



BLACK HISTORY MONTH: A. PHILIP RANDOLPH ★
CUNY STUDENTS SUPPORT MEXICAN STUDENT STRIKERS
★ PATAKI THREATENS CUNY BUDGET CUTS YET AGAIN!

THE MESSENGER

AN INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER VOL. 2 NO. 3 FEBRUARY 2000 UNIVERSITY OF HARLEM

Resolution Smackdown!

Faculty nix attempt to kill remediation a year early at City College

by Rob Wallace

In a mid-December joint session of the Faculty Senate and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Faculty Council, faculty voted against a resolution that called for forgoing a one-year reprieve for remediation classes at CCNY. The resolution was rejected 49-22.

The reprieve was originally provided for by the New York State Board of Regents on November 22. At that time, the Regents voted to accept a plan crafted by CUNY's Board of Trustees for ending remediation classes at CUNY's 11 senior colleges and transforming the colleges' SKAT tests into entrance exams.

Several studies, including CUNY's own, show the Board's plan could, in due time, reduce the number of Black, Latino and Asian students attending senior colleges by as much as 50%. A recent *New York Times* article showed transfer students prepared well enough initially to be accepted into universities like NYU and the University of California had been blocked from entering CUNY senior colleges this year because they failed one of the SKAT tests.

The Regents instituted one change in the Trustees' plan, permitting City Col-

lege and Lehman College—with more minority students than the other senior colleges—another year before remediation classes are ended. In interviews with the *Messenger*, several students and faculty characterized the Regents' one-year delay as a scrawny bone thrown to placate remediation proponents who had so passionately lobbied the Regents to reject the Trustees' plan.

Round One

On December 16 faculty convened in a lecture hall on NAC's first floor to vote on a resolution to turn down the one-year delay offered by the Regents.

The joint meeting of the two major faculty decision-making bodies began with short presentations for the resolution by Mathematics professor Ray Hoobler, who first proposed the resolution, and against by Psychology professor Bill Crain, a *Messenger* contributor.

Professor Hoobler argued that the College's reputation, already hammered by politicians and the media, would suffer more damage if it were to be perceived as a last bastion for unprepared students. For Hoobler, CCNY must take into consideration the image it presented off-campus, even as the College opposed the Board of Trustees' plan.

Moreover, Hoobler continued, most



CCNY faculty debate the resolution to end remediation early.

students would not benefit from a one-year delay. And those who flunked one SKAT test could enter the CCNY upon the successful completion of programs like Prelude to Success and summer immersion programs. CCNY should therefore phase out remediation before the Fall 2000 semester, Hoobler concluded.

Professor Crain, on the other hand, argued that CCNY should not reject the extra year for remediation by emulating the goals and methods of those intent on closing education off to minority students. To Crain, remediation works. Crain pointed out that while serving a greater proportion of minority and poor

students than any other senior college, CCNY graduates more students who subsequently earn Ph.D.'s than any college in the New York area.

Lastly, Crain argued the fight to save remediation is not over as a complaint against the Trustees has been filed with the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and a federal lawsuit may be in the works. Voluntarily removing remediation would weaken those efforts, Crain concluded.

Hot Debate

The floor was subsequently opened to audience members. Among them includ-

continued on page 3

Registration Fiasco Causes Headaches for Students

New Computer System Is Ready for Spring but Bureaucracy Isn't

by Hank Williams

City College's change to a new computerized Student Information Management System, known by the acronym SIMS, made registration and other relatively simple tasks—such as getting ID cards—a nightmare for students. The problem appears to be not so much the system itself, but the way it was installed.

SIMS should be much more reliable than the old system, and it will eventually allow conveniences like registering by telephone, as students at Lehman College have had. The new system was supposed to be installed in the fall of 1999, but it wasn't until the fall of 2000 that it was finally up and running. The old system was supposed to be phased out at my program.

The real problem was poor planning and implementation. Registration was delayed until January because the new

system was not running in time to register seniors and juniors in December, as the college normally does. At the end of

the fall semester, students had still not been told exactly what the registration procedure would be, except to go to the college after January 10th if they had not heard anything.

