

NEWS & BLUES

Volume I, No.1

The Newspaper of Stony Brook's Graduate Students

December 2000

GSEU "Meltdown": What's Going on?

An Interview with Stony Brook's GSEU Negotiator

STONY BROOK, NY - In the Fall of 1992, by a six to one margin, state-employed graduate student workers throughout SUNY voted to unionize as the Graduate Student Employees Union (GSEU), and become Local 1188 of the Communications Workers of America (CWA). At the time it was the nation's largest graduate student employee union. Now eight years later, the GSEU at Stony Brook has become a shell. Bargaining unit members are working into their seventeenth month without a contract, and the Stony Brook Steering Committee has failed to meet in over a year. What happened? First, a little history...

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New Child Care Center to Raise Capacity 60%

STONY BROOK TO "CHARGE RENT" - A FIRST IN SUNY

STONY BROOK, NY - In October 2000 construction began on Stony Brook's new \$3.3 million Child Care Center at the corner of Stony Brook Road and South Drive (across from the South P-Lot). The new center will increase by more than 60% the number of spaces available for campus and community children between 8 weeks and five years, including a new kindergarten and before-and after-school care. But according to financial documents obtained by *News & Blues*, adequate funding for this desperately needed expansion may be in jeopardy because unlike all other SUNY campuses, Stony Brook expects the not-for-profit child care center itself to pay for the building.

The four child care centers currently

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The Adjunctification of Stony Brook

ADJUNCT TEACHING UP 96% IN SIX YEARS

STONY BROOK, NY - Across the university and the United States part-time adjunct faculty, including graduate students, are teaching more and more courses. Since 1994, the number of Full-Time-Equivalent (FTE) adjunct positions in the College of Arts and Sciences has nearly doubled, according to numbers generated by Stony Brook's own administration.

While the total number of teaching FTE's has actually increased by 1%, tenured faculty FTEs are down by 7.5% and graduate students by 9%, over the same period.

Apparently, reductions in tenure-track faculty lines and graduate student funding have been made up by hiring underpaid and over-worked adjunct instructors. This has meant cash savings Stony Brook, but it's difficult to see who else has benefited.

The savings are dramatic. At Stony Brook, adjuncts typically teach one or more courses at salaries ranging from roughly \$2,500 (for a graduate student) to \$3,000 (for a Ph.D.) per course, usually without benefits or job security. This means that a regular professor's teaching load (two courses each semester, or "two and two") can be taught for ten to twelve thousand dollars, instead of the \$40 to \$60 thousand it would cost to hire on a fully salaried tenurable line.

Though nominally members of United University Professions (UUP - the professional staff union at all SUNY schools), adjuncts must satisfy special criteria in order to become eligible for

benefits, including negotiated pay increases. An adjunct must teach two courses per semester to reach the "half-time" threshold that gives access to UUP negotiated health benefits, for example.

Because many departments are unaware of this, courses are often assigned without attention to the importance of benefits eligibility for adjuncts.

Even with such benefits, adjunct pay is dismal. According to Judy Wishnia, associate professor emerita in the department of history and UUP's point person on part-timers, the salary for an adjunct

is essential to do their job, Wishnia says, "adjuncts should have office space, access to computers and photocopying - some don't even have a mailbox."

A graduate student working as an adjunct could easily find herself in the bizarre situation of teaching a course for \$2,500, and having the TA for the course earn more than twice as much, receive health insurance benefits, and regular office space.

The Regional Adjunct Faculty Organization Project, which advocates the unionization of all college level adjuncts, reports that nationally the percentage of adjuncts is approaching 50%. The situation is not yet that bad at Stony Brook, where between 17

FTE Teaching and TA Levels - Arts & Sciences

Category	(state \$)		
	1994-1995	2000-2001	% change
Tenure Faculty	475.51 (68%)	439.51 (62%)	- 7.57%
Graduate Students	164.62 (24%)	149.82 (21%)	- 8.99%
Adjuncts	59.80 (9%)	117.56 (17%)	+ 96.59%
Total	699.93 (100%)	706.89 (100%)	+ 0.99%

instructor has hardly changed at all; she knows this because when she first taught as an adjunct at Stony Brook in 1977, she received \$2,500 - precisely the same amount of money most graduate students receive today, 23 years later. In light of the failure of the administration to raise adjunct pay even to meet basic cost-of-living changes in the past quarter century, it is easy to see hypocrisy in talk by Stony Brook's administration about improving undergraduate education. Where else can highly-educated professionals earn less than ten dollars an hour?

Prof. Wishnia points out that it is a mistake to point the finger of blame at the adjuncts themselves. "Most part-timers at Stony Brook are excellent, and should be treated like professionals." But often they don't even get the basics nec-

and 25 per cent of courses are adjunct-taught, but the recent increases do not bode well for the future.

Adjunctification affects some departments more than others. A recent study by the Coalition on the Academic Workforce reports (perhaps not surprisingly) that adjunct teaching has increased most rapidly in the Humanities and Social Sciences departments, departments that have disproportionately borne the brunt of statewide budget cutting in New York since the early 1990s.

Stony Brook University proudly posts links on its homepage to the highly touted report of the Boyer Commission, chaired by our own President Shirley Strum Kenny. The report laments the state of undergraduate education at research universities and calls for a "rad-

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Graduate School Enforcement of Ph.D. Time Limits

Your time at Stony Brook is limited. It may feel as if time stands still and you will never leave, but once enrolled in a Ph.D. program at Stony Brook, you have 7 years to finish the degree after completing the first 24 credits (the "24 + 7" policy). Students at the beginning of their program may look forward at eight or nine years as more than enough time to complete the dissertation. But to those approaching the limit or even halfway along, it often feels as if time is running out, especially as sources of funding disappear, and they feel themselves adrift without adequate advising support. For those students, the possibility of a time extension has always existed. Recently, however, some graduate students have complained that the requirements for an extension have been increased. As a result, the policy on time limits and the toughening of the rules to get extensions have become a focal point for graduate student frustrations.

There have been changes, but they are complicated. In the

1970s, the time limit was four years after being advanced to candidacy (becoming ABD - "all but dissertation"); there was essentially no limit to how long a student could take reaching ABD status. Even after the four year clock began to run, stories tell of the Graduate School routinely granting extensions without placing any undue burden on the student, her committee, or the graduate director of the department.

In 1992, when Helen Cooper, professor of English, became Acting Vice-Provost for Graduate Affairs, the 24 + 7 policy was firmly in place, and enforced. When it came to granting extensions under her tenure, approvals were relatively routine, though requests were always individually reviewed. In speaking with *News & Blues*, Prof. Cooper positively affirmed her support for the policy. She emphasized the importance of completing the Ph.D. in a timely manner, and likened the time constraints graduate students face to the tenure review period

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News & Blues

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News & Blues is published by the Stony Brook Graduate Student Organization and serves the Graduate Student Community at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. It is currently being published on a monthly basis. We welcome submissions in the form of letters, opinions, poetry, news items, art works, announcements or anything else that could conceivably be of interest to graduate students and the larger university community. Please include your name and a way that you can be contacted with anything you submit. Items may be submitted by campus mail at the GSO offices, SAC Room 226, z=2800, or by e-mail to the editor at jheller@notes.cc.sunysb.edu.

