

**NEW YORK LEGISLATORS CALL ON CUNY  
ADMINISTRATION TO STOP CUTS AND LAYOFFS**

May 27, 2020

William C. Thompson, Jr.  
Chairperson, Board of Trustees  
The City University of New York

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez  
Chancellor, The City University of New York  
205 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Chairperson Thompson and Chancellor Matos Rodríguez:

We write as elected officials of New York City and New York State who strongly support The City University of New York. We want to express our concern about plans announced by CUNY colleges to lay off hundreds of adjunct faculty by May 29 and cut course offerings for the fall by as much as 35 percent.

New York will need CUNY more than ever as we seek to rebuild the economy. The communities that have borne the greatest loss of life and employment during the pandemic are exactly the communities whose members rely on CUNY and who will turn to CUNY to rebuild their lives. New Yorkers from all parts of the city and surrounding region will need CUNY as they seek to gain new skills and earn college degrees. Reduced course offerings, fewer faculty and over-sized classes will leave CUNY under-prepared to support the students whose need for support is greatest. A strong and fully staffed CUNY is a unique and essential resource for New York's recovery.

While we are painfully aware of the budgetary crisis facing the City and State, we believe that the CUNY administration should pursue every alternative before reducing course offerings and enacting mass layoffs. The CARES Act allocated more than \$100 million to CUNY for institutional support during the crisis, with an explicit provision about keeping employees on payroll. To date, CUNY has made no announcement of how those funds are being used. The University should provide complete transparency about its proposal for and allocation of the CARES Act funds. Budgetary relief at the state and city level may also come in the form of additional stimulus money from Washington.

The layoff plans announced by several colleges would mean that thousands of adjunct faculty and other hourly employees would lose their jobs. Adjuncts who are contractually entitled to health insurance would lose coverage—during a pandemic.

Many of these faculty members have taught at CUNY for decades, enabling CUNY to keep colleges open despite shrinking public funding.

The damage done to CUNY by pre-emptive and disproportionate budget cuts will not be easily undone. We call on you to rise to the demands of this terrible moment in New York's history and chart a new course that protects CUNY students, CUNY workers and the communities CUNY serves.

Sincerely,

City Council Member Adrienne Adams  
City Council Member Inez Barron  
City Council Member Justin Brannan  
City Council Member Andrew Cohen  
Assemblymember William Colton  
Senator Leroy Comrie  
Assemblymember Catalina Cruz  
Assemblymember Inez E. Dickens  
Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz  
City Council Member Daniel Dromm  
Assemblymember Steve Englebright  
Assemblymember Harvey Epstein  
Assemblymember Mathylde Frontus  
Senator Michael N. Gianaris  
Assemblymember Richard N. Gottfried  
City Council Member Barry Grodenchik  
Senator Brad Hoylman  
City Council Member Ben Kallos  
City Council Member Peter Koo  
City Council Member Brad Lander  
Senator Andrew J. Lanza  
Acting Queens Borough President Sharon Lee  
Assemblymember Joseph R. Lentol  
Senator John Liu  
City Council Member Farah Louis  
City Council Member Alan Maisel  
Senator Monica Martinez  
Assemblymember Walter T. Mosley  
City Council Member Francisco Moya  
Assemblymember Catherine Nolan  
Assemblymember Félix Ortiz  
Assemblymember Dan Quart  
City Council Member Carlina Rivera  
Assemblymember Daniel Rosenthal  
Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal

Assemblymember Nily Rozic  
Senator Diane J. Savino  
Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright  
Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon  
Assemblymember Aravella Simotas  
Senator Toby Ann Stavisky