STANDING UNITED
Protecting our students, our rights, our jobs.
Standing Strong Against Threats to Our Union

The past few months have been turbulent, to say the least, but I could not be happier with the direction this union is moving. Overall, we have become more active on state and local levels: advocating for MAP grants to be funded, traveling to Springfield to protest the Governor’s draconian budget proposals and anti-union agenda, introducing a House bill for an elected school board for the City Colleges of Chicago, and organizing a blitz where volunteers and Union leaders collected hundreds of postcards from City Colleges faculty and staff to show legislators the support we have for an elected board.

Illinois has now been without a budget for more than eight months. The situation is dire, and it’s impacting our members directly. The administration at Prairie State and South Suburban have closed their childcare centers due to cuts in funding. More than 15 people have been let go between the two campuses, and more layoffs could still be ahead. Read about the cuts and the Union response on page 3. Even at colleges where layoffs aren’t being made, we’re feeling the strain. Governor Rauner vetoed a MAP bill that would have allowed much needed grants to be distributed to our students. Many colleges are honoring the MAP funding themselves, but it’s unclear how long colleges can continue to deplete their financial reserves. Our pensions are still unfunded, and Rauner continues to obsess about turning Illinois into a “Right-to-Work” state where workers’ power is severely diminished.

The union is fighting back. Members of Local 1600 took part in a demonstration on February 17 to protest the Governor’s budget address. The turnout was phenomenal! Our members joined nearly 400 people from colleges and organizations across Illinois to make their voices heard. But more needs to be done. Rauner is not backing off from his anti-union, pro-business Turnaround Agenda, and we must continue to stand up to him. Together, in solidarity, we are strongest. Be on the lookout for more calls to action and ways for you to get involved. More about our actions in Springfield on page 4.

There have also been many recent developments at the City Colleges of Chicago. At the February 4 board meeting, The Faculty Council of the City Colleges of Chicago presented a Vote of No Confidence in Chancellor Cheryl Hyman. This is a very serious decision, necessary due to Chancellor Hyman’s policies and the disastrous consequences evident at our colleges. More about the Vote of No Confidence on page 6. The City College division of Local 1600 has also joined with our brother and sister unions at the City Colleges to form the Alliance of City College Unions (ACCU). The ACCU is fighting back against the most egregious board policies, such as tuition hikes, which penalize part-time students and program consolidation. Through the ACCU we hope to restore the City Colleges of Chicago to its original mission of an open-enrollment, comprehensive college. More about the ACCU on page 10.

There is still so much more that must be done. Between a budget impasse, layoffs at our colleges, and pressing back against bad administrative actions there is plenty to unite and fight against. Let these recent demonstrations be an indicator of the direction this union is moving: We are progressive in outlook; militant in action.
STATE BUDGET CRISIS

Budget Related Lay-offs Hit Members at our Colleges

Bruce Rauner came into office as our governor one year ago vowing he would “shake up Springfield.” He introduced his turnaround agenda which includes weakening of public service unions in our state and he refuses to accept a budget from the legislature that does not include his non-budgetary turnaround agenda items. Our state has now been eight months without a budget.

During this stalemate between the legislature and the governor, many people and organizations across the state are being harmed by the fact that the state does not have a budget. In our world of community colleges, the lack of a state budget means there is no funding for our schools and no MAP grant funding for our students. How does this affect our Union? With declining enrollments and no funding from the state, colleges are finding that they need to make drastic cuts to the programs and services they provide to their students and communities that they serve. Many of the jobs that our members have are funded by grants. Grant money that, in some instances, has been cut by the governor entirely. Many colleges started tightening their belts by initiating hiring freezes, cutting travel expenses, cutting services and programs, and trying to get more work done with fewer people. Unfortunately, when colleges are faced with budget problems and they need to cut salary expenses, they often look at the classified/support staff employees first.

In December, Prairie State College chose to close their child care center. The center provided jobs for ten Union workers and eight non-Union hourly employees. Some of the grants that funded the center were cut and it was uncertain if others would be approved. With the uncertainty of receiving those funds, the college felt that they were unable to continue to keep the center open. The result, ten Union members were about to lose their jobs. The Union worked with the college to negotiate severance packages based on years of seniority for each member as afforded in the Union contract. The Union was also able to negotiate tuition reimbursement for the members for one year from their termination in order for them to take classes to develop new skills for future employment opportunities. Retirement options, recall list placement, and resume writing was also reviewed with the members. Unfortunately, the college may not be done with staff reductions. Prairie State College is continuing to look for ways to make further cuts in order to keep their doors open.

