

## Yes, we have a “special interest”: Our working conditions are our students’ learning conditions

by Kevin Peterman

Spin Cycle, *Newsday*’s political blog, had an interesting post by Dan Janison on December 28. It was called “Political words: Special uses.” Writing about the phrase “special interest,” Janison gave the term an historical perspective. He noted that back in the day Teddy Roosevelt defined “interstate corporations” as special interests. Truman referred to Wall Street speculators as special interests. Eisenhower applied it to the military industrial complex.

But today public-employee unions and their members are THE special interest.

A few days later, on January 4, 2011, the *New York Times*’ lead story headline was “Strained States Turning to Laws to Curb Unions.” We have all heard Governor Cuomo ask public employees to “give back.”

At Suffolk, the FA did give back! How? By negotiating a contract with the college and county with two years of no increases in the base salary. And still we are being threatened with more cuts to state aid and threats to our benefits that we worked so hard to attain. There are groups in Albany calling for major changes in pensions—and not just for new employees—and major changes to health insurance.

We have our governor calling for the

elimination of the 1982 Triborough Amendment. Prior to Triborough’s passage, many employers would stall negotiations, not settle a contract, and then unilaterally impose changes in pay and working conditions.

They had no interest in a fair process for negotiating contracts. The Triborough Amendment provides a level playing field for negotiating contracts and ensures stability/continuity in the workplace. It allows both sides to negotiate in good faith and accelerate contract settlements.

We are under attack! And everyone needs to come together to fight back. We must fight to stop the attempts to destroy public-employee unions.

We are in a crisis. We do not have the luxury of the past where we can say, “let the other guy do it” or worse “it will not affect me.” The plans that some extreme groups have in mind will negatively impact us all.

We cannot afford to stick our heads in



*The capital building in Albany*

photo by Rrrrus | Dreamstime

the sand. We all know that the situation is bad—and, believe me, it is getting worse. It seems that everywhere you look in the local media, we are being portrayed as the reason the county and state are broke. We are not! We need to fight back.

How can you help fight back?

Some of you are already helping by giving to the FA political action program VOTE/COPE. If you give, please try to give a little more. If you don’t give to VOTE/COPE, then you really should do so today. Call Anita at the FA office (451.4151) for information on how to sign up and/or to increase your contribution.

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# Profiles of FA leaders and activists

by Cynthia Eaton

## featuring Sara Rafferty

Assistant Professor of Visual Arts (Ammerman)  
Executive Council Representative (Music/Visual Arts)

1. Cynthia: I understand that you are quite an accomplished artist. Tell me about your work (mediums, approaches/styles, philosophies, etc.) and how you became interested in the field.

Sara: Frankly, while I have had a lot of outward success as an artist, I don't know if I consider myself "accomplished," since it is a life-long process and I don't think I've yet done my best work.

Recently someone at SCCC asked me if I work in the "classical" mode, and I thought about what that meant and answered that I work in a "contemporary" mode. This means that my work, which is formally grounded in photography/video and sculptural installation techniques, engages with theories and practices of performance and media with special account for feminism, questioning mastery, and the tragicomic. This includes strong contextualization for my practice within the rubric of time-based art.

My philosophy, I guess, is for the work to have integrity and truth, and to be well made.

I can't say exactly how I became interested in art, but I was exposed to art as a child, and as an adolescent I was encouraged to pursue art seriously.

2. Cynthia: What have you learned as an artist that helps you better understand our students at SCCC? Any insights that you care to share?

Sara: I always say that living as an artist is an "alternative lifestyle." I'm a very open person and like to meet all of our students as individuals with unique circumstances, ways of learning, and backgrounds.

Getting through a day in one's studio takes faith, confidence, and perseverance, and I strive to help our students gain the confidence they need to succeed here at SCCC and beyond.

3. Cynthia: Tell me one thing about yourself that might surprise people.

Sara: This winter I'm taking up snowshoeing!

4. Cynthia: What one word would you use to describe yourself? What word would your friends use to describe you? Your husband?

Sara: Me: *short*. My friends would say *hilarious*. My spouse: When I asked him, he said *genuine*.



5. Cynthia: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Sara: An adult [*laughs*]. Actually, I even wanted to be an adult while I was still a child.

6. Cynthia: You've been at Suffolk for nearly four years. What did you do before coming into your current position?

Sara: I have had a lot of jobs—including a ton of office work, selling winter and wedding wear at "Glove Me Tender," window dressing at Barneys and Bergdorf Goodman, working in the morgue (picture archive) at the *New York Times*, making databases for writers, and editing an art publication.

**W THE WORD**

Cynthia Eaton ..... Co-Editor  
Joyce Gabriele ..... Co-Editor  
Kevin Peterman .... Photographer

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# FYI: Highlights from the Executive Council and other news of note

- **Spring 2011 adjunct/overload checks:** According to Payroll, for the spring 2011 semester, there will be seven adjunct/overload paychecks beginning on March 10 and ending on June 2.

- **Prescription drug claim forms:** 2010 Benefit Fund prescription drug claims must be received by Daniel H. Cook by April 30.

Express Scripts will no longer mail prescription drug printouts. To obtain one, you should go to <http://www.expresscripts.com> and register your online account for your prescription history. You can also obtain one from your pharmacist(s).

The Prescription Drug Claim Form is available at the Benefit Fund office, Southampton 224D, Ammerman campus, or on our website: <http://www.fascc.org/beta/docs/rx2010.doc>.

If you need assistance, call Mary at 732.6500.

- **Faculty development deadline:** FA members planning to apply for faculty development and retraining for summer 2011 or for the 2011-

2012 academic year are encouraged to contact FA Secretary Marie Hanna for assistance in completing the application. All applications are due April 15, 2011.

- **EMHP claims deadline:** Faculty must submit all unpaid 2010 medical claims to Empire Blue Cross by March 31 to receive reimbursement for covered out-of-pocket expenses.

- **Distance education mentors:** DE faculty have some new points-of-contact for assistance with their online and blended courses.

This semester's mentors are

- Cynthia Eaton (Eastern)
- JoAnn Gushue (Grant)
- Kathy Mitra (Ammerman)
- Balan Nagraj (Ammerman and Grant)

- **New Distance Education Guidebook on its way:** The Office of Instructional Technology and the college Distance Education Committee have consulted with the FA about the in-progress guidebook on policies and procedures that pertain to distance education courses at SCCC. The guidebook should be

available by mid-semester from the Office of Instructional Technology and your academic chair/area supervisor.

