

Over 1,000 AFT Members & Supporters Protest Working Without a Contract!

Over 1,000 faculty, professional staff and librarians, supported by students, CWA and IFPTE members, State assembly members and the NJ AFL-CIO, held demonstrations on April 25 and 26, 2012 on eight campuses represented by the College Council. The protest theme "Working Without a Contract!" highlighted the lack of progress in negotiations that have dragged on for nearly a year. At issue are the college/university presidents' and the state's outrageous and onerous proposals that seek to gut our collective bargaining agreement, an agreement that has been negotiated fairly for many decades under Republican and Democratic governors. The protests also highlighted the growing lack of credibility of the presidents' claims to be honorable educators, given their willingness to incur ex-

penses for buildings, public relations and their own salaries and bonuses at the expense of the well-being of faculty, librarian and professional staff, and of the ability of students to acquire a college education without excessive debt.

There was a fair amount of media coverage. Unfortunately, NJ TV (New Jersey's revamped public television station housed at Montclair State University) chose to only broadcast an interview with Susan Waldron, president of William Paterson University. They ignored the presence of Assemblywoman Connie Wagner and the local union members and leadership who contacted the station's correspondent.

What follows are brief descriptions of the activities at each campus:



Montclair State University rally start



NJCU Photo by Debra Jenks

New Jersey City University – NJCU

At least 250 union and student activists assembled at NJCU demanding a fair contract and increased state support for public higher education. Organized by AFT Local 1839, the rally on April 25 attracted a spirited crowd that responded with cheers and chants to featured speakers from the Local, Council, professional staff, students and community

organizations. One speaker, professional staff member Orlando Lavarro, Jr., is also a Jersey City Councilman-at-Large. The president of the Hudson County Central Labor Council Peter Busacca was also in attendance.

The crowd carried signs that supported both the struggle of AFT educators for a fair contract and student concerns for educational access and affordability. They emphasized that "Banks Get Bailed Out, Education Gets Sold Out" and called for the reinstatement of the "millionaires' tax."

Before the rally, media including WCBS radio and local cable TV stations interviewed the outgoing and incoming Presidents of Local 1839, Ivan Steinberg and William Calathes. Both stressed that students and workers share a common interest in an affordable system of quality public higher education and that unions fight not only for their own members but for students. Speakers at the rally decried the

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crippling effect of rising tuition costs and student loan debt on student success in college and in the job market. Many speakers also targeted Governor Christie for catering to the corporate elite at the expense of the rest of New Jersey residents.

The rally was followed by a march through the campus to President Carlos Hernandez's office. Hernandez was already



and staff, what does this tell us about how much the State actually cares about public higher education in New Jersey? I see not care but disdain, not support but selfishness, not constructive cooperation but political jockeying. It is sad. It makes me sad to see my wonderful students insulted in this manner, treated like they matter so little."

Despite being on medical leave for a serious illness, SFT President Tim Haresign showed his dedication to his union brothers and sisters, to his students and to Stockton by delivering a passionate speech praising the way the union's negotiating team has conducted itself, despite the Governor's hostile stand against public employees, and thanking



Local 2275 President-elect Anne Pomeroy addresses rally

Stockton's students for their support of faculty and staff. Haresign said: "Today we are sending a message to management: The focus on blaming workers for the state's economic dysfunction is a ruse. NJ ranks among the bottom five states in the nation in its support for public higher education while at the same time college presidents have disproportionately expanded the ranks and salaries of upper level managers. Those are the issues

the Governor and the College Presidents do not want to talk about."

Adjunct faculty and professional staff representatives spoke about the State's draconian demands that will have a negative impact on how they service students and Stockton's two valedictorians spoke in support of their faculty and staff and against the State's lack of support for higher education.

The Day of Action coincided with final exams so faculty, staff and students showed up in steady streams throughout the day rather than all at one time. Whenever the crowds grew to marching size, Mike McGarvey from Visual Arts



Photos by Debra Jenks

meeting with Local 1839 President Steinberg, and in response to the crowd outside his office, invited three students into the meeting.

The protesters then made their way to the Student Center where a hearing on public safety issues that included State Legislators was taking place. Two of the legislators, Charles Mainor and Jason O'Donnell, both Democratic Assemblymen from the 31st district in Hudson County, were engaged by the protestors and expressed strong support for a fair contract settlement and increased state support for public higher education.

