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Testimony to the CUNY Board of Trustees, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023

“Our working conditions are our students’ learning conditions.” When full-time faculty make from \$15k to \$30k less than our counterparts at comparable institutions, they can’t afford to live in New York. Either CUNY is unable to hire or retain faculty, or faculty must make difficult financial decisions about where to live, how much debt to fall in, even how many children to have. As a result, students lose the opportunity to learn from the most qualified experts in their field.

“Our working conditions are our students’ learning conditions.” Three-year appointments for adjunct faculty create a culture of stability not just for individual instructors but for whole departments and colleges. Department chairs don’t have to scramble to find people to fill classes. Adjunct faculty are not shuttling from college to college to find enough classes to cover health insurance and other basic costs. And students can build meaningful relationships over time with adjunct faculty, who are more likely to be teaching them than fulltimers.

“Our working conditions are our students’ learning conditions.” Classrooms that are 60 degrees or 85 degrees. Rain leaking into a building and dripping into buckets that custodial staff already know where to place from their experience with the last heavy storm. Chunks of ceiling falling to the floor. Mold, mice, cockroaches, rats. Elevators that are chronically out of order or that get stuck between floors at peak times. Class sizes that are raised and raised.

“Our working conditions are our students’ learning conditions.” Full-time tenure-rank faculty in the four-year colleges are expected to maintain an active research profile. But there’s minimal money for travel to conferences or research trips. Our libraries are losing or never had subscriptions to important journals. How do we stay abreast of the developments in our fields? How do we share with our students our excitement about the work we do when, unlike many in our peer institutions, we have no research budgets. At Hunter our tenure requirements are on the same level as elite liberal arts institutions, with a higher teaching load, less money, fewer resources. Our students deserve more.

By undervaluing CUNY faculty, you cheat our students. Our working conditions are their learning conditions.