

THE FACULTY VOICE

Hunter College Faculty Newsletter

Vol. IV

MARCH 1992

Number 6

GOVERNANCE HEADS MEET

For perhaps what might be considered a first in recent years, the elected heads of the official governance bodies of Hunter College met on two occasions to talk about issues and concerns of special interest to each and of mutual concern to all. Organizations and individuals involved in these meetings were: Margaret Magnus, Faculty Delegate Assembly; Elizabeth Beaujour, Richard Baldwin, and Michael Turner, Hunter College Senate; Kim Ray, Day Session Student Government; Mark DePalma, Evening Session Student Government; Doris Chee, Graduate Student Organization; Giuseppe DiScipio, Ombudsman; and Ken Sherrill, Political Science Department.

The first get-together, a luncheon meeting, took place on Friday, March 6. Seated at a round table and sharing generous portions of Chinese food, participants quickly focused the conversation on a most pressing problem common to all, i.e. the "draconian" budget cuts being proposed for CUNY and how these cuts will impact on Hunter College. Each person spoke about the impact of the cuts from the perspective their individual organizations and the constituencies they represent. However, it quickly became apparent that despite the diversity of concerns, a unity of purpose was needed. It was obvious that the time-frame for action was indeed short. Three areas emerged: (1) The cooperation of faculty will be sought to allow students to speak briefly to their peers during class sessions; (2) The members of the Hunter Community need to contact and visit the local district offices of their legislators; (3) Each group needs to bear "witness" to how the proposed budget cuts will influence the quality of and access to public higher education in New York.

The second meeting of governance heads took place on Friday, March 13. During this meeting, it became apparent that there is much misinformation afloat, both within CUNY and at Hunter, about where and how the budget cuts would be made. It was proposed that a fact sheet be prepared which would detail as accurately as possible the actual process, expected outcomes, and the impact of the proposed cuts on Hunter. Some of this information is accessible, while most of it will depend on our lobbying efforts, the ultimate budget scenario with which we are faced, and fine-tuned negotiations by all concerned. Efforts are being made to gain access to sources of accurate information, which will be made available in a timely manner. In a nutshell what we are facing is a \$5M+ cut in the operating budget; a \$500 tuition increase; and reduction in State financial aid support for incoming students. New York state now spends two dollars on social welfare for every dollar spent on education—a real travesty indeed! The tight fiscal restraints, which these cuts will necessitate, will affect all of our constituencies at Hunter.

It is expected that the group will meet again, although no date has been set as yet.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

PROMOTION SCHEDULE—By March 27, supporting material must be filed in appropriate Divisional Office. Also by that date, Divisional Personnel and Budget Committee ratings are forwarded to the President.

TENURE AND CCE SCHEDULE—By April 13, Department recommendations are forwarded to divisional deans, with supporting data. Also by that date, notification of candidates about Departmental P&B decision by the Department Chairperson.

SHUSTER AWARD APPLICATIONS—An April 1, deadline is set for faculty to submit proposals for small grants from the George N. Shuster Faculty Fellowship Funds. Average awards, of approximately \$400.00, will be made to support current research, scholarly writing, or creative work. Proposals will be evaluated by a faculty review panel chaired by Pamela Stone, Sociology.

PUBLIC SERVICE SCHOLAR PROGRAM—Faculty are asked to refer upper juniors and seniors, with a GPA of at least 3.0, for consideration for the Public Service Scholar Program. Although a March 13, deadline was established, an extension may be granted for students referred by faculty. For additional details, call Elaine Walsh, EXT 5599/5.

END-OF-YEAR FACULTY GATHERING

The Executive Committee of The General Faculty and the Faculty Club plan to sponsor an end-of-year faculty gathering and retirement event. The Faculty Delegate Assembly, at its March meeting, agreed that this was a worthwhile endeavor which should be pursued.

Several FDA Delegates have signed up to serve on an Ad Hoc Committee to begin preparatory work. Other faculty volunteers are needed. Also faculty with musical and other artistic abilities might wish to share their talents with their colleagues. We would be happy to hear from you at the FDA Office, Room 1414E, EXT 4123/4. Invitations to The General Faculty will be issued in a few weeks. Also, donations to support the event will be greatly appreciated.

GENERAL FACULTY ELECTION SCHEDULE

1. Signed petitions, with at least 25 faculty signatures, for each of the announced position vacancies on the Executive Committee of The Faculty Delegate Assembly and the University Faculty Senate, were received by a March 20 deadline.
2. Ballot distribution to The General Faculty will begin by April 15.
3. Election tally by May 15.
4. Announcement of election outcomes at the May 20 General Faculty meeting.

