

NYC Council Higher Education Committee Public Hearing

Subject: City Council CUNY Task Force

Testimony of Hercules E. Reid, Co-Chair of City Council CUNY Task Force and Legislative Director of the CUNY University Student Senate

May 31, 2018

Greetings to the Higher Education Committee and the members of the New York City Council,

My name is Hercules E. Reid, and I am the Co-Chair of the New York City Council CUNY Task Force. It's truly a privilege to be appointed by the Speaker of the City Council and serve as the student's voice, both past and present, in providing progress for our future. This opportunity has been a platform to take what I learned and advocated for as a former two-term Student Government President of New York City College of Technology and Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs of CUNY University Student Senate and assist in putting it into legislation. I would like to make a special mention to the sponsors of this bill to remind them of the commitment they made. This Task Force was sponsored by Council Members Inez D. Barron, Margaret S. Chin, Inez E. Dickens, Daniel Dromm, Deborah L. Rose, Andrew Cohen, Jumaane D. Williams, Robert E. Cornegy, Jr., Ben Kallos, Ydanis A. Rodriguez, Helen K. Rosenthal, Donovan J. Richards, Annabel Palma, Brad S. Lander, Stephen T. Levin, Paul A. Vallone, Rory I. Lancman, Vincent J. Gentile, and The Public Advocate (Ms. Tish James). I would like to express extreme gratitude towards to the Chair of the Higher Education Committee, Council Member Inez Barron, who has played a significant role in the creation of this Task Force and has remained invested, being an authentic voice for the people especially for our beloved CUNY.

This Task Force assembled a team of twelve people from various walks of life, allowing for multiple perspectives to express their thoughts and concerns about CUNY, thus creating a White Paper that we can share. The Task Force worked diligently and produced a recommendation report that researched historical and current data on CUNY and reviewed best practices.

The White Paper offers recommendations in three areas:

1. What the real costs of attendance are for CUNY students and how addressing these costs would improve access and graduation rates;
2. How to ensure that CUNY faculty are adequately supported academically and financially so that they are entirely able to help their students achieve academic success; and
3. What needs to be done to ensure that the physical environment on CUNY's 24 campuses is conducive to the teaching and learning are necessary to make possible student success?

It has not been easy to get to this point and I would like to apologize to the public on record for the delay in the release of the White Paper. According to Local Law 161, the report was to be finalized in October 2017, and the Task Force requested an extension to produce a more thorough report by December 2017. The White Paper draft was completed, and a public announcement was in order. It was requested that the release be canceled to allow time for the Mayor's Office to read and provide feedback. As of yesterday evening, we finally received input from the deputy Mayor's office.

I am calling on all the sponsors of this legislation, the CUNY community and elected officials to band together on this report to make sure it sees the light of day. Very often great work like this falls on deaf ears and no change comes of it. We can not do this alone, and if you believe in the power of higher education, it is time now more than ever to take advantage of the weight of this document and command the change and investment we need to make CUNY more accessible and affordable, which will directly impact graduation rates.

There is a song by an artist Big Sean called, "One man can change the world". This song is inspirational to me because it represents not being able to rely on people who give their word to be the difference. I realized a long time ago I was on this planet to serve a bigger purpose than myself. I will continue to fight for the 500,000+ students present and to come who deserve a chance, just like I received in life. It takes more than one person to change the world, but everyday, like my ancestors, I will let it at least begin with me.

NYC Council Higher Education Committee Public Hearing

Subject: City Council CUNY Task Force

***Testimony of Kawthar Abdullah, Vice Chair for Disability Affairs for CUNY University
Student Senate***

May 31, 2018

Greetings to the Higher Education Committee and the members of the New York City Council,

My name is Kawthar Abdullah. I'm a Student Government Senator at the Borough of Manhattan Community College not far from here. I also currently serve as Vice Chair for Disability Affairs for the CUNY University Student Senate. As a first generation Arab immigrant woman from Yemen, I never thought, one day I would be sitting here as a college student. I will be graduating with my Associate's degree in Liberal Arts this Friday. I will continue my education at the City College of New York, where I was accepted into the Skadden Arps honors program. While at City College, I will double major in political science and International Relations.

For the average New Yorker, this may not be a big deal. As an immigrant coming from a village deep in the Yemeni suburbs where war has infiltrated the towns, and the educational opportunities depleted, I consider myself lucky. My native country doesn't promote intellectual curiosity or see educational opportunities as a right; instead, they are viewed as a luxury. Here at CUNY, education is a right and somewhat affordable. However, if CUNY continues to raise the tuition or the conditions remain the way they currently are, then I and many others will not be able to afford to go to school. At times I feel that the idea of me becoming a lawyer is a farfetched opportunity, not because of access, but the everlasting increasing tuition.

Most of the people I represent and come to love, question the fate of their future. Many of their difficulties are lack socioeconomic opportunities and foundational support. Knowing what I know now, people like me to have the intellect and will to succeed, but lack the means or access. Having insufficient funds and lack of guidance, can we genuinely continue to wonder why so many of our problems have become palpable? Many individuals talents are wasted because they have been compromised to choose less desired alternative routes.

CUNY students are mostly people of colors, and they feel like not having affordable access to higher education, the continued divestment in our facilities and faculty, is a direct attack on us. We must not forget, tuition hikes make it harder for low-income students to enroll or even complete college. Most of my classmates are full-time students and work two jobs to support themselves. The unwillingness to fully support Higher Education, adds more to their worries and is not the way to make colleges more accessible or affordable. The 500,000+ students and I deserve quality affordable better yet Free Education! We are the future generation of leaders, and it is in the best interest of New York to make CUNY free!

Task Force on Affordability, Admissions, and Graduation Rates at the City University of New York

Recommendation Report (Draft)

Executive Summary

The Task Force on Affordability, Admissions, and Graduation Rates at the City

University of New York was established by Local Law 161, enacted by the City Council on November 16, 2016 and approved by the Mayor on December 6, 2016. This temporary task force was established to examine ways to understand affordability, admission and graduation rates of the City University of New York, and to recommend improvements in each area. Members included individuals appointed by the mayor, individuals appointed by the Speaker of the City Council, a designee of the Speaker of the City Council, and a designee of the Public Advocate. A list of Task Force members and their affiliations is included in the Appendix.

Task Force members are fully aware that our deliberations and the writing of this report have taken place against the backdrop of ongoing negotiations in Washington D.C. on a gigantic federal tax cut plan that will have potentially catastrophic fiscal consequences not only for New York State and New York City but also for the City University of New York. While the pending bill has not yet been finalized and signed into law, we are cognizant that the fiscal circumstances in which CUNY could find itself will have a major and likely deleterious impact on CUNY's faculty, staff and students over the course of the coming months and years.

The task force reviewed best practices, research, historical and current data on CUNY, its students and faculty, and decided to offer recommendations in three areas:

1. what the true costs of attendance are for CUNY students and how addressing these costs would improve access and graduation rates;
2. how to ensure that CUNY faculty are adequately supported academically and financially so that they are fully able help their students achieve academic success; and

3. what needs to be done to ensure that the physical environment on CUNY's 24 campuses is conducive to the teaching and learning needed to make possible student success?

The task force organized into sub-committees to address each of these three areas and provided a series of recommendations, highlighted in **bold** throughout this report. They are also included below.

- The Task Force believes that New York State and City should commit to finding sufficient public funding to eliminate all tuition charges for full-time and part-time students enrolled across the CUNY system so that the City University can return to its original historic mission to provide tuition-free public higher education to all city residents who are high school graduates.
- The Task Force recommends that CUNY establish an emergency fund of no less than \$5 million to help respond to its students' immediate financial problems and emergencies (e.g., rent payments, medical expenses, food and book purchases) that prevent students' from completing their university studies. This recommendation will require a concerted political effort to secure such emergency funding from a combination of city, state, and private philanthropic sources.
- The Task Force recommends that the NYC Department of Education and CUNY each hire and train sufficient full-time guidance counselors who are specialists in the transition from high school to college as well peer mentor college students to assist graduating high school and new CUNY students in sustaining their transition to university life and work. The Task Force further recommends that CUNY and DOE guidance counselors collaborate closely and meet periodically to develop best practices that lead to students' seamless transition from high school to college. The Task Force also recommends that CUNY enhance its existing student-facing technology and data gathering to help determine when students are facing academic or financial stress points and alert advisors/ counselors and students of those anticipated problems.
- The Task Force calls on the governor, the mayor, and state legislators to provide the necessary support to expand the ASAP model to encompass as many new CUNY community college and senior college students as possible. While the Task Force doesn't recommend ASAP and the Guttman models for every CUNY student, having these options across CUNY's 24 campuses (rather than at just a few at present) could save time and financial resources for thousands of CUNY students who would benefit from those programs.

- The Task Force recommends the implementation of a CUNY Institute for Adult Learners to ensure that students deemed “non-traditional” who may have even more difficulty navigating college campuses than students recently out of high school have the opportunity to complete their degrees. The Task Force further recommends that CUNY extend this model of service and special attention to non-traditional students to encompass students with disabilities, veterans, as well as students whose gender and bilingual identities make their college attendance additionally challenging. The Task Force commends CUNY’s Black Male Initiative (BMI) and other campus-based efforts designed to encourage increased college attendance by African-American men, and recommends that the BMI be expanded to encompass other neglected groups, including disabled students, veterans, and other students of color who attend CUNY and who struggle to stay in school and complete their degrees.
- The Task Force recommends that CUNY’s child care centers at all CUNY campuses be expanded and their state and city operating budgets increased to allow the children of staff and faculty to attend alongside the children of CUNY undergraduate and graduate students.
- The Task Force recommends that New York State adjust the criteria for students to apply for the Excelsior Scholarship to eliminate the restrictive yearly credit requirements to maintain Excelsior scholarships. That one change would allow more CUNY (and SUNY) students to benefit from the Excelsior Scholarship program’s provisions. The Task Force also supports the effort to devote \$50 million each year in Excelsior Scholarship funds to underwrite a Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Fund targeted at low-income CUNY and SUNY students.
- The Task Force recommends that CUNY’s Single Stop program be significantly expanded to all CUNY campuses.
- The Task Force recommends that free Metro Cards be provided and/or reduced MTA Fares for all CUNY students.
- The Task Force recommends that the pilot program to encourage FAFSA registration by undergraduates should be expanded to encompass all CUNY campuses as well as colleges and universities throughout New York City.
- The Task Force recommends that CUNY ensure that policies proposed by the CUNY Development Education Task Force are in fact implemented to make the

necessary changes in math remediation sustainable and that funding is provided to support these institutional changes.

- The Task Force believes that the new CUNY strategic framework offered in “Connected CUNY” is a necessary step in order to assist CUNY students in achieving academic success.
- The Task Force recommends that CUNY undertake a full and ongoing review of the Pathways process and CUNY’s campus articulation agreements that were generated under Pathways to determine if problems of articulation continue to exist among and between CUNY campuses.
- The Task Force recommends that the city and state secure and commit the necessary funding to increase the salaries and number of full-time CUNY faculty. Increased pay and an increase in the numbers and percentage of full-time faculty teaching at CUNY will make it possible for the campuses to successfully recruit more faculty of color to reflect more closely the demographic profile of CUNY’s student population.
- The Task Force recommends that CUNY be allowed and supported to convert as many of the current part-time lines as possible to full-time lines, which will require additional funding by both New York State and City governments.
- The Task Force recommends that CUNY management, in collaboration with PSC-CUNY and the University Faculty Senate, develop a basic orientation/training program for full-time and part-time CUNY faculty focused on establishing and improving the improved student mentoring and advisement made possible by the workload reduction.
- The Task Force recommends that CUNY management find necessary additional revenue sources from the state and city to make full-time faculty pay scales competitive with other similar public university systems nationally.
- The Task Force recommends a separate review of CUNY’s capital policies and procedures to ensure that critical maintenance work that is funded with public monies is undertaken by CUNY in a timely manner. We also recommend that CUNY management be required to submit an annual report and update to both the City Council Committee on Higher Education and the borough presidents about the status of all prior Reso-A funding provided to CUNY campuses for capital projects and/or critical maintenance projects.

- The Task Force also recommends a review of all CUNY properties to understand if all buildings and land are being used adequately for educational purposes and if there are opportunities for possible redevelopment. The Task Force recommends that any income generated by such potential redevelopment be used to enhance the educational mission of CUNY.
- The Task Force recommends that CUNY leadership undertake a full and complete audit of all CUNY buildings to assess the progress being made on every campus to make them fully disability-compliant.
- The Task Force recommends that CUNY management be required to submit annual reports of this disability audit to the City Council Higher Education Committee.

CUNY's Historical Development¹

Before arriving at the current recommendations, the task force developed a historical analysis of CUNY as an institution and how the current system came into being.

For 170 years New York City's municipal college system has provided affordable, post-secondary educational opportunities to generations of New York City residents. The Free Academy,² established by popular referendum in 1847, had a clear and admirably stated founding mission: "The experiment is to be tried, whether the *children* of the people, the *children of the whole people*, can be educated . . ." The expressed desire 170 years ago to provide access to public higher education to city residents was matched by the city's abiding commitment to provide that education "gratuitously," that is tuition free, paid for out of the city's tax coffers.

