



WCCFT Union NEWS

December 2005

Monthly Newsletter of The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers

We're not alone.

As administrations all around the New York metropolitan area dig in in an effort to reverse workers' gains over recent years, unions and their constituencies are standing up and saying "enough." At every level — from K-12 to community college and four year campuses — and from graduate teaching assistants to tenured faculty—voices are being raised loudly in objection to the tactics of intransigent administrations. Three unions — three different kinds of constituencies — one shared vision:

Item: NYU TAs march in solidarity.

On Wednesday November 8, NYU graduate student teaching assistants began picketing under the banner of United Auto Workers Local 210. The TA union's contract expired Aug. 31 after the union rejected a last-minute offer from NYU that would have allowed it to continue to negotiate on behalf of graduate students on stipends and benefits but not on issues the university considered "academic affairs" and did not include a third-party grievance procedure.



Item: CUNY faculty and staff speak out.

In a September 29 rally at Cooper Union, a capacity crowd of CUNY faculty and staff overflowed the Great Hall, rejecting the administration's "austerity contract" and vowing to do whatever was necessary to win the contract CUNY needs and deserves. As union president Barbara Bowen put it, "The austerity agenda for CUNY is an expression of contempt for our students."

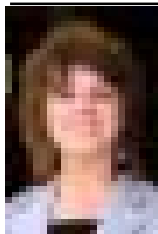
Item: Yonkers teachers rally.

On October 26, the Yonkers school system faculty stood up to be counted. On a chilly Fall afternoon at the Chicken Island parking lot, 1000 people braved the wind and cold to show solidarity with the YFT in demanding a fair labor contract. Leaders from 17 different unions spoke to those assembled and pledged support and solidarity.



President's Message

The Heart and Soul of a Union



The heart and soul of a union is advocacy. And no union can shy away from this responsibility. We represent individual bargaining unit members and the unit as a whole in grievances and contract negotiations. And we have represented the interests of the College as well in Albany and White Plains. Yet, despite our efforts, on all but minor issues, we have met resistance on the part of the Administration. In fact, the more we defended our interests, the more intransigent the Administration became against them. The Administration's limited view of the

role of the union is out of line with the practices at sister colleges such as Nassau and Suffolk where the union is welcomed as a legitimate voice of faculty concerns. After 36 years the union can point to a long list of accomplishments in promoting the interests of the College with local, state and national legislators and has earned a place which the Administration consistently ignores.

Let me cite a couple of examples. First, at Suffolk Community College, the union, as the union, was part of the search and screen committee for a new president. The union at

(See "Heart and Soul" Pg. 2)



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Heart and Soul

(Continued from Pg. 1)

Westchester Community College was refused admission to either of the two search and screen committees for the new Dean of Academic Affairs. When campus constituencies were invited to meet the primary candidate, the union, again, was not included.

Secondly: Westchester Community College does not grant adjunct faculty members any rights until they have taught for 20 semesters, which could be ten years of consecutive fall-spring teaching. This delay in offering an adjunct any protection at all against being terminated at will is way out of line with other two-year and four-year schools, some of which extend this kind of protection after as early as three years of steady commitment. And no matter how we appeal to the Administration on the unfairness of this situation, we are rebuffed every time.

“We value being part of the decision making process and trying to make participation in governance a reality.”

Our values and interests have been clearly stated in this Newsletter, but they deserve reiteration at this time of reflection at the end of the year.

We value working together in a collective, standing up for each other, being supportive in difficult times and con-

gratulatory when a good job is done. We value being part of the decision making process and trying to make participation in governance a reality. We value the work we do as educators and being able to define where and how we pursue our profession outside the classroom. We more than fulfill our obligations to students and the College community. Other institutions of higher education recognize that flexible schedules are part of academia, not indications of irresponsibility. We value academic freedom and the right to frame the substance of our courses and the assessment of students without interference.

Our primary interests are to protect the rights of unit members, to promote a

healthy and safe workplace, and to provide a comprehensive health care package and progressive salary increases. We also have an interest in maintaining the bargaining unit as a whole and advancing the position of the entire member-

ship, which sometimes means balancing the interests of an individual member with those of the group.

It is fitting at the end of the year to take stock of where we've been and where we're going. The Union is proud of its record in representing bargaining members and will continue to be vigilant on their behalf.

Calendar of Events

Monthly Meetings:

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

December 8, 2005:

Holiday Celebration

February 1, 2006:

Spring Luncheon

March 1, 2006:

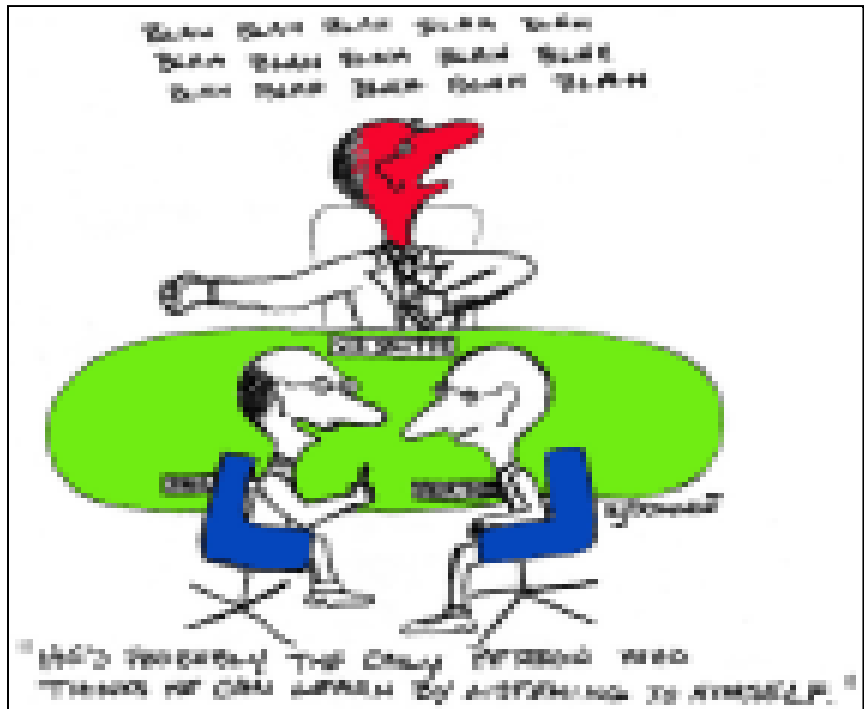
Unions and Globalization

April 3, 2006:

Report of the Watchdogs

May 5, 2006:

Committee Meetings





Location:
HSC Bldg Rm. 17 (office)
Concern(s): Visible mold next to air vent, stained tile.
Suggestions: Test mold spores, replace tile.

Location:
HSC Building Rm. 8 (utility/nursing supplies storage closet).
Concerns: Visible mold next to air vent, water leaks when it rains.
Suggestions: Test mold spores, patch hole in roof.



Location:
HSC Building Rm 2 (classroom)
Concern(s): Visible mold on several tiles adjacent to air vent, stained tiles, visible water damage to panel that covers light fixture, missing tile exposes insulated pipe.
Suggestions: Test mold spores, replace stained & missing tiles, replace light fixture cover panel.



Location:
Academic Arts Building room 515 (copier room).
Concern(s): Mold on ceiling tiles, missing ceiling tiles, ceiling leaks each time it rains, trash cans on file cabinets are used to catch leaking rain water, tops of metal file cabinets have rust stains from leaking rain water.
Suggestions: Test mold spores, fix hole in roof, replace missing/damaged tiles, replace rusted file cabinets, use trash cans for trash.

WCCFT Draft Resolution on Workplace Health

WHEREAS, the objective of the Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers is to represent the faculty, full-time and adjunct, in collective bargaining with the College Administration and the County to achieve and maintain optimal terms and conditions of employment and a **safe, healthy work environment**, and

WHEREAS, conditions such as indoor air quality, mold, and radiation related to the infrastructure and the maintenance of buildings and grounds have been the subject of bargaining unit member concerns and complaints, and

WHEREAS, complaints of conditions and suggestions for improvements are not properly tracked and answered by the College administration in a timely manner, and

WHEREAS, these conditions may contribute to illness, absence and increased health care costs for bargaining unit members, students, staff and administrators,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT,

The WCCFT establish procedures to monitor concerns about workplace health,

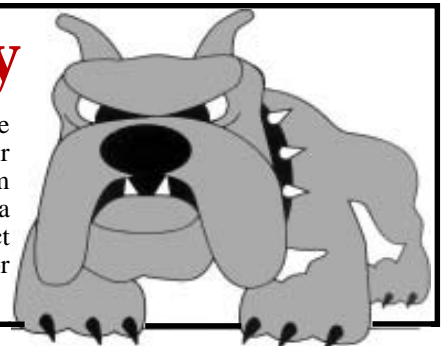
The WCCFT train a team of bargaining unit members who will be charged with the responsibility of monitoring health and safety conditions, documenting evidence of problems and reporting its findings to the Executive Board and the membership of the Union,

The WCCFT establish mechanisms for bringing these concerns to the attention of the College administration for remediation,

The WCCFT follow up on administrative actions and report such actions to the membership.

Beware: Watchdogs on duty

Ed Olmstead, a nationally recognized certified industrial hygienist, will be offering an all day training session on identifying mold and other indoor air quality problems on Saturday, January 21, 2006. Sponsored by a grant from the New York State United Teachers, this program will launch the WATCHDOGS, a team of trained staff who will begin "walk-throughs" of campus buildings to collect data and take pictures of harmful conditions. To take part in this training session or to report trouble spots, please call Anne D'Orazio at 606-8513.





ome to our **PARTY!** on Dec. 8, 3-5:30 p.m.



njoy one and all – faculty and staff.



isten to WCC’s instrumental ensemble.



at good, festive, and fattening food!



ring yourself and a smile.



lease time for staff members!



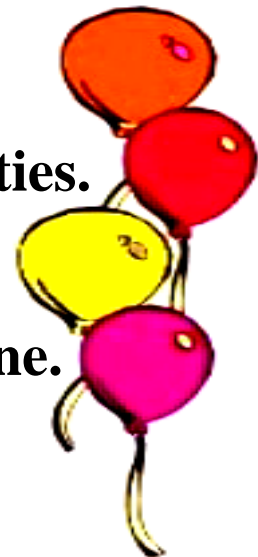
rt on display in AAB gallery student art show.



ake a break from semester end duties.



scape the grind of your daily routine.



**IT’S THE WCCFT ANNUAL
HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA
IN THE AAB AUDITORIUM**