

**Testimony of Deborah Hertzberg, Senior College Laboratory Technician
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 Deborah Hertzberg. I'm testifying about the CUNY Budget Request (Calendar Item 3.F.) and about the need for a CUNY budget that funds overtime and salary increases for College Laboratory Technicians. I am a Senior College Laboratory Technician for the Department of Theater at Brooklyn College. I have been a dedicated employee for 12 years where I serve as the Costume Shop Supervisor working with graduate and undergraduate students studying theater design and technology. The Department of Theater produces 4 productions each semester. These productions allow our students to gain practical, industry-standard experience that supports what's learned in the classroom.

It is a requirement of my job to provide instructional support to students working on our productions. This necessitates meeting the deadlines set forth in our production calendar. During a regular work week I typically work 40 hours, instead of the contractual 35 hours. During a week when we are mounting a show, I often work around 50 hours per week, which includes working evenings and weekends. In all my 12 years I have never been compensated in pay for hours worked in excess of 35 hours. I, like CLTs all across CUNY, am a victim of wage theft perpetrated by CUNY because there is not sufficient funding to pay for overtime hours worked.

Before the timesheet initiative, HR was aware of Theater Department staffers working long hours yet turned a blind eye saying, "we don't want to know about it." While we continue to work with our Department to meet our production goals and support our students, we are offered compensatory time rather than overtime pay as stipulated in our contract. Now that

timesheets are required for all CLTs, HR can no longer turn a blind eye. We are logging our hours as worked and tracking accrued comp time, yet our Department has no funding to pay us for overtime. This leaves all of us in tenuous circumstances. HR, at any time, can deny our accrued comp time, and our Department does not have sufficient funds to pay overtime.

I respectfully ask the Board of Trustees to insist that new timesheets be implemented in a manner that does not degrade our professionalism and permits payment for overtime hours worked. I therefore also ask the Board of Trustees to consider greater funding in the CUNY Budget for the Theater Department at Brooklyn College.

Furthermore, the Budget must include funds for wage increases for CLTs who are among the lowest earning instructional staff members. On average CLTs earn \$51,358 per year, Sr CLTs earn \$60,907, and Chief CLTs earn \$75,025. We have not had a wage increase in 5 years, and it is very hard to maintain a reasonable standard of living for a family in the NYC metropolitan area on these salaries. Although our work may be technical in nature it does not preclude us from academic and professional achievements in our areas of expertise. Many of us hold the same higher degrees as the professors with which we work. Collectively, we are the academic support of our departments and critical to the success of our students.