The city's municipal colleges grew slowly in the century following the founding of the Free Academy, adding what would become Hunter College in 1870 and then Brooklyn College in 1930 and Queens College in 1937. The city expanded the capacity of the four-campus municipal college system gradually in the 1950s and early 1960s, with the total number of its colleges growing to nine (including the addition of three community colleges) by 1961. In that year the state legislature consolidated the municipal college system under the umbrella of The City University of New York (CUNY).

The new CUNY system tried hard to expand to meet the growing demands of city residents for public higher education throughout the decade of the 1960s. By decade's end,

¹ This section of the report is adapted from Task Force co-chair Stephen Brier's recent book (co-authored with Michael Fabricant) *Austerity Blues: Fighting for the Soul of Public Higher Education*, Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2016, Chapters 2 & 3.

² The Free Academy would officially change its name to City College in 1866.

CUNY had managed to expand from nine campuses to fifteen, adding three new senior and three new community colleges. Despite this critically needed expansion, CUNY still had too few undergraduate seats available on its campuses to meet both escalating public demand for admission to CUNY's campuses as well as the ever increasing grade requirements needed for city high school graduates to gain admission. By 1968 NYC high school graduates wishing to attend one of CUNY's four original senior colleges, for example, needed a Regent's diploma and a high school average in the 88 to 92 range to be granted admission. Even CUNY's community colleges required high school averages in the low 80s. Those tough admissions standards resulted in CUNY remaining an overwhelmingly white and increasingly middle-class institution throughout the 1960s, even as the racial and ethnic demographics of the city were dramatically changing. Almost one million white New Yorker residents left the city for nearby suburbs over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, to be replaced by an almost equal number of new African American and Puerto Rican migrants to the city. Given that the city's public school population was almost 50 percent Black and Puerto Rican by the end of the 1960s, it is striking that as late as 1967 the total number of Black and Puerto Rican students at the CUNY's senior colleges stood at just 7 percent.

Though the CUNY central administration understood the extent and impact of the demographic changes transforming the city, the Board of Higher Education (the municipal college's governing body, created in 1926), was unwilling to directly confront CUNY's increasing problems of racial exclusivity. Finally, students of color across the CUNY system took matters into their own hands in the spring of 1969. Spurred by Governor Rockefeller's attempt to cut state support for CUNY's 1969-70 operating budget, Black and Puerto Rican students, along with white allies among the student body and faculty on most CUNY

campuses, seized control of their campuses. Following negotiations with CUNY and city leaders, the striking students won a commitment from the CUNY administration to lift all prior barriers and requirements for high school graduates to gain admission to CUNY, implementing an actual "open admissions" system at the nation's largest public urban university in Fall 1970. In the words of the historic Board of Higher Education resolution, the primary goal of CUNY's new open admissions program sought nothing less than "the ethnic integration of the university."

The demographic impact of the new policy was immediate: the first "open admissions" entering class in Fall 1970 was 75 percent larger than the previous year's in terms of size; one year later the black and Puerto Rican student enrollment in CUNY's senior colleges already represented 24 percent of CUNY's total as contrasted with well less than half that percentage a year earlier. And not only students of color benefitted from the new open admissions policy at CUNY; so too did working-class white students from Irish and Italian backgrounds, who were able to gain admission to CUNY where previously their high school rankings had largely excluded them. The number of Italian Americans entering CUNY, for example, doubled from 1969 to 1971. By 1975 (five years after the launch of open admissions), CUNY had created a more racially and ethnically diverse pool of 253,000 matriculating undergraduates (a 55 percent increase in total enrollment since 1969). Seventy-eight percent of first-year students entering all CUNY campuses in 1969 had been white; by 1975, that number was 30 percent. In one fell swoop, CUNY had thrust itself to the forefront of national efforts to make tuition-free public higher education available to any city high school graduate who wished to attend college, transforming CUNY into the most open and perhaps most envied public higher education system in the country in the early 1970s. This dramatic transformation after 1970 made CUNY into the diverse public

education system that we know and recognize today, one that serves as a transmission belt to middle-class jobs and income for many poor and working-class New Yorkers.

The golden age of truly open, democratically accessible, tuition free, and racially and ethnically integrated public higher education in NYC sadly would last in total only half a dozen years, however. Despite the triumph of open admissions, CUNY continued to suffer significant fiscal problems. Neither the BHE nor the city and state, which remained jointly responsible for underwriting the operating costs of CUNY in the early 1970s,³ committed sufficient funding to fully support CUNY's expanding operating costs in these years. Those growing costs included hiring sufficient numbers of new full-time faculty to instruct CUNY's expanding undergraduate enrollment and to develop and/or fully support the innovative teaching and remediation programs that this diverse student body needed to succeed in college. A direct result of this state underfunding was that two-thirds of the students entering CUNY in the early 1970s under the liberalized open admissions policy were leaving the system within four years of admission without graduating. Faculty workloads also varied widely among CUNY campuses as the number of adjuncts hired across the system increased dramatically. By 1974, adjunct faculty already comprised one in three CUNY teachers. That number is now one in two, and at some campuses almost three of four.

New York City's growing fiscal difficulties, of which funding for CUNY was a major part, brought the free tuition/open admissions policy to an abrupt and dramatic end. In June 1976, the BHE approved the imposition of tuition on all CUNY students in exchange

³ By 1973, New York State underwrote fully 45 percent of the operating budgets of CUNY's senior colleges. Stephen Brier, "A History Lesson for the Governor," *PSC-CUNY Clarion*, Feb. 2016. <http://www.psc-cuny.org/clarion/february-2016/history-lesson-governor-0>.

for a total state takeover of senior college finances (the community colleges would still largely be carried on New York City's budget). To its credit the State of New York accepted CUNY's special mission, even as it agreed to absorb the total operating costs of the city's senior colleges. The 1976 legislation, which also established the current Board of Trustees, included a specific acknowledgment of CUNY's unique mission: "The city university is of vital importance as a vehicle for the upward mobility of the disadvantaged in the city of New York Only the strongest commitment to the special needs of an urban constituency justifies the legislature's support of an independent and unique structure for the university."⁴

Despite the state takeover of CUNY's operating funding after 1976, all capital construction was halted and almost 5,000 faculty and staff members were laid off. While open admissions at CUNY remained in place, at least officially, the decision to charge tuition and tighten admissions standards, especially at the senior colleges, dramatically eroded the underpinnings of a truly open and democratic public higher education system. CUNY suffered a decline of 62,000 in its total enrollment by the end of the 1970s, with 50 percent fewer Black and Latino freshmen among CUNY's entering class in 1980.

The final nail in the coffin of CUNY's path breaking open admissions policy was hammered into place two decades after the 1976-77 fiscal crisis. In 1998-99, Mayor Rudy Giuliani and the chair of the CUNY Board of Trustees that he had selected, Herman Badillo, attacked CUNY as "An Institution Adrift." The first step in their effort to reshape the municipal colleges was ending CUNY's legendary remedial education programs (a hallmark of the Open Admissions era) at all CUNY senior colleges. The practical effect of this policy

⁴ <http://codes.findlaw.com/ny/education-law/edn-sect-6201.html>

was to drive ever-larger numbers of underprepared NYC high school graduates into CUNY's increasingly overwhelmed and overburdened community colleges. The impact of this transformative change was, as we will see in the next section of this report, that the community colleges were increasingly unable to deliver on the promise of remedial/developmental instruction for underprepared entering students.⁵

We can't detail here CUNY's ongoing financial woes over the next 40 years of its history, other than to say that CUNY continued to experience fiscal travail at the hands of both Republican and Democratic governors, all of whom consistently failed in a variety of ways over the next four decades to provide the necessary financial support that CUNY needed to fulfill its age-old mission to provide free, quality higher education to the citizens of the city. CUNY has never managed to return to the pre-1976 levels of state and city support that made possible the dramatic expansion of CUNY's undergraduate enrollment and the employment of sufficient full-time faculty (who numbered above 11,000 by 1975) to educate its unique student population. The ongoing withdrawal of state support for CUNY and the sharp decline in the number of full-time faculty explain, in large part, the current financial and educational struggles experienced by CUNY students.

In the pointed concluding words of the Center for an Urban Future's December 2017 "Degrees of Difficult" report, New York State at this point in time "has fallen far behind its financial obligations to the city's public education system at both the K-12 and postsecondary levels" and "the impact of [this] underfunding from New York State is pervasive."⁶ It is to that pervasive impact of persistent underfunding of CUNY

⁵ Anthony Picciano and Chet Jordan (2017). *CUNY's First Fifty Years: Triumphs and Ordeal of a People's University*. New York: Routledge, 71-83.

⁶ Center for An Urban Future, "Degrees of Difficulty: Boosting College Success in New York City," 37. <https://nycfuture.org/research/degrees-of-difficulty>.

that this Task Force report now turns, focusing first on what CUNY needs to do to assure greater student success and degree completion, followed by an analysis of the status of CUNY faculty, both full-time and part-time, and concluding with a brief discussion of CUNY critical infrastructure needs, focusing especially on required critical maintenance that must be completed to establish a safe, healthy and function physical environment for faculty to teach and students to learn. We believe that the solutions to CUNY's problems rest in a tripartite approach that looks critically at and makes recommendation about the status of CUNY's student body, its faculty, and its physical infrastructure.

1. Supporting Student Access and Completion

A college degree is one key path to escaping poverty. Several of the campuses of the City University of New York (CUNY) top the Social Mobility Index, leading the nation's four-year colleges in helping students achieve the American dream of moving up the socio-economic ladder and landing good-paying, high-quality jobs. The Brookings Institution has found that a Bachelor's degree holder contributes \$278,000 more to the local economy through direct spending over the course of his or her lifetime than the average high school graduate; an Associate's degree holder contributes \$81,000 more than a high school graduate.⁷ College attendance and, more importantly, completion of a degree is also a sure path to becoming a more enlightened and informed citizen as well as a productive one, of the city, the state, and the nation.

The Transition from High School to College

In order to fully understand what is required for college students to complete degrees one must look beyond the simple availability of higher education services in a city as complex as New York. According to the CUNY Office of Institutional Research, six of every ten NYC public high school graduates attend CUNY and half of those incoming college students will go to a CUNY community college.⁸ Only four in ten of those entering students (about 41 percent) are properly prepared to undertake college-level work, requiring them to take one or more remedial/development

⁷ <https://www.brookings.edu/research/what-colleges-do-for-local-economies-a-direct-measure-based-on-consumption/>

⁸ NYC public high schools typically graduate between 75,000 and 80,000 students each year, which yields 45,000 new CUNY students.

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/GraduationDropoutReports/default.htm>; CUNY Office of Institutional Research, "Enrollment." <http://cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ira/ir/data-book/current/enrollment.html>.

courses when they first enter CUNY.⁹ These facts suggest that significant educational problems persist for the majority of city high school graduates as they enter college. Many New York City high schools students also do not have access to sufficient numbers of college counselors or receive adequate advisement about college attendance. On average in city high schools one counselor advises between 221 and 300 students.¹⁰ In this environment high school students cannot receive the necessary advisement and attention they deserve.

Students in CUNY

It is instructive to understand the ways the demographic profile of CUNY's student body has changed over the past decade. CUNY's senior and community colleges each experienced an increase in undergraduate enrollment totaling 20,000 between Fall 2007 and Fall 2016.¹¹ Over the course of the decade the percentage of Black students declined 2.6 percent and 3.2 percent in CUNY's senior and community colleges respectively, the percentage of Hispanic students increased 2.4 percent and 6.8 percent respectively, and CUNY's White student population declined 6.6 percent in the senior colleges and 4.9 percent in the community colleges (see Table 1A). That said, students of color (Black/Latinx/Asian) now comprise 79 percent of all CUNY undergraduates and 85 percent of students attending CUNY's community colleges.¹²

⁹ Analysis and Data calculated from School Quality Report 2015–2016 database, New York City Department of Education and from administrative data provided by New York City Department of Education. Charter schools and District 75 schools are excluded as are schools with small graduating cohorts.

¹⁰ Data submitted by NYC Department of Education to the NYC Council.

¹¹ Between 2007 and 2016 the increase in CUNY Full Time Equivalent students (FTEs, which combines several part-time students into a single full-time, 12 credit student) was even more striking, growing from 163,216 to 203,529, a 24.7 percent increase. See Table 1A¹. All Tables in this report are included in the Appendix.

¹² CUNY Office of Institutional Research, Current Student Data Book.

This changing demographic profile has an important impact on the need for remedial courses in math and English, especially for an expanding Hispanic undergraduate population that includes a growing number of English language learners. Table 1B indicates the trend lines in developmental education at CUNY between 2003 and 2014, with fully three of every five entering CUNY students needing to take at least one remedial math or reading/writing course, a measure of how unprepared most NYC public high school graduates are for college-level work.

The Research Alliance for New York City Schools states that while an increase in high school graduates has led to improvements in college access, there have not been comparable improvements in college persistence and completion.¹³ Though it contains the nation's largest public urban university, New York City is not the only urban area struggling with low completion rates; this is a major problem in higher education nationwide.¹⁴ Obstacles to graduation include: education and living expenses (including books and transportation); remediation needs; policies and processes that hinder student progress toward the degree; and lack of social/emotional supports. These roadblocks lead to stopping out and dropping out, spiraling student loan debt (which is difficult to pay back without completing a college degree), and mental health issues. Students who are from low-income families

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https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/ks191/New_York_City_Goes_to_College_Report.pdf.

