

Testimony of Leslie deGiere, Continuing Ed Teacher
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

Good afternoon. My name is Leslie deGiere and I'm an instructor with CLIP, the CUNY Language Immersion Program. I'd like to address the University Budget Request and advocate for funding to create professional conditions for CLIP and CUNY Start instructors.

As you may know, CLIP is an intensive program for English language learners who have not yet passed the writing and/or reading entrance exams for CUNY. Many of these students have never written an essay or even been required to read an entire book for school before. To help these students, CLIP has an academically rigorous program with a focus on essay writing and academic reading. CLIP was the model for our sister program, CUNY Start, an intensive English and math program for native speakers.

In both CLIP and CUNY Start, we teach 25 hours a week and are paid for 5 hours a week for preparation time. However, we are required to spend far more time outside of class on preparation than what we are paid for. For example, over the course of a semester, each of my students writes 8 or 9 essays. This means I need to read over 200 essays. The students need to do a minimum of three drafts of each of these 200 plus essays, and I work with them on every single one of these drafts. I do the vast majority of this work outside of my 5 hours a day of class, so I

constantly have a stack of essays that I'm trying to plow through. This is the stack of essays that I need to get through tonight before class tomorrow morning. I also give quizzes and exams, plan field trips and create my own curriculums. Needless to say, this takes far more than the 5 hours a week of preparation that I'm paid for.

Incredibly, with 25 contact hours a week and extensive preparation beyond that, CLIP and CUNY Start teachers are only considered part-time employees. This leads to a variety of unacceptable problems. For instance, in CLIP, if we don't teach in the summer session, we lose our health insurance. We even lose our health insurance if we teach within the same program but at a different campus. This is particularly problematic given that enrollment goes down in the summer so there isn't enough work for those of us who can't afford to lose our insurance.

I would like to request that funding be allocated so that CLIP and CUNY Start instructors can attain full-time status for the full-time work that we're already doing. This will create more professional conditions for our instructors and allow us to focus on helping our students.

