

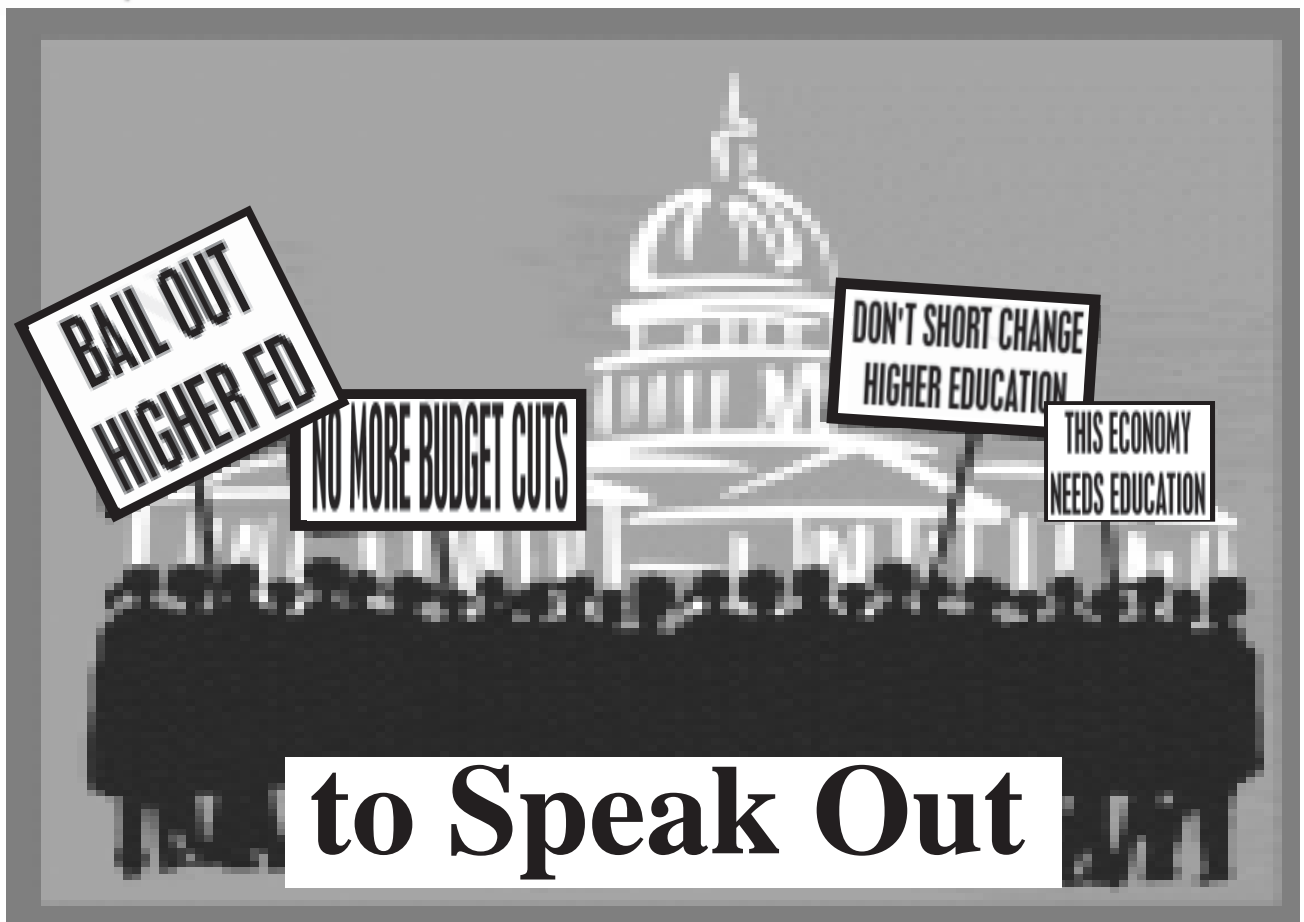
November 2008



Union **NEWS**

Monthly Newsletter of The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers

Higher Education Needs You



to Speak Out

www.wccft.org



A Monthly Newsletter of
Local 2431 American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO)
Affiliated with New York State United Teachers

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Phone: (914) 345-8856

Fax: (914) 345-2761

Newsletter printer

Efficiency Printing Co., A Union Shop
126 So. Lexington, White Plains, NY
914-949-8611



President's Message

Who will Bailout Higher Education?

