



The Chancellor

chancellor@cuny.edu

205 East 42nd Street, 18th floor
New York, NY 10017
646 664-9100 tel
646 664-3868 fax

March 9, 2020

Barbara Bowen, PhD
President
Professional Staff Congress/CUNY
61 Broadway, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10006

Dear Professor Bowen:

As we all know, the recent events concerning the outbreak and the spread of the Coronavirus in the State of New York have singularly focused CUNY leadership on how best to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all of our faculty, staff and students. Notwithstanding the rapid and ever changing pace of information developing each day around the circumstances of the Coronavirus, the University has been proceeding methodically to share information and implement the recommended CDC and DOH guidance as it is received. As you point out in your letter, I have directed the establishment of a Coronavirus task force under the leadership of Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer Hector Batista. Among others, Ayman El-Mohandes, Dean of the CUNY School of Public Health, is on the task force and available as a resource. You also indicate your awareness with the University's creation of a website containing relevant information about Coronavirus and links to appropriate guidance. We are using this website as our primary method of communicating to our internal and external constituencies, as circumstances and protocols may be subject to a rapidly changing environment. In addition, we continue to respond to and provide guidance to our campus presidents and personnel either directly through the Chancellor's Officer and/or through the Coronavirus task force.

Regarding your assertion that PSC executive director Debra Bell has, "since February 13 sought answers to questions about employment protocols, pay for hourly workers, hand washing facilities and other issues, but she has not received satisfactory answers," both Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Doriane Gloria and University Director of Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management Howard Apsan have responded to Ms. Bell pointing her to CUNY's website which contains our most current information, and is periodically updated as new information becomes available. To date, our employment protocols have not changed except for employees who are self-quarantining consistent with CDC and DOH guidelines, to the extent that they will not have leave deducted for the self-quarantine period; this has been conveyed to Ms. Bell. Tomorrow we will forward a list of point people at each of the colleges to whom you, PSC campus leadership or your members should address location- or college- specific concerns, such as those you raise in your letter about sinks having no water or restrooms without soap, as well as local cleaning concerns, and concerns about individual employees. Central Office is

(2)

working with the colleges to assist them in procuring adequate supplies. We continue to interface with our vendors and colleges in an effort to insure that they are taking appropriate action, which is including deep cleaning in certain instances.

We appreciate the suggestions in your letter, and while many of the items you raise are presently under discussion at the highest levels of CUNY, we are being guided by the CDC and DOH guidance and discussions with the State and City of New York. At this time, other than the information available on our website, staff and employees — other than those directed to act in a particular way based on the posted information — should continue to work, as they have been and will be paid accordingly. We are constantly updating our CUNY website as we receive new information, and we are preparing FAQ's for our Human Resources Directors across our campuses which summarize the work we have already been doing.

Regarding questions such as adjunct and part-time faculty being paid in the event classes are cancelled or rescheduled, it is premature to make any decisions in that regard and any decisions that CUNY contemplates making will be done in consultation with the State and City of New York; where necessary we will bargain with our unions regarding changes to employment protocols. Thus while you raise many issues, we are dealing with them in due course, as circumstances arise; many of the answers you seek are in the process of development and will be done so in the context of our emergency planning and based upon external guidance as the situation evolves, and based upon consultations with the State and City of New York's Public Health Departments.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Félix V Matos Rodríguez', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Félix V Matos Rodríguez, PhD
Chancellor