

Testimony for Board of Trustees hearing, Feb. 5, 2024

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Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I would like to start by offering some suggestions for *reducing* enrollment at the college: *Make John Jay less attractive for students.* Increase class size. Shrink the curriculum. Offer courses at fewer time slots. Cancel classes at the last minute. Reduce student services and don't rehire experienced adjunct faculty who are devoted to their students.

Wait... that is what you are doing at John Jay and other CUNY colleges. Yet, I thought the goal was to boost enrollment.

John Jay has been asked to make significant cuts and, therefore, plans to cut \$4.46 million from this year's budget. Yet, the college has nearly \$17 million from the prior year to draw on. This would more than cover any budget shortfall—and still leave about \$10 million for future years.

As part of these cuts, John Jay is reducing adjunct spending by \$1.5 million. How is this done? By eliminating class sections and not rehiring the adjunct faculty who teach them. \$1.5 million represents about 150 to 200 fewer class sections.

Just to highlight one of many impacts...As mentioned in earlier testimony, 69 class sections were cancelled less than two weeks before the semester began – and *90 percent of these were in-person classes!* To bring students back to campus, CUNY needs to plant the seeds and let them grow. In-person classes should be offered at a variety of time slots and allowed to run, even if enrollment is low for now.

As the Chancellor and Board of Trustees of CUNY, you should be doing everything possible to attract and retain students not undermine enrollment.

Graduates of CUNY are vital to New York City's economy and workforce. They are NYC's teachers, nurses, administrators, criminal justice reformers and more. Imagine if we asked everyone who is a current or former CUNY student and their families to wear a purple shirt one day. New York would witness a sea of purple from the subways to the offices.

I urge you to publicize the value of our institutions and its students, to fight for the funding CUNY needs to educate NYC's future workforce and leaders of tomorrow – leaders who will develop creative alternatives to incarceration, find new ways to deliver public services, contribute to solutions to global warming and more.