The result was long lines and short tempers for students forced to wait hours for registration and even ID cards. Making matters worse was the fact that not all of the computer operators were familiar with the system, creating confusion.

Bernard Elstrunk, a Communications major, complained that his records, when accessed on the new system, incorrectly showed that he had been dismissed from the college.

The worst is probably yet to come, but the fall has to be critical of the plan. Fixed registration that caused needless frustration and inconvenience to many students. **M**



Let this happen to you. Enter bring a sleeping bag next time.

Pataki's Budget Blasts CUNY

Governor George Pataki's budget for next year will hurt CUNY's most financially strapped students. It calls for a \$2 million cut in SEEK, a combined reduction of \$2 million for child care services at the senior and community colleges, and a \$40 million statewide reduction in TAP. These cuts, coming at a time when the state enjoys a budget surplus, are simply cruel. There should be a tuition decrease to help students—not cuts like these.

The governor's budget, which must be approved by the state legislature before going into effect, also fails to provide money for additional full-time faculty. Since CUNY has suffered severe losses of full-time faculty since the early 1980s, and will lose more next year, the lack of replacement money is serious. One has to ask whether the budget reflects a plan to

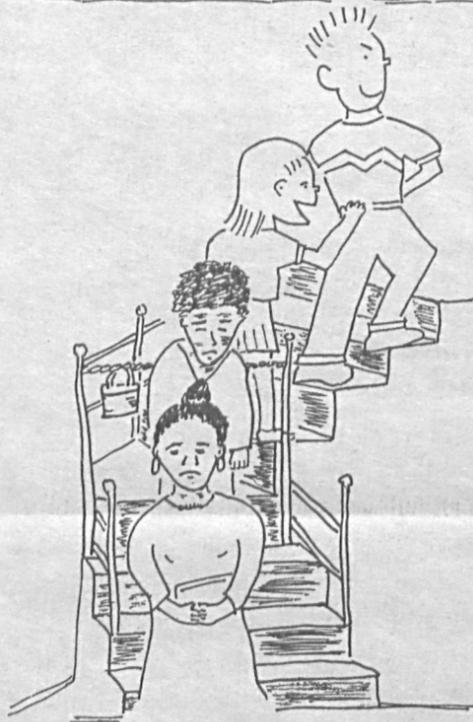
downsize the university.

The Pataki budget does provide a 2% overall increase for the senior colleges. Much of this new money will go to the new remedial programs that CUNY is putting in place as it phases out the current remedial offerings. The new programs include immersion institutes and new tests. The community colleges, which are supposed to help many students who are barred from the senior colleges, will suffer an overall funding loss of 1%.

As noted, the governor's budget is not final. If the university community and the wider communities actively oppose it, the pressure will be on the governor and the legislature to revise it. Let's press for a fair budget that gives students a chance.

—Bill Crain

CUNY'S NEW STAIRWAY TO SUCCESS



~CRAIN '00

Black History Month Spotlight: A Philip Randolph

He was called the most dangerous Black in America.

He led 250,000 people in the historic 1963 March on Washington.

He spoke for all the dispossessed: Blacks, poor whites, Puerto Ricans, Indians and Mexican Americans.

He won the fight to ban discrimination in the armed forces.

He organized the 1957 prayer pilgrimage for the civil rights bill.

He was President Emeritus of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the union he built.

And he was a former City College student.

The words and deeds of A. Philip Randolph show us the unyielding strength of his life-long struggle for full human rights for the Blacks and all the disinherited of the nation.

At the heart of A. Philip Randolph's vision as a socialist was his belief that a decent and well-paying job is the first step towards social and political freedom. Therefore, while he supported the needs of Blacks as Blacks, Mr. Randolph also maintained that those who are poor,



whether they are Black or white, have basic interests in common, and that they should join together.

As a socialist, Mr. Randolph believed that workers and their labor unions are the key forces in any political effort to redistribute society's wealth more justly. He did not see the problem of Black people in America as the problem of one isolated group. He viewed the condition of American Blacks as the symptom of a larger social illness, an illness caused by an unfair distribution of power, wealth, and resources.



The agent for spreading Mr. Randolph's socialism was a magazine called the *MESSENGER* (after which this newspaper is named), founded in 1917, "The only magazine of scientific radicalism in the world published by Negroes."

