

**Testimony of Fern Luskin, Lecturer
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Before the New York City Council Committee on
Higher Education**

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While teaching nine courses a year and doing committee work, it is next to impossible to write and do research for publications during the semester on weekdays except on the train and at bus stops, not the ideal way to do either. During a fairly typical week, I log 82 hours a week fulfilling my course load and committee work, as well as working on my scholarly publications. As a result, I am often literally running from class to class and sometimes that is the only time I have to talk to my students.

If I were required to teach only eight courses a year, one of the biggest benefits for my students would be that it would afford me more time to teach them how to organize their thoughts and achieve flow from one paragraph to the next in their writing. A reduction in my course load would also give me more time to look over their notebooks to make sure they have written down all the important points I presented to them in class. I have found that doing both of these things helps students write better papers and do better on their exams, but it is very time intensive, especially for instructors who have large classes of 35 students.

If we had to teach only eight courses instead of nine, the other great benefit is that it would allow us more time to work on our publications. This would have a profound impact not only on individual scholars and their particular disciplines, but on their students, and CUNY as a whole, because we could then impart this cutting-edge knowledge to our students. My students give me feedback on my research and tell me they really appreciate that I incorporate my own ideas in my teaching.

I have drawn up a substantial list of articles I intend to write in the future concerning major discoveries I've made in my field, but with a nine-course-a-year workload, I'm beginning to wonder if I have enough years left to finish all of them. It has taken me my entire tenure at LaGuardia to write one of the books, and that was only possible because I was awarded two fellowships for sabbaticals and because I received PSC-CUNY grants which gave me released time. If CUNY's request for \$35 million dollars to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative were funded, faculty would have more time for research and more time with individual students. Please support CUNY's proposal to invest in a more manageable teaching load.

The rationale for requiring us to teach nine courses a year at community colleges used to be that our mission was to teach rather than publish. However, that mindset has changed – faculty members at the community colleges are also expected to publish, and that's a good thing, because it can only enrich our students' learning experience, but it is unequitable to require us to teach more courses than do our colleagues at the four-year colleges.