AUSTERITY UNIVERSITY

FIGHTING FOR OUR PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

MARCH 6-7 2020
NEW PALTZ, NEW YORK

UNIVERSITY
Welcome to Austerity University: Public Education for sale! We’re so thrilled you could join us for the next two days. The purpose of Austerity University is to provide a space for educators, scholars, students, workers, and community members to discuss the problems associated with state and federal divestment from our public colleges and universities.

We (the organizing committee) decided to launch this conference as part of our broader campaign activism demanding that New York State lawmakers increase funding for New York’s public universities and across the country. We seek to create and strengthen alliances between groups dedicated to investigating, critiquing, and resisting the ongoing corporatization and imposition of austerity measures aimed at our public university systems.

Our conference is being held at the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz, a four-year comprehensive college which has suffered from a multiyear budget crisis since the 2008 recession. Since the financial crisis, New York state lawmakers, under the leadership of Governor Andrew Cuomo, have imposed brutal austerity policies across state institutions. For SUNY, the results have been dire.

After initial reductions in state assistance, Governor Cuomo has held SUNY funding flat up until the present day while increasing our students’ tuition. These policies have resulted in increased student debt, forced each campus to make painful budget cuts, overwhelmed faculty and staff with unsustainable workloads, increased class sizes, and seriously damaged SUNY’s ability to educate our students from New York and beyond.

Since SUNY (and its partner institution, the City University of New York), serve vastly more students from marginalized communities, SUNY is a key institution in fighting structural racism and inequality in New York. But it’s ability to create a more just and democratic society have been seriously weakened by New York State policy and budgetary decisions. In short, such manufactured austerity is starving us to death, but we refuse to let SUNY go down without a fight.

Defeating austerity requires building coalitions and movements with anyone interested in protecting public higher education. Our conference is designed to add this effort by achieving the following goals:

- Increase awareness and more clearly understand the history of funding for public higher education (within New York State and beyond)
- Examine the diverse impacts of present-day fiscal commitments to our public colleges and universities
- Build coalitions and solidarity networks across the state, region, country, and beyond
- Develop strategies and policy proposals that restore the democratic promise of accessible and affordable public higher education.
- Promote and expand our #FundSUNYNow campaign, demanding funding commitments from New York State lawmakers

We’re so glad you could join us and we look forward to thinking, learning, and struggling together to defend public higher education!

In solidarity,

Melissa, Kiersten, César, and Steve
The Austerity University Planning Committee
AUSTERITY UNIVERSITY
PLANNING COMMITTEE

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We would like to extend our deepest thanks to our Austerity University sponsors:

The Antipode Foundation exists specifically for public benefit and the promotion and improvement of social scientific research, education and scholarship in the field of radical and critical geography. To this end it enables the pursuit and dissemination of valuable new knowledge that advances the field by:


[ii] Making grants to: support conferences, workshops and seminar series, and enable collaborations between academics and non-academic activists; and

[iii] Arranging and funding: summer schools and other meetings for doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and recently-appointed faculty, public lectures at international geography conferences; and the translation of academic publications.

*The Austerity University Conference is made possible by an International Workshop Award from the Antipode Foundation.*

Ecosocialist Horizons seeks to advance ecosocialism as a world-view and as a movement capable of offering real answers to the crises caused by capitalism. Whether these crises be social, economic or ecological, an integrated approach is necessary. While we conceive of our work holistically, we can categorize our activities into three areas aimed at creating ecosocialist consciousness:

1. Providing news and analysis of ecosocialist concern through a multi-media website and other publications.
2. Educating our members to produce creative work and to organize events and actions.
3. Organizing convergences to advance diverse struggles towards an ecosocialist horizon.

*We are eternally grateful to Ecosocialist Horizons for providing the necessary administrative support to facilitate our Antipode Foundation grant in order to make the conference possible!*

Radical University Professions (RUP) Frustration bubbled over on the SUNY New Paltz campus in the spring of 2018, as our statewide union, the United University Professionals (UUP), attempted to negotiate better working conditions and wages for our overdue (20-month expired) contract. Both the stalled negotiations as well as the aforementioned austerity measures led to the emergence of a new group at SUNY New Paltz called the Radical University Professionals (RUP) which sought to more aggressively push back against state-sponsored austerity, as well as the apathy, cynicism, and paralysis felt amongst our peers towards the state government, university administration, and our union.