FACULTY ISSUES AND CONCERNS ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES

On October 28, 1991, The Executive Committee of The General Faculty wrote to each FDA Delegate from each of the Departments and Schools asking them to apprise the body of the issues and concerns which faculty wished to raise for discussion and subsequent action. A summary of issues raised was presented at a meeting of The General Faculty on December 17. We now wish to highlight some of these concerns and want to assure the faculty that efforts are being made to bring these matters to the attention of appropriate individuals and offices and to secure out workable solutions to problems identified.

Quality of Life Issues—In this category, some of the problems faculty felt influenced negatively the quality of life at Hunter were such things as: lack of chalk, erasers, and other instructional tools in the classroom; poor air quality, lighting, and uncomfortable temperatures in classrooms and offices; lack of water fountains and unclean restrooms on some floors; lack of access to copying machines and personal computers; lengthy waits for elevators, especially in the North Building; increasing noise levels on some floors, especially in the North Building; lack of adequate office, conference, and classroom space to accommodate increasing section sizes and increasing instructional responsibilities; and safety and security concerns, especially during evening hours. Mention was also made of a lack of technical support staff to maintain some laboratories and studios.

Professional Issues—Some of the concerns, in this category, focused on the College's inability to replace departing professors; reduction in the number of fellowship awards; extremely heavy reliance on adjuncts; diminution of funds to sponsor guest speakers, seminars, and work-study students; elimination or decrease in teaching credit for independent study; limited credit for time and labor intensive field-based education; and heavier course load assignments of faculty in the professional schools. Other issues in this category pertained to tight scheduling that cuts into class time, and learning and psychosocial problems evidenced by students and reflected in classroom settings.

Service Issues—On-going concerns were expressed about multiple position reporting, especially an item pertaining to the reporting of volunteer activities. Salary issues, lack of cost of living increases, pay freezes, paycheck distribution methods, and abrupt, unannounced changes in health and fringe benefit packages, as well as the ominous state of the CUNY budget situation were identified as factors contributing to faculty anxiety, uneasiness, and low morale. It was also reported that there was a dearth of faculty available and interested in standing for election to Department Chair and other leadership positions at this time. Also noted was the seeming futility of voicing concern about any of these issues and concerns and expressions of desire to explore novel approaches to problem resolution.

Library—Matters specifically relating to the library and its services were noted. Replacement of personnel who departed due to early retirement or for other reasons, and severe budgetary constraints influencing acquisitions and computerized services, were two major concerns of the library faculty.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM—"Voices of Protest: A Study on Tamil Women's Writing," presented by Sitra Maunaguru, Visiting Rockefeller Humanities Scholar, Thursday, March 26, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m., Room 1700E.

DOLCIANI LECTURES—"The Geometry of Randomness," by Persi Diaconis, Harvard University, and "Geometry—The Gateway to Understanding," by Jean Pedersen, Santa Clara University, Tuesday, April 7, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. Room 714W.

CUNY ACADEMY FOR HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES—"New Compact for Learning: An Education Reform Package," presented by Thomas Sobol, NY State Commissioner of Education, Thursday, April 9, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., Graduate School Auditorium, 33 West 42nd Street.

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES—The Aeolian Chamber Players, Sunday, April 12, 2:45 p.m., The Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th Street.

HONORS CONVOCATION—Honoring students whose names appear on the Dean's List, Scholar Athletes, and those elected to any of the Hunter Honor Societies, Tuesday, April 28, 4:30 p.m., Faculty-Staff Dining Room, 8W.

GORDON FIFER MEMORIAL LECTURE—"Current Status of Developmental Theories," by Frances Degan Horowitz, newly appointed President of the CUNY Graduate Center, Wednesday, April 29, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m., Room 1315E.

FACULTY IN THE NEWS

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS AWARD—Timothy Bromage, Anthropology, recently received a Distinguished Alumni Award from Sonoma State University in California. Professor Bromage "earned himself international recognition by comparing the bones of early humans with those of apes." In addition, "he invented a new technique for determining the age of individual fossil teeth from growth patterns."

NEW YORK LIVE—Under the caption, "Tough & Tender," students of Robert White, Classics and Oriental Studies, were quoted as saying, "He's really tough, but you don't mind because he has such a great mind." And, "He treats everyone with respect. That encourages confidence and participation. People in his class aren't afraid to speak freely."

CLOSE-UP—A recent Newsday article featured John Henrick Clarke, professor emeritus of African world history at Hunter and author of 27 books. The headline read, "He Opened Eyes to Black History," and quoted Professor Clarke's message to his people, "each generation must secure its own freedom . . . one way to protect it is to know yourself by knowing your history."

THE FACULTY VOICE is produced by the Office of the General Faculty and the Faculty Delegate Assembly. We would like to encourage a more active exchange of ideas, news, views, and opinions among our faculty. Write us letters, and send us information and articles which you would like to have included in forthcoming issues. Let us hear from you!