¹⁴ According to IPEDS, the three-year graduation + transfer rate for all community colleges in New York

City was 35.5 percent, compared to 30.9 percent in Los Angeles, 34.0 percent in Houston and 36.6 percent in Chicago.

or the first in their families to attend college face these hardships at a much higher rate.

While a record high number of students are enrolling in college nationwide (including at CUNY), overall college graduation rates have remained stagnant, with stark inequities between white and Asian students, who graduate at fairly high rates, and their Black and Latino peers, who struggle to do so. CUNY's 2016 Student Experience Survey noted that 71 percent of students in CUNY community colleges live in households that earn less than \$30,000 a year (and fully half of those live in households with annual income of less than \$20,000); the figure is 54 percent for CUNY's senior college students.¹⁵ Because many CUNY students come from poor or working-class families they are often required to work while going to school or worse, have to choose employment over starting or finishing their college educations. Fifty-three percent of students in CUNY work for pay and most labor more than 20 hours per week.¹⁶ This need to work adversely affects most CUNY students' academic performance.

Tuition and Non-tuition Financial Supports

CUNY prides itself that most of its students attend college "for free" because they receive need-based financial aid support, estimating that approximately 60 percent of CUNY students have their tuition covered through federal Pell Grants and the New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). The remaining 40 percent,

¹⁵ 2016 Student Experience Survey, CUNY.

¹⁶ Center for An Urban Future, "Degrees of Difficulty: Boosting College Success in New York City," 37. <https://nycfuture.org/research/degrees-of-difficulty>

however, must pay tuition to attend CUNY, often out of limited family resources. CUNY tuition charges have in fact skyrocketed since 2008, growing more than 63 percent for senior college students and over 71 percent for community college students, as CUNY has sought to make up for budgetary shortfalls from New York State by increasing tuition revenue (see Table 1C). The rise in CUNY tuition charges over the last quarter century has been even more dramatic, more than doubling from constituting 21 percent of CUNY's total operating budget in 1990-91 to 46 percent of CUNY's budget in 2014-15, a percentage almost equal to the total amount of operating support provided to CUNY by the New York State (see Table 1D). These tuition increases place an unconscionably heavy burden on many working-class families that want and need to send their loved ones to public universities but have too much income to qualify for TAP and Pell Grants. **The Task Force believes that New York State and City should commit to finding sufficient public funding to eliminate all tuition charges for full-time and part-time students enrolled across the CUNY system so that the City University can return to its original historic mission to provide tuition-free public higher education to all city residents who are high school graduates.**

While the tuition ceiling at CUNY for in-state students is now \$6,530 per year, CUNY estimates that other related educational expenses add as much as \$9,762 for students living with relatives and \$20,512 for students living on their own.¹⁷ Moreover 16 percent of CUNY community college students and 11 percent of students attending CUNY senior colleges have children and need to support them financially.

¹⁷ <http://www2.cuny.edu/financial-aid/tuition-and-college-costs/tuition-fees/#1452181615519-e5da8da8-8969>.

When you account for actual costs CUNY students incur for books, transportation, rent, and food, these non-tuition costs force students to work or take out student loans, which affect students economically and emotionally during and long after their college careers. CUNY's 2016 Experience Survey also notes that 82,000 students, about one-third of CUNY's total undergraduate population are forced to attend school part time because of family and work obligations.¹⁸

The most recent \$300 tuition hike imposed on CUNY students and the current plan to raise tuition again in the 2018-19 academic year did not lead to an increase in TAP or Pell aid, neither of which is available for part-time or graduate students. CUNY and SUNY instead are being forced to cover the increasing gap between tuition charges and tuition assistance out of their own operating budgets. According to the Center for an Urban Future's "Degrees of Difficulty: Boosting College Success in New York City" report, CUNY now pays approximately \$50 million annually in tuition waivers. That number will only increase as tuition continues to rise.¹⁹ **The Task Force recommends that CUNY establish an emergency fund of no less than \$5 million to help respond to its students' immediate financial problems and emergencies (e.g., rent payments, medical expenses, food and book purchases) that prevent students' from completing their university studies. This recommendation will require a concerted political effort to secure such emergency funding from a combination of city, state, and private philanthropic sources.**

¹⁸ 2016 Student Experience Survey, CUNY.

¹⁹ Center for An Urban Future, "Degrees of Difficulty: Boosting College Success in New York City," 37. <https://nycfuture.org/research/degrees-of-difficulty>

Proven Strategic Solutions

The Task Force has considered a number of current programs, strategic solutions, suggested interventions and efforts to improve CUNY student completion rates and offers here a set of recommendations that draw heavily on successful programs that have already helped CUNY students on various campuses to improve both their academic success and their time-to-degree performance.

Retention Specialists and Peer Mentors to Help Students Navigate Complex University Systems:

While the DOE has focused on expanding the number of college counselors to help more NYC high school students get into college, little is done after high school students graduate. The goal of college counselors in high schools has always been to get students in to college, but the goal needs to expand toward helping students make it *through* college. Charter school networks such as KIPP have begun to shift their focus toward sustaining high school graduates *through* college and have developed support systems to assist high school graduates during their college years. NYC public schools should mirror this strategy and that of workforce development providers by hiring “retention specialists” to engage with alumni who have gone off to college. For example, the Success Coaching Unit at CUNY’s Hostos Community College focuses on academic and career counseling as well as helping students address structural and personal barriers to attendance, persistence and program completion. It uses practices to identify potential issues before they have a chance to derail students’ progress to graduation. Similarly, the College of Staten Island has a major Student Counseling Center, which provides personal and academic counseling services that

explore issues that help CSI students to achieve and sustain their college success. Professionally trained counselors provide individual and group counseling to address various issues that affect academic performance and experiences in college and personal life. While these model CUNY programs are usually carried out by professional full-time staff, peer mentors– college students hired to work with high school and college students–have also achieved significant retention successes. **The Task Force therefore recommends that the NYC Department of Education and CUNY each hire and train sufficient full-time guidance counselors who are specialists in the transition from high school to college as well peer mentor college students to assist graduating high school and new CUNY students in sustaining their transition to university life and work. The Task Force further recommends that CUNY and DOE guidance counselors collaborate closely and meet periodically to develop best practices that lead to students' seamless transition from high school to college. The Task Force also recommends that CUNY enhance its existing student-facing technology and data gathering to help determine when students are facing academic or financial stress points and alert advisors/ counselors and students of those anticipated problems.**

Build on Best Practices from Proven Programs across CUNY

In addition to Hostos College's Success Coaching Unit and CSI's Student Counseling Center, several programs already exist throughout CUNY colleges that help students with securing necessary resources to reach graduation. CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) assists students in earning

Associate's degrees within three years by providing a range of financial, academic, and personal supports including comprehensive and personalized advisement, career counseling, tutoring, waivers for tuition and mandatory fees, MTA MetroCards, and additional financial assistance to defray the cost of textbooks. This program will help up to 25,000 students by 2019 in six community colleges and three comprehensive colleges. **The Task Force calls on the governor, the mayor, and state legislators to provide the necessary support to expand the ASAP model to encompass as many new CUNY community college and senior college students as possible.**

Another example is the Strategic Partnerships for Achievement and Retention (SPARK) Program at Kingsborough Community College's. This initiative works to improve retention rates, credit accumulation, and academic performance of incoming first-year students, while enhancing the experiences of and career prospects for continuing students. Kingsborough has also recently expanded access to its AssistMe online app, an innovative mobile application that allows quick smartphone access to information on financial aid, academic support, food and housing assistance, residency and childcare for all Kingsborough C.C. students.

Finally, The Center for an Urban Future in its December 2017 report²⁰ suggests that colleges borrow the Guttman Community College and ASAP models and offer guided pathways for students. This approach offers students structured choices in their degree programs instead of the *a la carte* model current used by most CUNY campuses (and most higher education institutions around the country) and is a guided pathway toward degree completion. This approach helps students avoid

²⁰ <https://nycfuture.org/pdf/CUF-DegreesofDifficulty.pdf>

mistakenly taking courses outside of their degree path that wouldn't be eligible for state TAP funding and that would increase their time to graduation. That said, the Task Force is also concerned that not all CUNY students are subjected to too narrow a range of choices of courses that they can take, allowing individual students some flexibility if they wish to pursue new areas of knowledge while also being appropriately guided to timely graduation. **While the Task Force doesn't recommend ASAP and the Guttman models for every CUNY student, having these options across CUNY's 24 campuses (rather than at just a few at present) could save time and financial resources for thousands of CUNY students who would benefit from those programs.**

Develop a CUNY Institute for Adult Learners

There are 1.8 million New York State residents (including 824,000 in New York City) aged 25 and above with some college attendance but who have not completed degrees. CUNY must do more to reach and serve these potential students. CUNY has proposed an Institute that would provide a centralized point of access for marketing, assessment, and counseling of individual students entering CUNY and would collaborate with unions, employers and other organizations. It would work with individual colleges and the University's central administration to adapt and implement effective policies and practices in supporting adult students, particularly at the associate degree level, and to conduct rigorous research and evaluation into student educational and workplace outcomes. **The Task Force recommends the implementation of a CUNY Institute for Adult Learners to ensure that students deemed "non-traditional" who may have even more difficulty navigating college**

campuses than students recently out of high school have the opportunity to complete their degrees. The Task Force further recommends that CUNY extend this model of service and special attention to non-traditional students to encompass students with disabilities, veterans, as well as students whose gender and bilingual identities make their college attendance additionally challenging. The Task Force commends CUNY's Black Male Initiative (BMI) and other campus-based efforts designed to encourage increased college attendance by African-American men, and recommends that the BMI be expanded to encompass other neglected groups, including disabled students, veterans, and other students of color who attend CUNY and who struggle to stay in school and complete their degrees.

Child Care at CUNY

CUNY currently includes small child-care facilities at each campus, which are limited to accepting the children of CUNY students, supported by a dedicated budget item from New York State. In order to support parents and the growing number of women who are attending CUNY as students and also work at various CUNY campuses, **the Task Force recommends that CUNY's child care centers at all CUNY campuses be expanded and their state and city operating budgets increased to allow the children of staff and faculty to attend alongside the children of CUNY undergraduate and graduate students.**

New York State's Excelsior Scholarship Program

The New York State Excelsior Scholarship was announced earlier this year as tuition-free education college for the New York's middle class. While hundreds of families will undoubtedly benefit statewide, tens of thousands of others will not, especially at CUNY. In the first semester that Excelsior was available to CUNY students, only about 2,000 of CUNY's 245,000 undergraduates (less than 1 percent) qualified for the program under its stringent requirements.²¹ Scholarship requirements such as full-time attendance (30 credits a year) will be difficult for over 50 percent of CUNY students who work to support themselves and their families. The Excelsior Scholarship, which is applied to a student's tuition bill after all other federal and state financial aid has been used up, does not cover other expenses that impede student success, such as transportation, food and childcare. For Academic Year 2017-18, CUNY tuition, fees and related costs averaged \$16,747 for students living with relatives and \$27,423 for students living on their own.²² The Excelsior scholarship plan does nothing to cover or even help underwrite those very real additional costs beyond tuition of attending college. **The Task Force recommends that New York State adjust the criteria for students to apply for the Excelsior Scholarship to eliminate the restrictive yearly credit requirements to maintain Excelsior scholarships. That one change would allow more CUNY (and SUNY) students to benefit from the Excelsior Scholarship program's provisions. The Task Force also supports the effort to devote \$50 million each year in Excelsior Scholarship**

²¹ SUNY qualified only about 4,000 for Excelsior scholarships, similar to the 1 percent figure that CUNY achieved.

²² <http://www2.cuny.edu/financial-aid/tuition-and-college-costs/comparing-college-costs/>

funds to underwrite a Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Fund targeted at low-income CUNY and SUNY students.

Supports that Address Student Stop-Out and Drop-Out

Connecting to Public Benefits

Although CUNY tuition and fees are relatively low compared to other public higher education institutions in the region, these costs are only a small portion of the overall cost of attending CUNY. Thirty-nine percent of CUNY students report being food insecure and 42 percent report being housing insecure.²³ CUNY's Single Stop is a one-stop solution to help connect low-income students to government benefits and other social and legal services to help overcome financial barriers. An examination of persistence rates among Single Stop students versus those who did not receive Single Stop services at Kingsborough and LaGuardia community colleges showed a 32 percent increase in retention rates for those students who receive Single Stop assistance.²⁴ **The Task Force recommends that CUNY's Single Stop program be significantly expanded to all CUNY campuses.**

Financial Support for College Expenses

Programs such as CUNY ASAP provide students with supports such as Metro Cards and stipends for purchase of course books. These items have successfully been used as incentives to ensure that students continuously meet with advisors and coaches while supporting them with material supports that help them complete their

²³ [http://wihopelab.com/publications/Wisconsin hope lab hungry to learn.pdf](http://wihopelab.com/publications/Wisconsin%20hope%20lab%20hungry%20to%20learn.pdf)

²⁴ Tina Rosenberg, "For Striving Students, a Connection to Money," *The New York Times* (March 26, 2014).