- **Join annual drive to help stamp out hunger on May 14:** The FA is encouraging members to help fight hunger on Saturday, May 14, by donating nonperishable food items to the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) National Food Drive.

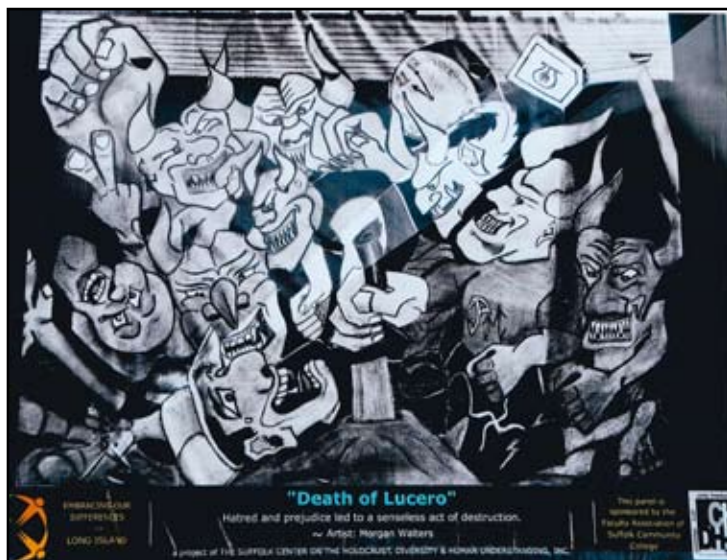
Simply place a box or bag of nonperishable foods next to your mailbox before your letter carrier delivers mail on Saturday, May 14, and the carrier will do the rest. The food is taken back to the postal station, sorted, and delivered by union volunteers to area food banks or pantries for needy families to access.

Food banks are experiencing an unprecedented crisis as requests rise while donations continue to decrease. Last year, 77.1 million pounds of food were collected in the one-day drive. This year, even more is needed as new data shows that more than 49 million Americans face insecurity in providing food to their families.

- **FA sponsors quotation, educational guide for 2011 *Embracing Our Differences* exhibition:** A Faculty Association donation of \$1,000 supported the *Embracing Our Differences* exhibition affiliated with the Suffolk Center on the Holocaust, Diversity & Human Understanding.

The panel sponsored by the FA is shown at right. Titled "Death of Lucero," the artist is Morgan Walters. The quotation below it reads: "Hatred and prejudice led to a senseless act of destruction."

The exhibition has been displayed at Stony Brook, Hofstra, and several local school districts.



# Leaders and activists profile: Sara Rafferty

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But the longest was as the studio manager for Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, artists for whom I worked for nearly eight years. I have a certificate in bookkeeping, which I completed in my first year here. I was also an adjunct at City College and Columbia University.

7. Cynthia: Speaking of careers, if you could be or do anything else, what would you choose?

Sara: Pro tennis player.

8. Cynthia: Be honest: What do you like most about your job? least?

Sara: There are two things I like most about my job:

1) Walking into the classroom as a practicing artist; in other words, teaching is part of my job as an artist (and vice versa) and not a so-called “day job.”

2) Teaching art to students who are responsive.

My least favorite aspect of my job is the commute from Brooklyn. Some days WNYC, my iPod, or Audible can't stave off BQE/LIE-induced frustration.

9. Cynthia: What does it mean to you to serve on the Executive Council?

Sara: Representing Ammerman campus visual arts and music faculty, who are mostly studio-based academics, in the Executive Council has been meaningful because I am able to advocate for both faculty and student needs in our majors.

It also means I get a broader context for current and historical events at

the college and can represent those back to my departments.

10. Cynthia: Name one thing you've learned as an EC rep that you might not have learned otherwise.

Sara: Having come to Suffolk from the private sector in NYC, my association with unions was passing by giant inflatable rats at construction sites. It was difficult for me to understand the culture at the college when I first started and being an EC Rep has illuminated a great deal. If I had to pick one, it's that Kevin Peterman has an amazing pink shirt collection [*laughs*]!

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## Out & about

Your FA leaders are constantly at work representing our members' interests. Below are Jan/Feb activities of two of our officers.

### President Ellen Schuler Mauk

- **1/7**—chaired NYSUT Community College Conference planning committee
- **1/7-1/8**—chaired NYSUT's Higher Education Council
- **2/3**—met with State Senator John Flanagan and a group of K-12 local leaders to discuss impact of governor's proposed state aid funding for higher ed and community colleges
- **2/4-2/5**—participated in Long Island Presidents' Council, including seminar on FMLA
- **2/10-2/12**—attended NYSUT Member Benefits meeting as trustee as well as NYSUT Executive Board and Board of Directors meetings
- **2/15**—participated in special NYSUT lobby session in Albany
- **2/16**—served as witness in EMHP arbitration case involving physical therapy reimbursements
- **2/18**—participated in monthly meeting of EMHP Labor/Management Oversight Committee.

### Executive Vice President Kevin Peterman

- **1/3**—attended Suffolk County Legislature meeting
- **1/13**—attended SCCC Board of Trustees meeting
- **1/14**—attended NYSUT Political Action meeting in Latham
- **1/20**—attended Suffolk County Republican fundraiser
- **1/28**—attended Suffolk County Democratic fundraiser
- **2/15**—participated in NYSUT's Committee of 100 in Albany
- **2/16**—attended fundraiser for DuWayne Gregory

# Meet our new FA members!

by Dan Linker



photo by Kevin Peterman

**Bruce Seger**  
Library · Grant

To call Bruce Seger a Renaissance man would be a start, but just a start. This instructor of library science at the Grant campus comes to us with a wealth of talents and diverse abilities, and that he got his start right here at SCCC is something that could be used to significantly motivate any one of our students.

After SCCC, Bruce received a BA in economics with minors in psychiatry and education from Queens College. Fast forward two decades and you find man with twenty years' experience practicing law. Many people, I imagine, after spending that amount of time in law would sit back and continue what they had become used to, but Bruce then returned to school, receiving a MS from the University of Bridgeport in instructional technology and an MLIS from CW Post in library science.

Both his parents were teachers, and with many other educators in his family, his ability to teach clearly showed itself, as he was asked to stay at the University of Bridgeport as an assistant professor in the educational department to teach courses in new technologies for learning as well as cyber ethics and school law.

Bruce is not new to teaching at SCCC

either; he was an adjunct at all three campuses before accepting his current position where he also assists paralegal students.

One field in which he had worked as an attorney was real estate, and when we discussed the success he must have seen several years ago, he mentioned that he was trained to "always have the flip side ready," so even when it was booming, he studied bankruptcy and foreclosures. That proactive mentality translates to what he does here. Among other innovations to help students, if you've seen images of Abe Lincoln around the library, instructing students on rules and regulations, that's Bruce's creation.

