

Testimony of Vice Chancellor Matthew Sapienza
The City University of New York
New York City Council Higher Education Committee Hearing:
Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget
March 3, 2017

Good morning, Chairperson Barron and members of the Higher Education Committee. I am Matthew Sapienza, CUNY's senior vice chancellor and chief financial officer. I am joined by Judy Bergtraum, vice chancellor for facilities planning, construction and management.

We appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2018 Preliminary Budget and its effect on The City University of New York. We are at a pivotal moment in our history and one of opportunity and great optimism. We are embarking on a new strategic framework, a comprehensive vision and set of strategies that will result in better performance and even greater success for our students.

The strategic framework is called "Connected CUNY," because our future success depends on how well we collaborate across the university and with our many partners, including government, the public schools, other leading universities and the private sector. We have designed and will be launching new initiatives that will increase the number of high school students prepared for college-level studies, get the large numbers who aren't fully ready through our remediation programs more effectively, improve graduation rates at our colleges so that more New Yorkers will enjoy the benefits of a quality diploma, and we will offer more internships and other experiential learning opportunities so that CUNY graduates will enjoy improved career prospects.

Chairperson Barron, and members of the committee, your strong and continuing advocacy for our students, who are attending in record numbers and graduating in increasing numbers, is more vital than ever. We very much appreciate and need our partnership with both the City and State, as we persistently strive to fulfill CUNY's historic mission to

provide a broadly accessible, affordable, high quality education to all New Yorkers, but especially those from low income and underrepresented groups and immigrant populations.

We are very grateful that our funding partners share these goals: the City Council Merit Scholarships and funding for application fee waivers for New York City public high schools students illustrate this commitment. From the State, we fully support the Governor's proposed Excelsior Scholarship program, which will make college more affordable and reduce debt for middle-class students, and passage of the state Dream Act, which will extend financial aid and other benefits to CUNY's many undocumented students.

Our efforts continue to bear positive, transformational results. A recent groundbreaking study by a group of respected economists, part of The Equality of Opportunity Project, ranked universities by economic mobility and quantified the opportunities that CUNY's students enjoy. As summed up in a New York Times article: "The new data shows, for example, that the City University of New York system propelled almost six times as many low-income students into the middle class and beyond as all eight Ivy League campuses, plus Duke, M.I.T., Stanford and Chicago, combined."

In addition, a new report from the Education Trust also recognized the efforts at CUNY to close gaps for underrepresented groups. The Education Trust is a nonprofit organization that advocates for minority and low-income students, and found that, nationally, graduation rates of black students lag behind those of white students by 22 percentage points. The report also describes what some institutions are doing to close this gap, and specifically cited John Jay College, which graduates black students at rates higher than white students.

CUNY's nationally acclaimed Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) is the University's most successful initiative in raising degree completion rates and positioning students on the path of upward mobility. ASAP offers comprehensive support services and financial resources that remove barriers to full-time study, build student resiliency, and support timely graduation. Results have been remarkable. To date, the average three-year

graduation rate among ASAP students is 53 percent compared to 23 percent for similar students. The national urban community college three-year graduation rate is 16 percent. Seven years after beginning, 64 percent of ASAP students had earned an undergraduate degree (associate and/or bachelor's degree) compared with 42 percent of similar students.

The Wall Street Journal last week published an article about replication efforts at colleges in Ohio, California, and Indiana. And we are in the midst of an expansion of the program to 25,000 students, including transforming Bronx Community College into a fully ASAP college.

There are many more examples of CUNY's efforts to effectively serve a diverse student population. Just this past week, the New York Times described the work going on at Brooklyn College's Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema, which is located at Steiner Studios in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. It is the only school in the country built on a working film lot. The tuition at the Feirstein costs about a third of other film schools, and as the Times reported, "Though the Feirstein tuition is low-budget, the facilities are not". And just as importantly, the school's mission is to serve women and minorities; women make up half of the student population, and typically underrepresented groups make up 45 percent.

Now let me speak to the City's Preliminary Budget. We are very pleased that the City's financial plan includes significant and ongoing support for our collective bargaining agreements with our faculty and staff. These agreements are critical to our ability to recruit and retain top-notch faculty and staff. This additional funding combined with prior plan increases for ASAP expansion and new programs to improve and enhance access is a key factor in our efforts to increase retention and graduation rates.

We are extremely grateful to the City Council, particularly the Higher Education Committee, for securing resources in this year's budget for the City Council Merit Scholarships. We will ask for your advocacy again, as funding for this critical student support program was not included in the FY18 Preliminary Budget. This initiative provides

financial aid to students who graduated with an 80 average from New York City high schools and who maintained a B average at the University. These merit-based awards are available to deserving students at both the senior colleges and community colleges and are a significant contribution to our efforts to speed time to degree. They demonstrate to our students, in a tangible way, that their city makes it possible to pursue an excellent postsecondary education right here at home. We look forward to working with you in ensuring that these financial aid awards are protected.

Additional needs to support CUNY's ongoing efforts to increase completion rates are highlighted in our FY2018 budget request. We are seeking City investment in significant endeavors. The first is related to support for associate degree programs at our comprehensive colleges. The amount provided for these programs has remained constant at \$32.3 million since 1995. Simply applying the Higher Education Price Index over that time period would have meant an additional \$28 million in annual, recurring support.

We are requesting \$35 million for our Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative.

As part of the recent collective bargaining agreement with the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), the union and the University agreed that it is committed to a shared goal of reducing the annual undergraduate teaching contact hour workload for full-time classroom teaching members of the instructional staff by three teaching contact hours. A labor/management committee has been convened to develop a plan to reduce the contractual teaching load by three hours. The reduction in the contractual teaching load is designed to allow faculty more time for mentoring, student and academic advisement, office hours, and research. Enhancing support for faculty to mentor and interact with students in small groups to provide both academic and career advisement is critical to enhancing completion rates and student success.

Our request also includes the Bridge to Completion Student Affordability Initiative. While New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is one of the best financial aid programs in the country, it is generally limited to only 8 semesters. Due to work and family obligations, many of our students are not able to complete their degrees in 8 semesters.

This is also especially true for those students who start at a community college and articulate to a senior college. As a result, thousands of CUNY students are in good academic standing, are close to graduating, but yet are no longer TAP-eligible. The Bridge to Completion Initiative will provide financial support to those students who have lost their TAP eligibility but are within 30 credits of graduation.

While financial assistance is often critical in our students' abilities to complete their programs, adequate preparation for college is equally essential. While the City Department of Education (NYCDOE) has raised its graduation rates substantially since the turn of the century, many new graduates are not yet ready for the academic rigor of college courses. While all students who have been able to attain a high school degree or a GED have a place at CUNY, true access is impeded by the inability of many of them to begin taking credit-bearing courses.

We are committed to improving our remediation programs using innovative, evidence-based best practices. As CUNY refines its approach to developmental education, it will work closely with NYCDOE leaders, policymakers, and school-level staff to ensure that the new approaches are understood by students and those who support them. Improving the effectiveness and rigor of developmental instruction and thereby eliminating some barriers to degree completion will be a major area of focus in the years ahead. CUNY has a long history of innovative practice and continues to engage in research that is leading to significant pedagogical and curricular improvements. Outcomes from these educational innovations in developmental instruction have garnered national attention and adoption of CUNY-created programs across the nation.

Let me turn now to the State Budget. CUNY's request to the State includes a three-year community college base aid funding increase of \$250 per student FTE each year. The current base aid level is \$2,697 per FTE, down \$382 in inflation-adjusted dollars from the FY2009 level of \$2,675.

This increase, coupled with enrollment changes, would generate an additional \$10.0 million in FY2018. This request is a multiyear effort to restore State funding and increase it to a level that will enable it to adequately support community college operations and provide funding for strategic investments that will improve student outcomes. And we are also hopeful that the Senate and Assembly will restore funding for ASAP and child care centers.

CUNY's financial plan for FY2018, approved by our Board of Trustees, includes an extension of the predictable tuition policy. No one likes tuition increases. However, a predictable tuition plan helps ensure financial stability for the University, allows families to plan ahead and provides important funding for academic programs and student services. CUNY used the revenues from the previous predictable tuition plan to directly benefit students; over this timeframe, approximately 1,000 new faculty lines were created. The benefits of these investments are clearly evident, as both enrollment and graduation rates increased. Even with these increases, CUNY's in-state tuition will continue to be well below the average for public universities in the country and, combined with New York's Tuition Assistance Program, it will keep college affordable to all our residents.

In order to support those most in need, it is the University's intent to limit tuition increases at the community colleges to \$100 per year. However, for the second straight year we are committing to a freeze on community college tuition rates, if our funding request is met through other sources.

CUNY serves 274,000 degree students and 269,000 adult and continuing education students. 58% of our students receive federal Pell grants. 39% are from households whose incomes are less \$20,000. 42% are the first in their families to attend college. Chairperson Barron and members of the committee, the University deeply appreciates your continued commitment to a high-quality CUNY education, which is the vehicle that *these* students rely on for the path of upward mobility. We look forward to working with you as the budget for FY2018 is developed.

I would now like to ask Judy Bergtraum, Vice Chancellor of Facilities Planning, Construction and Management, to talk about CUNY's capital budget.

Good morning, I am Judy Bergtraum, Vice Chancellor of Facilities Planning, Construction and Management at CUNY. It's a pleasure to be here today and I am happy to have this opportunity to discuss with you our capital budget.

The City Council has been an outstanding partner to CUNY, and especially to our community colleges, by providing support for critical maintenance work and major new buildings. In recent years, your support has been instrumental in helping CUNY to complete North Hall's new quad at Bronx Community College, a major expansion of Medgar Evers's library, creation of a new dining facility at Queensborough Community College, and the creation of the Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema at Brooklyn College—all projects that added much-needed space and enriched those campuses with modern, well-designed facilities that inspire students.

Also with your support we have been able to start design on the new Allied Health and Sciences Building for Hostos Community College. This major facility will provide modern classrooms and science labs for the college's allied health programs, which provide essential workforce development. In addition, it will house a dental clinic that will provide students with practical experience and furnish the community with expanded services.

In recent years the Council has provided over \$250 million to CUNY and funded over a hundred projects, in particular at the community colleges where the need is greatest. Because of your generous support of critical maintenance funding, CUNY has been able to address some of the most challenging critical maintenance issues at these campuses. As you know from our previous discussions, achieving a state of good repair within the system is utmost priority for us.

All of this is important timely because as we improve our physical facilities CUNY is implementing a major new vision, our strategic framework, which will significantly improve our performance for all New Yorkers. Through a broad array of initiatives, we will make sure more high students are prepared for college, we will ensure that far more students get their diplomas in a timely manner and we will provide more internships and other opportunities for CUNY graduates to receive invaluable workplace experience, which will help launch them on promising careers as soon they leave our campuses. We are also expanding our capacity for offering online courses for adult learners, so they will be able to obtain the skills needed to advance or change careers. It is an exciting, optimistic time at CUNY.

