



TEACH CUNY DAY

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NAC 1/202

THE MESSENGER

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The University We All Deserve

The Faculty Union Looks at the Contract Talks and CUNY's Future

By Larry Hanley

Since July 2000, CUNY's faculty and staff have been working without a contract. The Professional Staff Congress of CUNY, the union that represents CUNY's faculty and staff, began negotiations for a new contract with CUNY management in September. Progress towards a new bargaining agreement has been slow.

These contract negotiations come at a critical time for the University, its faculty, staff, and students. While there's been a lot of talk lately about "restoring" CUNY's excellence (through the creation of "flagship environments," "honors colleges," and a slew of new tests for students), there's been less talk about the

decades-long deterioration of fundamental conditions at the University. Under its new leadership, elected last April, the PSC sees the new contract as an opportunity to restore CUNY's excellence by restoring work conditions that foster academic excellence, professional accomplishment, and a renewal of the University's commitment to the people and communities of New York City.

The facts of CUNY's deterioration are clear. Over the past several decades, faculty and staff salaries have failed to remain competitive with other institutions. While other universities have encouraged more and better research and scholarship by maintaining equitable workloads, CUNY's heavy workloads have made research and scholarship increasingly difficult for its faculty. The

number of full-time faculty at CUNY has been dropping precipitously for decades; since 1974, the number of full-time CUNY faculty has declined almost fifty percent. Meanwhile, over the same period, the University has relied on an expanding pool of underpaid, casualized, part-time faculty. Standard features of professional life at other universities—sabbaticals, research support, junior faculty leave—are increasingly scarce at CUNY.

With this goal in mind—a restoration of the conditions of professional academic life that will enable CUNY to return to national prominence—the PSC has presented CUNY management with a list of 170-contract demands. The full set of proposals is available at the PSC website (www.psc-cuny.org). Highlights of the

contract proposals include:

- reduced workloads for CUNY faculty, commensurate with other research universities
- greater opportunities for professional advancement and development for CUNY staff
- pay parity for CUNY's part-time faculty to increase salaries and reward comparable academic labor
- more-competitive salaries for all CUNY faculty and staff
- tuition remission for grad students

Like other unions, the PSC has traditionally negotiated its contract in a "top-

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CCNY President Search Ignites Controversy

Undemocratic Board of Trustees committee fast-tracks two candidates with uninspiring credentials. Fifty students storm Interim President Roman's office looking for answers. Mass rally planned for March 26 Trustees meeting.

By John Olafson

The long-running and largely secret CCNY presidential search process is finally coming to a head, and in classic Giuliani-era fashion, the result is controversy and protest. As the Nov-Dec 2000 *Messenger* and the March-April 2001 *Campus* have reported, the search process to date has been extremely murky and inaccessible to the students, staff and faculty of City College.

The search committee which was convened ten months ago consists of twelve members, of whom only two are CCNY students and three are CCNY faculty. CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein forced the committee to consider only candidates found by an employment service he hired. This service weeded out candidates who support unacceptable policies like remediation.

Surprise!

Finally, after months of secrecy and confusion, on Thursday, March 15 City College was informed of the names of three finalists, one of whom dropped out immediately. The final vote by the Board of Trustees was planned for only eleven days later, on Monday, March 26.

The interviews of the two finalists,



Undergraduate Student Government President Jason Compton joined dozens of other students on March 22 in bringing to Interim President Roman their many concerns about the presidential search process.

Dr. Gregory Williams of Ohio University and Robert Reinstein of Temple University, were set up on short notice—only five days after the search committee was informed of the final list. These "town hall meetings" were easy to miss if you hadn't been tipped off. Notice was posted on the City College website and a memo was circulated to the college com-

munity in a limited way. The *Messenger* received no notice, and students found out mainly through word of mouth.

Undergraduate Student Government President Jason Compton sent a memo requesting that classes be cancelled during the town hall meetings, which were scheduled for times when many students are in class. The request was denied.