Most recently, one of our other colleges has also announced they will be making similar cuts. They are proposing to close their child care, their health fitness center, and possibly eliminate several other clerical positions at the college. The Union is currently in negotiations with the college regarding how many employees will be affected and to negotiate severance packages, bumping rights, and recall list placement for any of the employees who will be affected.

As Union members we must come together to raise our voices in protest of the continue lack of community college funding. This should not just be a concern of those facing layoffs, and it’s certainly not just a classified/support staff division problem. This is a CCCTU, Local 1600 problem! We need to come together, in unison, faculty, mid-managers, city colleges, retirees, and support staff to help save our colleges! After all, isn’t that what being in a union is all about, being able to have a voice? It is time to raise our voices!

By Rose Sakanis, Classified Vice President
Standing Up for Community Colleges in Springfield

We have now been eight months without a state budget to fund essential government activities. Governor Rauner refuses to pass a budget unless either the legislature grants him broad powers to single handedly re-write the budget himself or the legislature agrees to a grab bag of poison pill laws that will undermine our right to organize in public sector unions. He has effectively taken the public sector hostage. And keep in mind, Rauner is the son of a millionaire patent attorney. He makes $57 million a year (1000 times more than middle family income in Illinois), yet he is intentionally degrading the quality of life for tens of thousands of people in Illinois, simply because he hates unions.

People who rely on government across Illinois are feeling the pain of Rauner’s destructive dogmatism. Government and non-government social service organizations that help disabled adults, the homeless, the food insecure, and people who need mental health and addiction recovery assistance are all seeing their programs collapse due to a lack of funding from the state government. In higher education, 125,000 students are going without their MAP grants. Some colleges and universities are eating those costs themselves, others are asking students to cover the hole in their funding. Affluent schools are drawing down their reserves to fill the budget holes. Less affluent schools including Eastern Illinois University and Chicago State are radically restructuring so as to avoid shutting down altogether. In our union, members have already lost their jobs and more are facing lay-offs as the crisis continues.

In response to this crisis, reasonable legislators passed SB2043 to fund MAP grants and provide for community college funding (which has been flat for a decade), but it still had to get past Rauner. That’s why more than 30 members from CCCTU traveled to Springfield on February 17th, the day Governor Rauner gave his annual budget speech at the statehouse. We participated in a demonstration at the State Capitol building, calling on Rauner to fund community colleges and MAP grants by signing SB2043. Students,
Local 1600 joined students and educators from across the state to protest.

SB 2043 was vetoed by Rauner, but the fight continues for funding for our colleges.

Members of Local 1600 demonstrate at the State House.

staff, and faculty from across the state (but especially Chicago State and Eastern Illinois University) took part in the demonstration. Local 1600 Classified Vice President Rose Sakanis explained her passion for demonstrating when she told WAND 17 News, “Classified units usually get the hit first when there’s a lack of funding.”

Rauner vetoed SB2043 on Friday the 19th. In fact, his budget proposal for 2017 calls for 10% across the board cuts to all community colleges and 20% cuts for universities. We must continue this fight. In the coming weeks, look for emails and social media from Local 1600 calling on all union brothers and sisters to take action against Rauner and his dogmatic drive to destroy unions and the social safety net in Illinois. It’s essential that we all stand up for public education and the future of unions in Illinois.
Faculty Council at City Colleges of Chicago Votes “No Confidence” in Chancellor Hyman

On February 4, Local 1600 and Faculty Council representatives attended the City Colleges of Chicago’s board meeting to address faculty members’ lack of confidence in Chancellor Cheryl Hyman and the lack of communication between administration and the union. Local 1600 President Tony Johnston addressed the board as well as Faculty Council President Jennifer Alexander.

Tony spoke about the unilateral decisions being made by the administration, decisions that ignore the input of the union entirely. Tony brought up concerns regarding program consolidation, which in essence abandon the communities of our community colleges, forcing students to travel across the city in order to finish their degrees. He also mentioned the dangerous consequences of the recent tuition hike, which impacts our most vulnerable students – the part-timers, international students, and those already fighting to make ends meet.

Jennifer Alexander followed Tony’s speech and provided the board with a resolution declaring a Faculty Council vote of no confidence in Chancellor Cheryl Hyman:

“As Faculty Council President, on behalf of the City Colleges of Chicago, I’m here to announce with grave disappointment that our efforts in shared governance have been repeatedly and pointedly ignored by our chancellor. And so today we will enter a resolution declaring a vote of no confidence. This is a significant decision, one which we did not take lightly. We reserve a vote of no confidence for only the most serious concerns. We are exceptionally concerned that our chancellor’s actions are destroying our mission, the values and integrity of the city colleges.”

