

**Testimony of Annette Gourgey, Adjunct Assistant Professor
Before the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York**

**Concerning Funding for Adjunct Health Insurance
In the CUNY Budget Request (Calendar Item 3.A.)**

21 November, 2011

As an adjunct assistant professor for over 15 years at Baruch and other CUNY colleges, I urge the Board of Trustees to continue to fund our health insurance and to transfer us to the appropriate City or State health plan, as is already done for SUNY adjuncts.

Adjuncts teach a majority of the course sections at CUNY. We adjuncts who currently receive health insurance have taught multiple courses for many years. In addition to our teaching, we spend several hours per week meeting with students individually to help them succeed, with little or no additional compensation. We work tirelessly and CUNY could not continue to operate at its current level without our services. I and the other adjuncts like me are dedicated to teaching, care about serving our students, and can continue to do so only because of the benefits that CUNY has provided.

We have no other job that provides health insurance. The cost of living in New York is already very high, and at adjunct pay levels, paying for private insurance would be impossible. We rely on the adjunct health insurance benefit to continue to teach at CUNY, and without it, would be forced to seek other employment.

The adjuncts that rely on CUNY's adjunct health benefit are often the most experienced, long-term, and highest quality of CUNY's adjunct work force. As such, we especially need the health insurance benefit to continue our services. Many of us are older; some of us have pre-existing conditions or health problems that preclude getting other insurance and it would be morally wrong to abandon us now. It would be a great loss to CUNY if the most experienced and committed adjuncts were forced to find other work because they could not continue uninsured, and if CUNY could no longer attract adjuncts with similar quality and dedication in the future. Those of use who chose to remain at CUNY without insurance would be forced to draw on the city or state's emergency services and our health care would only be a greater public burden than to fund us preventively. Therefore, adjunct health insurance is a wise investment; its abandonment will only cost more in lost instructional quality to CUNY and added financial burden to taxpayers.

The first step in supporting adjunct health insurance has been taken; I urge you to continue this commitment and to impress upon the state authorities the professional and moral importance of continuing to fund this benefit. Please do not abandon those of us who have been loyal and dedicated to service at CUNY, and whose lives depend on it. Thank you for your support.