A.A. and A.S. degrees. In some instances, free MetroCards alone have motivated students to continue with their Associate's degree programs.²⁵ **The Task Force recommends that free Metro Cards be provided and/or reduced MTA Fares for all CUNY students.**

FAFSA/TAP Encouragement

Many students who complete the FAFSA form in their first year (almost 40 percent at CUNY) do not complete it in their second year of attendance. A behavioral science experiment that nudged CUNY freshman community college students via text messages to complete the FAFSA form resulted in a 14 percent increase in sophomore year enrollment. The Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity is currently working with ideas42, an NYC non-profit design and consulting firm, to design a pilot of this program, and **the Task Force recommends that this program to encourage FAFSA registration by undergraduates should be expanded to encompass all CUNY campuses as well as colleges and universities throughout New York City.**

CUNY Math Remediation

A CUNY Task Force on Developmental Education²⁶, convened by Provost Vita Rabinowitz in the fall of 2015, generally agreed that the existing remedial education process has not worked to the benefit of students and has become an obstacle to graduation. That Task Force's final recommendations include:

- a. changes in CUNY's remedial placement and exit policies;

²⁵ [http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/asap/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2015/02/MDRC Doubling Graduation Rates ASAP Final Report Feb 2015.pdf](http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/asap/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2015/02/MDRC_Doubling_Graduation_Rates_ASAP_Final_Report_Feb_2015.pdf)

²⁶ [http://www2.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/undergraduate-studies/developmental-education/Proposed-Recommendations-of-RTF-06.17.16.final .pdf](http://www2.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/undergraduate-studies/developmental-education/Proposed-Recommendations-of-RTF-06.17.16.final.pdf)

- b. alignment of math curricula so that each student receives the math education that is most relevant to their intended course of study; and
- c. additions to the supplemental educational support available to students in remediation and throughout the math curriculum.

This Task Force recommends that CUNY ensure that policies proposed by CUNY Developmental Education Task Force are in fact implemented to make the necessary changes in math remediation sustainable and that funding is provided to support these institutional changes.

CUNY Strategic Plan: Connected CUNY

Prior to the release of this report, CUNY released its new strategic framework, “Connected CUNY.” This framework includes a plan outlining the ways CUNY intends to grow in the areas of Access and Completion, College Readiness, Career Success, and Knowledge Creation. Specifically in the areas of Access and Completion, College Readiness, and Career Success, CUNY states that it will:

- Extend the benefits of higher education to more New Yorkers and the value of our degrees will be improved.
- Double its three-year graduation rate for associate degrees, leading the nation in urban community college attainment. CUNY will also raise by ten points the six-year graduation rate for bachelor’s programs.
- Eliminate barriers to registration and credit acceptance between CUNY colleges, and encourage students to take full advantage of the rich academic opportunities throughout the University, across college lines.
- Increase diversity at its most selective institutions and at its highest levels of degree attainment.

- Greatly strengthen student services and supports to speed degree completion.
- Deepen its work with the Department of Education to improve successful student transition from high school to college.
- Reform underperforming remediation programs with evidence-based approaches and national best practices.
- CUNY, which produces nearly a third of the city's teachers, will strengthen teacher education and diversify the teaching force to better prepare high school graduates.
- Will be a leader in early childhood learning, integrating research, policy, and practice to lift educational success of children, birth to 8 years.
- Will identify current and future economic engines by regions, sectors, institutions and employers and build education and training programs that align with current and future workforce needs.
- Will make pragmatic experiential learning a signature component of a CUNY education.
- Will substantially improve career services throughout the university.²⁷

This Task Force believes that the new CUNY strategic framework offered in “Connected CUNY” is a necessary step in order to assist CUNY students in achieving academic success.

CUNY Transfer Policy

Despite the creation of CUNY's Pathways program, many glitches still occur when CUNY students attempt to transfer into or within the CUNY system. Completed courses at a CUNY community college often or do not easily transfer over to senior colleges within the CUNY system. These problems cause delays in many students' progress to degree completion. It is imperative that CUNY create a more effective and

²⁷ <http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/connected/>

efficient credit transfer process. **The Task Force recommends that CUNY undertake a full and ongoing review of the Pathways process and CUNY's campus articulation agreements that were generated under Pathways to determine if problems of articulation continue to exist among and between CUNY campuses.**

2. EXPANDING CUNY'S FULL-TIME FACULTY AND RAISING FACULTY PAY

The ability of CUNY's 274,000 undergraduates to succeed in college is directly correlated to the level and quality of the academic instruction they receive in CUNY classrooms. Who is doing the teaching, how that teaching occurs, and under what pedagogical and physical conditions are essential questions that must be addressed if CUNY's unique student body is to derive the greatest value from attending this public university. Those questions are obviously important to ask in any higher education context, but they are especially relevant for college students such as those who attend CUNY. CUNY students face unique socio-economic challenges that add significantly to their burden of going to school and graduating in a timely manner. Some of that lag in degree completion time by CUNY students is a product of educational shortcomings resulting from insufficient high school preparation for college-level work, poor advisement, and insufficient student to teacher contact; these shortcomings require additional and in many cases substantial remedial attention both students get in to CUNY and throughout their college careers.

The Need for Face-to-Face Faculty-Student Interaction

Given the very real socio-economic circumstances and the remediation needs detailed in the Supporting Student Access and Completion section of this report, CUNY's undergraduates require especially "high touch," person-to-person instruction. This means that CUNY faculty members must have the necessary time and circumstances to engage actively and regularly with their students not only to instruct them but also to properly mentor and advise them. Unfortunately, current

conditions across the CUNY system make that close contact between faculty members and students especially difficult if not impossible. High undergraduate enrollment in required courses as well heavy faculty teaching loads mitigate against such “high touch” mentoring/advising connections between CUNY students and their professors.

As Associate Professor Amy E. Hughes, Brooklyn College, has noted in written testimony submitted to the City Council last March:

...our students are incredibly passionate, resourceful, driven, and above all, diverse. Most of them step onto our campuses without the advantages of 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.²⁸

CUNY faculty, both full-timers and part-timers, have repeatedly proven their dedication to their students’ academic successes over the years and decades, working, as they do, in often overcrowded, under-resourced, and sometimes decaying or dilapidated physical spaces (see the section of the report on critical infrastructure maintenance needs).

The CUNY Teaching Workforce

CUNY’s teaching workforce, which provides instruction to 274,000 CUNY undergraduate and graduate students, was composed in Fall 2016 of approximately 8,000 full-time and approximately 13,000 part-time instructors. The total number of CUNY instructors has increased over the past decade (2007 to 2016) by 17.3 percent (see Table 2A). But that increase in the number of faculty, though important to recognize, is more than matched by an even larger increase during the same period in

²⁸ Quoted in PSC-CUNY *Clarion* (March 16, 2017) <http://www.psc-cuny.org/issues/psc-members-testify-about-why-cuny-faculty-need-more-time-students-and-scholarship>.

the total number of CUNY undergraduates, whose numbers grew from 203,515 in 2007 to 243,526 in 2016, a 19.6 percentage increase (see Table 2B).²⁹ It is also essential to note that the overall CUNY faculty continues to lack ethnic and racial diversity. In Fall 2014, approximately two-thirds of CUNY's 7,698 full-time faculty members were white, while only 12.1 percent were Black, 8.9 percent Hispanic, and 12.1 percent Asian, little changed from a seven years ago.³⁰ **The Task Force recommends that the city and state secure and commit the necessary funding to increase the salaries and number of full-time CUNY faculty. Increased pay and an increase in the numbers and percentage of full-time faculty teaching at CUNY will make it possible for the campuses to successfully recruit more faculty of color to reflect more closely the demographic profile of CUNY's student population.**

CUNY's 13,000 part-time teachers currently deliver about 53 percent of all undergraduate instruction at CUNY (see Table 2C). For comparative purposes, in 1975 (the last full year before the city's fiscal crisis ended Open Admissions as it was originally implemented) CUNY's 249,000 students were taught by 11,000 full-time faculty members. If the current number of CUNY part-time instructors, who provide more than half of all undergraduate instruction, could be converted to Full Time Equivalent faculty positions, it would add a total of 5,472 full-time lines to the CUNY teaching workforce (see Table 2C). That number, added to the current full-time CUNY

²⁹ As noted above, between 2007 and 2016 the increase in CUNY Full Time Equivalent (FTE) undergraduate students was even more striking, growing from 163,216 to 203,529, a 24.7 percent increase. See Table 1A¹

³⁰ CUNY Office of Human Resources Management, "Staff Facts," Fall 2014, <http://www2.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/additional-data/Fall-2014-Staff-Facts.pdf>. Data for racial/ethnic composition for CUNY part-time faculty are roughly comparable to full-time faculty.

faculty workforce of 8,000, would yield 13,000 full-time faculty, the appropriate number of full-time faculty members that CUNY undergraduates would require to be fully and appropriately educated in the way they deserve. **The Task Force recommends that CUNY be allowed and supported to convert as many of the current part-time lines as possible to full-time lines, which will require additional funding by both New York State and City governments.**³¹

The Problem of Heavy Teaching Loads at CUNY

We turn now to a consideration of the existing teaching workload of CUNY full-time faculty. CUNY's full-time senior college faculty have a contractually mandated four-three (21 credits) teaching load per academic year, while full-time CUNY community college faculty carry a five-four (27 credits) teaching load. These teaching loads, especially for full-time CUNY senior college faculty, are well beyond the national average.³² The sheer amount of teaching hours involved as well as the hours required to prepare to teach those classes and then to read and comment on student papers and exams, leaves CUNY full-time faculty little time for the necessary advisement and mentoring that are essential to the success of undergraduates. As Queens College Associate Professor Anupama Kapse argued in written testimony to the City Council last March: "Our current undergraduate teaching contact hour

³¹ Data and Table in this paragraph drawn from PSC-CUNY, "Keep the Promise of CUNY" pamphlet, 2015, p. 10. http://psc-cuny.org/sites/default/files/Lobbybook2015_FP.pdf.

³² Standard faculty teaching loads at most four-year private and many public universities are minimally 3 credits (1 course) lighter and often as many as 9 credits lighter than at CUNY, while full-time two-year community college faculty nationally endure similarly heavy teaching loads as faculty at CUNY community colleges.

workload is among the highest of peer institutions, making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to provide the kind of attention our students need. . . .³³

We are pleased to note here that CUNY management has finally acknowledged the importance of this problem. As this Task Force report was being drafted in early December, CUNY's leaders announced an agreement with the Professional Staff Congress-CUNY (CUNY's faculty-staff union), to reduce full-time CUNY faculty members' workload by three credits, to be phased in one-credit a year over a three-year period. It is worth quoting CUNY both the CUNY chancellor and the PSC-CUNY president on the importance of this milestone:

Chancellor James B. Milliken: This agreement recognizes that faculty work encompasses critical elements in addition to classroom teaching, better positioning our faculty to address critical responsibilities such as student advising and mentoring. This important step not only aligns faculty work to achieve CUNY's ambitious strategic goals, it reflects peer and best practice nationally and will strengthen the University's competitiveness in attracting and retaining talented faculty.

Dr. Barbara Bowen: This is a breakthrough for the University, its faculty—and above all, its students. Multiple studies show that the single most important academic factor in student success is time spent individually with faculty. The agreement will give us that time. CUNY faculty members will embrace the opportunity to provide the support students need, contribute to important research and offer an education worthy of our students' aspirations.³⁴

The Task Force commends CUNY management and the PSC-CUNY for achieving this important agreement and encourages both sides to continue to bargain creatively to improve many of CUNY's other long-term teaching and learning issues and problems described in this report and recommends that the city and

³³ Quoted in PSC-CUNY Clarion (March 16, 2017) <http://www.psc-cuny.org/issues/psc-members-testify-about-why-cuny-faculty-need-more-time-students-and-scholarship>.

³⁴ "CUNY AND PSC REACH AGREEMENT ON TEACHING WORKLOAD," December 7, 2017 press release.

state provide necessary additional funding to hire more full-time faculty to take up the additional teaching that will be required by the workload reduction. We also recommend that CUNY management, in collaboration with PSC-CUNY and the University Faculty Senate, develop a basic orientation/training program for full-time and part-time CUNY faculty focused on establishing and improving the improved student mentoring and advisement made possible by the workload reduction.

Full-Time and Adjunct Faculty Pay and Workload Issues

The teaching workload issue is but one of several key problems faced by full-time CUNY faculty. CUNY and the PSC finally reached a settlement last year in the six-year long contract stalemate between the two. That contract called for modest 1 to 2 percent annual pay increases over the five retroactive years covered by the new contract. Despite that agreement (which expired on November 30, 2017) current salaries for full-time CUNY faculty, using the most recent available data (2015-16) remain largely non-competitive, well below what teachers at comparable public institutions of higher education are paid (see Table 2D). **The Task Force recommends that CUNY management find necessary additional revenue sources from the state and city to make full-time faculty pay scales competitive with other similar public university systems nationally.**

The pay, workload, and working conditions received by CUNY's 13,000 part-time/adjunct instructors, are even more difficult than those experienced by CUNY

full-time faculty.³⁵ That statement means that more than half of the CUNY faculty workforce directly responsible for educating CUNY's student body is composed of radically underpaid, contingent, part-time instructors.

Average CUNY adjunct pay hovers around \$3,200 per course. Even if CUNY adjuncts are able to cobble together a six-course teaching schedule (three courses each semester, in many schools more than a full-time teaching load), annual pay still totals less than \$20,000, which is essentially a poverty wage in New York City. And that kind of an adjunct teaching workload, often worked at multiple CUNY and non-CUNY campuses, makes it virtually impossible for adjuncts to be able to find the necessary advising and mentoring time that many of their CUNY students require. These largely temporary part-time teachers cannot—despite heroic individual efforts—serve their CUNY students as those students deserve and need to be served.

