



WCCFT Union NEWS

Monthly Newsletter of The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers

FACE Campaign

Nationwide Union Strategy Aims to Unite Goals of Full Time and Adjunct Faculty

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the national umbrella organization representing 1.4 million teachers, including 160,000 higher educational professionals, has launched an initiative to ensure that **all** faculty members are given the financial and professional support they need to do their best work; and to establish a better balance between the number of full-time tenured faculty, and part-time nontenure-track faculty. It is called the Faculty and College Excellence (FACE) Campaign.

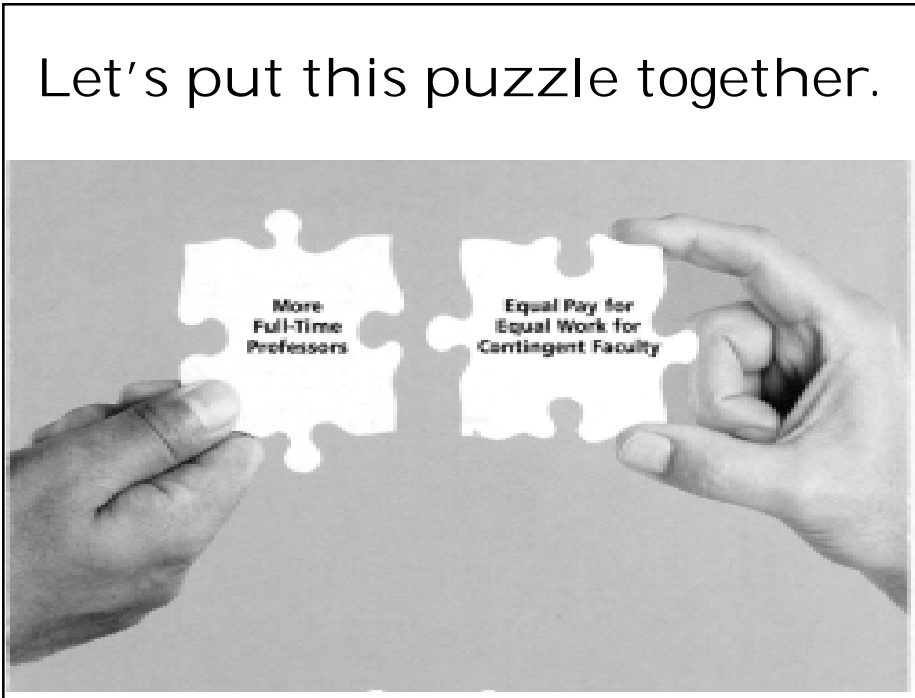
The Campaign is encouraging colleges and universities around the country to hold hearings on campus about current academic staffing trends. These educational hearings are designed to start a dialogue about substantive issues of teaching and compensation in higher education. The AFT hopes unions, faculty senates, individuals and institutions will articulate their support of the FACE campaign by drafting resolutions, declarations, statements and petitions calling attention to the crisis facing higher education by runaway reliance on part-time faculty who work under less than optimal conditions.

Faculty unions have tried for years to negotiate better benefits for adjunct

faculty at the bargaining table. Some like the United University Professions of the state-operated four-year SUNY campuses have been successful in getting health benefits and a measure of job protection for their part-time members. The Professional Staff Congress which represents the faculty at the CUNY campuses has also made gains in their contracts providing adjunct faculty with health coverage.

not a new or unproven means of making gains for workers. Federal and state laws as well as administrative regulations have aimed to improve wages and working conditions for decades. AFT recognizes that every state affiliate, such as the New York State United Teachers to which the WCCFT belongs, has a powerful political lobbying arm, and is therefore in a good position to suggest statutory language for consideration by

the legislative and executive branches of government. Such legislation could include a requirement for a state-wide survey of colleges and universities to collect definitive statistics on faculty ratios and benefits. It could go farther and actually mandate a ratio and require health coverage. In support of these goals, the legislation could provide for a



Let's put this puzzle together.

When contractual efforts have failed to correct the balance of full-time/adjunct ratios, unions have turned to state legislation for relief. In California, the legislature passed a bill which mandated a 75-25 ratio of full time to part-time. Similar legislation is being proposed in a number of states.

The idea of legislating benefits is

special fund to finance them.

AFT has made FACE a priority on its higher education agenda and has put resources behind the campaign. The local unions just need to step up and make this effort a major commitment for its members, its administration and local legislators.