Robin Villa, who co-ordinated the campus visits, said that "They [CUNY Headquarters] gave us such short notice ... [it was] a balance of preparing for the visits and getting the word out college-wide."

The Candidates

The *Messenger* questioned the two candidates at the town hall meetings.

When asked by the *Messenger* about what, specifically, he might do to increase funding with governments opposed to supporting public higher education, Williams responded that: "Resources will [have to] come from a number of different places... There's a wide variety of areas that we would want to be working on to increase resources."

Williams noted that "One of the ways you enhance the budget is by increasing the number of students," which is a sound plan, but might prove difficult with enrollment likely to drop when remedial classes end next September and students who can't pass all three skills tests are banned from the college.

Responding to a question by USG president Jason Compton about how he would respond to a CUNY Board directive that wasn't in the college's best interests, Williams replied that he'd "try

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Why Students Should Support a Fair Contract

While the contract talks between the Professional Staff Congress and CUNY management continue, there's a need to critically examine the issue from a student point of view as well.

For starters, the decline of CUNY (both real and imagined) draws parallels with the fate of the faculty who are hired to teach us. The same conditions we (rightly) complain about at school are the same conditions that make it even more of a challenge to teach us.

CUNY's attack on faculty started the same time as their attack on students. The ranks of full-time faculty and support staff have plummeted since the 1970's, as Kristin Lawler's article points out.

As conservative politicians and CUNY board members rammed through policy changes and budget cuts that have decimated the university, they have steadily replaced full-time staff with poorly paid and poorly supported part timers. Whether or not you could even contact your professor was less important than saving money.

Over the last thirty years New York State and City have followed a familiar tactic: they've funded CUNY at starvation levels and now claim that the university is a flop. The solution? Privatization. Let corporations handle it. Never mentioned by the politicians is a people's agenda—one that makes the interests of the students a priority.

The new PSC leadership is trying to do something long overdue—link the devastation of CUNY with their own demands for improved pay and working conditions and call for the rebuilding of the university in the process.

The real strength will lie in creating a bond between CUNY students and the professors that are here to teach fighting together to demand first-rate college we deserve. Support must be critical: the PSC needs to fight for us as hard as we fight for them, and we need to hold them to what they promise.

The potential is here to build a powerful movement that can stop the attacks on higher education and the thinly veiled racist attacks on working-class students at the same time. A strong PSC and student movement will be a force the CUNY Board will not want to mess with.

The PSC contract negotiations are also going on at the same time that several other New York City employees are negotiating contracts. A contract win for the PSC would help set the tone for public school teachers and sanitation workers and would help to stem the tide of conservatism and neo-liberalism that piles more profits on the rich while the rest of us barely scrape by. The message from students should be clear: fight for us and we'll fight for you.

—Hank Williams

A History to Inspire Us

We are all so busy with our classes and work that we rarely stop to think about the place we are in. The City College campus is rooted in history—great history. On the wall of the NAC rotunda is a plaque honoring the idealistic CCNY students who voluntarily went to Spain and died fighting fascism in the Spanish Civil War. On the second floor of Shepard is The Great Hall and its famous mural portraying immigrants who come to New York in search of a brighter future, receive a City College education, and go forth to better the city and world. Indeed, those who attended the college sound like a Who's Who in U.S. History—Jonas Salk, who invented the polio vaccine, A. Philip Randolph, who reduced racial discrimination in public hiring, the painter Faith Ringgold, writers such as Bernard Malamud, Upton Sinclair, Kurt Vonnegut, Oscar Hijuelos, and so on.

As an emblem of the American Dream, The College almost rivals the Statue of Liberty. Founded in 1847, The College was the first tuition-free public college in the U.S. Its mission was to give all New

Yorkers the opportunity for a college education—an opportunity that most wouldn't otherwise have. Over the years it fulfilled its mission well, but not completely. It wasn't until the early 1950s that the college admitted women to the CLAS, and it only opened wide its doors to people of color in 1969 when, as a result of student protests, it initiated the open admissions policy. In November 1999, we placed a plaque on the rock behind the Aaron Davis Center commemorating the 30th anniversary of the event—one of the most important events in American civil rights history.

