

Testimony on Adjuncts at CUNY

I'm writing as the former Chair and current Associate Chair of the English Department at Queens College, CUNY. As chair I was responsible for supervising adjuncts, for maintaining the department's adjunct budget, and for overseeing the scheduling of our courses. I want to stress that our department's reliance on part-time labor is a huge strain on our department not only because of how such precarious academic positions but also because of how they impact full-time faculty members.

The English Department currently has 40 full-time faculty members and approximately 80 part-time faculty members. While about a quarter of those part timers—or adjuncts—are long-term, the majority are graduate students, recent PhDs and MFA graduates, or adjuncts who have been hired from other institutions. On average, we have to hire between 15 and 20 new adjuncts every spring/ summer for the next fall semester, and on top of that we receive 10 new PhD and MFA students who are new to teaching and must receive training and support. This precarious and ever-changing labor pool means that our department expends a lot of resources helping new instructors adjust to teaching in our department. Because we're committed to teaching our students well, we've developed extensive materials to support our part-time faculty. However, these materials need to be continuously updated. Additionally, because adjunct teaching is, by its nature, precarious, it means that our adjuncts often leave us with little notice. It's not unusual for us to be scrambling to hire new adjuncts in August to cover courses that begin within a few weeks. And every time we hire someone new, there is involved process in onboarding and training this new person. (There have been more than a few times where we had to hire within a day or two of the semester beginning, and in those cases, we hope for the best when we hire.)

The pandemic has brought with it an additional set of challenges: our department managed not to let go of many adjuncts because when it became clear in the spring that CUNY would have financial issues, we decided not to hire any new adjuncts to replace those that told us they would not be returning in the fall. However, because we were not allowed to hire our usual number of adjuncts—and we had more students than usual needing to take our required courses— we were asked to increase class sizes by 20%. Therefore, adjuncts found themselves teaching more students this fall, even though we were all new to facing the challenges of teaching online.

As we're learning, teaching online, especially if you're to do it well, requires a substantial investment in time. Besides having to re-conceive how we teach—and teaching writing online is not easy—the number of emails from students has increased substantially. We are also now dependent on our computers and webcams. However, Queens College does not provide adjuncts with computers or any hardware. Therefore, in order to do their jobs properly, adjuncts have to invest

in equipment out of their own pocket when they already earn less than a living wage.

When I became chair of my department, I lobbied our Provost for full-time lines dedicated to teaching our first-year writing students. The response was always that there was no money in the budget to do so. But I often think about how, if my department was not so reliant on part timers to teach in our first-year writing program, the full-time faculty who hire, train, and manage part timers, would be free to teach more or spend their administrative time in more productive ways. It doesn't advantage any student to have an instructor with very little commitment to the institution, and it doesn't advantage us to spend hours training people who leave within a few years. In the long term, the most innovative thing CUNY could do is actually the simplest: be the first public university committed to having the majority of its courses taught by full-time faculty members whose investment in students and the institution will ultimately benefit both more than any change the university could implement.

I am submitting my testimony as an adjunct at The English Language Center, TELC, at LaGuardia Community College. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to describe how the impact of the virus has turned my life, our lives, upside-down.

In June, I received notice that I would not be assigned any classes in the TELC summer session, and I received the same email in August, about the fall session, despite having been reappointed, as I have been for three decades in CUNY, for the new academic year. I stand before you, with four decades of teaching experience, three of them in CUNY colleges, two of them in TELC, with all the requisite degrees, without a paycheck, without health coverage, without any kind of assurance that I will be assigned teaching hours in the future, and having had to suddenly alter my plans and dreams.

I have become “expensive.” And so has my medication, which formerly cost \$20.00, and now costs \$670.00.

This, after two decades of helping students learn through Essay Collections containing seven to ten multi-draft essays each; of spending a minimum of nine hours per week on the essays from only one section; of developing materials for readings, from Shirley Jackson to EB White, from MLK to AOC; of having to find innovative solutions to broken copiers and no access to the LaGCC print shop; of having to hustle for white board markers; of having to quickly learn to teach remotely through Schoology, Zoom, Google Docs and Blackboard; of having to figure out scanning with my cell phone; of many uncompensated extra hours with students; of a night class of 26 students in three levels, all of whom excelled.

My students have been pole dancers and surgeons, busboys and engineers, chefs and lawyers, construction workers and TV news anchors, architects and office cleaners, tired Amazon warehouse workers, street food vendors, future nurses, essential workers, teenagers, senior citizens, parents, gay, straight, trans.

Some have fled violence and war. They have had spouses killed in Windows on the World on 9/11, and they have had relatives in ICE detention. They have come from all over the world, and have continued in LaGuardia, CUNY, and other colleges around the city and country.

For 20 years, in TELC, I have provided them with challenge and support. With my adjunct colleagues, I wish to continue doing so.

I respect our challenges. But let's look to history. As PSC President Bowen has pointed out, Brooklyn College was created during the depression. The crisis should be a shared burden, not an opportunity to balance budgets on the backs of adjuncts, whose contribution to CUNY is almost impossible to overstate, and has never been paid in full.

I respect this crisis. But the crisis will end, and with my thousands of adjunct colleagues I ask that councilmembers and college administrators listen carefully to what we are saying, commit to rehiring adjuncts, to doing what it takes to invest in the largest public university system in the US, because not only is it the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do.

Rebecca Vaughan, TELC adjunct

One note: I am one of many (35?) adjuncts in TELC who received a reappointment letter, but either did not receive any class assignments, or received class hours insufficient for continued

health coverage. All adjuncts in TELC who relied on the Health Benefits through our employment lost it, despite receiving reappointment letters. In the meantime, our classes have been assigned to teachers in another classification created by CUNY, Continuing Education Teachers, or CETs, who are compensated at a lower rate than the adjunct rate, and who do not receive benefits. The pattern of hiring reveals that the longest serving and most experienced adjuncts were not assigned classes. The crisis has been used to accelerate administration's decision to hire CETs, not adjuncts, in the program. Adjuncts in the program support CET Justice in organizing for an end to this classification in TELC, a classification which CUNY has created, and which is being used against all of us.

Testimony from PROFESSOR KIMORA from CUNY

Kimora@jjay.cuny.edu

Member, Executive Committee (EC) CUNY University Faculty Senate (UFS) and

Professor, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

“Oversight: Adjunct Faculty Employment at the City University of New York”

New York City Council's *Committee on Higher Education and Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction*

Thursday, November 12, 2020, 10:00 AM, Zoom-Webinar

Good Morning, Honorable Chair Inez D. Barron and Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about the issue of adjunct faculty employment at the City University of New York. I am a full adjunct professor of criminal justice, ethics, and leadership at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. I have been a dedicated professor at the City University of New York (CUNY) since 2003. I have been an elected official of the CUNY University Faculty Senate (UFS) since 2011. I was honored to be re-elected this past May, 2020, to a third term of the Executive Committee (EC) of the City University of New York (CUNY). I have been asked by the Chair of the University Faculty Senate (UFS), Professor Martin Burke, to speak about this important issue.