But the work on our facilities continues and is integral to realizing those important goals. For instance, we are making excellent progress on one of our largest single critical maintenance projects - construction of the new façade of LaGuardia Community College's Center 3 Building. This enormous building is 100 years old and its façade must be replaced if the building is to be preserved. I am happy to report that we expect to complete construction of this \$123 million project by beginning of next year and I believe you will all take pride in realization of what will be a community treasure. We are also nearly complete with phase I of a major library expansion at LaGuardia.

Other critical maintenance projects that have benefited from Council funding are: the ongoing campus-wide utility upgrades at Bronx Community College (we are in construction of Phase 4—only two more phases to go); a complete replacement of the electrical system at Queensborough

Community college so they no longer have blackouts in their buildings; the phased renovation of Hostos Community College's 500 Grand Concourse Building (we're in construction on the 4th Floor renovation, after completing the 5th Floor and bathrooms), and numerous other roof replacements, correction of ADA deficiencies, central plant upgrades, and heating and cooling systems upgrades.

The Council has been generous to our senior colleges as well, by providing funding for new programs, special initiatives and equipment. Recently, you have provided support for a phased library renovation at Lehman College; equipment for science lab upgrades at City Tech; upgrade of student lounge space at Medgar Evers; upgrades to IT infrastructure at The City College; and soccer field improvements at both College of Staten Island and Queens College. We thank you for these commitments and hope you appreciate how they do to support our new vision and improved performance on behalf of our students.

One of the great, innovative programs improving graduation rates at CUNY is the ASAP program at our community colleges. I want to provide you a brief update on the status of implementing ASAP program space at the community colleges and the participating senior colleges. Last year we received a \$7 million contribution from the mayor, which we anticipate receiving a state match this year; in addition the mayor added another \$1.5 million in the January plan. We will use the funds for renovations that will provide space for counselors who will assist students in staying on track, including homework assistance, study groups, and scheduled review sessions for individual courses. Construction of dedicated space for ASAP continues to move forward. Thus far, Phase 1 projects have been completed at Bronx CC, CSI, Kingsborough,

Medgar Evers, City Tech, and LaGuardia. Work is underway to lease and renovate 26,000 square feet for BMCC, and 25,000 square feet of space for Hostos. At Queensborough, ASAP's second phase will construct a 4,600-square-foot addition to a building on campus to house the program.

Why is that support so important? As you may know, ASAP improves the three-year graduation rates by more than double, to about 55 percent, and now other community colleges, from Ohio to California, have asked us to help them replicate the program at their campuses. The Wall Street Journal just published a fascinating article last week on this growing national awareness of ASAP's strength.

I am also pleased to tell you we are planning to expand our space in Inwood for the CUNY in the Heights program associated with Hostos Community College and Borough of Manhattan Community College. The expansion will allow us to continue to increase vital higher education services to the community, providing many career ladders to educational attainment and careers.

We are happy to report all this activity but must emphasize that critical maintenance continues to be a major capital priority at our community college campuses and we are still in need of your support for the long-term effort. We have over 7 million square feet of community college facilities, three-quarters of which is over 40 years old. The most serious need remains infrastructure systems that support facility operations. Continuing degradation of these systems could lead to costly emergency repairs and, in some cases, major system failures. \$750 million

is needed to keep the backlog of deferred maintenance from growing, so you will continue to see requests for critical maintenance funding from our colleges. This year approximately \$200 million in identified projects need funding to cover critical facility items such as fire alarms, roofs, boilers, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, and facades and windows.

In addition to critical maintenance funding we are seeking additional city and state funding for the Hostos Allied Health and Sciences Building that I mentioned. Additionally, we are requesting funding for another important initiative. We are also requesting \$50 million for a new facility for Guttman Community College.

On behalf of all of us at CUNY, let me thank you again for your support of our capital program, a critical element in helping us achieve the greater success rates for our students under the new strategic vision. The funding you have provided is helping us work toward a state-of-good-repair on our campuses, and is also helping to ensure that we provide facilities to support strong academic programs that meet the needs of students and the city. We look forward to working closely with you on the budget in the weeks ahead. Thank you.

For the Record

**Testimony of Diana Rickard, Assistant Professor, Borough of Manhattan Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education In Support of CUNY's
Request for \$35 Million to Fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative**

March 3, 2017

I am writing in support of CUNY's request for \$35 million dollars to fund the **Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative**. I am a full-time faculty member at Borough of Manhattan where I teach nine courses a year (4/5). The semesters when I teach four are incredibly challenging, and the semesters when I teach five are beyond challenging. The high teaching load makes it difficult to be an engaged and effective professor, scholar, and community member.

I have approximately 170 students this semester. As you know our students come from diverse backgrounds and underserved communities. They need and they deserve quality education which includes having professors who are there for them, who can address their individual learning styles, who can catch students who are falling behind and try to help them achieve success. They deserve professors who know their name. But with 170 students it is a challenge to just know every student's name (although by the end of the semester I will), let alone work with them outside of class. It is a challenge to catch students who might be slipping through the cracks. I know at BMCC there is concern about the high D/W/F rate (the percentage of students who receive a "D", "F", or withdraw). I am certain this could be addressed by a reduced course load.

I am fortunate that I teach at a campus that provides many opportunities to improve pedagogy, through a vital CETLS program. However, I cannot participate in many activities and programs that I am interested in because I simply do not have the time. In this way my ability to grow as an educator is negatively impacted by the high teaching load.

My teaching load makes it so I can only write and conduct research during the summer. Even our January break, with administrative assignments and 15 hours of required advising, does not allow adequate time for research. While being able to work and write in the summer is better than nothing, it makes us fall behind other scholars in our fields who can write grants and conduct research throughout the year. In this way the high course load negatively impacts my research and scholarship.

The high teaching load also negatively affects my ability to participate in campus life and to serve my institution adequately. For example, I am on an important and demanding committee. Because we all are teaching all the time we have had to meet from 7-9:30 on a weeknight, and from noon-3:30 on Sunday. There are many events at BMCC sponsored by different organizations, including a social justice conference sponsored by two programs, events sponsored by the LGBTQ Pride Month committee, a symposium on the consequences of Trump's election sponsored by the social science department, a panel discussion of DuBois' contributions to sociology as part of African History Month – these are just several of many events I would have liked to participate in and attend but was unable to because of the demands of my teaching schedule.

I want to end by emphasizing the impact the high teaching load at CUNY community college has on our students. It makes is challenging to reach out to students, challenging to have time for them outside of class, and challenging to provide them with ongoing feedback on regular assignments. All of this is so

critical to students' academic success. Without reinforcement from available professors, students lose out on opportunities to truly learn and it detracts from the sense of community that is so vital for institution of higher learning.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

[Handwritten Signature]

**Testimony of Charlotte Brooks, Professor
Baruch College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education**

March 3, 2017

My name is Charlotte Brooks, and I am here to testify in support of CUNY's request for \$35 million dollars to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative. I am a professor of history at Baruch College, where I've taught for a decade, always carrying a 3-4 load: 3 courses one semester, and 4 the next. At comparable schools with comparable requirements for tenure and promotion, history professors almost always teach a 2-2 load and sometimes a 1-2 load. At liberal arts colleges with lower tenure and promotion requirements than CUNY, professors routinely teach a 2-2 or a 2-3 load. In other words, the teaching load at CUNY is almost unique, and not in a good way.

My research and teaching specialties are popular—they include 20th century America, Asian American history, and modern Chinese history—so my courses routinely fill to 40 students each, which is as much as most Baruch classrooms will hold. Since we have no TAs at Baruch, I do all my own grading. This grading isn't easy. I don't believe in using multiple choice exams, which only teach students to memorize and regurgitate answers without context or argument. My bluebook exams and papers require students to make clear arguments, show change over time, marshal evidence to back up their points, and demonstrate a deep knowledge of a particular period. They also require students to learn to read critically and write well. These are skills our students desperately need to develop both for their careers and to be good citizens. Most do not have the chance to develop these skills in their high schools, which are often overcrowded and underfunded. Furthermore, English is frequently not our students' first language. That means our students require intensive investments of time from professors to help

them build the skills I've described. And they deserve that investment of time. They deserve a real, thorough, and competitive college education.

Any decent historian will tell you that part of being a good teacher is being an active scholar and researcher. This has been my approach at Baruch. In addition to teaching a 3-4 load without TAs and without multiple choice tests, over the past eight years I have published two books and several articles, all of them deeply researched in multiple languages. I routinely bring my research findings and materials into my classrooms to share with my students and to help them understand why the past matters.

At the risk of sounding immodest, I will tell you that I and many of my colleagues are actually more engaged and productive than lots of our peers at Ivy League universities and flagship state schools. This helps create the kind of environment that CUNY's largely immigrant and working-class students deserve just as much as their peers at Harvard and Yale. But it has not come without a cost: I am burned out after ten years of trying to be the teacher and researcher that my students deserve. A recent New York Times study showed that CUNY schools, especially Baruch, offer our students an extraordinary degree of economic and social mobility. Like my colleagues, I want to keep giving our students this kind of mobility; I don't want to go look for an easier job at another school. But I can't keep doing what I've been doing without a teaching load reduction—it is just too exhausting.

Testimony of Ángeles Donoso Macaya, Associate Professor, Borough of Manhattan Community College, Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education In Support of CUNY's Request for \$35 Million to Fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative

March 3, 2017

Good afternoon. My name is Ángeles Donoso Macaya. I am Associate Professor of Spanish at BMCC. I joined the Modern Languages Department in January of 2013. Since then, I have taught and advised over 800 students. I am currently teaching five courses. I have 115 students. Besides this heavy teaching load, I am completing my first book manuscript, currently under contract with Florida University Press. (I am expected to turn the full manuscript for final review in the summer.)

In order to convey to you the kind of work that I do, and the amount of time this work takes, let me share with you a regular day. This past Wednesday, for instance, on my commute to school, I calculated the scores of a test I had given on Friday in my literature class (I had already graded these tests, Saturday and Sunday). I also spent 3 hours grading written exercises and videos I had assigned in my intro Spanish courses. Giving individual feedback to 100 students takes time, so I normally grade 3 times a week, in slots of 3 to 4 hours. I had two meetings, taught two of my classes, and then I held office hours. I first met with Luis, the president of *Acentos Latinos*, a student club of which I am the advisor. *Acentos Latinos* publishes a magazine with creative work written in Spanish by students (my role is to collect all the work, proof read it, and manage the design, printing, etc.) and organizes several events every semester, which I must attend. On Wednesday, we were planning this semester's events, including an over-night trip to either Philadelphia or Washington D.C. to visit museums and other cultural sites. Luis told me he and other club members had never been outside the city. I then met with Fiona, a student in my literature class. Fiona is writing a novel; she usually comes to talk about this project and about her schoolwork (not only the work I assign for our class). The other day she told me she was stuck with her writing. I told her I was also completing a manuscript, a monograph on Chilean photography from the seventies and eighties, and that at times I also have experienced very inconvenient blocks. I left my office around 8 pm, exhausted, but content, because I know I wouldn't like to work anywhere else, and the main reason is that I love my students.

