

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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May 31, 2018  
Start: 10:15 a.m.  
Recess: 12:17 p.m.

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

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

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

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

Stephen Brier, CUNY, Professor, Ph.D. Program in  
Urban Education, City University of New York, CUNY

Hercules Emile Reid, NYC City Council Task Force  
City University of New York, CUNY

David Crook, Associate University Provost for  
Academic Affairs, City University of New York, CUNY

Kwaffa Abdullah, CUNY Student

Jamell Henderson, CUNY graduate of Borough of  
Manhattan Community College, Brooklyn College,  
Baruch College

Cyrille Njikeng, Graduate Student  
City College of New York  
Vice Chair for Graduate Student Affairs  
City University of New York, University Student  
Senate a/k/a CUNY USS

Emily Skydell, Higher Education Coordinator  
New York Public Interest Research Group, NYPIRG

Evan Aycock (sp?), Sophomore Borough of Manhattan  
Community College, Board Director of NYPIRG

Jamie Farbowitz, English Major  
College of Staten Island & NYPIRG Student Leader



2 [sound check] [pause] [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Good morning.

4 COUNCIL MEMBERS: [in unison off mic]

5 Good morning.

6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Good morning.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER [in unison on mic] Good  
8 morning.

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: My name is Inez  
10 Barron, and I am the Chair of the committee on Higher  
11 Education. Today, we are seeking an update on Local  
12 Law 161 of 2016, which was enacted from legislation I  
13 introduced last session to establish a task force to  
14 review proposals for restoring free tuition at the  
15 City University of New York. For 129 years residents  
16 attended public higher education institution at no  
17 cost for tuition. Beginning in 1847, New York City  
18 established the Free Academy with admission based on  
19 merit and offering liberal arts, career training,  
20 fostering intellectual freedom and rigorous academic  
21 standards. Even during the challenging times of the  
22 Great Depression there was no tuition, and two new  
23 colleges were constructed during that time. The  
24 system grew to six senior colleges and three  
25 community colleges that were then consolidated as

2 CUNY in 1961. The CUNY student—the CUNY student body  
3 remained predominantly white for middle-class  
4 families. In 1970, pressure from the Civil Rights  
5 Movement and mass protests by Black and Latino  
6 students forced an era of “open admissions.” In the  
7 next five years following that time, Black enrollment  
8 grew by 55% and Blacks and Latinos represented 42% of  
9 the CUNY’s 1979 graduating class, but unfortunately,  
10 city and state did not commit sufficient funding  
11 to support the expanding operating costs. In 1976,  
12 facing financial constraints, the city agreed to let  
13 the state over the operating costs for senior  
14 colleges. Several board members resigned in protest  
15 to the proposed imposition of tuition. Under Chair  
16 Herman Badillo, CUNY eliminated remedial classes at  
17 all senior colleges, which forced many students to  
18 attend community colleges. You may note, however,  
19 that there are several elite colleges that still  
20 offer remedial classes. An earlier report of the  
21 Committee for Higher—for Public Higher Education,  
22 Inc. based on the cost of tuition, a study of City  
23 University of New York published about 18–1984,  
24 included a recommendation that the city of New York  
25 should support the tuition-free policy at City

2 University as an essential service for its relative-  
3 its residents. In 1975 tuition and fees accounted  
4 for 175 of the CUNY funding. The city put in 47% and  
5 the State contributed 40, but that has drastically  
6 changed. I'm personally a beneficiary of this  
7 historic commitment having graduated from Hunter  
8 College in the 1960s, January 1967, and I've made  
9 clear that we should all be working to restore CUNY  
10 to its former glory as the free university of New  
11 York City. Indeed, we have had multiple hearings-  
12 related hearings exploring such topics a CUNY  
13 graduation rates, student debt and food insecurity.  
14 Most recently at our March budget hearing, we heard  
15 from a young CUNY student names Levi who had not  
16 eaten in two days so that he could ration his  
17 expenses to afford a Metro Card to get to and from  
18 his classes. His experience is all too common, and  
19 yet we sit by idly instead of pursuing solutions that  
20 can help the city and state restore free tuition at  
21 CUNY and help students like Levi. As I have already  
22 acknowledged previously, the path to restoring a free  
23 tuition policy isn't easy. CUNY is a large  
24 institution with a multi-layered bureaucracy reliant  
25 on local, state and federal funding accountable to a

2 central administration, a board of trustees, and the  
3 New York State Board of Regents. There are also a  
4 lot of political interest and financial interest at  
5 play, and there are legitimate policy debates that  
6 surround this issue. That's why the task force  
7 created by Local Law 161 of 2016 was constituted so  
8 that it could examine the obstacles and produce a  
9 report with recommendations on how we could—on how  
10 they could be addressed. It was my hope that once we  
11 had the report we could discuss and take concrete  
12 steps towards advancing a tuition free CUNY. The  
13 report was due October 15<sup>th</sup>, and was completed  
14 December 23, 2017. I do want to acknowledge the  
15 members of the task force, and to thank them for  
16 their time, their commitment, their input, their  
17 expertise. Co-chairs Stephen Brier and Hercules  
18 Reid, and the members Charles Bendit (sp?), Deborah  
19 Bayo (sp?) Barbara Bowen, Jose Calderon, Una Clark,  
20 William Goodlow, Ty Johnson, Terzah Nasser, Lisette  
21 Viegas and Via Wong, and these were members appointed  
22 by the Mayor, and the then Speaker Melissa Mark-  
23 Viverito, and the public advocate. I would like to  
24 acknowledge my colleague, Council Member Holden who  
25 is here, and I'd like to thank my Chief of Staff Joy

2 Simmons; my Legislative Director and CUNY Liaison  
3 Ndigo Washington, the committee's Finance Analyst  
4 Jessica Ackerman and wish her well. She's going to be  
5 leaving. Our Policy Analyst Chloe Rivera and our  
6 Committee Counsel Paul Senegal, and at this time  
7 we're going to call the first panel, and I'm sure  
8 that as we get to hear from them they, too, will  
9 share their frustration that a report that was  
10 completed in December is only just now being  
11 released, and part of that delay was because I was  
12 asked by the Administration to hold off on having a  
13 public-public hearing on the issue because the Mayor  
14 wanted to be involved. Here it is six months later,  
15 and the mayor has not been involved, has not had  
16 input, has not had his deputy Mayor give us the  
17 figures that we asked for that would be financially  
18 tied to the recommendations in this report. It's  
19 very disheartening, very frustrating, and an  
20 unnecessary delay, but we're going straight ahead.  
21 We're going to go forward, and we're going to make  
22 sure that this report gets a hearing and that this  
23 report has impact on CUNY's future. So, at this time  
24 I'm going to call the two panelists, and we're going  
25 to start with the co-chairs of the Task Force Report,



2 and that is Stephen Brier, from CUNY and Hercules  
3 Reid City Council Task Force. If you would come  
4 forward, the Counsel will administer the oath.

5 [pause]

6 LEGAL COUNSEL: Good morning. Do you  
7 affirm to tell the truth? Oh, would you raise your  
8 right hands, please. Do you affirm to tell the  
9 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in  
10 your testimony before this committee, and to respond  
11 honestly to Council Members' questions?

12 HERCULES REID: Yes.

13 STEPHEN BRIER: I do.

14 LEGAL COUNSEL: Please State your names  
15 for the record.

16 HERCULES REID: Hercules Emile Reid.

17 STEPHEN BRIER: Stephen Brier.

18 [background comments, pause] I'm not on? Stephen  
19 Brier.

20 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, you can begin  
21 with your testimony. [background comments, pause]

22 STEPHEN BRIER: I want to thank Council  
23 Member Barron for her tireless work in support of  
24 CUNY and this task force, and for convening this  
25 hearing. The City University of New York has been

2 recognized since its inception more than 170 years  
3 ago as an especially successful and efficient engine  
4 of upward mobility for the city's poor and working  
5 class citizens, what one of its founding leaders  
6 termed the children of the whole people. That was  
7 especially true of recent immigrants and/or racial  
8 and ethnic minority groups starting in the last 19<sup>th</sup>  
9 Century. This early public commitment to municipal  
10 higher education included the provision via city tax  
11 dollars of free tuition for CUNY's full-time  
12 students. That commit-commitment was significantly  
13 broadened and democratized further in 1969 when CUNY  
14 students supported by faculty and community members  
15 forced the system through masked actions to open its  
16 doors widely to let in all of the city's high school  
17 graduates, a proud moment in the history of the city  
18 and of the City University. For the next seven  
19 years, CUNY was arguably the most important and  
20 admired public education system in the world, but  
21 like most public institutions, CUNY suffered  
22 egregiously from the austerity policies imposed on it  
23 after the city's 1976-77 Fiscal Crisis. One of the  
24 first things to be abolished, and the Council Member  
25 noted was free tuition followed by ever tightening

2 admission standards for entry into CUNY's senior  
3 colleges. CUNY has struggled over the next four  
4 decades after 1977 with ever decreasing city and  
5 especially state support, which has been filled in by  
6 increased revenue from student tuition. That cutback  
7 in funding intensified the imposition of neo-liberal  
8 policies by the city and state effectively  
9 privatizing many public functions resulting in the  
10 undermining of public institutions like CUNY, but  
11 rising crescendo, of public concern and anger over  
12 increasing income inequality not only in the city but  
13 across the nation following the 2008 economic  
14 downturn has put the issue of CUNY's long-term  
15 sustainability and public support back on the agenda.  
16 That concern thanks to the strong leadership of  
17 Council Member Inez Barron as chair of this committee  
18 pushed the New York City Council as you've heard last  
19 year to pass the law authorizing the task force to  
20 consider CUNY's future and explore what CUNY now the  
21 nation's third largest public university system will  
22 need moving forward to assure the academic success of  
23 its 275,000 undergraduates and in a word, the Task  
24 Force Report suggests that there are three ways in  
25 which CUNY needs to be supported to be able to

2 realize that mission. One, of course, is to make  
3 admission to CUNY affordable and widely available.  
4 Free tuition is one key sort of leg of this three-  
5 legged stool. The second is a very serious  
6 recommitment to hiring more full-time faculty, people  
7 like myself. I'm a faculty member at the CUNY  
8 Graduate Center. We have lost 3,000 full-time  
9 faculty members alone since 1977. We need to get  
10 more full-time faculty, and at the same time, we need  
11 to pay our adjuncts much more than we're paying now.  
12 They're living on starvation wages. That's the  
13 second leg of the stool, and the third to guarantee  
14 access and—and a good education is that we need to  
15 fix CUNY's infrastructure. We need to make an effort  
16 to—to—that—that the—the working and—and learning and  
17 teaching conditions at our institutions are—I would  
18 settle for satisfactory. I would love them to be  
19 world class, but I would settle for them to be  
20 satisfactory. As Co-Chair of the Task Force, I am  
21 proud of the work that my colleagues and I were able  
22 to do in a short span of three months at the end of  
23 last year. We completed our work, and submitted this  
24 white paper two day before Christmas, as you've  
25 heard, to Mayor de Blasio's staff. This draft report

2 has been sitting on the—in the Mayor's Office now for  
3 the past five months without action. I call on the  
4 Mayor and his staff to make this report and the  
5 recommendations that it offers public and to launch a  
6 public process for considering how the city and state  
7 can and should find the necessary funds to assure  
8 CUNY's vital role in the life of the city and state  
9 in the coming years. Thank you.

10           HERCULES REID: Greetings to the Higher  
11 Education—the Higher Education Committee and to  
12 members of the City Council. I would like to say  
13 thank you to my Council Member from my district  
14 Alicka-Samuel for being in the room today. My name  
15 is Hercules Reid and I am the Co-Chair of New York  
16 City Council's CUNY Task Force. It is a privilege to  
17 be appointed by the Speaker of the City Council to  
18 serve as a student voice both past and present in  
19 providing progress for our future. This opportunity  
20 has been a platform to take what I have learned and  
21 advocated for as a former two-term student government  
22 president of New York City College of Technology, and  
23 Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs for the University  
24 Student Senate and assist in putting it into  
25 legislation. I would like to make a special mention

2 to the sponsors of this bill to remind them of the  
3 commitment that they made. This task force was  
4 sponsored by Council Member—Council Members Inez  
5 Barron—sorry—Inez Barron, Margaret Chin, Inez  
6 Dickens, Daniel Dromm, Deborah Rose, Andrew Cohen,  
7 Jumaane Williams, Robert Cornegy, Ben Kallos, Ydanis  
8 Rodriguez, Helen Rosenthal, Donovan Richards, Annabel  
9 Palma, Brad Lander, Steven Levin, Paul Vallone, Rory—  
10 Rory Lancman, Vincent Gentile, and the Public  
11 Advocate Ms. Letitia James. I would like to express  
12 extreme gratitude towards the Chair of the Higher  
13 Education Committee, Council Member Inez Barron who  
14 has played a significant role in the creation of this  
15 task force and has remained invested being an  
16 authentic voice for the people especially for our  
17 beloved CUNY. This task force assembled a team of 12  
18 people from various walks of life, allowing for  
19 multiple perspectives to express their thoughts and  
20 concerns about CUNY. Thus, creating the white paper  
21 that we can share. The task force worked diligently  
22 and produced a recommendation report that research  
23 historical and current data on CUNY and reviewed best  
24 practices. The white paper offers recommendations in  
25 three specific areas: (1) What the real cost of

2 attendance is for CUNY students, and how addressing  
3 these costs would improve access and graduation  
4 rates. (2) How to ensure that CUNY faculty are  
5 adequately supported academically and financially so  
6 that they are entirely able to help their students  
7 achieve academic success, and (3) what needs to be  
8 done to ensure that the physical environment of  
9 CUNY's 24 campuses is conducive to the teaching and  
10 learning that are necessary to make possible  
11 students' success. It has not been an easy road to  
12 get to this point, and I would like to apologize to  
13 the public on record for the delay in the release of  
14 the white paper. According to Local Law 161, as was  
15 mentioned, the report was final—was to be finalized  
16 in October 2017. The task force requested an  
17 extension to produce a more thorough report by  
18 December 2017. The white paper was—the white paper  
19 draft was completed and the—and a public announcement  
20 was in order. It was requested that the release be  
21 cancelled to allow time for the Mayor's Office to  
22 read and provide feedback. As of yesterday evening,  
23 we finally received input from the Deputy Mayor's  
24 Office. I'm calling on all the sponsors of this  
25 legislation, the CUNY community and elected officials

2 to ban together on this report and make sure it sees  
3 the light of day. Very often great work like this  
4 falls on deaf ears, and no change comes of it. We  
5 cannot do this alone, and if you believe in the power  
6 of higher education, it is time now more than ever to  
7 take advantage of the weight of this document, and  
8 command the change and investment we need to make  
9 CUNY more accessible, affordable, which will impact  
10 graduation rates. There's a song by an artist named  
11 Big Sean, *One Man Can Change the World*. This song  
12 inspired me to—because it represents not being able  
13 to rely on people who give their word to make a  
14 difference. I realized a long time ago I was on this  
15 planet to serve a bigger purpose than myself. I will  
16 continue to fight for the 500,000 plus students  
17 present and to come who deserve a chance just like I  
18 received in life. It takes more than one person to  
19 change the world, but everyday like my ancestors, I  
20 will at least let it begin with me. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I want to thank the  
22 Panel for their presentation, and I also want to  
23 acknowledge that we've been joined by two more  
24 Council Members. Council Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel,  
25 who you identified as your Council Member and Council



2 member Laurie Cumbo. We're glad that you're here. I  
3 just want to highlight what the recommendations are  
4 that were—that are included. I think it's important  
5 that they be read into the record. So, I think I  
6 summarized them. There are 21 recommendations.

7 1. Eliminate all tuition charges.  
8 2. Establish an emergency fund of no  
9 less than \$5 million to respond to immediate students  
10 needs with financial problems.

11 3 That the DOE and CUNY each hire and  
12 train sufficient full-time guidance counselors.

13 4. That we expand ASAP.

14 5. Implement a CUNY Institute for Adult  
15 Learners for non-traditional students, students with  
16 disabilities, veterans, and expand the Black Male  
17 Initiative.

18 6. Expand CUNY child care centers.

19 7. Underwrite \$500 million Martin  
20 Luther King Scholarship for low-income CUNY and SUNY  
21 students, and that's a bill that was introduced by my  
22 husband Assemblymember Charles Barron in Albany.

23 8. Expand CUNY Single Stop.

24 9. Free or reduced Metro Cars for CUNY  
25 students.

2 10. Expand the Fast Registration by  
3 under-grads to eventually encompass all of CUNY.

4 11. Make the new changes n the math,  
5 remediation program sustainable

6 12. A believe that connected CUNY is a  
7 necessary step in order to assist CUNY.

8 13. An ongoing review of Pathways  
9 process and CUNY's Campus Articulation Agreement.

10 14. Increase salaries for a number of  
11 full-time CUNY faculty.

12 15. Convert part-time to full-time  
13 faculty, as many as possible.

14 16. Develop basic orientation and  
15 training programs to establish and improve students  
16 mentoring and advisement.

17 17. Make full-time faculty pay-pay  
18 scales competitive with other similar public  
19 university systems nationally.

20 18. Recommend CUNY management be  
21 required to submit an annual report to the council on  
22 higher-Committee on Higher Education and borough  
23 presidents about the status of all prior Reso A  
24 funding.

2 19. Determine if all buildings and land  
3 are being used adequately for educational purposes.

4 20. Assess the progress of the ADA  
5 compliances at each campus.

6 21. Submit an annual report on this  
7 disability study.

8 So, I wanted to read into the record  
9 those 21 recommendations so that those of you who  
10 don't have an opportunity to get a copy, which is by  
11 the sergeant's desk. You will know what they are.  
12 I'm going to, you know, I've got lots of questions,  
13 but I've been involved with talking to you, and I'm  
14 going to defer to my colleagues who might have  
15 questions. Council Member Holden, do you have any  
16 questions?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: [off mic] Yes.  
18 [on mic] As some—as a student in CUNY and as a  
19 faculty member for 40 years, I can attest to the fact  
20 that CUNY has been neglected. Never funded properly  
21 in my 40 years. Actually, it's over 40 years if you  
22 consider my eight years as a, you know, as a student,  
23 and what—what—the recommendations are—are certainly  
24 right on. I'm just—I have a question, though, on  
25 the—on the task force. How does that fit in with the

2 Pell Grants and the—and TAP, if—if there's a free  
3 tuition? Do we get federal funding?

4           STEPHEN BRIER: (sic) I'll respond  
5 quickly. I think when we were talking about the  
6 tuition we were not simply assuming that the city  
7 would take on the responsibility of—

8           COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: [interposing]  
9 Okay, so--

10           STEPHEN BRIER: --of our underlining  
11 bill. (sic) [off mic] It would be a topic. It would  
12 after taxes or whatever—I'm sorry, whatever [on mic]  
13 [background comments] Yeah, was—was short from TAP  
14 and Pell funding would be topped up by this free  
15 tuition--

16           COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay.

17           STEPHEN BRIER: --and lock it.

18           COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: That's—that's—  
19 that's the clue. Another thing, and—and Hercules,  
20 you certainly know about City Tech's problem with the  
21 infrastructure. I visited many public schools,  
22 actually all of them in my district and I can attest  
23 that the public schools have a better infrastructure,  
24 at least in my district, than any of the colleges I  
25 attended in CUNY. Smart boards in every class. We

2 didn't have that at—in my department. We had one  
3 Smart Board. The elevators didn't work, the roof  
4 leaked. There was mold throughout the building at  
5 City Tech. It was—it's amazing what the faculty were  
6 able to do despite the—the college infrastructure,  
7 but the biggest hurdle and I—and I'm—I'm glad the  
8 task force is addressing, we had 100—we had 20 full-  
9 time faculty members in my department, over 100  
10 adjunct professors or lecturers. Now, that's a  
11 problem. It's a problem on a number of levels. As—  
12 as you know, at that time at least so I know Barbara  
13 Bowman (sic) has fought for office hours. We got one  
14 office hour. If you—I think if you had six hours of  
15 adjunct, and that was a great, great accomplishment,  
16 but it's not enough, and with over—how do you  
17 actually manage 100 adjunct faculty in a department?  
18 How does the chair actually work, and how does  
19 anybody get, you know, coordinate any meetings? The  
20 adjuncts weren't required and shouldn't be required  
21 to attend. So, we need more full-time faculty, and  
22 the adjunct pool that you have at least in my  
23 department was magnificent. They were working  
24 professions who would have loved to get a full-time  
25 position. Yet, the Administration, the—the city, the

2 state we never got enough lines ever. So, this—I—I  
3 think you could—you could double the full-time  
4 positions and still not address the needs of our CUNY  
5 students who are—are, you know, again, they—they have  
6 the deck stacked against them. Many of them have not  
7 only financial issues, but they don't really know how  
8 to maneuver college—college life, and you really  
9 need, and I would sit and talk with many of them, and  
10 counsel them. However, we got to a point where so  
11 many fell by the wayside, and because you just  
12 couldn't—they are just a very large department, and  
13 we—we have an issue at CUNY not only of a disrespect  
14 for the full-time staff and not paying them enough,  
15 but the adjunct staff to me were abused, and not only  
16 in pay, but in just the workload. They had to stay  
17 extra hours. You couldn't—if you had a class of 25  
18 students, you couldn't get to everyone in a—in a 2-  
19 1/2 hour class, and we would say—many of the adjuncts  
20 would stay two or three hours after class for free.  
21 They didn't get paid for that. So, these  
22 recommendations are great. I really appreciate the  
23 efforts of—of—of the task force, and I just hope the  
24 Mayor's Office, and if we can get the Governor to  
25 weigh in on this, certainly, it—the Mayor's office

2 I'm sure will respond, and I-I will speak to the  
3 Mayor about this because I-I've been on the front  
4 lines and CUNY actually I would be-I don't know where  
5 I'd be without CUNY. CUNY actually is my life, was  
6 my life, and I owe a lot to CUNY, and I'll fight for  
7 CUNY, and we need other people in the government to  
8 realize that this is a gem, but we-we have to  
9 actually address so many needs, and-and the  
10 infrastructure, you know, the capital projects that  
11 are needed, of course, billions, they started to  
12 address a little bit, but especially at City Tech,  
13 but still more is needed. But I would-if there is  
14 one recommendation that I-I would think is most  
15 needed is the adjuncts. Taking care of the adjuncts,  
16 making sure them into full-time. So, I'll get off my  
17 soap box now. Thank you. [laughter]

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. Council  
19 Member Cumbo.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. Thank  
21 you Chair Barron. I wanted to further a point that  
22 was just brought up. So, you said from 1976 did you  
23 say on that you'd lost over 3,000 full-time faculty?

24 STEPHEN BRIER: Yeah, after-after the  
25 fiscal crisis, the cutback was dramatic. It was-it

2 went—it went from roughly 10,000 to 7,000. Something  
3 like that. It was and—and—and what happened in that—  
4 in that following 40 years was the increase in the  
5 number of adjuncts and part-time faculty teaching at  
6 CUNY increased to the point where it's about half the  
7 workforce right now. The contact hours is with the  
8 part-time workers.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And so those 3,000  
10 faculty that were lost that were full-time was never  
11 replaced?

12 STEPHEN BRIER: Never replaced. There's  
13 been small increments by the CUNY administration in  
14 the 1990s and after 2000. So, we've got several  
15 hundreds of those lines back, and so there are—there  
16 has been some new faculty hiring, but let's remember  
17 the—the—the enrollment is—is at the highest level  
18 it's ever been in CUNY's history. It's pushing  
19 275,000 undergraduates. So, we—we've—we've let open  
20 the doors at one level to more students particularly  
21 at the community colleges, but we've not sort of  
22 comparably increased the number of full-time faculty.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Do you feel that  
24 there's a pathway that adjunct professors understand



2 to full-time professorship? Do they understand that  
3 there's a pathway or is there a pathway?

4           STEPHEN BRIER: There is not a pathway. I  
5 mean it—it-it's a crapshoot, frankly. I teach at the  
6 Graduate Center. I teach doctoral students, and  
7 their biggest concern is what's—what—what are my  
8 prospects to get a full-time academic job? Many of  
9 them were four, five and six different adjunct  
10 positions cobbled together a tiny living. The other  
11 thing I would point out in addition to hiring more  
12 full-time faculty, we pay our adjuncts abysmally.  
13 The average—pay for adjunct faculty--

14           COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]  
15 That's good.

16           STEPHEN BRIER: --is between \$3,000 or  
17 \$3,500 of staring wage. One of the demands that our  
18 union the PSC CUNY has made is that should be raised  
19 to \$7,000.

20           COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I agree.

21           STEPHEN BRIER: Because it's the only way  
22 that people can make at all a living wage and  
23 continue to—these are people with PhDs, and they're  
24 working for essentially \$18,000 a year if they teach  
25 four or five adjunct classes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And where do you  
3 feel that we are in that movement because I feel  
4 that—I feel that two things need to happen as part of  
5 the goals is that adjuncts do have to be compensated  
6 adequately for the work that they're doing because I  
7 think there also needs to be—I taught as an adjunct  
8 for a number of yeas, and no one calculates the  
9 amount of time it takes to --

10 STEPHEN BRIER: [interposing] That's  
11 right.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: --to work with  
13 students, as you suggested after class, the amount of  
14 support and assistance they need with their thesis,  
15 the number of letters of recommendation that you have  
16 to write. Like all of these different things are not  
17 calculated into the time that it takes for an adjunct  
18 to effectively teach course, and I feel that office  
19 hours and all of these different sorts of things that  
20 was also a challenge for me was that office hours  
21 were not—we didn't have an office, and didn't have a  
22 space where students could come and meet with us, or  
23 to talk with us. So, it might, you know, turn out to  
24 be a meeting a lounge or a meeting somewhere in the  
25 lobby or going out for coffee, or all these different

2 things, which would ultimately cost you money as  
3 well. So, it's all of these different dynamics. So,  
4 we're definitely in full support of seeing that, and  
5 also wanting to see a pathway that adjuncts  
6 understand that there is a process that you can  
7 become full-time faculty if you've taught for a  
8 number of years, that you've expressed interest in  
9 wanting to do that. You should be able to do that.

10           STEPHEN BRIER: And that's one of the  
11 recommendations that that task-as-as Council Member  
12 Barron read, that's one of the recommendations that  
13 there be some kind of a structure where, you know,  
14 dedicated adjuncts have worked in some cases decades  
15 at CUNY have a pathway to full-time status if and  
16 when full-time positions become available. That's  
17 the-the-that's the fair thing to do for the people  
18 who have made that kind of commitment to our  
19 institution.

20           COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. [pause]

21           CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, and just  
22 to extend that concept a little about increasing  
23 staff, you know, I always express my concern about  
24 how disappointed I am at the low numbers of black  
25 faculty at CUNY

2           STEPHEN BRIER: Absolutely.

3           CHAIRPERSON BARRON: It's flat-lined. It  
4 has not gone up. Even though there may have been a  
5 number of people who are applicants, there's not a  
6 comparable number of applicants who are given-granted  
7 interviews, and there's still the old boy network of  
8 the chairs making the decision about who is coming  
9 in. So, that's certainly not for you--

10           STEPHEN BRIER: [interposing] Yeah.

11           CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --but just to get it  
12 on the record that once again we need to address that  
13 topic as well.

14           HERCULES REID: [interposing] And if I  
15 may interject as well, from the student voice where  
16 you guys' previous adjuncts--adjuncts professors know  
17 how the--the amount of adjuncts affects, and the--the  
18 funding for adjuncts affects, you know, individuals.  
19 You know, coming from a student's perspective talking  
20 about adjuncts not having office hours and, you know,  
21 you have your full-time job and maybe kids, and you  
22 have your full-time classes and trying to maneuver  
23 around, trying to meet with the professor just to  
24 answer one question for you or to really get feedback  
25 on something so that you can the--the grade that you

2 want or deserve is pretty ridiculous. I myself have  
3 been in that scenario. I—I know many of students who  
4 truly suffer because adjuncts themselves are  
5 suffering, right, because they have to run. They—I'm  
6 sure many of them would love to stick around and have  
7 these conversations and support these students, but  
8 like was mentioned they're running to their next  
9 adjunct position job, of their, you know, trying to  
10 handle what load of the classroom size that they  
11 have. So, I definitely want to continue to just  
12 highlight the need of, you know, (1) funding these  
13 professors who can then in turn directly impact  
14 student's lives a little more because they are a  
15 little bit more comfortable in their own shoes.

16 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Just before I go to  
17 my colleague Alicka-Samuel, does—I can't recall if  
18 the task force talks about how online classes might  
19 be a source of increasing— You didn't?

20 STEPHEN BRIER: Yes, we did. We did in  
21 the area of—we did very maybe a sentence or two.

22 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Oh, okay.

23 STEPHEN BRIER: I mean I'm a—I'm an  
24 instructional technologist. So, I have a strong set  
25 of ideas or beliefs about this.

2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes.

3 STEPHEN BRIER: But I also don't believe  
4 because I'm an instructional technologist, and I  
5 teach interactive technology and pedagogy at the  
6 graduate center, I don't believe online courses  
7 completely online are the answer for our students.  
8 What we need is blended courses what we call hybrid  
9 courses because there our students need particularly  
10 strong attention from faculty members face to face as  
11 well as whatever they can do at a distance. So, I  
12 think we—we want to do that, but we want to do it  
13 carefully and thoughtfully.

14 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. Council  
15 Member Samuel.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ALICKA-SAMUEL: Hello,  
17 everyone and I just wanted to just put on the record  
18 that I am CUNY graduate. I am a proud CUNY graduate,  
19 and truly believe that the woman that I am today, a  
20 graduate of Law School as well as a member of the New  
21 York City Council having been born and raised in New  
22 York City Housing Authority, having been born and  
23 raised in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, I am  
24 sitting here today because of CUNY, and will do  
25 everything I can within my capacity and my position

2 to be supportive of--of everything, and I just want to  
3 say hey [laughter] to my constituents, I love you and  
4 I'm just so proud of--of where you are today because  
5 of CUNY right--

6 HERCULES REID: Yeah.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ALICKA-SAMUEL: --and your  
8 upbringing, but I just have a question about the  
9 Board of Trustees. Was there any input or  
10 collaboration or like meetings or anything at all.  
11 Like just can you describe the relationship, if there  
12 was any, between the task force and the Board, the  
13 CUNY Board at all?

14 HERCULES REID: So, as of right now, the  
15 answer is no. What we had a representative, Una  
16 Clark, Trustee Clark who sat on the task force. So,  
17 that was essentially a direct connection to the task  
18 force and, of course, she gave her input and feedback  
19 based on her role and also as a fellow CUNY lover,  
20 but have we sat down with multiple people on the  
21 Board of Trustees and had these conversations? No.  
22 We are looking forward to it s this is a definite  
23 document that we want to make sure that we do get  
24 their input, and their feedback on what could be  
25 included and what can be worked on. So, yeah.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ALICKA-SAMUEL: Okay,  
3 because I was just trying to figure out if need be  
4 their level of input or—I don't want to say support,  
5 but just their involvement if it would help push  
6 things along at all--

7 HERCULES REID: [interposing] Um--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ALICKA-SAMUEL: --with  
9 some of the recommendations or even a release.

10 STEPHEN BRIER: We'd welcome the  
11 opportunity for Trustee Clark to help us make that a  
12 reality, but it's—it's—it's going to be difficult  
13 until the Mayor lets the report out publicly, and we  
14 can have a chance to really discuss what we proposed  
15 in the 21 recommendations, and—and try to figure out  
16 how to make them a reality or many of them as we can.  
17 Then it seems to me that's an appropriate moment for  
18 the CUNY Central Administration and the—and the  
19 trustees to be actively involved in that. We—we  
20 would have welcomed any feedback at that point. It  
21 was a very—it was a very open-ended process, and the  
22 final meeting, which we held at the Graduate Center  
23 where I teach, would—Council Member Barron came,  
24 Trustee Clark came, several members of the task force  
25 were there as well to vote on the final report that—



2 the report that you see that we—we submitted back in—  
3 in December. We think that's a—a conversation that  
4 needs—should have started right away after the new  
5 year, and we're sad five months later that it is not.

6 HERCULES REID: And—and definitely on the  
7 aspect of confidentiality, I think that was probably  
8 another level of respect that again the Mayor's  
9 Office asked that we keep it almost to ourselves  
10 until they were able to give specific feedback, and  
11 the document could go public where we can have these  
12 conversations with a wider audience. We've been  
13 sitting, you know, on that. I myself have spoke to  
14 Trustee Clark, and she's been, you know, behind the  
15 scenes definitely prodding things as well as—the  
16 individual's name slips my mind, but she also  
17 introduced me to another Board of Trustees member. I  
18 think his name is Michael. He's on of the Mayor—  
19 Mayoral—mayoral trustees. I have started keeping him  
20 in the look as well, and he would have been here  
21 today but, of course, his graduation is in Staten  
22 Island. But some of them are definitely aware. So,  
23 yeah.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ALICKA-SAMUEL: Okay,  
25 thank you. Thank you, Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. Just one  
3 further questions in terms of following up, the task  
4 force, you were the law said that you should have at  
5 least three meetings. So, did you fulfill that  
6 obligation? How often did you meet? How many times  
7 did you meet? You should meet like three times.

8 HERCULES REID: The guaranty met three  
9 times--

10 STEPHEN BRIER: Three times.

11 HERCULES REID: --with quorum.

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

13 HERCULES REID: With quorum.

14 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And how--how did the  
15 members contribute to the document that you produced?  
16 In what way were they engaged?

17 HERCULES REID: So in the--in the first  
18 few meetings it was very general conversations were  
19 being had and brought feedback and then essentially  
20 meeting minutes was produced. I believe it was in  
21 the third meeting when we actually started to get  
22 deeper into the project where we also split up into  
23 subcommittees where individuals who were interested  
24 in say infrastructure or faculty or the student  
25 aspect attended particular meetings geared around

2 that, and then after we got all the input and buy-in  
3 from all the members of the task force, I will  
4 definitely say Steve Brier was a huge engine behind,  
5 you know, typing it out and putting it into a  
6 document as well as at the time choice of towns and  
7 me giving feedback to the—to great people and then  
8 after that point we went and had our final meeting,  
9 which you were a part of, and we presented the  
10 document that came out of the different levels of the  
11 meetings. We asked for feedback from all the  
12 members. Some gave, some didn't, and then after we  
13 had that final meeting was when we went back to  
14 working on the engine on typing it out, making the  
15 adjustments, and then that's when in December we  
16 finally had the draft that you see today.

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Did all of the  
18 members have an opportunity to receive a copy of the  
19 draft?

20 HERCULES REID: I personally sent all of  
21 the task force members a copy on at least two  
22 occasions.

23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

24 STEPHEN BRIER: And I before it was  
25 finalized on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, I made a point of sending

2 that, an ultimate draft to all the members of the—of  
3 the task force to ask for their feedback, and we got  
4 as Hercules suggests some feedback. Others were  
5 content with the way it was, and that's the document  
6 we produced. We gave it to Charissa Townsend who was  
7 on the Mayor's Staff, not on the Council's staff.  
8 She was the staff to the task force, and she produced  
9 the final document, which frankly until we got  
10 Hercules to sort of put together the thing you see.  
11 I've never actually seen the final document that went  
12 to the Mayor's Office. All I have is my then  
13 ultimate draft that went to her.

14 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Was there any  
15 objections to recommendations that are contained in  
16 this report, or would you say the group was in  
17 consensus that all of the items in this were items  
18 that they could embrace.

19 HERCULES REID: What I would say is that  
20 in my last email where I did send the draft again, I  
21 specifically requested that if any feedback was  
22 needed to be provided and by silencing your feedback  
23 would sound as you're agreeing to what's in the  
24 document. I would say only one task force member  
25 Lucette Mendez. She was the only one that said I

2 want to give feedback, but as of today, which this  
3 happened like two or three weeks ago, I have not  
4 received any type of feedback.

5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I think that's very  
6 important that we get that into the record. That's  
7 why I asked those questions. Are there any further  
8 questions? If not, we want to thank you for your  
9 testimony. Thank you for your work. Thank you for  
10 your dedication. Thank you for your persistence and  
11 thank you for continuing the fight because it is a  
12 fight.

13 STEPHEN BRIER: Thanks a lot.

14 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.

15 STEPHEN BRIER: We appreciate it.

16 [background comments, pause]

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, we'll next  
18 call the CUNY representative and we're going to have  
19 David Crook who is the University Dean for the  
20 Officer of Institutional Research and Assessment come  
21 and give testimony. [background comments, pause]  
22 Okay, I'm going to ask the Counsel to administer the  
23 oath.

24 LEGAL COUNSEL: Would you please raise  
25 your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth,

2 the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your  
3 testimony before this committee, and to respond  
4 honestly to Council Members' questions?

5 DAVID CROOK: I do.

6 LEGAL COUNSEL: Please State your names  
7 for the record.

8 DAVID CROOK: David Crook.

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. You may  
10 begin.

11 DAVID CROOK: Good morning, Chairperson  
12 Barron and members of the Higher Education Committee.  
13 I am David Crook, CUNY's Associate University Provost  
14 for Academic Affairs. I got a promotion. [laughter]  
15 I would like to thank you for the opportunity to  
16 speak with you this morning about the report of the  
17 task force on affordability admissions and graduation  
18 rates of the City University of New York. The  
19 Council and—and the task force that prepared the  
20 report deserves our great appreciation for  
21 identifying the ingredients that are crucial to  
22 students' success. Academic support is—is key, but  
23 this—I mean the kind of health that students need to  
24 guide and sustain them in their studies through to  
25 degree completion, and non-academic support. All the

2 various sorts of-of support other than support for  
3 the academic work that they're doing needing  
4 financial aid, paying for the many costs associated  
5 with going to college, living expenses such as  
6 transportation, emergencies and childcare. Our  
7 undergraduate students are non-traditional students  
8 in-in some respects and traditional in many other  
9 ways. Forty-two percent have a household income less  
10 than \$20,000 year; 58% receive Pell grants and about  
11 1 in 8 are parents. Certain groups of students, as  
12 the report mentions, students who are entering or  
13 returning to college, students who have disabilities,  
14 veterans, low-income students, students of color have  
15 distinct needs even over and apart the general needs  
16 that I just cited in-in the-in-in the basic  
17 statistics, and-and so consistent with the  
18 recommendations of the-of the task force, the  
19 university has been and must be sensitive to the  
20 special needs of-of these populations. Finally, no  
21 university can serve its students well unless it is  
22 able to recruit and retain excellent faculty. Full-  
23 time faculty are the life blood of our Teaching Corps  
24 dedicated to CUNY's mission, and to the success of  
25 our students. They demonstrate this commitment

2 everyday in the classroom like in their work to  
3 design a rigorous curriculum, their meetings with  
4 students, and in their careers as scholars. Both  
5 teaching and learning take place in buildings that  
6 need to be maintained and so proper conditions and  
7 teaching conditions we acknowledge are essential, and  
8 but this morning, I will focus my remarks on the  
9 progress that the university has made in raising the  
10 success rates of students, acknowledging the needs  
11 that are cited in the report for better support of  
12 faculty, and for the infrastructure, I will be  
13 focusing on the academic part of the equation and the  
14 recommendations in the report. Today, coincidentally  
15 is a day of great celebration at CUNY as we've  
16 mentioned. I understand that no fewer than six  
17 graduation ceremonies are taking place today, and so  
18 as a result, several of my colleagues have commitment  
19 to speak of them. Otherwise they would have been  
20 here. So, I'll spend a few minutes talking about how  
21 we've been able to make sure of the resources that  
22 our—have been available to the university through its  
23 operating budget from the city and the state to  
24 improve degree completion rates with an eye toward  
25 how much better these rates could be, and how much



2 faster progress could be with if additional funding  
3 were available. So by making effective use of the  
4 resources available at CUNY in a relatively short  
5 period of time, has made remarkable progress in  
6 raising its graduation rates. This has been due to  
7 the hard work of our students, our faculty and staff,  
8 and our leadership. So, last year in 2016 to 17, the  
9 university awarded 51,533 degrees up from 47,776 the  
10 year before. So, that's an increase of 8% overall,  
11 but degrees awarded to students of color increased at  
12 an even faster pace. So, [coughs] if undergraduate  
13 degrees in general increased by 12.4%, the number of  
14 degrees awarded to students of color increased by 18%  
15 of the same period. Three-year graduation rates are  
16 another point of progress, and the improvement that  
17 we've seen in these rates and the improvement that we  
18 expect to see going forward is in so small part due  
19 to the large investment that the Council and the city  
20 has made in the ASAP program, and I'll say a bit more  
21 about that. But three-year graduation rates from  
22 associate programs, this is all of our associate  
23 programs including our so-called comprehensive  
24 colleges, climbed from 13.6% to 19.2% from the  
25 entering full-time cohort in 2010 to the cohort

2 entering in 2014. So, over a four-year period, the  
3 graduation rates increased by almost half in just  
4 that short period of time, and we believe that we're  
5 on track to achieve the target in the university's  
6 strategic plan of--of reaching 35%--35.6% graduation  
7 rate for the cohort entering in 2019. We chose the  
8 2019 cohort as a--as the basis for that target because  
9 that will be the year when the ASAP program is fully  
10 scaled up to 25,000 students representing almost half  
11 of the--of the entering class of--of associate  
12 students. So, back in 2006 just to go back a little  
13 bit further than the--the 2010 cohort I mentioned,  
14 the--the graduation rate was only 10% back then. So,  
15 in--in just not that many years we've more than  
16 doubled the--the associate degree graduation rate, and  
17 our target it to double it again. For baccalaureate  
18 students, we've made progress there as well, again  
19 keeping in mind the constraints on the resources that  
20 we've been operating under that the Councilman  
21 referenced so eloquently. Six-year graduation rates  
22 for baccalaureate students moved from 51% to 56.6%  
23 for the entering full-time cohort of fall 2006  
24 preparing that to the fall 2011 cohorts. So, again,  
25 progress of over five percentage points in--in that

2 relatively short period of time. Some of that may be  
3 due to rising admission standards, but there's been a  
4 tremendous amount of attention, you know, paid to  
5 supporting students as best we can, you know,  
6 improving advisement to—to raise those rates. So more  
7 financial resources for out students would—would be  
8 welcome, warmly welcomed but our efforts to we  
9 believe increase—to change student behavior in terms  
10 of the—what—what is seen as a normal credit load can  
11 also have in the meantime a bigger effects on time  
12 graduation rates, and it would also help our students  
13 maximize the use of financial aid. TAP is limited to  
14 eight semesters I believe, and so students who pursue  
15 their degrees in an efficient manner and take 15  
16 credits a term, we recognize that not every student  
17 can do that, but if more students do that, graduation  
18 rates on time and better use of—of—of the available  
19 financial aid should be possible. So, the data show  
20 that students who are full-time now, who increase  
21 their credit load from 12 to 15 credits do not suffer  
22 a GPA penalty for—for taking on the additional  
23 credit—the additional credit load. Sometimes there's  
24 a concern among advisers that—that students are  
25 taking on too much, but almost no matter what the

2 student's level of high school preparation, they—they  
3 are better off taking 15 than 12 credits. It might  
4 seem counterintuitive, but—but my background is  
5 showing that when we do a rigorous study that that  
6 seems to be the—the pattern. We have launched as part  
7 of our Momentum Campaign a systemic communications—  
8 set of communications to our students to encourage  
9 them to take 15 credits making full use of the  
10 summer. So it may be not possible for a student to  
11 take 15 in the—in the fall and 15 in—in the spring,  
12 but by making good use of the summer, they can stay  
13 on pace to the 30 credit degree credit accumulation  
14 rate that's necessary to qualify them for the  
15 Excelsior Scholarship and to make full use of their—  
16 their TAP award. So the efforts in this direction  
17 have begun to—to bear fruit. The percentage of full-  
18 time undergraduates taking 15 credits in the—the fall  
19 increased from 30 point—6 percent in the fall of '16  
20 to 41% in the fall of '17. That's an increase of  
21 10.6 percentage points. So, over time this should  
22 show an improvement in retention and on-time degree  
23 completion rates. At one of our four-year colleges,  
24 Hunter, the percentage of new freshmen taking 15  
25 credits in their first semester rose 30% in 2012 to

2 more than 59% two years later though a concerted  
3 information campaign working with the advisors, and  
4 changing the—the baselined expectations about what a  
5 full-time credit load is from the financial aid  
6 definition 12 credits to the on-time to degree  
7 completion definition of 15. [coughs] We've also  
8 just begin a campaign to encourage students to take  
9 advantage of the new Pell benefit for summer course  
10 taking again to encourage students who—to take the  
11 full 30 credits a year by making full use of the  
12 summer. Pell will pay for summer course work. One  
13 of the things that we've been working hard at, at  
14 CUNY is to what we call just in time information  
15 delivery to students. With the investments in the  
16 administrative infrastructure that—that we've made  
17 over the last number of years to have better access  
18 to what we call real time information by our  
19 students. We've been able to deliver messages to  
20 students at the time when that message—delivery of  
21 that message does the most good. So, for example  
22 students are rounding the corner into the summers.  
23 We are able to identify students who might benefit  
24 from taking the additional six credits and send them  
25 messaging in time for them to change the—maybe make

2 decisions about what they should be doing over-over  
3 the summer. Because students pay the same tuition  
4 for 15 credits as 12, the overall-the overall cost of  
5 a degree is much more affordable when students take  
6 the 15 credits per term, and also as I mentioned  
7 before it allows them to make full use of-of the TAP  
8 award. Finally, the-the-the other benefit of  
9 graduating closer to on time is that students can  
10 enter the labor force more quickly or continue their-  
11 their studies more expeditiously than before, and  
12 again, this-this reduces the ultimate cost of-of the  
13 degree because students can start earning money more  
14 and more quickly to pay back any loans they may have  
15 taken or to basically get on with their-their lives.  
16 Another one of the recommendations in the report is  
17 something that's near and dear to my heart, which is  
18 remediation reform. We-the Council generously  
19 allocated \$2 million last year to-to CUNY to support  
20 a number of efforts that we've been making on-to make  
21 remediation more effective and efficient for-for  
22 students who are placed into it, and one of the  
23 benefits of that is that last year, 80% of our  
24 students in entering our associate programs placed  
25 into some form of remediation, reading, writing or

2 math. Because of changes that we made after a great  
3 deal of research into which students really belong in  
4 remedial instruction, which students can—can do well  
5 by placing directly into credit. That percentage  
6 dropped from 80 to 62% of community college students  
7 placing into remedial instruction. Sixty-two  
8 percent is still maybe higher than it needs to be,  
9 but, you know, what we've been doing is working hard  
10 at designing remediation so that it's more effective  
11 than, you know, than it—it was when it consisted  
12 largely of a series of nine-credit courses one after  
13 another. The problem with those that—that form of  
14 delivery is that there's a great deal of leakage  
15 between courses in—in remedial sequences, failure  
16 rates in each course are high, and so way too many  
17 students were never making it through to—to credit  
18 course work. So, what we've done using the—the  
19 Council funds, and—and thinking hard about—about  
20 policy is to better target remedial interventions to  
21 the needs of students. So, summer emersion for  
22 example is—is an opportunity to do a better job of  
23 moving away from one size—fits—all workshops to ones  
24 targeted to the specific skill profile of—of  
25 students. That involves a fair amount of redesign

2 of-of-of summer emersion workshops to accomplish  
3 that. Students with the greatest needs are being  
4 referred to CUNY Start or Math Start, which both-both  
5 programs have really good track records in moving  
6 students through to skill proficiency. In math, what  
7 that means is that students who participate in one of  
8 those-either of those two programs and-and master  
9 elementary Algebra have the full array of curricular  
10 options open to them once matriculate at-at CUNY. And  
11 then on the-in terms of post-matriculation options  
12 what we're doing here is encouraging what we call the  
13 co-requisite model of instruction. So, this instead  
14 of students being placed into a 9-credit sequence of-  
15 of courses, they have a good chance of becoming  
16 discouraged. They're placed into a credit course  
17 with extra support. So, now when they're taking the  
18 extra support, the see the context and the need for  
19 that extra support, and it's delivered just in time  
20 at the point in the regular course when they-they  
21 need it, and that's been found both at CUNY and  
22 nationally to be a much more effective way of  
23 delivering remedial instruction. So, we-we hope to  
24 be able to continue that-that work. Again, with  
25 assistance of the Council the money goes to a highly



2 effective set of-of interventions that are showing  
3 real promise. Proper advisement as the report  
4 mentions is essential to starting our students off on  
5 the-the right track and keeping their mind on it  
6 though to a timely degree completion. Too many  
7 students take too many credits maybe sometimes the  
8 wrong credits because they haven't spent enough time  
9 with advisors to make sure that they take the courses  
10 that they really need to-to complete their degree.  
11 Major changing is-is an issue as well, and so  
12 advisement is-is-is one of the secrets to the ASAP  
13 program. I'll mention the-the Intrusive Advisement  
14 model there keeps students on track. So, not only do  
15 they take-pursue their careers efficiently by taking  
16 the right number of credits, but they take-they take  
17 the right credits because of-of that advisement. So,  
18 one of the things that CUNY has been able to do again  
19 given the budgetary constraints is to give advisors  
20 technological support that they haven't had in the  
21 past. [coughs] So, in the community colleges five of  
22 our community colleges now have what we call early  
23 alert systems. Starfish is the-the main package. If  
24 a student begins to show signs of academic  
25 difficulty, the package allows faculty to refer

2 students to support, tutoring support. It might be  
3 counseling of various sorts, and then it keeps track  
4 of whether the student has kept those appointments.  
5 So, it sort of closes the—the student in a—in a  
6 technological web of support. The—another package,  
7 analytics packages provide a different sort of  
8 support to advisors. They're able to distill an  
9 enormous amount of academic information that's  
10 available to them in terms of patterns of course  
11 taking and grades that students over long period of  
12 time have demonstrated, and it delivers the—that  
13 information directly to the advisor and with respect  
14 to a particular student. So, for example, if David  
15 Crook comes to an advisor and says, Gee, I'm—I'm  
16 thinking of—of majoring in physics, but my record  
17 shows that I got a C+ in Physics 101 or in college  
18 Algebra, based on the records of—of thousands or  
19 hundreds of—of students over time, the—the advisor  
20 might say well, you know, not necessarily discourage  
21 me, but alert me to the—the—some of the risk factors  
22 associated with my career—with my choice of—of major.  
23 So, we just procured an analytics package called E-A-  
24 B for the senior colleges that would perform that  
25 function and—and help the advising course there.

2 It's not to take away from the need real live  
3 advisors for bolstering the—sometimes small—way too  
4 small advising corps available to students especially  
5 in senior colleges. ASAP has made a huge difference  
6 in the Community College Advising Corps. The report  
7 advocates for closer connections to the DOE, to ease  
8 the transition from high school to—to college. I  
9 won't go into detail with probably the programs that  
10 you are pretty familiar with, but CUNY has been out  
11 front and a leader in dual enrollment programs, the  
12 College Now Program for decades, and that program  
13 serves 22,000 students now and a growing percentage  
14 of freshmen at CUNY have had experience with College  
15 Now, and the record shows that those students have  
16 higher grades and accumulate more credits than  
17 students who haven't had the benefit of College Now  
18 even for controlling for high school background.  
19 The—the Linked Program, a senior year program to  
20 provide remediation is now in over 90 schools again  
21 thanks to funding from the city and that's showing  
22 promising results. We've—for ten years have had a  
23 two-way data exchange for the public schools, which  
24 has allowed the two institutions to communicate more  
25 effectively than they would have about what makes

2 students ready for college, and what informs skill  
3 proficiency standards and college admission  
4 standards, and that's been a healthy channel of  
5 communication over-over time, but much more work  
6 needs to be done to many students who have—who apply  
7 to college, and—and follow through with being-filing  
8 an admission and—and beginning the process, change  
9 their mind and for whatever reason through a process  
10 that we call college summer melt, don't show up at  
11 college either at CUNY or elsewhere, and so that's  
12 work that we know needs to be done to—to smooth that—  
13 that transition and to make sure that students who  
14 can benefit from a college education take advantage  
15 of it. New York City has an unusually high college  
16 going rate in part because of the efforts that the  
17 two institutions have already made to—to raise  
18 college going rates. One think that we do know, has  
19 made a difference in college going here in New York  
20 is the—the Application Fee Waiver program that the—  
21 that was funded last year with \$2 million provided by  
22 the—by the city. According to an analysis that—that  
23 the public schools did, 75% of DOE graduates applied  
24 to CUNY in 2017. That's up from 71.5% the year  
25 before, and we think that the application waivers

2 may—may have made a difference, and also the freshman  
3 class at CUNY is—is higher than it's ever been. It  
4 climbed last fall to over 38,000 students. It's—it's  
5 sort of an historic high. It's up 3.4%, over 1,200  
6 students from the fall before, and that 1,259  
7 students are almost entirely made up of graduates of  
8 the New York City Public Schools. [coughs] Another  
9 area of concern in—in the Task Force Report is the  
10 struggle that our—many of our students have to pay  
11 for college. We acknowledge that it is a—a challenge  
12 for many students who come from the low-income  
13 families that I—I cited at the beginning. Forty-two  
14 percent of our students come from households earning  
15 less than \$20,000 a year. So, you know, how can we  
16 support these students better than we have? Well,  
17 one thing we need to keep in mind, and as the report  
18 points out that tuition isn't the whole story.  
19 Living expenses even for the many—the majority of our  
20 students who live with their parents are about  
21 \$17,000 a year. So tuition doesn't solve the—the  
22 problem. There's still the need for many of our  
23 students to work or—or borrow to afford their—their  
24 education, but we do know that about 65% of our full-  
25 time resident and undergraduates are able to attend

2 tuition free. That's 61% at the senior colleges and  
3 71% at the community colleges. So that's between TAP  
4 and Pell. Their—their income is low enough and those  
5 awards are high enough to cover the entire cost of—of  
6 tuition at CUNY, which is 65--\$6,530 at the senior  
7 colleges and \$4,800 in the community colleges.

8 Because financial aid is relatively generous, and I  
9 haven't mentioned Excelsior yet, and because tuition  
10 is comparatively low 8 and 10 of our students who  
11 graduate, graduate free of federal loan debt. So that  
12 enables them to continue their schooling. It makes  
13 graduate school more affordable because they're—  
14 they're finishing their undergraduate degree with  
15 little or no debt. Of those who did borrow—the 20%  
16 who did borrow, the average debt is—in 2017 was  
17 \$11,700. It's \$12,700 for the four-year schools,  
18 \$8,900 for the two-year schools. In total, CUNY  
19 students received more than a billion in federal,  
20 state and city financial aid this—this past year, and  
21 that doesn't the aid from private funds as well for  
22 scholarships. Excelsior is, you know, as—as Steve  
23 Brier mentioned, is a—is a last dollar in award. So,  
24 it makes up the difference between TAP and Pell and  
25 tuition for students who—who need—need that, and the—

2 the number of students at CUNY who receive an  
3 Excelsior awards was 4,700 in the fall of '17. So,  
4 it's more than double. Not to take issue with the  
5 report, but it's more than double the-the-the number  
6 estimated in-in the report from-from last fall before  
7 all the data were-were in. So, in fall-Fiscal Year  
8 2018, students were paying out of pock-pocket about  
9 \$750,000 in tuition, and so, \$750 million in tuition.  
10 Sorry. Of the total \$3.5 billion budget, tax levy  
11 budget, 20-22% in-in that fiscal year was made up of-  
12 of-of tuition payments by-by students. I wanted to  
13 say a word about the importance of emergency funds,  
14 another one of the recommendations. We know that the  
15 Petrie Foundation has been generous since-in offering  
16 support for emergency funds. We know how vulnerable  
17 students can be to minor expenses unforeseen that can  
18 disrupt their-their-their schooling. I mean back  
19 earlier in my career we did a student of students of-  
20 of excellent students who-who dropped out, and did an  
21 interview study to find out why-why good students  
22 with excellent GPAs left-left-discontinued their  
23 studies, and overwhelmingly it was for financial  
24 reasons. It might be a medical emergency. It might  
25 be a need to take care of a relative, but and for

2 relatively small amounts of money. So, emergency  
3 funds can make a large difference. The report  
4 mentions the Assist Me App at Kingsborough, which  
5 students can enter and—and signal needs that need for  
6 Student services. Research associated with the  
7 development of that app showed that many students at  
8 Kingsborough, and this is true everywhere, were—had  
9 left the—the university for relatively small amounts  
10 of—of money, and this is important for recruiting  
11 adult students coming back to CUNY, students who may  
12 have left for a while. Many of them owe relatively  
13 small amounts of money, and they need to clear it up  
14 with the bursar. So, these are all points where a  
15 little bit of funding can—could do a lot of good in  
16 terms of removing small financial hurdles to—to  
17 degree completion. This last year, and again this  
18 year, CUNY received \$4 million from New York State  
19 for open education resources. So, these are  
20 resources that are textbooks and materials used in  
21 class that for which students don't have to pay an  
22 arm and a leg to publishers for—for commercial  
23 textbooks. They're developed by faculty from around  
24 the world, and at CUNY as well, and so the money goes  
25 to—to develop the materials, to—to store them and to



2 make them available to students. Last year, the \$4  
3 million investment saved our students \$8 million. So,  
4 there's tremens--there's tremendous potential here  
5 for--for that investment. The, you know, just to say  
6 a bit about career--the work that the university is  
7 doing to prepare students for the--the labor market.  
8 We--our data have gotten much better on what happens  
9 to our students once they enter the labor market.  
10 We--we reached an agreement with the New York State  
11 Department of Labor to obtain unemployment insurance  
12 records, and so we have data now on where our  
13 students are employed. The good news is almost all  
14 of them remain in New York City and New York State,  
15 and they enhanced their our news that have from  
16 graduation rates including the higher ones that I  
17 just cited go to increase tax revenues. So,  
18 taxpayers benefit from the investment in higher  
19 education because our students graduate and stay in  
20 the--in the--the local economy, and they earn more than  
21 they would have. So, we're working hard now to  
22 strengthen our career centers. We--we have a dynamic  
23 addition to our staff who is pursuing creative  
24 solutions to link up employers with--to--to students to  
25 enhance their career opportunities, to increase paid

2 internships. One part of the strategy is to hire a  
3 group of what he calls sector navigators. These are  
4 specialists in a certain area of the local economy  
5 that can help connect employers to our students. So,  
6 the task force, I'd to, you know, add my  
7 commendations to the authors of the report. The  
8 work—the task force has obviously done its work  
9 carefully. It has spotlighted key opportunities for  
10 additional investments in our students. You know,  
11 I've tried to make the point that, you know, given  
12 the framework, the budgetary framework that we've  
13 operated in over the last number of years, we've  
14 still been able to make remarkable progress, but  
15 additional investments could accelerate that  
16 progress, could improve working conditions for our  
17 faculty and classroom conditions for our students,  
18 and accelerate the progress that we've already seen  
19 in raising graduation rates. This concludes my  
20 testimony, but once again, thank you for the  
21 opportunity to speak to you this morning.

22 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very much.  
23 It's been very comprehensive, and it's generated a  
24 lot of questions. [laughter] So, I'll start, and  
25 then if my colleague has questions, I'll ask him to

2 share them. So, you said that in 2016 the number of  
3 students—I think you said the number of students  
4 taking 15 credits rose from 30.6% to 41%.

5 DAVID CROOK: So from that—2016 to 2017  
6 that's correct. The number of full-time freshmen at  
7 CUNY, meaning that they were taking 12 already.

8 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right.

9 DAVID CROOK: It rose by 10 percentage  
10 points.

11 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: What impact did that  
12 have on their GPAs?

13 DAVID CROOK: None. On average none.  
14 The—the GPA stayed just about the—the same.

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. So, my  
16 questions are not in order because I—I haven't-- The  
17 Excelsior Scholarship recipients you said they're  
18 4,700. So you have the dollar amount that these  
19 students received? I've been told that sometimes  
20 they're very negligible amounts as low as \$18.

21 DAVID CROOK: I don't have those—those  
22 figures for you. I think that will be the first  
23 thing that I have to promise to get back to you with—

24 -

25 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

2 DAVID CROOK: --but what we do know is  
3 that amount is calibrated to students' income and  
4 that-[coughs]

5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I-I would love to  
6 see those numbers. You talked about the remediation  
7 Initiative, and I'm not quite clear.

8 DAVID CROOK: So, the average, I just--

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

10 DAVID CROOK: --figured here that the  
11 average Excelsior Award was \$2,454. Is that right?

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

13 [background comments, pause]

14 DAVID CROOK: Okay. So it varies some by  
15 school, but depending on the average because our  
16 schools vary in terms of the average income level of  
17 the students.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right.

19 DAVID CROOK: You know, the average award  
20 that they receive over and above their TAP and Pell  
21 and--

22 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right. So, I-I  
23 appreciate that, and if you can give us the breakdown  
24 of what you put there--

25 DAVID CROOK: [interposing] Right.

2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --I would appreciate  
3 that. You talked about the Remediation Initiative,  
4 and I wasn't quite clear. I-I thought I heard you  
5 say it had been 80% that needed remediation and that  
6 wen down to 62%.

7 DAVID CROOK: Yes. So, of all of the  
8 students entering our Associate Program, 80% hade  
9 needed remediation of one form or another, reading,  
10 writing or math. In 2016, the next--the next year, so  
11 what--what had happened is that all of the tools that  
12 we've been using to place students into or out of  
13 remediation changed in--in one year because of moved  
14 by the state and by the college board to recalibrate  
15 their assessments in--in a accord with the Common Core  
16 State Standards. So, we had ne regents exams in math  
17 and English, the college, the SAT changed, the  
18 scaling changed, and we had been using a back-up  
19 placement test called COMPASS to place students who  
20 weren't proficient based on the SAT or the Regents  
21 into remediation or out of it, and the company that  
22 publishes COMPASS pulled the test from the market.  
23 So, we--we switched over for the time being to a new  
24 package called Accuplacer, and so that gave us the  
25 opportunity to do a series of studies to determine

2 who can succeed—where—where should we set the cut  
3 points on these different markers to separate student  
4 who really need remediation from those who could do  
5 just fine if they were placed directly in the credit.  
6 Most of the change took place with respect to  
7 mathematics. So, we placed fewer students into math  
8 remediation than we did the year before, and more  
9 directly into it could be statistics, it could be  
10 quantitative reasoning or—college Algebra.

11 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, we can't really  
12 make a true comparison in the numbers in that sharp  
13 decline because we use a different measurement than a  
14 different standard.

15 DAVID CROOK: It's—the—that—that's—it's a  
16 true comparison in that it has a real effect on the—  
17 the lives of our students. Many more students  
18 [coughs] succeeded in their credit bearing math  
19 courses than—than had been before—the case before.  
20 So, what—what I mean by that is just to be a little  
21 more precise is that we—we placed more students into  
22 credit bearing math than the year before.

23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

24 DAVID CROOK: The average grade point  
25 average—grades—the percent earning a C or better went

2 down a few percentage point, but so many more  
3 students placed directly into credit that they were  
4 able to continue their career, satisfy their general  
5 education requirement—in-in mathematics and move-move  
6 on into-into the curriculum.

7 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: That-that's  
8 interesting. That's interesting. I'd like to think  
9 about that a little more and we can talk about it  
10 again.

11 DAVID CROOK: Sure.

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I have some like-  
13 some thoughts about that. You said that about 75% of  
14 New York City graduates apply to CUNY.

15 DAVID CROOK: 75% of the entering  
16 freshman class--

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Came from it?

18 DAVID CROOK: --78% came from the DOE--

19 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

20 DAVID CROOK: --and, yeah, the number. I  
21 think I did give you that 75% number of-of DOE  
22 graduates applied to CUNY--

23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

24

25

2           DAVID CROOK: --and because we think  
3 partly because of the--of the waiver, the Application  
4 Waiver.

5           CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And so of--of those  
6 students from DOE, because I always feel that their  
7 college ready index is not quite what it should be. I  
8 think they call it the College Ready Index. Of those  
9 students who come from DOE, Department of Education  
10 schools, how--what percentage would you say still need  
11 remediation. Is that back to the 62?

12           DAVID CROOK: Yeah, it's about--it's close  
13 to 62. There's not that much difference between the  
14 parochial schools and the public schools, and that's--  
15 -

16           CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] There  
17 isn't in terms of remediation from private schools,  
18 the parochial schools and public schools.

19           DAVID CROOK: Not--not--not on average. A  
20 little bit, but not that--not average.

21           CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And what percent of  
22 the students who come to CUNY come from parochial or  
23 private schools in New York?

24           DAVID CROOK: Well, it's--it's less than  
25 10%. I think it's--it's around 10%. I'm looking at



2 my colleague Laura Bruno in case she knows, but I  
3 think it's an important thing. (sic)

4 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So, now you said 61%  
5 of students in-in community colleges graduate tuition  
6 free and 71% in senior colleges graduate tuition  
7 free, and the average is 11,700--

8 DAVID CROOK: For the most part.

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --in terms of those  
10 who graduate with that?

11 DAVID CROOK: That's right, yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Do we have a number  
13 for the students who leave before graduation, and  
14 have--have debt?

15 DAVID CROOK: So, so no I don't have  
16 those numbers, but I just want to correct--

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

18 DAVID CROOK: --what I said. So, 8 and  
19 10% of our--8 and 10 of our graduates, graduate free  
20 of federal loan debt.

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

22 DAVID CROOK: So, it's 8 and 10, and what  
23 the--the other numbers that I cited were the  
24 percentage of students who attend tuition free. So,  
25 that's 61% if the senior colleges.

2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Who attend tuition  
3 free?

4 DAVID CROOK: Who attend tuition free--

5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay,

6 DAVID CROOK: --and 71% of the community  
7 colleges.

8 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, of community  
9 colleges.

10 DAVID CROOK: And the--and yes the average  
11 debt of those who did borrow, the 20% who did borrow  
12 was \$11,700.

13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I have other  
14 questions, but I'm going to ask my colleague Council  
15 Member Holden.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you--thanks,  
17 Provost for your testimony. It was--it was very  
18 complete by the way.

19 DAVID CROOK: Sorry, I went on so long.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: No, that was  
21 good. That was good. It was very good. Fifteen  
22 credits. I always would try to urge my students to  
23 take at least 15 credits, but I ran into obstacles  
24 and--and as you know, you mentioned about the  
25 household income. Many of my students worked, and

2 they always said well, I can't—I could barely take 12  
3 credits, but I have to get my TAP so I need 12  
4 credits. I can't take 15, and that was the biggest  
5 hurdle that I had, but the next biggest hurdle for  
6 students getting their 12 credits or 15 credits were—  
7 were the lack of course offerings in their major, and  
8 right at the same time we had lot of—the state cut  
9 off some of our funding, and we had a lot of courses  
10 cancelled or they—the courses didn't have enough  
11 students in them, and they wouldn't let them run or  
12 they had 12 or 13, and said no you can't run a class.  
13 So, the student couldn't get their course to graduate  
14 or they couldn't get a course in their major. Yet, at  
15 the same time the Registrar stated to clamp down on  
16 course substitutions, which is again counter  
17 productive because if you let the department handle  
18 the course substitutions to a degree, obviously there  
19 has to be some controls, but if—if a student through  
20 no fault of their own could not get the course that  
21 they registered for because it was cancelled or not  
22 offered in that particular semester, and held them  
23 back from graduating or getting the 12 credits, which  
24 his quite—it happened quite often. And—and to  
25 actually most students. So, why can't we have some

2 kind of, you know, I think considerations for  
3 students who are through no fault of their own denied  
4 that course to have them graduate on time or to get  
5 TAP even, and—and allow the departments to make some  
6 decisions.

7           DAVID CROOK: It's a valid point. You  
8 know, the data you show that while it's not so much  
9 course availability, it's not so much of an issue at  
10 the community colleges. It's more of an issue at  
11 some of the senior colleges, and you're right that  
12 it's more likely to be in the major courses needed  
13 for the major than in general education. And so, you  
14 know, I think that there's a provision in the  
15 Excelsior scholarships and that if the colleges can't  
16 offer the courses that the students need to maintain  
17 their 30 credit a year pace, that—that the burden of  
18 that falls back to—to the colleges. But the  
19 university has an obligation. If we're going to  
20 encourage students to take 30 credits a year to offer  
21 the courses, and if—if we want students to graduate  
22 on time, the courses need to be available. So, one—  
23 one way that—to think about that is—is offering more  
24 courses online or partly online so that if the course  
25 isn't available at the home college, the student

2 might be able to take some other—other at another  
3 college. The permit system is a—is another under-use  
4 resource that would allow students to take a course  
5 not available at their own college—to take it another  
6 CUNY college. They're the barriers that students  
7 don't know about that option. It's not well  
8 publicized enough right now. We've made one leap  
9 forward in the last year by creating a university  
10 wide course catalogue so that it's much easier for  
11 students to search for a course that they need  
12 anywhere in the university, and identify whether, you  
13 know, how it's being offered, whether it's online at  
14 time when—when they can take it.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yeah, I agree the  
16 permit isn't advertised, and it should be because I—I  
17 did that when I went to CUNY. You said there were  
18 4,000 students who received Excelsior. Is that  
19 correct? In CUNY?

20 DAVID CROOK: Yeah, at CUNY. There's  
21 4,700 of them.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: That's a low  
23 number actually, isn't it?

24 DAVID CROOK: 4,700 yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: 47, that's pretty  
3 low, though. How do we raise that? How do we get  
4 the word out or a least try to get more students?

5 DAVID CROOK: Well, the number will  
6 increase with each incoming class that, you know, has  
7 a chance to register from day one for the minimum  
8 number of credits that--that they need. Another way  
9 to raise it to target students who may be have 24  
10 credits by the need of their first spring, but not  
11 the 30 they need to keep the scholarship. So, it's  
12 the communications campaign that I mentioned to  
13 encourage students to make up the--the--the 30 through  
14 summer course taking. And, you know, those--those  
15 would be, you know, probably the two main--main ways  
16 to--to start taking 30 right from day--year one, and  
17 then keep that pace up through to--to--to degree  
18 completion.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay, one final--I  
20 just want to add a summary. So, on the course  
21 substitutions or at least if a student is denied a  
22 course through no fault of their own to graduate or  
23 to get to 12 at TAP, and they take any course, I mean  
24 they are not eligible for TAP after that, and don't--  
25 should the university respect, you know, actually

2 have some responsibility. They have some  
3 responsibility, and like you mentioned in the  
4 Excelsior program, could—could you—your office look  
5 at possibly having more flexibility in course  
6 substitutions of at least bear some—have the  
7 university bear some responsibility for that?

8 DAVID CROOK: Well, you know, I'm not in  
9 a position to take a position on that, but—but I can  
10 certainly—I know what we're—what we're doing to try  
11 to ameliorate that situation, which are the steps  
12 that I've—I've mentioned. It's in the 2016 to '20  
13 mater plan and in the CUNY strategic framework to try  
14 to—to ease this issue of course availability. It's a  
15 problem that we've—we've recognized.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, Council  
18 Member. Just a few more questions. You just said  
19 that if a student had completed 24 credits, you might  
20 encourage them to do the six so that they could meet  
21 the Excelsior requirement?

22 DAVID CROOK: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Would they have to  
24 pay for the summer school? Would they have to pay  
25 that session?

2           DAVID CROOK: TAP does not cover summer  
3 tuition, but Pell may, and depending on the students.  
4 There's quite a few sort of complicated regulations  
5 around that, and so the—our communications campaign  
6 encourages students to come see their financial aid  
7 officer.

8           CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So someone will sit  
9 and work with them, and try to get that?

10          DAVID CROOK: If we have enough financial  
11 aid officers.

12          CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I have—I have a  
13 chart. I don't know if these graduation rates are  
14 accurate, but for the senior colleges you said CUNY  
15 wide it's 57% I think you said for a six-year  
16 graduation.

17          DAVID CROOK: [interposing] Yes, yes, 56.6  
18 in six years.

19          CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Right. I rounded it  
20 off so 57, but in—in those senior colleges there's a  
21 high of according to what I have here of 75%  
22 completion from one school and a low of about 27%.  
23 What kind of interactions or collegial exchange is  
24 going on or are there particular issues where the  
25 graduation rate at one school is so low, or what kind



2 of collegial exchanges or instructors are giving the  
3 detail or sharing with each other to get these  
4 graduation rates up, 27 up?

5 DAVID CROOK: It's-it's--

6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] And  
7 again, there may be lots of reasons why people may  
8 have decided to take off. They may need another  
9 semester or another semester. Six may not be  
10 adequate.

11 DAVID CROOK: We--this last year we  
12 launched what we've called the Momentum Campaign that  
13 has three pillars that we hope will raise graduation  
14 rates everywhere to lower performing schools and even  
15 at the--the ones that boast of the 75%. Everybody can  
16 be--even the ones who get--who have a 75% degree  
17 completion rate in six years might have a higher on  
18 time degree completion rates than they do, and the  
19 Momentum Campaign consists of three pieces. Now, one  
20 is to move students through to what we call the  
21 Gateway courses, the--the key first level credit  
22 courses in math and in English more quickly, and--and  
23 to--to many students especially in math procrastinate  
24 in taking their--the first math course, and we know  
25 that that's correlated with degree completion. So,

2 and—and then in the associate programs, parts of—of  
3 completing a higher percentage—or completing Gateway  
4 courses on time in the first year is getting through  
5 remediation more efficiently. So, that's wrapped up  
6 in remediation reform, but so Gateway Course  
7 completion is—is part of it. The momentum—the—the  
8 Credit Taking Campaign to encourage students to take  
9 15 rather than 12 and even if they're part time and  
10 you may be encouraging them to go to full time. So  
11 that's a Communications Campaign, and then Degree  
12 Mapping is really the glue that holds it all  
13 together. Degree maps are a plan that semester by  
14 semester that the advisor creates with the student so  
15 that the student knows exactly which courses he or  
16 she needs to take to get through to meet the  
17 requirements in a timely fashion. We've just  
18 finished a huge investment in the —in a degree—a  
19 piece of software called Degree Works that does an  
20 audit on what courses a student still needs to take  
21 to—to complete the degree, and then helps with the—  
22 the planning part of it, and that's a--

23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] So, do  
24 all students have that ability to sit with someone or

2 is it, you know, guided online things that you can  
3 do? How does it--so one--?

4                   DAVID CROOK: [interposing] I think--it's--  
5 it's subject, of course, to the size of the advising  
6 staff that's available, but I think students early in  
7 their career have access to a professional advising  
8 core at most colleges, and then once they've reached  
9 the junior year, advisement responsibilities move  
10 over to the--to the faculty and--and major. But the  
11 colleges have generally made a commitment to having  
12 the student work with a live advisor with the Degree  
13 Works software in hand to--to do this--this planning  
14 and then to make changes on a semester basis if the  
15 student withdraws from a course or changes their  
16 major. So, that's--that's nice.

17                   CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, any further  
18 questions?

19                   COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Yeah, just one  
20 follow-up question on Excelsior. How many students  
21 were rejected from the--the program?

22                   DAVID CROOK: That I don't know, and I  
23 think it would be--nobody is rejected on grounds  
24 except initially at least on the basis of their--their  
25 income level. They may if they have too high an

2 income or if all of their—the expenses are already  
3 met by TAP and Pell then they wouldn't be eligible  
4 for Excelsior. We don't have data yet on the number  
5 of students who earn 15 credits in their first term,  
6 but then didn't keep up the pace in their first year.  
7 The summer is not over yet, and so, you know,  
8 remember the quota is 30 credits over—over a whole  
9 year, and so the first year hasn't elapsed yet.  
10 We'll—we'll know next fall how many students maybe  
11 started out on track to reach—for eligibility and  
12 then lost it.

13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And I do have one  
14 follow-up question. How is the topic of implementing  
15 a tuition free policy or the recommendations in this  
16 report broached when interviewing or vetting  
17 potential university chancellors? Is that a part of  
18 what that broad spectrum would be?

19 DAVID CROOK: I wish I was part of the  
20 Search Committee, but I'm not.

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: That's alright.

22 DAVID CROOK: I don't know what happens  
23 in those conversations, but—

24 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Okay.  
25 Okay, I think that—that completes that questions that

2 I have. Thank you so much for your testimony, and  
3 we'll call the next panel. [background comments]  
4 And we're going to put people on the clock for—oh,  
5 no, that's because we grill them because they've got  
6 all the data. Yeah, and we want to make sure we give  
7 them as much time as they need. Thank you so much.  
8 We're going to put people on the clock. Cyrille—oh,  
9 boy, help me pronounce your name. It's Injekay. Say  
10 it for me please.

11 CYRILLE: Njikeng. (sp?)

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Njikeng. Okay,  
13 Kwaffa Abdullah (sp?) and Jamell Henderson.  
14 [background comments, pause] So, we'll give each of  
15 you three minutes on the clock. I know it's a short  
16 time, but we'll ask that you try to adhere to that  
17 time limit. If you'd raise your right hand. We  
18 don't—we don't this also with students. Okay, just  
19 give us your name, and your testimony. Thank you.

20 KWAFFA ABDULLAH: Good afternoon to the  
21 Higher Education Committee, the members of the New  
22 York City Council. My name is Kwaffa Abdullah. I'm a  
23 student government center at the Bronx Heights (sic)  
24 Community College not far away from here. I also  
25 currently serve as the Vice Chair for Disability

2 Affairs for the CUNY University Student Senate. As a  
3 first generation immigrant woman from Yemen, I never  
4 thought that one day I'd be sitting here as a college  
5 students. I will be graduating with my associate  
6 degree in liberal arts this Friday. I will continue  
7 my education at the City College of New York where I  
8 was accepted to the Arts Honors Program. While at  
9 City College I will double major in political science  
10 and international relations. For the average New  
11 Yorker this may--this may not be a big deal. As an  
12 immigrant coming from a village deep in the Yemini  
13 suburbs where war has influenced--infiltrated the  
14 towns and the education opportunities displaced  
15 (sic), I consider myself lucky. My native country  
16 doesn't promote intellectual curiosity or see  
17 education opportunities as a right. Instead, they  
18 are viewed as a luxury. Here at CUNY education is a  
19 right and somewhat affordable. However, if CUNY  
20 continues to raise the tuition or the--or the  
21 conditions remain the way they currently are, then I  
22 and many others will not be able to afford to go to  
23 school. At times I feel that the idea of me becoming  
24 a lawyer is a--is a thought that's an opportunity not  
25 because of access, but the everlasting increasing

2 tuition. Most of the people I represent and come to  
3 love question the state of their future. Many of  
4 their difficulties are a lack of socio-economic  
5 opportunities and foundational support. Knowing what  
6 I know now, people like me do have intellect and will  
7 to succeed, but they lack the means and access.  
8 Having insufficient funds and lack of guidance, can  
9 we generally continue to wonder why so many of our  
10 problems have become so impossible. (sic) Many  
11 individuals' talents are wasted because they have  
12 been compromised to choose less desired alternative  
13 routes. CUNY students are mostly people of color,  
14 and they felt like not having affordable access to  
15 higher education, the continued divestment in our  
16 facilities and faculties is a direct attack on us.  
17 We must not forget tuition hikes makes it harder for  
18 low-income students to enroll or even complete  
19 college. Most of my classmates are full-time  
20 students, and work two jobs to support themselves.  
21 The unwillingness to fully support higher education  
22 adds more to their worries, and is not the way to  
23 make college more accessible or affordable. The 500  
24 plus students and I deserve quality affordable,  
25 better yet free education. We are the future

2 generation of leaders, and it is in the best interest  
3 of New York to make CUNY free. Thank you.

4 Good morning. To the members of the City  
5 Council Higher Education Committee led by the  
6 Honorable Inez Barron, to the professors who choose  
7 to above and beyond educating the right now of our  
8 great city to move forward and most importantly to  
9 the 500,000 plus students and the millions of alums  
10 across this world I say to you good morning. My name  
11 Jamell Henderson, and I am a proud three-time CUNY  
12 graduate receiving degrees from the Borough of  
13 Manhattan Community College, Brooklyn College, Baruch  
14 and now working on my second masters at the CUNY  
15 Graduate Center. I'm here also to stand before you  
16 as a proud resident of NYCHA's Kingsborough Houses  
17 where I have attained all these degrees as a  
18 resident. CUNY means the world to me, and I'm proud  
19 of the wealth of knowledge that I have attained thus  
20 far, but I want just to be clear, CUNY is not  
21 perfect, and it is so important that I address this  
22 amazing committee on the importance and vitality of  
23 keeping our great university on the premises of being  
24 truly free for everyone to attend. There are many  
25 prospective and current students who are here for a



2 common goal, and that is to graduate. However, the  
3 resources that are available to help such students  
4 are not properly funded nor advertised to the general  
5 student body, or to the public. It can be very  
6 intimidating to think about graduation if you are in  
7 real life circumstances that can cause you to give  
8 up. Circumstances like being in foster care, dealing  
9 with the loss of a loved one, living on your own and  
10 making tough decisions whether I'm going to use the  
11 money to pay rent or to pay for classes. Let's not  
12 forget what happens on campus as students like myself  
13 who have experienced hunger would have to smile  
14 because we don't want to be seen as someone who is  
15 desperate. In fact, right now there is someone on  
16 campus in the City University of New York who are  
17 planning how to hide from public safety to ensure  
18 that they have a safe place to rest their head. All  
19 of these circumstances lead to one thing:  
20 Accountability and responsibility. It's so important  
21 that our great city and state governments be honest  
22 in working alongside with CUNY with the people whom  
23 we elect to show us how CUNY is helping our students  
24 to achieve that pinnacle of the academic journey.  
25 All students deserve access to every resource

2 available to help theme to achieve their goal. They  
3 should no longer be hidden from the public. We need  
4 to make sure that our great university is a  
5 absolutely supported academically and financially.  
6 CUNY has the best professors anywhere in any  
7 university in this world period. It is also very  
8 crucial that our city and state treat them as such  
9 for they work very hard to teach us to learn the  
10 world in a very unique way. Many professors develop  
11 life-long bonds with us because they invest in us in  
12 such a way that our communities can't compare to the  
13 love and support [bell] we receive. Finally, our  
14 campuses must be upgraded to be in cop-top  
15 competition with our fellow private universities that  
16 we cannot afford. Our greatest resource is the city  
17 and state government, and we cannot play political  
18 games when it comes to the academic livelihood and  
19 space that we will be a part of for years to come as  
20 we strive to be the absolute best. I am asking that  
21 you stand with us the 500,000 plus students and the  
22 millions of alums across this world to truly invest  
23 in the great city university in the world for if  
24 there is no sacrifice, there is no victory. Thank  
25 you.

2                   CYRILLE NJIKENG: Thank you. Greetings,  
3 Council Member Barron, and Committee Members on  
4 Higher Education. My name is Cyrille Njikeng and I'm  
5 a graduate student at City College of New York. I  
6 serve as the Vice Chair for Graduate Student Affairs  
7 for the City University of New York University  
8 Student Senate also known as CUNY USS. CUNT USS is a  
9 student governance organization responsible for  
10 representing the interests of the nearly 500,000  
11 students that attend CUNY each academic year. During  
12 my time at City College as a graduate student, and at  
13 Lehman College as an undergraduate, I've been to many  
14 rallies, press conferences, and hearings where CUNY's  
15 funding was a topic of conversation. Most of the  
16 time, we're talking about tuition hikes, budget cuts,  
17 service being cut, buildings falling apart or our  
18 professors being underpaid. I'm happy because today  
19 we're flipping the script and speaking about a real  
20 investment in CUNY. We're talking about  
21 fundamentally changing the system so that we don't  
22 have to come to City Hall or travel to Albany or the  
23 mount to advocate for the education we truly deserve.  
24 I want to thank our Chairwoman Inez Barron and every  
25 member of this great New York City Council Task Force

2 on tuition free CUNY for working hard to produce a  
3 blueprint for a tuition free CUNY. This is what our  
4 students need and truly deserve. We all know CUNY's  
5 rich history, and that was free, and that provided  
6 opportunities for a lot of New Yorkers. We have some  
7 of them in the room actually. We have some—we have  
8 seen nothing but budget cuts since they decided to  
9 make CUNY a paid institution. Since then just this  
10 year we have not only seen attrition go up, we've  
11 also seen the CUNY Board of Trustees adopt a number  
12 of excellent fees for setting programs. In one case  
13 at Brooklyn College students in a program were hit  
14 with an excellency fees that cost almost as much as  
15 the attrition, and yet we know all that Brooklyn  
16 College is the same school that is in such disrepair  
17 that a student nicknamed it Broken College. Like I  
18 said, we have to begin to change the conversation.  
19 We have to imagine a different way and to be  
20 proactive about it. The Council's tax for us (sic)  
21 gives us the blueprint. These are the thing that we  
22 need as New Yorkers in our public college. Our  
23 students need an attrition free model, and it's not  
24 impossible. We had it before. We are at risk of  
25 continuing the decades-long trend in divestment of

2 public higher education. What we need is the real  
3 investment in public higher education. We need a  
4 commitment from our governor and legislator that our  
5 students [bell] and professors are a priority to the  
6 good state of New York. We can make a real  
7 investment in CUNY by adopting a tuition-free funded  
8 model and it's not impossible because we had it not  
9 too long ago. We can make a real investment by  
10 paying our faculty a living wage and providing more  
11 full-time faculties. We can make a real investment  
12 by providing working families with support services  
13 such as childcare, additional counseling services,  
14 transportation assistance and counseling services.  
15 Thank you—thank you very much for your time.

16 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. We  
17 always appreciate the testimony of those who are the  
18 students, and they are the ones that are most  
19 directly impacted by what it is that CUNY courses are  
20 offered. So, we thank you for your testimony.

21 CYRILLE NJIKENG: You're welcome. Thank  
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [bell] And be  
24 encouraged. We—we expect you to be a lawyer, and you

2 can come back and tell us how successful you are when  
3 you get that degree. Thank you.

4 CYRILLE NJIKENG: Thank you, for that.

5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And the last panel  
6 is Emily Skydell, and then Aycocock and Jamie  
7 Farbowitz. If there is any other person who wish to  
8 testify, you should have filled out a slip because  
9 this is the last panel. [background comments and  
10 noise, pause]

11 EMILY SKYDELL: Hello. Thank you so  
12 much for giving us the opportunity to testify. My  
13 name is Emily Skydell. I'm the Higher Education  
14 Coordinator for the New York Public Interest Research  
15 Group, for the statewide non-partisan, non-profit  
16 organization that was founded by college students in  
17 1973 to engage peers in civic life. We thank the  
18 Council member Inez Barron and the task force for  
19 drafting this comprehensive and detailed account of  
20 what a free and fully funded CUNY can look like. I  
21 am speaking on behalf of the—of our board chair and  
22 board reps that are right now getting ready to go on  
23 a retreat, a board retreat. So, I'm here on their  
24 behalf. So, investing and college success are a  
25 necessity for thriving economy and democracy. That's

2 something that everybody in this room knows, and, you  
3 know, SUNY found that for every dollar spent on  
4 education the economy actually reaps five dollars in  
5 benefits. In New York City 20 of the 25 fastest  
6 growing occupations that pay over \$50,000 annually  
7 require a college degree. So, it's very clear that in  
8 order to be successful in this state, you would—you  
9 need a college degree, and a mere 19% of Bronx  
10 residents, for example over the age of 25 hold a  
11 bachelor's degree, and among the nation's 100 largest  
12 counties, this is the second lowest rate. So, this  
13 is incredibly important that we're here today talking  
14 about this. So, free tuition for full-time and part-  
15 time students, we all know that with the continuation  
16 of rational tuition the state and city are continuing  
17 to rely on students and families to cover budget  
18 shortfalls. So, you know, free tuition for part-time  
19 students is—incredibly essential as well. The  
20 Excelsior Scholarship, TAP, free tuition through  
21 programs like ASAP, they're only offered to full-time  
22 students. We've heard from many students who are  
23 parents, have jobs, other responsibilities that don't  
24 allow them to take on a full-time course load. So,  
25 NYPIRG supports the task force recommendation to

2 eliminate all tuition charges for full-time and part-  
3 time students enrolled across the CUNY system as well  
4 as the costs associated with college that can be a  
5 barrier to college completion. These are essential,  
6 and that's why we support the--the task force's  
7 assistance on expanding ASAP. We all know that that  
8 that program has tremendous success. So, but--but the  
9 real thing here is that--that I wanted to emphasize  
10 that I don't think is talked about enough is  
11 connecting students in need with programs that are  
12 built to serve them. Too many students that we talk  
13 to find out about the programs that they need far too  
14 late. After speaking with students across CUNY,  
15 we've noticed that many students are unaware of  
16 programs like ASAP until they are already enrolled in  
17 CUNY at which point it is too late to enroll, and in  
18 many cases--in many cases, and according to the ASAP  
19 website, one of the eligibility requirements the  
20 student must have no more than 15 college credits.  
21 This puts students in a tough spot. They're out of  
22 reach of a program that they need. Meanwhile, a lot  
23 of students come from very poor districts that maybe  
24 don't have the--the proper support advisors to--to help  
25 them connect to these programs before it's too late.



2 So, we have students that have trouble [bell] finding  
3 out about ASAP as well as even childcare resources.  
4 One student at Bronx Community College, Melissa  
5 Astrella, she dropped out of school for a while. She  
6 had no knowledge of the childcare center on her  
7 campus, and it took her ten years to get her  
8 community college degree at Bronx Community College.  
9 Meanwhile, it only costs \$5.00 a day at the Childcare  
10 Center at Bronx Community College. So, we really  
11 thank you for thinking about expanding advisement and  
12 counseling as a key feature in—in this transitional  
13 period between high school and college so students  
14 don't miss out on all these opportunities, and all  
15 these programs that you guys put so much energy into  
16 funding. So, I don't want to take up more of your  
17 time. You can read the rest of the testimony. Thank  
18 you so much.

19 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [off mic] Thank you.  
20 [pause]

21 EVAN AYCOCK: Thank you, Chairwoman  
22 Barron for your time, and I want to offer for the  
23 record a full anecdote about why this report is  
24 really crucially important for students. Hello. My  
25 name is Evan Aycock (sp?) and I'm Sophomore at the

2 Borough of Manhattan Community College, and newly  
3 elected Board Director of the New York Public  
4 Interest Research Group. Just to give a bit of  
5 background on myself, I moved to Harlem from a rural  
6 island in Alaska called Sitka to pursue my dreams of  
7 studying for a bachelor's degree in political  
8 science, and eventually undertake the exciting  
9 challenge of law school. Little did I know that  
10 pursuing my educational dreams would come at quite  
11 the cost that it did. I pay nearly \$13,000 a year  
12 working multiple part-time jobs simultaneously in  
13 order to attend a community college that quite  
14 ironically touts the fact that it is a machine for  
15 social mobility. Over the past year, I have come to  
16 love CUNY for its caring and compassionate staff,  
17 driven and inspiring students and the unique  
18 opportunities that it serves us. This is why I'm so  
19 devastated to say that if the issue of raising  
20 tuition at senior colleges is not addressed, the idea  
21 of continuing my education becomes a more and more  
22 distant reality. I stand in front of you not only as  
23 a second generation American citizen via  
24 Johannesburg, South Africa, but also as a gay man.  
25 Access to higher education is imperative for the

2 people of my communities because not only are we  
3 underrepresented in basically every facet of society,  
4 but you only need to look to people such as Wisconsin  
5 Senator Tammy Baldwin, local City Council Speaker  
6 Corey Johnson, and Community organizations such as  
7 the Gay Men's Health Crisis, Sage and Stonewall  
8 Foundation to see how effective and successful we can  
9 be under seemingly unbearable pressure. The  
10 individuals that make up the Gay, Lesbian, Bi and  
11 Trans community have accomplished amazing and unheard  
12 of fetes despite the disproportionate injustices of  
13 poverty, and legal oppression that we face. So,  
14 imagine what we could do with the wind of the city  
15 and state at our backs in the form of legitimate  
16 access to free higher education. With that being  
17 said, I implore all concerned parties to do  
18 everything in their power to make this report public  
19 in order to ensure that underserved individuals who  
20 might follow in mine and my colleagues' footsteps are  
21 able to do so with the full support of both the city  
22 and the state of New York. Thank you very much.

23 [pause]

24 JAMIE FARBOWITZ: Okay. My name is Jamie  
25 Farbowitz. I'm an English major at the College of

2 Staten Island, and -and a NYPIRG student leader. I  
3 am a part of the 2018 to 2019 CUNY Service Cohort in  
4 an attempt to pursue public office one day. Thank  
5 you for holding this hearing since it is so important  
6 that CUNY be made free again. Unfortunately, I  
7 don't receive any financial aid. I don't bother  
8 filling out FAFSA any more because I've never  
9 qualified. I have two brothers who only got about  
10 \$10 each from TAP when they were both in college. My  
11 parents helped me pay for my tuition, but paying for  
12 textbooks or anything else school related or  
13 transportation is on me, and I am expected to pay my  
14 tuition-pay money-them back for my tuition. Textbook  
15 money is needed all at once, and there's not way to  
16 estimate price. I don't bother telling my parents  
17 that to save for textbooks I don't eat because they  
18 already pay so much for me to go to school.  
19 Transportation is a constant infusion of money. I  
20 also have loans from when I went to SUNY, Albany. I  
21 transferred to CSI to help my parents out with the  
22 household because they are older and also disabled. I  
23 am disabled, too, physically and mentally, but I  
24 cannot apply for disability to ease my financial  
25 burdens because if you make over \$2,000 a month even

2 at a part-time job, you cannot receive SSI. In a  
3 high cost city like New York, that would basically be  
4 forcing myself into poverty. As a trans male, I  
5 have experienced challenges maintaining housing  
6 stability at times as well. Homelessness is a  
7 serious issue among the LGBT community where it is  
8 harder to access support from blood relations  
9 emotionally and financially. Though I came back to  
10 Staten Island to help my household, I have also been  
11 kicked out of the house temporarily with the threat  
12 of permanently being kicked out during crucial time  
13 periods like finals week. This has affected my  
14 academic success. If I could save my money from my  
15 job as a college assistant for an apartment nearby  
16 instead of paying for college, I could do what I have  
17 to with chores, and leave without relying on them  
18 financially or worrying about shelter over my head.  
19 A year before I would be graduating with my parents  
20 paying my tuition. I would be out of luck if they  
21 cut me off completely. I would have to expend all-  
22 all my energy on day-to-day living expenses and want  
23 to be able to afford school. I can't do manual labor  
24 and minimum wage is simply not enough to live on. If  
25 tuition, textbooks and transportation were free and

2 accessible for all college students, it would help so  
3 many LGBTQ Plus students like me as well as other  
4 students who don't have stable family support. I  
5 wrote this earlier, but as an addition I also have a  
6 friend who had to drop out because here abusive  
7 mother withheld information to fill out FAFSA.  
8 [bell] So, if tuition were free in the first place,  
9 then that—she wouldn't have had to drop out of  
10 school, and she would have been able to afford going.  
11 Free CUNY can ultimately save people from toxic  
12 family environments and provide an escape route that  
13 simultaneously betters a person. I hope that you all  
14 will keep thin in mind when considering what a  
15 tuition free CUNY really means for someone. Thank  
16 you for your time, and also my job as an office  
17 assistant—as a college assistant is under the Office  
18 of Academic Support. So, I help with remedial  
19 English. If you have any questions about that, I can  
20 help. [coughs] Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you again. We  
22 always appreciate hearing from first hand testimony  
23 of people who were experiencing what it is that we  
24 are trying to develop policy on. Thank you for your  
25 testimony, and we do have one last person. Did you

2 have any questions, Council Member? The last person  
3 to give testimony is John Adaramo. You can come up.  
4 We're ready to hear from you. [background comments]  
5 Oh, well, then he'll have to—we'll be glad to receive  
6 his testimony. He can forward it to us and we'll  
7 make sure that it's added as a part of the record.  
8 Okay. Thank you so much all of you who stayed, and  
9 it's been a very lengthy hearing, but I think it's  
10 been very productive. I'm really glad that we have  
11 this Task Force Report. I again commend all of the  
12 people who in. I see Barbara Bowen was one of the -  
13 one of the team members. So, we're just so pleased  
14 that we do have this document, and we're going to use  
15 this as a framework and as a guide to move us forward  
16 to tackle all of the recommendations that the task  
17 force has presented for our consideration. So, thank  
18 you very much, and with that this hearing is  
19 adjourned. [gavel]

20

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date June 19, 2018