

Testimony

CUNY Board of Trustees Borough Hearing, April 6, 2026

Julie Hegner, Brooklyn College

My name is Julie Hegner, HEa/Assistant Registrar in charge of Degree Audit and Readmission at Brooklyn College. I have what I consider one of the best jobs on campus: I help students return to Brooklyn College, and I help graduate them.

But I worry about the conditions in which our students learn, and our faculty and staff work.

Several of Brooklyn College's buildings are approaching the century mark, with decades of deferred maintenance that make them feel even older. We have leaks, mold, and even occasional waterfalls. There are falling tiles, condemned rooms, and wildlife sharing our spaces. The Brooklyn College I came to in 1999 was a jewel. Now, 27 years later, it has lost its shine.

Even our newer buildings are struggling. In West Quad, where I work, ongoing HVAC issues have worsened since the pandemic. Last week, temperatures reached 86 degrees in parts of our office—an enclosed space with no windows that open. The heat even knocked out internet service for half the building, forcing us to work remotely.

Spending an eight-hour workday in those conditions is exhausting and can worsen existing health issues. And I am in one of the so-called "good buildings."

Across campus, students, faculty, and staff are exposed to unsafe and unhealthy environments—sometimes briefly, sometimes for a full day. All of us deserve better. We should not have to endure the spaces where we work and learn, and we certainly should not be in environments that pose risks to our health.

The CUNY Five-Year Capital Plan for FY2023–2028 clearly prioritizes improving the health and safety of our facilities and bringing them to a state of good repair. I urge that these commitments be implemented as quickly as possible, and without the delays that so often stand in the way.