

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

----- X

February 8, 2018  
Start: 10:12 a.m.  
Recess: 11:27 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.  
14<sup>th</sup> Fl.

B E F O R E: INEZ D. BARRON  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Laurie A. Cumbo  
Robert F. Holden  
Ben Kallos  
Ydanis A. Rodriguez

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Mahlet Tsegaye, Director  
Executive Search and Enrollment Services  
City University of New York's Central Office

Karen Christian, Deputy Director  
Procurement, Office Budget and Finance  
City University of New York Central Office

Fern Chan, Past President  
Continuing Education Association of New York

John Adedrounmu, University Student Senate  
City University of New York  
Trustee on the Board of Trustees at CUNY

[sound check, pause]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Good morning.

Welcome. Welcome today's oversight hearing on hiring a new chancellor and college president at the City University of New York. I'm Council Member Inez Barron, Chair of the Committee on Higher Education. Witnesses are invited to testify today on this topic include representatives from CUNY, the Professional Staff Congress, student groups, higher education advocates and other interested parties. First, I would like to acknowledge that we're holding this hearing almost four years after this committee previously received testimony jointly with the Civil Rights Committee regarding faculty diversity at CUNY. During that hearing we recognized that while CUNY's undergraduate student body more or less reflects the diversity of the city as a whole, its faculty and academic leadership unfortunately does not. This lack of diversity is even more profound when we look at the top governance of the institution, at the chancellor and at college president levels. For example, according to the most recent studies—recent student data available as of fall 2016, 25% of CUNY undergraduates identified as black; 30% as Hispanic;

25% as Asian Pacific Islander; and 15% as white.

Yet, all seven chancellors that have served CUNY since 1960 including the current Chancellor James B. Milliken, have been white, and six of them have been men. Out of the 11 college-senior college presidents, six, more than half, are white while only three are black and two are Puerto Rican. Out of the seven community colleges, four, again more than half are white. And finally, all of CUNY's five graduate school deans are white. These numbers beg us to ask what is preventing CUNY from hiring chancellors and college presidents that reflect the diversity of its outstanding student body not to mention that of New York City, and where there are issues in its search and hiring process that prohibit any efforts to do so. CUNY was established with explicit legislative findings that recognize "an imperative need for affirmative action" and that its personnel should "reflect the diverse communities, which comprise the city and the people-which comprise the people of the city and state of New York." Moreover, the intent of these findings "should be evident in all the guidelines established by the Board of Trustees" including specifically hiring. CUNY's Board of

Trustees has unfortunately in my opinion instituted a cloak of secrecy around its search committee's solicitation, and consideration of candidates for university chancellor and college presidents.

Indeed, the Board's standing policy for presidential searches and more recently amendments to its policy for chancellor searches approved just this week provide that the work and communications of the Search Committee shall be conducted confidentially with the understanding that committee members are not to reveal any information concerning the identity of candidates, the contents of its deliberation or any other aspect of its work to persons outside the group. In addition, CUNY's Board of Trustees is guided in part by the statement of affirmative action that expressly values "diversity and inclusion" and purports to encourage applications from individuals with disabilities, veterans, women and those from traditionally underrepresented groups." However, standing policy for presidential searches, and more recently conforming amendments to its policy for chancellor searches approved just this week, chose to single out Italian-Americans as included among the underrepresented groups from which applications would

be encouraged while not bothering to mention Blacks and Latinos who comprise more than half of CUNY's undergraduate student body. This reads insensitively especially when--when one considers that of the seven community college presidents, four identify as white Italian-Americans while only one is black. For centuries African-Americans have been excluded, marginalized and locked out of positions of leadership and authority by virtue of the systemic racist policies embedded in institutions and the systems of this country. Too often attempts at affirmative action are challenged, diminished and eliminated, and so the disparity continues and the gap widens. Even today with their policy-written policy for diversity and selection of faculty, we continue to see a trend that has not increased the number of blacks in full-time positions and at senior administrative levels. The old boy network appears to still operate, and blacks are not receiving appointments to professorships and top-level leadership positions. At this hearing I'm interested in learning about the process by which CUNY hires a new college president and University chancellor. With transparency in mind, the committee intends to

better understand why CUNY has implemented a policy of secrecy surrounding its search process, and how it seeks community input. For example, the Board of Trustees appointed Vincent Boudreau, a white male as Interim President of City College in October 2016 while it conducted a search for more permanent replacement. However, when it became apparent to the surrounding Harlem community that this appointment would be made permanent, there—this disappointed a number of influential and prominent African-American leaders because their insight, their input and influence have not been sought in the search process. Indeed, the Faculty Union PFC similarly expressed concern regarding the secrecy of these searches and the fact that finalists do not even participate in any public meetings with the community, staff or students. And finally, the committee hopes to gain insight into the outreach methods especially as it relates to candidates of color other than Italian-Americans and how CUNY's legislative and policy driver commitments to diversity and inclusion actually play out in the process. I would like to now acknowledge my colleague who is here. This is his first meeting. Council Member Holden from

Queens. New members of the City Council we welcome you.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you, and thank you to the panel assembled here for today's oversight hearing. I'm honored and privileged to sit on my first committee hearing, and it couldn't be more important—a more important committee to start my term off with. As a former CUNY professor, the oversight authority vested in the Higher Education Committee is of vital importance to—to me. I appreciate all the efforts CUNY has undertaken to provide a quality of education for a reasonable price. I believe firmly in the necessity of higher education, and even more specifically in technology. I taught graphic design and technology at City Tech, which is right across the river here, and I want the next chancellor and president of CUNY to support technology programs in all of the CUNY colleges. The best city in the country should have the best university in the country, and the first steps toward that starts today with this oversight hearing on hiring a new chancellor and college president of CUNY. Thanks, Madam Chair. Thank you so much for the introduction. Thanks.



1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

9

2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: You're welcome. I  
3 would like to also acknowledge the staff that has  
4 worked to put this hearing together, my Chief of  
5 Staff Joy Simmons, Mr. Alma (sic) Wally Clay, my CUNY  
6 Liaison. Also, N'digo Washington, the Director of  
7 Legislation; Chloe Rivera, Community Policy Analyst;  
8 Jessica Ackerman, the Committee's Senior Final-  
9 Finance Analyst and Mr. Paul Senegal, Counsel to the  
10 Committee. At this time, we'll call the first panel.  
11 [background comments] And it's going to be the  
12 Director, Executive Search and Enrollment Services of  
13 CUNY, Mahlet Tsegaye, and you can correct the  
14 pronunciation when you come forward. Welcome. If  
15 you'd raise your right hand, I'll ask-- You can  
16 have a seat.

