

Testimony of Manfred Philipp to the CUNY Board of Trustees, December 5, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to you today. My name is Manfred Philipp, I have served on CUNY Board committees from 2003 to 2015, and served on the Board itself from 2006-10.

CUNY has undergone many crises since I began to teach at Lehman College in 1977. In the period when nearly all daytime classes were taught by full-time faculty, losses of funding meant that tenured faculty members were fired. Now the crises are much less visible, since there are so few full time faculty to begin with. Few people outside the university notice when part-time faculty are not rehired. CUNY's crises have gone underground. But they are there, nonetheless.

The New York City press outlets have provided a drumbeat of criticism of CUNY. The NY Times says that CUNY students *struggle to Capture Opportunities in Tech*. The Center for an Urban Future says that *Today, most tech companies in the city employ few if any CUNY grads*.

A fragmented, college-by-college system of matching students with internships and jobs may be one problem. Another is basic funding for faculty. One recent report says that *10 years ago, Queens College was home to 406 computer science majors and 20 faculty. Now, the college has more than 3,500 majors and just 15 tenure-track faculty*.

In October, Michael Green testified to you that the CCNY Chemistry has not been allowed to hire any full time faculty since 2015, even though there have been several retirements. At Lehman College the Chemistry department is short on new modern laboratory equipment needed to teach senior students.

In the STEAM disciplines, the most important thing for a university is to have small classes with full time research-active instructors who can write effective letters of recommendation for their students. CUNY once was such a place. But CUNY has too few tenure track faculty members, and the \$52,267 official starting salary for CUNY assistant professors hardly compares with what is offered in industry, or anywhere else, for that matter. Can one live in NYC on \$52,267? Yes. But the problems are obvious.

In the meantime, we are faced with headlines like *CUNY students accounted for less than 0.3% of workers in New York's largest technology companies*. Perhaps the better funding of our competition is a factor. For instance, NYU is reported to be investing \$1 billion into its Engineering school this year.

Professor Ned Benton of John Jay College has issued reports that compare CUNY to SUNY institutions. He shows that CUNY colleges generally have fewer than 40 faculty members per 1000 full-time equivalent students (a measure used to compensate for the presence of part-time students.)

One example Professor Benton gave was SUNY Postdam with 75 faculty members per 1000 full time equivalent students. Why is CUNY's Lehman College, also funded by the state, listed at approximately 37 faculty per 1000 full-time equivalent students?

Even with its constricted funding, a report issued by the Chronicle of Higher Education shows that CUNY is near **the top in the nation** when it comes to providing students with social and economic mobility. We all ought to be proud of an institution that does so much with so little. But think of the possibilities, if New York State were to fund CUNY like it does some SUNY colleges. Or if CUNY got funding that even approaches that of some of our neighbors.

Thank you.