

**Testimony of Lynne Turner,
Humanities Alliance Teaching
Graduate Center**

**Before the CUNY Board of Trustees at
Manhattan Borough Hearing, Baruch College
October 22, 2018**

My name is Lynne Turner. I am a doctoral student in Sociology at the Graduate Center, a Humanities Alliance teaching fellow at LaGuardia Community College and teach as an adjunct lecturer at the Murphy Institute. I am here to call on you as Trustees to use your authority to oppose austerity for CUNY, to take a public stand for a contract that is fully funded with real raises for all – and specifically and urgently to increase adjunct faculty pay to a fair and equitable wage of \$7000 per course.

New York City subway advertisement: “Another reason why CUNY is the greatest urban university in the world: CUNY has propelled almost six times as many low-income students into the middle class and beyond as the top ten colleges in America, combined.”

When I see this advertisement during my morning subway commute I am filled with great pride, and simultaneously with sadness and anger. CUNY’s dedicated and talented adjunct faculty is integral to the fulfillment of its aspiration as an engine of social and economic mobility. Yet how is it possible for the University of the “Children of the whole people” to provide substandard wages to those teaching the majority of classes?

The annual pay for the average adjunct lecturer teaching a full load of 8 courses at CUNY is \$28,000, which is about \$20,000 less than the yearly income of \$48,000 required for a modest yet adequate standard of living for even a single person without children in my borough of Brooklyn. (EPI family budget calculator). CUNY’s low adjunct pay is far less than adjunct faculty compensation at Barnard, Fordham, New School, NYU, and even 50% less than neighboring public university systems such as Rutgers and UConn.

As adjunct and full-time faculty, staff and students at CUNY, we have joined together to ensure that for this contract there will be a change. At nine campuses and more to come across CUNY we are petitioning our Presidents and you the Board of Trustees to take a stand for fairness and equity. We are educating, lobbying, rallying, building coalitions and taking action for a fair contract for all and a living wage of \$7000 per course for adjunct faculty. This is our Fight for 15 within higher education and we will continue to take the strong action required to bring our demand for a minimum of \$7000 per course, for wage justice and educational justice, to fruition.

We are calling on you, the Board of Trustees, to take leadership and use the power of your position to stand on the right side of history and true to CUNY’s historic mission.