The resolution enumerated the areas in which Chancellor Hyman has failed the faculty, staff, and students of the City Colleges. Jennifer then declared that she was going to personally deliver the resolution to Mayor Emmanuel’s office. Union members and supporters immediately followed Jennifer as they marched to City Hall. The march was led down LaSalle Street with followers carrying signs with messages against Reinvention, Mayor Emmanuel, and Cheryl Hyman. The resolution was then hand delivered to the Office of the Mayor.

The vote of no confidence was well reported in Chicago media with articles in the Chicago Tribune, Crain’s Business, Better Government Association, Chicago Sun-Times, Substance News, Labor Beat and WBEZ. The story was also featured in the national publication, Inside Higher Ed.

You can read the full Faculty Council resolution and the news articles online at CCCTU.org.
Faculty Council and Local 1600 members march from District Office to City Hall to deliver the vote of “no confidence” resolution to the Office of the Mayor.
We Need You

The enemies of labor and quality community college education are numerous, active, and at our figurative doorstep. We face a governor who is obsessed with destroying unions and who is blocking a budget until he gets union busting laws passed. We’re seeing layoffs at some of our colleges with classified staff and professionals being hit especially hard. On the public education front, we face laws that lower the threshold for granting college credit to AP exam takers and mandate expanded dual credit programs. These quality diluting laws have the effect of surreptitiously outsourcing faculty work to the high schools.

Attacks on union rights and quality community college education are happening in a context where money is becoming the driving force in politics. In the 2014 election cycle, the billionaire hedge fund manager, Ken Griffin, contributed more money than all 244 labor unions in the state of Illinois combined. Clearly unions can’t compete dollar-for-dollar with the Ken Griffins of the world. However, if we completely surrender in this political spending battle, we are certain to see Illinois morph into a state where unions are weak, the middle class is tiny, and the community college system is degraded.

We Need Your Money

Your union dues go to the economic functions of the union, such as securing contracts, working grievances, and providing due process. The political activities of CCCTU are paid for by funds from the Committee on Political Education (COPE). COPE funds support pro-labor and pro-public-education candidates and office holders at the local and state (but not federal) level. We also contribute to progressive community and labor groups such as United Working Families, Grassroots Collaborative and Jobs with Justice.

COPE Drive 2016 is now underway. Please Contribute to COPE. If you already contribute, please increase your contribution. Depending on the size of your contribution, we have some CCCTU union SWAG to offer as premiums. To learn more about contributing to COPE, please email me at noonan.ccctu@gmail.com

We Need Your Activism

Union activism can beat the financial power of the elites. It is how the reforms we enjoy today were won in the past. There are a myriad of ways to become a union activist. You can talk to your colleagues, family, friends, and neighbors about labor and education issues. You can “button-up” or wear red on solidarity days. You can start a petition campaign around an issue that is important on your campus. You can get involved in a political campaign. You can join with other folks across CCCTU (and other unions) to attend events, demonstrations, and marches. Things are heating up. Friendly politicians and our allies in labor and education are asking us to bring people out for events and actions with increasing frequency. If you want to join with fellow union activists to work on campaigns like the one listed here email me at noonan.ccctu@gmail.com.

By Sean Noonan, Legislative Chair
JOIN THE
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY
CREDIT UNION!

Local 1600 members have special access to low-rate loans!

Open only to members of Local 1600 and Local 1708.

For more than 35 years the credit union has been helping our members purchase cars, build savings and borrow money while on strike!

- Personal loans up to $10,000.00 with rates as low as 5.95%
- New car loans up to $40,000 with rates as low as 3.95%.
- Used car loans with rates as low as 4.95%.

Learn more and fill out an application today.

www.CUCU1600.com
Solidarity Across Unions in the City Colleges

Local 1600 has entered into a coalition with our brother and sister unions in the City Colleges. The Alliance of City College Unions (ACCU) was born out of our shared vision that the communities we serve have a wide variety of educational needs that are best served by the model of the open-enrollment, comprehensive community college. The alliance is made up of Local 1600, Local 1708 Clericals, CCCLOC IEA Adjuncts, SEIU custodial staff, and AFSCME Local 3506 Adult Educators. Though our alliance has just begun, we are already demonstrating our strength with substantial successes.

Every last Tuesday and Wednesday of the month, we are setting up tables at all the campuses to circulate petitions and inform our members, students, and the community about important issues, such as:

1) Lack of MAP grant and community college funding
2) Recent tuition hikes that hurt a large portion of our part-time students
3) Consolidation of programs which disrupts the lives of our students and takes resources out of communities
4) Lack of shared governance
5) Support for an elected City College board (HB 4312)

We have collected hundreds of signatures for the petitions and have made strong contacts with students who are affected by the misguided policies of Reinvention. If you have not signed the petition or signed a card for HB 4312, come to the tables or seek out your chapter chair. Better yet, volunteer 30 minutes of your time to work the table and reach out to the City College community.