I doubt that many of us came to City College with conscious plans to defend and advance its historical mission. But now that we are here, don't we have an obligation to do so? Now that open admissions is under a fierce right-wing attack by Mayor Giuliani, Governor Pataki, and the CUNY Board of Trustees, don't we have an obligation to fight back? Don't we owe it to those who came before us?

—Bill Crain

CUNY's Faculty Union Calls for an End to the Two-Tier Wage System

By Kristin Lawler

The Professional Staff Congress, the union that represents over 18,000 faculty and staff at the City University of New York, is currently mounting a major campaign to win a new contract for its members.

In negotiations with the CUNY administration, the PSC is demanding a truly visionary contract, one that would restore the pay and professional conditions that make real teaching and scholarly work possible for faculty. Over the past ten years, CUNY has been defunded by \$375 million inflation-adjusted dollars. This budget-slashing has taken its toll on education here at the City University—professors' wages have stagnated while their workloads have increased, and the university has hired more and more adjunct, or part-time professors, to teach our classes.

These adjuncts are talented, dedicated professors, but that's not why CUNY hires so many of them. CUNY hires them because they get paid about a quarter of what most full-time professors make to do the same work. They receive poverty wages, few benefits, have little access to departmental resources, and are not paid to meet with students outside of class. They're hired on a semester-by-semester basis, subject to course enrollments and fluctuating departmental funding. Cheap, contingent labor—more akin to sweatshop workers than to college professors.

The union is making some powerful demands of the CUNY administration in the contract negotiations. Foremost among these is the demand to end the two-tier wage system at CUNY, and pay part-time faculty (adjuncts and grad students) at the same rate that full-time faculty receive. This demand is really the crux of all the others, since it's easy for the university to ignore all the demands for the full-time faculty if it can just exploit cheap adjunct labor instead.

The union's other proposals demand

increased pay, decreased workloads, and improved professional conditions for all CUNY faculty and staff. For students, this means professors with more time for them and more time for the scholarly work that makes their classes interesting. It means more full-time professors in our departments, since the more expensive it gets to hire adjuncts, the more incentive the university will have to hire full-time, tenure-track professors instead. It also means a decent salary and work life for the adjunct professors that we do have—because we all know that they deserve it. In short, if the union wins the contract that it seeks, it will transform CUNY into the great public university that we all know New York City deserves. That we deserve.

The most important reason, though, for students to support the faculty's contract demands has even more to do with the future than with the present. Because what's going on at CUNY is the same damn thing that is happening in every other workplace, around the country and around the world. Employers try to speed up their employees—work harder! faster! longer hours!—and do whatever they can to replace the well-paid jobs, the ones with good benefits and job security, with poorly paid, contingent jobs that allow the employer more "flexibility." CUNY is clearly no different—overworking its full-time employees, letting their salaries stagnate while replacing them, little by little, with exploited, part-time, contingent workers.

The main reason for you to join the union in the struggle, against these conditions and for a reinvestment in CUNY, is not only that if we're victorious, you'll get the education that you deserve. No, the best reason for you to join the fight is that these very dynamics that affect CUNY faculty and staff are the same ones that face you in the job market.

It's the union's struggle. It's your struggle. And it starts right here.

Join us at Teach CUNY, Thursday, March 29, noon, NAC 1/202. **M**

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

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

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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.

