

To: The CUNY Board of Trustees

From: Michael Paris, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science and Global Affairs, The College of Staten Island, CUNY

Date: June 26, 2020

Re: Budget Cuts and Planned Layoffs.

At the College of Staten Island (CSI), President William Fritz and Provost Michael Parrish have informed the chairs of all departments to plan for layoffs of part-time faculty, college assistants, and other job classifications, that would result in \$6-7 million in savings. Overall, our campus leaders say, we must plan for cuts that would save approximately \$10 to 11 million. Thus, approximately 65 to 70% of the savings on our campus are to come from layoffs targeting our most poorly-paid and vulnerable colleagues. These employees often rely on their low-paying jobs for health insurance coverage. When no high-level CUNY administrators or well-paid full-time faculty members are sharing in the sacrifice in any way, these targeted layoffs are simply unconscionable.

For our students, so many of whom are poor or working class, and so many of whom are members of racial minority groups, these cuts will mean fewer course offerings and much larger class sizes.

At CSI, we are considering canceling sections with full enrollments because, as our President put it yesterday in a budget meeting, we don't have the money to pay instructors to teach them. Are we to destroy the university in order to save it?

You have been remiss in carrying out your moral and legal obligations to advocate for CUNY and its students. Before covid19, our students were not receiving the resources and opportunities that they need to succeed. Before covid19, the New York State government, under the leadership of Governor Andrew Cuomo, failed adequately to provide funding for CUNY. Before covid19, our infrastructure was crumbling. And, now, you align yourselves with Governor Cuomo, and his refusal to have the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes, instead of with us, the faculty and students.

Students and faculty will not accept this. They will resist, and, eventually, withdraw their support from CUNY as an institution. There will be a revolt the likes of which we have not seen since the late 1960's. I urge you to reconsider your complacency and complicity.

Sincerely,
Michael Paris