While Bruce could accurately be described as a lawyer and a professor, you would also be correct to call him a genealogist. For the past 15 years he has

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photo by Kevin Peterman

**Talia Argondezzi**  
English · Ammerman

As I walked towards Talia Argondezzi's office, animated conversation and laughter were spilling into the hall. Inside, she and her office mates, other colleagues, and the chair of the department were chatting amiably about various topics, including the fact that she was going into the city that weekend for a trapeze artist class. This was for a friend's birthday. It instantly felt like she has been a part of the English department at the

Ammerman campus for years. The truth is, Talia started here only a few weeks ago.

Coming from the suburbs of Philadelphia, Talia attended the University of Scranton from which she graduated with a BA in English and philosophy and a minor in Spanish. It was the minor that landed her a job with *TV Guide*, where she composed the Spanish listings. A year later found her enrolled in a PhD program at CUNY, from which she is currently ABD.

Originally, Talia was interested in British modernism and 20th century American poetry, but as she realized that she preferred reading those genres to writing about them she changed her direction.

Thanks in part to a specific class that analyzed early American writing from a post-colonial perspective, she altered her focus onto that period. Her dissertation, *The Transnational Body in Early American Literature 1798-1846*, analyzes the political implications of the surprisingly large number of odd representations of the body that appear in early American literature. She theorizes, for example, that fiction about amputated body parts indicate a fear of national disunity, and that lookalike characters suggest some anxiety about the leveling effects of democracy in the fledgling country.

Teaching is not new to Talia. During her first five years of graduate study she held a Provost's Fellowship, which focuses on teaching, and taught at Baruch College and the City College of New York. Also, she adjuncted at the Fashion Institute of Technology. In her last year she received a CUNY Writing Fellowship through which she not only taught but also helped other instructors incorporate various teaching pedagogies and methods into their classrooms. She also worked at the Writing Center at Baruch College.

Although she is new to Suffolk County, she brings to us a wealth of experience and expertise, and although she is new to the college, it certainly doesn't feel that way.

Good luck with the rest of the semester, and good luck on that trapeze.

# Promotion: It's ultimately your responsibility

by Kevin Peterman

# Special interest

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It's that time again. Actually, it is always that time. As soon as we finish with promotions for the current year, we begin gearing up for the next year.

Managing promotions for full-time faculty is a lengthy process. Now pay attention....

Faculty who sent in their completed applications in June 2010 for their promotion effective September 2011 will be notified of the Promotion Committee's recommendations to the President shortly. (See list of committee members in box at right.)

Adjunct promotions do not go to the committee. Your campus dean makes recommendations for all adjunct promotions to the college president. Adjuncts are notified if they are eligible for promotion in October or March (depending on when they applied). Adjuncts may apply for promotion in either the fall or spring semester for a promotion effective the following September. Adjuncts use an A1 Form.

Both full and part-time faculty must meet the promotion criteria for time in rank and for educational requirements (see charts on page 7).

Full-time faculty who are eligible to apply for promotion effective September 2012 will be notified that they must apply for promotion by June 15, 2011. They use an A Form.

There are both time in rank and educational criteria requirements for promotion. Faculty should not take this lightly or assume is automatic. The process works, but you need to know what the timelines, educational criteria, and committee expectations are.

Occasionally, there are a few faculty who for various reasons are not on the list. So, if you even think you are eligible, attend the workshop. I encourage faculty who were recently hired to attend; it's never too early to understand the process.

## Promotion Committee Members

- Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Chair
- Vice President for Institutional Advancement
- Associate Vice President for Student Affairs
- College Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs
- Ammerman Campus Executive Dean
- Eastern Campus Executive Dean
- Grant Campus Executive Dean

Every year, I work with the Promotion Committee to make the process more transparent. The committee's recommendations from this last round of promotions were typical. Most faculty were recommended for promotion, but several were not. One thing I'm fairly certain of is that faculty who attend a promotion workshop have a better understanding of the process.

So if you are a full-time faculty member with a promotion in your future, I urge you to attend one of the upcoming promotion workshops which I will co-present with your campus executive dean. My goal is to make sure all faculty understand the entire promotion process: the requirements, the committee's expectations, and the various forms used in the process.

All workshops take place during common hour (11 a.m.) on their respective campuses:

## Spring 2011 Promotion Workshops

- |      |          |               |
|------|----------|---------------|
| 3/9  | Ammerman | Montauk Pt Rm |
| 3/16 | Grant    | Sag 259-260   |
| 3/23 | Eastern  | Peconic 228   |

You can also help by becoming an education ambassador. Even if you haven't really been into politics up to this point, you can help educate our legislators about the needs of our college, our faculty, and our students. That's ultimately what our "special interest" is all about, isn't it? The FA firmly believes that the working conditions of our faculty are the learning conditions of our students.

This spring the FA will be visiting Suffolk's Albany representatives in their local offices to discuss SCCC's issues and the need for funding. In addition, we will also be visiting Suffolk County legislative offices to discuss SCCC's needs.

I need your help. Please come along as an education ambassador when we make our visits. We need to make clear to our elected officials that our faculty do have a special interest in making SCCC truly a college of excellence for our faculty and for our students.

We need to mobilize... NOW!

## New members

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dabbled significantly in this hobby, a field that has become incredibly popular.

Additionally, he is an animal lover. He used to own and condition race horses and later started a non-profit organization, "Save the Horse," that purchased horses destined for slaughter and either placed them in adoptive homes or utilized them for programs with the disabled.

I learned all this after talking to him for only twenty minutes. I can only imagine what else there is to know. As innovative as he is interesting, Bruce is clearly a terrific asset not just to the library but all of our students.

