

BOT Testimony March 20, 2023

Good afternoon,

I am Carolina Bank Muñoz, Professor of Sociology and Chapter Chair of the PSC at Brooklyn College. I am here to tell you that Brooklyn College is running on fumes. In my 19 years at BC, I've never seen this level of demoralization and disinvestment. Our working conditions and students learning conditions are abysmal. This past week, students and faculty reported 95-degree classrooms in the Film department, Black goop dropping from ceiling tiles in the Psychology department, and maintenance issues in the library bathrooms.

Preemptive budget cuts are forcing us to choose between having plumbers and having additional staff in financial aid, between adding hours for College Assistants in Mental Health Counseling or hiring full-time positions in understaffed departments like Puerto Rican and Latino Studies. These are not choices. This is speed up. We are not replacing people who are leaving which means that Staff at BC are performing out of title work and working more than their contractual 35 hours a week because the College cannot run without them doing so. This is what austerity looks like on the ground.

The blame for these conditions falls squarely on the shoulders of the CUNY administration and the Board of Trustees. If CUNY is undergoing a financial crisis, why did the board approve 30% wage increases for administrators on Executive Compensation Plans? Why are the much-needed pandemic relief funds being used to fund CUNY online, instead of making upgrades to infrastructure on the campuses?

If there is an enrollment crisis, why is the CUNY administration supporting tuition increases? The best way out of this crisis is FREE Tuition.

The CUNY budget should not be balanced on the backs of students. The budget should not be balanced on the backs of faculty and staff, some of whom are the most vulnerable workers at CUNY.

A New Deal for CUNY is PAST DUE. What are you doing to make it a reality?