



The State University
of New York

Senate Higher Education Hearing Testimony

“The Cost of Public Higher Education”

November 1, 2019

Hello. I am Robert Megna, Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer of the State University of New York.

On behalf of Chancellor Kristina M. Johnson, I would like to thank Chairperson Stavisky, members of the Senate, and legislative staff for allowing me this opportunity to discuss a matter important to all of us: ensuring an affordable and high quality education for all New Yorkers.

And I would also like to acknowledge and thank Chairman Meryll Tisch, our entire SUNY Board of Trustees for their leadership and support, and the great work of our executive leadership team and presidents across all 64 of SUNY's colleges and campuses.

SUNY is in the process of finalizing our SFY 2020-2021 budgetary proposal, which you will hear more about from Chancellor Kristina Johnson at the Joint Legislative Budget Hearing in January or February. However, I appreciate the opportunity to share the most recent data we have on New York's transformative approach to an affordable and quality public higher education.

I know that you are aware that SUNY is the largest comprehensive system of postsecondary education in the nation. We serve more than 400,000 full-time students every year, and with credit bearing courses, continuing education, and community outreach programs, that total increases to nearly 1.4 million annually. We are a unique system and therefore have unique challenges: in addition to our community colleges, four-year colleges, and graduate and doctoral research centers, we operate medical schools, hospitals, a law school, and a national lab.

With the support of Governor Cuomo and state legislators, despite the challenges of a vast system with diverse needs, we have grown our commitment to being accessible and affordable, while continuing to excel on the quality of the education that we provide every student entering through our doors. In fact, I am very pleased to share that professor M. Stanley Whittingham of Binghamton University was just awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for one of the most profound inventions of our day, the lithium-ion battery. Every time you charge your smartphone, you can thank Dr. Whittingham for his work while at SUNY.

By the way, he is our 16th Nobel Laureate.

This story of affordability and quality extends to all of our campuses. U.S. News and World Report released its rankings last month of the nation's best colleges and 21 of ours were listed on the National and Northeastern lists, including Stony Brook University, University at Albany, University at Buffalo, SUNY Oswego, FIT and many more. Further, Forbes recently released its list of the 2019 Best Value Colleges, and 10 different SUNY schools topped the list, including Farmingdale State College, SUNY New Paltz, SUNY Maritime and others.

23 of SUNY's 30 four-year colleges were also featured in CNN/MONEY's 2019 list of Best Colleges for Your Money, including Buffalo State College, SUNY Purchase, SUNY Old Westbury, SUNY Delhi and more, while Kiplinger's ranked Binghamton University as the top public school for value in the country; 14 other SUNY schools made that select list.

Your ongoing support for our infrastructure and academic facilities that help to attract the best teachers and which deliver groundbreaking research, will help to further build on these achievements.

Because of the support Governor Cuomo and legislators have delivered on affordability, and because of the innovation of programs like the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Excelsior Scholarship, New York is truly set apart from many other states. You have prioritized affordable and quality education, and its showing in one of the most important metrics available: social mobility and the enormous impact SUNY and our students and alumni have on local economies in every region and corner of this state.

Because of this, one-third of the State's college-educated workforce have a degree from the State University of New York, with 55 percent of resident undergraduate students attending SUNY and CUNY tuition free.

How does that break down?

Pell, TAP and Excelsior

In 2017/18, 90,656 students at all SUNY campuses were offered a Pell grant; 51,004 (or 56.3% of Pell recipients) were offered the maximum Pell award allowable (\$5,920). Alongside Governor Cuomo and his team, we are working with New York's congressional delegation to see additional resources and better eligibility requirements for Pell – and Federal Work Study – in the reauthorization of the federal Higher Education Act (HEA).

New York's TAP program has been a life-changing experience for hundreds of thousands of students. Across all campuses last academic year, 108,095 students were offered a TAP grant; 63,319 (or 62.3% of TAP recipients) were offered the maximum TAP award.

And the Excelsior Scholarship program has opened the door to 24,000 SUNY and CUNY students in just its 2nd year of enrollment. This has been a particularly powerful resource for students at our Community Colleges where, because of the support from Governor Cuomo and legislators, students are able to focus on learning: Excelsior students at community colleges have a graduation rate of 30% compared, nearly 3 times higher than their peers. We have also seen an increase in the metrics for on-time graduation at 4-year colleges, with full-time Excelsior Scholarship freshman taking 15 or more credits their first semester increasing by 7.5%.

EOP

Since its inception more than 50 years ago, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) has graduated more than 75,000 people who otherwise may not have gone to college, or have the supports needed to succeed while with us. Today, we have 11,284 EOP students enrolled at 48 campuses. These students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, with a family income of less than \$46,435 per year for a family of 4. They are academically underprepared when they start their time with SUNY, averaging 6-11 points lower than general admits on their high school averages, and approximately 250 points lower on their combined SAT scores. But because of the supports and services we are able to provide, EOP students have a first-time, full-time retention rate of 82.2% at our 4-year campuses, and a higher overall graduation rate than their non-EOP peers. Chancellor Johnson recently held the very first program honoring EOP students for their academic excellence, campus leadership, and perseverance at the 1st Norman R. McConney, Jr. Awards for EOP Student Excellence – named for the man who helped Assemblyman Arthur Eve shepherd this program into the success that it is today.

Re-enroll to Complete

This past summer, we announced the first results of our unique and innovative program to re-enroll students who left a SUNY campus prior to completing their degree. So far, we have engaged students at 52 campuses in the months before their first student loan payment comes due, and I am proud to share that so far, 6,013 have come back to SUNY. More than half have returned as full-time students. In the process of re-enrolling these students, Re-Enroll to Complete has recovered over \$12 million in tuition revenue for SUNY campuses. In addition to recovered tuition, the project is expected to increase retention/completion rates and reduce the number of students who fall into student loan delinquency or default.

I want to highlight that this effort was the direct result of PIF funding – another initiative supported by the Governor and legislators. Thank you for that.

Community College Funding

In the last state budget, Governor Cuomo and legislators delivered much-needed support for our community colleges with increased funding. These campuses are the lifeblood of the communities they serve, providing workforce training skills and economic security. In a good economy, when fewer people are looking for work, community colleges generally suffer enrollment declines. Because of the support you provided, they are better able to plan for future growth and local training needs.

It has been a privilege to come before you on behalf of The State University of New York, and I look forward to working with all of you during the upcoming legislative session.

I would be happy to take any questions.

**New York State Senate Higher Education Hearing
“The Cost of Public Higher Education”**

**Nassau Community College
Dr. Jermaine F. Williams, President
Patricia Noren, Director, Financial Aid
William Clyde, Jr., Director, Education Opportunity Program**

November 1, 2019

Dr. Jermaine F. Williams

Good afternoon Senators Toby Ann Stavisky, Kaminsky, Gaughran, Brooks, Martinez, Thomas, and Kaplan. We appreciate that Nassau Community College (NCC) has been selected as one of the sites to hold a public hearing on such a crucial topic. The cost of public higher education is a factor that impacts equitable educational access, completion, and post-completion success.

By way of context, Nassau Community College is the largest single campus community college in the SUNY system. Today, our campus spans 225 acres and includes 50 buildings. More than 16,000 day and evening students and 11,000 continuing and professional students attend each year. We are the top choice for one out of every four college-bound high school graduates in Nassau County. About one million people have attended Nassau throughout our history. Our 135,000 graduates include doctors, attorneys, teachers, and business and political leaders. More than 80% of our students live in Nassau County. Approximately 10% and 8% of our students live in Queens and Suffolk counties, respectively.

We are a comprehensive, full-opportunity institution of higher education. We endeavor to ensure that all who can benefit from our resources have the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills and to pursue the goal of lifelong learning.

The College is dedicated to high-quality, low-cost education and career preparation to meet the needs and interests of the community it serves. It is committed to academic excellence and the dignity and worth of the individual. To this end, Nassau Community College offers Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, and Associate in Applied Science degrees, as well as Certificate and continuing education programs.

Curricula spans the liberal arts and sciences, as well as pre-professional and professional areas, for the benefit of a diverse population. The College places a high priority on small classes, taught by qualified, experienced faculty, to provide an optimal educational environment. I started my tenure at the College on July 1st, 2019 and my goal is to spend the first several months learning about as much as possible about the College, County and its communities, and the State. Within my first year, I will endeavor to work with the internal and external constituents to identify common goals that will address equity issues and enhance educational access, completion, and post-completion success.

Cost of Public Higher Education

Now that you have been officially welcomed and know a little about Nassau Community College, I am compelled to share that we are grateful for your support in the most recently completed New York State budget cycle. Your advocacy on our behalf resulted in funding for improved learning environments for our students to help them realize their higher education goals.

This recognition of our funding needs by Governor Cuomo and yourselves truly shows how much you understand the importance of community colleges in our region and across the State. I hope that we can count on your continued support to ensure that it does. On behalf of our students, thank you again for your support.

With last year's advocacy in mind and knowing that we need continued support, I want to share a bit more about the students who attend Nassau Community College. According to our most recent data reported to Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS):

- 42% of our students are Part-time, meaning they take less than 12 credits a semester
- Race/Ethnicity breakdown
 - 35%: White
 - 30%: Hispanic or Latino
 - 21%: Black or African American
 - 7%: Asian
- Age
 - 74% are 24 or younger
 - More than one in four are 25 or older

According to our most recent Community College Survey on Student Engagement (CCSSE), administered in 2018, more than half of all respondents (52.5%) indicated that they spend time during the week "Providing care for dependents living" with them (parents, children, spouse, etc.), with 17% spending 11 or more hours. Nine percent of respondents, almost one in every 10 students, indicated spending more than 30 hours a week providing care for dependents living with them.

In regards to working for pay, 85% of respondents dedicate some time during the week working for pay, and 68.6% of respondents are working for pay 11 or more hours a week. That is more than two out of three. Almost 50% of respondents (49.7%) are working for pay 21 or more hours a week. And, more than a quarter (27.4%), one in four, of respondents are working for pay more than 30 hours a week.

Clearly the cost of public higher education matters to our community, especially to students as they attempt to manage the realities of life pursue their educational and professional goals.

How Are We Addressing the Cost of Public Higher Education

We advocate in places and spaces where our voices are heard. By telling the stories of our students, we endeavor to illustrate the true cost of higher education to those who are in decision-making roles regarding funding. We appreciate that you listen and advocate for us, as was evident with the last budget cycle.

We pursue grant opportunities. Nassau Community College recently applied for the SUNY Family Empowerment Community College Pilot Program. Governor Cuomo has thankfully provided three years of funding to launch the Family Empowerment Community College Pilot Program, which provides customized support for single parents attending SUNY and CUNY community colleges. In Fall 2018 there were 775 students enrolled at NCC who were identified as single parents. Of the 775 single parent students, 90% or 694 students were eligible for PELL. PELL, of course, is a federal program that does not have the purchasing power it once had, and I hope

that our federal delegation will strengthen PELL support for community college part-time students in the upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

Our plan today is to offer free on-campus child care to 35 single parent students while they pursue their degrees. These funds would help us leverage the fantastic on-campus child care facility that has been at Nassau Community College for 40 years, The Children's Greenhouse. As we know, students who have obtained an education are better prepared to be able to independently support their families through obtaining jobs that have a livable wage and lead to social mobility.

We endeavor to learn more about our students so we can address equity gaps. Thanks to the leadership of Governor Cuomo, NCC participated in a survey administration, led by SUNY, that will help us receive quantifiable data regarding the percentage of students who experience food insecurity, hunger, housing insecurity, and/or homelessness. It is important that we have the data so we can identify how pernicious these issues are. To place this in perspective, a few national surveys have identified that:

- 42% - 56% of community college students were food insecure
- 46% - 51% of community college students experienced housing insecurity
- 12% - 14% of community college students were homeless

Furthermore, **The NEST, NCC's food pantry**, is committed to fostering health and well-being by providing nourishment and other vital supports to all members of our campus community. It aims to alleviate the presence of hunger and food insecurity in the lives of our students, employees, and their families.

We also raise funds via the Nassau Community College Foundation. This entity is a not-for-profit corporation created in 1983 to support the mission of the College by providing an independent avenue to receive philanthropic aid. Through the years, this avenue has supported thousands of NCC students.

Thank you for the opportunity to share a bit about Nassau Community College, our students, and the importance of the cost of higher education. I hope that we can count on your continued support to ensure that we are able to provide equitable resources designed to support educational access, completion, and post-completion success for the diverse body of learners we currently serve and seek to serve in the future.

Patricia Noren

Students and parents are well aware that a college education pays off in countless ways, but are concerned with how they will pay for college. Will they qualify for financial aid? Will their savings be enough? The possibilities are endless and often confusing. There are different types and sources of aid. There are grants, scholarships, loans and work-study. The sources of aid are the federal government, which students must apply to every academic year via the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid); State government; the Institution the student is attending, if available; and private sources.

Although the FAFSA is the first step to applying for aid, many New York State residents are fortunate to receive assistance from our State to help offset the cost of college tuition. The Tuition Assistance Program grant (TAP) is a New York State grant that has assisted full-time students for decades. It provides tuition assistance for our lowest income students. Only in the past two academic years have Nassau Community College students faced the "TAPGAP". In Fall 2018, 3,347 students received TAP; 688 students received the maximum TAP award at NCC and 667 (97%) of this population also received a federal Pell grant that covered the "gap".

New York State has taken the lead on assisting middle income families when they introduced the Excelsior Scholarship. Not only does this scholarship allow middle-income families to receive grant funds, not previously available to them, but it promotes on-time completion. These Excelsior Scholarship recipients now have a choice to attend full-time rather than part-time in order to budget their personal expenses along with the cost of tuition. Another positive feature of the Excelsior Scholarship is its potential to reduce loan dependency.

New York State understands students may need to attend part-time and has made sure there are resources available to help off-set a part-time student's tuition expense. There is APTS, Aid for Part-time Study, where an annual appropriation is provided, and is allocated proportionately based on part-time enrolment data, to those institutions electing to participate in the program. At Nassau, this award has assisted over 500 students in 18/19 by paying almost \$570,000 of tuition costs.

Part-time TAP is available to students that have attended full-time and earned at least 24 credits in the prior two semesters and now will be attending part-time with a half-time credit load.

The new Part-time Scholarship for community colleges allows students enrolled in 6- 11 credits to receive a maximum annual award of up to \$3000.

The Senator Jose Peralta New York State DREAM Act gives undocumented and other students, such as those receiving Temporary Protection Status or designated as Victims of Criminal Activity or Trafficking, access to New York State administered grants and scholarships that support their higher education tuition costs. We at Nassau Community College spread awareness of this new opportunity at high school financial aid presentations, at our FAFSA workshops, and Financial Aid Information Sessions, as well as through the recruitment efforts of our Admission team. This information is accessible on our webpage and social media.

Colleges are aware of the rise in student loan debt and have taken action to educate student borrowers. Financial Literacy is a key component because it equips one with the knowledge and skills to manage money.

Through the efforts of a SUNY developed contract, we are able to take advantage of the SUNY Smart-track financial literacy tool. It is an interactive online tool that helps students develop a stronger understanding of basic finances. Its comprehensive modules address personal finances

like budgeting, basic banking, borrowing, responsible credit card use and avoiding identity theft. The impactful content can be adapted to HS students, as well. We recently introduced this tool to our campus NY Gear-Up team. They are excited to share this tool in their efforts to graduate high school students and to prepare them for college.

At NCC our President recently instituted a Cohort Default Taskforce to review data and to come up with strategies to engage, encourage and determine what more the College can do to prevent students from defaulting on their student loans. The Financial Aid Office began hosting Loan Debt Awareness Workshops on campus. Our Goal is to make the students aware early on that loans are to be repaid and arm them with the necessary tools to be responsible borrowers. We show them how to determine the overall amount of loan they have borrowed, and explain the loan servicer's part and the ramifications of going into default.

Nassau has also partnered with SUNY in the Re-enroll to Complete project. This project reaches out to student loan borrowers that have withdrawn from school and encourages them to resume their studies and to complete their program. Research shows that students who resume and complete their education will earn more and are less likely to default on loans.

New York State understands that new college graduates may not start their new job with a salary of \$50,000 or more. That is why they have developed the "On your feet loan forgiveness program". This program will pay up to 24 months of loan payment relief.

Thank you for taking the time to be here and to continuously look to alleviate the pressures the students face in funding their college education.

William Clyde, Jr.

The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), supported by Governor Cuomo and legislators, combines access, academic support and supplemental financial assistance to make higher education possible for students who have the potential to succeed despite poor preparation and limited financial resources. EOP seeks to identify eligible first-time degree-seeking students who meet specific academic criteria and whose family household income does not exceed 185% of the federal poverty guidelines.

Program services for students include and are not limited to providing academic support, tutoring and supplemental instruction, and modest financial assistance for non-tuition expenses.

The SUNY Office of Opportunity Programs mandated in its RFP (Request for Proposals) a minimum three-week session to provide a comprehensive academic experience in an effort to prepare students to persist, succeed and earn a college degree. In addition, the EOP Summer Academic Institute sought to address aspects of applied learning, cultural sensitivity and diversity, career exploration, personal and mental health awareness, and strategies for students to maintain good academic standing and understanding of degree requirements.

For its second cohort class, the Nassau Community College 2019 EOP Summer Academic Institute lasted four weeks from July 22 through August 15, 2019. Forty-four (44) students participated and completed the program, and forty-three (43) continued for the fall 2019 term. The non-returning freshman's family relocated to Pennsylvania upon completion of the summer program.

The main objectives of the 2019 Summer Academic Institute were as follows:

- Improve reading, writing, math, and critical thinking skills
- Strengthen students' study and organizational skills
- Help students recognize their academic strengths and weaknesses
- Prepare students for the academic, psychological, social, and personal adjustment to college
- Develop teamwork amongst the cohort

The following classes were offered during the Summer Academic Institute:

- Math (EOP 130)
- Reading (EOP 100)
- Writing (EOP 120)
- EOP 101

Student success and recognition are important by-products of the program. To that end, Ethan Elliot was selected as a recipient of the inaugural Norman R. McConney Award for EOP Student Excellence. Ethan was recently honored with other awardees for his exemplary academic achievement at the SUNY Global Center in New York City.

Nassau Community College Educational Opportunity Program is in its second full year and seeks to expand its reach to serve two hundred students.

NCC EOP Fall 2019 Student Demographic Profile

| | Female | Male | Total |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| Black/Non-Hispanic | 9 | 11 | 20 |
| Hispanic | 17 | 13 | 30 |
| White/Non-Hispanic | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| Native American/Alaskan | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Multi-Racial/Other | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| Total | 41 | 33 | 74 |



**New York State Senate Higher Education Committee
Public Hearing, November 1, 2019**

Testimony of

Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III

President, State University of New York at Old Westbury

Senator Stavisky and members of the higher education committee, thank you for inviting me to share my perspective today. My name is Calvin O. Butts, III, and I am the President of the State University of New York at Old Westbury.

Before I begin, I would like to thank Senator Stavisky and members of the committee for your leadership and support of our great state. I would especially like to thank the Long Island-based members of the committee, Senators Gaughran and Lavalle, for their work in championing the cause for the higher education institutions of Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

I must also state for the record my gratitude for the leadership and commitment of New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo. Through initiatives like the Excelsior Scholarship Program and Start-Up New York, he has shown the public the valuable and important roles the campuses of the State University of New York and City University of New York play for our state.

As some of you may be aware, I recently completed my 20th year of service as the President of SUNY Old Westbury. I will step down from my day-to-day role as President in January 2020, so I welcome the opportunity to be with you today to make a statement in support of public higher education in New York State before I depart.

In my time at Old Westbury I have had the pleasure of presiding over 23 commencement ceremonies at the College and have affixed my signature to diplomas for more than half of the 30,000 graduates of our institution. I bear witness every day to the struggles our students undergo to earn money for school, to get to class on time, to excel in their studies, and then as alumni to make headway towards the lives they want for themselves and their loved ones.

This all happens at and because of SUNY Old Westbury. Ours is a comprehensive college that provides a value-centered education with more than 60 undergraduate and graduate degree programs grounded in ethical and civic principles that connect learning in the classroom with engagement in the community.

At SUNY Old Westbury, talks with our students regularly turn to our goal – to help each of them to own the future they want for themselves. By “Own Your Future” we mean that we are dedicated to creating an atmosphere where students can learn and grow to be the person they want to be – both in terms of being prepared for the career they hope to pursue and putting them in a position to think critically about the world around them and their role in it.

Through strategic program development and a focus on student retention, the College has experienced enrollment growth of 56 percent since my arrival on campus. With a student body today of more than 5,100 undergraduate and graduate students, of which roughly 20 percent reside on campus, the College boasts the most diverse student body in the State University system and a historic commitment to educational empowerment and equity.

SUNY Old Westbury also sustains an outstanding faculty with a long history of instruction and mentorship in small class settings and the engagement of students in undergraduate research, experiential learning and community service.

Our campus is proud of its active relationship with the Long Island and metropolitan New York communities from which most of our students enroll. The College has also earned a variety of public accolades, including most recently being named a “Best Value” by Money Magazine for the second consecutive year and again earning the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award from Insight Into Diversity magazine.

I will miss very much my work as president and the relationships built with colleagues in SUNY, with my administrative team, and with the members of our faculty and staff. We have been through much together and much has changed in higher education in New York State during my time with SUNY. Our student body has grown more diverse in every way. Technology has driven transformative changes in how we teach, operate and communicate with our constituencies. We have battled amongst ourselves over mission creep and program development.

Unfortunately, the changes of time have resulted in our campuses being too reliant on tuition payments. In the year 2000, my first full year on campus, Old Westbury welcomed a student body of 2,992 after holding firm to its new admissions standards and received \$9.9 million in state support and \$9.7 million in tuition. This year, with the largest enrollment in college history of 5,128 students, we will benefit from \$10.1 million in state support and more than \$32 million in tuition revenues.

I ask today that the Senate Higher Education committee begin deliberations on how an increase in funding might be accommodated for state-operated campuses. We on campus have no control in determining contractual increases, utility increases, and whatever unfunded mandate is coming our way next. Thankfully, in the most recent fiscal year support was available for the initial phase of contracted raises. Even so, the leveling off of state support for campuses forces us to expend funds in those areas that could be used for other academic programs, personnel and services.

More than 420,000 students have chosen to pursue their studies at a SUNY institution. An increase in general support would give our campuses the flexibility to add needed services for those challenged by learning and other disabilities, to offer more extensive mental health

evaluation and treatment options, and to better deal with issues of food security, housing, transportation, and more that can be essential to keeping students on the path to completion and success.

It is time to increase direct support for our campuses after years of not having done so.

Maintaining and improving quality in academia also means maintaining and improving the physical plants of our campuses. For SUNY Old Westbury and its brethren across the state to provide an education for the future, there is a pressing need for new laboratory, instructional, and research space on campuses.

Forty percent of the buildings at SUNY's State-operated campuses are more than 50 years old. SUNY's annual capital funding has ranged from \$450 million to \$550 million per year for the last four years, while the system has estimated its needs to be \$850 million per year. Our campuses have issues related to aging infrastructure, already overcrowded facilities, and an ever-more-demanding marketplace.

In the case of SUNY Old Westbury, we are desperately in need of an expansion and renovation of what is now our Natural Sciences Building into a state-of-the-art STEM Center.

At Old Westbury, we offer degrees in Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Biochemistry, and Health and Society, a program focused on issues of community and public health. The quality of instruction our science faculty provides is high, as evidenced by our students going on to pursue doctoral studies in medicine and dentistry and the large number of them who pursue careers as physician's assistants and in other scientific pursuits. The atmosphere in which they are providing that instruction is poor.

The Natural Science Building at SUNY Old Westbury opened in 1985. Other than some improvements in technology and a new roof we have been able to complete during my tenure, the building looks and functions as it did when it opened. The building:

- Lacks sufficient classroom and academic laboratory space to service current demand
- Suffers from crowded research laboratories insufficient for the current number of researchers and for current technological demands
- Requires expansion to accommodate expected growth, and
- Is experiencing end-of-life issues with core utilities/services.

I mentioned earlier the dramatic success we have had in growing our enrollment. With that growth, we first had to close admissions early to our Biological Sciences degree program in 2014 and have done so every year since because we cannot handle the demand from students. In the 10-year period ending in 2024, we expect we will have experienced growth of 77 percent in major-specific and general education science course enrollment.

The \$130 million expansion and renewal of the Natural Science Building is key in Old Westbury's ability to reach its greatest level of success and to provide STEM instruction to meet growing local demand in a marketplace where careers in healthcare and related industries are among the fastest-growing. At the same time, it will augment our long-

standing ability to prepare men and women from underrepresented backgrounds for careers as physicians, scientists, dentists and more.

However, due to recent changes from the State's Budget Office and the State University of New York's Construction Fund's need to adhere to those changes, there is essentially a restriction in place requiring SUNY to use funds for critical maintenance only and not allowing for the complete development of new projects.

Frankly, SUNY campuses need both. With 40 percent of our facilities 50 years old or older, critical maintenance is vital. With the evolution of technologies and constantly growing demand from our students, particularly for high-tech spaces to serve the sciences, technology, media and more, we need funding for new projects as well.

Priority capital projects could be completed on all of SUNY's state-operated campuses with an additional \$250 million in capital funding for five years. This was a request put forward by SUNY last year and is one I will be demanding comes up in budget negotiations again. Our campuses need it, our faculty and staff deserve it, our students demand it.

I ask the Senate Higher Education Committee to pursue this vital need. Our campuses are falling behind our private competitors more and more each day.

Of course, while improving and adding to SUNY's capital plan will enhance the quality of every New Yorker's educational experience, we must also do whatever we can to grow the number of full-time faculty we have to teach them.

The most recent system-wide data shows that roughly 43 percent of faculty teaching at SUNY's four-year colleges and university centers are part-time. We need to reduce that number. Yes, there will always be a place for part-time and adjunct faculty; especially in those areas where specific, targeted expertise can only come from someone in the industry or from the community. However, our students lose significantly when large swaths of our class schedules are taught by part-timers.

There is no substitute for the time a full-time professor spends on campus with students. This means more than class time and office hours. It leads to mentorship opportunities. Roles for students in research and service projects often result. Interaction between professor and student through clubs and other campus organizations is also a by-product of more full-time faculty spending more time with students. Think back to your own collegiate experiences, and the fondness you have for that professor who invested his or her self in a relationship with you to help you become the person you wanted to become. Too many students are missing that experience.

All of what I have discussed so far will enhance the quality of the education and experience we provide our students. But how can we make those needed investments and maintain affordability?

Along with the increase in funding for state-operated campuses I advocated for earlier, I offer the following opportunities for your consideration.

First, provide funding to eliminate the SUNY Tuition Credit, known more casually as the TAP Gap. The Tap Gap is the continually growing difference between TAP funding for students and actual tuition costs. Prior to 2011, low-income SUNY and CUNY students would have their tuition costs covered in full by TAP, with colleges receiving adequate TAP payments to help cover costs for hiring new staff, funding libraries and investing in student support services.

In each year since 2011, SUNY and CUNY colleges have had to cover the difference between state TAP awards and the actual tuition price for these students. The gap between what the maximum TAP award the state pays at SUNY -- \$5,165 -- and the actual cost of tuition at SUNY -- \$7,070 -- has left SUNY campuses alone grappling with a more than \$70 million shortfall in funding.

This issue is particularly impactful for SUNY Old Westbury, which has a long, proud tradition of serving students from low- and middle-income families. In this academic year, the Tap Gap will cost SUNY Old Westbury \$2.5 million. So, our campus, which makes up just over one percent of SUNY's undergraduate enrollment, endures nearly four percent of the system's total Tap Gap shortfall.

At Old Westbury and across SUNY, students are feeling this loss in funding in their classrooms, career-planning services and counseling centers. In terms of the total New York State Budget expenditure, the cost to close the Tap Gap seems nominal.

My second proposition for consideration is an added payroll benefit for downstate SUNY campuses. Our state-negotiated union contracts have a "location pay" provision that provides CSEA and UUP employees added compensation based on the region in which they work to help offset cost-of-living differences. However, in our region that sum is just over \$3,000 annually, which pales in comparison to the expense of living and working on Long Island.

The same \$80,000 we might offer a much-needed Psychology professor goes much further in upstate areas than it does in this region. There are too many instances for me to recall where we have lost candidates due to our need to be conservative in our salary structure combined with the cost of living in this region.

The last idea I offer today would not lower the cost of higher education in the Empire State but it would directly affect students and build upon the incredibly meaningful achievements of the Excelsior Scholarship program. I commend Governor Cuomo and all members of the New York State Legislature for their foresight in creating and promoting The Excelsior Scholarship program. Excelsior Scholarships enable more New Yorkers the chance of a higher education by eliminating the cost of tuition. And, as a result of the program, students are more likely to stay on track to complete their degree on time and with less debt than many other students across the nation."

On our campus this year, 322 students will receive Excelsior Scholarships amounting to more than \$1 million in support critical to their futures. I urge the Governor and the Legislature not to stop there.

As we are all well aware, the amount of student debt facing our nation's college students has gone well past the term "crisis" and into another realm. The amount of debt held nationally

by students is more than \$1.5 trillion with the average student graduating owing \$34,000, before accounting for interest. More than 10 percent of those loan-holders default on their loans.

In nearby Massachusetts, a zero-interest loan program to support residents who attend colleges, private and public, within the commonwealth's borders has been in place for nearly 30 years. In this regard, Massachusetts has stepped in as a provider of what seems to be a sensible service for its residents. The program began in 1991 with annual \$10 million appropriations from the legislature. Since 2002, the loan program operates entirely on its repayments – issuing \$5-\$6 million in new loans annually. All residents with financial need are eligible for up to \$4,000 a year and no more than \$20,000 in total. The repayment period is 10 years. Where the Massachusetts plan suffers is in repayment with 62 percent of borrowers in arrears.

On SUNY's part, there is already an infrastructure in place that would tackle the repayment challenge more effectively than it appears have our neighbors in Massachusetts. Thanks to the innovative SUNY Smart Track financial literacy program, students of SUNY schools undergo an array of financial literacy workshops online and in person to help them understand their situations more deeply and, at least in the case of SUNY Old Westbury, to perform better in the repayment of their loans.

SUNY Old Westbury was recognized by SUNY in 2018 as being the top college in the system as it relates to Smart Track registrations, and the number of our active users today stands at more than 3,500 and the number of courses completed is over 9,000. The end result? In the most recent three-cohort report available from the federal government, the loan default rate among our graduates is just six percent.

Through a no-interest loan program for its residents, New York State has an opportunity to step in where the federal loan processing and management system is failing our students. At the same time, you as our leaders would be paving the way for our students to experience brighter futures, more quickly.

In closing, I want to state clearly that I am very optimistic about the future of higher education in New York State and, specifically, the ability of the campuses of the State University of New York to continue to make a valuable, affordable education accessible to its residents and taxpayers. By holding this hearing today, you, our leaders in the State Senate, have shown your commitment to and belief in the importance of higher education in the lives of New Yorkers and I thank you for doing so.

Thank you also for providing me with the opportunity to share my thoughts and ideas on this important topic.



NYS Higher Education Committee

Testimony of Trustee and President Austin Ostro

State University of New York Student Assembly (SUNY SA)

October 22, 2019

NYS Higher Education Committee
Testimony of Trustee and President Austin Ostro
State University of New York Student Assembly (SUNY SA)

October 22, 2019

On behalf of the SUNY Student Assembly, and the 1.4 Million students of our great University system, I very much appreciate the tireless efforts of Senator and Committee Chair Stavisky for hosting a series of hearings across the State of New York to address the cost of public higher education, financial aid programs, and other challenges to the student with respect to affordability and accessibility.

The Student Assembly is the recognized system-wide student government supporting the students of SUNY. We are comprised of Student Leaders from across the state and represent the students of the many University centers, colleges, technology colleges, and community colleges. In addition, we are also involved in advocacy on the local, state, and federal level. The President of the Student Assembly serves as the head of the organized student government for all 64 campuses in the system and holds the position as the only student member of the SUNY board of trustees. Twice annually the Student Assembly brings together hundreds of student leaders from across the state and beyond to participate in student leadership conferences, where the organization's advocacy priorities are finalized, and members are offered the opportunity to network and learn leadership skills from students, campus and system administration, and world class faculty through various workshops and lectures.

Additionally, Student Assembly representatives meet on a monthly basis to coordinate advocacy efforts and further refine strategies towards the advancement of quality and affordability in public higher education. We operate a variety of committees focused on promoting academic excellence throughout the system and highlight areas of campus safety, disability services, gender equity, and sustainability.