By Anne D'Orazio

Analysts now estimate that the financial bailout constructed by Henry M. Paulson Jr., the Treasury secretary, should be calculated, realistically, at \$2.5 trillion. Even Paulson himself, although not offering up hard numbers yet, told press conference reporters that any adequate plan would need "hundreds of billions of dollars." (If you can visualize that many zeros, you know that really means trillions.) He has also said that the plan, whatever it looks like in its final form, contains "a certain amount of experimentation." What we do know is that he is being given a whole lot of latitude in constructing it and that his decisions in regard to hiring ten asset managers and structuring the criteria and authority for making certain financial institutions solvent may be "non-reviewable," that is, "may not be reviewed by any court of law or any administrative agency." Moreover, all this money and power are being allocated to companies, the heads of which made unwise, sometimes fraudulent, judgments. But more importantly, the stock market continues to tank on a daily basis in spite of this infusion of more capital than any one of us can imagine.

The fallout of these errors is being felt all over, not least of which is in the halls of state and county legislatures. Just take a look at the budget cuts and their ramifications in the SUNY and CUNY systems that we outline in this issue. An emergency session of the New York State legislature is barely two weeks away with more cuts anticipated. What is the meaning of this ill-advised slashing of funds to public higher education?

What did we do wrong? We certainly haven't defrauded anyone or made serious errors of judgment. And if being bailed out is a form of punishment, we've been just too good. We have way too many forms to fill out, assessments to complete and reports to submit to be unaccountable.

What is the matter with our strategy? Have we not convinced anyone in our carefully crafted, well-documented arguments on the economic impact of cuts to higher education that it is fool-

ish to close the doors to job training and career development? Have we lost entirely the consensus that higher education serves as access to the American Dream for middle and working class people? How is it that everyone agrees vehemently with our claim that education is the backbone of democracy then goes right ahead and guts our budgets?

Who are our allies? The president of the teachers' union at CUNY, Barbara Bowen, takes CUNY's Chancellor, to task for offering to take the \$50 million reduction out of reserve funds. On a much smaller scale, I have criticized our own administration for not pushing for extra funds from the County, but instead, like CUNY's Chancellor, offering to take new faculty lines and programs out of existing funds.

Why can the government find **\$343 million a day** to occupy Iraq (\$410 million if you add Afghanistan) and allow the states to underfund the future of public higher education? We can all think of dozens of ways we could spend the \$12.3 billion a year that's going to the wars: For starters, how about equipment, technology, smaller classes, better indoor air quality, lower student tuition, more full-time faculty lines, adjunct faculty health benefits?

If the protest movements of the Progressive Era, the 1930s and the 1960s teach us anything about how to advance a social agenda, they do so by showing us what fundamental change mass protests can make. Regulatory agencies, labor unions, social security, the civil rights law all of which protect consumers, workers, retired citizens, and minorities were all established in those decades.

We can learn important lessons in organizing from the leaders of those movements: We need to join with students, community members, administrators and most of all each other to protest these budget cuts. We need to attend County Legislative meetings, lobby in Albany and meet individually with legislators. We need to write op-ed pieces for the local newspapers and talk to civic groups.

In the end, who will bailout higher education? Only we can.

Calendar of Events

Monthly Meetings:
First Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.
Science Building 102
(Lunch is served)

November 5, 2008:
The Politics of Labor

December 3, 2008:
Holiday Party

February 4, 2009:
Labor/WCCFT History

March 4, 2009:
Committee Updates

April 1, 2009:
Health and Safety

May 6, 2009:
Legislative Luncheon



WHAT ARE THE BUDGET CUTS AS OF AUGUST 2008?