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

WCCFT Officers, 2007-2008

Anne D'Orazio, president
Richard Rosell, vice-president
Joyce McQuade, treasurer
Lynette DeBellis, secretary

WCCFT Executive Board

Carolyn DiLeo, Faculty Development
Matt Ferranto
Jodie Hopkins, Membership
Judy Langer
Steve Nardozi, Benefits
Joanna Peters
Rafael Rodriguez
Diane Urban, Adjunct Rep

Newsletter Editorial Board

Richard Rodriguez, Editor
Kate Ray
Patti Sehulster
Julia Daniels, Photo Editor
Alfred Quinn Quinones, editorial ass't.

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

When Is *Quid Pro Quo* Not Fair?

By Anne D'Orazio

Collective bargaining is the process of holding talks between organized workers and their employer to determine wages, hours, rules, and working conditions. The end product is a contract governing the parties for a determined period of time. In some cases, other issues may be put into documents called Memoranda of Understanding which are not incorporated into the collective bargaining agreement, but are enforced by both sides. While negotiations always consist of trade offs, it is important that both sides remain substantive in their requests and refusals.

We hope the Administration will avoid any tendency to consider a gain for the faculty a loss to the Administration. This attitude forces the Administration to feel it has to "get something" or "take something back" every time the Union is persuasive in one of its items. A good example of this happened recently in the Tech Building. The Union was successful in obtaining a room for adjunct faculty only to find that another room was taken away and the Tech Lounge was locked "because adjuncts were using it too much."

In other words, the Union would like to focus on genuine issues that need to be addressed and problems that need to be solved. A good example of a solution without a problem came up during the 2001 negotiations. The Administration wanted the faculty to document better their efforts to reach advisees. The Union, in turn, requested some justification for faculty taking on a greater role in student counseling, some indication that students benefited from seeing a professor unknown to them, often outside their department. We asked what problem would be solved by asking the faculty to add counseling as-

signments to their teaching responsibilities. Was it retention? Or alienation? The Administration could not supply any answers, but stuck to its position that it was a necessary trade off for the contract to be signed. We agreed in order to complete the deal, but left feeling that it was not a real gain for either side.

Nothing the Union puts on the table should be seen as faculty demanding more than it deserves. We have been judicious in our proposals, mindful of the lack of sufficient funding from state and local governments. We have asked for legitimate salary advances only slightly above cost of living. Increased salaries for faculty enhance the abilities of the College to attract and retain first-rate teachers, set a standard for other college con-

"...it is important that both sides remain substantive in their requests... We hope that the Administration will avoid any tendency to consider a gain for the faculty a loss to the Administration."

stituencies and enable all the campus communities to live decently in Westchester County. When an Administrator suggests we deep-six the fact that our faculty is well paid, the Union responds that the College ought to be proud of our high salary levels and defend them every chance it gets.

The Union's insistence on better pay and benefits for adjuncts is completely reasonable. We cannot continue to look the other way while two-thirds of all sections are taught by people treated differently than the full time faculty. It is unjust and unjustifiable.

As we approach contract negotiations, let's take a careful look at the interests of the faculty and the Administration. We are not a profit-making enterprise trying to maximize a margin of income for outside stockholders. We are all the stockholders here and our profits are measured by successful, well-educated members of the community.

Calendar of Events

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

November 7, 2007:
Political Action

December 5, 2007:
Holiday Party

February 6, 2008:
Union Contract Proposals

March 5, 2008:
Benefits

April 2, 2008:
Health and Safety

May 7, 2008:
Legislative Luncheon



Adjunct Faculty Month Update

By Diane Urban

I am happy to be able to share with you some of the highlights of Adjunct Faculty Month. At our October 3rd meeting, we set the tone of one faculty, full timers and adjuncts working together to achieve better working conditions for all of us. There was a panel discussion on the roles of the adjunct faculty coordinators, the difficulties they face and the concerns of adjuncts. Julia Daniels, Sean Simpson and I were the panel members. One of the outcomes of this discussion was the realization that some of the difficulties we face are flip sides of the same coins. Adjunct coordinators find it difficult to find faculty to cover classes at the last moment; adjuncts find it difficult to live with the uncertainty of last minute of-

fers. It all underscores the need for one faculty working together to find solutions.

On October 11th, Steve Nardozzi, a member of the WCCFT executive board who is acting as liaison regarding benefits, spoke about union benefits available to all faculty; he encouraged all adjuncts to explore the www.nysut.org link and then click on the Members Benefits Trust link. He also discussed the State Teacher's Retirement System and said that under state law all adjuncts are eligible for this pension plan. Contact Steve at 606-6507 or check the union website www.wccft.org for additional information about this.