United University Professionals (UUP) is the nation’s largest higher education union, representing the faculty and professional staff of the SUNY system (referred to as professional faculty in the contract). This encompasses the 29 comprehensive, technical, specialized and university centers of SUNY. The 29 campuses are broken into 32 chapters. UUP is Local 2190 of the state-wide union, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and national union, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).
THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENT SUPPORT:

Jax Diaz
Therese Fischer
Nicholas Keller
Anthony Lebron
Nathaly Munoz
Caroline Rowley
Jasmine Tirado
Jason Toth
Fan Xia
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Austerity Video Testimonial
9:00am to 3:00pm (March 7th)
Lecture Center basement TV Studio (LC03C)

Stop by the TV Studio to record your personal video testimonial on how Austerity impacts you personally, professionally or both. By sharing our stories, we can enact change. Let’s collaborate to bring a human perspective to the Austerity crisis. All stories welcome!

Artist Presentation
8:15-8:45am (March 7th)
THIS IS WHAT AUSTERITY LOOKS LIKE
by Rebekah Tolly and Aaron Major
Sojourner Truth Library Lobby

Numerical representations of austerity in public higher education, while documenting an important truth, are often lacking in their ability to clearly, and forcefully convey its impacts. Inspired by the clean, simple graphics of W.E.B. DuBois representations of black Americans in the Civil War era, we visualize austerity through hand-printed graphics. Between eight and ten original art pieces will document: declining public funding for higher education and the concomitant burden placed on students, the rise of the part-time, contingent labor force, crumbling university infrastructure, the substitution of private, for-profit actors for public support and other topics. The “presentation” will take the form of a gallery show and talk.

Note: The associated art display can be appreciated in the Sojourner Truth Library Display Cases just past the lobby as you walk into the library.
ON CAMPUS PARKING: Visitor parking permits are sold at the Welcome Center ($3). Tickets valid for 24 hours are also sold at kiosks located in the Rt. 32 and Elting parking lots.

OFF CAMPUS PARKING: On Mohonk and Tricor Ave, there is metered street parking. Hasbrouck Ave is unmetered. There is also metered parking all around Main St.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: UCAT runs the New Paltz Loop roughly every half hour, for $1.

TAXI SERVICES: Green Taxi LLC - 845-255-4733, Jon’s Village Taxi - 845 243-4241

CAMPUS ABBREVIATIONS:
- HUM: Humanities Classroom Building
- JFT: Jacobsen Faculty Tower
- LC: Lecture Center
- STL: Sojourner Truth Library
- SUB: Student Union Building
- WH: Wooster Hall
CAMPUS RESOURCES

GENDER NEUTRAL RESTROOMS: Available across campus, notably:
• behind Truth Cafe in the Sojourner Truth Library
• 4th floor of the Student Union Building
• 2nd floor of Wooster Hall
• Basement, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 7th floors of the Jacobsen Faculty Tower

LACTATION SPACE: The Austerity University Planning Committee is proud to facilitate access to conference attendees who need to use the lactation space. The UUP’s Women’s Rights and Concerns Committee (WRCC) successfully worked to get the campus to commit to not one but two spaces on campus for lactating parents. Please contact Melissa Yang Rock at AusterityUniversity@gmail.com for more information.

AUSTERITY UNIVERSITY KID CAMP: The Austerity University Planning Committee is proud to support free childcare for conference attendees - and it’s not Austere, we promise! Advanced registration is necessary to secure childcare during the conference. Childcare will be provided by SUNY New Paltz early education and education majors, who have all completed background checks necessary to work with children. Austerity University Kid Camp will offer age-appropriate activities for children ranging from 6 months to 17 years of age (separated into age-appropriate groups) including curriculum-enriched, hands-on, creative activities, arts & crafts projects, active games, and more. For questions about this program and any additional inquiries, please contact Melissa Yang Rock at AusterityUniversity@gmail.com.

INTERNET ACCESS: The “NP Hawks Guest” wireless network is available almost everywhere on campus. You need a phone that can receive text messages to get login credentials. Upon connecting, you’ll be prompted with a short registration.

COMPUTER ACCESS/PRINTING: Guests can request to use a library desktop computer for 1 hour intervals, if there are any available. Printing is $0.10 a page, and can be picked up at the Circulation Desk.

