Watson’s CCC Post-Strike Reprisals Continue

Chancellor Wayne Watson and the CCC Board fired nearly 140 adjunct professors, 63 of whom are Local 1600 professors emeritus, for honoring the picket line during the acrimonious three-week strike in October and early November last year. “Make no mistake about it… You chose to fire these professors who followed their conscience to do the right thing,” stressed CCCTU President Perry Buckley in his address to the CCC Board on February 3, 2005. He continued, “There is no state law, no provision in our contract, no Board policy, and no past practice which calls for [their] dismissal.” He concluded, “I hope at least one of you asks the question: ‘Exactly what have [we] won in firing some of the best professors the City Colleges have ever had?’”

When the contract was ratified Buckley had vowed no one would “go back in” unless everyone on the line went back in. No one was fired, and all the emeritus and adjunct professors returned. It was only after returning to work that the City Colleges announced their plan to not rehire them in the spring.

All the reprisals began after returning to work. Professionals, for example, who earned overtime pay in the new contract, were forced to “sign in and sign out.” The most obvious reprisal, however, was against the retired faculty members who have given thirty-plus years to the City Colleges. “Many of our retirees are a Who’s Who not only in the CCC but in the state of Illinois and the country,” said Buckley in an interview. “This same Board who honored these Distinguished Professors is now punishing them.”

At the February 3 City Colleges Board Meeting, Ismay Ashford, a professor emeritus and founder of the African-American Studies Program at Olive-Harvey College, asked the Board: “How does my not being allowed to teach benefit my students?”

OH’s award winning African-American Studies Program, asked, “How is my not teaching helping my students?” Stewart Cohen (HW) called for an “independent and elected Board,” and former department chair and Distinguished Faculty Errol Magidson (DA) noted that the blacklist of names reminded him of “those issued during the McCarthy era of the 1950s.”

The infamous “blacklist” that began circulating in December 2004, also contained the names of the now-fired part-timers who for ethical reasons refused to cross (Continued on Page 7)
FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

I had thought by now I would be finished writing about the October City Colleges of Chicago Strike. I would be talking only of upcoming negotiations at Triton, South Suburban, and Morton Colleges. However, the inexcusable and reprehensible reprisals and the continued destructive policies of Chancellor Wayne Watson and the CCC Board continue unabated. Therefore, our fight continues unabated.

Watson, with total support from his chairman, board, and all seven presidents, followed through with his firing of 63 professors emeritus, all Local 1600 retiree chapter members who honored the strike. He also fired all the adjuncts who honored our line. This was done in spite of an “ironclad non-reprisal clause” in our contract. We will continue our fight before the American Arbitration Association.

But this is only one of several moves made by Watson which all reek of reprisals. Perhaps the most egregious and destructive was his freezing of all new nursing student enrollments at three of the City Colleges. Watson stated the reason was that these programs were “on probation.” What Watson did not say was that the programs are certified both by the NCA and the state nursing body. The probation is his! It simply boggles the mind as to why a chief administrator would publicly attack a certified, licensed program with nursing board pass rates which are some of the best in the state.

The only difference in these programs is that the nurses won “one for one” clinical credit in the new contract. Instead of hiring the new nursing faculty to get this done, he is destroying programs which offer life altering careers in our communities where they are most needed. Here too we will continue to fight not only for our Union teaching nurses, but for the colleges, the students, and the communities we serve.

Fortunately, for now, this self-destructive madness is exclusive to the City Colleges. Triton MidManagement settled with a good contract six months before the old contract expired. The boards at Triton, Morton and South Suburban have voiced their willingness to negotiate in good faith on the other contracts, and early indications are encouraging. If things change, however, we have demonstrated, as a Union, we know well how to run, and win a strike. We will now demonstrate we know how to fight, and defeat, reprisals as well.

Triton Faculty Begins Negotiations

Triton Faculty began negotiations on Wednesday February 2nd with both sides exchanging a list of five concerns each in addition to health care and salary. Employing the strategy of Interest Based Bargaining (which proved successful in bargaining five years ago), both sides will discuss the issues before taking positions. Limited negotiations were agreed upon to last no longer than February 28th. The negotiating team includes Chapter Chair Maggie Hahn-Wade, Stewart Sikora, Judy Darst, Mary Casey-Incardone and Bill O’Connell. CCCTU Vice-President, and Triton retiree, Jim O’Malley will serve as an advisor. Local 1600 has pledged its support and assistance to the team and the chapter throughout negotiations.