- SUNY Community Colleges: 6% cut applied to unspent 2008-2009 budget for categorical programs equaling \$680,000. The programs include rental aid; child care centers; contract courses; high needs programs.
- SUNY State-operated (four-year) campuses: Cut in General Fund of 7% or \$96.3 million over previous cut in April Budget for a total 2008-2009 reduction of \$148 million.
- CUNY Senior Colleges: General Fund cut of \$17.7 million plus Special Session cut of \$50.6 million for a total reduction of \$68.3 million.
- CUNY Community Colleges: 6% cut in the unspent 2008-2009 categorical programs for a total of \$662,000.

WHAT DO BUDGET CUTS MEAN FOR HIGHER ED?

- Fewer transfer seats in the SUNY system for community college students
- Reduction in full-time faculty lines
- Delayed graduation from four-year schools
- Increased tuition for all SUNY and CUNY students
- More students in classes
- Less money for salaries and benefits

**THE LEGISLATURE MEETS IN SPECIAL
SESSION ON NOVEMBER 18, 2008.
MORE BUDGET CUTS ARE ON THE TABLE.**


Don't
be a
lone
wolf



Run with the PAC

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VOIE

Community College
members support our
political action fund



UPDATE ON AFT FACE CAMPAIGN

In past issues, we have talked about the FACE campaign which is a legislative effort of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) to increase the number of full-time faculty lines while improving the working conditions and benefits to adjunct faculty at the same time. The AFT website has encouraged adjuncts to write in with their personal experience and on-going concerns. Here is an excerpt from one letter that appeared recently. We hope our adjuncts will log on to the AFT website www.aft.org and participate in this dialogue with other adjuncts from all over the country.

Why Can't Part-time Faculty Experience Transfer?

Written by Jennie Smith
Tuesday, 21 October 2008

I have taught part-time for almost ten years. I have taught about 100 Composition classes at the Community College level, and some literature courses. Approximately 2500 students have passed through my classes. Not one student has ever entered the English Department with a complaint. I have had groups of students take my next Composition class. We have laughed, argued,

learned and grown together. None of this matters. None of this counts. Why? I am at a new Community College. I am on probation for my first few years. I am the lowest ranking Instructor and will be for some time. I have the least seniority and get the last choice in classes. I am there because the college has a strong union, with better pay and benefits. But I'm tired, of starting over, tired

of being held up to the administration's probationary requirements and offered the least convenient schedule, having the least protection. I put in my time for ten years, taking those last minute classes, the sections at the faraway campus, the weekend or evening courses that I had to sacrifice family time to teach. I've done them. I'm done with them...

What is VOTE-COPE?

VOTE-COPE is the Voice of Teachers in Education/Committee on Political Education, the non-partisan political action arm of the State United Teachers and its affiliates. Funded entirely by voluntary contributions from members, VOTE-COPE is used to help union-backed candidates and campaign committees (State Representative, State and National) win.

VOTE-COPE helps strengthen political action programs at all levels -- national, state and local. Through on-the-ground level VOTE-COPE provides support to participating unions for local political action.

VOTE-COPE funds, by law, are kept separate from those of NYSUT. Decisions on the use of VOTE-COPE contributions are made by a national committee. VOTE-COPE solicits and accepts only voluntary contributions. Contributions or gifts to VOTE-COPE are not tax-deductible.



With VOTE-COPE, we gain influence in the political arena. Without that influence, we cannot advocate. Please give to your political action committee, VOTE-COPE.

For the name of your VOTE-COPE regional coordinator, call NYSUT's Legislative Department at (800) 442-6874.



Regional member
please provide to
NYSUT
Political Department
Attention: VOTE-COPE

**REMEMBER, VOTE COPE IS FOR
ADJUNCTS AS WELL AS FULL-TIME FACULTY**



SPEAKING OUT

Recruiting Contingent Faculty

By Jack Longmate

Jack Longmate is an adjunct instructor at Olympic College in Bremerton, Washington and serves as vice president of the college's NEA-affiliated local. He can be reached at JLongmate@oc.ctc.edu.

Most non-tenured/contingent faculty do not voluntarily join their unions, which creates a paradox: without contingent membership, unions are less likely to be very staunch defenders of contingent interests. But if unions do not defend contingent interests, contingents have all the more reason not to become members.

