



## NEGOTIATIONS WITH STATE BEGIN IN MAY

### President's Report Nicholas C. Yovnello



In this era of political one-liners from our governor, the media is quick to capture and spread the latest Christie sound bites. There is little interest in covering issues in depth or fact-checking the governor's statements. Take collective bargaining, for example. Governor Christie's one-liner that he favors collective bargaining is contradicted by his steadfast refusal to negotiate over health benefits. Christie states that "dozens" of states deny collective bargaining rights to state employees – when in fact only five states have enacted such legislation. Not "dozens", not one "dozen" – five: Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia. The major news outlets present these falsehoods unchallenged and can't wait to set up their cameras for another of Christie's staged "town hall meetings" where citizens, who have the nerve to disagree with him, are shouted down when they attempt to make their points when Christie refuse to engage in meaningful dialogue.

During February, the Council sent an electronic survey to its members soliciting opinions on bargaining proposals. At the beginning of March, Council staff representatives reviewed the record of grievances that occurred over the last four years and other contract disputes and developed a list of recommended changes in the grievance procedure. By

mid-March each local had designated its representatives to the Council's bargaining team. The team reviewed the survey results and the staff representative recommendations. On April 8, the Council's full-time/part time unit and adjunct faculty unit bargaining teams developed bargaining proposals to present to the State.

Our negotiations with the State are scheduled to begin on May 16, with subsequent dates set for later in May and June. In preparation for the re-negotiation of our Statewide Agreement, we have joined with other state employee unions to endorse a comprehensive proposal on state health benefits. The comprehensive proposal offers a modification to the current 1.5% cost sharing agreement and it includes various ideas on cost savings. However, the CWA leadership informs us that there has been no progress at all at the CWA bargaining table. Instead, the State has proposed to remove all language on health benefits from the CWA contracts. In fact, the State's position is that health benefits are non-negotiable. Senate bill S-2718, introduced by Senator Sweeney, would eliminate collective bargaining on health benefits but would reduce premium sharing costs for lower salaried employees while phasing in higher premium sharing over four years as compared to Christie's proposal. There is a chance that Sweeney's bill will be passed and both he and Assembly Speaker Oliver are open to the unions helping craft desired modifications, which may also include a sunset clause. A worse case scenario is that Christie could impose his own changes at negotiations if impasse is reached.

Soaring healthcare costs are not new. Unions know this – we have known for years that health care costs have been outrunning the rate of inflation. Health care cost coverage and employee contributions have always been on the table at past negotiations. In order to arrive at past agreements, state employee unions have settled for salary freezes or minimal increases to offset the State's increased costs. At times we have agreed to higher co-pays and, in the last round of negotiations, we agreed to premium sharing. The Council has further attempted to constructively address rising healthcare costs by negotiating a Labor-Management Cost Containment Committee (See Letter of Agreement V of our Agreement). However, the State has been reluctant to embrace union proposals to help control costs over the years. As a result, there has not been a meeting of the committee for over seven years.

### Also In This Issue

<b>Should I Retire Before the Current State-Union Agreement Expires on June 30?.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Making a Difference Every Day, Our Work, Our Union, Our Students - AFT Higher Education Conference .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Higher Ed Tenure Legislation Temporarily on Hold.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>AFT NJ State Federation "One Union-One Voice" Conference.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Council Officers Elected .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Council Locals Stage "We Are One" Events on Campuses .....</b>	<b>7</b>

## President's Report

(from previous page)

Governor Christie's ham-handed plan to legislate health benefits will hurt lower paid public employees the most; especially young employees who have just started their careers and families. Coupled with arbitrary limits on salary increases, the imposition of large health benefits contributions is a direct attack on living standards. Like the rest of Christie's initiatives, the governor's healthcare legislation is designed to weaken union power and augment the authority of management. The burden of the State's fiscal woes falls directly on our backs, while the Governor continues to default on the State's pension contributions and shower the wealthy and large corporations with tax cuts.

