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August 19, 2024

Chancellor Felix Matos Rodríguez
City University of New York
205 E. 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Chancellor Matos Rodríguez,

I am writing at the start of the Fall semester to insist that all adjuncts receive their first paycheck on time. Late paychecks have become all too common at CUNY. They have serious adverse impacts on the livelihood of teaching adjuncts and, for many, on their benefits, including health insurance eligibility. The PSC has a proposal to resolve this issue in our collective bargaining agreement. But it should be addressed even in the absence of formal contractual provisions.

On-time pay should be a given at a 21st century university. But at the start of nearly every semester, the union hears from adjuncts facing the financial stress and disrespect of late paychecks. It's a recurring, systemic problem that your administration has, to date, failed to remedy. We've kept an accounting of hundreds of affected adjuncts in the last few years alone. Your administration's practice of centralizing control over hiring practices and conditions while delegating responsibility to the colleges when payroll problems result is unacceptable.

I sent a similar letter last year, and your administration's response attributed the problem to last-minute schedule changes and state payroll deadlines. If the issues are technical, then fix them. If better communication is needed, then tell the college presidents, Human Resources/Payroll offices, and deans to make a priority of respect and on-time pay for adjuncts. If hiring practices must be improved so that colleges and departments can meet a state or city payroll deadline, all the better. It is your administration's failure to secure adequate resources that leads to continued austerity budgeting, last-minute hiring, and a lack of administrative support for departments. It is unacceptable to blame department chairs for late adjunct pay, explicitly or by implication, when your administration establishes the conditions in which they work.

If paychecks are late again, then college Human Resources offices should offer guidance to affected adjuncts about requesting a salary advance and provide them a letter, as needed, to give to their landlords or other creditors.

The status quo is that affected adjuncts are expected simply to wait to be compensated, and that is unjust. That is why we are demanding that a fair system to compensate adjuncts who are not paid on time be established in our collective bargaining agreement.

Sincerely,



James Davis, PSC President