Both as a scholar and as an educator, it has been so motivating and inspiring to encounter such hard working and enthusiastic students (a large majority of whom are economically underprivileged, immigrants and racial minorities), students who not only want to learn a language, but who are also eager to deepen their knowledge about the cultural nuances and the different aspects that characterize and define each Latin American country. This is why I am grateful for the different teaching resources available for us at BMCC. After attending a Writing Across the Curriculum workshop in the fall of 2013, I developed writing assignments that better relate to my students' diverse cultural backgrounds and address the different experiences of being bilingual or being in the process of learning a second language in the U.S. I would certainly attend more of faculty development workshops if I had the time to do so.

Last year, the Modern Languages Department launched a new major. Carla, who is with me here today, is one of our Spanish majors. For several semesters, I have had the intention to develop a new course on Latin American visual studies. It would be so rewarding being able to develop and teach a course focused on my area of expertise, especially now that we have a major. Unfortunately, I have not been

able to do so, because developing a new course requires extra time. Having more time would also allow me to apply for collaborative research grants to work more closely with students during the summer—at present, I devote most of the summer to work on my own research. A restructured workload committed to teaching, service and research would certainly be beneficial in this regard.

Thank you for your time and for hearing my testimony.

**Testimony of Hayes Peter Mauro, Assistant Professor
Queensborough Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education**

March 3, 2017

Like most of my colleagues, I was attracted to the prospect of teaching at CUNY because of the exceptional opportunities the institution affords. As faculty at CUNY, especially at the community colleges, we have the rare opportunity to teach students for whom this is the first experience with higher learning for anyone in their family. Over the years, this has remained my primary motivation for staying at Queensborough Community College, where I am now a tenured Assistant Professor in the Department of Art & Design.

I regularly have such students, and when I teach them about the history of art and cultures, I feel that I am having a profound impact on their lives, as I am offering them the opportunity to see in new ways by experiences the art and artifacts of civilizations throughout history. Concurrently, I am often presented with the experience to learn and grow intellectually, as our students hail from all reaches of the globe, and thus bring to bear unique perspectives on the artifacts and cultures under consideration in my classes. I often find myself thinking about artworks in new ways, provoked by questions asked by students who view this material anew each semester.

While teaching in this unique environment has always been a primary attraction for me, the sheer quantity of the teaching, coupled with the special needs of many of our students, has made professional life at QCC challenging. We currently teach nine classes per academic year, in a five-four split between semesters. We are also expected to publish regularly, give conference presentations, obtain grant and fellowship funding, and engage in a large amount of extra-contractual "service" to the campus, such as committee work, assessment reporting, and program reporting. All of this makes focusing on students and their needs more and more difficult, as the requirements for reappointment, tenure, and promotion have increased exponentially at QCC in recent years.

In this context, a three-credit restructuring would loosen up time and allow faculty to more readily fulfill their multi-faceted requirements, as well as better speak to the needs of students. Currently, an average teaching load at most colleges is five to six course per year; I currently teach nearly twice that much, and yet as I stated earlier am obligated to fulfill similar publishing requirements as a professor at a four-year research university. As such, restructuring speaks to larger issues, especially the attracting and retention of high quality faculty. Please assist CUNY faculty and support CUNY's request for \$35 million dollars to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative, so that we may better facilitate our students' rise in American society.

Testimony of Elisabeth Gareis
Baruch College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
March 3, 2017

I would like to support the CUNY's request for \$35 million dollars to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative. Baruch, along with several other CUNY colleges, is classified as a research institution. Yet, a few years ago, when an external reviewer visiting our department learned of the 3/4 workload, he assumed we were a teaching college. His assumption was not far-fetched. Research institutions nationwide have a 2/2 teaching load or less.

It's impossible to be both a teaching and a research institution on a 3/4 workload. Here is why:

- A recent survey by the American Association of Colleges and Universities of 433 Chief Academic Officers showed that a large majority of institutions have a common set of intended learning outcomes: in writing, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and oral communication. Because many of our students have significant problems in these areas, they need individual attention and extensive feedback. It is humanly impossible to provide this attention and feedback during a semester with 4 classes of 25 or more students each. Teaching 4 classes doesn't allow for adequate instruction. Teaching 3 classes may barely do so, at a high cost to the faculty's family and social life, but, and this is crucial, it doesn't leave time for research.
- Our current workload renders CUNY uncompetitive, not only in attracting new faculty but also in the scholarship productivity of established faculty.
- Faculty with a 3/4 workload (even 3/3 workload) are unable to compete nationally and internationally with colleagues who operate on a 2/2 workload.
- Also, new faculty have contractual reassigned time. It comes as a great shock to them

when this reassigned time runs out. CUNY goes through great pains to hire these excellent scholars, but once they receive tenure, CUNY hinders their continued progress.

- One of the greatest challenges at CUNY may be aging departments; yet, without a more competitive workload, we can't attract top faculty to fill the gaps.
- CUNY's hiring and promotion standards as well as productivity goals are those of research institutions. We need a workload to match these standards and goals.

For improved working, teaching, and learning conditions at CUNY, to keep CUNY in a position to retain and recruit faculty, and to allow CUNY faculty to advance professionally, we need a sustainable workload.

**Testimony of Fern Luskin, Lecturer
LaGuardia Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on
Higher Education**

March 3, 2017

While teaching nine courses a year and doing committee work, it is next to impossible to write and do research for publications during the semester on weekdays except on the train and at bus stops, not the ideal way to do either. During a fairly typical week, I log 82 hours a week fulfilling my course load and committee work, as well as working on my scholarly publications. As a result, I am often literally running from class to class and sometimes that is the only time I have to talk to my students.

If I were required to teach only eight courses a year, one of the biggest benefits for my students would be that it would afford me more time to teach them how to organize their thoughts and achieve flow from one paragraph to the next in their writing. A reduction in my course load would also give me more time to look over their notebooks to make sure they have written down all the important points I presented to them in class. I have found that doing both of these things helps students write better papers and do better on their exams, but it is very time intensive, especially for instructors who have large classes of 35 students.

If we had to teach only eight courses instead of nine, the other great benefit is that it would allow us more time to work on our publications. This would have a profound impact not only on individual scholars and their particular disciplines, but on their students, and CUNY as a whole, because we could then impart this cutting-edge knowledge to our students. My students give me feedback on my research and tell me they really appreciate that I incorporate my own ideas in my teaching.

I have drawn up a substantial list of articles I intend to write in the future concerning major discoveries I've made in my field, but with a nine-course-a-year workload, I'm beginning to wonder if I have enough years left to finish all of them. It has taken me my entire tenure at LaGuardia to write one of the books, and that was only possible because I was awarded two fellowships for sabbaticals and because I received PSC-CUNY grants which gave me released time. If CUNY's request for \$35 million dollars to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative were funded, faculty would have more time for research and more time with individual students. Please support CUNY's proposal to invest in a more manageable teaching load.

The rationale for requiring us to teach nine courses a year at community colleges used to be that our mission was to teach rather than publish. However, that mindset has changed – faculty members at the community colleges are also expected to publish, and that's a good thing, because it can only enrich our students' learning experience, but it is unequitable to require us to teach more courses than do our colleagues at the four-year colleges.

Testimony of ANUPAMA KAPSE
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
QUEENS COLLEGE, CUNY

Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education

March 3, 2017

I am writing to express my strong and emphatic support for the **Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative**. The Initiative would allow a restructuring of the full-time faculty workload to enable more time with individual students, leading to greater student success and a richer educational experience.

Our current undergraduate teaching contact hour workload is among the highest of peer institutions, making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to provide the kind of attention our students need, as well as for faculty to enhance their research. I have not been able to complete writing my book *Film as Body Politic* (under contract with Indiana UP) because of the time I spend serving my students and my institution as Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Their success is my success, just as my failures are their failures. Completing the book will in turn provide me with the time and resources I need to complete research to apply for grants for faculty development and to advance to professorship. This in turn affects my students by denying them access to the latest knowledge in the field. Workload is a major but invisible hurdle that has a visible and serious impact on faculty retention. We lost two faculty members, Heather Hendershot and Ellen Scott, to MIT and UCLA respectively because they offered a reduction in workload to enable them to produce knowledge that makes a full impact in the classroom and in the field.

CUNY students often struggle with work and family responsibilities that leave them unprepared for the rigor of college life. Not assigning an advisor to each student is detrimental to the performance of CUNY students in more ways than one. Most students are unaware that they can ask for an advisor and come to seek advice from professors only at last minute at the time of, or immediately before graduation, when it is too late to avail of the excellent advice faculty can give to them. A three-hour release from the current contact hours would allow CUNY to assign an advisor to **each** student from the getgo, an advantage and resource that every liberal arts college pledges to its students but is **denied** to CUNY students. Dedicated advising would ensure that every CUNY student has the resources to navigate the challenges of selecting and completing a major that cater individually to each student. Advising sessions are critical to help students choose an emphasis on the basis of their unique strengths, talent and ability. This is possible only with consistent, repeated and *required* advising that enhances student aptitude during the first and second years of college. Our students need faculty support to complete required core and

elective courses in a well-sequenced, and well-paced manner to graduate on time with the skills they need to succeed in their chosen careers.

One of my students was an underpaid, exploited musician who left the industry for college simply to get away from unpaid work. CUNY gave him an education that enriched his intellectual life and put him on a path to professional self-expression and development. I mentored him closely to develop his aptitude in film studies. Our students simply don't know how good they are until faculty members tell them. He is now pursuing a PhD at NYU because of the time and attention I could give to him. Another student is pursuing film-making at SFSU because of the time I could give to her outside of class. One my best students is a graduate student at Yale. Another a nurse-practitioner. Others have not only joined graduate programs at premiere institutions, they have found work as school teachers, nurse practitioners, physical therapists, media producers and TV professionals because of the time I spent with them. They would not be where they are if we as faculty had not helped them to overcome their underprivileged economic and social conditions. If working-class colleges have become vastly larger engines of social mobility, it is because of the sacrifices CUNY faculty like myself make, as we commit to doing so much with so little. Funding for higher education has plummeted, and this needs to change:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/opinion/sunday/americas-great-working-class-colleges.html? r=0>

A restructured workload committed to teaching, advisement and research will be a strong tool in the hiring and retention of faculty. It offers faculty institutional support so their commitment to students and to research that can thrive. The Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative embodies CUNY's core mission to offer quality education to the whole population of the city. The initiative acknowledges the needs of our students, a large majority of whom are economically underprivileged, immigrants and racial minorities. I write to express my strong support of CUNY's request for 35 million dollars to fund the **Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative**, to CUNY's continued excellence as an institution, in order to provide us with the best tools for success, and to fight economic and racial inequalities.

