

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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March 8, 2011
Start: 2:17 pm
Recess: 4:48 pm

HELD AT: 250 Broadway
Committee Room, 14th Floor

B E F O R E:
YDANIS RODRIGUEZ
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Fernando Cabrera
Letitia James
Deborah Rose
Larry B. Seabrook
Charles Barron
James Vacca

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

Julia Wrigley
Associate University Provost
CUNY

Anthony Rini
Executive Director, Academic Financial Affairs and
Planning
CUNY

Dr. Ramona Hernandez
Director
Dominican Studies Institute

Edwin Melendez
Director of Center for Puerto Rican Studies
Hunter College and CUNY

Anthony Tamburri
Dean
John D. Calandra Italian-American Institute

Patricia Krueger
Dominican Studies Institute
CUNY

Joyce Moy
Executive Director of the Asian-American and Asian
Research Institute
CUNY

Kyung Ji Rhee
Juvenile Justice Director
Center for New Leadership

Ricardo Gabriel
CUNY Graduate Center

Esmeralda Simmons
Executive Director, Center of Law and Social Justice
Medgar Evers College and CUNY

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

Dr. Brenda Greene
Executive Director
Center for Black Literature

T. Rasul Murray

Joseph Coello
Board Member
DuBois Bunche Center, Medgar Evers

Gloria Dulan-Wilson

Henry Williams

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon everyone and welcome to this hearing of the Committee on Higher Education. My name is Ydanis Rodriguez, and I chair the Committee on Higher Education.

Before we begin I would like to introduce my colleague in government Council Member Cabrera, Council Member James, Council Member Rose.

We are here today to hear testimony about the academic impact of the City University of New York's instituting centers on ethnic studies. New York City has a diverse population when it comes to ethnicity. This population includes African, African-American, Latino, Caribbean, Asian, Jewish, Irish, Greek, Italian, Middle Eastern, and other cultures. The City University of New York, known as CUNY, is the largest city university in the country and is made of 25 colleges, senior, and community colleges. CUNY's diverse student population reflects the city diversity.

CUNY has more than 100 research

1
2 centers, institutes, and consortia located at CUNY
3 senior colleges, graduate, and professional
4 schools. This institution is engaged in research,
5 offer academic resources, and present a wide [off
6 mic] event amongst CUNY research centers,
7 institutes, and consortium. There are over 20
8 culturally-based centers in the institute that
9 focus on African, African-American, Latino,
10 Caribbean, Asian, Jewish, Greek, Italian, Middle
11 Eastern, and other cultures.

12 The importance of this work cannot
13 be overstated. As New York City continues to
14 increase its diversity with growing immigrants
15 community. Through these many demographic shifts,
16 the centers have chronicled the social and
17 political issues affecting these groups, and their
18 research has been published widely, providing
19 insights for our society. When we say that we
20 wish to examine the academic impact of these
21 centers, we are looking, not only to the
22 production on a scholarly research, but also at
23 the impact the centers have on the student body
24 and our communities.

25 A number programs, some of whom are

1
2 represented here today, use these theoretical work
3 done by the centers and put it into practice on
4 the ground with the students every day. These
5 efforts and crucial to the developments of a
6 supporter and collaborate academic environment.

7 We will hear testimony from CUNY
8 administrators and faculty, directors of centers
9 and institutes, as well as the students who use
10 these centers. At their core, our university are
11 where our collective knowledge is stored, and as
12 this hearing will make clear, this center and
13 institute preserve the knowledge of the many
14 diverse groups that together make New York City so
15 dynamic.

16 So now we will start calling our
17 first panel, which is composed by Julia Wrigley
18 from CUNY, Anthony Rini, Ramona Hernandez--Dr.
19 Ramona Hernandez--I'm sorry for not mentioning the
20 title of the others--and Anthony Tamburri, and
21 Edwin Melendez.

22 [Long pause]

23 JULIA WRIGLEY: ...and members of the
24 Higher Education Committee. Thank you for the
25 opportunity to speak with you today about centers

1
2 and institutes at the City University of New York,
3 CUNY, and for the specific invitation to address
4 the academic impact of CUNY's centers and
5 institutes on ethnic studies.

6 After my testimony, and that of
7 University Executive Director of Academic
8 Financial Affairs and Planning Anthony Rini, you
9 will hear from three directors who will be able to
10 speak directly to your chief concern: Dr. Ramona
11 Hernandez, Director of CUNY's Dominican Studies
12 Institute; Dr. Edwin Melendez, Director of CUNY's
13 Center for Puerto Rican Studies; and Dr. Anthony
14 Julian Tamburri, Dean of CUNY's John D. Calandra
15 Institute for Italian-American Studies.

16 First, however, I would like to
17 provide some background about the role of centers
18 and institutes at CUNY. Executive Director Rini
19 will then explain how our centers and institutes
20 are organized, structured, and maintained.

21 At CUNY, as in most institutions of
22 higher education, the traditional locus for
23 instruction and research is the academic
24 department. Adult and continuing education
25 programs deliver additional instruction. At the

1 same time, the university benefits greatly from
2 the activities of centers and institutes, which
3 play an important role in the university's
4 endeavors. Centers and institutes are essential
5 vehicles for the interdisciplinary research and
6 thematic research that unites sub-disciplines
7 within an academic field. They may offer non-
8 credit instruction more narrowly focused or of
9 shorter duration than the customary curriculum.
10 They may further provide non-instructional
11 services to the outside community based on their
12 area of academic expertise. They supplement and
13 complement departmental activities. They do not
14 offer regular courses, confer degrees, appoint
15 faculty members, or confer tenure.

17 It may also be helpful to
18 understand that at CUNY a center is an organized
19 unit of a single CUNY college whose mission is to
20 sponsor, coordinate, and promote research,
21 training, instruction, or service. For its part,
22 an institute is an organized unit staffed,
23 supported, and governed by several colleges of the
24 university, under the leadership of a primary
25 campus. There are currently, as we heard, more

than 100 centers and institutes at CUNY.

Executive Director Rini will now address the administrative structure and policies of our centers and institutes.

ANTHONY RINI: Good afternoon, Chairperson Rodriguez and members of the Higher Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today.

Although new centers and institutes at CUNY must be approved by the local governance structure of the campus or campuses where they are housed, all centers and institutes are governed by the policies of the university Board of Trustees. Campus-level examination approval includes a review of the academic merit of the center or institute, whether the entity satisfies an unmet need on the campus or in the local community, start-up costs, and the feasibility of leveraging external private and public support.

