to spending cuts, as the Legislature has not closed the door on this year's budget. Goldstein has

said he expects to find the money to cover all hiring commitments, and that existing searches should continue.

"The union is still pushing as hard as we can for a supplemental budget," said PSC Vice President Steve London. "When the Legislature reconvenes in mid-October, we will be there. But whatever happens this year, within a month we will have to start working to shape next year's spending plan."

"The PSC knew from the start that this would be a multi-year process," said London. "Even if we don't get new full-time lines and other items this year, we have gained enough political capital to get them in 2002." To win more funds for CUNY, London said, "we have to be in it for the long haul."

Campus Equity Week: October 28 – November 3

By KRISTIN LAWLER

The PSC's ongoing efforts to bring part-timers into the union and to negotiate aggressively on their behalf are part of a larger national and even international movement. From October 28 to November 3, that movement will organize coordinated activities on campuses all over the US and Canada in a campaign dubbed "Campus Equity Week."

"This week, part-timer issues will take the national stage," said Mary Ann Carlese, the PSC's director of organizing.

"Campus Equity Week is part of a long history of academic labor organizing," says a statement from the organizers. "For the past two decades, faculty in the US and Canada have struggled to organize local unions and have their issues addressed in collective bargaining. Through a series of conferences, internet networks and growing support from faculty organizations, a leadership dedicated to building an international movement of contingent faculty has emerged." This broad movement has organized Campus Equity Week around two simple messages: teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions, and equal work deserves equal pay.

Already, nearly thirty local unions and organizations have signed on as sponsors and endorsers, including the PSC and its national affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers.

The PSC, a leader in organizing part-time faculty, is organizing two main events. On Tuesday, October 30, a panel discussion on "Adjunct Equity in the University" will be held at the CUNY Graduate Center (see "Calendar" on page 6). Speakers will include Rich Moser, of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), who testified at the March 9 legislative hearing on securing unemployment and disability benefits for adjuncts; PSC Community College Officer Ingrid Hughes, an adjunct at BMCC and a leader in the PSC's "Strength in Numbers" campaign, PSC President Barbara Bowen, and adjunct activists from other universities.

November 1 has been declared "Adjunct Equity Day," and a CUNY-wide cultural event will be hosted by BMCC. Music, poetry and performance work by adjuncts will give voice to the need for equal treatment for part-timers. "Everyone's invited," said the PSC's Carlese. "It's a chance to socialize, become informed and join the struggle for part-timers' rights."

PSC and RF CUNY return to table

By DEBRA BERGEN

PSC Director of Contract Administration

After the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center, the building that held the CUNY Research Foundation (RF CUNY) was severely damaged and was declared structurally unsound, and may have to be torn down (see page 3). While every RF staff member is safe, the institution had to find a new home.

By September 24, the RF was open for business in its new location: at 555 West 57th Street, 11th floor. For all kinds of reasons, RF employees were glad to be there. Many said it was a relief to start getting back to normal, after all they had been through.

"It was just so hard working from home," said one RF staff member on his first day back. Work had not stopped just because the RF offices were closed: RF-funded research throughout CUNY was still going

Contract talks set to resume

on, and there were thousands of salaries to be paid. Off-site computer backup meant that the information was there, but dozens of people had to figure out how to get the job done without access to anything that had been in their offices.

Obviously these events put RF CUNY's collective bargaining on hold. The union and the Foundation plan to get back to hammering out a new labor agreement in mid-October.

Since the start of the RF negotiations in February 2001, the union has secured tentative agreement on some non-economic demands and has overcome the Foundation's initial refusal to hold any bargaining sessions at the PSC office. While some progress has been made, negotiations have often been difficult. Like CUNY's management at 80th

Street, RF officials are trying to impose a corporate model of management and the Foundation's proposals ask that the union make too many concessions. The Foundation wants to eliminate the entire disciplinary process from the union contract, and wants to remove ten titles from the bargaining unit. They also want givebacks in sick leave accruals and a doctor's note for even a one-day absence. RF management has not offered any economic proposal. (A full list of both the PSC's demands and the Foundation's proposals is available on the Web at www.psc-cuny.org.)

In an important demonstration of solidarity, PSC chapter chairs sent a joint letter to RF Executive Director Nina Peyser last spring to express their support for the RF-PSC bargaining team. It was a strong mes-

sage to send to RF management, showing that the RF's PSC chapter has the backing of researchers that the Foundation is supposed to serve.

The spring and summer brought several months of tough negotiations. At the last bargaining session of the summer, the union and the Foundation reached tentative agreement on some of the PSC's important time-and-leave demands concerning bereavement leave and an appeal process when an annual leave request is denied. There is also tentative agreement on improvements in the evaluation process.

All tentative agreements, of course, are subject to conclusion of an overall agreement and ratification by the RF's PSC membership. "With negotiations resuming, we hope that will be soon," said PSC Executive Director Debbie Bell. "In spite of the dislocations caused by September 11, we hope the attitude of RF management will be positive."

CALENDAR

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25 / 6:00-7:00 pm: Open discussion on the AFT's adjunct organizing drive at NYU. At the CUNY Graduate Center (34th St. and 5th Ave.), 9th floor.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30 / 6:00-8:00 pm: "Adjunct Equity in the University," a panel discussion for Campus Equity Week. At the CUNY Graduate Center (34th St. and 5th Ave.) in Room C-204/205.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1 / "Adjunct Equity Day," a CUNY-wide cultural event hosted at BMCC. For time of the afternoon event, call 212-869-1568 or check www.psc-cuny.org.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6 / Make sure to vote! To volunteer on a campaign, call Cecelia McCall or Chris Cage at the PSC office (212-354-1252).

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16-17 / 9:00 am: Conference at CUNY Grad Center on Globalization and Resistance. Discussion of the global justice movement including how it will be affected by the WTC tragedy. Speakers include Michael Hardt, Mike Davis, Manning Marable, Jeremy Brecher, Stanley Aronowitz, Barbara Bowen. \$25 / \$15 students, low-income. For info contact Heather Gautney (hgautney@ge.cuny.edu or 212-817-2000).

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20 / 10:00 am: Florida branch of the PSC Retirees Chapter meets the third Tuesday of every month at the South County Civic Center, 16700 Jog Road, in Delray Beach. For information, call Norma Newmark at 561-487-0431.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20 / TIAA-CREF rep available at PSC office for retirement counseling. To set a time call Linda Slifkin at 212-354-1252.

PSC picks candidates

Below are City Council candidates endorsed by the PSC in the November 6 general election. For information on PSC endorsements for mayor and other city-wide offices, check the union Web site (www.psc-cuny.org) or call the PSC Hotline (212-869-1568).

Manhattan: 2/Margarita López; 3/Christine Quinn; 6/Gale Brewer; 7/Robert Jackson; 9/Bill Perkins

Bronx: 12/Larry Seabrook; 17/José Marco Serrano

Queens: 19/Tony Avella; 20/John Liu; 21/Hiram Monserrate; 22/Peter Vallone, Jr.; 23/David Weprin; 24/Jim Gennaro; 29/Melinda Katz; 31/James Sanders; 32/Joseph Addabbo; 30/Elizabeth Crowley

Brooklyn: 36/AI Vann; 38/Angel Rodríguez; 43/Joanne Seminara; 48/Mike Nelson

Staten Island: 50/Libby Hikind

Union demands negotiations

PSC files to stop RRI awards

By **STEVE LONDON**
PSC First Vice President

In our contract negotiations, the PSC has been pressing for higher, more competitive salaries across the board while CUNY's salary demands focus on management discretion. In violation of the contract and New York State's Taylor Law, CUNY is now attempting to unilaterally impose one of its two main salary demands: discretionary compensation above established maximums. The PSC has been forced to act.