COOK COUNTY COLLEGE TEACHERS UNION, LOCAL 1600, AFL-CIO

President.................................................................Perry Buckley
Vice President, City Colleges Division.........................Sonia Powell
Vice President, Suburban Faculty...............................Jim O’Malley
Vice President, Suburban Classified.........................Gail Wiot
Secretary...............................................................Patricia Wenthold
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Legislative Representative...............................Bill Naegele
Grievance Chairman..........................................Tom Kodogeorgiou
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For news you can use visit: www.cccctu.com

Member of AFT Communications Association
and Midwest Labor Press Association.
By a unanimous vote on Feb. 17, the Prairie State College Campus and Public Safety Officers Association, the newest chapter in Local 1600, approved the new contract they negotiated with their administration. Chapter Chair Julius Neveles indicated the Prairie State Board is expected to approve the contract on February 28.

Every person in the chapter received a salary increase in addition to an across-the-board increase of 5% for 2005 and 2006. Thereafter, annual increases will be tied to salary increases by their sister chapter, the Prairie State Classified Association. The lowest paid part-time security members were receiving $5.15 per hour; now the lowest paid will receive $9.43. Plus, a new higher minimum was created for each rank. In addition, medical, dental, vision, pension and other benefits have been pro-rated for each member. A total of 21 fringe benefits were gained plus at least an additional 26 working condition and union rights provisions. For example, chapter officer Faa’iza Sharif, who was relegated to part-time pay despite full-time hours, will now receive an increase of roughly $7,000 annually.

Neveles worked with LaGenne Cole Carter, Princeton Ferguson, and Robert Goncher on the chapter’s negotiating team. Neveles said, “I received tremendous support and assistance from Local 1600’s Assistant to the President Janie Morrison as chief negotiator.” He also cited Prairie State Classified Chapter Chair Susan Braasch, Local 1600 Classified V.P. Gail Wiot and “the commitment demonstrated by the security staff in my unit.” LaGenne Cole Carter said: “It’s been a long hard road, though we finally made it. It’s nice to feel secure in your job.”

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“Beautiful” was the word used by Chapter Chair Mary Jeans to describe a five day negotiating session for Triton Mid-Managers. The settlement includes raises of 3, 3.5 and 4 percent respectively in the three year contract, and an increase in professional development money. The contract also includes 40 days paid for unused sick leave and $1,000 for out placement (career transition). Insurance co-payments will increase 15% each year of the contract. Prescription co-pays move from $3 (generic) and $5 (non-gener-ic) to $6 and $10 plus $20 for non-formulary drugs.

The negotiating team also included Kathy Deresinski, Kevin Miller, and Peggy Hosty. Jeans was in daily contact with Local 1600 Vice President Jim O’Malley who helped advise the team. Jeans also commended President Perry Buckley for his help. O’Malley noted that the raises received were equivalent to those of Northeastern Illinois Faculty who walked the picket line for almost three weeks.
Rausan Tamir (at right), Dawson Chapter Chair, leads the “Electric Slide” at Dawson’s Holiday Party on December 17 at Dawson.

The Kennedy-King holiday party on December 9 at Dusty’s Banquets got all chapter members up and dancing.

Harper Pro Tech Members who gather at the Jan. 12 meeting were (from left): Marie Eibl, Barbara Singer, Doris Howden, Lynn Secrest, Becky Santeler, local 1600 President Perry Buckley, Beth Krueger, Suburban VP Jim O’Malley, Chapter vice-chair Margi Sedano, Ron Greenberg, and Local 1600 Secretary Pat Wenthold.

(from left) Gathering at the Harper College on Jan. 12 were Chapter Treasurer Dan Loprieno, Asst. Chair Paul Guymon, Grievance Chair Sue Overland, Local 1600 Suburban VP Jim O’Malley, Chapter Chair Michael Harkins, and President Perry Buckley.

Editor’s Farewell

It is with great happiness that I announce my stepping down as the editor of the Voice. It has been fun working with Norm Swenson and Perry Buckley over the past two-and-a-half years, even when the heat was on at Harper College and the City Colleges of Chicago. At this point in my life, however, I do have other projects that I must try to finish. I would like to thank Janie Morrison and Gayle Gregg for their help at the union office, Bob and Delsia Vogel at Spread the News (our union mailer), Randy Martini and his crew at Forest Printing (our union printer) and my wife, Diane, for continued support and good humor.

Finally, I expect that you will see me around with a camera in my hands in the years to come; old habits die hard. And the Cook County College Teachers Union will always be under attack from the powers that be. The only persons you can trust at crunch time are your hard-working president, Perry Buckley; his officers, our peerless attorneys and each other.

Best wishes,
Bob Blackwood, Retiree Chapter

College Union Voice
South Suburban Faculty and Morton Prepare for Negotiations

South Suburban Faculty Chapter and Morton Faculty and Classified Chapters have surveyed their membership, established their negotiating teams and are preparing to enter contract negotiations for expiring contracts.