On October 20th, WCCFT

hosted a Town Meeting. Twenty adjuncts stopped by for a bit to eat and a chance to express their concerns. The major topics were benefits and the fairness of the selection and retention process as it relates to adjuncts. Also, payment for training sessions related to curriculum was brought up as an issue. I encourage all of you to take advantage of the Adjunct Survey available on the www.wccft.org website. It is anonymous and it is a powerful way to let us know what your concerns are so we can begin to determine how best to address them. *Without your input*, without the ability to demonstrate the number of adjuncts taking an interest in campus life, *our ability to negotiate wanes*.



Sean Simpson, Dianne Urban and Julia Daniels during panel discussion on the roles of the adjunct faculty coordinators, the difficulties they face and the concerns of the adjuncts.

Make Every Month a Time to Reach Out to Adjunct Faculty

Meet Our County...

The Westchester County Board of Legislators plays a direct role in the functioning of the College:

- 1) It approves the College budget
- 2) It signs off on the Union-Administration collective bargaining agreement.
- 3) It appoints five members of the College Board of Trustees

The Board consists of seventeen legislators of whom eleven are currently Democrats and six are Republicans. The Board Chair is elected for a two-year term. Matters important to the College are handled by the Budget and Appropriations Committee (B&A) chaired by Michael Kaplowitz of the 4th District; Housing, Planning and Government Operations (HPGO) chaired by Lois Bronz representing Greenburgh; and Public Works, Transportation, Labor and Parks (PWTLP) chaired by Ken Jenkins of Yonkers. The College sits in the Third District represented by Sue Swanson who heads the Appointments Committee (APPT) and sits on B&A, PWTLP, and Public Safety and Security (PSS). The other Committees of the Legislature are:

Environment and Energy (E&E) Tom Abinanti (Elmsford)
 Generational, Cultural & Diversity (GCED) Bernice Spreckman (Yonkers)
 Families, Health and Human Services (FHHS) Judith Myers (Mamaroneck-Larchmont)



District 1
George Oros



District 2
Ursula LaMotte



District 3
Suzanne R. Swanson



District 4
Michael Kaplowitz



District 5
Bill Ryan



District 6
Martin Rogowsky



District 7
Judith Myers



District 8
Lois Bronz



District 9
William Burton



District 10
Vito Pinto



District 11
James Maisano



District 12
Thomas J. Abinanti



District 13
Clinton I. Young Jr.



District 14
Bernice Spreckman



District 15
Gordon A. Burrows



District 16
Kenneth W. Jenkins



District 17
Jose I. Alvarado

Legislative Hearing Proposed for February 2008

The Westchester County Board of Legislators
 has expressed interest in holding a
Public Hearing on
Identifying the Needs of the Community College

...and State Legislators

The New York State Legislature is vitally important to higher education faculty. It has the power over community college funding as well as the ability to pass laws affecting pensions, health coverage, safety in the workplace, shared governance, and, most importantly, full-time, adjunct staffing. We need to maintain close, productive relationships with members of the Assembly and Senate. The districts most directly associated with the college are represented by:



George Latimer

George Latimer (91st) sits on the Labor Committee and Local Government Committee. He prides himself on fighting for Westchester Schools and has said it was "time to step up for higher education." Although a junior member of the Assembly, he has been a particular friend of labor and the College.

Adam Bradley (89th) serves on the En-

vironment Committee and has been especially concerned with saving jobs and improving the economy.

Amy Paulin (88th) is a member of the Higher Education Committee of the Assembly and has written about student loans and college aid.

Richard Brodsky (92nd) is the senior member of the Assembly. He chairs the Important Standing Committee on Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions. He has been an influential member of the Assembly for many years

Mike Spano (93rd), who recently defected from the Republicans so that he could have more influence in a Democrat-dominated Assembly is from Yonkers and very familiar with school funding problems.



Adam Bradley



Amy Paulin



Richard Brodsky



Mike Spano

Gary Pretlow (87th) sits on the influential Ways and Means Committee and comes from Mt. Vernon.



Gary Pretlow

Sandy Galef (90th) has always had close connections with education and holds regular town meetings in Yorktown to discuss issues. She is concerned with health and the uninsured.



