

**Testimony of Ángeles Donoso Macaya, Associate Professor  
Borough of Manhattan Community College  
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education**

**March 3, 2017**

Good afternoon. My name is Ángeles Donoso Macaya. I am Associate Professor of Spanish at BMCC. I joined the Modern Languages Department in January of 2013. Since then, I have taught and advised over 800 students. I am currently teaching five courses. I have 115 students. Besides this heavy teaching load, I am completing my first book manuscript, currently under contract with Florida University Press. (I am expected to turn the full manuscript for final review in the summer).

In order to convey to you the kind of work that I do, and the amount of time this work takes, let me share with you a regular day. This past Wednesday, for instance, on my commute to school, I calculated the scores of a test I had given on Friday in my literature class (I had already graded these tests, Saturday and Sunday). I also spent 3 hours grading written exercises and videos I had assigned in my intro Spanish courses. Giving individual feedback to 100 students takes time, so I normally grade 3 times a week, in slots of 3 to 4 hours. I had two meetings, taught two of my classes, and then I held office hours. I first met with Luis, the president of *Acentos Latinos*, a student club of which I am the advisor. *Acentos Latinos* publishes a magazine with creative work written in Spanish by students (my role is to collect all the work, proof read it, and manage the design, printing, etc.) and organizes several events every semester, which I must attend. On Wednesday, we were planning this semester's events, including an over-night trip to either Philadelphia or Washington DC to visit museums and other cultural sites. Luis told me he and other club members had never been outside the city. I then met with Fiona, a student in my literature class. Fiona is writing a novel; she usually comes to talk about this project and about her schoolwork (not only the work I assign for our class). The other day she told me she was stuck with her writing. I told her I was also completing a manuscript, a monograph on Chilean photography from the seventies and eighties, and that at times I also have experienced very inconvenient blocks. I left my office around 8 pm, exhausted, but content, because I know I wouldn't like to work anywhere else, and the main reason is that I love my students.

Both as a scholar and as an educator, it has been so motivating and inspiring to encounter such hard working and enthusiastic students (a large majority of whom are economically underprivileged, immigrants and racial minorities), students who not only want to learn a language, but who are also eager to deepen their knowledge about the cultural nuances and the different aspects that characterize and define each Latin American country. This is why I am grateful for the different teaching resources available for us at BMCC. After attending a Writing Across the Curriculum workshop in the fall of 2013, I developed writing assignments that better relate to my students' diverse cultural backgrounds and address the different experiences of being bilingual or being in the process of learning a second language in the US. I would certainly attend more of faculty development workshops if I had the time to do so.

Last year, the Modern Languages Department launched a new major. Carla, who is with me here today, is one of our Spanish majors. For several semesters I have had the intention to develop a

new course on Latin American visual studies. It would be so rewarding being able to develop and teach a course focused on my area of expertise, especially now that we have a major. Unfortunately, I have not been able to do so, because developing a new course requires extra time. Having more time would also allow me to apply for collaborative research grants to work more closely with students during the summer—at present, I devote most of the summer to work on my own research. A restructured workload committed to teaching, service and research would certainly be beneficial in this regard.

Thank you for your time and for hearing my testimony.