17 MAHLET TSEGAYE: Okay.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Raise your right  
19 hand and I'll ask Mr. Senegal to swear you in.

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: In accordance with the  
21 rules of the Council, I will administer the  
22 affirmation to the witness from the Mayoral  
23 Administration. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
24 whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your  
25

testimony before this committee, and to respond honestly to the Council Members' questions?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: I do.

LEGAL COUNSEL SENEGAL: Thank you.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Thank you

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: If you could pull the mic--pull the mic a little closer. Make sure it's on, and you can begin your testimony.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Thank you. Good morning, Chair Barron and members of the City Council Committee on Higher Education. I am Mahlet Tsegaye, Director of Executive Search and Enrollment Services at the City University of New York Central Office. A major part of my responsibility is to coordinate and assist the university in its executive level searches following guidelines set by the University's Board of Trustees. I am here today to provide you with an overview of the processes and guidelines that are followed when hiring any chancellor and a new college president. The executive search process is conducted in accordance with guidelines and bylaws established by the CUNY Board of Trustees. Over the years, the Board has revised some of these guidelines. Their Office of Executive Search falls within the

Chancellery, and is tasked with working closely with the Board Office, the Chair and members of the Search Committees, search firms and CUNY colleges within the purviews of these established guidelines. In addition to myself, there is one additional full-time employee in the Office of Executive Search. The total current year budget for the office including salary and benefits and other than personnel services is \$245,000. The CUNY Board of Trustees had a set of guidelines for the University to follow while conducting chancellor searches, and a set of guidelines to be followed when conducting searches for presidents of CUNY colleges. The latter also includes the search for the Dean of the CUNY School of Law, the CUNY School of Professional Studies, the CUNY Graduate School of journalism, the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy and the Macauley Honors College. For the most part, the language in the guidelines for searching for a new chancellor and that for a new president mirror each other with a few exceptions that I will highlight below. The University partners with search firms when conducting chancellor and presidential searches. I would outline the process undertaken in the

selection and hiring of search firms further down in my testimony. The chancellor and presidential searches are chaired by members of the Board of Trustees. In the case of chancellor searches, the board guidelines call for at least five members of the Board of Trustees to serve on the committee as appointed by the chair of the Board. In addition, and I quote "the chair of the Board will serve as the chairperson of the Search Committee and the vice chairperson of the Board shall serve as the vice chairperson of the Search Committee. The guidelines also call for two faculty members including the chairperson of the Faculty Senate, two students, including the chair of the University Student Senate, and alumnus of CUNY and two CUNY presidents for a total of up to 16 committee members. For presidential searchers, which also includes the deans of the various independent schools within the system, the current guidelines call for up to five trustees, three tenured faculty from the college or schools elected as determined by the appropriate faculty governance body, up to two senior level administrators, and/or representatives of external constituents recommended by the chancellor and

appointed by the chairperson of the board. The total number of appointed trustees, senior level administrators or external constituent representatives shall not exceed five, two students from the college, an alumnus from the college and a president of another CUNY college. In addition, the search committee for the Dean of the law school, the graduate school of journalism, the graduate school of public health and health policy shall include a member of the school's Board of Advisories-Advisors or Advisory Council, and up two other outstanding figures of the relevant professional community in New York City as appointed by the Chairperson of the Board. A presidential search committee thus consists of 11 to 14 members. Let me outline for you in broad strokes the life cycle of a search and the roles played by the committee, the search firms, the colleges, and the Office of Executive Search. I trust getting an overview of the steps from launch to hire would provide a better understanding of what is involved. The guidelines require that "when a vacancy for the position of president occurs or is certain to occur, the chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall after consultation with the chancellor establish a

search committee to seek a new president. For obvious reasons, the guidelines for the chancellor search do not reference consultation with the chancellor. As mentioned above the college's faculty and student governments are tasked with selecting the faculty and student members of these committees following their own governance procedures. The chairperson of the Board and the chancellor consult with the college and select alumni representatives. They also select one president for presidential searches. For chancellor searches, the chairperson selects two presidents one from a baccalaureate granting institution, and one from the community college. For presidential searches, only the guidelines also call for the selection of senior level administrators from other CUNY institutions and/or external constituents. Parallel to the information of the committee, and RFP process is developed and search firms with experience in this particular area. Example: Some search firms focus on community college searches versus senior colleges. Some search firms have more experience working with the law schools, et cetera are invited to submit proposals. Proposals and firms reviewed in various

categories including a firm's track record and experience for the particular type of search, a firm's commitment to diversity. Search firms are asked to provide evidence of their dedication to the university in terms of recruiting and building diverse interview tools and placements, the quality and breadth of services provided, their proposed timeline and whether it meets the university's needs and cost and other criteria. Based on these and other criteria, the chancellor and the Board for chancellor Searches selects the search firm. Once a search firm is selected, the Office of Executive Search works with various units within CUNY including the Legal Office and the Budget Office to secure the necessary approvals. The search firm that has been selected for the upcoming chancellor search is Isaacson Miller, a leading national firm with deep experience in conducting higher education leadership searches. The contract between CUNY and Isaacson Miller has been registered by the Office of the State Comptroller, and comes after request for proposal solicitation and evaluation process conducted by the university. All expenses for the chancellor search will be paid with tax state levy funds. No city tax

levy funding will be expended for the chancellor search. For presidential searches, the colleges also appoint a search liaison to work closely with the Office of Executive Search for the duration of the search. This individual, this campus space serves as a conduit for all communications from the search committee to the college, facilitates campus visits for the Search Committee and for finalists as needed, works with college constituents to ensure that appropriate protocols are followed in the selection of faculty, student and other committee representatives, and serves as a coordinator of college data and information necessary for the development of the advertisement and position for a file. After the committee has been fully identified and confirmed, typically a joint announced from the chair of the Board and the chancellor for presidential searchers is sent to the college community announcing the launch of the search and the members of the committee. For presidential searches, the Office of Executive Search works with the campus to schedule a kickoff campus visit for trustees on the committee, search consultants and staff. This group meets with the various key constituents



including faculty, students, cabinet members and staff. Their visits typically culminate with an open forum where any member of the college community is free to participate. Feedback from the campus visits provides insight into the culture, needs and texture (sic) of the college, and informs the position profile documents and where it's sent. At the very first committee meeting, the chancellor, the university chief diversity officer and the chairperson of the Board of Trustees when schedules allow, charge the committee. They outline their expectations of the committee, an ideal timeline, the needs and strengths of the institution from their vantage point, and the characteristics of the candidates they would like to see in the pool. Typically, two major themes are identified and emphasized at these meetings and throughout: Confidentiality and diversity. Confidentiality is key in this process because many of the ideal candidates are individuals who are currently holding high level positions. If their candidacy becomes known, not only would it jeopardize their position and careers, but would also compromise CUNY's ability to recruit the robust and rich pools of diverse

candidates for the search on hand and for the future.

