

UCATS Momentum

Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU, Local 3882, NYSUT, AFT, AFL-CIO

Volume 25 Number 1 | Spring 2004

Health & Safety down the drain



NEWS FLASH! The union has discovered that a UCATS member was kept working in a lab after NYU knew she had been exposed to 8 times the acceptable level of formaldehyde. Our subsequent investigation revealed that there were dozens of health and safety violations in the lab, including the improper disposal of waste from human cadavers. Full details will be reported in a special edition of *Momentum Extra!* coming to your mailbox soon.

Above: UCATS members Juanita Davis, Shirley Montgomery, Steve Rechner, and Susan Price picketed at an NYU/Environmental Protection Agency press conference on February 12, called to announce that the EPA would henceforth allow NYU to self-regulate(!) their compliance with EPA regulations. . .

Building a foundation



■ Stephen Rechner, Vanderbilt Hall

It's only February, but already the UCATS executive council has an ambitious agenda for the coming year. The theme of this year's activities is *Building a Foundation for Contract Negotiations 2005*.

Some members have already approached me with individual lists of improvements they'd like to see in the next contract, but that's putting the cart before the horse.

What we need to learn over the next year is what each of you are willing to do to achieve that contract. The extent to which we achieve our goals always depends on member participation.

Your union needs you

To begin with, currently we have 21 positions open on the executive council (that's half the council, folks). If we can fill those positions that will greatly enhance our position at the bargaining table next year.

If becoming a steward seems too daunting at this point, FEAR NOT, because in addition to our shop stewards, we also need people who are willing to serve as deputy stewards. Deputy stewards are union members who volunteer to assist their area stewards. Typical responsibilities include distributing information in your areas, helping with mailings, and reminding your co-workers about union events.

Our shop stewards are doing a terrific job, but they can use all the

help and encouragement you can give them (it's never a bad time to call your steward just to say 'thank you'). Becoming a deputy steward is a great way to help out, and if you ever had a notion of becoming a shop steward, it's a way to try it out without making a long-term commitment.

Filling the executive council is not something those of us already on the council can do for you (we don't have cloning capability yet). Each of you must consciously decide if you want us to reach our full potential as a union, and achieve a good contract in 2005. It's a simple equation: *Union Participation Now =*

A Good Contract in 2005.

We have a lot to do over the next 18 months to lay the foundation for contract negotiations next year. For the near term, we have enclosed a survey regarding your educational background *see my article on "De-skilling Our Jobs" on page 8*. The survey is also available from our website — www.ucats3882.org.

The extent to which we achieve our goals always depends on member participation.

In the future we will be surveying you to gather information on your housing expenses. By this time next year, we will be forming our bargaining team and surveying our members to determine our negotiation priorities.

Completing these surveys is an important way to participate in the union, while providing us with valuable information to prepare our contract proposals next year. It will also help us counteract proposals NYU negotiators might make that could have a negative impact on us.

On the opposite page we're delighted to publish a copy of a letter from NYSUT president, Thomas Hobart, written on our behalf to Mayor Bloomberg. We were prompted to ask president Hobart to write this letter when we learned that NYU had accepted an

(Continued on page 3)

UCATS Momentum

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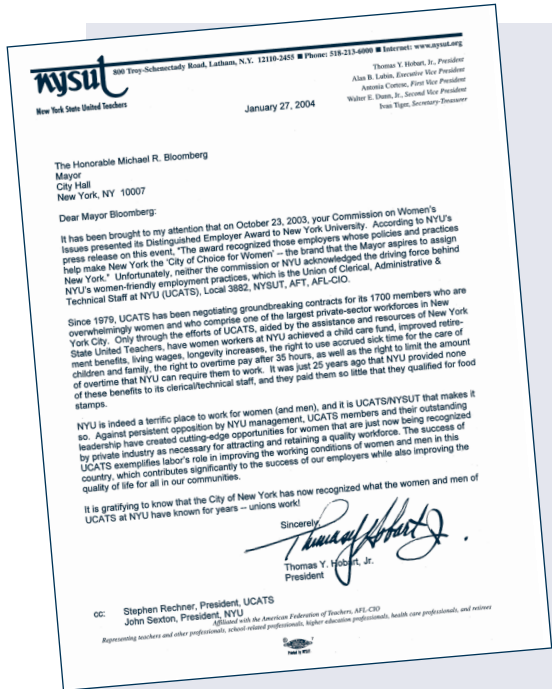
Momentum is published bi-monthly for the clerical, administrative & technical workers at NYU by the Union of Clerical, Administration, & Technical Staff (UCATS), Local 3882, New York State United Teachers, AFT, AFL-CIO.