To learn more about A. Philip Randolph, you can visit the web site of the A. Philip Randolph Institute at www.aprihq.org or read the book *A. Philip Randolph: A Biographical Portrait* by Jervis Anderson, University of California Press. **M**



Members of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

letters

Sign Me Up!

Today I had to handle some financial aid drama, and as I waited (and waited, and waited) in line, I noticed a copy of your November paper. First of all, I particularly liked the article on Mumia. It was a very well written, and an informative piece. While I was already familiar with Mumia's story, it gave me new insight to the case, and motivated me to want to take some sort of action.

Anyway, my point for this letter is that I am interested in becoming involved with the paper. I am a skilled writer, and also familiar with basic layout. I have a back-

ground in student affairs, and like to speak up on important issues. I think that is one of the reasons I became immersed in your paper today. It was the articles on Mumia, Badillo, Giuliani, CCNY and CUNY.

Those issues are right up my alley in terms of what I like to be educated on as well as educate others.

—Dawn Marczak

Dickmeyer's Done

I just completed reading the *Messenger*, which I found quite interesting. I am totally happy that the Mayor of New York was not able to get his way on this one [charter

revision].

I'm a graduate at this time and once worked in one of the offices on campus. Yes, Mr. Dickmeyer is running the school, [see "CUNYCard Quashed," December 1999] and in his hideous way is trying to undermine the new President. Yes, he would love to see the new President make a blunder and fall down.

I have had it up to my neck in seeing how the white establishment controls everything. When they can not get someone of color, they then turn to someone who tries to be like the establishment, place them in control, and use them to get rid of the people of color. This is how it has been in the school system for 15 years.

So to see that this Mayor did not win on the charter revision, or to see Dickmeyer not have his way, makes me elated. Yes, if the Mayor has his way, believe me, all people of color would be thrown to the dogs.

Lastly, on campus there are many who have never gone through the merit system. They are given a job on a platter, tenured, and paid while others have to fight for their positions on campus. The majority of these Professors know each other and (are) doing some very underhanded work. They are receiving these high paying posi-

tions as professors, and teach only 1 to 2 days a week, their salaries over \$70,000. They hold these positions, and they drain the system, and get away with it. I truly hope this new President will not allow underhandedness to succeed. Positions in this college should be given to those who truly have gone through the system, not because you know someone.

—Anonymous

Vice President Dickmeyer resigned in December. More juicy details in the next issue.

—Editors

THE MESSENGER

CCNY'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

c/o CCNY SLAMI, Finley Center, 138th St. & Convent Ave., NY, NY 10031
ccnymessenger@yahoo.com ★ <http://www.geocities.com/cunyslami/>

The *Messenger* is an independent student newspaper at the City College of New York. It is produced periodically by an editorial collective. The *Messenger* aims to serve CCNY students, other CUNY students, and the Harlem community. We seek to do this by reporting on student activities for empowerment, enjoyment, and survival and by exposing the misdeeds of those in power. We seek to help build a powerful student movement at CUNY to win improvements in our lives and changes to societal injustices.

The articles in *The Messenger* do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors of *The Messenger* or anybody other than the individual writers.

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Write in to the *Messenger's* Letters section:
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Sign your letter, tell us your major, and give contact info.

Resolution continued from page 1

ed CCNY Interim President Stanford Roman who argued in favor of the resolution. Roman declared that CCNY students deserved educations of the highest standard. Roman worried that the students allowed during the one-year reprieve would only be pushed out once remediation ended, a situation he said he could not in all good conscience allow. Roman did not address whether these students were adult enough to decide on their own whether to attend City for the one year if properly informed of the situation by the College.

Roman also described how the administration was prepared to institute the phase-out in the fall. Several programs were to be instituted to deal with the phase-out. These included a year-round Freshman Immersion Program, currently held in the summer only, a high school outreach drive to recruit and prepare students for CCNY-level work, and Prelude to Success, wherein students who failed the SKATs could still attend CCNY classes and take remediation classes on campus taught by community college faculty.

