

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

Paul Brown

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Hello CUNY Trustees,

My name is Paul Brown and I am an adjunct lecturer in the Science Department at BMCC. One year ago today, I was extremely unhappy in my job in a graduate program, where I felt alienated from my work and belittled by my advisor. That's why, when I decided to try to switch to a career in teaching, I was ecstatic and excited. I truly love teaching, and I felt honored to teach chemistry to aspiring nursing students, especially at a public university for New Yorkers of all walks of life. Earning a living as a teacher at CUNY truly felt like a dream for me.

However, more and more, the actions of the CUNY administration are making that dream further and further from reality. As an adjunct lecturer, I spend each semester not knowing if I will be able to pay my rent the next semester. The woeful lack of job security makes it extremely difficult to plan for the near future, let alone my long-term future. The pay per course is thousands less than adjuncts earn across the river at Rutgers, making it extremely difficult to save anything.

I know I speak for many of my fellow adjuncts when I say that we don't want to be rich, we only want to earn a sustainable living from our teaching. We want to be full-time. The multi-year appointment program was a crucial starting point in making that a reality, and now you, the CUNY administration, want to further weaken what you already shamefully watered down in our most recent contract.

You say that you value adjuncts, and aren't trying to squeeze profits from an increasingly-precarious teaching workforce. Talk is cheap, though, and actions speak far louder than words. The majority of classes at CUNY are taught by over 11000 adjuncts, and your actions in going against the agreed-upon language for multi-year appointments tell us that you want to keep us precarious and desperate.

As a member of this community and this public university with so much potential, I am demanding that you find your integrity and honor the multi-year appointment language that you agreed to. To do that is simply the bare minimum, to continue on your course is despicable and in blatant bad faith.