Upon receiving campus approval, all requests for new centers and institutes are reviewed by the CUNY Central Office of Academic Affairs. This review includes an examination of the academic merit of the entity, potential

1
2 duplication of similar entities within CUNY, as
3 well as a fiscal plan--

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ:

5 [Interposing] I'm sorry, can we have the
6 testimony?

7 ANTHONY RINI: It's included with--

8 [Off mic]

9 JULIA WRIGLEY: It's in one
10 document.

11 ANTHONY RINI: Okay.

12 [Crosstalk]

13 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

14 ANTHONY RINI: That's okay. And
15 fiscal planning indicating the need for matching
16 funds and a timetable for attaining all funding
17 goals. Upon receiving this approval, new centers
18 and institutes are added to the CUNY Board of
19 Trustees' agenda for ratification.

20 Every five years, as stipulated in
21 the CUNY Board of Trustees' policies, the Office
22 of Academic Affairs requires that all campuses
23 review centers and institutes and present an
24 inventory to the board for approval. This process
25 allows for an additional academic and financial

review of centers and institute activities and allows CUNY to close dormant groups.

The governing documents clearly stipulate that these units are expected to operate with substantial external support to advance the mission of the university beyond what is possible to accomplish through the basic institutional budget. Historically, tax levy support from the university has been provided from the organized research funds, which in recent years, has proven to be limited, if not nonexistent.

As Associate Provost Wrigley explained, centers and institutes are based on a single campus. As such, they normally receive start-up funding from their home campus, which may include office space, communications infrastructure, and a percentage of faculty and/or staff salaries to support center activities. Institutes, with their multi-campus orientation, may receive university support stemming from city and state allocations. In these cases, support is normally limited in duration and extent.

CUNY's centers and institutes have proven very successful in generating substantial

1 funding from federal, state, and city agencies, as
2 well as from private foundations and donors. This
3 funding has been essential to supplementing and
4 complementing CUNY's academic mission and
5 attracting new faculty and students to the
6 university.
7

8 CUNY's Dominican Studies Institute
9 provides one example of a CUNY institute with a
10 significant academic impact in the area of ethnic
11 studies. Its director, Dr. Ramona Hernandez, will
12 explain.

13 DR. RAMONA HERNANDEZ: Thank you.
14 Before I begin, let me thank the Honorable Council
15 Members for their willingness to listen to my
16 comments about the Dominican Studies Institute. I
17 also want to thank Vice Chancellor Hershenson for
18 selecting me as one of the members of this
19 important panel to provide testimony about the
20 importance of institutes dedicated to the
21 production of research and, in the process,
22 enhance the scholarly productivity and the
23 academic status of the entire university.

24 The CUNY Dominican Studies
25 Institute is unique in every sense. It is the

1
2 only institute of research in the world dedicated
3 to study and produce knowledge about Dominicans
4 who live in the United States; we have the only
5 library in which one can surely find all that has
6 been written and published about this group; and
7 of course, we also have the only archives in
8 Dominican Studies that preserve the documents
9 recording the contributions of the Dominican
10 people to society, particularly New York City,
11 where they have been the largest immigrant group
12 for the past few decades and where they have
13 revived decaying neighborhoods with their hard
14 work and their dreams of securing a better life
15 for themselves and their children.

16 Let me briefly speak to you about
17 our unique library. We have close to 4,000
18 bibliographical resources and 70% of them have
19 been donated by individuals and organizations.
20 The rest, 30%, has been acquired with funding
21 provided by the City University of New York. We
22 seek donations aggressively. Every time someone
23 finishes a Ph.D. dissertation, we write to the
24 person and we ask to donate his or her
25 dissertation. Because of this action alone, we

1 house the largest collection of Ph.D.
2 dissertations granted by U.S. institutions going
3 as far back as 1939, the first doctoral
4 dissertation about Dominicans. No other library
5 possesses this unique collection.
6

7 You may ask, and how many students
8 does the Dominican Library actually serve? Last
9 year the Dominican Library served a little over
10 1,500 patrons, and close to 60% of them were
11 students from CUNY, the rest was composed of
12 students from other colleges and universities from
13 New York City, from other places in the United
14 States, and from around the world, including
15 Japan, and Germany. Of course, much of the
16 service provided to the international community is
17 done via the internet and the phone with our
18 librarian, Professor Sarah Aponte, who is the only
19 librarian, specialized in Dominican Studies in the
20 U.S.

21 It should be taken into account
22 when considering the numbers of patrons served
23 last year. One thing, the library was closed for
24 three years because, as you know, we were
25 rebuilding and constructing a new library and what

we think is that the more people know that we have opened, the more visitors we are going to have in the years to come.

Let me now speak briefly about the Dominican Archives. The Dominican Archives began officially in 2004 with two collections of documents donated by two of the oldest community activists: Dofia Normandia Maldonado and Don Juan Paulino. Dofia Maldonado has been involved in the founding of a number of organizations dedicated to celebrate and preserve Dominican cultural legacy in our city. Don Paulino helped secure the only statue of Juan Pablo Duarte, founding father of the Dominican Republic. He passed away in 2008 but he left us knowing that the papers documenting the work he had done on behalf of the Dominican people and American society are well preserved in the Dominican Archives and are available so that no one forgets how the Dominican community laid down roots in New York City.

Today we have accessioned over 150 collections and have processed almost 60% of them. Processing one collection often takes months and hundreds of hours of work. The funding allocated

1
2 to CUNY DSI by the New York City Council ensures
3 continuation of this very important work. And
4 this work must be done, because what is left of a
5 people that has no memory of itself?

6 What do the archives do besides
7 preserving the legacy of the Dominican people? It
8 serves researchers who are interested in
9 documenting the life of Latinos of which
10 Dominicans are an essential constituency in the
11 U.S.

12 Let me speak briefly now about our
13 undergraduate and graduate student research
14 program. CUNY DSI continues to attract young
15 doctoral students who are interested in writing
16 dissertations in Dominican Studies. We award
17 fellowships for a year to qualified doctoral
18 candidates research also intersects with CUNY
19 DSI's research agenda. The fellowship is
20 competitive and provides an annual stipend of
21 \$20,000 and the opportunity to use all the
22 bibliographical and archival materials currently
23 held at the institute's Dominican Archives and
24 library. It is important to stress that these are
25 the only fellowships in the United States that

support students conducting research specifically about the U.S. Dominican population.

