

# The Graduate Student Advocate

The City University of New York

December 15, 1989

Holiday Edition

Volume 1  
Number 3

## CUNY Chancellor Will Resign

*As for me, I've spent twenty-five years trying to change the world. It's time I tried to understand it.*

—Joseph S. Murphy

"The entire University owes Chancellor Murphy an enormous debt of gratitude for his outstanding service and extraordinary commitment to the fulfillment of the educational mission of the City University," Chairman James P. Murphy said after Dr. Joseph S. Murphy announced his intention to resign at the November 27 meeting of the Board of Trustees. As soon as a successor can be found, Dr. Murphy, who is serving his eighth year, will return to academic life in the University's doctoral program in political science, where he is currently a tenured professor.

During Dr. Murphy's tenure, a comprehensive \$1.5 billion college building program was approved by the State to modernize thirteen CUNY campuses and has been substantially completed; research grants at the City University rose from 4.2 million in 1980-81 to \$125 million in 1988-89. Chancellor Murphy also established CUNY-TV, the first city-wide cable-television station operated by the University. During his administration, the Feminist Press affiliated with City University and a University Press was initiated. Federal funding for the Robert F. Wagner Center for Public Policy was also secured by Chancellor Murphy.

Chairman Murphy commended Dr. Murphy's commitment to access and excellence, noting that student enrollment rose from 172,332 in 1981 to 194,000 in 1989; worker education classes, child-care services and adult literacy programs were initiated and expanded throughout the University to enhance access for non-traditional students; and tuition rates were held as low as possible (\$625 per semester for full-time undergraduates in 1989 compared to \$525 in 1982). Chancellor Murphy also expanded collaborative programs with the Board of Education, emphasizing drop-out prevention, including the joint operation of four new middle college high schools. With the support of the Board of Trustees, funding was provided to a pre-freshman summer skills program for entering freshmen in need of remedial assistance. This retention initiative began as a pilot project with 543

*Continued on page 6.*

## Committee for Cultural Studies Plans Doctoral Program Student Involvement Encouraged

*Special to The Advocate*

Scholars working in the emerging field of Cultural Studies seek to establish the principles and diverse methodologies required in order to study society in terms of the forms of knowledge and emergent discourses, as well as with regard to the interrelationships among high, mass, popular and everyday cultures as these are perceived from structural and historical points of view.

Students from six disciplines attended this year's first student meeting of the Committee for Cultural Studies (CCS) on Friday, November 3rd. The high turnout of students from diverse disciplines is a sign of the increasing interest in the ongoing efforts to develop an interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in Cultural Studies at the Graduate School. A corresponding "track" proposal is also in progress for students who wish to combine Cultural Studies with more traditional disciplines.

Four students were selected for 1989-1990 Cultural Studies Fellowships: Betina Zolkower (Sociology) will produce the CCS newsletter as well as seek new avenues of funding; Vincent Tirelli (Political Science) will oversee the finances; Tanya Serdiuk (Comparative Literature) will coordinate outreach and colloquium projects; Barbara Roseman (English) will coordinate curriculum proposals.

To ensure that students are aware of the decision-making processes as these affect the creation of the Cultural Studies program, students are represented in equal numbers with faculty members on all sub-committees (i.e., curriculum and colloquium committees). The first step in an involved process concerns accreditation and funding. An ad hoc CCS sub-committee has already prepared a draft of the Letter of Intent for the Cultural Studies doctoral program. At the CCS Steering Committee meeting of November 10th, many of the fifty faculty members and students who had received copies of the draft made comments and corrections for incorporation in the final document.

In collaboration with the Womens Studies program, the Feminist Students

Organization and the Center for the Study of Women, the CCS co-sponsored a lecture by Sheila Rowbotham at the Graduate School December 8th. Ms. Rowbotham discussed her latest book, *The Past is Before Us: Feminism in Action From the Late 1960's to Today*.

Two major CCS events are planned for the spring semester. First, a conference on Russian critic and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin is scheduled for March, 1990. Organized by Professor Amy Mandelker and Tanya Serdiuk, the conference will present many prestigious Bakhtin scholars from the CUNY academic community, as well as from other universities. The CCS and the English Program will also co-sponsor a conference entitled, "Professionalization in the Victorian Period," in May, 1990. There will be a panel composed of professors and students from three universities, whose topic is entitled, "Victorian Studies/ Cultural Studies: A Dialogue?" With the participation of the audience, the panelists will discuss the rich possibilities as well as the difficulties of multi-disciplinary dialogue within the framework of traditional disciplinary study.

The Cultural Studies Reading Group, now in its fourth year, meets every two weeks during the semester. Several new working groups will begin in the spring. There will also be occasional Friday evening gatherings, at which students will be able to present readings of works-in-progress. Refreshments will be supplied by the recently chartered Cultural Studies Student Association.

There is significant interest in the present and future of Cultural Studies at the Graduate School. The CCS encourages all students to participate in Cultural Studies events. For further information, contact the CCS Fellows in their departments. Students who wish to be on the CCS mailing list should leave their name and address in the Cultural Studies mail slot in the Sociology Department on the 8th floor. Look for posted notices. Watch for CCS flyers to land soon in your department.

## A Veiled Affair

By Binita Mehta

Should Muslim girls growing up in France be allowed to wear the veil, as required by Islamic law, in school?

"France has always lived under the domination of a single religion," wrote Sultana Cheurfa, a militant French socialist wrote in *le Monde* (Nov 24), the Parisian daily. Ms. Cheurfa's statement helps us understand the veil affair (*affaire du foulard*) that has been raging for the past three months in the French media and among both politicians and intellectuals. The French public school system (*école laïque*) is based on the separation of religion and education. The debate about the veil has raised sensitive questions concerning the secular principles of the French public education system as well as issues of individual equality, freedom of religion and women's rights.

The controversy began in the Junior High school of Gabriel-Havez in Creil, a northern suburb of Paris. On September 18th of this year, the principal of the school, Ernest Chenière, prohibited three students, Leïla and Fatima Achaboun and Samira Saidani, from wearing their veils to class. The principal was forced to take action when the girls persisted in wearing the veil despite requests made by teachers since last spring not to do so. When the schools reopened in September, the girls continued to wear the veil. On October 13, a compromise was reached by the principal and the students: the students could wear the veil during recess hours, but not in the classroom. The controversy erupted on October 19, however, when the gym professor refused to let the three girls wear the veil in his class. The girls insisted on wearing it, saying that the class was conducted outdoors and not in a classroom. Mr. Chenière then gave them an ultimatum: remove the veil or leave school.

On October 25, the French Minister of Education, Mr. Lionel Jospin, announced to the National Assembly that although he strongly believes in the non-religious, secular principles of the public school system, the schools had no right to exclude students wearing veils or any other signs indicating religious affiliation (*le Nouvel Observateur* 26 Oct.-3 Nov.). On November 27, the *Conseil d'Etat* decided that the final decision concerning the compatibility of the veil with the principles of secularity should be left to the principals of each school (*l'Express*, 8 Dec.). Following that decision, a number of schools allowed Muslim girls who wear the veil to enter the premises. Once inside, however, the girls were quarantined in the school library, where they would do their class assignments.

Jospin's stand has been criticized not only by members of the ruling Socialist Party, but also by members affiliated with both right- and left-wing political parties. They have contested Mr. Jospin's decision to allow the Muslim veil in school, despite the fact that French public schools are non-denominational.

*Continued on page 7.*

## Features

- Manjula Giri  
Why We Can't Write About Home
- Jonathan Hager  
Mobilize Now
- Chrystel Hollevoet  
A Day Without Art
- Christine Hutchins  
Subversion and Convention
- Ed Marx  
In Search of the Lost Rib

- Binita Mehta  
A Veiled Affair
- Maria J. Rivera &  
Margaret Logreira  
Unified Diversity for Pro-Choice
- Thomas Smith  
Democratize the DSC  
&  
Mr. Update

## Inside

- Around & About The Center 2
- Editorials & Letters 4
- Reflections & Commentary 5
- World 7
- Arts & Entertainment 9

## Around & About The Center

### The Doctoral Students' Council: A Report

Special to *The Advocate*

The DSC meeting of November 20, was convened at 6.35 p.m. Carina Yervasi, Co-Chair for Communications, chaired the meeting. First on the agenda was the election of the Co-Chair for Student Affairs. Manjula Giri, who had served as interim Co-Chair since the October meeting, was nominated by Carina Yervasi and seconded by Michael Glassman. Ms. Giri, who had served on the Steering Committee, was elected by acclamation.

There was some discussion of the electing another member to fill Ms. Giri's seat on the Steering Committee. There were no volunteers, however, and the motion was tabled for further discussion.

Next on the agenda was *The Graduate Student Advocate*. Ms. Yervasi asked the council to consider the repeal of the by-law requiring that the newspaper employ three editors. The newspaper is currently produced by two editors. Representative Pat Belcon from the Sociology Program brought up the October editorial about her criticism of the newspaper's editorial policy ["Trick or Treat"]. Ms. Belcon stated, "My off-the-record comments with Danny Choriki were made into an editorial. It's unfair to other reps who might be intimidated. It's irresponsible and taken out of context. Nobody knows who wrote the article. As DSC reps, it's our responsibility to students to set the policy and the structure of the paper." Ms. Belcon also said that she was not concerned for herself but for other representatives, who might be offended by such editorials. "The paper's funding comes from the DSC. If they continue their irresponsible reporting, we could have a lawsuit," Ms. Belcon said, after calling for the Media Board to resolve these problems. After some discussion among the representatives, the date for the Media Board meeting was set for November 29, at 6.15 P.M. The repeal of the by-law was then tabled until the next meeting, when the Media Board will make its recommendations.

A few members at the meeting then aired their views about the editorial in question. Some members, worried about references to individual students, disputed the right of the editors to editorialize about DSC meetings, stating that the editorial seemed like a personal attack on Ms. Belcon. A student stated, "The editorial was

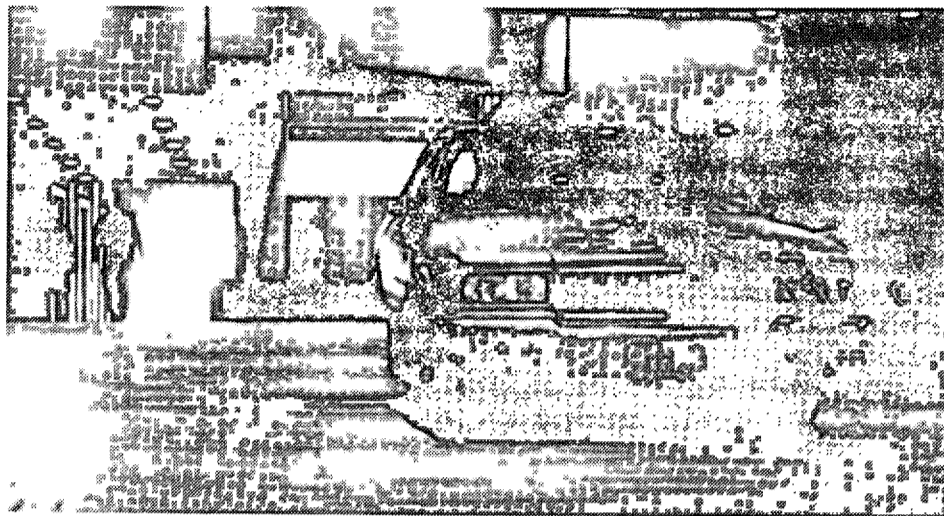
very bad, and has had an intimidating and chilling effect on the student body." Representative John Holzapfel stated, "The DSC needs to clarify the rules. What's off the record must be clear." Co-Chair Yervasi pointed out, "DSC meetings are open unless we move into executive session. Only statements by people who are recognized by the Chair are put in the minutes. If you're overheard, it's fair game. Pat Belcon did not expect her comments to be taken out of context." Cheryl Fish, speaking on behalf of the Steering Committee, said that the Committee had recently expressed concern about the editorial to one of the editors, George McClintock. She stated that the Steering Committee intends to communicate its apprehension in a letter to the newspaper.

The editors were present at the meeting and responded to the charges. Co-Editor McClintock said, "I don't think we've been irresponsible. *The Advocate* is not the official voice of the DSC. What our reporters reported was on the record, said at an open meeting. Representatives are responsible for the statements they make during an open meeting of the DSC." Co-Editor Victoria Gillen said the editorial was neither slanderous nor irresponsible. "There's no legal liability," she told the representatives, and called for greater involvement in the newspaper on the part of the student body. A vote was taken to table the discussion.

Then the representatives discussed the need to extend the Mina Rees library's evening hours. Steering Committee member Gregory Pinney said that a poll taken last year indicated that 90% of the students surveyed also want the library to be open on Sunday. Apparently the library had experimented with keeping the library open on Sundays several years ago, only to find that not many students made use of the facility. Representatives recounted trying to extend the hours last year, and had proposed an increase of the student activity fee in order to raise the necessary funds. They suggested formulating a questionnaire in order to find out how many students are interested in an extension. A letter-writing campaign to Albany was also suggested.

Carina Yervasi announced that new bulletin boards had been put up in the Basement Mezzanine for the use of the various

### Post-Modernism



*The Graduate Center Mall on West 42nd Street has been recognized as one of the city's leading public showplaces for contemporary art and historical exhibitions.* —Chairman James P. Murphy and Chancellor Joseph S. Murphy

### Enhancement Funds for Students with Disabilities

The City University of New York has provided the Graduate School with a modest allocation of enhancement funds for temporary services for students with disabilities. These funds are meant to supplement already existing support and may be used on an ad hoc basis to provide assistance in the form of readers, interpreters, transcribers, and so on.

Our resources are quite limited, but we are eager to put them to use in helping as many individuals as possible. Interested students should contact me or Sharon Lerner to discuss their needs.

Floyd Moreland  
Dean for Student Affairs

Chartered Organizations, and recommended that the DSC establish a dating policy for flyers. After some discussion, it was decided that the DSC has the right to remove notices of dated events after the expired date.

Steering Committee member Michael Glassman then reopened the nominations to fill the seat left vacant by Manjula Giri. Representative Barbara Roseman and at-large representative Robert Greer were nominated, but both declined the nominations. Mr. Greer then asked Kim Reade, who was acting as proxy for Representative Dana Fenton, if she wished to serve on the Steering Committee. When she replied that she is not an elected representative, Mr. Greer said that the DSC Constitution allows the Council to remove any representative who misses two consecutive DSC meetings. Thus, in theory, Ms. Reade could have been elected as both an at-large representative and a Steering Committee member, all in one evening. "It's sleazy, but it's legal," Mr. Greer concluded, much to the amusement of the other representa-

tives. After the laughter subsided, Ms. Yervasi intervened, saying that the Council should wait until the next general meeting to hold the Steering Committee election, in order to give representatives who were not present the chance to participate in the election.

Representative Rick McKinnon, who also represents the student body, at the CUNY Research Foundation, reported that nothing of importance to the students had been discussed at the last RF board meeting. Mr. McKinnon also pointed out that students should be made aware of the fact that the Research Foundation is a relatively unknown source of financial aid.

Finally Ms. Yervasi suggested that since the Steering Committee meetings are not as a rule open to the student body, the Steering Committee should include the minutes of their meetings on the agenda of the general DSC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m. Portions of this report were drawn from the Minutes of the DSC, November 20, 1989.

### International Students Association November 10th Social Hour



### Hot Dates

#### Democratic Socialists of America

"Lessons of the New Left" with Paul Berman & Ellen Willis  
—Feb. 8, 7:00 P.M., Rm. 207

#### Doctoral Students' Council

General Meeting: Feb. 21, 5:00 P.M., Rm. BM10  
Steering Committee Meetings: Feb. 1, 5:00 P.M., Rm. BM01

#### Minority Students Association

Lecture: "Symbols, Ideology and Women of Color"  
—Dec. 21, 4:30 P.M., Rm. BM10

#### Primum Mobile

First Readings: Plays by Michael Glassman, Karen Pincus and Vinny Tirelli—Dec. 20 & 22, 7:30 P.M., Rm. BM10