

**Testimony of Craig Bernardini, Associate Professor  
Before the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York  
Concerning the University Budget Request for FY 2015-2016 as it  
Relates to the PSC-CUNY Collective Bargaining Agreement  
(Calendar Item 3.F.)**

*24 November, 2014*

My name is Craig Bernardini. I am an Associate Professor of English at Hostos Community College and chair of the English department. I am speaking today on Item 3F and the need for a CUNY budget that includes funding for a reasonable workload at the community colleges.

To prepare my comments, I looked back over my report for the 2013-14 academic year, which includes a section on scholarship. We are a relatively small department, with 23 faculty in professorial lines and 5 lecturers. Over the course of last year, English faculty at Hostos published 10 peer-reviewed articles, 20 poems or stories, a novel, and a book of poetry. We also presented or gave readings at more than 30 professional conferences and other events.

Why do I begin here? First, to remind us that community college faculty in the CUNY system are not just teachers, but researchers; we were drawn to schools like Hostos because of our combined love for teaching *and* scholarship. Publication is one of the requirements for reappointment, tenure and promotion, and publish we do, consistently, prestigiously, and very much to the merit of the college and the university.

When I break down the statistics above, I find—not surprisingly—that the majority of those publishing are junior faculty. This is partly because junior receive 24 hours of reassigned time to do research.

This time is absolutely critical. And yet, even with reassigned time, trying to pursue a research

agenda at a college with a 27-hour teaching load, class sizes well above what our professional organizations recommend, and very high service expectations, is incredibly daunting. We are forced to work in dribs and drabs, sneaking a few hours to research on weekend mornings, hoping to be able to bank enough hours in a semester to really dig in our heels. It's impossible to find any continuity for longer, more ambitious projects under such conditions, except during annual leave.

Simply put, it is not possible to fulfill an ambitious research agenda working in the conditions that we do. We end up cutting corners with our students to find adequate time to meet a deadline for a presentation or article. We drop off a committee, and risk raised eyebrows at P&B. Or, we abandon our research agenda to make time for the mountains of papers we have to grade. However we do it, we end up neglecting one thing to make time for another. There is simply not enough time. And so we fight to make it, sometimes at the expense of our students, sometimes our college ... and sometimes, perhaps most sadly, at the expense of our own health.

And what happens after 5 years, when those 24 hours of contractual reassigned time run out? We've all heard the concerns about keeping senior faculty "engaged." Giving people time to balance their careers between research and teaching would be a good start.

Last semester we at Hostos began having group mentoring meetings for junior faculty in departments around the college. Our next meeting is on the topic of managing workload. And what am I, the senior faculty member with ten years' experience, the department leader, supposed to tell them? About how I passed out at the dinner table in front of guests because I was so sleep-deprived from trying to keep up with the work? It's a funny story, but it hardly amounts to mentoring. I have few strategies to offer, more consolation and commiseration.

The most important thing a new contract could do would be to reduce the teaching load for community college teachers by 3 hours across the university. Thank you.