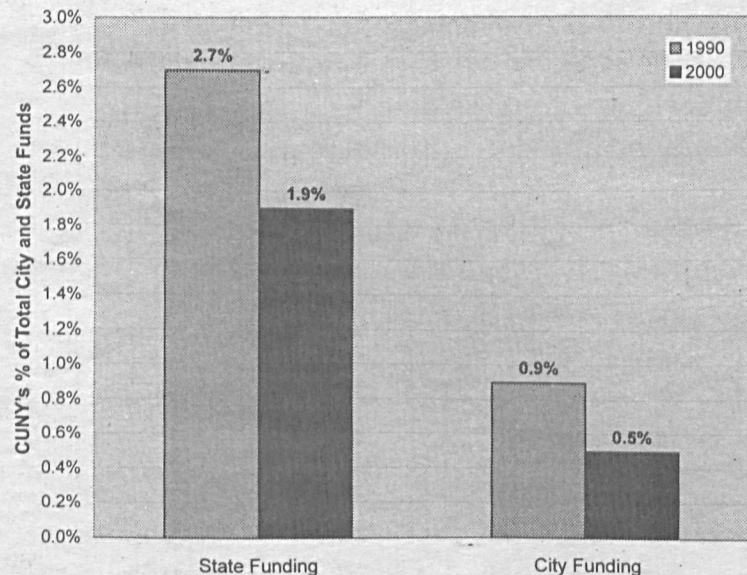
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A Graphical History of CUNY's Fate

Change in CUNY Share of Total State and City Tax-Levy Funds FY 1990-2000

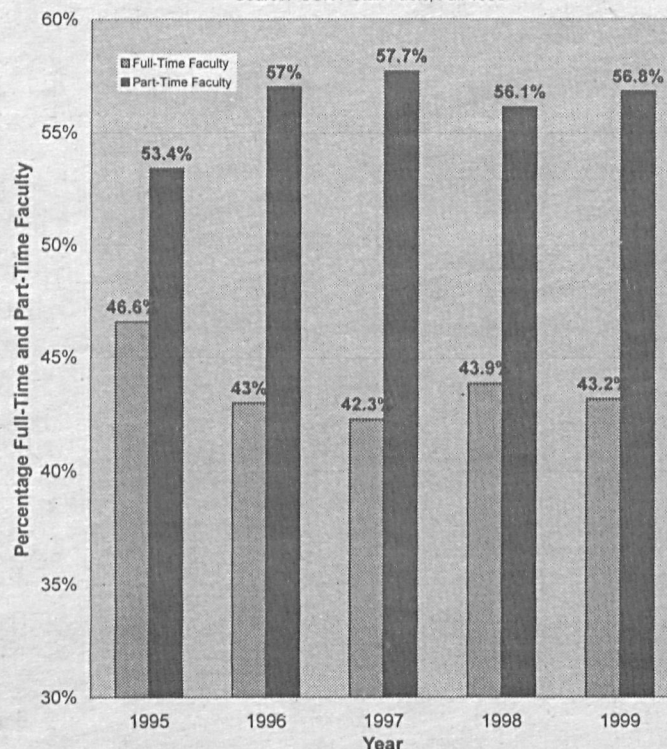
Sources: State Funds: NASBO State Expenditure Reports 1990 and 2000. City Funds: Citizen's Budget Commission.
 Note: State General Funds include tax-levy funds for basic state operations.
 State General Funds exclude Federal funds, bond funds, and tax funds restricted by law for specific state and city activities. City Tax-Levy Funds include revenues from real property taxes, sales and use taxes, personal income taxes, business taxes and other taxes.



CUNY's slice of the pie from the state has decreased 30% in the 1990s. CUNY's slice of the pie from the city has decreased by 44%.

Percentage of Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty at CUNY, 1994-1999

Source: CUNY Staff Facts, Fall 1999



More Part-Time Faculty Are Teaching, But They Are Paid Poorly and Are Not Even Paid to Meet Students for Conference Hours.

Category

State and local appropriations for higher education.
 (Percent change FY 1990-1999 in constant dollars.)

Per \$1000 of personal income in FY 1999 allocated for higher education.
 (Tied with four other states.)

Per capita allocation for higher education in FY 1999.
 (Tied with three other states.)

Share of income needed to pay for college expenses minus financial aid at public four-year colleges or universities.
 (36% in New York, national average 25%.)

Share of income needed to pay for college expenses minus financial aid at community colleges.
 (35% in New York, national average 22%.)

Share of income that poorest families need pay for tuition at the lowest-priced colleges.
 (33% in New York, national average 15%.)

—Measuring Up 2000: The State-By-State Report Card For Higher Education, from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, December 2000.

NY Rank
50th

42nd

33rd

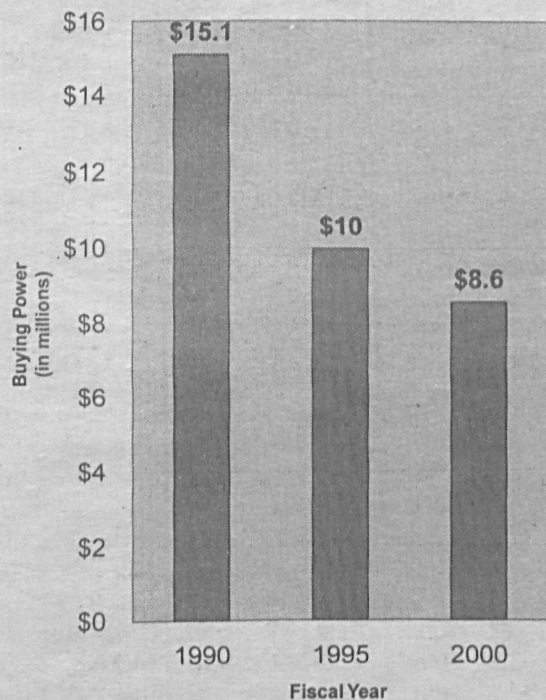
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Inflation-Adjusted Buying Power of CUNY Library Material Funds

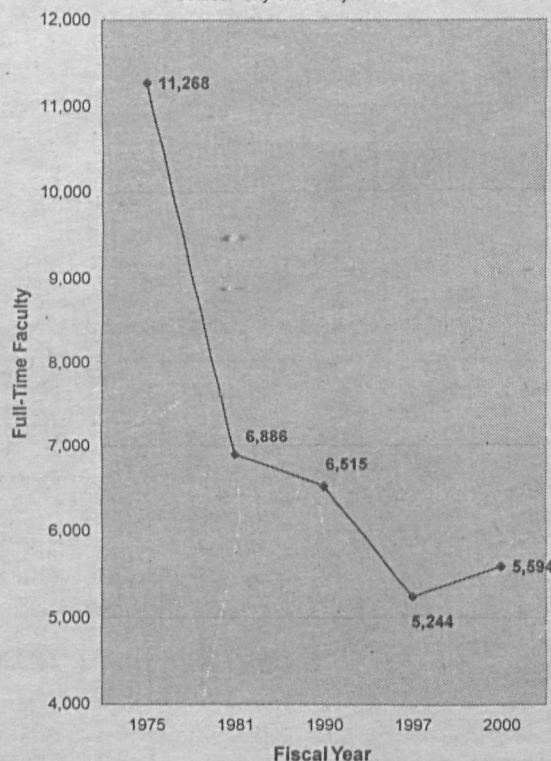
Source: IPEDS, Research Associates of Washington (Higher Education Price Index); CUNY 2001-02 Budget Request



Reduced Funding Means Fewer Resources for Learning.