The Governor just released some more details of his plan to legislate health benefits including possibly eliminating NJ Direct 15 and offering health plans with fewer benefits. Actual details and analyses remain elusive. If Christie wants cooperative reform and cost containment, he should negotiate and not dictate how health benefits costs will be restructured.

We anticipate that this will be the most difficult negotiations that the Council and the other state public employee unions have ever faced.

Finally, the recent NJ Supreme Court finding that Christie's 2011 budget shortchanged public school funding bodes ill for public higher education across the state. If there is court-ordered restoration of public education funding cuts, the Governor has indicated he will further reduce the State's commitment to higher education funding. So far, Governor Christie has proposed flat funding for our institutions that does not provide for payment of increments. This will make it that much harder to make economic gains at the bargaining table. Echoing the Race to the Top debacle, New Jersey citizens and NJ higher education will continue to suffer because of the governor's mistakes.

In unity there is strength. Work with your local to build up your membership and increase COPE contributions for the November elections. You cannot afford to sit out this election. Just imagine for one minute the consequences of a Republican takeover of the Legislature - Wisconsin or worse.

-- • --

## Should I Retire Before the Current State-Union Agreement Expires on June 30?

Let's face it, the breath and scale of attacks on public employees in the media are unprecedented and our Governor has made it clear that he intends to hit us hard during negotiations, especially over pension benefits. He also wants to legislate health care benefits. It is not surprising then, that in the last couple of months the Council office has received dozens of calls from senior staff and faculty asking if this is the time to retire.

Most members ask two things: "Should I retire under the terms of the current Agreement?" and "What will our retirement benefits look like in the

new Agreement?" We can't answer that question for you, but we can say that if you have accrued twenty-five years of pension credit service by June 30, 2011 to be eligible for health care in retirement under the terms of the current contract, your benefits in Letter of Agreement IV (Health Care Benefits in Retirement) are guaranteed. Thus, there is no reason to rush into retirement, especially if you need more time to add to your ABP account.

As for future retirees under a successor agreement, the Governor is proposing a 30% premium sharing cost in retirement and an increase in the

eligibility requirement from 25 years of pension credit service to 30 years. If his proposed legislation comes to pass, it would mean that those employees who have not accrued 25 years of pension credit service after June 30 would then need 30 years of service to be eligible for health benefits in retirement and most likely at a much higher cost to them for premium sharing.

If you do plan to retire soon, call the Council office at 908-964-8476 or send an email to [info@cnjscl.org](mailto:info@cnjscl.org) to request a retirement checklist.

-- • --

## MEMBER ASSISTANCE SERVICE AVAILABLE

If you need assistance with stress, mental health problems or substance abuse that is affecting your job performance—or if anyone in your family is experiencing similar problems—help is available from Healthcare Assistance with Member Support (HCAMS). If you have one or more of the following problems: Drug and alcohol dependence; Stress related conditions; Sleeplessness; Uncontrollable anger; Difficulties in concentrating; Disciplinary issues relating to health; Adolescent problems;

or Other relationship issues - then don't hesitate to contact HCAM.

**This is a free service available to the entire bargaining unit—and yet another good reason to join the UNION.**

We encourage you to visit their website at [www.hcams.org](http://www.hcams.org) or call 1-800-828-7826

# Making A Difference Every Day, Our Work, Our Union, Our Students - AFT Higher Education Conference

On April 1-3, 2011, AFT members from across the nation gathered for AFT's Higher Education Issues Conference in Philadelphia, PA. Held at the Sheraton in Center City, the largest unionized hotel in Philadelphia, the theme of the conference was **Making A Difference Every Day, Our Work, Our Union, Our Students**. All sectors of the AFT nationwide were represented—senior public colleges/universities, county colleges, K-12 and health care.



