



WCCFT Union NEWS

October 2005

Monthly Newsletter of The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers

The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers has invited several candidates for the Board of Legislators to address the October general membership meeting of the Union. The candidates have been endorsed by the Westchester Putnam Central Labor Body to which the WCCFT belongs. This November, all seats on the Board of Legislators are up for election.

The Westchester County Board of Legislators has the

responsibility for the budget submitted by the College and voting on the collective bargaining agreement concluded between the Union and the Administration. On its own initiative, the Board may increase budget approving allotments to the College as it did recently when, on the urging of the WCCFT, it added \$80,000 to cover two new full-time faculty lines after the budget had been hammered out between the County Budget office and the WCC Administration.

The Board, which dates in its present form from 1970, is composed of seventeen members representing legislative districts throughout the County. The current political party composition of the Board is eleven Democrats and six Republicans. The work of the Board is conducted by means of 23 committees which meet regularly throughout the year and legislative sessions usually held on Monday evenings which are open to the public.

The Committees which

deal mostly with matters concerning the College are Budget and Appropriations headed by Michael Kaplowitz of the Fourth District, the Education Committee chaired by Bernice Spreckman from Yonkers, the Labor Committee under the leadership of Jose Alvarado, and County Officers and Departments guided by District Ten's Legislative Representative Vito Pinto which reviews appointees to the WCC Board of Trustees.

Meet the Candidates Wednesday, October 5th at 11:00 a.m.

Kaplowitz is in his fourth term on the board, representing the 4th District, which includes New Castle and parts of the Towns of Somers and Yorktown. He has served four years on the county's Environment Committee and six years on the Budget and Appropriation Committee, which he currently chairs. During difficult 2002 budget discussions, Kaplowitz led the effort to find and cut over \$50 million in the proposed budget while retaining necessary county programs.



Michael Kaplowitz



Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Democratic legislator for the 16th District of Yonkers, brings to the Legislature her experience in both the private sector and public service. A former AT&T marketing professional, journalist, and teacher, Stewart-Cousins began her career in government in 1992 as Director of Community Affairs for the City of Yonkers. She is the first African-American to serve in this position. She heads both the Family and Health Committees.

First elected to the Board of Legislators in November 2001 and overwhelmingly re-elected in 2003, Alvarado is the first Hispanic to serve as a Westchester County Legislator. He represents the 17th District in the southwest portion of Yonkers. He chairs the Labor Committee. He is also a member of the Health Committee, the Committee on Housing, the Committee on Cultural and Ethnic Diversity, the Committee on Parks and Recreation and the Committee on Seniors.



Jose Alvarado

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Calendar of Events**Monthly Meetings:**

First Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.
Science Building 102

October 5:

VOTE-COPE, Political Plans
and the November Election

October 22, 26:

Union Members Working Together.
Speakers and Discussions Focusing
on Adjunct Faculty Issues

November 2:

Shared Governance and
Health and Safety at WCC

December 8:

Holiday Celebration

February 2006:

Spring Luncheon

March:

Unions and Globalization

April:

Report of the Watchdogs

May:

Committee Meetings

**President's Message****“What Have You Done For Us Lately?”**

By Anne D'Orazio

A legitimate question to ask of a politician is: What have you done for us lately? In a system of representative, as opposed to direct, democracy, we must rely on officials whom we have elected to carry forward our best interests. Their job is to listen to our concerns, to respond to problems, to initiate programs and to create a positive environment where everyone feels able to participate in the improvement of life.

As public employees of a publicly supported college, we play an important role in the governance of the country on all levels by educating the people who live and work here. We are actively involved in shaping awareness, fostering a critical approach and assessing progress. In this job we have chosen, we stand together with the legislative and executive branches of government which are entrusted with the awesome responsibility of meeting the needs of a complex population.

We can only fulfill our part of this bargain of government by consent of the people if we take seriously the electoral process. In our overloaded and overextended lives we can easily put off thinking about the consequences of not becoming involved. The immediate task of the day—a lecture, a meeting, an errand, an obligation, takes precedence over what's happening in White Plains, Albany or Washington. Taking time to think about how a political situation could be remedied, making a financial contribution to a campaign which supports our view of an issue, attending a political event may not yield tangible results and may even seem overwhelming—only adding to the overload and overextension we're already experiencing.

But we know life is not comparten-

talized into fifty minute hours like classes at a college. We've lived long enough in a global society to understand the connections between all the parts of a political economic system and understand that if we don't suggest direction someone else will.

In a little over a month, there will be elections in Westchester County. The Westchester Putnam Central Labor Body spent four days interviewing over 80 candidates for all kinds of political and judicial positions and has officially endorsed many of those office seekers. At the general membership meeting of the Union, several endorsed candidates for the County Board of Legislators will be available for questions.

The faculty members of Westchester Community College are usually not the faces the legislators see most frequently.

When there is an event for which the Board needs a speaker, it is predictably an administrator who represents the College. When legislators visit the campus, it is mostly on the invitation of the Administration or the Foundation. We need to make ourselves known to the individuals who make decisions affecting our working lives. They welcome the chance to hear from us and help them understand what

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we think is good and what we think could be improved in higher education. This is the kind of information they need for the functioning of their committees and the drafting of legislation.

We work for an institution which receives the highest praise from all our elected officials. Do not miss this opportunity to speak directly to the legislators of Westchester County and do not hesitate to tell them what you need to be a more effective educator. They're prepared for the hard question, What have you done for me lately? They would expect nothing less from their constituents than that.