The Student Assembly urges the state to recognize and act upon the magnitude in which under funding public higher education has on the delivery of services and the quality of education across the system. The Committee clearly identifies the benefit to the state as an accessible State University due to the return on investment made by students pursuing higher education in New York. ¹Graduates of SUNY are more likely to work and live in New York and continue to stimulate local and state economies through employment and taxes; currently SUNY campuses contribute \$28.6 billion annually to New York's economy. Adequately funding higher education holds the potential to yield a greater return on investment for the state as students, faculty, and staff from across the SUNY system continue to enhance the quality of life and economic prosperity in their communities.

¹ Schultz, Laura. "The Economic Impact of the State University of New York." *www.rockinst.org*, Nov. 2018, Pg3, rockinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/11-1-18-BTN-SUNY-Drives-NYS-Economic-Engine.pdf.

State and federal financial aid programs continue to greatly benefit the students of SUNY. Above all, the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), New York's largest grant program, administered by the Higher Education Services Corporation aids eligible students in attending in-state postsecondary institutions.² TAP Grants are based upon New York State family taxable income at the maximum level of \$80,000. For qualifying students, Tap provides grant funds up to \$5,165 to cover the costs of tuition. As the panel can imagine this is enormously helpful in covering the cost of tuition for middle and low income students. The Number of SUNY students at state-operated campuses and community colleges have risen to represent 40 percent of the total number of TAP recipients across the state.³ This participation rise represents both a silver-lining in covering the cost of education, but a bleak future for campus operating budgets.

There continues to be a consistent gap in the funding mechanism which penalizes campuses for accepting and matriculating students who utilize the Tuition Assistance Program. Institutions of public higher education across the state are obligated to cover the difference between the maximum TAP award and the cost of tuition at each campus. Currently, SUNY resident undergraduate tuition reaches \$7070⁴, while the maximum TAP award is \$5,165⁵, leading to a \$1905 gap in funding per student.

This combined figure cost SUNY and CUNY statewide a total of \$139 million dollars last fiscal year.⁶ A funding shortfall of hundreds of millions of dollars over the last 8 years. Individual campuses must finance this funding shortfall through operating costs before they are able to allocate funding for measures of quality education and critical student services.

There are two aspects of public higher education in New York State that remain true. The cost of tuition and the gap in funding for the Tuition Assistance Program both continue to rise.⁷ Since 2009, tuition at state operated campuses has risen 63%, contributing to an increase in the SUNY TAP gap from \$20 million in 2012 to nearly \$65 million in 2018. The shortfall in funding for the program has required SUNY and CUNY to allocate millions of dollars of operating costs over the years in which the gap has existed. Overall, the gap has resulted in students and their families paying more for less. The lack of

² "TAP Eligibility & Income Limits." *NYS Higher Education Services Corporation - TAP Eligibility*, www.hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/financial-aid/types-of-financial-aid/grants/tap-eligibility.html.

³The State University of New York, *An Analysis of the Tuition Assistance Program* <https://www.suny.edu/about/leadership/board-of-trustees/meetings/webcastdocs/Attachment%20C1%20-%20Tap%20Report.pdf>

⁴ SUNY Smart Track - Empowered Financial Planning, Tuition and Fees <https://www.suny.edu/smarttrack/tuition-and-fees/>

⁵ Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC), TAP Award Amounts <https://www.hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/financial-aid/types-of-financial-aid/grants/estimate-your-tap-award.html>

⁶ It is time to fill the GAP in TAP, PSC CUNY https://www.psc-cuny.org/sites/default/files/GAPTap_Coalition.pdf

⁷Reichman, Hank. "A New Deal for SUNY and CUNY." *ACADEME BLOG*, 2 Jan. 2019, academeblog.org/2018/12/24/a-new-deal-for-suny-and-cuny/

investment by the state to provide funding in this matter has severely diminished the ability of individual campuses to provide services to students and enhance the quality of education offered. For example,⁸ SUNY Fredonia's core operating budget has declined from an all-time high of \$17.8 million in 2008-2009 to approximately \$11.3 million in 2018-2019, for a cumulative loss over the last ten years of roughly \$53.2 million. This is due to the combination of stagnant funding, a widening TAP gap, and rising institutional operating costs, and Fredonia is not alone.

With increased investment by the state in institutions of public higher education students can receive quality services such as mental health counseling, academic advisement, and gender and sexuality resources at an affordable cost. It is imperative that the state invest in SUNY as the students have selected the State University for its commitment to providing the people of New York educational services of the highest standard, with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population in a complete range of academic, professional and vocational postsecondary programs.

No hearing would be complete without drawing attention to the plight of graduate students who suffer from insufficient support for stipends. Stipends aid students in offsetting tuition costs to advance their education. We urge the committee to review graduate student financial support and invest in research opportunities for students who are pursuing advanced degrees. Similarly, important programs such as EOP and CSTEP deserve your continued support.

With respect to loan programs, state policy should focus on enhancing grant availability, and accessibility, thus minimizing the burden of student debt. Availability for Excelsior Scholarships, NYS TAP, and New York Aid For Part-Time Study should be enhanced, and thresholds lowered to increase participation. We should concentrate our efforts on defining access to higher education as an economic investment in the future of the state of New York.

The Excelsior Scholarship, in conjunction with other student financial aid programs, allows some students to attend a SUNY or CUNY college tuition-free. This program continues to succeed as it aids students in graduating on time and with less debt. The Student Assembly urges the state to expand the promise of the Excelsior Scholarship and implement measures that would allow for a greater number of students to apply the scholarship to their academic success. Alterations regarding the course credit minimum for the scholarship would allow for typical students to pursue their education free from the 30-credit calendar year mandate in which it may not be viable for all. Furthermore, expansions of the program to cover additional costs associated with pursuing a degree such as fees, books, room, and board would alleviate excessive student debt and the need for additional employment while matriculated.

The Student Assembly urges the state to invest in public higher education by funding the shortfall created by the Tuition Assistance Program, making amendments to current financial programs available to students, and recognizing its fundamental role and responsibility to offer a world class education at an affordable cost. With an increase in funding and expansions of aid programs campuses across the state

⁸ "Fredonia Budget Issue 'Serious'." *Fredonia Budget Issue 'Serious'* The Post Journal ,26 Dec. 2018, www.post-journal.com/news/page-one/2018/12/fredonia-budget-issue-serious/.

will be equipped to provide a higher quality education and student services that address the backgrounds and needs of all students.



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**TESTIMONY OF TIMOTHY HUNTER,
CHAIRPERSON OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE,
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
REGARDING FREE PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

**BEFORE MEMBERS OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

November 1, 2019

Good afternoon. My name is Timothy Hunter. I'm the Student Government President of City Tech and the Chairperson of the CUNY University Student Senate (USS). Founded in 1972, the Student Senate's main mission has been to preserve the accessibility, affordability, and excellence in higher education within CUNY. The student delegates of USS are responsible for the representative governance of the 500,000 students of the twenty-five CUNY campuses.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on public higher education to members of the Senate Higher Education committee.

After some joint conversations with Austin Ostro, the President of SUNY SA, there are some things that we would like to address as both parties, some crucial needs that if implemented correctly could enhance the quality of life across both universities. Therefore, we have three main asks. **The first ask is to have the state fund SUNY and CUNY at \$75 million each to alleviate the financial strife created by the TAP Gap. The second ask is to have the state provide enough funding for a tuition freeze for both institutions this upcoming fiscal year. The third ask is that we continue to expand on EOP programs such as ASAP and SEEK.**

We believe our asks are reasonable, particularly since the TAP Gap exists because of tuition hikes, and our tuition has been hiked exponentially because of SUNY 2020, otherwise known as the "predictable tuition" plan. The state promised that tuition would be increased but that the revenue generated would be earmarked for an expansion of support services, course offerings and infrastructural improvements.

Since then, through numerous reports, we have concluded that the money has not gone towards what was promised, and instead, has went towards filling in state budget gaps. In last year's budget, for example, CUNY required senior colleges to set aside funds from tuition hikes for



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future labor costs from collective bargaining contracts¹. Flat funding from the state has placed the burden on both higher education institutions to pick up the tab for mandatory cost increases like rent, and staff contracts. Factoring in the TAP Gap, SUNY and CUNY are both being fiscally squeezed, further restraining our institutions from being able to provide much-needed improvements towards the quality of student services.

As the nation's largest urban public university, CUNY consistently gets touted as the City's gem, boosting households to the middle class and providing economic mobility to some of the most underprivileged members of our community.

Our decision-makers constantly remind us of this. When tuition is raised, they remind us that CUNY remains the most affordable university in the nation. In a time when the national trend of college affordability has declined and the cost of college has increased exponentially, and continues to rise; when student loans are in the trillions, surpassing both credit card and auto loan debt², we don't believe comparing CUNY's tuition to that of other universities makes sense. That is because we at the CUNY Student Senate believe that public higher education is a right and, therefore, should be free.

As the new chairperson of the CUNY University Student Senate, representing half a million students in this great city, I am here to talk about what it is that the State Senate can do for CUNY and SUNY to take the appropriate steps to make education affordable, to identify key needs that our students in both CUNY and SUNY need, and to eventually get our institutions truly fully funded.

In order to accomplish this, we ask that legislators be open to ideas and be creative when thinking of how to fund higher education because the current process of incremental budgeting used to set tuition does not work for most.

At a time when free college is being discussed by presidential candidates on the national stage, we know it is realistic. It is possible, if only we have the political will to fully fund higher education so that we eliminate any and all barriers students constantly face when trying to access an education that again, should be a right in this day and age where having a college degree is necessary for students to have their best chance at having a successful future. Current projections

¹ CUNY Board of Trustees, June 26th 2019 Meeting Broadcast: (26:29)
<https://www.cuny.edu/about/trustees/meetings-of-the-board/meeting-broadcasts/>

² Forbes, Student Loan Debt Statistics In 2019: A \$1.5 Trillion Crisis:
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/zackfriedman/2019/02/25/student-loan-debt-statistics-2019/#210a320a133f>



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indicate that 3.5 million jobs in New York State will require an associate's degree or higher by 2024³.

The CUNY Student Senate believes that New York must lead the nation toward a constitutional amendment guaranteeing pre-K and college education for all.

We support Senate bill S5255, sponsored by Senator Andrew Gounardes. We understand the implications of a constitutional amendment, and we are willing to lead a grassroots movement to spearhead this initiative. We know that CUNY has been starved of funds for years, so we understand how imperative it is for the higher education committee to ensure that the TAP Gap gets filled and that mandatory costs get accounted for in this upcoming fiscal year's budget, however, the TAP Gap nor the Maintenance of Effort bill does not solve the problem of tuition itself. S5255 addresses this issue by codifying the right to education into our state's constitution.

We understand there is much work to be done behind this bill and that fiscal implications must be figured out, and we ask the Senate higher education committee to take the lead on finding out the full cost of higher education, both SUNY and CUNY within the state of New York.

That leads me to my final point, Senator Salazar and Senator Gounardes, thank you for attempting to create legislation looking to address the full cost and needs of public higher education. I ask that Senator Stavisky as well as the rest of the higher education committee be apart of this initiative and provide support for the creation of this bill because we need a long-term solution to address the constant disinvestment and neglect of higher education.

When crafting this bill, I request that you keep these four main points in mind: CUNY needs a dramatic increase in funding to; **(1) hire an increased number of full time faculty, advisors and counselors, (2) fill the TAP gap that will eat up 80 million dollars of CUNY's budget this year, (3) significantly increase the capital budget of CUNY to address its soaring numbers of students over the past decade and the decay of facilities and (4) offer every student who attends CUNY free tuition.** The right to free tuition is the norm for every public K-12 student. This right needs to be extended to public higher education.

In an era when college is the new high school in order to be a part of the middle class, we need new, bold, progressive and ambitious policies that must address the tuition and accessibility issues we constantly face at our public universities.

³ The Excelsior Scholarship, Making College Possible: <https://www.geneseo.edu/sites/default/files/users/1357/Summary.pdf>



Thank you.

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Testimony

to the
Senate Standing Committee on Higher Education
on the
Examination
of the
Cost of Public Higher Education
November 1, 2019

Prepared by
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Representing more than 600,000 professionals in education and health care
Affiliated with the AFT – NEA – AFL-CIO

*Testimony of
Frank Frisenda
President, Nassau Community College Federation of Teachers
to the
Senate Standing Committee on Higher Education
Toby Ann Stavisky, Chair
and
Co-Sponsors
Andrew S. Gounardes
Velmanette Montgomery
Kevin S. Parker
Julia Salazar
on the Examination of the
Cost of Public Higher Education
November 1, 2019*

Senate Higher Education Hearing

Chairperson Stavisky, honorable members of the Legislature and distinguished staff, I am Frank Frisenda, President Nassau Community College Federation of Teachers, representing SUNY Community Colleges. Today I am testifying on behalf of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT). NYSUT represents more than 600,000 teachers, school-related professionals, academic and professional faculty in higher education, professionals in education, in health care and retirees statewide. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the cost of public higher education, student borrowing and other challenges to affordability and accessibility.

My testimony represents the concerns of over 80,000 higher education faculty and professional staff who work in colleges and universities across the state. These include the members of United University Professions at the State University of New York, the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York and the faculty and staff at nearly all the SUNY Community Colleges in this state.

Access to quality public higher education is a crucial component of the state's efforts to recruit and retain businesses and industries. As businesses consider where to locate, they are drawn to locations with an available pool of highly trained and educated employees. The State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY) help to fulfill that requirement by instructing and preparing New Yorkers for current and future job opportunities.

A growing number of employment opportunities require advanced degrees, which further underscores the need for greater state investment in public higher education. Properly funding these institutions will help to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to an affordable, quality education as offered by CUNY and SUNY.

Affordability and Accessibility

A student's ability to attend a public institution of higher education, and complete their degree on time, depends on a number of factors — many of which involve financial resources, as well as student and academic supports. A lack of financial resources can severely limit one's ability to attend college as a full-time student, pay tuition and student fees and purchase textbooks or other required course materials — without incurring crushing debt.

Due to the student debt crisis, much time and attention has been paid to affordability, however, more attention must be paid to accessibility. NYSUT has stressed the need for increased student access to quality public higher education that provides students with the ability to enroll in the courses they need, and not delay their graduation because a course is only offered one semester a year. It means a student will have direct access to student and academic supports to help them successfully navigate and complete their degree program.

Over the years, both SUNY and CUNY have designed programs to provide students with supports that meet the definition of meaningful access. Programs such as CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) and SUNY's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) have proven track records and help students complete their education. However, both programs are restricted due to funding limitations, and have requirements that applicants must meet in order to be accepted and continue in the program.

CUNY's ASAP program was started in 2007, at six community colleges, to improve completion rates by providing wraparound services to students. When the program was created, less than four percent of CUNY community college students completed an associate degree within two years, and only 13 percent did so within three years. Many studies have examined the ASAP

program, which has since been expanded to serve students attending nine community colleges. These studies concluded that the program is cost-effective — the average cost-per-degree for an ASAP student is lower than for the costs for those receiving a standard college education. Other studies have also shown that retention and completion rates are significantly higher for ASAP students, when compared to other groups of students. Six years after beginning a CUNY ASAP program, 63.3 percent of ASAP first-time freshmen had earned either an associate or baccalaureate degree (or both) vs. 43.3 percent of comparison group students.

SUNY's EOP program was created in the 1960s and recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. It was applied at the State University College at Buffalo with 249 students and has since been expanded to 48 SUNY campuses. The program has graduated more than 70,000 students. EOP alumni continue to live in New York State and go on to become prominent figures in our communities. The 2016, six-year baccalaureate graduation rate for EOP students is nearly 70 percent.

SUNY's EOP program offers students support services, such as academic, career and personal counseling, tutoring and supplemental instruction. The program also provides financial assistance to cover non-tuition related expenses (e.g. books, supplies, etc.).

The academic and student supports offered by both EOP and ASAP go a long way to not only address affordability issues but also to increase access. Public higher education is not a one-size fits all model. Students often have various needs that must be addressed. These needs can range from housing to food insecurity to health care or other personal issues. We call upon the state to provide a significant increased investment in our public higher education institutions to help them better support students' ability to attend and complete their degree programs. NYSUT believes that all students attending SUNY and CUNY should be afforded the academic and student supports offered through ASAP and EOP.

Community Colleges

At this time, I would like to discuss community colleges. As you know, community colleges educate and prepare students for the workforce as well as provide the foundation for those students who move on to four-year campuses or universities. Community colleges educate all types of students, they help to advance social mobility and are located where students live and work. They often collaborate with regional businesses and employers to develop and provide training to address local workforce needs.

Notwithstanding the Legislature's commitment to community colleges, state funding to these campuses is not commensurate with the provisions of the state education law. State education law stipulates that the state shall pay 40 percent of the operating costs of these campuses, however, the state is not meeting its obligation.

As the attached Charts A and B illustrate, both SUNY and CUNY Community College students are paying the lion's share of operating costs of these campuses. Over the ten-year period from 2008-09 to 2018-19, SUNY Community College students went from paying 40.8 percent of the operating costs to approximately 41.4 percent. While the state's contribution for the same period decreased from 30.8 percent to 25 percent. We see a similar trend for CUNY Community Colleges during the same time period, where the student share increased from 32.3 percent to 40.6 percent, while the state share decreased from 28.9 percent to 23.7 percent.

In order for our campuses to maintain and enhance academic programming and supports, their state funding needs to be increased and stabilized. Even though enrollment on some campuses has decreased, operational costs have risen. As recently noted, SUNY Community College enrollment across the board has decreased by 5,684. Reductions in community college enrollments are related to an economy that is doing well, and a decrease in the state population that is projected to continue.

Our campuses rely on state funding to offer programs and student services that not only respond to current and future business needs, but will also attract potential students. In the absence of

predictable funding, campuses are forced to raise tuition and/or limit courses and programs, which diminish their appeal to future students and potential business partners.

The 2019-20 New York State Enacted Budget provided community colleges with the greater of a \$100 FTE increase or an established floor of 98 percent of the 2018-19 funding level. We appreciate the Legislature's work and continued support in including this language, which is a good step to help address issues related to declining enrollment at community colleges. While this year's enacted budget established a funding floor, unfortunately, it did not insulate all SUNY community college campuses from enrollment declines. A number of SUNY community college budgets will be lower than they were in 2017-18.

NYSUT continues to advocate for the adoption of a hybrid FTE funding methodology, as proposed by SUNY for their community colleges. During budget negotiations earlier this year, SUNY and NYSUT reached an agreement on statutory language to codify the hybrid methodology. The language and proposed hybrid methodology would provide SUNY Community Colleges with a greater of a level of support using a three-year average, or the FTE dollar amount for the college. This methodology change will provide our community colleges with some level of security and allow them to strategically plan for their future, as well as provide them with additional financial support, as outlined in the attached Chart C.

Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) Gap

Both SUNY and CUNY four-year campuses have been grappling with the growing tuition credit, which is an unfunded mandate that started in 2011, with the enactment of the tuition plan. All TAP students receive a tuition credit based on their income — with higher-income students receiving the lowest credit and lower-income students, who receive a maximum TAP award, getting the highest credit to fully cover the cost of their tuition.

As noted in the attached Chart D, you can see the rapidly rising cost of the TAP tuition credit, which now stands at nearly \$130 million for both SUNY and CUNY, and will grow to at least \$150 million in 2019-20.

It is our understanding that a \$200 tuition increase would cost each system an additional \$10-15 million. Campuses with high numbers of TAP students are penalized by the need to cover the TAP Gap without any state reimbursement. Existing law ensures that TAP students receiving a maximum award are made whole and provided access to CUNY and SUNY. Unfortunately, however, that access is compromised by the tuition credit. As noted above, the TAP Gap increases with every tuition increase, which is intended to cover the tuition credit along with other costs. Since the tuition credit has quickly grown over the years, institutions are left with less or very little money to invest in new faculty and other student initiatives to support on time completion.

When we have discussed the TAP Gap in the past, we focused on four-year campuses. However, this is becoming an issue at some of SUNY's Community Colleges, as tuition for the 2019-20 year has pierced the TAP limit of \$5,165. We raise this issue as we expect additional campuses to also exceed the TAP limit. While the law regarding the tuition credit only applies to four-year colleges, it is unclear who will be responsible for covering this difference at the community college level.

Ultimately, students are paying the price for the TAP Gap requirement. In order to mitigate a situation that grows with every tuition increase, and one that is starting to appear at community colleges, NYSUT urges the Governor and the Legislature to provide SUNY and CUNY four-year and community college campuses with state reimbursement to cover the full cost of the TAP credit.

Conclusion

For a number of years the executive and enacted budgets held SUNY's and CUNY's instructional core budgets relatively flat. Unfortunately for our students, this has been the case for far too many years and needs to be addressed. While funding for instructional core budgets has remained flat, operational costs continue to rise. Without funding to address these operational costs, including the TAP Gap, we are endangering student affordability and access to public higher education as well as the quality of the education they receive. A significant state

investment is needed to reverse this trend and to preserve and enhance the quality of education our students receive.

#47507

ARR/AB

Chart A

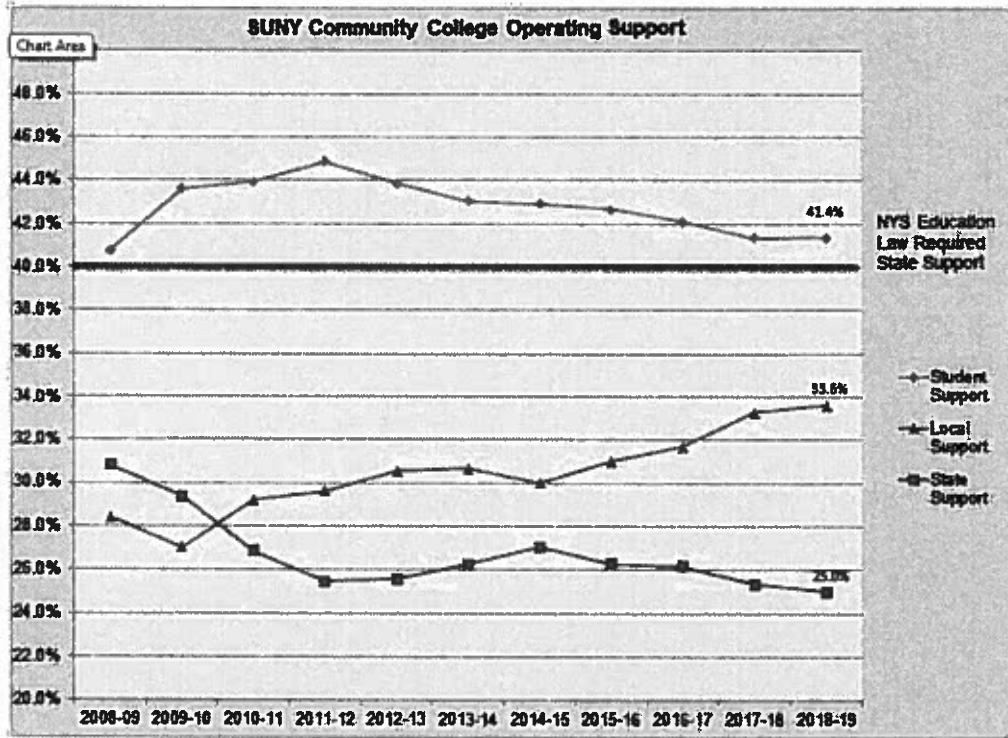


Chart B

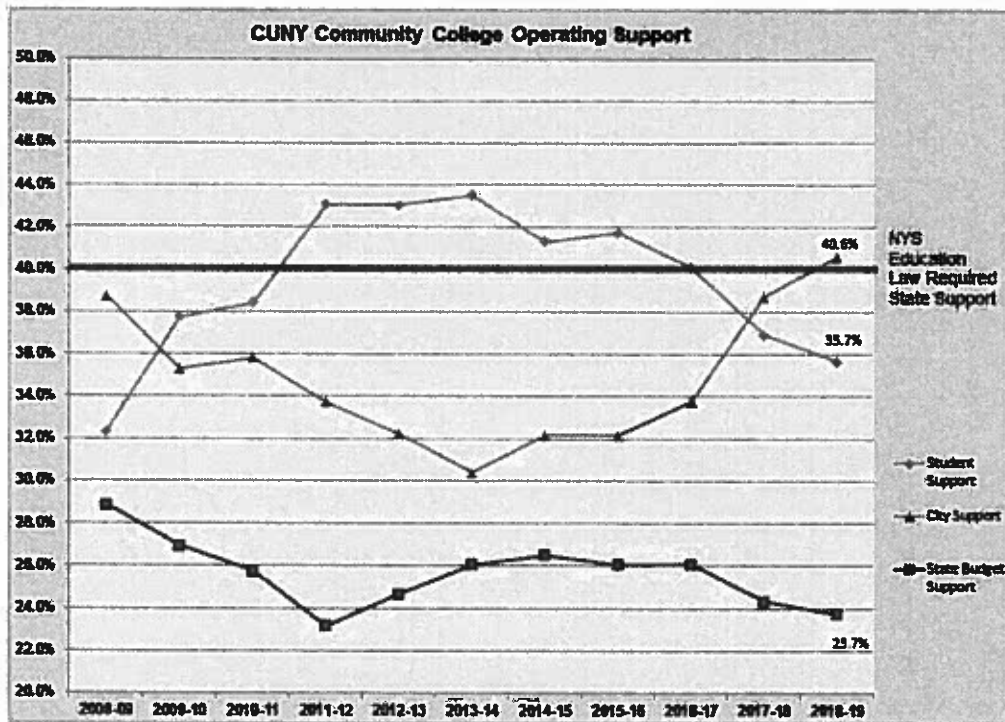


Chart C

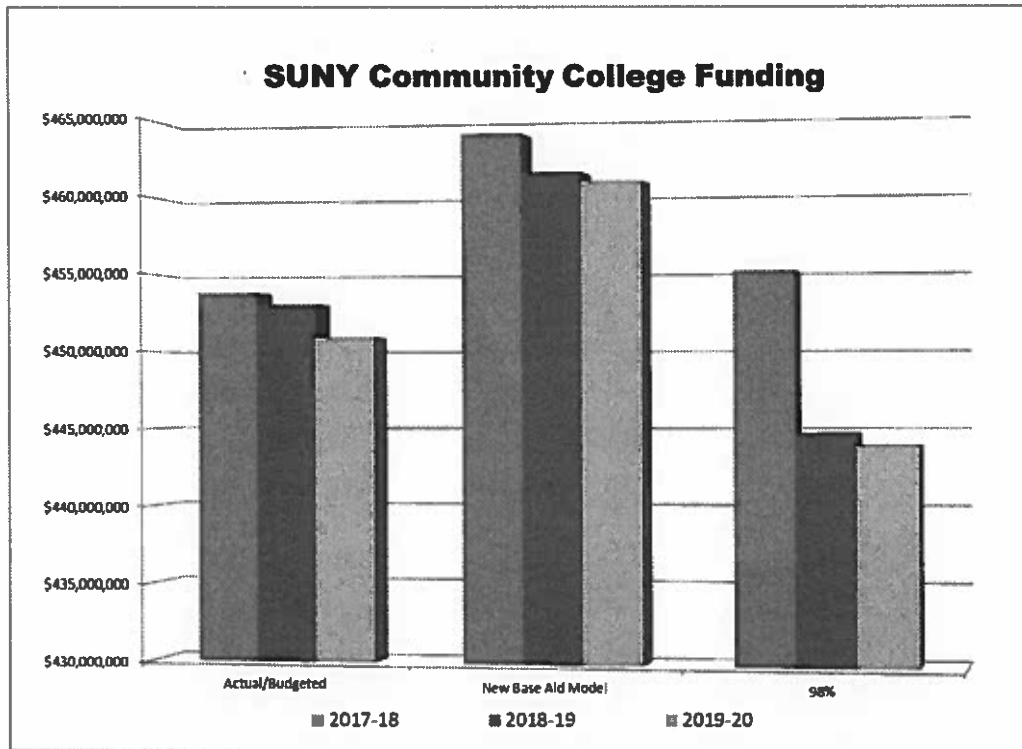
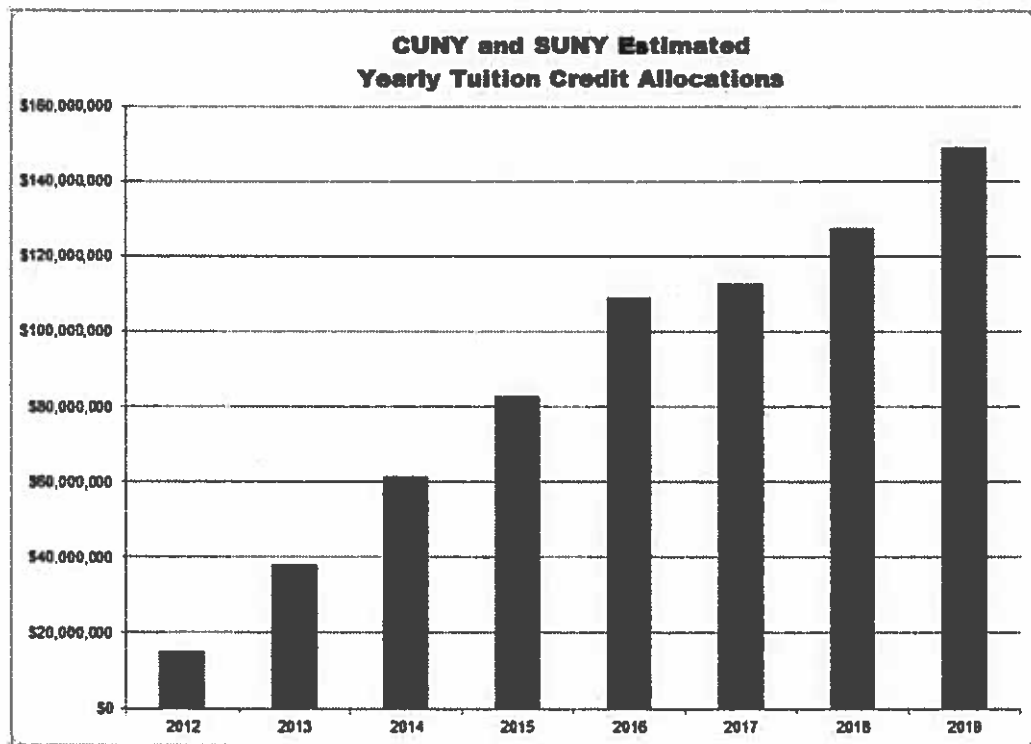


Chart D



NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

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RICHARD NEWMAN
Secretary

CAROLINE FALCONETTI
Treasurer

November 1, 2019

Chairperson Stavisky, honorable members of the Senate and distinguished staff, my name is Frank Frisenda. I am a Professor in the Engineering/Physics/Technology Department and I am President of the Nassau Community College Federation of Teachers. I have already provided extensive testimony to your office on behalf of SUNY Community Colleges and I know that you have heard testimony from other Community College leaders. Today, I am testifying on behalf of the Nassau Community College Federation of Teachers. Of the 80,000 Higher Ed members in NYSUT, the NCCFT has 556 members. I thank you for the opportunity to provide an oral summary today on the cost of public higher education, student borrowing and other challenges to affordability, accessibility and success.

Community colleges are open access and educate all types of students; we help to advance social mobility and are located where students live and work.

We often collaborate with regional businesses and employers to develop and provide training to address local workforce needs. Nonetheless, a student's ability to attend a public institution of higher education, and complete their degree on time, depends on a number of factors — many of which involve personal financial resources coupled with public financial resources in order to provide academic instruction, student services and academic support systems.

State education law stipulates that the state shall pay 40 percent of the operating costs of our open access campuses, however, to date the state has not met this obligation. In order for our campuses to maintain and enhance academic programming and support systems, State funding needs to be increased and just as importantly, it must be stabilized. Even though enrollment on some campuses has decreased, operational costs have risen. Reductions in community college enrollments are partly due to a decrease in the high school graduating classes and to an economy that is doing well. While population projections indicate a continuing decline, we cannot predict economic fortunes within our communities.

However, we can predict the importance of Higher Education and the economic burden that is placed upon our students. This austerity funding model in public higher education has placed mounting student debt upon our most vulnerable students and placed the colleges in a position whereby we have to rely ever-increasingly on adjunct faculty.

While there is no question as to the competence of adjunct faculty to deliver quality instruction, there is a marked difference in the value added of full-time faculty before and after class where our role is critical to student success. This includes office hours, knowledge and participation in campus support services both to the internal and external college community.