Richard Stockton State College

Under sunny skies in front of Stockton College's new \$65 million Campus Center, the Stockton Federation of Teachers, Local 2275, held its April 25th Day of Action. The audience heard from incoming SFT President Anne Pomeroy who asked the crowd to consider: "If the State persists in pulling funding from the State colleges, if the State turns a deaf ear to the students who are begging to get out from under the enormous weight of their debts, if the State continues to heap insults and injury upon the college's faculty

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beat his Celtic Bodhrán drum and led chanting protesters around campus, always ending up in the new Campus Center. At one point the crowd forced the College president, who was hosting a parent/student group in the Center, to acknowledge the marchers.

Local 2275 President Tim Haresign told the crowd that this is just the beginning and that if by the fall semester we do not have a contract, “things will not continue on as they have.” After the success of April 25th, it looks as if the SFT is well prepared for mobilizing for future actions!

William Paterson University



Photo by Chriss Williams

AFT Local 1796 members and supporters rallied on April 25th to protest lack of movement toward a new contract and numerous punitive State demands that remain on the bargaining table. Led by Local 1796 President Sue Tardi, members were joined by NJ Assemblywoman Connie Wagner (D-38) who proclaimed her support and applauded the protesters “for standing up for students.” Assemblywoman Wagner is deeply aware of student experiences and needs at our universities since she received a B.A. in Education from Trenton State College (now the College of New Jersey), and

an M.A. in Student Affairs from Montclair State University. She was a high school guidance counselor prior to entering politics.

Dr. Tardi spoke with public radio WBAI’s Jose Santiago about the need for increased state support for higher education to provide high quality affordable college education for NJ students, which includes a new AFT contract with pay and benefits that “attracts and retains high quality faculty and staff”. Tardi pointed out that many of the non-economic proposals – e.g., making sabbaticals locally-negotiated, removal of union observers from university committees, etc., simply attack the union and serve to compromise the professionalism of State college/university faculty, staff and



AFT Local 1796 President Sue Tardi addressing rally
Photo by Chriss Williams

librarians. Dr. Tardi pointed out that sabbaticals support faculty research that keeps instruction current and allows faculty to teach students appropriately; union observers on committees serve in many cases to prevent disputes that would otherwise result in costly grievances and arbitrations.

She noted that while Gov. Christie promised support for higher education, no additional funds have been forthcoming in the current budget.

At the rally Richard Kearny (WPUNJ Librarian) stated “we are demanding that the state cease its outrageous stonewalling”. Surveying the assembled group of faculty and students Dr. Arlene Hopp Scala (WPUNJ Women & Gender studies) declared “this is what democracy looks like!” Arlene Hylton-Lindsay (WPUNJ Secondary and Middle School Education) led the crowd in a chant of “no contract – no business as usual!” and was followed by Prof. Christine Kelly leading everyone in song with Woody Guthrie’s “I’m Stickin’ With the Union”.

Ramapo College

Over 200 members of the Ramapo community gathered at the Arch in support of a fair contract. Led by Local 2274 President Irene Kuchta, who described the status of negotiations with the State, the crowd heard from faculty, professional staff, adjuncts and students. The speakers, including Peter Schecker (faculty), Eileen Quagliano (event coordinator) and Kathleen Shannon (Adjunct VP), affirmed Ramapo AFT solidarity among the full-time and adjunct faculty, professional staff and librarians.

The group marched to the mansion where the president’s office is located, chanting “What do we want? A CONTRACT! When do we want it? NOW!” A third of the group entered the mansion, continuing to chant, while the rest stayed in front holding the AFT banner and signs. The crowd

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Marching into the President's office

inside filled the lobby, the stairs and the upper hallway.

A group, including Irene Kuchta, Mitch Kahn, Marshall Harth, Mike Fluhr, Pat Keeton, Peter Schecker, Jill Weiss, Todd Barnes and Roark Atkinson, met

for over an hour in the president's office and scheduled a meeting between President Mercer and a union contingent.

Kean University



Photos by Tony Velez

Approximately 100 people participated in the Kean Federation of Teachers Day of Action. Also in attendance in support of the KFT were IFPTE Local 195, the Adjunct Faculty Union (AFT Local 6024), SEIU 1199, and the Union County Central Labor Council. Joining in as well were key leaders of the Occupy Kean movement and NJ United Students.