# Promotion criteria for full time and adjunct faculty

by Kevin Peterman

## Time in Rank Criteria

### Full-time Faculty

• promotion to assistant professor	• three (3) years as instructor
• promotion to associate professor	• four (4) years as assistant professor
• promotion to professor	• five (5) years as associate professor [with mid-term evaluations]
• promotion to professional assistant (P1)	• four (4) years as professional assistant
• promotion to professional assistant (P2)	• four (4) years as professional assistant (P1)
• promotion to specialist 2	• four (4) years as specialist 1

### Adjunct Faculty

• promotion to adjunct assistant professor	• ten (10) semesters and thirty-nine (39) teaching hours as adjunct instructor
• promotion to adjunct associate professor	• fourteen (14) semesters or fifty-four (54) teaching hours as adjunct assistant professor
• promotion to adjunct professor	• eighteen (18) semesters or sixty-nine (69) teaching hours as adjunct associate professor
• promotion to adjunct professional assistant (P1)	• fourteen (14) semesters as adjunct professional assistant
• promotion to adjunct professional assistant (P2)	• fourteen (14) semesters as adjunct professional assistant (P1)

## Educational Requirements\*

Below are the general educational requirements for each rank. There are some variations for some areas. In addition, faculty may request a substitution of performance/experience for credits toward promotion. Please check the FA website for a complete list of educational requirements and for the credit substitution form: Request For Substitution of Performance/ Experience/CEU's/ Undergraduate Credit for Credits Toward Promotion. For faculty hired before 8/28/06, these are the minimum educational requirements for promotion:

• promotion to assistant professor	• masters
• promotion to associate professor	• masters plus 18 credits
• promotion to professor	• masters plus 36 credits
• promotion to professional assistant (P1)	• bachelors
• promotion to professional assistant (P2)	• bachelors plus 15 credits
• promotion to specialist 2	• masters

For faculty hired on or after 8/29/06, these are minimum education requirements for promotion:

• promotion to assistant professor	• masters plus 6 credits
• promotion to associate professor	• masters plus 21 credits
• promotion to professor	• masters plus 36 credits or two masters
• promotion to professional assistant (P1)	• bachelors
• promotion to professional assistant (P2)	• bachelors plus 15 credits
• promotion to specialist 2	• masters

\* Faculty who need to take courses to meet the above criteria must have prior approval from their campus executive dean.

# Professional development opportunities abound

by Steven Brodsky

“Professional development” is a phrase you hear a lot at SCCC. It is a key element in our faculty contract, an important part of the faculty promotion process, an integral piece of department, area, and collegewide initiatives throughout the year; furthermore, it happens weekly at our Teaching and Learning Centers on each campus, and it’s going on in the frequent trainings and workshops offered by the college and the FA.

As a CPC representative, I see how committed faculty members are to developing professionally. As a member of the college community, I know how invested the FA is in promoting faculty development.

In this article, I explain three important faculty development initiatives offered via our FA contract: conference attendance, faculty development and retraining leaves, and sabbaticals.

## Conference attendance

Our contract provides funding for faculty to attend conferences related to their areas. Funding is provided in two-year cycles (a set amount to be used in a two-year period). For example, the amount for the academic years of 2009-10 and 2010-11 is \$1,350. This will increase to \$1,400 in September for academic years 2011-12 and 2012-13.

Once a faculty member uses his or her funding for the two year cycle, conference attendance must be funded to the faculty

member. Similarly, any expenses incurred for conference attendance that are above and beyond the amount stipulated for the two-year cycle must be paid for by the faculty member.

The conference reimbursement process requires application for pre-approval prior to the conference. After the conference, faculty submit forms, documentation, and a report. Full guidelines on how to apply for conference funding and how to get reimbursed can be found on the FA website: <http://www.fascc.org/docs/conference-reimbursement.pdf>.

## Faculty development & retraining

The contract provides funding and release time for faculty to retrain in areas where growth is expected and/or to pursue professional development in their current areas. The college allots a fixed sum (currently \$30,000) for this.

The college prioritizes retraining applications. Once these are considered, applications for development within one’s area are considered. Funds that remain after applications are made for retraining and development during the year are then allocated for summer retraining and development.

As with conference attendance, an application is required prior to the professional activity, and paperwork and a report are due after the activity. Full guidelines, forms, and sample applications can be found on the FA website: <http://www.fascc.org/professional/retrain.asp>.

In addition, the FA offers workshops for prospective candidates in the spring. Watch for emails from FA secretary Marie Hanna on these important sessions. If you are thinking of applying, be sure to attend.

If you cannot attend, contact Marie ([marie@fascc.org](mailto:marie@fascc.org)) as alternate sessions can be arranged.

## Sabbaticals

Nine full-year sabbaticals at half-pay and nine half-year sabbaticals at full pay are awarded each academic year. Sabbaticals are intended to aid faculty in pursuing a wide array of academic and intellectual pursuits.

The contract stipulates that “sabbatical leaves may be granted for one or more of the following: graduate study, writing a significant work for publication, doing a significant research project or dissertation that complies with the permitted purposes for a sabbatical and is within the context of professional review, developing a new curriculum or program which is consistent with college plans, or other significant academic or intellectual projects.”

Full-time faculty, including PAs, are eligible once they are on continuing appointment and have completed six years of full-time service. This also holds true for second and subsequent sabbaticals—you must have completed six years of full-time service since returning from your last sabbatical before applying again. Full guidelines as well as forms and sample documents can be found on the FA website: <http://www.fascc.org/professional/sabbatical.asp>.

In addition, the FA offers workshops for prospective candidates in the fall. Watch for emails from Marie Hanna on these important sessions and be sure to attend or to contact Marie as alternate sessions can be arranged.

These are just three of the many important opportunities for faculty development supported by our FA. For more information on other opportunities, go to the FA website (<http://www.fascc.org>), check out the college’s page on faculty development programs (<http://www3.sunysuffolk.edu/Academics/FacultyDev.asp>), and watch your email.





# The alarms are sounding—and we all need to respond

by Ellen Schuler Mauk

## Let's face it: Up till now we've had it good

FA members have never gone out on strike to get a contract settled and have only seriously considered it once in the 42 years we've had a union; most faculty currently on staff have never even walked an informational picket line, and even fewer have attended political rallies or meetings of the Suffolk County Legislature to urge passage of the college's budget or to save college positions.

While there was more political activism in the past by FA members, much of the recent political legwork has been handled by FA officers and members of the FA political action committee. From 2000 to 2008 the college budget grew, the college increased the actual number of full-time faculty in addition to filling vacancies created through retirements, and we were even able to renegotiate a contract before the old one expired.

The FA leadership has a history of not being alarmist and addressing issues proactively before they became a problem.

## Things are different now: We're in the midst of the worst funding crisis ever for community colleges

The fact of the matter is that New York state is in the worst fiscal shape in memory. On a state level it is comparable to the fiscal crisis in New York City in 1975 when the financial control board took over and union pension funds helped bail the city out of its fiscal problems. At SCCC, as enrollment continues to surge—33% in the last 10 years—we now have fewer resources to help our students achieve their dreams. While we have not had any layoffs, the surge in enrollment is being handled almost exclusively by adjunct faculty—a record number of *over* 1,600 last semester—and

state aid to the college has been cut by more than \$7.4 million over the past two years. Governor Cuomo's proposed state aid cut of an additional 10% would mean an additional \$5+ million less (totaling almost \$14 million less than 2008) and would drop community college aid to less than 1999 rates while we're trying to address 2011 enrollment and student success concerns.

