

**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.