When it first appeared over a decade ago, Stony Brook's graduate student newspaper called itself "News & Blues." In the spring of 1992, the editors changed its name to "News and Views," and it kept that name through numerous editors over the next eight years. One issue came out earlier this fall, under the name "The Graduate Times." But as I took over editorship in the past weeks, I found myself wanting to take notice of the current (and continuing) state of our graduate student experience - *the blues*.

That's not meant to be a negative thing. It recognizes and validates the fact that though in some ways we are "apprentices" - hopefully all destined for good jobs and great things - there is an intractable part of graduate student life that is fundamentally stressful, depressing, alienating, and discouraging (especially at Stony Brook, though I have only a limited basis for comparison). Yes, griping and complaining are integral parts of graduate student life, too.

But the name is also just a name, and this paper needs to be judged by its content and its quality. The GSO Executive, especially President Kunal Das, wanted to re-start the graduate student newspaper as a way to help constitute a community and to provide a tangible forum for airing ideas, problems, successes, etc. It's an ambitious goal, and I can only hope that this first number is at least a step in the right direction.

This issue tries to address important issues for graduate students and the university as a whole. The state of the Graduate Student Employees Union (GSEU), is important for all graduate students, including RAs and unfunded students because in many ways the fortunes of the university are tied-up with the success of its graduate students. RA funding and benefits have closely followed TA and GA funding patterns. One of the goals of unionization is not simply to improve working conditions for members of the bargaining unit, but also to expand the GSEU unit to encompass as many students as possible - that means more funded students. Successful graduate programs have made Stony Brook's reputation, and their decline could unmake it. In the past, the GSEU has been a powerful force for good planning and

rational thinking on this campus and throughout New York State. It would be good to see a return to that state of affairs.

Other "news" in this issue includes: hard numbers on the creeping process of adjunctification. There is an analysis of the commitment of the current administration to providing services (in this case child care) that enable single parents (usually women) to attend school and further their education. The changing policies on extensions beyond degree time limits remind us all that we each ultimately bear responsibility for completing our degrees - but also that we need to hold our departments' feet to the fire to make sure that they give us the help we need to get the most out of our education before it's too late.

These few small articles are only the proverbial tip of the iceberg. The next number of *News & Blues* will hopefully include the latest update on attempts to get decent housing for graduate students - on and off campus. The announcement of the opening of the Wo/Mens' Center is great news - and we need to pay attention to the progress that is being made on campus - even as we honestly and constructively criticize the university's failures and mistakes.

Most of all, this paper needs to be a collaborative effort. It needs to include a broad range of perspectives and voices on all the issues of importance to graduate students, which is to say the issues of importance to the university.

Very limited funds are available to support "editorial assistants" (people who want to work on this kind of thing for little or no pay) - but your help is desperately needed. I am the editor, but the paper belongs to all of us.

Jacob Heller
Sociology (z=4356)
632-7721
jheller@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

Campus Calendars

Administrative Calendar of Graduate Deadlines

December 2000 - January 2001

Friday, December 15.
Last Day of classes for Monday - Friday course offerings.
Last Day to withdraw from the University - SPD/GSP students must have SPD approval.
Last day for graduate students to submit thesis and dissertations to the Graduate School for December Graduation.

Saturday, December 16.
Last day of classes for Saturday course offerings. Finals will be held on Saturday, December 23 for Saturday course offerings, during regular class time.

Sunday, December 17.
Graduation Ceremony scheduled for December 2000 graduates.

Monday, December 18.
Final Exams Begin

Friday, December 22.
Final Exams End for Monday - Friday course offerings; Fall semester ends.

Saturday, December 23.
Saturday course offering will hold their finals during their regular class time.

Tuesday, January 2, 2001
Final registration and payment (or proper deferral) of tuition and fees for students who did not advance register. Classes begin in the Schools of Medicine; Basic Sciences and Health Technology and Management (\$30 late registration fee assessed); Dental Medicine classes resume.

Tuesday January 16-23.
Final registration and payment (or proper deferral) of tuition and fees for west campus, Social Welfare, Nursing and Health Technology and Management students.

Tuesday, January 9 - Tuesday, January 23
Final two weeks of advance registration for the Spring 2001 semester.

Wednesday, January 24
Classes Begin. Late registration begins with a \$30 late fee assessed.

Last day for removal of Incomplete grades from the fall semester for Graduate G1-G5 students (Non SPD/GSP).

And some non-administrative things to think about doing:

December 9, 2000: Former *News & Blues* Editor George Mann and Julius Margolin will be performing selections from their latest album of folksongs at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship on Nicolls Road, half a mile North of Route 347, concert starts at 8:00 p.m.

GSO Holiday Bash at the SPOT

Friday Dec 15 at 9pm. Come join us for a great time. Live music, **free food, drinks**. Paid for by your student activities fee. Must be 21 and over to enter. Please tell EVERYBODY!

March 9 & 11, 2001: The Graduate Opera Program will be staging the world premiere of the opera, *THE THIEF OF LOVE*, at the Staller Center on All cast members are graduate voice students.

Ph.D. Time Limit Enforcement

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for new assistant professors. "Students have a much better time on the job market if they've gone through graduate school in a timely way," she said, explaining that students are better served by establishing a record of productivity in graduate school. Graduate students still remember that during her 18 months as Acting Vice-Provost, Cooper fought hard to maintain graduate student funding levels. For a variety of reasons since then, however, funding sources have continued slowly to dry up (see adjunct article), and this has understandably exacerbated the difficulties of completing the Ph.D. within the time limits.

In 1993, Lawrence Martin, an associate professor of Anthropology, became head of the Graduate School. Though the underlying policy, adopted by the Stony Brook Graduate Council sometime before 1980, remains unchanged, Martin has tweaked the process by which extensions beyond the seven-year limit are dealt with. On November 21 Martin spoke with *News & Blues* on the subject of completion time limits.

He takes the position, generally shared by graduate directors and department chairs, that the 24 + 7 scheme is entirely reasonable. A quick and entirely unscientific survey of other graduate programs found that Stony Brook's policy falls well within the range for comparable schools. Under Martin's stewardship, however, the criteria for extensions have been increasingly tightened. According to graduate secretaries who spoke with *News & Blues*, as recently as three of four years ago, it was much easier to obtain an extension, or even a second extension. Today, applications to the graduate school for an extension beyond the 7 years are essentially limited to two years, and that extension will only be granted upon production of a detailed plan for completion of the degree.

There is no evidence that applications for extensions have been turned down at any higher rate under the new, stricter policy. There is, however, a much heavier burden on the student to justify the extension. Based on his experiences as Graduate Director in Anthropology, Martin's new enforcement policy has required students and faculty to agree on a plan for the completion of the degree. What the Graduate School needs to see in order to grant an extension is a specific 1, 2, 3 or 4 semester plan with a signed agreement from the student, the committee and the department's graduate director that the plan will be kept to. Martin asserts that application of these criteria is neither capricious nor punitive, "It's semi-automatic that a credible plan will be approved."

Martin strongly that there is an institutional responsibility to support graduate students through their programs within a sensible time frame, an opinion shared by the graduate students interviewed for this article. Accountability for problems with excessive completion times, Martin says, should not be assigned to the student, "if students are not completing their degrees within these limits, we're not living up to our responsibilities to the students." There is some disagreement, however, about what form that support should take.