## Public employees, especially teachers—and that includes college teachers—are under attack over bedrock rights

These rights, such as pensions and Triborough, are fundamental to ensure collective bargaining. In the 1970's, before Triborough, every time the FA went into negotiations, management's proposals included an additional course per faculty member, a 40-hour work week for non-classroom faculty, elimination of seniority, and increased class sizes. We ALL need to make sure that we don't return to the "bad old days" before Triborough. And to that end...



image by infotrontof | Dreamstime

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

In order to make a compelling argument to legislators, more than the FA officers and EC reps need to be involved:

- WE NEED YOU to tell legislators first hand about what you do that makes a difference in your students' lives. But we're not going to ask you to go out alone. In the next couple of months we will be rolling out an action plan to urge legislators to "do the right

thing" by our students and our community college.

- The easy part of the campaign NEEDS YOU to give to VOTE/COPE so that NYSUT can fund the PR campaign necessary to put education and public higher education at the forefront of the political debate on the state budget so that the FA can continue its lobbying efforts locally in the various political forums.
- Part of this campaign will NEED YOU to fill out postcards that we will then deliver to our Albany legislators.
- Another part of it will NEED YOU to send a fax or an email via a link to NYSUT's Legislative Action Center.
- Finally of great importance is that part of the campaign that NEEDS YOU to join us when we meet with your local state representative to remind the legislators that what we do transforms the lives of our students, many of whom do not have the financial wherewithal to find that opportunity elsewhere.

As I thought about writing this column, the refrain of Joni Mitchell's song, "Big Yellow Taxi," kept running through my head: "you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone."

Like it or not, this crisis will impact the professional lives and livelihoods of all of us. If we all don't work together to address the problem, we may find ourselves being all too painfully aware of what's gone.

We urge all FA members to respond to our call for collective political action and education. THE ALARMS ARE SOUNDING!

## Direct deposit redux by Joyce Gabriele

In the April/May 2009 issue of *The WORD*, I wrote an article regarding the pros (and cons) of direct depositing our paychecks. At the time, we were surprised to learn that the majority of our faculty (full-time and adjunct) do *not* use direct deposit services for their paychecks. Unfortunately, that remains the case and we are still wondering what is the rationale for this and how can we encourage more faculty to sign on to this service?

On a personal note, I've used this method over 30 years, first as an adjunct and then as a full-time faculty member. I've never had a problem and I can't imagine why I'd add another errand (i.e., going to the bank) to my "to do" list every payday.

Why do we care? First of all, on payday your money is available to access immediately via your bank account, and you save time and gas money by eliminating that trip to the bank.

Second, the college saves money with electronic transfers by eliminating the costly printing of bank checks. And, of course, eliminating the need to print a check helps save a forest (a slight exaggeration, I know, but you get the picture, don't you?).

If you are interested, it's a very simple process to initiate. There's a form on the college's Human Resources page. Follow the menu: Forms – Personnel/Miscellaneous – Direct Deposit.

If you're going to deposit your check into a checking account you need to send a *voided* check along with the form so Payroll can verify the routing number. There is no "window" for applying; you can choose to switch any time, but it will take approximately three to four paycheck periods for the direct deposit to go into effect.

Adjuncts who choose this method do *not* need to apply each semester. The service remains in effect until the

## Unions under attack: Dispelling the myths by Cynthia Eaton

Visiting friends in Brooklyn recently, I was engaged in my own conversation in the living room when I overheard some of the guys in the kitchen debating our state's economic woes. I was only half-listening until I heard the inevitable. One of the men declared, "Well, if they could do something about these ridiculous public pensions...."

We've all heard or read about the attacks on public employees lately. The problem is nationwide but especially bad in New York. When economic times are tough, people go looking for scapegoats, and we cannot afford to let ourselves become the scapegoats for our state's sizable deficit.

The attacks on unions come in various forms—some explicit, some far trickier—but I'll focus on two myths that are specific to our state.

### Myth #1: The Triborough Amendment must go

Several fiscally conservative groups are perpetuating the myth that the Triborough Amendment to the state's Taylor Law must be eliminated to help trim state spending. They are urging Governor Andrew Cuomo's Mandate Relief Redesign Team to repeal the Triborough Amendment, and he has agreed to consider it. "We have a rigged

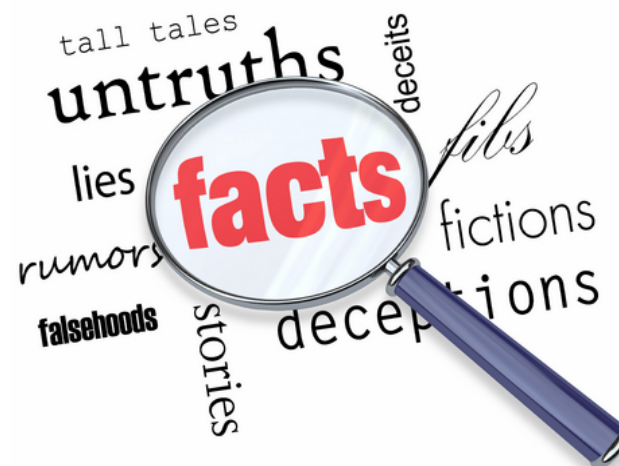
system in New York," the myth holds, "with the public service unions holding all the cards" (Liz Feld, *Peekskill Daily* 1/19/11). She adds, "We consider [Triborough] one of the dirty little secrets of collective bargaining."

As intriguing as I find this notion that unions "hold all the cards," I would like to provide some history and context regarding the Triborough Amendment.

The proper name of the Taylor Law is the Public Employees Fair Employment Act, which is Article 14 of the New York State Civil Service Law. It is a labor relations statute created in 1967 covering most public employees in our state.

As noted by the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, the Taylor Law was "the first comprehensive labor relations law for public employees in the State, and among the first in the United States." As the "fair employment" part of its title implies, this law was implemented to establish a fair process for negotiating contracts with public employees. Basic labor rights provided by the Taylor Law include the right to organize and to collectively bargain wages, benefits, and working conditions. Another provision of the Taylor Law, which workers agreed to because it's clearly for the public good, makes it illegal for public employees to strike.

