

My name is Karen Miller and I teach History in the Social Science Department here at LaGuardia Community College. This is my twentieth year as a full-time faculty member, and every day, I thank my lucky stars that I got this job. It is an honor to teach my students. It is amazing to receive support for my research (I'd like more). And I have a window. In an office in New York City! Pinch me.

One thing that has been terrific in the last year is that I have had the opportunity to teach small classes. It's a game changer and it's what our students deserve. Faculty at elite institutions often have 8-person seminars, I never have. This means that all my students speak. Every day.

We need CUNY to continue funding classes at this scale. We need to give our students the best educations. It's only fair. We need to keep funding classes that our students can succeed in. Students simply do not get enough attention without the care that faculty can take in a smaller classroom. Since the pandemic, enrollment has fallen, but the numbers of contingent faculty have fallen proportionately *further*. The jobs of my colleagues on three-year contracts are disappearing in the face of austerity, but these most-exploited faculty make our institutions work. CUNY is working to pressure to lay off part-time faculty, cut our budgets, and fill our classes to their limits. Actions that clearly undermine education. We are an educational institution. Our students need to be our priority.

Some of the investments that *are* happening at CUNY are raises for workers on the executive compensation plan (ECP). These workers are the best paid in our institution by far. To give an example of how this priority is shaping our institution, consider these numbers. Since November 2022, a College Laboratory Technician on a full-time line who is in our bargaining unit makes \$47,509. That worker has no raises in their future because CUNY will not negotiate with us. Our chancellor conversely, who is in the ECP, makes \$670,000 at the same public

institution. I understand that this is the going rate. But it's not what we need. What we need is less, not more inequality.

I call on you to stand up to Adams' calls for deep cuts to our institutions. To stop your aggressive and preemptive austerity budgets. To fight to de-link the funding we receive from the city and state from tuition. For most of our students, school is free. We need to stop funneling tuition through TAP and PELL. Instead, CUNY needs to be free. Tuition driven institutions of higher education are more vulnerable to the kind of austerity theater that you and Adams are performing. Elite private institutions have gigantic endowments. We live in one of the richest cities in the United States, in one of the richest countries in the world. That is our endowment. Let's redistribute this wealth.

Come to the table. We need a contract.