**Testimony of Robin Isserles, Professor, Borough of Manhattan Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education In Support of CUNY's
Request for \$35 Million to Fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative**

March 3, 2017

My name is Robin Isserles, and I have been a full-time faculty member at BMCC since 2000. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you this afternoon.

I will preface my remarks by saying that I chose to make my academic home at a community college. After teaching at BMCC as an adjunct instructor while pursuing my Ph.D., I decided that the community college was where I wanted to make my academic home. I was driven to work with community college students. I wanted to dedicate my time to teaching and mentoring students who never thought they'd go to college; or are returning to school after many years—in other words students for whom college isn't a given.

I'll save why I want this to be the college student I teach for another conversation, but I'd like to share with you how much the amount that I am expected to teach hurts this endeavor.

At the community colleges, we are expected to teach nine classes a year—something unfathomable to most who teach in higher education. In addition, we have both an expectation and also a desire to research, write and publish—to carry out what we were trained to do. Given my teaching load, I am constrained to carry out this work in January and the summer months. This means that I often have to pass up on grant applications or conference/paper submissions that fall during the semester. I just cannot carve out the necessary time and space to make room for these activities while at the same time teaching so much.

And because my research and writing happen when they do, this leaves precious little time to think about my teaching—to reflect on what is working and why, what is not working and why and what changes I'd like to make, etc. The labor involved in developing oneself as a teacher is profound. But good teaching requires this work. Good teaching requires time to do this reflection.

What would a restructuring of the full-time faculty workload offer me? It would give me some much needed time to think about my teaching, time to consider new material, time and energy to focus on learning and implementing new pedagogies—the things that make good teaching possible. I do some of this, and it is always challenging. It is difficult for me to imagine the kind of teacher I'd like to be—think I could be—If I taught just a little less.

This semester, I teach five classes. In order to maintain the quality of teaching that I expect of myself, I had to cut out a short paper in two of my classes and drop an entire book from two others. You may ask why? And though it's difficult for me to admit this, I needed a way to reduce some of the grading and necessary feedback as I now had to spread myself and my time to an additional group of students. I needed to preserve the energy that I need for the class preparations, class discussions, office-hour meetings, email exchanges that are a constant, and now intensified with an additional class.

If all I did professionally was teach—if I wasn't engaged in research, in college and university service, in my union, in my community, in my family—then perhaps I would not need to make these changes. Perhaps I wouldn't be testifying here for the importance of funding for this teaching load reduction. But given these other commitments, commitments that enhance my teaching, I am forced to give less of myself, and thus less to my students.

These students do not deserve less, in fact, they deserve more. More of me, more of my time, more of my feedback. And they deserve teachers and mentors who are institutionally supported to do the difficult work of developing themselves as teachers.

**Testimony of Emily Schnee, Associate Professor of English,
Kingsborough Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education**

March 3, 2017

My name is Emily Schnee and I am an Associate Professor of English at Kingsborough Community College. I teach English composition as well as developmental English (also known as remedial English) and I want to speak with you today about what my current workload looks like and what a restructured workload would mean for me and my students, many of whom, as I'm sure you know, come to Kingsborough academically underprepared for the reading and writing demands of college. In addition to teaching 27 hours (an average of 9 courses per year), I spend much of my work life providing feedback on student essays. In order to help our students graduate with the reading and writing skills necessary for success in careers and further education, I, like most of my English department colleagues, assign a draft of an essay nearly every week of the semester.

In my almost 10 years at Kingsborough, I have gotten more adept and efficient at providing the copious feedback students need to improve their writing. I now use an electronic portfolio and type my comments because it is faster, but even if I dedicate just 10 or 15 minutes to every student's essay with an average class size of 27 students x 9 classes per year x 12 weeks in a semester x 15 minutes per student, well, you can do the math. The end result is that English professors, and the faculty in other disciplines who teach required writing intensive courses, spend many working hours every week teaching students to write outside of class time.

Despite my best efforts, written feedback on student essays often is not enough. My students need to meet face-to-face with me to review drafts, clarify ideas, and understand what they need to do to improve their writing if they are to successfully complete the course. I attempt to create time for individual conferences with students in a variety of creative ways: when available, I hold class in a computer lab and while students are busy drafting, I circulate and grab a few private minutes with as many students as I can; sometimes I extend class hours and have every student sign up for an individual 15 minute conference where I speed talk them through revisions on their essays. It is always catch as catch can and rarely feels like enough, especially for those students teetering on the brink of academic failure.

Lastly, writing is an intensely personal act and students often reveal intimate details of their lives to their writing instructors. It is through student essays that I have learned that one student has relapsed after a 10 year struggle for sobriety and been kicked out of his home or that another student is experiencing paralyzing anxiety over her parents' undocumented immigration status. These are needs that must be attended to swiftly, thoughtfully, and individually. Investigating appropriate campus-based referrals and following up to make sure students have accessed the help they need is a time-consuming task, but one that faculty must take on if we want our students to succeed, both personally and academically.

A restructured faculty workload that accounts for the teaching, learning, and advising that must happen *outside of class hours* would enable me to be the professor I aspire to be and would afford our students the academic experience they deserve. It is imperative that the committee support

CUNY's request for \$35 million dollars to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative.

**Testimony of
Amy E. Hughes, Associate Professor, Brooklyn College (CUNY)
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education**

March 3, 2017

First, I express heartfelt thanks for the opportunity to address you today. **During this time of political and social uncertainty, I have pinned my hopes on the progressive and enlightened leadership of my City Council.** Your decisions will determine whether or not New Yorkers will be able to enjoy the freedoms that many elected representatives at the state and federal levels seem to want to take away from us. Thank you for all of your hard work to ensure we can continue to be *exactly* “Who We Are,” as Speaker Mark-Viverito emphatically stated in her address at the Kings Theatre a couple of weeks ago.

One thing we *definitely* are is: CUNY. I’m certain that a significant number of CUNY graduates (myself included) are in this room. **A great many New Yorkers have studied at a two-year or four-year CUNY college, or have a family member, friend, neighbor, or colleague who did.** To single out one such person in the room: we at Brooklyn College are incredibly proud that Council-member Williams is one of our alumni. I’m sure he’s not the only member of this committee with a connection to CUNY. I hope you will think about this impressive and extensive network as you listen to and ponder our testimony today.

I’m here to provide you **a professor’s perspective on why you should allocate \$35 million to the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative.** These funds will allow CUNY ~~to~~ restructure its faculty’s time so that we can give our students more one-on-one attention. You know already that our students are incredibly—and, I daresay, *atypically*—passionate, resourceful, driven, and, above all, diverse. Most of them step onto our campuses without the advantages and privileges that students at other colleges bring to bear on their education. Because of these disadvantages, our students need as much time as we can possibly give them.

As you know, **CUNY has contributed dramatically to the social mobility and career success of students of color, low-income students, and first-generation college students.** They are New York City residents who in many cases would not be able to attend college at all if CUNY were not an option. I know you have listened to testimony regarding the importance of faculty advisement and mentorship in students’ success. So, instead of reiterating that research, I will offer some specific stories about what a typical semester entails for me, and why a restructuring of my time as an associate professor would make a significant impact on me and my students.

This is my eleventh year as a full-time professor at Brooklyn College. Before joining the BC faculty, I taught three years as an adjunct lecturer at Hunter and Baruch while I was working toward my doctorate degree at the CUNY Graduate Center. This means that I have been a CUNY professor for 27 semesters. Every semester is different, but during all of those 27 semesters, **I have had countless conversations with students seeking my advice or support outside of the classroom.** Here are three examples from this past semester (fall 2016):

1. **I had a series of meetings with a student—I’ll call her Amani—who was struggling in my class.** We discussed basic strategies for reading comprehension, note-taking, exam

preparation, and working effectively within a team. During these conversations, I learned that Amani is a single mother of two who was only able to take my class because she could enroll one of her daughters in a program at our campus's Early Childhood Learning Center. Her daughter played and learned there while Amani attended class. I'm proud to say that although it was touch-and-go for a while, Amani passed my course—an accomplishment that allowed her to increase her chances of graduating this spring.

2. **I convened five students in my office so that I could help them resolve a conflict that emerged during a team project.** I deploy a teaching method called Team-Based Learning (TBL) in my classes, in which students work together in permanent, stable teams for the entire semester. In Team-Based Learning, students wrestle with real-life questions and problems during class time rather than listening passively to a lecture—engaging the course content actively while also developing skills that they can use wherever life takes them. As I'm sure you have all experienced, working in a team is never easy. Often, I need to coach students on how to give and accept constructive feedback, how to communicate effectively, and how to transform disagreements into opportunities for growth. Last semester, the members of one particular team had a rough time getting along. So, they sought my help. I invited them to my office and, for nearly an hour, they discussed and worked out the conflict. Along the way, I interjected with suggestions about how they might rephrase a critical statement more productively, and provided specific examples of alternative wording. By the end of the meeting, the students had identified the root of the conflict and created a plan for moving forward. Several of them sought me out later to thank me for investing time in their team, expressing gratitude for the way I coached them through the crisis.
3. **I helped one of my master's students—I'll call her Anna—to complete my course despite a difficult medical challenge.** This personal setback caused Anna to withdraw from her master's program a few weeks shy of the semester's end. But my colleagues and I refused to give up on her. We did not want all of her hard work to go to waste. Anna's faculty advisor alerted her professors to the situation, and after Anna received the medical attention she needed, we worked together to ensure she could complete her remaining assignments and receive credit for her courses. Last week, I administered her final exam, making special arrangements to do so because I am on research leave this semester. I'm thrilled to tell you that she earned a B+, despite everything. This means that if she decides to reenroll at Brooklyn College in the future, she will not have to retake my course.

These are just three of the many encounters I had during a single semester. They mirror and echo countless conversations I've had with students during my thirteen years as a CUNY professor. These are success stories. But there are an unbearable number of stories I could share about how I've failed. Too often, I have failed students who needed me to intervene—situations in which I have been unable to intervene due to pressures and demands on my time. Though I try to take heart in the success stories, the failures never cease to haunt me.

If the City Council were to provide the funding CUNY needs to restructure professors' instructional time, here are four things I could accomplish:

1. If I taught one fewer course per year, **I could meet with more students, and meet with them more often.** Whenever I notice that a student isn't participating in class, or is struggling to keep up, or misses a class without explanation, I ask him or her to meet with me—because in my experience, this is the single most important thing I can do to ensure that

the student does not drop or fail my class. But because a substantial proportion of my students need this kind of support, and because of the unusually high course load at CUNY, I can rarely help every student who needs it.