Nick Yovnellio presenting "Building Coalitions" Workshop

The Council was well represented at the Conference by members from the Rowan, Kean, William Paterson, Montclair and New Jersey City University locals. Nick Yovnellio, Council President and Karen Siefring, President of Local 2373 (Rowan) were presenters for sessions titled **"Building Effective Coalitions with Labor/Campaign Planning"** and **"Strategies for Dealing with Professional Staff Layoffs and Furloughs/The Union on Campus"** respectively. Yovnellio highlighted the Council's past and present work in



Karen Siefring (2nd from left) presenting "Strategies for Dealing With Professional Staff Layoffs"

solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the NJ labor and social justice movements, while Siefring provided an analysis of the MOA on Wage Freeze and Furloughs in relation to avoiding professional staff layoffs. Both workshops were well attended.

All of the workshops were thematically designed to highlight the interdependence of the success of our students and the work we do every day. Presenters emphasized that we need to be proactive in ensuring the continued success of our students and institutions given the lingering impact of the financial crisis and the rightward shift of the political landscape at the federal and state levels. That point was driven home in the workshop titled, **The Role of Professional Staff in Student Success/The Union on Campus**, where presenters illustrated strategies that professional staff can use to not only ensure student success, but also to show ways the local union can promote students' values and support their needs. Professional staff should learn to redefine the work they do so that students, their families and management understand that they are on the frontline in student services and know what students and institutions need to succeed.

In addition to workshops, the conference featured forums and lectures exploring a wide range of topics such as state-level advocacy and federal policy work, job security for contingent faculty, combating fraud and abuse at for-profit colleges and universities and how unions can increase gender, racial and ethnic diversity in the academy.

There were several plenary sessions — the first included opening remarks by AFT Vice-President Sandra Schroeder on the national fiscal and political crises, followed by Ed Muir, Deputy Director, AFT Research and Informa-



MSU Delegates working on student outcomes in breakout session

tion Services, who provided a state-by-state budget breakdown. Schroeder then introduced AFT President Randi Weingarten who delivered a rousing speech about the broad-based national coalition of community groups, unions and citizens that organized the **"We Are One"** events. Weingarten brought members to their feet when she called for an end to bashing and blaming teachers and other public employees for state budget problems they did not cause. The opening plenary concluded with a presentation by Barbara Bowen, President, Professional Staff Congress, CUNY/AFT Vice President, who regaled the crowd with her moving account of the time she spent with the Wisconsin protesters. Bowen ended by introducing Bryan Kennedy, Presi-



dent of AFT Wisconsin and protester *extraordinaire* who received a standing ovation on behalf of his union for its phenomenal work fighting Governor Scott Walker, who as we well know, stole collective bargaining rights from

## AFT Higher Education Conference

(from previous page)

public employees. Kennedy was joined by leaders from the Teaching Assistants' Association at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association at UW-Milwaukee. These members, "the vanguard of our movement," as Kennedy called them, led the vibrant occupation of Wisconsin's Capitol building. Such a passionate movement, said Kennedy, demonstrates the determination that will carry the unions through this fight.



Rowan & MSU delegates at "Legal Issues" workshop.

The second plenary was titled, **Tying Our Political Efforts to AFT Higher Education Priorities**, which included a viewing of AFT's latest video called *Making A Difference*. It showed that despite the nasty political environment, AFT state and local affiliates across the country are making a difference by restoring balance to policy debates and presenting their own solutions for how to work cooperatively to move the economy forward.

After the video came the presentation of the **Every Day Hero Award** to Travis Parker from Cosumnes River



NJCU Delegates

College in Sacramento, California. Parker was recognized for founding The Alpha Academy, which runs a series of mentoring and tutoring programs for young African-American males, ages 12 to 18, parent support program and green technology classes.

Labor activist and author Amy Dean gave the annual Polishook luncheon lecture. Dean's unique perspective on organizing comes from her time as president and CEO of the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council where she was instrumental in creating community based alliances that allowed labor to help shape the economic development of Silicon Valley, CA. She called on participants to help reinvent the U.S. labor movement by forming similar coalitions, stating that "if the labor movement is to change its future, it must become a community-based organization as much as a workplace organization."