The PSC filed a grievance on July 2, 2001 to stop CUNY management from violating the contract by continuing to award Recruitment/Retention Initiative (RRI) compensation to CUNY instructional staff past the agreed-upon end date.

Typically, RRI compensation augments salary by adding \$10,000 or \$20,000 "above the maximums specified in the salary schedules for disciplines experiencing serious difficulties in recruitment and/or retention of highly qualified personnel." (June 25, 1998 Letter of Agreement) In 1998, the PSC and CUNY agreed, as part of the last round of contract negotiations, to allow management to award up to 100 RRIs during a two year period. The June 25, 1998 Letter of Agreement said that the RRI provision "will expire on July 30, 2000, unless renewed by the parties."



Members of the CUNY management contract negotiating team.

In the two years the agreement was operative, the CUNY Board of Trustees approved approximately 40 RRIs. Since the end of the agreement, about 34 additional RRIs have been awarded. It is these additional RRIs and any more CUNY is contemplating awarding that the union is concerned about.

The PSC learned this summer that management continued to give out RRIs in violation of the agreed upon end date. CUNY management made no attempt to inform the PSC they wished to renew the RRI agreement. In fact, CUNY included a RRI-type stipend as one of its current bargaining demands – leading the union to believe that CUNY wished to negotiate the RRI as part of this round of bargaining. In the union's

opinion, CUNY management is violating New York State's Taylor law in its attempt to bargain individually with members of the bargaining unit and to unilaterally impose one of its bargaining demands.

The PSC supports recruitment and retention of the highest caliber faculty for CUNY. In our current collective bargaining with the management, the union is seeking significant salary increases, including increases at the top of the salary scale, to ensure that CUNY pays salaries that are competitive with other research universities. But CUNY's attempt to unilaterally impose one of its salary bargaining demands undermines the union's attempt to raise top salaries for everyone. If CUNY is allowed to ignore our step

system in determining compensation, then these benefits won't be undermined through collective bargaining will be undermined.

The PSC has and will continue to attempt to resolve this issue through negotiations. We recognize that special market circumstances exist and we are willing to address these in the context of other needs. If negotiations fail, however, we have asked CUNY to waive the preliminary grievance step so that this issue may be immediately moved to arbitration for resolution. CUNY, however, has not agreed to forgo the preliminary grievance step.

By continuing to offer RRI compensation after the explicit sunset date of the program and failing to seek negotiations with the union to renew the RRI agreement, CUNY has put at risk the continuation of RRIs for some. One effect, if the grievance is successful, could be that the RRI portion of salaries will be rescinded for those approved by the Board of Trustees for RRIs after the July 30, 2000 sunset date.

It is the PSC's hope that no one will see a reduction in their annual salary. We have filed a grievance because CUNY cannot be allowed to take unilateral action when it has a legal obligation to negotiate with the union. Otherwise, we fear more and more of our contractual rights will be violated. If we are to be governed by contractual agreements and good faith bargaining, then we are forced to bring CUNY to the table to negotiate over this issue or have it resolved in arbitration. The union's goal is for CUNY management to engage in good faith bargaining in order to resolve this issue speedily.



The theme of this year's Labor Day Parade was "Save Our Schools," and the PSC marched near the head of the class. The PSC contingent marched immediately behind the UFT, whose president, Randi Weingarten, was the parade's grand marshal. PSC signs linked the crisis at CUNY with the overall cause of public education. "It was a magnificent performance," John Jay chapter chair Haig Bohigian told Clarion. "When we marched with arms linked together, the TV cameras panned down to us, and the reviewing stand stopped talking and broke out in applause." Treasurer John Hyland said that Legislative Committee member Manny Ness's sound truck made a big difference: "It was playing great versions of old labor songs – 'Solidarity Forever' and 'Which Side Are You On' – and they really lived things up." PSC President Barbara Bowen expressed her thanks to all who came. "Every year I'm surprised by how much fun Labor Day really is," Bowen said. "But beyond that, our powerful presence there signaled our seriousness about getting the contract we deserve."



Hostos crackdown roils campus

Arrests condemned by student groups and PSC

By LINDA OCASIO

On September 20 and 21, charges against three students and a faculty member arrested during protests at Hostos Community College were dismissed for lack of evidence. Charges against a fourth student were continued.

A dispute over curriculum issues at Hostos that arose last spring is still unresolved, and new controversies have emerged this semester. But no matter what Hostos students, faculty and staff think about these specific issues, there is overwhelming agreement that the arrests were a violation of both civil rights and academic freedom.

The first arrests came on August 15, when a small group of student activists began handing leaflets to those waiting on line during registration. The flyer charged that Spanish-language classes had been eliminated in over eight subjects, protested special fees of up to \$300 for language and writing workshops, and criticized the diversion of students to the non-credit CUNY Language Immersion Program (see page 8).

CAMPUS CRACKDOWN

Campus officials were nervous about rumors of a boycott of registration, and they were quick to crack down. Miguel Malo, vice president of the Hostos Student Senate and head of the campus Ecuadorian Club, told *Clarion* he was arrested after handing out the leaflets. An August 16 press release from the Hostos College administration stated that Malo was arrested because he was "blocking the entrance to the college and/or the registration area," and that he assaulted two campus security officers when they put him under arrest. Malo denies both charges and says it was in fact campus security officers who assaulted him.

An August 19 letter by President Fernandez suggests that no form of protest at the site of registration would have been allowed: "Registration is a process that does not need any disruption," she wrote to Prof. Henry Lesnick. "Demonstrations could have been held in an identified area in front of the building.... That would have provided the demonstrators with an opportunity to hold up signs, hand out leaflets, etc. without having this occur while students were on line filling out forms and waiting their appointed times to enter the gym." The court complaint against Malo states simply that he was arrested when he "began to hold up a sign and protest against the college administration."

Hostos student Pedro Rivera told *Clarion* that he was arrested while holding a sign that said, "Stop Arresting Our Students!" – which he had made after witnessing the arrest of Hunter student Christopher Day.



Students Pedro Rivera, Christopher Day and Marcos Lora, at Hostos on August 16, protesting their arrests the previous day.

The next day, during a small demonstration against the arrests, City College psychology professor Bill Crain was arrested after he tried to enter Hostos Building C to observe registration. PSC President Barbara Bowen, present as an observer, tried to convince Hostos security chief Arnoldo Bernabe to let Crain go, but to no avail.

When contacted by *Clarion*, Bernabe refused to discuss the incidents and referred all questions to the college's Office of Public Information. But Public Information Officer Carlos Hargraves also would not comment on the arrests.

The PSC called on CUNY management to drop all charges. In an August 16 phone call to Fernandez, Bowen protested the conduct of campus security and stressed that the right to lawful protest must be safeguarded. The leadership of the Hostos PSC chapter also objected to the arrests and voiced support for students' First Amendment rights and academic freedom, said Sue Dicker of the chapter's executive committee.

Bowen also pressed Fernandez on who had ordered that CUNY faculty be banned from entering a CUNY building. Fernandez said she had issued no such specific order – but did not disavow Crain's arrest.

