

Administration silent on CUNY union 'political capital' claim

CAPITAL

By Conor Skelding

5:06 a.m. | Oct. 23, 2014

At a rally Tuesday night, officials from the union representing CUNY's faculty and staff suggested that Mayor Bill de Blasio would help them negotiate a favorable new contract because of their early endorsement and support for his mayoral campaign.

"We endorsed Bill de Blasio, and we made a significant contribution to his being elected," said Michael Fabricant, Professional Staff Congress treasurer and Hunter College professor, to hundreds of the union's members at [a meeting and march Tuesday night](#). "We didn't only endorse at the right time, we showed up, we pushed his campaign, and he knows that, and he remembers."

The Professional Staff Congress has been working without a contract since October of 2010.

"We are using our earned political capital with the mayor to ... press our case for a good economic package," said the group's first vice president and Brooklyn College professor Steven London, at the same meeting. "We helped elect a new mayor, and one with whom we had built up considerable political capital."

London declined to say whether union representatives had met with de Blasio or members of his administration.

The union negotiates with CUNY officials, and the system is funded by both the city and the state, though mostly the state.

The system's board of trustees, who will have to approve a contract, are appointed partly by the governor, and partly by the mayor. De Blasio has yet to appoint his first CUNY board member.

City Hall did not respond specifically to the union's claim of "political capital." Amy Spitalnick, a spokeswoman for the city's office of management and budget, emailed the following statement: "We trust that both sides will reach a fair and responsible resolution that treats workers with respect while protecting taxpayers."