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I recently joined hundreds of CUNY full- and part-time faculty, staff and students to lobby our legislators in Albany for robust State funding commensurate with the “Greatest Urban University in the World” and New Deal for CUNY legislation inclusive of free tuition, community college support, major increases in hiring of full-time faculty and advisors, capital expenditures, and pay parity for adjunct faculty.

Our ambitious PSC-CUNY bargaining agenda further casts its vision high towards the realization of the people’s university that CUNY students, workers and communities need and deserve. For those in part-time positions - teaching and non-teaching adjuncts, adjunct CLT’s and graduate workers – many laboring for decades to serve our students, this agenda includes provisions for just compensation, job security, stable expanded benefits and access to full-time positions.

I now contrast the transformative vision of my union, students and community allies with the preemptive austerity measures embodied within Executive Vice-Chancellor Batista’s recent memo mandating that campuses already cut to the bone find additional “savings” of five to six percent if not more, and to specifically analyze adjunct costs for cuts.

These measures will, if implemented, guarantee a deepening of the vicious cycle of cuts, larger class sizes, class cancellations, austerity, under enrollment and job loss for part-timers, whose quality, dedicated work holds up our university. We are already seeing threats of adjunct layoffs at John Jay, Queensborough and elsewhere. I suggest looking elsewhere in the scavenger hunt for cash with the gentle reminder that, prior to its issuance of a proactive austerity demand for campus cuts that will fall heavily upon the lowest paid and least secure CUNY employees, CUNY top administrators readily issued double digit raises to themselves with

increases of \$90,000 apiece for both Vice-Chancellor Batista and Derek Davis. How many adjunct jobs do these preemptive raises buy?

Be bold instead. Say not to austerity cuts. No layoffs, no loss of health insurance, no increased workload, and increased class size. Fulfill your mandate to protect and preserve the historic mission of CUNY to serve the working-class communities of New York City. Press for the robust funding we need from the State and now the City. And come to the table to bargain a fair contract with the PSC.