2. If I taught one fewer course per year, **I could do a better job staying on top of the latest developments in my field, thereby ensuring that I pass them on to my students.** Within the current workload structure, I have very little time for my own professional development and self-improvement as a teacher.
3. If I taught one fewer course per year, **I could invest more time in my research—and, more importantly, get my students involved in my research.** Right now, it is difficult to model for them what it means to be a critical thinker, an intellectual, and a scholar. With seven courses to teach every year, it is impossible to devote ample time to my research and writing.
4. If I taught one fewer course per year, **I could be a representative of CUNY in my field and in the academic profession at large.** When CUNY professors are visible in the field, the prestige of the university increases. So does the value of a CUNY degree. But relatively few CUNY professors serve as officers in professional organizations due to demands on their time. As a result, our unique perspectives as professors at a diverse, urban, public university go unheard and unacknowledged. I have been nominated several times for prestigious positions in national organizations. In only one instance was I able to accept the nomination—and in that case, I accepted only because my term as an officer would overlap with my sabbatical. I have also been asked to serve as an editor or co-editor for three leading academic journals. But all three times, I had to decline, due to the unusually high number of courses I teach as a CUNY professor.

I confess: **I frequently ponder what it would be like to teach at a better-funded public university or a private college.** Not only would I be teaching students with fewer challenges, but also I would have more time to invest in research, professional development, and student mentoring. But I have something that my peers do not have: I have CUNY students. I have the great honor and privilege of working with diverse individuals who inspire, galvanize, and teach me every day.

So, I have stayed at CUNY—despite other offers and opportunities that have come my way—because I know I can make a difference. I know that if I were a professor elsewhere, my students would likely complete their degrees and enjoy success no matter what I did. This is not always the case with CUNY students. Our students have incredibly complicated lives. They face challenges that I can hardly wrap my head around sometimes. For many, simply showing up to class constitutes a small miracle. Their dedication, commitment, and drive to succeed—despite the odds and obstacles—are why I am testifying today. My mission is to help them become the movers and shakers they hope to be: activists, artists, scientists, entrepreneurs, perhaps even elected representatives, like Council-member Williams. My colleagues and I share a deep, abiding belief that we are doing the most important work we could possibly do. I sincerely hope you share this mission and vision. If you do, please do everything in your power to support the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative.

**Testimony of Joyce Solomon Moorman, Associate Professor,
Borough of Manhattan Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
March 3, 2017**

My name is Dr. Joyce Solomon Moorman and I am an Associate Professor at Borough of Manhattan Community College in the Music and Art Department. My area of research is music composition.

I'm here in support of CUNY's request for 35 million dollars from the City to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative. The Initiative would allow a restructuring of the full-time faculty workload to enable more time with individual students, leading to greater student success and a richer educational experience.

Community college Presidents are insisting on more scholarly activity and productivity today than ever before. October 15, 2016 I was commissioned to write two art songs for Dr. Louise Toppin, chair of the Music Department at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. The songs were to be performed February 9, 2017 at a music conference at the University of California Irvine. When I accepted the challenge of the commission, Dr. Toppin asked me how many classes I teach a semester? When I told her five, she was shocked. At the University of North Carolina the course load is only two. CUNY community college professors are now being required to produce scholarship equivalent to that of senior college professors. Across CUNY we need a course load reduction to meet increased research demands and to spend more time with our students, especially at the community colleges where we are required to teach 27 hours yearly (a 5/4 semester course load) as compared to 21 hours for the senior colleges (4/3 semester course load). If CUNY wants to be competitive with the top American universities, it must reduce the course load for its professors.

I set poetry to music. For Dr. Toppin's commission, first I had to find two poems that I felt would inspire me to write music. I had several times in the past read through poems of Dr. Maya Angelou hoping to find one that would inspire me but had no success. For some reason not expecting to succeed, I decided to try again. This time to my surprise I immediately upon reading "Caged Bird" and "Equality" felt that they would work for this commission. Then after rereading "Equality" several times I decided that it would not work. Reading through Dr. Angelou's poems again, I settled on "Still I Rise."

Though the commission was constantly on my mind, I simply could not find the time I needed to be relaxed and let my imagination flow. So it was Thanksgiving by the time I decided on "Still I Rise." Dr. Toppin called me to find out how I was progressing. I had to tell her I had just settled on the two poems, and that I had not had time to actually start composing the songs. Of course facing final exams and grading in December, I had to say to her when she told me the latest she could give me to finish the songs was January 15, 2017 that I would start working on the songs December 26th, and that I thought (or hoped) that I could finish them by January 15th. So yes I did finish them by January 15th and Dr. Toppin performed the songs February 9th. I had no children to distract me and I did no after-Christmas shopping, which I love to do. That's when you get the best bargains. I worked registration at BMCC January 18th.

In addition to composing the songs, I had to seek permission from Dr. Angelou's agent to write the songs and for the premiere performance. Her agent was more insistent than I expected. It took a significant amount of time and money to work out an agreement.

Research or creative activity takes time. The heavy teaching load at CUNY makes it very difficult to conduct research activity. Professors at other American universities have a much lower teaching load. CUNY needs City funding to enact a course load restructuring. Without City support, it

will be very difficult for CUNY to successfully compete with other American universities in the area of research. I'm sure you know that much of a university's reputation rests on the research conducted by its professors. If you want CUNY to be competitive in this area, a course load reduction is a necessity.

**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
PUBLIC HEARING
NEW YORK CITY PRELIMINARY BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018
MARCH 3, 2017
TESTIMONY: CHIKAODILI ONYEJIUKWA, CUNY TRUSTEE AND CUNY
UNIVERSITY STUDENT CHAIRPERSON**

Greetings Honorable Committee Chairperson Barron and Honorable Councilmembers,

My name is Chikaodili Onyejiukwa and I serve as Chairperson for the City University of New York University Student Senate, also known as CUNY USS. As you have heard me mention many times before, USS is the student governance organization responsible for representing the interests of the nearly 500,000 students that attend CUNY each academic year. I also have the distinct honor to serve as a CUNY Trustee. I am a student at Hunter College studying Community Health. I'm also a proud member of city council district 27, represented by Councilmember Daneek Miller.

In November of 2016, I testified before this body informing you that the CUNY budget request for fiscal year 2017-2018 included proposals which brought concerns to the students I was elected to represent. The first concern is CUNY's request to increase tuition by \$250 per year for four consecutive years. As you know, CUNY USS and several campus student governments adopted a resolution in September of 2016 calling for the Board of Trustees and Chancellor to freeze tuition for fiscal year 2018. However, it is disheartening to see that students' request were ignored when the CUNY Administration proposed and the CUNY Board of Trustees approved the budget request with tuition increase. I could not vote in favor of budget because I feared that it will have a negative impact on students currently enrolled and future students' ability to attend CUNY.

In January, Governor Andrew Cuomo released the executive budget proposal for fiscal year 2018. It was not surprising that the executive budget included tuition increases for SUNY and CUNY. However, it is devastating to learn that Governor Cuomo's proposal cut funding for opportunity programs and proposed a \$250 annual tuition increase for five consecutive years instead of four, as proposed by CUNY. Our students will not be able to complete their studies in a timely manner if tuition continues to rise and financial aid does not increase.

The second concern is CUNY's budget proposal includes a request that the city council cover cost at CUNY Senior College. This concerns students because we believe the cost shift will impact the city's ability to provide funding for programs such as the ASAP, the merit scholarship, and other programs which aid over 100,000 students. We also believe it is unreasonable to request the city provide more funding when the state is not providing sufficient state aid to students.

I'm here today to request the City Council endorse the 2017 CUNY USS Student Legislative Agenda. An endorsement means the city would fund our city requests and the city council would assist students in advocating for our state requests. The student agenda consists of items that matter most to students at CUNY and across the state in communities that consist of citizens that yearn for an opportunity to acquire a higher education. The student agenda consists of state requests and city requests for fiscal year 2018. In addition, we support CUNY's Five Year Capital Request for fiscal year 2017-2018 through fiscal year 2021-2022.

We are calling on the State Legislature to freeze tuition at CUNY because our students can not afford to pay more and it will prohibit students from completing their degree. We are calling for the state to reform the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) because tuition at CUNY senior colleges exceeds the maximum level of aid. This prohibits our students from being able to purchase textbooks, metrocards for transportation. Furthermore, the policy issue prohibits our students from acquiring the most affordable meals such as a slice of pizza. Due to the lack of available aid, our students go hours without eating while they study in over crowded libraries during finals. We are calling for a restoration and greater investment in opportunity

programs such as, ASAP, BMI, SEEK/College Discovery, child care services, services for people with disabilities and services for veterans. These programs provide support for people that come from communities that need or deserve support to gain access and enhance the quality of their education.

We are calling on the city and state to provide funding for capital projects. Our students need state-of-the-arts facilities that propel students in the future to enhance the quality of life for all. In addition, CUNY needs the state to provide an operating budget that can help maintain these facilities. We support our faculty and staff's request to be paid equitably. However, we disapprove of the notion that it should come from students paying exorbitant tuition rates that exceed the amount of financial aid.

In conclusion, we understand that resources are limited and the state and city has many priorities in addition to higher education. We ask that in times of uncertainty, when resources are limited our elected leaders double down on the investment in public higher education because the return on investment has always proven to be beneficial for the economy and society. We are grateful to have a city council that has understood that over these past years. On behalf of the 500,000 students at the City University Of New York the CUNY University Student Senate thanks you for the service that you provide to our great city.



NYPIRG

Straphangers Campaign

a project of the New York Public Interest Research Group Fund

9 Murray Street, Lower Level • New York, NY 10007-2259 • 212-349-6460 • www.straphangers.org

TESTIMONY OF THE
STRAPHANGERS CAMPAIGN
BEFORE THE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON
REDUCED FARES FOR LOW-INCOME NEW YORKERS
New York, NY
March 3rd, 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. My name is Jaqi Cohen and I am the Campaign Coordinator for the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign. NYPIRG is a student-directed, non-profit advocacy organization, which coordinates its own higher education affordability campaign focused on expanding tuition assistance and keeping college affordable for all New Yorkers, however I am here today representing the Straphangers Campaign, NYPIRG's mass transit project, to speak about transportation costs in relation to higher education.

Mass transit is a great equalizer. Robust transit systems connect community members to schools, jobs, libraries, civic centers, and other resources – increasing economic, political, and social opportunity beyond an individual's immediate surroundings. Despite being such a crucial resource, many New Yorkers face difficulty accessing subway and bus service. While many New Yorkers struggle to pay the fare, it is especially burdensome on New Yorkers living at or below the federal poverty line, many of whom simply cannot afford the cost of subway or bus fare at all.

