

CUNY Board of Trustees Hearing  
March 20, 2023  
New York City College of Technology  
Carole K. Harris

My name is Carole Harris, and I'm a full-time faculty member in the English Department at City Tech, as well as the PSC Chapter Chair on our campus.

We at City Tech welcome you!

We have much to celebrate at our college, including this remarkable theater. On April 27, we'll celebrate the Literary Arts Festival here. We hope many of you can come to this literary extravaganza.

As we move on in the spring semester, we're grateful to see student enrollment stabilize on our campus. However, student retention remains an intractable problem, and our student body is demoralized. In fact, we hear that faculty and staff feel demoralized, too. What is at the heart of this feeling?

Students struggle to make appointments in Counseling or Financial Aid as those offices are understaffed; personnel work excessive workloads and hours because someone has left a position and is not replaced; weary faculty advise randomly assigned students from a wide range of majors with complicated requirements because of a lack of advisors on campus. Students who meet for Saturday classes wonder why the library is closed.

Faculty and staff from every corner of our campus report work areas or classrooms that are crumbling, flooded, or infested with mold.

Underlying every lament is a common problem, a lack of resources and staffing at City Tech, in particular a sore lack of HEOS, or a disregard of the needs of faculty and staff, including their health and safety. Before the newly ordered "Savings Targets," our campus administration had already been operating with an austerity mindset. In the current circumstances we

feel more strongly than ever about our commitment to our students and thus a need to hire more people to support their success.

It is not enough to have a large group of new students enter college every semester, only to lose them before they can graduate. City Tech needs to offer more support in the areas of Financial Aid, Billing, Registration, Counseling, and Academic Advisement. We do not have a Dean of Students or a HEO responsible for Judicial Affairs. The Academic departments need more HEO administrative support to manage the growing reliance on adjunct teaching and to offer in-depth student help like SEEK and ASAP. At City Tech the majority of our Academic Departments are without full time HEOs to provide advisement. This puts undo pressure on the few faculty willing to become department chairs. Department Chairs should be free to support curriculum development and faculty scholarship instead of managing hundreds of adjuncts.

Last month as part of her whirlwind “Listening Tour,” Wendy Hensel, Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost, visited City Tech. She named Student Success as a number one priority at CUNY, calling it a “moral imperative.” We know that all CUNY students need vital support in the areas of Academic Advisement, Student Affairs, Financial Aid, Registration, Counseling, etc. Yet, at City Tech, the lack of staffing necessary to provide adequate student support is an especially acute issue: for at least a decade City Tech has had among the lowest ratios of HEOs to students of all the CUNY campuses. Our students deserve better.

CUNY's "savings targets" will exacerbate the situation at all campuses, especially at City Tech because of our current staff-to-student ratio.

We urge you, Trustees, to oppose the College “Savings Targets” ordered by Executive Vice Chancellor Batista in his February 3 memo. Our students, faculty, and staff should not carry these cuts on their back. Reverse the "savings targets;" invest more in staff and student support instead. Be outspoken public advocates for increased public funding for CUNY. And help us secure the funding necessary to provide new staff lines at City Tech.