Hostos spokesperson Hargraves insisted that "no Spanish courses have been cut, no offerings have been cut." Malo stated that the problem was a reduction in the number of Spanish-language sections within a given course. This reduced selection, Malo said, "hurts night students the most."

Hostos PSC Chapter Chair Lucinda Hughey said it was true that the number of Spanish sections are "substantially down" in recent years, but that this was a consequence of the decline in enrollment at Hostos since 1997 (see below). Gerry Meyer, faculty advisor to the Hostos student government, said

that while the students had sometimes been wrong about details, their overall point is accurate: "There's a general move away from bilingual education," Meyer said.

The current conflict over language instruction at Hostos goes back to last spring, when Fernandez announced the elimination of the lowest-level courses in ESL and Spanish. Faced with strong and united opposition from both students and faculty who were not consulted about the change, the Hostos administration agreed to retain the courses for at least the fall semester. A task force was appointed to consider the curriculum issues involved – but it never met over the summer, and when fall semester began the situation deteriorated quickly.

This time there was less unity among faculty, staff and students. Dicker told *Clarion* that students had not discussed their demands with the Hostos PSC chapter, nor invited it to support the student action. Lack of communication, plus disagreement and confusion over the Spanish-language sections, made joint action unlikely.

STUDENTS REJECT BOYCOTT

Fernandez has claimed that the arrests prevented a boycott of registration, which would have had disastrous consequences for Hostos. Although faculty did not support the arrests, they are worried about maintaining enrollment, and many therefore took a negative view of the August 15 protest. "We are fragile," commented Hughey.

But student activists themselves were split over the boycott idea – and ironically, those who were arrested say they did not support it. "Our intent was to inform [students] about the issues," said Pedro Rivera. "We never planned a boycott. It would be damaging to the school." Rivera said that the boycott tactic was suggested in planning meetings but had been rejected, an account

seconded by Day, Malo and others. There is no mention of a boycott in the August 15 leaflet.

In addition to better communication with student groups, the Hostos PSC chapter has asked for better communication within the PSC. There were some raw feelings among faculty at Hostos about faculty from other campuses participating in the August 16 protest without first speaking to the Hostos chapter. "If we disagree, they can do as see fit," said Hughey, "but then at least there's communication."

A statement from the Hostos chapter to the September 20 PSC Delegate Assembly went further.

Urging that media attention to conflicts at Hostos be minimized, it requested that PSC members on other campuses refrain from joining protests at Hostos because of "the undue attention that this wider participation creates." While several delegates from other campuses supported the importance of communication, there was no consensus on the second point. Several delegates said that the urgency of defending civil liberties also had to be weighed.

Students and faculty at Hostos are now in a better position to work together than at the time of registration. There have been expressions of mutual support, and a registration boycott is now rarely mentioned. The task force named last spring on the ESL and Spanish courses has met twice, and faculty and student representatives on the task force will be working closely together.

But if pronouncements of the Hostos administration are any guide, the school may well be headed for another round of conflict. On September 6, Hostos security issued a "Public Safety Announcement," restricting all protest to a plaza outside college buildings. And in the wake of the attack on the World Trade Center, a high-ranking Hostos official told *Clarion* that people should expect restrictions on First Amendment rights.

Miguel Malo is due back in court on November 19. The prosecution wants him to spend 15 days in jail.

State, city policies hurt Hostos enrollment

by LINDA OCASIO

Enrollment at Hostos has fallen dramatically over the last six years, from about 5,000 in 1995 to 3,200 in the current semester. Nydia Edgecombe, the college's director of admissions, believes that workfare and changes in student aid are responsible for much of the decline.

In 1995, New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) was limited at community colleges to six semesters instead of eight, and the following year the imposition of workfare required students on public assistance to work without pay for 20 hours a week. Federal Pell grants have also been limited to six semesters at community colleges.

Workfare in particular exacts a heavy toll from the typical Hostos student on public assistance, usually a woman with meager resources who is often caring for a preschool child, said Hostos history professor Gerald Meyer. Welfare regulations limit them to two years of studies

and push them towards occupationally oriented courses, which demand college level skills in math and English. But to succeed in these classes, most students need developmental work and remediation – and therefore more time. Meyer said seven semesters is the average length of time for a Hostos student to graduate: "Handfuls, about 12 to 15, graduate in two years." For the rest, these constraints "put a cap on where they can go later in their lives," Meyer said.

The drop in enrollment has led to fears at Hostos that there might be another attempt to close the college, according to Lucinda Hughey. In 1976 a plan to close Hostos was turned back by strong college and community opposition.

In June the PSC Delegate Assembly called for the restoration of TAP to eight semesters and backed legislation that would enable students on public assistance to count college attendance toward workfare requirements (see p. 12).

English as a Second Language at CUNY

Where have all the students gone?

By **MARC WARD**
Lehman College

This fall at Lehman College, where I've worked since 1984, enrollment in the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program hit a record low of only 83 students – down nearly 90% from a high point of 718 students in 1994. ESL headcount at CUNY's senior colleges has fallen from approximately 8,200 students in 1994 to under 1,800 last spring.

This decline occurred during a decade of rising immigration in New York City. Where have all the ESL students gone?

In 1995 the Board of Trustees (BoT) imposed strict limits on remedial and ESL instruction at the senior colleges. But four years later, when they voted to end remediation altogether at the senior colleges, the Trustees exempted ESL students "who otherwise are not in need of remediation." Nevertheless, ESL enrollment continued to fall.

Even now, after two years of policy shifts, ESL headcount remains flat. Earlier this year the State Board of Regents expressed concern about the decline.

David Crook, head of CUNY's Office of Institutional Research, says there are several factors at work, including limitations on ESL and re-

medial courses, the impact of workfare rules, implementation of the CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP), rising admissions criteria and fewer ESL applicants.

In a recent memo to Presidents and Provosts, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Louise Mirrer wrote that CUNY needs to "improve our ability to identify college-ready ESL students." But CUNY has never said exactly what a college-ready ESL student is.

IMMIGRANT CHALLENGES

Immigrants face different educational and economic challenges than traditional foreign students, who arrive on visas, intend to return to their home countries, and often enroll at expensive language institutes prior to attending college classes. These institutes work to improve foreign students' English until they can pass a gate-keeping test like the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language); many colleges set their TOEFL cut scores to exclude students who still need significant ESL instruction.

But immigrant ESL students can succeed in college before they achieve linguistic parity with native speakers. The 1994 ESL Task Force at CUNY showed that ESL students do about as well as mainstream students, and significantly



ESL students are disappearing from CUNY's senior colleges.

better than under-prepared native speakers, on such measures as retention and graduation rates or GPA. Subsequent studies at the University of California and other public universities have confirmed this pattern.

To some, this comes as no surprise. The TOEFL manual says straightforwardly that the exam "is not designed to provide information about scholastic aptitude, motivation, language-learning aptitude, or cultural adaptability." But most of us don't read test guides or think much about the difference between language proficiency and intelligence.

Many experts on second-language acquisition believe that children learning English as a second language need up to seven years to compete linguistically with native

speakers, even though they reach academic parity in most school subjects much sooner. Research also suggests that most adults may never reach full linguistic parity with native speakers – but this does not stop them from using English effectively or excelling in other subjects.

The Trustees have never understood or acknowledged these findings on language acquisition and academic success. Though research tells us that four years is insufficient to mainstream many ESL students, the BoT decided that it would not admit any student needing ESL instruction to the senior colleges whose entire high school attendance took place in the US. This new definition of who CUNY will accept as an ESL student is demographic, not linguistic, and leads to some odd contradictions. While excluding many immigrants who entered a North American school system prior to high school, it includes students from places like the Philippines who may have studied English all their lives.