Last year, we had four doctoral students and I just wanted you to know, 50% of them came from the CUNY's Graduate Center and the other 50% came from universities from Rutgers and Fordham University.

Our CUNY DSI also accepts and supports students from the different higher education institutions that come to us asking for research internships and these function as a precious opportunity for the students, sometimes for the first time of their lives, to familiarize themselves with the field of Dominican Latino studies by exposing them to our daily work and to an entire staff whose only mission is to think, discuss, produce, and disseminate academic knowledge about a people. These students come to CUNY DSI funded by their own institutions. Last year alone, we hosted students that hailed from states as far away from Texas, and countries as distant as Germany.

Our students are assigned to work in one of the three areas of CUNY DSI according to

1
2 their undergrad field of studies or major. For
3 many of these students, the opportunity to work at
4 CUNY DSI becomes more than a way to supplement
5 their incomes, it becomes a place where they do
6 homework, find support and encouragement, and
7 expand their social and professional network.

8 Similarly, we work very closely
9 with the public school system by offering teacher
10 training programs to enhance and develop
11 curriculum incorporating Dominican Studies and by
12 organizing workshops for young students in the
13 same field. These programs are provided in the
14 library and facilitated by CUNY DSI librarian
15 Sarah Aponte, the archivist, Idilio Gracia Pena,
16 and the post Doctoral Fellow, Dr. Patricia
17 Krueger, who is specialized in education and
18 teaches in the Education Department of the City
19 College of New York, the home of the Dominican
20 Studies Institute.

21 I'm going to begin to cut so that
22 you don't [off mic] my attention. Let me touch
23 briefly on the research undertaken by CUNY DSI.
24 Currently, there are six research projects
25 sponsored by CUNY DSI. Please allow me to remind

1
2 you that we undertake pioneering research, areas
3 of studies and topics that have received little,
4 if any, attention in the scholarly community. I
5 will not abuse your kindness today and give you a
6 list of research projects currently sponsored by
7 CUNY DSI. Allow me please just to mention the
8 last three research projects in 2010.

9 "The discovery of Juan Rodriguez as
10 Dominican." Tracing some widely forgotten
11 scholarship, CUNY DSI found archival records that
12 show that Juan Rodriguez, a mulatto who settled
13 along the Hudson River in 1613 and who became
14 known as the first immigrant to settle in what is
15 called New York City today, is of Dominican
16 origins. Public recognition of that research--
17 which is still ongoing as we speak--came when the
18 prestigious New York Historical Society asked our
19 Assistant Director, Anthony Stevens, a historian
20 trained in 16th century colonial history and
21 leading the research in the Juan Rodriguez
22 project, to join the New York Historical Society's
23 historical research team. The first exhibit about
24 Latinos in New York, as you know, was currently
25 recently showcased at El Museo and it began with

1
2 the story of Juan Rodriguez now as told by the
3 CUNY DSI. The award winning historian of New York
4 City, Dr. Mike Wallace, also noted CUNY DSI
5 research in his new book about Latinos in this
6 great city.

7 And I'm going to cut and just
8 mention a second research. This is one of the
9 most exciting and rewarding ongoing research of a
10 CUNY DSI is called "The Forgotten People:
11 Dominicans who Came Through Ellis Island." I am
12 the lead researcher in my group, five students in
13 total, it's made up of undergraduates majoring in
14 sociology, history, and anthropology. No one knew
15 Dominicans came through Ellis Island--that port of
16 entry to New York City that has filled American
17 imagination with countless stories of courage and
18 hope. Over 5,000 Dominicans came through Ellis
19 Island between 1892 and 1924. We have spent two
20 years on this research. First searching, then
21 creating the database with the 5,000 names, and
22 then analyzing the document completed by
23 Dominicans at the time of arrival. We now know
24 where these Ellis Island Dominicans went to live;
25 we know their demographic profile--whether they

1
2 were men, women, their ages, what kind of jobs
3 they had, whether they were single or married, who
4 they married once they settle here--and most
5 importantly, we also know how many of them came
6 with the intention of settling permanently in New
7 York City because they declared their intention to
8 become U.S. citizens.

9 These five students are employed by
10 your generosity by resources provided to CUNY DSI
11 by the New York City Council. Their participation
12 in this research means the world to them and to us
13 because it allows them to learn how to conduct
14 high quality, sophisticated research, and
15 manipulate primary data, and become authors in
16 recounting the story of a people for the very
17 first time. It also means that CUNY DSI gets the
18 most committed, passionate, and inquisitive minds
19 out there of young students who still believe that
20 what they say can actually change the world for
21 the better. And of course, their participation in
22 this research means they get jobs: four of the
23 five students depend on this job to pay for food,
24 transportation, and other necessities.

25 These are young women and men who

1
2 represent the future researchers, the future
3 professors, the future of the Dominican people who
4 relied on them to tell their version of their
5 story.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

8 EDWIN MELENDEZ: Before I start,
9 let me ask you, do you have a copy of the
10 memorandum that I wrote?

11 [Off mic]

12 EDWIN MELENDEZ: Okay.

13 [Off mic]

14 EDWIN MELENDEZ: And this is for
15 you [off mic].

16 [Long pause]

17 EDWIN MELENDEZ: Chairperson
18 Rodriguez, Councilors, [Foreign language] my name
19 is Edwin Melendez, I'm the Director of the Center
20 for Puerto Rican Studies and it is my great
21 pleasure to represent CUNY and Hunter College here
22 at the hearings.

23 What I did was we received a few
24 questions that are of your concern and I just
25 organized my remarks based on those questions, so

1
2 rather than have a general presentation, I'd
3 rather move through the memo that you have in
4 front of you as expeditiously as I possibly can.

5 In regard to the number of students
6 that we serve, we organized our services to
7 faculty and students and the community in various
8 categories and I'm going to briefly comment on
9 each of them.

10 The first one of course is the
11 intellectual development of the students, and for
12 that we have faculty affiliated with the Center
13 for Puerto Rican Studies that teach several
14 courses. This faculty are affiliated or in
15 collaboration with various departments throughout
16 the university. The courses are listed through
17 the department and co-listed by other departments.
18 And, as you can see, over the last year we served
19 a significant number of students. Some of those
20 courses are very popular and some of them are
21 geared--sponsored by a coalition now geared
22 towards transitioning students from high school to
23 college.

