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### NO CUTS JUST BUCKS!

The SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge) Program is a stipend program for students in the City University of New York (CUNY). It began in September, 1966 with an enrollment of 450 full-time students. Today there are 10,399 SEEK students in 10 senior colleges in New York City.

We were able to win the SEEK stipend because of the power built up in the struggles led by Black women for welfare during the 60's. The welfare struggles made the point that we are owed some dues--some money--in our communities. Black women knew that the options for ourselves and our children were few and that street life meant hustling, drugs, and jail. We all needed money and a way of getting access to a higher wage without the risk of jail. It is no accident therefore that the demand to open up the doors of the universities was central to the struggles in the Black community--struggles led by Black mothers and schoolgirls. Opening the doors of the then tuition-free university was not enough--"open admissions" could not be a reality for Black, Latin, immigrant, and other poor students without money for food, clothing, shelter, books, and transportation.

The attack on the SEEK program is key to the state's offensive against women. Large numbers of women (out of 1,507 SEEK students at Queens College, 873 are women) have used the SEEK program to break out of the isolation of the home and to gain access to a higher wage. Dismantling the program is a way of forcing those women penniless back into the home, back to dependency on men. For both teenage women and men it means being forced into the full-time job of street life with the higher risk of jail. For young women the street life is prostitution; for young men it is mugging: both are ways of getting money--but it is women, whether working as prostitutes or not, who are mugged. We pay the price twice!

The dismantling of the SEEK program leaves women the "option" of working a low-waged second job for longer hours and less pay. The lack of money means more housework, reinforcing our wageless first job in the home.

The attack on the SEEK Program in Fall, 1976 was launched by New York State Comptroller Arthur Levitt's announcement of "welfare fraud" within CUNY. The state accused SEEK students of receiving "duplicate funds" from the Human Resources Administration (which administers welfare in New York City) and SEEK. HRA and CUNY have since set up a computer cross-check on all monies women/students receive from both welfare and CUNY in order to pick up any "duplication of funds": any students "caught" by the computer will have their student financial aid cut and the state will begin recoupment of monies in September, 1977.

Meanwhile tuition for all students was instituted for the first time in CUNY in September, 1976.

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Beginning in February, 1977, women applying for Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) are being forced to sign a new paternity affidavit.

The New York state budget for the new fiscal year stipulates that all "employable" women and men receiving Home Relief (the name of the New York city-and-state-funded welfare program) must now work for the state three days a week without pay just to stay on the welfare rolls.

Women on ADC are told in welfare offices that they cannot attend a four-year college--that they must either attend a two-year college or enter a vocational training program.

Women who are attending four-year colleges are not eligible for publicly funded daycare services.

Women with children over six must register in the state's Work Incentive Program (WIN) which gives "vocational training" for the same low-waged jobs women are always forced to do and where more often than not no jobs exist. Last year the WIN program placed only 2% of women workers in WIN in waged jobs.

The City University of New York has instituted a "proficiency exam" which all students must pass before entering their third year. Students who fail the exam will be forced to take non-credit remedial courses--courses for which students must pay tuition but receive no academic credit, making them pay to mark time in the university while the paid job market shrinks all around us. While proficiency exams strike hardest at SEEK students from starvation budget ghetto schools, all the schools are too under-budgeted to equip students with what they need. So that proficiency exams strike hard at non-SEEK students--all students--as well. And as proficiency exams, tuition, and cuts in stipends combine to eliminate thousands and thousands of younger undergrads, the corporation trustees of colleges and universities throughout the country are going into the business of "adult education"--more than recouping on their "losses" from "declining youth enrollment" by getting federal and state subsidies to recruit adults and senior citizens--mostly women--into the treadmill of the university.

The New York state legislature was forced to restore most of the cuts in the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP--see demand #5 in petition) in the budget for the new fiscal year. But the TAP stipends of "emancipated students" (students not living with parents or guardians) are still scheduled for reduction in the new budget. This means that single women students--many of whom are Black, Latin, or immigrant women who are already doing the lowest paid jobs outside the home in addition to their wageless housework and the wageless work of going to school, and many of whom are lesbian women with no access at all to the higher wages of men--who most depend on the TAP stipend and on getting an education as a way to get out from

under, are being expected to absorb the shock of the cuts in TAP. Single women are being threatened with having to go "back home": to overcrowded homes where there's more housework, more noise, and less time and room to study—or to get married and be dependent on men in order to survive.

The Queens College Women's Action Group came together at Queens College, CUNY in the Fall of 1976 to fight the cuts in welfare and the dismantling of the SEEK Program. Seeing how the housework we do is wageless and therefore not recognized as work, women are able also to see how the schoolwork we do is a second wageless job: that we don't have the option to refuse either without money. Since we don't get paid for our work in the first place, the only way to fight the cuts is to demand more—NO CUTS JUST BUCKS!

That the lives of women students are already split between two wageless jobs in the community and on the campus, and one or two low-paid jobs in the factory or office, means seeing the cuts in education and welfare—like the speed-up on our jobs outside the home—as the same cuts—cuts in our lives! And the fact that some of us have already won something of a wage for housework in getting welfare (little as it is), and something of a wage for schoolwork in getting a stipend (little as it is), is an example and a source of power for all of us because we know we can win.

The division in our lives between the campus and the community is one that the Man creates and one that we can't afford: we are the same women whether we're holding a dishtowel, a baby, or a chemistry textbook! And we know that wherever we are—campus or community—we're expected as women to work for free. But when we come together with each other to demand our money we have already begun to put an end to this free work once and for all.

POWER to the Queens College Women's Action Group!

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