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CUNY Board of Trustees
205 East 42nd Street
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I have been teaching at CUNY for the past twelve years as an adjunct. All CUNY adjuncts are dedicated instructors. Those of us with advanced degrees bring the full force of our training - my PhD is in English Literature - to bear on our teaching. It is wonderful to work with CUNY students, who respond with such appreciation and effort to the material and insight we can bring to them - but it is hideously frustrating to shortchange them on time and effort - simply because to survive in this city one has to teach at least 100 students - in at least two different institutions - every semester.

I will say that again: *Most adjuncts have to teach a hundred students EVERY SEMESTER to earn anything approaching thirty thousand dollars a year.* Here's another fact you probably already know: *More than half of CUNY classes are taught by adjunct faculty.*

Efficient as it might seem, this state of affairs is horribly costly to students. Quite apart from the exploitation of highly educated and dedicated instructors like me and my colleagues, (and the useemly contempt for our efforts that it appears to express) , undercompensating teachers quite literally devalues CUNY students' education: their time, their work, their opportunities for intellectual development in the classroom. Each of these things requires a heavy teaching investment.

CUNY students, who must themselves juggle so many competing calls on their time, skills, and energy, require - and deserve - all the more time and attention because of their challenges. They are doing the impossible: pursuing a liberal arts education while commuting and working full time. They are heroes. Underpaying their instructors - and so forcing them to travel to multiple campuses, and to teach hundreds of students a year - deprives those students of the stability and investment they need and so richly deserve.

Providing quality higher education to all of New York's students is CUNY's primary, fundamental mission. I call on you as trustees to oppose austerity for CUNY teachers. Take a public stand for a contract that is fully funded, and increases adjunct pay to 7K per course.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Hollander".

Dr. Elizabeth Hollander
English Department, Lehman College