Committee members are selected by their constituent

groups to be their voice on these committees, and are

asked to pledge confidentiality. Regarding

diversity, I won't quote the language because the

chair has but there is language in the bylaws that

address diversity. What I will say is that when a

presidential search committee is first convened to

receive its charge from the chancellor, the

chancellor is also joined by a representative from

the Office of Recruitment and Diversity who provides

the committee with an overview of the Ethnic and

gender breakdowns of individuals holding similar

positions at the University and pointing out gaps the

committee should try to bridge. The charges also

include how to diligently work against unconscious

biases and guides—guidance and provides guidance on

appropriate and interim (sic) questions, et cetera.

Furthermore, the committee and the search resultants

are asked to ensure that the job vacancies posted in

the wider outlets to be as wide an audience as

possible. Throughout the search process the

committee continually solicits and welcomes

suggestions of potential candidates and nominations

as well as for additional outlets in which to post vacancy notices. Going back to the life cycle of the search, the next step is for the Search Committee to develop a detailed search time table including a schedule for future meetings. The Office of Executive search works closely with the Search Chair and the Search firm to develop and facilitate the draft ad, ad placement strategy, position profile, et cetera, and secures appropriate data from the college units (sic) for the development of these documents. Once the committee reviews and finalizes an ad with input from the chancellor and Board of Trustees as required, the Office of Executive Search works with a search firm to have it posted on various appropriate outlets. Increasingly, this is done electronically. The next step is to develop and finalize the position profile, which is a much meatier document and provides an overview of the institution highlighting unique strengths and challenges. It includes demographic and budget information, and is meant to provide potential candidates with a 360-degree view of the current state of the college, and serves a major recruitment tool. In addition to being to potential candidates, presidential position profiles

are also sent to the company solicit-solicitation letters from the chancellor or the chairman for chancellor searches to higher education system and college heads nationwide asking them-asking them to identify and nominate individuals they think would be a good fit for the position. Nominations are encouraged from the college and university community, but also from other stakeholders and from the larger community. Applications and nominations are typically submitted electronically. A password protected secure website is created where applications supporting documents and nominations are uploaded. Only committee members and appropriate staff are given access to this site. During the course of the search, the Search Committee holds several face-to-face meetings facilitated by the search consultants who provide critical background information on applicants typically not apparent in the submitted documents. The consultants also provide information on some individuals who are reluctant to formally declare their candidacy and work with the committee strategizing ways to interest such candidates. Some a phone call from a trustee member of faculty colleague might help things along.

Through this back and forth, the committee typically identifies 8 to 12 potential candidates for interviews. The committee with the guidance of the search firm develops and finalizes interview questions and fees. Interviews typically take place over one to three days, and in the interest of confidentiality are held at an undisclosed location. Once all the interviews have been conducted, the committee selects typically 3 to 4 finalists. On occasion, and when appropriate, the committee is also tasked with doing some confidential first round referencing on candidates. For presidential searches, the chair of the committee then communicates their decisions with—of the committee to the chancellor. The next stage of the process for presidential searches is for the identified finalists to meet with the chancellor and the chancellery, and to visit the campus where they meet with the various constituent groups. Campus groups are then asked to provide their feedback to the chancellor. However, and I now quote from the bylaws. "After consultation with the search firm, if the chancellor determines that campus visits would inhibit the generation a suitable pool of excellent candidates, the chancellor

may with the approval of the chairperson of the board, modify the college consultation process as follows: Each finalist shall meet with a group of representatives of college constituencies including, but not limited to elected faculty and student governance leaders and alumni selected by the chancellor. Following such meetings, these representatives shall meet and provide the chancellor with a report on their views of each candidate. Their work and communication of those groups shall be conducted confidentially with the understanding that the members of each group are not to reveal any information concerning the identity of candidates and content of its deliberation or any other aspect of its work to persons outside the groups. At this juncture, the search consultants and Office of Executive Search finalize the background checks and referencing. For presidential searches, the chancellor then assesses the feedback received from the various sources, engages in negotiations with the candidates and prepares a recommendation to the board. After the board has acted upon the chancellor's recommendation, the chancellor notifies the findings in a formal letter of appointment is

issued. For a chancellor search the committee is tasked with identifying approximately seven individuals to interview. Once the committee identifies a small group of semi-finalists, these semi-finalists are interviewed by the full board, and a finalist is selected in executive session of the full board followed by a public announcement. I trust this provides you with a better understanding of CUNY's search process when hiring a new chancellor and college president. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you for your testimony. Would you pronounce your last name for me again?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Tsegaye.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Tsegaye. Okay, and your title again, and how long you've been in that position and how many searches have you participated in?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: My current title is Director of Executive Search and Enrollment Services. I've been in this position since 2009. Regarding your last question, I don't have the numbers off the top of my head--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Okay.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: --but I have the number involved in--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] 2009. So, you've participated in both presidential and chancellor searches?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. Now, you talked about the search firms that are used, and how you do an assessment as to what their qualifications are. The firm that you used now, can you talk about how they were selected and why they were selected, and what's in their track record that makes you feel confident with these--

MAHLET TSEGAYE: [interposing] So, let me just start off by saying that I--I'm not the person who makes the determination of which search firm to--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Okay.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: --select, but I know that when they--when the university solicits RFPs, there are certain criteria that the--the search firms are asked to address, and I do have people from the Contract Office who can perhaps answer more detailed question about the process, but what I've outlined is pretty much what I know about this.



CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. So, if those persons are here?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. Just come up and have a seat, and I'll ask the attorney to swear you in, and if you could answer those questions, I'd appreciate it.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Would you please raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee, and to answer, and to respond honestly to Council members' questions?

PANEL MEMBERS: [off mic] I do.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. If you would give us your name and then if could answer those questions.

KAREN CHRISTIAN: My name is--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Is your--is your mic on? And, pull it a little closer. Thank you.

KAREN CHRISTIAN: My name is Karen Christian. I'm Deputy Director of Procurement out of the Office Budget and Finance at CUNY's Central Office.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, and so as—in the selection of the firm that you will use in terms of having them participate in the search, what criteria helps you select one firm as opposed to another?

KAREN CHRISTIAN: Okay. So, our RFP process was a competitive solicitation, which was open to all executive search firms. We have minimum requirements in terms of certain qualifications that a firm must meet in order for us to consider them as a potential firm for executive search, and those minimum qualification were that they must have completed at least three contracts for executive search and recruitment services with institutions of higher education within the last three years, and they must have then provide an executive search and recruitment services for at least five years prior to the submission of the proposal. Once we receive proposals, we had a selection committee of three individuals representing the Central Office and the colleges, and they each independently reviewed all the proposals that we received. We received a total of eight proposals. They reviewed the technical proposal that was submitted and we had specific

questions within the RFP document that they had to respond to, which helped us to further evaluate, and document their capability and experience of an—of an executive search firm. They were then scored, and then there is the cost aspect of the proposal, which we also add that scoring into, and then we have an oral presentation where the firms that have been shortlisted, and the firms are shortlisted based on the combination of their technical and cost scores. And, those that scored like the top four scoring proposals will be brought in for all presentations. The committee has an interview with each one of these proposals, and then they're scored, and then the overall total score, whoever comes in with the highest score would be the firm that the committee would recommend to move into award for these services. What consideration is giving—given to the ethnic competition—composition of these firms? Is that a factor at all? You know, I'm concerned about the old boy network, which everybody knows still exists.

KAREN CHRISTIAN: Right.

2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, what  
3 consideration and what criteria is given to  
4 evaluating?

5 KAREN CHRISTIAN: Well, we evaluate  
6 based—we—it's an open evaluation meaning that any  
7 firm can choose to respond, and then we pretty much  
8 would evaluate based on the experience and  
9 qualifications of the firm. We don't at this point  
10 in time look specifically at what their makeup is,  
11 but we do have what is called a diversity  
12 questionnaire--

13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Uh-hm.

14 KAREN CHRISTIAN: --form that they have  
15 to fill out, which gives us some background into how  
16 diverse their firm is, and part of the requirement  
17 for this RFP is that when--whichever firm is selected  
18 they must provide us with a diverse pool of  
19 candidates. So, whichever search can work they'll be  
20 conducting for us.

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: In terms of the  
22 diversity questionnaire--

23 KAREN CHRISTIAN: [interposing] Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --can you give us some idea of some of the questions that are asked of that firm that would help you determine their-

KAREN CHRISTIAN: [interposing] Sure.

Well, the diversity questionnaire it's a standard form that's created I think out of the ESD Department by the State, and it's reviewed and evaluated by our Director of MWBE, and I'm just looking to see if I have a copy of it. Some of the questions that we ask are: Does your company have a chief diversity officer or other individuals whose tasks would supply diversity initiatives? What percentage of our company gross revenues was paid to New York State Certified Minority and Women Owned Businesses? What percentage of your company's overhead or--yeah, overhead was paid to New York State Certified Minority and Women Owned Business enterprises? Does your company provide technical training to Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises? Is you company participating in the government approved Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise Mental Protégé Program? Does your company include specific quantitative goals for the utilization of Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises? And does your

2 company have a formal Minority and Women Owned  
3 Business Enterprise, and does your company plan to  
4 enter into partnering or subcontracting agreements  
5 with New York State Certified Minority and Women  
6 Owned Business? In addition to this, most of our  
7 solicitations we require 36% Minority and Women Owned  
8 Business participation and SDVOBs participation.

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, when you say 36%  
10 participation--?

11 KAREN CHRISTIAN: 30% for Minority and  
12 Women Owned and 6% for service disabled veterans.

13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So that's the  
14 minimum that you're requesting for the organization--  
15 for the companies that are applying?

16 KAREN CHRISTIAN: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And so, in terms of  
18 the company that you selected, the firm you selected,  
19 all of those questions that you--you cited to me, they  
20 had a positive answer to all of those questions?

21 KAREN CHRISTIAN: No, not--I can't  
22 remember off hand, but I don't think we had positive  
23 responses to all of them.

24 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, were there other  
25 firms that submitted a response to the RFP that might

have had a higher score in that area? I'm trying to get to the reason why we don't have blacks in higher positions in CUNY. So, if we have a questionnaire that we send to these firms and we ask them to respond, those firms that have a higher score in terms of the responses to the questionnaire, how does that compare with firms that may not have as high a score in the Ethnicity Questionnaire, the University Questionnaire?

KAREN CHRISTIAN: From what I've seen on other RFPs including this one--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes.

KAREN CHRISTIAN: --firms tend to not score that high on this questionnaire.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: That's a problem. That's a part of the problem, I think--

KAREN CHRISTIAN: [interposing] Right.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --in our--in my opinion. That's a part of the problem. So, my question then becomes what kind of consideration should be given if we're saying that we have a written policy to improve the number of quote-as-as they say, underrepresented groups without specifying black and Latino. How are we going to address the

problem when we're hiring firms that don't in themselves reflect that it is that we want to see?

KAREN CHRISTIAN: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, I'm asking you but you're not the person that makes the policy.

KAREN CHRISTIAN: Exactly.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: You're the person that's sitting there. Okay. Can you tell me what is the Pre-Search Report? Does that still exist? In the--in the amendments that were voted on this week there--that was deleted, the Pre-Search Report was deleted. So, can you tell me what is the Pre-Search Report? Is it still used, and what the content of it is.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: I'm going to speculate here because this revision--this--the--all bylaw, as you know, has been there since 1991--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Right.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: --or something and this was--So, I--I believe the Pre-Law Report is probably the announcement. I don't think there's anything beyond that, and I--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, that--that doesn't sound to me like a report.



MAHLET TSEGAYE: Yeah, I would have to get back to you on that. I'm not sure what that statement is.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, and how many groups—how many firms submitted—how many groups—firms responded to the RFP for the last announcement, which probably is—would be in City—City College? Do you know how many firms responded?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: So, for the City College, I think I'd rather get back to you on that. I'm not 100% sure.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, so for the City College presidential search do know how many individuals submitted applications for consideration?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: I would say well over 30.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, over 30. What is the ethnic breakdown of those applicants that submitted for the City College position?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: I don't have that information on me, but we can definitely get that to you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Can you tell me where the announcement for City College specifically,

since that's the most recent, can you tell me where those announcements were placed?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: The--the--where the ads were placed?