ACCESSIBILITY: If you have accessibility questions or require accommodations to fully participate in this event, please contact us at AusterityUniversity@gmail.com at least a week in advance of the conference.
SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Friday, March 6
Registration
• Science Hall Lobby

Keynote: Sherry Wolf
• Science Hall 181

Saturday, March 7
Registration
• Sojourner Truth Library Lobby

Morning Welcome, Coffee + Tea
8am-8:45am

Artist Presentation: This Is What Austerity Looks Like
• Sojourner Truth Library Lobby
8:15-8:45am

Video Testimonials
• Lecture Center Basement TV Studio
9am-3pm

Session 1
9am-10:30am

15 Min Break

Session 2
10:45am-12:15pm

Lunch (On Your Own) 12:15pm-2:00pm

Session 3
2pm-3:30pm

15 Min Break

Keynote: Jia Lee
• Lecture Center 102
3:45pm-4:45pm

General Assembly
• Lecture Center 102
4:45pm-6pm

Closing Remarks
SESSION 1: 9-10:30am

**PANEL DISCUSSION**
The Impact of the 1970’s Financial Crisis on CUNY

**Panelists:**
Alissa Karl (SUNY Brockport)
Michael Spear (CUNY, Kingsborough)
Leigh Claire La Berge (CUNY, BMCC)

**Chair:** Stephen Brier (CUNY Graduate Center)
**Location:** Humanities 201

**PAPER SESSION**

**Chair:** César Barros (SUNY New Paltz)
**Location:** Humanities 214

The Garbage Can Model of Technology Use in Higher Education and the Role of Governance
John Gallagher (BMCC)

Education Technology Integration in K-12 and the Impacts of Austerity on Public Higher Education
Kiersten Greene (SUNY New Paltz)

Putting Austerity into a National Context
Rachel Somerstein (SUNY New Paltz)

**WORKSHOP**

Poverty-Proofing the University
John McKendrick
(Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, United Kingdom)

**Location:** Humanities 218
SESSION 2: 10:45am–12:15pm

PANEL DISCUSSION
Strategizing the Fightback, Lessons from Rutgers, CUNY & SUNY
Panelists:
Sherry Wolf (AAUP-Rutgers)
James D. Hoff (PSC-CUNY)
Beth Wilson (UUP-SUNY, New Paltz Chapter President)
Chair: Peter Ikeler (UUP, SUNY Old Westbury)
Location: Humanities 201

PANEL DISCUSSION
The Common Front and Beyond: Lessons from the Fight Against Austerity in Quebec
Panelists:
Fanny Theurillat- Cloutier (Cégep Marie-Victorin, Montréal, Québec, CA)
Camille Marcoux (CUTE UQAM/ Student Work Unitary Committee)
Etienne Simard (CUTE UQAM)
Chair: Erik Forman (SUNY Empire State College)
Location: Humanities 214

PAPER SESSION
Chair: Kt Tobin (SUNY New Paltz)
Location: Humanities 216

Austerity University: Enrollment trends at state colleges & universities in New York following the Great Recession
John Sharp (SUNY New Paltz)

Baumol's Cost Disease and Higher Education Finance
Hamid Azari-Rad (SUNY New Paltz)

Resisting Austerity at Bronx Community College: Strategies & a New Vision
Jonathan Scott (CUNY-BCC)

WORKSHOP
Queers for Educational Justice, Liz Montegary (SUNY Stony Brook)
Location: Humanities 218
SESSION 3: 2pm–3:30pm

BOOK TALK
Stephen Brier (The Graduate Center, CUNY)
Location: Humanities 201

PAPER SESSION
Chair: Jessica Pabón (SUNY New Paltz)
Location: Humanities 214
‘Fees Are Wage Theft’: Graduate Labor Unions and Confronting the Neoliberal University
Jonathan Isaac (University of Wisconsin- Madison)
The Adjunct Paradox
Mary Hess (SUNY Oswego)
The People’s University: Austerity Inequality and the Liberatory Promises of Public Higher Education
Michelle Corbin (Worcester State University)

WORKSHOP
Austerity in CUNY and NYC
Sarah Gafur (CUNY)
Hailey Lam (CUNY)
Jane Guskin (CUNY)
Location: Humanities 216

WORKSHOP
Marshaling for Protests under the First Amendment
Alexis Danzig (ACT-UP civil disobedience trainer, founding member of Rise and Resist NYC)
Location: Humanities 218
Hope Amidst the Horror: Collective Action vs. Manufactured Austerity

Sherry Wolf is the Senior Organizer of Rutgers AAUP-AFT, a union of more than 8,500 FT and PT faculty, grad workers, postdocs and counsellors at the state university of New Jersey where faculty came to the brink of their first strike in the university’s 253-year history last Spring when they won a ground-breaking contract that includes race and gender equity and other common good demands. Wolf is a longtime socialist organizer, writer, public speaker and is the author of *Sexuality and Socialism: History, Politics and Theory of LGBT Liberation.*

March 6, 2020, 5:30pm
181 Science Hall

Organizing vs Mobilizing: Lessons for Higher Ed from the Grassroots, K-12 Public Education Movement

Jia Lee has been a New York City special education public school teacher for nineteen years and UFT chapter leader for twelve years. She is also a proud public school parent. Jia is a member of a caucus within the United Federation of Teachers called the Movement of Rank and File Educators. She organizes with other parents and educators in New York City and across the state to expose the harmful impact of high stakes standardized testing.