Professor Elizabeth Starcevic of the Romance Languages Department and chapter chair of the PSC, the faculty and staff union, disputed Roman's contention the administration was prepared to implement the phase-out in the fall. Many questions are not answered, she pointed out, including how many adjuncts, tutors and full-time faculty would be needed and how they would be paid, how these programs would be institutionally supported, and the likelihood strapped community colleges would be willing to provide CCNY precious faculty. Many of the likely supportive programs on-campus, like admissions and high school outreach, are either underfunded, understaffed, or on-paper only, Starcevic explained.

Moreover, Starcevic continued, the administration is currently in disarray, with key administrators recently departed,

and is having enough trouble just getting the new SIMS computer system together, among other problems.

Professor Ayoka Chenzira, chair of the Communications Department, declared she sensed there was a social worker attitude pervading remediation proponents' arguments, as if students of color would be against higher standards.

Math Department chair Jack Barshay and Dean Bill Herman of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences declared that their departments, which run the remediation programs at CCNY, were prepared to implement the phasing out of remediation this fall.

Professor Larry Hanley questioned the English Department's preparedness since, as the department's vice-chair, he had never been consulted. Another faculty member, who requested anonymity, told the *Messenger* that Herman never fully consulted the English Department before telling the faculty at the vote the department was prepared. "Her-

man manufactured this. It was his way to try to sway the vote. The Dean divined getting rid of remediation early was what the administration wanted and pushed for it," said the faculty.

Hanley, the *Messenger's* faculty advisor, went on to point out that the estimated 350 students who would be denied entrance to City for one year if the reprieve was rejected are living people with dreams and desires of their own. Even one year at City could mean the world to them, Hanley continued.

The 350 number is a rough estimate of CCNY students who flunked at least one SKAT test in 1998, and who would have been denied entrance if the end of remediation had been instituted then.

Carol Lang, a staff member in the English Department, pointed out that the question of "image" was a political problem, as it is Mayor Giuliani and other remediation foes who are besmirching CUNY's "image." So any concession on remediation would be a political concession to Giuliani, Lang declared.

Adjunct lecturer Susan Diraimo spoke



Professor Ray Hoobler, the author of the resolution.

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about how she was able to enter CCNY as a student in the 1970s only because of the Open Admissions policy and remediation. She said she took the resolution as a personal affront.

Cristine Cocheo, Noah Berg, and Sayfullah El of the Undergraduate Student Government spoke out against the resolution.

After the debate, blank ballots for the vote were handed out to all full- and part-time faculty who attended the meeting. The final tally showed the resolution rejected 49-22.

Vote Binding?

During the debate Math professor Bernie Sohmer, faculty representative to the CUNY Board of Trustees, offered his opinion that the Board of Regents' vote would likely bind CUNY to permitting City College the extra year. Accepting Professor Hoobler's resolution to end remediation early would not likely pass legal muster, Sohmer stated.

But would rejecting the resolution be binding on the CCNY administration? President Roman made statements implying that the administration would move forward on ending remediation regardless of the vote's outcome.

For Professor Crain, the vote was binding, as according to the Board of Trustees' by-laws, faculty are responsible for decisions about curricula on the campuses.

But according to Professor Ned Scheier of Political Science, who moderated the debate, remediation was more a question of admissions policy, under administrative purview, and not strictly a curricular matter. "The Faculty Senate can serve in an advisory role on this point, but in the final analysis, the administration can trump us," Scheier told the *Messenger*.

For Scheier, the President's statements about ending remediation were "ambiguous." Scheier told the *Messenger* he has "heard nothing to the effect that the president would get rid of remediation."

But, Scheier continued, "We don't usually hear from across the street," referring to the Administration Building across Convent Avenue from the NAC Building. When asked whether the administration is

not in the habit of consulting the faculty, even after the change from Yolanda Moses, Scheier said, "Yes. There's not much collegial interaction."

When asked whether this was the case at other CUNY campuses, Scheier replied, "No, nor at other universities."

Charles Decicco of the administration's Public Relations office told the *Messenger*, "We don't have any plans to advance the end of remediation by a year."

Aftermath

After the vote, Math professor Walter Daum, who supervises the remedial math program, told the *Messenger* that "The Math Department is not ready to implement a plan." A plan for math courses that would fit the trustees' decree was presented in December, but full discussion of it had yet to take place within the department.

