NEW YORK CITY — Belle Zeller has been re-elected president of the Professional Staff Congress, the union representing the 16,000 members of the City University instructional staff.

Dr. Zeller, professor of political science at Brooklyn College, won a three-year term with 1,395 votes for Israel Kugler, professor of social science at New York City Community College and currently deputy president of the union.

Edgar Fank, assistant professor of romance languages at Queens College, received 321 of the 1,235 votes cast for the presidency.

The 20 other top union offices were won by both former Legislative Conference and former United Federation of College Teachers members.

Heading a coalition that swept 15 of these posts was Irwin Polishook, professor of history at Lehman College, elected first vice president.

The winning candidates take office Sept. 1.

Dr. Zeller, 70, has headed the union since its formation in April 1972 by a merger of the Legislative Conference and the United Federation of College Teachers.

She had been chairman of the LC since 1964.

In September, Dr. Zeller will enter her 35th year as a CUNY faculty member and become the longest-tenured professor at any CUNY college.

Her first priority, she said, is to settle the contract dispute that has wracked the university since June 1972.

The strike, affecting approximately 250,000 students at 19 CUNY campuses, would be the first major university strike in the nation.

The vote tally announced July 7 by the NYSUT's Professional Staff Congress, the union representing the teaching and nonclassroom staffs of the university, was 5,905 to 1,023 in favor of the strike, a margin of practically four to one.

The strike vote was recommend ed by the PSC leadership after a year of negotiations and after the Board of Higher Education refused to accept the unanimous recommendations of a three-member state fact-finding panel.

Negotiations began June 19, 1972, and existing contracts expired Aug. 31. The talks reached an impasse Sept. 8 and went into fact-finding Nov. 24.

When the factfinders issued their recommendations in May, the union expressed reservations about some of them but agreed to accept them all in order to break the deadlock.

The board refused to reciprocate.

Instead, the board designated itself the "legislative body" authorized by the Taylor Law to be the final arbiter of a dispute after holding hearings.

At hearings held June 18, the PSC asked the board to abandon its "charade" as an impartial body and to accept the factfinders' recommendations as a reasonable compromise.

The board has not responded.

PSC President Belle Zeller and Deputy President Israel Kugler said:

"The major obstacle to a settlement is the Board of Higher Education's determination to break the union."

"They cited the board's refusal to recognize the union after it was formed by a merger April 14, 1972; the board's cancellation of salary increments 10 days later; its rejection of key recommendations of the state fact-finding panel; its insistence on retroactive contract provisions; its recent offer of a one-year retroactive contract that would expire in August, 1973; and its stated intention to dictate its own terms as the "legislative body.""

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