March 7, 2020, 3:45pm
Lecture Center 102
SESSION 1  9:00-10:30am

PANEL DISCUSSION
The Impact of the 1970s Financial Crisis on CUNY
Humanities 201
PANELISTS:
Alissa Karl (SUNY Brockport)
Michael Spear (CUNY, Kingsborough)
Leigh Claire La Berge (CUNY, BMCC)
CHAIR: Stephen Brier (CUNY Graduate Center)

This panel offers three engagements with the valuation of public-sector labor as a commodity. We begin with the premise that since the 1970s, public-sector labor in New York State (and beyond) has been subject to a progressive devaluation as evidenced by stagnant wage rates. This devaluation has been prompted by multiple factors, including the Taylor Law, which bans striking by public sector workers; a series of capital strikes in which the business and financial class have constricted the circulation of capital (one could read NYC’s fiscal crisis through this lens); and, finally, the encouragement and coordination of volunteer labor throughout state institutions.

Literary scholar and UUP Brockport Chapter President Alissa Karl (SUNY Brockport) examines how the concept of “the public” figures both in the extraction of extra labor value from public workers, and also as a commodity – or perhaps not – in an age of austerity; historian and PSC bargaining committee member Michael Spear (CUNY, Kingsborough) offers lessons from CUNY in the 1970s, during which the devaluation of public-sector labor resulted in an increase in tuition; critical theorist Leigh Claire La Berge (CUNY, BMCC) provides a history of universities’ cultivation of volunteer—what she has also termed decommodified—labor as a way to blunt organizing efforts. Together, these panelists seek to offer new vocabularies and histories for how to think and value public-sector labor now.

WORKSHOP
Poverty-Proofing the University
Humanities 218
John McKendrick (Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, United Kingdom)

Poverty-proofing is one of the interventions that is used to ensure that public investment is, at the very least, not disbursed in ways that perpetuate or exacerbate poverty. At its best, poverty-proofing encourages a spending shift toward public investment that either ameliorates the negative impact of poverty or tackles its root causes. This workshop applies this anti-poverty intervention to the university and comprises three parts. First, a brief presentation will review the history of poverty proofing as an anti-poverty intervention and will outline its prospects for improving how universities operate. Second, through a participatory workshop, we will work collectively to generate ideas on what should be undertaken, by the gamut of actors across the university community, to ‘poverty proof’ the university. Finally, we will discuss the prospects for poverty proofing as a practical tool to transform the university in the USA and beyond.
The Garbage Can Model of Technology Use in Higher Education and the Role of Governance
John Gallagher (BMCC)

There is a significant discourse in higher education administration and among politicians that technology can be used to increase revenues and improve efficiencies in the face of constant budget cutting. It’s seen as a silver bullet and often makes significant assumptions about student preferences and the role of faculty. Unfortunately this not only isn’t true, it also runs against the reality that it increases costs and degrades student outcomes. Much of the assumptions are made by administrators and politicians in the absence of faculty participation or formal governance. Their decision making is often based on the kind of reasoning that comes out of the chaos triggered by austerity and the false opportunities that are apparently but not actually available through technology application. This reasoning follows a management theory called the garbage can model.

The problem of course is that these decisions are not grounded n the communities of practice that constitute the faculty and focus on narrow ideas of content delivery and accreditation. By eliminating the faculty role through governance, decision making stays in the garbage can and makes austerity worse. This proposal suggests that faculty participation and governance is essential for using technology well and for combating austerity.

Education Technology Integration in K-12 and the Impacts of Austerity on Public Higher Education
Kiersten Greene (SUNY New Paltz)

The purpose of this session is to make the invisibility of public higher education work creep visible through an exploration of changes to teacher preparation since the Great Recession of 2008. Historically wielded as a capitalist tool to ensure class-based pathways to work, teacher preparation is increasingly positioned as an industry that can be farmed out to profit-seeking entities. This process has only accelerated as public university funds have diminished in the last decade. However, another factor has contributed apace: education technology integration in K-12, which has impacted both the acceleration — and automation — of the impacts of austerity on public higher education. SUNY educates one in four teachers in New York State; however, funding for programs continues to diminish. This presentation will think out loud about growing problems and possible solutions in the face of these economic and social trends in P-20 education.

