



March 2009

WCCFT *Union* NEWS

Monthly Newsletter of The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers

A Deal Is a Deal



**Support the CSEA Memorandum of
Agreement with the WCC
Administration**

www.wccft.org

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**President's Message**

Stand Tall

By Anne D'Orazio

On March 18, members of the Board of Trustees voted against the Memorandum of Agreement signed by Dr. Hankin and the newly formed unit of the Civil Service Employees Association. Without any raise in salary for over three years, the staff who compose that union local have struggled to survive. With an average annual income of \$40,000, the secretaries, maintenance, technicians, and managerial employees of the College come to work every day to handle countless jobs that serve the institution. How can any fair person vote to deny them an increase in salary which barely matches the cost of living in Westchester County? There are no scholarships, tuition waivers for family members, housing or gas allowances, professional development funds available to staff to help deflect the rising costs of housing, gas, food, clothes. Yet every single day, they go out of their way to offer assistance to students, faculty and administrators.

Throughout the nation, the state and Westchester County, employees, union and non-union are receiving modest pay increases, in some cases offset by decreases in benefits. No union in this county or in New York City has settled for less than an average of 3% salary boost in the past rounds of contract negotiations. Why should our staff be treated differently? Under the Taylor Law labor and management are obligated to bargain in good faith. The CSEA did that; the WCCFT has done that. If we cannot rely on the word of management when we arrive at a settlement agreement, under what authority

has it entered into negotiations?

At the same time, state and local government has flat-lined or reduced its contributions to higher education, forcing every single institution to increase tuition. Lawmakers must be held accountable for their fair and promised share of the price of higher education. We cannot hold our staff hostage to tuition increases beyond their control. That issue must be assigned to a political and social agenda of restructuring the financial package on which higher education in the United States depends.

We must triple and quadruple our efforts to have them rescind cuts and enact positive increases in tuition reimbursement aid, program development money and capital improvement funds.

We must stand behind the staff at Westchester Community College in its efforts to achieve a fair and just settlement of an agreement which was negotiated in good faith by their bargaining team and members of the college administration. Dr. Hankin is authorized by the Board of

“The college hires a labor relations specialist to handle negotiations. Days, weeks and months are dedicated to working out the details. To have these efforts blow up in the faces of the CSEA bargaining team in the space of a couple of hours, was a stunning lesson in betrayal for the over 200 members of CSEA.”

Trustees to craft collective bargaining agreements with the unions at the college. The college hires a labor relations specialist to handle negotiations. Days, weeks and months are dedicated to working out the details. To have these efforts blow up in the faces of the CSEA bargaining team in the space of a couple of hours, was a stunning lesson in betrayal for the over 200 members of CSEA.

This cannot be allowed to happen. Register your disapproval of a decision which overlooks fundamental facts, contradicts rational problem solving and, most importantly, violates all principles of fairness.

Calendar of Events

Monthly Meetings:
First Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.
Technology Building 130
(Lunch is served)

April 1, 2009:
Nominations for Election
Contract Vote

April 28, 2009:
Workers' Memorial Day

May 1- May 31, 2009:
Labor History Month

May 6, 2009:
from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Legislative Luncheon
Meetings with County Legislators

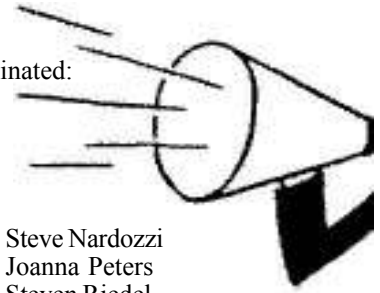


The Nominees Are...

Nominations for the officers and executive board of the WCCFT followed the union's constitution. They were announced the first week of March, opened at the March general membership meeting and held open until the last Wednesday of the month, March 25. Those nominated will be allowed a platform at the April meeting and following that a ballot will be sent to all members in good standing for secret ballot elections.

The following union members have been nominated:

President:	Anne D'Orazio	
Vice President:	Richard Rosell	
Secretary:	Rafael Rodriguez	
Treasurer:	Joyce Mc Quade	
Adjunct Representative:	Diane Urban	
Board members:	Mel Bienenfeld	Steve Nardozzi
	Michael Bobkoff	Joanna Peters
	Carolyn DiLeo	Steven Riedel
	Jodie Hopkins	Maryanne Vent
	Judy Langer	Ellen Zendman



Come Vote on the Agreement

The Negotiating Team of the WCCFT has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the WCC Administration.

The contents of that agreement will be offered for vote at the April membership meeting.



To the Editor, WCCFT Newsletter

In response to Anne D'Orazio's call for dialogue on faculty governance at WCC, I offer the following general thoughts about issues that ought to be included in this important discussion. I would encourage other colleagues to consult the resources available at the AAUP website and to speak up at meetings and in this newsletter about the direction of our union.

Theses on Faculty Governance and the WCCFT

1. In practice, a strong faculty role in governance generally exists in the form of empowered academic departments, department chairs, and standing faculty bodies such as Central Committee.

2. By and large, we do NOT have empowered departments, chairs and standing faculty bodies at WCC.

3. This disempowering of departments etc. is the result of long-standing practices on the part of both administration

and WCCFT leadership.

4. The union leadership's role in disempowering faculty is frequently manifested in the way they pursue grievances that pit one union member against another.

5. The entire membership has a right to expect that when our representatives investigate a potential grievance it will be investigated fully and fairly and that all union members likely to have relevant information will be consulted at the earliest stages.

6. Union members should never feel bullied, intimidated or maligned by WCCFT leaders as a result of carrying out our professional responsibilities as members of the faculty.

7. It is possible to be a good member, even a militant member, of WCCFT and also work collegially with administrators on projects and issues arising from our shared commitment to providing a qual-



ity education to our students.

8. When our interests diverge from administration, as they inevitably will, it is possible to fight for them without demonizing individual administrators.

9. The faculty may be the union, but the union is not the faculty.

Richard Courage, February 5, 2009

Join a Committee

The Union will move forward with the formation and function of committees. It is important that you participate in this process. The Executive Board has proposed to target committee work as a priority for the 2009-2010 academic year.

The committees listed below need members who will dedicate themselves to specific, achievable tasks:

Grievance

Governance

**Political
Action**

**Faculty
Development**

**Health and
Safety**

Please contact Secretary Lynette DeBellis to indicate your willingness to serve.