24 The second area in which we serve
25 students directly is enhancing their educational

1
2 experience while they're in college. This event
3 serve all the CUNY community throughout, we
4 receive students from far away campuses that just
5 made the trip to participate in these events. I
6 just listed the one for the last two semesters,
7 but suffice to say, if you move to the next page,
8 that we have significant participation of both
9 students and community in those courses. I just
10 noted the ones that are particularly to courses
11 that are currently offered by faculty throughout
12 campus and they bring the students to participate
13 in this event. So it's an enhancement to whatever
14 they do in the classroom.

15 We also, as a Dominican institute,
16 have far-reaching library and archives. We are
17 the only depository at the national level of the
18 Puerto Rican diaspora files. We last year served
19 about 2,300 students, of which more than half
20 were--far more than half were students. We also
21 serve people that came to use our archive for
22 research. Last year we served about 1,500 of
23 them, and many of them are related to
24 dissertations and masters degree products that
25 they're working on. And there were other

1
2 services, workshops, specialized workshops and so
3 forth, but I leave that for you to read at your
4 leisure.

5 We also have--with the sponsor of
6 the federal government we receive a grant to
7 promote cultural competence at the graduate level,
8 so we have a partnership among four graduate
9 programs--the School of Education, the School of
10 Social Work, the School of Public Health, and my
11 department, Urban Studies and Planning, in which
12 we created a number--too many to probably list--
13 activities to enhance the knowledge of graduate
14 students as they relate to our communities of
15 color, okay. In essence, what we do is train them
16 to assess these parties, you know, how equal or
17 unequal are services provided by government, the
18 outcomes of labor markets, and so on and so forth,
19 and then we train them to develop culturally
20 sensitive interventions to attend to those
21 problems that are identified.

22 In those processes, you know, [off
23 mic] of research and what have you, we employ a
24 number of college assistants, and it's a direct
25 services to the students. Last year, we employed

1
2 about 49 undergraduate and graduate students at
3 any given time and this funded by a combination of
4 state tax levies and the City Council support, we
5 had 31 students last year for--in total, we have
6 49, the difference is funded by grants and other
7 funding. And I include a breakdown a little bit
8 of where those students come from.

9 Suffice to say that these are, in
10 general, well paid jobs for students on an average
11 \$15 an hour. For many of them, it's the only
12 income that supports their continuation in
13 college. And you can see a little bit of the
14 breakdown there, but many of them are from Hunter
15 and from other CUNY campuses.

16 In terms of the impact on the
17 student population, I think there are four
18 substantive areas that are important to consider.
19 The first one, obviously, is intellectual and
20 academic development and that is partly related to
21 the educational activities that we promote, but
22 it's also related to all the ancillary services
23 that we provide--like your library services, the
24 training that we provide--and when they are
25 employed, they get extensive training in research

1
2 methodologies, data gathering, analysis, and so on
3 and so forth.

4 Many of our students, whether they
5 are on the graduate or undergraduate level, what
6 they learn with us is what's going to serve them
7 to continue and finish their studies, it's a
8 motivation. So this intellectual mentoring, if
9 you will, is an essential part of what we do.

10 The second part has to do with
11 retention and graduation and that has to do, in
12 addition with intellectual mentoring, has to do
13 with the networks, the support networks that they
14 engage when they are working with us, it refers to
15 all the research, seminars, and conference in
16 which they're exposed to and they participate.
17 Many times they assist faculty and other
18 presenters in preparing those courses and they
19 themselves are trained in the process.

20 We also offer work experience. For
21 many of you, that transition is what's important,
22 you know, learning the discipline of coming to
23 work, having a supervisor that guides you,
24 understanding when you can respond to your
25 supervisors in one way or the other way. That

1 work experience I think is invaluable for
2 professionals. We train them to be oriented by
3 service towards others, not towards making--just
4 getting a job or making money in the labor market,
5 we train them to service others as a motivation
6 for their education.
7

8 And finally, the earnings that they
9 have from Centro are very important too for their
10 continued education.

11 The next question is how effective
12 these institutes are, and it will take me much
13 more time than I have allocated here to really go
14 through the litany of things that we do and how we
15 serve, but I think I just summarized the strategic
16 goals that we develop over about a year of
17 planning about three years ago when I became
18 director of the center and they are grouped by the
19 substantive areas in which we engage. The first
20 one is research and we really would like to have
21 research that impact, not only the understanding,
22 but also the solutions that we need in our
23 communities.

24 The second area is education, and
25 here we like to serve as the hope of

1
2 experimentation, a development tool for all the
3 CUNY campuses and programs that really need to
4 develop [off mic] that engage our type of
5 population--population that come from a diverse
6 background that comes with sometimes, oftentimes,
7 disadvantages in terms of the academic preparation
8 and really our courses try to do things in a
9 different way--project base, engagement of
10 students, students focuses is what we try to
11 implement.

12 Our library and archives are, as I
13 mentioned before, the depository of numerous
14 titles, thousands of linear feet of archival
15 material, we're over 250 collections now and
16 counting. And, as Ramona mentioned, if it's not
17 us, who is going to collect these histories.
18 We're the only, at the national level, the only
19 research center that devotes attention to the
20 collection of that data.

21 In terms of outreach, we have an
22 extensive program. We have created a new
23 electronic magazine that's called Voices, we have
24 revamped the website to really attend to the
25 expression of our population throughout the whole

1
2 country. Without a doubt, I will state here that
3 Centro is a flagship of CUNY and Hunter, we have a
4 national presence and that is partly done through
5 our social networking and all these vehicles that
6 use the new technologies to outreach to a very
7 disperse and vast population.

8 In regard to our goals, as I
9 mentioned before, they correspond to those
10 substantive areas that I mentioned before. In
11 essence, we try to build partnerships with other
12 institutes, partnership with the community,
13 partnership with academic departments to implement
14 our academic programs. And since you have a list
15 of goals in there, I'm going to leave it at that
16 for now.

