

CUNY BOT Testimony 4-1-24
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I was asked to speak today about the devastating effects of dismantling the three-year contract program for adjuncts, and that's what I planned to do. Removing the paltry job security I now have, will, indeed, be devastating for me and many others—it will make our lives even more hand to mouth, more stressful, remove any respite from the looming specter of financial insecurity and desperation we all face.

But you know that already. Just like you know, because you have already heard it dozens of times from people like me, that we adjuncts are the victims of massive wage theft at CUNY's hands, that we and our students are being deprived of basic resources, that we are underfunded and exploited. You already know this.

The question is, "why is it this way?" The answer we get is that there's no choice. We have to balance the books, to run CUNY like a business. And that would seem to be your mandate, given that there's only one faculty member and one student among you. The rest of you are in banking, law, finance, PR, etc.— you're businesspeople, meant to run CUNY like a business. That in and of itself is a horrifying prospect, but if that is the goal, then nothing that CUNY does makes sense. Good business people do not toss out competent and experienced employees at the first sign of downturn, only to spend money and time rehiring less experienced people a few months later when the numbers rebound. Good businesspeople do not deny their employees access to basic photocopying services, or mold-free workspaces, or reliable access to toilet paper. Good bosses don't rewrite their bylaws to take decision-making ability out of the hands of the only managers with any practical, day-to-day knowledge of their departments. Good businesspeople lock in their valuable employees and provide them with the resources they need to succeed.

Your decisions and policies only make sense if we acknowledge that they are not meant to keep CUNY running; they're meant to kill it. Whatever you think your role in CUNY is, the fact is that your job is to preside over the world's slowest execution. CUNY is being murdered, choked of resources, and all of your short-sighted budget-balancing policies only hurry the process along. We here on the ground, the ones who love CUNY, may not be able to stop you, but we'll keep screaming while you do it. This is one of those screams.