



**TESTIMONY OF THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF
CONGRESS/CUNY**

**THE IMPACT OF THE 2006-07 STATE BUDGET ON
NEW YORK'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS**

New York State Assembly Standing Committee on
Higher Education
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My name is Carl Lindskoog. I am a doctoral student in the history department at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. I chose to come to CUNY to do my Ph.D. because the history department faculty featured some of the leading scholars in my field and because the program is ranked among the top twenty in the nation. I also looked forward to studying at a public university in the city of New York, an experience that I imagined would introduce me to the diversity and excitement of the city itself.

Although I do not regret the two-and-a-half years I have spent at CUNY, there are certain things that have made my experience difficult. Starting in my second year of coursework I had to begin teaching as an adjunct at Queens College, as this is the only form of financial assistance available to most doctoral students at the Graduate Center. Unlike graduate students at many other institutions who work as teaching assistants for an annual stipend, students at the CUNY Graduate Center do not assist in a course but have to teach our own courses—a more exciting, but much more arduous assignment. This is my second year of teaching two courses per semester. The amount of time I spend preparing for class, teaching, and grading limits the time I can put toward my own studies, and will certainly lengthen the time it takes me to get my degree.

This is only one problem I have encountered while studying and working at CUNY. Because CUNY does not provide health insurance to graduate students, I have had to choose between going without or paying for it myself out of my meager wages as an adjunct. Added to this is the cost of tuition. Almost all top-notch graduate schools provide tuition remission for their students, but at CUNY many graduate students have to pay their own. Although I am one of the fortunate few to enter my program with tuition remission, many graduate students are not so fortunate. Having to pay tuition and health insurance on top of expensive city life forces them to teach more courses or to go into deeper debt. One of my graduate-student colleagues at Queens College has stopped taking courses, completely halting progress toward her degree because she simply cannot afford tuition.

CUNY's inability to support graduate students hurts students like me, but it also puts the University at a disadvantage when competing with other schools for top graduate students. I have met with prospective students in the past two years and they always ask me about assistance to graduate students at CUNY. I wish I could tell them that CUNY values us enough to fully

fund our study, but I cannot and I am afraid this is keeping some of the best students from joining our otherwise outstanding institution.