Most ESL programs identify their students through the judgment of knowledgeable faculty or tests of specific features of language. Until the Trustees intervened, CUNY had always relied on this kind of "operational" definition of ESL status. After two years of lobbying by concerned faculty, this summer CUNY management added a review process that allowed ESL status to be determined, once again, by a writing sample rather than by demographic specifications set by the Trustees. However, the initial admissions process still relies on the Trustees' demographic definition, and many students who need ESL instruction therefore may not make it into the review process and could fall through the cracks.

Eightieth Street has taken other steps to reverse the decline in ESL enrollment. For example, ESL students now have two years, rather than just 15 months, to pass the CUNY ACT exams in reading and writing. ESL faculty have welcomed the flexibility, but ongoing changes

in testing and admissions rules have led to confusion throughout the University. One testing director stated flatly, "By the time we figure out the policy, they change it."

For those who do get admitted, CUNY may make it harder for them to graduate. Vice Chancellor Mirrer's memo also "suggests" that credit be reduced for ESL courses, which will hamper ESL students in getting financial aid and making progress toward their degrees.

"By the time we figure out the policy, they change it."

The New York State Regents English exam has cut the graduation rate of high school ESL students. But even those who graduate have a harder time getting in due to CUNY's new Admissions Index, based on such measures as cumulative academic average and SAT. All of these depend heavily on English proficiency. But since ESL grades are excluded from the index, years of successful ESL classwork are ignored unless a student demonstrates near-parity with native speakers by passing the English Regents exam.

DENYING ACCESS?

This seems to confirm the fears of Professor Virginia Collier of George Mason University, an internationally known expert on the language acquisition and cognitive development of school-age bilinguals. Commenting on the "standards movement," Collier said, "Standards of 'minimum competency' in basic skills in reading and writing in English will be completely inappropriate for second-language students, if based on expectations for native speakers. Such a test will become a gatekeeper denying access to higher education for all second-language students."

City University has lost 80% of its senior college ESL students, and is now being forced to consider some hard questions about immigration, language and opportunity. CUNY has long educated the children of immigrants. But in today's economy, massive numbers of adult bilinguals also want a place at our universities for themselves.

ESL in CUNY's community colleges

By **SUSAN DIRAIMO**
CCNY and Lehman

While the decline in ESL students has been most pronounced at CUNY's senior colleges, community colleges have also been affected by the debate over ESL policy and open admissions.

Since 1996, students needing the most basic level of ESL instruction have been advised to go to the non-credit CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP), deferring college enrollment for up to a year while they work to improve their English. Three of the six community colleges no longer offer the most basic level of ESL as part of their curriculum, leaving CLIP as the only option. Debate over CLIP has been extensive within CUNY. Last spring Hostos Community College administration tried to eliminate its first-level ESL course, but temporarily backed down after protests by students, faculty and staff.

"The cost of CLIP is \$10 a week for 25 hours of intensive instruction," said Ellen Balliesen, a CLIP faculty

Debate over the impact of CLIP

member at Bronx Community College. "They don't have to use up financial aid on no-credit classes." But the full-time schedule of CLIP can make it difficult for working students to attend: many CUNY students hold down jobs that mean they can only attend college part-time.

"By not offering the most basic level of ESL at the community colleges and pushing students into CLIP, CUNY is in effect ending open admissions at the community colleges," said Mercé Pujol, president of the CUNY ESL Council. Pujol added that students routed into CLIP take longer to graduate. Miguel Malo, a student leader at Hostos, told *Clarion*, "Many students want to take other classes for credit while they study English. They don't want to be slowed down."

Some faculty, on the other hand, stress the advantages of intensive instruction, especially for students with very limited English. Ray Hubbenner, director of CLIP at Bronx

Community College, says that students are able to attend CUNY as matriculated students after a semester or two of CLIP instruction. "Pedagogically, it's a great setup," argued Balliesen. "The teacher has far more time to get to know each student's learning process."

But Balliesen said that despite the importance of the work they do, CLIP's faculty get poor treatment from CUNY management. "We are officially 'part-time' employees, which is absurd. We have 750 to 900 contact hours per year." Meanwhile, CLIP's annual starting pay has not increased since 1995. In contract negotiations, the PSC has proposed converting CLIP teachers to the Lecturer title.

Meanwhile, the debate over English instruction and access to community college can be expected to continue. According to CUNY's Office of Institutional Research, only 50-60% of CLIP students end up taking courses for credit at CUNY.

Change period for health plan ends October 31

By ESTELLE GIAMMUSSO
PSC/CUNY Welfare Fund

Q When can I change to a different health plan?

A Active members of the instructional staff can transfer from one city health plan to another during the Health Plans Open Enrollment period, which this year ends on October 31. Members may also add or delete optional riders and add or remove dependents in their current plan. All changes made in October will take effect in January of 2002.

Retirees can only transfer to a new plan in even-numbered years, so if you are a retiree you will have to wait until Fall 2002 to make a change.

The City should have distributed information about the health plan transfer period to all active employees. If you did not receive it, or need to know more, contact the personnel office at your college.

Q I've heard that the PSC has won some new health benefits. What's new and how soon can I start using them?

A Earlier this year, the PSC and the other unions in the Municipal Labor Commit-

YOUR BENEFITS

tee won the following additions to existing health benefits. These changes went into effect between March and July of this year, so you can use them now!

- Many prescription drugs that must be used repeatedly are now available at a reduced rate through the new PICA (Psychotropic, Injectable, Chemotherapy and Asthma) program. This includes many drugs used to treat depression, diabetes, bipolar disorder and other conditions. For a list of covered medications, please refer to the mailing that was sent out in June. If you need a copy of the list, call the Welfare Fund at 212-354-5230.

- Mental Health benefits have been improved for active members and non-Medicare retirees. In GHI, you now have unlimited visits for in-network mental health services. As of March 1, 2001, the optional rider for non-network services covers reimbursement of up to 50% of the network allowance, with a \$100 deductible, and a maximum of 30 visits per year. The lifetime maximum benefit of 60 out-of-network visits has been eliminated.

- For HIP-HMO (not HIP Point of Service), the visit limit under the outpatient mental health program has increased from 20 to 60. The co-

payment for each visit has increased from \$5 to \$10.

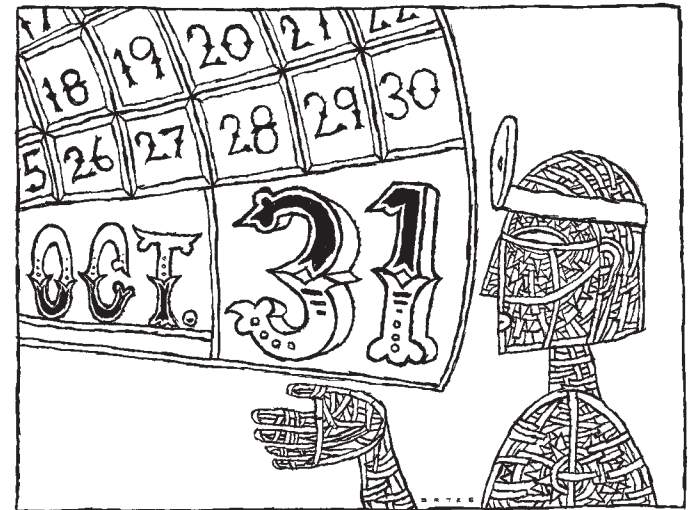
Q I've got GHI, and I like being able to choose which doctor I go to. But for some specialties there aren't many choices or they're not convenient.

