

Testimony to the Board of Trustees Meeting at

Baruch College, 10/22/18

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My name is Professor Lorraine Cohen. I teach Sociology at LaGuardia Community College. I have taught at the college for 25 years, I received my doctorate at the Graduate Center. I am a past Academic Chair of the Social Science Department. I am currently the PSC Vice President of Community Colleges.

I was also member of the Bargaining Team that negotiated the Teaching Load reduction. At the negotiations our union President Barbara Bowen repeatedly raised the question of how CUNY was going to fund the course reduction. It was clear that more faculty would have to be hired to make up for the full time faculty who would teach less. It was also clear reassigned time to support faculty engaged in scholarship, and faculty who currently carry out College and Department was in jeopardy.

CUNY management and the Board of Trustees have never put up a public fight to get more money for CUNY. The budget is set up as a zero sum game. A win by one means a loss for others. Those "others" happen to be the faculty, the staff, and the students. Despite claims to care deeply about the students, the Board and the Chancellery seem to care more about whether they will offend Governor Cuomo, who has never expressed a deep understanding or concern about CUNY. His record as a progressive is very thin when it comes to CUNY. He has consistently opposed a Maintenance of Effort bill, despite support from the legislature. He has continued a long pattern of disinvestment in CUNY on the backs of faculty, especially part time faculty and low paid staff members. He has continuously supported raising tuition of students.

The PSC's vision was one that would have included adequate funding for full time replacement lines, some of which would go to qualified long serving adjuncts. Instead Provosts and Presidents are being confronted with having to make

choices that diminish the resources that should have been used to expand academic services and programs.. At LaGuardia there have already been cuts to Library Services and the Writing Lab. Both of these services are essential to students and the faculty who are teaching them.

Hints are given to the Chairs that maybe there will be less money available for sabbaticals or travel money. The university boasts about its reputation as a center for research, yet faculty who had been awarded time to do research now find that reassigned time received in the past is being taken away. Similarly there is an expectation that time given out for departmental and college responsibilities will also be reduced. I hope that the BOT is clear that we will recommend that faculty not perform these responsibilities if their reassigned time is withdrawn.

CUNY management and the BOT have to make up its mind about to whom they should be accountable, the political powers that be, or the people of the City of New York? We need to imagine and fight for a University that will serve “the whole people.” It is time for the Board to stand up and fight for a contract that will fund a demand of \$7,000 a course for adjuncts, a decent raise for other faculty and staff, and additional funding for the programmatic and capital needs of the university. Thank you.