As you may have surmised, we at CUNY are in the midst of a financial nightmare due to the virus pandemic. For example, CUNY lost \$84 million dollars from a 5.1 percent decline in enrollment and other revenue collections since last March, 2020.(Chancellor Matos Rodriguez stated in a memo to us this month that CUNY lost \$32 million in revenue for just the spring, 2020 semester.) As a result, we are enduring a CUNY-wide hiring freeze. Approximately 3,000 adjuncts (part-time workers included) have been laid off, as of this writing. It is clear that many of the dismissed adjuncts are of color and were barely making a living wage.

How does this impact the CUNY adjunct faculty? Many of our colleagues have lost their livelihood and their health insurance, not to mention their dignity. In addition, many have shortened contract terms. If that isn't bad enough, our workloads have increased tremendously with larger class sizes. Also, additional work is required to ensure that ONLINE learning is effective and helpful to our students.

It makes no sense to punish adjuncts, unless of course, CUNY has no regard for them as part-time workers. Adjuncts are the backbone of teaching at CUNY. For example, the CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, on page 15 of their “PMP Highlights, CUNY 2019”, published in September, 2020, reported that 27.9 % of the instruction at John Jay College of Criminal Justice is by full-time faculty. Obviously, that implies that up to 72.1% of the instruction at John Jay is done by ADJUNCTS. We are a source of invaluable and cheap labor for the College. We work very hard because we love teaching

our students. We know the importance of educating a future generation of leaders for the City of New York and beyond.

I ask that you consider investing in CUNY by increasing taxes on the wealthy of this great City. You, as conscientious members of the NYC Council, can prove to us that you care about educating our public. As I have mentioned to you in earlier testimony in June, 2020 regarding the impact of the Coronavirus on CUNY, it is imperative that we invest in the City University of New York (CUNY), the largest urban university in the United States. I know you have the compassion to invest in CUNY. You and I cherish CUNY.

Please continue to collaborate with us at the University Faculty Senate so that we can aid the adjuncts in their struggle for continued employment.

Thank you for your time.

I hope that you are well and safe.

NOTE: PMP equals Performance Management Process.

November 15, 2020

To the NYC Council,

Thank you for holding these hearings so the people can be heard. I am a part-time lecturer at Baruch College in the CUNY system.

Last spring due to the Covid-19 pandemic all classes at Baruch went online. This increased the workload and uncertainty for both students and faculty. Faculty were bombarded with issues from both students and the Administration. We were told by the Administration that we were doing a great job and that they were very thankful.

Well the thanks I ultimately got was “thank you for your efforts but we have no classes for you in the fall”. This was during the time when I was preparing with the rest of the department for the fall semester. But I was also the last adjunct hired.

So budget cuts were made at the college most of which ended up affecting the classroom. Fewer adjunct faculty were offered classes and existing full time faculty saw their class sizes increase in already large classes.

The budget cuts also affected the most vulnerable and lowest paid employees at the college (part-time faculty and staff). All well paid administrators kept their positions with no cut in salary and benefits. This was done because it could be. If cuts had to be made, and the administration was concerned about the quality of education at Baruch, I would think the classroom would be the last place they would want to cut. But of course they are primarily concerned with their own positions and income.

In the interests of the students and the quality of education at Baruch I would ask the council to look into how the administration at Baruch handled these budget cuts. I will not even go into the issue of “fairness”. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carl Jensen

Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education (jointly with the Committee on Civil Service and Labor) by Jillian Abbott.

I am an adjunct lecturer in the English Department at York College, CUNY. I also serve as an elected Senator on the CUNY-wide University Faculty Senate and am an elected member of the PSC-CUNY Executive Council at York College CUNY.

I was given less than 24 hours' notice of this hearing (as were all adjuncts). This was a deliberate act on the part of CUNY and the union (PSC) to ensure no adjuncts would be able to pull together testimony in time. Adjuncts by and large have to teach up to six classes with at least 25 students in each, at several institutions, to avoid living in their cars – if they are lucky enough to own a car, that is.

I am writing this at 2:56 am on Sunday, November 15 because this is the first and only time I have to so.

I am not paid for any of my substantial service to CUNY and following a directive from Pamela S (Smirking?) Silverblatt, to colleges to not reappoint three-year contract eligible adjuncts or give out three-year contracts to the newly eligible adjuncts, I was denied a three-year contract. **The PSC told me that if I appealed this decision, I would lose my job altogether.**

Because I am an outstanding teacher, and one who not only gives considerable service to CUNY but also brings CUNY distinction via my publications and presentations at international, national and regional conferences, denying me the three-year contract could only be done based on lies.

This was achieved by the department deploying a blunt instrument known for her vendettas against adjuncts with talent, and even sometimes vendettas against full-time faculty members with talent. The lies she told in writing in denying me the contract are outrageous, ethically challenged, and call into question her professionalism. I have been in politics since I was 14 years old and have therefore been insulted by experts. She is no expert, just a blunt instrument ripping away at my flesh (in the midst of a pandemic), leaving me feeling suicidal at the end of the process (I'm over it now).

She even attacked me for getting publications in my field of expertise – far from a fault this is a necessary achievement for promotion and tenure for full time faculty. She also used this publication to make unsubstantiated allegations about my grading policy that were never raised to me in the assessment meeting or ever. But no adjunct expects professionalism or ethical treatment at CUNY.

I know CUNY does not care about adjuncts because in my 10 years of outstanding teaching and service to CUNY I have been abused, exploited, sexually harassed, and viciously attacked, and **no one, not CUNY central, not the union, no one, has ever defended me.** I will put a link below to an op-ed I had published at *The New York Daily News* in April 2019 which outlines some of my plight.

The indifference and contempt with which CUNY holds adjuncts and the PSC which represents department chairs, who, though health insurance, exercise the power of life and death over adjuncts and who protect full time faculty who abuse them is a scandal (see attached link to the plight of outstanding historian Thea Hunter in *The Atlantic* – she died).

This contempt is underpinned by indifference to CUNY students, who are made up of many of the most under privileged New Yorkers. Empowered teachers who earn a living wage can have a substantial impact on student's economic upward mobility, however underpaid teachers, who need to teach five or six classes with now up to 42 students in each class struggle to withstand the pressure to pass students though. And yet, we stay up all night to try to withstand this pressure and actually teach our students the skills they need to succeed.

How are students' needs served by the exploitation, under payment, and abuse of adjuncts who do the bulk of the teaching?

Regarding the diversity of CUNY faculty: CUNY includes the adjuncts in diversity statistics to showcase itself as a diverse employer. This is a trick. The bulk of the full time faculty are white and/or native born. While there are reasonable numbers of women in full times teaching positions, the numbers go down as rank increases, i.e. there are proportionally more women as lectures or assistant professors than associate professors or full professors. The bulk of the adjuncts are either women, people of color, immigrants (like me), women who took time out to prioritized their families and spent time at home as mothers (like me), or creatives (also me).

That is, CUNY exploits adjuncts while using their diversity to pretend it is a diverse employer.

Let me debunk some of Pamela Smirking Silverblatt's lies.

Adjuncts were not paid for the training they did. York College received the fund to pay me for an advanced course in online teaching (I was already certified for online teaching when CUNY went virtual). I received an email stating that to get paid I needed to log in to the HR System known as AEMS by October 28. I could not log in. I tried from several different devises. AEMS was not accessible.