A GHI's payment schedule for participating providers in Manhattan has been increased, which is expected to increase the number of doctors in the GHI network in New York City. In addition, GHI has expanded its panel of participating doctors to targeted areas in some other states, such as Florida.

Q The cost of my health plan just doubled. Whose decision was that?

A The cost for each health plan is set by the plan itself, not by the City or the PSC. The prices of several plans have increased drastically, some have increased moderately and a few have remained relatively stable. But there are of course differences in what is covered, so as always you must weigh options and price to decide which plan is best for you.

Please note that both the 2001 Health Benefits Program Summary Plan Description and its counterpart



at the City's web site have NOT been updated to reflect recent price increases. For the most recent rates, please contact your personnel office.

Q I am signed up with CIGNA for the major medical supplement to GHI. Recently I had to discuss some claims with them, and I ran into problems because CIGNA's customer service and claims processing are in two different places. Why are they set up this way?

A The PSC/CUNY Welfare Fund has heard this complaint from several members and raised the issue with CIGNA. As a result, customer ser-

vice for CIGNA major medical has been relocated and is now in the same spot to which your claims are sent.

It has a new phone number: 800-223-9601.

CIGNA expects that this change will improve response time and decrease the aggravation level for those who call. The Welfare Fund hopes that the change will improve things, but if you still have any complaints please bring them to our attention. It's most helpful if you can do this in writing, so we can take the issue up with CIGNA. You can write to me at this address: Estelle Giammusso, Assistant Administrator, PSC/CUNY Welfare Fund, 28 W. 44th Street, New York, NY 10036.

Who you should call about a grievance

By DEBRA BERGEN
PSC Director of Contract Administration

The grievance and arbitration procedures in the union contract can provide you with a way to challenge actions taken by management. Your right to use the grievance and arbitration procedures is the heart of the collective bargaining agreement; it is the most important right you have under the union contract.

But how do you know when you have a case?

In general, you may be able to file a grievance if management:

- violates the provisions of the contract.
- violates the University's own rules and regulations.
- violates past practice.
- administers a wrongful disciplinary action.

If you think you might have grounds for a grievance, talk to an expert – a PSC grievance counselor – to find out for sure. They will evaluate the situation and explain your options. Contacting a counselor immediately is critical because grievances must be filed within the time limits laid out in the grievance and arbitration provi-

YOUR RIGHTS

sions of the contract, Article 20. Otherwise you may forfeit your right to pursue the matter as a

grievance, regardless of the merits of your case.

Below is a list of who to call. On days when they are in the PSC Central Office, grievance counselors for CLTs, HEOs and adjuncts can be reached at (212) 354-1252.

PSC GRIEVANCE COUNSELORS

Title	Counselor	Day at the PSC Central Office
CLTs	Louis Rivera	Monday
	Shelly Mendlinger	Tuesday & Thursday
	Ellen Steinberg	Thursday
	Steve Trimboli	Thursday
HEOs	Ted Gottesman	Alternate Mondays
	Marc Ward	Alternate Mondays
	Charles Schwartz	Alternate Tuesdays
	Vera Weekes	Alternate Tuesdays
	Jean Weisman	Wednesday
	Leo Deuster	Thursday
	Steve Leberstein	Alternate Fridays
ADJUNCTS	Andy Saluga	Alternate Fridays
	Marcia Newfield	Monday, 11 – 2
	Ingrid Hughes	Wednesday, 10 – 1
	Harry Cason	Thursday, 9:30 – 12:30

Chapter	Counselor	Campus
BARUCH	Gayana Jurkevich	(646) 312-4221
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REBUILDING

Invest in public life

By BARBARA BOWEN
PSC President

September 11 brought unspeakable suffering to New York's working people. I want to extend my sympathy to readers who lost people you loved. In this I am joined by thousands of PSC members, many of whom have called the union office to ask that we express their sympathy for others in the CUNY community and throughout the city.

Perhaps in this crisis the PSC can draw on an older tradition of trade unionism, developed among workers who had fewer other resources, in which the union is a primary source of both support and identity for its members in need. All of us have suffered dislocations that range from missed classes to loss of concentration to confusion and numbness and rage; many of us have already begun to rethink our lives in response to the attack and its political aftermath. I want the union to be relevant in the current moment.

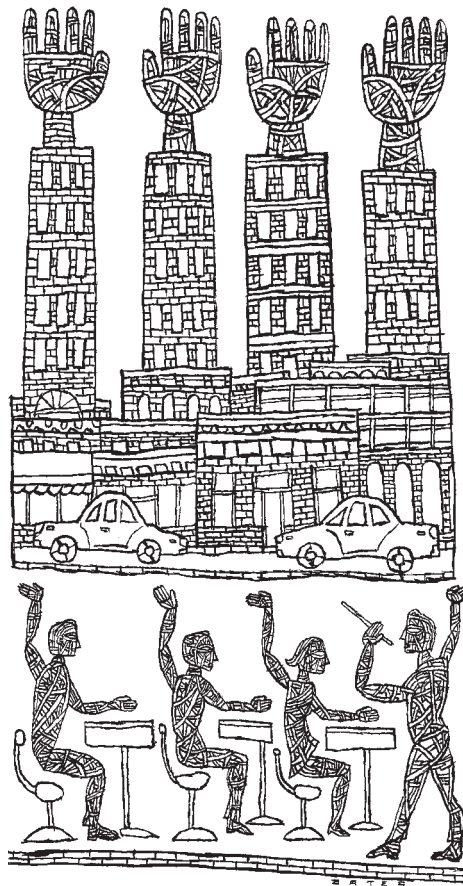
The response of the PSC officers and staff has been multiple, starting with such basics as setting up a relief fund, safeguarding the health of CUNY faculty and staff in workplaces in lower Manhattan, negotiating a new academic calendar at sites where classes were disrupted and ensuring that no employees lose income because of forces beyond their control. We have also offered support to other unions, especially those whose members have suffered a staggering number of casualties. Other articles in this issue tell that story. Here I would like to think about where we stand now that both

everything and nothing have changed.

What sustained the city through the past few weeks was an ideal and a practice of public life. One thing that was instantly clear from the World Trade Center disaster was the importance of workers in the public sphere: firefighters, emergency medical teams, sanitation, transit, teachers, police. Imagine if these services had been left to the demands of the market, as airport security catastrophically has been. We would have fire and ambulance teams subject to the cynical cost-shaving that always accompanies privatization: untrained, minimum-wage, no-benefit, un-unionized workers entrusted with life-and-death jobs.

If there was a different timbre to New Yorkers' response to the attack from that in other American cities – an appetite for cooperation, a conscious rejection of racism – it came from immersion in the density and diversity of an urban population. The ad hoc memorials that blossomed across the city tacitly affirmed the desire for public meaning. As knots of commuters, three weeks after the attack, still gathered in the Times Square subway station to study the posters of the missing, they could have had little hope of being able to assist in finding these loved people. Instead, they gathered because they wanted to read the text of the city and work out its meaning together.

This is the moment to invest in, not starve, public urban life. Hearing of the disaster and the raw needs of so many people, many of us may have felt that the decent thing would be to put aside our own campaign for restoration of CUNY. I think that is exactly the



wrong way to go. The city has never needed quality education more than now; it would be terribly shortsighted to skimp on New York City's public university just when thousands of people need the education that will propel a new New York. In a very real sense, re-

building New York means rebuilding CUNY.

