

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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November 12, 2021
Start: 10:05 a.m.
Recess: 12:32 p.m.

HELD AT: Remote Hearing, Virtual Room 1

B E F O R E: Inez D. Barron
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Inez D. Barron
Laurie A. Cumbo
Alan Maisel
Ydanis Rodriguez
Eric A. Ulrich

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Dr. Daniel Lemons
Interim Executive Vice Chancellor
and University Provost
City University of New York

Matthew Sapienza
Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief
Financial Officer
City University of New York

James Davis

Rosa Squillacote

Linda Pelc

Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome

Nathan Schrader

Jillian Abbott

Jonathan Hanon

Dishunta Meredith

Parisa Osmanovic

Pamela Jean Stenberg

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: The cloud is up.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Backup is rolling.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Sergeant Martinez, you may begin with the opening.

SERGEANT AT ARMS MARTINEZ: Good morning and welcome to today's remote New York City Council committee hearing of the Committee on Higher Education. At this time would all panelists please turn on their video. To minimize disruption, please silence your electronic devices, and if you wish to submit testimony you may do so via email at the following address: testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again, that's testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you for your consideration. We are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Welcome to today's virtual oversight hearing on adjunct faculty employment at the City University of New York. I'm Council Member Inez Barron, chair of the Committee on Higher Education. We last conducted a joint hearing on CUNY adjunct faculty one year ago today. At the time, the university testified that it had been greatly impacted by the pandemic, which necessitated "serious budget cuts", including reductions to personnel. Accordingly, a vacancy review board

1 established in April 2020 reduced payroll costs by
2 keeping vacant or consolidating the responsibilities
3 of existing positions, saving CUNY 33 million dollars
4 in annualized costs as of September 2020. These
5 represented a reduction in full-time staffing levels
6 by 486 positions. Campuses determined that it had to
7 decline, decline to renew the appointments of
8 approximately 2800 adjuncts. CUNY testified that a
9 decline in enrollment had resulted in 52 million
10 dollar loss in revenue, in addition to 32 million
11 dollar lost revenue for the spring 2020 semester.
12 Additionally, CUNY spent almost 75 million dollars on
13 unplanned emergency costs related to the pandemic.
14 In the 12 months since that hearing, campuses have
15 reopened for in-person instruction and the university
16 has received additional public funding. But we
17 continue to hear about layoffs that appear to be
18 disproportionately impacting black and brown
19 employees who are losing their employment and
20 benefits as we continue to crawl out of the pandemic.
21 Meanwhile, I'm also hearing that class sizes have
22 ballooned for remaining instructors. At today's
23 hearing I'm interested in learning about current
24 adjuncts, laid-off adjuncts, and rehired adjuncts, as
25

1 well as the status of continuing education teachers.
2 I want to take a deep dive into what is driving the
3 school's decisions and to know how it is impacting
4 all students, students who may have lost out on the
5 opportunity to take a certain class or declare a
6 particular major, students who have found themselves
7 a little lost in bigger classes, and continuing
8 education students who have lost access to English
9 language courses, for example. I have lots of
10 questions for all of you. But first I would like to,
11 ah, say I want to give thanks to Mr. Omowally Clay,
12 my chief of staff, Ms. Em Indigo Washington, my
13 director of legislation and CUNY liaison, Ms. Chloe
14 Rivera, the committee senior policy analyst, Ms. Amy
15 Briggs, counsel to the committee, and Michelle
16 Faragan, the committee's finance analyst. And I wan
17 to do it, I want to acknowledge we've been joined by
18 Council Member Alan Maisel, and as others join and
19 I'm notified I will announce them as well. I will
20 now turn it over to the committee counsel, Amy
21 Briggs, who will review some procedural items on
22 today's hearing and call the first panel.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair
25 Barron. My name is Amy Briggs and I serve as a

1
2 counsel to the Committee on Higher Education at the
3 New York City Council. I'll be moderating today's
4 hearing and calling panelists to testify. Before we
5 begin, please remember that everyone will be on mute
6 until I call on you to testify, and after you're
7 called on you will be unmuted by the host. Note that
8 there will be a few seconds delay before you are
9 unmuted and we can hear you. For public testimony I
10 will call individuals up in panels. Please listen
11 for your name and I will periodically announce the
12 next few panelists. Once I call your name, a member
13 of our staff will unmute you. The Sergeant at Arms
14 will set a clock and give you to go ahead to testify.
15 All public testimony will be limited to three
16 minutes. After I call your name, please wait for the
17 Sergeant at Arms to announce that you may begin
18 before starting your testimony, testimony. At
19 today's hearing the first panel will include
20 representatives from the City University of New York,
21 followed by council member questions, then public
22 testimony. For today speaking on behalf of the
23 administration we will have Dr. Dan Lemons, interim
24 executive vice chancellor and university provost and
25 Matthew Sapienza, senior vice chancellor and chief

2 financial officer at CUNY. I will now administer the
3 oath to the administration. When you hear your name,
4 please respond once a member of our staff unmutes
5 you. Dr. Lemons and Mr. Sapienza, do you affirm to
6 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
7 truth before these committees and to respond honestly
8 to council member questions? Um, Dr. Lemons?

9 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

10 I do.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Mr.

12 Sapienza?

13 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: I do.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much.

15 We will now hear from Dr. Lemons. You may begin your
16 testimony once a member of the staff unmutes you.

17 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

18 Good morning, Chairperson Barron and members of the
19 Higher Education Committee. Thank you for this
20 opportunity to testify before you on these important
21 issues around adjunct faculty employment of the City
22 University of New York. My name is Daniel Lemons and
23 I have the privilege of serving as interim executive
24 vice chancellor and university provost for the City
25 University of New York. It's clear that CUNY is

1 emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic and will resume
2 significant ways to transform as a university, one
3 that is [inaudible] not only meet the challenges
4 ahead but prepared to take advantage of new
5 opportunities. However, we must also accept the
6 reality the pandemic has left its mark in the
7 community and higher education in general in ways
8 that will require further recovery. One of the most
9 significant roles of CUNY and really all colleges
10 across the nation [inaudible] was felt by the
11 pandemic was a swift decline in student enrollment,
12 primarily at community colleges. The cascade effect
13 of this drop in enrollment inevitably led to
14 [inaudible] which ultimately and unfortunately to the
15 led to the college [inaudible] that could reappoint a
16 large number of adjunct and community [inaudible]
17 that had [inaudible] circumstances [inaudible]. CUNY
18 values its professors and serves educators and
19 mentors for our nearly 500,000 students across the
20 [inaudible] campuses in every borough in New York
21 City. The decision to not reappoint even one
22 adjunct, especially an adjunct who was the recipient
23 of employer-based health insurance during a pandemic
24 is not something the university takes lightly. As an
25

1 example, as president of Lehman College I worked to
2 combine classroom institution with other important
3 student-focused work, such as tutoring, in light of
4 appointments and sufficient hours for adjunct faculty
5 members would otherwise have not been able to
6 maintain health insurance and in doing that was able
7 to prevent any faculty members from not being able to
8 continue with an appointment and therefore they, they
9 were all able to maintain their health insurance.
10

11 However, an unavoidable fact about higher education
12 is the part-time instructor employment shares
13 [inaudible] relationship with enrollment and with the
14 sharp attrition in enrollment in 2020 coupled with
15 budget constraints also by sparked by the pandemic,
16 CUNY was left no choice other than to not reappoint
17 part-time faculty members and a greater number
18 [inaudible]. Difficult decision was necessitated not
19 only by enrollment declines, but also by new budget
20 realities. Nevertheless, the decision to not re-
21 employ faculty was not a decision that we made
22 lightly or without an understanding of its impact.
23 We recognize that CUNY is more than a university.
24 It's a vital anchor institution. It works towards
25 the betterment of the city and the state as an engine

1 of upward social mobility for its students and it's a
2 major important pipeline for New York, as well as
3 being world renowned for ingenuity and innovation.

4 In spring 2020 CUNY was able to reallocate funding to
5 reappoint 81% of the adjuncts who had been receiving
6 health insurance that were laid off pre-pandemic. To
7 amplify these re-employment efforts, CUNY worked

8 assiduously to acquire philanthropic funding

9 specifically to rehire as many adjuncts as funding

10 would make possible. So in July 2020 CUNY received a

11 historic 10 million dollar grant from the Noland

12 Foundation and of that gift \$500,000 was dedicated to

13 matching the reallocation of an additional \$500,000

14 from the budget of the central office of the

15 university to maximize [inaudible] sections in fall

16 2020. Those were core sections that had previously

17 been offered by a non-reemployed adjunct faculty. So

18 a total of 1 million dollar investment was allocated

19 to CUNY campuses based on an equitable model that

20 would seek to maximize [inaudible] and the number of

21 previously non-reemployed faculty which could be

22 brought back to CUNY campuses. With this generous

23 support from the Noland Foundation, CUNY was

24 empowered with [inaudible] 913 adjunct instructors.
25

1 The total of these adjunct instructors served 2815
2 students throughout nine of CUNY's 25 colleges. The
3 hiring of these instructors was crucial in continuing
4 the university students' learning advancement during
5 the disruption that we've all experienced from the
6 COVID-19 pandemic. In fall of 2021 [inaudible] CUNY
7 reopened its campuses to in-person learning. Now
8 more than ever our students seek the knowledge,
9 wisdom, and guidance from their adjunct instructors
10 and so re-engaging the part-time instructors was
11 [inaudible] as a CUNY priority. More than that,
12 instructors who stayed on or have been reacquainted
13 over the past year had an opportunity to engage in
14 high-quality, innovative training online [inaudible].
15 In May 2020 CUNY School of Professional Student
16 Studies launched its online Teaching Essentials
17 program, called OTE, which focuses on providing
18 faculty of all the students [inaudible] skills they
19 need for supplying our students with the best
20 education during the COVID pandemic. The program has
21 gone through multiple iterations of [inaudible]
22 changing demands on our students, through the
23 different stages of the pandemic. And I'm pleased to
24 report thousands of our faculty have participated in
25

1 the spring and the 2020 program was the recipient of
2 the prestigious UPCA Mid Atlantic Region Award for
3 Innovative Programs, which recognized CUNY as a
4 paragon in online [inaudible] best practices. My
5 current priority with CUNY is the safety of working
6 conditions of all of our community. Since the early
7 days of the pandemic CUNY's Office of [inaudible]
8 safety plan across the 25 campuses to ensure
9 [inaudible] work and learning environments that would
10 greatly limit transmission of the coronavirus. In
11 fall 2021 part of this plan included a CUNY mandate
12 that all students enrolled in in-person and
13 [inaudible] courses must provide proof of vaccination
14 for COVID-19. And I'm pleased to report that to date
15 over 92% of our [inaudible] online students provided
16 such documentation. Along with the vaccination
17 mandate, CUNY has developed a rigorous COVID-19
18 testing program for faculty, staff, and visitors, as
19 well as students who receive [inaudible] vaccination.
20 As of the last round of tests, positivity rate among
21 our campuses remain at just 0.2%. It's a remarkably
22 low number for any higher education institution. It
23 is 1/10 of the city's positivity testing rate. The
24 CUNY campus is where [inaudible]. The outcomes of
25

1 CUNY's vaccination mandates, testing results, and
2 facilities [inaudible] hardens us as a university and
3 imbues us with the confidence to invite the vast
4 majority of community back to our campuses where
5 faculty can connect with students face-to-face and on
6 a more personal, engaged role. One opportunity the
7 pandemic has allowed was for CUNY to accelerate its
8 online hybrid course delivery modalities and such a
9 reshaping of our course modalities has been
10 beneficial to many of our students, who see the
11 online learning environment as convenient for work
12 schedules and their lifestyles. It's added the basis
13 [inaudible] flexibility how our curriculum is
14 accessed by our students. However, we recognize that
15 it's also true that many CUNY students benefit more
16 from in-person learning and in fact require it for
17 successful academic progress. The need for more in-
18 person class time [inaudible] is most acutely felt by
19 our first- and second-year students, as well as our
20 community college students. This observer will meet
21 for engagement and the opportunity to reestablish the
22 social connections and reforge a sense of community
23 has been the foundation for most decisions to have
24 far more on-campus presence with all of our
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1
2 instructors in this coming spring term. As I said
3 earlier, university part-time hiring has a direct
4 relationship with student enrollment. Nationally
5 enrollment in colleges has suffered a steep drop in
6 numbers. CUNY has not been immune to this national
7 trend. Ever since this decline emerged CUNY has
8 committed itself to a proactive plan to reverse the
9 loss of students and regain lost ground. It's
10 important to remember that CUNY's 2019 enrollment
11 numbers were at a record high. And let me just
12 interject in terms of records, we just got our
13 numbers yesterday, this past spring CUNY graduated
14 the largest number of students it ever has in its
15 entire history, 56,000 students, bringing to over
16 half a million the number of graduates in the past
17 decade in CUNY. But it was clear that CUNY, um, is a
18 top choice for hundreds of thousands of students as
19 an institution that would afford them a high-quality
20 education [inaudible] upward socially. So our
21 attrition in enrollment numbers is not reflective of
22 a fundamental lack [inaudible]. It instead is part
23 of a national trend that we're just beginning to
24 understand at a more granular local level. In March
25 2021 CUNY assembled an enrollment task force to

1
2 devise and deploy a dynamic enrollment recovery plan,
3 but before such a plan can take shape and solutions
4 can be applied to the problem, we have to truly
5 understand the nature of the problem. It's clear
6 that the pandemic is a part of CUNY's decline in
7 enrollment. But just a cursory look at our extensive
8 internal data paints a picture that is more
9 complicated to fully comprehend this moment. For
10 instance, the greatest attrition in enrollment
11 numbers is most significantly observed in our
12 community colleges. Our most current internal data
13 reveals a decline in community college enrollment
14 about 14%, which is almost identical to the national
15 14.1% decline, and as much as we have the number in
16 front of us, we're still working to understand why
17 prospective students are now turning away from
18 community college education and a path to an
19 associate's design. We need to learn exactly where
20 these prospective students are going, [inaudible]
21 into the workplace, vocational schools, or elsewhere.
22 Another serious concern for community college
23 enrollment is the decline in enrollment for black
24 students. The reason for black student enrollment
25 declines at community colleges are complex, not well