The Task Force therefore recommends that CUNY adjunct pay per course be immediately and substantially increased, even doubled, to make it both competitive with other public universities and also to make it possible for CUNY's part-time instructors to actually earn a living wage while continuing to provide much of the undergraduate instruction. And, where possible, CUNY management should be encouraged to combine adjunct teaching positions and convert them into full-time instructional positions.

³⁵ A significant number (perhaps 2,500 in all) of CUNY's 13,000 adjunct instructors are Graduate Center, CUNY doctoral students who either teach under the terms of their five-year Graduate Center (GC) fellowships or because they need to work to afford to attend graduate school. According to the most recent data, GC doctoral students taught approximately 6,900 course sections to approximately 181,000 CUNY students during the 2016-17 academic year (see Table 2E).

The Task Force realizes that these proposed reforms and changes will require a significant investment of new public funds from the city and especially from New York State. We agree with our colleagues at the Center for an Urban Future whose recently released report on CUNY, "Degrees of Difficulty: Boosting College Success in New York City,"³⁶ concludes that

As CUNY's student population booms, state funding has failed to keep pace. . . . Since the Great Recession [2008-09], per-student funding from New York State has fallen 17 percent for CUNY's senior colleges and 5 percent for community colleges, adjusting for inflation. . . . Languishing state support has prevented CUNY from making crucial investments in areas ranging from full-time faculty hiring and technology improvements to student advising and faculty mentoring. (36)

By all accounts such shortchanging of necessary public fiscal support for CUNY by New York State not only leaves the institution and its faculty and students at risk for failure. In a larger sense, it also puts the state's and the city's entire economic future at risk as well.

³⁶ <https://nycfuture.org/research/degrees-of-difficulty>.

3. A Physical Environment for Student Success

The physical environment needs to be taken into consideration when looking at post-secondary student success. According to Cheryan, Ziegler, Plaut, and Meltzoff³⁷, considering that students spend approximately 400 classroom hours in post-secondary education buildings over the course of their undergraduate careers, both structural and symbolic features of classrooms need to be considered when considering student learning and achievement. With 50 buildings across CUNY campuses predating the Great Depression, maintenance, repair and reconstruction costs are expected to be considerable. Several students and faculty members have indicated, as highlighted in a May 2016 *New York Times* article by David Chen,³⁸ that decay of campus classrooms and buildings is indeed a hindrance to a productive learning environment, especially when repairs do not seem to happen as quickly as needed. The article notes that “On the City College of New York’s handsome Gothic campus, leaking ceilings have turned hallways into obstacle courses of buckets.” That statement and the picture accompanying the article of plastic tarps catching water from a leaky roof in the Lehman College Library speak volumes about the ongoing need for CUNY to undertake much needed and in many cases long-delayed critical maintenance work to make its facilities safe and healthy for students, faculty and staff to work, teach, and study in. As Hercules Reid, the co-chair of this Task Force and a former student leader at New York City College of Technology (CUNY) aptly noted in

³⁷http://ilabs.washington.edu/sites/default/files/14Cheryan_etal_Meltzoff_Designing%20Classrooms.pdf

³⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/29/nyregion/dreams-stall-as-cuny-citys-engine-of-mobility-sputters.html>

his June 2017 testimony on CUNY before the City Council Committee on Higher

Education:

CUNY students go to school in buildings that are falling apart, elevators are breaking down, bathrooms need renovating, classrooms are overcrowded, and there is simply not enough space to offer all the classes students need within the semester. There are leaks in buildings when it rains, and I myself have sat in a classroom where temperatures reached over 90 degrees. How can we as a system, expect to maintain high quality education in these conditions? If more money was allocated toward the college's operating budget, many of these issues could be remedied. The onus of funding these things should fall on the state and city, not the students who it seeks to educate.

In reviewing the CUNY's capital funding needs for Fiscal Year 2017-18 through Fiscal Year 2021-22, CUNY management has indicated that \$5.1 billion is needed for the senior colleges and \$1.7 billion for community colleges for a total of \$6.8 billion. Half the five-year funding requested for the community colleges is made to the City of New York because New York State education law requires matching state funding equally for community college capital projects. University-wide, the first-year funding need is \$1.3 billion.

In reviewing the funding request for the previous ten years, CUNY has not been funded at close to the level requested from the State and City. However, CUNY's use of capital funds allocated each year has been low as CUNY campus critical maintenance projects that have received public funding continue to lag in their start and completion dates. The City Council and the borough presidents have also been especially generous over the last decade in providing capital funds to individual CUNY senior and community college campuses to undertake critical maintenance projects, including renovations and upgrades of existing facilities. Despite such funding, many

of these capital projects are painfully slow to get underway, the result of a range of bureaucratic and operational delays. The New York City Council Higher Education Committee noted this problem earlier this year:

For Fiscal 2017, the University anticipates committing only \$64 million, or 21.5 percent of its total capital plan for the year. While the City retains primary responsibility for expense budgets at the community colleges, it shares responsibility for capital projects with the State. Thus, any capital project that receives City funding qualifies for an equal match in State funds. However, because the City and State operate on different fiscal calendars; because the State requires any project to have all matching funds in-hand before releasing its own share of funding; and because any capital project eligible for State funding must be fully funded before getting underway, any capital project at a CUNY community college that receives City funding must wait until enactment of the next New York State Budget to proceed. As a result, CUNY capital projects often experience longer and more frequent delays than capital projects in other City agencies.³⁹

However, what is not clear is the nature of the internal policies and procedures CUNY Central Office uses to allocate and disperse funds for critical maintenance. For students and faculty experiencing mold and leaks, they question how much of a priority is given to these critical maintenance projects? **The Task Force recommends a separate review of CUNY's capital policies and procedures to ensure that critical maintenance work that is funded with public monies is undertaken by CUNY in a timely manner. We also recommend that CUNY management be required to submit an annual report and update to both the City Council Committee on Higher Education and the borough presidents about the status of all prior Reso-A funding provided to CUNY campuses for capital projects and/or critical maintenance projects.**

³⁹ <http://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2017/03/042-CUNY-2.pdf>

The Task Force also recommends a review of all CUNY properties to understand if all buildings and land are being used adequately for educational purposes and if there are opportunities for possible redevelopment. The Task Force recommends that any income generated by such potential redevelopment be used to enhance the educational mission of CUNY. The Task Force also recommends that CUNY leadership undertake a full and complete audit of all CUNY buildings to assess the progress being made on every campus to make them fully disability-compliant. The Task Force further recommends that CUNY management be required to submit annual reports of this disability audit to the City Council Higher Education Committee.

Conclusion

The student population at CUNY has obviously changed dramatically since it began in 1847, but what it symbolizes remains constant: providing quality education that is accessible to all, regardless of background or ability to pay. With 65 percent of jobs calling for some postsecondary education or training by 2020,⁴⁰ CUNY is vital to the future of New York City and its people. It is that much more critical that CUNY's policies and practices support helping students access, afford and complete a college degree at CUNY. Today's definition of the "non-traditional" college student—older, female, poor and working class in background and circumstance, parents, of color--is coming more and more to resemble the typical CUNY student. CUNY's policies therefore must be adapted and transformed to support the success of low-income students of color who may hold multiple jobs and may have children who they must care for and support.

CUNY has hit a record number of degree-seeking students – 274,000 – this year. Ensuring that there are enough well-supported and well-trained faculty and necessary support staff and that there is adequate and safe physical space to teach and learn in is equally as important as supporting student success. As the NYC DOE continues to improve graduation rates and prepare students for higher education, the groundwork needs to be laid so that the road to success exists for all who wish to enter.

⁴⁰ <https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.ES.Web.pdf>

Appendix

**Task force on Affordability, Admissions, and Graduation rates at the
City University of New York**

Co-Chairs

Stephen Brier

Senior Academic Technology Officer, Professor of the Ph.D. Program in Urban Education
and Co-Director of the New Media Lab at the Graduate School and University Center,
CUNY

Hercules E. Reid

Former Vice-Chair for Legislative Affairs, CUNY University Student Senate

Members

Charles Bendit

Co-Chief Executive Officer, Taconic Investment Partners LLC

Deborah Bial

President and Founder, Posse Foundation

Barbara Bowen

President, CUNY Professional Staff Congress

Jose Calderon

President, Hispanic Federation

Una S.T. Clarke

Trustee, City University of New York

William Goodloe

President, Sponsors for Educational Opportunity

Tai Johnson

Intergovernmental Affairs Director, Public Advocate Office

Terzah Nasser

Deputy Director, Human Services Division, New York City Council

(with special thanks to Aysha Schomburg who also served on this task force)

Lisette Nieves

President of the Stella and Charles Guttman Community College Foundation, Co-Founder of
Lingo Ventures and Professor at New York University

Rhea Wong

Executive Director, Breakthrough New York

Table 1A¹

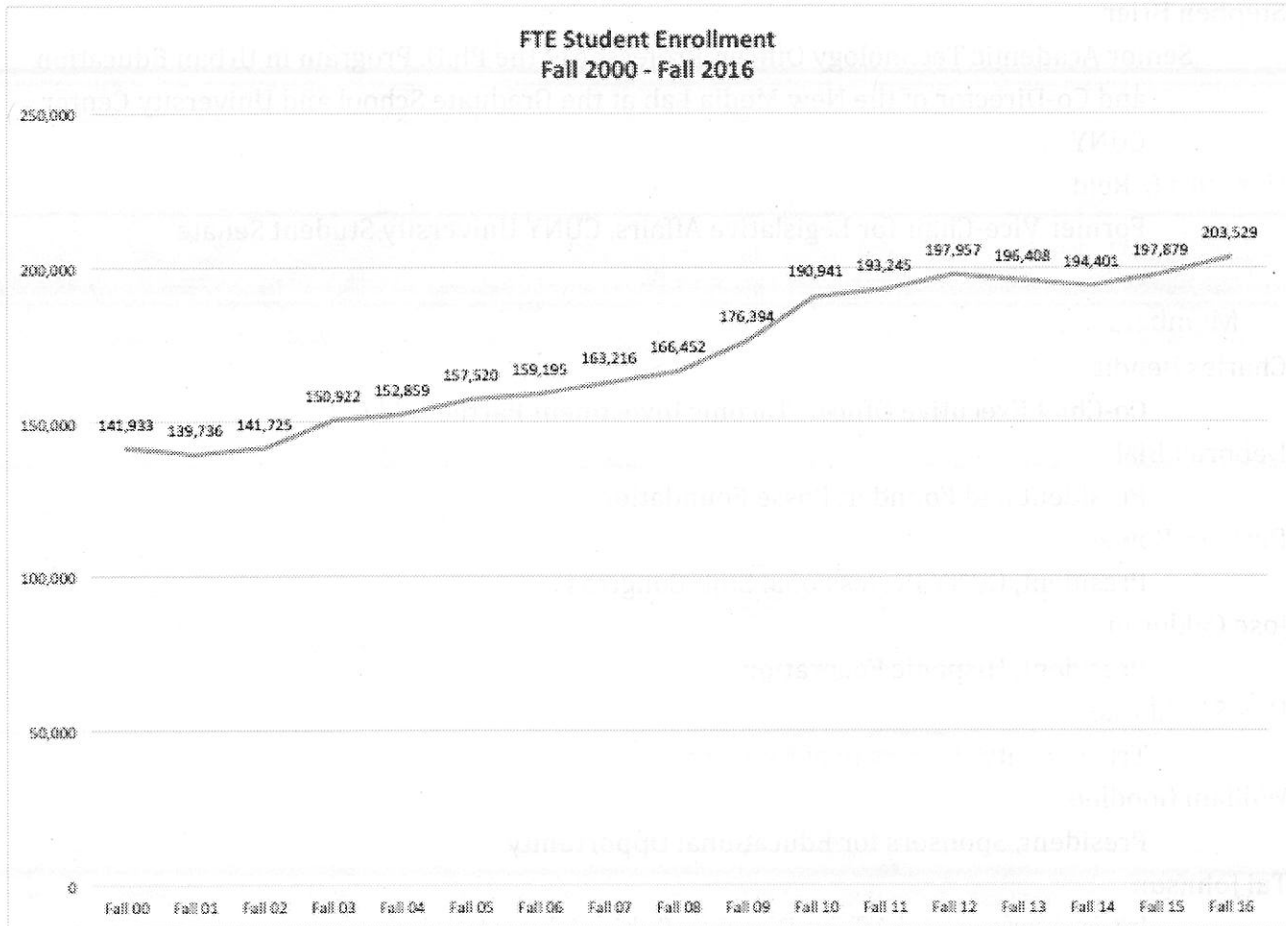


Table 1A

Ten-Year Trends in Enrollment of Undergraduates by College Type & Race: Fall 2007 to Fall 2016

