

Testimony Delivered to the CUNY Board of Trustees: Agenda Item: 3F

by

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I think we all are in agreement that the University is underfunded and in need of vastly more resources. CUNY never fully recovered from the mid-1970s fiscal crisis and the persistence of this underfunding over forty years has hurt our collective ability to educate New Yorkers. The impact of this defunding could not be clearer than in what has happened to the salaries of the instructional staff since that time.

The decline in the value of instructional staff salaries is quite dramatic and leaves CUNY colleges non-competitive with comparable institutions in the area. Here are some examples of the decline expressed in terms of 2010 constant dollars, which corresponds with the end of the last contract.

If salaries had simply kept pace with inflation since 1971, then in 2010:

- The top step of the Professor/HEO salary schedule would have been \$172,000 rather than \$116,000;
- The median step of the Associate Professor/HEO Associate salary schedule would have been \$119,000 rather than \$74,000;
- The salary range for the Assistant Professor/HEO Assistant salary schedule would have gone from \$81,000 to \$114,000 instead of \$43,000 to \$82,000;
- The top step of the Lecturer salary schedule would have been \$94,000 rather than \$75,000;
- The top step of the CLT salary schedule would have been \$70,000 rather than \$59,000;
- Finally, the Adjunct Lecturer bottom step, where most adjuncts are hired, would have been \$4,700 for a three-credit course instead of \$2,900.

The decline in the real value of the salary steps is dramatic. We have seen salary step declines for most titles in the 30% to 40% range, with some declines as great as 49%. The decline in the value of salary steps from 1971 to 2010 is a good measure to use to gauge how much the University's budget request ought to be to repair the historic damage done by underfunding.

The decline in our salary structure has real consequences for our members' ability to teach, to do research and manage life in New York City and the metropolitan area. The cost of housing in New York City and transportation alone make it difficult for many instructional staff to live near the college where they work. These costs and others make it hard to recruit and retain faculty. Even though the applicant pool in response to many job announcements is rich, the low salaries

and high teaching load make recruiting and retaining top choices problematic. Churning of new hires and recruiting a diverse faculty are becoming increasingly difficult problems to solve without the resources necessary to increase salaries.

Comparing CUNY salaries with peer institutions in the area makes clear that CUNY is not competitive when it comes to salaries. In 2010, the average salary for CUNY senior college full professors was \$114,345. Compare this with these 2010 average salaries for peer institutions with whom CUNY senior colleges compete. Also, I would add that many of these institutions subsidize housing costs:

Yale University	\$177,080
New York University	\$175,930
University of Pennsylvania	\$174,753
Columbia University in the City of New York	\$169,171
Cornell University	\$150,084
St John's University-New York	\$143,640
Rutgers University-New Brunswick	\$140,913
Barnard College	\$140,216
University of Connecticut	\$139,254
Stony Brook University	\$138,631
Fordham University	\$137,933
Amherst College	\$137,212
University at Buffalo	\$134,931
University of Delaware	\$134,603
University of Maryland-College Park	\$134,424
Temple University	\$130,384
Swarthmore College	\$128,239
SUNY at Albany	\$127,199
Yeshiva University	\$127,169
SUNY at Binghamton	\$126,049
Pace University-New York	\$121,192
Quinnipiac University	\$121,095
Vassar College	\$120,953
Bard College	\$120,353
Adelphi University	\$120,246

William Paterson University of New Jersey	\$119,994
University of Massachusetts-Amherst	\$118,641
LIU Post	\$115,814

If CUNY had kept pace with inflation over the last forty years, we would indeed be competitive today. But, the sad truth is that CUNY's defunding and poor contract settlements over the years have led to CUNY's current non-competitive status. If CUNY wishes to recruit a diverse, high quality instructional staff in the years to come, then substantial salary increases need to be negotiated.