The South Suburban negotiating team includes Chapter Chair Karen Simac, Dr. Herman Stark, Roger Kessinger, Diane Black, G. A. Griffith, and Don Ehrhart. At the team’s request, Local 1600 Legislative Chair Bill Naegele will act as CCCTU advisor.

The Morton Faculty team includes Chapter Chair Dante Orfei, Jerry Neadly and Diane Sarther.

Morton Classified will be represented by Chapter Chair Greg Benson and Assistant Chapter Chair Walter Hoenisch. The classified team is working closely with Local 1600 V. P. Classified Gail Wiot and IFT Staffer Jennifer Marsh.

The Voice will keep you abreast of these negotiations.

Professors Emeritus on Chicago Cable TV

On Thursday, Mar. 10 and Mar. 17, at 9:30, “Labor Beat” on Chicago Cable Television Channel 19 will present a story on “Reprisals in the City Colleges of Chicago.” Steve Dalber shot most of the tape, and Larry Duncan edits the show.

Buckley at Wright

From left: Wright Chapter Chair Clyde Walker looks on as President Perry Buckley passes out the Union’s new member welcome letter to new social science faculty member Joe Mendoza on February 9.

Union to Present 15 $1,000 Swenson Scholarships at Union Banquet

The Cook County College Teachers Union will present up to 15 $1,000 college scholarship awards at its Annual Union Banquet on May 22. One student from each of the seven City Colleges, one student from Dawson Tech, and one student from each of the seven suburban colleges will be eligible to receive a scholarship.

The Union will also be reinstating the Student Activist Scholarship and will present one $1,000 award to a student who has embodied Union activism through his work at his or her college.

Contact the union office at 312-755-9400 to receive an application. All applications and other relevant documents must be in the union office by March 18, 2005. Send applications and documents to:

Norman G. Swenson Scholarships
Cook County College Teachers Union
208 W. Kinzie St.
Chicago IL  60610

Recipients must attend the annual banquet to receive the scholarship. They will be guests of the Union.

CALENDAR

MARCH 18
House Meeting
Merchandise Mart

APRIL 8
Executive Board Meeting
Merchandise Mart

APRIL 13
Lobby Day
Springfield, Illinois

MAY 22
Union Banquet
Holiday Inn Mart Plaza
Health Care Corner
by Local 1600 Vice President Sonia Powell

The Problem:

In the CCC, we held out for reasonable medical premium costs. Our PPO Family package (the priciest) is about $1000 yearly; other community college packages are that much monthly. There was, however, an increase in co-pays for prescription at $10, $20 for formulary and $40 for non-formulary drugs. In some cases, a drug that carried a generic co-pay in December ’04 is now exacting a formulary ($20) or a non-formulary ($40) co-pay. Also, I learned that individuals using drugs in the highest co-pay category may also have to pay a penalty charge—the difference in retail between the cost of a “medically equivalent” generic and the brand name drug. This cost varies by the drug.

Furthermore, there is no appeals process to override these charges even in the case where your physician has determined that there is no acceptable generic equivalent. A committee of “concerned” physicians and pharmacists at Prime Therapeutics make these decisions. Indeed, drugs in the highest co-pay category are not available through mail order in a 90 day supply for two co-pays. They must be purchased retail in 30 day lots—each carrying a co-pay.

What You Can Do:

Ask your doctor and your pharmacist if there is a generic substitute suitable for you. Use mail order where possible; it costs less. Keep saving your receipts.

What Local 1600 Is Doing:

We filed a union grievance to protest the reclassification of drugs from generic co-pay to brand co-pay levels. All aspects of insurance coverage including changes must go through the joint Union-Board Committee. Apparently, the change from Blue Cross Blue Shield to Prime Therapeutics was not processed properly. We will investigate the relationships between the CCC, Blue Cross Blue Shield and its prescription drug provider(s). We will also seek reimbursements. Keep saving your receipts.

2005 Legislative Program Asks for Community College and Pension Funding

Legislative Chairman Bill Naegele’s eight-part legislative program for Local 1600 passed the Union House in January. Naegele notes: “The Illinois Board of Higher Education has proposed a 2.8% increase in their budget. Last year, they received their proposed increase, though the year before they did not.” Naegele cited receiving service credit for unused sick leave as a definite priority as well as not increasing employee contributions and opposing any decrease in benefits—such as eliminating the enhancing of pensions during the last years of retirement or decreasing the cost of living adjustment from 3% to 2% for new hires.

“I hope we can get a large group to effectively talk with legislators on Lobby Day, April 13,” Naegele says.

The 2005 Legislative Program:

• Increase state aid to community colleges to 50% of operating costs.
• Permit SURS recipients to receive service credit for up to 2 years of unused sick leave.
• Continue in Washington to decouple the Social Security offset provision from state pension benefits.
• Adequately fund SURS with no employee increases and no decreases in benefits for current or future annuitants.
• Require that 75% of college credit courses per department are taught by full-time faculty.
• Oppose any legislation to undermine or remove teacher tenure.
• Change the SURS statute to require the election of the SURS Board of Directors by SURS participants.
• Introduce legislation to prohibit community college residency rules.
the picket line. In his address to the Board in January, Professor Phil Stucky, HW English Dept. Chair, eloquently described one such adjunct whose family has “a history of activism and concern for education [and who] stated adamantly that...the ethical thing for her to do [was] to observe the strike. You are now denying our students one of the best teachers in the department.”

Other reprisals are keeping Grievance Chair, Tom Kodogoegeorgiou, extremely busy. The professionals being required to sign-in and sign-out is but one of them. There are also the prosecutions of MX Professor Ben Rubin (trial date Friday, February 25, at 9:00 AM at Belmont and Western) and MX student Felipe Findley (February 22, at 9:00 AM at Kedzie and Flournoy).

Just as the Voice was going to press the City Colleges announced they were stopping all new nursing students from enrolling at Olive-Harvey, Kennedy-King, and Malcolm X Colleges. The link between this move and the nursing faculty’s gain of one-to-one clinicals (which gave each nurse one hour credit for each hour worked) seems more than coincidental and appears to be yet another reprisal.

In reaction to the reprisals, at numerous campuses faculty are resigning or suspending all volunteer activities until the blacklisting of adjuncts end. In fact, thirty-six faculty members at Wright College alone, were joined by other Unions members at Washington, Olive-Harvey, and Daley Colleges in resigning or suspending their work. Further, Faculty Council President Polly Hoover presented to the Board an unprecedented and overwhelming vote of “no-confidence” of the Chancellor: 350-5 (with 14 abstentions).

“As never before, Local 1600, AFSCME, Local 1708, COCAL and other brother and sister unions have bonded into a unified force that may not have been possible without your [the Board’s] help. [Your actions] have made the Union movement in the City Colleges stronger, not weaker,” Buckley told the CCC Board.

Union Banquet to Feature Dancing and Gourmet Menu

Vice President Sonia Powell who is organizing this year’s Annual Union Banquet on Sunday night, May 22, at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza said “We will have a cocktail hour with appetizers before, followed by an exceptional menu. We will have dancing after dinner.”

The butlered hors d’oeuvres menu includes Swedish meatballs, petite franks en croute, spanakopita triangles, shrimp & scallop skewers with Teriyaki glaze and smoked duck quesadillas with Chinese mustard. The chopped Romaine and watercress salad with Gorgonzola cheese and caramelized pecans will be served with an herb buttermilk dressing plus a basket of assorted dinner rolls. The soup will be lobster bisque.

The first entrée is a combination pairing of petite fillet of beef with merlot wine sauce and salmon fillet with a Teriyaki glaze. The vegetarian entrée is grilled Portobello mushrooms with oven roasted vegetables and Balsamic vinegar glaze.

The dessert is cake with vanilla bean ice cream. The after dinner station will have coffee, teas, whipped cream, chocolate shavings and orange and lemon zests. The white and dark chocolate fondue station features strawberries, bananas, pretzel rods and marshmallows plus assorted petit fours and Napoleons.

President Perry Buckley promises, “In addition to the traditional elements of our banquet, there will be an opportunity for us to come together socially as Union members.” The cost will be $35 per ticket, available through your chapter chair.

Truman College Emeritus Rally

At a Feb. 2 Rally for blacklisted Emeritus Professors at Truman College, a group of active faculty, retirees, other members of other unions, and student activists picketed against the CCC firings. In the front row from the left: HW Chapter Chair Mike Ruggeri and President Perry Buckley. Second row from left: Seymour Schwartz (emeritus) and Alan Meyers (TR).
Moraine Valley Faculty presented student scholarships at their faculty workshop on Jan. 13. Faculty sponsors at left are Jim Koscielniak and Kathy Foreman. At right is President Perry Buckley with Suburban VP Jim O’Malley.

Linnea Forsberg, Eunice Lopez, and Dr. Lois Collins eagerly anticipate St. Nick’s arrival at Malcolm X Chapter holiday party at the Teamster City on Dec. 13.

Have you moved? Please send us your new address:

NAME: 

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HOME PHONE: 

ADDRESS: 

CITY/STATE/ZIP: 

COLLEGE (OR FORMER COLLEGE): 

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