

Testimony of Lara Beaty
CUNY Board of Trustees Hearing
December 5, 2022, LaGuardia Community College

I am a professor of psychology here at LaGuardia as well as the PSC Chapter Chair. I've taken valuable time from grading papers and supporting students as they finish research projects because none of what I do these next two weeks will matter for those students who won't be able to continue their education. It is my work with and about students that motivates me in most of what I do. Our students' need you to create a budget that will enable faculty and staff to help them. The budget needs to reflect the increased needs of our students and the city more generally. We have been through a collective trauma with the Covid pandemic, and we've all been affected in some way. For some, the major problem was living life through zoom, and for others it was far more serious. But in my effort to understand student development, I turned to focus on the role of trauma and adverse childhood experiences because student after student told me stories of sexual abuse, rape, family separation and conflict among, and more. These past difficulties, as ample research indicates, impact the ability of students to function on a day to day basis. They need faculty and staff who have the time to help them develop not only the academic skills they need but the emotional stability that is needed. The already difficult conditions students were facing have worsened. High school experiences were interrupted, and CUNY's faculty and staff have struggled to meet this increased need while also experiencing the problems of the pandemic and filling in for staff who have left and not been replaced, and adjunct faculty have faced increasingly precarious job conditions. We need to be able to replace all those who left and to increase the number of advisors and counselors. All of us need greater stability if we are going to meet the increased need of our students. Increased funding for CUNY is needed as part of healing the city. If we are to take the mission of the university seriously, we need more resources to make up for years of austerity and to meet the increased needs of students and all those who serve them.