Low-income New Yorkers are disproportionately burdened by increased transportation costs. More than one third of all low-income, working-age New Yorkers have reported that the rising transit fares have prevented them from either seeking or accepting employment further from where they live.¹ Transit inaccessibility further perpetuates the cycle of poverty by limiting educational and employment opportunities for low-income New Yorkers, and rising costs make it exceedingly difficult for these individuals to live in New York City or even attempt to complete a college degree. For example, according to the most recent Student Experience Survey conducted by the City University of New York (CUNY) in 2016, about 60% of all CUNY students report an annual household income of less than \$30,000 a year. 40% of all CUNY students are among the first generation in their family to attend college.²

The Straphangers Campaign feels strongly that no New Yorker should have to risk losing a job or forgoing a college education due to the cost of a MetroCard. It is time that New York City provide financial relief to its neediest residents and adopt a fair fare system, much like Seattle, San Francisco, and Chicago have already done, and allow for low-income New Yorkers to have the opportunity to get on board.³

¹ Rankin, N.; Stolper, R. (2016). *The Transit Affordability Crisis: How Reduced MTA Fares Can Help Low-Income New Yorkers Move Ahead*. Page 13. Retrieved from Community Service Society's website at: <http://www.cssny.org/publications/entry/the-transit-affordability-crisis>

² Table Two, Socio-Economic Status of CUNY Undergraduates. <https://public.tableau.com/profile/oira.cuny-1/viz/home/2016StudentExperienceSurvey/MainMenu>

³ Luzer, Daniel. "In Some Cities, Your Bus Fare Now Depends On Your Income". *GOVERNING*. May, 2015. Retrieved from GOVERNING's website at: <http://www.governing.com/topics/urban/gov-seattle-bus-fare.html>

**Testimony of Sigmund Shen, Associate Professor, LaGuardia Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education In Support of CUNY's
Request for \$35 Million to Fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative**

March 3, 2017

Thank you for hearing our testimony on the need to restructure faculty workload. This is really a discussion about the quality and depth of public higher education in New York City. Teaching doesn't just mean lecturing a classroom or test prep; it also means caring about each student, knowing him or her, understanding his or her level of preparation, and finding undiscovered ways of reaching that person.

When you factor in the large class sizes and the 27-hour teaching load at CUNY's community colleges, just a three-hour reduction can mean the difference between 90 students and 60 students in a semester. When your college's commitment to the crucial principle of open admissions means both a wide range of abilities in the same classroom, and that a majority of your students are immigrants, 90 vs. 60 is literally a qualitative difference. Frankly, it means passing or failing to many of my students. In the first-year composition courses I normally teach, I routinely find that 20% of my students will not pass the course. For those 20% of students in danger of failing, this is what it means: With 90 students, I'd have to give primarily written feedback, hand scrawled in a rush on their paper and handed to them at the end of class. With 60 students, I'd be able to give them substantial verbal feedback, in an actual, one-to-one, give-and-take conversation. Instead of waiting days or even a week to get answers to their questions, they'd be able to hear answers within seconds. And of course, that individualized conversation leads them to deeper questions. That individual attention also makes me better able to cajole students who need counseling into walking to the counseling center, or better able to intervene on the behalf of students who are having trouble navigating the bureaucracy. I try to do this with my students, but often don't have time to know them well enough to identify such problems until it's too late.

A three-hour reduction would also enable me to spend more time and more consistent, sustained, consecutive hours on scholarship. I'd be more excited about my field and more up-to-date, and more excited and better able to articulate that excitement to my students, treating them as potential scholars themselves rather than simply as customers.

I served on the hiring committee in the English department for two years and more than one of our candidates, during the interview, very candidly expressed incredulity when we notified them of the workload. Humanities Ph.D.s can do basic arithmetic and very clearly understand that CUNY's claim to being a research university is empty. I don't know if I have personally seen faculty from diverse backgrounds dissuaded from working at CUNY because of the workload, but I do know that when workload suppresses active scholarship, it discourages the experimental, the unorthodox, and the minority voice, perspective, or methodology. People don't have time to innovate or investigate, let alone waste time arguing for the importance of an emerging field. This leads to an essential conservatism and timidity in scholarship, at a time in American history when, more than ever, we need to serve our diverse, hard-working students, and protect the production of academic knowledge in the humanities and the sciences.

Joey Fernandez, Student
LaGuardia Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education

March 3, 2017

The opportunity to interact with my professor in-class and during their office hours grant me a better opportunity to excel in college. This one-one-one time has allowed me to become a better writer, critical thinker, researcher and a stronger student overall. I have been in classes where the professor could not give me the substantive feedback that I needed to improve my work. This meant that I only got my papers graded, but I was limited in my ability to really delve deep into the content of my papers and fix my essays. This handicap reduces the level of preparedness and makes it harder to transition into higher level courses. On the other hand, when I have had the opportunity to interact with my professors and dissect my papers, I have seen the tremendous improvement in both my grade and most importantly the quality of my work.

When I first entered college, I was like many students who entered CUNY lacking a strong academic background that could carry me over through my four years of college. During that crucial first semester, I found my transition to college especially difficult because I did not feel that I was being provided the adequate attention that I needed to effectively pass my classes. Luckily, I was able to pass my courses. Yet, I witnessed how other students fell through the cracks, and I firmly believe that had they been given the opportunity of more individualized attention that these students would be walking with me this June at graduation instead of ending their studies during that first semester. Therefore, I urge you to support CUNY's budget request for \$35 million to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative to ensure that students are given the support needed to excel in their studies.

**Testimony of Heather B. James, Instructor
Borough of Manhattan Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on
Higher Education**

March 3, 2017

The testimony is in support of CUNY's request for 35 million dollars to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative. The Initiative would allow a restructuring of the full-time faculty workload to enable more time with individual students. This would lead to greater student success and a richer educational experience.

As a social sciences professor at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), I work with some of our City's most vulnerable populations. My students are veterans, immigrants, formerly homeless individuals and a myriad of others seeking the promise of a way out of poverty via public education. These students are often unfamiliar with the college environment, lacking in basic skills, and in need of hands-on guidance as they acculturate to the expectations of an academic institution. As a first generation college student from a working poor family, it has always been my dream to teach students such as those at CUNY. I truly believe in our mission and our proven track record of income mobility. Yet, like other faculty, I face the challenge of an unmanageable workload, which makes it difficult to form the deep bonds with students that are statistically proven to guard against college dropout.

When I began teaching social sciences at BMCC, I found that many students did not have college-level writing skills. As such, each of my classes requires students to write a draft paper, which I edit, as well as a final paper, which students revise based on my feedback. I currently teach five classes a semester with 35 students in each class. This means editing 175 four-page papers each semester combined with tutoring, office hours, other grading, teaching, writing for publication, and university service. This is not a complaint but a plea for the City Council to better understand the intense commitment necessary to maintain the highest standard of education and CUNY's mission of education as a public service. A quality professor's schedule can require 80+ hours per week. I frequently work 13 hour days and still struggle to consistently update course syllabi so that my teaching is innovative and exciting. This is unmanageable and causes many promising professors to leave BMCC and CUNY.

I have already seen the benefits of individualized attention many times over. One of my students nearly failed high school but now wants to be a lawyer because our tutoring sessions helped him understand the Constitution and gain a real interest in the subject-matter. Another student was on the verge of dropout due to sudden homelessness but was connected with appropriate services due to my initial intervention. Many professors have similar examples of the power of real student investment. CUNY has included a request for funding for a 3-credit reduction in teaching load for all full-time faculty as part of its budget request of New York City. I ask you to seriously consider including this in the City's preliminary budget. We cannot hope to continue to be a leader in income mobility and educational success without retaining top-quality faculty, encouraging a culture of intensive mentoring, and allowing time for innovative teaching. Our success is unsustainable if we do not address the crisis of workload at our colleges.

**Testimony of Carla Rivadeneira, Student
Borough of Manhattan Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education**

March 3, 2017

I began college fall 2016. I was scared because English is not my native language, and also because my high school did not prepare me well enough for college. Either way going to college was something I needed to ensure a better future for my mother and me.

I chose this college because of its diverse student body; people from all over the world start here and go anywhere, as BMCC'S motto states. During the five semesters I have been studying at this institution I have had the best teachers I could have imagined. I always felt nervous and anxious whenever I had to do public speeches, until I met my Speech 102 professor Lee Ritchey. This was a truly blessing in my life. Every afternoon he'd stay with me after class practicing every speech I had to in his class. I went to every office hour he had, he never complained about me asking for too much help. Not once did he complain about being tired, although it was obvious he was. He was always there for me as a caring professor. He is one of the reasons I am standing here and giving this speech in front of so many people and feeling confident.

Professor Jan Stahl was another angel to me. Like I mentioned before, I sometimes struggle with the language. She noticed my deficiencies and offered as much help as I needed. We would always stay Fridays after class going through the material I did not understand, making sure I kept up with the rest of the class. I went to every single office hour she had, and again, I never heard complaints of how tired she was or how she had to repeat herself over a million times because I did not understand stuff. She was also there for me to talk about personal stuff. She truly cared about my well-being. Because of her, I am a better reader and writer.

I am a Modern Languages major, and words cannot describe how much I love my major and the professors I've had and still have. This major is relatively new, so there aren't many students yet, and this has led into very close relationships with my professors. It feels like a family and I love that. Silvia, Paquita, Ainoa and Angeles have always been there for me, for school related stuff and non-school related stuff too. If they are busy they will make time for me, which makes me feel that I do matter to them as a student and as a person. They are professors, mentors, and I've grown to respect them and love them as family. They recognize my name and my face, whereas I've had other professor who barely even know who am I. I guess it's not their fault, maybe they have too many classes and it gets difficult to remember every single name.

I have greatly benefited from all of my BMCC professors. They have shared with me their knowledge with patience and enthusiasm, and I will forever be grateful for this. I hope I can develop good relationships with my professors once I transfer to Hunter College. I hope my new college will make me feel as good and welcome as BMCC did.

I urge you to support CUNY's budget request for \$35 million to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative so students can access the resources they need. Thank you.

Dear Council Members,

My name is James Hoff and I am an Assistant Professor of English at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. And I am here today to speak in full support of the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative included in the university's most recent budget request.

I speak today in support of this initiative because I know from my own professional experience the value of individual instruction, and I know that current courseloads, especially at the community colleges, often make such individual instruction near impossible for many faculty members. However, despite this heavy courseload, many instructors, including myself, do find the time to work with our students outside of class. When I teach ENG 101, for instance, I require my students to meet with me individually for twenty minutes three times each semester to discuss their writing and assess their progress in the course. That often adds up to 90 additional hours of instruction per semester. I do this because I know it works and because I know from experience that this kind of individual attention, especially in gateway courses like ENG 101, increases not only the quality of the work my students produce, but their overall engagement with the course and consequently dramatically increases the number of students who pass my classes.