Our campuses rely on state funding to offer programs and student services that respond to current and anticipated business and social needs, while also attracting potential students who will be first generation college students and those that never dreamed that they would be college bound. In the absence of predictable funding, campuses are forced to raise student tuition and/or limit courses and programs, which diminish our appeal to future students.

The 2019-20 New York State Enacted Budget provided community colleges with the greater of a \$100 FTE increase or an established floor of 98 percent of the 2018-19 funding level. We appreciate the Legislature's work and continued support in including this language, which is a step to help address the issues related to declining enrollment at community colleges. While this year's enacted budget established a funding floor, unfortunately, it did not insulate all SUNY community college campuses from enrollment declines. As a result of the current funding model, Nassau Community College will receive almost \$1 million less in state operating aid for SFY 2019-20.

NYSUT continues to advocate for the adoption of a hybrid FTE funding methodology, as proposed by SUNY, endorsed by the Community College Presidents and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges. During budget negotiations earlier this year, SUNY and NYSUT reached an agreement on statutory language to codify the hybrid methodology.

This language and the proposed hybrid methodology would provide SUNY Community Colleges with a greater level of support using a three-year average of the FTE dollar amount, rather than the current one-year model to help stabilize the impact of annual enrollment fluctuations and allow us to strategically plan for our future.

As a result of the funding deficit, Nassau has increased its annual tuition which is now \$5,600. This is \$435 above the maximum TAP limit of \$5,165. We raise this issue as we expect additional campuses to also exceed the TAP limit in the near future. While the law regarding the tuition credit only applies to four-year colleges, it is unclear who will be responsible for covering this difference at the community college level. So, as you discuss the TAP Gap and how to address this issue, please keep community colleges in mind.

Without funding to address these operational costs, including the TAP Gap, we are endangering student affordability, success and access to public higher education as well as the quality of the education they receive. Therefore, a significant state investment is needed to reverse this trend and to preserve and enhance the quality of education our students receive and need in order to be the educated citizens of the future who will be tasked with taking care of us all.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak.

November 1, 2019

Dear Members of the Senate Standing Committee on Higher Education,

My name is Casandra Murray, and I want to thank you for the invitation to testify today. I am here to speak about my experience as a part-time faculty member at The City University of New York, but I will begin with a brief summary of my background as a life-long New Yorker. I was born and raised in Albany, NY. I attended Shenendehowa public schools, and I graduated Summa Cum Laude from SUNY Albany. I then earned an MA in English Literature from CUNY Hunter College, and I am now pursuing a doctoral degree in English Literature at the CUNY Graduate Center. It is safe to say that I am a staunch supporter of public education. I am the first in my family to attend college, and I owe my intellectual curiosity and passion to the public school education I have received from elementary to graduate school. There have been moments along the way when I have considered pursuing higher education at private institutions, but that would not be true to who I am or to my commitment to the sociocultural and socioeconomic principles of public education. I am sure you are aware that CUNY in particular has a long history of providing for social mobility for students from oppressed populations and the working class. For the past six years, I have been dedicated to CUNY's mission, working as an Adjunct Lecturer at Hunter College, where I teach English courses that range from Expository Writing to Human Rights and Literature. I have also been a doctoral student and Graduate Teaching Fellow at the CUNY Graduate Center for the past three years, a role that involves a combination of scholarship and teaching.

I am testifying here along with the awesome students that come before you to share my perspective on the dismal status of both the state funding of CUNY and the dispersal of its budget by administrators. I cannot overstate how the pattern of underfunding by the government combined with administrative bloat fails our state's public college students and the teachers who train intensively and work tirelessly to educate them. Before I go on to detail my concerns, however, it is important to me that I emphasize the countless positive experiences I have had engaging with faculty and students at CUNY; I have learned an immense amount from my professors, and I learn from my own students every time we enter into analytical discussions of the literature we read together and the historical and contemporary issues surrounding it. But this productivity occurs *despite* the hardships of teaching and learning at CUNY. There are various issues I could address, including consistently broken and even dangerous facilities, insufficient offices, underfunded and completely unfunded learning centers and labs, overcrowded classes, lack of books and supplies, class cancellations, and technological shortfalls (all of which occurs as CUNY tuition continues to rise).

But, today I am here primarily to discuss how the financial and ethical pitfalls associated with underfunding impact adjunct faculty at CUNY, those of us who work most tenaciously day in and day out in the classrooms on each campus. I have been committed to teaching in higher education at CUNY for a long time now, and students have told me on multiple occasions that my work as their instructor has consistently impacted their lives and learning for the better, whether it has been through creating an environment for them to discover a new passion; providing them support for a scholarship, internship or other extracurricular program; helping them improve their writing and research skills; providing emotional support; or any of the many

benefits that come from fostering a challenging and inclusive learning environment. Yet, as I submit this testimony to you, I am on the verge of quitting. The state, the city, and the CUNY administration together have made it nearly impossible for me to continue on in a meaningful career that I love because I literally cannot afford to survive in the city in which I work, and there appears to be little hope of obtaining a living wage in the future. I currently reside in an apartment with poor living conditions, but I cannot afford to move to a better apartment given the high rents in New York City. The cost of living in New York City combined with the student loans I have accumulated from attending SUNY and CUNY schools keeps me up at night and on edge throughout the day, thus working for CUNY also takes a toll on my physical and mental health. I would like to start a family, but if I can't take care of my own basic needs, how could I responsibly care for a child?

This is my personal story, but my colleagues tell me they face the same hardships; our working conditions prevent us from affording decent housing and childcare, cause us exhaustion and health issues, and put our lives on perpetual hold. They also impact our abilities to teach with our full energy and attention. All of this is our reality even though we work very hard for CUNY and thus for New York City and the state. I, for example, spend more hours than a typical 40-hour full-time job when I combine the time I teach, grade, prep, study, and pursue professional development, all of which is necessary to meet the intellectual demands of working in higher education instruction. Yet, I am compensated at a mere rate of \$3,500 per semester for a typical 3-hour course and \$4,650 for a 4-hour course. This pay rate is akin to what I used to make as a camp co-counselor over ten years ago as an undergraduate student. To make anything even within a few thousand dollars of this rate to teach a college course is in plain terms, absurd. I should add that my rate is slightly higher than the starting adjunct rate of \$3,200 per 3-hour course because I have taught at CUNY for six years.

Some argue that the role of an adjunct is simply to teach a course on the side while you pursue an actual career in a field of expertise, so those of us who are adjuncts should just stop complaining and go get a real job. But many of us have studied or are currently studying to become professors in our specializations. Teaching college *is* our expertise. And yet, the sad truth is that because instructional funding has simply not kept up with the increases in enrollment at CUNY over recent decades, the majority of courses at CUNY are taught by adjuncts and it is becoming less and less possible to ever be hired as a full-time lecturer or professor given the scarcity of these positions in the current structure of the university system, a system which has become so farcical that it consistently devalues *the* main purpose of a school: instruction and education. According to the City University's Human Resources Management data, adjunct faculty make up about 54% of CUNY's instructional staff while full-time faculty make up about 46%. The CUNY Performance Monitoring Project has reported over the past several years that on average only about 40% of courses are taught by full-time faculty across the Senior Colleges of CUNY; this number is slightly higher at an average of 45% at community colleges. In fact, the adjunct faculty has doubled at CUNY since 2000.

It is obvious that this upside-down instructional configuration exists because we adjuncts provide cheap teaching labor that saves the administration and the city and state money. But I would like to ask you, at what societal cost? Does New York plan to continue to give lip service to progressive ideals all while destroying one of the most important institutions for human progress

in the state? Will this state allow itself to remain a guilty party in the immoral and unethical practice of paying college educators poverty wages? The "adjunctification" of CUNY is a major crisis that not only exploits and debases dedicated and talented teachers, many of whom have earned the highest degrees in their fields, but it also shortchanges the residents of New York who attend college and work hard to earn their own degrees. I grew up believing that education would lead me to success, that education makes our world a better place, and now the state and the city in which I live and work are palpably showing me otherwise. The message that is repeatedly conveyed to the students and teachers of New York is that, actually, education is not valuable. I am here today because I am obliged to counteract the tangible policies that have created and continue to foster not such a destructive ideological stance.

Now there is a new tentative CUNY contract negotiated by the Professional Staff Congress, which had been hailed as "historic" and as a "breakthrough in adjunct pay." I can tell you after reading over the details, it is clear that adjunct pay remains meager and that most teaching at CUNY has simply become dead-end jobs. This contract provides no path for eventual full-time employment and it even takes away the salary steps that have long been in place for adjuncts that have committed years and years to CUNY. Furthermore, it simply keeps adjuncts in poverty. I cannot help to wonder if those who stand behind this contract do not realize that adjuncts will still not be making a living wage for New York City, even in nearly 3 years from now when the negotiated \$5,500 per course kicks in. Can they not understand the numbers or do they just not care? Some say that this agreement is a fair contract. I would like to know their definition of "fairness." Is fairness continued exploitation of specialized labor? Is fairness working hard and not being able to even afford decent housing? Honestly, the 2% annual raises across the board in this contract are even below the national annual average. They do not keep up with inflation and do not account for CUNY's location in a city with one of the highest costs of living. The MLA recommends \$11,000 as the minimum for a 3-credit course salary nationally, and we are being promised half of this amount in three years from now in New York City. In fact, according to various reports, the current average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in New York City is nearly \$3,000 per month, or \$36,000 per year.

If an adjunct teaches eight courses at the current starting rate per year (two more courses than the average full-time faculty member teaches), their annual salary totals just under \$26,000. With the increase to \$5,500, that annual salary would come to \$44,000. There is no denying that this is a definite increase, but the problem persists; this is not enough; it is hardly a sufficient wage in New York City now, and it will be even less so in three years from now when this rate actually kicks in (see the average cost of today's housing above). Nor is it an adequate wage for a job that requires the most advanced degrees. Many adjuncts will also never realize this possible annual salary when they are unable to secure eight courses per year as a result of budget constraints and limitations. Most appallingly, those who have been teaching for CUNY for years and even decades will see no benefit as a result of their service. By the end of this contract, the adjunct rate becomes a flat rate for all no matter the amount of years one has been committed to CUNY. Other major universities surrounding CUNY currently pay their adjuncts close to \$7,000-\$10,000 per course. The Fall 2021 adjunct pay rate is being advertised as a 71% increase, but the numbers vary greatly depending on how long one has actually been teaching at CUNY, so that those with the most service get the smallest raise. It is also essential to note that scientists and economists often make it clear that percentages are not always meaningful anyway; the fact is

that a high percentage salary increase does not mean a whole lot when the starting salary is a poverty wage and the new salary still does not reach economic and professional standards. What does mean a whole lot more are the actual numbers for costs of living and salaries of other similar employees locally.

I, like others, recognize that the bargaining teams worked hard on this, but that does not mean it is good enough or that it is "historic." Despite the gains made here, this contract continues CUNY's, and in turn the city's and the state's, reign as an unprincipled and abusive employer. The only reason I have stuck around this long is my commitment to my public school students and to scholarship as a whole, but how much longer can those in power take advantage of CUNY instructors' unwavering dedication to teaching?

While many adjuncts I have spoken to plan to vote "no" on this proposed contract agreement, it is also clear that others will approve it because the system has worn them down. It has made them so desperate that they will take any raise, however small it might be, to alleviate their daily financial stress. This is what a broken system does to its exploited employees. It makes them desperate by design, so that it can offer them the bare minimum all while training them to internalize the false inferiority with which they are repeatedly treated. And so I ask, should someone who has worked so hard to earn degree after degree encourage her own students to continue to learn within such a broken system? Should someone who puts the majority of her energy into teaching and mentoring the next generations be forced to either live in abysmal conditions or quit? How does pushing good teachers out of higher education benefit our state or our society at large? In my view, and many others I have spoken to, if those in power will not provide a decent wage, CUNY faculty must be bold; we must fight back, and we must look to other teachers around this country who are standing up for their rights to dignity and a living wage, and for their students' rights to an excellent education.

Therefore, I call on the New York State government and Governor Cuomo to preemptively reconsider your dismal funding of CUNY and to find the money to do the right thing. I also call for an investment specifically directed at instructional spending at CUNY, a budget for faculty that is in line with costs of living and the skills and degrees required to do the job of teaching college. CUNY adjuncts have been fighting for \$7,000 per 3-hour course in this contract, a modest request given the numbers I have noted above. We are not motivated by greed. We are simply trying to avoid having to quit our jobs so that we can continue the important work that we do with our students. The demand for \$7,000 per course is simply a start, and even that has been far from met in this contract. So my first request to you, to bring CUNY in line with other major universities, is to stipulate a base pay of \$7,000 per 3-hour course within one year. It goes without saying that many of the adjuncts who are teaching at CUNY should also be employed full-time, and that a pathway for this professional growth should be created and financially supported by the state. Overall, the "adunctification" of CUNY has got to end, and the first step to rectifying the situation is to provide proper funding that respects higher education as a valued professional field. While I disagree with the PSC in various regards, there is no doubt that they are correct when they say, "Teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions." It is my strong hope that this state can one day soon take pride in creating a system of higher education in which students and teachers can thrive together.

I want to thank you very much for your time and consideration of the concerns I put forward on behalf of myself, my fellow adjunct instructors, and the brilliant students we teach.

Sincerely,

Casandra Murray
Graduate Teaching Fellow and Adjunct Lecturer
CUNY Graduate Center, English
Hunter College, English

UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS

Chairperson Stavisky and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education, thank you for providing the opportunity for United University Professions (UUP) to testify at this hearing regarding the cost of public higher education in New York State, its effect on the Tuition Assistance Program and other important student aid offerings, as well as the affordability and accessibility of a SUNY education.

My name is Dr. Frederick E. Kowal and I am the president of United University Professions. UUP is the largest higher education union in the U.S., representing more than 37,000 academic and professional faculty and staff at 29 State University of New York campuses, System Administration, Empire State College, and SUNY's public teaching hospitals and health science centers in Brooklyn, Buffalo, Long Island and Syracuse.

Our members serve hundreds of thousands of students and patients at our colleges and universities, health sciences centers and state-operated public teaching hospitals directly administered by SUNY.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continuing support and approval of programs and initiatives that we see as vital to the students and patients we see and serve every day.

And as we seek to incorporate everyone into a diverse society and a prosperous state, I thank you for your support for SUNY's opportunity programs and your decision to vote to restore funds cut to these incredibly successful programs in the 2019-20 Executive Budget. We thank you and other legislators for your keen interest and support in closing the "TAP gap"—the difference in state State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) aid and SUNY tuition that must be made up by colleges. Details about the situation follow further into this testimony.

And thank you for this chance to address the issue of funding for public higher education in New York state.

The cost of education

SUNY's mission statement requires the State's University to "provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population in a complete range of academic, professional and vocational postsecondary programs including such additional activities in pursuit of these objectives as are necessary or customary."

Yet, access to SUNY is a major obstacle for thousands of New Yorkers, some of whom simply can't afford the cost of a SUNY education. Others don't receive—or don't qualify for enough—student aid and are forced to take out tens of thousands of dollars in student loans as they work toward their college degrees.

In its May report on student debt, the U.S. Federal Reserve reported that 54 million Americans took on debt—including student loans—for education. U.S. student loan debt surpassed \$1.6 trillion in 2019. Last year, 2 in 10 students who still owe money were behind on their payments, the Reserve report said.

In New York, the average student-loan debt per borrower expanded to 36 percent from 2007 to 2017, rising more than \$8,000 to \$30,899, according to report by LendEDU, a student loan finance company. Our state is No. 7 in LendEDU's ranking of the 10 states with the highest student debt.

Students must also factor in room and board, books, incidental expenses, lost income, and other related costs of attending college—which far exceed SUNY's tuition. Full-time student fees and room and board at SUNY state-operated campuses total to roughly \$19,000, more than two and a half times tuition. Tuition itself accounts for about a quarter of the total costs to students of attending college each year.

Lack of state support

As student debt rises, so does the percentage SUNY students pay for their education—in large part because of the lack of new state funding for SUNY. In 2007-08, tuition and fees from SUNY students accounted for 25 percent of SUNY's operating budget, with the state providing the rest of the funding. In 2019-20, students are paying 65 percent, with the state

chipping in the remainder. This is unfair to students and is unsustainable formula for SUNY.

SUNY's state-operated campuses have never recovered from a series of slashing state funding cuts that took place during the Great Recession; aid dropped from \$1.36 billion in 2007-08 to \$700 million this year—that's a decrease of nearly 50 percent, or a third of its core operating budget.

Of all state agencies, SUNY took the greatest hit in terms of budget cuts—and unlike other agencies, the University has never been made whole. Several years of flat funding for SUNY has only served to harm and financially hamper cash-strapped campuses even further.

These cuts have caused financial chaos at campuses like Fredonia, where the college last year considered cutting undergraduate and graduate programs to help close a nearly \$13 million budget deficit. In May, Fredonia officials proposed an academic reorganization that could help the college save about \$1.6 million which still leaves a large budget gap.

Stony Brook University, which faced a \$35 million deficit in 2017, instituted a hiring freeze. Last year, the university merged three foreign language programs into a single department, and suspended admission to undergrad programs in theatre arts, cinema & cultural studies, comparative literature, adapted aquatics and pharmacology. Binghamton University also ordered a hiring freeze in 2018 to help reduce a \$12 million budget gap.

In January, SUNY Downstate Health Science University's College of Health Related Professions was cash-strapped to the point where there wasn't enough funding for it to hire enough staff and faculty. This could jeopardize the school's reaccreditation.

The need for support

With proper state funding, SUNY's focus can move to expanding programs and hiring more full-time, tenure-track faculty, initiatives that will make the University more accessible to New Yorkers seeking a quality public college education. These moves will also help SUNY campuses attract—and more importantly—retain students.

One way to achieve that is by increasing funding for SUNY's successful Educational Opportunity Program. These are proven, life-changing programs that provide clear paths to a college education—and often, good-paying jobs—for those who might otherwise be denied access to college.

Through the EOP, students—many of whom are from some of the state's most economically distressed areas—receive specialized advisement, counseling, tutorial services, and summer programs. These students, who are mostly underprepared for college work when they enter the program, thrive in the EOP.

The EOP graduation rate exceeds 65 percent, exceeding the national average for public higher ed colleges and universities. More than 70,000 EOP students have earned SUNY degrees. And with smart, targeted investments in this critical program we can do even more.

Thirty-three percent of SUNY's state-operated campuses have EOP graduation rates ranging from 70 to 88 percent. Not surprisingly, the EOP is a program in high demand; SUNY annually receives more than 30,000 applications for just 2,500 available EOP seats. More funding will allow the programs to expand, increasing access to thousands more students each year.

TAP gap woes

More state funding is also necessary to close the TAP gap—the portion of SUNY tuition that campuses must waive for TAP awardees. The gap has swelled to \$70 million. TAP and other state financial aid programs help provide accessibility to a public college education, which is still out of reach for many qualified students.

About a quarter of students at state-operated campuses receive the maximum TAP grant of \$5,165—which covers only 75 percent of SUNY undergraduate tuition. SUNY campuses must cover the remainder out of their budgets. In many instances there is a correlation between the SUNY Campuses that accept the most TAP eligible students and our campuses that are facing financial shortfalls.

From 1974 to 2010, TAP covered 100 percent of SUNY tuition at state-operated campuses. But the gap has grown as state aid funding to SUNY has dropped. More than 40 percent of TAP students attend SUNY schools; over one-third of SUNY students at state-operated campuses receive TAP aid.

The TAP gap is equal to the annual salaries of over 500 new full-time, tenure-track faculty. These additional hires could increase advising, counseling, tutoring, and course offerings necessary for students to complete their education, and complete on time.

SUNY medical schools hurting

Our state-run academic medical centers in Brooklyn, Stony Brook and Syracuse hold dual roles—as safety net hospitals serving all who walk through their doors regardless of their ability to pay, and as teaching hospitals that provide accessible, affordable medical education to student doctors and medical professionals.

Both are important, and both require adequate funding to serve their students and the tens of thousands of patients they treat each year. Yet, state support for the hospitals was reduced in the 2019-20 budget due to the elimination of \$87 million of state operating funds in 2018.

Our hospitals rely on this funding—which was at \$153 million before the Great Recession—to help offset costs associated with caring for large numbers of underinsured and uninsured patients and fund the medical schools by more than \$200 million annually.

This show of support from the state wasn't without a price; in return for this funding, SUNY's academic medical centers pay for their employee fringe benefits and debt service costs, a total annual expense nearing \$500 million.

The elimination of this portion of operating funds will undoubtedly impact the ability of the medical schools to provide an affordable, accessible education to thousands of students each year. SUNY's state-owned hospitals do not turn a profit and shouldn't be expected to do so. That is not their purpose.

Without full state support, the hospitals will be hard-pressed to properly fund their medical schools, which attract most of their students from the Empire State.

More New York City physicians have trained at Downstate than at any other medical school; 67 percent of its students are New York City residents. In February, SUNY Downstate's medical school was ranked fourth nationwide by Castle Connolly Medical (a healthcare rating company for consumers) for training the next generation of physicians. At Syracuse's Upstate Medical University, 80 percent of its class of 2021 is made up of students from New York State.

Focus on transparency at SUNY campus foundations

In February 2018, the state Comptroller issued a hard-hitting report that found that more than half of SUNY campus foundations haven't been audited by SUNY over the last 10 years. Of those foundations, two of them—the UB Foundation and the Stony Brook Foundation—control as much as \$1.1 billion in assets, which is more than half the assets of all the campus foundations combined.

The Comptroller found that contracts bid by the UB and Stony Brook foundations—including services for lobbying, fundraising and entertainment—were not bid competitively and were awarded based on referrals or companies they had worked with before. The report said that the UB Foundation paid nearly \$240,000 in salaries and fringe benefits to two retired UB staff members who returned to work, allowing the employees to bypass Retirement and Social Security law finance caps.

Since SUNY isn't auditing the foundations on a regular basis, the inner workings of these organizations are murky, to say the least. The public has a right to know how much money the foundations have, where it came from, where it's going and how it's being used.

Our cash-strapped campuses need help, and the foundations are doing precious little to provide that help, even though they were established to serve the academic missions of our colleges and universities. In fact, most people who donate to the foundations don't know—or realize—that

these non-profit organizations are private; many believe they are donating to the campus.

The foundations use their SUNY affiliations to raise funds, which are invested in higher risk, higher reward investments. It helps them avoid regulation and transparency requirements that other state entities must adhere to.

UUP has been behind AO4367/S06275, which if approved would compel CUNY and SUNY campus foundations and their subsidiaries to submit annual reports and to post them on the SUNY website. Those reports would include financial information, contract vendor data, and a list of foundation and SUNY employees, including salaries, job titles and descriptions.

What we have now is a situation where the issue is not just the lack of transparency, but serious concern over how these hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent. These dollars should be used to help campuses and aid students in their pursuit of a college degree—and a better life. Making SUNY foundations accountable and transparent is a solid step toward making public higher education a priority again.

Conclusion

On behalf of the entire UUP membership, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

Our union appreciates this opportunity to provide the committee with detailed information to help it examine and address these important issues.

Our hope is that the information we've provided will help shine a spotlight on these problems and explain why it's imperative that the state make a solemn commitment to investing in the future of public higher education in New York state.

We greatly appreciate your time.

Thank you.

UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS

Chairperson Stavisky and distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education, thank you for providing the opportunity for United University Professions (UUP) to testify at this hearing regarding the cost of public hospitals in particular Stony Brook University Hospital and their importance in their region and to the public at large.

My name is Ms. Carolyn Kube and I am the UUP chapter president of Stony Brook HSC chapter. Combined with our brothers and sisters at Stony Brook University we make up almost 8,000 union strong households. The UUP SBHSC chapter is comprised of 5,000 academic and professional members. –They are from a wide range of Doctors, Dentists, Advance Practice Nurses, Laboratory Technologists, Radiological Techs, Social workers Physical and Occupational therapists, Professors and professional staff, just name a few. All of whom work in the Stony Brook University Hospital(SBUH) which houses-, Renaissance School of Medicine, School of Nursing, School of Health Technology and Management, School of Social Welfare. My members are also located at the Long Island State Veterans Home, and the School of Dental Medicine. Our members serve hundreds of thousands of students and patients in our, schools and SBUH.

I would like to thank you for your continued support of Stony Brook Medicine's mission and programs that are vital to how we administer care to our patients and train the next generation of health care workers in New York state. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit more about Stony Brook Medicine.

Stony Brook Medicine is a network of affiliated hospitals in Suffolk county which include Stony Brook University Hospital (SBUH), Stony Brook Children's Hospital, Southampton Hospital and Eastern Long Island Hospital. SBUH is the largest academic medical center on Long Island with 603 beds for patient care, Stony Brook Ambulatory Center and Carol Baldwin Breast Care Center.

SBUH serves as the region's only tertiary care center and Level 1 Trauma Center, and is home to the Stony Brook Heart Institute, Stony Brook Cancer Center, Stony Brook Children's Hospital, Stony Brook Neurosciences Institute, and Stony Brook Digestive Disorders Institute. SBUH also encompasses Suffolk County's only Level 4 Regional Perinatal Center, state-designated AIDS Center, state-designated Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program, state-designated Burn Center, the

Christopher Pendergast ALS Center of Excellence, Cody Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities, and Long Island's first Kidney Transplant Center. It is home of the nation's first Pediatric Multiple Sclerosis Center.

The Heart Institute performs the only open-heart surgery in Suffolk County. The Cancer Center will be relocating to a new state of the art space in the Medical Arts and Research Translation building (MART) which will provide cancer patients with the most recent developments in cancer treatment including, bone marrow and stem cell transplantation and greater access to participation in clinical trials. Stony Brook's comprehensive Stroke Program is certified by the Joint Commission and the NYS Department of Health; which has just launched this year, -a mobile stroke ambulance and team uniquely equipped to deal with stroke patients prior to them reaching the hospital.

As an academic medical center Stony Brook is responsible for training 500 medical students, 750 residents and fellows annually. Over 3,000 students in nursing, clinical sciences, social work, physical therapist, occupational therapist, radiology techs, physician's assistants. and athletic trainers. Our dental school trains approximately 250 dentists and dental hygienists each year.

SBUH is committed to diversity and both the HOPE program which introduces promising high school students from underserved racially and ethnically diverse communities to careers in healthcare. The program strives to support them to pursue a college career in the health care industry. The SARS program also reaches out to underserved high school students to introduce them to careers in biomedical engineering, biomedical research, Nano - technology, hospital administration and the allied health professions.

SBUH employs 8,212 healthcare workers, professional staff, nurses and doctors. This makes SBUH one of the largest economic engines in Suffolk county. For every dollar spent on Stony Brook \$23 dollars in revenue are generated. Not only is revenue generated but almost 4500 trained doctors, nurses and healthcare workers remain employed in NYS. This helps to ease the shortage the state is experiencing in most of the healthcare professionals.

UUP has had a long tradition of advocating for the educational and clinical mission of its state hospitals. As a state facility SBUH has an obligation to treat the underinsured and uninsured population of Long Island. It is often thought on Long Island is that everyone is affluent. Nothing can be further from the truth when it comes to the uninsured and underinsured. Suffolk County has 111,333 that live below the poverty line. Many Long Islanders are small business owners with less than 50

employees therefore they may not carry health insurance for their employees or they provide plans with high deductibles associated with them. Those types of plan place a heavy burden on the patient to come up with the outstanding bill. Which it is important to note that the leading cause of bankruptcy in the United States are outstanding medical bills, this burden is felt even more acutely on Long Island, where the cost of living is so high.

Without a doubt it is easy to see the critical role that SBUH plays in providing expert tertiary care to the people of Suffolk county. SBUH (in fact all 3 of the state hospitals) being an intricate part of the SUNY system has in the past, benefitted this system by giving revenue to aid financially struggling schools. In turn, in 1980 the state made a promise to the hospitals for giving this revenue and agreeing to pay all of the contractual and benefits costs of their employees. The state was to give the 3 hospitals a subsidy to offset those cost incurred by the Hospitals covering these costs. That promise has been broken! Last year UUP advocated for 78 M for the hospitals and the hospital subsidy has been zeroed out in the budget last year. The administrators of the Hospital as well as UUP understand that the State budget has limitations. The state hospitals do not run with high margins coupled with the rising costs of benefits more and more if funding levels are not maintained then Stony Brook University Hospital will not be able to stay competitive in the County. As a matter of fact, this is evident now in the inability of many clinical departments to be competitive in the employee healthcare market. As the supply of healthcare workers declines the SUNY teaching hospitals will not be able to attract new staff and will continue to lose qualified, experienced healthcare workers at all levels. If the 78-million-dollar subsidy (in which 35M would be allocated to SBUH) was included in the budget last year SBUH would have still been 20M short. Why? SBUH as well as the other SUNY Hospitals have to also pay for their debt service they incur. This is about 15M for SBUH.

Additionally, the Hospitals are very dependent on the DSH (disproportional share funding for services rendered by treating the uninsured). SBUH receives approximately \$150M in DSH funds a year. These funds are provided by the Federal government 50% and matched by the state of New York which is allowed for through the Medicaid expansion program outlined in the Affordable Care Act. When in 2017 the state matched portion of the DSH funding was delayed SBUH went immediately into a \$30M deficit. Additionally, some may say well the hospitals are a burden to the state. Let's get the hospitals out of the SUNY system, privatize them. Then you would just have the medical schools. This is a flawed argument, because the school and the hospital are intimately connected even through funding. As years have gone

by, like all of the other funding I have spoken about in this testimony, the Graduate Medical Education (GME) funds have declined as well. But ~~with~~ the physicians that practice, teach and do research at our academic medical centers are highly invested in the university. Therefore, their practice plan, ~~dollars money~~ has increasingly filled the funding GAP created by the decreased GME funds. This would be difficult if not impossible if the physicians were private with no investment in the university.

It is paramount to keep the Hospitals in the SUNY system. For New York State to keep their promise to its citizens; please ~~r~~Restore the hospitals subsidies to \$87M that pay for the fringe benefits the hospital is currently paying for, unlike any other state authority or agency; Ensure that the DSH funding of \$450M is stable and paid on time to insure smooth and uninterrupted operations of the 3 state hospitals. Please do this ~~s~~So the academic Medical Centers can continue their missions of Education, Research, High Quality of Care and caring for the indigent population with in their regions. And train the next generation of physicians and healthcare workers of New York State.

Vieki Janik,
Farmingdale UUP
Chapter President

TESTIMONY

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

I am a teacher at Farmingdale State College with the rank of Distinguished Teaching Professor, and I also serve as the chapter president for United University Professions. I have found great satisfaction in my 32 year career at the college.

Farmingdale enjoys an excellent location, sitting almost directly on the Nassau-Suffolk border. It also enjoys ever-increasing enrollment, thanks to its outstanding staff and valuable academic programs.

However, Farmingdale State College faces three growing challenges.

First, the college is increasingly staffed by part-time faculty and staff. Professionals, such as admissions counsellors, IT experts, and financial aid staff, are over 50% part-time employees. And academic faculty are part-time by an almost exactly 2 to 1 ratio--67%--the highest percentage of part-time staff at any SUNY campus save Empire State College.

Second, Farmingdale needs greater financial support in several areas of technology, including its solar and wind power initiatives, its unique aviation program, and its highly successful nursing program, which has often produced a 100% credentialing pass rate among its graduates.

Finally, overall pay to staff lags far behind median family income in Nassau County and Suffolk County. Last year, the median family income in Nassau County was \$108,133. Only 48 employees at the college earned the Nassau County median. Part-time professors, paid hourly, can earn just above \$2,700 for a semester's worth of teaching one course, adjunct professors in the Equal Opportunity Center earn an hourly wage that is about 3/5 of that. And many part-time professionals, earn an hourly wage of about \$20 an hour, which is comparable to the \$19.15 average hourly wage of a Long Island babysitter for two children.

Farmingdale College serves a highly populated and highly educated region of New York State. Surely, its mission, performed by an outstanding staff, must be sufficiently funded to maintain and grow the campus's success.

Chairperson Stavisky and distinguished members of the Senate Committee Higher Education, thank you for providing this opportunity to testify at this hearing regarding the funding of public higher education in New York State and how it effects the Stony Brook campus in regards to the students, faculty and staff and the impact of providing a quality education.