Cohort	Senior Colleges						Community Colleges						Total University
	American Indian/ Native Alaskan	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	White	Total	American Indian/ Native Alaskan	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	White	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Fall 2007	0.2	17.0	27.3	24.0	31.6	126,651	0.2	15.5	31.2	33.2	19.9	76,864	203,515
Fall 2008	0.2	17.7	26.9	24.6	30.6	131,755	0.2	15.8	30.4	34.2	19.3	81,538	213,293
Fall 2009	0.2	18.2	26.7	24.4	30.6	137,502	0.3	15.7	29.3	35.5	19.3	88,770	226,272
Fall 2010	0.2	19.3	25.7	24.0	30.7	137,220	0.3	15.4	29.0	36.6	18.8	91,264	228,484
Fall 2011	0.2	20.3	25.2	23.4	30.9	141,391	0.3	15.4	29.2	37.0	18.1	97,712	239,103
Fall 2012	0.2	21.2	24.6	23.6	30.4	141,237	0.3	15.9	28.6	37.8	17.4	96,500	237,737
Fall 2013	0.3	22.0	24.4	24.3	29.1	141,746	0.3	15.9	28.1	39.0	16.6	97,751	239,497
Fall 2014	0.3	22.5	24.5	24.8	27.9	145,688	0.4	15.9	28.5	39.2	16.0	99,958	245,646
Fall 2015	0.3	23.2	24.8	25.6	26.2	146,234	0.4	16.0	28.4	39.9	15.3	99,045	245,279
Fall 2016	0.3	23.7	24.7	26.4	25.0	146,661	0.4	16.5	28.0	40.1	15.0	96,865	243,526

Table 1B

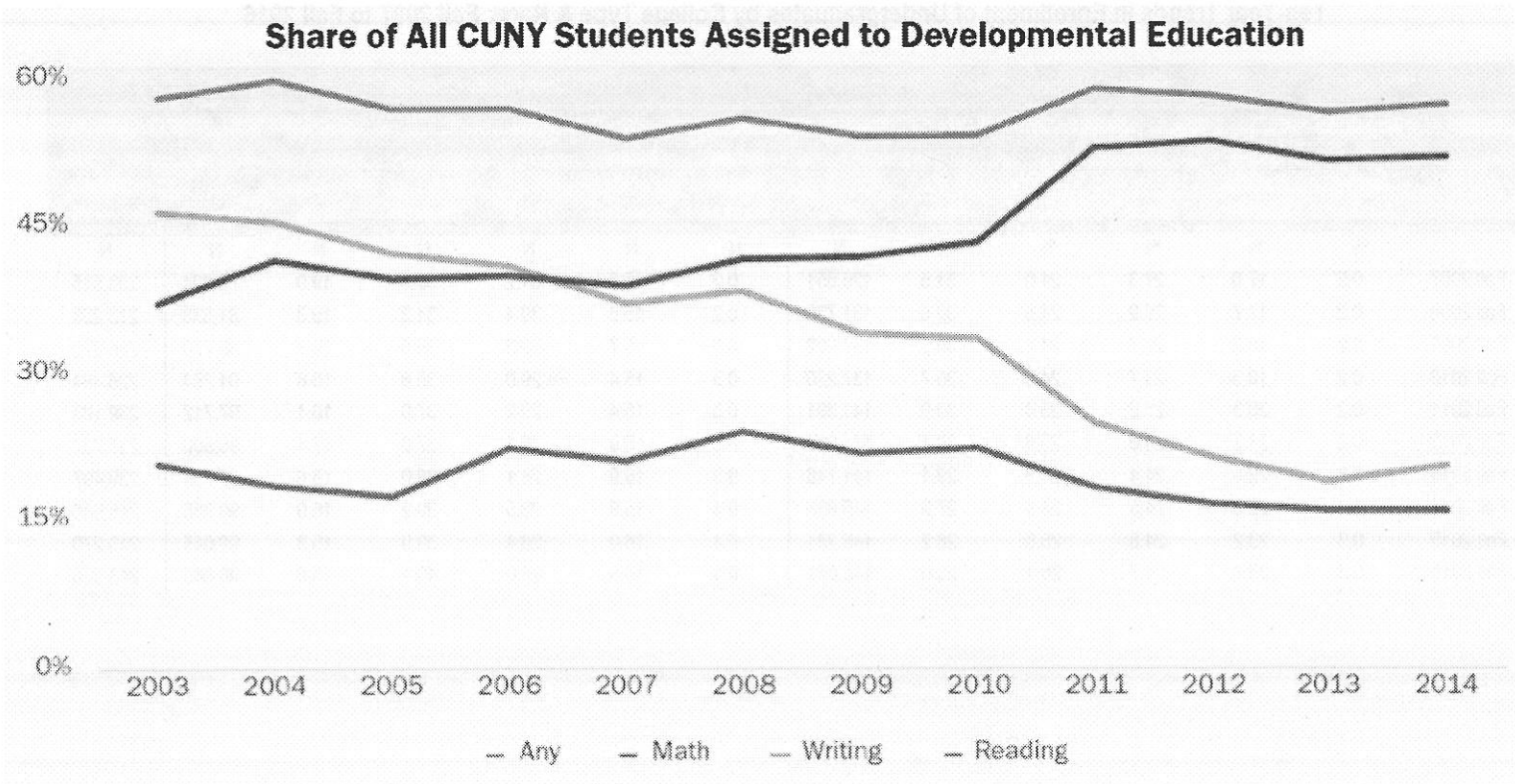


Table 1C

Tuition at CUNY (Undergraduate Full-Time)											Change 2008-09 to 2017-18				Change 2010-11 to 2017-18	
Academic year	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Nominal change	% change	Inflation adjusted	% change inflation adjusted	Nominal change	% change
Senior Colleges	4,000	4,600	4,830	5,130	5,430	5,730	6,030	6,330	6,330	6,530	2530	63.3%	1891.3	41%	1700.0	35.20%
Community Colleges	2,800	3,150	3,300	3,600	3,900	4,200	4,500	4,800	4,800	4,800	2000	71.4%	1552.9	48%	1500.0	45.45%

NOTES

Tuition at CUNY senior colleges increased twice in the first two years of the Great Recession (2008-9 and 2010-11 academic years) from \$4,830 per year to \$5,130. Community college tuition increased by \$500 from \$2,800 per year to \$3,300 over the same period.

The SUNY 2020 bill (passed by the state in 2011 and shaded in blue) increased tuition \$300 each year beginning with the 2011-12 academic year, and raised CUNY senior college tuition to \$6,330 for the 2015-16 academic year. Community college tuition also increased by \$300 per year over the same period to \$4,800 in 2015-16.

CUNY community college tuition has remained stable for the last three years, but the Governor and Legislature agreed last spring to raise senior college tuition by \$200 per year for the next five years. This year senior college tuition is \$6,530 and, barring other changes, it will rise to \$7,330 by the 2021-22 academic year.

The summary figures are adjusted for inflation using the CPI Inflation Calculator at the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl?cost1=2%2C800&year1=200801&year2=201707>

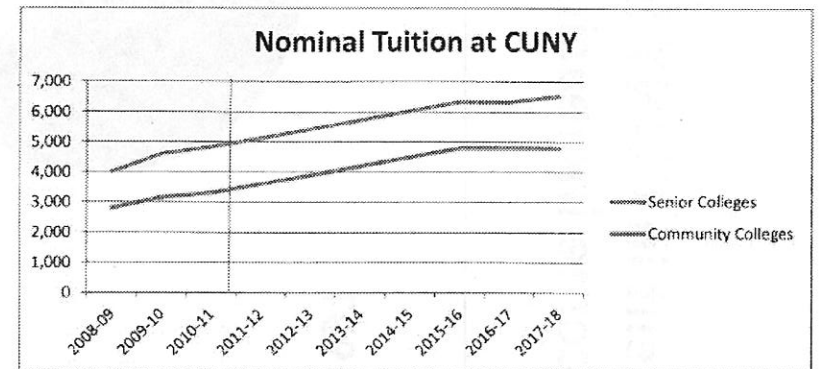


Table 1D

As State investment in CUNY has faded, CUNY senior colleges have become increasingly tuition-dependent.

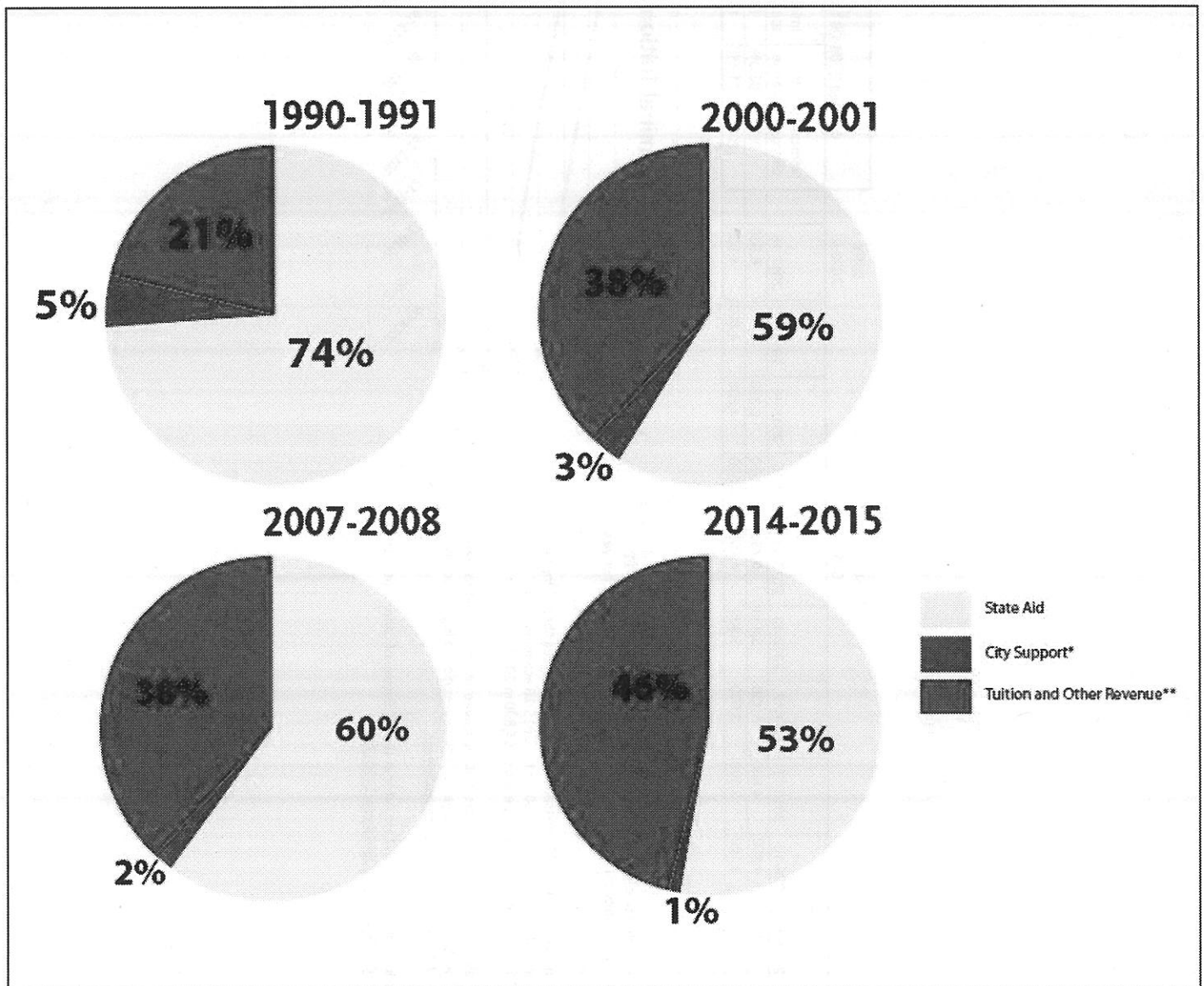


Table 2A**Ten-Year Trend in Faculty by Type: Fall 2007 to Fall 2016**

Cohort	Full-Time Faculty			Part-Time Faculty	Total Faculty
	Continuing	New Hire	Total Full-time		
	N	N	N	N	N
Fall 2007	6,579	391	6,970	11,093	18,063
Fall 2008	6,788	436	7,224	11,320	18,544
Fall 2009	6,968	529	7,497	11,093	18,590
Fall 2010	7,158	514	7,672	11,320	18,992
Fall 2011	6,961	407	7,368	11,579	18,947
Fall 2012	7,142	608	7,750	11,692	19,442
Fall 2013	7,352	659	8,011	11,576	19,587
Fall 2014	7,513	698	8,211	11,803	20,014
Fall 2015	7,480	526	8,006	12,283	20,289
Fall 2016	7,615	519	8,134	13,046	21,180

Source: IPEDS Human Resources 2016 survey. Includes both undergraduate and graduate course instruction.

Table 2B

**Ten-Year Trends in Enrollment of Undergraduates
by College Type & Mean Age: Fall 2007 to Fall 2016**

Cohort	Senior Colleges			Community Colleges			Total University		
	Age	25 Years and Older	Total	Age	25 Years and Older	Total	Age	25 Years and Older	Total
	Mean	%	N	Mean	%	N	Mean	%	N
Fall 2007	24	29.2	126,651	24	31.2	76,864	24	29.9	203,515
Fall 2008	24	28.4	131,755	24	29.9	81,538	24	29.0	213,293
Fall 2009	24	28.2	137,502	24	28.3	88,770	24	28.2	226,272
Fall 2010	24	28.5	137,220	24	28.2	91,264	24	28.4	228,484
Fall 2011	24	28.7	141,391	24	27.4	97,712	24	28.1	239,103
Fall 2012	24	28.3	141,237	23	26.5	96,500	24	27.6	237,737
Fall 2013	24	27.4	141,746	23	26.2	97,751	24	26.9	239,497
Fall 2014	24	27.1	145,688	23	26.1	99,958	24	26.7	245,646
Fall 2015	24	26.6	146,234	23	26.5	99,045	24	26.6	245,279
Fall 2016	24	26.4	146,661	23	26.5	96,865	24	26.5	243,526

Note: Columns may not sum to total undergraduate population due to students whose age is unknown.