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes, where the ads were placed?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Okay, bear with me for a second. I'm going to dig through my papers.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: So, we had placements at the Association of Asian Studies, Asians in Higher Education, Blacks in Higher Education, Chinese World Journal, Chronicle of Higher Education, the CUNY Job Board, Diverse Issues in Higher Education, Higher Education Recruitment Consortium, Hispanic Outlook, Higher Ed Jobs, Inside Higher Ed, the Isaacson Miller Website, which is the firm that was used, LGBT and Higher Ed, LinkedIn, Monster, the New York Times, Simply Hired and Women in Higher Education, and, of course, the CUNY website as well.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, of those that you--that I was able to jot down--

MAHLET TSEGAYE: [interposing]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --they were specifically—I—I thought you mentioned two, perhaps several Asians, one Black, one Chinese, the Diversity Issues--

MAHLET TSEGAYE: [interposing] Uh-hm.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --publication, LGBTQ women, and CUNY. So, were there any that were sent to—do you send them—do you send the announcements to Black institutions themselves? Do you send them to—?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: [interposing] Well, we sent as part of the solicitation process, we—the Chancellor sends out a letter to the heads of higher education institutions, colleges and universities throughout the nation.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. So, he sends a letter?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Yeah, and attaches the—the ad--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Okay.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: --and ads were implemented from all higher education institutions.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And I do want to acknowledge that we do have testimony from the Chancellor, which he has submitted for the record.

So, I do want to acknowledge that he sent that. I've got lots of other questions, but I'm going to pause now and give my colleague an opportunity to ask questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: The search firm do they actually--besides looking at resumes and, you know, getting the list of people that are applicants, do they actually go out and recruit and actually contact the person that this might be a great candidate and they actually--

MAHLET TSEGAYE: [interposing] Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: --and they actually reach out to people of color?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Yes. In fact, many times the people who make the candidates that we look at are not necessarily the people who apply for the positions. They're people who are sort of made to think about this position due to these conversations. So, they are not people who automatically applied. They're people who are happy in their positions, and are reached out to because people feel like they would make a better fit for this position. So, they are actively recruited by the search firm.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay, on the-the  
3 questionnaire for hiring a search firm, do they-does  
4 anybody check the questionnaire for accuracy? Like-  
5 sort of like a resume. You can put anything on a  
6 resume, but if it's not checked, it gets by?

7 MAHLET TSEGAYE: To some degree yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: How?

9 MAHLET TSEGAYE: By their track record.  
10 I mean we know what placements they-they had. They  
11 will report to the committee on places that they've  
12 made placements. So that way we verify their role?  
13 Or, are you saying do they-do you have to address-  
14 cross-reference every item on their--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: [interposing]  
16 Well, you can't. Obviously, it's difficult to check  
17 every item, but the-the items obviously that are very  
18 important to a search a fair search we would want to  
19 focus on--

20 MAHLET TSEGAYE: Yeah.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: --and check the  
22 company. Actually, I'm not saying we would visit the  
23 company, but it could even get to that at a point  
24 where let's check these-these answers for accuracy  
25 and it's very, very important because, as you know,

people do sometimes not tell the truth, or companies do that. So, we need to have oversight on that, and I think that's—is that done from your—in your area extensively?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Not extensively.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay.

KAREN CHRISTIAN: Can I just add to that? Part of the process in selecting firms, we do reference background checks on them. We out to other clients that they've worked with and we ask them a series of questions with regards—regards to the information that they submitted in the proposal to verify that it's true and accurate.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: One other question. Let's—let's say one company selected some candidates and—and the search didn't turn out so great. The can—or the candidate that was selected didn't turn out so great. What happens to that search company or search firm? Does that go back into the pool or do we just take them off the list or we do nothing?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: So, in the past we have—we—we would probably take that into consideration when we are doing another search, but for the most part, in the contract if a president is appointed by—

a search firm helps us place a president and the person leaves within a year, that firm is responsible for doing another search, and that may be not because the president was, you know, it wasn't a bad placement necessarily. Anything could happen.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Just, Madam Chair, one other--another question and the search firm this is, um, it's kind of difficult, but I know you said that the search firms do reach out to people of color, and again, how many--we need a--we need a kind of like a list of how many people are actually reached and--and brought in for interview by these search firms. So, we need to know if we're trying to create more diversity, then obviously we want to follow through on this, and--and--and if people aren't applying then we need to go out and find them. There--they exist let's say. We--we know they exist. So, can't we find them?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: So, we can share with you ethnic breakdowns of people who are in the pool, people who made it to the level of finalists. Maybe not the names, but we can provide numbers.

[background comments, pause]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. Now, you said that if the—if the person that's selected leaves within a year, that that search firm is responsible to continue to do another search, and does that mean a new contract, new fees, new payments, new—

MAHLET TSEGAYE: So, we have negotiated in such a way it's not a new contract, but the fees may be revised. With the payment of a full set of fees, we'd probably adjust the payment for the direct fees that they would encounter as a result of that once it's within the first year.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: What's the average length of time that chancellors have served in their positions, and that we've have some of them? Is there an average that we're looking at?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: pause] I'd be speculating, but as you know, Matthew Goldstein served for a very long time before this current president—with this chancellor. So, we can definitely get you the numbers--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Okay.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: --but I don't have the numbers off the top of my head.



CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right and—and certainly I want to get the information about the ethnicity of the total pool, the semi-finalists and, of course, the finalists. So, in—in its policy that was adopted this past week: The work and communications of the Search Committee shall be conducted confidentially with the understanding that the numbers of each group are not to reveal any information concerning the identity of candidates, the contents of its deliberations for any other aspect of its work to persons outside the group. How does that improve the process for selecting the Chancellor?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: So, I—I didn't write the policy so I'd just be talking—I'm just giving you my opinion. I think that if people are sitting in very high-level positions, they would feel more confident to enter a search process of this magnitude if they know that they are under the veil of confidentiality. I think a lot of high-level people would be reluctant to throw their hat in the ring if they know that there is going to be a very public process where they don't—they're not—they're not guaranteed the position. So, they'll have to—so that's my general

