

CUTS DEVASTATE EDUCATION AT MCC

- 1 - 47 full-time faculty members have been declared "in excess" (many with up to five years of service at CUNY, and all adjuncts have been fired.
- 2 - "Excess" faculty have been re-assigned to other departments, with no consideration for the effect on faculty or students of their lack of expertise in the new discipline, e.g. Physical Ed. faculty teaching English Composition; a philosophy teacher teaching psychology, etc.
- 3 - Arbitrary decisions have been made with regard to the number of hours that re-assigned faculty are required to work: some Modern Languages faculty have been assigned to 35 hours of tutoring; full-time faculty re-assigned to the Math Lab work 30 hours, while faculty re-assigned to Reading work 12-15 hours in class and lab; for some faculty one hour of lab counts equally with one hour of class, but for others two count as one, etc.etc.
- 4 - Some courses are being split between two teachers in order for the teacher to take on the extra hours mandated by the college: in the Science Dept. one faculty member may teach the lab and another the lecture class of the same course; in English as a Second Language some 6-hr. courses are taught 3 hours by one teacher and 3 by another. This makes continuity for both teachers and students nearly impossible.
- 5 - Many faculty members have schedules that start at 8 a.m. and finish at 8 p.m. on the same day, and re-assigned faculty - some with a 30-hour new assignment - are expected to function as "total" members of their original departments.
- 6 - New CETA workers and re-assigned faculty in the Math Lab are being shuttled around, & given contradictory directions. Chaotic and dehumanizing conditions prevail, resulting in low morale for both staff and students.
- 7 - The tutoring program has been completely cut. Tutoring, a vital service for BMCC students, is now being done in each department (if at all) in an inefficient and casual way. Some faculty are tutoring in different disciplines than their own.
- 8 - In Puerto Rican Studies, 10 courses were cancelled, both adjuncts were fired, and one of the four full-time faculty has been "re-assigned."
- 9 - Evening and late-afternoon classes can no longer have films, slides, etc. because the Media Center now closes at 3:30p.m.
- 10 - Only one bus now runs between the uptown and downtown buildings, and it is always jammed. Recently a scuffle broke out and one student was injured as students were trying to crowd onto the bus. Students miss, or are late for, classes, or are forced to pay 50c each way for their own transportation.
- 11 - Guards and maintenance people in most buildings have been fired, or drastically reduced in number. This is especially serious in the M Building where conditions have always been sub-standard and unsafe. (There have been several rapes at Hunter College already this semester, due to lack of guards.)

STUDENT-FACULTY UNITY

Budget Cuts at BMCC are part of an attack on higher education at CUNY. This means there is a basis for uniting a large number of students and faculty to defend education and to fight every aspect of the cuts - from threatened imposition of tuition to increased teaching loads and class sizes.

But if the Cuts are viewed narrowly then the whole question becomes merely a contract issue. Students can not be expected to support a purely faculty struggle. In fact, management will try to pit teachers against students (e.g. promising to re-hire faculty at the expense of students by imposing tuition).

The BMCC chapter of the PSC feels that it is important to develop the potential unity between students and faculty. At a meeting of 150 faculty on September 8, it passed the following resolution:

We do not look forward to a strike. However, we see no alternative. If we do not strike, we will give a green light to the BHE to fire more faculty and to implement still greater productivity drives.

But the issue goes beyond the union contract. The cuts are in reality an attack on education at City University. Students and faculty are both affected. There is growing unity between faculty and students about the need for coordinated action. To win, we must develop that unity into a joint student and faculty strike against the budget cuts.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the MCC chapter of the PSC hereby urges the central office to seriously explore with the University Student Senate the possibility of a joint student-faculty strike against the budget cuts, and to start building for this strike.

WHAT THE BUDGET CUT MEANS TO YOU.

The budget cuts are not temporary. The banks and "Big MAC" are squeezing the City and Carey has responded by stating that thousands of jobs must be cut. What does this mean to you?

- the \$64 million cut is coming. Departments are being asked to make contingency plans to assess what these cuts will mean to their respective departments.
- an imposition of tuition will spell the end of open admissions. Thousands of students will be forced to withdraw from the University. Not only does this mean the end of any chance for higher education for these students but if Nyquist gets his way thousands of jobs will be lost. Less students means less jobs.
- a unilateral increase of 25% in the workload here at BMCC means a deterioration in the quality of education. Larger class size and more classroom hours means that less time is spent with each student, turning "open admissions" into "revolving door" education. In addition, as faculty are asked to work more hours less faculty are needed. No one is safe and tenure is no guarantee of job security. Any one can be fired for "educational reasons" regardless of tenure or seniority at the discretion of the President.
- the BHE is in the process of deciding which schools may be merged in an effort to cut costs. Next year there may be no BMCC and it should be remembered that the Board has always maintained that tenure is in the college and not in the University. Your job is on the line if these proposed mergers go through.

HOW WE ARE FIGHTING THE CUTS AT BMCC.

At its Sept. 8th meeting our PSC chapter set up a strike committee. It now has 20 active members. You can join the committee by contacting Howard Jones (-2192) or Bill Friedheim (-3562). The committee is involved in a number of activities:

- Newsletter - this is the first of a series of strike bulletins.
- Mini-teach-ins - students and faculty are organizing mini-teach-ins on the budget cuts and the economic crisis. The teach-ins will include a skit about the cuts followed by a discussion of the issues and what we can do. If you want the mini-teach-in to come to your classes, contact us.
- CUNY Outreach - by sending literature and speakers we are trying to spread the word about what is happening at BMCC to other PSC chapters. We think all chapters should be building student-faculty unity along the lines stated in our Sept. 8th resolution.
- Student Sign-up Sheets - faculty can circulate sign-up sheets for the Student Fight Back Committee to their classes. If you are willing to do this contact us.

SOCIAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT RESOLUTION.

The Social Science Department passed the following resolution at its Oct. 1st meeting:

The Social Science Department strenuously objects to the mandated Board of Higher Education 15% increase in the teaching load. It is counter-productive to our functioning as effective teachers and scholars.

The Social Science Department insists on a return to the uniform 12 hour teaching load, and will accept no other alternative.

We urge all departments to pass a similar resolution so that we can fight the increase in teaching hours with the greatest faculty unity.

STUDENT COMMITTEE

There is a fightback committee of 50 students actively organizing against the cuts. They are planning teach-ins, forums, demonstrations and other actions - all pointing toward a student-faculty strike.

UNION FACTS

- The PSC has gone to fact finding and mediation. What does this mean? Not much. Neither fact finding nor mediation is binding. The BHE holds the upper hand and has nothing to gain by giving into a fact finder's decision backed by no more than moral persuasion.
- Actions before the courts and PERB (Public Employers Relation's Board) look just as unpromising. The BHE, by appealing, can tie up any favorable decision on teaching hours. PERB is a dead end because it has no legal power to enforce its decisions.
- What all of this boils down to is that a strike is probably our only recourse.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE CITY

--6,000 students and faculty demonstrated against the cuts in front of Governor Carey's office on Sept. 18. Four days later, 400 students demonstrated in front of the BHE when it met to consider the imposition of tuition. 350 students occupied the Brooklyn College library when *occupying the library* *they were out.* *They are in* *the* *library* *last* *year.*