As it is, contingents often have reasons for not joining. Some fear joining a union could interfere with their aspiration for a tenured position or their chances of being offered future classes. Others, given the meager improvements in workplace conditions over the years, have become fatalistic and complacent about the possibility for change and consider union involvement a waste of time. Some hold their unions partially responsible for the lack of job security, unequal pay, limited workload, and spotty benefits.

There's also expense: for those at or below the poverty line, even a discounted membership fee may seem excessive.

Since standard appeals used for recruiting tenured faculty to join the union don't necessarily work with contingent faculty--Maslow's hierarchy of needs comes to mind--the key to recruiting

“The key to recruiting contingents is to speak directly to their needs, the primary one being job security.”

contingents is to speak directly to their needs, the primary one being job security. More important than higher wages, job security makes contingents feel a part of the system and more inclined to involve themselves with it.

Going hand in hand with job security are two other cost-free measures: establishment of a contingent faculty seniority system, which is important even without assurance that it will impact personnel procedures, and vigorous promotion of unemployment benefits for contingents who are unemployed between semesters through no fault of their own.

Contingents are the majority faculty in U.S. higher education; the absence of a strong contingent presence in faculty unions deprives contingents and weakens unions.

Unions can begin to come to grips with the pronounced differences in the two-tiered system by establishing job security for contingents and related noncost issues as reachable, practical goals for bargaining and legislative advocacy. After all, workers who perceive little commitment from either their employer or their union cannot be committed to either. Only when contingents are invested in the system can there be hope for tenured and contingent faculty to stand in genuine solidarity.

Modern Language Association Backs FACE

The Modern Language Association (MLA), the national association of teachers of English and foreign languages, has prepared a resolution to be voted on at their forthcoming annual conference in Chicago this December. The resolution expresses support of the FACE campaign. The full text of the resolution is as follows:

Resolution 2007-1

Whereas the 2007 AAUP “Freedom in the Classroom” report identifies dire challenges to academic freedom, and

Whereas contingent faculty members are most vulnerable to nonreappointment for exercising their academic freedom, and

Whereas reliance on contingent faculty members has grown significantly, such that up to 78% of faculty members in state college systems are part-time,

Be it resolved that the MLA publicly support state legislation aimed at ensuring fair pay and job security with full due-process protections for contingent faculty members and at establishing a higher proportion of full-time faculty members, as developed, in part, by the AFT-led campaign for Faculty and College Excellence (FACE).

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What Some of Our Political Representatives Have To Say . . .

by Patti Sehulster, English Department

As we come to the end of another election cycle and begin our journey of economically uncertain times, knowing what our elected officials think and do matters. We asked five of them the following question: "As our state and county face severe economic decline and probable cuts from federal, state, and county government and as we have already learned (that SUNY's budget will be cut at all SUNY schools, regardless of level, what do you imagine the state and county can do to protect the mission of our award-winning community college: to offer an affordable education to *all* who seek it? What do you think we as faculty can do to aid you in that endeavor?" Some of their answers and other information about them serve to enlighten us.

RUTH HASSELL-THOMPSON, STATE SENATE, 36th District

A widow, a mother of two daughters and grandmother of two, a graduate of Bronx Community College, a retired nurse and counselor at Mount Vernon Hospital, and the recipient of two honorary doctorates for her humanitarian work, Senator Hassell-Thompson has served as a New York State senator since 2000. Prior to her work for the Senate, she served as the Mount Vernon City Council President and Acting Mayor. In this capacity, she chaired the Urban Renewal Board and Capital Projects Board as well as working on the Board of Estimate and the Real Estate Board. These days, Senator Hassell-Thompson stands as the ranking minority member of the Judiciary and the Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business Committee and serves on the Crime Victims, Crime and Correction, Construction and Community Development, and Rules Committees.