My name is Edward Quinn and I am the United University Professions (UUP) Stony Brook Chapter President from the West Campus. I represent 2,500 academic and professional faculty and staff at the Stony Brook West campus. I also work in both the Theatre Arts and Art departments on the campus.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continuing support of public higher education in New York State and for holding this hearing in order to provide an opportunity to speak about the Stony Brook campus.

I have worked at the Stony Brook campus for the past 37 years and also attended Stony Brook as a student. In my 37 years I have seen the erosion of state support for the campus and the impact it has had on the structures and programs. SUNY as the public higher education for the State of New York was supported like any other public education institution in New York. There was a time when New York State paid the lion's share of the costs to keep the cost to the students affordable and fulfill its mission to making higher education accessible to all in the State of New York. As stated in their mission statement; **"The mission of the state university system shall be to provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population in a complete range of academic, professional and vocational postsecondary programs including such additional activities in pursuit of these objectives as are necessary or customary."** There was a time when the State of New York invested in SUNY and the younger generation in order for them to improve themselves and our state's economy. The State needs to once again begin investing in SUNY and its people. And that investment will act as an economic driver for our economy.

As report by Long Island Newsday:

"Stony Brook University's ripple effect on Long Island's economy is worth \$7.23 billion a year and supports 54,637 local jobs, according to a new report.

Those economic impacts — calculated by using multipliers developed by the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis — would, for example, include the direct effect of a restaurant meal purchased by a Stony Brook employee, but also the indirect effect when the restaurant then pays landscapers or sends its tablecloths to a laundry service.

Such direct and indirect economic activity supports 8 percent of all jobs in Suffolk County, the study said." Newsday Business Section - July 9, 2019

The lack of state support and investment has led to many deficiencies at our campus. It has led to deferred maintenance for our buildings which are now beginning to show their age. In the building I work in there have been major floods due to pipes bursting or when there is a heavy rain. These floods have caused major damage not only to the structures but the library of materials and equipment within the buildings. One such incident occurred during our commencement ceremony in the Main Stage. A heating pipe broke due to aging and flooded the third floor and the two floors below it. The damage was extensive but ceremony concluded without being interrupted.

The lack of state support and investment has led to increasing costs and burdens on our students and their families. It is the student's tuition and fees that now pay for the lion's share of the cost. For our undergraduate students the costs in tuition have increased from \$3,400.00 in 2002 to \$7,070.00 in 2019. That's a 108% increase. We have seen the fees increase from \$983.00 to \$3,105.00. That's a 286% increase. Our graduate students have seen similar increases over the same time period, 122% in tuition and 345% in fees. During this period of time tuition assistance, scholarships and financial aid has not kept pace with these increases. This meant students and their families would need to secure loans to cover the costs. This has made it even more difficult for students to afford the cost of living on campus or in the surrounding areas. The cost of living on campus has increased 56% since 2008.

The lack of state support has also led to the closing and consolidation of academic programs. The suspending admission into those programs essentially closed them down. This has affected disproportionately the Humanities both in the undergraduate and graduate programs. My personal experience has been with the Theatre Arts department in which the admission to the program as a major for students was stopped and now it exists as a minor. We graduate our last majors in the spring. As an undergraduate major our program was growing and had students enrolled from several disciplines. We generated revenue through ticket sales to cover the cost our departmental productions. And we worked collaboratively with our departments on campus to develop and create productions. One such production we did every year was the opera production done through the Music department. If we want to have a comprehensive university the arts and humanities need to be funded and exist on campus.

We also experienced a hiring freeze on our campus due to the lack of state support. This has led to unfilled positions both with faculty and staff. However, it affected the staff hiring more than the faculty hiring. It also led to the whole sale firing of many adjuncts, in the Humanities in particular, and the remaining faculty was expected to pick up the work. The impact on the students with all of this, they were not be able to get the courses they needed, having classes being taught by faculty with no experience in the academic discipline and staff that were shifted around to areas where they had no experience. For instances, a chemistry professor would be teaching writing composition or a staff person would be scheduling classes with no training or background with the on campus scheduling system.

We need the State to reinvest in SUNY in order for it to fulfill its mission. We need the adequate funding in order to repair the crumbling infrastructure of the buildings and provide a safe learning environment for our students, faculty and staff. State funding is needed to allow us to offer sufficient sections of classes for our students with qualified people. We need the investment by the State of New York in its economy and future through the economic engine of SUNY and younger generation population of this state.

On behalf of the students, faculty and staff of the Stony Brook campus I want to thank you for this opportunity to address you today at this hearing. And I hope this has given you a bit more of an insight about the needs of our campus, its students, its faculty and its staff. Thank you for your time



Graduate Student Tuition and Required Fees

| Year | In-State | | | | Out-of-State | | | |
|-----------|-----------|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Full-Time | | | Part-Time Per credit hour | Full-Time | | | Part-Time Per credit hour |
| | Tuition | Required Fees | Tuition + Required Fees | | Tuition | Required Fees | Tuition + Required Fees | |
| 1987-1988 | -- | -- | \$3,792 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1988-1989 | -- | -- | \$4,657 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1989-1990 | -- | -- | \$2,211 | -- | -- | -- | \$5,526 | -- |
| 1990-1991 | -- | -- | \$2,211 | -- | -- | -- | \$5,526 | -- |
| 1991-1992 | -- | -- | \$3,351 | -- | -- | -- | \$6,667 | -- |
| 1992-1993 | -- | -- | \$4,162 | -- | -- | -- | \$7,478 | -- |
| 1993-1994 | -- | -- | \$4,162 | -- | -- | -- | \$7,478 | -- |
| 1994-1995 | -- | -- | \$4,182 | -- | -- | -- | \$7,498 | -- |
| 1995-1996 | -- | -- | \$5,282 | -- | -- | -- | \$8,598 | -- |
| 1996-1997 | -- | -- | \$5,382 | -- | -- | -- | \$8,698 | -- |
| 1997-1998 | -- | -- | \$5,422 | -- | -- | -- | \$8,738 | -- |
| 1998-1999 | -- | -- | \$5,592 | -- | -- | -- | \$8,908 | -- |
| 1999-2000 | \$5,100 | \$492 | \$5,592 | \$213 | \$8,416 | \$492 | \$8,908 | \$351 |
| 2000-2001 | \$5,100 | \$455 | \$5,555 | \$213 | \$8,416 | \$455 | \$8,871 | \$351 |
| 2001-2002 | \$5,100 | \$496 | \$5,596 | \$213 | \$8,416 | \$496 | \$8,912 | \$351 |
| 2002-2003 | \$5,100 | \$551 | \$5,651 | \$213 | \$8,416 | \$551 | \$8,967 | \$351 |
| 2003-2004 | \$6,900 | \$500 | \$7,400 | \$288 | \$10,500 | \$500 | \$11,000 | \$438 |
| 2004-2005 | \$6,900 | \$556 | \$7,456 | \$288 | \$10,920 | \$556 | \$11,476 | \$455 |
| 2005-2006 | \$6,900 | \$704 | \$7,604 | \$288 | \$10,920 | \$704 | \$11,624 | \$455 |
| 2006-2007 | \$6,900 | \$747 | \$7,647 | \$288 | \$10,920 | \$747 | \$11,667 | \$455 |
| 2007-2008 | \$6,900 | \$857 | \$7,757 | \$288 | \$10,920 | \$857 | \$11,777 | \$455 |
| 2008-2009 | \$6,900 | \$892 | \$7,792 | \$288 | \$10,920 | \$892 | \$11,812 | \$455 |
| 2009-2010 | \$8,370 | \$928 | \$9,298 | \$349 | \$13,250 | \$928 | \$14,178 | \$552 |
| 2010-2011 | \$8,370 | \$993 | \$9,363 | \$349 | \$13,780 | \$993 | \$14,773 | \$574 |
| 2011-2012 | \$8,870 | \$1,104 | \$9,974 | \$370 | \$15,160 | \$1,104 | \$16,264 | \$632 |
| 2012-2013 | \$9,370 | \$1,214 | \$10,584 | \$390 | \$16,680 | \$1,214 | \$17,894 | \$695 |
| 2013-2014 | \$9,870 | \$1,316 | \$11,186 | \$411 | \$18,350 | \$1,316 | \$19,666 | \$765 |
| 2014-2015 | \$10,370 | \$1,431 | \$11,801 | \$432 | \$20,190 | \$1,431 | \$21,621 | \$841 |
| 2015-2016 | \$10,870 | \$1,551 | \$12,421 | \$453 | \$22,210 | \$1,551 | \$23,761 | \$925 |
| 2016-2017 | \$10,870 | \$1,696 | \$12,566 | \$453 | \$22,210 | \$1,696 | \$23,906 | \$925 |
| 2017-2018 | \$10,870 | \$1,765 | \$12,635 | \$453 | \$22,210 | \$1,765 | \$23,975 | \$925 |
| 2018-2019 | \$11,090 | \$1,917 | \$13,007 | \$462 | \$22,650 | \$1,917 | \$24,567 | \$944 |
| 2019-2020 | \$11,310 | \$2,248 | \$13,558 | \$471 | \$23,100 | \$2,248 | \$25,348 | \$963 |

Amounts in this table correspond to official data reported to the U.S. Dept. of Education following guidelines for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and are comparable to amounts reported by other institutions following federal definitions.

Source: Institutional Reports to IPEDS & SBU Bursar Office

Source: Institutional Reports to IPEDS SBU Bursar Office

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning Effectiveness, July 18, 2019



Graduate Student Tuition and Required Fees

| Year | In-State | | | | Out-of-State | | | |
|-----------|-----------|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Full-Time | | Tuition + Required Fees | Part-Time Per credit hour | Full-Time | | Tuition + Required Fees | Part-Time Per credit hour |
| | Tuition | Required Fees | | | Tuition | Required Fees | | |
| 1987-1988 | -- | -- | \$3,792 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1988-1989 | -- | -- | \$4,657 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 1989-1990 | -- | -- | \$2,211 | -- | -- | -- | \$5,526 | -- |
| 1990-1991 | -- | -- | \$2,211 | -- | -- | -- | \$5,526 | -- |
| 1991-1992 | -- | -- | \$3,351 | -- | -- | -- | \$6,667 | -- |
| 1992-1993 | -- | -- | \$4,162 | -- | -- | -- | \$7,478 | -- |
| 1993-1994 | -- | -- | \$4,162 | -- | -- | -- | \$7,478 | -- |
| 1994-1995 | -- | -- | \$4,182 | -- | -- | -- | \$7,498 | -- |
| 1995-1996 | -- | -- | \$5,282 | -- | -- | -- | \$8,598 | -- |
| 1996-1997 | -- | -- | \$5,382 | -- | -- | -- | \$8,698 | -- |
| 1997-1998 | -- | -- | \$5,422 | -- | -- | -- | \$8,738 | -- |
| 1998-1999 | -- | -- | \$5,592 | -- | -- | -- | \$8,908 | -- |
| 1999-2000 | \$5,100 | \$492 | \$5,592 | \$213 | \$8,416 | \$492 | \$8,908 | \$351 |
| 2000-2001 | \$5,100 | \$455 | \$5,555 | \$213 | \$8,416 | \$455 | \$8,871 | \$351 |
| 2001-2002 | \$5,100 | \$496 | \$5,596 | \$213 | \$8,416 | \$496 | \$8,912 | \$351 |
| 2002-2003 | \$5,100 | \$551 | \$5,651 | \$213 | \$8,416 | \$551 | \$8,967 | \$351 |
| 2003-2004 | \$6,900 | \$500 | \$7,400 | \$288 | \$10,500 | \$500 | \$11,000 | \$438 |
| 2004-2005 | \$6,900 | \$556 | \$7,456 | \$288 | \$10,920 | \$556 | \$11,476 | \$455 |
| 2005-2006 | \$6,900 | \$704 | \$7,604 | \$288 | \$10,920 | \$704 | \$11,624 | \$455 |
| 2006-2007 | \$6,900 | \$747 | \$7,647 | \$288 | \$10,920 | \$747 | \$11,667 | \$455 |
| 2007-2008 | \$6,900 | \$857 | \$7,757 | \$288 | \$10,920 | \$857 | \$11,777 | \$455 |
| 2008-2009 | \$6,900 | \$892 | \$7,792 | \$288 | \$10,920 | \$892 | \$11,812 | \$455 |
| 2009-2010 | \$8,370 | \$928 | \$9,298 | \$349 | \$13,250 | \$928 | \$14,178 | \$552 |
| 2010-2011 | \$8,370 | \$993 | \$9,363 | \$349 | \$13,780 | \$993 | \$14,773 | \$574 |
| 2011-2012 | \$8,870 | \$1,104 | \$9,974 | \$370 | \$15,160 | \$1,104 | \$16,264 | \$632 |
| 2012-2013 | \$9,370 | \$1,214 | \$10,584 | \$390 | \$16,680 | \$1,214 | \$17,894 | \$695 |
| 2013-2014 | \$9,870 | \$1,316 | \$11,186 | \$411 | \$18,350 | \$1,316 | \$19,666 | \$765 |
| 2014-2015 | \$10,370 | \$1,431 | \$11,801 | \$432 | \$20,190 | \$1,431 | \$21,621 | \$841 |
| 2015-2016 | \$10,870 | \$1,551 | \$12,421 | \$453 | \$22,210 | \$1,551 | \$23,761 | \$925 |
| 2016-2017 | \$10,870 | \$1,696 | \$12,566 | \$453 | \$22,210 | \$1,696 | \$23,906 | \$925 |
| 2017-2018 | \$10,870 | \$1,765 | \$12,635 | \$453 | \$22,210 | \$1,765 | \$23,975 | \$925 |
| 2018-2019 | \$11,090 | \$1,917 | \$13,007 | \$462 | \$22,650 | \$1,917 | \$24,567 | \$944 |
| 2019-2020 | \$11,310 | \$2,248 | \$13,558 | \$471 | \$23,100 | \$2,248 | \$25,348 | \$963 |

Amounts in this table correspond to official data reported to the U.S. Dept. of Education following guidelines for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and are comparable to amounts reported by other institutions following federal definitions.

Source: Institutional Reports to IPEDS & SBU Bursar Office

Source: Institutional Reports to IPEDS SBU Bursar Office

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning Effectiveness, July 18, 2019



Typical Room and Board Charges

| Year | Typical room charge for academic year | Typical board charge for academic year | Typical charge for room and board |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1987-1988 | \$1,925 | \$1,468 | \$3,393 |
| 1988-1989 | \$2,078* | \$1,450 | \$3,528* |
| 1989-1990 | \$2,230 | \$1,474 | \$3,704 |
| 1990-1991 | \$2,338 | \$1,528 | \$3,866 |
| 1991-1992 | \$2,525 | \$1,602 | \$4,127 |
| 1992-1993 | \$2,670 | \$1,700 | \$4,370 |
| 1993-1994 | \$2,828 | \$1,884 | \$4,712 |
| 1994-1995 | \$3,014 | \$1,908 | \$4,922 |
| 1995-1996 | \$3,168 | \$1,998 | \$5,166 |
| 1996-1997 | \$3,294 | \$2,100 | \$5,394 |
| 1997-1998 | \$3,658 | \$2,100 | \$5,758 |
| 1998-1999 | \$3,840† | \$2,300 | \$6,140† |
| 1999-2000 | \$4,021 | \$2,400 | \$6,421 |
| 2000-2001 | \$4,224 | \$2,300 | \$6,524 |
| 2001-2002 | \$4,350 | \$2,380 | \$6,730 |
| 2002-2003 | \$4,530 | \$2,660 | \$7,190 |
| 2003-2004 | \$4,718 | \$2,740 | \$7,458 |
| 2004-2005 | \$4,880 | \$2,850 | \$7,730 |
| 2005-2006 | \$5,080 | \$2,970 | \$8,050 |
| 2006-2007 | \$5,334 | \$3,060 | \$8,394 |
| 2007-2008 | \$5,528 | \$3,206 | \$8,734 |
| 2008-2009 | \$5,804 | \$3,328 | \$9,132 |
| 2009-2010 | \$6,112 | \$3,478 | \$9,590 |
| 2010-2011 | \$6,442 | \$3,700 | \$10,142 |
| 2011-2012 | \$6,748 | \$3,826 | \$10,574 |
| 2012-2013 | \$6,968 | \$3,966 | \$10,934 |
| 2013-2014 | \$7,268 | \$4,096 | \$11,364 |
| 2014-2015 | \$7,552 | \$4,096 | \$11,648 |
| 2015-2016 | \$7,854 | \$4,178 | \$12,032 |
| 2016-2017 | \$8,082 | \$4,800 | \$12,882 |
| 2017-2018 | \$8,402 | \$5,044 | \$13,446 |
| 2018-2019 | \$8,654 | \$5,044 | \$13,698 |
| 2019-2020 | \$9,082 | \$5,196 | \$14,278 |

Amounts in this table correspond to official data reported to the U.S. Dept. of Education following guidelines for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and are comparable to amounts reported by other institutions following federal definitions.

* Amount for typical room charge not reported to IPEDS in 1988-89; amount here is interpolated as the average of 1987-88 and 1989-90.

† Amount for typical room charge reported to IPEDS in 1998-99 was \$5,700 and appears to be a reporting error; amount here is interpolated as the average of 1997-98 and 1999-00.



Undergraduate Tuition and Required Fees

| Year | In-State | | | | Out-of-State | | | |
|-----------|-----------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| | Full-Time | | | Part-Time | Full-Time | | | Part-Time |
| | Tuition | Required Fees | Tuition + Req. Fees | Per credit hour | Tuition | Required Fees | Tuition + Req. Fees | Per credit hour |
| 1987-1988 | -- | -- | \$1,500 | -- | -- | -- | \$3,344 | -- |
| 1988-1989 | -- | -- | \$1,495 | -- | -- | -- | \$4,095 | -- |
| 1989-1990 | -- | -- | \$1,495 | -- | -- | -- | \$4,845 | -- |
| 1990-1991 | -- | -- | \$1,511 | -- | -- | -- | \$4,861 | -- |
| 1991-1992 | -- | -- | \$2,411 | -- | -- | -- | \$6,011 | -- |
| 1992-1993 | -- | -- | \$2,918 | -- | -- | -- | \$6,818 | -- |
| 1993-1994 | -- | -- | \$2,946 | -- | -- | -- | \$6,846 | -- |
| 1994-1995 | -- | -- | \$2,995 | -- | -- | -- | \$6,895 | -- |
| 1995-1996 | -- | -- | \$3,759 | -- | -- | -- | \$8,659 | -- |
| 1996-1997 | -- | -- | \$3,879 | -- | -- | -- | \$8,779 | -- |
| 1997-1998 | -- | -- | \$3,932 | -- | -- | -- | \$8,832 | -- |
| 1998-1999 | -- | -- | \$4,141 | -- | -- | -- | \$9,041 | -- |
| 1999-2000 | \$3,400 | \$741 | \$4,141 | \$137 | \$8,300 | \$741 | \$9,041 | \$346 |
| 2000-2001 | \$3,400 | \$853 | \$4,253 | \$137 | \$8,300 | \$853 | \$9,153 | \$346 |
| 2001-2002 | \$3,400 | \$868 | \$4,268 | \$137 | \$8,300 | \$868 | \$9,168 | \$346 |
| 2002-2003 | \$3,400 | \$983 | \$4,383 | \$137 | \$8,300 | \$983 | \$9,283 | \$346 |
| 2003-2004 | \$4,350 | \$956 | \$5,306 | \$181 | \$10,300 | \$956 | \$11,256 | \$429 |
| 2004-2005 | \$4,350 | \$1,039 | \$5,389 | \$181 | \$10,610 | \$1,039 | \$11,649 | \$442 |
| 2005-2006 | \$4,350 | \$1,224 | \$5,574 | \$181 | \$10,610 | \$1,224 | \$11,834 | \$442 |
| 2006-2007 | \$4,350 | \$1,281 | \$5,631 | \$181 | \$10,610 | \$1,281 | \$11,891 | \$442 |
| 2007-2008 | \$4,350 | \$1,410 | \$5,760 | \$181 | \$10,610 | \$1,410 | \$12,020 | \$442 |
| 2008-2009 | \$4,350 | \$1,460 | \$5,810 | \$181 | \$10,610 | \$1,460 | \$12,070 | \$442 |
| 2009-2010 | \$4,970 | \$1,518 | \$6,488 | \$207 | \$12,870 | \$1,518 | \$14,388 | \$536 |
| 2010-2011 | \$4,970 | \$1,610 | \$6,580 | \$207 | \$13,380 | \$1,610 | \$14,990 | \$558 |
| 2011-2012 | \$5,270 | \$1,724 | \$6,994 | \$220 | \$14,720 | \$1,724 | \$16,444 | \$613 |
| 2012-2013 | \$5,570 | \$1,990 | \$7,560 | \$232 | \$16,190 | \$1,990 | \$18,180 | \$675 |
| 2013-2014 | \$5,870 | \$2,125 | \$7,995 | \$245 | \$17,810 | \$2,125 | \$19,935 | \$742 |
| 2014-2015 | \$6,170 | \$2,260 | \$8,430 | \$257 | \$19,590 | \$2,260 | \$21,850 | \$816 |
| 2015-2016 | \$6,470 | \$2,385 | \$8,855 | \$270 | \$21,550 | \$2,385 | \$23,935 | \$898 |
| 2016-2017 | \$6,470 | \$2,529 | \$8,999 | \$270 | \$23,710 | \$2,530 | \$26,240 | \$988 |
| 2017-2018 | \$6,670 | \$2,587 | \$9,257 | \$278 | \$24,180 | \$2,587 | \$26,767 | \$1,008 |
| 2018-2019 | \$6,870 | \$2,755 | \$9,625 | \$286 | \$24,540 | \$2,755 | \$27,295 | \$1,023 |
| 2019-2020 | \$7,070 | \$3,105 | \$10,175 | \$295 | \$24,740 | \$3,105 | \$27,845 | \$1,031 |

Amounts in this table correspond to official data reported to the U.S. Dept. of Education following guidelines for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and are comparable to amounts reported by other institutions following federal definitions.



Financial Aid Received by Full-Time, First-Time Undergraduate Students

| | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| Full-Time, First-Time Cohort* | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 2,760 | 2,875 | 2,801 | 2,733 | 2,516 | 2,674 | 2,708 | 2,852 | 2,836 | 2,931 | 3,160 |
| Receiving Any Student Financial Aid | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 2,169 | 2,272 | 2,247 | 2,235 | 2,011 | 2,146 | 2,131 | 2,155 | 2,156 | 2,271 | 2,472 |
| Percent | 78.6 | 79.0 | 80.2 | 81.8 | 79.9 | 80.3 | 78.7 | 75.6 | 76.0 | 77.5 | 78.2 |
| Grant Aid | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Federal state local or institutional grant aid | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 1,951 | 1,961 | 1,881 | 1,866 | 1,750 | 1,904 | 1,877 | 1,894 | 1,942 | 2,116 | 2,234 |
| Percent | 70.7 | 68.2 | 67.2 | 68.3 | 69.6 | 71.2 | 69.3 | 66.4 | 68.5 | 72.2 | 70.7 |
| Avg. amount of those receiving | \$4,871 | \$5,562 | \$6,627 | \$7,473 | \$6,801 | \$7,592 | \$8,355 | \$8,773 | \$9,723 | \$9,698 | \$10,162 |
| Federal grant aid† | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 906 | 863 | 975 | 994 | 907 | 899 | 868 | 923 | 945 | 1,013 | 1,127 |
| Percent | 32.8 | 30.0 | 34.8 | 36.4 | 36.0 | 33.6 | 32.1 | 32.4 | 33.3 | 34.6 | 35.7 |
| Avg. amount of those receiving | \$4,449 | \$4,850 | \$5,443 | \$5,466 | \$4,964 | \$4,998 | \$5,092 | \$5,175 | \$5,119 | \$5,400 | \$5,331 |
| Pell grants | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 895 | 861 | 966 | 973 | 904 | 897 | 866 | 921 | 944 | 1,013 | 1,127 |
| Percent | 32.4 | 29.9 | 34.5 | 35.6 | 35.9 | 33.5 | 32.0 | 32.3 | 33.3 | 34.6 | 35.7 |
| Avg. amount of those receiving | \$3,641 | \$4,035 | \$4,659 | \$4,881 | \$4,849 | \$4,889 | \$4,897 | \$4,985 | \$4,943 | \$5,172 | \$5,149 |
| State/local grant aid | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 1,556 | 1,416 | 1,380 | 1,233 | 1,144 | 1,100 | 1,129 | 1,206 | 1,185 | 1,231 | 1,463 |
| Percent | 56.4 | 49.3 | 49.3 | 45.1 | 45.5 | 41.1 | 41.7 | 42.3 | 41.8 | 42.0 | 46.3 |
| Avg. amount of those receiving | \$2,908 | \$3,087 | \$3,392 | \$3,582 | \$3,811 | \$3,692 | \$3,596 | \$4,121 | \$4,204 | \$4,453 | \$4,642 |
| Institutional grant aid | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 765 | 857 | 797 | 977 | 1,306 | 1,845 | 1,801 | 1,795 | 1,871 | 2,048 | 2,138 |
| Percent | 27.7 | 29.8 | 28.5 | 35.7 | 51.9 | 69.0 | 66.5 | 62.9 | 66.0 | 69.9 | 67.7 |
| Avg. amount of those receiving | \$1,241 | \$2,742 | \$3,109 | \$3,376 | \$2,327 | \$3,199 | \$3,998 | \$3,827 | \$4,844 | \$4,952 | \$4,632 |

Number and amounts in this table correspond to official financial aid data reported to the U.S. Dept. of Education following guidelines for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and are comparable to amounts reported by other institutions following federal definitions. Because this data collection includes only students enrolled in the fall term, the total number of financial aid awards in each category during a fiscal year (July 1 - June 30) is somewhat higher because it will include students enrolled in terms other than fall. Amounts reported represent award amounts for the academic year. Institutional aid for athletics was excluded prior to the 2012-13 reporting year. † Number of Pell recipients was overreported as 1,042 for the 2010-11 fiscal year.

* Undergraduate enrollment included in the full-time, first-time cohort; figure may differ slightly from official headcount for undergraduates reported on IPEDS Fall Enrollment (EF) survey or Graduation Rate Survey (GRS).



Financial Aid Received by Full-Time, First-Time Undergraduate Students

| | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
|--|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Full-Time, First-Time Cohort* | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 2,760 | 2,875 | 2,801 | 2,733 | 2,516 | 2,674 | 2,708 | 2,852 | 2,836 | 2,931 | 3,160 |
| Receiving Any Student Financial Aid | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 2,169 | 2,272 | 2,247 | 2,235 | 2,011 | 2,146 | 2,131 | 2,155 | 2,156 | 2,271 | 2,472 |
| Percent | 78.6 | 79.0 | 80.2 | 81.8 | 79.9 | 80.3 | 78.7 | 75.6 | 76.0 | 77.5 | 78.2 |
| Loan Aid | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Student loan aid | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 1,262 | 1,345 | 1,418 | 1,465 | 1,264 | 1,328 | 1,249 | 1,306 | 1,215 | 1,271 | 1,338 |
| Percent | 45.7 | 46.8 | 50.6 | 53.6 | 50.2 | 49.7 | 46.1 | 45.8 | 42.8 | 43.4 | 42.3 |
| Avg. amount of those receiving | \$4,321 | \$5,348 | \$5,445 | \$6,086 | \$5,936 | \$6,103 | \$6,327 | \$6,279 | \$6,640 | \$6,404 | \$6,384 |
| Federal student loan aid | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 1,252 | 1,337 | 1,413 | 1,462 | 1,259 | 1,316 | 1,238 | 1,299 | 1,197 | 1,262 | 1,327 |
| Percent | 45.4 | 46.5 | 50.4 | 53.5 | 50.0 | 49.2 | 45.7 | 45.5 | 42.2 | 43.1 | 42.0 |
| Avg. amount of those receiving | \$3,655 | \$4,778 | \$4,981 | \$5,428 | \$5,148 | \$5,100 | \$5,141 | \$5,215 | \$5,102 | \$5,144 | \$5,035 |
| Other student loans | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 105 | 92 | 67 | 87 | 89 | 109 | 127 | 117 | 139 | 123 | 135 |
| Percent | 3.8 | 3.2 | 2.4 | 3.2 | 3.5 | 4.1 | 4.7 | 4.1 | 4.9 | 4.2 | 4.3 |
| Avg. amount of those receiving | \$8,353 | \$8,753 | \$10,185 | \$11,275 | \$11,479 | \$12,783 | \$12,100 | \$12,180 | \$14,099 | \$13,396 | \$13,780 |

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* Undergraduate enrollment included in the full-time, first-time cohort; figure may differ slightly from official headcount for undergraduates reported on IPEDS Fall Enrollment (EF) survey or Graduation Rate Survey (GRS).



Financial Aid Received by All Undergraduate Students

| | 2007-08 ² | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
|--|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------|
| Undergraduate Fall Headcount Enrollment (N)¹ | 15,519 | 15,921 | 16,384 | 16,126 | 15,785 | 15,837 | 15,992 | 16,480 | 16,831 | 17,026 | 17,364 |
| Undergraduates receiving federal state local institutional or other sources of grant aid | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 9,314 | 9,189 | 9,333 | 9,421 | 9,221 | 9,304 | 9,240 | 9,405 | 9,554 | 9,721 | 10,223 ⁵ |
| Percent of undergraduates | 60.0 | 57.7 | 57.0 | 58.4 | 58.4 | 58.7 | 57.8 | 57.1 | 56.8 | 57.1 | 58.9 |
| Total amount received | \$48.2 M | \$49.9 M | \$60.1 M | \$63.1 M | \$59.4 M | \$68.6 M | \$70.4 M | \$73.5 M | \$79.0 M | \$85.1 M | \$96.3 M |
| Avg. amount for those receiving aid | \$5,180 | \$5,430 | \$6,441 | \$6,694 | \$6,443 | \$7,368 | \$7,621 | \$7,811 | \$8,273 | \$8,754 | \$9,422 |
| Undergraduates receiving federal Pell grants³ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 4,820 | 4,824 | 5,330 | 5,664 | 5,745 | 5,563 | 5,359 | 5,487 | 5,473 | 5,453 | 5,985 |
| Percent of undergraduates | 31.1 | 30.3 | 32.5 | 35.1 | 36.4 | 35.1 | 33.5 | 33.3 | 32.5 | 32.0 | 34.5 |
| Total amount received | \$15.9 M | \$18.7 M | \$25.3 M | \$25.1 M | \$24.9 M | \$25.4 M | \$24.8 M | \$24.4 M | \$24.4 M | \$25.1 M | \$29.1 M |
| Avg. amount for those receiving aid | \$3,300 | \$3,875 | \$4,755 | \$4,440 | \$4,333 | \$4,573 | \$4,625 | \$4,439 | \$4,449 | \$4,611 | \$4,862 |
| Undergraduates receiving federal loans | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 6,801 | 7,080 | 7,349 | 7,619 | 7,372 | 7,337 | 7,190 | 7,138 | 6,983 | 6,752 | 6,602 |
| Percent of undergraduates | 43.8 | 44.5 | 44.9 | 47.2 | 46.7 | 46.3 | 45.0 | 43.3 | 41.5 | 39.7 | 38.0 |
| Total amount received | \$33.4 M | \$45.0 M | \$47.5 M | \$50.8 M | \$48.2 M | \$47.1 M | \$47.0 M | \$44.8 M | \$43.7 M | \$43.2 M | \$40.5 M |
| Avg. amount for those receiving aid | \$4,915 | \$6,349 | \$6,465 | \$6,674 | \$6,540 | \$6,417 | \$6,538 | \$6,280 | \$6,259 | \$6,392 | \$6,132 |
| Undergraduates receiving New York State Tuition Assistance Program Awards (TAP)⁴ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number | 6,791 | 6,733 | 6,659 | 6,278 | 5,990 | 5,838 | 5,590 | 5,673 | 5,699 | 5,996 | 6,196 |
| Percent of undergraduates | 43.8 | 42.3 | 40.6 | 38.9 | 37.9 | 36.9 | 35.0 | 34.4 | 33.9 | 35.2 | 35.7 |
| Total amount received | \$17.2 M | \$18.3 M | \$19.5 M | \$18.5 M | \$18.4 M | \$18.3 M | \$16.9 M | \$17.9 M | \$18.0 M | \$19.2 M | \$19.4 M |
| Avg. amount for those receiving aid | \$2,530 | \$2,724 | \$2,929 | \$2,940 | \$3,072 | \$3,139 | \$3,016 | \$3,158 | \$3,158 | \$3,204 | \$3,131 |

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- 1: Undergraduate enrollment included in the financial aid cohort; figure may differ slightly from official headcount for undergraduates reported on IPEDS Fall Enrollment (EF) survey.
- 2: 2008-07 and 2007-08 does not use survey data, it is recreated from administrative records. Data were not comparably collected for all undergraduates until 2008-09.
- 3: Pell data were updated for 2010-11 and 2011-12 to correct over reporting.
- 4: TAP data are not reported to the federal government, 2007-08 are reconstructed from administrative records, 2014-15 and on use frozen IPEDS data sets.
- 5: Reported as 10,233. Will be corrected when prior year correction window opens in late 2019.



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**TESTIMONY OF ENRIQUE PENA,
QUEENS COLLEGE SENATOR OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE,
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
REGARDING FREE PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

**BEFORE MEMBERS OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

November 1, 2019

Good afternoon Senators,

My name is Enrique Peña, I'm a student from Queens College. I'm a Dreamer. And I am a USS delegate.

I came in 2016 from Peru. I'm currently studying Political Science and plan to go to Law school afterwards because I understand the burden students like me face, therefore, I want to be that support for others; support that I wish I received as a student.

I have been active in my community since the day I enrolled in a high school in Queens in February 2016, and did not stop even after I graduated in June 2017. I kept going back to my old high school to encourage students to go to college and support them with applications and searching for scholarships, etc. I understand the importance of education, and even more among my fellow dreamers, that came to this country facing the biggest hardships just to get that opportunity in this country, in the state where, in our shore, is engraved that promise "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free"¹.

Today, I am heartbroken to say that we are letting down that promise. I can tell you that one of the most brilliant students in my high school has been pushed into this military complex because he fell off the cracks of educational opportunities and financial aid and won't be able to afford college.

However, the biggest example I can give you today is how three years ago, my school counselor started posting flyers about the "Excelsior Scholarship", New York State's 'free college program'. I don't think I ever felt that level of excitement before, when I walked into the high school classroom where I met with those students and basically begged them all to go and apply because that would finally give them that chance that each time looks more distant. But you guessed it, to my surprise, my school counselor told me that, today, 3 years after the program started, still not one single student from that whole high school has qualified for Excelsior.

¹ NY Statue of Liberty: <https://www.nps.gov/stll/learn/historyculture/colossus.htm>



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New York State gave those kids hope and then took it away with no mercy.

Now, I was in Albany when the Dream Act was passed, and I thought that would make a difference. As soon as the vote passed, I called some of my students and told them to please, try it this time, and I'd support them with any questions they may have, as I too was planning on applying for the Dream Act.

In order to qualify for the Dream Act, students must have attended high school for a minimum of two years. However, as I mentioned earlier, I was in high school for a year and a half, so I did not qualify. This unnecessary, rigid, requirement has created a barrier for me to attend CUNY, which has been, time after time, touted as the most affordable university in the nation. But if you're a dreamer who, for some reason, did not qualify for the Dream Act, like myself, then CUNY isn't affordable by any means.

While I myself did not qualify for the Dream Act, most of the students that I know did so I knew I had to remain positive about it. I sat down with them. We filled everything out. And today, November 1st, most of them are still waiting for an answer.

Even though this country is filled with immigrants, people like me continue to be left out of receiving any kind of financial support, and it shows through the shortcomings of the Dream Act.

I heard many arguments that were made against the Dream Act when it was voted on in the assembly. What I don't understand is the rhetoric around it. How we make this dream of ours to get to college so complicated, so hard to reach. Our legislators keep allowing tuition hikes and still have not given us a budget to cover the regular incremental costs; the TAP Gap for CUNY is more than \$70 million, and the PSC just finalized its contract, calling it a "historic" win, even when the majority of their base, adjuncts, are barely receiving any significant increase.

You are starving our only resource to find that education we came here for. So next time you vote on a budget that does not include the necessary funding to fix our university and provide funding for better educational opportunity programs like the Dream Act, like ASAP, like SEEK, I beg you to come to my high school in Queens and look at those kids in the eyes and tell them that you don't care about their future. I cannot find other explanation.

Lastly, I'd like to echo Timothy Hunter, our USS chairperson's ask that legislators be open to ideas, be bold, and be creative when thinking of how to fund higher education because, as I mentioned earlier, the current process does not work for most of us. Our students demand that we seek out a path for free CUNY. With that said, I'd like to thank Senator Gounardes for



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introducing Senate bill S5255, which would codify free public school from K-12 in addition to free SUNY and CUNY. This is a bold move from you Senator, and I want to let you know that student organizers like myself, and thousands like us throughout CUNY support this bill.

We understand there is much work to be done but please be aware that there are hundreds of thousands of students who are hungry for free CUNY and we are only waiting for the right strategy to organize around. The codification of free public school seems to be the perfect strategy. Senator Stavisky, we hope that you will co-sponsor bill S5255. We are grateful that you are championing the TAP Gap, but the TAP Gap was a state-created issue. The fiscal crisis that made NYC start charging tuition was, again, our governments issue. Time and time again, students have to pay the price, literally, through tuition, and then we beg for scraps like restoration of funds for educational opportunity programs, and we are supposed to be grateful for the state filling in the TAP Gap?

I don't think so. We want a free fully-funded CUNY. CUNY was free for most of its history, and it can be free again, because if it was possible for our institution to remain open to students providing free education during the Great Depression, we can afford to bring it back in our current situation. But we need the higher education committee starts prioritizing a legislative strategy, not just to barely maintain CUNY by filling in the TAP Gap, not just by providing a tuition freeze-- because that doesn't solve the problem of tuition. We want to eliminate tuition Senator Stavisky. Please be the bold and progressive leader that CUNY students need.

Thank you.

Sakia Fletcher
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November 1, 2019

Save Medgar Evers College!

The current conditions at Medgar Evers College are threatening and undermining the mission of the college. It is for that reason that I, Sakia Fletcher the current Medgar Evers College Student Government Association President urge this New York State Senate Higher Education Committee to help **Save Medgar Evers College!**

You must help to **Save Medgar Evers College** now! This institution is a vital higher educational pillar of educational, economic, cultural and social empowerment for the central Brooklyn community and New York City. The college is a (PBI) Pordomily Black Institution and serves a mostly female, poverty-stricken, disenfranchised student body. The students at my college are need the most but receives the least amount of resources from CUNY, the City and the State in comparison to other CUNY colleges.

We the Students of Medgar Evers College put forth these course of actions that must be taken to **Save Medgar Evers College!**

1. Resignation of Medgar Evers College President Rudolph Crew, Provost Okereke, & their executive staff.
2. New academic infrastructures (new buildings)
3. Student residential dormitories
4. Removal of portable classroom trailers
5. Capital Funding to pay for new infrastructure projects
6. Free, permanent, unlimited access to the new recreational facilities at the Bedford Armory

Medgar Evers College is in dire need of new academic infrastructures and residential dormitories. The Medgar Evers College students lack student housing and campus space to foster an environment in which we can continue to succeed and thrive.

Additionally, the mission and integrity of Medgar Evers College is being compromised by President Rudolph Crew and Provost Okereke. The President and Provost of Medgar Evers College do not have the best interest of the students in advocating for new student academic infrastructures. The college's executive leadership as failed in seizing recent opportunities to occupy additional land, gaining and managing capital funding.

Furthermore, the mismanagement of the college's finances by the present executive administration has left the students suffering from dilapidated infrastructures, disrepair campus facilities, and outdated technology.

In regards to outdated technology, students at Medgar Evers College utilize slow old computers, despite paying student technology fees every semester. We believe Student technology fees (STF) are being misused and mismanaged. We request an independent auditor to examine STF from the past five years until now. We believe the findings from this audit will prove ongoing corruption of student technology fees at the college.

The Medgar Evers College students demand the resignation of current executive leadership of Medgar Evers College. We request that the Chancellor of the City University of New York (CUNY) Felix V. Matos Rodriguez, and the CUNY Board of Trustees and the Governor of New York State remove the President, Provost and his executive staff from Medgar Evers College.

Furthermore, to help **Save Medgar Evers College** we must be provided additional land from the City of New York. The State must invest capital funding to build new academic and dormitory buildings. A substantial capital budget is needed to insure the advancement of the marginalized students the college serves.

Subsequently, the Medgar Evers College community is under siege by real estate developments willing to jeopardize the heritage and existence of our beloved institution. The proposed redevelopment plans will guarantee gentrification within the Medgar Evers College Community, displacing the very people the college was meant to serve. The college has a legacy of providing a higher education and vocational opportunities to predominantly black individuals from underserved, low-income households. The majority of these individuals are either black single mothers or come from black single mother households. For these individuals, Medgar Evers College serves as a means to earn a college degree and lift one's self and family out of poverty. Hence, the longevity of Medgar Evers College is crucial to the socioeconomic advancement of the black community in Brooklyn and the greater New York City area at large. If the proposed redevelopment is fulfilled, this pillar for black academic achievement will be all but destroyed.

The redevelopment projects slated for the South Crown Heights community will be disadvantageous to the heritage of the Medgar Evers College community. The projects listed below serves no direct or indirect benefit to the Medgar Evers College community. The planned gentrification projects pose an immediate threat to the educational, social, mental, environmental and economic well-being of the Medgar Evers College community. We, the Medgar Evers College community, refuse to watch in silence while our livelihood be dismantled. The needs of the Medgar Evers College community will not be rectified, but worsened by the planned redevelopment projects. Medgar Evers College needs prioritized developmental growth investments from both private and public entities.

We are the only public college in the City of New York that have classes in trailers due to lack of classroom space.

The buildings in which Medgar Evers College occupy are suffering from depleting and dilapidated conditions. In particular, the Carroll Street building have the most hazardous conditions. For

example, classroom ceilings are falling apart, the basement in disrepair, and has an environmentally dangerous exterior and interior infrastructure.

The Medgar Evers College campus requires several new buildings, modernized facilities, upgrades to current infrastructures, and open indoor/outdoor recreational areas; as well as a new fitness and weight room, vocational and occupational training labs, and a state-of-the-cultural theater are only a few of the numerous necessities the college needs to flourish. Medgar Evers College students also require dormitory facilities. Co-operative permanent Medgar Evers College community housing is also a major necessity. Such requirements are vital to the future prosperity of the college and the community at large.

Medgar Evers College campus currently occupy five buildings, most of which are designated for offices and faculty/staff areas, with little to no student space. Our most recent building is eight years old. The Academic Building 1 was erected in 2010; however, and of all of the buildings need to be remodeled, renovated and upgraded.

The Medgar Evers College community is located in Central Brooklyn and the community presently has the highest number of people suffering from housing displacement in all of Brooklyn. We currently have a homeless family shelter next to our Carroll Street building campus. This shelter is a content reminder of the Medgar Evers College community's need for housing and other essential resources. As a result, student and community moral is at an all-time low. Due to the neglect and deliberate disregard for the Medgar Evers College Community.

The five proposed redevelopment projects for South Crown Heights community all of the proposed projects have no direct or indirect benefits to the Medgar Evers College students or the MEC community.

- Project: 40 Crown Street: Laundry Facility
- Project: 960 Franklin Avenue: Spice Factory
- 1535 Bedford Avenue: BP Gas Station
- 1579 Bedford Avenue: Bedford Armory
- 450 Eastern Parkway: First Baptist Church

In addition, all of these are redevelopment projects that require rezoning approval by the New Your City Council. In particular, Majority Leader, Ms. Laurie A. Cumbo, the Democratic Council member of the 35th District, which covers the Medgar Evers College Community has consistently voted in favor of real estate development, Examples of Ms. Cumbo's community oppositionist habits include, the privatization of public land at the Bedford Armory.

More recent examples involve the 17-story high-rise apartment complex at 40 Crown Street. This planned 17-story project is located in a 12-story height limit zone and adjacent to Medgar Evers College's Bedford building. The impact of a 17-story apartment building being adjacent to Medgar Evers College's 3-story building will be a sure indication of a conquered and subjugated black community. In essence, the scheduled large-scale redevelopment projects planned for South Crown Heights are at enmity with the core values, culture, legacy, and mandate of Medgar Evers College.

The collaboration between the college and the community is the foundation of the institution. However, that partnership is being halted because the elected officials and the real estate redevelopers, CUNY, and the City, State of New York need to invest in the growth of Medgar

Evers College.. Students are not able to thrive at the college because the growth in population is not being supported by the current infrastructure. In other words, the college lacks space and resources to support the educational, social and economical needs of the student body.

In conclusion, we need your assistance in **Saving Medgar Evers College!** This college represents hope and ideals that inspire students and faculty of the college to pursue truth, as well as, a path to academic freedom and social justice.

EMAIL: CPMIMEC@hotmail.com

BROKEN PROMISES

*President Crew & Provost Okereke's 6 Years of
"Leadership" @ Medgar Evers College*

Promised Goals, 25% increase in:

- enrollment
- first-time full-time freshmen
- retention
- graduation rates
- internships
- \$25M in fundraising.



R E S I G N

6 Years Later:

- 43% decrease in enrollment
- 40% decrease in first-time full-time freshmen
- 50% overall retention rate
- 4-year graduation rate = 4%
- 20% decrease in internships
- MEC's debt is over \$15 Million
- Over \$10M in Missing Student Technology Fees
- Gross Mismanagement (e.g., student payouts, excessive overtime pay, Pipeline Program, etc.)

Let your voice be heard!

SAVE OUR STUDENTS & OUR COMMUNITY!!!

WE DEMAND THEIR RESIGNATION!!!

EROSION OF BLACK & BROWN CULTURE @ MEC

COMMITTEE TO PROTECT THE MISSION & INTEGRITY OF MEC

Dear Medgar Wiley Evers Family,

We write to you on a matter of utmost importance, regarding the leadership of our beloved Medgar Evers College.

Within the context of the legacy of Medgar Evers College, it has become transparent that Dr. Crew and Provost Okereke have lost the faith and confidence of the faculty and the staff, and it is our very strong belief that their continued leadership of the College will cause irreparable harm to the institution, to the students, and to the community we serve.

The Crew--Okereke leadership has fostered a culture that is inimical to the values espoused by Medgar Wiley Evers. We now have a culture openly hostile to collegiality, inquiry and scholarship. The Crew--Okereke leadership lacks the capacity for the sustained focus necessary to drive meaningful improvements in scholarship, meaningful improvements in teaching and learning, meaningful improvements in our service to the community and meaningful improvements in our operational effectiveness. There is very little understanding and appreciation at the executive level of what it takes to effectively manage Medgar Evers College and broad contempt for the expertise of faculty and staff in their respective domains. This is a leadership that has effectively disengaged from the challenges of the community we serve and from the College.

Faculty and staff that resonate the legacy and purpose of the College have a specified mission: driving scholarship, teaching and learning, community service and operational effectiveness in support of connecting the young people who come to us, particularly those from the central Brooklyn community, economically-empowering opportunities. Our's is a mission which seeks to honor the memory and the work of Medgar Wiley Evers.

The Crew--Okereke leadership has demonstrated that it cannot accomplish this task. It is (and has been for some years now) a leadership that is simply concerned with maintaining itself on the 3rd floor of the Bedford Building.

We write to ask that you recommend to the Chancellor of the City University of New York that they be removed from their positions of leadership at the College.

Five years ago, the Crew--Okereke team set, as their targets, the following goals, which they labeled the twenty--fives(25s):

25\% in enrollment;

25\% increase in first time, fulltime freshman (with 25% of same being baccalaureate level students);

25\% increase in retention;

25\% increase in graduation rates;

25\% increase in internships; and

\$25 million in fund raising;

In every single category above the Crew-Okereke leadership has failed to achieve its goal. More, in every single category, the data makes clear, the College is either at or lags 2015 levels!

In five years we have made no measurable progress on the key goals defined by this leadership team.

While faculty and students eagerly embraced these goals, the painful realization, broadly shared by both faculty and staff today, is that the Crew--Okereke leadership does not have the capacity to effect the proposed change. Perhaps even more painful is the understanding that there was no real intent on the part of this leadership to pursue these goals. In a sense the Crew--Okereke team has perpetrated a fraud against Medgar Evers College. To wit, these goals would have required purposeful and significant investments by the College, the University, and outside funding sources. The record is clear, the financial and programmatic investments required to ensure the attainment of the 25s within a five-year period have never been made.

As its failure to deliver on its agenda has become evident and as faculty have withdrawn their support, the Crew-Okereke team has engendered a culture of fear to silence its critics. It has resorted to bullying faculty and staff to coerce adherence to the administration line. It has emotionally abused and disrespected our colleagues and their expertise, and it has relied on nepotism, cronyism and extremely unethical arrangements to buy loyalty.

Our primary concern and focus is the well-being of Medgar Evers College (MEC) students and faculty/staff who contribute to upholding the legacy of Medgar Wiley Evers, the core stakeholders of MEC's educational system. Medgar Wiley Evers is the epitome of bravery, sacrifice, and high intellect; in light of him knowing that he would be assassinated, he fought incessantly for equity and justice. Medgar Wiley Evers's legacy and culture of the college has been under attack. This attack has been subtle, latent, and premeditated by MEC's leadership, spearheaded by Rudolph Crew and Augustine Okereke, whom hold the title of President, and Provost, respectively, of MEC. As a result of their lack of leadership, MEC has experienced a continual decline in its retention rate of incoming Freshman. The leave-rate for Freshmen students was 36%, 41%, 41%, 41%, and 45% for 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, respectively, representing a steady increase in losing Freshman students at MEC. As MEC Freshmen represent the bulk of the campus student population, full-time first-time freshmen (FTFTF) retention is thus a major concern for MEC. One-year retention rate decreased about 12% for baccalaureate first-time freshmen from 70.5% to 58.4%, for the Fall 2016 and Fall 2017 cohort, correspondingly. For associate level FTFTF, one-year retention rate decreased by about 3.5 percentage points from 58% for the Fall 2016 cohort to 54.5% for the Fall 2017 cohort. This continual decrease in enrollment (specifically, the Full-Time Equivalent from Fall to Spring) is amplified by increases in enrollment throughout CUNY (16 to 24% at CUNY's Community Colleges and 9 to 10% at Senior Colleges) but not at Medgar Evers College. A continued decrease in enrollment for one of the few PBIs in America, has a significant negative impact in the education of people of color.

In parallel, one of the direct monetary modes to support student services -- that is, through MEC's Student Technology Fee (STF) has been plagued with grandiose misappropriation and misuse of funds. Do keep in mind, that MEC's STF amounts to ~ \$1.5 M/year, and the use of these funds, controlled by select MEC administration (led by "President" Rudolph Crew, has been continually misused. SGA has been working with MEC administration to provide greater transparency in the use of these funds but have been stone-walled with lies and deception. Since 2013, MEC has accumulated approximately \$10 M dollars from STF, and it is very clear that those funds are not used to service students. Even more egregious, it is very clear that these funds are not used for any

campus activities – AT ALL. For example, SGA was told by “Provost” Augustine Okereke that STF was used for the recently-installed security entrances on campus when those were actually supported by capital funds. Moreover, there were several cases where faculty won STF grants and did not receive STF funds to implement such grants (e.g., Professor Rosa Zavala in MEC’s Physics and Computer Science Department, MDEC did not receive \$16,000 for the purchase of computers for students, etc.). Moreover, MEC SGA held a suite of meetings with MEC administration to attain a budget breakdown of STF funds; SGA and other student members repeatedly tried to attain STF budget details, but MEC administrative staff did not provide any transparency in this regard. The MEC student community would greatly appreciate a full audit for MEC's STF as well as other monetary transactions before Rudolph Crew and during his tenure at MEC. The fiscal matter at MEC is dire as the facilities are exponentially deteriorating (e.g., bathrooms frequently have no soap, toilet paper, faculty have to buy their own printing paper, lack of running water in bathrooms, sewage odors in the buildings, no AC in the summer, labs are not able to run due to non-functional facilities and equipment, etc.).

The factors explained above has also been coupled to nepotistic hiring of administrative staff, workplace bullying and victim shaming, which has been rampant throughout Rudolph Crew’s tenure at MEC. A significant number of faculty and administrators, who are/were well-received by the MEC student community for their dedicated work toward student and community advancement, did not get rehired. David Taylor (replaced by VP Clark, Office of Administration & Finance), Dean Jones (replaced by Lakisha Murray as Chief of Staff), Eugene Pursoo (replaced by Michael Seeling as Director of Study Abroad), Dr. Dr. Stanley Mims (replaced by Michael Seeling as Director of Pipeline Programs), Dr. Byron Price (replaced by Dr. Jo-Anne Rolle), the non-reappointment of Dr. Derrick Griffith (former Dean of MEC, which ultimately lead to him dying in 2015’s Amtrak Train accident as he was returning from a job interview), the removal of Mohammed Riyad as part of MEC’s BMI-MDEC (whom revitalized MEC’s MDEC, which has culminated in greater monetary capacity to serve a much large cross-section of MEC students, As an Academic Coordinator, he has instituted strategies to produce positive outcomes, such as an increase in GPA for 999, an increase in student enrollment from 28 to 1274 within two years, a 97% retention rate, an improved cumulative GPA from 2.2 to 2.9, a course completion rate of 91%, 54 students received internal/external scholarships, etc.), the non-reappointment and tenure denial of Dr. Christopher Boxe (who published ~50% of MEC’s SSH&T’s publications since 2012, raised ~\$725K in grants since 2012, empowers students and the broader Brooklyn community, was approved College-Wide for reappointment and tenure, juxtaposed this case is the Presidential approval of reappointment with tenure of a faculty in Dr. Boxe’s department, Dr. Lawrence Pratt, who received a plethora of continued student complaints (which include sleeping class, which are supported by circulated videos of the Dr. Lawrence Pratt sleeping in class) and did not receive a favorable vote through College Wide P&B for tenure and reappointment), – just to name a few. Rudolph Crew’s actions are indicative of a clear bias toward faculty and staff who actually work for the betterment of the campus and supports those that serve his agenda. All of these practices have been implemented by Rudolph Crew – mostly without any due process. This has created a toxic environment for all stakeholders of the College. These practices have eroded the legacy of Medgar Wiley Evers and the essence of what makes Medgar Evers College so unique as an educational epicenter for the community. These practices are exemplified by the recent removal

of SGA President Elect, Sakia Fletcher, from a Community Meeting as she exercised one of her 1st Amendment rights – *that is*, freedom of speech. Sakia Fletcher, under Dr. Crew's order was removed (without any due process) from that meeting by MEC security and subsequently suspended (without any due process), indefinitely. Fortunately, after her recent hearing, all of the charges against her were dismissed. Rudolph Crew's administration have been in multiple lawsuits – most recently Sylvia Kynard (former Title IX Officer), Cory Wright (former Chief Administrative Superintendent at MEC), Johnathan Sandville (former Director of Alumni Relations), Dr. Brenda Green (Professor of English) – just to name a few. Presently, MEC has an exorbitant amount of faculty grievances due to non-reappointments, denial of promotions, denial of sabbatical requests, etc.

Rudolph Crew and Augustine Okereke have been defrauding the Medgar Evers College since summer 2013 – 6 long years and counting. They promised: expansion of the campus, \$25M raised in 5 years, beautification of the campus, and most egregiously, stark increases in enrollment. All of these promises were in vain due to their baseless support. Given the pronounced factors above, it is not a surprise that exemplar faculty, administrators, and students do not want to come and stay at MEC – and even worse are being targeted and fired by Rudolph Crew. Rudolph Crew has created an environment where mutual understanding, innovation, and transparency are not rewarded, accepted, and allowed. How can MEC grow and sustain itself in such an oppressive environment, that solely serves the self-perpetuating notions of Rudolph Crew himself? The data and the climate on campus provides transparency into the continued destruction of the campus under Rudolph Crew's directive.

The core contributing factor to the destruction of Medgar Evers College is: Rudolph Crew. He uses bullying tactics to divide and attack anyone he does not agree with his perspective. Rudolph Crew is known to curse inflammatory and derogatory remarks at staff frequently if he disagrees with their point of view. He has eroded the culture of Black Intellectualism on the campus by orchestrating its destruction by pitting unintellectual puppets he can control against the Black male persona on campus. At present, Rudolph Crew's cabinet is comprised of Lakisha Murray (whom he has dated since the start of his appointment at MEC, students and faculty can attest to their non-platonic relationship as they have been seen in public often, huge conflict of interest), Gerald Possman (who does nothing on campus and does nothing on campus (AT ALL) and does whatever Rudolph Crew tells him to do), Jacqueline Clarke (manages the flow of monetary misappropriations on campus), Jennifer James (Director of Communications – recently married Rudolph Crew – another huge conflict of interest – does nothing on campus – AT ALL – who he also gave an ample salary raise – this behavior is synonymous to Rudolph Crew's relationship with Lakisha Murray, his Chief of Staff – ample salary and raises via quid pro quo), Johnathan Hardaway (sports lawyer and now MEC Legal Counsel, is totally unbiased and does whatever the Rudolph Crew tells him to do), Tanya Isaacs (is totally incompetent and does whatever Rudolph tells her to do), Augustine Okereke (does whatever Rudolph Crew tells him to do and is guided by his reptilian brain – e.g., his longstanding philandering with his former executive secretary, Kiesha Ball, and Hollie Jones (does nothing on campus (AT ALL) and does whatever Rudolph Crew tells her to do). The most damaging part of this attack on Medgar Evers College is its toll on the women stakeholders of the campus, which is comprised of ~75% Black Women. Rudolph Crew and Augustine Okereke's

philanders with Black Women staff on campus has detracted and disgusted women students from attending and wanting to stay at MEC. Rudolph Crew and Augustine Okereke's duplicitous natures are transparent as they do not interact with MEC students (AT ALL) – but selectively states the opposite at select events (e.g., graduation, political and external venues, etc.). They are stating to the MEC community that Black Women need to have sex with their male counterparts to be successful. Simultaneously, they are stating that Smart Black Men are not wanted at MEC – only unintellectual persons can succeed at MEC (and thus in life). There is NO Leadership at MEC – just a cabal that want to maintain the status quo for Rudolph Crew and his cabinet.

Under Rudolph Crew's directive, his cabal continues to erode the legacy of Medgar Wiley Evers and MEC's mission – thus changing landscape of the college for the worse. Instead of reappointing (and allotting tenure and promotion) to those that resonate with the community and genuine pipeline initiatives, his team is empowering those that do the total opposite, which serves his and only his agenda – that is, to continue his Presidency (and thus his salary), at the detriment of the state of Medgar Evers College. This is crucial as MEC represents one of the few places PBIs that black students can attend in America (and one of the only PBIs in the Northeastern region of the US). Additional recent activities are indicative of this modus operandi (e.g., Presidential appointments of Department Chairs: 1) Presidential appointment of Dr. Joshua Sussan being the Chair of the Department of Mathematics; Presidential appointment of Dr. Keming Liu being the Chair of the English Department; and 3) Presidential appointment of Dr. David Ahn being the Chair of Computer Information Systems Department). Lastly, within the context of an already established Strategic Plan (which had input from the MEC campus faculty, students, and staff), Rudolph Crew recently had a closed retreat, where he invited only his cabinet/cabal and CUNY Chancellor Felix Matos, and presented a different so-called 3-5 strategic plan for the college; campus members became aware of this through social media and have no clue what this supposed plan entails. It is clear that Crew is aiming to hoodwink Chancellor Matos with another scheme as Crew has not had an official cabinet meeting in over 1 year on campus.

The recent media coverage is another venue that provides more transparency to Crew's continuous lies. Crew claims to blame other people for thwarting efforts to grow the college. Who has actually done that – especially under his 'leadership,' which has clearly shown that since he arrived, enrollment has continually decreased. Crew further claims that people are also thwarting efforts to expand degree offerings, which he himself has been at the forefront of utilizing the Provost and his cabinet to block/delay faculty, that he does not personally like, from implementing new courses and degree programs. Crew also claims that the Educational Foundation Board continues to raise funds – which funds is he talking about, how much money as this is very new to faculty across campus (since fundraising on the campus, from that source is non-existent). He further claims that MEC had its largest graduating class June 2019. Although this may be true, at least 50% of these graduates are non-returning Associate degree graduates – specifically, 847 graduates are Associate degree graduates, where at least 95% of these graduates do not return to MEC. The remaining graduates are a combination of at least 6- to 13-year graduates. More importantly, this vast remaining 50% of graduates will work on the non-skilled service sector, especially those that pay minimum wage and do not require a college degree. From 6 to 10 years after graduating MEC, students earn a mean salary of \$28,700 to \$38,400, respectively. Also, this vast majority will not

matriculate toward professional programs (e.g., graduate, medical, law school, etc.). Specifically, there were 853 Bachelor graduates (out of the 1700 graduates); 54.5% (465 Bachelor graduates) of the 853 Bachelor students graduated with more than 140 credits and 381 students (44.6% of Bachelor graduates) graduated with GPA < 3.0. Nationwide, the average graduation rate for first-time undergraduates attending classes full-time is: 33.4% after four years, 47.6% after six years, and 49.2% after eight years. With a 4-year, 6-year, and 8-year Bachelor graduation rate = 4%, 17%, and 20%, respectively, this equates to 34 students (4-year graduates, 4% of 853 Bachelor graduates), 145 students (6-year graduates, 17% of Bachelor graduates), and 171 students (8-year graduates, 20% of Bachelor graduates), totaling 350 students. Therefore, 503 (59% of 853 Bachelor graduates) students took more than 8 years to graduate.

All of the above has equated to MEC's fiscal deficit of ~ \$16M, where Crew's administration added ~ \$13.5M debt to the college. The conundrum lies in the source of this debt within the context of enrollment Full-Time Student Equivalent (e.g., each Fall to Spring): (i) Fall 2013 (4275), Spring 2014 (3954); (ii) Fall 2014 (4324), Spring 2015 (3854); (iii) Fall 2015 (4513), Spring 2016 (4087); (iv) Fall 2016 (4760, MEC Dashboard # = 5356 w/ a tuition difference = \$1,886,340), Spring 2017 (4127, DB# = 4801 w/ a tuition difference = \$2,233,210); (v) Fall 2017 (4806, DB# = 5288 w/ a tuition difference = \$1,573,730), Spring 2018 (4330, DB# = 4992 w/ a tuition difference = \$2,161,430); (vi) Fall 2018 (4705, DB# = 5198 w/ a tuition difference = \$1,658,945); and (vii) Spring 2019 (DB# = 4596, true value likely = ~ 4000 w/ a tuition difference = ~ \$2M). When you sum all of these figures, you get the approximate value ~\$11.5M. Still, if this pattern is consistent from the inception of Crew's tenure at MEC, it would undoubtedly sum to ~ \$16M deficit. I am not sure if these may mean anything, but one thing is for sure, the MEC Dashboard has a consistent discrepancy, which may have some deeper meaning – not sure.???.? {see attached files to double-check data}. It is also transparent that this deficit may be contributed by select line items that did not provide any value to the campus. For example, although the utilization of Grammarly at MEC was not approved, in 2018-2019, SGA discovered that MEC administration approved the use of Grammarly since Fall 2016 at a rate of \$100,000 per year. This is highly egregious as no one campus uses Grammarly. So, what is MEC paying for and to whom exactly? Another contributing factor toward MEC's debt may also be due to fraudulent overtime pay of select staff members. For example, MEC's Building & Grounds personnel, accrue ~\$1.9M in overtime pay per year since 2012, which amounts to ~\$13.1M. The extremely high overtime hours per staff is indicative of fraud. Moreover, a financial strain is placed on MEC's budget as the Pipeline Program is absorbing a significant amount of the MEC School Program's Budget. Over 95% High School students that have participated never attend MEC.

As described in MEC's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, Crew target goals/outcomes were: 1) 25% increase in enrollment; 2) 25% increase in first-time, full-time freshman (25% of this cohort being Baccalaureate level students); 3) 25% increase in retention; 4) 25% increase in internships; 5) 25% increase in graduation rates; and 6) 25% increase in fundraising. Crew has not fulfilled any of these mandates. Rudolph Crew's 6-year track record at MEC speaks volumes and MEC wants only one thing: Rudolph Crew's resignation. The longer he remains, the worse it will get for the college, which will have longstanding negative repercussions for the student enrollment and faculty and staff stability.

The actions of the Crew-Okereke leadership are an affront to the memory of Medgar Wiley Evers and we must bring an end to it. Will CUNY and external stakeholders allow for Crew to completely destroy Medgar Evers College before it is too late?

Initial Points of Contact:

1) Eric Adams: 917-335-3179

2) Una S. T-Clarke: 917-846-1016

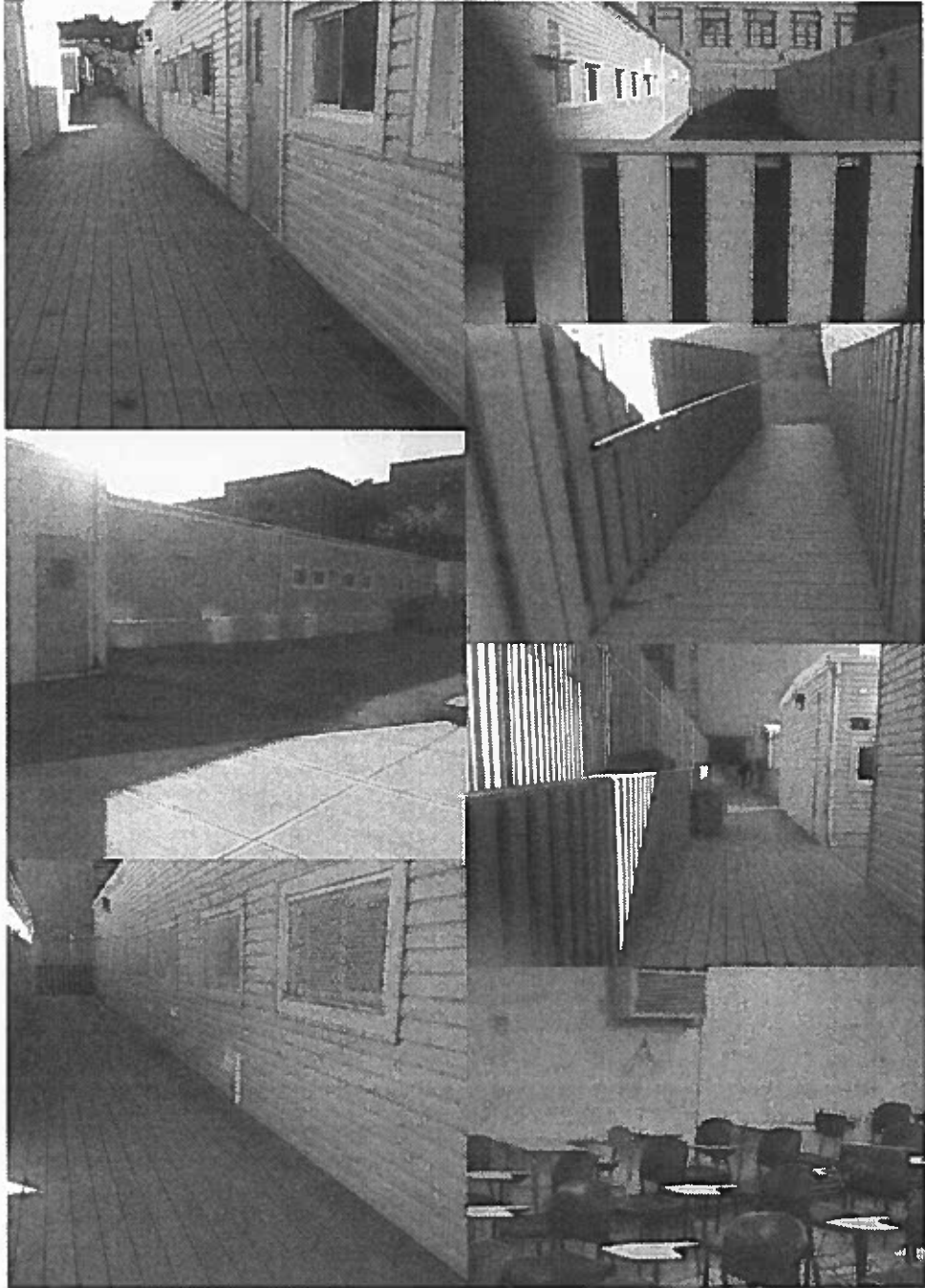
3) Yvette Clarke: Dereck and/or Terrence should have her c#

4) Kevin Parker: 646-338-5959

5) Diana Richardson: Terrence should have her c#

6) CUNY Chancellor: chancellor@cuny.edu 205 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017, Phone: 646.664.9100, Fax: 646.664.3868

7) CUNY Board of Trustees: <https://www2.cuny.edu/about/trustees/>



THOMAS P. DINAPOLI
COMPTROLLER



110 STATE STREET
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12236

STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER

November 29, 2017

Mr. James B. Milliken
Chancellor
City University of New York
205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10004

Re: Medgar Evers College: Controls Over
Bank Accounts
Report 2017-F-14

Dear Chancellor Milliken:

Pursuant to the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and Article II, Section 8 of the State Finance Law, we have followed up the actions taken by the officials of Medgar Evers College (MEC) of the City University of New York (CUNY) to implement the recommendations contained in our audit report, *Medgar Evers College: Controls Over Bank Accounts* (Report 2015-S-92).

Background, Scope, and Objective

CUNY is the largest urban university in the United States, consisting of 24 institutions. CUNY provides education for more than 269,000 degree-credit students and 247,000 adult, continuing, and professional education students. MEC is the newest of 11 senior colleges within CUNY. MEC's mission is to develop and maintain high quality, professional, career-oriented undergraduate degree programs. The college is named after the civil rights leader Medgar Evers. It has approximately 6,900 students as of the fall 2017 semester and is located in Brooklyn, New York.

MEC maintains bank accounts for various purposes to fulfill its mission. These include the Educational Foundation Account for the collection of donations; the Student Faculty Association Account for the collection of Student Activity Fees; and the Ella Baker/Charles Romain Child Development Center Account for the costs related to the care of the children of MEC students. As of October 6, 2017, MEC maintained 13 active accounts with a total balance of \$3.6 million. CUNY's Cash Management and Banking Policy (Policy), effective July 1, 2008, requires the University Comptroller (UC) and the Vice President of Finance and Administration at each college to ensure that each bank account complies with the university's policies and procedures. Prior to establishing any new bank account, the policy requires colleges to notify the UC by completing a

transparency and efficiency within each of its accounting and cash management functions, but MEC officials could not document that they had implemented these additional policies and procedures.

We also noted that, similar to our initial audit, the bank accounts on CUNY Central's listing did not reconcile with the accounts reported by MEC. CUNY Central's listing of bank accounts did not include three MEC foundation accounts, while MEC's list did not contain two accounts that did not contain any funds, but were still open.

Recommendation 2

Strengthen the control environment to assure that funds are appropriately disbursed from bank accounts by:

- *Reinforcing with staff the importance of adhering to New York State, City, and CUNY requirements; and*
- *Training Finance and Administration employees on the appropriate policies and procedures related to bank accounts and banking operations.*

Status – Partially Implemented

Agency Action – MEC provided documentation that employees from the various Finance and Administration offices attended training covering various areas such as budgeting, purchasing, and reporting revenues on October 13 and 14, 2016. However, the training did not address policies and procedures related to bank accounts and banking operations requirements. Nonetheless, our testing of a judgmental sample of 15 items totaling \$198,710 (from the cash disbursement accounts totaling \$922,009) for the period of June 1, 2016 to September 12, 2017 found limited exceptions.

Major contributors to this report were Abe Fish, Christine Chu, and Joan Williams.

We would appreciate your response to this report within 30 days, indicating any actions planned to address any unresolved issues discussed in this report. We thank the management and staff of MEC for the courtesies and cooperation extended to our auditors during this review.

Very truly yours,

Carmen Maldonado
Audit Director

cc: Gordon Taylor
Division of the Budget

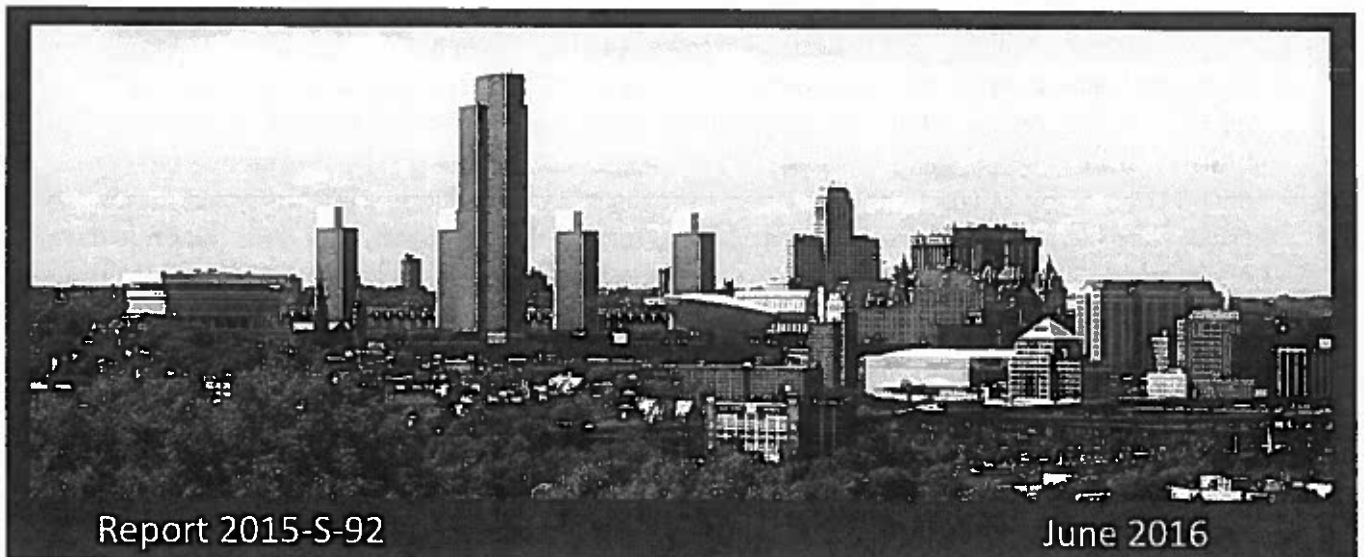


New York State Office of the State Comptroller
Thomas P. DiNapoli

Division of State Government Accountability

Medgar Evers College: Controls Over Bank Accounts

City University of New York



Report 2015-S-92

June 2016

Executive Summary

Purpose

To determine whether the City University of New York's (CUNY) Central Office (Central) officials adequately assured that all Medgar Evers College (MEC) bank accounts were authorized and used only for appropriate purposes and transactions. The audit covers MEC bank accounts for the period of January 1, 2013 through March 4, 2015.

Background

CUNY is the largest urban university in the United States, consisting of 24 institutions. CUNY provides education for more than 269,000 degree-credit students and 247,000 adult, continuing, and professional education students. MEC has approximately 6,700 students and is located in Brooklyn, New York. CUNY reported 567 bank accounts, including 24 at MEC that were active or closed during the period January 1, 2013 through March 4, 2015. As of July 31, 2015, MEC had 17 active accounts with a total balance of \$1.02 million.

CUNY's Cash Management and Banking Policy (Policy), effective July 1, 2008, requires the University Controller (UC) and the Vice President of Finance and Administration at each college to ensure that each bank account complies with University policies and procedures. Prior to establishing any new bank account, the Policy requires colleges to notify the UC by completing a "Bank Account Notification Form." The Office of the UC notifies the college within five business days of the receipt of the form as to whether there are any concerns with establishing the new account. If not contacted within this time frame, the college can proceed with the account.

Key Findings

- CUNY Central officials provided us with a list of 24 bank accounts that they were aware of at MEC. Fourteen accounts were opened after CUNY's bank authorization policy was established in 2008. However, CUNY Central did not have any of the required notification forms for these accounts. Additionally, our inquiry to banks located in the proximity of the college found an additional two accounts ("Medgar Evers College" and "Student Gov't Assoc. Medgar Evers College") that were not on the list. These findings point to weaknesses in the monitoring of bank accounts, which increase the risk that MEC personnel could conduct transactions using unauthorized accounts.
- Of 54 payments (totaling \$810,608) paid from six judgmentally selected bank accounts, 26 payments totaling \$118,782 were either improper (did not comply with CUNY and/or State and City policies and procedures) and/or were unsupported. For example, two payments (in August and September 2013) totaling \$32,421 were used to furnish the President's residence, which is owned by CUNY. To pay for these purchases, tax levy funds were transferred into the account used to pay for them, including \$50,000 from CUNY Central intended for the Child Care Center and \$40,000 from CUNY auxiliary and student fees. These funds were not used for their intended purposes.

State of New York
Office of the State Comptroller
Division of State Government Accountability

June 3, 2016

James B. Milliken
Chancellor
City University of New York
205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Chancellor Milliken:

The Office of the State Comptroller is committed to helping State agencies, public authorities, and local government agencies manage their resources efficiently and effectively. By so doing, it provides accountability for tax dollars spent to support government operations. The Comptroller oversees the fiscal affairs of State agencies, public authorities, and local government agencies, as well as their compliance with relevant statutes and their observance of good business practices. This fiscal oversight is accomplished, in part, through our audits, which identify opportunities for improving operations. Audits can also identify strategies for reducing costs and strengthening controls that are intended to safeguard assets.

Following is a report of our audit entitled *Medgar Evers College: Controls Over Bank Accounts*. This audit was performed pursuant to the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and Article II, Section 8 of the State Finance Law.

This audit's results and recommendations are resources for you to use in effectively managing your operations and in meeting the expectations of taxpayers. If you have any questions about this report, please feel free to contact us.

Respectfully submitted,

Office of the State Comptroller
Division of State Government Accountability

Key Recommendations

- Fully comply with prescribed procedures for opening new bank accounts and the monitoring of existing accounts. Develop and implement additional policies and procedures to administer bank accounts, as warranted.
- Strengthen the control environment to assure that funds are appropriately disbursed from bank accounts by:
 - Reinforcing with staff the importance of adhering to New York State, City, and CUNY requirements; and
 - Training Finance and Administration employees on the appropriate policies and procedures related to bank accounts and banking operations.

Other Related Audits/Reports of Interest

CUNY SPS: Controls Over Bank Accounts (2014-S-78)

CUNY Lehman College: Controls Over Bank Accounts (2014-S-69)

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This report is also available on our website at: www.osc.state.ny.us

Background

The City University of New York (CUNY) is the largest urban university in the United States, consisting of 24 institutions. CUNY provides education for more than 269,000 degree-credit students and 247,000 adult, continuing, and professional education students. Medgar Evers College (MEC) is the newest of 11 senior colleges within CUNY. MEC's mission is to develop and maintain high-quality, professional, career-oriented undergraduate degree programs in the context of liberal education. The college is named after the civil rights leader Medgar Evers. It has approximately 6,700 students and is located in Brooklyn, New York.

MEC maintains bank accounts for various purposes such as the Gifts and Grants Account, which is used to collect donations, the Student Faculty Association Account to receive student activity fees that can be used for approved events and purchases for students, and the Child Care Center Account for costs related to the care of the children of MEC students. CUNY reported there were 567 bank accounts, including 24 at MEC, which were active or closed during the period January 1, 2013 through March 4, 2015. As of July 31, 2015, MEC had 17 active accounts with a total balance of \$1.02 million.

CUNY's Cash Management and Banking Policy (Policy), effective July 1, 2008, requires that the University Controller (UC) and the Vice President of Finance and Administration (VP) at each college assign a responsible official to ensure that each bank account complies with University policies and procedures. Prior to establishing any new bank account, the Policy requires colleges to notify the UC by completing a "Bank Account Notification Form," which is signed by the VP. All requests for banking services must be justified by the college. The Office of the UC notifies the college within five business days of the receipt of the form as to whether there are any concerns with establishment of the new account. If not contacted within this time frame, the college can proceed in establishing the new account. The Policy also specifies the types of expenditures that are prohibited. Examples of these expenditures include out-of-town travel advances and travel expense reimbursements.

CUNY also has policies, procedures, and guidelines that impact banking activities and are directly related to the specific types of funds deposited into each bank account and/or if the bank account is established as an incorporated related entity. There are three classifications of bank accounts:

- **Tax Levy Accounts.** These accounts consist of taxpayer dollars, such as monies collected for tuition and fees. Purchases paid with tax levy funds must follow CUNY, State, and/or City procurement guidelines, such as: determining if purchases can be made from preferred source vendors, obtaining bids for purchases of \$5,000 or higher, and ensuring advertisement for contracts over \$20,000. All purchases made with tax levy dollars should be processed through the University's purchasing departments.
- **Non-Tax Levy Accounts.** These accounts consist of funds (also known as "soft monies") that are not derived by tax levy appropriations or student fees. Purchases paid with non-tax levy funds are not governed by State procurement laws; however, pursuant to CUNY policies and guidelines, sound procurement practices must be followed. If a contract is

partially funded with New York State funds or expected to convert (in full or in part) to New York State funding, then full compliance with State procurement and CUNY procurement guidelines are required from the onset. Also, a CUNY memorandum dated May 3, 1995 states that college presidents are authorized to approve the expenditure of non-tax levy funds and they are responsible for applying the standards prescribed by the Public Officers Law (Section 74), and that such expenditures are reasonable, appropriate, and provide a commensurate benefit to the college and University community.

- **Related Entity Accounts.** Related entity accounts can consist of both tax levy and non-tax levy dollars, depending upon the related entity's source of funding and its overall mission. For example, student fees are the primary source of funding for the Student Association's related entities accounts. Thus, according to The City University Fiscal Handbook for the Control and Accountability of Student Activities Fees, all purchases made with student fees must follow State Laws. In addition, whether the Association or the college purchasing department processes a transaction, the University's purchasing regulations must be followed and the appropriate documentation and internal control requirements must be satisfied. This includes purchasing from a sole source with justification and obtaining formal competitive bids and formal contracts for purchases over \$20,000.

Audit Findings and Recommendations

The audit identified multiple internal control weaknesses that CUNY and MEC officials need to improve related to the use of bank accounts. These weaknesses impacted various aspects of the banking process, from opening and properly authorizing accounts to making deposits to and disbursements from such accounts. For example, MEC did not comply with the policy to notify CUNY Central when opening new bank accounts. In addition, funds were used for improper purposes, including those not consistent with the intent of the accounts. The weaknesses also increased the risk to CUNY and MEC of fraud, waste, and/or abuse.

Bank Account Authorization and Completeness of Account Lists

As noted previously, CUNY colleges are required to notify CUNY Central when opening and closing bank accounts. This policy was effective as of July 1, 2008. Prior to that date, no formal policy for bank accounts existed. Of the 24 bank accounts CUNY Central identified at MEC, ten were opened before the policy's effective date. However, for the remaining 14 bank accounts, CUNY Central did not have any of the required notification forms. There is, therefore, no assurance that CUNY Central officials were notified of these accounts.

To test the completeness of CUNY Central's list, we sent confirmation letters to banks located in the proximity of MEC. Based on the responses, we identified two additional accounts ("Medgar Evers College" and "Student Gov't Assoc. Medgar Evers College") that were not on the list from CUNY's Central Office. Weaknesses in the controls over authorization of bank accounts, coupled with the lack of assurance regarding the completeness of CUNY Central's account list, increase the risk that College personnel could use unauthorized accounts and be undetected by CUNY.

Propriety of Bank Account Activities

We reviewed a judgmental sample of 54 transactions totaling \$810,608 from six judgmentally selected accounts to determine if funds were used appropriately. We found 26 payments totaling \$118,782 (excluding payroll exceptions) that were not in compliance with applicable State and CUNY purchasing policies and/or were unsupported, as summarized in the following table.

| Account | Number of payments reviewed | Number of exceptions | \$ Amount Reviewed | Exception \$ Amount |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Gifts and Grants | 13 | 9 | \$114,628 | \$70,215 |
| Ella Baker Child Care Center | 10 | 8* | 108,656 | * |
| Imprest Fund | 2 | 2 | 2,800 | 2,800 |
| Student Faculty Association | 10 | 7 | 79,730 | 45,767 |
| Depository | 13 | 0 | 69,648 | 0 |
| Reimbursement | 6 | 0 | 435,146 | 0 |
| Totals | 54 | 26 | \$810,608 | \$118,782 |

*Payroll exceptions were discussed with MEC officials, who were reviewing the issue at time of our audit fieldwork, and consequently, actual amounts of overpayments had yet to be determined. The matter is to be addressed by MEC officials and fully resolved.

The following are examples of improper payments from several of the accounts we reviewed.

The Gifts and Grants Account was originally established to receive private donations. According to CUNY guidelines, these non-tax levy funds are to be used in support of educational, social, and cultural events and programs of the College.

- Two disbursements (in August and September 2013) totaling \$32,421 were used to furnish the President's residence, which is owned by CUNY. The items purchased included a sofa set for \$7,753, window treatments for \$5,839, three leather counter stools totaling \$1,944, a leather recliner for \$1,800, a media cabinet for \$1,342, and a coffee table for \$909. Prior to these purchases, this account had a deficit balance. However, to pay for these purchases, tax levy funds were transferred into the account, including \$50,000 from CUNY Central that was intended for Head Start and the Child Care Center and \$40,000 from CUNY auxiliary and student fees. As such, the transferred funds were not used for their intended purposes.
- Two disbursements (in December 2013 and March 2014) in the amounts of \$1,507 and \$581, respectively, were for electronic equipment and cable bills for the President's residence. These purchases were made on an MEC Corporate credit card, but appeared to be personal in nature.

The Ella Baker Child Care Center Account was created to pay expenses related to the care of the children of MEC students.

- For the pay period October 5, 2014 through October 18, 2014, the timesheet for an official, who was responsible for submitting MEC's payroll, was approved for 75 hours. However, according to an MEC payroll report, the individual was compensated for 90 hours (75 regular hours and 15 hours classified as "unscheduled time"). There were two additional pay periods where this official was compensated for more hours than her approved

timesheet. In response to our preliminary observation, MEC officials stated that they have taken appropriate measures to prevent future occurrences of this problem, and they will try to recover the overpayments.

The Student Faculty Association Account was established to receive student activity fees that can be used for approved student events and affairs.

- A disbursement on February 13, 2014, in the amount of \$4,125, was purportedly used for meal per diems for 35 students during a weekend conference. The supporting documentation in the invoice package, however, indicated that the monies were used to cover lodging costs for the conference, but it did not support the dollar amount paid for meals.
- A disbursement on July 21, 2014, in the amount of \$4,500, was purportedly used for an MEC Education Foundation study abroad scholarship. However, the supporting documentation, showed the money was actually spent for the Medgar Evers College Society for Public Administrators' first Annual Fund Raising Gala on February 7, 2014. Further, there was no supporting documentation that detailed how these monies were spent.

Overall, given the number of payments wherein MEC did not follow CUNY, State, or City procedures and guidelines, we concluded that MEC officials need to significantly improve the controls over the administration of the various funds deposited into MEC bank accounts. These improvements include full compliance with the aforementioned CUNY and State policies and procedures governing the administration and use of such funds.

In response to our preliminary findings, MEC officials generally agreed with them and stated that all future acquisitions and/or provisions of services will be directed to the College Purchasing Office.

Recommendations

1. Fully comply with prescribed procedures for opening new bank accounts and the monitoring of existing accounts. Develop and implement additional policies and procedures to administer bank accounts, as warranted.
2. Strengthen the control environment to assure that funds are appropriately disbursed from bank accounts by:
 - Reinforcing with staff the importance of adhering to New York State, City, and CUNY requirements; and
 - Training Finance and Administration employees on the appropriate policies and procedures related to bank accounts and banking operations.

Audit Scope and Methodology

The objective of this audit was to determine whether CUNY Central officials adequately assured that all of MEC's bank accounts were authorized and used only for appropriate purposes and transactions. The audit covers the period of January 1, 2013 through March 4, 2015.

To accomplish our objective, we interviewed MEC officials to obtain an understanding of their internal controls related to banking operations, and of their policies and procedures. We reviewed pertinent sections of State procurement policies and CUNY guidelines. We examined supporting documentation, procurement files, and disbursements made from bank accounts. We also canvassed 20 banks located near MEC to determine whether there were any accounts that were not disclosed by CUNY Central.

Further, we reviewed a judgmental sample of 54 transactions totaling \$810,608 from six bank accounts to determine whether the funds were used appropriately. The transactions were selected based on high dollar amounts or unusual descriptions.

We conducted our performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

In addition to being the State Auditor, the Comptroller performs certain other constitutionally and statutorily mandated duties as the chief fiscal officer of New York State. These include operating the State's accounting system; preparing the State's financial statements; and approving State contracts, refunds, and other payments. In addition, the Comptroller appoints members (some of whom have minority voting rights) to certain boards, commissions, and public authorities. These duties may be considered management functions for purposes of evaluating organizational independence under generally accepted government auditing standards. In our opinion, these functions do not affect our ability to conduct independent audits of program performance.

Authority

This audit was performed pursuant to the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and Article II, Section 8 of the State Finance Law.

Reporting Requirements

We provided a draft copy of this report to CUNY officials for their review and comment. Their comments were considered in preparing this final report and are attached in their entirety at the end of this final report. We did not include the documents provided with the response because they contain confidential information that should not be disclosed. In their response, MEC

officials acknowledged the deficiencies in the processes reviewed and agreed with our report's recommendations. They added that similar weaknesses were noted by their own reviews and corrective actions were taken. Our rejoinders to certain comments in CUNY's response are included in the report's State Comptroller's Comments.

Within 90 days after the final release of this report, as required by Section 170 of the Executive Law, the Chancellor of the City University of New York shall report to the Governor, the State Comptroller, and the leaders of the Legislature and fiscal committees, advising what steps were taken to implement the recommendations contained herein, and where recommendations were not implemented, the reasons why.

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Vision

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Agency Comments



Office of Administration and Finance



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April 6, 2016

Ms. Carmen Maldonado
Audit Director
Office of the State Comptroller
Division of State Government Accountability
59 Maiden Lane—21st Floor
New York, NY 10038

RE: Response to OSC Draft Audit Report
2015-S-92

Dear Ms. Maldonado:

This memorandum serves as the College's written acknowledgement of the NYS OSC key audit findings and the associated responses to the findings.

College Overview on Audit Findings

Medgar Evers College (MEC) acknowledges the deficiencies in the processes reviewed and agrees with a number of the auditors' findings for the bank account transactions. It is important to note that prior to the NYS OSC audit review the new Administration and Finance team at MEC identified some of the same internal control weaknesses noted by the auditors. To correct these weaknesses and effectively operate in compliance with the state's and CUNY's cash management regulations, MEC took drastic actions which included the restructuring of key areas, increased segregation of duties, and the restoration of fiscal accountability and stewardship in all levels of management. Additionally, written procedural and policy manuals were produced to effectively streamline internal processes and enforce adherence to required business practices. These manuals were introduced to support actions initiated, and written explanations in response to the findings were previously presented to NYS OSC auditors.

Listed below, in the order in which each key finding is presented, are MEC's responses:

Bank Account Authorization and Completeness of Account Lists

MEC has completed a thorough review of the draft audit report and has concluded that of the 24 bank accounts CUNY Central identified as MEC accounts, 10 were opened prior to the creation of the CUNY-wide Cash Management Guidelines of July 1, 2008. For the remaining 14 bank accounts, there were subsequent changes to the accounts that had been mandated by the Central Office. Since the directives came from the Central Office, MEC was of the understanding that the bank account notification documents were not required.

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|-------------------|
| * Comment 1 |
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*See State Comptroller's Comments, page 16

Additionally, MEC also conducted an independent investigation among neighborhood banking facilities and furnished responses received from JP Morgan Chase, Citibank and Carver Federal Savings that confirmed only the accounts the College has on record. The two accounts in question were closed and inactive. Nevertheless, to prevent future discrepancies, MEC will increase its efforts to ensure that the Central Office is notified of the opening and closing of all bank accounts.

Propriety of Bank Account Activities

MEC is committed to compliance with State and CUNY guidelines governing the provision of services and/or the acquisition of goods. To ensure enforcement, MEC has redirected all requests to procure goods and/or services to the Purchasing Office with the required signatory approvals and supporting documents. Additionally, MEC has closed the Gifts and Grants account and has transferred funds to the associated 501(c)(3) corporations.

The Gifts and Grants Account

MEC acknowledges the purchases of the furniture cited; however, MEC disagrees with the auditor's claim that tax levy funds were used to pay for the furniture. The \$50,000 cited was in fact transferred from the Central Office and was used to cover the outstanding balance for the Head Start program and the Child Care Center's deficit within the Gifts and Grants account. The funds used for the furniture was not tax-levy; such funds came from an unrestricted source.

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Comment
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The Ella Baker Child Care Center (The Center) Account

MEC concurs with the auditors' findings and has terminated the employee in question. MEC is currently pursuing reimbursement of the overpayment. Additionally, MEC has implemented the following actions to prevent reoccurrence of the irregularities cited: the reorganization of the Center's staff reporting structure, the reassignment of the Center's payroll functions to the Controller's Office, and the reinforcement of signatory approval requirements.

The Student Faculty Association (SFA) Account

MEC acknowledges the auditors' findings for the two SFA samples selected and submits as evidence the reason and supporting documents for cases cited:

For the disbursement of February 13, 2014, in the amount of \$4,125, cited as "purportedly used for meal per diems for 35 students during a weekend conference," MEC affirms the referenced sum was issued to cover meals expenses for each student while they were in travelling status. As part of the documents presented, MEC included a copy of the itinerary and the invoice for the hotel accommodations as supporting documents to generate the check for the students' per diem. Hotel accommodations for the students were paid for under a separate check (see copy of the check included) and not the referenced check issued for the per diem meals.

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Comment
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For the disbursement of July 21, 2014, in the amount of \$4,500, cited as "purportedly used for an MEC Educational Foundation Study Abroad Scholarship," please note the relationship between the referenced accounts. The MEC Society of Public Administrators Club (MECSPA) is a sub-account within the Student Faculty Association (SFA) account while the MEC Educational Foundation Study Abroad

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Comment
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program is a sub-account within the MEC Educational Foundation account. SFA facilitated the Gala event cited on behalf of MECSPA. In adherence to MEC's internal practices, funds for the study abroad program were to be deposited in the MEC Educational Foundation account. For this reason, SFA issued the referenced check to the MEC Educational Foundation account for the study abroad program. MEC is including as evidence the copies of the checks issued from the MEC Educational Foundation made payable to the MEC study abroad program recipients (see the list of students and copies of checks provided).

College Declaration

In Conclusion, MEC has taken the auditor's recommendations quite seriously and is committed to the enforcement of each recommendation in its daily operations. Specifically, the College makes the following commitment:

- To remain vigilant in adherence to the prescribed procedures for opening new bank accounts and the monitoring of existing accounts.
- To develop additional policies and procedures to administer bank accounts.
- To Strengthen the control environment to assure that funds are appropriately disbursed from bank accounts by:
 - i. Re-enforcing the importance of adhering to New York State, City, and CUNY requirements; and
 - ii. Training Finance and Administration employees on the appropriate policies and procedures related to bank accounts and banking operations.

I wish to extend my thanks to the auditors for their professionalism and courtesy. If you should need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



Jacqueline Clark
Vice President of Finance and Administration

cc: President Rudolph F. Crew
Senior Vice President and COO Jerald Posman

State Comptroller's Comments

1. MEC contends that the directives to change the accounts came from CUNY Central, and therefore, the bank account notification documents were not required. However, MEC did not provide documentation to support its contention that CUNY Central ordered the changes.
2. We maintain that non-tax levy funds were used to pay for the furniture. MEC's Gifts and Grants account had a deficit balance, and three tax levy fund deposits were made to that account. Thereafter, payment was made from the Gifts and Grants account for the furniture. Further, at the time of our audit, there was no evidence of a deposit from an "unrestricted source" or Central Office to reimburse the Head Start program and Child Care Center for the transferred funds. Moreover, by commingling tax levy and non-tax levy funds in this account, the source of the funds used for disbursements from the account becomes unclear.
3. MEC still has not provided adequate support for the meals provided to students. An invoice for lodging and two checks are not sufficient evidence to show that student meals were in fact provided.
4. A disbursement on July 21, 2014, in the amount of \$4,500 was purportedly used for an MEC Education Foundation study abroad scholarship. However, the supporting documentation showed the money was actually spend for the Medgar Evers College Society for Public Administrators' first Annual Fund Raising Gala on February 7, 2014, and there was no supporting documentation that detailed how these moneys were spent. When we questioned this expense in our draft report, the college provided unsigned checks and letters to students advising them that they had received an award. However, the total amount of the awards was \$3,400 (not \$4,500), and there was no evidence that students actually received the funds. MEC, therefore, has not provided adequate support for this payment.

Dear Medgar Wiley Evers Family and Respective Stakeholders:

Our primary concern and focus is the well-being of Medgar Evers College (MEC) students and faculty/staff who contribute to upholding the legacy of Medgar Wiley Evers, the core stakeholders of MEC's educational system. Medgar Wiley Evers is the epitome of bravery, sacrifice, and high intellect; in light of him knowing that he would be assassinated, he fought incessantly for equity and justice. Medgar Wiley Evers' legacy and culture of the college has been under attack. This attack has been subtle, latent, and premeditated by MEC's leadership, spearheaded by Rudolph Crew and Augustine Okereke, whom hold the title of President, and Provost, respectively, of MEC. As a result of their lack of leadership, MEC has experienced a continual decline in its retention rate of incoming Freshman. The leave-rate for Freshmen students was 36%, 41%, 41%, 41%, and 45% for 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, respectively, representing a steady increase in losing Freshman students at MEC. As MEC Freshmen represent the bulk of the campus student population, full-time first-time freshmen (FTFTF) retention is thus a major concern for MEC. One-year retention rate decreased about 12% for baccalaureate first-time freshmen from 70.5% to 58.4%, for the Fall 2016 and Fall 2017 cohort, correspondingly. For associate level FTFTF, one-year retention rate decreased by about 3.5 percentage points from 58% for the Fall 2016 cohort to 54.5% for the Fall 2017 cohort. This continual decrease in enrollment (specifically, the Full-Time Equivalent from Fall to Spring) is amplified by increases in enrollment throughout CUNY (16 to 24% at CUNY's Community Colleges and 9 to 10% at Senior Colleges) but not at Medgar Evers College. A continued decrease in enrollment for one of the few PBIs in America, has a significant negative impact in the education of people of color.

In parallel, one of the direct monetary modes to support student services – that is, through MEC's Student Technology Fee (STF) has been plagued with grandiose misappropriation and misuse of funds. Do keep in mind, that MEC's STF amounts to ~ \$1.5 M/year, and the use of these funds, controlled by select MEC administration (led by "President" Rudolph Crew, has been continually misused. SGA has been working with MEC administration to provide greater transparency in the use of these funds but have been stone-walled with lies and deception. Since 2013, MEC has accumulated approximately \$10 M dollars from STF, and it is very clear that those funds are not used to service students. Even more egregious, it is very clear that these funds are not used for any campus activities – AT ALL. For example, SGA was told by "Provost" Augustine Okereke that STF was used for the recently-installed security entrances on campus when those were actually supported by capital funds. Moreover, there were several cases where faculty won STF grants and did not receive STF funds to implement such grants (e.g., Professor Rosa Zavala in MEC's Physics and Computer Science Department, MDEC did not receive \$16,000 for the purchase of computers for students, etc.). Moreover, MEC SGA held a suite of meetings with MEC administration to attain a budget breakdown of STF funds; SGA and other student members repeatedly tried to attain STF budget details, but MEC administrative staff did not provide any transparency in this regard. The MEC student community would greatly appreciate a full audit for MEC's STF as well as other monetary transactions before Rudolph Crew and during his tenure at MEC. The fiscal matter at MEC is dire as the facilities are exponentially deteriorating (e.g., bathrooms frequently have no soap, toilet paper, faculty have to buy their own printing paper, lack of running water in bathrooms, sewage odors in the buildings, no AC in the summer, labs are not able to run due to non-functional facilities and equipment, etc.).

The factors explained above has also been coupled to nepotistic hiring of administrative staff, workplace bullying and victim shaming, which has been rampant throughout Rudolph Crew's tenure at MEC. A

significant number of faculty and administrators, who are/were well-received by the MEC student community for their dedicated work toward student and community advancement, did not get rehired. David Taylor (replaced by VP Clark, Office of Administration & Finance), Dean Jones (replaced by Lakisha Murray as Chief of Staff), Eugene Pursoo (replaced by Michael Seeling as Director of Study Abroad), Dr. Stanley Mims (replaced by Michael Seeling as Director of Pipeline Programs), Dr. Byron Price (replaced by Dr. Jo-Anne Rolle), the non-reappointment of Dr. Derrick Griffith (former Dean of MEC, which ultimately led to him dying in 2015's Amtrak Train accident as he was returning from a job interview), the removal of Mohammed Riyad as part of MEC's BMI-MDEC (whom revitalized MEC's MDEC, which has culminated in greater monetary capacity to serve a much larger cross-section of MEC students. As an Academic Coordinator, he has instituted strategies to produce positive outcomes, such as an increase in GPA for 999, an increase in student enrollment from 28 to 1274 within two years, a 97% retention rate, an improved cumulative GPA from 2.2 to 2.9, a course completion rate of 91%, 54 students received internal/external scholarships, etc.), the non-reappointment and tenure denial of Dr. Christopher Boxe (who published ~50% of MEC's SSH&T's publications since 2012, raised ~\$725K in grants since 2012, empowers students and the broader Brooklyn community, was approved College-Wide for reappointment and tenure, juxtaposed this case is the Presidential approval of reappointment with tenure of a faculty in Dr. Boxe's department, Dr. Lawrence Pratt, who received a plethora of continued student complaints (which include sleeping in class, which are supported by circulated videos of the Dr. Lawrence Pratt sleeping in class) and did not receive a favorable vote through College Wide P&B for tenure and reappointment), – just to name a few. Rudolph Crew's actions are indicative of a clear bias toward faculty and staff who actually work for the betterment of the campus and supports those that serve his agenda. All of these practices have been implemented by Rudolph Crew – mostly without any due process. This has created a toxic environment for all stakeholders of the College. These practices have eroded the legacy of Medgar Wiley Evers and the essence of what makes Medgar Evers College so unique as an educational epicenter for the community. These practices are exemplified by the recent removal of SGA President Elect, Sakia Fletcher, from a Community Meeting as she exercised one of her 1st Amendment rights – *that is*, freedom of speech. Sakia Fletcher, under Dr. Crew's order was removed (without any due process) from that meeting by MEC security and subsequently suspended (without any due process), indefinitely. Fortunately, after her recent hearing, all of the charges against her were dismissed. Rudolph Crew's administration have been in multiple lawsuits – most recently Sylvia Kynard (former Title IX Officer), Cory Wright (former Chief Administrative Superintendent at MEC), Johnathan Sandville (former Director of Alumni Relations), Dr. Brenda Green (Professor of English) – just to name a few. Presently, MEC has an exorbitant amount of faculty grievances due to non-reappointments, denial of promotions, denial of sabbatical requests, etc.

Rudolph Crew and Augustine Okereke have been defrauding the Medgar Evers College since summer 2013 – 6 long years and counting. They promised: expansion of the campus, \$25M raised in 5 years, beautification of the campus, and most egregiously, stark increases in enrollment. All of these promises were in vain due to their baseless support. Given the pronounced factors above, it is not a surprise that exemplar faculty, administrators, and students do not want to come and stay at MEC – and even worse are being targeted and fired by Rudolph Crew. Rudolph Crew has created an environment where mutual understanding, innovation, and transparency are not rewarded, accepted, and allowed. How can MEC grow and sustain itself in such an oppressive environment, that solely serves the self-perpetuating notions of Rudolph Crew himself? The data and the climate on campus provides transparency into the continued destruction of the campus under Rudolph Crew's directive.

The core contributing factor to the destruction of Medgar Evers College is: Rudolph Crew. He uses bullying tactics to divide and attack anyone he does not agree with his perspective. Rudolph Crew is known to curse inflammatory and derogatory remarks at staff frequently if he disagrees with their point of view. He has eroded the culture of Black Intellectualism on the campus by orchestrating its destruction by pitting unintellectual puppets he can control against the Black male persona on campus. At present, Rudolph Crew's cabinet is comprised of Lakisha Murray (whom he has dated since the start of his appointment at MEC, students and faculty can attest to their non-platonic relationship as they have been seen in public often, huge conflict of interest), Gerald Possman (who does nothing on campus and does nothing on campus (AT ALL) and does whatever Crew tells him to do), Jacqueline Clarke (manages the flow of monetary misappropriations on campus), Jennifer James (Director of Communications – recently married Rudolph Crew – another huge conflict of interest – does nothing on campus – AT ALL – who he also gave an ample salary raise – this behavior is synonymous to Rudolph Crew's relationship with Lakisha Murray, his Chief of Staff – ample salary and raises via quid pro quo), Johnathan Hardaway (sports lawyer and now MEC Legal Counsel, is totally unbiased and does Whatever the Rudolph Crew tells him to do), Tanya Isaacs (is totally incompetent and does whatever Rudolph tells her to do), Augustine Okereke (does whatever Rudolph Crew tells him to do and is guided by his reptilian brain – e.g., his longstanding philandering with his former executive secretary, Kiesha Ball, who was moved to MEC's School of Professional Community Development and has recently been transitioned to be the Director of a Student Success Program at MEC), and Hollie Jones (does nothing on campus (AT ALL) and does whatever Rudolph Crew tells her to do). The most damaging part of this attack on Medgar Evers College is its toll on the women stakeholders of the campus, which is comprised of ~75% Black Women. Rudolph Crew and Augustine Okereke's philanders with Black Women staff on campus has detracted and disgusted women students from attending and wanting to stay at MEC. Rudolph Crew and Augustine Okereke's duplicitous natures are transparent as they do not interact with MEC students (AT ALL) – but selectively states the opposite at select events (e.g., graduation, political and external venues, etc.). They are stating to the MEC community that Black Women need to have sex with their male counterparts to be successful. Simultaneously, they are stating that Smart Black Men are not wanted at MEC – only unintellectual persons can succeed at MEC (and thus in life). There is NO Leadership at MEC – just a cabal that want to maintain the status quo for Rudolph Crew and his cabinet.

Under Rudolph Crew's directive, his cabal continues to erode the legacy of Medgar Wiley Evers and MEC's mission – thus changing landscape of the college for the worse. Instead of reappointing (and allotting tenure and promotion) to those that resonate with the community and genuine pipeline initiatives, his team is empowering those that do the total opposite, which serves his and only his agenda – that is, to continue his Presidency (and thus his salary), at the detriment of the state of Medgar Evers College. This is crucial as MEC represents one of the few places PBIs that black students can attend in America (and one of the only PBIs in the Northeastern region of the US). Additional recent activities are indicative of this modus operandi (e.g., Presidential appointments of Department Chairs: 1) Presidential appointment of Dr. Joshua Sussan being the Chair of the Department of Mathematics; Presidential appointment of Dr. Keming Liu being the Chair of the English Department; and 3) Presidential appointment of Dr. David Ahn being the Chair of Computer Information Systems Department). Lastly, within the context of an already established Strategic Plan (which had input from the MEC campus faculty, students, and staff), Rudolph Crew recently had a closed retreat, where he invited only his cabinet/cabal and CUNY Chancellor Felix Matos, and presented a different so-called 3-5 strategic plan for the college; campus members became aware of this through social media and have no

clue what this supposed plan entails. It is clear that Crew is aiming to hoodwink Chancellor Matos with another scheme as Crew has not had an official cabinet meeting in over 1 year on campus.

The recent media coverage is another venue that provides more transparency to Crew's continuous lies. Crew claims to blame other people for thwarting efforts to grow the college. Who has actually done that – especially under his 'leadership,' which has clearly shown that since he arrived, enrollment has continually decreased. Crew further claims that people are also thwarting efforts to expand degree offerings, which he himself has been at the forefront of utilizing the Provost and his cabinet to block/delay faculty, that he does not personally like, from implementing new courses and degree programs. Crew also claims that the Educational Foundation Board continues to raise funds – which funds is he talking about, how much money as this is very new to faculty across campus (since fundraising on the campus, from that source is non-existent). He further claims that MEC had its largest graduating class June 2019. Although this may be true, at least 50% of these graduates are non-returning Associate degree graduates. The remaining graduates are a combination of at least 6- to 13-year graduates. More importantly, this vast remaining 50% of graduates will work on the non-skilled service sector, especially those that pay minimum wage and do not require a college degree. Also, this vast majority will not matriculate toward professional programs (e.g., graduate, medical, law school, etc.).

All of the above has equated to MEC's fiscal deficit of ~ \$16M, where Crew's administration added ~ \$13.5M debt to the college. The conundrum lies in the source of this debt within the context of enrollment Full-Time Student Equivalent (e.g., each Fall to Spring): (i) Fall 2013 (4275), Spring 2014 (3954); (ii) Fall 2014 (4324), Spring 2015 (3854); (iii) Fall 2015 (4513), Spring 2016 (4087); (iv) Fall 2016 (4760, MEC Dashboard # = 5356 w/ a tuition difference = \$1,886,340), Spring 2017 (4127, DB# = 4801 w/ a tuition difference = \$2,233,210); (v) Fall 2017 (4806, DB# = 5288 w/ a tuition difference = \$1,573,730), Spring 2018 (4330, DB# = 4992 w/ a tuition difference = \$2,161,430); (vi) Fall 2018 (4705, DB# = 5198 w/ a tuition difference = \$1,658,945); and (vii) Spring 2019 (DB# = 4596, true value likely = ~ 4000 w/ a tuition difference = ~ \$2M). When you sum all of these figures, you the approximate value ~\$11.5M. Still, if this pattern is consistent from the inception of Crew's tenure at MEC, it would undoubtedly sum to ~ \$16M deficit. I am not sure if these may mean anything, but one thing is for sure, the MEC Dashboard has a consistent discrepancy, which may have some deeper meaning – not sure.?.?.? {see attached files to double-check data}. It is also transparent that this deficit may be contributed by select line items that did not provide any value to the campus. For example, although the utilization of Grammarly at MEC was not approved, in 2018-2019, SGA discovered that MEC administration approved the use of Grammarly since Fall 2016 at a rate of \$100,000 per year. This is highly egregious as no one campus uses Grammarly. So, what is MEC paying for and to whom exactly?

As described in MEC's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, Crew target goals/outcomes were: 1) 25% increase in enrollment; 2) 25% increase in first-time, full-time freshman (25% of this cohort being Baccalaureate level students); 3) 25% increase in retention; 4) 25% increase in internships; 5) 25% increase in graduation rates; and 6) 25% increase in fundraising. Crew has not fulfilled any of these mandates. Rudolph Crew's 6-year track record at MEC speaks volumes and MEC wants only one thing: Rudolph Crew's resignation. The longer he remains, the worse it will get for the college, which will have longstanding negative repercussions for the student enrollment and faculty and staff stability. Will CUNY and external stakeholders allow for Crew to completely destroy Medgar Evers College before it is too late?

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to you because it is important to make my concern and emailed it. In the CUNY college of Medgar Evers College, across from the Carroll building the school provided portables. The portables were made as a temporary solution until a new building is built for the students of M.E.C, that proposal was made 10-11 years ago. As Medgar Evers College Student I remember attending class in the portable my freshman year during the fall semester, to talk about the inside is something I will get to but the struggle to enter the platform is horrific. During the fall season, it was also the snowy period, I was conscious and annoyed about reaching the steps of the portable platform and arriving at my class. Students were falling, and some slipped while holding the handrails. Entering inside the portable was alarming to other students because once I open the door they would quickly shout "close the door", icy cold wind, and snow will enter the room. During class, I must keep my coat, hat, and scarf on so I wouldn't get a cold. Another scenario that happened to me was during the spring semester of 2019, a friend of mine had class in the portable and once I walked her to the classroom the heat was unbearable. We exactly stayed outside the door of the portable to continue our conversation. The portable needs to be destroyed and replaced with a building so students can be comfortable while learning.

Sincerely,

Student of M.E.C

Kenneth Lee

Medgar Evers College 1650 Bedford Avenue, | klee@mec.cuny.edu

10/11/19

Freshman Class President

Dear **who it may concern,**

Hi, my Name is Kenneth Lee and I'm a freshman at Medgar Evers college. We are the only CUNY School to utilize portables. The portables are extremely cold during the winter and hot during the summer. The technology in these portable classrooms are extremely old and out of date. This temporary solution has become an issue for all Medgar students. As a senior collage we should not be in portable classrooms.

I'm calling on CUNY and the New York City council to help resolve this issue with a permanent solution that meet the needs of all the students and staff at Medgar Evers college.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Lee

To whom it may concern,

I am a senior at Medgar Evers College majoring in Public Administration. This letter is to express my concerns about the internal as well as external issues and conditions of the school, overall, my experience so far as an undergrad student.

I remember struggling to understand the college system in New York City and finding a school to attend for the next four years after high school. Eventually, I was accepted to Medgar Evers College, I attended the school in hope of pursuing my passion for studying and obtaining a degree in Criminal Justice. I was told that the school offers Criminal Justice as a major, however, while registering for classes for my first semester I was told something else by a freshman year advisor that the school only offer it as a minor. It was a tough first semester but I was encouraged to major in P.A instead and minor in C.J or have it as an emphasis. This is to show the confusion and disappointment I sort of faced during my first year in college. One major issue that students normally complain about is the lack of well-knowledge experts about particular major or degree programs that is willing to guide students step-by-step in choosing a major, which classes to pick and what career field to go into after graduating with either an Associate's or Bachelor's degree.

Another concern is about the school environment, most if not all students feel the school does not truly reflect a typical college environment that students want to experience and be proud of. Also, the beautification of the school as well as the name has been demoted. For me, when I started here at the school I had higher expectations on the way the school buildings, classrooms, cafeteria, and gym would look. Although, I came to the understanding that Medgar Evers College have a budget deficit and funding is a major problem that CUNY and the government has ignored but students at Medgar Evers deserves and demands more and better. The internal and the outlook of the school must be renovated. Our executive officers along with other faculty/

staff members need to become passionate in advocating for students at the school and they must provide periodic results or reports on the state of the college or improve the school is on the verge of.

Also, a more in-depth problem is the portables. The portables located near the Carroll building has been an ongoing issue. I have had the chance to take classes at the portable several times. My experience was not great, at first, the portables made me feel as if I was in high school struggling to get through the hallway to attend class due to traffic from both high school and college students. Also, I've had classes during the fall semester and winter session there, it was extremely cold, no heater, it made my learning experience difficult. Additionally, I've had one or two classes where the air conditioner was not working and it was very hot in those small portables. It is time for those portables to be removed, students and faculty employees who frequent this area deserves a better setting.

Overall, as a student who've experienced these challenges in a college environment, It is time for changes to happen. We the students of Medgar Evers College want to always be proud of our school, we want to see progress, we want the school to help students flourish; and we want to become world changers that is going to come back and give back to the college community.

--
Best Regards,

Doodley Plaisival

Medgar Evers College CUNY

Public Administration Student

Student Government Association Council

National Society Leadership Success President

August 27, 2019

Committee to Protect the Mission and the Integrity of Medgar Evers College

To The Evers Family:

We represent a broad based group of faculty, staff and students, who have come together to protect the mission and the integrity of Medgar Evers College, and we write to you to seek your help on a matter of utmost importance – **WE SEEK A CHANGE IN THE LEADERSHIP OF MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE** (hereinafter College or MEC) and respectfully request that you recommend to the Chancellor of the City University of New York that they be removed from their positions of leadership at the College. It is our well-considered opinion, supported by the record, that President Crew and Provost Okereke have lost the confidence of the faculty, staff, and students, and it is our very strong belief that their continued leadership of the College will cause irreparable harm to the Institution and to the Community it serves.

As we celebrate our 50th year, our College, named after the patriarch of your family, an iconic civil rights leader, Medgar Wiley Evers, has ceased to fulfill the promise of its founders to the students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding communities of Central Brooklyn. Our mission, which is based on the belief that education has the power to positively transform the lives of individuals and is the right of all individuals in the pursuit of self-actualization, no longer addresses the educational and social needs of this Central Brooklyn Community, the largest African Diasporic community in all of North America.

The Crew-Okereke leadership has fostered a culture that is inimical to the values espoused by Medgar Wiley Evers, and have replaced it with a culture that is openly hostile to collegiality, inquiry, and scholarship. Their leadership lacks the capacity for the sustained focus necessary to drive meaningful improvements in scholarship, meaningful improvements in teaching and learning, meaningful improvements in our service to the community, and meaningful improvements in our operational effectiveness. There is very little understanding and appreciation at the executive level of what it takes to effectively manage the College, and broad contempt for the expertise of faculty and staff in their respective domains. For example, the faculty and staff who resonate with the legacy and purpose of the College through their scholarship, teaching, and service have either been replaced with less competent individuals or have been forced to step aside so that they would not be associated with the Crew-Okereke style of leadership.

A Failed Agenda

Five years ago, the Crew--Okereke team set, as their targets, the following goals, which they labeled the twenty-fives (25s):

- 25% increase in enrollment;
- 25% increase in first time, fulltime freshmen (with 25% of same being baccalaureate level students);
- 25% increase in retention;
- 25% increase in graduation rates;
- 25% increase in internships; and

In parallel, direct monetary support to student services through MEC's Student Technology Fee (STF) has been plagued with grandiose misappropriation and misuse of funds. Do keep in mind, that MEC's STF amounts to ~ \$1.5 M/year, and these funds, controlled by select MEC administrators (led by "President" Rudolph Crew), have been continually misused. SGA has been working with MEC administration to provide greater transparency in the use of these funds but has been stonewalled with lies and deception. Since 2013, MEC has accumulated approximately \$10M dollars from STF, and it is very clear that those funds are not used to service students. Even more egregious, it is very clear that these funds are not used for any campus activities – AT ALL. For example, SGA was told by "Provost" Augustine Okereke that STF was used for the recently-installed security entrances on campus when those were actually supported by capital funds. Moreover, there were several cases where faculty won STF grants but did not receive STF funds to implement such grants (e.g., Professor Rosa Zavala in MEC's Physics and Computer Science Department, MDEC did not receive \$16,000 for the purchase of computers for students, etc.). Moreover, MEC's SGA held a suite of meetings with MEC administration to obtain a budget breakdown of STF funds, but MEC administrative staff did not provide any transparency in this regard. The MEC student community would greatly appreciate a full audit for MEC's STF as well as other monetary transactions before and during Rudolph Crew's tenure at MEC.

Rudolph Crew's administration has been mired in multiple lawsuits – most recently Ms. Sylvia Kinard (former Title IX Officer), Mr. Cory Wright (former Chief Administrative Superintendent at MEC), and Mr. Johnathan Sandville (former Director of Alumni Relations), – just to name a few. Presently, MEC has an exorbitant amount of faculty grievances challenging departmental election irregularities and the Administration's capricious decisions regarding reappointments, promotions and sabbatical leaves. MEC's governance plan stipulates that the business of departments is to be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, which means that department chairs are elected by a majority of the votes cast. However, the Crew-Okereke administration has consistently dismissed those votes and have instead appointed faculty members of either the lowest academic ranks or non-tenured individuals who would feel beholden to their administration and would thus allow them to usurp the authority of departments. These practices have led to the marginalization and erosion of our Black talent on campus.

The Lack of a Strategic Plan

The Crew-Okereke administration not only failed to implement a strategic plan that included the five 25s, but also neglected facility developments, new degree programs (such as Black Studies), and the collaborative efforts of the college community at large. Instead, the Crew-Okereke administration dismissed the plan that the college community supported recently and had a closed retreat, where only the Crew-Okereke cabinet/cabal and CUNY Chancellor Felix Matos were invited. He presented at this "closed retreat" a different so-called 3-5 year strategic plan for the College. Campus members became aware of this through social media and have no clue what this supposed plan entails. It is clear that Crew is aiming to hoodwink Chancellor Matos with another scheme as Crew has not had an official administrative cabinet meeting in over one year on campus.

Retention and Graduation Rates

increase in student enrollment from 28 to 1274 within two years, a 97% retention rate, an improved cumulative GPA from 2.2 to 2.9, a course completion rate of 91%, 54 students received internal/external scholarships, and so on); the non-reappointment and tenure denial of Dr. Christopher Boxe (who published approximately 50% of MEC's SSH&T's publications since 2012, raised ~\$725K in grants since 2012, empowers students and the broader Brooklyn community, was approved College-Wide for reappointment and tenure, juxtaposed this case is the Presidential approval of reappointment with tenure of a faculty in Dr. Boxe's department. Additionally, SGA's current president, Ms. Sakia Fletcher was suspended from the College right before final exams, because she spoke out at a community meeting. Ms. Fletcher, under Dr. Crew's order was removed (without any due process) from that meeting by MEC security and subsequently suspended indefinitely. Fortunately, after her recent hearing, all of the charges against her were dismissed; she was reinstated as a full-time MEC student, and was able to resume her leadership as SGA president for the current academic year. All of these practices have been implemented by Rudolph Crew – mostly without any due process. This has created a toxic environment for all stakeholders of the College.

The Erosion of Black Intellectualism at MEC

Rudolph Crew has eroded the culture of Black Intellectualism on the campus by failing to appoint and re-appoint faculty and staff whose teaching, research, and service resonate with the community, thereby honoring the work of Medgar Wiley Evers. Black Intellectualism has been further decreased with the replacement of Black senior faculty members as department chairs with non-Black faculty members who are less qualified, less competent, and less senior members of the department. This has forced them to rely on the administration to run the department, thereby positioning Crew-Okereke as the de facto department chairs and enabling them to control department personnel and curriculum. As a result, faculty have become withdrawn and their morale has decreased. Furthermore, these practices have impacted the administrative functions that that a college president/provost is supposed to conduct in a state of incoherence or disorganization.

This is crucial as MEC represents one of the few PBIs that Black students in Brooklyn, NYC, and NYS can attend that is a “true descendant of an HBCU”, without having to leave the state of NY (Pennsylvania begins the geographic boundaries HBCUs along the east coast). Hence, given that it not physically or financially possible for the majority of our central Brooklyn high school graduates to attend a HBCU, MEC must continue to adhere to its mission and promise to the community.

Dysfunctional Leadership

It is clear that there is NO Leadership at MEC – just a cabal that wants to maintain the status quo for Rudolph Crew. Under Rudolph Crew's directive, his cabal continues to erode the legacy of Medgar Wiley Evers and MEC's mission – thus changing landscape of the college for the worse.

In short, the current leadership in Crew's cabinet is unable to perform the duties that their job description/titles call for because they are only allowed to do what Crew tells them to do. Please see below for examples of Crew's cabinet:

in overtime pay per year since 2012, which amounts to ~\$13.1M. Meanwhile faculty members are consistently denied salary step increases during their promotion process, and are often told that a course overload which is approximately \$4K, will not be approved. The extremely high overtime hours per staff strongly suggests fraud. Moreover, a financial strain has been placed on MEC's budget as the Pipeline Program has absorbed a significant amount of the MEC School Program's Budget. Over 95% of High School students who have participated never attend MEC.

Conclusion

What we have described above are citations of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation, public shaming, excessive firing, and high turnover rates for employees. Faculty, staff, and students who "look the other way" or pretend that they do not have a voice, receive "quick" promotions. This administrative leadership's behaviors align with the same abusive tactics that the Black Community has worked hard to overcome while they were enduring the harsh realities of the Civil Rights Movement. In a college created by and for the community, it is hard to imagine that in a college entrusted with the lives and responsibilities of uplifting the Black Community, that there would be little fund development/fundraising, a primary responsibility for college presidents and especially where it has been well-documented that students' primary reason for "stopping out" and returning years later, is mostly for financial reasons. More importantly, what this analysis entails is that the Crew-Okereke administration has used MEC as their "personal fiefdoms" – not engaging the governing body in budget preparations, not implementing the College's strategic plan. They appoint rather than elect faculty for department chairpersons, and there is no cultivation of MEC alumni. Crew has not fulfilled any of these mandates. Rudolph Crew's 6-year track record at MEC speaks volumes and MEC wants only one thing: Rudolph Crew's resignation. The longer he remains, the worse it will get for the College. This will have longstanding negative repercussions for the student enrollment and faculty and staff stability.

The list is never-ending. The actions of the Crew-Okereke leadership are an affront to the memory of Medgar Wiley Evers and we must bring an end to it. Please see below for a list of elected officials contacted regarding this issue.

Elected Officials Contacted:

- 1) Attorney General Leticia James
- 2) Congresswoman Yvette Clarke
- 3) Congressman Hakeem Jeffries
- 4) State Senator Kevin Parker
- 5) Assemblymember Diana Richardson
- 6) Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte
- 7) Assemblymember Charles Barron
- 8) Councilmember Inez Barron
- 9) CUNY Trustee
- 10) Chancellor's Office: chancellor@cuny.edu 205 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017, Phone: 646.664.9100, Fax: 646.664.3868

Other Important Websites for Financial Information:



University Student Senate
555 West 57th Street, 1420
New York, NY 10019
Tel: (646) 664-8844
Website: www.usscuny.org

**TESTIMONY OF ETHAN MILICH,
BROOKLYN COLLEGE SENATOR OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE,
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
REGARDING FREE PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

**BEFORE MEMBERS OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

November 1, 2019

Hello members of the Senate Higher Education committee. My name is Ethan Milich. I am a student from Brooklyn College, a Delegate to the University Student Senate, and I am also a United States military veteran. Thank you for hearing our concerns and giving us this platform.

I am not here to talk about the lack of affordability, closing the TAP Gap, or the Maintenance of Effort Bill. Instead, as a representative of CUNY students, I am here to talk about what the Majority of our student constituents have expressed is their most important demand: free CUNY.

I'd like to echo our USS Chairperson Timothy Hunter, and ask that legislators, particularly Senator Stavisky, be bold, creative, and open to new ideas when thinking of how to fully fund higher education.

Today I am here to express our support for Senate Bill S5255, sponsored by Senator Andrew Gounardes, calling for our state constitution to be amended, making quality public education from Pre-K through College, considered a right, and not a privilege.

The New York State constitution is one of the most powerful and significant constitutions in the nation, codifying the creation of SUNY, the environmental protection of state parks, a safety net for the economically disadvantaged, access to housing, and an equal protection clause prohibiting discrimination. These are all rights that we as New Yorkers can agree on. I am here today to let the Senate higher education committee know that millions of New Yorkers believe that higher education is also a right.

We now ask that the Senate higher education committee take the lead on finding out the full cost of higher education, both for SUNY and CUNY. And we now ask the Senate higher education committee, to push the state of New York to lead the nation toward a constitutional amendment guaranteeing pre-K through college public education for all.

Testimony, Corrinne Greene (Brooklyn College Senior, Theater Major, Student Activist)

My Story

I am a 4th generation NYS public higher ed student, originally from Buffalo, New York. I have attended NYS public schools since kindergarten and have been privy to Governor Cuomo's cuts to education virtually his entire tenure. After starting at a private institution, I transferred to Brooklyn College the following year after doing one semester in my previous college upon realizing that I absolutely could not afford it (this, alone, is why I do not qualify for the excelsior scholarship- a program that did not exist when I chose to transfer). I LOVE Brooklyn College and would not trade my education or my colleagues and classmates for anything. I simply ache with sadness and fume with anger at how undervalued our amazing institution is, and the crisis tipping point we are at. I will be graduating with more student debt than the previous 3 generations did after their bachelors' degrees, combined. My parents both have Masters degrees and I am an only child. I don't fit into the "formulas" for many of the programs that exist to help students find support and graduate debt-free .

In terms of my own academic experience While facilities haven't been usable, the theater department has had to rent space off-campus, as far as riverside church in Harlem. My faculty advisor is an adjunct who graduated with an MFA from Brooklyn college, has been with the department for over 5 years, is an expert in her field, has 2 children, and does the work of a full-time professor in terms of course load and advisement. I've met with one of the eight regular campus advisors literally once beyond my initial orientation and they were woefully ill-informed on my major requirements.

I strongly believe in the mission of CUNY and SUNY, and my continued advocacy has come personal sacrifice at the cost of mental health, grades, energy and money. I have also witnessed this with other students, staff, parents, alums, and faculty who are desperately trying to make our voices heard again and again upon seemingly deaf ears.

Financial aid

According to CUNY's own formula, used on the FAFSA, the expected yearly cost of attendance at Brooklyn College is just shy of \$30,000. My family was THRILLED at the prospects of the excelsior scholarship. Though the governor apparently acknowledges I need \$, I get NOTHING. There is no loan option or debt relief program either. With over 50k in student debt, more than half of it from private lenders, the option of going to graduate school looks slim.

At CUNY, Financial aid offices are totally dysfunctional: Call Brooklyn College's and wait on hold long enough and you will hear a played recording saying "we have no information about the excelsior Scholarship at this time, please refer to the HESC website". The one year I did receive a "full scholarship", it wasn't disbursed until mid-November, as is the case for private and federal loans, as well as excelsior (for those who get it)- so I still had to take out

student loans to make sure my classes were not dropped and I could pay for housing. Publicly, CUNY focuses on shiny “projects” “centers” new administrative positions and “initiatives” to cover up the fact that the average student, and the average faculty member, are suffering.

Faculty

In my department, the head of the BFA acting program resigned, citing underfunding/ a lack of resources and CUNY bureaucratic headaches; her position still has not been filled, nor has a search even started- over a year later. This year, the only full-time theater history faculty member, whose husband was also a Brooklyn college professor, left to teach the students at University of Michigan. Neither of their positions have been filled. EVERY undergraduate theater history course is now taught by a graduate student or adjunct, instead of a PhD scholar. I have had multiple semesters where every professor I had was an adjunct. Though they truly do their best, this can make mentorship, sustained relationships with faculty, and letters of recommendation hard. For this year, the Brooklyn College provost requested 33 new faculty lines. 11 were granted.

Infrastructure:

I was part of the “Brooklyn College” campaign (covered in the New York Post)- an Instagram that documents utter disrepair at the hands of state underfunding, and the lack of an MOE bill year after year. We are PAST the point of a “maintenance of effort”, and considering the rise in enrollment and many years of deterioration of campus infrastructure, it is URGENTLY time to invest in our campus facilities. Beyond literal safety and accessibility concerns, chemistry labs are dealing with half a century old equipment, and many classrooms have never been upgraded from the original chalkboards. Access to the facilities that DO work is also often inhibited, as public safety staffing costs are skirted by closing handicap- accessible entrances and reducing library hours when no security is staffing them. Student activity fees have gone to pay for new water fountains, microwaves, gym weights, classroom chairs, and other things that should be covered by state funding. Elements of campus have been “out of order” for literally years. It is not unusual to have a class in a room that is completely devoid of heat or air conditioning, or for the campus wifi to not be usable in the library because it is overwhelmed during midterms and finals week. Not to mention adequate library hours? Hilarious.

Safe, affordable student housing is virtually nonexistent. When CUNY and SUNY rely on private partnerships to fill in the gaps, students get taken advantage of. Example: Residence hall at Brooklyn College, as seen in Chris Omar’s film “You found a Home”. This disproportionately affects immigrant and international students/ I have witnessed freshman who dropped out after living in the privately owned “residence hall” (where they are not covered under title IX protections), after not having an RA’s support and guidance in their first college year, as they and their family had expected.

Making CUNY and SUNY a priority

We are being taken advantage of by lawmakers in terms of relying on/demanding our votes and our labor without truly representing us. Many CUNY students are immigrants and most of us are working class, middle class, or straight up poor- we don't have the money to hire lobbyists, though we run New York's economy. As tuition goes up, we don't have the hours to organize and demand the things we need. Do we need to occupy campuses and set trash cans on fire like happened in 1975 just to get what is owed to us? That is quite literally what I have been told by self-proclaimed "progressive" politicians. Further, the blame game between the city and state needs to STOP. 4 year public higher ed institutions are the responsibility of New York State to ensure quality and funding- period. WHY, when higher education is needed now more than ever (how many new jobs require a college degree?), is access and quality lower than ever? We are being privatized (unsuccessfully). CUNY/SUNY could, and SHOULD be a shining achievement/jewel.

The students and faculty are the stakeholders here. We are telling you the truth. It is important to acknowledge: You are often being lied to by CUNY staff administration who smiles and celebrates the minimal accomplishments. You are being lied to when you are told that expanding ASAP or closing the TAP gap will serve as the full solution. You are being lied to when you hear that the new contract is justice. You are being lied to when you are thanked for your time, instead of thanking us for ours- because we could be working. It is past time to return to a free and fully-funded public higher ed in New York.

Affordability

The statistics spouted regarding the students who graduate debt-free aren't the ones you should care about- you should care about the students who DON'T reach graduation because of their debt, in addition to the burden that those who do graduate with debt face. PS- student debt disproportionately affects women. In a state that has never had a female governor, a city that has never had a female mayor, and a country that has never had a female president: higher education can be a source of mobility beyond just class.

Housing

Students who are in abusive or uncomfortable home environments- women from religious households who are subject to curfew etc... are forced to abandon their dreams of attending a campus other than one they can easily commute to.

Quality and Access

A general university experience is reserved for those in programs like SEEK, etc.

There are many who fall thru the cracks and lack direction. If you don't fit into a particular formula, there is often no help for you. A revised version of Excelsior could help this. In order for that to happen, however, title IX needs to be adequately funded, as requested (and denied) by the CUNY board of trustees again and again. Further, we need to be able to attract and retain diverse faculty. Students have mobilized around this- k-12 schools are segregated in New York State. This is absolutely shameful.

Infrastructure:

Elevators are frequently out of order. This is documented on the Brooklyn College Instagram and the companion accounts "Shitty College of New York" and "toilets of Hunter", for instance. We do not have a campus bookstore, while Baruch, whose endowment is much larger than ours, does. We frequently get notifications via e-mail that water or heat is being shut off in entire buildings because of emergency burst pipes, etc. Construction projects that DO occur take years and often aren't done well because of an inefficient bidding and approval system. Administrators ADMIT that there is NOTHING that can be done without increased state funding. We are simply patching things together with bandaids and string. That being said, the flowers look very nice.

Why it's in your best interest:

This is a truly intersectional issue. Labor, Racial Justice, criminal justice, economic justice, gender equity. Immigration. This isn't just "progressive", it's about halting the dangerous regressive pattern we're currently in, that has the potential to, and is seriously hurting our economy and our community. All the issues good people- good politicians are supposed to care about intersect on this issue. And this DEEPLY affects multitudes of people, hordes of New Yorkers and the entire social climate/political landscape/ so many different types of justice. You want people to stop leaving New York? Prioritize public higher education. Note the numbers of: alums, students, faculty/staff, and Economic return of 5-7 dollars for every dollar invested in NYS public higher ed (NYPIRG report). Re-investing is simply justice- and it is an IMPERATIVE when it comes to changing our community/political climate by diversifying leadership.

This is not a partisan issue.

This is one of the only issues my Reagan-voting republican grandparents (who went to SUNY) and I can agree upon. They want to know where their tax dollars are going if it's not to educate New Yorkers who will need a quality college degree to get a job and be competitive in participating in and shaping our economy. As college EVERYWHERE becomes more expensive it is important to note that enrollment at New York's public higher ed institutions will likely keep rising- that is, until students are forced to go out of state to pursue a quality public education- where the wifi works and the heat is on. Don't just tell us to vote. Speak. Up and Represent us because we voted for you.

Testimony from Clark Greene (My father, and two time SUNY graduate and current Lecturer at SUNY Buffalo State):

The State University of New York says it offers the most affordable system of higher education in the Northeast. It's a potent boast.

But the state has failed to match SUNY's commitment to excellence. It agreed several years ago to a schedule of yearly tuition increases capped at \$300 each, which gave schools predictable revenue growth and students a better idea of costs. On some levels it worked for some but not all. One thing is for sure, we cannot return to the chaos of large and unpredictable tuition hikes that the state once used to assist in balancing some budget lines.

Unfortunately, the state has kept its own funding for SUNY flat at best, after years of big cuts. It's time to reverse that trend. A little over a decade ago, tuition and direct state support for SUNY were virtually identical. Now the split is 70 percent to 30 percent, with students bearing the heavier load. Funding from Albany is down \$329 million from its high of more than \$1 billion. During former SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher's tenure, her request of an increase of \$50 million per year for five years was reasonable yet Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo only wanted to throw in a fraction of that.

Historically, former Governor Pataki left a greater imprint on SUNY than any other governor since Nelson A. Rockefeller, whose lasting legacy to New York included creation of the 64-campus system. Pataki tied SUNY's fortunes to alliances with the private business sectors, making SUNY an important economic player from Buffalo to Albany to Long Island. The Pataki's perspective has led to a continuation of, SUNY operating like a private

university today. Tuition and fees have risen by approximately 80 percent since 1995, partly replacing taxpayer funds. In that time, the state's share of financing for core academics has declined almost 15% percent for all four-year campuses. The campuses have endeavored to help bridge the gap via raising over \$1 billion in donations since 1999.

Unfortunately, many campuses are headed toward a begging on the street existence. This is not an exaggeration. The perpetual erosion of state support for SUNY and CUNY have had an effect of the constant unraveling of threads on a rope. While the rope has held with an appearance of only superficial impact, the reality is that like patches on a bike tire, a catastrophic blowout and a snapped rope are on the horizon for the formerly great institution of SUNY.

As coordinator of Technology Education at Buffalo State College, I have experienced regular and constant erosion of financial support over my 20 year career there. I now get to boast of a budget for my program of virtually zero. As I drive my car around village streets on trash days to pick up discarded materials for use in my technical classes and spend personal funds for other supplies, I lament the sadness of being personally and professionally reduced to such an existence as a higher education faculty member. Additionally, while my curriculum in technology assumes contemporary knowledge of the latest content and practices in technology, support for attendance at professional conferences is also approaching the zero dollar amount.

If you drive by the Buffalo State Campus, it looks in many ways like it has for years with some positive additions of new construction, and upgrades. The unfortunate situation is that the instructional infrastructure that supports student learning including full time faculty, maintenance and upgrades of

equipment, and materials and supplies budgets are all disappearing leaving an emperor with no clothes existence. The question before us today is do we rite the ship or let it sink? That is where we're at.



**TESTIMONY
OF THE
NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP
BEFORE THE
NEW YORK STATE SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE
REGARDING
THE COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION
NOVEMBER 1, 2019
Nassau County, New York**

Good afternoon. My name is Vincent Gatto and I am a member of the New York Public Interest Research Group and a student at Nassau Community College. As you know, NYPIRG is a statewide, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization founded by college students in 1973 to engage their peers in civic life. NYPIRG's broad programmatic work provides students with a range of opportunities to participate in public affairs and advance responses to social problems that matter most to them. In collaboration with and guided by professional staff—researchers, organizers, advocates and attorneys—students tackle pressing issues while learning and developing professional-level skills that will boost their prospects for success in college, the job market and throughout their lives. Our Board of Directors solely consists of college and university students elected from campuses with NYPIRG chapters across the State.

We appreciate this opportunity to share our perspectives on the costs of higher education in New York. As we have stated in previous testimony, NYPIRG intends to present testimony at each of the Committee's hearings. Today I will focus both broadly on higher education and the financial challenges of community colleges.

NYPIRG thanks the Legislature for passing the Jose Peralta DREAM Act this year, for restoring funding to critical higher education programs cut in the executive budget, and for advocating for the elimination of the "TAP Gap" and more robust "maintenance of effort" legislation.

Starting in 2017, NYPIRG has been interviewing students who were experiencing difficulties funding the costs of their education, from tuition and textbooks, to related costs like food and childcare. Scores of interviews later, we have gathered insights into the impacts of state divestment in higher education; state and federal financial aid, scholarship, and grant programs; and who benefits from current programs and who is still left out.

Budget Shortfalls Translate into Reduced Services for SUNY Students

Through years of underfunding, New York State has starved CUNY and SUNY campus budgets and put student support services and educational quality at risk. One problem cutting into CUNY and SUNY budgets has the state's underfunding of mandatory cost increases. While the state promised in 2011 to maintain its funding levels from year to year as it raised the tuition burden on students, the state has not included funding for inflationary or other mandatory cost increases like electricity and staff contracts. That has created a gap in state funding for mandatory costs.

The erosion of state support and the creation of growing funding gaps is translating into an erosion of student services and quality of education. Students have experienced firsthand, the difficulty in getting into the classes they need to graduate, limited services such as library hours, and advisement gaps across the CUNY and SUNY system.

Luisa Garcia, a Nassau Community College student, shared her difficulty getting the advisement she needed:

“Right now, I am working towards becoming a physical therapist but have had issues trying to find the classes I need. I went to the advising office on campus, but was only told what classes I would need to get my general degree and not what would best prepare me to transfer. The office attempted to help, but because they had to help so many other students, I wasn't able to get the advising that I need to make sure that I will be prepared for life after college. Also, due to budget issues the school does not have all of the classes I will need to continue my education, so I will be behind when I transfer schools.”

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to enhance funding for CUNY and SUNY by including mandatory costs in its base funding equation to help students get the classes they need to graduate, reduce class sizes, and bolster student advisement.**

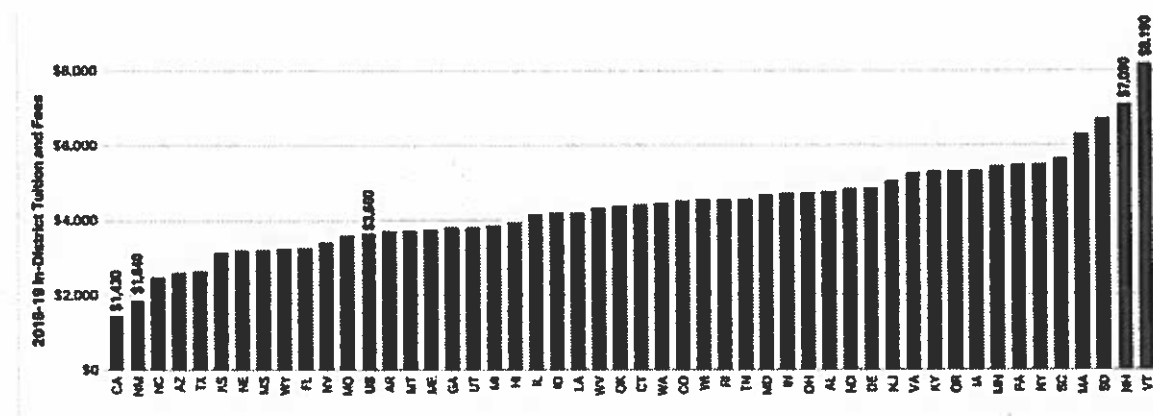
SUNY Community College Students Struggle with Rising Tuition and Other Costs

Community colleges are a local and potentially affordable path to a higher degree or a better job for many New Yorkers, including those who need to be close to their homes, families, and jobs. Moreover, community colleges provide crucial job training and re-training for under-employed and unemployed workers in a rapidly shifting economic environment.

City funding has spared CUNY community colleges from recent tuition hikes, while SUNY community colleges have not fared so well. Investment in community colleges carries proven advantages, particularly for more rural and isolated communities.¹

¹ Thaler, C., “The impact of community colleges on employment growth in rural U.S. counties.” *Journalist's Resource*, October 18, 2013, journalistsresource.org/studies/society/education/community-colleges-jobs-budget-cuts.

Yet, as seen below, community college tuition costs are among the highest in the nation² – creating a barrier to individuals who need new skills for a rapidly changing marketplace.



Recently, NYPIRG released an analysis of the overall financial impact of the SUNY2020 legislation. It found that New York State has charged public college students nearly \$4 billion more as a result of scheduled tuition hikes at SUNY and CUNY. Even when considering additional assistance provided by the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and the new Excelsior Scholarship program, students have paid \$2.5 billion in additional tuition.

The added tuition dollars have added up over an approximate 9-year period resulting from passage of the “SUNY 2020” law first enacted in 2011 and actions by local governments impacting community college costs. This year’s tuition increases will drive that number even higher.

While New York’s substantial financial aid and opportunity programs have shielded some students from these hikes, there are many who fall through the eligibility cracks or who cannot apply for reasons outside of their control. We’ll review some of these shortfalls later. With every tuition hike, New York continues to rely on students and families, many who struggle to keep up with rising costs, rather than addressing years of state underfunding.

Nassau Community College student, David Paiz-Torres shared:

“To pay for my education, I get a Pell Grant and a TAP Grant from New York. Usually, I would pay for books with my book voucher, but this year I couldn’t because tuition went up. The way the voucher works is that I would need to have at least \$100 more in financial aid than tuition costs. Due to tuition hikes at Nassau Community College, that did not happen this semester. Instead, I had to use a credit card and some money that I had left over from my summer job to pay for my schoolbooks.

I plan on graduating Nassau Community College, and moving on to get my Bachelor’s

² The College Board, see: <https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/2018-19-district-tuition-and-fees-public-two-year-institutions-state-and-five-year>.

Degree in Education. Since I want to be a teacher, I will need to follow that with my Master's in teaching which only adds to the costs I will have to pay. The cost of attending a 4-year school are very concerning for me, because I know I will have to take out student loans. I'm worried that by the time I would be eligible for loan forgiveness programs; these programs would have been dismantled. Any cuts to these programs would be putting my future at risk.

Here in New York, we need to increase funding for SUNY and CUNY schools so professors and academic programs can be properly paid for and so electricity and other utility bills aren't put on the backs of students. Our state leaders can definitely do a better job in terms of funding our schools."

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to freeze all tuition rates at senior and community colleges to protect college affordability.**
- **NYPIRG urges that the Legislature support an increase in state aid to offset the costs of attending community colleges.**

Current State Financial Aid Programs Fall Short – And Students Fall Through Cracks

Robust financial aid programs exist to safeguard low and middle income students from the financial barriers which can impede college completion. However, restrictive eligibility requirements, inflexible award schedules, and small budgets hamstring the support these programs are able to provide – and students pay the price.

Reform the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP): While TAP is an important and robust program – funded at over \$1 billion for 2019-2020 – it must be reformed to meet the needs of a 21st century student. TAP recipients are eligible for the award in the fall and spring semesters as long as they take a minimum of 12 credits per semester. However, with the exception of some opportunity programs or for some students with disabilities, the award is only available for up to 8 semesters. In order to ensure on-time graduation, a student must take 30 credits per year. However, with limited financial aid options in the summer and winter, students are forced to take on 15 credits per semester, risk a delayed graduation, or pay out of pocket. For working students, or those with other obligations, that load can be prohibitive.

Chelsea Grate, a SUNY Cortland student who transferred from a SUNY community college, was worried about graduating on time but still elected not to take summer classes and pay out of pocket:

"This is my second year of college, but my first year at SUNY Cortland. I transferred here from Hudson Valley Community College. I'm a Political Science major with a minor in Communications, and I'm somewhere between a sophomore and a junior because of the credits I transferred in with from HVCC and high school.

I am concerned about graduating on time. If I had six more credits I'd be considered a junior right now. I didn't want to do classes over the summer because I didn't want to have to pay for that out of pocket on top of everything else. Once I do graduate from Cortland

I'm going to grad school, preferably at U Albany or Syracuse. I pay for school with financial aid, TAP, and the Pell Grant. I also work at Target and Market 32 on breaks to pay for textbooks and food for the semester. If I didn't get financial aid, I would probably be working full time at Target, and I don't think it'd be possible to go to school at the same time as that."

Robust financial aid programs exist to safeguard low and middle income students from the financial barriers which can impede college completion. Financial aid barriers in the winter and spring semester must be lifted. It could even promote early graduation for those looking to jumpstart their careers or postgraduate studies.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to provide TAP during winter and summer sessions and to expand aid for use beyond covering tuition.**

Expand the New York State Part-Time Scholarship: Last year, the State established a New York State Part-Time Scholarship (PTS) Award Program to provide scholarships to students attending a SUNY or CUNY community college on a part-time basis. Awards would cover the cost of six credit hours up to \$1,500. Eligible students must maintain a 2.0 GPA and take six to twelve credit hours per semester. Awards would be distributed by a lottery system in the event there are more applicants than available awards in the first year. Going forward, priority would be based on financial need and given to students who received awards previously and are in good academic standing; awards would be proportionate to the total applications received. Aid for part-time students is woefully limited and this award is a step in the right direction, but a small one.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to allow eligibility of part-time students for TAP and the Excelsior Scholarships rather than administering this limited separate scholarship.**

TAP for Incarcerated Individuals: Despite prisons being called "correctional facilities," they do a dismal job in turning lives around. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, nationwide about two-thirds of released state prisoners were re-arrested within three years and three-quarters within five.³ Too often, prison is a revolving door. And it's a revolving door that impacts certain communities worse than others. According to the Cuomo Administration, nearly half of New York inmate population is African American, nearly one quarter is Hispanic, and nearly one quarter is white.⁴

The currently high recidivism rate helps no one. The connection between higher education and reduced recidivism has been well established. A study conducted by the University of California at Los Angeles found that "[a] \$1 million investment in incarceration will prevent about 350

³ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "3 In 4 Former Prisoners In 30 States Arrested Within 5 Years Of Release," April 22, 2014, see: <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/press/rprts05p0510pr.cfm>.

⁴ New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, "Under Custody Report: Profile of Inmate Population Under Custody on January 1, 2013," see: http://www.doccs.ny.gov/Research/Reports/2013/UnderCustody_Report_2013.pdf.

crimes, while that same investment in education will prevent more than 600 crimes. Correctional education is almost twice as cost effective as incarceration.”⁵

While prisoners can sometimes get access to educational courses now, they are ineligible for the federal Pell Grant program as well as TAP. Since the vast majority of inmates are low income, they usually cannot afford college courses while in prison.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to provide TAP eligibility for incarcerated individuals.**

TAP for Graduate Students: Graduate TAP began in 1974-1975, helping 22,253 New York graduate students with an average award of \$302 with a maximum award of \$600. The program has fluctuated greatly over the years with regards to the number of students receiving the award, the maximum award available, average award distributed, and the amount of money the state invested in the program. Before TAP for graduate students was completely eliminated in 2009-2010, it served 7,251 students.⁶

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that jobs requiring master’s degrees and professional degrees will grow by 22% and 20%, respectively, from 2010 to 2020 – faster than any other level of education.⁷ According to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, a worker with a high school diploma can expect to earn \$1.3 million over a lifetime, while a worker with a bachelor’s degree will earn \$2.3 million and a worker with a master’s degree will earn \$2.7 million over a lifetime.⁸ While the benefits of advanced degrees are clear, financial aid programs are either non-existent or uninviting to prospective graduate students, many of whom already hold student loan debt.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to expand TAP to eligible graduate students.**

Vulnerable Students Need Support Services to Access Higher Education

The goal of effective college aid shouldn't be to just cover tuition, but to cover the added costs that can hamstring student success. If costs including textbooks, transportation, food, housing and childcare are standing in the way of a student’s educational success, then they must be addressed.

The cost of child care can be a significant barrier toward accessing a degree. According to the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, just 8 percent of single mothers who enroll in college

⁵Audrey Bazos and Jessica Hausman, UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research Department of Policy Studies, “Correctional Education as a Crime Control Program,” p 2, March 2004, see: <http://www.ceanational.org/PDFs/cd-as-crime-control.pdf>.

⁶ New York State Higher Education Services Corporation, “Graduate Level TAP AY 1974-1975 thru 2009-2010,” Neal Warren, September 2013.

⁷ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Occupational Outlook Handbook, Projections 2010-2020,” <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/about/projections-overview.htm>.

⁸ The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, “The College Payoff: Education, Occupations, Lifetime Earnings,” Page 2, August 15th 2011, <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/collegepayoff-summary.pdf>.

graduate with an associate or bachelor's degree within six years, compared with 49 percent of women students who are not mothers.⁹ Single mothers with only a high school diploma are over three times as likely to live in poverty as single mothers with a bachelor's degree.¹⁰

While the average cost of private child care or daycare in NYC can be prohibitively expensive (roughly \$25,000 a year¹¹), enrolling a child in daycare at CUNY can cost as little as \$5 a day. It's unsurprising that access to affordable child care increases degree completion rates. A study by Monroe Community College in Rochester, NY, found that student parents that used the child care center there were 30 percent more likely to stay in school. CUNY and SUNY child care centers are a unique and powerful tool for socio-economic mobility.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to robustly fund CUNY and SUNY child care centers.**

NYPIRG commends the work of CUNY and SUNY staff, often in collaboration with our campus NYPIRG chapters, student governments and the community at large, to stock and maintain food pantries in compliance with the mandate from Governor Cuomo that every CUNY and SUNY campus create food pantries. That mandate came in part as a response to a report by groups including NYPIRG entitled *Hunger on Campus*. The report looked at food insecurity on campus, and how that may undermine the educational success of untold thousands of students.¹² Consistent with prior studies, 48 percent of survey respondents reported food insecurity in the previous 30 days.

Taking a closer look at the approximately 1,800 students who reported experiencing food insecurity, thirty-two percent believed that hunger or housing problems had an impact on their education, from foregoing textbook purchases, to missing or dropping classes. Students that are hungry and homeless must get the services they need.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to include monies in the budget to support operating expenses food pantries across campuses at SUNY and CUNY.**

Students Succeed In Proven Opportunity Programs – Why Are They Routinely Cut in The Executive Budget?

Opportunity programs, which are designed for educationally and economically disadvantaged students, have a steady track record of success in increasing graduation rates among the most at-risk students.¹³ In general, students in opportunity programs are individuals who have come from

⁹ Institute for Women's Policy Research, "Investing in Single Mothers' Higher Education: Costs and Benefits to Individuals, Families, and Society." <https://iwpr.org/publications/investing-single-mothers-higher-ed/>.

¹⁰ Institute for Women's Policy Research, "Investing in Single Mothers' Higher Education: Costs and Benefits to Individuals, Families, and Society." <https://iwpr.org/publications/investing-single-mothers-higher-ed/>.

¹¹ Bernard, Tara Siegel. "Choosing Child Care When You Go Back to Work." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 22 Nov. 2013, www.nytimes.com/2013/11/23/your-money/choosing-child-care-when-you-go-back-to-work.html.

¹² NYPIRG, *Hunger on Campus, The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students*, October 2016, http://www.nypirgstudents.org/reports/Hunger_on_Campus_NYPIRG.pdf, accessed November 30, 2016.

¹³ For an example of the success of opportunity programs, see State University of New York's Office of Opportunity
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low-income communities and often rank low on traditional measures of collegiate admissions standards, such SAT scores, high school GPA, and class standing.

New York State has several opportunity programs in place to help increase access to higher education: Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK), Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), College Discovery, Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), and Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP). These programs take a comprehensive approach to college access and affordability by building in academic counseling, mentoring, and coverage of related costs such as free metrocards, textbooks, and child care. This approach works, and increases graduation rates. All students deserve this model of a holistically supported education and New York State and City must make the investments to make it happen.

Despite the track records of the successes of these programs, each year the Executive Budget proposes cuts and forces the Legislature to fight to restore programs instead of building on them.

- **NYPIRG urges the Legislature to expand funding to the opportunity programs listed above.**
- **NYPIRG recommends that the state look to programs such as CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) as a model for free public college which addresses the all-in costs of higher education and has proven to increase graduation rates.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Testimony by
Courtney Davis
Community Service Society

Before the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Higher Education
Nassau Community College, 1 Education Drive
Garden City, New York 11530
Friday, November 1, 2019

Good afternoon,

Chairwoman Stavisky, Chairman Kaminsky, and members of the Senate Standing Committee on Higher Education, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Courtney Davis and I work at the Community Service Society of New York for a program initiative called the Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP). This program provides over the phone and in-person assistance to student loan borrowers who may need counseling on basic matters like loan repayment options to more complex situations, like getting out of student debt default or preventing wage garnishment.

Our student loan clients are diverse in age, gender, and ethnicity, and they come from a wide variety of economic and educational backgrounds. However, the reason they come to us is because they have incurred student debt to finance their education. In a sense, we get to see the consequences of college unaffordability and thus see our testimony as relevant to this hearing. To this end, we would like to focus your attention on a specific population, those attending New York State's community colleges.

Research and our own client experience show that although community college students are less likely to borrow and on average borrow less than other students, those who do borrow tend to suffer the greatest consequences. From a student loan default perspective, community college students have a default rate of over 19%.¹ The average overall student loan default rate is about 11%.² Having a higher student loan default rate is only part of the story. From our own experience, those who default will see their financial health immediately impacted and result in a lower credit score, which can lead to higher insurance premiums, less access to affordable housing, and increase cost of borrowing for other needs.³ As to the long-term impact, it will result in an inability to save for retirement and reduced asset accumulation. Aside from the

¹ U.S. Department of Education (2015). Three-Year Cohort Default Rates for Schools.

² *Id.*

³ NYC Consumer Affairs, Student Loan Debt Distress Across NYC Neighborhoods, Identifying Indicators of Vulnerability (November 2018), available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dca/downloads/pdf/partners/Research-StudentLoanDebtDistressAcrossNYCNeighborhoods.pdf>

impact of the debt, the reality is that these students are more likely to not have completed their degree and/or are unable to get additional financial aid to finish the degree they started. Ultimately, these students are worse off than if they had not attempted to get a higher education at all.

From a gender, race and ethnicity perspective, it is not surprising to see the disparate impact on minorities and communities who are already in overall economic distress. Women, African Americans and Latinos are suffering the most from relatively low levels of student debt from EDCAP's experience and research findings. In New York City, for example, the Bronx has the highest number of student loan holders in collections, followed by Brooklyn and Queens.⁴ The underlying issue could be said to be college unaffordability, but the problem is not just tuition and fees. The fact is that tuition and fees constitute a relatively small portion of the total cost of attendance, about 20%.⁵ As a result, the cost of living and childcare pose the biggest financial hurdles, particularly for those attending community college given that they often have to work full time to support themselves and their families. Considering the above, any discussion about college affordability and what can be done must include a discussion about the associated costs and life circumstances of the changing student population. For those attending public colleges and universities in New York State, it will be imperative to institute aid and programs aimed at addressing these needs outside of college tuition and fees.

Below are some concrete examples of the impact of college unaffordability and things that can be done:

Client J., a first-generation college student in his 20s, contacted our office with an education dilemma. Although his income and lifetime NYC residence qualified him to attend his upstate SUNY college tuition-free, a missed FAFSA filing had left him with an unpaid tuition balance of \$5,000. Not only was he told by the bursar's office that he would be unable to access any financial aid to remedy the situation, but that he could not even create a simple payment plan for the tuition he owed. Until the balance of his unpaid tuition was below \$500, he was shut out of college education, unable to return to classes, receive his transcripts, or to transfer to any other CUNY or SUNY college. So, he dropped out, and sought low-paying work to pay off his debt. This scenario is not rare among the borrowers that we see. And we know that those who fall through the cracks are likely to end up defaulting on the loans they have.

There are many students across the CUNY and SUNY system whose education and upward mobility is being held hostage because they owe their respective college or university relatively small amounts of debt, and schools seem to implement different repayment policies. We thus recommend that the CUNY and SUNY systems work together to create better *statewide* bursar policies that provide support and solutions for students who are behind in their payments to their school. We believe that the burden of complex and confusing financial aid applications and policies should be part of the discussion around college costs, precisely because these complex

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ College Board Research, Trends in Community Colleges: Enrollment, Prices, Student Debt and Completion (April, 2016), available at <https://research.collegeboard.org/pdf/trends-community-colleges-research-brief.pdf>

rules place low-income and minority students at a disadvantage and can lead to disastrous results.

When we met S., a mother in her 30s living in Brooklyn, she had already obtained her associate degree from a CUNY community college at a very low cost. However, S. wanted to pursue a bachelor's degree and was enticed to enroll in classes at a high cost for-profit college that overpromised the support available but by far underdelivered and saddled her with burdensome debt. Without a degree, S. soon defaulted on her debt. We helped S. get out of default and gave her information about the financial aid available to her at CUNY, like the Excelsior scholarship. That's when S. let us know that, although she wanted to return to school, finding childcare for her toddler during class was a barrier for her.

Considering the demographics of community college students—older adults, working full-time, with dependents—it is vital for New York to continue advancing the wonderful childcare programs that already exist at many CUNY and SUNY campuses. We believe that making those programs free, or more affordable, and available to a wide range of age groups for low-income CUNY and SUNY students could open doors to higher education to the most vulnerable, reduce the non-completion rates, and ultimately reduce the student debt. We also believe that by providing more comprehensive support, less people like S. will be lured into for-profit schools who often overpromise the type of aid and support truly available and leave people much worse off.

Finally, in New York the overwhelming cost of housing represents a massive barrier to upward mobility. That burden is one that is shared by students who are pursuing their education through New York's public higher education institutions. One CUNY community college campus found that the crisis of homelessness among enrolled students was causing so much concern that the head of Student Affairs requested that CSS send a financial coach to work with their student population to determine why and what could be done. Our financial coach determined quickly that although financial aid was made available to help low-income students pay their tuition, it didn't cover on-campus or off-campus housing. Housing remains an out-of-pocket expense for many CUNY and SUNY students, and those who don't have incomes or access to affordable housing are literally left out in the cold. We recommend making hardship waivers for on-campus housing available for more students in the CUNY and SUNY system. No one should have to live in their car or in order to get a degree from a public school in New York.

Ultimately, we at CSS and EDCAP believe the issue of the cost of higher education in New York's public institutions is one that should be viewed with nuance. While bringing tuition costs down for most is a commendable achievement, we should remain vigilant about hidden costs that acts as barriers to the most vulnerable. More can be done to reach out to and connect those who are struggling to complete their educations with services and support.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

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