

**Testimony of Hayes Peter Mauro, Assistant Professor
Queensborough Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education**

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Like most of my colleagues, I was attracted to the prospect of teaching at CUNY because of the exceptional opportunities the institution affords. As faculty at CUNY, especially at the community colleges, we have the rare opportunity to teach students for whom this is the first experience with higher learning for anyone in their family. Over the years, this has remained my primary motivation for staying at Queensborough Community College, where I am now a tenured Assistant Professor in the Department of Art & Design.

I regularly have such students, and when I teach them about the history of art and cultures, I feel that I am having a profound impact on their lives, as I am offering them the opportunity to see in new ways by experiences the art and artifacts of civilizations throughout history. Concurrently, I am often presented with the experience to learn and grow intellectually, as our students hail from all reaches of the globe, and thus bring to bear unique perspectives on the artifacts and cultures under consideration in my classes. I often find myself thinking about artworks in new ways, provoked by questions asked by students who view this material anew each semester.

While teaching in this unique environment has always been a primary attraction for me, the sheer quantity of the teaching, coupled with the special needs of many of our students, has made professional life at QCC challenging. We currently teach nine classes per academic year, in a five-four split between semesters. We are also expected to publish regularly, give conference presentations, obtain grant and fellowship funding, and engage in a large amount of extra-contractual "service" to the campus, such as committee work, assessment reporting, and program reporting. All of this makes focusing on students and their needs more and more difficult, as the requirements for reappointment, tenure, and promotion have increased exponentially at QCC in recent years.

In this context, a three-credit restructuring would loosen up time and allow faculty to more readily fulfill their multi-faceted requirements, as well as better speak to the needs of students. Currently, an average teaching load at most colleges is five to six course per year; I currently teach nearly twice that much, and yet as I stated earlier am obligated to fulfill similar publishing requirements as a professor at a four-year research university. As such, restructuring speaks to larger issues, especially the attracting and retention of high quality faculty. Please assist CUNY faculty and support CUNY's request for \$35 million dollars to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative, so that we may better facilitate our students' rise in American society.