The Taylor Law was groundbreaking in many ways and could have led to a significant degree of labor/management peace in the Empire State because it said, in essence, "in exchange for giving public employees the right to organize and bargain collectively, we agree not to strike." Fair enough. If police, fire fighters, and teachers are too busy mounting strikes, who is going to be protecting us and educating our citizens? Unfortunately,



# Dispelling myths

continued from page 10

employers began to exploit loopholes, such as deliberately dragging out the negotiations process until the contract expired and then unilaterally imposing changes in pay or working conditions. Since the newly formed unions couldn't strike, they were completely at the mercy of these management tactics—effectively rendering the collective bargaining process powerless.

This is why the Triborough Amendment was passed in 1982: to prevent future exploitations of these loopholes in the law. Triborough required public employers to maintain the terms and conditions of an expired contract until a new one was negotiated. The state legislature recognized that a balance was needed to insure that public employees remain on the job without a contract while assuring them that their existing agreement cannot be voided in the interim.

How leveling the playing field can be misunderstood as giving public unions “all the cards” remains a mystery to me.

Furthermore, as our state union, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) notes on its website:

- It's not true that keeping a contract in place locks in escalating costs. In the average school district budget, for example, the impact of continuing an expired contract is typically around 1 percent and the provision makes budgeting stable, transparent, and predictable. Most importantly, it ensures that public services will always be there.
- Triborough creates a stable environment that allows for both sides to negotiate in good faith and expedite successor agreements. The facts contradict critics' claims that Triborough is a disincentive to negotiate: at the start of the 2009-2010 school year, the latest year for

which full statistics are available, just 53 districts out of more than 700 were at contract impasse. And because of Triborough, even in those districts at impasse, there was no disruption in provision of services. School remained in session.

- Triborough is a major factor in ensuring that constancy. Public workers want stability, not crisis. Triborough has been critical in ensuring that the delivery of vital public services - most especially the education of our children - are not disrupted by protracted labor disputes.
- Public workers gave up the right to strike in recognition that labor peace serves the public good... and in expectation that they could bargain on a level playing field with management. Keeping a contract in place until a new one is negotiated honors that promise to public servants.

## Myth #2: Public pensions must go

Just as with the attacks on the Triborough amendment, scapegoat seekers have also targeted public employee pensions. It's a common phrase in academia that “nobody goes into teaching for the money,” but it seems that certain politically savvy groups would have the general public believe precisely the opposite. Critics of the public pension system have a penchant for citing the most extreme examples of individuals who have retired with pensions well into the six-figure range.

The facts? Typical pensions for our state's teachers, as noted by NYSUT executive vice president Andrew Pallotta, are in the \$30,000 range. Less than 1 percent of retirees earn the much-ballyhooed six-figure pension, almost all formersuperintendents or administrators. Another favorite windmill for critics to tilt at is that all of these pensions are flying south to Florida. Again, Pallotta

shares the facts: Roughly 80 percent of every dollar paid out by the teachers' retirement system is sent to New York residents.

Is our public pension system on the rocks? Not according to a 2010 report by the Pew Center on the States that indicated ours is the strongest in the nation. Pallotta argues that “both state employee retirement systems and New York's teachers' retirement systems are fully funded, and will continue to be so as long as constitutional protections for these important sources of retirement security remain in place.” While employer pension costs have increased, these changes are cyclical. Further, the Tier 5 pension reforms will provide \$35 billion in cost-savings to state and local governments and school districts over the next generation.

Yes, employer pension costs have increased, but these costs are cyclical and reflect highs and lows in the stock market. During previous economic downturns, employer costs also rose, just as they are doing now. However, historical trends show that, as the stock market swings back up—which it is also doing now—taxpayer and school district costs flatten out and then decrease, often quite dramatically.

Are 401(k) style retirement accounts the answer? Not if you consider how expensive it is to operate defined benefit pensions. Pallotta notes that costs to operate 401(k) plans are around \$2 per \$100 of assets, as opposed to the roughly 10 cents per \$100 it costs taxpayers to run public pension plans, according to the NYS Teachers Retirement System.

Pallotta says it best: “Public pensions work. They are not only less expensive to operate, but they provide middle-class New Yorkers with retirement security they can depend on. If this security is stripped away, we will see a generation of older workers without the means to sustain a dignified life or to contribute to our state's economy in their golden years.”

# Health insurance points to remember

by Lou Molinari (PBA)

*Editor's note:* This article is reprinted with the permission of Lou Molinari, treasurer of the Suffolk County Police Benevolent Association, which is also a member of EMHP.

I thought I would share with our members just a few important health insurance points regarding the Employee Medical Health Plan (EMHP) of Suffolk County (their website is [www.emhp.org](http://www.emhp.org)).

## Co-payments

Only one co-payment can be charged during a doctor's visit, unless a diagnostic x-ray is taken. When an x-ray other than a mammography is taken, only one additional co-payment, for a total of two co-payments, can be charged. Our plan includes flu shots and strep cultures in the office visit co-payments.

## Mammography

Only one co-payment can be charged for a mammography visit. EMHP includes the x-ray charge within the single office co-payment. Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield (EBCBS) has advised their plan doctors to issue a refund or credit if you were charged the extra co-pay. If you are being billed incorrectly for two co-pays, contact your doctor.

## Magnetic Resonance Imaging

Prior authorization for magnetic resonance images (MRIs, MRAs, etc.) is not required by EMHP. However, a doctor's written orders must state medical necessity.

## Physical, occupational, vision, and speech therapies

A prior authorization is not required to begin physical, occupational, vision, and speech therapies. The treatment must be medically necessary and a written order from the physician is required. Coverage is during the active phase of the therapy only.

## Hearing aids

Reimbursement for the cost of a hearing aid, including examination for and fitting of, is covered to a maximum of \$3,000 per eligible enrollee. This amount is the total allowance for reimbursement without the per ear limitation. Replacement will

be allowed once every thirty-six months. For eligible dependents of enrollees ages twelve and under, the frequency limitation remains once every twenty-four months, provided the existing hearing aid can no longer compensate for the child's hearing loss. This benefit is not subject to the deductible or co-payment.

## Foot orthotics

Foot orthotics dispensed by a participating provider are covered in full, up to \$300, with no co-payment. The plan benefit provides for one orthotic device per affected body part meeting the individual's functional needs. Replacements will be allowed, as medically necessary, once every twelve months for enrollees under the age of eighteen and once every twenty-four months for enrollees over the age of eighteen.

## Routine care of newborns

Out-of-network doctor services for routine care of newborns in a hospital are reimbursed up to \$150 with no deductible or co-payment.

## Laboratory tests

Quest Diagnostic Labs is still participating in the local EBCBS network. Call 800-939-7515 or visit [www.empireblue.com](http://www.empireblue.com) for a listing of participating labs in your area. If the lab is participating, you should not be charged for their services.

