

2009 Professional Staff Congress/CUNY Questionnaire for NYC Candidates

Candidate for: **City Council**

City Council District: **04**

Borough: **Manhattan**

Name: **Daniel R. Garodnick**

Campaign Address: **211 East 43rd Street, Suite 306
New York, NY 10017**

Telephone #: **646-209-6012**

Email Address: **garodnick2009@gmail.com**

Political Party Affiliation: **Democrat**

Occupation: **New York City Council Member**

Current Employment / Employer: **New York City**

Are you an incumbent: **Yes** No Number of years in office: **3**

Under the current term limits law, how many more additional terms, after this one, will you be able to serve?

I would be able to serve two terms in the City Council after this current term.

Education:

High School: **The Trinity School, New York**

College: **Dartmouth College, New Hampshire**

Graduate / Professional: **University of Pennsylvania Law School, Pennsylvania**

1. I received support to pay for college from:
(Please check all that apply)

- Pell Grant
- NYS Tuition Assistance Program
- Scholarship
- Student Loans
- Family**
- Self**
- Other Source

2. In my view, paying for public higher education (CUNY) should primarily be the responsibility of:
(check only one)

- Students

- Parents / Family
- Government
- Employers
- All of the above**

(Please attach additional sheets as necessary to answer the following questions.)

3. Public funding to public higher education has fallen sharply over the last two decades. Since 1991, NY State funding per student for CUNY senior colleges fell 14% and, for CUNY community colleges, it fell by 25.6%.¹ Though NY City began to restore funding to CUNY community colleges five years ago, proposed budget cuts this year will eliminate this advance. What would you do to increase public investment in CUNY?

I am proud to represent Hunter College as the Council Member for District 4. As a co-chair of the Manhattan Delegation and member of the Budget Negotiating Team, I advocated for the restoration of funds to the CUNY system and specifically pushed for restoring previous levels of funding to the Hunter College Campus Schools, the Vallone Scholarships, the Murphy Center for Worker Education, the Dominican Studies Institute and Center for Puerto Rican Studies. I support the state's decision to return percentages of SUNY and CUNY tuition increases directly to those public systems, instead of the State general fund, on an annually increasing basis.

4. More than 50% of CUNY students come from households with annual income below \$40,000, but students will pay 15% more on average next year to attend a CUNY senior college and 14% more to attend a community college if tuition hikes go through. Overall, student tuition makes up 40% of CUNY's total operating revenue and the CUNY Master Plan ("CUNY Compact") calls for regular, annual tuition hikes.

4a. Do you support or oppose the current tuition increases?

As co-chair of the Manhattan Delegation, I supported for Fiscal Year 2010 the lowest possible increases in tuition while advocating for the Council's restoration of funds to CUNY.

4b. Do you support or oppose the CUNY Compact's call for annual tuition increases?

If increases are necessary, they should be done in graduated fashion, rather than sudden drastic changes from one year to the next.

4c. What would you do to relieve the burden on students and families to pay for CUNY?

I advocated for restoring government funding to CUNY schools in this budget cycle. I also believe in more abundant federal, state and city grant and loan programs for low and moderate income families. I support expanding the eligibility for the State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and better funding of subsidized loans to help defray the cost of education until post-graduation.

4d. Some economists argue that earning a college degree enables a student to get a good-paying job upon graduation, and, therefore, government policy should be structured around an expectation of students to finance their education by taking out loans. Do you agree or disagree with a higher education financing policy that is structured around students taking out loans to finance tuition increases? Why or why not?

Students whose families do not have the ability to pay full tuition should pay through a combination of grants, loans, work-study and family or self-financing.

¹ Fiscal Policy Institute Report: "New York State's Underinvestment in Public Higher Education," January 15, 2009

5. CUNY enrollments are higher than at any other time in its history, but in 1975 (the last enrollment peak), CUNY had 11,500 full-time faculty and now it has 6,800. Similarly, there has been a decline in the number of professional and support staff. CUNY now has 9,000 adjunct faculty and 1,000 adjunct professional staff who are part-time and low-paid. The dramatic decline of the full-time workforce and reliance on an exploited and over-stretched part-time workforce compromises the quality of education and the University's ability to deliver educational services to students.

5a. What specific policies would you advocate to provide CUNY with the resources to hire more full-time faculty, counselors, professional and other staff?

See answer to Question 3.

5b. What specific policies would you advocate to improve the wages and working conditions of part-time adjunct faculty and staff that currently provide half the instruction at CUNY?