The calls for austerity have already begun, a chorus of private and governmental interests asserting that workers will have to make sacrifices so Wall Street investors and corporate owners can maintain their levels of profit. Let us take at least one lesson from the 1975 fiscal crisis, a crisis from which CUNY salaries are still recovering: imposing austerity on the city's working people would devastate public life and undermine urban culture for a generation or more. There is federal and state money for disaster relief; there has to be money for rebuilding the city's real infrastructure – housing, schools, healthcare, public services – and that includes money for CUNY.

The union's negotiating team will continue to press at the bargaining table and in other forums for a contract that advances the City University, even as we adjust our strategy to take account of changed economic conditions. And with your help we will redouble our efforts to secure adequate funding from Albany, now that the legislators' gamble with our lives on a "bare-bones budget" has proved singularly ill-timed. As an academic union, we have a special responsibility to defend freedom of speech and thought: CUNY must continue to be a safe space for our students and for serious academic inquiry into the hard issues before us.

Anyone who visited Borough of Manhattan Community College on October 1, the day it opened for the first time since September 11, would need no further proof of the value of public urban life. What took me by surprise was the quickness with which people got down to teaching and learning; there was an urgency about being engaged in shared work that has everything to do with the real future of this city. If ever there was a time to be strong in our call for investment in that future, the time is now.

POETRY

Four by Kimiko Hahn

Her Very Eyes

A friend's sister, my daughter reports,
cannot close her eyes,
and I interrupt, it must be asbestos irritation –
then she adds,
she sees bodies fall from the sky,
she sees bodies break through the glass atrium
or hit the pavement,
she sees one woman, her skirt billowing out
like a mannequin,
and a suited man plunge headfirst.
And she hears them in front of her
but cannot turn away when she closes her eyes.
And she doesn't know what to do.
This is what my daughter reports
coming home from school
last Tuesday.

After Forty-eight Hours

the wife of a rescue worker
from that first maneuver
finds a son's transit pass, brushes
a daughter's hair, braids her hair,
slaps together a couple pb&j –
and believes her husband
lies under metal, concrete, glass, chairs, desks,
fax machines, souvenirs –
with a pulse. She waves
bye to their children,
late for school, and sits down
to collapse
for a second
then stand again
for the ordinary.

from Wellfleet Tanka

43.
On a tourist boat out of Provincetown we whale-
watch a tail larger than my whole sun-burnt
body.

35.
Of her daughter's whereabouts she knows enough;
but of dragonflies, she collects books.

45.
I miss most the outdoor shower. Nine at night. A
light rain over the spray. A light from the
bedroom window where he reads about
psychopathology.

Note: Wellfleet is a small town on Cape Cod;
tanka is a classical form of Japanese poetry.

While it may not appear in every issue, we plan to make poetry a regular part of the pages of Clarion. Kimiko Hahn has agreed to serve as Clarion's poetry editor, and we

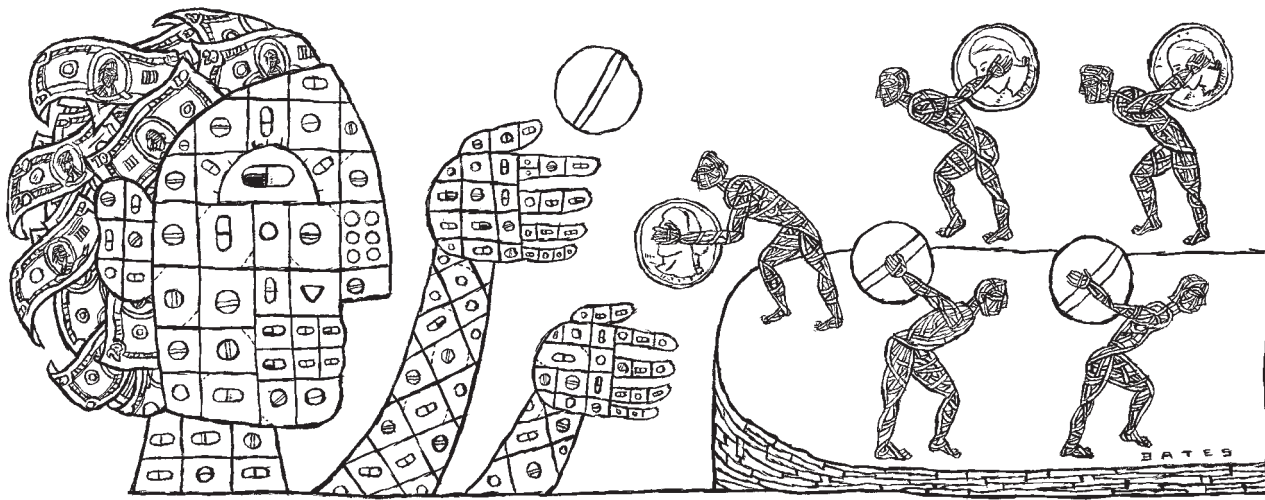
have selected the poems above to introduce her to our readers.

Hahn was born outside New York City and has been a professor of English at

Queens College since 1993. She is the author of six collections of poetry, including *The Artist's Daughter*, forthcoming from W.W. Norton.

from Ninth Avenue

x.
What makes it a neighborhood is the crew
of union guys
with a two-story blow-up rat
outside the MTA construction site,
the potted lettuces on the fire escape
as well the doll heads on the iron spikes
two floors above,
the ubiquitous white junkie black from sun and soot,
a Chinese waitress from an outer borough
folding napkins in the window, the paper stand
on each block selling the same news
to strap-hangers or free-lancers. Then
there's the hooker stepping back
onto the sidewalk
as the street cleaner angles around the curb – she is
a cliché here but not in the shower in her
kiss-my-ass-rent-stabilized shot-gun. It's what
anyone who pays rent sees repeatedly,
as if the director two blocks east cried,
Take-nine. Now give it up, sweetie.
I feel like carrying over to the union guys,
all brown from the line,
a tray of coffees, light sugar on the side,
and wonder if that older one in a white t-shirt
would wink and ask me to join them
deflate the rat and have a beer
before folding it up for the night?



HEALTH CARE

Drug costs, drug profits

By BOB YOUNG

Earlier this year, the Professional Staff Congress and other city unions won an agreement that will increase management contributions to union health and welfare funds. This increase was needed largely to offset the rising cost of prescription drugs, and it will help protect employees' benefits in the immediate future. But it unfortunately does not address the root of the problem, which is all too likely to surface again.

The real problem is that this country, unlike most European countries, has no national policies aimed at moderating the drug industry's escalating prices and profits. The pharmaceutical business now has the highest profits of any industry in the US: last year its 11 largest companies netted \$28 billion, a 15% increase over 1999. Yet the US government goes to great lengths to subsidize the drug industry, and as a result Americans pay twice for their drugs – once at the pharmacy and again through their taxes.

This double payment is at the core of two investigative reports published this summer by Public Citizen. We found that the drug industry has carried out a misleading campaign to scare lawmakers and the public. The central claim of the industry's campaign is that if anything is done to restrain high prices or profits, research and development (R&D) to find new drugs for life-threatening diseases will suffer.