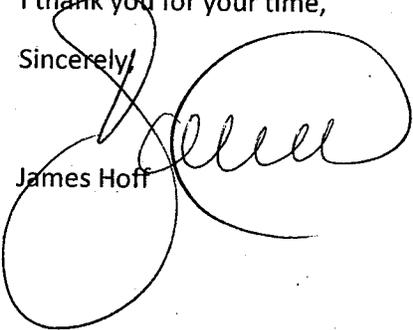
Unfortunately, this additional work has made it incredibly difficult for me to pursue the scholarship and the committee work necessary for my tenure, and thus, as my tenure review approaches, it is unlikely that I will be able to continue to offer these conferences to all of my students without some kind of reduction in the number of courses I teach each semester. A three credit course load reduction would guarantee that I would be able to continue to offer these conferences to my students and still be able to pursue the other requirements for my tenure. Thus, I would urge the council to approve the 35M that CUNY has requested for this initiative.

But before I finish, I want to say something more about the inadequacy of this \$35M request. If approved, this initiative, I am sure, would have a net positive effect upon the quality of teaching at CUNY, but we have to be clear that this courseload reduction, as it's been developed, would only apply to a minority of the faculty at CUNY. Adjunct faculty, who teach the majority of classes at CUNY, would receive no further compensation for their hard work and thus have no incentive to engage in the kinds of counseling and individual instruction that we know our students need. Therefore, if we really care about student learning, if we really want to improve the quality of teaching at CUNY, the administration, the city, and the state will have to make a commitment not only to reducing courseloads for Full Time Faculty, but also significantly raising the wages of adjunct faculty.

I thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

James Hoff



**Testimony of Karen Miller, Professor, LaGuardia Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education in support of CUNY's request
for \$35 Million to Fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative**

March 3, 2017

I have been teaching at LaGuardia Community College since Fall 2004. This is my thirteenth year on a full-time faculty line at CUNY. I love my job. I love working with students and I am also committed to my research. I am at a community college, where my workload is 27 credit hours a year. I came in with 12 hours of junior faculty released time that I used in my first three years, and have gotten some course release through my involvement in the Writing Across the Curriculum program and other activities both at LaGuardia, at the Graduate Center, and through support for my research. I teach between two and four classes a term, depending on my other commitments. For me, a reduction of three credit hours annually (which would translate into one fewer class per year) would allow me to be more effective at my job because it would ease some of the tensions between my commitments.

The one-on-one work that I do with my students is incredibly rewarding. It is far more possible to find the time for that kind of work when I am teaching a lighter load. For example, I regularly teach honors courses at LaGuardia and each year, I have a handful of students with whom I meet to talk about transfer, discuss their school choices, and work through their statements of purpose. I also write letters of recommendation for those students and am absolutely thrilled when they get into the schools of their choice. This work is rewarding, but it is time consuming, and it's something that a lighter load would allow me to do without cutting into my other commitments.

I am equally committed to my research and regularly apply to the PSC-CUNY grant program to receive course release and support for travel. This program has been absolutely invaluable to me, but I am tenured now, and am only even eligible to apply two of every three years. A permanent course reduction would be an incredible for my research.

Thank you so much for your time!

**Testimony of Jasmine Martinez, Student
LaGuardia Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education**

March 3, 2017

As a student of the CUNY network, I can personally attest to the benefits of having meaningful and invested relationships with members of the faculty. I began my CUNY journey two years ago, with little vision and expectations. I had returned to college after five years of being out of school with one simple goal: get a degree and get out. After two years of being back in school I am very happy to say that goal has drastically changed. As much as I am responsible for this change, it absolutely would not have been possible without the direct mentorship I have received from my professors. It was with their encouragement, guidance and care that I began to seek more out my educational journey. My goals and aspirations have changed from simply wanting a degree, to developing a passion for my studies and academic growth. It is with their mentorship that I have developed the courage to entertain ideas of graduate school and possibly PhD programs.

The relationships I have made with my professors continue to serve as one of the driving factors in continuing my education. They have not limited their job to simply providing me with an education, but have invested themselves into my future by offering an immense amount of encouragement, motivation and inspiration. I truly believe that the students will be the ones to benefit from the CUNY faculty receiving a course reduction. Please supporting CUNY's budget request for \$35 million to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative so that faculty will have more opportunities to create meaningful relationships with students and continue to develop the ones they have already established.

**Testimony of Chris Bueso
Student, College Assistant LAGCC**

Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education

March 3, 2017

As a CUNY student and employee, I understand that time is valuable. So when a professor goes that extra mile to give me extra individual attention, it makes all the difference in the world. I'm grateful that they're willing to invest in me, with what little spare time they have, to help me overcome my academic or personal problems. Such pedagogical relationships are special because they motivate me to produce my best work possible. I feel comfortable to ask for letters of recommendation, more willing to participate in extracurricular activities and more open to seek advice on my future education and job field. All these factors are components of a quality, impactful education.

These relationships are indeed special, in part because they are rare. Unfortunately, during my time at LaGuardia, most professors I had were hard pressed for time. More often than not assignments were graded late, feedback was superficial, and a few students in need of support were left to fend for themselves. I could see the stress and anxiety on the faces of my fellow students and on the face of the professor who couldn't do much to help them directly.

Last semester, I broke my ankle. I left with a cast and crutches for three months. It was only because of my professors who gave me one-on-one attention, despite their time constraints that I was able to surmount my obstacles and pass my classes with straight A's. I was lucky that they cared that much, otherwise I would have lost a semester of progress. Students should not have to worry if their professors have any time for them. Invest in our future by investing in professors by supporting CUNY's budget request for \$35 million to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative.

**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
PUBLIC HEARING
NEW YORK CITY PRELIMINARY BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018
MARCH 3, 2017**

**TESTIMONY: DANIEL DORNBAUM STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT,
BARUCH COLLEGE, CUNY UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE DELEGATE**

Greetings Honorable Committee Chairperson Barron and Honorable Councilmembers,

My name is Daniel Dornbaum, a Baruch College Senior and President of the Undergraduate Student Government. We join you today excited that higher education is at the forefront of this year's State and City budget discussions but there is still much work to be done.

In 2014 the Council restored funding to the Council Merit Scholarship, and each year has fought to preserve it. We are extremely grateful for the support you have shown us through this program as it is essential to the mobility of students through the CUNY system.

At CUNY, our mandate states we must maintain a close articulation between senior and community colleges and this holds true as many students transfer to our four year CUNY college's after receiving their associate's degree. Tuition for full time students at a CUNY Community College is \$4,800 per year while tuition at CUNY senior colleges is \$6,330. Programs like the Council Merit Scholarship ease the financial transition for students and we must invest in this.

This year marks the fourth year of the scholarship program. We are requesting an increase from the \$400 per semester award. Since 2014, under the SUNY2020 legislation, tuition has raised \$600 and additional funding would give students the financial means to stay in school.

As stated in a recent New York Times article, Baruch College was able to help move 79% of students from the bottom fifth of income distribution into the top three fifths. CUNY schools for years has helped propel students into the middle class as they progress through the system. It is with the help of these programs that allows us to continue to be this engine of social mobility to all New Yorkers.

In uncertain times at our university it is always comforting to be certain we have the Council as a partner in our pursuit for affordable public higher education in New York City.

Thank you.

Testimony of Luis Fernández, Professor, Mathematics, Bronx Community College and the CUNY Graduate Center Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education In Support of CUNY's Request for \$35 Million to Fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative

March 3, 2017

I moved to New York City to work at CUNY in August 2007. Originally from Spain, after finishing my Ph.D. in Mathematics at Washington University in St Louis, I worked in Puerto Rico, Colombia, and the United Kingdom. After living in so many places I came to New York City because I had the dream of being in the most multicultural and diverse city in the world, and I was enthused to work in an inner city college like Bronx Community College (BCC). Having been mostly at research institutions before then, I really liked the project of teaching basic mathematics to disadvantaged students and minorities.

What I found at BCC was not what I expected. My teaching load of 27 credit hours per year was overwhelming, and did not leave me the time that my students deserved, or let alone, my research. Each day, after having taught for several hours, attended students, graded, and prepared materials, I would go home and spend the rest of the evening doing research. This is the only way I and most professors are able to advance in their research. Thanks to these efforts I was appointed to the doctoral faculty of the Graduate Center, where I am currently teaching a course. The Department of Mathematics at BCC is peculiar, as 5 of its professors are in the Doctoral Faculty of the Graduate Center; this is more than several 4 year colleges.

The faculty at CUNY has an enormous potential. A lot of this potential is wasted, especially for the faculty at community colleges, where the teaching load is at least 3 more hours (and actually 6 more hours in most cases) than 4-year colleges. CUNY has the luxury of boasting that most of the faculty at community colleges have a Ph.D. This is unheard of in most community colleges in the country. These professors can write grant proposals for research in education or in their particular field. However, after the first few years, the overwhelming teaching load takes a toll and the research activity gets diminished. And without research activity there cannot be grant proposal. This a great loss for CUNY both academically and economically; it is important to note that a good part of the revenue of research universities comes from grants. CUNY could do much better in this aspect if professors, especially at community colleges, had more time for their students and especially for their research.

CUNY's \$35 million dollar budget request for the Faculty Partnership Student Success Initiative will certainly help remedy this situation. It will also revert into the university. A lower full-time faculty teaching load will improve the learning environment and well being of students by enhancing the time that professors can dedicate to each student. It will also improve the research output of the university and produce new grant initiatives for the advancement of science and the humanities.

**Testimony of Yakov Genis, Professor
Borough of Manhattan Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee of Higher Education**

March 3, 2017

I began teaching at CUNY in the Spring of 1998 at Kingsborough Community College and from the Fall of 1998 at Borough Manhattan Community College.

I began at BMCC as an Assistant Professor, then an Associate Professor and now as a full Professor. I developed new classes on Java, Visual Basic and C#. I taught regular face-to face classes, on-line classes. This Spring semester, I have two hybrid classes on Java 1 and two face-to face classes in Data Structures and Programming.

Coupled with teaching, I conduct extensive scientific research in areas of reliability and safety assessment of complex computer systems. While I have been at BMCC, I published 17 articles including four publications in international conference proceedings. I have had to decline personal invitations to international conferences because I had not enough time to fulfill research and discover new results.

If CUNY's request for \$35 million dollars to fund the Faculty Partnership for Student Success Initiative was included in the City budget, it would allow faculty to restructure the full-time faculty workload and pursue work that would enrich students' learning experience. Currently, when I am teaching, I do not have enough time to work with an individual student or a small group of students. If I had more time, I would be able to help my students better. I also want to develop innovative courses on programming mobile devices such as Android and iOS, but I can do it only if I take a half-year sabbatical.