The ACCU is also planning a Town Hall meeting in which we will invite elected officials to hear testimony from faculty, staff, and students about what is going on in the City Colleges regarding the issues mentioned above. It will take place Monday, March 28 at Grace Church, 637 S. Dearborn, from 6pm to 8:30pm. We want to fill this hall and show our politicians and the community that our concerns are their concerns.

In Illinois, unions, especially public sector unions, have many common enemies who want to weaken public education and weaken unions. Working together makes us all stronger and improves your standard of living. Support the Alliance of City College Unions!

Retiree Michael Ruggeri and Victor Guzman, a student at Harold Washington, collect petition signatures for the ACCU.
CITY COLLEGES
COMMUNITY TOWN HALL

Share your concerns about the direction of the CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO!
Chicago aldermen and Illinois legislators will be there to hear from you!

Consolidations and program closures forcing students to travel across Chicago to pursue their education

Tuition increases which unfairly penalize part-time and international students

The failure of the administration to reach a contract with adjunct faculty

Disregard for faculty, staff, student or community input

MONDAY, MARCH 28th
6:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Grace Church
637 S. Dearborn St. Chicago, IL

R.S.V.P. TODAY
www.bit.ly/CCCtownhall
In January, the Supreme Court heard arguments in the case of Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association. The plaintiffs in this case are ten public school teachers who work under California Teachers Association union contracts, but who are not members of the union. The lawyers for the plaintiffs are from the Center for Individual Rights (CIR), which is funded by the libertarian billionaire Koch brothers. CIR litigation focuses on opposing unions, the voting rights act, and affirmative action policies in higher education. Friedrichs, and her fellow anti-union teachers, are claiming that public sector unions are purely political lobbying organizations, which have no other role than engaging in political speech. In California (like Illinois), educators who work in a unionized public school have no obligation to join the union. However, these non-members are still required to pay agency fees (or what we in Illinois call “fair share” fees). These fees cover the costs of securing and operating the contract for non-members. The union has an obligation to represent nonmembers who work under the contract. In turn, the non-members pay a fee to the union for union representation. In short, fair share fees mitigate free riding on the union by non-members.

Friedrichs and her anti-union allies reject the economic realities of what unions do and how contracts work. Instead they insist on a purely political conception of unions. Friedrichs and the anti-union groups behind the case, claim that requiring employees in the public sector to pay fair share fees is an infringement upon the free speech rights of the individual by the coercive and collectivist lobbyists of the public sector unions. In this worldview money is speech and speech is money. At the time the case was heard most pundits were declaring that the case was likely to be won by Friedrichs. It appeared that a 5 to 4 majority of the judges on the Supreme Court would find in favor of Friedrichs and overturn the standing jurisprudence that supports fair share fees.

Then, On February 13th Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia died at a hunting lodge in Texas. With Scalia dead the court is very likely to be split 4-4 on Friedrichs. In cases where the justices are evenly split the lower court decision (that found fair share to be a legitimate charge for the economic activities of securing and working the contract for all employees) will be upheld. In the short term, the labor movement has dodged a bullet. We are still far too small and far too weak, but now we have more time to rebuild and reorganize so we can stand up against the many enemies facing us.

If President Obama succeeds in appointing a new judge to the Supreme Court before his term expires, then the cause of labor and public education should be minimally secure, at least for the short term. However, here in Illinois we still have to deal with Governor Bruce Rauner. Rauner is the son of a millionaire patent attorney, a man who makes $57 million a year and an anti-union dogmatist. Since being elected, Rauner has driven the public sector of Illinois into a ditch. We are now eight months into a budget hostage crisis fabricated by Rauner. Although Scalia is dead and Friedrichs is likely a draw, there are still plenty of other enemies of labor and public education working against us at every turn. The struggle continues.
Defending Member Rights
Outside the Grievance & Discipline Process

I am writing to you today to share a few of our recent member problem and union intervention success stories. While we sometimes have to take grievances all the way to an arbitrator in order to defend our contracts and union rights, many times we are able to successfully negotiate with administrators to achieve a positive resolution for our members. The sooner you alert us to an issue, the better we can fight for you and achieve a fair result. Congratulations to everyone who played a role in not just these successes, but the many issues union leaders have successfully negotiated in recent months.

