



May 2006

WCCFT *Union* NEWS

Monthly Newsletter of The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers

Contract Update: Expectations and Realities

After arduous negotiations, the Union has every right to expect that all ratifying bodies will carry out their functions expeditiously. That is not the case. The membership ratified the contract on Wednesday, March 1. It was submitted to the next Board of Trustees meeting on Wednesday, March 15 and the members unanimously voted to accept it. Then the process stopped.

Although the Administration conveyed the contract within days to the office of the County Executive, it never emerged from the ninth floor to be reviewed and voted on by the Board of Legislators until early May. During this long delay, the Union was making repeated phone calls, buttonholing individuals and trying to release the document from captivity.

On Monday, May 15, 2006, two com-

mittees of the Board of Legislators, Governmental Operations and Budget and Appropriations, with a total of ten legislators (more than half the number on the Board) in attendance, met together and voted unanimously to approve the contract as submitted. Approval by the entire Board will take place on Monday, May 22, 2006, at the Board's evening meeting.

And what about the money? The Financial Office of the College has worked out all the new scales based on a three-percent across the board increase in compensation starting September 1, 2004. The Union has a copy of the new scales. Assuming the Board of Legislators approves the budget on the 24th, and the signatories to the Contract (County Executive Andy Spano, College President Joseph Hankin and WCCFT President Anne D'Orazio) affix their sig-

natures shortly after, it should take about three to four weeks to put the new salaries into pay checks.

The retroactive payment from September 1, 2004 until the date of the implementation of the new salary scales, is another matter. The problem with those calculations is that until April, 2005, payroll was done by the County which has the records in the County payroll office. After April, 2005, the College handled payroll itself. The two sets have to be reconciled. No date is being given by the WCC payroll office as to exactly when that will be done. It's time to encourage our College Administrators to do everything they can to move this process along, and it's time to put pressure on our friends in County government to help us make this contract a reality.

Summer Faculty Development

While we are waiting for our retroactive paychecks to arrive, here is what some of our faculty members are doing this summer to stay on top of their game.

1. NYU Faculty Resource Seminars (June 12-16, 2006)

Bill Costanzo, Alan Devenish, Anne D'Orazio, Liz Gaffney, Barbara Thomas, Jim Werner, Christolyn Williams, and Richard Rodriguez are some of the faculty who will be attending various week-long NYU seminars with intriguing names such as: Approaches to Critical and Creative Thinking, Bio 2010: How Genes Act in Populations, Conditions

for Democracy: From Ancient Mesopotamia to Modern Iraq, Reacting to the Past, and New York City, American Literature and the Cosmopolitan Ideal.

2. Cambridge Summer Shakespeare program

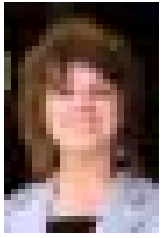
English Department Chair Frank Madden will accompany 10 WCC Honors students on their annual summer pilgrimage to Cambridge, England July 9th - 19th. This intense ten-day long program of Shakespearean studies will enable each Honors Program student to earn 4 credits during their summer study period.

3. **Richard Courage, who teaches English, will be working on his new book, *Black Chicago Renaissance on the South side of Chicago* this summer and attending a scholars conference on W.E.B. Du Bois in Great Barrington, Mass.**

4. **Carlos Delgado, Who teaches Music, is finishing his dissertation and traveling to China.**

5. **Jo Stokes, who teaches Anthropology, will be on an Archeological dig.**

President's Message



The Importance of Place

Let's talk about workplace. We spend a great deal of our time at work and it doesn't take much cognitive agility to figure out that that space we occupy for so many hours should be safe, healthy, and aesthetically pleasing, providing us with a sense of well-being.

We can say that Westchester Community College is a beautiful campus by any objective criteria—rolling landscape, flowering trees, varied architecture, patterned walkways, open areas, altogether comfortable to look at. Studies show that individuals

respond positively to such an inviting work environment. And as far as "safe" and "healthy" are concerned, we have a security force overseeing the operations and keeping careful track of violations.

What about inside the buildings? We would hope to find a setting equally conducive to personal well-being, and in some cases we do: Hartford Hall and the Library in particular are well appointed, at least as far as furnishings go. In other buildings, art work and potted plants help liven up aging interiors. Some carpets have been replaced and equipment upgraded. Still, there is much that can be done to improve the look of the classrooms. When Andy Spano came to my State and Local Government class to speak, the students asked him if he didn't think the room in which he was speaking was pretty dreary. He indicated he thought it could use a face lift.

Most importantly, the Union is aware of ongoing complaints about the quality of conditions in which bargaining members work. The WCCFT was alarmed when the mold crisis hit campus and sug-



gested the use of a nationally recognized industrial hygienist, Ed Olmsted, to conduct an investigation. When Olmsted was not available immedi-

ately, the College Administration hired another company which found and remediated mold in the Classroom Building. The Children's Center, the Library and Dr. Hankin's office in Hartford Hall were also found to have serious mold accumulations and removal efforts were undertaken. The problem was declared resolved. Subsequently, however, another outbreak of mold

was reported in the Classroom Building and additional remediation was ordered. After that, we were again told that all was well, although individual faculty and staff continued to report physical reactions to poor indoor air quality.

The Union continued to ask for a study of the entire campus. Finally, on Saturday, April 29, the Union held its own workshop with Ed Olmsted, with a lecture in the morning and a walk through of select rooms (the Smart Room, 318, 342, 347, and 368, and hallways) in the Science Building in the afternoon.

What we found were sites of intense mold collections, even, in one case, an



infestation of insects. There was mold on the fronts of refrigerators which held chemicals, on ceiling tiles, baseboards, and air ducts. Samples were collected to be observed by the group on microscopes. Olmsted took the slides back to his office for further viewing. He will be submitting a report on his findings. The information and a

list of sites were conveyed to the Administration which wrote back that it would begin clean up work right away. We know from a recent memorandum from Dr. Hankin that the roof in the Science Building is

slated for replacement this summer.

What about the rest of the WCC campus? The Union has urged the Administration to bring Olmsted back to conduct a thorough building-by-building inspection. In any case, the Union will be scheduling another all-day workshop with Olmsted early in the Fall semester.

The people who work, study and visit Westchester Community College deserve only the best environment we can provide. The Union will not let this issue be ignored.



**Beware
the
Watchdog**