17 The fifth question was how do we
18 prepare students for post-graduate studies. I
19 already mentioned a little bit of that, but I
20 think in essence our students need direct
21 mentoring as they move through the pipeline. I
22 don't know if you read in recent month about the
23 crisis that we have in the Puerto Rican community
24 with our youth. More than 20% of them are
25 completely detached from schools or work or

1
2 community in the ages of 16 to 24. That's a
3 tremendous crisis and I think our efforts to
4 reconstruct that pipeline with what we can do is a
5 problem that concerns everybody around, but what
6 we can do, and we do very well, is mentor those
7 students from each step as they move through the
8 pipeline.

9 Finally, I was asked to speculate
10 on the value of CUNY. I will revert that question
11 to all of us and say if we receive the budget cut--
12 that if we continue with the budget cut--and I
13 have to thank CUNY and the Councilor for picking
14 us up this year--if we were to implement that cut,
15 I just outlined a little bit of the tremendous
16 impact that that will have in the implementation
17 of our programs.

18 I estimate that of 31 students that
19 are partially or totally supported by the City
20 Council, we will end up with 19, assuming that
21 there are no cuts in the state level--and you may
22 have other assumptions than mine. I also think
23 that our outreach programs and our library
24 archival historical preservation programs will be
25 the most affected, they are the ones that depend

1
2 the most on this type of external support for
3 survival.

4 And so let me just finish by saying
5 that we appreciate the support that we get from
6 the Council, I think you are making a great
7 investment in this institute in terms of
8 preserving our history and supporting our students
9 and faculty throughout this difficult times.

10 Thank you very much for listening.

11 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: Is this good?

12 [Off mic]

13 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: You should all
14 have a copy of the text from which I'm going to
15 speak, there are about 50 copies circulating.

16 I also left you--because I became
17 dean--my name's Anthony Tamburri, I'm Dean of the
18 John D. Calandra Italian-American Institute and I
19 became Dean in 2006, and since then I've had very
20 few opportunities to be here before you. I tried
21 the first couple of years to put in some proposals
22 for funding, but unfortunately they were lean
23 years and it's basically lean years for the
24 Italian-American caucus.

25 The John D. Calandra Italian-

American Institute was founded in 1969 as a direct response to several key factors that came to the fore as a large number of Italian-Americans were entering college during the 1960s and 70s. What they found was that the system anywhere, including CUNY, was not prepared to meet their academic needs, their specific learning styles, and specific psycho-educational issues. Through a study in the late 1970s, the then-New York State Senator John D. Calandra, it was also determined that there was indeed some form of bias against and misunderstanding of Italian-Americans and that the needs and concerns of Italian-American students and, in some cases, even their faculty were largely unmet.

And I should state here also--it's not part of your text--but that in 1976, then-Chancellor Kibbee designated the Italian-Americans as an affirmative action group within CUNY.

First founded as the Italian-American Institute to Foster Higher Education, the Calandra Institute is a university-wide research institute under the aegis of Queens College; it is funded primarily by the state to the tune of 90%,

1
2 with the rest coming from Queens College, the rest
3 of the 10%. CUNY, in turn, offers space and basic
4 utilities on 43rd Street in Manhattan. Any extra
5 monies received have come from outside sources,
6 that is, non-profit foundations, individuals, and
7 other governmental agencies and agents. For
8 example, partial funding of our Oral History
9 Archive of Italian-American Elected State
10 Officials came from individual members of the New
11 York State Assembly and Senate, as well as from a
12 local not-for-profit dedicated to the promotion of
13 Italian and Italian-American history.

14 The overall goal of the institute
15 is to foster higher education among and by
16 Italian-Americans. The mission is carried out
17 through various means that include--and you have
18 these listed on the following two pages:

19 Counseling Services, research, academic and
20 cultural programs; the CUNY-Italy Exchange
21 Programs; the Italian-American TV Magazine; a
22 library; speakers bureau; and our collaboration
23 with a portal, a website entitled i-Italy.org.

24 For our counseling services, we
25 currently we have five full time counselors placed

1 at various campuses within CUNY. The data
2 reported from counseling personnel reveal that the
3 number of Italian and Italian-American students
4 that have been provided counseling is estimated at
5 approximately 3,000 per year. Each counselor
6 develops individual strategies specific to their
7 institutions and placement--and here you have four
8 general manners in which they serve the students.
9 They have the individual counseling services,
10 career and academic development, they serve as
11 club advisors on various campuses, and they also
12 conduct outreach on CUNY campuses, as well as at
13 high schools, where there are large Italian-
14 American populations.
15

16 The overall results thus far is
17 that since the institute's inception in 1979, it
18 is not an exaggeration to say that tens of
19 thousands of New York City high school students,
20 community college, senior college, and graduate
21 students have been served by the Calandra
22 Institute's campus and outreach counseling
23 programs.

24 I should say at the beginning the
25 institute in 1979 through the eighties, there were

as many as a dozen to 13 or 14 counselors working full time.

Also, several thousand middle school students, parents, individuals wishing to enter CUNY, and also survivors of the 9/11 attacks have also been served by the Calandra counselors.

There's an impact on student population would include: Entrance into colleges and programs of CUNY; support for academic integration, retention, and articulation; a world of work counseling and selection of graduates with specialization. Through this comes a respect for diversity, a heightened ethnic identity awareness, an examination of acculturation issues, generalization differences between student and family, and gender roles vis-à-vis male stereotypes and non-traditional work roles for students.

The work of the Calandra counselors is vital to the mental health and well being of all students regardless of race or ethnicity because, while they are there to concentrate on Italian-Americans and help Italian-Americans, the counselors receive all students.

1
2 what's called the Italian-American Review, it's
3 been around for a long time, it was a little bit
4 on hiatus, in the next month we should have our
5 first issue of the new series, and that is
6 basically social science. We've also inaugurated
7 two studies, two book series, one is called
8 Studies in Italian-Americana, the other is called
9 Transactions.

10 With regard to academic and
11 cultural programs, we have three regular series:
12 We have a documented film series, we have a series
13 that is entitled Writers Read, and we have a
14 series called Seminar Series. The Writers Read
15 are obviously creative writers; the Seminar
16 Series, people come from all over and present
17 their research, both from within CUNY, as well as
18 from all over the United States, we invite people
19 who deal with Italian-American issues from all
20 over the United States, as well as from actually
21 from Italy.

22 We have 24 of those a year, we have
23 another 10 to 15 special activities that we
24 organize as things develop. Most recently we had
25 a book presentation of a very controversial book

1 from Italy that deals with Southern Italy, as some
2 of you may know, there is a big contention between
3 northern and southern Italy, and the south has
4 always felt abused by the north and there is a
5 book that was written that sold about 200,000
6 copies in about 10 months in Italy. We invited
7 the person over, he came over, and we had about 40
8 people to 50 people at that presentation.

