

Kevin Adams

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Testimony – Borough of Brooklyn CUNY Board of Trustees Hearing

Good evening, members of the Board of Trustees and fellow community members.

My name is Kevin Adams, a proud PSC HEO delegate from Medgar Evers College — named after the acclaimed civil rights leader and located footsteps away from where Jackie Robinson bravely broke the color barrier in baseball.

I am submitting this testimony today because the physical state of our CUNY campuses in the Borough of Brooklyn has reached a breaking point that we can no longer ignore. For far too long, the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff at Brooklyn College, City Tech, Kingsborough Community College, and Medgar Evers College have been compromised by the persistent range of issues that plague our campus spaces.

CUNY's *Report of the Fiscal 2027 Preliminary Capital Commitment Plan*, submitted to the New York City Council's Committee on Higher Education, reads:

“Many of CUNY's buildings are currently in need of basic maintenance to ensure usability. Many of these facilities fell into disrepair because there has been a lack of funding available for basic maintenance.”

I could not agree more.

We often talk about the City University of New York as the greatest engine of social mobility in this country. We value its power to transform the lives of our students. But an engine cannot run at its full potential if the garage is flooding and the roof is caving in.

And that is the reality on the ground.

Recently, on March 20, 2026, Hector Batista (Executive Vice Chancellor, COO, and Acting Senior Vice Chancellor for University Human Resources) reported to the City Council that 33 percent of the system's facilities are in a state of “good repair.” While this represents a ten-point increase from 23 percent a few years ago, significant work remains.

While progress has been made, additional support is required to ensure a long-term state of “good repair.”

Right now, across our borough, students, faculty, and staff are navigating environments that actively hinder the mission of the University. We are not just talking about "old buildings" or aesthetic upgrades; we are talking about fundamental health and safety concerns:

- **Infrastructure Failure:** We have seen libraries flooded and elevators rendered inoperable, limiting access for students with disabilities and destroying expensive, essential equipment.
- **Environmental Hazards:** Persistent issues with mold, poor air filtration, and extreme temperature fluctuations in classrooms and offices aren't just distractions — they are health risks for every person who walks through those doors.
- **Safety and Dignity:** When a student has to choose between a broken bathroom, a dark hallway, or a moldy classroom, we are failing in our basic duty of care.

When we allow our facilities to deteriorate, we send a silent but devastating message to our students: "You are not worth the investment."

Our students are already balancing jobs, family responsibilities, and housing insecurity. They should not have to contend with the fear of a ceiling leak, a mold-riddled library, extreme temperatures, or a broken lab vent on top of their coursework. Improved health and safety conditions are not a luxury; they are a prerequisite for academic persistence and student success.

We need a dedicated, transparent capital investment plan that prioritizes the structural integrity of our borough's campuses. We need facilities that reflect the brilliance of the people inside them — campuses that are safe, modern, and, above all, functional.

During the 2025 State of the University Address, Chancellor Felix Matos Rodríguez said, "As we build up our programs and welcome more students, we must ensure that our campuses are equipped to serve them." He noted that between the last fiscal year and this one, the University invested approximately \$850 million in infrastructure improvements. However, further investment is warranted to complete the necessary upgrades across the system.

While remediation requires an upfront investment, the "tax" on neglect is far higher. Facility issues are not static; the cost of repair escalates exponentially the longer structural decay is ignored. To safeguard CUNY's future, we must continue to move from reactive patching to steadfast, proactive advocacy.

In the CUNY Five-Year Capital Plan (FY2023–28), the Chancellor established a clear directive:

"The University's capital priorities... include aggressive initiatives to sustain and improve the health, safety, and security of our facilities, working toward a state of good repair on our senior and community college campuses."

To fulfill this mandate, these "aggressive initiatives" must prioritize healthy environments for all who learn and work on our campuses. This is more than a maintenance goal; it is an ethical and practical necessity. Investing in our infrastructure today protects the wellbeing of our community, drives academic success, and secures the long-term financial stability of the institution.

We implore the Board of Trustees and the Chancellery to continue bringing more college buildings into a state of good repair and to ensure all facilities are fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the future of CUNY.