Table 2C

As a result of public disinvestment, more than half of CUNY courses are taught by adjunct faculty.

In Fall 1975, CUNY had over 11,000 full-time faculty and 249,000 students; CUNY now has 7,500 full-time faculty and 274,000 students.

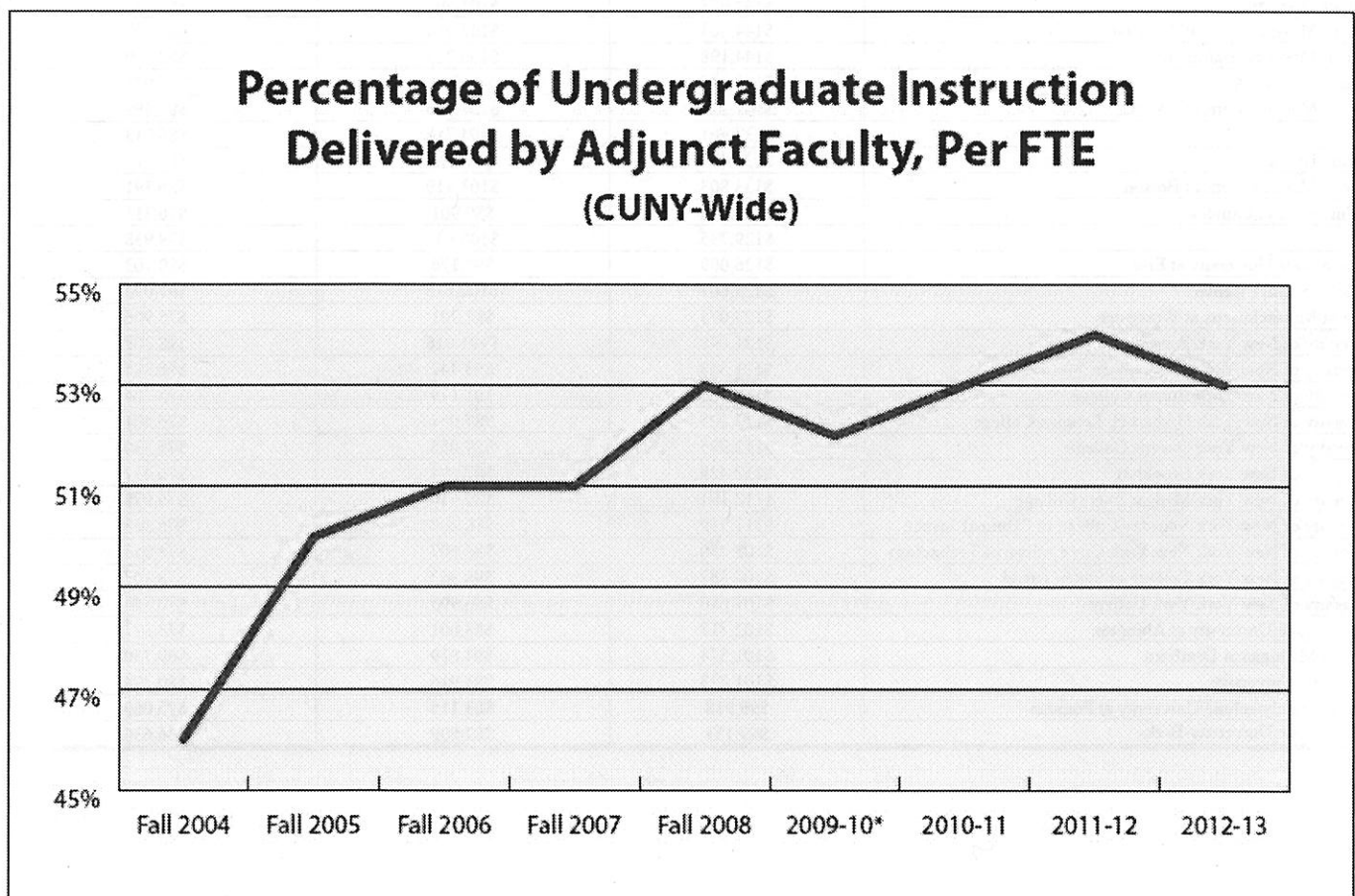


Table 2D

AVERAGE SALARY COMPARISON

Academic Year 2015-2016

Institution Name	PROFESSORS	ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS	ASSISTANT PROFESSORS
Columbia	\$209,475	\$138,411	\$110,250
New York University	\$195,939	\$115,074	\$97,812
Fordham	\$162,225	\$114,903	\$98,388
Rutgers Newark	\$151,587	\$111,114	\$94,905
University of Maryland College Park	\$149,328	\$104,886	\$86,526
Penn State University at University Park	\$146,466	\$96,642	\$78,444
University of Delaware	\$144,972	\$101,502	\$86,778
University of Massachusetts at Amherst	\$144,864	\$103,914	\$85,500
University of Maryland Baltimore	\$144,198	\$100,215	\$82,260
Rutgers New Brunswick	\$141,345	\$92,376	\$74,025
University of Massachusetts at Lowell	\$141,228	\$107,766	\$88,488
Adelphi	\$137,961	\$104,715	\$86,013
SUNY Stony Brook	\$136,467	\$94,806	\$80,577
University of Massachusetts at Boston	\$133,803	\$103,419	\$86,391
Rutgers University at Camden	\$130,050	\$89,901	\$76,311
Pace	\$129,735	\$100,935	\$79,938
Pennsylvania State University at Erie	\$126,009	\$94,176	\$80,703
SUNY Health Science Center	\$125,667	\$100,575	\$97,092
University of Massachusetts at Worcester	\$123,075	\$87,201	\$75,906
City University of New York Baruch	\$121,698	\$101,916	\$98,208
City University of New York City College	\$121,563	\$93,447	\$78,885
City University of New York Hunter College	\$113,661	\$91,179	\$75,204
City University of New York Herbert H. Lehman College	\$113,625	\$87,957	\$76,401
City University of New York Queens College	\$112,995	\$89,055	\$75,330
City University of New York Brooklyn	\$112,428	\$87,894	\$76,437
City University of New York Medgar Evers College	\$112,194	\$86,436	\$75,978
City University of New York John Jay College of Criminal Justice	\$111,519	\$88,407	\$75,375
City University of New York New York City College of Technology	\$108,450	\$86,607	\$73,044
City University of New York College of Staten Island	\$108,387	\$88,362	\$73,107
City University of New York York College	\$103,680	\$85,995	\$72,774
Pennsylvania State University at Abington	\$102,717	\$83,601	\$73,377
University of Michigan at Dearborn	\$101,574	\$84,879	\$69,750
San Diego State University	\$101,223	\$83,916	\$80,298
California State Polytechnic University at Pomona	\$99,918	\$83,115	\$75,060
Pennsylvania State University-Berks	\$99,153	\$82,809	\$66,636

Graduate Center Student Teaching at CUNY

In Fall 2016, Spring 2017 and Summer 2017, Graduate Center students taught 6,886 course sections¹ and 180,868 students across CUNY.

CUNY College	Number of Course Sections (N)	Percentage of All Course Sections (%)	Course Enrollment (Number of Students)
Baruch	613	8.9	19,719
Bronx Community College	107	1.6	2,445
Brooklyn College	791	11.5	21,802
Borough of Manhattan Community College	237	3.4	5,924
College of Staten Island	238	3.5	5,983
City College of NY	512	7.4	13,348
Graduate Center	1	.0	N/A
Hostos Community College	78	1.1	2,002
Hunter	1505	21.9	38,309
John Jay	443	6.4	11,383
Kingsborough	103	1.5	2,709
LaGuardia	180	2.6	4,358
Lehman	573	8.3	12,803
Medgar Evers	42	.6	1,018
Guttman	68	1.0	1,365
NYC Tech	216	3.1	5,357
Queensborough Community College	97	1.4	2,529
Queens College	908	13.2	26,034
School of Public Health	1	.0	10
School of Professional Studies	54	.8	813
York	119	1.7	2,957
Total	6,886	100.0	180,868



**TESTIMONY
OF THE
NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP
BEFORE THE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
ON THE
ADMISSIONS, GRADUATION RATES, AND AFFORDABILITY STUDY -
ELIMINATING TUITION AT THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
MAY 31st, 2018
New York, New York**

Good afternoon. My name is Emily Skydel, I am the Higher Education Coordinator for the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG). NYPIRG is a statewide, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization founded by college students in 1973 to engage their peers in civic life.

NYPIRG's broad programmatic work provides students with a range of opportunities to participate in public affairs and advance responses to social problems. Our structured peer-to-peer learning and community service programs offer opportunities for meaningful civic engagement, and are a potent vehicle for encouraging participation in democracy among students. Our Board of Directors consists of college and university students elected from campuses with NYPIRG chapters across the State.

We thank the City Council for analyzing affordability, admissions and graduation rates at the City University of New York -- important work to understand the true costs and barriers students face and the path to a free and quality CUNY. As everyone in this room knows, CUNY is an essential equalizer in our city. Sadly, too many students are unable to earn a degree at all. Items like tuition, food, housing, textbooks, child care and metro cards are all worthy of consideration.

We thank Councilmember Inez Barron and the Task Force for drafting a comprehensive and detailed account of what a free and fully funded CUNY can look like and urge the support of the Mayor and Governor in joining these efforts.

**INVESTMENT IN DEGREE COMPLETION AND COLLEGE SUCCESS ARE A
NECESSITY FOR A THRIVING ECONOMY AND DEMOCRACY**

In an increasingly economically divided and high-cost city, degree completion is vital. Investing in public higher education is a win for individual New Yorkers and a win for the city's economy as a whole, even amid a climate of budget-tightening. It is the surest way forward. A study on

SUNY found that for every \$1 spent on education, the economy reaps \$5 in benefits.¹ College-educated workers earn more than their high-school educated peers – by an average of \$17,500 per year for millennials, as found by the Pew Research Center. In New York City, twenty of the twenty five fastest-growing occupations that pay over \$50,000 annually require a college degree.² As wages increase, so do tax revenues which support any number of public services. The average bachelor's degree holder contributes \$278,000 more to local economies than the average high school graduate through direct spending over the course of a lifetime; and an associate degree holder contributes \$81,000 more than a high school graduate.³

Despite the benefits both to society and to individuals, too many New Yorkers are still without a degree. A mere 19% of Bronx residents over the age of twenty-five hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Among the nation's 100 largest counties, this is the second lowest rate. What's more, according to a Center for Urban Future report on New York State, "only thirty three percent of on-time high school graduates in the bottom quarter of family income (\$30,424 or lower) obtained a college degree, compared to 52 percent of students in the top quarter (\$56,492 or higher)."¹⁶

College has benefits that extend well beyond individual economic returns. A primary function of postsecondary education is to develop college students' involvement in the nation's civic life and democratic processes, engender a sense of social responsibility, and develop an appreciation and respect for difference across cultures and peoples. And while a college education is not the only way to achieve those goals, New York City's colleges and universities offer experiences that build a better understanding of the importance of civic participation as well as provide the skills to help students to evaluate increasingly complex technological and scientific issues that can become the focus of public policy.

FREE TUITION FOR FULL TIME AND PART TIME STUDENTS

The cost of funding the growth and expansion of New York's public institutions should not fall on students and families. With the continuation of "rational tuition," the state and city are continuing to rely on students and families to cover budget shortfalls. This includes nearly non-stop tuition increases up to \$200 for both SUNY's and CUNY's senior colleges annually.

Student debt is a burden on individuals, as well as a burden on the state's economy as a whole. Studies have shown that students burdened with student loan debt are less likely to start a small business. Small businesses are the backbone of New York City's economy, representing 98 percent of all NYC businesses. As a New York City report notes, "These small businesses employ more than half of New York City's private sector workforce, and often provide a first chance for economic self-determination and a path to the middle class for their owners."⁴ In addition, studies show that students burdened with student loan debt are less likely to own a

¹ SUNY, 2018-19 Executive Budget Testimony, Chancellor Kristina Johnson, January 23, 2018, <https://www.suny.edu/govrelations/state/testimony/2018-19-budget/>.

² Center for an Urban Future (CUF) analysis of New York State Department of Labor Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections, 2014-2024.

³ Rothwell, Jonathan. "What colleges do for local economies: A direct measure based on consumption." *Brookings*, July 28, 2016, www.brookings.edu/research/what-colleges-do-for-local-economies-a-direct-measure-based-on-consumption/.

⁴ New York City Office of the Mayor, "Small Business First," <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/operations/projects/small-business-first.page>.

home,⁵ limiting progress in social and economic growth in New York.⁶ The effect is even greater for low-income students and students of color.⁷

Free tuition for part-time students is also essential. The Excelsior Scholarship, TAP, and free tuition through programs like ASAP are only offered to full time students. We have heard from many students who are parents, have jobs, and other responsibilities which do not allow them to take on a full-time course load. *NYPIRG supports the Task Force's recommendation to eliminate all tuition charges for full-time and part-time students enrolled across the CUNY system.*

COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH COLLEGE CAN BE BARRIERS TO COLLEGE COMPLETION

In the spring of 2017, NYPIRG began interviewing students who were experiencing difficulties funding the costs of their education, from tuition and textbooks to related costs like food and child care. Scores of interviews later, we have gathered insights into the impacts of state divestment in higher education, state and federal financial aid, scholarship, and grant programs, who benefits from current programs, and who is still left out. Textbook, transit, food, child care and housing costs are barriers toward achieving a college degree. This is a theme that runs through many of the testimonials shared through NYPIRG's Higher Education Storybank.