For Martin, there is a relatively absolute time limit of two years beyond the 24+7 years. Where in the past extension after extension might be obtained, these days, Martin says, "if after a student has completed 24 credits and seven years have passed and the degree is not doable within 2 years, the requests [for an extension] will not be considered." Still, Martin acknowledges the role advisors and administrators play in ensuring that degrees do reach completion within the limits, "The problem is a lack of institutional commitment, not student commitment."

The emphasis on institutional support is crucial, and it takes two main forms: financial and advisory. Without adequate funding, students are left with few choices. Faced with a mandatory end to state (TA) funding after four years, students must find alternative sources of income. These can range from doing office work on a GA line (usually involving 20+ hours per week in an office, including during Winter intercession), to teaching as an adjunct for dismal pay, to work that is entirely unrelated to academia, like waiting tables or driving a taxi.

Often students leave the Stony Brook area seeking employment, and once people leave the area, it becomes much more difficult for them to complete their studies.

One advanced graduate student, who asked not to be identified, voiced support for the idea of time limits, but is concerned about unrealistic expectations given the absence of a formal advising structure: "I think [the 24 + 7 policy] is reasonable, given certain support systems. But [Stony Brook needs to] demand that each department produce a plan of how they're going to support their students." The student continued: "I'm not asking for my hand to be held, but to receive a letter with one year left on that time - that's the opposite extreme. It's all on the student." Without adequate funding, students say finishing within these limits is often extremely difficult, if not impossible. Another advanced student credited her return to active research in part to having gotten married to a spouse who is employed, "Before I couldn't afford not to work, but it's ridiculous for me to need a husband in order to finish my degree."

Difficulties in securing employment are not likely to be considered particularly relevant in applications for a time extension. Graduate students need to take real responsibility for keeping themselves on-track and moving in the right direction. Martin promises that failure to plan or to use the seven years well will not be rewarded with an extension: "There are no extensions for hard-luck stories." And although faculty signatures are required on extension agreements, as a way to make faculty members responsible, the consequences for failing to meet the requirements of the extension agreement fall entirely on the student. "The fact that I insist that the advisor and the graduate director sign off means, essentially, that they take responsibility." But, Martin admits, "the consequences are on the student."

"At the beginning of a piece of research, a long, necessarily vague, period seems essential."

- historian Francoise Loux

The Adjunctification of Stony Brook

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ical reconstruction" of the nature of a university education for undergraduates. But Stony Brook's creeping policy of expanding adjunct teaching suggests that a different kind of reconstruction is under way.

Adjuncts may be inspiring and committed teachers, but structural problems militate against their effectiveness in the larger picture. Working without an office, phone, e-mail account or mailbox is not just inconvenient and demoralizing for instructors, it has serious implications for their ability to function effectively within the university.

The most obvious consequence of adjunctification is that it increases the already growing distance between undergraduates and the "star" faculty Stony Brook is trying to attract (and which it advertises). Adjuncts regularly teach the largest courses, and most of the introductory courses, yet they have limited clout to claim scarce departmental resources in the form of teaching assistants or course development funds. These adjuncts who shoulder an increasing proportion of undergraduate teaching are by nature less permanent contacts for undergrads who need to seek out faculty for letters of reference. They may search for a favorite instructor a few years hence, only to find their "professors" have left the university, often beyond the knowledge of the department they taught for. Even while they teach here adjuncts without office space and secretarial support become unavailable to students in significant ways. Regardless of how brilliant an adjunct professor is (and many are very good), undergrads lose out, forfeiting important resources that potentially affect their current standing and sense of connection to the university. Losing these contact also hurts their long-term chances of professional success that more solid college networks can make possible.

Departmental needs for tenure-track faculty lines become invisible to the administration when adjuncts fill teaching posts on a temporary basis. Even non-tenure-track lectureships, Judy Wishnia says, "help some part-timers, but keep people off tenure track lines." The result is that dwindling permanent faculty bear the additional burden of dealing with student needs, because adjunct faculty are less available for (and prepared for) advising.

Departmental secretaries have to devote increasing amounts of their time to handling telephone and mail services for a ghost faculty they may not know by name or by sight. Adjuncts, who may have real concerns about departmental business and teaching priorities, reside at the bottom of the academic caste system in which they have limited access to policy meetings (except in rare departments), and usually no voting rights. It becomes a vicious cycle: lack of familiarity with departmental business means that they are even less prepared to advise students or participate actively.

From a union perspective, adjunctification weakens the faculty's power to control seniority and hiring. Adjuncts can be hired in defiance of open and fair employment practices, and can disappear within a semester, without most people in the department even knowing they were there. Wishnia says, "Our [UUP] contract requires that hiring practices be published and public, but we all know how that works." Wishnia points out that many part-timers may be led to believe that adjunct work can be a stepping stone to a tenurable line - but there are no guarantees.

The administration position has generally been that adjunct faculty is the best temporary solution to a tight budget, one that can benefit graduate students as well. Indeed, Dean of the Graduate School, Lawrence Martin would like to see adjunct positions allocated to senior graduate students as "two and two" teaching assignments, which would give the students access to the UUP benefits while allowing departments to "plan more rationally."

"Perhaps we should be thinking of spending on adjuncts as a form of fifth year funding," Martin says. "If graduate students are given the right of first refusal for the adjunct positions, then they won't have to be scurrying around to [local colleges], but can work in a more regularized way in their own department, with some benefits."

Martin acknowledged that this is a limited departure from the existing adjunct situation, but sees in its formalization some improvement for graduate students. "The expense would be the same for the University, and there'd be no more work for the students, but the situation would be better," Martin insists, though he also recognizes that "it's not about what's right - I'm just looking at the reality. [...] It's not fair pay for fair work."

The sense about adjuncts on this campus is generally one of resignation, that they have become a fact of life. In researching this article, *News & Blues* found little enthusiasm among departments or the administration for seeking redress at the source: the state budget. Five years ago the Pataki administration, under the banner of its call-to-arms "Rethinking SUNY," slashed the state university's budget to only relatively muted protest.

"It's not about what's right - I'm just looking at the reality," says Lawrence Martin. "It's not fair pay for fair work."

GSO STUFF

CLUBS & COMMITTEES:

Get a whole lot more out of the Stony Brook Experience!

Kunal Das

GSO President

In any academic institution, the level of interest the students take in campus activities largely determines the character of life on campus. Certainly, it helps to come into a University with a long history, where a diverse schedule of student activity has acquired the status of tradition and the involvement of students in campus decisions is a matter of course. At Stony Brook, we do not have such luxuries; rather, we have the unique opportunity to be the creators of such traditions and to be a part of the decision making process that is shaping the future of our young, but already very reputable, University. What we do right now and right here at Stony Brook is an investment in ourselves in ways that may not always be transparent; for example if our efforts help the University become more interesting and well known, its growing reputation will continue to enhance the value of our degree long after we have obtained it. But, without even looking towards the future, by getting involved with life on campus, we can enrich our own experience at Stony Brook.

Students are very vocal about how campus life at Stony Brook is dull; there are so many things to blame: transportation, location in the 'middle of nowhere', a desolate campus on the weekends and so on and so forth. It has almost become 'cool' to complain about the University. But, very few seem to want to do anything to change the state of things. The student apathy on this campus is legendary. If we want to make this campus more interesting, we have to make it happen; every so often, you might be pleasantly surprised to

find how much difference you yourself can make.

Perhaps the easiest way to get involved on campus is to become a member of some club that shares your interest. Believe it or not there are dozens of registered clubs just for graduate students alone. The level of activity varies, but most clubs have at least one or two major events during the year and smaller events and meetings more frequently. Clubs are also a great way to meet people who share some of your interests and are not necessarily in your department (which is certainly relevant if you are a graduate student!). The Graduate Students Organization (GSO) uses part of the student activity fee to fund various events organized by the clubs. Currently, there is office space available to all registered clubs in room 226 in the Student Activities Center (SAC). There are printing and copying facilities in the adjacent GSO office. There is space available for meetings. We encourage the existing clubs to use the space and facilities. Apart from the convenience, this has the potential to increase interaction among the various clubs and their members and create greater collaboration among clubs that could lead to joint events. Unfortunately, that space is underutilized at the moment - and if the space is not sufficiently used we stand to lose it by December to the office of the Dean of Student Affairs. We really would like to encourage the clubs to use this facility and encourage students to become active members of some of these clubs. You can always start your own club, too, if have a specific interest that others might share.

Another important role students can play on campus

is to be a part of the various administrative committees that shape the decisions that, directly or indirectly, affect us. All of these committees have some seats available for graduate students, but many of them are not filled. The consequence is that the university is often making decisions that affect us without our input. The GSO has filled in some of the committee positions with members of its executive committee and its senate, but we still need more students to have a full representation.

Apart from the fact that you get to influence important decisions on campus, being a member of a university committee can be a very attractive item on your curriculum vita or your resume; someday, when you are applying for a job, you can point to those items to show that you took an interest in your institution beyond the academic demands and went out and helped to make decisions for your university. If that is not enough, the GSO, as an added incentive, also provides a remuneration of \$20 for every committee meeting you attend and pass on the minutes to the GSO office. A summary of all such minutes will be published in this very newspaper (on a space available basis), which we are making an effort to distribute to all graduate students.

Clubs with contact information and important committees are listed below. If you are interested in a club or a committee or are the GSO, please do not hesitate to call our office at 2-6492 or write to us at usbgsa@hotmail.com, we would love to hear from you.

Clubs

Association for India Development

- >Rangshai Halthore ralthore@hotmail.com
- >Harish Seshadri harish@math.sunysb.edu

Buddhist Club

- >jlin@atmsci.mscc.sunysb.edu

Chapin Apts Resident Association (CARA)

- >chapin@ic.sunysb.edu

Chinese Students and Scholars Association (SBCSSA)

- >President: Gao Chao cgao@ccvm.sunysb.edu (President)
- >Xie Shaocheng sxie@uars.sunysb.edu (Vice-President)
- >Zeng Qiang zeng@sbmp04.ess.sunysb.edu (Vice-President)

Graduate Management Student Association (GMSA)

- >Lori Kilstrom lkilstr@ic.sunysb.edu
- >Surabhi Singh sursingh@ic.sunysb.edu

Hillel Graduate and Professional Students

- >Rabbi Menachem Even-Israel

Korean Graduate student Association (KGSA)

- > Kim, Namjun ; nakim@ic.sunysb.edu (President)
- > Suh, Young Ju ; ysuh@ams.sunysb.edu (Vice-President)
- >Yoon, Daeki ; dkyoon@ams.sunysb.edu (Webmaster)

Schomburg Apts Resident Association (SARA)

- >Kostas Pentikousis kostas@cs.sunysb.edu

Students for Peace and Humanity

- >sbdoves@ic.sunysb.edu
- >Adelaide Pangemanan mathade@ams.sunysb.edu

Toastmasters at Stony Brook

- >Aaron Kurtzman akurtzman@yahoo.com

Under-represented Graduate Scholars (UGS)

- >ugs@ic.sunysb.edu
- >Josie Brown-Rose jbrownro@ic.sunysb.edu (Co-Chair)
- >Jonine Figueroa jfigueroa@ic.sunysb.edu (Co-Chair)

CLUBS W/O CONTACT INFO AT PRESS TIME:

Behavioral and Ecology Group; GSEU; Linguistics Club; NYPIRG; Stony Brook Outdoors club (SBOC); Taiwanese Student Association (TSA).

Administrative Review:

- >Contact: Robert Kerber rkerber@notes.cc.sunysb.edu
- >Evaluates administrative structure & performance; is consulted in all proposed reorganizations; is represented on all search committees at the level of Dean or above; runs the biennial campus-wide review of the administration.
- >Needs Grad Reps -

Arts & Sciences Senate:

- >Contact: Michael Marx, President
- Grad Reps: Chris Nagle, Stephen Szolozsi
- >need 2 Grad Reps for Grad Programs Committee

Academic Standing & Appeals

- >Needs 1 Grad Rep.

Academis Judiciary

- >Needs 1 Grad Rep.

Campus Safety: Contact: Public Safety Office

- >Contact: 632-6350
- >Considers Safety issue across Campus.
- >Grad Reps: Dawn Marin, Jean Cadet

Stony Brook Child-Care Services, Inc.:

- >Contact: 632-6930
- >Needs 1 Grad Rep.

Committee on Academic Planning & Resource Allocation (CAPRA):

- >Contact: Robert Kerber rkerber@notes.cc.sunysb.edu
- >Reviews Academic planning, budgetary procedures, and priorities for resource allocations.
- >Grad Rep: Stephen Patnode

Committees

(# of Grad. Reps. Not Specified)

Computing & Communications:

- >Contact: Robert Kerber rkerber@notes.cc.sunysb.edu
- Advises the Chief Information Officer for Computing on all matters pertaining to computing & electronic Comm. on campus & USB's WWW presence. It also advises on the operation of the educational communications centers.
- >Grad Reps: Kunal Das & Kostas Pentikouris

FSA Committees:

- >Contact: Judy Lum (Chair)
- >GSO contact: David Spears
- >Budget: Karol Gray (Chair)
- >GSO contact: David Spears
- >Dining Services: Kevin Kelly (Chair)
- >Needs 1 GSO Contact
- >Retail - Bill Weisner (Chair)
- >Needs 1 GSO Contact

Graduate Council:

- >Contact: Martha Furie mfurie@path.som.sunysb.edu
- >Advises the Dean of Graduate School and monitors all aspects of Graduate programs.
- >Grad Reps: Kenneth L. Darling, Pegine Walrad

GSO Board of Appeals:

- Needs Grad Volunteers

GSO Committees:

- Budget:** Anthony Maletta, Kostas Pentikousis, & David Spears
- Election:** Needs Grad Volunteers
- GSO Lounge Advisory:** Needs Grad Volunteers
- GSO Rules & Constitution:** Needs Grad Volunteers
- Spot Planning** Dave Kharas, Godfried Palata (SPOT)

Manager), Kunal Das, David Spears, & Pegine Walrad

Housing Planning (HPAC):

- >Coordinates & Plans University Housing.
- >Grad Reps: Geralyn Datz & Chris Nagle
- >Needs as many Grads to attend as possible

Research:

- >Contact: Gail Habicht
- >Advises the VP of Research on all aspects of research & creative activity by faculty and students, both funded and non-funded.
- >Grad Reps: Sherrye Glaser & Mustafa Siddiq

School of Professional

Development (SPD) Council:

- >Contact: SPD Office (2-7052)
- >Advises SPD Dean & monitors all aspects of the program
- >Needs 1 Grad Rep (must be in SPD program)

Student Assembly:

- >Contact: Rob DeCicco (572-7225)
- >Acts as a forum for consultation & exchange of info between SUNY students, the Chancellor, and the SUNY Board of Trustees on matters of a University-wide nature which affect student concerns. Elects a student member to the SUNY Board of Trustees. Acts as a communication network for campus student government leaders.
- >Grad Rep: David Spears

Student Health Advisory:

- >Contact: Peter Mastroianni pmastroianni@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

continued on following page

National Coming Out Day (Came and Went)

Tanya M. Smith

Grad. Student in the Interdepartmental Doctoral Program in Anthropological Sciences

Wednesday October 11th marked the 12th year of National Coming Out Day, an event inspired by the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, which first featured the AIDS Quilt display. Every year on this day, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation sponsors hundreds of lesbian and gay public education events, which thousands of high school and college students across the country participate in. On the Stony Brook campus several events have taken place over the last few years, including LGBTQA presence in the student union, open-mike events, panel discussions, a couple-in (alternative to a sit-in), alumni reunions, and LGBTQA sponsored dances. Like many awareness projects such as World AIDS Day (December 1st) or National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October), personal involvement is not a requirement to support or participate in National Coming Out Day. Many people may wear ribbons or pins to show support without actually 'coming out'.

Yet for a campus which constantly prides itself on its diversity- there was a conspicuous lack of public demonstration and support this year. The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Alliance (LGBTQA), a Polity funded undergraduate association, had planned a film festival in honor of National Coming Out Day but was not able to acquire the funds in advance. Their presence in the union was missed as they chose not to set up a table or generate any type of public display. The Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Social Workers Caucus, an association of graduates, undergraduates

and faculty at the School of Social Welfare, was also notably quiet. However, at other local colleges such as Suffolk Community College, groups promoted public awareness by displaying banners and having a table staffed by member of the LGBT community.

It's impressive to walk across this campus and see fliers for different events sponsored by groups supporting everything from ethnic heritage to alcohol and drug prevention, yet there appears to be little 'community' for the LGBT community, particularly for the graduate community. The presence of an active LGBT community on the Stony Brook campus is an important part of acknowledging and supporting the incredible diversity we pride ourselves on. Public awareness also has far-reaching consequences as national polls have shown that people who know someone who is lesbian or gay are far more likely to support equal rights for all gay people. Issues such as recent increases in hate crimes, domestic partnership laws and job discrimination deserve more public attention from everyone, regardless of sexual orientation. As many of us consider our role in the greater college and local community, particularly as future educators, it is imperative that we strive to increase public awareness and work towards promoting the value of diversity and tolerance for all people.

More information about the Human Rights Campaign, the National Coming Out Project, and National Coming Out Day can be found at the HRC website: www.hrc.org. Additional information on local LGBT events can be found at www.OUTINLI.org, a 20-something plus social and issues group for LGBTs and friends, which is based at Community House of Long Island (CHOLI) in Deer Park.

Not Enough Advertising in News & Blues?

Contact the editor to place your ad in the
January issue.

632-7721/jheller@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

reasonable rates -

impoverished - but highly educated readership

Committees (contd.)

continued from previous page

>Serves as the students' voice on health related issues facing the university community, including such issues as mandatory health plans for all students.

>Needs 1 Grad Representative

Student Housing Committee:

>Contact: Daniel Melucci

dmelucci@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

>will study student housing demand & recommend to the President strategies to address unmet need.

>Grad Rep: Kunal Das

GSO Student Housing Committee:

>A NEW COMMITTEE is being formed to document & research graduate housing atrocities. e-mail the GSO Office or contact Chris Nagle (Graduate Student Advocate) if you have any personal "Housing Horror" experiences to share and help USB Grad students regain our most basic of human rights.

>Grad Reps: Abigail McKay & Ashaki Rouff

Student Life:

>Contact: Norm Goodman, 2-7750, ngoodman@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

>Advises the VP for students on all aspects of student life on campus, including graduates and professionals, commuters and residents.

>Grad Rep: Asaki Rouff

>Needs 2 additional Grad. Reps.

Undergraduate Council:

>Contact: Robert Kerber rkerber@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

>Advises the Provost and the Deans of the various colleges involved in undergraduate education, and monitors the

university-wide aspects of undergraduate programs.

>Grad Rep: Kenneth L. Darling

University Affairs:

>Contact: Robert Kerber

>Advises VP of the University Affairs on all matters pertaining to external relations, including fundraising, publicity, and public image.

>Needs 1 Grad Rep.

University Senate:

>Contact: Robert Kerber

>The Senate is the chief governance body of USB, and represents faculty, students, and the professional staff. Senators represent their departments, academic units, and the undergraduate and graduate student bodies. A major part of the Senate's work is done by its standing committees, which consist of elected representatives of faculty, staff & students.

>Exec Committee Grad Rep: GERALYN DATZ

>Grad Senate Reps: GERALYN DATZ, CHRIS NAGLE, JAYESH KOTECHEA, BRIAN VERRELLI, and KOSTAS PENTIKOUSIS

Women's Safety Council:

>Contact: Sally Sternglanz, 2-9176, ssternglanz@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

>Concerned with women's safety issues on campus.

>Grad Rep: Chris Nagle.

TO JOIN A CLUB OR COMMITTEE, USE THE CONTACT NAME, PHONE #, OR E-MAIL, LISTED OR **GET IN TOUCH WITH GSO:**
gso@hotmail.com
632-6492

THE UNENDING END

Rabindranath Tagore

Translated by Farida Sarkar

Can you hear the echo of travelling Time?
His chariot is ever vanishing,
Raising heart-throbs in the horizon,
Heart-rending cry of the stars,
Crushed by the wheels of darkness.
O my love, that advancing Time
Cast its net to entwine me,
Picked me up in its hasty chariot,
On the path of a daring journey,
Far, far away from you.
I feel I have overcome numerous deaths
to the summit of this new morning,
The hurry and scurry of the chariot
floats my old name in the wind,
There is no turning back,
If you look from afar,
You will not recognize me,
Adieu, adieu, my love.

Someday in the absolute leisure of no
work,
In the winds of spring,
Somenight when the past will raise a sigh,
The sky will be sad with the tears of fallen
Bakul.*
Look for it that moment,
I have left it behind,
At the edge of your life,
In the dim light of oblivion,
Maybe it will shed brilliance, maybe
assume a nameless form of dream,
But it is no dream,
That deathless entity,
my life's great truth, is my love,
I have left it behind,
That unchanging tribute for you,
While I am swept away
by the tide of change, of time,
Adieu, adieu, my love.

You have not suffered any loss,
>From my clay of the earth,
If you carved an ecstatic statue,
Let your evening be spent in homage to it,
That play of worship will not be hurt
by the pale touch of my mundane days,
Not a single flower in your offering

can be shed by the force of thirsty passions,
In the vase of your aesthetic emotions,
decorated so carefully,
In the banquet of your mind,
In your longing for the Muse,
I will not mingle my treasure of the soil,
The treasure soaked in the tears of my eyes,
Maybe even today, you yourself,
will write your dream-induced words,
in my fleeting memory.
Words unburdened and free of constraints,
Adieu, adieu, my love.

Do not mourn for me,
I have work to do and I have the world.
My cup has not been emptied,
I shall fill up the void
And ever keep this promise,
If there is one who anxiously waits for me,
He will make me blessed and worthy.
He who brings the twig of the
Rajanigandha*
from a moonlit night,
And adorns the cup of tribute
in utter darkness, he who sees me
in limitless forgiveness,
With all my evil and goodness,
Now, at his altar
I shall sacrifice myself.
You have the endless right
on what I had given you,
Here I give myself bit by bit,
The pitiful moments drink in handfuls
from my heart's offering.
O my rich! O my charming!
What I offered you was your own gift,
The more you took,
The more indebted was I,
Adieu, adieu, my love.

[Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali poet of undivided India who won the Nobel prize for literature in 1913.]

*Bakul and Rajanigandha: Two species of fragrant, white flowers.

The Spot®, your officially licensed graduate student lounge, it seems, is in line for re-lo-cation.

Officially, the Party Line stands as follows:

1) The Spot® is in a bad location for business.

Interpretation: This may well be true. Of course, anyplace is a bad place for business when you're not allowed to run it the way you have to in order to MAKE MONEY.

Top Secret Interpretation: The parties at The Spot® are competing with the parties in the dorms. Seven out of ten Campus Police officers prefer the dorm parties. Dorm parties stay. (I can't confirm this, so don't go spreadin' it around.)

2) We are troubled by the (potential for) incessant chatter of boisterous graduate students loitering after hours in the parking lot.

3) We are concerned about (the dreadful thought of, despite any hard evidence for,) underage patrons drinking alcohol.

Tip: When rummaging for five-cent empties to protect our precious environment and pay your wireless bill, wander around the dumpsters at the dorms. Plenty of empties there!

4) Your (remarkably soundproofed) performances, especially that "new fangled Rock-and-Roll" music, are keeping people up at night.

5) The Spot® is not what it was originally intended to be. Allow me, please: Neither is the University. Universities are established, and then defunded, and then make Five Year Plans, and when they finish (or fall apart), they make New Five Year Plans. Universities change, and Spots® change too.

6) Shouldn't you be in bed by midnight anyway? (Is this a trick question?)

Secretly, we believe the kicker was when the System got wind that the Spot's® brand of entertainment catered to a less than desirable demographic, formally known as the Rabble Rousers. I've never actually met a Rabble Rouser at the Spot, but even I don't like the sound of them. Working proactively, System administrators launched a pre-emptive strike, just in case anything could happen as a result of a Rabble Rouser attending an event at the Spot, like people actually showing up. Our heroes.

Naturally, The Spot Squad (since we would very much like to be Heroes too, we should be acknowledged as such) took umbrage with these charges. We asked about picky things like "evidence" and "complaints". The absence and/or unavailability of these minor details did not, however, deter the System. We also privately wonder if these complaints will conveniently disappear in our new home, wherever that may be. Logic be damned: the Spot shall move, the Forces say.

Knowing when to fold 'em, with valor and our chins held high, The Spot Squad lay down quietly.

So we aren't heroes. And so what? Landing some prime real estate in the fabulous (undergraduate) Student Union would be a major coup for the rel-



There's a Doin' Brewin' at The Spot®

Campus Satire

David Spears

your trusty GSO Treasurer

atively homeless graduate student body.

Besides, the Roosevelt Cafeteria (a.k.a. The Fannie Brice Building) has its shortcomings, not the least of which being it is without question the worst building on campus, right? One estimate from an anonymous System administrator claimed it would cost up to \$5,000,000 to renovate the place, and that still wouldn't solve the problem of having a **LOADING DOCK AS A FRONT ENTRANCE**. It was, and is, and most likely will be until its demise, a dump.

But it was our dump, dammit.

I digress. Any-hoo, the Spot® is in line for a new home. As this column goes to press, minions, dare I say HORDES, of Spot® defenders and lovers (2 or 3 people) are working diligently on a solution. The fabulous (undergraduate) Student Union WILL most likely be our new home, a place where we can plant our dirty claws firmly in the ground, and methodically extend our nerdy tentacles throughout the building until we DOMINATE (or until it closes for renovations, whichever comes first). The principals:

1) The Spot®, Formerly Known as The End of the Bridge (acronym: Spot at EOB).

Pros: Big. Modern. Tables and booths. Clean! A REAL bar with taps and everything! Black and white tiled floors. Clean bathrooms nearby (Notice I used the world clean twice, indicating how striking that feature really is).

Cons: Chartwells runs it, so we won't have control over it. (For those of you who may not know Chartwells, they are the fine folks who provide our food service on campus). Undergrads have steak dinner there. I cannot stress this enough: steak dinner. Who would want to lose steak dinner?

Bottom Line™: We ain't sharin' with nobody.

The Spot®, Formerly Known as The Colours Café (we aren't clever enough to think of an acronym for this)

Pros: Nobody in there. Again, it would be our dump. Next to the arcade.

Cons: Small. In the basement. No black and white tiles. No bar. Kind of dumpy, but fixable. Next to the arcade.

Bottom Line™: I really don't care anymore.

Quite a dilemma, no? No matter what happens, you can count on the GSO to make the right decision for the 30 or so you 7000 graduate students who attend the Spot on a regular basis. (If we spent this much time on stipends, we could all be making an extra grand by now).

Anyway, there is really only one way to solve this. I'm going to arm-wrestle the Secretary of the GSO. If I win, we move. If she wins, we move. I'm already 2 - 0 against her, so I think The Spot® will probably move. Of course we don't know EXACTLY where yet. You can rest easy knowing that you'll be hearing from me again.

Point is, The Spot® is moving.

Notice:

Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Internship in Biotechnology and Patent Law - 2001-2002
Call for Applications

Stony Brook's Center for Biotechnology is now accepting applications for the graduate internship program for Spring, Summer and Fall 2001. Successful applicants will spend a semester working in a New York State law firm and gaining experience in patent law and intellectual property management.

This program will provide third and fourth year graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows, with an opportunity to work in a legal environment conducting research into prior art and learning the basic principles of intellectual property rights. This insight will be useful to students interested in remaining in academia, as well as those who wish to pursue a career in industry or a law degree.

Competition is keen for these positions, so applicants are encouraged to start the application process early.

Interested applicants can visit www.biotech.sunysb.edu to obtain application information and forms or contact Pernille Jensen, Internship Coordinator, Center for Biotechnology at 631-632-8521.

Extended Deadline for Applications - January 31, 2000

ANOTHER Notice:

*News & Blues has neither the space nor the mandate to publish extended announcements for fellowships, grants, post-docs, or other sources of funding or employment. For such information, please refer to the **FUNDING BULLETIN** published by Stony Brook's Office of the Vice-President for Research, and edited by Peter Saal. It contains a fairly comprehensive listing of funding sources.*

All submissions are subject to editorial control and may be included as space allows.

GSEU Meltdown...

continued from first page

Early in 1993, work began on negotiations for the first contract. After much travail and cooperation among the disparate SUNY campuses across New York State, GSEU and its CWA counterparts negotiated a two year contract that for the first time made graduate student workers eligible for subsidized health insurance. The first contract also provided for two annual 4% pay increases, and modest but legally binding grievance procedures. That contract was ratified by the statewide membership in a vote of 453 to 2.