The group protested at the main entrance to Kean. Many people passing by in cars showed their support by honking their car horns.

One driver on Morris Avenue even stopped his car to say, "You're doing the right thing."

Montclair State University



The Day of Action at Montclair State University (MSU) brought together over 225 members of AFT Local 1904, members of CWA 1031, IFPTE 195, AFT Adjunct Local 6025 and students in unity for a fair and equitable contract and reasonable State college/university tuitions. It was a show of strength demonstrating to Montclair State University President Susan Cole and Governor Chris Christie that they cannot bully our members into agreeing to an erosion of working conditions and job protections, which will also negatively impact the academic mission of the University and significantly affect students by decreasing both access and opportunity.



After brief remarks from Rich Wolfson, President of AFT Local 1904; Jennifer Higgins, Internal Vice President of AFT Local 1904; Robert Noonan, President of AFT Local 6025; Lisa Grab of NJ United Students and current MSU student; and Steve Young, Executive Director of the Council, the crowd marched through campus, passing Dr. Cole's office, chanting in a call and response manner as at other campuses, "What do we want? A CONTRACT! When do we want it? NOW!" Closing remarks were given by AFT Local 1904 External Vice President Bill Sullivan.

Rowan University

Over 120 faculty, librarians and professional staff marched through campus, beating drums and carrying cof-

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fins symbolizing the fate of public higher education under the Christie administration. After the march, the demonstrators gathered at the clock tower to listen to speeches and sing union songs.

"We're drawing a line in the sand to let the president know that we are disenchanted with the lack of progress in contract negotiations," said Nicholas Yovnello, Council



President and Rowan librarian. Yovnello highlighted the State's suspension of the career development, sabbatical leave and tuition waiver programs, management proposals to eliminate the union's right to place an observer on the budget committee, and an attack on job security for professional staff as examples of its regressive posture in negotiations.

With contract talks stalled and the State's failure to pay normal increments,

Rowan faculty, staff and librarians, like their colleagues in the State college/university system, have seen their salaries eroded since the expiration of the contract on June 30, 2011. Professor Yvonne Rodriguez said AFT members deserve a fair contract that can keep up with inflation as well as support for sabbaticals and career development. Professor Dilip Mirchandani observed that it is impossible to attract the best faculty and students without a good contract."

Rowan student Jamie Kifferly, representing the Glassboro Student Union, participated to show her solidarity with the faculty. "Many students feel that if the professors weren't here, we wouldn't be here either. Without them, we don't have an education."

AFT Local 2373 President Karen Siefring urged members to keep the pressure on administrators and legislators. She encouraged faculty to wear AFT shirts and buttons to Uni-

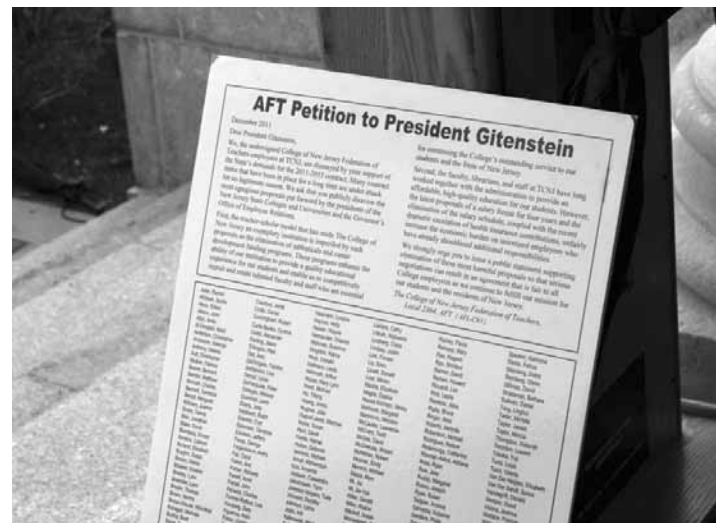
versity events and to sign a petition demanding that the Rowan administration repudiate the State's demands.

AFT NJ State Federation Political Director Seth Oberman spoke for the entire AFT leadership in declaring that our members are in the "front line to defend higher education. What we do right now will determine the future of higher education in this state."