1 understood by anyone at this point. If they were,
2 this would not be a national trend in overall decline
3 in black student community college enrollment over
4 the last two years 33%. In an email to the
5 publication *Inside* [inaudible] a [inaudible] employee
6 who is the interim president of the Institute for
7 Higher Education Policy said the decline in community
8 college enrollment signals an equity problem because
9 students of color are the very students who will most
10 likely start their higher education pathway at a
11 community college, and she adds the months since
12 March 2020 have laid bare more than ever before the
13 social inequities along racial and socioeconomic
14 lines. The pandemic exacerbated the decline in black
15 student enrollment, but it didn't create it. There
16 are systemic divisions that are long-standing and
17 [inaudible] how they are contributing to decisions
18 about [inaudible] and then development [inaudible]
19 overcome them and create pathways to the [inaudible]
20 credentials and success. A critical strategic step
21 now is to gain a better understanding of the reason
22 college is not a choice for many black [inaudible].
23 At CUNY we're launching a major pilot initiative, the
24 Bronx Self-Demonstration Project, a great
25

1 comprehensive approach [inaudible] we know greatly
2 impacts the CUNY enrollment to graduation. We
3 believe this approach will help, but it will not
4 solve the underlying systemic inequities that seems
5 to have been escalated by the pandemic. CUNY
6 launched the largest debt forgiveness program in the
7 country, eliminating outstanding [inaudible] for over
8 52,000 students and amounting to 95 million dollars.
9 These funds, these students will be able to enroll
10 for the spring without those debts standing in the
11 way and that will create demand for [inaudible] part-
12 time faculty members. This fall and the coming
13 spring, students will receive 400 million dollars in
14 direct support from the federal stimulus funds. This
15 support will further bolster students who want to
16 continue [inaudible] higher education and will
17 generate again a demand to hire part time instructors
18 to teach them. The reason I speak about this today
19 is to offer the community a more complete portrait of
20 the environment with which CUNY and higher education
21 now [inaudible] contextualize for the committee the
22 nature of CUNY's Adjunct Re-employment Action Plan.
23 In short, the university's goal, action on
24 enrollment, will [inaudible] faculty to its classes
25

1
2 and adjuncts will certainly be required to fill this
3 need. The challenge is presented by enrolling the
4 clients for [inaudible] at us from COVID-19 may seem
5 formidable. However, given CUNY's innovative spirit
6 and unshakable commitment that emerging from the
7 pandemic as a national model in modern university, I
8 believe that in the foreseeable future we will see a
9 resurgence of students enrolling in our schools and
10 an ardent dedication to a major recruit of the highly
11 valued and well-esteemed adjunct instructors. Thank
12 you for this opportunity to report to the committee
13 today.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
15 testimony. We will now hear from Matthew Sapienza.
16 Mr. Sapienza, you may begin your testimony once
17 you're unmuted.

18 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Thank
19 you. Good morning, Chairperson Barron and members of
20 the Higher Education Committee. I am Matthew
21 Sapienza, CUNY's senior vice chancellor and chief
22 financial officer. I appreciate the opportunity to
23 speak with you today about adjunct faculty employment
24 the City University of New York. We value very much
25 the critical contribution of our adjuncts, which was

1
2 underscored in the collective bargaining agreement
3 that was announced in October 2019, an agreement that
4 called for adjunct pay per course be historically
5 increased. The contract with the Professional Staff
6 Congress, PFC, was agreed to within the first six
7 months of Chancellor Matos Rodriguez's administration
8 and reflects his and the university's resolute
9 commitment to our tens of thousands of faculty and
10 staff whose talents and dedication are critical to
11 CUNY's ability to remain the nation's premier urban
12 public university. Of particular note, this
13 collective bargaining agreement included
14 groundbreaking economic and structural advances for
15 our 12,000 adjunct faculty members. In addition to
16 significant increases in adjunct pay that will reach
17 71% in the final year of the contract, the contract's
18 provisions moved CUNY forward in its efforts to fully
19 integrate our expanding part-time faculty into campus
20 life. Among other things, these provisions
21 restructured work loads to enable our faculty to
22 devote more time to working individually with
23 students and to professional development and other
24 activities that play a key role in our students'
25 success. The layer on of the challenges created by

1 the pandemic to our already-existing financial needs
2 has created a unique and difficult fiscal environment
3 for the university. The budget reductions from the
4 City of New York have been extremely challenging to
5 our campuses' finances, especially those of the
6 community colleges. The city allocated a reduction
7 of 20 million dollars in the last quarter of fiscal
8 year 2020 when the pandemic first arrived in New
9 York. For fiscal year 21, the city's cut to CUNY was
10 46 million dollars. Despite the city's improved
11 financial plan, the reductions CUNY actually
12 increased for the current year to 67 million dollars.
13 Therefore, the cumulative reduction from the city to
14 CUNY's budget since the onset of COVID-19 is 133
15 million dollars. These substantial reductions from
16 the city have had a significant impact on our
17 community colleges, who as a result of the pandemic
18 have suffered unprecedented enrollment losses over
19 the past two years. While this is a statewide and
20 national trend for community colleges, the large loss
21 of tuition and revenue, combined with increasing cuts
22 from the city, have placed a tremendous financial on
23 our community colleges. The allocation of federal
24 stimulus funds have helped all of our colleges,
25

1 especially the community colleges, through the
2 challenges of the pandemic. While we are extremely
3 grateful for this infusion of funds, it is important
4 to point out that the federal stimulus funds are one-
5 time allocations. These dollars are not part of
6 CUNY's ongoing base budget and will not be available
7 once they are spent. Therefore, each federal
8 stimulus dollar that our community colleges have had
9 to use to cover city budget reductions is one less
10 dollar that is available to provide additional
11 support for their students. It is important to note
12 also that the pandemic has added significant costs to
13 the community colleges, including those for health
14 and safety measures on college campuses, additional
15 health and wellness services for students, training
16 for faculty to enhance their proficiency in
17 delivering instruction to students in a remote
18 environment, and investment in technology to provide
19 the capacity for both faculty and students to teach
20 and learn remotely. The pandemic has changed
21 permanently the nature of higher education delivery
22 and CUNY must adapt. The federal stimulus funds are
23 also helping the colleges do that, with investment in
24 additional professional development, the development

1 of online programs, and the creation of hybrid
2 classrooms. The university and its colleges have
3 been very strategic and student-centric in the use of
4 federal stimulus allocations. In addition to the
5 investments in enhanced and changing operations, CUNY
6 has already dispersed 235 million dollars in student
7 emergency grants and we will be allocating another
8 400 million dollars this academic year. Moreover,
9 the CUNY Comeback Program, which was rolled out this
10 past summer, has so far relieved about 95 million
11 dollars in pandemic-related debt to over 52,000
12 students, enabling students to continue degree
13 pursuits. At its meeting on October 25, the
14 university's board of trustees approved the
15 university's fiscal year 2023 budget requests. The
16 university is seeking 416 million dollars in
17 additional operating expenses and 1.2 billion dollar
18 in capital budget investments. Our largest single
19 operating budget priority is to increase the number
20 of full-time faculty positions, including lecturers,
21 and to reduce reliance on a part-time teaching
22 workforce. The fiscal 23 budget request seeks 94.1
23 million dollars for 1075 new full-time faculty lines,
24 500 of which would be dedicated for new lecturer
25

1 lines. If funding is secured for this initiative it
2 is our expectation that some of this lecturer
3 positions would be filled from our existing adjunct
4 faculty. This investment will allow for greater
5 stability in course offerings, student mentoring, and
6 will create a career pathway for our faculty. CUNY
7 faculty have made numerous and important
8 contributions in their respective fields and
9 continually, continued investment further strengthens
10 the university. Chairperson Barron and all of us at
11 the university very much appreciate your continued
12 leadership and this committee's strong and continuing
13 advocacy for our students. Thank you.

14
15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Mr.
16 Sapienza. Before we turn to questions, I would just
17 like to remind both, um, administrative speakers to
18 make sure that your microphones are unobstructed.
19 We've just had some issues being able to hear you.
20 Um, but we'll now turn to Chair Barron for questions.

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Ah, thank you very
22 much. I want to the panelists, who have come before
23 us before, ah, for your testimony and for your
24 working with CUNY to make sure that we have
25 improvements that benefits all of our students and

1
2 populations and recognizes the great work that the
3 faculty is doing. So I have several questions. Um,
4 regarding adjunct professors, what is the current
5 number of adjunct professors that CUNY is using, has
6 on staff?

7 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
8 Chair Barron, the, the typical over the last number
9 of years has been 12,000, ah, in that range and, ah,
10 we're, we're pretty close to that.

11 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Those are all
12 professors, or those are all on the professorial
13 line, 12,000?

14 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
15 Those are, those are all adjunct, are part-time
16 instructors, yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Well, I'm trying...

18 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
19 It's not, it's not, um, non-teaching. That's, that's
20 our adjuncts.

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: You're, you're muted
22 at the end.

23 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
24 So that, that is, um, those are part-time
25 instructors, [inaudible] classroom [inaudible].

2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And those are not,
3 those are combined nonteaching as well as teaching?
4 I'm trying to get to the point.

5 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
6 That, yeah. That, those are the teaching, those are
7 teaching [inaudible].

8 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Those are teaching,
9 just so they're 12,000 teaching.

10 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
11 Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Adjunct professors.
13 I couldn't hear you, you went mute again.

14 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: You
15 know, Chair, Chair Barron, um, I'll, I'll try to
16 [inaudible] having some issues with the mic. Um, on
17 the adjuncts there are, um, different level of
18 adjuncts. There are professor lines and there are
19 adjunct lecturers as well.

20 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right.

21 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: So we
22 can provide you the breakout of the 12,000 in terms
23 of how many are adjunct professors, how many are
24 adjunct lecturers.

25 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right.

1
2 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Um, and
3 all the different levels of, of adjunct teaching.
4 We'll get that information to you.

5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And, and along with
6 that I'd like to have it disaggregated by college, by
7 department, by race, ethnicity, and by gender, 'cause
8 I'd like to see where, where these adjunct positions
9 are. I want to see if there are some schools that
10 have more bunched in a particular level than in
11 others and that would help us to understand that.
12 And [inaudible] number compare to 2020, 2019, and
13 2018 going back, how does the number of adjuncts that
14 you have in all of those capacities compare to
15 previous years?

16 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Um,
17 over the last few years our number of adjuncts have
18 been fairly stable, um, and as Provost Lemon said
19 it's been around that 12,000 number. Um, and for the
20 last few years that's been fairly stable in terms of
21 the total number of adjuncts that we've had.

22 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
23 Chair Barron, I'll, I'll try again. Are you able to
24 hear me?

1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION 28
2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Now I can hear you,
3 yes.

4 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
5 OK. Sorry that it's been a little difficult. So
6 another way, I guess, to answer your question,
7 because I know this has been really been a lot of the
8 focus and the concern, is around the non-
9 reappointment, um, of adjunct instructors who have
10 been, ah, employed in the previous term. And, um,
11 going over those numbers, um, and, and over the last
12 week or two, um, to give you an idea, um, the non-
13 reappointment of adjuncts from the previous year for,
14 for this fall is 1600, around 1600. Um, and that
15 compares to, um, the previous years and, and going
16 back to the last two years, um, 2020 to 2021, that
17 number was about 20,050.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: About what? What
19 was that number?

20 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
21 That was 20,050. And then, um, going back to the
22 last year that we, that, ah, before the pandemic,
23 which probably is a good comparison year for us, um,
24 the, the number of non-reappointments that year was,
25 ah, 1809. So, ah, it's, it actually has remained,

1 like the total numbers, has remained fairly stable.

2 Um, it does fluctuate, um, and, um, you know, that's
3 an overall number. So you're asking about, you know,
4 breaking it down by the different areas. We have to
5 go back and, and do that. I don't have those numbers
6 today. But, um, but I think that does give another
7 sort of view on, um, the numbers of part-time
8 inspectors and those that are not reemployment. And
9 one of the things that I think it's always important
10 to remember about non-reappointment. And one of the
11 things that I think is always important to remember
12 about non-reappointment of instructors is there are
13 many reasons for non-reappointment and, and one of
14 them is that there are always a certain number of
15 part-time instructors who just decide they don't wish
16 to come back [inaudible]. Um, move away from the New
17 York area, we know that happened, ah, probably to a
18 larger degree during the pandemic. So there are a
19 variety of reasons for that, that, um, they're not
20 related to what I think has been really the focus of
21 concern, which is the financial impacts on, budgetary
22 impacts.
23

24 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So what is the net
25 difference in, ah, the adjunct faculty? Some are

1 non-reappointed, but then I would imagine that there
2 are new appointees that are made, new persons that
3 come in. So what's the net change in that? So for
4 this year, you say there are 1600 currently who have
5 not been...

7 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

8 That's right.

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And in..

10 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

11 So...

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Going back to the
13 year where there were, I think you said 1809, that
14 was not a loss of all of those positions, I would
15 imagine, 'cause you're telling me that the number
16 stays basically the same. So basically then those
17 1800 were replaced by new people who came in?

18 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

19 So, um, that's where there would be fluctuation,
20 because that would be the cases, in some cases yes.
21 There would be other, ah, other adjuncts rehired and,
22 and, or hired, I should say, and one of the, you
23 know, one of the variables, ah, that we deal with
24 every term, if you look at the way enrollments happen
25 we, we will start enrolling, for instance, for next

1 fall before too long, we're enrolling to the spring,
2 so, um, what happens is, is that's over [inaudible]
3 five-month period of time [inaudible] in which
4 students are enrolling, and over that, with time, of
5 course, the enrollments increase and increase and
6 increase, even up through and past the first day of
7 classes. So we'll still have some enrollment that
8 will come in that first week of classes when students
9 are still able to, to do that. So that period of
10 time, particularly the two weeks before or the month
11 or two before, as we're watching enrollments continue
12 to grow, there's a lot of adjusting that has to be
13 made and different, because there's demand for
14 certain core sections, there's not the expected
15 demands of others. Some of it is very predictable.
16 Some is less predictable. So that's where there's a
17 lot of fluctuation in, in part-time hiring because,
18 ah, we actually can't really know a lot of that until
19 we closer to the beginning of the term. But, yes, at
20 that point there would be the hiring of both some of
21 the department faculty members who were not initially
22 appointed and also some new ones.

24 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: OK. Ah, so how many
25 faculty members were not reappointed, that's the term

1 that CUNY likes to use. What, how many were not
2 reappointed? I know that there's still 1900
3 remaining, but what was that initial number of those
4 who were not reappointed?
5

6 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

7 So, um, the, the, the number of non-reappointed
8 faculty, those are the numbers that I gave you.
9 You're referring to the part-time faculty, correct?

10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes.

11 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

12 Yeah, so that, those are the numbers that I, that I
13 gave you. I think what you're, you were trying to
14 get at is the net, right? You were trying to get...

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes.

16 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

17 And I, I actually don't have that number for you.
18 Um, because, um, I don't think we've quite looked at
19 it that way in terms of, you know, who, what's the
20 new, the new hiring basically in that field, right?
21 That's what you were [inaudible].

22 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right, but I think

23 that that would be an important number for CUNY to
24 keep, ah, in their view, if you're talking about, you
25 said your goal is to get back to where you were, so I

1
2 think that that number would be an important number
3 to have as you're going forward with your plans and
4 with your goals, um, and talking about the adjunct
5 faculty members that, again, well, you said you'll
6 give to me disaggregated, so that was what I wanted
7 to know. What has been the financial impact of
8 COVID-19, the financial impact of COVID-19, on the
9 number of persons that you have been to, ah, bring
10 back, or that you have not been able to bring back?

11 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: I
12 think, I'm sorry, go ahead, Dan.

13 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
14 Um, you know, actually I think Matt you should go
15 ahead first in terms of finance and then I'll, I'll
16 follow it up with the kind of more academic aspects
17 of that. But I'll just say in preface to that is it
18 can be difficult to tease that out because there are
19 a variety of reasons why we end up with the number of
20 adjunct faculty members that we [inaudible].

21 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Yeah
22 [inaudible] and just in terms of overall big picture,
23 and I'll, you know, drill down as, as far as you
24 would like, but, um, in April 2020 when the pandemic
25 first arrived here and we had some real big

1 uncertainties regarding, um, our funding, ah, funding
2 from the state and city regarding our enrollment,
3 regarding other revenue sources that we have, um, our
4 colleges generate from things from like their
5 performing arts centers, the cafeterias, parking, all
6 of those things. Um, since all of those things were
7 at risk back in April 2020 we weren't sure what our
8 financial situation was going to be going forward, we
9 implemented, um, what we called the Vacancy Review
10 Board.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Um-hmm.

13 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Um, and
14 the Vacancy Review Board went through every single,
15 um, action that colleges ask for in terms of filling
16 positions. And so, um, we didn't do layoffs or
17 anything like that, but we did have savings through
18 attrition. As people left there were some positions
19 that we decided...

20 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Oh.

21 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: ...we
22 weren't going to fill, or that colleges decided as
23 well. So from that point, um, April 2020, until, um,
24 the end of September 2020, I'm sorry, September 21,
25 that year and a half time frame, um, we're down, um,

1 a little over a thousand positions, 1069 positions it
2 was. Um, so we had 19,000 and change full-time
3 employees. It went down to 18,000 and change full-
4 time employees. So there was savings through
5 attrition that we did generate. We've now, um, the
6 chancellor has asked, ah, that the Vacancy Review
7 Board has done its work, um, you know, we're through
8 that, that pandemic period and hopefully getting into
9 recovery period, so there's no longer a Vacancy
10 Review Board, but obviously we're still gonna be
11 monitoring colleges, staffing, and spending levels
12 closely, um, as we're still in that, in a very
13 challenging period. But there were savings that were
14 generated, um, through attrition and through not that
15 filling certain vacancies, ah, full-time positions
16 during the pandemic period.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And do you have that
19 amount? Can you tell us what that amount is in
20 savings [inaudible]?

21 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Yeah,
22 yes, thank you, Chairman. It's a good question. Now
23 the 1069 positions equates to about 71 million
24 dollars in annual savings going forward.

25 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: 71 million dollars.

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SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Um-hmm.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And what are the plans for that 71 million dollars? Where are we going to see that 71 million dollars, ah, designated in the budget?

SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Well, we're hoping going forward that some of that can be, um, used to, for investment or to backfill some of those jobs, um, that, that were not filled. I think a lot will be contingent on, um, what the budget situation will look like for the state and city and, and how that will impact on CUNY going forward. And then I think the other big key is, um, what is our enrollment going to look like. Um, now, four-year college enrollment has been fairly stable. Um, this past fall it was down a little bit. Um, but as Provost Lemons said in his testimony, we're very concerned about community college enrollment, um, and, again, as I mentioned in my testimony, it's a nationwide trend. It's, it's certainly a trend throughout New York State that community college enrollment has suffered greatly as a result of the pandemic. Um, so especially for the community colleges, if that doesn't bounce back and, um, we

1
2 don't get the additional support we're seeing from
3 the state and city, those savings might have to be
4 used just to cover shortfalls. Um, but again, we're
5 hoping that, um, that both, um, from tuition revenue,
6 state and city support, that those supports will be
7 there and that we can use some of this 71 million for
8 investments.

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: How does the
10 reduction in the number of teaching adjunct faculty
11 correlate with the reduction, ah, in the courses that
12 are offered? So we've lost faculty, and how do we,
13 how does that correlate to reduced course offers?

14 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
15 Um, I can't give you the exact numbers, but I, I can
16 tell you that those do correlate. Because, and this
17 goes back to, I think, what's the...

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [inaudible] you said
19 you couldn't give me the numbers, but you could tell
20 me?

21 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
22 Yes, but I, but I, but they definitely are
23 correlated, Chair Barron. Ah, which is what you
24 would expect, right, because, um, ah, because the
25 driving, the main driver for part-time hiring, part-

1
2 time instructors is the, is the demand for core
3 sections that we're not able to staff otherwise, and
4 so they most definitely are connected. And so as, as
5 enrollment goes up we will hire more part-time
6 instructors. As it goes down, we will hire fewer.

7 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And can you describe
8 then for the me the impact on academic majors and on
9 students because of this reduction and do we, can you
10 give me a number as to course offerings that we can
11 say have been reduced or eliminated because of the
12 reduction in, um, adjuncts?

13 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
14 So I think that is, that's something that is very
15 difficult to answer in a straightforward way just
16 because there isn't a straightforward answer. Um,
17 because the hiring of the part-time faculty really is
18 determined by the students and the length of those
19 courses. So, for instance, if we have a major, um,
20 or maybe even a general education course, where we
21 have more students wanting to register for, for those
22 courses than we have sections, they will open a
23 section, we will very often need to hire a part-time
24 instructor to teach that section because we needed a
25 spot at that demand [inaudible] students can't

1 progress through general education part of their
2 education or into their major if they can't get the
3 courses. So the hiring is very much linked to that
4 student [inaudible].

6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I, I understand the
7 reduction in the number of, ah, sections that are
8 being offered, and I'm also, which of course means it
9 puts a strain on those remaining instructors because
10 they have a larger class, larger class loads, ah,
11 class sizes. I'm also particularly interested in
12 were there instances where a course was not offered,
13 not just the section, the fewer sections than you had
14 to, I'm talking about eliminating, ah, a particular
15 academic course.

16 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
17 There definitely were situations and places where a
18 course was not offered because, ah, and there were
19 budget constraints, you know, in the past year. Um,
20 there, by and large that's not what happened because
21 we really were responding to what was happening with
22 enrollment. Again, this was mostly at community
23 colleges and so as Vice Chancellor Sapienza said,
24 senior colleges were pretty stable, but, um, at the
25 community college level, due to that enrollment there

1
2 was a drop in the number of sections that were
3 offered, um, and there, there definitely were some
4 situations where there were courses and sections that
5 were not offered, and this was really, this was due
6 to the budgetary constraints that we've had. Those
7 were, those were really not very many. Ah, I can't
8 give you the number of those, but it was, it was not
9 very many.

10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Can we find that
11 number? Particularly in terms of not just of, not
12 just of sections, but that's one thing, but can we
13 find the number of course that were...

14 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
15 We can try to find that, yeah. I, um, it, it might
16 be a difficult number to come by, again because there
17 are a number of factors that are behind offering
18 course sections, but we definitely could try to come
19 back to you with that number.

20 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: OK, good. And what
21 percentage of courses are currently being taught by
22 adjuncts at each campus?

23 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
24 Again, I could get back to you with that number. I
25

1 don't have it in front of me. Um, but [inaudible]
2
3 breakdown.

4 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Would we find that
5 there are more adjuncts concentrated at the community
6 colleges than at the senior colleges, would that be
7 the case?

8 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
9 I would have to, I would have to come back to you
10 with that. Ah, again, I can, I can definitely answer
11 that question. I just need to get back to you, um,
12 go back and look at the data and, and report to you.

13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. Ah,
14 moving on to continuing education, ah, teaching,
15 teachers. Ah, to date, well, you'll be, when you
16 give me the breakout I'll see how many of those who
17 were not reappointed for continuing education
18 teachers and, um, how much, when you, when you said
19 there was 71 million dollars in savings, that's with
20 all of the adjunct positions, is that right? You,
21 that's a current...

22 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
23 No, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, Chair Barron. There is 71
24 million related to the amount that we saved from the
25 reduction in full-time staffing.

2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Oh, OK. So what
3 about the adjuncts? OK, in full time.

4 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
5 Yeah, it's interesting, you know, adjuncts, um, you
6 know, expenditures and, you know, because of my role
7 I, I focus more on expenditures more than staffing.
8 But in terms of expenditures, we spent 309 million in
9 fiscal 21 on adjuncts and in fiscal 21 we spent 306
10 million. So it, it is a 3 million dollar reduction,
11 which equated to about a 1% reduction in adjunct
12 spending between 20 and 21.

13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: OK, so the 3 million
14 is for adjuncts savings.

15 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
16 Um-hmm.

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: OK. OK, thank you.

18 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
19 Sure.

20 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I got to have that
21 distinction. Um, a few more questions. The
22 correlation between reduction in continuing education
23 and the programming, if we could again break down how
24 this loss or how this consolidation affected the
25 programming and how many programs might have been

1 eliminated or reduced, particularly through the
2 continuing education program, 'cause we're talking
3 about really have an impact in the community when we
4 talk about these continuing education programs. And
5 are there any plans to bring back those program
6 offerings which might have been eliminated because of
7 the reductions?
8

9 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

10 So, Chair Barron, the, um, the continuing education
11 offerings that we have, which actually are generally
12 pretty significant, you know, we talk about a half
13 million CUNY students and...

14 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right.

15 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

16 Ah, almost half of those are in those kinds of
17 programs. So it's a significant number of people,
18 you're right, for each community impact. Those are
19 all really driven by demand. There, there are self-
20 sustaining programs, um, so they, we offer those in
21 response, so many of them, for instance, have come
22 about because, um, ah, one of the unions will come to
23 us and say, you know, we really would like training,
24 um, in this area and we'll provide it, and then the
25 union might provide the funding for the program, or

1
2 they're funded by their grant-funded programs, ah,
3 city, state, or even sometimes federal, um, but
4 mainly city and state. So these are, these are self-
5 sustaining, um, and self-planning programs that
6 really are really offered, ah, in response to the
7 union. And so it's, you know, it's not part of and,
8 and Vice Chancellor Sapienza can explain that better
9 probably than I can, but, but from a funding basis,
10 ah, it's very different from the regular matriculated
11 student population in the way that it's funded.

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: OK. Um, that's a,
13 that's a, that answers my question. Can you describe
14 the role of the Research Foundation, if any, in
15 running these continuing education programs? What's
16 the role that they play?

17 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
18 They may, if, um, if there are grants that are
19 funding those programs and, um, then the Research
20 Foundation will be managing the, the funding and so
21 the hiring would be done through the Research
22 Foundation, um, and, um, and the salaries would be
23 paid out, um, and managed by the [inaudible].

24 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Ah, that question
25 comes from previous hearing that we had with it had

1
2 been posed that perhaps as a way of avoiding health
3 benefits for some of these adjuncts the funding or
4 the salaries were split between two entities so as to
5 not have the ability to identify persons being, ah,
6 21 hours and getting those kinds of benefits. So
7 that's the basis for that question coming up, 'cause
8 we're still looking at that possibility, making sure
9 that people are not being denied an opportunity
10 because there are two different entities that are
11 paying it. Ah, how has CARES funding been allocated
12 for continuing education program, and I'm
13 particularly interested in this again because we're
14 talking about the community level and people who are
15 coming back to school and getting additional skills
16 that they need.

17 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Yeah, I
18 know, it's a good question. The, the, um, when, when
19 the federal government and administered through the
20 US Department of Ed, when they determine how much
21 each college in the entire country and, and the
22 colleges at CUNY, how much they were going to
23 receive, it was done on a formula basis that was
24 based on number of students in, in degree programs.
25 And so [inaudible] weren't captured within that

1
2 amount and so, um, we have a new federal stimulus
3 money for adult continuing ed programs. Um, those
4 have been separate. Um, it's really due to how those
5 funds were allocated and, and the, um, guidelines
6 that were given by the USDA, we [inaudible] spend
7 those funds.

8 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And what kind of
9 support does the university offer to continuing
10 education programs, ah, administration, perhaps in
11 grant writing or those kinds of aspects of, of
12 running the program. What kind of support does CUNY
13 offer them?

14 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
15 We have, um, we have a number of tax levy employees
16 that are, ah, administering those programs. Ah, not
17 all, as you pointed out, not all, not all the
18 personnel for those programs are connected to tax
19 levy. Some of them are paid RF from the project
20 funding itself. But we also do have, ah, significant
21 investment in those programs and in, in tax levy
22 [inaudible] that we have [inaudible]. And Chair
23 Barron, I wonder if I could step back just one, just
24 one step, ah, just to clarify one thing about the RF
25 funding or the splitting of it, 'cause I, I, I can't

1 really speak to that. It's not something that I've
2 been aware of. But one thing I think it's important,
3 at least might help to understand some of that issue,
4 is that, ah, since 2015 the Research Foundation, ah,
5 based on federal guidelines will no longer directly
6 pay the, the salaries for any instructors who are
7 teaching credit-bearing course. And we have, we
8 have...

10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I didn't understand
11 what you were saying. They will no longer pay the
12 salary of?

13 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
14 Of, for, for instructors for course that have credit,
15 college credit.

16 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Oh.

17 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
18 We, and so we, but we do have quite a few instructors
19 that are paid indirectly from RF funding who are
20 teaching college credit courses, but what happens is
21 those instructors are hired on the tax levy as
22 adjuncts, as any other adjuncts would be, and then
23 the departments are reimbursed, um, by the Research
24 Foundation to cover that. The base of their, but
25 they're actually just, there's no, they're no

1
2 different from any other, ah, adjunct that has been
3 hired with tax levy.

4 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: And
5 Chair Barron, if I could just add to that, the
6 majority of revenues that are generated for adult
7 continuing ed run through a tax levy and, and do not
8 run through the RF as, as Provost Lemons said if
9 there's a particular grant that is administered
10 through the RF as for adult continuing ed program
11 then it would, it would run through the Research
12 Foundation, but, um, for the community colleges, for
13 example, um, in the city's, um, accounting system in
14 FMS there's a revenue source for adult continuing ed
15 programs and the revenues that come in are deposited
16 with the city, um, for those programs at the
17 community colleges.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Um, a few more
19 questions. How, what is the number of students that
20 a typical, ah, teaching adjunct faculty person would
21 have in their class and what does it compare, how
22 does that compare to pre-pandemic loads?

23 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
24 You know, that really varies hugely. Um, it really
25 is dependent on the type of curriculum and the type

1 of courses in the curriculum, so if you could
2 imagine, for instance, a writing course that, ah, is
3 very instructor-intensive in terms of the amount of
4 time, um, would have a much smaller number of
5 students. Um, and I, I don't, I don't know that
6 there is, you would find a difference between full-
7 time faculty and part-time faculty in terms of the,
8 you know, the, the number of students being taught,
9 or, ah, it really goes much more by the type of
10 course that they're teaching and the kind of, you
11 know, what, what's involved in teaching that course.
12 And just for, you know, an example, um, we, we have
13 some very large class sections, for instance, um,
14 that are taught by, um, full-time faculty, probably
15 more by full-time faculty than not, not necessarily
16 [inaudible] at all, um, and...

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: But, but, yes, go
19 ahead.

20 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
21 And, um, what I want to just say about those is that
22 even though they're very large sections and we have
23 really great examples of classes like that have been
24 extremely successful at improving students'
25 graduation [inaudible] matriculating and going

1 through those courses successfully and getting good
2 grades and be able to move on, really depends a lot
3 on how they're organized, ah, and so that's kind of
4 the [inaudible] that class size really is a, it's
5 really much more dependent on the kind of course that
6 is [inaudible]. It's not really and shouldn't be
7 dependent on what kind of instructor is in that
8 course.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: That may be, but I
11 know that when you have, ah, a large student, ah,
12 class enrollment it's difficult to reach every
13 student, and we certainly know that there are some
14 students that can function well and there are others
15 that are gonna need that additional, ah, attention or
16 counseling, so, um, that may be, but my experience is
17 that in many, and again it depends on, on the subject
18 matter that we're talking about, but larger class
19 sizes are not beneficial in terms of establishing a
20 rapport with the teacher, with the students, and
21 being able to make sure that students feel that they
22 are contributing. Um, but my question also talks
23 about have you seen an increase in the load presently
24 from what it was pre-pandemic.
25

2 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

3 I don't think that there is a dramatic increase in
4 the class size, you know, from before the pandemic to
5 during the pandemic.

6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: OK.

7 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

8 Um, yeah. And, and...

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Another important
10 question. Have adjunct faculty lost any benefits,
11 such as health insurance, as a part of the
12 university's efforts to spend down and consolidate
13 and save?

14 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

15 So, um, I think, um, Vice Chancellor Sapienza...

16 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Yeah.

17 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

18 ...can probably speak to this better than I can.

19 What I can tell you is, um, that we know in the two
20 previous years, we, we know there were a certain
21 number of non-reappointed faculty members, it would
22 be who have lost health insurance. It was about 155,
23 um, 19 to 20, and it was about 135, 20 to 21. Now
24 it's actually lower than that number because, and I
25 know this from my own experience because at Lehman we

1
2 were try very hard to not have that happen to any
3 part-time faculty. So we have a list of nine part-
4 time faculty members, as I recall, that if they were
5 not given enough, ah, teaching hours, would lose
6 their health insurance [inaudible]. Um, but what I
7 found is like only three of those faculty members,
8 ah, were still available to teach. The others had
9 either moved out, couldn't reach them, um, and those
10 that were available, obviously we tried to work that
11 out and we did work it out, so that they would have
12 enough power to obtain that health insurance. That,
13 but we know that there are some, you know, it's, it's
14 somewhere below that 155 in the one year and 135 last
15 year, ah, for whom, for whom that was the case.

16 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, you know, that's
17 certainly, um, very concerning, ah, particularly
18 during this pandemic, ah, and, and I think we always
19 have to be mindful of, of the human side and the
20 reality. You know, these, the numbers are what they
21 are, but they represent in fact people who are...

22 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
23 Absolutely.

24 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ... challenged. Um,
25 just a few more questions. How does CUNY plan on

1
2 spending the state's one, the recent, the state's
3 recent 100 million dollar allocation and will part of
4 it go towards, um, towards a 500 conversion, funding
5 the 500 conversion lines or, or not?

6 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Chair
7 Barron, the, the 100 million that I think you're
8 referring to is, um, we were very grateful in the
9 state's, um, enacted budget this past April that they
10 included an additional 100 million dollars in capital
11 funding, um, for our colleges. Um, and so we are
12 working to develop plans on, on how to use those
13 funds, um, working with our new vice chancellor for
14 facilities, we're really excited [inaudible] Mohammed
15 Attalah, um, under our direction of our two
16 [inaudible] Batista. Um, so we're working with our
17 campuses to, to develop those plans, um, and look
18 forward to bringing that plan to the state for, ah,
19 final approval. Um, but again, we're, we're really
20 happy to have the 100 million dollars. Um, we have a
21 lot of needs on the capital side. Um, we're hoping
22 that, um, you know, we'll be able to use it to, to
23 increase capacity in terms of instructional capacity,
24 but I think for each college, um, as we distribute
25 those funds depending on what the colleges' needs

1
2 are, um, based in terms of their space, in terms of
3 their, ah, physical capacity, and in terms of their
4 enrollment each college will have a different type of
5 need for how we're gonna use those funds.

6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: OK. My staff is,
7 ah, helping me get some clarity on information that I
8 intended to ask you.

9 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: OK.

10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So for the, for the
11 100 million dollars that you're requesting in the
12 upcoming budget...

13 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Yes,
14 yeah.

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: How are you planning
16 to, ah, use that money?

17 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Yeah,
18 so we're looking, ah, on the operating budget for
19 fiscal 23, um, and we'll make sure that, that you and
20 the other members of the committee and, and folks at
21 City Council Finance have a copy of our budget
22 requests that, ah, Board of Trustees recently, ah,
23 passed. Um, but we're seeking 416 million in
24 additional funding in next year's budget, um, and the
25 biggest component of that is about 94 million

1 dollars, um, for additional full-time faculty. So
2 that, that's the largest component of that 416
3 million. It's about 100 million, a little less, 94
4 million for additional full-time faculty lines, ah,
5 1075 additional full-time faculty lines, um, just
6 again, going back to your good point, ah, a couple of
7 minutes ago, Chair Barron, about, um, having a full-
8 time faculty person in the classroom and having
9 those, um, ability to have more core sections offered
10 by having more faculty. Um, it would be a great
11 benefit to our students and so we're hoping to
12 receive that funding. And then one other, ah, quick
13 thing I want to add about that, those 1075, we're
14 seeking that 500 of those would be in the lecturer
15 lines. Um, the lecturer position are folks that, um,
16 we greater teaching capacity in terms of the number
17 of courses that they teach and so particularly we get
18 some, again, more efficiencies and, and be able to
19 create more core sections with lectures and have the
20 benefit of it could be a great career pathway for
21 many of our existing adjuncts who would have an
22 opportunity to apply for those, ah, lecturer, ah,
23 positions. So we're hoping that we'll be successful
24

2 in, ah, in securing funds from the state and city for
3 our new faculty hiring initiative.

4 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: OK. Could a portion
5 of the, and you may have answered it, I was a little
6 distracted, I apologize. Um, could a portion of the
7 106.2 million support personnel salaries for adjuncts
8 or other CUNY professors for fiscal 2022?

9 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Ah, it,
10 you're referring to the federal stimulus funds, Chair
11 Barron?

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: No, for the money
13 that you're asking.

14 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Oh, um,
15 well, we're asking for, um, the money we're asking
16 for is for new, it would be for new full-time faculty
17 positions.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: New full-time
19 faculty?

20 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Yes,
21 um-hmm.

22 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So of those persons
23 who were not reappointed, what provisions are, what
24 opportunities will you have to reach back to them to
25 offer them an opportunity to come back? And will

1
2 they be a part of your planning to be able to bring
3 some of them back to CUNY, if that's what they would
4 like to do. For those who were reappointed, ah, not
5 reappointed for financial reasons.

6 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:

7 I think, you know, going forward, the hiring plan if
8 we're able to move ahead with the 500 new lecture
9 lines, um, for instance, those are 500 positions that
10 any of our part-time faculty members or many of them
11 who would be candidates for and we would anticipate
12 that they would be in a really good position to
13 obtain those positions. So that's, ah, you know,
14 that, that, that isn't, part-time faculty members
15 currently appointed are not reappointed, it's, it's
16 the whole pool that is eligible for that.

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: OK, ah, what are the
18 plans to spend down the remaining balance from the
19 100, wait, um, not getting these, let me see if I can
20 get these correct. My eyes are failing as I'm aging
21 and it's challenging to really see this. Ah, we, the
22 committee is requesting a breakdown, ah, with a
23 description disaggregated for each community college
24 and CUNY's plan for the 106.2 million for fiscal
25 2022.

1
2 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Yeah.
3 For fiscal, ah, 22, the, the [inaudible] that we're
4 in now, um, our, um, federal stimulus plan was
5 approved by our Board of Trustees as to how we're,
6 ah, what are plan is to spend those funds, um, and so
7 we can get that information to you. Um, again, I
8 think a lot of it will be used to help cover, um,
9 enrollment losses at the community, at the community
10 colleges, um, then, you know, another big component
11 of it that, again, we're really pleased about and
12 know it helped so many of our students, the CUNY
13 Comeback Initiative that relieved students of their
14 pandemic-related debt.

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right.

16 SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR SAPIENZA: Um, so
17 those, those are two of the larger components. But
18 I'm happy to share our, um, plan for the community
19 colleges. I know it's a plan and, you know, if, if
20 the world changes again we might have to, we might
21 have to pivot, um, but we're certainly happy to get,
22 get you and, ah, and folks at the council finance
23 division a plan.

24 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: OK. Um, I think
25 that concludes most of my questions. If there are

1
2 questions that I have overlooked I will ask that my
3 team send them to you and, as you've done in the
4 past, if you would respond to those questions.

5 INTERIM EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR LEMONS:
6 Happy to do that.

7 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: OK, thank you. I'll
8 now turn it back to our moderator, Counsel Emmy
9 Briggs.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Amy.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: [laughs] Thank you.
13 Um, so we'd like to take a moment to ask if any of
14 the council members present would like to ask any
15 questions to our panelists. I would like to remind
16 the members that if you have not yet done so please
17 raise your hand in the Zoom, use the raise hand
18 function in Zoom, and we will call on you as soon as
19 possible. Please remember to keep your questions to
20 five minutes. I'll give a brief pause, and seeing
21 no, ah, hands raised, Chair Barron, if you have any
22 other additional questions we can ask the panel or we
23 can move on to our, our next panel.

24

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Ah, I think the
3 other questions I'll formulate and we can send them
4 in writing.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: All right, thank you,
6 Chair Barron. Um, we have now concluded CUNY's
7 testimony. We will now turn to public testimony.
8 First, I would like to remind everyone that
9 individuals will be called up in panels. Once your
10 name is called a member of our staff will unmute you
11 and you may begin your testimony once the Sergeant at
12 Arms sets the clock and gives you the cue. All
13 testimony during this portion will be limited to
14 three minutes. Note that there is a few-second delay
15 when you are unmuted before we can hear you, and
16 please wait for the Sergeant at Arms to announce that
17 you may begin before you starting your testimony.
18 And our first panel of speakers will, we'll be
19 hearing from, pardon while I get those lists up, um,
20 Mr. James Davis, Rosa Squillacote, and Linda Pelc.
21 James Davis, you may now begin your testimony.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 JAMES DAVIS: Thank you, Chair Barron and
24 committee members for the invitation to testify today
25 about the adjunct members of the Professional Staff

1 Congress at CUNY. I'm James Davis, the PSC
2 president, and I'm here on behalf of 30,000 faculty
3 and professional staff, including some 12,000 who are
4 teaching adjuncts, another 1700 CUNY workers that are
5 adjunct college lab technicians and nonteaching
6 adjuncts. We are grateful, as always, for your
7 advocacy on behalf of CUNY students and workers.
8 Joining me on my panel today is Rosa Squillacote,
9 vice president at the PSC for part-time personnel,
10 who will speak about the challenges that our adjuncts
11 and part-time members are facing, and also with me on
12 the panel is a long-term member, Linda Pelc of
13 Laguardia Community College, who will discuss why
14 programs like the English Language Center, the
15 largest English language program in New York City,
16 are essential for immigrant students aiming to
17 matriculate at CUNY, and I'm grateful to see so many
18 other CUNY colleagues here as well to testify after
19 our panel. I want to begin my testimony on a couple
20 of positive notes. First, I want to offer
21 congratulations to the CUNY chancellor for his
22 appointment as a cochair of the transition committee
23 for Mayor-Elect Adams. Eric Adams is two-time CUNY
24 graduate who understands the central role CUNY plays
25

1 in the city's economy and the life of our students.

2 And, second, this year's CUNY budget request, as has

3 already been mentioned, um, finally puts the

4 university on a promising path after many years of

5 austerity and disinvestment. The CUNY administration

6 has made a budget request worthy of its students'

7 needs, as well as the faculty and staff. And this

8 hearing allows us to highlight a feature, as was just

9 discussed, of the budget request was the intention to

10 provide a defined career pathway for part-time

11 teaching faculty by creating 500 new full-time

12 lecturer positions. So CUNY relies heavily on

13 adjunct labor to meet its instructional needs. In

14 this respect, it resembles other public colleges and

15 universities where contingent appointments without

16 job security have become the norm rather than the

17 exception. But CUNY is a particularly stark instance

18 of the problem. People talk about the gig economy.

19 We have the gig academy. As public resources for

20 CUNY have diminished, the over-reliance on adjunct

21 labor has increased. The university effectively now

22 balances its budget on the backs of a large underpaid

23 contingent workforce. In 2019-2020, according to the

24 university's performance management report, just 41%

25

1
2 of undergraduate instruction per full-time equivalent
3 student was delivered by full-time faculty. That
4 means that nearly 59% of...

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

6 JAMES DAVIS: ...was delivered by
7 adjuncts. Chair Barron, could I request one
8 additional minute.

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes, you can
10 continue.

11 JAMES DAVIS: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Take your time. I
13 want to hear your full testimony.

14 JAMES DAVIS: I appreciate that. Thank
15 you very much. So this is the lowest rate of full-
16 time instruction at CUNY in at least five years. At
17 the community colleges, full-time faculty actually
18 teach a slightly higher percentage of courses, and I
19 know you asked about this earlier, than at the four-
20 year colleges, but at community colleges as well they
21 rely on, on underpaid adjuncts. So we're helpful
22 that in this budget request it's a step in the right
23 direction and we look forward to working with the new
24 mayoral administration and City Council to ensure the
25 city portion is realized. We also look forward to

1
2 working with CUNY on a method to implement the
3 conversion lines that could move many of our members
4 into permanent full-time work with benefits while
5 also protecting the jobs of our adjunct members who
6 are not seeking full-time work. The last thing I
7 just want to wrap up with is back in June you heard
8 my testimony about the devastating impact of COVID on
9 our members and the university. That difficulty was
10 sharpened when CUNY laid off approximately 2800
11 adjunct teaching faculty, and I know you were in
12 discussion, ah, with university management here about
13 that issue. Thankfully, about a thousand of those
14 have been rehired. However, attrition has also led
15 to the loss of more than 500 full-time faculty and
16 professional staff over the last 18 months. And many
17 of those who remain face larger rosters in their
18 virtual classes, and again appreciate your astute
19 observations about the issue with online class size,
20 um, ah, and there's really, this demand for, for more
21 and smaller classes should create the opportunity for
22 our laid-off colleagues to return to the classroom.
23 The last thing, we're in the midst now of ensuring
24 that CUNY provides a safe and healthy return for many
25 of our members back onto campuses. That's entailed a

1 massive health and safety effort among our members,
2 while we're also trying to advocate for
3 accommodations for those who still require remote
4 work. And we ask for your assistance because
5 unfortunately our efforts to obtain ventilation data,
6 ah, particularly on 10 different campuses, has been
7 impeded by the university, and I won't go through the
8 list because you have it in my written testimony, ah,
9 but we've been compelled to submit FOIA requests and
10 we're still awaiting that ventilation information.
11 So I want to thank you again for the opportunity to
12 testify, um, and I want to thank you especially,
13 Chair Barron, ah, as your council term winds down,
14 for leading this committee and for your passion for
15 CUNY students and PSC members. You have helped us
16 raised issues of equity and educational justice
17 consistently, and those are critical to our members
18 and to our students, and they'll lay the foundation
19 for your successor in the chair role and for future
20 champions for CUNY. So thanks, and I'll turn it over
21 to Rosa, and look forward to discussion.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Dr. Davis.
24 Rosa Squillacote, you may now begin your testimony.
25 Apologize, apologies for your name [inaudible].

1 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

2 ROSA SQUILLACOTE: It's, ah, the story of
3 my life, don't worry about it. Um, hello, my name is
4 Rosa Squillacote and I have been an adjunct at Hunter
5 College since 2012. I am also currently the vice
6 president of part-timers for the PSC. Thank you,
7 Chair Barron, for the opportunity to testify today.
8 I want to start by thanking the CUNY administration
9 for requesting 103 million dollars from the next city
10 budget. Our community colleges desperately need
11 these funds and more in order to rehire laid-off
12 workers, reduce class size, support continuing
13 education programs, and ensure that all part-time
14 workers are paid adequately. Since the pandemic
15 class sizes have increased dramatically. While
16 research says that online classes should have no more
17 than 10 or 12 students, I regularly had three times
18 that in my classes over the last year, and I know
19 that other adjuncts had even more. People returning
20 to in-person classes still have increased class
21 sizes, even though we know that not all of CUNY's
22 buildings have adequate ventilation and are made even
23 more unsafe by overcrowded classes. And, even though
24 several hundred adjuncts who were laid off at the
25

1 start of the pandemic haven't been rehired. Adjunct
2 teachers and continuing education teachers, CETs, in
3 the English Language Center at Laguardia Community
4 College faced similar cuts. Adjuncts were laid off
5 and lost health insurance at the beginning of COVID
6 and CET workers faced larger class sizes. After a
7 very difficult fight, those adjunct workers were
8 rehired and given health insurance. But now we are
9 learning that some are being denied their
10 contractually guaranteed office hour pay. Continuing
11 education programs, which many part-time workers work
12 in, and which are self-funded because the CUNY
13 administration makes that decisions, these programs
14 seem to have come under a kind of special attack.
15 Some programs have been outright cancelled. The CET
16 workers of the [inaudible] Continuing and
17 Professional Studies Program had classes with 37 or
18 41 students this semester, far larger than normal.
19 And now in the middle of the semester they are being
20 told for the first time that the program is ending
21 and will not continue into the spring, leaving
22 workers without a job and students without a program.
23 There is some decline in enrollment at community
24 colleges, but how does that explain class sizes
25

1
2 increasing while laid-off workers aren't getting
3 rehired? Students are going to be coming back and if
4 these programs are gutted what are they coming back
5 to? CUNY is an essential part of our city's fabric.
6 When I walk around my neighborhood in like a CUNY
7 sweater everybody stops me to say, not everybody, but
8 people stop to say, oh, I got a certificate at Bronx
9 Community College, the guy at my bodega across the
10 street is taking classes at Hostos.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

12 ROSA SQUILLACOTE: Ah, may I take another
13 minute to finish, or?

14 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes, you may. You
15 can finish, yes.

16 ROSA SQUILLACOTE: Thank you very much.
17 My apologies. It is essential to invest in CUNY's
18 community colleges and continuing education programs.
19 And our members who make these programs run deserve
20 to be respected. They deserve a fair wage, small
21 class sizes, and better working conditions. I again
22 thank the CUNY administration for requesting 103
23 million dollars from the CUNY budget, from the city
24 budget. I urge CUNY to fight for more and to use
25 these funds to support the part-time workers who need

1 support in order to make CUNY what it is, a people's
2 university. Thank you for your time, and thank you
3 again, Chair Barron, for the opportunity to testify
4 today.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
7 testimony. I'll now call on Linda Pelc to testify.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 LINDA PELC: [inaudible] is my 36th year
10 of teaching at TELC. I had already been teaching for
11 10 years before I came to Laguardia Community College
12 in 1987. However, it was at Laguardia that I found
13 the level of commitment and passion that would define
14 my career, a career that has given me an enormous
15 sense of fulfillment. At Laguardia I found
16 commitment and service. Although, as an adjunct I
17 was only paid for contact hours, I served on
18 curriculum committees and search committees, mentored
19 new teachers, and gave presentations at national and
20 international conferences. My passion motivated me
21 to pursue two higher degrees, namely a second
22 master's and a Ph.D., and to keep a constant and
23 consistent connection to my students, both in the
24 classroom, before, during, and after class, and
25 through email. To further my professional

1
2 development, I have taught in teacher training
3 programs in New York, at New York University and at
4 the New School, and I have worked as a teacher
5 trainer staff developer at the New York City
6 Department of Education. Given my status as one of
7 the most senior faculty TELC, one who has contributed
8 to the development of the program and has mentored
9 junior faculty throughout the years, I was stunned to
10 learn that in fall 2020 for the first time in three-
11 and-a-half decades at Laguardia I was not given any
12 classes in TELC. Instead, new non-adjunct teachers
13 were given these classes. In fall 2021 enrollment
14 went up considerably and most adjuncts who requested
15 classes were given classes. We adjuncts are asking
16 that our experience, expertise, and continual
17 commitment to the program be granted their due. If
18 classes are available we are asking to be given
19 priority in the distribution of classes. Sharon
20 Lund, associate director of recruitment at Laguardia,
21 has recently said in his interview with President
22 Adams, President Adams is president of Laguardia, it,
23 Laguardia, is not a community college. It's a
24 college for the community. TELC adjunct lecturers
25 developed an English language program for the

1
2 community that was thriving. For decades TELC
3 faculty, like myself, have consistently demonstrated
4 our dedication to sustaining a program and continuing
5 education for the community. And we feed into the
6 colleges of CUNY with these students that we have
7 trained in English.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

9 LINDA PELC: For decades, just a few more
10 seconds please. For decades TELC faculty like myself
11 have consistent, I'm sorry, consistent, and it is the
12 contribution of these adjunct lecturers that will
13 continue to make TELC the vital lifeline needed by
14 the community that we have so proudly and
15 passionately served. Please support TELC. Thank
16 you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
18 testimony. Chair Barron, if you would like to ask
19 this panel any questions I'll turn it to you.

20 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Ah, thank you very
21 much. I want to thank the panel for coming and
22 giving their testimony and certainly when, ah, the
23 question involves adjunct lecturers, instructors, we
24 need to hear in fact from those people, those
25 organizations that reflect them and represent them.

1
2 So we're so glad for you to be here and to share your
3 testimony today. I did want to ask, ah, President
4 Davis, about any ideas that he has or any, ah,
5 insight that he has that he wants to share we us as
6 we look to what CUNY has proposed to do with these
7 500 conversions line. Are there anything that we
8 need to be mindful of or to have some oversight of as
9 these conversions are implemented?

10 JAMES DAVIS: Thanks for the question.
11 It's, um, it's probably one of the most important
12 ones to ask in this transition, um, with the budget
13 request. Um, so I think it's really, really
14 important to exercise oversight about the discrepancy
15 between, um, the possible discrepancy between, um,
16 converting, right, creating conversion lines and
17 creating an opportunity for people to apply for
18 lecturer positions. Um, CUNY and their, you know,
19 Dan and Matt left, but, um, they've heard it from me
20 elsewhere, um, you know, CUNY has expressed it in a
21 certain way in their budget request and I think what
22 the City Council can do is actually make sure that,
23 ah, that the conversion lines are [inaudible]
24 possible so that it's not a question of adjuncts
25 merely competing on an open national market, for

1
2 example, for, for, um, the same positions. So the
3 proposition of conversion lines is a bit different,
4 um, and they seem to want to have it both ways in the
5 way they've expressed it in their budget request.
6 Chair Barron, I think that you raised a really
7 important question about, um, equity in your line of
8 questioning with, ah, university administration. Um,
9 and I want to, I want to also clarify, um, something
10 that Rosa pointed out in relation to, to this. Um,
11 ah, the university's budget request, um, actually
12 includes 103 million additional, um, city funds, so
13 not total, total funds from the city, just in case
14 that wasn't clear. Um, it's additional, so it's
15 above and beyond what the enacted budget had in it
16 last year from, from the city. Ah, and I think, you
17 know, you were, you were getting at a, at a question
18 about the proportion. I, I think what the
19 management, university management was struggling to
20 understand, and your question was this question of
21 equity in, um, access to full-time faculty at, ah, at
22 various colleges across the CUNY system, and I think
23 it's a critical question to ask, and I, I want to be
24 clear in answering it that the question of access to
25 full-time faculty is in no way a kind of negative,

1 presupposed negative judgment about adjunct faculty,
2 because...

4 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Sure, Um-hmm.

5 JAMES DAVIS: ...as you just heard from my
6 colleagues, um, you know, and Linda expressed it
7 well, there's experience and expertise. Um, I was an
8 adjunct faculty member myself for four years. And
9 every time I go around and conduct classroom
10 observations of my contingent faculty colleagues,
11 it's striking, ah, the passion, the devotion, the
12 teaching expertise. So, you know, I just want to be
13 clear about that. When we talk about, about, you
14 know, the quote unquote problem with full-time versus
15 part-time, ah, ah, instruction at CUNY we're not
16 talking about at the individual instructor level.
17 We're talking about a structural issue.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I agree. I'm glad
19 you made the point. Thank you.

20 JAMES DAVIS: Yeah, and, and it does
21 track. I mean, unfortunately, um, and I see my
22 colleague from the University Faculty Senate, ah, Dr.
23 Okome is here and maybe she'll address this, what we
24 see when we look at the proportion of full-time
25 faculty members in the CUNY system, unfortunately

1
2 it's less, you're less likely if you're at a
3 predominantly minority-serving institution to, um, to
4 be able to study with full-time faculty over the
5 course of your career at that institution. There's a
6 major discrepancy right now, you, you may be aware
7 of, between the SUNY system and the CUNY system.
8 There's a major divergence and you can track it over
9 the last 16-17 years. It's stark and it does
10 correlate with the racial composition of the
11 colleges. So the colleges, like, and it's a study of
12 the four-year schools, just to be clear. So, and,
13 and, I don't know the way it tracks with the city,
14 with the, with the community colleges, but, um, you
15 know, Lehman, John Jay, Medgar, New York City Tech,
16 and York, the, the, with the highest rate, ah, of
17 serving students of color are the least likely, um,
18 to, ah, to have a high percentage of full-time
19 faculty. So part of that question about conversion
20 really would be to make, ah, a higher percentage of
21 full-time faculty at those institutions, um, not only
22 by hiring them from the outside, but also converting
23 it, from the amazing ranks of, of part-timers that we
24 currently have.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Ah, thank you very
3 much. Ah, I did have another question about your
4 concerns, the union's concerns about ventilation.
5 You know that we're back in person on campus. And we
6 did raise the question with CUNY previously about
7 ventilation because the union has raised the
8 question, particularly as they were talking about
9 coming back for in-person learning. So what is the
10 status of that? Have you gotten a response, or, ah,
11 and has the response been one that is appropriate and
12 adequate, particularly during this time of the
13 pandemic?

14 JAMES DAVIS: Appreciate the question,
15 and I'm gonna be really brief. We started down this
16 road by asking for, ah, the data behind the
17 engineering reports that was provided to the union.
18 So the university had an obligation to provide
19 engineering reports that showed at a kind of a 30,000
20 foot level what buildings were safe on the campus.
21 That's all well and good, but what we needed to know
22 was actually what's the ventilation levels in the
23 real time work spaces that people were occupying, not
24 simply is the HVAC system still working according to
25 code, but what does it actually mean on the ground,

1 in the library at Medgar Evers? Are people safe
2 there, right? In the registrar's office at John Jay
3 College, what does it mean? And the university has
4 been absolutely intransigent at providing that
5 information. We believe that they must have it
6 because that's what the engineering reports based
7 their reporting on. It does not inspire confidence,
8 right, in the workers, and I imagine with the
9 students, that the university hasn't been willing to
10 disclose the more granular level information about,
11 about ventilation, so we've tried the OSHA route and
12 they haven't complied with our request based on OSHA,
13 and now we're FOIA'ing, um, and so, again, it's, it's
14 one of these things where it's like if they're right
15 and the buildings are safe and there's nothing to
16 hide, just provide the data and then people will be
17 happy to go away and stop clamoring for it, but
18 they're refusing to provide it, which is raising, of
19 course, raising red flags, and this is an airborne
20 virus. We're not asking for something gratuitous,
21 we're asking for basic information during an airborne
22 virus pandemic. So appreciate you asking that
23 question and, um, you know, I, I realize that CUNY
24 will say that, you know, we gave the union
25

1 information. We're, we're asking for local level,
2 ah, um, data. You know, as the DOE is actually
3 providing. You know, New York City DOE is doing
4 this. You can go to the website right now and find
5 that data. So we feel CUNY should provide it as
6 well. So thanks for asking.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, yes.
9 It's always, [inaudible] always suspect is to
10 hesitancy on giving information and a lack of
11 transparency makes you wonder, well, why are
12 reluctant to do that. So, and, ah, we'll ask as the
13 committee also in our questioning of CUNY, we'll be
14 able to include that. And I do want to acknowledge
15 and thank the other panelists that are there with
16 you. Thank you for your service to CUNY and thank
17 you for going above and beyond, as you talk about the
18 things that you do beyond the contact hours for which
19 you are paid and how you're willing to share your
20 expertise and concern not just with students but with
21 colleagues as well. We do thank you for that. Thank
22 you so much.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next
24 panel in order of speaking is, will be Mojubaolu
25 Olufunke Okome, Nathan Schrader, Jillian Abbott,

1 Jonathan Hanon. I will now call on Mojubaolu
2 Olufunke Okome to begin testifying. Thank you.

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

4 MOJUBAOLU OLUFUNKE OKOME: Ah, good
5 morning, and thank you for, um, giving me the
6 opportunity to speak. I think the core issue, I kind
7 of, um, think some of the core issues here were not
8 addressed as much as I would have liked, um, in
9 especially the testimony from the administration. I
10 think the issue is adjunct faculty appointment and
11 equity within that, um, that, um, frame. Also, you
12 know, what marks are left by the pandemic that are
13 structural, you know, in a historical way, and which
14 ones were occasioned by the pandemic itself. When I
15 wanted to come I didn't just base what my remarks on
16 my own experience, but I was as a, I was a, an
17 adjunct faculty at CUNY in the 1980s when I was a
18 graduate student. The pay and the conditions were
19 so, ah, unsuitable for my needs that I went and found
20 a small liberal arts college where I able to
21 negotiate better pay and condition and I worked
22 there. But I did teach at CUNY as an adjunct faculty
23 member. I also taught at Long Island University, and
24 then at this, um, small liberal arts college. So I
25

1
2 had a little bit of a perspective. I would not claim
3 that I have a global perspective. I've been
4 teaching, I've been teaching at CUNY for 21 years and
5 I administered the program, an interdisciplinary in
6 which we used, um, we, we, we hired adjunct faculty.
7 I think we have to be aware that there's a lot of,
8 um, legitimate reasons why adjunct faculty would feel
9 disaffected, would feel disrespected, would feel, you
10 know, um, a bit, you know, unappreciated for a lot of
11 the work they're doing. A lot of our colleagues have
12 Ph.D.s. They have teaching experience. But, you
13 know, there's a whole variety of people who come into
14 the adjunct category. Some people are teaching for
15 the love of teaching. Some people, this is their
16 only work and they have to work unbelievably hard to
17 pay their bills, to put food on the table, to not
18 leave in a very precarious condition. So I, you
19 know, what, what the administration has said about
20 this conversion lines must prioritize hiring adjunct
21 faculty...

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

23 MOJUBAOLU OLUFUNKE OKOME: Oh, I'm sorry.
24 Hiring adjunct faculty. The other thing I think
25 needs to be done is to be aware that universities are

1 supposed to have this, um, this, um, I mean, our
2 qualities. We want to educate all the people of New
3 York. We want to be the Harvard for the people, you
4 know. How are we living this in terms of how we do
5 our budget priorities? How do we show the people who
6 work so hard to teach our students that we value
7 them, that we respect them? I know for a fact that
8 66 adjunct faculty were fired at, um, Medgar Evers
9 College. I don't think they've been restored to
10 their jobs, and something needs to be done on this.
11 You know, so we need to kind of put faces, we need to
12 see the global picture, but there are individuals
13 affected by this and we need to be mindful that as a,
14 as a set of universities that claim that we're for
15 the people, we have to act as such. Let's live our
16 values. Let's ensure that the people who are doing
17 all this teaching are able to do so as professionals
18 who are not living in precarious conditions that and
19 tell them moving from place to place, you know, and
20 also having their classes canceled at the last moment
21 and losing healthcare benefits and so on. You know,
22 so I will submit my, um, my remarks, um, by email. I
23 also think we need to be mindful that CUNY and SUNY
24 are both funded by state and city, you know, um,

1
2 state and city in, in the case of CUNY, the state in
3 the case of SUNY. There's a faculty gap. CUNY has
4 more full-time faculty per full-time equivalency per
5 thousand students. And the gap, ah, is substantial.
6 So if we're not the, um, orphan children of New York
7 State and New York City, um, governments we have to
8 be made to feel this, in terms of the staffing, the
9 treatment, equitable treatment for all of us, and
10 then enabling for people who are skilled,
11 experienced, within our fold, and are still in the
12 adjunct category to have more jobs where they have
13 more predictability in terms of their work conditions
14 and how they're rewarded for their efforts. Thank
15 you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
17 testimony. I'll now call on Nathan Schrader to
18 testify.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 NATHAN SCHRADER: Ah, hello. Thank you,
21 Chair Barron and, um, the City Council and I'm glad
22 to support, ah, to be here to off my, ah, testimony,
23 um, for your consideration. Ah, I'll try to brief.
24 Um, honestly, a lot of the things that I have to say
25 are pretty much the same as what my colleagues have

1
2 been saying. Um, it's kind of telling that the
3 administration didn't stick around to listen to us,
4 but what's new. Um, so, ah, as you observed, um, you
5 know, I don't know the numbers myself, either, but,
6 ah, a number of adjunct and part-time faculty are
7 minorities, people of color, ah, women. I am not,
8 but I can maybe, ah, give you my experience and as an
9 indicator of the way that part-time employees are
10 treated and the type of work that we do and the
11 compensation that we get for it. Ah, so just to give
12 you, ah, ah, a little example, ah, I am not getting a
13 class appointment in the spring. Ah, that would
14 usually mean the loss of one-third of my income. In
15 this case it means the loss of half of my income. It
16 also means the loss of my insurance. So because I
17 don't get one class, ah, I lose out on over \$5000 and
18 health insurance for the next foreseeable future
19 until I have enough classes to provide for that. Um,
20 also it's impossible, I mean, the administrators and
21 other people have made points about, um, creating
22 more full-time jobs and creating more, creating more
23 jobs that would, ah, give opportunities for people in
24 part-time positions to move up to full-time
25 positions, but I don't see any of that happening.

1
2 Um, the only kind of security that we have are
3 sometimes we have, ah, we have what's called a three-
4 year contract, which wasn't even honored, ah, because
5 of the pandemic. A lot of people under, ah, three-
6 year contracts were not given their contractually
7 obligated classes, ah, because CUNY simply, ah, just
8 did not honor the contract because of the pandemic
9 and, ah, we're coming out of pandemic situations and
10 I understand that higher education was hit hard, but
11 that's easy when it comes from people who are making
12 half a million dollars a year. All right, for the
13 rest of us, um, you know, um, this has been going
14 back before the beginning of the pandemic, right, the
15 insecurity of whether or not we will get a job in the
16 next semester or the next year, um, the fact that the
17 TELC adjuncts still have not been rehired or have
18 been replaced with, ah, workers who are doing the
19 same job for a lower wage kind of shows the direction
20 that CUNY is going with its hiring practices. Save
21 as much money, pack as many students into the
22 classroom as possible, and pay, ah, their, ah, their
23 employees as little as possible, offering to little
24 to no benefits. And that's not beneficial for us,
25 the employees. It's also not beneficial for the

1 students. When I have to teach a class that's capped
2 at 22, 25, or some people have even suggested 27
3 students in a class...

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

5 NATHAN SCHRADER: Ah, one more minute, I
6 know time is up, but everyone's going over, so I'll
7 wrap up my ideas right here. Um, you know, when we
8 have larger class caps, I mean, research shows that
9 18 is the ideal number of students in a class, and I
10 know that's a little unrealistic for a public
11 university, but it allows, ah, more jobs for adjunct
12 employees like myself and my colleagues, um, and it
13 allows more individual attention to those students to
14 give them the type of education that they need. Um,
15 the administration, um, maintained training for
16 online teaching and that's good, but training does
17 not replace income. That doesn't guarantee that
18 we're given jobs in a given semester and that we lose
19 our insurance, we lose our source of income. We are
20 not able to contribute our knowledge and our skills
21 to our students and, ah, I thank you very much for
22 the consideration.
23
24
25

1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION 86
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
3 testimony. I will now call on Jillian Abbott to
4 testify.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

6 JILLIAN ABBOTT: Um, hello, and thank you
7 very much for giving me the opportunity and the honor
8 to, um, give this testimony today. Um, um, I have,
9 ah, submitted my written, um, testimony, which is
10 longer than three minutes, and I've just done a down
11 and dirty edit, so I should, I'm gonna try, ah, I
12 should be as close as possible to three minutes. Um,
13 my name is Jillian Abbott. I'm an adjunct lecturer
14 in the English department. Ah, I'm a member of the
15 PSE CUNY Executive Council, and I'm an adjunct
16 senator at the University Facility Center, ah, for,
17 ah, representing York College. Um, I speak to you
18 today as a passionate educator and advocate for
19 students, faculty, and public education. To put it
20 another way, I'm a typical currently serving adjunct.
21 The impact of CUNY's policies have made adjuncts'
22 lives untenable, which in turn affects our students
23 negatively. I also want to share my vision for the
24 [inaudible] back to CUNY before [inaudible] and the
25 [inaudible] capacity to deliver quality education,

1
2 the kind of education that could turn a city student
3 into a statesman. Um, I had some very bad news a
4 week ago. A friend of mine, who I knew through my
5 artistic life, ah, I had run into her a few years
6 ago, she was teaching at Queens College, her name is
7 Liz Foley. Ah, she is a graduate of Smith College.
8 She was a graduate of Smith College and Columbia
9 University, ah, in the film school. She was teaching
10 film at Queens College. She got sick. She became
11 sick. She was let go and last week I found out she
12 died. So when a CUNY adjunct loses their, this was
13 not COVID. Where, as we get older and we get sick
14 we're discarded and we die. She did not have health
15 insurance at the time that she died. Um, her,
16 treating her passing [inaudible] except by her
17 students, who have lost their guidance, experience,
18 and passion. How many more adjuncts will CUNY
19 students lose? It's time for CUNY faculty to unit,
20 celebrate differences, and respect the contribution
21 of all. This can only be achieved when adjunct
22 faculty are welcomed into meaningful full-time jobs
23 with equal pay and conditions and the prospect of
24 advancement that current full-time faculties enjoy,
25 enjoys. That is, I urge CUNY to end [inaudible] and

1
2 to invite currently serving adjuncts into full-time
3 positions. And just as importantly, it is time for
4 CUNY to return to being an organization based on
5 shared government, where the voices of all faculty
6 are not only heard, but empowered. Ah, this is not,
7 the situation at CUNY isn't because administrators
8 are necessarily bad people or, or, um, full-time
9 faculty, ah, are bad people...

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

11 JILLIAN ABBOTT: ...although there has
12 been a lot of abuse of power. It's, it's, the whole
13 thing is, the organizational structure based as it is
14 on the indentured servitude of adjuncts makes being
15 our best selves almost impossible. This is a
16 structural issue. Um, the work faculty does can have
17 profound effects, impacts on students' lives. The,
18 the CUNY, but the CUNY of today is a very different
19 organization, oh, sorry, I, I edited it so I've got
20 to go back. I, I tried to cut things out. I have to
21 put something back in. Ah, the work faculty does can
22 have a profound impact on students' lives. Last
23 Friday I watched the funeral of the great statesman
24 and CUNY alum Secretary of State General Colin
25 Powell. In a moving eulogy his son, Michael, had

1 said I've heard it asked, are we still making youth
2 kind. The CUNY of today is a very different
3 organization to that CUNY that educated Secretary
4 Powell. When he came through CUNY at least 75% of
5 classes were taught by full-time professors. It is
6 very hard to turn a state student into a statesman
7 when you are living in your car or commuting five
8 hours between campuses to earn enough to barely pay
9 your bills. Um, can today's CUNY still catch the
10 would-be Colin Powell? All I know from personal
11 experience is faculty strives to help their students.
12 Um, but the entire faculty, but particularly those in
13 the classroom are stretched too thin, are too
14 overworked, disenfranchised, and economically
15 insecure to be their best self, and data surprising
16 how many promising students we still manage to catch,
17 although retention and graduation, ah, [inaudible]
18 point to the many, many students who fall between the
19 gaps. Public education mirrors adjuncts' struggle to
20 survive. The forces moving to privatize CUNY, to
21 give up on government funding and replace it with
22 private money, allowing rich individuals and
23 foundations to determine pedagogical practice and
24

1 research priorities is a great trick to our future
2 competitiveness.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [inaudible]
5 comments? Can I ask that you wrap your comments up,
6 please?

7 JILLIAN ABBOTT: Ah, yes. Could I have a
8 little bit more time? I cut, I cut, and cut, and
9 cut. Everybody else has had more time.

10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And we've extended
11 more to you as well. Just wanted to make note of
12 that. But I ask if you could wrap up your
13 committees.

14 JILLIAN ABBOTT: Sure.

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.

16 JILLIAN ABBOTT: Um, yes, thank you, and
17 thank you for the time. Ah, actions speak louder
18 than words. CUNY talks a good game and adjuncts
19 telling that they value us, then pass us less than
20 full-time McDonald's workers earns when the hours we
21 must actually put in add up. Um, we adjuncts are not
22 other. We're not inferior. We're people who give of
23 ourselves in order to make the future better for all
24 New Yorkers. Michael Powell said that we can choose
25 to be good. He also said that he believed the answer

1
2 to the question of whether we are making his
3 father's, still making his father's kind is up to us.
4 I urge the council to see all adjuncts and faculty
5 for who we are. I urge you to use your power to
6 create a CUNY that can choose to be good. Um,
7 adjuncts are irreplaceable resource worthy of
8 investment and allies providing, allies in providing
9 superior education. When uninsured, underpaid
10 adjuncts must take, must take time away from their
11 academic work just to survive, how many Colin Powells
12 will we lose? Ah, I thank you for your time, and my
13 only last comment is that my fear is that the next
14 statesperson to walk the halls of CUNY may do so on
15 her way out the door, her degree incomplete, never to
16 return to higher education again. So thank you for
17 your time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
19 testimony, Jillian. Um, I'll now turn to Jonathan
20 Hanon. You may testify, you may begin your
21 testimony.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Start, starting time.

23 JONATHAN HANON: Thank you. My name is
24 Jonathan Hanon and I'm a Ph.D. student at the
25 Graduate Center and an adjunct lecturer at John Jay

1 College and Brooklyn College, as well as the vice
2 chair for technology affairs for the University
3 Student Senate. Let me begin by addressing the
4 elephant in the room, which is the precarity of
5 adjunct employment. Adjuncts are hired on a semester
6 to semester basis without any security for future
7 semesters. As a USS delegate to the CUNY Graduate
8 Center my campus has mostly Ph.D. students, most of
9 whom are also adjuncts, many of whom were laid off
10 during the pandemic without any income other than
11 from unemployment, causing them to lose health
12 insurance, and as James said earlier, there were 2800
13 adjuncts that were laid off. This is a problem.
14 Where there are, where are CUNY's priorities? Why
15 are adjuncts not seen as a priority at CUNY, when
16 CUNY relies so heavily on adjunct employment. When
17 we're talking about the new deal for CUNY, whose
18 budget was recently passed by the CUNY Board of
19 Trustees and we're discussing today, we see that
20 there's an indent for more full-time lecturer lines
21 to be created. However, there is one key demographic
22 which is omitted from this - current adjuncts and
23 CUNY Ph.D. students. Ph.D. students who are just
24 beginning their studies are not allowed to receive a
25

1 master's degree until they have completed their
2 entire coursework for the Ph.D. and by the time they
3 finish this coursework there will not be any more
4 full-time lines to be allocated to them. Current
5 adjuncts, many of whom are teaching on the way to
6 their master's degrees, will be caught at the short
7 end of the stick and not be able to benefit from
8 this. If we look at historical hiring practices,
9 typically CUNY prefers to hire from outside of its
10 system from what they would consider more elite
11 institutions, leaving its own alumni, students,
12 adjuncts, and even administrators, sometimes, behind.
13 This is unacceptable and I feel that as elected
14 officials it is the City Council's responsibility to
15 hold CUNY accountable for these egregious hiring
16 practices and I am glad to see that that is what the
17 City Council is doing today. We need to ensure that
18 our benefit and we need to give back to our own
19 system rather than hiring from outside. CUNY says
20 that it tries to assist its own students and alumni
21 in finding jobs, and yet when push comes to shove,
22 when it's time to literally put their money where
23 their mouth is, the CUNY community itself is never
24 the priority. By not hiring our own, CUNY is
25

1
2 contributing even further to the lack of employment
3 opportunities available to its community, and this
4 starts with adjunct employment. We need to discuss
5 this problem, and year after year CUNY brings it up
6 and yet never does anything about it. You need to
7 bring jobs back to your own community. You need to
8 provide job security to your adjuncts. You need to
9 make more opportunities available for your students
10 who are currently pursuing graduate designs. CUNY,
11 you need to do better. Thank you, Chair Barron.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
13 testimony. Chair Barron, I will turn to you for any
14 questions for this panel before we, ah, before we go
15 to our final panel.

16 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Ah, thank you, Ms.
17 Briggs, and I want to thank all the panelists for
18 sharing your positions, and I think that your
19 personal, ah, insight is important and your
20 perspective from your having been, ah, employed by
21 CUNY or working CUNY, or in the union and seeing a
22 certain perspective is one that's very helpful. I do
23 want to extended, ah, my condolences for those who've
24 lost loved ones, ah, whether through the pandemic or
25 just through other kinds of circumstances, and

1
2 certainly it does highlight the fact that when there
3 are folks who don't have health insurance it can have
4 a devastating and even deadly impact on, on the
5 services that they can access. Ah, I do agree with
6 what you're talking about in terms of having faculty
7 appointments that reflect equity and having, ah,
8 adjuncts appreciated and appointed and acknowledged
9 for the work that they do, and highlighting, ah, as
10 Mr. Hanon talked about, the restrictions from those
11 who are presently working and Ph.D. candidates from
12 not being a part of this consideration. And I think
13 that that's something that we will look at and, as we
14 move forward, try to have CUNY respond to all of
15 that. And we do, as was indicated earlier, send
16 additional questions, so the fact that CUNY is not
17 here doesn't mean that they won't be informed as to
18 the concerns that you raise. Thank you very much.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I'll now
20 call on our final, ah, panel of public witnesses.
21 Um, and I will call in the order of speaking. It
22 will be Dishunta Meredith, Parisa Osmanovic, and
23 Pamela Jean Stermberg. Dishunta, you may now begin
24 your testimony.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

1
2 DISHUNTA MEREDITH: Hello. Um, thank
3 you, Chair Barron and your wonderful staff and this
4 panel for allowing me to speak today. I'm a little
5 nervous. Um, I am the president of Local 2054 under
6 DC37 and I represent the New York City College
7 Assistants. I really hate after sitting here
8 listening to all the things that's being said on both
9 sides, ah, with CUNY and the people are testifying, I
10 really hate that I haven't been here prior. Um, my
11 people also was affected very badly, um, due to the
12 pandemic. CUNY actually let go of over 4000 of my
13 people and without notification, without having a
14 discussion with us. Um, we found out after I, um,
15 requested a listing of my people. They didn't even
16 send letters to, um, the employees. They just simply
17 decided on September 1 to just not reappoint anyone,
18 just got rid of them. Normally their reappointment
19 was annually and they started to reappoint my people
20 month by month. What my people do. They are the
21 backbone of CUNY. If you go to any department in
22 this university you will find my college assistants.
23 They are advisors. They are admission advisors.
24 They are financial aid advisors. They are academic
25 advisors. They're in the health service department.

1 They are the tutors, they are in-class support. They
2 do everything. They are the jack-of-all-trades.
3 They are the backbone. They are the ones who help
4 carry this university through this pandemic. If you
5 picked up a phone you will not find upper staff. You
6 would have found a college assistant, my college
7 assistant answered the phone and servicing students.
8 And that was the issue with this pandemic. If you
9 noticed even with, um, PSC and the adjuncts, the
10 nonteaching adjuncts, I was a nonteaching adjunct,
11 they got rid of the support for the students, and
12 they wonder why they lost so many students. You
13 wonder why so many students left. I'm a mother also
14 and I'm gonna speak about that. But I want to go
15 back to my members. They talk about that they had to
16 do all these budget cuts. I have 81 college
17 assistants. Through the CUNY practices they were
18 hired at 35 hours. According to our contract, they
19 only supposed to work 10-40. These people have
20 worked from 15 to 35 years for the university. You
21 know how they repaid them? On July 1, 2021, not
22 2022...

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION 98
2 DISHUNTA MEREDITH: ...they decided, can
3 I continue?

4 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes, you may.

5 DISHUNTA MEREDITH: Thank you. July 1,
6 2021, what they did was they took these people and
7 reduced them from 35 hours to 20 hours a week. These
8 are black and brown people that was dedicated to the
9 university. And they basically chopped their lives
10 in half. [inaudible], um, on May 24, 2021, they
11 notified these people that they were gonna lose their
12 hours. And you know what their comment? I thought
13 approximately all these years of being, um, loyal
14 employees, oh, you have to get a, you can go out and
15 get another job. Really? These people are not
16 young. A lot of these people are almost retirement
17 age. During a pandemic you're gonna tell these
18 people that, oh, you should, you're able to go out
19 there and get another job? I'm in my fifties now.
20 It's difficult for me to go out and get a job, and
21 for you to take that type of attitude or stand on
22 these people that have been [inaudible] university
23 it's ridiculous. These people have been abused for
24 many years. We are stuck under a contract for 50,
25 over 50 years, the same contract. It never changes.

1 That contract is older than me. That contract is
2 older than the leader of DC37. My members, I have
3 18-year-old babies, 20-year-old babies, and they are
4 stuck working under work conditions from the late
5 Sixties, early Seventies. How does that happen?
6 Well, the reason why, because, well in a contract
7 both sides have to agree on any changes. And if it
8 benefit you, everything about you it benefits, you're
9 not gonna be willing to change anything. We don't
10 have, we have people that have been around 15, 20, 35
11 years. They don't have sick time. They don't have
12 vacation time. We don't have holidays. I look at
13 the people, the leaders of New York City and New York
14 State and they make all these laws to have people to
15 have time off to take care of their children, go to
16 the doctor. But you forget about the city workers.
17 You forget about the state workers. You forget about
18 us. I don't even want to ask a question. You know,
19 it, it really is a very difficult thing for me
20 because I hear the struggles of these people that I
21 represent. These are just not my members, these are
22 family, this is my sister, these are my brothers.
23 Through the pandemic people lost their medical
24 coverage. They kept 4700 of them, but guess what
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1
2 they did? They sliced their hours. They lost their
3 medical coverage. We paid CUNY over half a million
4 dollars out of our wages, our raises, to have full-
5 time coverage. They sliced their hours down so they
6 couldn't have medical coverage through a pandemic. I
7 have people going out, picking up cans, their
8 neighbors putting cans in front of their door so they
9 could pay their rent, so they could pay their
10 mortgage, so they could eat. Do you know how that
11 makes me feel as a human being to look at my, someone
12 calling me that I care about. I talk to my members.
13 I've worked with my members. I don't send people to
14 represent me to them. I talk with them. I'm
15 involved with them. To tell me that they don't have
16 food on their table, they're going to bed hungry.
17 That, that takes a toll on me. And after this
18 pandemic what really, really, really struck me on the
19 way that CUNY really seeing my people and the people
20 that work under them as really a way that I, I just
21 could never have imagined. I'm a African American
22 person. I'm a African American woman. I was bussed
23 to school. My family fought through the civil rights
24 movement. I'm from Alabama. I was born there. My
25 family went through those struggles. And I sat in a

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2 room in March of 2021 for CUNY to tell us that, oh,
3 we voted to have Juneteenth as a holiday. As a
4 holiday. Would you turn around and say, well, you
5 know what, your group is not going to get paid for
6 the holiday, without asking to get paid for holidays
7 that we're not working, you just totally diminished
8 us, and I sat there with 33 people, the only
9 American, African American wanted to have anything to
10 do with the, um, as a descendent to slavery. The
11 only one. And those people, Mr. [inaudible] said
12 that off of this, off of this, um, off, because he
13 knew I was gonna talk about him. I explained to them
14 exactly how it make me feel, how it make my African
15 American members feel, and you know he looked at me
16 like I had three heads. Three heads.

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I hear, I hear
18 the...

19 DISHUNTA MEREDITH: I'm angry, and I'm
20 passionate.

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: ...the passion that
22 you have for the situation, and, ah, we share that,
23 and it was brought to our attention a little earlier,
24 but I'm gonna ask the council to continue so that we
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1
2 can, ah, move to other persons and offer questions,
3 OK? Ms. Briggs?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.
5 Thank you, Ms. Meredith, for your testimony. I see
6 that we have another panelist with their hand raised.
7 I would just like to remember we have other testimony
8 that we have to get through, but at the end we will
9 do a catch-all, um, and we'll do our best to get back
10 to you. Um, but for now I would like to call on
11 Parisa Osmanovic, if you are still available.

12 PARISA OSMANOVIC: Yes.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

14 PARISA OSMANOVIC: Sorry if my voice is a
15 little shaky. That, um, testimony hit very close to
16 home. Thank you, Ms. Meredith. Um, I'm Parisa
17 Osmanovic. I am a third-year doctoral student at the
18 Graduate Center. I'm also the sole, ah, university
19 faculty senate liaison from the Graduate Center as a
20 doctoral and graduate student counsel, um, elected
21 representative for that position. I do not have a
22 voting, um, position on that senate, which is
23 effectively the conduit between the faculty and CUNY
24 Central. So doctoral student adjuncts are not able
25 to actually vote on conditions or any type of

1 constitutional amendments that are communicated to
2 CUNY Central. And I think that really speaks to the
3 contempt that CUNY Central has for its adjuncts,
4 because you don't want more representation from
5 adjuncts, um, alongside your faculty and you don't
6 want to hear anything that we have to say via a vote.
7 Um, as an unfunded third-year doctoral student, the
8 pandemic hit in the second semester of my first year
9 as a doctoral student. Um, I was left with no work.
10 I lost my job. My entire family was sick. I ended
11 up with blood clots in my lungs from COVID and no
12 type of, you know, reassurance that I was gonna have
13 health insurance, um, that being said I had through
14 the absolute grace and generosity of individual
15 faculty members within my department who contributed
16 individual monetary gifts to my family throughout the
17 pandemic, I was able to actually have some type of
18 support. But that was not CUNY. Those were good
19 people that happened to be at CUNY. Um, I do want to
20 say as, as far as being an adjunct, I'm working now
21 as an unfunded doctoral student. I'm teaching three
22 classes at Hunter this semester. I do not have any
23 type of, ah, security for next semester. I'm six
24 months pregnant. I don't know if I'm gonna have
25

1 health insurance when I deliver my baby next
2 semester. I do not know, um, if my, the rest of my
3 kids are gonna have health insurance 'cause our
4 entire family depends on this health insurance. My
5 pay, for each of the classes that I teach, is around
6 \$3000. Being that I have no other income, I'm not
7 funded, let me reiterate that. My peers, there is a
8 hierarchy between the doctoral students that are
9 hired as adjuncts. Some of them are funded. They
10 receive a \$28,000 fellowship every year, which, as
11 you know, in New York City is absolutely not enough
12 for rent, and then some of us are unfunded, which
13 means that CUNY only pays for our tuition and then
14 offers us these teaching gigs, these one-off teaching
15 gigs that are not really secure semester after
16 semester. And so I'm one of those. I don't have any
17 other income other than the three classes I teach,
18 which amounts to around 10K, just around 10K for the
19 semester, for the year. If I were to get those three
20 teaching classes again next semester, which have not
21 been offered to me...

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23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

24 PARISA OSMANOVIC: ...because they don't
25 know, um, that would be \$20,000 income for the year.

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2 As a mother of three small children, as a pregnant
3 woman, you know, this is insane to me, that there is
4 absolutely no consideration for the people who are,
5 um, coming, being trained by CUNY, that want to work
6 at CUNY, we have experience. My students, all of my
7 classes are between 30 to 35 students. They're all
8 students of color, coming from low-income
9 backgrounds. They're faced with the type of
10 precarity that nobody in this administration could
11 ever fathom throughout this pandemic without work,
12 their family members losing work, having to struggle
13 to find work to support their families, and then also
14 having the tiniest barriers meaning the difference
15 between whether or not they can stay in school or
16 have to drop out. So as Ms. Meredith said, your
17 falling numbers are a huge reflection of your
18 contempt for your students, including those who are
19 teaching your students. And as one of those people I
20 just wanted to give my testimony so that you could
21 put a face to these adjuncts that are suffering. Um,
22 and the types of conditions that we're dealing with.
23 Um, I would like to have access to more data that
24 shows what percentage of our adjuncts are doctoral
25 students and how many of those are being offered

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2 positions, you know, for those full-time positions,
3 that are getting allocated huge sums of money,
4 because as Jonathan mentioned so many of our faculty
5 are not coming, you know, directly from CUNY.
6 They're out, we're competing with the entire
7 country's job market and every single time it looks
8 like they want someone from Harvard or Yale or
9 Stamford or Berkeley. You, you do not respect your
10 own. And what does that communicate to your teachers
11 and people who want to, you know, come here? And
12 that's it. Thank you for your time.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
14 testimony. I will now call on Pamela Jean Stermberg.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 PAMELA JEAN STERMBERG: Hi. Um, that was
17 very moving testimony, um, and Ms. Meredith and, and,
18 um, Parisa's testimony are both just, you know, they,
19 they, they really speak to exactly what's happening
20 at CUNY and has been happening, and has just
21 increased and magnified by the pandemic. Um, good
22 morning. I have a prepared speech, but I have to
23 kind of get back to it because, um, because, you
24 know, this, this inequity in, in the faculty and, and
25 how CUNY treats us, it's, it's such a raw issue, and

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2 so, um, so, you know, it's so true. There's no
3 respect, um, for, even for those who teach their
4 students. That means really there's no respect for
5 the students. Um, anyway, good morning, Chair
6 Barron, and thank you for the opportunity to testify
7 on adjunct faculty employment this morning. Um, I
8 really appreciate the, the committee here, too. Um,
9 I'm an adjunct assistant professor at Hostos
10 Community College and the City College of New York.
11 I'm a full-time part-time faculty member. I earn
12 most of my incomes in teaching between these two
13 schools, and I teach the same course load, sometimes
14 more as full-time faculty while earning less than
15 half of the salary. Um, recently under the pandemic
16 I lost classes because part-time faculty, and this is
17 so insulting, were asked to understand that other
18 part-time faculty needed classes, so they had to kind
19 of split the crumbs, um, and, you know, I lost 25% of
20 my income, but I know there are lots of people who
21 lost, lost more than I have. Um, I'm not getting, I
22 haven't gotten it back, I don't know if I'm going to
23 get it back, but, you know, this is austerity where
24 the poor are asked to share their meager earnings
25 with each other because we're precarious and

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2 fungible, right? Um, I don't have a full pass to
3 full-time employment and stability, and no part-time,
4 ah, faculty member does. Most of us are precariously
5 employed and we lose our jobs or have classes cut one
6 semester to the next. You know, during the pandemic
7 we lost 2000 professors, and though they might have
8 been brought back, they have a [inaudible], which
9 means they have no rights to accumulated benefits,
10 such as health benefits or step increases, and
11 they're semester to semester appointments so they're
12 even more precarious than before. CUNY wants it this
13 way. I once heard a university administrator refer
14 to this system as nimble and Provost Lemons said
15 part-time faculty are tied to students' enrollment,
16 like so many widgets in a factory being manufactured
17 just in time. Is this really the way we think of
18 people who educate New Yorkers, like just in time
19 employees? You know, we have long-serving adjuncts
20 who deserve a path to full time...

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

22 PAMELA JEAN STERMBERG: Can I just go a
23 little longer?

24 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes you may.
25

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2 PAMELA JEAN STERMBERG: OK. You know,
3 and, and I'll just end it with this. Now we're told
4 we have to apply for jobs that we already do, and I
5 think this is insulting. We, we do these jobs
6 already and deserve to have a path to full-time
7 lines. Now we're being told we can apply for them
8 with the rest of the country. You know, I don't
9 think that this is equitable or fair or, or, you
10 know, risk [inaudible] the people who actually do the
11 major share of the teaching at CUNY. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your
13 testimony. Chair Barron, if you have any questions
14 for these, for our last panel, um, and I understand
15 we had another panelist who had a question if you'd
16 like to just point to her as well.

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Ah, well, well I'll
18 make my comments and, ah, observations on this panel
19 and then we can see about, ah, the panelist's
20 concern. Ah, I, I really want to thank each of you
21 for your very, ah, personalized, impassioned, and
22 moving testimony based on what in fact is the reality
23 that you're living with. Ah, it's always interesting
24 to have those who are the, ah, persons involved give
25 their perspective because the institution oftentimes

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2 doesn't want to put that out there, tries to keep it
3 obfuscated, and if we don't hear directly we are only
4 limited to what it is that the, ah, that the
5 administration will present. So it's interesting to
6 know that, ah, the situations that you walked about
7 are ones that you're facing, ah, and perhaps we can't
8 see if the comment that made on why should we have to
9 apply for jobs that we already are doing, perhaps
10 then that would be an opportunity for some language
11 in the, in the announcement that's gonna go out that
12 you'll be grandfathered in, or you'll have some
13 advantage, or that you'll have some preference. So
14 there are things that can be considered and, and we
15 can see how it is that we can work with PSC to try to
16 incorporate that into some language of what, of what
17 is that, ah, of what it is that would be equitable
18 and fair. And, and in terms of the, ah, the, ah,
19 college assistants, we were informed of that I think
20 in, in May or June, and we certainly had hoped that
21 CUNY would give, again, in an opportunity of equity,
22 let's grandfather those who are there, who are doing
23 the 35 hours. Those coming in new might be limited
24 to that, and over a period of time, ah, we could have
25 some equity in that regard as well. But CUNY wasn't

1 willing to do that and we weren't able to accomplish
2 that. And here, we're hearing about so much of
3 bureaucracy and so much of greed from a capitalist
4 system that looks to squeeze and get the most that
5 they can out of the workforce. Ah, it was someone
6 who used the term, ah, I think maybe it was Ms.
7 Abbott, who had talked about indentured servitude and
8 it's a kind of model of that, as we hear about your
9 individual instances and concerns. But, um, hours
10 late, Ms., Ms. Briggs you can raise the person who
11 wanted to, um, make comment, briefly.

12
13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, that was, um,
14 Linda Pelc.

15 LINDA PELC: Yeah, I just...

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

17 LINDA PELC: ...wanted to say, thank you.
18 I just wanted to say a word on behalf of the college
19 assistants. I work in TELC and there are college
20 assistants who have been there for over 30 years, as
21 mentioned by Meredith, and they were cut those hours,
22 and yet, as you know, as you've mentioned, Chair
23 Barron, they are the ones that keep the program
24 together. They work so hard and two of them I know
25 for a fact are near retirement, and yet they were cut

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2 those hours. And that hurt me more than my
3 colleagues, because I know them and I know they have
4 dedicated so much to the program. And yet the
5 administrators of TELC, of which there are five, were
6 not cut at all. Five administrators and three
7 secretaries. Who do most of the work? And who were
8 cut? It's a horrible thing, and I just wanted to
9 speak on behalf of that in my own experience. Thank
10 you.

11 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. I see
12 two more raised hands. I can give you each one
13 minute, because we do have to conclude our hearing.
14 Ms. Briggs.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I believe Mr. Hanon
16 was first, Jonathan Hanon.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

18 JONATHAN HANON: I just wanted to mention
19 about the fact that we were saying that we can
20 discuss this with the PSC. If we discuss this with
21 the PSC we have to remember that the PSC is mostly
22 full-time faculty members, and so we need to have a
23 body that will interest in the current interest of
24 the part-time faculty members and adjuncts, because
25 if we don't have a body that specifically represents

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2 adjuncts and part-time faculty members, then how can
3 their interests be properly represented? Thank you,
4 Chair Barron.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And Ms.
6 Jillian Abbott.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 JILLIAN ABBOTT: Ah, thank you, thank you
9 for that, too. Ah, first I just want to say like
10 I've been almost moved to tears by the things that
11 I've heard today, and I know they're all true,
12 because I've seen every, I've seen all this stuff,
13 and one of the things that I wanted to tell when I
14 was at Queensboro Community College, because we were
15 all, you know, one of the things they, they do with
16 the, with the subhuman units of labor is push us from
17 college to college. But there was an event with food
18 one day and the person in charge of all the college
19 assistants at the end said oh, don't throw that in
20 the bin, I need to give it to the college assistants.
21 They're all hungry. And, and meaning they don't have
22 enough to eat in their regular life. And then the
23 other thing that I wanted to ask about or to almost
24 beg for is some protection in, in the appointment
25 process if they are conversion line, um, when with

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2 the three-year contract, which I got I think because
3 of the passionate, um, testimony I did last time, um,
4 I think, I think heard me...

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

6 JILLIAN ABBOTT: Ah, OK, well, well,
7 please give us some protection that, that people
8 can't pick the favorites, that it's if we do a good
9 job we get the job. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Ah, thank you all.
11 Thank you very much. I appreciate your coming,
12 taking the time and adding to the discussion about
13 what it is that we need to examine as CUNY has the
14 opportunity to hear and now to move forward to
15 improve things. Ah, thank you all again, and I do
16 want to thank my team for the work that they do, for
17 the preparation that they give in terms of doing it
18 briefing papers for me and for all of the, ah,
19 pointers that they give and all of the signals that
20 they send. I really appreciate it, and I certainly
21 have to thank as well all the sergeants at arms, and
22 all of the technical people who make this run so
23 smoothly and so seamlessly, and, ah, just appreciate
24 all that you do. So with that I will find my
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[inaudible] and declare that this hearing is now
adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date November 27, 2021