Sandy Galef

In the Senate, the College is directly represented by Andrea Stewart Cousins who served for ten years on the Westchester County Board of Legislators and has also been very reliable in her support. Other Senators are:

- Ruth Hassell Thompson (36th District – Bronx and Mt. Vernon)
- Jeff Klein (34th District – Bronx and Yonkers)
- Susie Oppenheimer (37th District – Mamaroneck)
- Vinnie Leibell (40th District – Mt. Kisco)

VOTE-COPE
Opens Doors

nysut
New York State United Teachers

Community College members support our political action fund

GIVE TO VOTE COPE

ORP Victory for NYSUT VOTE-COPE

The efforts of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) have been rewarded victory in the fight for parity of state funded retirement plans. After years of lobbying, NYSUT was successful in producing a bill which the legislature and the governor could both agree was necessary to restore participants in Optional Retirement Plans (ORP) to the same status as their colleagues who chose the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS). Below is the explanation sent out by the College Administration with links to all supporting documents from SUNY. If you have further questions, please call the WCCFT Benefits Coordinator, Steve Nardozzi at 6507.

To all ORP (Optional Retirement Plan) participants

Enhancements have recently been made to the SUNY Optional Retirement Plan (ORP).

The following is a brief summary of those changes along with the supporting documents:

- The Governor has recently signed legislation eliminating the 3% employee contribution after **10 years** of ORP membership, phased in over a three year period.
- Employees who are currently contributing 3% to the pension plan and have **10 years** of ORP membership will have their contributions decreased by 1% on April 1, 2008; 2% on April 1, 2009; 3% on April 1, 2010.
- Correspondingly, for those who have **10 years** of ORP membership, the college contributions to the pension will increase 1% on April 1, 2008; 2% on April 1, 2009; 3% on April 1, 2010.
- New funds have been made available for investment through TIAA-CREF, ING, Met Life and AIG Valic.
- Advice, planning, and active investment management services have been added for all ORP vendors.

Below are the original supporting documents from SUNY-HRMS Benefits Office:



ORP Enhancements
Announcement ...



ORP Approved
Funds List.pdf (2...



ORP 3& Elimination
Legislation...



AIG Campus
Representatives.pdf..

R

R

If you have any questions concerning the changes please contact the appropriate SUNY authorized representative:

- AIG Valic - Valerie Verini – 914-954-2296 - Valerie_Verini@aigvalic.com
- ING - Barry Maslick - 914-347-5837 - SUNYORP@us.ing.com
- MetLife - Robert W Davis – 914-345-8233 - MLRrdavis2@metlife.com
- TIAA - CREFF - Brian Munnelly - 800-842-2011 - bmunnelly@tiaa-cref.org



Actively Engaged

by Patti Sehulster

All of us may think we already do enough to improve our world; after all, we teach and make active, thinking citizens of all those who pass through our classrooms. We encourage our students to join student government, the Human Rights Union, or a host of other clubs geared toward citizen action. We offer a chance to give blood, donate gifts, speak up in newspaper editorials, and do community service through projects like those required by the Davis Global Scholars Program. Many of us work in our local PTA groups or at the food pantries of our local houses of worship. But some of us, including Michael Downie, Alan Devenish, Farhad Ameen, and Susan Shumejda go beyond this level of participation to become activists.

Michael Downie has sort of fallen into his activism as a member of Community Board 10 in Central Harlem.



Though a very active president of the Block Association of the 119th Street and Lenox and 7th Street Neighborhood, he had never attended a Community Board 10 meeting when Scott Stringer asked if Michael were willing to accept the appointment to the board from April 1, 2007 through March 31, 2009. Since accepting that position, Michael has joined two of the group's subcommittees, the education committee and the arts and culture committee. Though the board focuses on working in an advisory capacity regarding land use, zoning, city planning, and traffic issues for the 250,000 people who live in the Board 10 area and on projects such as training youth in building skills and then employing them in the community, "the biggest project [they] have engaged in concerns zoning for 124th, 125th, and 126th Streets." Michael says the City Planning Commission wants to "build

thirty-story buildings from river to river because it says '1.2 million people will be coming to New York, and we want them to live in Harlem.' We want the citizens to be able to look up at the sky" instead of having all sunlight blocked out by the monstrous buildings. In addition, while the City Planning Commission wants to build "primarily multimillion dollar condominiums and cooperatives," the citizens in the area want a different kind of neighborhood. So Michael and the rest of the board have crafted a proposal that asks for a sixteen-story limit and for a condition that requires for every so many square feet of building, five to one hundred square feet of space must be allotted for cultural activities, including museums, arts, etc. In early December, the board will host a town meeting featuring Dr. Dodson from the Schomburg Center to discuss what the people want. In working with the Community Board and the Block Association, Michael frequently links with the city's Community Affairs Office and other such official arms of the city's government, but when asked if he would ever consider entering the political ring, he smiles, chuckles softly, and voices a firm, "No." Michael enjoys exactly what he does now: making a difference in his own community.