opinion of that, but the board came up with that policy. So, I can't say--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] But I think the policy speaks to the board not to the candidates. Is the secrecy also required of the candidate? Because it's not stated as such.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: I think the secrecy is in protecting the candidate is my interpretation of it.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes, but the policy talks to the--the search committee, and those who work for the search committee.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: In serving the confidentiality of the candidates.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right, your answers seem to say that candidates might, you know, feel protected by this, but the policy doesn't talk to candidates? Is the requirement for candidates to not discuss what's going on?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: No, it's--it--I think my interpretation of it is to basically encourage candidates who might have concerns about their candidacy becoming public. Therefore, to better

rapport. (sic) I may not be understanding the question.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. So, what—we know that with City College the search for the president there was a big outcry from the community, and I believe it put a halt or a pause on the final announcement of who the candidate was. Do you think that it's important that the community have some kind of input or involvement in this process? We're talking—we're in an age now where people are talking about being transparent. That's the big word now, transparency. So, based on the fact that at the last selection of a college president there was a great outcry against the process, and we're talking about process. Do you think it would be important to at some point consider input from the community?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: So, you'd—you'd be asking me for my opinion. As you know, I—I don't draft anything so--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing]  
Correct.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: --I guess there would be—there would be—that would be maybe a good point of it.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. Well, we'll—I think we'll prepare that as a question to submit to CUNY and ask them to respond because as you say, you just have given your opinion, and I think that CUNY has the result that it has because it has not in my opinion invested enough time and energy. As my colleague has said, there are black candidates that are out there, and for us to have not found them, I think speaks to the fact that CUNY is not being zealous enough to go out and pursue that, and be able to do that. We talked about the Pre-Search Report and you're going to—I would like for you to get back to me and say if, in fact, there still is a pre-search report and what it does and what its intentions are, and I had some more questions about the finances of if I can just find them. Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: [off mic] Can I just add?

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Just one other—I have one other question from before that was—you—you referenced to hiring the search firm on a point system. They are—you accumulate a point system to

select the search firm. How often is that the lowest bidder action--

MAHLET TSEGAYE: [interposing] Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: --on the--on the like monetary? The lowest bidder comes in, and how often is that firm selected? Would you say half the time, 90% of the time?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: I would be speculating, but I would say half the time.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: So, half the time the lowest bidder. So, and--and but they obviously got the most points? Is that it or the money comes into it--this a lot?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Of course, money plays a role, but it's not the only thing.

KAREN CHRISTIAN: It's not the only thing, but it seems to be almost dominant here at this point. So, maybe that could be the problem. If half the time you're going to lowest bidder, that seems to me suspect.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: That--that if you said 30% of the time the lowest bidder got it, then I would feel better.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Maybe you will feel better once I get back to you on that then because I'm not sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I'm just—I'm just hoping that we pick them based on their talents, and not the--

MAHLET TSEGAYE: [interposing] Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: -the-the price.

KAREN CHRISTIAN: So, part of the RFP process involves best value in terms of that's how we would select the vendors. So, it could be based on who can provide the best quality service for the best possible price. So, sometimes it doesn't happen that the lowest cost would be the one that's awarded the contract, but there are times where you would get-- the lowest cost would be awarded in the contract. One of the things we do at the end once we've selected a firm is that we negotiate their pricing down to make it more competitive with regards to what's going on around.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yeah, well you often get what you pay for.

KAREN CHRISTIAN: Exactly. [laughter]

2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. So, we've been  
3 talking about the search firms. When a--when the  
4 university contracts within an executive search firm,  
5 how is a firm paid, and is it based on a particular  
6 length of time on its types of services rendered or  
7 other factors brought into that consideration?

8 KAREN CHRISTIAN: So, there are three  
9 aspects to the payment method for the search firms.  
10 There is a fixed fee, which is normally--industry is  
11 normally 33% but for this contract it's at 30% of the  
12 compen--annual compensation for the proposed position  
13 that the candidate is being recruited for. Then you  
14 have what is called indirect fees, which is like an  
15 overhead cost and then direct cost, which would be  
16 costs associated with bringing a candidate back and  
17 forth for interviews meeting with the firms for this  
18 because the strategy and approach for the search.

19 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, what was the  
20 dollar amount for this contract, for the last  
21 contract that was given?

22 MAHLET TSEGAYE: [off mic] The chancellor  
23 survey?

24 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: No, the last--the  
25 president.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: The president of the  
City College?

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right.

KAREN CHRISTIAN: I'll have to get back  
to you on the precise numbers.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And what is it for  
the Chancellor's position?

KAREN CHRISTIAN: So, under this contract  
the firm we negotiated a fixed direct fee of \$150,00.  
That would be the firm's fee, and then the added cost  
would be the indirect fee, which would be a  
percentage of the direct fee and then the direct  
cost.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, what—what are  
the funding sources that contribute to the costs of  
identifying a chancellor and are they covered through  
tax levy funds, through state resources or other  
sources of funding?

KAREN CHRISTIAN: This search, it's going  
to be strictly tax levy funding.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: City tax levy  
funding?

KAREN CHRISTIAN: State Tax Levy.



CHAIRPERSON BARRON: State. No, city funds involved?

KAREN CHRISTIAN: No city funds.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And—and, um, once an individual has accepted the—the position of college president or chancellor, then you see the formal letter, and it delineates the terms and conditions of employment. At that time, is a severance package talked about? Is that part of the contract?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: The negotiations take place outside my office. I have no idea what's involved.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: But as a Search Committee, would you know? You wouldn't know whether or not the severance package is a part of that contract that's offered?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: So, no salary—no—no part. The Search Committee is not involved in the negotiation with salaries or with those conversations.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Who would do that?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: The chancellor or the chairman, or if there's a chancellor search I don't know.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. Do you have any information about the former chancellor's severance package, which I think gave him his salary for a year, and then gave him an opportunity to do some perhaps research and then gave him \$300,000 for the next five years? Do you have any information about that?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: No.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. I've heard of golden parachutes. That one I think qualifies as platinum. Oh, here it is. It's in my notes. Just so we have it in the record. CUNY offered a severance package to Dr. Matthew Goldstein full salary of \$490,000, five years including six months of retirement leave and an annual salary of \$300,000 for the position of Chancellor Emeritus. So, is that a new position or is that just a title or is it work that goes with that or--? You don't know.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: No.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. Thank you. [background comments] So, the CUNY workforce demographics issued most recently for 2017 indicates that there is one Hispanic/Latino person in the Chancellery Executive Compensation Plan. So, what

are the titles that go with that? Would you know?  
Does it include the president the deans, the vice  
presidents are all of those the titles that fall  
within the Executive Compensation Plan? [pause] Oh,  
okay. Alright. So then, those questions won't be  
asked. [background comments, pause] Okay, Council  
Member, any further questions?