I reached out to the adjunct liaison in HR. He said he could see my assignment but couldn't approve it. He told me to reach out to IT. I did. They never got back to me. I then reached out to the Provost who wrote to me several days later say he might be able to help. I reached out again, but still can't sign in, and no word from HR, IT, or the Provost. I won't get the money because now the deadline is passed. This is deliberate, systemic, and typical. CUNY steals money from adjuncts all the time. Besides, **full time faculty members got paid their salary plus the stipend for doing these courses, we had only our stipends**, which in my case was not paid.

Adjuncts were not paid for the weeks of full time, hour upon hour work they did to convert their courses to online in March 2020 when the pandemic hit.

The new contract, far from being a great achievement for adjuncts represents the end of teaching. It institutionalizes of Silverblatt's overarching philosophy that adjuncts are interchangeable, sub-human units of labor. It takes away the one thing we had – incremental pay rises which recognized our increased value that comes with years of service. The idea that a teacher fresh off the streets is of equal value to one with 10 years experience is a joke. The contract established the principle that we are not professionals, just robots. An assistant janitor at York College starts out at \$36,000+. The most we can earn at one college is \$20,000. Of course, a janitor should be well paid, but as **educating young people is a prime objective of CUNY, shouldn't those doing it earn at least what a janitor earns?**

The idea that being paid one-hour for every three hours of teaching is an insult. If we stuck to that, the complaints from students would never end. Most full time teachers teach from zero to two classes per semester, maybe three, or if they are lectures and the chair hates them, they might teach four classes. To be effective as a teacher requires at least 15 hours non-teaching work per three-credit course, not one hour. The new contract is an insult.

Despite repeated requests to CUNY and the PSC, no one will give me the figures on the total cost of adjunct pay this contract versus the last. I believe there was little or no increase in expenditure because the one-hour office hour was financed by the removal of incremental increases for years of service. The whole thing is smoke and mirrors.

The idea that all teachers are indistinguishable, interchangeable, sub-human units of labor has a devastating impact on students, especially in a time of crisis such as this pandemic.

There are many outstanding full time and adjunct faculty members who are great teachers in person but have no skills or are intimidated by the online setting. They can't just switch to this mode. Full timers are protected and paid their salary regardless, whereas adjuncts who couldn't make the switch to online were discarded with as much ceremony as when I throw out used kitty litter.

I am very skilled at teaching online (see link to York College news story about my student from Spring 2020), but as the chairs complained to the PSC Executive Council at York, they cannot take into account the skills of adjuncts when deciding who to let go. Silverblatt and her puppet masters at CUNY have directed that subhuman units of labor must be removed according to cost. That is, a highly skilled, long serving adjuncts such as myself who can teach online must be sacked because we cost more to employ. That fact that I can do the job and others can't doesn't enter into the equation.

My first career was in organization design and classification review. Leaving aside the mind blowing structural inefficiencies at CUNY, just the goal displacement there leaves me gob smacked.

Here are some other tales of woe from my long history of being abused, sexually harassed and discriminated against at CUNY. On request, I can supply documentary evidence of everything I assert.

I also stood as a delegate to the PSC assembly, however a misprint in the voting instructions - union members were told they had to “vote for no more than FIVE (4) ‘ - ensured that the overwhelming majority of votes in this category would be invalid. This was done because the PSC knew that as an adjunct (that is to say, a poor person) I would not have access to legal council so they could get away with this. Like many adjuncts, I oppose much of what the PSC-CUNY does because they represent the department chairs who give cover to (or in the case of Queensborough Community College lead) the minority of unscrupulous full timers who abuse adjuncts, such as the systemic sexual harassment of adjuncts by unscrupulous male full time faculty members.

I have been involved with the union movement since I was 14 years old and I have never worked without being a union member. That said, I have never encountered a union like this one. If you imagine the police union with the ability to put their hands in criminals’ pockets and take out dues, you have the situation with regard to the PSC and adjuncts. They represent our bosses, the department chairs, and almost never take adjuncts sides in disputes.

When I became a victim of discrimination and was passed over for promotion by the person who had sexually harassed me at the urging of the same full time faculty members who made the decision on employment, I wrote to the then Chancellor documenting all that had happened, including providing an email I received from a HR executive at CUNY Central suggesting if I wanted a full time job I should consider a romantic liaison with the department chair. I received a one paragraph reply from legal council the gist of which was we don’t care (this was before #MeToo). No action was taken.

I was never been approached about this, or even asked if I was okay. This happened at Queensborough Community College, and I made sure that all senior executives there knew about it, as well as all officers of the PSC. I have heard rumors that years later the same gang of harassers harassed full time faculty members and action was taken then and only then and only to protect full time women.

I was mocked by all, especially “smirking” Pamela S. Silverblatt. I have put on 80 pounds since all this happened and the stress of insecure employment, discrimination, and abuse is destroying my health.

As an immigrant from Australia, a country that maintains the highest standards of professionalism and is a meritocracy, I could not understand what was happening to me, and why my talent and hard work only served to marginalize me further. Then I read Jane Myers *Dark Money*. Finally, I understood. The Koch brothers didn’t spend all that many to prevent the education of people of color, women, immigrants and poor people to let someone like me loose in a classroom with enough resources to actually transfer skills that would lead to upward mobility. All that happens at CUNY is deliberate and systemic. I am but a fly in Silverblatt’s puppet masters’ ointment and she will squash me for them.

The situation with adjuncts evolved slowly over time but could not have come into being without complicity and proactive enforcement by the PSC-CUNY.

Note I am exhausted and writing this from scratch in the middle of the night to meet you deadline. I apologize in advance for typos.

The Atlantic “Death of An Adjunct” 2019

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/04/adjunct-professors-higher-education-thea-hunter/586168/>

New York Daily News Adjunct Life April 8, 2019

<https://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-oped-cunys-teachers-get-stiffed-20190408-rvxovg6yhrhc7e3tjit4fvtfbq-story.html>

Link to York College news story about my student

https://www.york.cuny.edu/news/hastride-animates-her-story-of-covid-19?utm_source=phpList&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=York+Weekly+Update&utm_content=HTML

Link to Hastride’s Edouard’s work (spring 2020):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIOLb26qn_M&feature=youtu.be

Testimony of Barry Lituchy, Adjunct Assistant Professor of History in the Social & Behavioral Science Department at Medgar Evers College to the Committee on Higher Education of the New York City Council, November 12, 2020

Dear New York City Council,

I am compelled to provide this testimony because as one of the 66 Adjunct professors not re-appointed at Medgar Evers College, despite the fact that we were entitled to a renewal of our the three year contracts based both on the recommendations of our departments and the binding collective bargaining agreement between CUNY and the PSC, I believe that many vitally important issues relating to this matter were left unaddressed as well as unexplained at today's hearing. I have taught at Medgar Evers College for the past 13 years and in CUNY for over 30 years, and I can say without being too immodest that I know more than most people about what is going on in CUNY and more particularly what is going on at Medgar Evers College.

First of all, it needs to be said at the outset that the current administration at Medgar Evers College, led by Rudy Crew and Augustine Okereke, have used the Covid 19 crisis as a smokescreen to carry out pernicious policies that have harmed Medgar Evers College, its faculty and students, and have done so continuing a pattern of misadministration that has been going on for years. This did not begin in 2020! For the past ten years they have been undermining and destroying the only historically black college in CUNY and in New York City. And if you don't believe me, then ask the widow of the man for whom the college is named, Myrlie Evers-Williams. (See <https://diverseeducation.com/article/185884/> and <https://nypost.com/2020/08/01/widow-of-medgar-evers-slams-brooklyn-college-named-after-husband/>.) If the phrase Black Lives Matters has any meaning at all, it should mean excellent educational and life opportunities for African American students in New York City. Unfortunately, the administration at Medgar Evers College has failed in its specific mission to do this, and has failed its students, its faculty, and the community which it serves. Based on what I witnessed at today's council hearing chaired by Councilwoman Inez Barron and Councilman I. Daneek Miller, the central CUNY administration is allowing malfeasance to occur at Medgar Evers College and is throwing up additional smokescreens to obscure and deflect their own culpability in allowing the administration at Medgar Evers College to act in this manner and to do so with impunity.

The flagrant violation of academic and contractual norms by the Crew-Okereke team at Medgar Evers has nothing to do with the Covid crisis! They attempted to violate the very same three year contract stipulation three whole years before Covid even began, in the spring of 2017, just weeks after the collective bargaining agreement between CUNY and the PSC was signed. Crew & Okereke refused to abide by the collective bargaining agreement and unilaterally refused to offer three year contracts to all eligible faculty at Medgar Evers College clearly in a very deliberate and flagrant violation of the binding agreement when appointments came up in May 2017. Without any explanation, 66 professors were denied what was due to them based on the contract CUNY and based on their own departments' recommendations. I was the faculty member who immediately filed a grievance against this malfeasance in May 2017. By the beginning of 2018 the

CUNY administration admitted they were wrong and conceded that it must reverse itself just as the matter was going to arbitration. Had we not fought for the three year contracts in 2017 we would not have gotten them because the Medgar Evers College administration was deliberately trying to cheat the adjunct faculty and undermine the Professional Staff Congress. Is this an anti-union tactic? The answer obviously is yes. In May 2020 the Medgar Evers College administration once again refused to renew the three contracts of the 66 professors whose three year contracts were ending, although this time they sent out two form letters to this effect to the 66 professors. The first stated that it was due to budgetary constraints brought about by Covid but the second letter said that it did not, thus contradicting themselves (I have attached both letters of non-reappointment). The truth is that this was part of a pattern by Crew and Okereke to avoid responsibility for fulfilling the obligations of the college to its faculty, staff, and students. Moreover, in doing so they have been consistently conniving and untruthful. They took this action in direct opposition to the recommendations and decisions of the department chairs at the college. During August 2020 the chair of my department, Dr. Maria DeLongoria, assigned courses to several non-reappointed professors. So too did the chairs of other departments at Medgar Evers College. Okereke responded by terminating the email accounts of all 66 professors who were not re-appointed and made untruthful statements to the chairs that he could not allow any of the 66 three year contracts to be renewed or even re-hired for one year contracts because of "litigation." In doing this he also created in effect a "do not hire" list that all departments had to follow and he claimed he was "only following orders" of the central CUNY administration.

This was all a bald faced lie by Okereke. Yes, within 24 hours of the first non-reappointment letter, two faculty members, Frank Laude, and myself, requested that the PSC file a grievance against Medgar Evers College, and so the grievance currently in progress was commenced. But for Crew and Okereke to lie in this manner was outrageous. Whether there was litigation or not had absolutely nothing to do with the hiring of adjunct faculty for contracts shorter than three years. Nor did it justify the punitive actions taken by them against adjunct faculty. And also, due to the evasiveness of the central CUNY administration (fully on display at your hearing today), we do not know the full extent of CUNY central's role in all of this. And by the way, this current grievance was another unmentioned elephant in the room during today's City Council hearing. Why was this issue not even addressed?

However, the questioning posed by City Council member Rosenthal was excellent and came closest to uncovering the malfeasance and harm being done to CUNY, to its faculty, and to African American students in New York City today. She asked very accurately whether the non-reappointment of the three year contract adjuncts at Medgar Evers College raised a red flag for the CUNY central administration and what they said or did about it. CUNY administrators Sapienza and Silverblatt simply did not answer the question. Councilwoman Rosenthal clearly and correctly saw that they were evading their responsibilities as administrators by refusing to cooperate with the City Council hearing and failing to answer her questions, and she said as much during the hearing. Thus, these administrators once again provided cover for flagrant violations committed at Medgar Evers College that harms this particular college, the one and only historically black college in CUNY.

It is exactly this kind of evasiveness, dishonesty, malfeasance, lack of accountability, and may I add racism, that currently plagues CUNY, and cheats not just CUNY faculty of contractual promises, but cheats the people of New York City, and particularly the African American population of New York City, of the fair and appropriate educational opportunities that they deserve. (For more on the misadministration at Medgar Evers College see News 12 tv reports <https://bronx.news12.com/school-of-silence-student-staff-member-say-there-is-a-culture-of-silencing-at-medgar-evers-college> and <https://bronx.news12.com/school-of-silence-thousands-of-dollars-in-misused-funds-end-up-in-wrong-hands-at-medgar-evers-college> and <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/ny-laurie-cumbo-medgar-evers-college-bedford-union-armory-20200921-i7tpsyi56rcatgq73qisd277q-story.html>.)

I thank the City Council members for their attention to the problems facing CUNY, and more especially Medgar Evers College. I strongly urge that the City Council take all necessary action to address the destruction of Medgar Evers College by CUNY administrators and the flagrant violations of contractual agreements by CUNY and Medgar Evers administrators made between the CUNY administration and the PSC-CUNY faculty union.

Sincerely,

Barry Lituchy

917-254-5164, kcchistory31@aol.com

Below are the two contradictory form letters of non-reappointment sent to me and 65 other three year contract adjuncts.



MEDGAR EVERS
COLLEGE
The City University of New York



Office of Academic Affairs

1650 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11225
T: (718) 270-5010

May 12, 2020

VIA USPS CERTIFIED MAIL AND EMAIL

Prof. Barry Lituchy
3402 Avenue I, Apartment 2B
Brooklyn, NY 11210-4102
blituchy@mec.cuny.edu

RE: Notification of Decision Not to Offer a Three Year Adjunct Appointment

Dear Prof. Lituchy,

We regret to inform you that Medgar Evers College, City University of New York is unable to offer you a Fall 2020 – Spring 2023 three-year adjunct appointment.

This decision comes after much deliberation including analysis of MEC fiscal and programmatic needs, consideration of full-time faculty priority in course assignments, enrollment forecasts, and budget shortfalls. Moreover, the Personnel and Budget Committee and President of Medgar Evers College did not recommend you for a three-year appointment.

Your current adjunct appointment in the rank of Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences in the School of School of Liberal Arts will terminate at the end of your current appointment, **Friday, May 22, 2020**.

MEC has not fully realized the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its budget and programmatic needs of the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences as well as other Departments in MEC. MEC is still exploring the changes that will be required as a result of the pandemic. In view of those facts, MEC may have need for an adjunct professor with your experience and qualifications.

Accordingly, MEC would like to offer you a conditional one-year adjunct appointment. This letter is not a reappointment letter and the proposed conditional one-year adjunct appointment is not being offered under the provisions of Appendix E Paragraph 2 of the PSC/CUNY Contract.

COURAGE. STRENGTH. FORTITUDE.



MEDGAR EVERS
COLLEGE
The City University of New York



The City
University
of
New York

Office of Academic Affairs

1650 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11225
T: (718) 270-5010

We apologize for having to take this action. We know these are hard times. We understand that it is difficult for you to be in flux about your employment status.

You may contact Tanya Isaacs, Executive Director of Human Resources in the Office of Human Resources/Labor Designee, with any questions or concerns. She can be reached via email at tisaac@mec.cuny.edu.

Thank you for your service to MEC.

Sincerely,

Augustine Okereke, Ph.D.
Provost and SVP Office of Academic Affairs

Cc: Dr. Ethan Gologor, Dean, School of School of Liberal Arts
Dr. Maria DeLongoria, Chair, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Tanya Isaacs, Executive Director, Human Resources/Labor Designee
Personnel File

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The City University of New York



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1650 Bedford Avenue
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T: (718) 270-5010

May 26, 2020

VIA USPS CERTIFIED MAIL AND EMAIL

Prof. Barry Lituchy
3402 Avenue I, Apartment 2B
Brooklyn, NY 11210-4102

RE: Notification of Three Year Adjunct Appointment Decision

Dear Prof. Lituchy,

This letter supersedes the May 12, 2020 letter sent to you regarding the same above subject.

We regret to inform you that Medgar Evers College, City University of New York is unable to offer you a Fall 2020 – Spring 2023 three-year adjunct appointment.

This decision comes after much deliberation including analysis of MEC fiscal and programmatic needs, consideration of full-time faculty priority in course assignments, enrollment forecasts, and budget shortfalls. Moreover, the Personnel and Budget Committee and President of Medgar Evers College did not recommend you for a three-year appointment.

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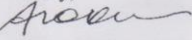
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Thank you for your service to MEC.

COURAGE. STRENGTH. FORTITUDE.

Letter to Prof. Barry Lituchy
May 26, 2020
Page 2 of 2

Sincerely,



Augustine Okereke, Ph.D.
Provost and SVP Office of Academic Affairs

Cc: Dr. Ethan Gologor, Dean, School of School of Liberal Arts (*via email*)
Dr. Maria DeLongoria, Chair, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences (*via email*)
Tanya Isaacs, Executive Director, Human Resources/Labor Designee (*via email*)
Personnel File

Along with hundreds of other adjuncts, at the end of June, I received a three line form email from the college HR director informing me that I would not be reappointed for the fall semester. There are a few things that I want to get off my chest in regard to that.

My years as an adjunct started in the spring semester of 1972. Yes, that's correct. Forty-eight ago I became a "temporary" employee. Since that time I was offered courses each semester by each of the department's four different chairpersons, until now.

As an untermensch in the CUNY system I received not a PERSONAL word in regard to my impending departure from the college. Nothing! Not from the department chair and not from the director of HR, in spite of both of them knowing me for decades. I'm not surprised. Over twenty years ago I took a semester off to help a dying parent who lived out of state. When I returned to the college, after my father's death, I was rewarded by the college for being a caring son with a reduction in rank from Adjunct Assistant Professor to Adjunct Lecturer. The administrators, at least at this college, are far too busy with important matters to waste any of their precious time or effort on being decent human beings.

Now, don't misunderstand, I'm a very fortunate man. Unlike many of my fellow "contingent", employees I don't NEED the adjunct position at the college. Neither the pay nor the benefits. My wife and I are both retired NYC teachers, I have business interests and I'm an adjunct faculty member at another college, in a different public system, where interestingly and unlike CUNY not a single adjunct has been displaced for the fall semester due to COVI-19. I teach because I truly love teaching and interaction with my students. From their feedback and my long untenured retention, at both colleges, I guess I must be fairly good at what I do/did.

Sadly, there are no good people in this story. CUNY's administration is an utter disgrace in their mishandling of this mess. They were totally unprepared in regard to how to handle the disaster of COVID-19 and I found that their greatest concern seemed to be how adjuncts like me were going to meet their office hour requirements once we went over to on-line teaching. Among other things I teach management courses at the other college. I would be happy if CUNY's administrators signed up for my course. They might actually learn about contingency planning and how to do their jobs as responsible, fair minded, managers.

The PSC, also totally unprepared for this mess, has some responsibility for the departure of long service adjuncts like me. There really isn't a legitimate retention system, based upon seniority, for adjuncts in CUNY. The three year/one year retention agreements are a bad joke for most adjuncts. In the current situation the three year contract people have been given retention priority when many of them have taught for fewer years, and fewer total courses, than those like me, who have been "shown the door." Its past time when PSC leadership got their act together and moved for a legitimate seniority based retention system for adjuncts. There are many colleges that have such a system, including the other school at which I teach.

What I miss are the many students that I taught at the college, including several who now teach and work. Hopefully they will all remain in their positions.

There, now I feel better!!

Bernard A. Bilawsky
(Former) Adjunct faculty member
Business Department
Queensborough Community College

Brian Prager, Adjunct Lecturer
BMCC, CUNY
Department of Academic Literacy and Linguistics

Testimony submitted to the Committee on Higher Education and Committee on Civil Service and Labor meeting
November 12, 2020

This testimony is addressed to the Committee on Higher Education and Committee on Civil Service and Labor meeting on Thursday November 12th, 2020.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee,

I am an Adjunct Lecturer in the City University of New York. I have held a position and taught our students at CUNY for 33 consecutive years.

At **Hunter College, CUNY**, I taught English in a program which was renowned and brought in millions of dollars; approximately a million dollars per academic year in revenue, throughout the late 1980's, 1990's, and 2000's. I worked there for 25 years as a teacher, teaching 16 to 20 classroom hours every week.

During the last eleven years, I have taught at **Borough of Manhattan Community College** in the **Department of Academic Literacy and Linguistics**. This is my job, to which I am entirely dedicated for the sake of the students I care for and guide into their academic and professional careers along with my department colleagues. Ours is an essential service.

We are writing to urge all of you to act to save the teaching positions we rely on for our living, and the teachers and classes on which CUNY students depend. Please heed this message, and read on!

In an age of continual, repeated economic crises, now intensified by COVID-19, we Adjuncts have survived *on the edge* in one of the world's most costly real estate markets, in one of the world's most volatile and precarious employment economies. Through never-ending job insecurity within the University, and despite the enormous societal failure to adequately fund higher education, a lack driven by the business and finance industries to whom we serve up professionally trained and intellectually developed students to serve in their the labor force, we have persevered year after year for love of our work and dedication to our students. We cannot save for our retirement with the poor wages; and the lack of security in the extraordinary unreliability in the manner in which teaching hours are doled out. Yet our love for learning, education, critical thinking, and building skills and knowledge with our students has kept us tethered to our places of work.

CUNY students are aspirational human beings, deserving of support, encouragement and respectful treatment. Yet every semester I face students who struggle to finish their courses despite homelessness and extraordinarily unfair low-wage, "flexible", precarious conditions in which they work in order to survive and feed their families. Why do they struggle so and persevere despite these impediments? Because they are determined to overcome the obstacles of living in the world's wealthiest poor country, the United States, in the world's wealthiest poor city and state, the State and City of New York.

Billions of dollars go into public expenditures at sites such as Hudson Yards where real estate and property interests desire it. But is there financing for us to teach, and for our new generations to become educated? Everyone knows that the college where we work provides the principal means that students have to achieve a basic hope for long-term stability in their lives. Yet we see the budgets every year get smaller, the wages lower

Brian Prager, Adjunct Lecturer
BMCC, CUNY
Department of Academic Literacy and Linguistics

Testimony submitted to the Committee on Higher Education and Committee on Civil Service and Labor meeting
November 12, 2020

or stagnant, and a state government that refuses to fund education. And what is the enabling justification for this? The students' educations have been relegated to debt financing, crippling their choices, and disabling their dreams and their creativity

The professoriate of which I wish to be a part now appears closing to me and to thousands of others whose knowledge and experience the City and State have exploited over the 40 years since tuition and price hikes have hampered the people's chances. You know about the thousands already laid off. What are we now fighting for?

We, the adjuncts, have ZERO security from semester to semester, and during holidays and summers we are not paid a dime. This spring and summer, I spent 16 hour days at the computer receiving COVID-era training for online teaching, and practicing for the necessity of teaching online courses with cumbersome software on machines we must pay for out of our wages, whose wear and tear and replacement we must provide as a precondition to employment. Yet was I rewarded for this training? Were we rewarded as a job class?

During the extraordinary experience of the Spring semester and the summer months, I received NO PAY for the training I endured and completed. Yet students tell me now that I am the only professor they have whose use of the online platform has gone without large failures this semester. Yet what I have to show for my immense efforts is the satisfaction of my students needs, accompanied by a total of sixteen \$800 to \$1,000-dollar paychecks for the entire year. With that gross pay, I must inspire students, as I must also eat, pay New York City rent, provide educational material and be prepared to care for my students needs, month after month, with long days and nights.

Since the onset of COVID-19, our students strive to learn from their kitchens, their beds, amidst the chaotic noise and commotion of their homes. What is the response of the City, the State and the budgetary decision makers at the helm of the CUNY system? Massive budget cuts; lay-offs; larger classes. Both dedicated teachers and striving adult students are being abandoned while Wall Street socks away the credit-burdened profits of people's suffering.

This is not the way a city that expects for its people to thrive is run. This is the desperate outcome of a neglectful system, that is slowly abandoning its people and the well-being of our society.

It is up to all of us, yourselves included, to fight to see the State of New York fight for the levels of taxation and funding that can restore CUNY to thriving. You have it within your powers to stand up for what is just. We need for you to do so, now!

Sincerely
Brian W. Prager
Adjunct-Lecturer, Department of Academic Literacy and Linguistics
BMCC, CUNY
November 2020

This is just a chronological sequence of events:

1. May 11: I sent to the President a letter of appeal on non-promotion (the third time) from the adjunct assistant professor rank to the adjunct associate professor rank (I'm a full professor at Yeshiva University).

The letter has never been answered.

2. Sometime during the Summer, I was assigned a 6-hour course to teach during the Fall.
3. On June 26, after teaching at BCC for 11 consecutive semesters (5.5 years), I received a non-reappointment letter with no explanations. Just 5 lines: you are fired, "we wish you success" from Ms. Clark.
4. On June 26 I wrote a letter to the president, presenting myself and asking to reconsider the decision to fire me.
5. July 23: I received a reply to my June 26 letter to the President written by Ms. Fiore. She wrote that the President values my contribution to BCC but the only reasons I've been fired were **"Covid-19 pandemic and enrollment numbers"**.
6. July 27 - July 30: I took and passed an on-line Blackboard course (have never been reimbursed); obtained CUNY Blackboard certificate.
7. August 21 – there were more than 20 students signed-up for the course assigned to me. This day the chair of the Math. & Comp. Science department informed me that he was told to hire somebody else to teach my course because I can't be hired.
8. Nov. 9: I've been ready teach during the Spring, but HR is objecting: "The reason (from HR) is the following: an instructor who received a non-reappointment letter cannot be rehired until two semesters (one academic year) have passed. At that point, you can be considered a "new hire.""

Sincerely,

-Mark Edelman

My name is Marc Kagan. I am a graduate student and an Adjunct Lecturer in the History Department at Lehman College. In that capacity, I teach two sections of a course on the historical development of racist exclusion in the United States and the fight to live up to the ideal of “equal rights for all.”

I am also the CUNY Graduate Center Grievance Counselor for the Professional Staff Congress. In that capacity, I regularly interact with graduate student-workers who teach at virtually all the campuses in the CUNY system. Some are assigned to teach as a requirement of their Ph.D. fellowships. Virtually all of those, and hundreds more besides – more than a thousand total – also teach as Adjunct Faculty to enable them to afford to live and study in New York City. None live in luxury. A graduate student-worker teaching three classes a semester – remember they are also students, expected to be working toward their degrees – makes approximately \$30,000/year. These are the cutting-edge educated workforce of New York City’s future: STEM, Humanities, and Social Science researchers who will fill our laboratories, schools, colleges, think-tanks, publishing houses, start-ups – if and when they get their degrees. All are imperiled by Adjunct layoffs.

First, hundreds of these graduate student-workers have lost employment as Adjuncts, slicing or, in some cases, eliminating their income stream entirely. For those only working as Adjuncts, and with no fellowship, this has also meant losing their access to health insurance. Many will soon abandon their programs and New York City. This is an investment in lives and in New York’s future prosperity simply gone to waste.

Many more have felt the rebound effects of those layoffs, in the form of increased class sizes or workload. Here are just a few of the reports our union chapter recently shared with Graduate Center administration (names have been removed):

1. **Spring 2020: 45 students —> Fall 2020: 60 students.** It is nearly impossible to engage 60 students in a classroom — let alone a Zoom call — which, at best, accommodates 16 people simultaneously. Students who would otherwise be “reachable” are now washed away by the massive tidal wave of competing names (not faces) vying for education in this dystopian factory-farm-style educational setting. This is income-bias in the extreme. I happen to teach at Fordham, for reference, where class sizes are restricted at a maximum of 32, and only 16 students meet at a time synchronously.
2. **This is my first time teaching. I’ve 75 students.**
3. **I currently have 77 students (it was 78 for a few weeks, before a student dropped the class).** Responding to the larger volume of student emails (including requests to correct grading mistakes by the computer systems) is still pretty time consuming. It also makes it nearly impossible to check in on which students are actually paying attention and understanding the material, and challenging to check in with students during group work (since there are too many groups to spend much time with each one).
4. **Last spring, I had approximately 40 students per class. I now have 75 students per class.** The main difference is the huge influx of emails that I now get. In addition, my office

hours used to have at most 4 students. I now have sometimes 10 or more coming to my office hours.

5. **Recitations (50min x 3)**; Biweekly discussion board (2-5min/student x **105 students**); Profile I & II (10min/student x **105 students**) (twice during semester, each 10min to grade); Final paper (10min/student x **105 students**) (broken into three parts across semester, each 10min to grade)

What we see clearly here is the effect not only on the graduate student-workers – whose progress toward degree is imperiled – but on their students. They receive less supervision, guidance, attention – all at a time when on-line learning has made that attention more critical than ever. In my own experience of six years of college-level teaching and ten years teaching high school before that, the number of students who are falling through the cracks – who are failing my courses – has doubled from previous semesters. But with 105 students, there is simply not enough time in the day to catch and care for those students. I should add that the number of college counselors and writing center instructors – educators whose sole purpose is to provide support – has also been pared to the bone and beyond.

The refrain “our working conditions are students’ learning conditions” is a hard truth. As educators we are caught between the Scylla of failing more students – driving them out of the CUNY system and back to a future of low-paying insecure work – and the Charybdis of passing them through out of compassion – graduating a less skilled, less qualified workforce. These are not happy choices.

We must find a way to return our adjuncts to the classroom – for the good of our students, our laid-off colleagues, and for New York City’s future itself.

Marc Kagan

Adjunct Lecturer, Lehman College

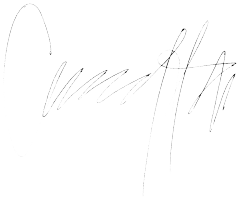
PSC Grievance Counselor, CUNY Graduate Center Chapter

To Whom It May Concern:

I am an Adjunct Professor at CUNY John Jay and CUNY LaGuardia. I am extremely concerned, angry, and anxious about the growing culture of austerity and labor disciplining at CUNY under Chancellor Matos, including the fact that he allowed Medgar Evers to lay off all 3-year contract eligible adjuncts, and permitted Bronx Community College to behave in a similar manner. I am also, naturally, horrified at the postponing of our contracted pay increase, which is due tomorrow.

I hope that the Chancellor considers the opposition he will face if he continues with his anti-labor actions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Edward Kihn', with a large, sweeping initial 'E'.

Edward Kihn

rcrew@mec.cuny.edu

Dear Dr. Crew,

For the past 8 years I have been an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychology at Medgar Evers College, I have taught primarily Personality and Developmental For the first year or two I also taught Introductory Psychology. For the most part I taught upper level courses. Including test and measurements.

My proudest achievement at Medgar was to take a B- student who would come to my offices every week and we would go over his homework until He got a B+ in that class. He took 2 more classes with me earning A s or A-s while going through the same procedure. Finally he was not able to take a class with me and I assured him that he would do all right if he just did what we had done on his own and He got an A in that class was constantly on the Dean's List. This spring he graduated with Honors and I had mentored him on his Honors Theses. I have written several recommendation letters for students that went on to graduate programs. And I will continue.

The past spring term I was forced to shift from In-person teaching to online that I adapted to. And even planned to make some new approaches to my classes tin the fall term. However, the Dean decided to not renew the adjuncts on 3-year contracts. And I and 3 others in psychology were terminated. (as well as several in Other Departments)

Also For the sake of my Students and request an exception to the procedure of removing former employees immediately from the College email system.

My lack of Mec email impleads my ability to write recommendations for my students?

One of my students asked me to write a recommendation to a MA program at Brooklyn College when he was accepted he wrote to me to tell me and thanked me. A year later he was applying to a special program at Brooklyn College, again I wrote a recommendation for him and again he was accepted and again he wrote to me to tell me and thanked me

There are several students who I have written multiple recommendations for.
Last semester I had a recommendation request from a student from 4 years ago.

I am concerned that since my mec email is no longer functioning that further requests for recommendations will go no ware, would it be passable to forward those request to me.

mec\eherman,

Thank you,
Edward Herman, PhD.

Edward.herman42@gmail.com # 347 678 5630

mlashley@mec.cuny.edu

Dr. Lashley,

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mec\eherman,

Thank you,
Edward Herman, PhD.
Edward.herman42@gmail.com # 347 678 5630

As of today, there is no change in MEC's decision to non-reappoint more than sixty 3-year eligible Adjuncts. The pending PSC grievance will not likely be resolved for several months.

You can make the request for email access to the College, and request an exception to the procedure of removing former employees immediately from the College email system.

My first question is has there been any change in my non-renewal status. Of 3-year adjuncts?

My second question involves my email and my ability to write recommendations for my students?

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Thank you,
Edward Herman, PhD.

Edward.herman42@gmail.com # 347 678 5630

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November 12, 2020

Written Testimony - NYC Council Committee on Higher Education

My name is Franky Laude, I am a former adjunct professor at Medgar Evers College.

I would like to thank Chairperson Barron and the NYC Council Committee on Higher Education for hearing the testimony of PSC members, many of whom are CUNY adjuncts, like myself.

After teaching art history at Medgar Evers College for 11 years, I was laid off during the spring semester.

I was notified of the layoff by email in May right as I was preparing to administer final exams. The weeks leading up to my termination was very stressful. By the time the pandemic reached its first peak in the Spring, two of my students contracted covid-19. One student and their mother contracted the virus at the same time.

I spent much of the semester worrying about students who had perfect attendance before the pandemic but then suddenly disappeared. In addition to transitioning my curriculum for online instruction, I was trying to track down students, while also dealing with my own personal financial challenges. My family experienced loss of income and other challenges during this time.

By the third week in May felt as if we had just rounded the corner, I was able to communicate with most of my students and we were making plans to make up for lost instruction time. I was shocked to find a termination letter in my inbox one morning. I had to push through the end of the semester and continue supporting students and administer exams while dealing with the stress of having lost future income and benefits.

I am one of dozens of long-time adjuncts with 3-year appointments at Medgar College who were laid off.

We were left without insurance in the midst of a global pandemic right as a second wave of the virus looms.

Many New Yorkers have been impacted by the pandemic and the recession, but Black people –people like me and most of my students—are more likely to become ill, more likely to die, more likely to lose jobs.

CUNY students are adult learners, first generation Americans, workers returning to school for a better job. They struggled before COVID: with family, work, academics, poverty and racism.

Even prior to our current crisis, CUNY lacked the capacity to fully support students and offer them the support they need. Now on top of that, our students suffer from having inadequate technology, lacking computers or high speed internet.

Laying off our most experienced adjuncts isn't helping students. Neither is increasing class sizes when students need us most. I recently learned that class sizes have climbed to 42 students per class. It is simply impossible to meet the educational needs of students with class sizes this large.

Right now the decisions being made will negatively impact the quality of education and will cause faculty burnout. Our students cannot succeed under these conditions.

CUNY has already endured years of disinvestment and it's getting worse. The state must put a stop to recessionary budget cuts that are endangering the livelihoods of the remaining adjuncts and hurting the education of our students too.

It is my hope that the Higher Education Committee can take the CUNY administration to task in restructuring its two-tiered system that relies heavily upon its adjunct faculty but

does not value their labor. CUNY deprives qualified adjunct professionals the benefits of full and dignified employment like a decent working wage, health insurance and job security.

The CUNY administration must take concrete actions to invest in and support its adjuncts and establish a pathway to much needed job security and benefits. The way we are treated is not reflective of an institution that values its employees and the contributions they bring to it.

The first step should be restoring 3-year contracts for all adjuncts. Limits must be set for class sizes with additional accommodations for students who are struggling.

I'd like to see the administration focus on the needs of students and faculty, especially adjuncts who have been the backbone of CUNY for so long.

Thank you,

Franky Laude

franky.laude@gmail.com

I am in my fourth year as an adjunct lecturer at Baruch College as well as City Tech. I'm also a member of the Executive Committee of the Baruch chapter of the Professional Staff Congress, the union at CUNY. This summer, 2,800 people were laid off across CUNY. Many lost their health insurance if not their job. There was a lawsuit against CUNY for not using the federal CARES Act money allotted to the university (\$251,000,000) to pay its employees during this crisis. Legislators such as Congressman Max Rose have written letters to Chancellor Matos Rodriguez stating very clearly that their intent in enacting the law was to support CUNY in keeping employees insured and on the job during this extremely difficult time. We adjuncts make under \$5,000 for a class per semester, well under standards determined by organizations such as the MLA. Most likely it is these low wages that have appealed to administrators at CUNY since we also make up the majority of the workforce. 2,800 people lost their jobs, yet Matos Rodriguez stated on the Brian Lehrer Show that no full-time employees lost their jobs. The idea is that we're part-time, so expendable. I have 77 students. Does that sound part-time? I met all class caps for the first time in my four years. They laid people off and passed the work onto others. They are practicing austerity and exploiting this crisis to do so. People are losing their job after decades working "part-time." Please consider the plight of adjuncts and tax the uber-wealthy to fund our institution and undo the slow bleed of austerity that is increasing now during this crisis.

Adjuncts Are Cuny. We deserve to have our contract honored and our promised raise received. I am the award-winning author of 22 produced plays and 7 books. I am, also, an Adjunct Associate Professor of Theater and of Environmental Justice, in the Communications and Theater Arts, and Environmental Justice and Sustainability minors at John Jay College where I have been teaching since 2011. Previously, I have taught at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and Smith College. I have 99 students in three online courses this semester. Many of my students, now, as in the spring, are coping with Covid, with being essential workers, sometimes at hospitals, fire or police departments, and with job losses and job changes, childcare and parental care, and with bereavement. I call them heroes for continuing their education online under these difficult circumstances, and, in fact, the majority are doing high quality work. I think our best students have stayed enrolled. And our best students deserve our best faculty. Many adjuncts are highly accomplished professionals in their fields, and, in fact, have many more professional accomplishments than full time faculty. Of course, my field, theater, is hardly operating now. Though I have produced two full plays on zoom, written and published a new play, and several articles and have done public lectures and talks in both theater and environmental fields during the pandemic. I also depend upon my adjunct salary to supplement my income. Delaying adjunct raises in this time when adjuncts are actually saving CUNY through our teaching skills and commitments to our students *and with the level and visibility of our professional accomplishments, which is often higher than that of the full-time faculty*, is quite simply unconscionable. Yesterday, I received a frantic series of emails from the CTA department secretary. She had to create a website of faculty accomplishments, of which I have many this past year. She had very little to post from anyone else (the full-timers) and was desperate to get all my documentation immediately. While I sent her what she needed, I was also talking by email, text and phone with students about their projects, reading and grading papers, adding new information to my three online courses and fielding professional correspondence about my work-in-progress. I deserve the raise promised after many months of negotiations, and so do my adjunct colleagues.

Revised testimony for Nov 12 Re: Adjunct Non Reappointments

For the past 8 years I have been an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychology at Medgar Evers College, I have taught primarily Personality and Developmental

For the first year or two I also taught Introductory Psychology. For the most part I taught upper level courses. Including test and measurements. (A 4000 level course)

In my first semester I was assigned to the East NY satellite during what became hurricane Sandy and I did not miss even one class. From the next semester on all my classes were on the main campus (A promotion). Since then I have developed a good reputation, among students and, faculty many students prefer to take more classes with me. One of my students ask me to supervise her in an independent study, I gladly accepted her request, even though I knew that I would not receive extra compensation.

My proudest achievement at Medgar was to take a B- student who would come to my offices every week and we would go over his homework until He got a B+ in that class. He took 2 more classes with me earning A s or A-s while going through the same procedure. Finally he was not able to take a class with me and I assured him that he would do all right if he just did what we had done on his own and He got an A in that class was constantly on the Dean's List. This spring he graduated with Honors and asked me to mentor him on his Honors Theses. Again I gladly accepted his request.

In the past spring term I was forced, along with everyone else to shift from In-person teaching to online that I adapted to. And even planned to make some new approaches to my classes in the fall term. However, the Provost decided to not renew the adjuncts on 3-year contracts, and 3 other adjuncts in psychology on 3-year contracts were also terminated. (As well as several in Other Departments) This goes against the idea of seniority and the loss of the most reliable Adjuncts. (I have heard the my Department chair was very upset by this dictate) After we went to a virtual system I filed a change of grade on line for a student from the previous Fall term

and was then asked by the Chair if I could send a change of grade form, to which I did promptly.

At the beginning of June I had 3 classes assigned to me the enrollment including several students that had previously taken classes with me, each had only 20 students per course rather than what have been normally 35 and I would not have been surprised if some of them would be combined in one class? Do to lack of enrolment. However when I received the notice the classes that had been assigned were lineally listed as Instructor to be assigned, then they were at first assign to the Department chair and were soon replaced by new people who I had never seen before.

I have written several recommendation letters for students that went on to graduate programs. And I will continue to do so. Even though I am no longer a currant faculty member.

One of my students asked me to write a recommendation to a MA program at Brooklyn College when he was accepted he wrote to me to tell me and thanked me. A year later he applied to a special program at Brooklyn College, again I wrote a recommendation for him and again he was accepted and again he wrote to me to tell me and thanked me.

There are several students who I have written multiple recommendations for.

Last semester I had a recommendation request from a student from 4 years ago.

She was able to obtain my personal email from the dean, and I was able to write a letter of recommendation for her. However, I am concerned about other students who may just give up when my CUNY Email. And I am again requesting that my CUNY Email be reinstated.

Again My lack of Mec email impacts my ability to write recommendations for my students? For the sake of my Students and request an exception to the procedure of removing former employees immediately from the College email system

I am concerned that since my mec email is no longer functioning that further requests for recommendations will go no ware, would it be passable to forward those request to me.

mec\eherman,

Thank you,

Edward Herman, PhD.

Edward.herman42@gmail.com # 347 678 5630

Written Testimony by Max Thorn, Adjunct Librarian at Queens College, for the New York City Council Hearing on Committee on Higher Education (Jointly with the Committee on Civil Service and Labor), November 12, 2020

Every semester at Queens College, thousands of first-year students enrolled in a required, writing-intensive course attend library workshops for an introduction to academic research. As the primary librarian in this role, I am held back by CUNY's austerity measures from doing my best work, because I am an adjunct. Because CUNY would rather balance its budget on the backs of employees without job security, I am not able to give the students the education they deserve.

It saddens me to think about what these students, who are majority POC and working-class, are missing because this isn't my full-time job: the attention I'm unable to give them, the lessons I've cut out of the curriculum, the feedback I'd like to give on their work but don't have time for, the time to assess and improve my work. My full-time colleagues do what they can to help, but they're already overwhelmed with so many responsibilities. The students are robbed of the guidance they need to really hone research skills--which they'll be asked to use throughout college and beyond--because CUNY has settled for hiring precarious part-time workers to fill essential roles.

And that's when things were "normal."

What happens to the students if CUNY administrators decide to cut my job next semester, because laying me off and rationalizing the devastation is easier than standing up to Governor Cuomo and demanding taxes on the rich to invest in a public higher-education system that calls itself "the greatest urban university in the world"? If things keep going the way they are, that slogan can only be true in spite of Chancellor Matos Rodriguez, the CUNY Board of Trustees, the college Presidents, and the Governor. They ask us to do "more with less." The truth is, the less we're given, the less we're able to do. Anyone whose brain isn't poisoned by austerity politics can see that.

We know that what makes CUNY truly great are the students, faculty, staff, and community. Not the administrators. Without us, there is no CUNY.