I do not support policies or practices that push professors into adjunct positions to avoid paying benefits.

6. What are your views on New York City's current tax structure? If you are elected, what specific tax and revenue policies would you advocate?

I support policies that promote progressive income tax reform.

7. What fiscal policies would you advocate to help New York City maintain public services during the current recession?

I have urged the Bloomberg Administration to consider alternative cost-saving measures to cutting vital services to New Yorkers. I highlighted \$9.3 million in contracted services and asked the Administration to do an in-depth analysis of where private contractor and consultant services can be replaced with civil servants.

8. In your view, where does CUNY stand, as a priority, in New York's economic development and economic recovery?

I believe that the CUNY system, and the education and opportunities it provides, is essential to New York City's recovery and economic development.

9. Academic freedom is important because adherence to it allows colleges and universities to best serve the public interest. For this reason, the university must be a place where all ideas, even those that are unpopular, may be freely expressed and debated without interference from management, trustees or public officials. Yet, for short-term political advantage, politicians have undermined academic freedom by publicly attacking unpopular speech by faculty and calling for punitive action by college or university managements. Such public calls go beyond simple disagreement.

9a. Do you agree that it is necessary to uphold academic freedom at CUNY and other colleges and universities? Will you agree to avoid taking unfair political advantage of unpopular speech on campuses?

Yes, I support upholding academic freedom and free speech at all public academic institutions.

9b. Academic freedom also extends to pedagogical practices, academic standards and curriculum and program decisions. Who do you believe is best placed to make determinations about these matters: faculty, college administrators, community organizations, private businesses, or public officials?

All entities with a stake in public education – from faculty to college administrators to students – should have a role in determining pedagogical practices and academic standards. Academic decisions should be guided through a dialogue between faculty and the college administration.

10. Do you believe that public employees should have the same right to strike as private employees? Please explain?

I support the Taylor Law, but I am open to examining revisions to the law.

11. In general, public employees have had more generous health and pension benefits than private employees. Some politicians have used this disparity to argue for a diminution of public employee benefits and blamed New York's fiscal problems on such benefits. Do you believe public employees' health and pension benefits should be maintained, reduced, or enhanced? Please be as specific as possible.

We need to focus on ways to ensure that private sector employees have appropriate health care benefits. Today, far too many New Yorkers do not have access to health care. Tearing down public employees does not accomplish that goal.

12. Incumbents, please list your committee and subcommittee memberships and indicate if you are chair:

Chair, Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions and Concessions; Education; Transportation; Land Use; Public Safety; Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations; Rules, Privileges and Elections; Standards and Ethics; and State and Federal Legislation.

13. Please list the bills you have introduced or co-sponsored in support of CUNY and higher education, or other actions you have taken in this cause:

I have allocated approximately \$1 million dollars for capital upgrades to CUNY facilities in my own district, including library, media facility, and art classroom renovations. I also supported the Council's March 2009 initiative to create new jobs and to combat New York City's nursing shortage by partnering with CUNY to increase the faculty at nursing programs and to admit additional nursing students.

14. Please list other legislation that you have introduced or co-sponsored in the last two legislative sessions:

While this list is by no means expansive, I highlight below several areas where I have introduced and passed common sense legislation to improve the quality of life and rights of New Yorkers.

We need to make every effort to protect our dwindling affordable housing stock. To protect tenants and help preserve affordable units, I authored the Tenant Protection Act, which makes it illegal for landlords to harass tenants. This legislation passed and was signed into law by Mayor Bloomberg in March 2008. This year, I authored Introduction 959, a bill that will give tenants more rights in the case of a foreclosure. This bill is currently awaiting a second hearing at the Council.

New Yorkers have every right to know the condition of their drinking water, yet I found that a loophole in the law prevented the public from accessing inspections of a building's water tanks – even with a subpoena. Mayor Bloomberg in February 2009 signed into law my bill that closes this loophole and requires building owners to provide tenants with the records.

In response to an Urban Justice Center report that highlighted unlicensed debt collectors that prey on the most vulnerable New Yorkers and clog our courts with bogus cases, I

authored the Fair Debt Collection Act, which closes a loophole in the current consumer affairs laws and increases the ability of the Department of Consumer Affairs to protect consumers from abusive and illegal debt collection practices. This legislation was passed by the Council and signed into law by Mayor Bloomberg in March 2009.

