

## **PSC Statement on Workplace Health and Safety**

Safe working conditions are a bedrock of employee rights. Working conditions that put the health, safety or life of a worker at risk are illegal as well as immoral.

The obligation to provide a safe workplace rests squarely with the employer. The City University of New York has a legal obligation under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, echoed in Article 39 of the PSC-CUNY Collective Bargaining Agreement, to furnish to each of its employees “a place of employment free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm.”

As a party to the collective bargaining agreement, the PSC has the right and responsibility to ensure that the Agreement is enforced. The PSC has a history of conducting independent investigations to evaluate the health and safety of our members’ working conditions.

The union’s right to ensure compliance with Article 39 of our contract assumes paramount importance in a pandemic that has already killed 33,000 New Yorkers, several dozen of whom worked or studied at CUNY. It becomes a matter of public health.

Therefore the PSC resolves that:

- PSC-represented employees, PSC staff and independent safety experts hired by the PSC or hired jointly by the PSC and CUNY continue to have the right to ensure compliance with the law and the Collective Bargaining Agreement by conducting inspections of any workplace in which PSC-represented employees are required to work;
- Such inspections include the ability to inspect infrastructural systems such as water systems and HVAC systems; to inspect all safety and health conditions specified in college reopening plans or college operational plans; and to be provided with data on the operation and maintenance of infrastructural systems;
- Regular labor/management meetings on health and safety must be conducted during the pandemic and its aftermath to provide an opportunity to discuss changes in safety plans; any closures of colleges or worksites; testing procedures, including testing for students in CUNY dormitories; occurrences of confirmed COVID-19 cases at colleges or other worksites; and other developments related to the pandemic.

*Adopted unanimously by the PSC Delegate Assembly  
October 15, 2020*