

March 26, 2023

I am delighted to welcome all of you to the 50th anniversary conference of the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions, a highly valued CUNY institution. The theme for this year's conference is Collective Bargaining in Higher Education Looking Back, Looking Forward, 1973-2023. We are honored and delighted that international renowned political philosopher and Harvard University professor Michael J. Sandel will be the keynote speaker.

The National Center is a labor-management research center that was established by the CUNY Board of Trustees in 1972 and is housed at Hunter College. For a half-century, the National Center has been a respected national leader in bringing labor leaders, scholars, and administration representatives together to deepen understanding and enhance the effectiveness of labor relations in higher education. That mission is central to the smooth functioning of our universities, especially at CUNY, and I offer my gratitude for your participation in this important conference and celebration, as well as your efforts to build the durable bridges that help us achieve our highest goal – serving our students effectively by focusing on the mutual aims behind our common cause.

Today's political landscape presents immense challenges – the divisions in our society are deep. The need for dialogue on the issues confronting us has never been greater. The theme of this year's conference, to examine the past and envision the forward, could not be more important. It is crucial to the vitality of our universities and our society that we continue to work together in good faith to seek solutions to the challenges we all face.

The work of our universities, especially our great public universities, has never been more necessary to help our students succeed in the knowledge economy, but it has also grown more difficult to engage in the robust debate, deep intellectual probing and community-building that are essential elements in the best academic experiences. CUNY's National Center enhances our collective ability to do that important work and unites us in our educational mission. I wish you the best of luck in your deliberations and I look forward to the insightful ideas and solutions you offer, as you have at all of your annual gatherings.

Sincerely,



Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, Ph.D.
Chancellor