The College of New Jersey

At the College of New Jersey several hundred members of the AFT Local 2364, representatives from the Council, the Communications Workers of America and the NJ State AFL-CIO rallied on the steps of the College's administration building.



Photos by Ben Akuma

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As on other campuses, union members demonstrated to make it abundantly clear to the campus administration that the union is organized and ready to push back against the unfair demands of the state.

"The kind of contract we get makes a difference in the quality of education we can deliver," stated Local 2364 Pres. Ralph Edelbach. Interviewed by the *Trenton Times*, Edelbach explained that negotiations for a new contract for union members have stalled and the State employees have been without contracts for the current academic year. We are operating under our expired contract, but the State has put a freeze on new sabbaticals taken by faculty members and on any incremental pay increases called for in that contract.

John Krimmel, Local 2364 Vice President explained that the main sticking point in negotiations has been the push by the State to localize agreements previously included in a master contract between the State and the union. Localizing agreements would shift control over employment matters from the bargaining table to individual college presidents.



Photo by Ben Akuma

"The state put demands on the table that are, in our view, completely unrealistic," Edelbach said. "We absolutely do not feel that breaking up (the union) is in the best interest of the College, the students or the employees."

Council Executive Director Steve Young described the state's proposals: "They want to give you zero percent in the first year because you're "so good"; zero percent in the



Photo by Ben Akuma

second year because you're even better; zero percent in the third year because you'll take it like it or not; and zero percent in the fourth year because they think they can get away with it!" Each phrase was answered by a cry of "SHAME!" from the assembled faculty and students. Young continued: "They want to take away sabbaticals, and they want you to use up your vacation time when they decide to close the college – no more vacations when YOU want to take your vacation time".

Richard Wilson, a professional employee at TCNJ and an AFT member, said that "Not having a contract has put a strain on staff morale. It is hard to be productive without the security of a contract, I see it as a sign of injustice."

In solidarity, CWA Representative Rene Garzon joined his message with ours: "We the people of this state must stand together" and NJ AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanec spoke in support of AFT members: "This governor is a part of a national movement attacking unionized workers everywhere. The only way we're going to beat this is to stand together. This fight is just starting. The best thing we can do for our sons and daughters is provide them with a good education. We stand with you." Charlie led everyone in a chant of "Hey New Jersey we're with you – schools for all not just a few!"

Try to imagine a better world where our college and university presidents were supporting their faculty, librarians, professional staff and students instead of mimicking the Governor in scapegoating educators and demeaning your work. — • —

Despite the fact that CWA recently settled their contract (subject to member ratification), we are not optimistic that the State and the presidents are willing to start to move to contract settlement and give us some important contract language contained in the new CWA agreement. This is even more apparent because of the Rutgers settlement several months ago that contained salary language that the State and presidents proposed to us. We cannot agree to this. However, negotiations are continuing and may drag into the summer months or beyond. Please continue to spread the bitter truth to your colleagues, especially those who think their administration is their friend. Talk to the Presidents. They are the ones who are behind most of these demands, even if they claim they are not. They can urge the State to drop them. Continue pushing your Presidents to do what it takes to get a fair and decent contract for everyone.

Communicating and Mobilizing for our Contract and for the Future

Nearly 100 local union activists and students assembled on Saturday April 14th for a day long conference titled **Loud and Clear: Communicating and Mobilizing for Our Contract**. To assist the locals in organizing against the State's regressive negotiating positions and to build a lasting network of activists for future struggles, the Council invited two professional labor activists, Minh Nguyen and Nick Unger, to share their experience and expertise that has proved effective in similar arenas.



Minh Nguyen, Assistant Director of Organizing and Field Services with the AFT worked on the campaign that successfully repealed legislation in Ohio that severely restricted public employee collective bargaining rights. He previously served as Executive Director of AFT-Maryland and as National Deputy Training Coordinator for the AFL-CIO.

Nguyen addressed the issue of member mobilization. In an interactive style, he reviewed many of the reasons members may give for abstaining from union activity—lack of time, apathy, sense of futility, fear of management reprisal etc.—and solicited responses from the audience on how to address them. He emphasized that one on one communication is the key to effective union activity. E-mail, phone calls, letters or flyers have their place, but there is no substitute for personal contact. The nature of this personal contact is also critical, because merely exhorting a member to get involved with the union will not work and a confrontational approach is sure to backfire. Learning something about the member and his/her interests is where to start. From that foundation, the member can be asked to make a small commitment of time. By valuing their opinions, recognizing their contributions and inviting them to work with others on progressively bigger projects, a passive member can be turned into an activist.