The Research Foundation (the "private" entity created by SUNY to facilitate spending money without the bureaucracy of state institutions) quickly followed suit and extended health insurance and pay increases to all RAs – graduate students who are employed by the Research Foundation, but often doing work indistinguishable from that of TAs and GAs. The second contract took effect in 1997. It increased health care coverage (ultimately to \$100,000 per year), raised salaries an additional 7%, and set the stage for further improvements. At this point a fateful course of events ensued.

Because of fiscal mismanagement by GSEU's statewide officers (notably failure to pay Federal payroll taxes for union employees), CWA stepped in and took over the management of the GSEU. CWA fired all GSEU officers in January of 1997 and placed the union under a temporary trusteeship. Since then, GSEU's fortunes at Stony Brook have been in steady decline, and no GSEU bargaining unit member has served as a statewide officer since the 1997 firings.

On July 1, 1999, the second negotiated contract expired. Since then, the GSEU, both at Stony Brook and statewide, has become embroiled in scandals, infighting, confusion, and a complete lack of activity. The main casualty has been the interests and fortunes of rank and file GSEU members.

Negotiations with GOER (the Governor's Office of Employee Relations) continue, however, with Stony Brook's interests represented at the table by Philosophy's Chris Johns. Johns spoke with News & Blues just before this issue went to press, and excerpts from his comments are included below.

News & Blues: What is the status of negotiations?

Chris Johns: It's difficult to say in a few words. Right now we have made some progress, but not as much as we should like. There has been a lot of stalling along the way. They [GOER] are very resistant to our proposals; they think they're completely unrealistic. The major ones we're concerned with are compensation, healthcare, tuition/fee waivers, and grievance and arbitration procedures. Healthcare issues are being dealt with in a negotiation subcommittee. In one form or another we've been meeting 2-3 times per month with GOER, in meetings ranging from 20 minutes to three hours.

N & B: What kinds of things is the GSEU asking for?

Johns: We're asking for the establishment of a minimum stipend determined by study at Binghamton. For married student, costs came to be \$19,000-odd. We realize that's an unrealistic goal but it's a good place to start to make it clear how unreasonable our stipends are for the high living expenses. We want a living wage – whatever that turns out to be. One thing is that we found a lot of people making below the minimum as specified in the

Stony Brook Wo/Men's Center Opens

Dr. Laura Williams

Director of the Wo/Men's Center

Thanks to the work of a very committed group of Student Affairs staff, Women's Studies faculty members and many students, and with the support of President Shirley Strum Kenny, a new Wo/Men's Center at Stony Brook finally opened in December 2000.

The new Center plans to be a "place of comfort/safe haven" for students to learn about, discuss and give each other support on such issues as relationship violence, rape, molestation, incest, physical and emotional abuse, eating problems and body image concerns. Since, as one student pointed out, "victims are not gendered," the name Wo/Men's Center evolved as a way to be welcoming of both male and female students in need of support around traumatic experiences. Groups will be offered for victims/survivors, partners of victims/survivors and couples trying to cope with the aftermath of trauma. It is estimated that at Stony Brook alone, 1,000 students arrive here still trying to cope with a previous assault, and another 1,000 may be assaulted, on or off campus while they are students. Clearly, there is a need for a Wo/Men's Center at the University.

Programs and activities implemented by the Center will focus on challenging oppression in all forms including sexism, ageism and homophobia. For example, a recent study revealed that the old "fight/flight" paradigm of how people respond to stress was created by males about males and thus does not appear to apply to how females respond to stress. A new model of coping, the "tend and befriend" model of nurturance and affiliation, has been recognized by a group of women psychologists as a useful counseling approach for helping women cope with stress. Thus, the Wo/Men's Center will offer a Tend and Befriend Stress Reduction Group

for Women, a Women in Transition Group for non-traditional aged female students who may be juggling the demands of family, school and work, and a Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered Group.

In addition to crisis counseling and group support, the Wo/Men's Center will offer outreach programs and workshops based on student need. The Wo/Men's Center lending library will be open to all students and will offer information and referral resources gender related issues, such as how to cope with various women's health issues like breast cancer, osteoporosis, premenstrual syndrome and menopause. Dr. Laura Williams, the Wo/Men's Center Director has donated a significant portion of her personal library to the collection and would appreciate donations of from other generous staff members and faculty of books on wo/men's issues, as well as any other useable office supplies. Our wish list includes: kitchen appliances such as a coffee maker, microwave and small refrigerator, as well as decorative items, such as art prints, plants, etc..

Currently staffed by an enthusiastic group of volunteers, the Center has three graduate student interns from the School of Social Welfare: Kathy Lahey, Ami Patel and Lois Byalick and several eager undergraduate interns from Women's Studies. Future plans include an open house to celebrate the birth of the Wo/Men's Center and the hiring of an Administrative Assistant and Assistant Director.

The Wo/Men's Center's doors are now fully open and will offer evening and weekend hours. Centrally located in the Student Union in rooms 214, 216, 221 and 223, the Center plans to eventually offer 24 hour assistance.

contract. It's best for us to shoot high – a minimum something like \$11-\$12,000 is not unreasonable.

N & B: What kinds of offers have there been?

Johns: On compensation the State has said 3% - now it's lower, 2% - in annual increases for the length of the contract. Because we're already a year without a contract they're offering an additional \$250 lump sum.

N & B: Is it reasonable to expect a whole lot more than UUP (the professors' union) got (3%), as people are going now almost two years without a pay increase?

Johns: You have to weigh the long term benefits against the immediate benefits now. By demanding something more reasonable, I think everyone will benefit. The 3% will do virtually nothing for us, especially since the universities can just raise the fees, and wipe out our increases.

N & B: What are some of the other items that are under negotiation?

Johns: One thing is trying to get some kind of control on the fees. At Buffalo graduate students pay fees in the neighborhood of \$1100. We're trying to get limitations on the fees that can charge for parking, for example.

N & B: What about some of the broader issues that seem to be plaguing the GSEU these days. For example how do you feel about the fact that there hasn't been a Steering Committee (SC) meeting at Stony Brook in more than a year?

Johns: That's a complex question – there are problems between the Steering Committee and the AVP [Area Vice President, Ramon Del Castillo], involving attitudes toward the [statewide GSEU] President and his conduct. Whatever the cause of it is, it has had a bad effect on our ability to be unified in negotiations. I think the AVP has the responsibility to make the peace here. I also think the SC has the duty and responsibility to do what they need to do – what they can do - without the AVP.

N & B: Can you talk a little about the kinds of things the Steering Committee could do?

Johns: Members of the SC were invited to and accepted an invitation to the GSEU's annual Delegate Assembly this September. They could have gone, but they didn't. There was also a demonstration at the capital [Albany] in September, and they could have gone to show their support for the contract, but they didn't.

N & B: What about the AVP's responsibility in all this?

Johns: The AVP could do more to repair the damage. I think he's a good guy, he's a smart guy, but I should be critical if him – he could do more.

N & B: How can folks at Stony Brook help out in the negotiations?

Johns: When it's clear that there's something definite to tell the membership, it'd be good to have a meeting. To get the latest information, the first place to consult is the website [<http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/gseu>]. As far as local meetings, there haven't been any planned, and I don't know whether any are being planned.

N & B: Are there going to be any campus meetings about negotiations?

Johns: If I told Ramon I was going to have a meeting, I think he'd be perfectly happy doing it. If some people wanted there to be a meeting, I'd be happy to have one. I think sometime in January would be a good time to do that. There are plans by the President for more demonstration activity around the negotiations.

N & B: Where do we go from here?

Johns: I think we have to look forward to January, and possibly some demonstrations or other activities that will persuade the State to come around on some of these issues. If we can get everybody to rally around the issue of compensation, that would be really great. I'm a bit skeptical about us organizing the activities. I'd encourage everyone to come together over these issues. I think one of the biggest problems is student apathy. If no one is screaming for action, it's easy for the administration not to call a meeting.

HELP WANTED!
WELL-RESEARCHED, WELL-WRITTEN,
INTERESTING ARTICLES NEEDED!
(paid positions possible)
**SUBMIT TO NEWS &
BLUES**

Child Care Expansion Set To Go - But Who Pays?

continued from first page

in operation on Daniel Webster Drive (across Nicolls Road from the main campus entrance) hope to be able to move into the new building by its scheduled opening in September 2001. The centers are run by Stony Brook Child Care Services, Inc. (SBCCSI), a not-for-profit corporation with deep roots in Stony Brook's history. Founded in the early 1970s by a group of student, staff and faculty parents as a free cooperative childcare effort, two of the centers still bear the names of their original homes. Toscanini and Benedict Centers were originally located in the lounges and common spaces of those two undergraduate dormitories. A few years later, the campus donated the use of the four houses that sit across from the main entrance. In 1985 the operation incorporated as a not-for-profit entity in order to become eligible for a variety of grants and other forms of aid, and to insure the continued ability to provide child care. They changed their name and internal administrative structure, but kept their philosophical principles. These include fostering children's growth in an atmosphere of cultural and individual diversity, the importance of a warm, nurturing and stimulating environment where children learn by doing, and – not least important – a commitment to an income-based sliding fee scale that enables each family who needs child care to be able to afford it.

That sliding fee scale has meant that children of students and low-paid university employees have consistently had access to childcare. On average, 50% of the children have at least one parent who is a student. Currently, 29 out of the 97 young people cared for daily at SBCCSI are the children of graduate students. For graduate students in particular, low-cost childcare is the only kind worth considering. SBCCSI's biweekly tuition is competitive with market rates for families with incomes at the top of the tuition scale (families earning \$130,000+). But at the low end of the scale, it becomes accessible to even a single-parent graduate student on a measly TA line: \$164 for infant care (up to three years of age) and \$149 for children 3-5 years of age; that's out of pocket money for *eighty hours* of care.

But low tuition doesn't mean low quality – in this case it means the highest quality. SBCCSI was the first child care center in Suffolk County to be accredited by

the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (only 2.5% of centers nationwide receive this accreditation). Part of SBCCSI's philosophy is that children are best taken care of in a family-style environment, with children of different ages mixing and learning from each other, always under adult supervision. They maintain an unbelievably high ratio of staff to children of 3:1 in the infant centers and 6:1 in the 3-5 centers. On top of this, SBCCSI has a long-standing commitment to sharing the wealth of their experience and expertise. Undergraduate students can intern at any of the four center through practicum courses in the Child and Family Studies Program, and center staff members have presented at national child care conferences and have helped produce child care training videos used by New York State and Columbia University Teachers College.

But all this quality doesn't come cheap. The campus does subsidize childcare, in various ways. In fact, even families that come in at the top of the tuition scale

Brook University. If this happens, it will mark the first time any SUNY-campus child care center pays "rent" for the facilities where they provide childcare. This is not only a dangerous precedent, it also threatens the end for the aspects of SBCCSI's childcare program that have made it a national leader.

Because of the amounts of money involved, it looks as if there are only two ways that SBCCSI can afford to buy the building for Stony Brook. Either tuition rates must rise, or the quality of care the children receive must fall – either one means a violation of the centers' philosophy that has made it so successful and valuable to Stony Brook. Because the top rates are inherently limited by the local market (families earning \$130,000+ have other options for childcare), tuition hikes would have to come at the low-end of the income scale. This will price child care out of reach for most students, and many staff (clerical and cleaning staff are paid almost as little as graduate students – less as an hourly wage). This obliterates the centers' commitment to providing child care to those who need it most.

The quality of care can decline in two ways. The first imagines lower salaries for the already underpaid people who care for the children. This would likely mean that many of the highly qualified staff would have little choice but to defect to better paying positions in public school systems (or at Taco Bell). The second would reduce staff numbers, and reduce the both the quality and quantity of attention each child could receive.

After a decade of hoping and planning to expand – SBCCSI has never had sufficient capacity to meet the demand for childcare on campus, and even with the new building, will fall short, especially for infant care – the new building will undoubtedly be built. Designed by the firm of Ehasz Giacalone Architects, P.C. in cooperation with the child care experts at SBCCSI, the new building will house a state-of-the-art child care center. It will provide resources for children in the surrounding communities who are physically challenged. It will be a wonderful and long-needed additions to Stony Brook. The question that remains is whether Stony Brook University will step up and pay for the costs of construction. The alternative appears to imperil access to high quality childcare for the entire university community.

STONY BROOK CHILD CARE CENTER

STONY BROOK, NEW YORK

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Dr. William R. Wiesner, Chairperson

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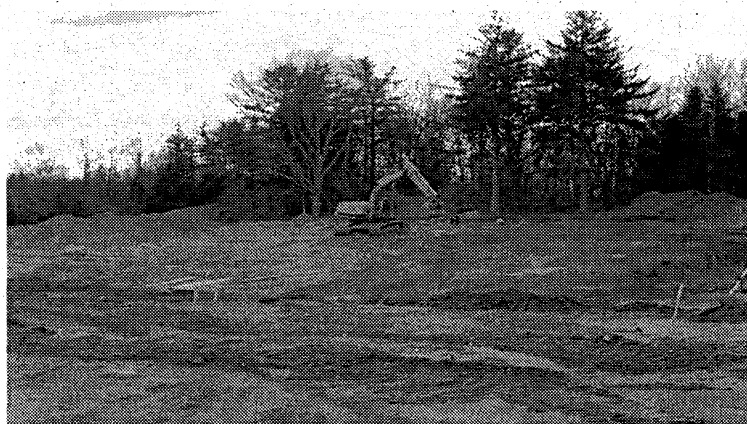
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benefit from subsidies to SBCCSI in cash and in kind from the university and a variety of governmental and private funding sources. One of the most important contributions for graduate students to remember is the \$50,000 annual subsidy for low-income students provided by the Provost as a result of graduate student activism during the now-legendary "Tent City" protests of 1987. Another important contribution by the campus for nearly twenty years has been the free use of the four buildings that currently house the four centers, valued at \$120,000 annually, according to SBCCSI budget figures.

Upon careful scrutiny of current financial plans for the new building, it appears that SBCCSI will be saddled with the full costs of the building's mortgage. (The University will re-take possession of the old buildings and the land on which they stand.) That is, the not-for-profit child care corporation will be expected to buy a \$3.3 million building for Stony



Construction at the site of the new child care center.



A rendering of the design for the new child care center.

For information about enrolling your child at SBCCSI...
check their website at

<http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/Admin/childcare.nsf>

or call

632-6930