Alan Holmer, president of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), recently played this R&D "scare card" in an interview on National Public Radio. "Believe me," Holmer warned, "if we impose price con-

trols on the pharmaceutical industry, and if you reduce the R&D that this industry is able to provide, it's going to harm my kids and it's going to harm those millions of other Americans who have life-threatening conditions." Holmer claimed that research costs "\$500 million just to get one medicine to market."

But Public Citizen's investigations discovered that the industry actually spends only about 20% of what it claims for R&D on every new drug. And that's based on industry data, which may be inflated with marketing costs that are being passed off as R&D.

More important, taxpayer-funded research has helped launch the most medically important drugs in recent years, including many of the best-sellers. An internal National Institutes of Health (NIH) document obtained by Public Citizen shows that taxpayer-funded scientists conducted 55% of the published research that led to the discovery and development of the five top-selling drugs in 1995, significantly reducing corporate costs and R&D risks.

Such details are hard to find, however, because the drug industry fought, and won, a nine-year legal battle to keep congressional investigators from the General Accounting Office from seeing the industry's complete R&D records. Congress can subpoena the records but has failed to do so. That might be due to the fact that in 1999-2000 the drug industry spent \$262 million on federal lobbying, campaign contributions and ads for candidates thinly disguised as "issue" ads. In 2000 alone, the industry employed 625 Washington lobbyists, including 21 former members of Congress.

Here are some other highlights of our

studies, based on government studies, company financial records and documents obtained via the Freedom of Information Act:

- In every year since 1982, the drug industry has been the most profitable in the United States, according to *Fortune* magazine. The drug industry's returns on revenue have averaged three times the average for all other industries in the Fortune 500. It defies logic to claim that R&D investments are highly risky, when the industry is consistently so profitable and returns on investments are so high.

- Only about 22% of the new drugs brought to market in the last two decades were innovative drugs that represented important therapeutic gains over existing drugs. Many were "me-too" drugs, highly similar medications that can qualify for a brand-new patent.

- The drug industry is lightly taxed, thanks to tax credits. The drug industry's effective tax rate is about 40% less than the average for all other industries.

- The drug industry's top priority is increasingly advertising and marketing, more than R&D. Increases in drug industry advertising budgets have averaged approximately 40% a year since the government relaxed rules on direct-to-consumer advertising in 1997.

Until drug industry profits are brought under control, prescription prices will continue to rise. And unions will have to fight harder and harder just to maintain the benefits they've already won.

Bob Young is research director for Public Citizen's Congress Watch in Washington, D.C. The two Public Citizen reports are available on the Web at <http://www.citizen.org/publications/index.cfm?section-ID=108&criteria=>

THE CHARLESTON 5

Something new on the waterfront

By CECILIA MCCALL
PSC Secretary

If you're like me, some of what you know about dockworkers may come from *On the Waterfront*. Although the film can be viewed as director Elia Kazan's attempt to justify naming names in the McCarthy era, its plot focuses on a New York longshore union's struggle to rid itself of mobster leadership.

In *Divided We Stand: American Workers and the Struggle for Black Equality*, Bruce Nelson analyzes a side of waterfront life that Kazan's film passes over. Few workers were more classically proletarian than the longshoremen and few were more exploited. But Nelson describes how they remained mired in the racialized parameters of family, parish and neighborhood, how control of a pier was determined first by color and ethnicity. When the Urban League of Greater New York monitored hiring practices on the docks in 1956, it found that forty-two experienced and skilled black dockworkers presented themselves daily for employment – and were bypassed every day.

Where black workers were able to find employment on the docks, they were limited to the lowest-paid, hardest jobs. But even in the face of this segregation, they were able to win some power. Nelson tells how in New Orleans, they used these back-breaking jobs to create a powerful all-black union, Local 1419 of the International Longshoreman's Association (ILA).

If the New Orleans waterfront had been organized by the left-leaning International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) instead of the more conservative ILA, would there have been less segregation and more solidarity? In the Jim Crow South, it might well have made no difference.

ILA Local 1422 in Charleston, SC, home local of the Charleston 5, has a similar history. Like the ILA local in New Orleans, Local 1422 also became a pillar of the black community. In recent years it has been central to the campaign to remove the Confederate flag from the South Carolina capitol. Now the union is in a struggle with the oppressive government of South Carolina, fighting trumped-up charges against four of its members and a member of the checkers' and clerks' union, ILA Local 1771.

When a ship from Danish Nordana Shipping Lines used scab labor to unload in Charleston in January 2000, the union set up a picket line – which was met by 600 state troopers in riot gear, armored vehicles, horse units and helicopters. A confrontation followed; Local 1422 President Ken Riley needed 12 stitches after he was hit in the head by a police baton.

At first the Charleston 5 were charged with a misdemeanor of trespassing and let go. But state Attorney General Charlie Condon had the men rearrested and ratcheted up the charges to felony riot, conspiracy, assault and resisting arrest. Writing in *The Nation* (August 6), Joann Wypijewski describes Condon as "an ambitious Democrat turned right-wing Republican" who "openly links his prosecution of the 5 with preservation of South Carolina's anti-union 'right-to-work' laws." Since January 2000, the Charleston 5 have been under house arrest; they are expected to go to trial this fall.

At a 5,000-person-strong march and rally in Columbia last June, I heard the head of the Norwegian longshore union pledge to shut down Norway's ports when the Charleston 5 go on trial. That call has been taken up by dockworkers in 16 countries and on the Pacific Coast.

Long before the ILA international got involved, the West Coast-based ILWU raised \$150,000 for a Charleston 5 defense fund. Under pressure from its rank and file, the ILA has joined a movement that includes the Black Radical Congress, the International Dockworkers Council and its West Coast rival. If the ports are closed, it may mark the beginning of a new tradition for the ILA – international and interracial solidarity.

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Editor: Peter Hogness

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Open access and fighting poverty

A CUNY collaboration

By **MELINDA LACKEY & MAUREEN LANE**

Welfare Rights Initiative (WRI)

STEPHEN LOFFREDO

CUNY School of Law

Lisa Cora enrolled in Bronx Community College the same week the New York Human Resources Administration (HRA) deemed her family eligible for a welfare grant of \$147 twice a month. Two years later, Lisa (who asks that her real name be withheld) is halfway to earning a Bachelor's degree at Hunter College. Lisa would soon be a teacher – the goal she's had for nearly 20 years – except that she is under intense pressure from HRA to quit school and return to low-wage employment. “Unfortunately, each day of college could be my last,” Lisa offers in a moment of near hopelessness. She has been ordered to add ten hours of workfare to her schedule.