10 We also have an annual conference
11 that we've been doing for the last four or five
12 years and I'll just give you some of the titles:
13 Land of Our Return, the idea of going back--of the
14 immigrants going back to Italy; another one is
15 called Terre Promesse, promised lands, how
16 Italians have historically worked with the lands,
17 that is gardening, etc., and how that has become a
18 new practice among the newer generation. Our
19 conference this year coming up this April is The 3
20 Fs in Italian Cultures: Critical Approaches to
21 Food, Fashion, and Film.

22 We've done also exhibits, some
23 exhibits that are very much locally focused:
24 Sacred Emblems, Community Signs: Historic Flags
25 and Religious Banners from Italian Williamsburg,

1
2 Brooklyn, for example. We have also had the
3 institute in 2003 commissioned an artist to do an
4 exhibit, a trip trick which is now we have on
5 permanent loan to various institutes and that was
6 entitled the Evviva la Madonna Nera! and that is
7 Italian-American Devotion to the Black Madonna.
8 The Black Madonna is a unique and actually quite
9 popular religious figure in Italy, especially in
10 southern Italy.

11 We average somewhere around 50
12 people to all of our activities, each activities.
13 Our conferences, our annual conferences instead
14 draw anywhere from 100 to about 125 people. One
15 of our special events which took place a year ago
16 January was dedicated to the examination of a
17 subculture, the Guido subculture, we had about 125
18 to 150 people at the institute in three different
19 rooms looking at it from video, some were looking
20 at it live, we had about 100 people webcast,
21 looking at it on a webcast.

22 We also collaborate with the
23 various institutions, Italian and Italian-American
24 institutions in the city, be they the Italian
25 Consulate, the Italian Cultural Institute, NYU's

1 Casa Italiana, and also Columbia University's
2 Italian Academy.

3 Also we have a distinguished
4 professor position that has been around since '95,
5 our current distinguished professor is Dr. Fred
6 Gardaphe, who by the way is on Fulbright in Italy,
7 he's teaching in Italy on a Fulbright Scholar. We
8 have the CUNY Italy Exchange which now is
9 articulative at three different levels: That
10 students can go one-on-one, we have exchanges
11 where we send students, individual students of
12 various universities--there are seven in Italy and
13 those students also come here and it's usually on
14 a one-by-one basis.

15 We also have summer abroad programs
16 that we're involved in, we actually have one that
17 we administer through Queens College through one
18 of our counselors.

19 And we also now most recently have
20 an exchange for research that was developed with
21 the University of Perugia for Foreigners, and
22 there it's more the exchange of research projects,
23 and we're working on one now about who studies
24 Italian and why and that research and will also
25

will also be a faculty exchange.

We have a TV program, we have Italics, the Italian-American TV program. It is the only TV program in the United States, it cablecasts on CUNY TV in the five boroughs and then those shows are put up on the CUNY website and now also on YouTube so that they can be seen nationwide. We also are involved in other media, we have three webcasts that we do a month. And those work up actually to our TV program.

We have a library that consists of our regular collection and three special collections. We have a total of 21,500 volumes in our library. We inherited a volume--I'm sorry, a library collection from Italy which had 13,500 volumes and it has a collection of the laws and decrees of Italy from 1861 when Italy was united to 1959. We're one of four places in the entire United States that has that.

We also have another run of a very important journal that starts from 1850 through 1992 and thereto we are one of four places. We also have two private collections, one from the late John Cammett [phonetic], who was actually a

1 professor and administrator at CUNY, and also Phil
2 Cannistraro, who was our first distinguished
3 professor, who passed away in 2003. Those
4 collections are specific to Italian and Italian-
5 American history, Cammett's is actually specific
6 to the studies of Italian communism and Italian
7 fascism. And we have perhaps, except for maybe
8 Harvard, Yale, and Berkeley, we might have the
9 largest collection of Antonio Gramsci, who was an
10 Italian political theorist in the United States.

12 We have a scholar's research
13 database and, therefore, a speaker's bureau.
14 Early on in the 1990s, the institute put together
15 a scholar's research database of about 1,300
16 scholars around the country dealing with Italian-
17 American studies and we've been updating that.

18 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I'm sorry,
19 we just need to--

20 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: Sure.

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --to
22 summary [off mic].

23 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: Finally, we have
24 an Italian-American Faculty Staff Advisory Council
25 which keeps us in touch with all the issues that

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3 Let me say that we are the only
4 institute of its kind in the United States and I
5 would submit we're the only institute of its kind
6 possibly anywhere where anyone deals with Italian
7 and Italian-American studies. We have expanded in
8 the last five years our research, our academic and
9 cultural programs, and we have made I think some
10 headway actually also into Italy, we have had
11 intellectual exchanges as well as student
12 exchanges, as I mentioned before, with Italy.

13 And I would just like to say that
14 this is a little bit of a--I hope would be a
15 little bit of a feather in our cap as far as our
16 reach is concerned. We had a visit from the
17 Cardinal of Naples, Cardinals Sepe from the
18 Cardinal of Naples, Italy, and we invited him to
19 be on a panel--Human Migration in the Third
20 Millennium. The undersecretary of state for Italy
21 found out about it and he flew over specifically
22 for that event. And from there we've actually had
23 conversations about setting up a center in Italy
24 and helping them with the center in Italy, and I
25 will be seeing them in April for that.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

I just want to say that to be focused on this hearing, the importance of this hearing for me and that's why we called for this hearing is because we value the work that the center has been doing and how much also CUNY has been supporting those initiatives. And we're just looking to hear--to get from this hearing--we would like to get your own perspective on what is the future of the centers and basically putting the center in perspective of the role that they play to support especially all those ethnic groups that make New York City like probably the richest city in the world and come to sharing with so many cultures.

So I just wanted to be clear that that's our focus, that's our goal, we just want to get from you like, what is are we doing a different centering institute and how much more can we do always to make the center important institution, centering [off mic] center--centering institute for our students.

