

City Tech Library Conditions and Staffing Crisis

My name is Nora Almeida, I'm a CUNY alumni and I've worked at CUNY for 17 years. I'm currently an Associate Professor in the Library Department at the New York City College of Technology.

I am speaking today on behalf of my library colleagues and the students, faculty, and staff who use our space and collections. We have a mold and staffing crisis that campus administrators, President Russel Hotzler and Provost Pamela Brown, have failed to address or even fully acknowledge.

In August 2024, part of the Library—including institutional archives and special collections, a classroom, and 3 faculty offices—had to be closed and vacated because they are full of mold. I moved out of my office of 9 years and had to discard personal books, clothes, and student artwork that were covered in mold. These spaces are unsafe to use or inhabit. Institutional records continue to deteriorate including a rare science fiction collection and ophthalmology collection that is essential for accreditation of a unique vision care technology program.

We started systematically collecting documentation of mold, leaks, ceiling collapses, as well as temperatures regularly exceeding 80 degrees in 2017. However, facilities issues, including decades long non-compliance with ADA standards, long predate this.

People entering spaces overtaken by mold, even for short assessment walkthroughs, have reported difficulty breathing, headaches, eye and skin irritation, and sinus pain. Campus administration and our designated Environmental Health and Safety Officer, Luis Venegas, have tentatively agreed to clean the most affected uninhabitable spaces but **maintain that there is no mold and do not support mold remediation or testing.**

The City Tech Library also faces a dire staffing crisis and struggles to provide core services and keep desks staffed. We have only 9 full time librarians and 2 adjuncts to support more than 15k students. We have 2 tech workers to manage all library technology, an e-classroom, tech help desk, and computer labs.

City Tech administration does not care about the physical health of workers and students. They don't care whether students have safe environments to study, ADA accessible facilities, or minimal support services to succeed in college. They are unwilling, even, to acknowledge the basic reality of the conditions of the library.

City Tech Library workers demand that campus administrators openly acknowledge the presence of mold and account for the literal toxic conditions of the physical plant and the human impact of their neglect. We demand professional testing and remediation of moldy areas. We demand open and frozen lines be filled and are concerned that the severity of the staffing crisis will impact our upcoming middle states accreditation. We implore the board of trustees to intervene in the interest of current and future students, faculty, and staff at City Tech.