

CUNY Board of Trustees Public Hearing Testimony | May 12, 2025

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I am writing to express my urgent concern about the severe science funding crisis currently affecting the entire CUNY system. While media attention has focused on funding freezes at private institutions like Columbia and Harvard, the reality for public universities like ours is far more dire: essential funding for critical research addressing human health, environmental challenges, and educational inequities is being systematically eliminated. Unlike the Ivy League schools, CUNY does not have the resources to support faculty research in the absence of federal funding. We must change the narrative, and the public must learn about the catastrophic consequences of cutting funding for public universities!

The consequences of the administration's cuts to science funding are already devastating our community. Students, both undergraduate and graduate, have suddenly lost their financial support, vital summer programs have been canceled, and ongoing research projects are grinding to a halt. We are accustomed to typical academic setbacks such as rejected papers or unfunded grant proposals, but this is different. We now face an unprecedented situation where previously approved and active grants are being abruptly terminated. Over \$13 million in federal funds, reviewed and allocated by a robust community of US leading scientists and scholars with the backing of Congress, rescinded via a terse email with no clear justification. When we look at the types of awards that were scrapped back from CUNY, we see that many were rescinded simply because they were allocated to serve the needs of Hispanic and minority serving institutions. We are being punished for training and educating "the children of the whole people."

To fight back, we have reached out to other faculty, met with representatives from the PSC-CUNY union, we have written op-eds in our local newspapers and have contacted journalists. But our isolated efforts are insufficient against challenges of this magnitude. We need your partnership and leadership to push back against the destructive actions of the Trump Administration.