Full-Time Faculty at CUNY

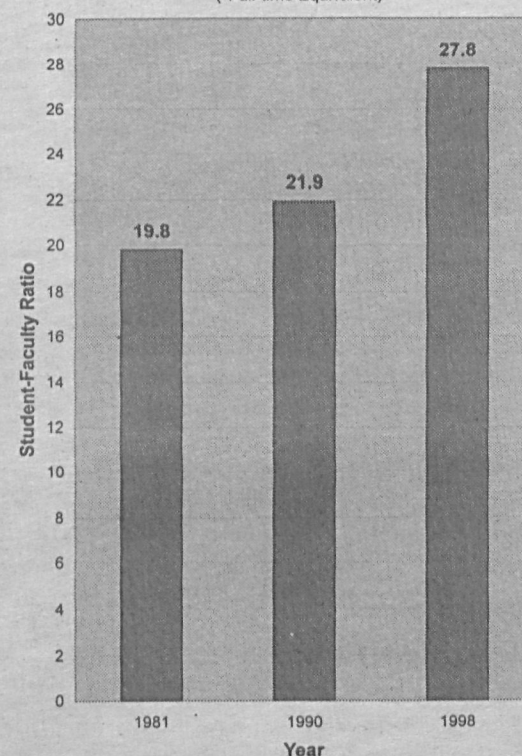
Source: City University of New York



Reduced State and City Support Has Meant a Sharp Decline in Full-Time Faculty

Ratio of FTE* Students to Full-Time Faculty

Sources: CUNY Student Data Book, Fall '98, and University Budget Office (*Full-time Equivalent)



Full-Time Faculty Have More Students to Teach and Advise, As Well As a Growing Number of Adjuncts to Observe and Supervise.

Contract

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down" style: union leaders decided what members need and deserve; they sat down with management to hammer out an agreement; this agreement was then presented to the membership for approval. This negotiation style, which leaves membership on the sidelines as spectators to their own fates, reflects a deeper and broader assumption about what unions do. In this view, unions exist to "service" contracts and are almost exclusively concerned with salary and benefits.

It's too late in the day for this way of thinking. Despite an accomplished faculty and ambitious students, our university is in serious trouble. The new PSC leadership believes that unions should empower their members, not subject them to an inscrutable leadership. The PSC's approach to negotiating a new contract reflects this belief. Our 170 contract proposals were created through consultation and public dialogue with members from across the union—full-time and part-time faculty, HEO's, CLT's, junior faculty and distinguished professors.

The goal of the new contract is not simply to advance salary and benefit demands, but to create the professional workplace that faculty, staff, and students deserve. The way to achieve this is to mobilize the whole membership of the union to get everybody involved in fighting for a better university.

That's where Teach CUNY comes in. Thursday, March 29 will be a day of education, organization, and solidarity. It will be a day to learn more about what's going on at CUNY and, more importantly, to learn more about what we can all do to win the university we deserve.

The PSC's contract campaign is not just about getting a better deal for professors and staff. Restoring a vibrant, supportive professional environment to CUNY's faculty means restoring a vibrant, exciting, intellectual and academic experience to CUNY's students.

Join us at Teach CUNY, Thursday, March 29, noon, in NAC 1/202. **M**

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Search

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to find out what's in the best interest for City College and stand up for that."

Williams spoke in broad generalities. For example, in responding to a question about the dilapidated state of Cohen Library, Williams responded: "It is important to have a high-quality library ... it would certainly be a priority of mine."

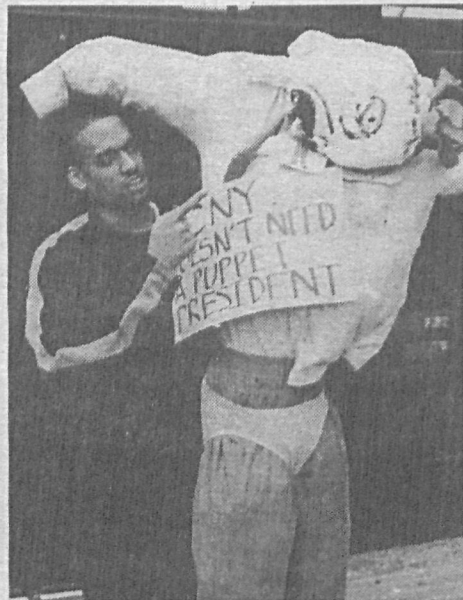
Asked a similar question about increasing funding for the school, Reinstein responded that he sees a combination of increasing grants and alumni donations as key to increasing college funding.