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Not at this time.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, good. If we  
have further questions, we'll put them in writing and  
we'll submit them to you. We do thank you for  
coming, and offering your testimony.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: For sure. [background  
comments]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, good. In  
terms of the search for the president at Kingsborough  
Community College, so, President Herzek retired June  
2017, and there has been a person appointed as  
interim president, and he's been the Vice President  
of Student Affairs since 2014, Mr. Peter Cohen and  
he's served in a number of student service  
capacities, and it says in the manual, the general  
manual that an interim president may not serve longer  
than one academic year. So, if the search is not

completed within one academic year, how do you fill the position? Do you extend his time of the interim or do you put another interim president in?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: So, I'll be speculating again. I'd suspect that there might that there might be the chair, chancellor and the chair might ask-- might--might get an extension on that, but I'm not certain.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And--and then also according to the Manual of General Policy it says that there are exceptions to the guideline for the presidential search process allowed in special situations, and it says that there can be a shortened process. What would be eliminated from the normal process that would shorten it? Do you know what steps might be skipped?

MAHLET TSEGAYE: No, I do not.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. So, we could send that question always, and then I'd like to--we'll also send it to CUNY. We would like to know what are the retention rates of college presidents. So, we'd like to have that disaggregated by senior and community colleges and by racial ethnicity. Okay, I

want to thank you so much for coming, and giving your testimony. Thank you.

MAHLET TSEGAYE: Thank you. [background comments, pause]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you so much, and we'll call now our next panelist, and that person is Fern Chan from Continuing Education Association of New York. [background comments, pause]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. If you would raise your right hand, the attorney will swear you in.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee, and to respond honestly to Council members' questions?

I do.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. You may begin.

FERN CHAN: Oh, okay. [laughs] Yes. Good morning Council Members, esteemed colleagues and members of the public. My name is Fern Chan. I am the immediate Past President of Continuing Education Association of New York. I appreciate the

opportunity to address you today about hiring a new chancellor and college president of the City University of New York. We are a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and support of quality programs of public continuing education in New York State. The association is comprised of continuing education departments across CUNY and SUNY schools, and serves as an advocate for the post-secondary adult learner, and to encourage the professional development of our members. We were established in 1972, and over the 46 years we have seen the growth and importance of continuing education across the state, and how it impacts the lives of adults and the community. Within the CUNY schools, the continuing education departments across 18 campuses serve over 275,000 adults a year. The role of continuing education and the impact it has on our constituents cannot be understated. Beyond preparing adults to obtain high school equivalency diplomas, we also provide workforce development training in key sectors such as healthcare, education, hospitality, manufacturing and IT among others. Continuing education not only creates a pipeline into college, but most importantly responds

to market needs with short-term training, building in industry recognized credentials and certifications. We engage with employers to fill in skills gap for the incumbent workers as well as train for new merging needs and evolving workforce. Continuing education departments are essential to the colleges. We are the entrepreneurial arm of the college, self-sufficient departments funded through grants, contracts and tuition based non-credit training programs. Not only do we provide a service to the community, we also give back to the administration to support the mission of our colleges. It is our hope that the future chancellor and any CUNY College president will recognize continuing education as an integral part of the city university system our role in their vision for the upward mobility of the disadvantaged of the city of New York. Making industry connections with employer, being aware of market demands, and forging partnerships benefits the academic side of the college. It also provides the adult learners who make up a significant portion of the workforce with continuing education primarily, which transforms them from minimum wage to middle wage income earners, provides that bridge to college

1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

56

2 for those seeking to further their academic pursuits,  
3 and enhances the skills of working professionals to  
4 boost their earning potential. We are seeking new  
5 leaders of our university who understand the  
6 essential role of continuing education in the growth  
7 of the university, and the economic development of  
8 New York City. Workforce training and continuing  
9 education are the engines of economic development for  
10 the university, and the city and we look forward to  
11 working with the new leaders of the university.

12 [pause] Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you so much.

14 Council Member, do you have any questions?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: And—and I—I know  
16 the importance of continuing ed. I don't think, and  
17 I want to get your opinion.

18 FERN CHAN: Uh-hm.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Do you think the  
20 University actually promotes it enough? Do you think  
21 they respect it enough?

22 FERN CHAN: So, my opinion would be--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: [interposing] In  
24 the past?

25



FERN CHAN: Not to the level that we would like. So, I think we lack the administration's support. It has come a long way. We have seen a shift, but it would be nice to, you know, turn that tide of it now that we have an opportunity to bring in a new chancellor to include us in that vision, which is we've always been somewhat, I wouldn't say marginalized, but not included as such. So, it would be nice to have that recognition, and also have a more collaborative effort, right, between the college, the academic side versus the non-credit programming.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yeah, so many times especially I was at a college of technology--

FERN CHAN: [interposing] Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: --and it was so important in our area to bring some of the employees from businesses that the technology has kind of left them behind. They needed to get an education and not a particularly expensive education. They didn't want to invest the time that academics require. So, they had to learn the technology and they'll--they'll certainly advance in their job that's so important, and yet I don't think we promoted it enough. So, I

think we need to do that, and I think—I hope the new chancellor—I agree with 100% that the new chancellor should recognize the importance of continuing ed. Thanks so much.

FERN CHAN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you for your testimony, and I also understand the importance of continuing ed especially in light of the age of technology that we're living in. So, we do want to thank you.

FERN CHAN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [pause] And our next panelist we're going to call at this time John Aderounmu from the University Student Seat-Senate. Good morning. If you'd raise your right hand, the attorney will swear you in.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee, and to respond honestly to Council members' questions?

JOHN ADEROUNMU: I do.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. You may begin.