## Provider list/contacts

The most accurate and up-to-date list of hospital and medical providers for the EBCBS Direct POS or PPO networks can be found by calling 800-939-7515 or visiting [www.empireblue.com](http://www.empireblue.com). Please be sure to select the appropriate network.



But there is one very important point that not only our covered members should be aware of but also their spouse, dependents, relatives, friends, or anyone else who may be in a position to ask a health care provider/hospital the following question (including an emergency room setting): "ARE YOU IN MY NETWORK?"

I cannot stress enough the importance of doing this. Never assume that it's a given, especially at an in-network hospital. For example, in an emergency room situation, the only out-of-network charges covered in full are the attending ER physician, radiology, and pathology charges and anesthesiology charges. Many specialists, such as cardiologists, plastic surgeons, orthopedists, etc., that are called in may not be in network.

If there is time, please ask the hospital to get an in-network provider. It could very well save you a lot of heartache at billing time. Remember, the plan is the plan. Sadly, this is true even in an extreme emergency.

# Adjunct Update

by Cynthia Eaton

As happens at the start of every semester, I've been fielding numerous inquiries about course assignments for adjunct faculty. Since I repeat the answers to these questions so often, I'd like to like to address four of the most common inquiries relating to assignments.

## Why does my seniority seem to change so dramatically each semester?

Adjuncts frequently contact me with questions about how their seniority ranking can seem to increase or decrease radically from semester to semester. This happens because the seniority lists are constantly in flux.

For example, say that you were ranked #14 in your department in fall 2010, and you discover that you are ranked #20 in spring 2011. Why does this happen? A number of factors come into play:

- Some adjuncts only work in the fall or in the spring semesters.
- Adjuncts can remain on the seniority list for up to eight semesters without receiving an active assignment.
- Seniority is calculated on both number of semesters served and number of contact hours served.
- Seniority is college-wide, so the seniority list in your home campus department/area doesn't give the full picture.

So if you were ranked #14 last fall, but this spring three more senior adjuncts who are spring-only get assignments, two more senior adjuncts who have been away for a year or so come back and get assignments, and one of your peers earned more contact hours than you did last fall, then you could easily find yourself suddenly ranked #20 in your department.

"Wait," some of you are wondering, "how do I even learn what my seniority ranking is?"

## How do I know where I am and others are on the seniority list?

Adjunct faculty often call me with the same question about assignments: "How do I know if a class or assignment should have been given to me if I don't know which adjuncts are more or less senior to me?"

Every adjunct at SCCC has the right to know their seniority standing in relation to others in their department or area. The problem is that the college cannot make seniority lists public for all to see due to privacy reasons, because adjunct seniority rankings are currently hand tallied (more on that in a moment), and because—as already explained—the lists are constantly in flux.

To find out what your seniority ranking is for the current semester, simply call the Office of Faculty and Professional Advancement (OFPA) at 451.4300 or 451.4464 and ask.

Now, what about other adjuncts? You see names next to classes in Banner or next to the assignments in your department schedule, but how can you know if your seniority rights have been violated if you don't know who is more or less senior than you?

To find out, contact the OFPA and give the names of the specific individuals whose seniority rankings you'd like to know. Sometimes adjuncts ask me, as Adjunct Coordinator, to do this for them. This is not something that I can

do because assignments are made not on seniority alone but also on campus preference, certifications, and the availabilities that you entered in your NORA form. Since you know that information, you should look at all of the courses/assignments, see which ones you believe should have been given to you, make a list of the adjuncts currently holding those specific assignments, and call the OFPA with those names.

Again, the OFPA cannot provide you with a set seniority list but if you give them specific names, they can confirm whether or not those adjuncts are less senior to you. If a less senior adjunct has been given an assignment for which you're certified, on a campus and during a time that you listed as available in your NORA form, then you should contact your chair and/or me immediately.

## What are the real rules regarding bumping?

Another perennial confusion has to do with what happens if an assignment or course is canceled and you are told that someone has "bumped" you out of your current assignment. Within your discipline or area of assignment, a full-time faculty member or a more senior adjunct may bump you out of an assignment if that other faculty member's assignment was canceled.

Confusion arises because some senior faculty members believe that they can

bump *any* less senior adjunct out of his or her assignment. This is not true. If you suspect this is happening to you in the future, please contact me immediately. And I do mean *immediately*: Once a class has met for the first time, we rarely "undo" erroneous bumping so as



photo by Koszivu | Dreamstime

# Adjunct update

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to avoid unnecessary confusion for the students.

The FA and the college agreed long ago—and this has been true since the 1970s—that they would adhere to a process known as “bottom bumping,” so as to disrupt as few faculty schedules as possible.

Here’s what this means for you:

A more senior adjunct who has lost an assignment/course may bump *the least senior adjunct* in their discipline who is working/teaching at a time that the more senior adjunct has indicated as available on their NORA form.

That’s it. The more senior adjunct does not get to pick and choose which of all the junior adjuncts he or she bumps, only the least senior adjunct who has an assignment within the senior adjunct’s NORA availabilities.

One caveat to this rule has to do with the campus preferences that the adjuncts put on their NORA forms. In addition, senior adjuncts may not bump a junior adjunct from a distance education course (unless they have prior training in the modality) or from a special topics or Honors course.

## How can I get certified for other classes or assignments?

Adjuncts also ask about how to get certified so that they can receive different assignments or get to teach different courses. Since assignments may be made college-wide, this list is maintained not by the individual departments but by the Office of Faculty and Professional Advancement (OFPA). If you wish to know for which assignments/courses you are *actually* certified, contact the OFPA at 451.4300 or 451.4464.

There are two ways that adjuncts can be certified in new areas/courses.

### 1. The chair certifies the adjunct.

When adjuncts are first hired, whichever assignments/courses they have in their very first semester are automatically put on the college-wide seniority/certifications list maintained by the OFPA. For the chair to add other assignments for that adjunct at a later date, they must notify the OFPA in writing and those specific assignments will be added for the adjunct based on the chair’s missive.

### 2. The adjunct requests certification.

This is the formal process by which adjuncts write to their chairs identifying which assignments/courses they’d like to be certified for and providing documentation to show why they should be certified. *The deadline this spring is March 11.* Then the OFPA meets with a committee that includes the three campus chairs/supervisors to determine which adjuncts are to receive certification.

Please note that these decisions include a consideration of supply and demand. That is, even though you may be eminently qualified for the assignments you are requesting, the college may deny your request at this time, especially if there are already sufficient instructors on staff who are qualified for that same assignment.