I have also introduced various bills to protect our environment. Nearly 80% of all greenhouse gases come from the roughly 950,000 buildings across the City. However, New York is one of few states that allow buildings to skirt the energy code if they are not taking on massive renovations. I am the author of New York City's Green Energy Code, which comprises part of the Green Buildings Legislative Package supported by Mayor Bloomberg and being considered by the Council. I have also sponsored legislation that calls for incentivizing solar power in New York City and restrictions on idling, as well as have co-sponsored a host of environmentally-friendly bills.

15. Please describe other actions you have taken in support of union-related initiatives:

Working with the Central Labor Council, I led the formation of a tenant-backed investor group to purchase Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village. We were ultimately unsuccessful, but our \$4.5 billion bid had as its goal the maintenance of affordable housing for the middle class.

In the context of land use, I worked to ensure that the redevelopment of the Con Edison Waterside site would be done with union labor, which was part of the negotiations over the rezoning. I also worked hard to find common ground between the community and developer to ensure that the project would be built -- an important priority for the construction trades. Along the same lines, as co-Chair of the Council's Infrastructure Task Force, I have been a clear and consistent voice for the need to develop and improve our City's infrastructure. This is particularly true now, as we face difficult times -- infrastructure investment pays dividends in economic benefit and good paying jobs.

Finally, in response to a disturbing New York Times report about the conditions of workers in India who are manufacturing New York City manhole covers, I introduced a bill to address the issue. The bill requires that foreign manufacturers of goods disclose their wage and hour practices and workplace health and safety practices before entering into a contract with the City. This legislation is awaiting a hearing at the City Council.

Return completed questionnaire and brief personal biography to:

Professional Staff Congress / CUNY
61 Broadway, Suite 1500
New York, New York 10006
(212) 354-1252
Fax: (212) 302-7815
Attention: Amanda Magalhaes
amagalhaes@pscmail.org

We encourage you to send the questionnaire and attachments via email or by fax.

GARODNICK 2009



Dan Garodnick is a rising star in New York politics, representing the East Side of Manhattan in the New York City Council. Born and raised in the district he represents, Garodnick was first elected in 2005.

As a member of the Council, he has been praised for his “independent streak,” and “creative problem solving,” and has brought transparency to government and sound land use decisions to his district.

During his three years in office, Garodnick was tapped to Chair the Land Use Subcommittee on Planning, and to co-Chair the Manhattan Council Delegation, as well as the Task Forces on Infrastructure and Rules Reform.

Garodnick has been widely recognized as a leader on issues of land use and affordable housing, bringing new approaches to these complex and often divisive issues. In 2008, Garodnick led a transformation of the East Side by rezoning the former Con Edison Waterside site to allow for a vibrant, mixed use community, with five acres of open public space, a new East Side school, affordable housing, and a performing arts facility.

Garodnick also spearheaded the \$4.5 billion tenant-backed bid to buy Stuyvesant Town/Peter Cooper Village, inspiring tenant groups around the city to take their destinies into their own hands. He then won praise for authoring the landmark Tenant Protection Act, which gives tenants new legal rights when they are subject to harassment from their landlord.

He has been a leader on good government reforms, co-sponsoring laws to restrict “pay-to-play” practices, and authoring policies to make the budget more open and transparent. He courageously voted against Mayor Bloomberg’s proposal to extend the terms of elected officials without a referendum.

As co-Chair of the Infrastructure Task Force, Garodnick has chaired hearings to highlight the need for consistent infrastructure investment, as well as the development of new, alternative sources of power. He has advocated creative

measures by city government to improve the environment, such as the creation of solar empowerment zones. He also fought – and succeeded – to secure compensation for local businesses affected by the steam pipe explosion in July 2007, and demanded answers from Con Edison about the cause of the incident.

Garodnick has also sponsored laws to streamline government for residents. He passed legislation to stagger the inspection cycle for building facades to promote efficiency, and introduced legislation to allow the public access to important public health information about their drinking water.



Prior to his election, he was a litigator at the New York Law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, and a law clerk for the Honorable Colleen McMahon of the Southern District of New York. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College, and the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where he served as Editor-in-Chief of the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*. Garodnick lives with his wife Zoe Segal-Reichlin in Peter Cooper Village.

Garodnick has repeatedly made the list of City Hall Newspaper’s “Rising Stars” under the age of 40. He is running for re-election in November 2009, and as a smart, articulate, principled leader in this City, he deserves our help.