

Testimony from Penny Lewis, PSC Secretary

CUNY BOT Hearing October 16, 2023

I'm Penny Lewis, PSC Secretary. I am speaking further to the bargaining agenda brought forth by CUNY management this past summer and the demands that have been authorized by you to bring to our members. As Andrea has said, our members are angered by your aspirations in total, but I'll focus on one particularly troubling path that the Board is seeking to travel.

Your bargaining agenda puts forward a broad attack on job security. We're not surprised when corporations like Amazon or right wing republicans decry such protections, but for the politically appointed board of trustees of the city university of NY to seek out erosions of tenure, weaker job protections for full time staff and expanded contingency for part timers goes against what Nyers want to see and the clear best interest of our university and students.

For example, CUNY has formally presented demands that would make it faster and easier to fire HEOs who have earned their certificates of continuous administrative service; and CUNY is also seeking to redefine job abandonment to hasten its ability to declare it and extend the shortened process to tenured and certified faculty and staff. In these instances, CUNY wants to be able to sever ties with long serving employees quickly and with less review.

But beyond firing people with greater ease, CUNY is seeking to expand its capacity to have faculty with less or no job security teaching our students. The Board of Trustees of this, and all universities, should understand the critical need for academic freedom for its faculty, and the job security offered by tenure, along with shared governance, are the cornerstones of it.

But CUNY has indicated that it seeks limitless capacity to appoint full time faculty on contingent lines, and to allow part time faculty to teach beyond full time loads across the system without any of the pay, security or benefits of their full time colleagues. Most troublingly, CUNY has shown incredible disrespect, even disregard, for the thousands of teaching adjuncts who have earned multi year appointments through a current pilot program in our contract. Here we have a contradiction-on the one hand, CUNY negotiators have indicated to us that they want to engage over the terms of this pilot in Appendix E. But that willingness was directly undercut when CUNY wrote to all of the colleges this summer that the

pilot was over, creating deep confusion and concern among our colleagues in the roles, as well as the departments who appoint and support them.

As the Board, we expect you to lead with the best interests of the CUNY community as a whole as your guide. Faculty teaching without the protections of academic freedom and basic job security and staff whose long-earned job security is threatened should not be the employment model that CUNY puts forward to the people of NY who fund it or to the students we teach.