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NYSUT President sets the record straight

January 27, 2004



The Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

It has been brought to my attention that on October 23, 2003, your Commission on Women's issues presented its Distinguished Employer Award to New York University. According to NYU's press release on this event, "The award recognized those employers whose policies and practices help make New York the 'City of Choice for Women' — the brand that the Mayor aspires to assign New York." Unfortunately, neither the commission or NYU acknowledged the driving force behind NYU's women-friendly employment practices, which is the Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU (UCATS), Local 3882, NYSUT, AFT, AFL-CIO.

Since 1979, UCATS has been negotiating groundbreaking contracts for its 1700 members who are overwhelmingly women and who comprise one of the largest private-sector workforces in New York City. Only through the efforts of UCATS, aided by the assistance and resources of New York State United Teachers, have women workers at NYU achieved a child care fund, improved retirement benefits, living wages, longevity increases, the right to use accrued sick time for the care of children and family, the right to overtime pay after 35 hours, as well as the right to limit the amount of overtime that NYU can require them to work. It was just 25 years ago that NYU provided none of these benefits to its clerical/technical staff, and they paid them so little that they qualified for food stamps.

NYU is indeed a terrific place to work for women (and men), and it is UCATS/NYSUT that makes it so. Against persistent opposition by NYU management. UCATS members and their outstanding leadership have created cutting-edge opportunities for women that are just now being recognized by private industry as necessary for attracting and retaining a quality workforce. The success of UCATS exemplifies labor's role in improving the working conditions of women and men in this country, which contributes significantly to the success of our employers while also improving the quality of life for all in our communities.

It is gratifying to know that the City of New York has now recognized what the women and men of UCATS at NYU have know for years—unions work!

Sincerely,
Thomas Y. Hobart, Jr.
President

Building a foundation

(Continued from page 2)
award for their women-friendly policies and practices from Mayor Bloomberg's Commission on Women's Issues, without any mention of the fact that those policies and practices were negotiated by Local 3882. President Hobart's letter sets the record straight.

Our current executive council team has achieved so much in the short time we've been in office. It is one of the most proactive councils that I can recall in my 17-year involvement in our union. We did not, however, run for office to rest on our achievements.

The time to lay the foundation for contract negotiations is now. Participating in that process is everyone's responsibility. I hope you will decide to make the time to participate in UCATS over the next year, so that we all achieve the contract we deserve in 2005. ☸

What every union member should know

■ *Geraldine Muhammad,
Midtown Center*

Answers to our most common questions, Article 23

Vacation time

How is vacation time calculated?

Full time permanent employees of NYU accumulate vacation days each month. The monthly accumulation of vacation time is counted from September 1st through August 31st of each fiscal year. Vacation days are earned at a rate of .83 to 1.83 days per month, resulting in 10-22 days, depending on how many years you've worked at NYU.

For part-time employees, the accumulation of vacation days is based on the number of hours that the part-time employee works each week.

New employees must first complete a six month period of probation before they become eligible to take a vacation. After completion of the probation period, a retroactive credit of 6 months vacation is given.

If an NYU employee is hired after the 15th of the month, no vacation credit is given for that month.

What is the official vacation period?

The official vacation period must consist of at least 12 weeks between May through September. For example, in my school, SCPS, the official vacation period for summer 2004 for the 2003-04 academic year is from May 24, 2004 through August 13, 2004. On June 1st of each year, employees are advanced credit for June, July and August, so the total

annual vacation entitlement is available during the summer months.

The official vacation period is a protection for you. You must be given time during that twelve weeks if you want it.

Does it mean I can't get time outside of the period?

No. With a supervisor's approval an employee may schedule time outside of the official vacation period. And many do.

What if I don't use all of my vacation time?

A maximum of one half of the annual vacation may be carried beyond the first of April and must be used prior to the 31st of August following the academic year (September 1 – August 31) it was earned. If you do not use it, you lose it! Exceptions may only be made by the assistant vice president for Human Resources.

What are the rules for using vacation, holidays and leave time?

If a holiday falls during an employee's vacation period, the employee is paid for the holiday and not for a vacation day.

