

My name is Mariana Regalado and I am a member of the library faculty from Brooklyn College.

CUNY has acknowledged that only 8% of its buildings are in good repair. We understand that building conditions are not fixed overnight. Yet the **mold situation** in our libraries is not only a resource problem, or a building problem, **it is also a policy problem with the way our libraries are managed on our campuses.**

Mold is a known threat to library collections everywhere, not just at CUNY. Mold spores live in the air, and **print** books are very attractive to mold. Librarians are professionally trained in basic conservation and preservation standards that are required to protect these materials. **But CUNY's chronically understaffed libraries cannot keep up under current conditions.**

It appears that mold was reactivated recently in several libraries because of a combination of factors:

- an unusually hot and humid stretch this summer;
- the City's energy savings program had some campuses running the HVAC lower than usual, with no special consideration for the requirements of library spaces;
- recent upgrades to HVAC systems created **new** humidity issues that were not properly addressed;
- HVAC may have been shut off when buildings were closed for Summer Fridays and on weekends;

The affected locations have been unable to maintain temperatures and relative humidity levels that we know will **prevent** mold growth, unsurprisingly leading to mold blooms starting up during the summer months. **What is surprising is the pushback librarians receive from their building engineers, campus facilities, and local administration.** Further, these are spaces where many students congregate, placing them at risk.

Mold remediation is expensive. It is much cheaper to prevent mold blooms through proper maintenance of our spaces. But CUNY librarians have been ignored, dismissed, and even blocked from managing our own collections. This is a structural problem:

- Some of these campuses have not had a chief librarian for years;
- Chief Librarians are charged with administering the library facilities, but in practice most are at the mercy of their campus provost and have little say over the library as a space;

- The Central Office has no authority over campus practices for collections care or facilities maintenance;
- There is no dedicated funding line for CUNY library facilities and they are chronically understaffed.

The librarians here today are sounding the alarm and asking the Board for help because no one else seems to be listening. **We need a baseline funding level for libraries across all campuses.** For the safety of our faculty, staff, and students, and for the safety of our collections, **we need a stable environment** within set ranges of temperature and humidity. We need to maintain this stable environment at all of our campuses. And **we need to staff the libraries with trained professionals** who are given the necessary resources to do their jobs. Librarians have tried locally to make these corrections, but we cannot do it without centralized institutional support.

Libraries are our most beloved and most heavily-used campus spaces and we should be dedicating resources to support their activities.

Thank you.