EXPAND ASAP, ASAP!

Opportunity Programs such as ASAP and others have seen tremendous success. Students involved in the nationally recognized ASAP graduate at more than double the rate of non-ASAP students, with increases in graduation rates after three years of at least 30%.⁸ In other words: “a range of financial, academic, and personal supports including comprehensive and personalized advisement, career counseling, tutoring, waivers for tuition and mandatory fees, MTA MetroCards, and additional financial assistance to defray the cost of textbooks”⁹ works.

Justin Kittrell is a student at Bronx Community College who receives partial TAP. If he was enrolled in ASAP, he would have received full tuition assistance in addition to the additional supports. He shares his story:

“My name is Justin Kittrell, I am studying paralegal studies graduating this June. I receive partial TAP but mostly pay out of pocket. I pay for most of my tuition, textbooks, metro card, food, and rent through my doorman job. I work between 40 and 60 hours on top of taking 12 credits. It's extremely overwhelming. I often go three or four days straight without a full sleep. That can't be healthy at all. Aside from not sleeping,

⁵ The Office of the New York State Comptroller, Student Loan Debt in New York State, September 2016, http://www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/highered/student_loan_debt.pdf.

⁶ Ambrose, B., Cordell, L. and Ma, S, The Impact of Student Loan Debt on Small Business Formation (March 29, 2014), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2417676> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2417676>, April 17, 2015.

⁷ Scott-Clayton, J., “The looming student loan default crisis is worse than we thought.” *Brookings*, January 11, 2018, www.brookings.edu/research/the-looming-student-loan-default-crisis-is-worse-than-we-thought/.

⁸ City University of New York, Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/asap/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/06/ASAP_Program_Overview_Web.pdf.

⁹ City University of New York, Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, <http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/asap/>, accessed October 16, 2017.

my eating habits are out of whack. I don't have time to get a meal in. I end up eating junk and fast food, I want to eat healthy but it's so hard. I don't have time for the important things. Every once in a while I can go out and socialize but most of the time I'm working. Of all that I've discussed so far, did I even mention study time? When am I supposed to squeeze that in? Have my grades suffered tremendously because I have to work so much just to pay to be here? Yes! Sometimes I've had to be in academic probation because of it. Because of the academic probation I was forced to take only one or two classes per semester until I met the 2.0 requirement which meant no financial aid because I was part time. This is a two year school but it's taken me four years to graduate.

All this being said, if I had the right financial support, most of these problems would disappear. Programs like ASAP which cover tuition, textbooks and metrocards truly change people's lives. I'm struggling and I'm only supporting myself, imagine if I was a parent? There are so many student parents who are suffering from these same struggles. In the most expensive city in the state if not the country, it's enough just paying to live. To have to pay for school on top of that is insane. Paying for utilities, necessities having a sustainable living situation are all hard enough when you're just getting on your feet becoming an adult and putting together your life again without parental support. My doorman job working from 12am to sometimes 4pm the next day is hardly manageable now. I'm hoping this June when I finally get my degree, emphasis on finally, I can breathe a little again."

In a recent report put out by the CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, of students that work, 79% reported that they work to pay for living expenses and over a third of those who work believe that having a job negatively impacts their academic performance.¹⁰ Justin's story is just one of many. ***NYPIRG supports the Task Force's recommendation to expand ASAP as a key step toward making CUNY free.***

CONNECTING STUDENTS IN NEED WITH PROGRAMS BUILT TO SERVE THEM

Too many students find out about the programs they need far too late. After speaking with students across CUNY, we have noticed that many students are unaware of programs like ASAP until they are already enrolled at CUNY, at which point it is too late to enroll, in many cases. According to the ASAP website, one of the eligibility requirements is that a student must "have no more than 15 college credits." This puts students in a tough spot, with the program that they would otherwise qualify for just out of reach.

Abdullah Huda, a recent Hunter College graduate who also attended Borough of Manhattan Community College lamented not knowing about programs like ASAP. He shares his story:

"Throughout my college career, I have received financial assistance through the Pell grant and the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). The assistance was a huge help for me because without it, I would not have been able to go to college. My father is the only person who works full time in my family. He barely makes enough money to pay for all the expenses of providing for a five-member family. I attended college full time while

¹⁰ 2016 Student Experience Survey, CUNY. http://www2.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/surveys/2016_SES_Highlights_Updated_10112016.pdf

working part time to help take some of the burden off his shoulder, and at the same time pay for my own expenses such as books, metrocards, and food. However, work would sometimes get in the way of my studies. There were many times when I had to choose between studying for an important exam and going to work because I needed the money. While the assistance of Pell grant and TAP has been extremely helpful, I still struggle financially.

I realized, although too late, that there were other programs offered in college to help students with their everyday expenses; programs like ASAP and SEEK. I wasn't informed about these programs in high school or in my first semester of college. When I learned about them and went to the financial aid office in my second semester of college, I was told it was too late for me to be eligible for the programs. If I had the assistance that educational opportunity programs provide, I could focus more on my studies and less on working to pay for expenses. This would have made a huge difference in my academic life."

Melissa Estrella, a student at Bronx Community College, dropped out of school for a while. She had no knowledge of the child care center on her campus, subsequently taking nearly ten years to graduate with an Associate's Degree. She shares her story:

"Hi my name is Melissa Estrella I am studying social work at BCC and I am a mother of two and this is my last semester. I receive TAP and Pell and pay for rent, food utilities transportation through my job every month as a certified nurse assistant. I work 40 hours a week and after taxes I only make around 400 a week. I pay for everything for my family. I'm here getting my associates, it's a sacrifice but I'm trying to level up. I've been at BCC off and on since 2009. I took time off when I had my kids because I honestly didn't know about childcare at CUNY. It's \$5 a day here that's super cheap. I was going here and I had no idea it existed, I would've finished school a lot quicker if I had known, I had to drop a couple of semesters because I didn't have child care. I feel like the advisors should have worked with me to tell me about the child care options on campus so that I wouldn't drop out. I've spent a lot of time and money at this school and I deserve a better support system."

NYPIRG supports the Task Force's recommendation to expand counseling for the transitional period between high school and college as a critical intervention strategy to support academically at-risk students and connect them with the services they need.

COMBATING FOOD INSECURITY ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Governor Cuomo has proposed action on food insecurity this year by creating food pantries on all CUNY and SUNY campuses, citing a recent report by groups including NYPIRG entitled *Hunger on Campus*. The report looked how food insecurity may undermine the educational success of untold thousands of students.¹¹ Consistent with prior studies, 48 percent of survey respondents reported food insecurity in the previous 30 days.

Taking a closer look at the approximately 1,800 students who reported experiencing food

¹¹ NYPIRG, *Hunger on Campus, The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students*, October 2016, http://www.nypirgstudents.org/reports/Hunger_on_Campus_NYPIRG.pdf, accessed November 30, 2016.

insecurity, thirty-two percent believed that hunger or housing problems had an impact on their education, from foregoing textbook purchases, to missing or dropping classes. Students that are hungry and homeless must get the services they need. Alexis Ramos, a Borough of Manhattan Community College student and mother shared her story:

“Luckily, because of the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), the Pell Grant, and the publicly funded childcare center at BMCC, I was able to afford to attend college. Textbooks and my monthly metrocard were a huge burden for me this year, though. Luckily I’ve enrolled in Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) for next year so those costs will be covered. I have a part time job that covers these costs currently, but between textbooks, metrocards, and paying for diapers and food for my son, I often can’t afford to buy food for myself. I’m determined to get an education, failure is not an option but it’s come at a cost to my health.”

NYPIRG appreciates the attention brought to food insecurity and looks forward to working with CUNY, as we have in the past, in accomplishing this goal. Many students are eligible for public benefits that could help them make it through college and finish their degree. The “Single Stop” program at CUNY provides an essential service in helping connect students to the millions of dollars in public benefits that they are eligible for including; housing, SNAP benefits, health insurance, tax preparation and financial counseling.¹² “Single Stop” has received national recognition for its tremendous success.¹³ ***NYPIRG supports the Task Force’s recommendation to expand Single Stop offices and to initiate a \$5 million emergency fund to respond to students’ immediate financial problems.***

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

¹² The City University of New York, BMCC, Single Stop, <http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/singlestop/>.

¹³ The City University of New York, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, March 7, 2011, <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/sa/specialprograms/SingleStopCCI/SingleStopInnovationAward.pdf>.

My name is Jayme Farbowitz. I am an English Major at the College of Staten Island and a NYPIRG student leader. I'm a part of the 2018-2019 CUNY Service Corps cohort and intend to pursue public office one day. Thank you for holding this hearing, since it is so important that CUNY be made free again. Unfortunately I don't receive any financial aid. I don't bother filling out FAFSA anymore because I've never qualified. I've two brothers who only got about \$10 each from TAP when they were both in college. My parents help me pay for tuition but paying for textbooks, anything else school related, or transportation is on me. Textbook money is needed all at once and there is no way to estimate the price. I don't bother telling my parents that to save for the textbooks I don't eat because they already pay so much. Transportation is a constant effusion of money. I also have loans from when I went to SUNY Albany. I transferred to CSI to help my parents out with the household because they are older and disabled. I am disabled too, physically and mentally, but I cannot apply for disability to ease my financial burdens because if you make over \$2,000 a month, even part-time, you can't receive SSI. In a high cost city like New York, that's forced poverty.

As a trans male I have experienced challenges maintaining housing stability at times as well. Homelessness is a serious issue among those in the LGBTQ+ community, where it is harder to access support from blood relations emotionally and financially. Though I came back to Staten Island to help my household, I have also been kicked out of the house temporarily with the threat of permanently being kicked out during crucial time periods like finals week. This has affected my academic success. If I could save my money from my job as a college assistant for an apartment nearby instead of paying for college, I could do what I have to with chores and leave without relying on them financially or worrying about shelter over my head.

A year before I would be graduating, with my parents paying my tuition, I would be out of luck if they cut me off completely. I would have to expend all my energy on day to day living expenses and wouldn't be able to afford school. I can't do manual labor and minimum wage is simply not enough to live on. If tuition, textbooks, and transportation were free and accessible for ALL college students it would help so many LGBTQ+ students like me, as well as other students who don't have stable family support.

Free CUNY can ultimately save people from toxic family environments and provide an escape route that simultaneously betters a person. I hope that you all will keep that in mind when considering what a tuition-free CUNY will really mean for some. Thank you for your time.

**Testimony of Prof. Stephen Brier, CUNY Graduate Center, and Co-Chair,
Task Force on Affordability, Admissions, and Graduation Rates at the City
University of New York**

The City University of New York has been recognized since its inception more than 170 years ago as an especially successful and efficient engine of upward mobility for the city's poor and working-class citizens, what one of its founding leaders termed "the children of the whole people," especially recent immigrants and/or racial and ethnic minority groups. This early public commitment to municipal higher education included the provision via city tax dollars of free tuition for CUNY's full-time students. That commitment was significantly broadened and democratized in 1969 when CUNY students, supported by faculty and community forces, forced the system through mass actions to open its doors widely to let in all of the city's high school graduates. For the next 7 years CUNY was arguably the most important and admired public education system in the world. But like most public institutions, CUNY suffered egregiously from the austerity policies imposed on it after the city's 1976-77 fiscal crisis. One of the first things to be abolished was free tuition, followed by ever tightening admissions standards for entry into CUNY's senior colleges. CUNY struggled over the next four decades after 1977 with ever decreasing city and especially state support. That cutback in funding intensified the imposition of neoliberal policies by the city and state, effectively privatizing many public functions, resulting in the undermining of public institutions like CUNY.

But the rising crescendo of public concern and anger over increasing income inequality not only in the city but across the nation following the 2008 economic downturn has put the issue of CUNY's long-range sustainability and public support back on the political agenda. That concern, thanks to the strong leadership of Councilmember Inez Barron as chair of this committee, pushed the NY City Council last year to pass a law authorizing a Task Force to consider CUNY's future and explore what CUNY, now the nation's third largest public university system, will need, moving forward, to assure the academic success of its 275,000 undergraduates. As co-chair of the Task Force I am proud of the work that my colleagues and I were able to do in a short span of 3 months at the end of last year; we completed our work and submitted this White Paper two days before Christmas to Mayor De Blasio's staff. This draft report has been sitting in the Mayor's office now for the past 5 months without action. I call on the Mayor and his staff to make this report and the recommendations that it offers public and to launch a public process for considering how the city and state can and should find the necessary funds to assure CUNY's vital role in the life of the city and state in the coming years.

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Address: 342 Kingsboro 3rd Walk APT 6G

I represent: City Council CUNY Taskforce

Address: Stephen Drier

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Name: Jamell Henderson

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I represent: NYPD

Address: 9 murray st, New York, NY 11237

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Name: Jayne Farbowitz

Address: 1176 Richmond Avenue Staten

I represent: NY, 10314 NYPK 6/CSI/college assistant

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Name: David Crook

Address: University Dren - last Office of Institutional

I represent: CUNY Research & Assessment

Address: _____

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