JOHN ADEROUNMU: Good morning Chair of the Higher Education Committee, Council Member Inez Barron, members of the City Council, and interested committee members. My name is John Adedrounmu. I'm the Chairperson of the University Student Senate of the City University of New York. I was elected and charged to represent the interest of over 500,000 students at CUNY, and by virtue of position sitting as a Trustee on the Board of Trustees at CUNY, whose responsibility is to govern the university, review its policy and do its best for the interest of the university. The changes in the Chancellor Search Policy was announced as a calendar item of the full Board meeting for Feb-February 5<sup>th</sup> with one hearing the previous week, of which its location was announced at the very minimum required by law in the Central Office of the City University of New York as opposed to the regular location at Baruch College for this very hearing of the Board. It was also scheduled for the first week day of classes in which was a vital part in turnout as students will have had more pressing concerns as they know it's a calendar item—even if they had known it was a calendar item in the first place. I have concerns with the

construction (sic) of the calendar item, the chancellor search policy revisions. Firstly, the University Student Senate was not provided with an opportunity to review the policy, and make recommendations prior to the policy being added to the board calendar. This is not the first time this issue has been raised, and it's my understanding that our current Board Chair William Thompson was—assured my predecessor that policies would not be brought to the board without provide trustees and USS advanced notice to review the policy and provide feedback. Secondly, this—this policy was not considered approved by any board committee of the board. It has been common—common practice that the calendar items be reviewed and recommended by the committee before receiving full board consideration. This ensure that the policy has been entirely vetted and received support from several board members. This policy has also lacked any involvement of faculty representation because they did not have a say on the full board meeting. So, when policies circumvent the committee process, it deprives faculty members of the right to vote on a policy, and I believe it's in the best interest of the university to continue the shared

governance and inclusivity of the respective stakeholders. It's what makes CUNY the greatest urban university in the world. The university is house to the most diverse student body in the world—in the world, but it—that is not reflective of executive positions, presidents and even professors at the university. Today, only four of the current presidents that have black presidents. Only—that is only 16% of the systems' institutions. This certainly is not reflective of the ethnicity of the student population, which is 25% black, 30% Latino and white—and while only 24% white or identify as white. I quote this now on the testimony you—you gave. You were unable to give to the—to the board on that very day as you were held down—not held down but delayed from coming up until the testimony was finished. Nearly 65% of all CUNY staff under the Executive Compensation Plan identifies as either white or Italian-American. The language of the policy, as you correctly put in your testimony particularly for Section 2.3 and which I quote, "is a non-course and on clear def—definitive statement that specify—specifically identifies blacks and by extension by Latinos as groups that are in college to

apply. To the contrary, it singles out Italian-Americans and encourages them to apply, but the University Chancellor's mandate in 1976, the Italian-Americans are designated and offered official affirmative action category within CUNY in addition to black, non-Hispanic African-Americans, Hispanics and all the traditionally underrepresented groups. However, the act as amending in this section single out Italian-Americans in this way bridge (sic) insensitively especially in 2018 when 65% of the CUNY student body is black and Latino. When I request that both the chair of the board and the general counsel the reasons for the changes to the policy, I was told that it is to reflect the recent updates of the presidential search policies. I was surprised that a policy that with such great impact on the future of the city was hurriedly changed without the what I would consider due process. It was not mandated by law to be—to be changed, and—and the reason—and the strong reasoning for which was the main factor was that subordinated policies were changed in previous years. It does not make any sense to me as to why the changes are being made in general. The last time these changes were being made

in the mid-90s, and I understand that that's probably outdated, but you don't make up a generally policy overnight because you haven't them in two decades. You still give it as due process. You do not make drastic changes to policies or laws in form of government simply because someone feels two decades is too much of a time to keep the single taxes low with that being changed by—with that argument. All those that have been changed with that argument. This is the argument that I think is not very feasible as to which many other changes in the university has been made, and I will definitely be coming back to the City Council to testify about that. As of yesterday, I was appointed to the Chancellor's Search Committee by the Chair or the Board as required by the current university bylaws by virtue of my position as Chair of the University Senate—the University Student Senate. Thank you for this opportunity to present these highlights to you. I offer my testimony of these, and if you have any questions I will answer—answer them.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you for coming. Congratulations on being named to the Search Committee. We're pleased that there will be someone

with a different kind of bent or understanding as to how we should proceed. We know that you'll be sworn to secrecy, but we look forward to you having your input in that important selection of chancellor, and as you indicated in your testimony, I do feel this country, the bedrock documents of this country are what still governs this country, and those bedrock documents do not treat African-Americans as full people. We're three-fifths. They never changed. So, it's still in there, and I think that the policies and practices at institutions and system still implemented today reflect that. So, we're looking to have a chancellor that understands the importance of a CUNY education. I'm a CUNY graduate, a proud CUNY graduate of Hunter Class of January 1967, majored in physiology, minored in psychology, and it was the best education. Of course, at that time it was free, which was the other piece that's added on. I just had to make sure I could get the 15 cents to get the token to get to college, and it was a struggle, but we know that CUNY is a great institution, has great potential and it has a great responsibility to make sure that it provides a great education to all of those who come through its doors.



And we've got to make sure that we pay faculty adequately, and that they can be compensated at a rate, which allows them to live in this great city and to do the great work that they do. Council Member Holden. Oh, and I see—I'm sorry. We've been joined by Council Member Cumbo. I didn't know that you were coming. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: First of all, I want to thank you for your service and thank you for your involvement. It's great to see students involved. What would—what's the single most—what's the step that you would take to increase student involvement in the selection of the chancellor? One—  
one thing?

JOHN ADEROUNMU: Make it open to the public, and make sure we have public hearings on this matter as to what the students would like to see in the chancellor process.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Not to increase more—like let's say more students on the Search Committee?

JOHN ADEROUNMU: That too, but--

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: [interposing]  
Okay.

JOHN ADEROUNMU: --so it's actually-

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: [interposing] I asked you for one, but I-I [laughter]

JOHN ADEROUNMU: So, actually that-at this-at this moment I guess it would be very difficult to-to push for especially with the way this policy in the first place was made.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yeah, well there might be let's say a student from the community colleges and a student from the senior colleges selected.

JOHN ADEROUNMU: There's one other student selected and was appointed by the chair of the board-

-

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: [interposing] Right.

JOHN ADEROUNMU: They'll be serving on.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay, great. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Council Member Cumbo.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you, Chair Barron. This question might have already been asked and answered, but wanted to ask you or perhaps Chair

Barron if this question was asked. Has there ever been a CUNY graduate who has served as the chancellor of CUNY?

JOHN ADEROUNMU: Well, that's not something I'm very familiar with.

COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDERN: Goldstein.

JOHN ADEROUNMU: So, I'm--so the previous chancellor from what I'm just hearing [laughter] served--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] He was at CUNY.

JOHN ADEROUNMU: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: As a graduate?

JOHN ADEROUNMU: As a graduate at CUNY.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you to the committee and thank you to the panelists for coming, and to the audience if there are no other persons interested in presenting testimony, this hearing is now closed. Thank you. [gavel]

1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

68

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date February 15, 2018