While Michael hopes to affect his Harlem community positively, **Alan Devenish** focuses on the global community through his involvement in the co-advisorship of Human Rights Union and his own activism off campus. Alan has traveled to Washington, D.C. and New York City to participate in rallies to save Darfur or to protest human rights violations. Whether he works with students at WCC or marches on Washington, Alan holds as his primary goal to raise people's awareness of these issues and hopefully, to encourage them to take action. He fears that "There's a real paucity of interest in and knowledge of other peoples and places in the world and the tremendous changes and events

taking place in that world while we fixate on Britney Spears as genocide continues." Rather than focus upon only the "gloom and doom that can turn people off to global knowledge," Alan prefers to emphasize what positive action people can take both globally and locally, for even local action still has people "looking out for their fellow human beings." Alan wants most of all for people to begin "seeing our common but extraordinary humanity in the other rather than seeing suffering as something in the other with no connection to [ourselves]."

Alan's biggest push toward helping the WCC community see those connections will come in the new, spring honors course he has designed, Readings in Human Rights. An interdisciplinary course of study that will use literary and non literary texts, the offering will consider many issues surrounding human rights and human rights violations. This course, added to the work Alan does with the Human Rights Union by bringing in speakers, showing films, and sponsoring activities, may make WCC a hub of global and local understanding and activity for change.



Though he says he does not consider himself an activist, **Farhad Ameen**, too, concentrates his efforts on helping one

culture to understand, accept, and help another. Whether he collaborates with other clubs and professors in bringing speakers such as Kamin Mohammadi, an Iranian-born writer, journalist, and commentator to our campus or works with Alan and the Human Rights Union's club members to raise awareness of the issues of refugees and internally displaced people, child soldiers, the trafficking of women and children for commercial sex, or the importance of banning land mines, Farhad Ameen feels passionate about the elimination of human suffering and the violation of

(See "Engaged" Pg. 8)

Engaged

(Continued from Pg. 7)

people’s rights.

Farhad’s concern for the less fortunate has led him to research work intended to affect the “ultra poor” – whom he defines as “those who earn less than \$1.00 a day” (almost one fifth of the world’s population – almost half live on less than \$2 a day). Working with the research division of Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) on a project entitled Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction/ Targeting the Ultra Poor (CFPR/TUP), Farhad is studying and analyzing the data for a project that examines whether or not social capital – “our networks and associations” – can impact our economic well-being, and if so, what implications that conclusion has for “concrete actions we can take to pull people out of poverty.” The study asks if such social capital can be artificially created, and if so, how and how soon. The long-range

goal of the project is of course to learn lessons that will help replicate similar programs in other ultra poor areas of the globe.

As part of his field visits with BRAC to villages in northern Bangladesh Farhad visited some of its chain of rural schools imparting non-formal primary education. He is quite excited about the potential of such non-formal education and hopes to utilize his talents and skills in a way that will help bring change in a broken and unequal system.

Local and national women’s issues and systems of gender discrimination and violence engage **Susan Shumejda**. A member of several local women’s organizations and an in-



vited speaker at a host of conferences on women’s issues, Susan works to promote awareness about and changes in laws concerning domestic violence. She has just recently returned from a national conference on this issue and the ways various professionals must handle specific situations. She also plans to participate actively in the political contests the future promises. She may work on a campaign committee or in some other capacity, as she has done in the past, but she knows she will never remain only a passive reader of news reports or a voter without knowledge. Rather, she will stray from the sidelines onto the frontlines to make her voice heard.

The voices of our faculty shout out strongly all over the county, and Michael, Alan, Farhad, and Susan represent just four of our politically active members. November is the month for political awareness; perhaps this month, each one of us can add to our list of commitments one small bit of political activism that makes a positive difference.

A New Way To Get Heard

According to a recent article in the business section of *The New York Times*, for every 21,000 Americans there is a MacDonalds and for every 56,000 Americans, a Dunkin

Donuts. At the same time, every 550,000 Americans have one representative in the House of Representatives in Congress and 20,000,000 New Yorkers have only two chances to have access to a

United States Senator from their state.

So why don’t we elect representatives to work at MacDonalds and Dunkin Donuts and ask them to fix health care and get us out of the war in Iraq?