You do not accumulate vacation time if you are out on an unpaid leave of more than 15 days. In terms of FMLA leave, you may use vacation time when you are out on FMLA leave for your child, spouse/domestic partner or parent. This time may be used in 1/2 or full day increments.

Will I be paid for unused vacation time when I leave NYU?

Yes. You must give 2 weeks notice to be paid for your unused vacation time.

If an employee's last day of work falls after the 15th, the employee will receive vacation credit for that month. ☞



Executive Council Action Calendar

Executive Council Meetings
Second Tuesday of each month

Black History Month Film Showing
Friday, February 27th 5 p.m. — Union office
Bayard Rustin: Brother Outsider

New York State United Teachers
Representative Assembly, NYC
7 elected UCATS delegates will attend
Thursday, March 25
Saturday, March 27



Campus media services

Recently UCATS held a lunchtime meeting to discuss issues and concerns in Campus Media Services. Representing the union at the meeting were Edwin Guzman, District 3 Shop Steward and Campus Media Technician; Luz Contreras, Vice President and Kimmel Center Sr. Media Technician; and Greg Succop, Organizer. The majority of the Campus Media employees present were Code 114, part-time technical.

After successfully organizing to have an especially abusive supervisor ousted, the members showed an interest in having other problems and concerns heard. Most of the issues revolved around their part-time status.

Historically, Campus Media workers were temporary employees with none of the benefits or protections of our union contract. After successfully negotiating the conversion of those positions to part-time status, the union insisted on the need for

full-time positions. As a direct result of union activism, ten full-time positions were created.

The need for full-time positions

Despite this success, Campus Media Services still has the highest concentration of part-time employees at NYU. Although UCATS argued for better part-time benefits

in Contract 2000, more improvements are needed — the most crucial being employment status.

At Campus Media, workers are classified as 9-month contract employees. They are hired for the academic year, September to May. During the summer months, they are laid off. Since Campus Media and NYU expects to employ the

same workers each year, those workers become ineligible for unemployment benefits.

As part-time employees, Campus Media workers can

“buy into” the medical plans offered by the University. The costs of these plans are beyond the means of most workers and rising each year. As a result, most of the workers do not have medical coverage. During the meeting, Greg handed out information on various low-cost medical coverage alternatives.

Surviving on a part-time salary

As a direct result of union activism ten full-time positions were created.



Edwin Guzman

without medical coverage makes full-time employment a goal for many. Concerns were expressed about the low numbers of people who successfully transferred either out of the unit (and into full-time positions) or into full-time positions within Campus Media.

A new union shop steward

After the recent union election, Campus Media now has its own steward: Edwin Guzman. Edwin understands his unit’s issues, as someone who moved from part-time to full-time status. He is committed to improving conditions and representing all employees at Campus Media. He was central in organizing the current meetings and continues to work with Campus Media Employees to achieve other goals.

The formation of an area committee is in the works to help bring the issues of Campus Media technicians into our Contract 2005 negotiation strategy.

If you work in Campus Media and would like to get involved, please contact Edwin Guzman. ☎

An Issue of Respect

Pediatric care at NYUCD



Everyone knows the staff in Pediatrics work hard — it’s too bad everyone knows it but the Dental Center administration. From top left, clockwise: Orlando Vega, Derylaine Giddings, Lindell Hampton, Ralph Simeron (steward), Ed Cabatotan, Marcia De La Rosa, Vanessa Sejourne.

Once again, the NYU College of Dentistry can be counted on to ignore the hard work of the staff in favor of archaic management practices.

The staff of the Pediatrics Unit located on the 9th floor of the Dental Center have a strong commitment to patient care and the smooth functioning of their clinic. Unfortunately, policies initiated by their supervisor, with the support of HR (or, initiated by HR, and carried out by the supervisor) undermine their work.

What are some of these policies? Every time workers go in to speak

to the supervisor, Ms. Rodriguez, she writes down everything they say (and the exact time) and considers it a counseling session. If they ask a question about a policy they are challenged with questions such as “are you saying no?” or “do you know what insubordination means?” On more than one occasion, the supervisor has told the staff that their jobs were more important than their children. While staff members certainly un-

The problems in the clinic have been going on for some time.

derstand the importance of making their jobs a priority, that remark is insensitive towards the staff, most of whom are parents.

