

## THERE IS A CRITICAL NEED FOR UNITY AMONG THE STAFF, FACULTY AND STUDENTS TO RESIST THE CORPORATIZATION OF CUNY

In 2004, [Clarion](#) published a graphic illustrating the “Shadow University,” a compendium of the fragmented army of more than 8,000 part-time employees who currently perform a record 63% of the teaching and a large amount of the non-teaching work for poverty wages--with no job security, disability insurance, or city health insurance upon retirement.

The creation of a huge reserve of contingent, unprotected labor is part of another disturbing trend: The aggrandizement of power by CUNY “managers” in a drive for “flexibility” and centralized control over (1) its academic and professional labor force and (2) curriculum. Together, these trends weaken the institutions of academic tenure and 13.3B protection for professional staff, undermine faculty governance and control of curriculum, compromise the mission of a university, replace collegial decision-making with a top-down hierarchical structure, and substitute a corporate model for an academic one.

At corporate CUNY, privatization and outsourcing are on the rise; public funding is on the decline. Education, in the language of the marketplace, becomes a "product" which can be quantified by test scores and outcome assessments. CUNY’s original mission of educating the children of the whole people is step-by-step eroded by rising tuition and tiered colleges at a university that was once the model of affordable, democratic public higher education. In the last decade, CUNY managers have:

- Promulgated a master plan, among whose goals was to “achieve productivity and program savings” (corporate speak for “speed-up” and “de-funding”),
- Accelerated the tiering of colleges and personnel (academic and professional ranks),
- Increased the wage gap between the top and bottom university ranks—the Chancellor recently received a raise to \$ 395,000 a year, plus continuing perks of a Sutton Place apartment, car, chauffeur and expense account, while a PhD adjunct assistant professor teaching four or five courses a year averages \$24,000,
- Approved a School of Professional Studies, staffed almost entirely by part-time faculty with no control over curriculum,
- Created an online degree by central fiat, sidestepping university procedures that give faculty control over curriculum and degree programs,
- Cancelled remedial education at senior colleges against the testimony of its own faculty and academic experts from around the country,
- Blocked a legislative bill to allow part-timers to collect unemployment insurance when they are not working,
- Forced unpaid overtime on higher education officers (registrars, financial office, academic advisors, bursars etc.),
- Endorsed quantitative testing over teacher judgment,
- Outsourced construction and grading of ACT placement, CPE exit exams and proposed CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment) testing to private corporations,
- Contested the intellectual property rights of faculty,
- Increased student tuition to the point where it will soon surpass public funding as the largest source of CUNY’s budget,
- Allowed class size to mount above levels recommended by professional associations, and
- Attempted to take elected department chairs out of the union and designate them as managers.

A key purpose of these practices is to squeeze more work out of faculty for less pay. Together, such practices undermine collegial governance, academic freedom, and student access. All the stakeholders of CUNY must fight for the common interests of students, faculty and staff. We must work for a social policy that invests in free public higher education.

**GET INVOLVED IN THE NEW CAUCUS : [www.newcaucus.org](http://www.newcaucus.org)**