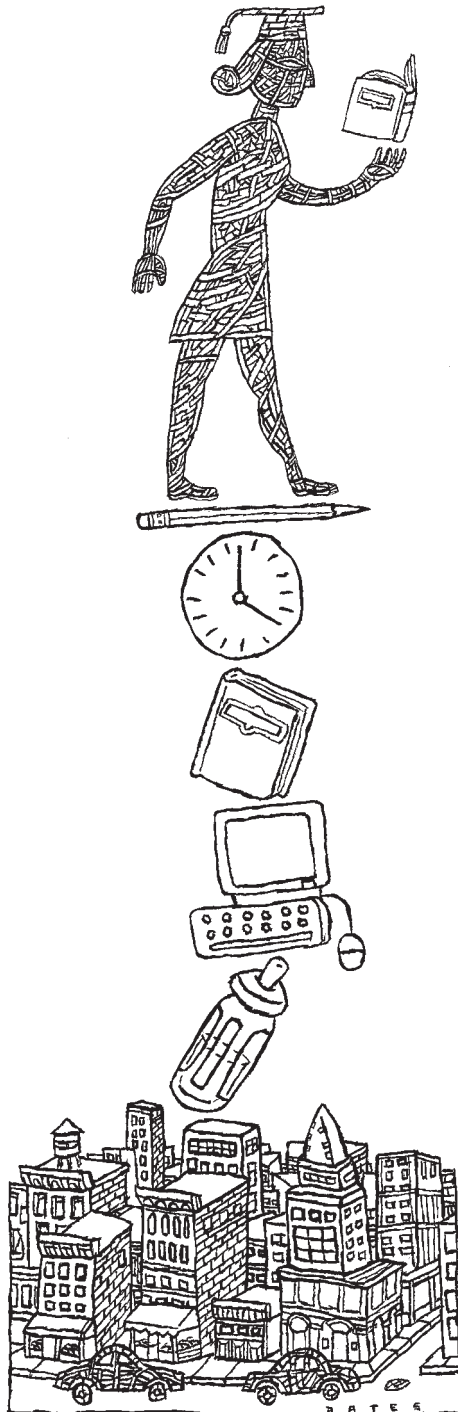
A COLOR-CODED WEEK

The first page of Lisa's planner is a color-coded week-at-a-glance with school photos pasted opposite the calendar page: her 10-year-old son smiling shyly and her 7-year-old daughter, all brown pensive eyes. Her days start at 6 a.m. Blue slots indicate time to fix the kids three meals and green is time to help them with their homework. These are interspersed with five college classes, a 20-hour per week work-study job, and a day's worth of internship hours. She allots less than six hours per night for sleep, that's purple, and three hours for homework, red. Lisa is just managing. If not for the book bag on her stooped, shawl-clad shoulders, this tiny, pale twenty-six year old could be mistaken at first glance for a woman twice her age.

Lisa Cora's story is not unique. Thousands of single mothers like her are presently enrolled at CUNY. They are struggling against long odds to make ends meet with inadequate funds, to provide decent homes for their families and to obtain the education that will enable them to escape poverty and dramatically alter the life chances of their children.

Any sound, humane welfare policy would encourage the heroic efforts of these women. Nearly 90% of those who complete a four-year degree secure living-wage jobs and permanently exit the welfare system. In contrast, parents leaving welfare without higher education tend to remain in poverty and cycle back onto relief. Those forced into workfare assignments almost never secure employment that can sustain them.

Although the case for higher education as a path out of poverty is compelling, the New York City administration has pursued a dramatically different course. The welfare-to-work scheme it adopted in response to federal welfare reform ranks among the most regressive in the nation. The City has demanded that claimants perform more hours of “work activity” than required by either state or federal law. The City has refused to recognize many educational and training programs as work activities, even



though the federal government has authorized states to count such programs as “work,” and many counties in New York State do so. Overall, the City has systematically pursued policies and practices that have foreclosed higher education as a viable anti-poverty strategy for the vast majority of people on welfare.

These policies have had devastating consequences for low-income students. In 1996, 27,000 public assistance claimants were working toward degrees at CUNY. Within a year, the City had forced thousands of these students out of college and into dead-end

workfare positions, sweeping streets, raking leaves or cleaning toilets. At present, only 6,000 welfare claimants remain at CUNY.

What explains the City's staunch opposition to higher education for the poor? Some speculate that it forms part of the administration's assault on public higher education. Others view it as an expression of the City's goal of slashing the welfare rolls at any cost. In either event, the human and public policy consequences have been tragic. But welfare claimants and CUNY faculty and staff have refused to just stand still and watch.

Besides being a student, a mother and a worker, Lisa Cora is also a leader of the Welfare Rights Initiative (WRI). Located at Hunter College, WRI is a leadership training and student activist organization that emerged from the stories of unsung women like Lisa, working hard to move their families out of poverty. Founded in 1995 at the height of welfare policy debates, WRI's organizational cornerstone is an innovative seminar in community leadership. This seven-credit, year-long course empowers students affected by welfare to assert a collective voice in the policy-making that shapes their present and their future.

WRI joined forces with the CUNY School of Law in 1997, with the goal of keeping as many students in school as possible through a combination of individual legal representation and broader strategies for advocacy. The law school dedicated a clinic to provide the necessary legal expertise and representation. Over the past four years, direct legal assistance provided through this collaboration has enabled over 1,300 CUNY students to continue their college education.

In coalition with the law school clinic, the Legal Aid Society and other community-based groups, WRI has also pursued a legislative strategy, which last year won an important victory. The New York State Legislature voted to require welfare departments throughout the state – including NYC's HRA – to count work-study positions, internships and externships as “work activities” that satisfy a college student's workfare obligation. The new law also prohibited workfare assignments that unnecessarily interfere with pursuit of a college degree.

Although New York City has resisted full implementation, these changes have already provided some breathing space that has made it possible for many students to remain in school.

TARGETING THE CITY COUNCIL

Another legislative campaign is targeting the New York City Council. The WRI/CUNY Law School collaborative has joined with community groups to form the Coalition for Access to Training and Education (CATE). After months of preparation, Council Member Stephen DiBrienza and Speaker Peter Vallone introduced into the New York City

Council the coalition's Access to Training and Education Bill (Intro. 959).

Under this proposed law, people receiving welfare who need education and skills will be allowed to participate in the full range of education and training opportunities that exist in this city. The bill aims to ensure that the City fully utilize state and federal laws to promote access to education for poor New Yorkers. WRI student leaders, Lisa Cora among them, are mobilizing students in support of Intro. 959, and on September 20 the PSC Delegate Assembly voted unanimously to back the bill.

From its origins as the Free Academy, CUNY has worked to open the doors of higher education for communities that have traditionally been excluded. New York City's welfare policies have senselessly closed those doors to thousands of students, shattering their families' hopes for better lives, and undermining the central and perhaps noblest mission of City University. The CUNY community can act to repair this damage and to move the city's policies in a more humane direction. Active support for the education and training bill before the City Council is a critical first step.

There are a variety of things that PSC members can do to support Intro. 959. Meeting with City Council members, letter-writing, phone-banking, classroom presentations and legal training are all essential to raise awareness. If you'd like to launch or join these activities on your campus, please call Maureen Lane at 212-650-3368, or e-mail mlane@hejira.hunter.cuny.edu.



15-MINUTE ACTIVIST

A free academy

As the most diverse university in the country and a microcosm of New York, CUNY is in a special position to offer a model of opposition to racism and support for academic freedom. Both need to be reaffirmed as New York reacts to the horror of 6,000 deaths and the US launches an anti-terrorist campaign.

All too many of our students – Afghan, Pakistani, West Indian, Israeli, North African and others – now feel less secure to speak in class or even come to campus. Faculty and staff can also be targeted: one South Asian faculty member was recently reported to the FBI by a student whose suspicions were aroused by a class on the medieval prominence of Istanbul. Anti-Semitism has also been on the rise.

As a union, we need to respond by showing zero tolerance at CUNY for any infringements of academic freedom or attacks – violent or subtle – on students, faculty or staff because of their race or religion.

Take 15 minutes this month to call the Arab students' association or another student club on your campus and ask what you can do to make sure they continue to feel welcome at CUNY. If you know faculty and staff who may feel threatened, ask how you can support them. In this crisis, CUNY has a chance to offer a lasting model of how a diverse academic community can defeat racism and fear.

What explains the City's staunch opposition to higher education for the poor?