Perhaps the most humiliating policy is the requirement that they MUST find the supervisor when they have to go to the bathroom and sign out. As soon as they return from the bathroom, they must sign in again. From a practical standpoint this policy makes no sense. The supervisor is in her office most of the time and can’t even see the clinic floor to make up for staff shortages if someone is gone for 2 minutes. It’s just a tracking mechanism intended to embarrass the workers.

Non-supportive supervisor

Recently, the post-graduate students informed the staff that Ms. Rodriguez had asked them if they had any complaints about the dental assistants and, if so, to write them down and give them to her. Shouldn’t a supervisor support her staff, rather than instigate students against them?

And lastly, dental assistants must access their computer email after they are finished with

their patients, and after they have cleaned their areas, because they do not have their own computers. Ms. Rodriguez objects to staff being on the computers at that time (after

(Continued on page 7)

United we won!

■ Heidi Lubov, Vanderbilt Hall

As of January 15, 2004, UCATS members at the law school once again have a staff lounge. The lounge was converted into offices in the summer of 2000, forcing staff members to get their coffee and take breaks in the faculty library. Then in November, the assistant dean sent an e-mail to the staff prohibiting them from using the faculty library, but offering ration cards to use in the student cafeteria to acquire one daily cup of “complimentary” coffee or tea (which he pointed out we could “enjoy” in the hallway or outside!).

UCATS members take action

Outraged, UCATS members responded by holding a “SIP IN” in protest of the disrespectful notion of ration cards, and not having our own space to gather, i.e., on the first day we were banished from the faculty library, 35 union members sat down for coffee, and invited the assistant dean to join us and listen to our issues (and he got an earful!).

We were told emphatically that there was no space available now, or in the future, to reestablish a staff lounge.

The results of our unified action included the ban being lifted, allowing us to have our coffee/tea breaks in the faculty library [without ration cards] and, after 18 months, law school staff members won back the

staff lounge. And this time, instead of autocratically dictating to us how things will be, the administration is working with union members to make it an even better lounge than it was before. It’s not always easy, and it’s not always fast, but when union members work together, we can make things happen! ☘



Union members at the Law School enjoying coffee in their newly reclaimed staff lounge.

Pediatric care

(Continued from page 6)

4:30 or 4:45) and frequently assigns other work to them. However, it is her policy to communicate policies or large issues to the staff via email. In addition, the University has converted many of their functions online, such as applying for jobs through MATCH, the childcare fund applications and other important university-wide information. As a result, staff are frequently de-

prived of information necessary to their jobs.

The problems in the clinic have been going on for some time. When the union has raised concerns in the past, things have gotten better for a short time and then re-occurred. The one thing the Dental Center administration does not count on, though, is the staff being organized — and they are. This time, we decided not only to

go to the HR Representative, who supports and defends these policies, but directly to the dean. A letter was sent to him and we are awaiting his response. If that doesn’t work, the union will help bring these issues to the general Dental Center community — patients and staff alike.

We’ll keep UCATS members informed. We are optimistic that with unity, we will win respect. ☘

De-skilling our jobs

NYU and the Bush Administration — changing the rules of the workplace

■ Stephen Rechner, Vanderbilt Hall

What do the Bush Administration and NYU have in common? Both are attempting to lower the living standards of workers in this country.

Working for less

Bush's new immigration proposal to expand the visa program that allows employers to recruit workers from other countries "for positions that they can't fill with American workers" is just a sham to help employers lay off well-paid non-immigrant workers and replace them with much lower paid recruits from other countries. This is happening a lot in the IT industry.

In the nursing and health professional fields, hospitals are recruiting from abroad as an alternative to raising wages and reducing excessive overtime requirements. In other words, employers will be able to decimate existing pay structures in any job category they want, or just not raise wages, and then claim they can't find workers here to take the jobs at the low salaries they're offering.

Under Bush's proposed reform, these "guest workers" would have to leave the country after 6 years, roughly equivalent to the time it will take them to understand the real cost of the American dream, and why workers here are unwilling to work for the wages their employers have been paying them.

Meanwhile, for non-union workers who do have jobs, Presi-

dent Bush has pushed through legislation that will allow employers to demand unlimited overtime without compensation from millions of workers who currently depend on that extra income.

The U.S. Labor department has even issued a strategy report for employers that explains how they can avoid paying OT! And, for those employees who are still eligible for OT under the new rules, the report includes practical tips

such as lowering the base salary so that the straight-time and the OT equal the original base salary, thus the net impact on the employer is zero.