The luncheon also included a tribute to the late Lou Stollar, known as one of AFT's higher education pioneers. Lou was a psychology professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) for 48 years, serving as the president of the United College Employees (UCE) of FIT from 1968 to 2004. He helped FIT become one of the first colleges to have a collective bargaining agreement, which remains one of the strongest contracts in the country. He was

lauded for his work on behalf of contingent, part-time and adjunct faculty, but mostly, he will be remembered for his kindness and compassion.

Council president Yovnello claimed that "this AFT Higher Education Issues Conference was one of the most interesting and indeed timely considering the animosity that Governor Christie has exhibited toward public employees and that we are anticipating extremely unpleasant contract negotiations beginning in May. We take strength from our brothers and sisters in Wisconsin who, by their protests against a bully governor, showed us that the labor movement is not dead in this country; rather it is in the process of reinventing itself."

Overall, conference participants were given valuable tools to build effective campaign planning and alliances with the communities we serve; members learned the basics of navigating both political and academic power structures, creating greater faculty and staff diversity, staving off privatization, developing strong communication skills and building coalitions in solidarity with AFT affiliates. All of the sessions were premised on not just surviving working under more challenging conditions than ever before, but also becoming stronger and more united for having struggled together and to reverse the negative trends to reduce the quality of higher education for our students.

The conference ended with closing remarks from Sandra Schroeder. She reminded us that it's up to us to spread the truth — that faculty, staff and other public workers did not create the states' budget crises and that our pay and benefits are not the problem

— • —

## NOW MORE THAN EVER, SIGN UP FOR COPE!

Our governor and his anti-union allies in the State Senate and Assembly constantly attack our contracts, wages, pension and benefits. COPE (Committee for Political Education) funds your union's legislative efforts and supports candidates who support and promote issues important to you and your union. COPE contributions come through

payroll deductions — you set the amount you wish to contribute from your paycheck. COPE funds are needed more now than ever before to support legislators who will protect our bargaining rights and the labor agenda. Without a union-friendly legislature there will be no checks and balances — New Jersey could become another Wisconsin.

Ask your local (or call the Council at 908-964-8476) for a COPE card today!

## HIGHER ED TENURE LEGISLATION TEMPORARILY ON HOLD

**U**nder current law, a faculty member of a State college or university qualifies for tenure after employment at the college for 5 consecutive calendar years; or 5 consecutive academic years, together with employment at the beginning of the next academic year; or the equivalent of more than 5 academic years within a period of any 6 consecutive academic years.

Two of Governor Christies' "tool kit bills" address the issue of duration of the probationary period for tenure track faculty. A-2964, sponsored by Assemblyman Weber (R-26) and S-2171, sponsored by Senator Bateman (R-16) would give the individual boards of trustees the authority to extend the probationary period beyond five years. Neither bill has moved out of committee.

The detrimental nature of these bills is obvious. Institutions could move tenure goalposts at their discretion, fostering confusion and uncertainty among faculty on tenure tracks. Different probationary periods would exist from institution to institution, causing higher faculty turnover. If promoting the devolution of our state college/university system into semi-private fiefdoms is the Governor's objective, these bills make perfect sense. But if creating a stronger coordinated system of public higher education in New Jersey is our goal, these bills are a frontal assault on faculty rights.

Democratic Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt issued her own bill making the probationary period for tenure track faculty at State or county colleges between five to seven years as determined by each board of trustees, which was meant as an alternative to A-2964/S-2172. .

A-3357 was voted out of the Assembly Higher Education Committee in January 2011. Due to the Council's lobbying efforts, the bill was amended to make tenure requirement a six year period and to conform to the language of the existing law so tenure would be consistent among the state colleges and universities. It would also allow for six years within a seven year period to allow for medical or maternal leaves of absence similar to the current law. Further, the bill would allow boards of trustees to grant immediate tenure to new faculty members who were previously tenured at an accredited institution.

The Council remains opposed to this bill. The existing system has worked reasonably well. Why "fix" something that is not "broken?" A five year probationary period is long enough. Although Rutgers has a six year probationary period for tenure track faculty, new hires receive a three year appointment and if renewed, receive a second three year appointment before qualifying for tenure. The pre-tenure probationary period in the CUNY and SUNY systems is seven years, but in the Pennsylvania state college system it is five.

Nevertheless, with greater demands being placed on our faculty to publish, there may be an advantage to providing an additional year for research to come to fruition. Should A-3357 advance further in the State Legislature, the Council will be vigilant in securing provisions that are most beneficial to our tenure track faculty. This bill is on hold until the State budget is finalized.

— • —

## AFT NJ State Federation "One Union-One Voice" Conference

On April 15-16, 2011, AFT-NJ held its **One Union-One Voice, Legislative/Education Issues Conference** at the Hilton Hotel in East Brunswick. The conference was organized to help all sectors of the AFT in New Jersey plan for the battles we face as we head into the 2012 election cycle.

Some of the conference workshop topics included how to wage successful COPE campaigns and develop effective collective bargaining strategies during a fiscal crisis, how to ensure student success and how to engage members and build community outreach programs, etc.

On behalf of AFT-NJSF, Council president Nicholas Yovnello presented Assemblyman Nelson Albano a **Partner with Labor Award**, with Yovnello stated that Albano, who is also a shop steward for the United Food Commercial Workers, has been a staunch ally of New Jersey's working families and a true partner with labor. Labor awards were

also given to Senators Ron Rice, Jeff Van Drew and Linda Greenstein.

Council delegate and New Jersey City University (NJCU) Local 1839 member Lilliam Rosado was presented with the AFT-NJ **Humanitarian Award** in recognition of her efforts to eliminate barriers to affordable health care in at-risk communities by educating tomorrow's health care advocates.

Lilliam is a trained community health educator. She is a former resident of East Harlem where she worked with the Boriquen Community Health Clinic. She is currently a pro-



Council President Nick Yovnello present Assemblyman Nelson Albano with a Labor Award

## Council Officers Elected

**A**t the April 8 Council Meeting Election Committee Chair Ralph Edelbach announced the following results for the election of Council Officers: President – Nicholas C. Yovnello\* (Rowan); Executive Vice President, Bill Sullivan (MSU); Vice President, Susanna Tardi\* (WPUNJ); Treasurer, Muroki Mwaura\* (WPUNJ); Secretary, Judy Matthew\* (WPUNJ); Legislative Representative, Sarah Harnick\* (NJCU); Professional Staff Representative, Jennifer Higgins (MSU); Librarian Representative, Faye Robinson\* (Rowan); Adjunct Faculty Representative, Arlene Schor (Kean). Those designated with "\*" ran unopposed.

**Bill Sullivan's** election marks his return as a Council officeholder. Bill first became a Council delegate in 1994. He held the position of Council secretary for two years (1997-1999) before becoming the Council's executive vice president. As executive vice president, Bill chaired the Council's Domestic Partner Benefits Committee. At that time, the Council was the first labor organization to meet with lesbian and gay groups to form a coalition to fight for domestic partner benefits, which led to the enactment of domestic partner legislation. Bill also represented the Council at the



Public Employees Committee of the NJ AFL-CIO and traveled extensively representing us in a variety of venues. In 2006 Sullivan chaired the Council's constitution committee, which produced the 2006 major revision of the council constitution and bylaws. He also chaired the Council's grievance committee. Bill is a lifelong union activist having led coworkers at the Elizabeth Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in a union organizing drive and later in AFSCME Local 2254 at the Jersey City Medical Center (EMS) – prior to being hired at Montclair State University.

**Jennifer Higgins** has been an active member of AFT Local 1904 (MSU) since 2006, serving as a member of the Professional Staff Negotiating Team and as Alternate Delegate to the College Council. She helped draft contract proposals for Flex-Time procedure and co-drafted the procedures for the Tuition Waiver for AFT dependents, spouses and Partners in a Civil Union. Jennifer has served as Associate Vice President for Personnel at Local 1904, handling all grievance matters for the Local and assisting faculty, librarians and professional staff members with employment-related matters. Since May 2010



has served as the Internal Vice President of the Local, and served as Acting President of the Local from September 2010 to December 2010.

**Arlene Schor** returns as Adjunct Faculty Representative. Arlene is an Adjunct faculty member of Kean University and has been a member of several unions for over 40 years, including the NJEA, the AFT, the NJ Association of School Administrators and the Principal and Supervisors Association. While employed as an elementary school principal, Arlene served as a president and a vice president of her union and served on two negotiating teams. Schor was elected as a labor candidate to two terms on the Belleville Board of education and was instrumental in halting privatization of custodial services in that district. As Council's Adjunct Representative, Arlene attends and participates in local unit meetings, attends legislative campus events, assists with recruitment and legislative activities.

At the conclusion of the election committee report, a unanimously approved motion was made from the floor to appoint outgoing Council VP Jon Erickson to a newly created position of Assistant Legislative Representative. All new officers assume office effective July 1, 2011.

— • —

### AFT NJ State Federation Conference

(from previous page)

fessor and chair of the Health Sciences program at NJCU. Today, Dr. Rosado draws on her experiences with low-income residents of East Harlem to teach her students about not just how to deliver quality health education to at risk populations but to do so with respect and with a sense of social justice.

Dr. Rosado has been an active member of Local 1839 and has served as the executive vice president of the Local. In May 2009, she was honored by the National Puerto Rican Coalition for working with the Puerto Rican community in order to bring sustainable solutions to core issues and challenges in health and education that affect Puerto Rican communities.

**Congratulations Dr. Rosado!** — • —



Council Legislative Representative Sarah Ann Harnick (left) presenting Liliam Rosado (NJCU) AFT NJSF Humanitarian Award

**Need contract information or updates on important issues that affect you? Visit and bookmark our website at <http://cnjscl.org> for this and more. We also have a large list of useful links that make it easier for you to find other important websites.**

## Council Locals Stage “We Are One” Events on Campuses

Council Locals at Richard Stockton College, Rowan University, New Jersey City University and Montclair State University hosted a variety of *We Are One* events during the week of April 4. The *We Are One* campaign is part of a nation-wide multi-union on-campus labor awareness outreach.

Richard Stockton College AFT Local 2274 staged a day-long teach-in and staffed informational leafleting tables. AFT members gave talks on several subjects, including legislative issues, bargaining rights, the economic crisis in higher education and union solidarity.



Stockton Faculty & Staff

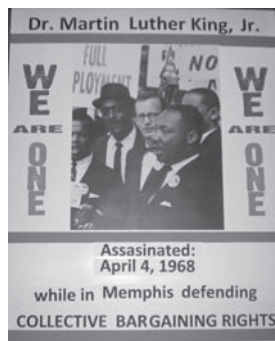
At Montclair State University, Local 1904 members dedicated April 4<sup>th</sup> to contacting their NJ state legislators to demand that our health care benefits be negotiated at the bargaining table rather than legislated. On April 6<sup>th</sup>, the local encouraged AFT unit members to don a blue AFT t-shirt and buttons to show their soli-



Members from Stockton Faculty Band

arity. Our members engaged in dialog with the university community about how our union and our work “make a difference everyday” in ensuring student success.

On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. traveled to Memphis to support AFSCME sanitation workers. That evening, he delivered his famous “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech to a packed room of supporters. The next day, he was assassinated. To honor the memory and work of Dr. King in supporting both the civil rights and labor movements, members of the Rowan American Federation of Teachers Local 2373 sponsored a Day of Action on April 6<sup>th</sup> in the Pit at the Chamberlain Student Center, followed by various campus actions throughout the week of April 4<sup>th</sup>. Our Rowan brothers and sisters planned some unique activities to encourage student participation in the *We Are One* activities.