I have a few questions, then I will call on my colleagues. One is, does CUNY have a

1 mechanism to--and this is basically to Centro--
2 does CUNY have the mechanism of bringing all the
3 directors of centers together so that they sit at
4 a table and share the experience that they have?
5 I know that individually, people like--and someone
6 that--we used to be in the school--work in a
7 school know that--I know that some people that
8 usually in this type of environment call, get
9 together, but does CUNY have any mechanism of
10 bringing all the directors together and how often,
11 and what has been the experience if that has been
12 in place?
13

14 JULIA WRIGLEY: Well that's an
15 interesting idea. Up 'til now we have not done
16 that to my knowledge, but it's certainly something
17 we could do. I originally come from the Graduate
18 Center and there all the centers and institutes
19 do--the directors then do occasionally get
20 together. So I suspect that happens on a college
21 level, but we could certainly contemplate it on a
22 university wide level.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Great.

24 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: It actually did
25 happen in 2007.

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JULIA WRIGLEY: Oh, okay.

ANTHONY TAMBURRI: Yeah, then-
provost from the College of Staten Island had
called all the institutes together--I don't think
you were around then, but--

[Crosstalk]

ANTHONY TAMBURRI: --remember,
Ramona, that--

[Crosstalk]

RAMONA HERNANDEZ [Off mic].

ANTHONY TAMBURRI: Yeah, that's
where we're met, exactly, yeah--

JULIA WRIGLEY: There you go.

ANTHONY TAMBURRI: --yeah.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: But--

[Crosstalk]

EDWIN MELENDEZ: If I may, there is
also a CUNY Council of Latino Studies and it's not
directed to all the centers, but we interact in
that council with department chairs, the centers
participate, student's organization participate,
and it's a formal CUNY mechanism to bring that
segment of the ethnic community together. So we
talk about curriculum, we talk about issues and

1
2 campuses, and how we can collaborate. So it's not
3 general, but it's certainly--

4 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: Right.

5 EDWIN MELENDEZ: --particular to
6 the Latino community.

7 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: And we too have
8 two academic advisory committees, one is Italian-
9 American Studies that's made up of faculty and
10 staff from the different campuses, and the other
11 is Italian language, Italian Language and Culture
12 Committee, which, again, is also made up of the
13 various committees.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Before I
15 continue with the other question, I'd like to
16 recognize Council Member Seabrook, Barron, and
17 Council Member Vacca.

18 My next question is on how does
19 central [off mic] or the administration work on
20 providing the support to each center? Is there
21 like any general policy on how an [off mic] work
22 or does the director of each center have some
23 flexibility of going out and working and on
24 getting the resources, or how is that coordinated?

25 ANTHONY RINI: That's changed over

1
2 time, I think that the central office budget has
3 shrunk over the past several years in an effort to
4 fully keep things more solvent at the campus
5 level, and we have reserved our funding at the
6 central office for start-up activities. So new
7 centers and mainly new institutes--because we're
8 mainly focused on funding institutes at the
9 central office because they have cross campus
10 impact--start-up funding three years, two years
11 clearly stated at the beginning of that funding
12 for start-up activities with the goal of self-
13 sustainability, whether self-sustainability means
14 external support or campus-based support and
15 external support, but not central office support.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: When you
17 look at CUNY, and you look at, especially on the
18 Black and Latino and African-American student, you
19 make like the majority of the student population
20 and how close are the president of each campus
21 work with those centers and institutes to get the
22 perspective of the center on how to coordinate so
23 that we can--that we have a better understanding
24 of the population that we're serving?

25 ANTHONY RINI: I'll attempt it. My

1
2 understanding of the centers and institutes is
3 that they report up through the academic side
4 through their provost's office--and you can
5 correct me if I'm wrong--and that's sort of the
6 coordination for campus, sort of, impact related
7 to the demographics of those campuses, how those
8 centers and institutes can serve the goals of the
9 provost and the academic programs.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: But I just
11 think that there has not been any one who wouldn't
12 have a better understanding of the student
13 population and, therefore, having the
14 understanding of the student population will help
15 any particular administrator to put a policy in
16 place of dealing with a student dropout, dealing
17 with a student cultural than those institutes,
18 like, besides reporting how much--and I would like
19 to hear from the institute, how much, how often
20 does the administration of each campus work close
21 with your institution?

22 EDWIN MELENDEZ: Well if I may just
23 say, for about a year we have been negotiating or
24 talking to the central administration Office for
25 Institutional Planning to have access to microdata

1 that leads the transition from high school to CUNY
2 for CUNY students. We already have some
3 information about the number of, say, Puerto Rican
4 and Latino students in campuses, but that's an
5 effort that is just ongoing. We have a little bit
6 of more work to do in that area, but CUNY
7 published a report about a year and a half or two
8 years ago that was done by Columbia, the Center
9 for Community Colleges or something like that,
10 that pertained to immigrant students. So even
11 though that's a large portion of our population,
12 it's not all the population.

14 So there is some efforts for us to
15 directly participate and, not only in the
16 understanding the analysis of the data, but also
17 engage in the conversation. At my campus level, I
18 can tell you we're in conversations with the SEEK
19 [phonetic] folks, with various programs like
20 presidential scholars and so forth to create
21 targeted cohort driven courses that will be partly
22 cosponsored by us.

23 So we are in the process, we
24 understand the tremendous pipeline crisis that at
25 least the Puerto Rican community face, we think

1
2 that's a broader program for Latinos in the city,
3 and so we are in the process of trying to get our
4 hands on.

5 At another level, the center secure
6 funding from the Ford Foundation to look at
7 programs directed to what we call pathways.
8 Pathways mean programs that will train people that
9 have been dropouts from college and so forth to
10 engage in various campuses and various programs
11 that CUNY has that facilitate that transition from
12 out of jobs and dropouts and so forth to an
13 education, maybe at the beginning kind of for
14 continued education, but eventually we hope for
15 degree programs and so forth.

16 So we have already secured some
17 papers, we're in the process of reviewing them for
18 publication in our journal, Centro Journal has a
19 process for that. So we are at various levels
20 trying to attain that question of participation
21 and we understand how important it is that we
22 understand why is that our kids don't come to
23 college; when they come, they don't last long; and
24 when they last and finish, they don't move to
25 other [off mic]. I mean that's a tremendous

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concern for us. I think that we all can do more
in that area, to be frank.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Has the
administration been engaged in that conversation
with--

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --talk
about that particular--

EDWIN MELENDEZ: [Interposing] They
are very cooperative in my regard, the problem is
that the management of the data is very complex,
you know. For those of you who are [off mic]
folks, it has to do with [off mic] various years
of data for students, adding institutional data,
and even though the study that I mentioned,
immigration was done, it was done outside campus
in Columbia by their researchers there. CUNY just
had, at that time, I think they just worked on the
data thing.