Still, the one year's grace provided by the regents and faculty votes does not address the ramifications of ending remediation. More than 350 students will be affected. "People in the [Math] Department are angry. The departmental sentiment is that it's now an impossible task to teach because of the wide set of skills that would be missing," once the current regimen of remediation ended, Daum said. The math SKAT test requires an eighth grade level of ability, but the first class the Math Department offers is a eleventh grade level pre-calculus course, Daum explained.

And without classes to deal with this problem, other programs in the College could be adversely affected. "The Engineering School has always been terrified of students not being calculus-ready, so maybe in that way they're happy to get rid of remedial students. But what about the students who pass the SKAT but can't do calculus? Engineering will be saddled with more students calculus-unprepared. It's a classic example of lowering standards with 'higher' standards," Daum stated.

For the record, Robert Wallace, an adjunct lecturer in Biology, participated in the vote. 

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General Interest Meeting

Wednesday, February 23
3 PM, NAC 3/201

February-March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
13	14	15	16	17 Fighting the Criminal Injustice System: Former Black Panther Lawrence Hayes speaks out. NAC 4/125, 12-2pm. "Fly Words & Sly Talk of Black Relationships: The pain, power, and passions of Black Longevity": Prof. Kalfani N. Ture leads a workshop sponsored by The Nat'l Society of Black Engineers. NAC, 12-2pm. 212-650-8394.	18	19 NO CLASSES Anti-Death Penalty Workshops including "Racism and the Death Penalty," "Police Torture and Falsified Confessions." Synod Hall, St. John the Divine, 112 & Amst, 12:30-3:30, 212-330-7056. "My Lord, What a Morning: The Marian Anderson Story": Play chronicles the life of the Black singer. Aaron Davis Hall, 2pm, \$8. 212-650-7148.
20 NO CLASSES PRESIDENTS' DAY	21	22 African American Film Series. NAC Student Lounge, 12-2pm.	23 Last Day to drop classes without academic penalty. ("W" grade assigned). "The Role of African Americans in the Media in the 21st Century": Lecture by Gil Noble, host of ABC TV's <i>Like It Is</i> . NAC Student Lounge, 5-8pm. Window on New York: open rehearsal of Bill T. Jones' latest play, <i>You Walk?</i> Aaron Davis Hall, 7pm, 212-650-7148.	24 Poetry Slam and Open Mike Session. NAC Student Lounge, 12-2pm. African Arts and Crafts Festival. NAC Rotunda, 9:30am-5:30pm. Architecture Lecture Series: "Questions," Gaetano Pesce. The Great Hall (Shepard Hall, 2nd fl.), 6pm, School of Architecture, 212-650-7118.	25 Dominicans 2000 National Conference. Discussions on the challenges facing the Dominican community in the new millennium. 212-650-5008 or stop by NAC 3/201 for registration or information.	26 Dominicans 2000 National Conference. Discussions on the challenges facing the Dominican community in the new millennium. 212-650-5008 or stop by NAC 3/201 for registration or information.
27 Dominicans 2000 National Conference. Discussions on the challenges facing the Dominican community in the new millennium. 212-650-5008 or stop by NAC 3/201 for registration or information.	28 Book Signing and Discussion with Philip Wamba, author of <i>Kinship: A Family's Journey in Africa and America</i> . NAC Student Lounge, 12-3pm. Men's volleyball: New York City Technical College vs. City College. New York City Technical College, 6:00 pm, 212-260-5102 for location, free.	29 African American Film Series. NAC Student Lounge, 12-2pm. Men's volleyball: City College vs. Brooklyn College/CUNY Conference. City College, 7:00 pm, Nat Holman Gym, free, 212-650-8228.	01	02 Architecture Lecture Series: "Somatic Time," Raimund Abraham. The Great Hall (Shepard Hall, 2nd fl.), 6pm, School of Architecture, 212-650-7118.	03 Degree application deadline for June graduates. Window on New York: open rehearsal of Bill T. Jones' latest play, <i>You Walk?</i> Aaron Davis Hall, 7pm 212-650-7148.	04 Men's and women's basketball Region XV Semifinals, hosted by BMCC. Call for time and location, 212/346-8279, free.
05 Men's and women's basketball Region XV Championship, hosted by BMCC. Call for time and location, 212/346-8279, free.	06	07	08 "Jazz Master Class," featuring guest artist Dave Liebman, saxophone. Shepard Hall Room 95, 12:50pm, 212-650-5411, free.	09 Black Inventions Exhibit sponsored by The National Society of Black Engineers. NAC, 212-650-8394. Architecture Lecture Series: "Known and Imagined," Max Bond. The Great Hall (Shepard Hall, 2nd fl.), 6pm, School of Architecture, 212-650-7118. "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf." See Friday.	10 "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf." A play by Ntozake Shange and directed by Eugene Nesmith. Aaron Davis Hall, Call for times; 212-650-6666, free. Men's volleyball: City College vs. Baruch College/CUNY Conference. City College, 6:00 pm, Nat Holman Gym, free, 212-650-8228.	11 "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf." A play by Ntozake Shange and directed by Eugene Nesmith. Aaron Davis Hall, Call for times; 212-650-6666, free.