The restructuring of full-time faculty workload would allow me to significantly improve students' knowledge in computer science, provide new scientific research and develop new courses.

Testimony of John B. Van Sickle
Professor of Classics & Comparative Literature,
Brooklyn College & Graduate School
City University of New York

Before the New York City Council Committee on
Higher Education
March 3, 2017

Teaching since 1976 at Brooklyn College and CUNY I have been proud to counsel students from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds who have gone on to success in such areas as medicine, law, academia, the arts, and business.

Yet the quality of my service as an advisor, as a professional mentor, and as an exemplary scholar-teacher has suffered from the excessive caseload of students per teacher: a situation that is notorious and remarked in correspondence from deans and professors at other institutions. Their letters to our Committee on Promotion and Tenure affirm the excellence of our faculty; yet these leading professionals marvel that CUNY faculty manage to produce such significant scholarship despite the caseloads deemed extraordinary by the standards of comparable public institutions. The issue of caseload haunts not only such exchanges with colleagues but limits our ability to compete in hiring and retention: faculty caseload in short an ill-kept secret, the shame of CUNY.

For the Record

**Testimony of Parisa Assassi, Lecturer
Queensborough Community College
Before the New York City Council Committee on Higher Education**

March 3, 2017

In my first semester teaching at CUNY as a new faculty in public health, I taught seven classes with 35 students in each class, a total of 245 students. Before the semester started, I developed the syllabus and selected the appropriate textbook. In addition to the 15 hours per week I spent teaching in the classroom and three hours per week in the office grading exams, homework, projects and surveys, answering students' questions and concerns and giving feedback to my students, I spent at least four to five hours per week on each subject developing the educational material including slides, handouts, homework and class projects. At the end of the semester I wondered how I managed my workload. Of course I worked more than 45 hours per week!

Teaching is not just going to class and giving a lecture. Teaching requires preparation, creativity and research to discover effective ways of teaching. In order to be a successful instructor, we should know our students by name, their personality, their weaknesses and strengths and find an effective way to teach each class and each student. CUNY's current workload makes it impossible for faculty and CUNY as a whole to reach our full potential.

Also an instructor needs to update his/her knowledge and do research. Currently I am working on three manuscripts which I developed before I started my job. However, with my workload, I have found it impossible to complete and publish my manuscripts.

**Testimony at the City Council Higher Education committee Hearing
March 3, 2017**

Sharon Persinger

Associate Professor, Bronx Community College Department of Mathematics and Computer Science

PSC Treasurer

CUNY community college faculty teach 27 contact hours per year. So every week during the semester I am in the classroom about 14 hours. Basic preparation for class takes at least an equal number of hours, so we are up to 28 hours. Preparing a new class takes even more time, easily bringing the total to 40 hours. I haven't included grading, another 10 hours per week. Faculty have departmental service and college service requirements, so add time for committee meetings, revising the curriculum, assessment, and more. There is very little time for in-depth work with students.

My aim in my testimony is to give some specific examples of what we faculty could do with a workload restructuring that would allow us more time to work with students out of class. Many of us do on occasion find time for that in-depth work with students. In my nearly 20 years at Bronx Community College, I have supervised three research projects in math and computer science. I choose project topics to emphasize to students the role of mathematics in using computers to solve problems. I would like to tell you about those research projects.

Project 1: One summer I worked with a student programming Lego robots to carry out search-and-rescue tasks. My work on this project was easy; I provided the robots, the basic programming tools, and developed and described the problem tasks. The task was to make a robot patrol along a regular path the area between two walls, stop when it found a dark object, and send a message to a second robot giving the location of the object. After receiving the message, the second robot would come directly to the location of the first robot and the object it had found. It is easy to see that the ability to perform tasks like this would help in rescuing an unconscious person in a building.

The student Jean Carlos did the programming, and by the end of the summer term he had the pair of robots performing the desired task. Along the way, he found a better programming environment for the robot language, taught himself to use it, and figured out how to get the robots to communicate using Bluetooth. By the end of the summer, he had improved his programming skills generally and demonstrated his ability to solve problems independently with an entirely new set of programming tools.

Project 2: Most likely you have never wondered how a website can let you know which of the many public library branches is closest to your current location. The right way to prepare to answer this question is to place the public library branches on a map, and then mark the map so that each library is surrounded by a region that contains the locations for which that library is the closest of all the libraries. I guided two computer science students in implementing an animation of a beautiful algorithm that finds the boundaries of these regions. The algorithm

uses parabolas, the very same parabolas that we study in high school algebra. These students gave a lively presentation of their work in the campus science fair.

Project 3: This student was specifically interested in connecting more theoretical mathematics to computer science. We worked together on a project in coding theory, the methods used to allow for correction of errors in transmitted messages. Think about the use of the NATO phonetic alphabet - Alfa Bravo Charlie Delta Echo - for spelling out radio messages. 'B' and 'D' have very similar sounds in a noisy situation, but Bravo and Delta are easy to distinguish. The added information of the entire word allows for the correction of the mishearing of 'B' for 'D'. Since there can always be errors in a transmitted message – on a phone line, in a satellite transmission, even in data stored in a computer – it is standard in those situations to add information to the data so that the message when received with errors can still be understood.

This student and I worked together on a more theoretical investigation of a relatively easy procedure for encoding and decoding data given as strings of 0s and 1s. The student learned of a number of ways of adding additional information, more 0s and 1s, to a message, how to tell whether an error had occurred in a received message, and some ways to recreate the original message from the one received with an error.

All of these students benefited by the one-to-one interaction that working on these projects provided. They were challenged to attack a difficult task and supported in the process. Seeing the immediate application of what they were learning challenged them to learn more thoroughly. As the instructor, I had the satisfaction of getting students to appreciate the importance of mathematics in computer science. With more time, I would definitely develop further projects like these and guide students to work on them.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: 3 March 2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Luis Fernandez
Address: 135 W 225th St Apt 5M BRONX NY 10463

I represent: Bronx Community College & Graduate Center

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor in opposition

Date: 3-3-17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hayes Peter Mawo
Address: 41-10 47th Ave #50, Sunnyside

I represent: QCC
Address: 200-05 56th Ave. Bayside

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: 3/2/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sigmund Shen
Address: 85 Livingston St. Bklyn 11201
I represent: PSC
Address: 61 Broadway

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: Mar. 3

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Persinger PSC Officer +

Address: faculty at BCC

I represent: Professional Staff Congress

Address: 61 Broadway, NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: March 3, 2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John VAN SICKLE

Address: BROOKLYN COLLEGE

I represent: professor Brooklyn College

Address: BROOKLYN COLLEGE

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PAUL NARKUNAS

Address: 385 E. 18th ST. 5A BROOKLYN, NY 11226

I represent: PSC CUNY / JOHN JAY COLLEGE

Address: 524 W. 59th ST. NY NY 10019

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARIA DELOS ANGELES DONOSO MACAYA

Address: 79 HAUEN AVE. APT 511

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carla Rivodeneria

Address: 97-11 Hoken Holding Expwy 9E

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: March 3, 2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joyce Moorman

Address: 104 Saint Marks Place #1E, Brooklyn

I represent: Professional Staff Congress

Address: 61 Broadway, NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jody Pollock

Address: 695 Park Avenue, NY NY 10065

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Emily Schnee

Address: 234 East 5th St. Bklyn 11218

I represent: PSC

Address: 61 Broadway, NYC

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Persinger

Address: 166 W. 189 St. #63

I represent: PSC-CUNY

Address: 61 Broadway Suite 1500

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melissa Schieble

Address: 930 Hamison Drive, Centerport NY 11721

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Robin Isserles

Address: BMCC / CUNY

I represent: FSC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Peter Cipriano

Address: _____

I represent: Myself - CUNY Baruch Student

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Yakov Genis (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 16 MOURNE ST #C-PH

I represent: BMCC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3-3-17

Name: Hayes Peter Mares (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: QCC CUNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Nichole McDaniel (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 23 Overlook Terrace, Maplewood NJ

I represent: Bronx Community College / PSC-CUNY

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amy Hughes PSC-CUNY

Address: 2458 BEDFORD AVE #1, BKLYN 11226

I represent: CUNY - BROOKLYN COLLEGE (FACULTY)

Address: ~~2458~~ 2900 BEDFORD AVE 11210

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JASMINE MARTINEZ

Address: 255 HANEMAYER ST. Apt 17A, BROOKLYN, NY, 11211

I represent: Students at CUNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Karen Miller

Address: 280 ocean Parkway #3T, BK, NY 11218

I represent: faculty at CUNY (LaGuardia CC)

Address: 31-10 Thomson Ave, Long Island City NY 11101

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chris Bueso

Address: 6125 34th Ave Apt F1

I represent: Students at CUNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LUIS FERNANDEZ

Address: 135 W 225th St Apt 5M

I represent: BCC and GC and PSC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Terrie Epstein

Address: Hunter College

I represent: PSC-CUNY Faculty

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

CUNY
admin

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Arlene Torres

Address: University Dean for recruitment and Diversity

I represent: CUNY

Address:

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

CUNY
Admin

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John Moqulescu

Address: Sr. University Dean Academic Affairs / Dean - School

I represent: of Professional Studies - CUNY

Address:

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

CUNY
admin

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gwen Perlman

Address: Director - Capital Unit

I represent: CUNY

Address:

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Cuny
admin*

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Murphy

Address: University Delen - Enrollment Mgmt

I represent: Cuny

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VICE CHANCELLOR JUDY

Address: BERTLEUM

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VICE CHANCELLOR MATTHEW

Address: SAPIENZA

I represent: Ⓢ

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Charlotte Brooks (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 149 Prospect Park SW #1 BK

I represent: PSC faculty

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Timothy Hardin (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 590 W. 204th St Apt A35

I represent: BMCC student / myself

Address: 199 Chambers St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/17

Name: James Hoff (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 3103 Fairfield Ave 3A

I represent: CUNY

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chika Onyejukuwa

Address: _____

I represent: U.S.S. Hunter College

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: Mar. 3, 1977

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nivedita Majumdar, PSC Secretary

Address: + John Jay professor

I represent: Professional Staff Congress

Address: 61 Broadway, NYC 10006

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JARI COHEN

Address: 9 MURRAY ST, NY NY

I represent: NYPIRG STRAPHANGERS CAMPAIGN

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 12017-5595 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daniel Dornbaum

Address: 80 East End Ave. Apt 7E

I represent: University Student Senate

Address: 555 West 57th St. Suite 1420

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Barbara Bowen

Address: _____

I represent: Professional Staff Congress

Address: 61 Broadway, NY, NY 10006

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 12017-5595 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/3/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Willy Bacz

Address: 1805 BRUCKNER BLVD, APT 6G

I represent: CUNY / HOSTOS COMMUNITY College

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms