

**Testimony of Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost José Luis Cruz  
New York City Council Committee on Higher Education  
The City University of New York**

**November 20, 2019**

Good afternoon.

Chairperson Barron, and members of the Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on the important issue of diversity in higher education classrooms and curricula.

My name is José Luis Cruz and I have the privilege of serving as the executive vice chancellor and University provost of The City University of New York.

The perspectives I bring today have been shaped by my personal experiences as a student who lived diversity in the classroom and curricula in uneven and unexpected ways through my own educational journey, as well as professional experiences as a faculty member and administrator at three large university systems and as a former Vice President of Higher Education Policy and Practice at The Education Trust, a national non-profit advocacy organization that promotes high academic achievement for all students at all levels, particularly for students of color and low-income students.

I am accompanied here today by two esteemed colleagues to whom I will in due course yield the floor so they can provide the committee some specific examples of the many ways in which CUNY's campus communities are collaborating to "capitalize on [the University's] diversity... to create a vibrant academic, intellectual and cultural environment in its classrooms and curricula": **Karol Mason**, president of John Jay College of Criminal Justice and **Christine Mangino**, provost of Hostos Community College.

I am pleased they are here with me and am confident the committee will find their testimony to be highly informative and invaluable.

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Last year, in my role as president of Lehman College and co-chair of the University's Faculty Diversity Working Group, I had the opportunity to testify before this committee. In preparing for that testimony, I sought to do three things: express my confidence in CUNY's efforts to recruit and retain a world-class faculty who better reflected the diversity of the students we serve; call attention to the best practices that were being employed to advance this objective; and problematize the challenges associated with sustaining advances in this area through the creation of an inclusive environment supported by equity-minded policies and practices.

I left humbled by the opportunity to represent our University in such an important discussion, energized by the opportunity to contribute to advancing the University's goals in this area, and confident that in the years to come CUNY would meet its full potential as an engine of opportunity, a vehicle of upward mobility, and a driver of transformative change.

But I also left with a full appreciation for the concerns raised during the proceedings about CUNY's approach towards diversity among its faculty, including an apparent lack of accountability for campus efforts to diversify faculty; lack of clarity on reappointment, tenure, and promotion standards among faculty of color; and the unevenness in and differences between student and faculty diversity across and within campuses. In short, there was a sense among council members and other witnesses before the committee that CUNY convened many meetings and taskforces on the subject of diversity, but that there appeared to be little apparent follow-through on advancing the issue of diversity in the classroom and the curricula.

Today, I come before you on my fourth month as CUNY'S chief academic officer, to state that — given what I learned at the last hearing and what has transpired since then — my sense of humility has been enriched by a sense of heightened responsibility; my energy levels have been biased for urgent action; and, my confidence in advancing the future is now a conviction for bettering the present.

Because to — in the words that describe today's hearing — effectively promote our University's pluralistic community and create a vibrant educational, intellectual and cultural environment that goes beyond representation to genuine participative membership, we must build decidedly upon the strong foundation that has been laid and move purposefully from *plans and studies* to *action and accountability*.

And the first step to do this is to problematize the issue of diversity in the classroom and curricula and recognize that notwithstanding the position of strength from which our University approaches this issue, the complexity inherent in the work requires both cultural and structural solutions.

Because the reality is that, by any objective measure, CUNY is a national leader in the issue of diversity in higher education classrooms and curricula. As I will detail later in my testimony, we have the most diverse student body in the country, the percentage of our faculty representing minority backgrounds is approximately twice the national average, nearly three out of every four students indicate to be very satisfied or satisfied with their overall academic experience at CUNY (18.4% feel neutral and only 7.6% dissatisfied), and in the last four years we have seen improvements in the satisfaction of our faculty of color with respect to the nature of work, mentoring, teaching, departmental leadership and collegiality, departmental quality, and appreciation and recognition.

But the fact remains that we have work to do.

For instance, in my time at CUNY I've been in the room when a provost decided to communicate to the members of a search committee that they needed to go back to the drawing board because there was insufficient diversity in the candidate pool. Upon reviewing the screening rubrics and rating sheets, the provost asked the Office of Compliance and Diversity to determine if there were additional minority candidates the search committee could consider. As a result, a highly qualified Hispanic candidate was identified, added to the pool, and ultimately hired.

I've been in the room when a junior faculty member of color who had just received a sample syllabus for a general education course sighed loudly when realizing the disconnect between the college experiences of the protagonists in the course's main reading and those of the students she knew to expect in her classroom. And I was there when she immediately resolved to actualize and localize the readings to not only better engage her students, but also capitalize as a result on the diversity that they'd bring to classroom discussions.

I've been in the room when a faculty member presented compelling data to disabuse those who for years had intimated that the pass rates of students in a gateway science class was destined to be around 30% because for years it had been so and the characteristics of the students enrolled in the college had not changed. Through innovations in pedagogical deliveries, this faculty member had shown that the pass rate of those students could not only be increased to 80%, but their learning could be demonstrated to be on par with that of students in a sister institution whose student body had SAT scores that were on average 200 points higher. In doing so she did much to push back against the soft bigotry of low expectations that keeps so many from having the supports and investments they need to meet their full potential.

And I've been in the room when a member of a faculty promotion committee for a female African American candidate expressed concerns about the emphasis on the black experience and lack of European-inspired voices in the faculty's scholarly work. I had barely just registered what had been said when another member of the committee, firmly, respectfully, and successfully made the case that the flip of that argument would not be applied to a white male faculty member specialized in European scholarship – that is, no one would be questioning why said faculty member did not speak more about the black experience in their work. The African American faculty member, needless to say, was promoted.

And so, it is — because we acknowledge that issues of diversity play out in different ways in different spaces and that they not always turn out as well as in the examples I have just shared with you here today — that I welcome the opportunity afforded to me to inform the committee about what the University, under the leadership of **Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**, is doing to further enhance the diversity of CUNY's classrooms and curricula.

To this end, in the next several minutes, I will paint an image of what diversity in the classroom currently looks like in terms of students and faculty, what it looks like in terms of the curriculum, what our campus communities are doing to maintain the momentum gained in strengthening the diversity in our classrooms and curricula, and how we are planning to accelerate progress in these areas. I will then close by providing one final image of how when done right, diversity in

the classroom and curricula not only help push the frontiers of knowledge and transform the lives of our students, but also lift the communities they represent.

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Diversity and pluralism are deeply ingrained in the CUNY value system. With its home in the nation's largest, most diverse city, CUNY recruits and attracts a student body that is extraordinarily diverse in language, culture, religion, race, ethnicity, geography, family income, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and educational background.

Recruiting, retaining, supporting and graduating this diverse student population are essential components of CUNY's ability to ensure that New York has a workforce that will meet the complex and evolving needs of the city and the state. In addition to providing opportunity to the widest possible range of students, CUNY faculty and administrators consistently ensure that the experience of all students is enriched through exposure to diverse points of view, experiences, beliefs, and opinions in a climate that encourages understanding and respect.

In Fall 2018, for example, CUNY's physical and virtual classrooms hosted nearly 245,000 undergraduate students representing 209 ancestries (median age 24) of whom 79.7% identified as people of color (American Indian/Alaskan Native, 0.3%; Asian, 21.4%; Black, 25.5%; Hispanic, 32.4%); 56.8% as female; 1.2% as transgender or gender non-conforming; and 16.2% as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning or asexual. Of these students, 32.6% attended part-time, 34.6% were born outside of the U.S. mainland, 38% spoke a language other than English at home (168 languages spoken on campus), 60.7% received Pell grants, and 61.1% did not have a parent who had graduated from college. To put some of these numbers in context, according to recent IPEDS data, BMCC alone has 1.5 times as many students of color as the entire Ivy League, similarly Lehman College on its own enrolls 80% as many students of color as the entire Ivy League.

There's a lot to celebrate here. Especially when we know that CUNY's mix of quality and affordability propels almost six times as many low-income students into the middle class and beyond as all the Ivy League colleges combined and that nearly 4 out of every 5 of the University's graduates stay in New York, contributing to all aspects of the city's economic, civic and cultural life and diversifying the city's workforce in every sector. Indeed, recent data indicate that in 2018, 73% of CUNY's baccalaureate graduates during 2012-2013, are employed in New York State earning a median income of \$57,932, while 75% of associate degree graduates during that academic year are similarly employed in New York State earning a median income of \$44, 534.

But we know that to truly capitalize on this diversity in the classroom, we must do more to recruit and retain faculty who understand — through their own life experiences and/or their vocation and training — that a student's identity in regards to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, and socioeconomic status, is fundamental in the individual learning process as well as the educational progress of the class as a whole — an understanding that is echoed in Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor's spirited dissent in the 2014 case of *Schuette versus the Coalition*

to Defend Affirmative Action, in which she proposes that educational diversity is not only desirable, but integral for learning, especially in higher education.

And so – even as we acknowledge the need to do more and do it quicker —we celebrate the fact that the faculty leading CUNY classrooms are more than 1.7 times as likely to represent a minority group (37.2%) than what would be predicted by the national average (21.8%). Furthermore, the likelihood of the classroom being led by a Black (12.2%) or Hispanic (10.2%) faculty members is more than twice the national average.

Yes, there is unevenness in and differences between student and faculty diversity across and within campuses. Student diversity is lower in our more selective campuses and the difference in the diversity of our faculty and the diversity of our students is significant within most of our campuses. The former is in part a function of the fact that pre-college educational inequities disproportionately limit the access of low-income students and students of color to high demand, capacity limited programs and campuses. The latter is in part related to the mix of disciplines taught at CUNY campuses, the availability of diverse candidates to fill positions, and the slow-pace with which faculty lines become available for hiring. But in both cases, there is much that can be done — and is in fact being done — to bridge these gaps.

For example, to further diversify its student body, for the first time, Macaulay has enrolled community college students in a bid to expand opportunities to deserving students who, for a variety of reasons, have taken indirect routes to college. Under a pilot program called Macaulay Bridge, selected sophomores —from Bronx Community College and the Borough of Manhattan Community College — will earn their associate degrees in the spring and then continue as Macaulay at Lehman College students. This is a small pilot with significant scaling potential.

Similarly, efforts to further diversify our faculty continue to be prioritized throughout our campuses. In September 2017, with the support of the Faculty Diversity Working Group, guidance was issued to the presidents of the CUNY Colleges and Deans of the CUNY Professional Schools that resulted in the development of a baseline to allow for the critical evaluation of the search process and outcomes to meet CUNY's commitment of faculty diversity and inclusion; encouraged the development of a search and recruitment plan for faculty searches where underutilization existed; developed a reporting mechanism to track the applicant pool, the selection of candidates for interview, offers, and hires for each professorial search where underutilization existed in 2017; and addressed areas for improvement in data collection, analysis, and implementation of recruitment and retention strategies.

As a result, in 2017-18 the University-wide applicant pool by race/ethnicity for the 90 searches with underutilization completed and verified against the data of record in CUNYfirst indicated that 45% or 3,153 of the 7,008 applicants were from underrepresented minority groups, 3.21% or 225 were Italian-American, 5.72% or 401 were unknown, and 46.08% or 3,229 were White. The 90 completed searches referenced resulted in 99 hires. Fifty-four or 54.4% of the total hires were from federally represented minority race/ethnic groups. Six or 6.06% were Italian American, and 39.39% were White and unknown. The data demonstrated that departments made

concerted efforts to attract a broad applicant and interview pool that positively impacted the hiring of a diverse professoriate at CUNY.

To illustrate the intentional efforts that our campuses are conducting to diversify our faculty, I present Brooklyn College's approach which in the most recent hiring cycle yielded a nearly 50% hiring rate for faculty of color. And thus far in this year's hiring cycle, BC have completed two searches of 11 and have hired two Latina faculty members in departments where Latinx faculty were underrepresented.

To achieve these results, the President communicates the importance of faculty diversity routinely, reports to the community on progress, and identifies her expectations for improvement. The Chief Diversity Officer, the Provost, and the Labor Designee work collaboratively to plan and assess their efforts and report findings to the President and the community. They work with all stakeholders on implementation and on communicating revisions to the plan.

During the spring semester, academic departments receive underutilization reports from the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer that show the extent to which the department represents the diversity of the workforce. The report highlights all underrepresentation. Chairs are asked to share the report with all faculty in the department.

Academic Affairs, in collaboration with the Chief Diversity Officer and the Labor Designee, asks department chairs and personnel committee members to participate in a variety of development opportunities yearly that introduce or reinforce best practices in the recruitment and hiring of a diverse faculty. The College requires that all departments develop and update a diversity recruitment hiring plan based on best practices. Best practices include targeted formal advertising, informal advertising, use of networks and personal contacts, and targeted recruitment. The plans must include an analysis of department-specific underutilization and the specific strategies the department will initiate to address these specific deficits in its next searches.

The Chief Diversity Officer reviews the plans and provides feedback to individual departments. The Dean also reviews the plan during the annual review of the department. Departmental hiring committees then implement the plan during a search. Their work is guided by a checklist that ensures adherence to the process. When drafting ads, departments are asked to use inclusive language in job descriptions and to include areas of specialization that may be of interest to diverse applicants. The current faculty job posting template also emphasizes the diversity of the campus community and the College's interest in further diversifying our faculty.

The Provost, Dean, Chief Diversity Officer, Labor Designee and Human Resource Department review each ad before it is posted. In addition to departmental recruitment, the Provost conducts outreach through established pipeline programs and through direct contact to academic leaders at HBCU, HIS, and Asian and Pacific-Islander institutions.

The College has expanded Implicit Bias training with a plan to include all of the College's faculty over the course of the next academic year. In addition to improving hiring, the training will assist us in the retention of minority faculty. To this end, the College also will expand its faculty development opportunities to include analysis of microaggressions. Deans will work with academic departments on institutionalizing junior faculty mentoring programs to help ensure that the faculty we recruit are integrated into the academic culture of the college, the discipline, and the profession. The Provost also has initiated an Academic Leadership mentoring program aimed at increasing the number of faculty of color in academic leadership positions. Based on annual feedback from the President and assessment, the Chief Diversity Officer, the Provost, and the Labor Designee will modify the plan as needed.

To build upon this momentum and ensure that we accelerate progress in our diversity efforts, **Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez** recently instructed all presidents and deans to establish and state specific goals on the diversity of faculty, staff, and administrators that would then be assessed as part of their personal performance evaluations.

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The diversity of the students and faculty that convene in CUNY's classrooms is activated through the broad variety of courses that collectively define our University's curricula.

All academic courses at CUNY, including General Education ("Pathways") courses, major requirements and electives, are developed by faculty in the appropriate academic department. The courses undergo local governance approval on campus, including the curriculum committee at the level of the relevant department, the School the department belongs to, and, depending on the governance plan of the particular institution, at the level the entire college through the curriculum committee and the college senate. Following governance approval, new courses are submitted to CUNY's Central Office via the campus' Academic University Report and reviewed by the Chancellor's designee for compliance with CUNY, NYSED and MSCHE (our regional accreditor) policies. Once approved, courses are entered into the course catalog, published in the student bulletin and are made available for enrollment.

CUNY's general education Pathways courses take a similar path through local college governance. They are then required to be reviewed and approved by a CUNY-wide faculty committee. According to the resolution passed by the Board of Trustees of The City University of New York on June 27, 2011, the University Office of Academic Affairs, working with the colleges, "will facilitate the expeditious review and approval of all courses proposed for the Common Core with the assistance of a CUNY-wide committee, appointed by the Chancellor." To that end, the CUNY Common Core Course Review Committee (CCCRC) was established in March 2012.

This committee, consisting entirely of faculty reviews courses submitted by the colleges to ensure that they meet the designated learning outcomes. In its current format, the committee is divided into two subcommittees, each of which has its own chair. Faculty members are chosen through college governance processes, with each undergraduate college nominating faculty for each

subcommittee for a two-year term. There is a representative from each college on each committee.

A specific graduation requirement is for all undergraduate students to complete a course in the Common Core area of US Experience in its Diversity. In addition, many courses in other required Common Core areas, such as Individual and Society, Creative Expression and World Cultures and Global Issues, also explore the issues of race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability and class from a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives, from literary criticism to the history of music to the social sciences. These courses are ensured full transfer credit when students move between and among colleges. Students can also opt to take a class at another campus via a system known as e-permit, and such a course will fulfil the same Common Core area requirement on their home campus. And some campuses have additional related requirements for their undergraduate students. For example, Hunter College requires two courses with their own Diversity and Pluralism designation as a graduation requirement.

The University's success in meeting the learning outcomes associated with Pathways courses is measured at the individual campus level through established continuous improvement processes and structures for educational effectiveness. These efforts, in turn, are assessed by outside evaluators as part of institutional- and program-level accreditation processes. For example, CUNY colleges, as well as the Graduate School and University Center, receive their institutional accreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE or Middle States). As part of a periodic review, MSCHE evaluates each college on seven different standards. Standard V — Educational Effectiveness Assessment seeks to determine whether or not a college is able to "demonstrate that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education." As of today, all CUNY colleges are fully accredited by MSCHE.

Apart from General Education courses, there is a wide variety of relevant courses offered as major requirements or electives. These courses explore their topics in greater depth and use more advanced critical methods of inquiry than introductory or survey courses. For example, in Spring 2020, some 210 sections of various classes in the Africana Studies discipline are scheduled throughout CUNY; 99 Sections in Latin American Studies; and 31 Sections in Women's Studies. Moreover, student exposure is not limited to courses specifically designated as focusing on cultural, ethnic or gender lenses, since survey courses in traditional disciplines such as Anthropology, Sociology, History, English, etc. have been incorporating a critical reevaluation of the obsolete Western-centric canon and offering an inclusive multi-focal approach to disciplinary knowledge for some time now.

For students interested in centering their academic careers around the issues of diversity and pluralism, there are dozens of long-established degree programs at CUNY. In addition to degrees, there are also concentrations in many programs, including the system-wide CUNY BA, which allows students to create a customized study program taking classes at multiple CUNY institutions and majoring in an interdisciplinary field such as LGBTQ studies or Disability Studies.

For student choosing professional fields or more traditional academic disciplines as their main study focus, many senior colleges also offer interdisciplinary minors, typically 12-15 credits in areas such as Africana Studies; African American Studies; Asian American Studies; Latin American and Caribbean Studies; LGBTQ Studies; Middle Eastern Studies as well as Women's and Gender Studies. These minors often complement the students' primary area of study or allow them to pursue an intellectual passion for their own culture of origin or one that is simply of academic interest to them.

Furthermore, CUNY encompasses many Centers and Institutes dedicated to research and public outreach in related disciplinary areas. Campus-based Centers and university-wide Institutes organize extracurricular activities, provide resources for faculty to develop and renew curriculum, and offer internship opportunities for students. To name just a few, they include the Asian-American Center at Queens College, the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College and the Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College, as well as a number of university-wide entities, such as the Jaime Lucero Mexican Studies Institute housed at Lehman College, the Dominican Studies Institute housed at City College, the Haitian Studies Institute housed at Brooklyn College, or the Institute for Research on the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean housed at the Graduate Center. Moving forward, CUNY is hoping to expand and deepen its collaboration with city agencies as a source of a well-educated, highly diverse workforce reflecting the unique cultural vibrancy of New York City's population.

Most recently, CUNY announced the creation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Incubator that will build on work already underway to transform CUNY's campuses into spaces that are national models of equity. This incubator has been made possible with a \$500,000 grant from New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, and will be developed by the Center for Ethnic, Racial, and Religious Understanding at Queens College. Furthering CUNY's mission of transformative social mobility, the incubator will develop programmatic training for CUNY staff and faculty to build skills in the areas of bias recognition and mediation, along with cross-cultural communication skills and the promotion of dialogue between diverse groups on campus.

In summary, the diversity in CUNY's classrooms is activated in part — not by any means exclusively — through 39 academic majors across 11 campuses leading to AA, BA, MA, MS, Advanced Certificates, and Ph.D. degrees in fields such as African and African Diaspora Studies, Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, Judaic Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, and East Asian Studies, Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies, Disability Studies, among others. It is also activated through 128 Pathways courses classified under the core area of "U.S. Experiences in its Diversity" spanning subjects such as Evolution and Expressions of Racism, African American History, Black Poetry, and Philosophical Visions of American Pluralism and an additional 167 Pathways Courses under the core area of "World Cultures and Global Issues". In Fall 2018, nearly 1,000 students enrolled in the aforementioned programs, while 25,000 enrolled in courses in the identified core areas.

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In addition to sustaining the previously described efforts, CUNY is currently working to further expand access to diverse students, better support faculty hiring and retention processes, and evaluate the effectiveness of its general education offerings, among other initiatives. A sample of these efforts is described below.

First, we are actively working to scale proven P-16 initiatives that serve as an efficient pipeline of student enrollment that begins at the earliest stages of one's educational journey. Essential among these programs are those that focus on college readiness among DOE high school students, including programs that offer high school students the opportunity to take college credit-bearing courses before enrolling in a college. Meanwhile, other programs will expand to further reinforce developmental reading and math skills necessary for college success and provide the advisement, academic and financial support they need to graduate on time.

Second, we are actively working to enhance the climate on our campuses through the strategic use of recent Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey results in which faculty of color satisfaction was seen to improve in all the surveyed benchmarks: satisfaction with the nature of work, mentoring, teaching, departmental leadership and collegiality, departmental quality, and appreciation and recognition. And we will continue to provide on-campus trainings on the search process; support University-wide and campus-specific Diversity Dialogues; expand our faculty mentoring and retention programs; sponsor the biennial Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Conference; and improve data collection, analysis, and implementation of recruitment and retention strategies.

Third, we are actively working on an evaluation of the Pathways curricular structure to develop a comprehensive understanding of how it contributes to student momentum and how students experience Pathways at the campus level. And, with the introduction of two new technology platforms, we are working to improve the percentage of students who are able to schedule all of the courses they require to advance in their academic program, especially as it pertains to courses in the major, which 54% of the students indicating they were not able to register in all the classes they wanted (30% of total survey respondents) cite as the type of course in need of additional seats.

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Clearly, CUNY has long understood that a vibrant exchange of ideas and perspectives within the classroom is informed by identity. This leads not only to a more engaging and inclusive learning process, but also increases retention, as students want to continue classes in which their individual identity and cultural background is not only respected and reflected, but integral to the functioning of the class as a unit.

In these classes, whether they are in the social sciences, humanities, or the physical sciences, students are encouraged and expected to give differing discipline-based perspectives that provide the class with a deeper understanding of the topic being discussed, while fostering

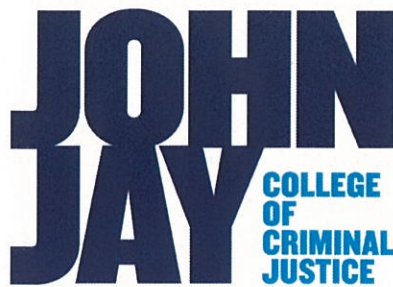
openness and sense of community. It is this sense of community that will go on to create positive outcomes outside of the classroom.

Take for example the nursing program at Lehman College, which likely has the most diverse nursing student body in the nation. Key to the program's pedagogy is the intention to harness the collective power of those individuals in the classroom, who represent a diversity of races, ethnicities, and ages in order to tackle problems, make inquiries, challenge accepted theories, conduct research, and take on complicated medical and public health issues. What's more, this pedagogy is augmented by the nursing program's diversity training courses, which have become a national model under the guidance of C. Alicia Georges, a researcher, an advocate, an African American woman who has been an internationally recognized leader in the field for decades, and who will be honored this week at a nursing research conference that bears her name.

Lehman nursing graduates bring to bear their diversity-based education and training when they head out into the field. Thus, bettering the community at large through the administration of effective, culturally sensitive health care. In this way, Lehman's nursing program exemplifies the positive ripple effect of capitalizing on diversity in the classroom and the curricula.

For this and so many other reasons, I stand here today optimistic about what lies ahead.

Thank you.



**Testimony of President Karol V. Mason  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice  
The City University of New York  
New York City Council Committee on Higher Education  
November 20, 2019**

Good afternoon Chair Barron and members and staff of the City Council Committee on Higher Education. Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony.

One of John Jay's greatest strengths is its diverse community. With a richly diverse student body that is 46 percent Hispanic, (new class is 50% Latinx) 20 percent Black, and 13 percent Asian, John Jay is recognized as both a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and a Minority-Serving Institution (MSI). We are deeply committed to transforming John Jay from merely a Hispanic-and Minority-*enrolling* institution into a truly Hispanic-and Minority-*serving* institution. We work to create a space that authentically incorporates the rich diversity of our students' heritages into our curriculum and programming. I will highlight some of our Diversity and Inclusion efforts in the classroom and across campus.

John Jay's historic mission and focus on criminal and social justice exists alongside the college's educational values and commitment to inclusion. Using best practices in student-centered pedagogies, classroom tools and training, we are strengthening inclusion. This fall, through our Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), we are expanding the design and use of inclusive curricula at the college through year-long faculty seminars; a working group; and six curricular intervention projects. More than 50 faculty, (24 faculty of color, 36 women) are rewriting syllabi, developing culturally-sustainable course content and assignments, and enhancing their understandings of the contexts in which their students experience historical oppressions and individual traumas through structured discussions and the study of research on racism, sexism, gender identity bias, ethnic and religious hatred, and other forms of discrimination. To foster a more vibrant and inclusive learning environment, they are working to include publications, biographies, and images of authors from diverse backgrounds in assigned readings and viewings. These changes help us provide our students with role models who reflect their self-images and who inspire them to believe they can succeed. Additionally, the TLC is advising faculty and staff to use inclusive language and apply

social-psychological interventions that support students' senses of belonging at the college and their development of resilient qualities in response to oppression and trauma.

Some of these initiatives build upon two intensive lecture series we held in the Spring and Fall of 2018 that highlighted best practices for Hispanic-Serving Institutions while partnering with other projects already in process that focused on culturally-responsive pedagogy for infusing multicultural content across academic programs. An inspiring example can be seen in the efforts of our HSI Faculty Working Group who work on teaching and mentoring practices and improvements.

The TLC's work also connects with our Presidential Fellows for Curriculum-Driven Student Success initiative, which I launched in 2018, inviting all full-time faculty to apply. We selected six inaugural fellows to pursue faculty-designed projects, and three of the 6 Presidential Fellows projects stand out as examples of inclusive curricular interventions. First, Associate Professor in Psychology Demis Glasford has designed activities in the first-year seminars to increase students' senses of belonging, work aligned with recent research into success factors influencing college students of color and growth mindset recommendations. Second, Jill Grose-Fifer, also Associate Professor in Psychology, has redesigned the introductory psychology course to include student activities on well-being and flipped classroom strategies to incorporate culturally-sustainable pedagogies. Third, Assistant Professor and Chair of the SEEK Department Monika Son has focused on deepening critical race pedagogy skills in her department faculty and students, carrying these through from the first to the third years of coursework.

I also acknowledge our faculty in several departments, who through curriculum development, scholarship, experiential learning and other unique educational opportunities, expose our students to the political, historical, socio-economic and cultural possibilities, obstacles and challenges for achieving global social justice and equity; cross-cultural and intercultural understanding; respect for human dignity; and awareness of human and political rights. In particular, I recognize the leadership in this area of both our Latin American and Latinx Studies Department and our Africana Studies Department.

We know that it is important for students of color to see themselves reflected in their professors and administrators. John Jay has committed to expanding diversity among our faculty as we hire. To that end, we are engaged in robust training of all hiring committees in the best practices for diversity and inclusion. This includes instruction about implicit bias in assessing letters and CVs as well as sharing information about how to avoid biases that can occur in interviews. Additionally, to intentionally build a diverse pool of highly qualified applicants when we are hiring, our Provost and department

chairs are reaching out to HSI and MSI institutions that produce PhDs specifically to share information about teaching and hiring opportunities.

Fostering a campus climate of inclusion and belonging for all of our members is crucial to advancing our broader educational mission of educating for justice in all its dimensions and preparing our students to serve as agents of change, diverse leaders of justice in an increasingly diverse America. Last Spring, I engaged an expert external team from *Working IDEAL* to conduct an institution-wide review of the College's culture, prevention programs and policies, specifically related to diversity and inclusion, discrimination and harassment. The recently-released report highlights our strengths as well as opportunities to draw upon new research and best practices to strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion across our campus environment and improve our practices and resources. We are excited and eager to seize this opportunity to model a data-driven, research-based approach to fostering a strong sense of inclusion and belonging in our community. We have already acted on some of the recommendations, including announcing the creation of a new Office of Diversity, Compliance, Equity and Inclusion to be led by a vice president who will be identified by a national search, reporting directly to me. We are piloting enhanced diversity training among senior leadership and in academic and other departments, among other initiatives. Additional recommendations will require a longer-term effort as we endeavor to identify and marshal resources.

As we continue our work to change the face of opportunity through higher education and ensure that our college community is a model of inclusion, we thank you for your continued support of CUNY and John Jay College.

To: The Honorable Inez Barron, Chair of the NYC  
Council Committee; Council members Ydanis  
Rodriguez, Eric Ulrich, Laurie Cumbo and Alan Maisel



My name is Jamell Henderson and I am the CUNY Rising Alliance Coordinator. CUNY Rising Alliance mission is to empower, educate, engage and mobilize the students, alums, faculty and staff of CUNY to push our city and state legislature to fully fund CUNY once and for all. I am also a proud 4-time CUNY graduate receiving degrees from the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), Brooklyn College, Baruch College and The Graduate Center. I am here not only on behalf of the 25 various organizations under the banner of CUNY Rising, but I am here as a proud alum, advocate and ally for the 600,000+ CUNY students and the millions of alums around the world to share with you the importance of having diversity in our classrooms.

As a part of our cache of mission guideposts for CUNY Rising, it includes the increased enrollment and employment of students and faculty that are a reflection and resemblance of the communities they serve. As a proud student of CUNY for 15 years I can count on 1 hand the number of Black male professors I had the honor of learning from; I can count one hand the number Black women who are professors I had the honor of learning from; I have experienced classes, especially at the Graduate Center, where I was the only Black student in the room; I have experienced direct racial discrimination from a professor while being a student in CUNY. Imagine the thousands of students who look just like me, some of whom are experiencing these situations as we speak and how that is an unnecessary burden they have to carry in their pursuit of a higher education.

There needs to be a greater push for more students who look like me to be in colleges that are dominated by one race; currently at Baruch the Black student population is 10.9%; at CSI it's 15%; at the Graduate Center; less than 8%. The city and state must do better to our communities in making sure that we are in the classroom and given opportunities at higher education.

There is an emergent need for more professors who look like me in the classroom; I can tell you how that felt like because I had the honor to give back to one of the colleges I love as an adjunct professor in the Political Science Department at Brooklyn College; I was one of 3 African-American men in the political science dept. and because I was able to teach I was able to bring a different experience to the subject I taught because of the reflective experiences I face daily. There is a different morale in the classroom when there are more professors who look like me and it's important that the city and state do more to increase the diversity in the classroom.

In the United States, in the City of New York, the public school systems do not teach the importance of learning African-American history in its entirety; the public school systems do not teach Hispanic/Latino (a)-American history in its entirety; the public school systems do not teach Asian-American or Arab-

American history in its entirety and it's important that we learn this history when we have it on our beloved campuses because it is OUR history. Africana Studies, African-American Studies, Caribbean Studies, Asian Studies, Judaic Studies, Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, Arab/Muslim-American Studies are of great importance that have contributed to the melting pot and fabric of this great city and country; the city and state must increase its funding so the colleges can increase the awareness and importance of learning our history.

This should not be something we have to beg for, it should be a done deal and we have the opportunity to make this happen now!

Respectfully Submitted

Jamell N.A. Henderson, M.P.A., M.P.P.,

CUNY Rising Alliance Coordinator

**Higher Education Committee Hearing**  
**Oversight- Diversity in Higher Education Classrooms and Curricula**

**Presented by Dr. Brenda Greene,**  
**Professor of English, Medgar Evers College**  
**Founder & Executive Director, Center for Black Literature**

Good Afternoon Chair Inez Barron, Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo, Council Members Alan N. Maisel, Ydanis A. Rodriguez and Eric A. Ulrich. Thank you for spearheading this hearing on the diversity of curriculum in higher education classrooms.

I am a full professor with nearly 40 years of teaching and administrative experience in CUNY and I represent several roles at this Hearing: Professor of English at Medgar Evers College, Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College and Member of the CUNY Association of Black Faculty and Staff.

Founded in 2002, the Center for Black Literature was established to expand, broaden, and enrich the public's knowledge and aesthetic appreciation of the value of Black literature and through conferences, readings, workshops and educational programs to provide a forum for ensuring that black literary scholarship and conversations on black literature are sustained and that the general public, including educators and students are exposed to a broad range of Black writers.

The CUNY Association of Black Faculty and Staff" was formed in October 2018. Its mission is to support the academic and professional development of Black faculty, staff, students & alumni across the City University of New York and within CUNY and to serve as a resource for the recruitment, retention, advancement & growth of Black faculty, staff, students, and alumni at CUNY.

Journalist and scholar Pamela Newkirk informs us in her recent book on *Diversity, Inc.* that the diversity conversation began in 1968 when President Lyndon Johnson recommended the inclusion of African Americans in institutions that had historically excluded them. Since 1968, diversity has been expanded to encompass other racial and ethnic minorities along with women, people with physical and mental disabilities, LBGTQUIA individuals and other marginalized populations. These groups have distinct characteristics and the plight of racial minorities in general and African Americans in particular have been overshadowed by other categories within this widely used term Diversity.

My remarks will focus on racial diversity with a particular emphasis on curriculum representing the disciplines within Black Studies, that is Literature, Sociology, History, Gender Studies, and Psychology.

When we ask whether we have a way to gauge whether CUNY has a system in place to examine material, ie textbooks, discussions, etc that promote diverse cultural experiences and

backgrounds, there are two area in CUNY that we can examine: Black Studies Programs and Pathways.

### **Black Studies**

Black Studies Programs and Departments and Black Faculty play an important role in serving the intellectual, academic, sociocultural, and professional needs of all students and in fulfilling the goals, vision, and mission of The City University of New York. The advent of Black Studies strengthened democratic practices throughout the nation and democratized our academic institutions. However, given our current political climate and in an age in which American democracy may be breathing its last breaths it is not surprising Black Studies and Black peoples at CUNY find themselves increasingly marginalized and discounted. This situation is deeply disturbing and problematic.

How do we address this problem? It is well-documented that students who enroll in Black studies programs will have opportunities to take courses focused on the Black experience. Furthermore, it is documented that there is a positive correlation between the number of faculty who teach in Black Studies programs and throughout academic departments within CUNY and the number of Black Studies courses that are created and taught.

We must also support Black Studies degrees at CUNY. There are five senior colleges that currently offer baccalaureate Black Studies Degrees in CUNY. These include City College, Brooklyn College, Hunter College, York College, and Lehman College. John Jay College, Queens College, New York City Tech and Baruch offer Black Studies minors or concentrations. The Graduate Center offers an Africana Studies track within the Masters of Liberal Studies and a Certificate in Africana Studies at the PhD level.

One of the major reasons for the diminishing of Black Studies programs is the non- replacement of Black Studies faculty. In the CUNY Faculty Report on Diversity, Black Studies programs are included under Area, Ethnic and Cultural Studies. By counting Black Studies as part of Area, Ethnic and Cultural Studies, this report distorts the number of Black Studies programs and Black faculty within CUNY. And even with this blurring of Black Studies, the number of Black faculty in Area, Ethnic and Cultural Studies decreased by 1.6 % from 2010 to 2017. From 2010-2016, the number of Black Faculty hired was eight. In 2016-2017, the number of Black faculty hired was two.

If we want curriculum that reflects diversity, we have to hire more Black faculty.

### **The Flexible Core in Pathways**

The Flexible Core requirement in Pathways is a natural place to offer more courses focused on racial diversity. It requires that students take a total of 6 courses: at least one course in each of the five Flexible Core areas and an additional sixth course in one of them. Students may select courses from the following:

- World Cultures and Global Issues — 3 credits

- U.S. Experience in its Diversity — 3 credits
- Creative Expression — 3 credits
- Individual and Society — 3 credits
- Scientific World — 3 credits

Courses in the World Cultures and Global Issues and the US Experience and its Diversity buckets offer opportunities for the most racially diverse courses.

A review of the courses on the website in the flexible core across CUNY reveals an unevenness. It appears that those colleges which have more Black faculty and students have a higher number of courses focused on racial diversity.

LaGuardia Community College, BMCC and Lehman have a range of courses in the US Diversity and World Cultures and Global Issues focused on racial diversity.

### **Challenges and Solutions**

What are our challenges and solutions in making the curriculum in CUNY more diverse?

#### Challenges

Although nearly 25% of students in CUNY are Black, the institutional support for programs reflecting Black Studies has been reduced over the last three years.

Colleges have failed to replace faculty who have retired or resigned, thereby affecting program growth and the number of Black Studies majors.

In some colleges, there are no full-time or part-time faculty directly connected to the Black Studies Program. There is a high attrition rate for directors or coordinators of Black Studies Programs. In one college, there have been five coordinators of Black Studies in 10 years.

The administration cancels upper level Black studies courses, thus eliminating courses needed for the major and affecting retention in the program.

#### Solutions

Without vigilance and deliberate strategies, we will roll back and replicate social worlds that lack racial diversity.

We must change the culture and address what Pamela Newkirk calls the cancer of the culture around racial diversity.

We must ask whether there is really a will to address diversity.

Black Studies must be respected and supported within the confines of CUNY.

We must be sensitive to exploring creative ways to offer components of Black Studies. For example, we have developed an AA degree on African Diasporic Literature and we have a BA degree in the pipeline.

Students enroll in Black Studies courses in high numbers when they are offered. These courses should be supported within degree programs and with full-time faculty.

Colleges must utilize deliberate strategies that support and retain Black studies programs and faculty.

Colleges must use their websites to promote courses that reflect racial diversity.

CUNY offers no Masters degree in Africana/Black Studies. The Graduate Center should develop a Black Studies Master's degree program that is in concert with the foundation of Black Studies as a discipline and reflective of a broad range of thinkers across disciplines.

Data on Black Studies Programs and Black faculty hires with respect to status and college need to be documented. Data should not be grouped under Area Studies.

And finally, we must support degrees in the liberal arts. In the broadest sense, a liberal arts education is an approach to learning that involves diverse coursework so students develop a range of knowledge. The data show that because the skills they develop are applicable to nearly any job, liberal arts graduates enter a range of career fields.

New York City Council Higher Education Committee Hearing

November 20, 2019

**Testimony of Professor James Blake,**

President of the BMCC Black Faculty and Staff Association member of Department Personnel and Budget Committee, Member of the Academic Senate and member of the Academic Standing Committee of the Academic Senate.

**November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**Racial Makeup of the Chairpersons (heads) of BMCC's 18 Academic Departments**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Race</b>
Academic Literacy and Linguistics	White
Accounting	White
Allied Health Sciences	White
Business Management	White
Center for Ethnic Studies	
* (though listed as such on the webpage Center of Ethnic Studies is not an academic department)	
Computer Information Systems	White
English	White
Health Education	Black
Library	White
Mathematics	White
Media Arts and Technology	White
Modern Languages	White
Music and Art	White
Nursing	White

Science	Indian
Social Sciences, Human Services and Criminal Justice	White
Speech, Communications and Theatre Arts	White
Student Life	Black
Teacher Education	White

Chairpersons are elected by their department's faculty. Each department has a **Personnel and Budget Committee (P&B)**, whose members are also elected by the department faculty. The Department Chair serves as the Chair of P&B Committee and is the department's representative to the college-wide P&B committee, which consists of all the Academic Chairs in the College. The department and college-wide committees are charged with the mission to review the personnel and budget recommendations, specifically recommendations for faculty **hiring, reappointment, promotion, tenure and sabbaticals. AND matters pertaining to curriculum.** Recommendations from departmental P&B Committees go before the College-wide P&B, and, if approved by that committee, are forwarded to the college Provost for further review, and the college President for final disposition. The President makes recommendations to the University Board of Trustees for final approval.

One can plainly see the lack of diversity in the both the Departmental and College-wide Personnel and Budget Committees contributes to the overwhelming appointments of full-time White faculty, on all levels, and across all college departments. This results in a curriculum of exclusion that is totally controlled by the majority white faculty in the various academic departments. It also contributes to the appallingly inadequate number of full-time Black and Latino faculty members hired within the college.

This lack of diversity also leads to the exclusion of Black and Latino faculty members in the accumulations of wealth (higher salaries), that

accompany these appointments, promotions, tenures, sabbaticals, etc. ... The beneficiaries of CUNY's policies of exclusion are White faculty and administrators. Increasingly, our tax dollars used to fund CUNY has become a monetary source to enrich and increase the wealth of one group over another, based on color.

### **Impact on Curriculum/ No controls!**

## **Academic Senate**

- The Academic Senate is responsible for the principle academic policy decisions of the college including admissions criteria, **academic programs**, degree requirements, and graduation requirements. It is the agent of the faculty for carrying out the functions of faculty, according to the provisions of the by-laws of the Board of Trustees.
- 
- The Academic Senate is composed of several committees, they are as follows:
  - Executive Committee
  - Committee on the Committees

### **Standing Committees**

#### Academic Senate Standing Committees 2019-2020 (pdf)

- Academic Standing Committee
- Curriculum Committee  
Procedures Manual
- Instruction Committee
- Faculty Development Committee
- Student Affairs Committee
- Admissions Committee
- Election Committee
- Academic Freedom Committee

Members of the Academic Senate are elected to serve on the Academic Senate by their respective department faculty colleagues. Some academic departments because of their size have more representation than others.

Once elected to the Academic Senate faculty are assigned by the **Committee On Committees** to the various committees mentioned above. Because of the lack of diversity in the faculty ranks at BMCC. The above mentioned committees chairs and members consist of predominantly White faculty

***NO ACADEMIC PROGRAM, CURRICULUM OR NEW COURSES CAN OFFERED AT BMCC WITHOUT THE APPROVAL AND CONSENT OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE***

The college offers a number of Study Abroad courses. Last year students travelled to **Brazil, Mexico, China and Spain**, There were no study abroad courses offering to Africa. And there are none planned for this coming year. BMCC large percentage of Black Students (32%) will not have the opportunity to visit their ancestral HOMELAND. Offerings of African Centered courses have been eliminated. While study abroad programs to South America, Italy, Sweden, sailed through the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee and are voted and approved unanimously by the Academic Senate,

1. To add insult to injury, the Center for Ethnic Studies had a Chinese professor teaching a course entitled “**The Black Man in America.**”
2. The lack of diversity has led to culturally insensitive teaching modalities in the classroom that are offensive and hurtful to both Black and Muslim Students (see attached).

3. Over the objections of the Black Faculty and Staff Association, the White faculty used their overwhelming voting strength in the Academic Senate to ignore the Black Faculty and Staff Association's choice to represent their views to the BMCC President Search Committee. Instead, the Academic Senate elected someone who neither was a member of the Black Faculty Association nor has ever spoken in the Academic Senate on matters of Diversity.
4. Because all new course proposals must have the approval of the predominately White curriculum committee, which consist of the college academic chairpersons, very few if any African-centered courses from the Center for Ethnic Studies (which is under the control of the predominantly White faculty in Social Science Department) have come before the Academic Senate for approval.
5. Self-knowledge and appreciation of one's racial and cultural contribution to civilization is vital to the equitation of self-love, self-esteem and confidence. The Euro-centric education system are teaching our students to love everyone but themselves. How can they love themselves if they do not have knowledge of themselves? Our tax dollars are being used to advance a curriculum of White supremacy and Black inferiority.

### **Controls that need to be put in place**

- 1. Hiring of full time Black and Latino faculty.**
- 2. Presidents should review the hiring practices of each academic department, and reject candidates for positions if that department has a history of not hiring Black and Latino Faculty**
- 3. CUNY Central office should reject candidates for appointment from those colleges that have a poor record of Hiring Black and Latino faculty.**

- 4. Just a CUNY has a curriculum that deals with Sexual Misconduct, it must institute a mandatory curriculum that deals with Diversity and Racial prejudice in the class room, in curriculum, hiring practices for all faculty, staff and administrators.**
- 5. CUNY mandated Black Studies Course for all students as part of the degree requirements**
- 6. College Presidents should be evaluated on their effectiveness in improving faculty and administration diversity on their campus**

**CUNY CAN AND MUST DO BETTER!**

# ACADEMIC Senate Minutes

10/25/17

To: Members of the Academic Senate

I am a BMCC student and a senator in the Student Government Association. My religion is Islam. I am concerned about the mockery and false representation by my classmate concerning the religion of Islam. My concern arises from an incident in my English class. It left me feeling hurt, offended and dismayed. The incident involved an assignment given to non-Muslim students to portray themselves as Muslims. In doing so, the students made fun of the Hijab (scarf) which in Islam is an example of modesty and humbleness. They said it was "Hot" and the Hijab was thrown around and eventually ripped off their heads and replaced with a "Hoody." The students made offensive jokes about Islam. They pretended that Muslims drink alcohol and used supposedly liquor bottles to give the impression that all Muslims drink and are alcoholics.

As a Muslim, this was very offensive. The use of the alcohol and other intoxicants are prohibited in Islam.

As the only Muslim in the class, I was hurt and upset by the negative manner and behavior by the students toward my faith. I expressed my feelings to the professor. She dismissed my concerns and did not correct the students but appeared to approve their behavior. Because I felt her behavior was discriminatory towards Muslims, I complained to the Diversity Office and I also shared my concerns with Vice President of Student Affairs, the College President I also shared my concerns with Vice President of Student Affairs, the College President and the chairperson of the English Department. They all dismissed my concerns and told me that what happened was for "educational purposes." I was disappointed; since when is mockery of a person religion defined as educational?

I believe there is freedom of speech. However, freedom of speech must not include discrimination and hate against students regardless of their religion. BMCC must treat its students equally. The college must increase awareness and sensitivity to its students, faculty and staff. The college must be strong in disavowing the mockery or misrepresentations of a person's religion.

Finally, the purpose of education is to build tolerance, understanding and communication between people. Contrary to what the college administration said, this experience was not educational, but the kind of misrepresentation that leads to increase intolerance and division.

I have sought help from all college officials at BMCC but to no avail.

The Academic Senate is my last hope to address my complaint.

I humbly request that you submit my statement in the minutes Thank you

Badr Alhyani

Student Government Association

**Dr. Anthony Browne**  
**Chair, Department of Africana and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies**  
**Hunter College, CUNY**  
**Chair, CUNY Association of Black Faculty and Staff**

**New York City Council**  
**Diversity in Higher Education Classrooms and Curricula**  
**Wednesday, November 20, 2019**

Good afternoon, I thank Councilwoman Barron and her staff for the opportunity to present today. Research shows that students and faculty benefit from a diverse curriculum. Diversity in the curriculum enhances critical thinking by raising new issues and perspectives, by broadening the variety of experiences shared, by confronting stereotypes on issues of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and class, among others. It exposes students to different perspectives, by allowing a broader variety of experiences.

The curriculum itself communicates important messages about the importance of diversity (or the lack thereof). On the first day of classes, when students browse the syllabi created by their professors, do they see readings that reflect their experiences? The key question is what qualities does the university want their graduates to have? If one of them is to prepare students to thrive in a diverse democracy, then a diverse curriculum is essential. Diversity requirements are a common method utilized by universities to ensure that graduates have knowledge and competencies in this area. Hunter College, where I teach require four courses from four categories that would satisfy its Pluralism and Diversity requirement. They are: 1) Non-European societies, particularly those of Africa, Asia, Latin America, or those indigenous to the Americas; 2) One or more of the following groups in the US: African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans; 3) Women and/or issues of gender or sexual orientation; 4) Europe, including ways in which pluralism and diversity have been addressed. In addition, CUNY instituted Pathways Requirements for graduation in the Flexible Common Core where students are required to take six course in the following areas: World Cultures and Global Issues; U.S. Experience in its Diversity; Creative Expression; Individual and Society; and the, Scientific

World. However, course offering across the university tend to be uneven reflecting, in part, the power and influence of administrators and departments.

In order to develop racial literacy we need a base level of knowledge. For instance, students should understand the historical processes of inclusion, exclusion and subjugation of African Americans. They should know the history of Black activism for civil and human rights. In the era where facts are questioned, our classrooms play a pivotal role in alleviating misconceptions around race. Helping students, for example, to learn about inequalities as well as policies to reduce disparities in wealth, education, policing, health, public policy and debt. We know that when students are only exposed to dominant perspectives, they come to believe that viewpoints from other racial and ethnic groups are insignificant and lack value, intellectual worth, and scholarly credibility.

#### Ways to promote a diverse curriculum

The recruitment of a diverse faculty is arguably the most effective method of diversifying the curriculum at CUNY. Recruitment of Black faculty can be a challenge particularly in departments with an uneven history of tenured Black faculty. A strategy that has been successfully utilized by both public and private universities to address faculty diversity is cluster hiring. A cluster hire would involve hiring a critical mass of Black faculty members based on shared, interdisciplinary research interests. These hires could be in a single department or a cross-disciplinary research area that would provide the new hires with a community of scholars that would reduce feelings of isolation and marginalization. At the same time, these scholars would utilize their interdisciplinary training to diversify the curriculum and learning experience through theories, methods, readings, and pedagogical approaches.

For CUNY, building on the University's research, teaching, demographics and location, a cluster hiring initiative would enhance the University's existing research capacity, contribute new discoveries and applications of knowledge, and address real-world problems that require cross-disciplinary expertise. For example, a cluster hire initiative centered in Africana Studies departments around the theme of *Black Futures* would attract Black faculty whose teaching and research focuses on challenges facing urban areas that might include race and social justice, educational and/or health disparities, urban housing, poverty, policing, and any other topics that

speak to persistent concerns facing New Yorkers. Research would be coordinated through a Black Futures CUNY wide Disciplinary Group that would coordinate research, funding, cross-disciplinary collaborations, and the dissemination of research.

### Teaching and Learning Centers

Several CUNY campuses have some variation of teaching centers that allow faculty to share and discuss practices that can be incorporated into their teaching and research. These centers conduct seminars on diversity, inclusion and pedagogy that allow faculty to reflect on their current approaches and learn new ones. More often than not, faculty members have not been trained to seek out and infuse diverse readings and pedagogical methods into their courses. These centers allow faculty to critically examine their classroom practices and assigned course materials.

Faculty cannot depend exclusively on the material they were exposed to during graduate school. Instead, they must hold themselves accountable for introducing new literature to which they might be unaccustomed in order to enable students to understand differences. More specifically, by engaging in collaborative peer review, faculty can receive feedback on the readings and other materials they select for their courses. This practice can enable faculty to identify diverse literatures and build on the expertise of their colleagues, thus enhancing their own knowledge.

In closing, faculty must intentionally incorporate cultural inclusion into their pedagogy and their courses. Diversity, learning, and engagement are cyclical and largely dependent upon accountability, collaboration, and multicultural consciousness among faculty. Thank you!

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New York City Council

Higher Education Committee Hearing, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Testimony by Hostos Community College Vice President for Academic Affairs

Provost Christine Mangino

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Good afternoon Chairwoman Barron and members of the Higher Education Committee. My name is Christine Mangino and I am the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at Hostos Community College of the City University of New York.

At Hostos Community College we are intentional in the representation of inclusion and diversity throughout our course curriculum and extracurricular activities. This is part of the mission of the college and our general education learning outcomes. We have a capstone course, entitled Bronx Beautiful, as the culminating class for our liberal arts students. Part of the course description states students will “understand how their education can help them become more aware, educated, and involved members of their communities, and therefore empower them to become agents of change.” Another way we involve our students in the community is through our service learning curriculum. There are guidelines to become a designated service-learning course through a governance-led approval process. Some elements are a reflection component and outcomes related to our global

citizenship general education outcome. Most of the CBOs we have partnered with work with diverse populations and inclusiveness is part of their missions. Two of our English faculty have been collaborating with Columbia University's Common Core. Our focus has been on connecting with authors who write about feelings of alienation, conflicted identity and oppression. A highlight is the inclusion of DuBois' *The Soul of Black Folk* and focusing on the concept of double consciousness and the sense of double identity black people carry with them in a predominately white society.

We have an interdisciplinary faculty committee revamping our liberal arts degree to include options in Women's and Gender Studies, the Black and African Diaspora Studies, and Health care management, whose focus is understanding current health issues such as health inequity and cross-cultural and interpersonal communications. There is a new LGBTQ course going through our governance process. Within our Aging and Health Studies degree program, our faculty discovered the need to incorporate curriculum on cultural sensitivity. This need was discovered when surveying employers who provide our students internships. In collaboration with our career services staff, we developed two sets of curriculum. The first is now embedded in all the Aging and Health Studies courses and the second has become a workshop our career services staff provide all students participating in internships. The handbook entitled "The Roadmap to

Cultural Sensitivity- the Journey to Cultural Awareness.” has outcomes which include that students will “develop an increased self-awareness of differing culturally-based values and beliefs of individuals and organizations” and “understand the challenges that arise when differences in culture, values, beliefs, and experiences exist between people”. Included activities have the purpose of expanding students understanding of other cultures, building awareness of one’s own cultural biases, how to bridge language divides, the importance of nonverbal communication, and the difference between being culturally sensitive and culturally competent. These curriculum have been shared with faculty across the college so they can begin incorporating portions in their own courses.

For a few years we designated a faculty member to be a Diversity Fellow to work with our Center for Teaching and Learning to plan different activities and conversations to discuss diversity, inclusion, and equality. We recently had a series of conversations to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stonewall Riots as a way to illuminate our LGBTQI+ faculty and staff members’ journeys on campus.

Another recent event was titled “Is the Hostos classroom really inclusive?”

Through a college-wide process, we select a book of the year that faculty can use in their classrooms and we have college-wide events to discuss the book and suggest in-class activities. Our last four books all speak to themes of inclusion, social justice and equality. The books were Just Mercy, Americanah, How to

Think, and The Hate U Give. Our Social Science Speakers Series runs every semester and highlights these same themes. This semester included “Upending the Ivory Tower: Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Ivy League”; and “A Blueprint for Economic Justice: Project Equality and Black Women’s Economic Activism in America’s Industrial Heartland”. Our theater productions always focus on themes of social justice and inclusion. Our latest production which was also performed at this year’s Fringe Festival was “The Gender of Attraction” which is about transgender relationships. We promote the creation of cultural, social and religious clubs such as the Black Student Union, Capoeira Club, Muslim Club, the Veterans Club, the Reimagining Justice Club and the African Club. They recently held a multicultural day and added the flags of the Republic of Yemen and Turks and Caicos to represent our student population in our flag collection. Again, these are just some examples of Hostos’ inclusive curriculum and all of which speaks to who we are as a college.



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555 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street, 1420  
New York, NY 10019  
Tel: (646) 664-8844  
Website: [www.usscuny.org](http://www.usscuny.org)

**TESTIMONY OF ENRIQUE PENA,  
QUEENS COLLEGE SENATOR OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE,  
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
REGARDING LACK OF DIVERSITY IN THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

November 20th, 2019

Good afternoon Councilmembers, fellow students, and everyone else in this room,

My name is Enrique Peña, I'm a student from Queens College. I'm a USS delegate. I'm a Dreamer. And a proud New Yorker just like anyone else in this room.

I wanted to briefly address the situation regarding my own education in CUNY. I'm a Latin American Studies Major at Queens College. Intended major. I'm a sophomore and have not been able to declare it yet. Why? Because of how CUNY is slowly but steady underfunding and killing our Ethnic Studies programs. Out of the about 60 different classes that were listed to fulfill requirements of my career, fewer than 10 have been offered in the previous year, and considering classes I cannot take because I need previous requirements that are also not being offered, or Spanish classes I simply am not allowed to take because of that being my first language, I am currently struggling to find most of the classes that I'd need to graduate with that degree. I have talked to counselors, to the Academic Center, to every office I could to ask why that was happening, and got no answer. If you ask me, the same way I have been asked before, why didn't I go ask the same department? I have. I did not know that the chair of the department had taken a sabbatical and no one had been assigned to replace them, and since there is only one person in charge of a whole department, that meant it was impossible for me to seek any help. For a whole year I've been making calls, sending emails, going to different offices and I feel I've been fooled into a major I may not be able to complete because the first thing to go when there's a budget cut in CUNY is ethnic studies.

Queens College has a history of unrest, for which I am proud of. 50 years ago, in 1969, in all around CUNY, students took over campuses to ask for racial justice, to condemn the war, to make sure our university became the beacon of hope not only for a white majority



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that existed back then, but for those who looked like the majority in this room, the majority of New York, people that looked like me. That is how we got our Ethnic Studies departments in the first place. That is how we got SEEK. That is how CUNY opened admission to people of color and became the institution I speak in behalf of, today. But I am tired of speaking up. I am tired of going to hearing after hearing to tell the same sob stories to denounce this systemic problem that New York has let happen for so long.

You're not asking the right questions, so let me help you with some:

- Why is it that in 1976, the year that CUNY finally stopped being a white majority institution, it started charging tuition?
- Why is it that we keep telling ourselves that the answer to the previous question is a fiscal deficit when we managed to have the biggest expansion of CUNY during the Great Depression?
- Why is it that when tuition was just imposed, student money covered about 20% of CUNY budget, and now we finance about 50%? Why the disinvestment? Why is that disinvestment put in the back of middle class students of color?
- Why can we spend 11 billion dollars in prisons, and a few hundreds of millions in police officers in the MTA to lock up people like me but not invest in education for the same demographic, for a much lower cost? And let me repeat the word "Invest", because education is not an expense, it is an investment.

I cannot speak about education without mentioning my mother. She studied in Peru to be an educator, and then went on to get a Law degree in 1996. But when I came to the US in 2016, she came with me to work for a minimum wage as a home attendant, facing sometimes discrimination because she doesn't speak English, but fighting non-stop so I get to be here today, speaking my truth and the truth of our people.

So you know why I dare today to criticize a Mayor that calls himself progressive, and runs for president saying he supports Free College for all, yet underfunds CUNY and applauds cops arresting a lady selling churros in the Subway, because in that woman, I see my mom, my dad. I see nuestros tíos y abuelos. And there you see how the words of



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the Peruvian poet César Vallejo become a reality: “To know more is to be more free”, because through education, we buy our freedom. Through education, we thrive in this country. That is why this is important to me, because I know the story of my fellow dreamers that came to this country facing the biggest hardships just to get that chance.

When I came to NYC in 2016, I enrolled in high school and was sent to an international school in Queens, for English Language Learners, where almost every student was an immigrant, and a big part of them were Dreamers like me, and that school did not have access to honors programs, to AP classes, to sports. But you say you want those students to succeed, you still ask about diversity, and there’s a segregated school in Queens where you still fail to provide the most basic level of education, in comparison to students in that same building, but a different school in a different floor. A school for citizens.

I supported students in my old high school for a couple years through the ASPIRA organization, founded in 1961 by Dr. Antonia Pantoja, that saw back then the same issues we discussed. It took Dr. Pantoja a civil rights lawsuit against New York City in 1972 to be able to provide a bilingual education to students in the city. To use the efforts of Dr. Pantoja to segregate students and refuse to give them a basic education is just an insult to everything and everyone she stood for, and city officials should be ashamed of the outcome. I’m tired of seeing how students like me are pushed out of the educational system, and into jails, the military complex, or the streets. I’m tired of trying to help students when the whole system wants us to fail.

So if this hearing was organized to know why do we have issues with lack of diversity in our schools, I’m giving you the answer. New York City has one of the most segregated school systems in the country. If students of color can’t even get through high school, don’t expect them to go to college. And by hiking tuition and no investment, you are purging out students of color like me that wanted an opportunity in this university system but pay college out of pocket. You make us choose between a meal and an education.

Invest in CUNY. Invest in schools. Invest in us.

Thank you.



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**New York City Council Higher Education Committee Public Hearing**  
***Testimony of Natalie Segev, Vice Chair of Senior Colleges for the***  
***CUNY University Student Senate (USS)***  
**NOVEMBER 20<sup>th</sup> 2019**

Good afternoon City Council members. My name is Natalie Segev, I am the Vice Chair of Senior Colleges for the CUNY University Student Senate (USS) and a student at John Jay College. Thank you for holding this hearing on ethnic studies at CUNY.

The lack of funding in our public higher education system has many negative impacts. One consequence that does not get nearly enough attention is how an underfunded CUNY affects our ethnic studies departments. This institution prides itself with its diverse students. In the Fall 2018, CUNY reported that the largest student population in all of its schools were Hispanic students at 30.8%. The second largest student population were Black students at 24.8%. So why is it that CUNY has an academic curriculum that is not reflective of the students they are supposed to serve?

At John Jay College of Criminal Justice budget cuts to the Africana Studies Department mean that in the past six years the department has been unable to hire new faculty members. Even if it was to replace a retired faculty member. Around ten to fifteen years ago the department had eleven full time faculty members. Since then the Africana Studies Department has had a steady increase. Their minors program more than doubled and they serve over 1,000 students. Yet, they only have six full time faculty members. These faculty members not only teach but create programming and advise their students. As a result, the Africana Studies Department is unable to offer all the courses displayed in their course catalog.

Unfortunately, this is an issue across CUNY campuses. The Department of Africana Studies at Lehman College will have to offer a significantly reduced amount of courses for the upcoming Spring 2020 semester. The department just finalized their Spring schedule and cited a reduction in \$20,000 in their adjunct budget. This means the department cannot pay for the same amount of classes that were offered last Spring. To provide additional context; Lehman's Department of Africana Studies had been able to offer numerous courses on Saturdays in Spring 2019, however, they will only be able to offer one class this upcoming Spring. This is harmful for many students, who cite lack of course offerings being the reason why they cannot fulfill their requirements in a timely manner, and delays them for graduating.

On the flyer for this hearing a question was posed; do you feel that there aren't enough ethnic studies courses offered to fulfill your degree requirements? I believe, just based on the two examples presented, that due to budget cuts, the answer is no. No there are not enough ethnic studies courses offered to fulfill degree requirements.

Good Afternoon Chairwoman Barron,

My name is Gugeeta Cheetram, I am a student leader who currently attends Lehman College and is an alumnus of Guttman Community College. Transferring to a college with a vast diversity of ethnic studies is impactful for me and my peers because of the opportunities to learn about our heritage history. The sole purpose of this testimony is not only to advocate for ethnic studies at the CUNY campus but also to highlight the need for more professors of color to teach these courses. By having the professor- students' connection will be able to impact the students at a higher level within the classroom. Because they will be able to learn the materials at a personal level.

Within the ethic studies department/ program at each CUNY campus, the students will be able to find a secure place for themselves and resources that will be beneficial. The NYC Council is giving \$3,170,000 to CUNY to fund the ethic studies on CUNY campuses. However, that money isn't enough to sustain the ethic study across CUNY. The asked for more funding to the ethic study at the different CUNY intuition and to not take away students prides of leaning. We are in a diverse city, and our city population is being reflected through CUNY. Which is why our curriculum should reflect the students body they serve. Additionally, the faculty, staff, and administrators should be a reflection of the students they serve within CUNY. Take Lehman Mexican Study for example, we are receiving 285,000 campar to our colleagues across CUNY. There are only five full time staff at Lehman with over 20 part time staff. The Mexican Study is focus to only plan six months into the future, instead of a year or more. Because of the limited funding they received to provide the resources they currently have for the students. With the Budget from NYC Council they are able to provide research activities, CUNY MSI Archive and Library, Educational opportunity initiative, legal Consultation for Immigrants and conferences. Additional, to these programs Lehman Mexican Study provides scholarships and indigenous and diaspora language with Columbia University. Within this program all Lehman students have

access to join and applied to the resources being offered. We are here to empower our students voice by giving them the resources they need to succeed.

**Diversity in Higher Education Classrooms and Curricula Hearing**  
**250, Broadway – Committee Room 4**  
***Testimony of Sabina Dorville, Secretary of the Senate at CCNY***  
**November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Good afternoon, my name is Sabina Dorville, I am a senior at the City College of New York (CCNY) studying Political Science with minor in Black Studies. I am currently the Secretary of the Senate of the Undergraduate Student Government at CCNY. First and foremost, I would like to thank the New York City Council Chair Inez Barron for holding the hearing that's allowing me to speak on Diversity in Higher Education in CUNY, more specifically about my experience at CCNY.

For many years now, many CUNY campuses have been facing the crisis of little to no professors of color. Although the 1969 protest- known as the "Five Demands Protest" demanded CUNY to hire Faculty members that represented the demographics of NY, it's sad to say that 50 years later we are seeing less and less of that demand across the divisions and departments. Right after the protest, some ethnic studies, like the Black Studies Department were developed into the curricula but since then, they have been facing with budget cuts. Ethnic studies at CCNY devolved into programs due to continuous decrease of their budgets every year under the pretense of the school's debt. Currently, there are no full time Faculty within the Black Studies Program at CCNY, and because of that, the program and students alike have to depend on part-time adjuncts. They are often forced to have their classes cross listed with other departments that have no faculty of color in their respective department.

As students, we can actually count how many faculties of color especially black professors are on campus. For example, the Political Science department has only one black professor, and he is just a part-time adjunct.

Personally, as an immigrant, I was drawn to the Black Studies Program office because of its focus on the experiences and struggles of Black people here in the U.S. At first, I was very excited, but I was forced to grapple with reality- the inability to register for classes they once offered but because of budget cuts and lack of full-time professors. A lot of our classes are cross listed with other departments which would be fine, but it always come at the expense of representation in the classroom. Last semester, I took African Politics and African American Political Thought, both cross listed with the Political Science department and taught by White men. The first day, in one of my classes, the Professor told us he was not well versed in African American history (aside

from slavery) before he started teaching the class five years ago. Imagine how shocked we were when our own Professor was unable to teach us at times and unwilling to hear our opinions, perspectives when it comes to our daily struggle. One day, many of us walked out because of the constant emotional labor we had to do as he sometimes did not want to hear our frustrations on "Unconscious Racism" and the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment. This is not to say Professors of color would have 100 percent agreed with us, but they would have been able to relate to our experiences and understand where we are coming from.

My friends and I who are majoring and/or minoring in ethnic studies have to sacrifice our extra-curricular activities every semester because there only 20 or less classes offered during limited hours. This not only affect our emotional well-being; it also hinders us when we have to apply for graduate studies. The graduate programs often ask for letter of recommendations from full-time faculty, tenured professor. How can we prosper in our future studies if we do not have a full-time professors? People who relate to us and care about our future? This is unacceptable because living in New York City, a diverse environment, classes at CUNY should reflect that. The programs are getting bigger in terms of students enrollment but they are sustainable enough to serve the students.

I am happy that we have Council members and CUNY staff who are working endlessly to solve this issue. But in order to truly solve this problem, there should be Professors of color(the ones that are still in the schools) on the board of the hiring committee and once they are hired, there should be educational programs in place to make sure they succeed. It would include conference, financial support and to make sure they are heard. Because professors themselves, are subjected to daily microaggressions from their peers and administrators. I want the City Council to push Governor Cuomo to invest in CUNY but specifically ethnic studies. We also need to make ethnic studies classes required- as general education classes. Having philosophy and similar classes required and not those classes at CUNY, is basically saying we do not care about the rest of the population and their experiences. I believe students would be more knowledgeable about the world around us.

Again, thank you for your time and I am looking forward to working with you all.

**THE COUNCIL  
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Address: 108-30 42nd Ave 3rd fl Corona NY 11368

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Name: Jamell Henderson

Address: 470 Vanderbilt Ave

I represent: CUNY Rising Alliance Coordinator

Address: 470 Vanderbilt Ave Brooklyn NY

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Address: BMCC

I represent: Black Faculty

Address: 199 Chambers St

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Name: DR. ANTHONY BROWN

Address: 695 PARK AVE NYC

I represent: HUNTER COLLEGE

Address: DEPARTMENT OF AFRICANA & PUERTO RICAN/LATINO STUDIES

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Name: Dr. Brenda Greene

Address: Medgar Evers College

I represent: 1650 Bedford Avenue

Address: Brooklyn, NY 11225

**THE COUNCIL CUNY PANEL  
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Name: Christine Mangino, Provost

Address: VP for Academic Affairs at

I represent: Hunter Community College

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL CUNY Panel 1 of 3  
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Name: Jose Luis Cruz

Address: Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost

I represent: CUNY

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THE COUNCIL *CUNY Panel 3ot 3*  
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Name: *Karol Mason*

Address: *President*

I represent: *John Jay College/CUNY*

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Name: *Sabina M. Dorville*

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