Send announcements of your events to the Messenger at ccnymessenger@yahoo.com.

Mexican Police Raid Ends Nine-Month Strike by University Students

by Hank Williams

In the early morning hours of February 6, more than 2,000 Mexican federal police officers stormed the campus of Mexico's National University, thus ending a nine-month strike by students protesting against steep tuition hikes. A brief warning of "Comrades, they're coming in!" was the only warning the strikers had of the impending raid. Over 650 strikers were arrested and taken to detention centers by

*"Tell the people, tell the nation. We're defending the education of their children."
—an UNAM prof.*

police armed with riot gear and clubs, but no guns. Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo was apparently responsible for this, and was most likely keen to avoid a repeat of 1968, when the Mexican army

and police fired upon student protestors in Mexico City, killing more than 200 students in cold blood.

Zedillo's concern for the students is only skin deep, however, as he and university officials were willing to impose a tuition hike to \$160

per year, up from the current two cents. This is significant in a country where the minimum wage is about \$3 per day, half the population lives in poverty, and the National University (UNAM) is virtually the only way for many Mexicans to earn a college degree.

Student demands changed over the course of the occupation from simply protesting the tuition raises to



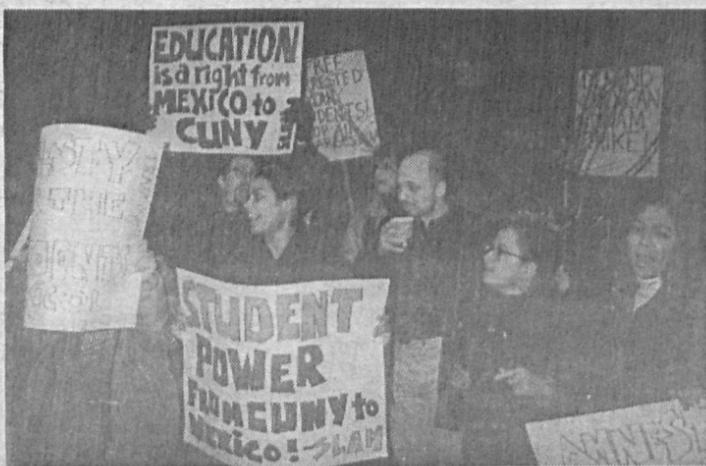
More than 100,000 march in Mexico City in support of the student strikers. (AP)

include demands for greater involvement in decisions affecting the school and the resignation of the school's president. The proposed tuition increase was defeated and the university's president resigned last October.

Strikers, encouraged by their success, decided to continue the strike, although support from the 250,000 student body was starting to slip.

Support was still high amongst the general public, however. "The authorities violated the autonomy of the university, and I'm here to protest a government that always chooses violence as a way to end conflict with its own people," said Teresa Yanez, a parent who has daughters attending the college. **M**

More coverage in an upcoming issue. Story compiled from AP, and other news reports.



CUNY students rallied in support of the UNAM strikers on February 7 outside the Mexican Consulate in Midtown.

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