And now that employers can make people work unlimited hours without overtime pay, how are people who depend on two jobs going to survive? They will have to choose between losing their second job because they can't leave their primary job, or risking their primary job by refusing to work the OT demanded.

NYU de-skilling its workforce

Just because we have a union contract that protects our wages and OT, don't think that NYU isn't dancing this waltz. Just take a look at the most recent job postings from Human Resources — all of a sudden every position posted for our

bargaining unit only requires a high school diploma, even grade 10 positions.

Furthermore, the job descriptions our members are receiving are riddled with diminutive terms and phrases such as "simple", "rou-

outine", "general", and "for supervisor's review and approval."

I've worked at NYU School of Law for 17 years and nothing that happens here is simple, general or routine. It's more like pushing an

elephant through the eye of a needle. Moreover, one of the most common complaints our stewards receive from members is that they are required to train their supervisors — so what's the point of having our work reviewed by them?

My suspicion is that NYU is creating the impression on paper that they are seeking to hire only high school graduates (and trained seals, perhaps), so that they can justify low wage increases in our next contract.

Only time will tell, but in the meantime, we've enclosed a survey to compile statistics on our education level as a group. You can also download it from our website (www.ucats3882.org). Completing the enclosed survey is one way we can build a strong foundation for negotiating in 2005. ☸

Every position posted for our bargaining unit only requires a high school diploma, even grade 10 positions.

Fight the Bush Agenda

Overtime — We've come a long way

It was not until 1938, with the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), that the standard five-day, 40-hour work-week was established. Before then, 10 or 12-hour work days and six or seven-day weeks were common. In jobs where there is no union contract, the only enforcement mechanism for the 40-hour week is the FLSA requirement that employees be paid time-and-a-half for work in the excess of 40 hours. Our union has won significant improvements beyond FLSA requirements — we get paid for overtime after 35 hours!

The Bush proposal

President Bush has pushed through Congress an overtime proposal that will deny overtime pay and the protections of the 40-hour workweek to millions of workers. It would effect approximately 80 million workers currently protected, by making it easier for employers to claim that these employees are exempt from overtime pay.

Under the Bush overtime scheme: Millions of salaried workers making between \$22,101 and \$65,000 who now are eligible to receive overtime pay could be reclassified as executives, administrative or professional employees, who would no longer qualify for overtime pay.

Relatively low-salary earners who have supervisory or management-related responsibilities would be penalized, as would workers with advanced education or specialized training. Some of the jobs effected are police, firefighters, nurses, retail managers, insurance claims adjusters and medical therapists.

Employees not covered by the new rules could also be hurt. By reclassifying some workers, employers will be able to assign overtime only to them and eliminate overtime for other workers.

Anyone making \$65,000 or more a year would likely lose overtime pay, effectively eliminating much-needed extra pay for middle-income wage earners.

According to the U.S. Depart-

While we are protected because of our union contract, millions of workers do not yet have that protection.

ment of Labor's own estimates, the Bush administration's proposed changes could mean between 2.1 million and 3.3 million workers would face unpredictable work schedules and an increased demand for extra hours for which employers would not have to pay time-and-a-half.

While we are protected because of our union contract, millions of workers do not yet have that protection. Unionized workplaces will likely face battles over this issue, should the Bush agenda prevail.

What can you do? Log on to www.saveovertimepay.org where you can sign an on-line petition. That site is run by the AFL-CIO and includes other ways you can register your protest. ☸

UCATS honors Bayard Rustin



Bayard Rustin in the mid-1940's.

(Continued from back page) during the early days of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. His extensive background in the theory, strategies, and tactics of nonviolent direct action proved invaluable to Dr. King and he was chosen to organize the historical "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom" of 1963. The March concluded with Dr. King's "I Have A Dream" speech.

A longtime supporter of workers' rights, Mr. Rustin participated and led many strikes and was a staunch ally to organized labor and spearheaded a program which successfully increased minority participation in the building and construction trades.

Bayard Rustin said it best, "The real radical is that person who has a vision of equality and is willing to do those things that will bring reality closer to that vision." ☸

Part II: A history of labor at NYU

Keeping our eyes on the prize

■ Rob Lesko, 145 4th Avenue

In 1998, it was the University's graduate Teaching Assistants' turn to assert their right to organize. With direction from the United Auto Workers, the Graduate Student Organizing Committee sought two ends: to overturn Federal NLRB law denying collective bargaining rights to private university graduate students, and to build a membership base at NYU that would be the first to benefit from this reinterpretation of labor law.