Of course, as with any situation, these are just the most common questions. Individual situations vary widely. If you have any questions about any of the above—or any other issues—please contact me at [cynthia@fascc.org](mailto:cynthia@fascc.org) or 451.4151.

## Direct deposit

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employee notifies Payroll to stop.

If you change banks or close the account into which your checks are being deposited, you must notify Payroll immediately. Otherwise it will go into the

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closed account and you will have to wait for the bank to return the money to the college before your check can be reissued.

This is a win/win/win situation: for you, the college, and the environment.

# It's election season in the FA

by Marie Hanna

As chair of the Elections Committee, I need to remind the membership that elections are being held for all six of the FA officer positions and several Executive Council seats according to the rules in Section VII.B. of the FA Election Procedures, which reads in part that "The EC rep in each constituency shall be designated the elections chairperson of that constituency, and shall conduct elections, unless he/she is running for office, in which case an acting elections chairperson shall be designated."



photo by Theresa Thompson | flickr

The names of officers and EC reps whose terms expire are in parenthesis. The following timetable will govern the election:

- March 24, 12:00 p.m. Close of nominations. Nominations must be submitted to FA office in writing.
- March 31, 12:00 p.m. Statement (no longer than 150 words) for *The WORD* due in FA office.
- April 14, 3:30 to 4:00 p.m. General membership meeting with candidate presentations (H229)
- April 25 Ballots will be mailed to all registered FA members
- May 12, 3:45 p.m. Certification of election results at EC Meeting

## FA Officers

- President (Ellen Schuler Mauk)
- Treasurer (Joyce Gabriele)
- Grievance Officer (Sean Tvelia)
- Executive Vice President (Kevin Peterman)
- Secretary (Marie Hanna)
- Adjunct Coordinator (Cynthia Eaton)

## Full-time Representatives

- Eastern Campus (1 rep) Library, Humanities, Social Sciences (Michael Boecherer)
- Grant Campus (2 reps) Liberal Arts, Counseling, Library (Mohini Ratna)  
Business Programs, Educational Technology Unit, HVAC (Pete DiGregorio)
- Ammerman Campus (5 reps) Fine Arts and Music (Sara Rafferty)  
Nursing, Health, and Human Services (Lisa Aymong)  
Mathematics (Jane-Marie Wright)  
Accounting, Business Admin, Business Info Systems (Kevin McNamara)  
Social Sciences, Behavior Sciences (Denise Haggerty)

In the case of at-large college-wide, constituent-based PA representatives as well as the adjunct representatives, the FA Elections Committee will conduct the elections.

## College-wide Constituent-based Representatives (2 reps)

- Professional Assistant ~ Programmatic (Kathy Massimo)
- Professional Assistant ~ Instructional Labs (Deb Kiesel)

## Adjunct Representatives (8 reps)

- Computer Science/Accounting/Business Admin/Business Law/Office Technologies (Joseph Rastello)
- Economics/History/Political Science/Criminal Justice/Psych/Counseling/Student Activities (William Schaefer)
- English/Library/Speech/Theatre/Broadcasting/Communication (Christine Hegarty)
- Foreign Language/ESL/Sign Language/Music/Visual Arts/Philosophy (Pauline Pharr)
- Nursing/Health Careers/Nutrition/Chemical Dependency/Early Childhood/PhysEd/College Seminar (Carol Powers)
- PA/Specialists ~ Instructional Labs (MaryAnne Ellinger)
- PA/Specialists ~ Academic Skills Centers (*vacant*)
- Retiree/Guild (Christopher Gherardi)



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Kevin Peterman.....Executive Vice President  
Marie Hanna.....Secretary  
Joyce Gabriele.....Treasurer  
Sean Tvelia.....Grievance Officer  
Cynthia Eaton.....Adjunct Coordinator

**EC Reps: Adjuncts**

Doug Cody.....BIO,CHE,ESS,FPT,PHY,AUT,ELT,ENS,TEL  
Joseph Rastello.....CST,ACC,BNK,BUS,LAW,MKT;BUS,OFT  
William Schaefer.....ECO,HIS,POL,POA,Counseling, Stud. Act.  
Frank DiGregorio.....ECO,HIS,POL,POA,Counseling, Stud. Act.  
Christine Hegarty.....ENG,LIB,COM,THR,RTV  
Priscilla Pratt.....ENG,LIB,COM,THR,RTV  
Corrine Morton-Greiner.For.Lang.,ESL,RDG,HUM,ASL,MUS,ART,PHL  
Pauline Pharr.....For.Lang.,ESL,RDG,HUM,ASL,MUS,ART,PHL  
Russell David.....Math  
Agnes Lynch.....NUR,HSC,DTE,HIT,CDC,EDU,PED,COL  
Carol Powers.....NUR,HSC,DTE,HIT,CDC,EDU,PED,COL  
*vacant*.....PA/Specialists - Acad. Skills Ctrs.  
Maureen Sandford.....PA/Spec.-Programmatic, Tech, At-Large  
MaryAnne Ellinger.....PA/Specialists - Instructional Labs  
Christopher Gherardi.....Retiree/Guild  
Charles Grippi.....Retiree/Guild

**EC Reps: Professional Assistants**

Kathy Massimo.....Programmatic  
Steve Ortiz-Rios.....Technical Areas/Instructional Centers  
Deb Kiesel.....Instructional Labs

**EC Reps: Ammerman Campus**

Sara Rafferty.....Music/Visual Arts  
Lisa Aymong.....Nursing/Health & Human Services/PE  
Darryl Butkos.....Biology/Physical Sciences  
Jane-Marie Wright.....Math  
Lars Hedstrom.....Comm./Languages/Reading/Philosophy/  
Theater/TV, Radio, Film  
*vacant*.....Library/Central  
Kevin McNamara.....Accounting/Business Admin./  
Business Information Systems  
Adam Penna.....English  
Denise Haggerty.....Social Sciences/Criminal Justice  
Karen Pepe.....Counseling  
Mike Simon.....Engineering/Computer Science/  
Industrial Technology

**EC Reps: Eastern Campus**

Michael Boecherer.....Library/Humanities/Social Science  
Louise Johnston.....Counseling/Science/Math & Business

**EC Reps: Grant Campus**

John Burgess.....Natural & Health Sciences/Math/PE  
Marlene DuBois.....Liberal Arts/Counseling/Library  
Mohini Ratna.....Liberal Arts/Counseling/Library  
Peter DiGregorio.....Business & Technology

**New York State United Teachers**

Jonathan Rubin.....NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist