

# The Facts about CUNY Adjuncts: Why an Increase in Adjunct Pay to \$7000 per Course is Essential for Student Success

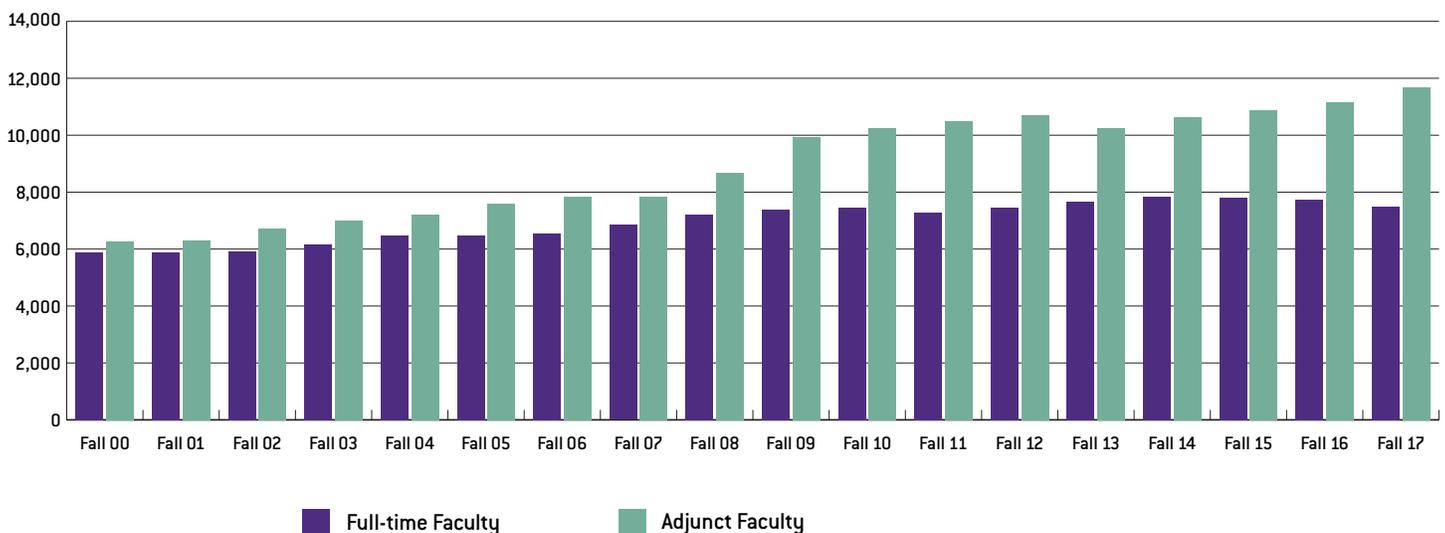
**ADJUNCT FACULTY** do the majority of teaching at CUNY. Public investment in CUNY has failed to keep pace with enrollment growth and inflation, leaving the University without the resources to hire the needed full-time faculty. Since 2000, the number of adjuncts teaching at CUNY has almost doubled.

**The starting pay for CUNY adjuncts is currently \$3200 per course, or as low as \$20,000 per year.** Near-poverty pay for the majority of CUNY faculty should not be tolerated

in New York State. It is unfair to adjuncts and unfair to CUNY students. **A university staffed largely by part-time, contingent, underpaid faculty cannot provide the support students need in order to succeed and graduate.**

The Professional Staff Congress is seeking an increase in adjunct pay to \$7000 per course. While adjunct pay is collectively bargained, the current low pay is largely the result of NYS policy decisions on investment in CUNY. Solving the adjunct pay crisis will require public investment.

**CUNY Faculty Employment**



Source: CUNYfirst Fall 2017

## CUNY relies on adjuncts for the majority of undergraduate teaching, yet pays adjuncts a near-poverty wage.

- In Fall 2017, CUNY employed almost 12,000 adjunct faculty and only 7,500 full-time faculty.
- The current starting pay for an adjunct lecturer teaching a 3-credit course is \$3200.
- The average pay for an adjunct lecturer teaching a 3-credit course is \$3500.
- If an adjunct lecturer were teaching a full load of 8 courses, the average annual pay would be \$28,000.
- The average annual pay for a *full-time* lecturer teaching 8 courses is \$74,000.



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## **Raising adjunct pay is essential to enabling CUNY to increase student retention and graduation rates.**

- A recent study by the Center for Community College Student Engagement shows that over-reliance on adjunct instructors is a barrier to college completion, especially for vulnerable students.
- In some departments, entry-level courses are taught almost exclusively by adjuncts.
- Because of their low pay, many CUNY adjuncts race from one college to another in order to assemble enough courses to earn a minimal income—leaving them little time to mentor students.
- Many adjuncts are forced to find additional part-time employment, some working as many as three jobs, again diminishing their ability to spend time with students.
- While the PSC has negotiated partial payment for office hours for eligible adjuncts, most receive no pay to meet with students individually.
- A growing body of research—as well as the experience of CUNY’s celebrated ASAP program—shows that time spent individually with faculty and advisors is a key element in student success.
- Raising adjunct pay to \$7000 per course would relieve the financial pressures on adjuncts, allow them to spend more time with students, and contribute to raising college completion rates.

## **It is a myth that all adjuncts have other full-time jobs and use their adjunct income as supplemental pay.**

- More than 2000 CUNY adjuncts earn their entire income cobbling together a series of courses at different CUNY campuses. These adjuncts typically earn between \$20,000 and \$32,000 per a year.
- Some adjuncts have been working at CUNY for more than 20 years, often teaching pivotal entry-level courses.
- Almost all CUNY adjuncts have advanced academic degrees; many hold PhDs.
- In recent years, some CUNY adjuncts have reported having to rely on public assistance because their pay is so low.
- Starting pay per course for adjuncts at Rutgers is \$5200; at the University of Connecticut it is \$4700—in contrast to \$3200 at CUNY.
- Why do CUNY adjuncts stay, despite the low pay and job insecurity? Adjuncts are among CUNY’s most dedicated teachers. Many choose to stay because they have an intellectual and moral commitment to CUNY’s mission.

## **Public investment in CUNY has not kept pace with enrollment growth or inflation; low-paid adjuncts have, in effect, subsidized New York State.**

- Since 2000, undergraduate student enrollment at CUNY has grown by 45 percent, or 75,600 students—the equivalent of the number of students at Baruch and Hunter Colleges combined.
- New York State investment has not kept pace. Adjusted for inflation, NYS funding per FTE student at CUNY senior colleges has been cut by 18 percent since 2008.
- CUNY has filled the gap in public investment by increasing tuition and replacing full-time faculty with low-paid part-time faculty—adjuncts.
- Every year since 2006, adjuncts have provided the majority of undergraduate instruction at CUNY.

CUNY adjuncts deserve fair pay. PSC and CUNY, supported by New York State and New York City, have made important gains for adjuncts in the past. By working together to raise adjunct pay to \$7000 a course, we believe we can make New York a leader in progressive values, fair pay for working people and investment in student success.