Nick Unger has worked in senior positions for the AFL-CIO, UNITE and local unions in the NYC area. In 2009-2010, he played a vital role in crafting the AFL-CIO's campaign in support of President Obama's health care legislation, the Affordable Care Act. He is currently coordinating efforts to build community support for keeping the Avondale Shipyard open in New Orleans.

Unger focused on how unions can win allies among sectors that would not ordinarily be sympathetic to organized labor or public higher education. He began with the premise that teaching methods only work inside the classroom

and fail almost everywhere else. As much as we might like to believe otherwise, the facts do not speak for themselves. Context, story and belief always count for more than content, facts and evidence in getting our message across. People have widely divergent beliefs and interests. We have to help potential allies make sense of what they already know, rather than lecture people on what they do not know.

All people are self-centered by nature. Therefore, appeals to enlightened self-interest are most effective. For example, a businessman may be willing to support increased funding for higher education because an educated workforce is a more productive workforce. A real estate agent may see the value of public education because good schools increase property values.

Unger reinforced some of Nguyen's themes by reminding the audience that effective conversations are not about "you" but the person you are trying to reach. Finding out where people are coming from is essential if we are to win them to our side.

The day's activities ended with breakout sessions where locals met to assimilate what they learned and apply the lessons to planning for the April 25th rallies—and beyond.

The Council was pleased to welcome the many new faces from our rank and file who attended this conference and was encouraged by the participation of students. Students are an essential component of a successful coalition not merely for their own energy and ideas, but because of the link they provide to their parents.

Here are "Volunteer Recruitment Best Practices" developed by the AFL-CIO and the AFT.

- Engage in frequent issue education.
- Draw clear connections between their issues and volunteer work.
- Make activities short term commitments, not long-term assignments.
- Reconfirm volunteers before every activity.
- Give recognition for volunteers.
- Follow-up with no-shows.
- Make volunteers part of the team.
- Tell volunteers about their successes.
- Mentor new and prospective volunteers.

Montclair Adjunct Faculty Local 6025 Celebrates Union Solidarity

AFT Local 6025 held its first annual Union Solidarity & Celebration Dinner on April 26th to honor members who have twenty or more years of service as Adjunct Faculty at Montclair State University. The Local awarded student scholarships and installed its newly-elected officers and executive board. Over ninety members attended the dinner.



L. to R. - Robert Russo, Yolanda Simmons, Joan Burke and Robert Noonan



Adrienne Santola (Curriculum and Teaching, 1989).

Honorees received a commemorative plaque and engraved silver key chains. More significantly, Vice President Mary Wallace delivered short biographies of the honorees, citing their important accomplishments in their professions and impressive teaching careers at Montclair.

Local 6025 student scholarships were awarded to Ms. Rebecca Ferguson (daughter of Harold Ferguson) and to Ms. Chava Vietze (daughter of Alan Vietze).

The Council's Adjunct Representative Arlene Schor administered the Oath of Office to newly-elected President Bob Noonan and to the new Executive Board members. The Local also bid a fond and grateful farewell to the out-going president Bob Russo, who received an award for his service to the Local. The evening ended with a drawing for two *iPads*: the winners were Dr. Joan Burke and new member Daphne Hanrahan. Congratulations! — • —

SOLIDARITY
SHOULD NOT
BE JUST A
WORD.

IT IS OUR
ACTIONS
THAT GIVE IT
TRUE
MEANING!

The honorees for twenty years or more of service were: Dr. Joan Burke (Mathematics, 1985); Dr. Raymond Calluori (Sociology, 1983); David Caulfield (Classics and General Humanities, 1986); Harold Ferguson (Justice Studies, 1985); Anne Glennon (Classics and General Humanities, 1986); Dr. Kathryn Keller (Sociology, 1989); Vincenza Gioia Kay (Anthropology, 1987); Arnold Korotkin (Center for Advising and Student Training, 1987); Dr. Richard Marranta (Classics and General Humanities, 1989); Yahui Olenik (Modern Languages and Literature, 1986); Lenore Rosenbluth (Linguistics, 1986); and Dr.