Even amid her busy senatorial work,

Senator Hassell-Thompson still finds time to engage in the community work most important to her: The Gathering (a women's center she founded), the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center's Initiative (an AIDS education program), the Westchester Minority Contractor's Association (a group promoting assistance for minority and women-owned businesses), and the Westchester Community Opportunity Program (Westchester Co-Op). Doing this work has earned her several humanitarian achievement awards, and for her work in Ghana, she has received enstoolment as Mpuntuhema (Queenmother for Development) from the Akwamu Traditional Council.

Senator Hassell-Thompson is currently involved in an election campaign against Bronx Republican Curtis Brooks. She has said, however, during a *Journal News* meeting on October 22, "One of the most interesting upsides to this whole crisis we're experiencing in our economy is it's going to force us to reduce the size of government. . . The one area I would spare is education."

ADAM BRADLEY, ASSEMBLYMAN, 89th District

A man responsible for restoring \$4.4 million to Westchester Community College last year and an assemblyman who has consistently fought to restore the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), Adam Bradley earned his JD from Pace University and still has a private practice specializing in family law. The former Assistant County Attorney and Counsel to Assemblyman Richard L. Brodsky, Assemblyman Bradley has championed Election Law reform, the STAR tax relief program, a security and decommissioning study on Indian Point Nuclear Power Generating Facility, legislation that created the Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program, the Family Health Plus program, campaign finance reform, and New York's Sex Offender Registration Act.

When Assemblyman Bradley has time away from his duties and does not have responsibilities at home with his wife and two daughters, he performs com-

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community service as a member of the Advisory Board of the Coachman Family Center (a shelter for homeless families), the treasurer of the WCLAPAC (the pro-choice Political Action Committee), and a member of the Board of Directors of the Law Guardian Association (a group that represents children in legal matters).

Assemblyman Bradley tells us, "We are clearly in for challenging times at all levels of government, all institutions, all businesses and for every individual, perhaps in a way that most of us have never experienced. In facing these challenges, it is important that all stakeholders participate in the dialogue on how best to meet our public policy goals, including the priority we place on improving access to a high quality education and how we ensure that we enable those that work hard have the opportunity to obtain the higher education they seek and deserve."

RICHARD L. BRODSKY, ASSEMBLYMAN, 92nd District

A former adjunct professor of law at St. John's University, a husband and a father of two daughters, Assemblyman Brodsky has served in his post since 1993. During his tenure, he has worked as chairman of the Committee on Environmental Conservation, for which he authored legislation that produced the Environmental Protection Fund and the Clean Air/Clean Water Bond Act; chairman of the Committee on Oversight, Analysis and Investigation; member of committees to increase funding for education and create alternatives to Regents exams; co-creator of the School Tax Relief (STAR) Program; and co-sponsor of a bill to eliminate sales tax on clothing. Currently, he chairs the Standing Committee on Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions, which over-

sees public and private corporations, and he co-chairs the national Coalition of Legislators for Environmental Action (CLEAN). In addition, he stands as the lead Petitioner and Counsel in legal action to force the State Department of Environmental Conservation to regulate pollution of the Hudson River caused by Indian Point.

When Assemblyman Brodsky is not fighting Indian Point, he works on enough humanitarian projects to have garnered the Martin Luther King, Jr. Award, The United Federation of Teachers Friend Award, The Westchester Distinguished Service Medal, the Jewish



Council of Yonkers Appreciation Award, the American Arab Council Distinguished Service Award, the New York State Federation of Police

Legislative Excellence Award, and the New York State Audubon Society William Hoyt Environmental Award. He has made keeping children safe, maintaining privacy rights, sustaining the environment, helping domestic violence victims, and lobbying for breast cancer patients some of the priorities of his legislative and private life.

Assemblyman Brodsky responded to our question with an honest answer: "There are a host of human services, including community colleges, higher education, secondary education, all of them threatened by the current economic crisis. We won't know the details until we return to session. But there'll be a lot of pain. We don't know the extent of the problem right now. Until we know exactly what the problem is, we cannot craft a remedy. Additional funding is always an important goal. But keeping the community aware of the extraordinary contribution of the College is something else we do, and can do more of."

