

CUNY BOT Testimony 4-1-24

Dear CUNY Board of Trustees,

I am an associate professor of Sociology at the College of Staten Island and was hired as a tenure track professor in 2008. Our Department of Sociology and Anthropology is housed in building “4S” and since I arrived there has been a progressive deterioration in the physical condition of my immediate workplace. The state of disrepair ranges from broken windows, unhinged doors, lavatory stalls falling apart, ceilings caving in, to most sadly the water fountain next to my office now serving as a pool of stagnant water.

This state of disrepair is not an isolated problem—rather, as our sociological/anthropological imagination teaches us, a systemic one. According to CUNY’s most recent budget report, only 8% of the University’s buildings are in a “state of good repair”, with the other 92%, including my workplace of 4S at CSI, in various states of disrepair. The infrastructure crisis is on top of the other crises workers and students at CUNY face. These range from massive worker pay cuts due to “pay increases” that are well below the near double-digit inflation of the last several years, to increasing reliance on super exploited adjunct labor with efforts by management to increase their precarity, to proposed changes to CUNY bylaws that will further gut shared governance. For their part, students confront increased tuition, deteriorating facilities, classes canceled or filled to the rafters, to increased repression of students who fulfill the very values they are taught at CUNY by speaking out against US funded genocide in Gaza.

The central source of these problems is the austerity budgeting the Board and Democratic-controlled State legislature and governor’s office have subjected CUNY (and other) education workers and students for years. While we are starved for funds, NYS officials provide billions of welfare to a billionaire for a stadium, [the wealth of the top billionaires doubled just since the pandemic](#) with no wealth tax to claw back their unearned riches, and there is an endless stream of dollars for war and genocide.

The workers and students at CUNY, and the broader working class we serve, demand a massive, Multibillion dollar refunding of CUNY and other public services. The money is there! Make the rich pay! Retake the trillions the billionaires—soon to be trillionaires--have stolen and end the genocidal war machine that our students have been heroically demanding.

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