Since CCNY has a notorious history of suppressing student activism, Reinstein was asked what he thought about campus dissent. He replied, "Students have every right to protest... [and] these are rights that we actually have to welcome."

Student Response

Students were uninspired by the choices offered. Hanna Seifu-Teferra, Executive Vice President of the Undergraduate Student Government, said of the candidates, "I found Williams to be extremely arrogant. He didn't have a clue about what

SEEK is and told us that we had no school morale because we did wear CCNY T-shirts. I pointed out to him that the T-shirts cost too much, and they have nothing to do with our morale anyway. Reinstein was okay, however he wasn't very informed on CCNY as a whole. At the



USG President Compton showing us what they'll give us for a CCNY president if we don't speak out.

Faculty Senate meeting they seemed to like Reinstein better; however, they know the decision isn't theirs and they'll have to take whatever they can get."

On the search process itself, Seifu-Teferra stated, "It's so unfair that we have to take one of the two options they're giving us. The search process was very undemocratic. We were promised three candidates, and even through one dropped out, they still pushed two on us. There are rules and regulations that everyone must follow, and it is obvious that the Board of Trustees believe they're above the rules."

"What's the point of having a search committee when the real decision comes down to Giuliani and Badillo and their cronies? It's completely unfair that not enough students and faculty are on the search committee. We're the ones who have to live with the president, and we're the ones who'll have to reap the benefits or suffer the consequences."

Students Take Action

On the afternoon of Thursday, March 22, fifty students stormed CCNY Interim President Stanford Roman's office to express their unhappiness. Unfortunately, Roman has little say in the matter, but stu-

dents gave him an earful of their concerns.

Undergraduate Student Government President Jason Compton declared, "Students are enraged to say the least about the entire process. Evidence of this can be found in the fact that in under fifteen minutes 50 students spontaneously came together to march into the president's office to communicate our frustration with the entire situation. As the days proceed, we're going to stop at nothing to make sure our voices are heard and our rights are not denied."

The newly formed Coalition for Justice at CCNY is demanding that the search process be reopened and the search committee be restructured to include a majority of CCNY students, faculty and staff.

As this issue goes to press, students are planning to make their voices heard at the CUNY Board of Trustees meeting on Monday, March 26, where the board is planning to decide between the two candidates. The Coalition for Justice at CCNY is organizing a mass rally and press conference at the meeting, to take place at 4pm at CUNY Central, East 80th Street and York Avenue in Manhattan. Free buses to the rally are leaving at 3pm from NAC Plaza. **M**

TEACH CUNY

THURS. MARCH 29

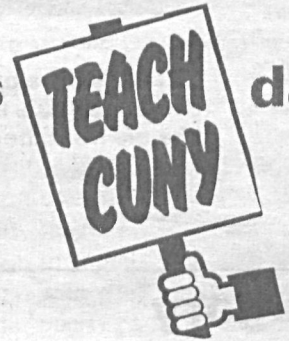
CUNY students... do you want:

- ✓ To stop getting shut out of classes? Smaller classes?
- ✓ All your professors available for office hours?
- ✓ Access to counselors whenever you need assistance?
- ✓ Fully staffed libraries and computer labs open when you need them?
- ✓ To stop paying more and more for your education because of city and state cutbacks?
- ✓ Tuition remission for CUNY graduate students who teach and do research?

That's what we want... you can help!

We're the Professional Staff Congress (PSC/CUNY), the faculty and staff union that's now lobbying for increases in the budget and negotiating a new contract. WE want to restore CUNY's reputation as a first-rate university, but all the administration does is stall on our contract proposals. If we join together, we can make a difference.

Thursday, March 29 is **TEACH CUNY** day
at City College.
Join us at noon
in NAC 1/202.



Your involvement in **TEACH CUNY DAY**
will send a message:

**We all deserve a better CUNY—
STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF**

**JOIN US IN FIGHTING FOR THE CONTRACT
AND FUNDING WE NEED**

For more information, check out the PSC/CUNY website
at www.psc-cuny.org or call (212) 354-1252

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