• CCC Change to HMO Co-pays – recently Local 1600 was informed that the CCC changed the co-pays for employees enrolled in the HMO plan for 2016. However, changes to this plan must be negotiated with and agreed to by the Union, and in fact, that had not been done. Local officials immediately contacted the District Office and were able to get to the root of the problem, which was determined to be a “tech glitch” in the transmission of records to the insurance company. As a result of the Local’s swift actions, all affected members were issued new HMO cards with the proper co-pays delineated, and anyone who overpaid their co-pays was reimbursed.

• Suburban Support Staff Vacation Request – a member contacted the Local with a rejected request for a vacation during a purported departmental busy time. This member had a cultural observation to attend in her home country and without the vacation approval, would have missed both the event and her family reunion. After trying to resolve the issue unsuccessfully on her own with campus administration, the member called her Local. After intense conversations with Local 1600’s reps, the campus relented and our member was able to submit and receive approval for a revised request and not miss her travels.

• Retiree Assistance with Post Retirement Benefits – unfortunately, retiree members were informed last summer that there had been changes with respect to how they would be reimbursed for Medicare Part B co-pays. As a result of the Local’s actions, members were informed of the new protocols during open enrollment (a change that was initiated by the Union) and members who missed the most recent date were included in the reimbursement cycle. Efforts continue to get past payments for retirees who weren’t properly informed of the changes to the reimbursement protocols.

As always and for all members, your Union is here for you! Feel free to email local chapter and member success stories to me for possible publication in a future issue of the Voice: bpryor@ccctu.org.
Unions have played an immense value in the American landscape. Without unions, there would not be an eight-hour work day. Without unions, there would not be any personal or vacation days. Unions gave all Americans lunch breaks and leave time. Clearly, unions have contributed to building the middle class in America.

Chicago, Illinois, like other current and former cities of industry, is a union town. Its rich union history can be traced back to the Haymarket Riots of 1886 to the multiple Chicago Teachers Union strikes of the 1970s and 1980s. As unions are being attacked by corporations, which seek to privatize education, and profit from that privatization, more than ever there is a need for unions and union solidarity.

That is why this last November, the City Colleges of Chicago unions formed a coalition to combat the sweeping changes, such as consolidation of programs, increase of tuition, and lack of shared governance that is plaguing City Colleges. More than ever, unions need to stand together as they fight for students and combat abuses from management.

This year, Cook County Colleges Teachers Union must continue to fight with the Chicago Teachers Union to protect our students from administrative changes that fail students and hurt communities. We must stand with our union sisters and brothers as they fight for student services for students and fair wages. We must remember that what happens for the Chicago Public Schools is a litmus test for what can happen at the City Colleges. CTU has come a long way from the anti-communist stance of its original president, John Fewkes, and its most stylish president of Jackie Vaughn. We must support its current leader, Karen Lewis, and all other education unions. As educators, we strive for quality of education while business-minded administrators seek cubits of commerce. Education cannot be commodified.

Local 1600 Union leaders wear red in a show of solidarity with the Chicago Teachers Union.
Renewing our Commitment: Retiree Chair Update

Celebrating the Local’s 50 years has allowed us to reflect on our Union’s achievements. A review of our union’s history reveals that militancy and solidarity were the basis of our success. Our Retiree Chapter has taken this celebration to renew its purpose and commitment. A “Movement” statement for our Chapter has been adopted by your Retiree House Representatives:

“Advance, protect, and defend Local 1600’s retirees’ and active employees’ pension rights and contractual retirement benefits. Support the Local’s activities in organizing, recruitment, negotiating contracts, and grieving contract violations. Promote the union movement and workers’ rights in our society.”

As members, this statement requires your continued membership in the Retiree Chapter and involvement. How can you be involved?

*Stay Informed on Union and Pension Issues
*Take action when asked by your union through emails, writing, calling, and signing petitions
*Discuss important union issues with friends, family, and community members
*Participate in Union and Retiree Chapter Events
*Recruitment and Reinforce membership in the Union’s Retiree Chapter

While the union’s activities will continue to be communicated through mail and phone, the need for quick action, response, and low cost is best handled through email. Our Union and Retiree Chapter is communicating news, social events, and requests for action over the last year through email. If you have not received our email communications, we need your email address. Please email your Retiree Chair, Don Radtke, at dradtke2133@gmail.com.

Upcoming Retiree Chapter Events:
Robert Matire Presentation, Executive Director/Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, on April 5th 10-12
Cost $10
Lunch is included
IFT Conference Center,
500 Oakmont Lane, Westmont, Illinois

Elder Law – April – details to be announced

“Hazel” at Drury Lane on May 25, 2016
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