

Oct 16, 2023

Dear Members of the CUNY Board of Trustees,

My name is Jack Kenigsberg. For the past dozen years, I have been a teaching adjunct in the English department of Hunter College; I am also, for the fifth year, a non-teaching adjunct and Acting Coordinator of the Hunter's writing center.

My status as an NTA is needlessly precarious. Every semester I wait on pins and needles for my NTA appointment to come through. This semester, not for the first time, I was not appointed until two or three weeks into the semester, which jeopardized my health insurance.

There's no need for this. Before I took the reins of the writing center, we were led by a full time director in a HEO line and a full time coordinator in a HEA line. When they retired, they were replaced by a pair of NTAs on an interim basis. That was five years ago. The associate provost I report to tells me they want to post a full-time director position, but are having difficulty moving it past the vacancy review board. You could fix that with a snap of the fingers. Until you do, I, and my writing center, will be trapped in limbo.

The precarity of my position clearly affects me. However, it also affects the student body at Hunter. For the past five years, the writing center has created next to no new programming because I am never sure whether I will be around the following semester to continue the work. Also, for the past five years I have had to steadily cut down the writing center's operational hours because I am part time. My associate coordinator is part time. We lost our last full time employee last year to retirement and replaced her with an administrative college assistant, also part time. We cannot be open without a supervisor on duty, and since not one single person at my center with any kind of administrative responsibility is a full time employee of the college, we have had to trim our hours from 52 per week just five years ago to just 34 now.

And it is not only our operational hours that have been cut. We've also had to cut our tutoring hours. Once upon a time, perhaps six or seven years ago, we could offer 275 tutoring hours per week. But the Chancellorate, under orders from the Board of Trustees, has demanded that the colleges cut their budgets by 5% to 7%. That cut has not been spread evenly; it has been largely borne by NTAs and college assistants. This year, compared to last

year, we suffered a 20% cut to our college assistant budget - our tutoring budget. Without the money to pay for writing tutors, we can only offer 135 hours of tutoring per week. That is 140 students *every single week* that we cannot help.

The Board of Trustees may not have created these problems, but its fiscal and personnel policies have certainly exacerbated them. It is the responsibility of the Board to undo the mess it helped to create, and to make sure that critical student support services like the Rockowitz Writing Center at Hunter College have the tutoring and administrative budgets they need to help our students succeed.

Thank you,
Jack Kenigsberg
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