

FELICIA WHARTON

Good evening,

Since testifying at the October 17, Board of Trustees meeting, let me reintroduce myself. I am Felicia Wharton, treasurer of the Professional Staff Congress and doctoral lecturer at the Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center, administered by New York City College of Technology.

It is December. The last month of 2022. And the launch of the PSC contract campaign. Our contract expires on February 28, 2023. I am here today to urge CUNY to bargain promptly. Why?

Cost of living has increased faster than our salaries. Our faculty and staff need raises in the next contract that reflects the actual cost of living in New York City and above inflation. I will use myself as an example. Last week I received an email that my housing costs would increase in January by 3.3%. Immediately I began to do the math because I knew that the 2% increase on November 1 was eroded and then some. My salary and those of my colleagues need to catch up with our living expenses. Faculty and staff are battling the rising cost of daily life, unsustainable rent increases, childcare, and transportation, to name a few. We, the faculty and staff, are the foundation of CUNY. We are the face of CUNY. We are the first point of contact for students. Without us, they would not be at CUNY. Come to the table. Better pay for faculty and staff.

Another issue I want to bring attention to is the EOCs. EOCs continue to promote the social, economic, and educational growth of academically and economically under-served residents of New York City. We provide innovative academic programs that lead to higher education and employment. EOCs are funded by SUNY and administered by CUNY. As such, I ask that the trustees ensure that oversight, that is, monitoring, supervision, and accountability from the respective administering CUNY colleges, is taking place as faculty and staff are employees of CUNY.