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I am currently the associate chair for my department and in charge of the scheduling of courses. Every day I see the impact of the crisis of class size increases.

First, students are being forced into larger and larger “jumbo” sections of 150+ students for many introductory and 200-level courses. They receive little to no facetime with an actual faculty member and, especially in an online environment, they are processed through with multiple-choice exams, and very little critical learning. Faculty simply cannot grade 150+ essays or even short-answer questions. We are producing factory-type learning, not the critical thinking for which Queens College was known.

Second, because we are combining many smaller sections into jumbos, many of our part-time faculty have been let go because there are not enough sections to offer them. As a result, some have lost their entire or partial livelihoods and some have even lost health insurance.

Third, even upper-level seminars have been pushed to 25 or 30 students, which makes it impossible for faculty to properly conduct discussions or to grade so many essays in a timely fashion in writing-intensive courses.

Finally, since we have not received our contractual 2% raise, we are all teaching more students for relatively less money; there has been no adjustment in faculty workload accounting relative to the many new students enrolled in each course. Rather, we have to argue with the accounting department to get proper payment for faculty who teach jumbos, as they are constantly trying to downgrade their workload credits according to the administration’s “efficiency” workload guidelines, which have been roundly rejected by the chairs of the college and not adopted by any process of shared governance.

As the CUNY Chancellor said, we are doing more with less, but more does not mean better. Efficiency at a public university should not be a point of pride, but rather a call to lobby Albany and Washington for the critical funding we need to do our jobs well.