In response to GSOC's dual-purpose organizing campaign, NYU responded with labor court and on-campus efforts to defeat both the campaign's goals.

GSOC prevails

Before the NLRB, NYU fought GSOC's union drive by engaging in delay, through protracted legal hearings and appeals.

On the campus front, it employed a dizzying array of tactics, as

though seeking, for that reason alone, to surpass its previous union-busting record. Noteworthy among these stunts were: bombarding graduate students with anti-union e-mails, while denying GSOC advocates use of the same medium; refusing to provide other alternative contact information for union-eligible voters, a violation of labor law; holding "town hall meetings" and departmental meetings, to provide 'equal time' to the university

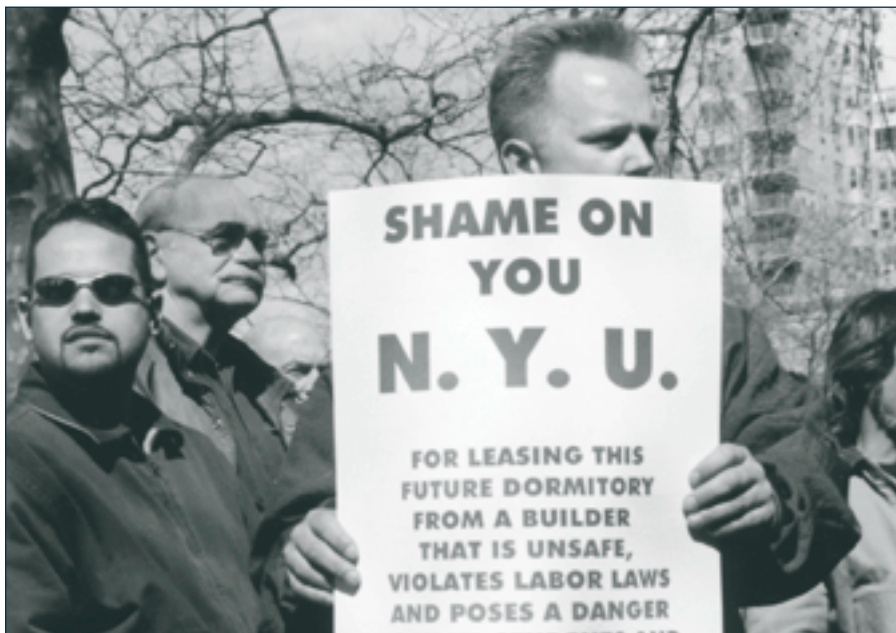
position, no doubt; establishing a "faculty council," seemingly to support the university position, it ended up doing the opposite; using disinformation to alienate international graduate students, somewhat successful; and enlisting, on ballot day, non-eligible MBA students to pad the anti-union vote, this was not successful.

On March 1, 2001, two hours before a grad student strike-authorization vote, NYU agreed to recognize and bargain with GSOC. A negotiated contract was signed the following January. In its failed fight against GSOC, NYU had expended hundreds of thousands of dollars for fees to anti-union law firms, and perhaps immeasurable university energies. For their part, the graduate student workers of GSOC, for their four year struggle to contract (another NYU record!), earned significant wage increases, health care coverage, workload and grievance procedure protections, and the less quantifiable rewards of those who can profess to have set a landmark in labor history.

NYU uses old tactics

The winter of 1999 brought back echoes of NYU's earliest struggle with organized labor. Rising at the intersection of Third Avenue and 14th Street at the time was the latest addition to the University's housing stock, the Coral Towers Residence Hall. Research by the NY District Council of Carpenters (DCC) determined the contractor to be the Forkosh Construction Company, a non-union employer notorious for providing its workers

(Continued on page 11)



UCATS attended and spoke at a rally demanding NYU only lease buildings with owners who use union labor. Here, workers explain the issues to educate those who pass by.

UCATS CELEBRATES THE HOLIDAYS!



Let's party. UCATS members enjoy a great time at our annual holiday party held on December 12, 2003.