Putting Austerity into a National Context
Rachel Somerstein (SUNY New Paltz)

SUNY’s stagnant funding is not unique. According to the Center for Budget and Budget Priorities, every state in the country, except Wyoming and North Dakota, is devoting less per student in higher education than before the 2008 recession. In this presentation, I situate SUNY’s budget within a larger, national lens. I show how other public systems have tried to ‘make up’ lost funding through tuition increases and detail the programs that, across the nation, have not survived the axe. In addition to such data, I include the voices of faculty who currently work for institutions from Alaska to Wisconsin to show how austerity measures have shaped our colleagues’ experiences across the country. The presentation concludes with an opportunity to consider what’s been lost over the past 10 years. I focus on those losses that are not immediately evident—much like staggering environmental losses, such as the world’s decimated bird and insect populations—and therefore hard to see.
SESSION 2  10:45am-12:15pm

PANEL DISCUSSION
Strategizing the Fightback, Lessons from Rutgers, CUNY & SUNY
Humanities 201
PANELISTS:
Sherry Wolf (AAUP-Rutgers)
James D. Hoff (PSC-CUNY)
Beth Wilson (UUP-SUNY, New Paltz Chapter President)
CHAIR: Peter Ikeler (UUP, SUNY Old Westbury)

Public higher education has been the target of sustained attacks since the 1970s. From adjunctification and bloated administrations to for-profit suppliers and ballooning student tuition, state systems once formed to create an educated citizenry and provide working-class uplift have been forced into the mold of debt-making credential factories based on sweated intellectual labor. Faculty, students and staff have seen their wages and opportunities dwindle while emphasis is placed ever-more on commodified educational “outcomes” and dubious performance “metrics.” Yet at many institutions and systems a fightback is brewing. This panel brings together leading activists from three key unions in the Northeast--PSC-CUNY, Rutgers-AAUP and UUP-SUNY--to share their experiences resisting austerity alongside students and staff. Sherry Wolf, a Rutgers-AAUP organizer and author of the book Sexuality and Socialism, will summarize the lessons of her union’s 2019 almost-strike that won a historically progressive contract. James D. Hoff, PSC-CUNY activist and professor of English at Borough of Manhattan Community College, will report on the ongoing fight for adjunct equity at CUNY spearheaded by the $7K or Strike movement. Beth Wilson, lecturer in art history and president of the UUP New Paltz chapter as well as statewide Executive Board member, will share her insights from decades of struggle inside the UUP. Peter Ikeler, fellow UUP activist and professor of sociology at SUNY Old Westbury, will moderate the discussion. With audience participation, this panel aims to synthesize strategy and foment cooperation for movements to de commodify public higher ed across the US and beyond.

PANEL DISCUSSION
The Common Front and Beyond: Lessons from the Fight Against Austerity in Quebec
Humanities 214
PANELISTS:
Fanny Theurillat-Cloutier (Cégep Marie-Victorin, Montréal, Québec, CA)
Camille Marcoux (CUTE UQAM/ Student Work Unitary Committee)
Etienne Simard (CUTE UQAM)
CHAIR: Erik Forman (SUNY Empire State College)

A six hour drive north of New York City, a powerful movement has staved off austerity with strikes of over 300,000 students and “common front” general strikes of all unions in the public sector. This is Quebec. What can movements of workers and students in New York state learn from the anti-austerity organizing of our neighbors to the north? This panel discussion will feature a roundtable discussion between student unions and labor unions in Quebec along with student organizations and union activists in New York exploring factors of success, and barriers to confronting the neoliberal turn in higher education.
Austerity University: Enrollment trends at state colleges & universities in New York following the Great Recession
John Sharp (SUNY New Paltz)

Following the Great Recession, state support for higher education has declined and public universities have employed various strategies in an effort to make up for shortfalls. In addition to raising tuition, many schools have sought to increase overall enrollments as well as the proportion of students coming from out-of-state. This paper examines those enrollment trends in New York State at the institutional level, for both comprehensive colleges and research institutions, and seeks to explain why these approaches have been more or less successful.