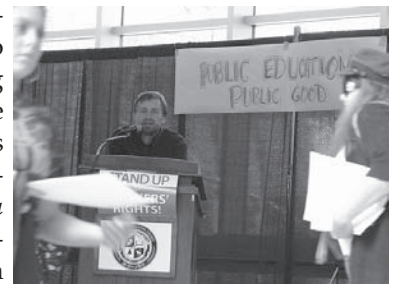


The day started with an all day “Life in the Day” twitter feed whereby Dr. Jerry Hough (Biological Sciences and

Psychology) posted his daily activities in real time — to reinforce that while faculty may teach for a relatively small proportion of the day, they are busy on service and research duties from dawn to late at night. Throughout the day, professional staff engaged with students to talk about how interconnected their academic success is with the administrative support they provide to make that success possible.

At the Rowan Student Center, students and staff were encouraged to complete postcards

to send to their elected representatives asking them to support increased funding for higher education. The student-centered activities kicked off with a presentation of the movie *Norma Rae* with pre- and post-movie discussions with members of the AFT unit. Linda Parthemer, the AFT office manager and a former labor attorney with arbitration experience, presented a brief history of unionism in the United States. Afterwards, Esther Mummert (Academic Advisor in the College of Communications) and Joy Xin (Professor of Special Education) coordinated a poster making activity where students designed posters and signs that were reminiscent of those carried at social justice and civil rights rallies of the past.



Patrick Hossay at Stockton

Manuel Pontes, Professor of Marketing and Business Information Systems, held a lecture on the benefits of collective bargaining. Lastly, Kathleen Pereles (Associate Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship) delivered the final presentation on the link between the social justice movement and protest music. She showcased music that captured the protest spirit with music of past generations that struggled for civil rights and labor justice. In addition to the events that took place in the Student Center, there were teach-ins across campus on matters of unionism, education, the labor



Packed Lecture Hall Teach-in at Ramapo

**“We Are One events”**  
 (from previous page)



Ramapo Students

movement and other issues of great social import. Rowan University Local 2373 hopes that this is the start of more days of action in the coming months.

Ramapo College’s AFT Local 2274 *We Are One* activities were a week-long affair. On April 4<sup>th</sup>, Local 2274 commemorated the 43<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, noting that he was in Memphis speaking in defense of public workers’ collective bargaining rights. The next day the Local presented *Fight Back USA!*, a national teach-in on *Austerity, Greed and What You Can Do About It* – streamed live to a packed house. April 6<sup>th</sup> was Ramapo Solidarity Day where faculty, staff, librarians and students proudly showed

that *We Are One!* Ramapo rally attendees, who wore red t-shirts received pro union stickers in a demonstration of solidarity with the college community. On April 7<sup>th</sup>, the week’s activities culminated with a day-long teach-in that was a “packed to the rafters” affair attended by union members and students alike.

Council Locals stood tall during the *We Are One* week, celebrating the labor movement and higher education by calling attention to AFT’s proud role in fighting for collective bargaining rights in public higher education and rising to the challenges posed by legislators and right-wing extremists who would take away hard won bargaining



Ramapo “We Are One” in library

rights and benefits. It’s a great thing to be able to involve students in union-related activities to talk about labor history — the struggles and hard-won victories — and engage students in discussions about the new onslaught against unions and collective bargaining. The April 4<sup>th</sup> *We Are One* events provided students with an understanding of how the collective power of organized labor is as vital and necessary today as it was in previous generations.



“We Are One” at MSU

**NOT A MEMBER YET?  
 BECOME INVOLVED!!!**

Make **your** voice heard in the workplace by joining the union today. Occupational Liability Insurance comes with membership!

Visit your local office for a membership card or visit the council’s website ([www.cnjscl.org](http://www.cnjscl.org)) for membership information.