KEN JENKINS, COUNTY LEGISLATOR, 16th District

Active in community affairs and Democratic politics since 1993, Legislator Ken Jenkins became a county legislator in 2007. A former telecommunications worker who earned a B.S. in Computer Science and Information Systems at Iona College, Legislator Jenkins also served as a political analyst on the

"Newsmakers and Point/Counterpoint" Cablevision News shows. In addition, he acted as the executive producer of "Insights and Updates", a Yonkers Cablevision program that discussed issues pertinent to the African-American community. These days, he serves as chair of the county's Committee on Government Operations and as a member of the Budget and Appropriations Committee, the Community Services Committee, the Legislation Committee, the Public Safety and Security Committee, and the Generational, Cultural, and Ethnic Diversity Committee.

Legislator Jenkins works on more than county committees, however; he serves his community, too, as a volunteer for the Greyston Foundation, United Way, the Westchester County District Attorney's Community Service Committee, Westchester County Crimestoppers, the Community Planning Council of Yonkers, the executive committee of the Yonkers NAACP, and the Yonkers Community Action Program, for which he serves as president.



In addition, Legislator Jenkins has secured a grant to work on an Anti-gang and Violence Prevention program and has actually performed in the chorus for the annual Senior Performance in Yonkers. He and his wife and now three grown children have made Yonkers their home since 1982.

Legislator Ken Jenkins's response in 2008 to then-Governor Spitzer's State-of-the-State Address tells us a lot about his attitude towards education. He stated: "Governor Spitzer has made great strides in improving the economic climate of New York in his first year. Laying a foundation that starts with the reformed aid to education formula, his 2008 agenda will build on these successes and show that New York is open for business and sensitive to the needs of its citizens."

JUDITH A. MYERS, COUNTY LEGISLATOR, 7th District

A former PTA co-president and market research consultant, Legislator Myers began her work as a County Legislator in 2005 after having served as a

Town of Mamaroneck Town Board member since 1999. She campaigned on the issues of flood mitigation for Sound Shore communities, lower tax burdens for Westchester County families, and increased open space but has since her election expanded her areas of interest and work. Currently the majority whip for the Democratic caucus, she works with each of the legislature's committees, though she has official membership on the county's Budget and Appropriations Committee, the Committee on Government Operations, the Legislation Committee, the Public Safety and Security Committee, and the Generational, Cultural, and Ethnic Diversity Committee. She has previously served as the chair of the Family, Health and Services Committee, for which she championed a childcare scholarship program. In addition, land use issues, Rye Playland operation, the purchase of Davis Island, and flood relief programs have stood as priorities.

Legislator Myers' community service priorities have included her work for the Mamaroneck CAP (Community Action Program) Center, the Community Advisory Board of the Junior League of Westchester on the Sound, the Larchmont/Mamaroneck Summit, RADAR, the League of Women Voters, and the Women's Westchester Agenda. She, her husband, and their golden retriever live in Mamaroneck.

Legislator Myers responded to our query by telling us, "It's actually something I've given a lot of thought to. Given these tough economic times, and the fact that residents are paying very high property taxes in Westchester



County, I can see the Community College being severely impacted. Specifically, enrollment will continue to rise given the more affordable price tag

attached to WCC, but budgetary increases will be difficult to pass through to stressed taxpayers! I think the County may be able to provide increased efficiencies to the College through an increase in shared services. I think the faculty can be helpful by continuing to do what they do so well and by understanding the tremendous need to curtail as many costs as possible."

New York State and Westchester County Legislators at a Fundraiser Sponsored by the Westchester Putnam Central Labor Body (AFL-CIO)



*WPCLB President Paul Ryan, NY State Assemblyman Mike Spano,
WPCLB Executive Board Member Jim Edmiston*



*NY State Senator Suzi Oppenheimer, NY
State Assemblyman George Latimer*



*NY State Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow, NY State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Westchester
County Legislator Lyndon Williams, Westchester County Board of Legislators Chairman Bill Ryan*

**New York State Legislators Oppenheimer, Latimer, Pretlow, Stewart-Cousins
and Spano were all endorsed by NYSUT for reelection in November 2008.**

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HIGHER EDUCATION ON THEIR AGENDA**