Baumol’s Cost Disease and Higher Education Finance
Hamid Azari-Rad (SUNY New Paltz)

Baumol’s cost disease is an economic phenomenon where production costs in labor-intensive industries rise faster than those in capital-intensive industries, even when labor costs rise at the same rate. The celebrated economist, William J. Baumol and William G. Brown discovered this in 1960s when studying the anemic nature of finances in the performing Arts. However, this phenomenon applies to other sectors of the economy such as healthcare and education and is the source of faster than normal (i.e., inflation rate) rise in costs in these sectors. In higher education, Baumol’s cost disease appears as an unending budget shortfall in both private and public institutions. The impact has been more potent in the private sector leading to closure of some private colleges and universities. In the public sector this appears as a constant budgetary cut to the higher education by the State. In this paper, I will use examples to explain what Baumol’s cost disease is, and how it affects financing of higher education. While the typical proposed solution to filling the gap left by rising costs is to increase labor productivity, I propose that an alternative view of the nature of this phenomenon can lead to restatement of the “problem” and realignment of our social priorities in addressing this issue in higher education.

Resisting Austerity at Bronx Community College: Strategies and a New Vision
Jonathan Scott (CUNY-BCC)

At the end of October 2019, the administration of Bronx Community College released its 2020 financial plan. The plan is an austerity program that once imposed will have many damaging effects on the college. In response, BCC’s Faculty Council passed in November a resolution of No Confidence in the college’s head of Administration and Finance, Kay Ellis. This collective act of resistance to austerity is extremely promising politically, and will take up the first part of this presentation. The second part focuses on one specific negative effect of austerity at BCC: the lowering of student retention rates at the college. For the past ten years, BCC has had the lowest student retention rate among CUNY’s seven community colleges. Each year BCC loses around 45% of its students, and this problem is being used by the college’s deficit hawks as justification for their new austerity program. While, predictably, BCC’s administration has failed to offer any new vision for increasing student retention, the faculty and staff has thus far not involved itself in making a vision of strong student retention at the college. The last part of this presentation will propose a way that faculty and staff could create such a vision.
This workshop will provide a venue for participants to think collaboratively about the relationship between gender and sexual liberation and racial, economic, and educational justice. While we will begin with a brief discussion about the specific challenges facing LGBTQ*-identified folks on US campuses and about why access to quality public higher education is a queer and trans issue, the primary goal of this workshop will be to move beyond a diagnosis of the university’s homo/transphobic shortcomings and to imagine new ways of inhabiting the academy and building student and worker movements. We will begin with a collective exercise in imagining otherwise. What would the ideal queer university look like (in terms of curriculum, architecture, accessibility, health services, student housing, the terms/conditions of our labor, etc.)? Next, we will spend some time identifying the spaces and moments where we get a glimpse of that imagined university in our current lives. When do we feel safest, sexiest, queerest, and/or most radicalized on our campuses? Where does neuroqueerness and gender nonconformity thrive, and where do multiracial queer networks and cross-movement solidarities take shape? How might we repurpose the university’s resources to expand these spaces and extend these moments? With our utopian longings in mind, we will dedicate the end of the workshop to brainstorming concrete strategies to move us toward a queerer future. What steps can we take to align our student and worker movements with the broader project of gender and sexual liberation? At the heart of this workshop is a commitment to infusing the fight for educational justice with an intersectional feminist politics, an unapologetic commitment to sex positivity, and a belief in the need for a world with more gender and sexual diversity.
SESSION 3   2:00pm–3:30pm

BOOK TALK
Humanities 201
Stephen Brier (The Graduate Center, CUNY)

Stephen Brier (The Graduate Center, CUNY) will be discussing the book he co-authored with Michael Fabricant titled, “Austerity Blues: Fighting for the Soul of Public Higher Education.”

PAPER SESSION
CHAIR: Jessica Pabón
Humanities 214

‘Fees Are Wage Theft’: Graduate Labor Unions and Confronting the Neoliberal University
Jonathan Isaac (University of Wisconsin–Madison)
The rhetoric of graduate student workers as “students first” or “apprentices” is not a new administrative tactic when combatting unionization initiatives—administrators from elite private universities employed it in 2002 in front of the NLRB when arguing against graduate worker unionization at NYU, and administrators at the University of Wisconsin–Madison continue to deploy it to deny graduate student workers their rights in a post-Act 10 landscape. With labor struggle resurfacing in the wake of the teachers’ strikes of 2018-19, graduate labor unions represent a potent countering force against corporatizing and extractive practices in institutions of higher education that have chipped away at the tangible gains in workplace protection and compensation. Further, a refounding of graduate labor struggle on college campuses is made all the more urgent because of the restructuring of higher education over the last four decades under neoliberal doctrine that now guides our institutions’ decision-making (see Fabricant and Brier 2016). In this presentation, I will draw from a case study of the UW–Madison Teaching Assistants’ Association’s (TAA) current campaign for financial relief from mandatory fees for graduate student workers to demonstrate how grad unions must suture the personal injustices felt by graduate student workers to a collective identity as workers within neoliberal logics in order to facilitate campaigns that can both develop labor consciousness among graduate student workers and challenge neoliberal funding models. This presentation will offer union organizing and messaging strategies that can be adapted to fit neoliberal conditions at other universities.

The Adjunct Paradox
Mary Hess (SUNY Oswego)

Adjuncts are indispensable. Adjuncts are disposable. Adjuncts want promotion, protection, and parity. Adjuncts are temporary by design, and a threat to tenure. Adjuncts deserve a place in the academy. Adjuncts further their own oppression. In the new austerity, at many public universities, any move to better their circumstances is met with stubborn resistance by administrators grown accustomed to manipulating “casual” labor and enticed by a business model of “just in time” course scheduling. As adjuncts increasingly become the focus of union organizing and the subject of sympathetic journalists, the entire question of what place adjuncts have in this stripped-down public system is now revealed as never before. Gone is the old paradigm of “vanity” adjuncts, the moonlighting expert burnishing a resume with a class or two. Gone as well is the perception that adjuncts are deficient in scholarship or ambition. Decades of a dwindling job market have left a cohort of hard-working, highly qualified and frustrated teachers who ask why they should be denied job security and a living wage. As a UUP Officer for Contingent Faculty, I am tasked with both saving adjunct jobs and arguing that there should be no adjuncts. This paradox has engendered paralysis in negotiations, as administrators both depend on adjuncts to balance their budgets while simultaneously deploping their existence. Is the path forward a normalization of these positions, as UUP has long advocated, or will the future be less security for all, as tenure is increasingly threatened?
The People’s University: Austerity Inequality & the Liberatory Promises of Public Higher Education
Michelle Corbin (Worcester State University)

The US public higher education system is often celebrated as a groundbreaking progressive achievement as it led the world in expanding historically unprecedented public access to higher education. This included not only economic mobility but also the promise of access to the liberatory aspects of education that enrich the mind and the imagination, cultivate informed and active democratic participation, and foster a more fair and equal society. Unfortunately, just when the institutional needs for public higher education are expanding, intensifying racialized austerity politics are increasingly undermining both of these historical liberatory promises of public higher education in multiple ways. In response to these deepening crises, faculty and graduate students are also organizing to defend their programs, institutions and working conditions and to reclaim the racial and gender justice promises of public higher education.

In this paper, I draw on the analytic frameworks of feminist and public sociology, critical pedagogy and my experiences as a teacher scholar at a regional state university to critically analyze the pedagogical landscape of public higher education as it is transformed by deepening inequality and escalating austerity and I assess the current state of the historical promises of public higher education as a liberatory and equalizing project. I also examine the ways that women and racially minoritized faculty and graduate students are organizing to resist these through their unions and beyond.
WORKSHOP
Austerity in CUNY and NYC
Humanities 216
Sarah Gafur (CUNY)
Hailey Lam (CUNY)
Jane Guskin (CUNY)

On October 21st, students and adjunct professors marched from 125th street in Harlem to CUNY Hunter College Silberman School of Social Work, where the Board of Trustees were holding a public hearing. Together, we chanted, flyered to the community, and stated our grievances to the Board. Free CUNY!’s protest echoed the ones that happened in 1995 against massive budget cuts to CUNY, carry the same message of anti-austerity, anti-neoliberalism, and anti-bureaucracy in CUNY. In December, we creatively disrupted two meetings where CUNY’s trustees tried to impose a new tuition hike and wellness fee on students.

When we think about what a Free CUNY means and how we get there, we keep in mind that these are not new questions, nor is it an isolated practice. The “fiscal crisis of CUNY” was a part of massive budget overhauls all over the city. The deliberate cutting of public resources by the state has targeted several city institutions like the NYC Housing Authority’s public housing, the MTA, the K-12 system, but never attacks policing and surveillance. In our fight for a Free CUNY we find it necessary to consider and include in our organizing the ways austerity permeates all aspects of our lives, not just when we’re in the academic institution.

In our presentation, we outline specific ways we must think about the relationships between CUNY and the community how this is incorporated into our organizing tactics, and our relationships with other organizations across the city and beyond. Join us to discuss: How can we expand on the gains made so far by Free CUNY and the adjunct-led 7K or Strike campaign? How can we coordinate our actions into a powerful statewide movement against austerity? How can we build rank-and-file worker and student power to win a free and fully funded CUNY and SUNY through creative militant actions including strikes?

WORKSHOP
Marshaling for Protests under the First Amendment
Humanities 218
Alexis Danzig (ACT-UP civil disobedience trainer, founding member of Rise and Resist NYC)

Q. What is Marshaling?

A. Marshaling is organized community resistance. Marshals help organizers carry out a demonstration according to what has been planned; convey information to protesters and bystanders; help distribute signs, banners, lead chants, set up legal pickets, and set the pace of a march so that all can participate. Marshals also delineate the limits of the legal protest from where civil disobedience is occurring, and negotiate with police during an action. As necessary, Marshals block traffic, advocate for the rights of leafletters and all protesters; and de-escalate interactions with hecklers and trolls.

In this 1.5 hour presentation, you will learn the various roles of marshals at demonstrations and on marches, and consider best practices for creating successful actions, share/rotate skills, and build activist community. The presentation will end with time for Q&A. Activists with all levels of experience are welcome.
Lunch is from 12:15-2:00pm. The Village of New Paltz is home to many restaurants suiting a variety of palates.

### Breakfast/Cafes
- **The Bakery, ($) (**)**
  13A North Front St.
  255-8840
- **Main Street Bistro ($) (**)**
  59 Main St.
  255-7766
- **Mudd Puddle Café ($)**
  10 Main St., #312
  255-3436

### Caribbean
- **Jamaican Choice ($)**
  45 Main St.
  255-4700

### Chinese
- **China House ($$$)**
  102 Main St.
  255-8438

### Continental/Eclectic
- **Huckleberry ($$) (+)**
  21 Church St.
  633-8443
- **Lola’s Cafe ($$) (**)**
  49 Main St.
  255-6555
- **Main Street Bistro ($) (**)**
  59 Main St.
  255-7766

### Delis/Diners
- **B-Side Grill ($$$) (**)**
  62 Main St.
  256-0100
- **Convenient Deli ($)**
  186 Main St.
  255-9835
- **Jack’s Meats & Deli ($$$)**
  79 Main St.
  255-2244
- **Russo’s Italian Deli ($)**
  164 Main St.
  255-1485

### Greek/Mediterranean
- **Anatolia ($$$)**
  76 Main St.
  255-1424
- **Moonlight Café ($) (**)**
  53 Main St.
  255-4813
- **Tzatziki Greek Grill ($)**
  62 Main St.
  255-1144

### Indian
- **New Paltz Indian ($$$) (**)**
  1 N Manheim Blvd.
  255-6441

### Japanese
- **Asian Fusion ($$$)**
  215 Main St.
  255-3333
- **Tokyo Sushi ($$$)**
  117 Main St.
  255-1335

### Mexican/Southwestern
- **Bacchus ($$$) (+)**
  4 S. Chestnut St.
  255-8386
- **Los Jalapenos ($$$)**
  25 N Chestnut.
  255-9000
- **Mexicali Blue ($)**
  89 Main St.
  255-5551
- **Mexican Kitchen ($) (**)**
  15 North Front St.
  255-2224

### Pub Food
- **Bacchus ($$$) (+)**
  4 S. Chestnut St.
  255-8636
- **Garvan’s Gastropub ($$$)**
  215 Huguenot St.
  255-7888
- **Murphy’s Restaurant & Pub ($$$)**
  107 Main St.
  255-9718
- **McGillicuddy’s Restaurant ($$$)**
  84 Main St.
  255-9289
- **P&G’s Restaurant ($$$)**
  91 Main St.
  255-6161

### Pizza/Italian
- **Rino’s Pizzeria ($)**
  246 Main St.
  255-8600
- **Village Pizza ($)**
  81 N. Chestnut St.
  255-3100

### Miscellaneous
- **Karma Road Vegetarian Deli (**+)**
  11 Main St. ($)
  255-1099
- **Main Course (**) ($$$)**
  175 Main St.
  255-2600
- **The Parish ($$$) (+)**
  10 Main St.
  255-4205
- **Rūna ($$$) (**)**
  10 Plattekill Ave.
  844-251-3990

### Thai & Vietnamese
- **Bangkok Café ($$$)**
  119 Main St.
  255-1026
- **IPho ($) (**)**
  152-154 Main St.
  255-0555
- **Lemongrass ($$$) (**)**
  125 Main St.
  255-0161

* Vegetarian Options
** Vegetarian and Vegan Options
+ Gluten Free Options