Keeping our eyes on the prize

(Continued from page 10)

below-standard wages and benefits and poor safety conditions. When confronted with the DCC's charges, NYU administration, citing its lease relationship with the property owner, disavowed responsibility for the manner in which the dorm was being built. Over the course of 6 months, the DCC reached out for help from Local 3882, GSOC, and student activists, to pressure NYU to weigh in to protect prevailing wage scales and site safety. Protests escalated from daily pickets at the construction site, to elaborate protests outside Bobst Library, to an April 17, 2000 march of 12,000 construction workers, bagpipes a-wailing, from the dorm site, down Fifth Avenue, into Washington Square Park. That year's coordinated efforts of the DCC, the New York City Building Trades Council, and campus unions and activists seem to have had a greater effect than efforts 154 years earlier. The university pledged from

Spring 2000 on to use union-labor exclusively for its building projects, leased or otherwise. This policy was reiterated publicly in October 2001 when construction commenced on the Second Street residence hall.

Again NYU shows its true colors

The year 2002 brought to the fore the latest NYU workers seeking unionization, the adjunct faculty. An e-mail message written by former School of Education Dean Ann Marcus, which surfaced during NLRB investigations, encapsulates late-1990's administration policy toward part-time, untenured faculty: "We need people we can abuse, exploit, and then turn loose." Such hubris on the part of NYU's managers seems to have dissipated in light of more recent events. Perhaps it was of GSOC's against-the-odds victory,

"We need people we can abuse, exploit, and then turn loose."

capping NYU's current 25-year losing streak, but university administrators assumed the role of spectators as the UAW led the adjunct faculty to a successful recognition election in July 2002. Though the administration's delaying tactics and the withholding of NLRB-mandated information have stalled negotiations on the adjuncts' important first contract, a confluence of pro-worker energies at the dawn of 2004 offers a positive resolution to the matter.

The adjuncts' November vote to authorize a spring semester strike, efforts of current undergraduates to deploy themselves on their teachers' behalf, and stirrings

among the constituent campus unions to more fully formalize their mutual support bode well for delivering optimal base-setting terms and conditions of employment for this newest organized group at the university. ☸

Black History Month

UCATS 3882 honors Bayard Rustin



Bayard Rustin with Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1956.

■ Michele Cox and Trudy Rudnick

Bayard Rustin's (c.1910-1987) activism can be traced to the early influences of his grandmother, Julia Rustin, a pacifist and a member of the NAACP (National Association of the Advancement of Colored People). Julia often entertained and housed some of its leaders, such as, W.E.B. DuBois and James Weldon, during their world tours.

Rustin's contributions as an activist began with campaigning against "Jim Crow Laws" in West Chester, PA. He was also politicized by his activism in the "Scottsboro Case."

In 1931 nine black youths were indicted in Scottsboro, Alabama, for raping two white women. In a series of trials the youths were found guilty and sentenced to death or to prison terms of 75 to 99 years. The U.S. Supreme Court reversed convictions

twice and at the second trial one of the women recanted her previous testimony. The Alabama trial judge set aside the guilty verdict as contrary to the weight of the evidence and ordered a new trial.

In 1937 charges against five of the accused were dropped and the state agreed to consider parole for the others. It was a widely held belief that this case was a product of the racism of the south and that these youth were innocent.

INSIDE MOMENTUM

President's Letter — Building a foundation	Page 2
NYSUT President sets the record straight	Page 3
Know your rights — Vacation time	Page 4
Pediatric Care at NYUCD	Page 6
United we won	Page 7
De-skilling our jobs	Page 8
Part II: A history of labor at NYU	Page 10

For more than 50 years, Bayard Rustin was a strategist and activist in the struggle for human rights and economic justice. He worked with A. Philip Randolph, President of The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the premier black trade union. In 1941, together they planned a March on Washington to protest racial discrimination in the armed forces.

A stand against war

As a committed pacifist, Rustin refused to register for the draft, and served three years in a federal penitentiary, beginning in 1943. In 1947, Rustin helped plan

the first "freedom ride" in the South and was beaten, arrested and fined.

As a gay man, relatively open for his time, Rustin experienced anti-gay prejudice in addition to racial discrimination. Because of his sexual orientation, as well as his controversial political positions, he was often relegated to a behind-the-scenes role in various campaigns.

Due to his background as a pacifist, activist, organizer, founder and campaign specialist in 1955 he became Martin Luther King's chief advisor. In 1956, he assisted Dr. King
(Continued on page 9)