So it's kind of a process and I
think we're at the beginning--at least from my
perspective, I can't speak for other institutes--
we're just at the beginning stage, but I think
it's a very important program for the Puerto Rican

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community, specifically for our young people.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: How many classes are offered in each campus related to the ethnic group of each centers?

EDWIN MELENDEZ: I can only speak for us, Ramona, if you have other data that are more campus.

RAMONA HERNANDEZ: Honorable Chair, if I may respond to your previous question just briefly, we are very lucky at the City College of New York I think because the previous president, I think, we began together and the next president, the current president have invited the Dominican Studies Institute member--members of the Dominican Studies Institute to participate in some of the college-wide committees. Some of these committees, in connection with the neighborhood of the city as a whole, so if my memory doesn't fail me, I would say that we are in at least three committees that the president had put together. And those committees, they ask us to provide opinions and to put the college, the university in contact with the leadership or the grassroots leaders of the Dominican community. So there is

1
2 some effort at City College in reaching out to the
3 Dominican community as a source of knowledge, as a
4 source of--as an institution that has some
5 knowledge about the population that the college
6 serves.

7 With regards to the second
8 question, how many courses in Dominicans studies
9 do we teach in CUNY. That's a difficult one,
10 that's a difficult one because the courses in
11 Dominicans studies are distributed in different
12 campuses, and sometimes you might have three to
13 four courses--one, I have to agree on that, one
14 per campus. Sometimes it could be more, it
15 depends on the department and it depends on the
16 campus. We don't have a major or anything of that
17 nature, so I guess that that will impact on the
18 number of courses in that area.

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: What is it
20 in your case as a Dominican? Say, that probably
21 one course in the campus, what is the percentage
22 of Dominican students at City College?

23 RAMONA HERNANDEZ: I don't know if
24 I know it by heart, but it's high. High means
25 that it's probably half of the Latino groups in

1
2 there, and most of the CUNY campuses, a good half
3 of the Latino component will be of Dominican
4 ancestry.

5 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And when
6 that was a City College, Dominican, Latinos, and
7 Black we were 80% of the student population. I
8 assume that if there's any dropout or any change
9 on the student population, I assume that the
10 percentage have to be around on a 70%. If any
11 change to the Latino population has taking place
12 there and looking at City College--the campus
13 where I did my master and my [off mic]--so if by
14 any chance [off mic] any different factors, the
15 population went down, I assume that it could not
16 be going lower than just 70%. So what about in
17 the Puerto Rican Studies, how many courses
18 offering--

19 EDWIN MELENDEZ: [Interposing] Well
20 you have to understand, we're are not a department
21 per se, there is an Africana, Puerto Rican Studies
22 department at Hunter, there are Latino Puerto
23 Rican Studies department at Lehman and Berkeley,
24 there is a Latino Studies program at John Jay, and
25 so on and so forth. There are others minor

1
2 programs that are in other department in other
3 campuses, and we're not directly involved with the
4 departmental creation of courses, therefore, we
5 just collaborate with them.

6 I think the role that we play,
7 though, is one of a development agents and one
8 that has the flexibility and latitude to create
9 new courses and to kind of explore new areas. I
10 can give you examples of that that we've done
11 recently, but all our courses are co-listed with
12 departments, we don't have the capacity to
13 independently set any course. That may vary in
14 other institutes, but for us, we're just a
15 complement.

16 However, we take our role as a hub
17 for Puerto Rican studies throughout CUNY and the
18 nation very seriously. We hope to in the very
19 near future, we have distinguished lecturers being
20 appointed just like in other institutes and we
21 hope that those people, two of them with myself,
22 that can actually teach cross-listing these
23 courses with departments, can actually take a
24 leading role in expanding this kind of focus on
25 Puerto Rican studies throughout all the campuses

1 at CUNY, using [off mic] and other methodologies.

2 But this is an ongoing battle. On
3 the one hand, overall there's been a decline in
4 enrollment in Puerto Rican Latino studies
5 throughout various campuses. It's a phenomena
6 that we're trying to get our handles on, partly
7 related to the crisis in the pipeline that I
8 mentioned. It's a very complex problem and all we
9 can do at this point is try to get a better
10 understanding of what the forces are. At the same
11 time, the Latino population increasing in numbers,
12 they're having increasing problems in that
13 transition. CUNY has numerous programs helping
14 immigrants and helping ethnic groups--

15 [Crosstalk]

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ:

17 [Interposing] I'm sorry--

18 EDWIN MELENDEZ: Yeah.

19 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --I

20 understand about the program, but I want to--and
21 my question is related to on the BA--

22 EDWIN MELENDEZ: Sure.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --I know
24 that there's BA in Dominican studies--
25

EDWIN MELENDEZ: Right, right,
right.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --that is
established at CUNY.

EDWIN MELENDEZ: Right.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I don't
know how many classes are offering that BA. Is
there a BA on the Puerto Rican study at CUNY?

EDWIN MELENDEZ: There is--

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ:
[Interposing] And how many classes are offering
that BA?

EDWIN MELENDEZ: --the BA. I think
the department offers--they have probably about
four full time faculty in the sequence and they
have a number of adjuncts, so if each of them
teach three courses, two or three courses a
semester, you can imagine that's a good number--
18, 20--but I'm not directly involved with that
part of the operation. What we do though is
cross-list the courses with them and I can give
you examples of that.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: What about

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CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Great.

ANTHONY TAMBURRI: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: What about on the Black study? Which is the most important institute for concerning the Black study and how many--what courses is offering as a BA at CUNY?

[Off mic]

ANTHONY RINI: I'm not sure we have the answer to that, get back to you on that.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. I have other questions, but I know that my colleague also has to leave so I would like to-- Council Member Barron.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me just say that I'm sitting here--this is an incredible presentation that no black people are up there, this is incredible. We make up--just in case you forgot-- 25% of the city, 25% of CUNY, over 100,000 students, we got centers--how dare you come to this hearing, have the Latino representation, Italian representation, and leave us out--

[Off mic]

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: --like

1 we're invisible--

2 [Off mic]

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet--

4 [Crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: --like
6 we're invisible? This is an insult for you to do
7 that. To come here and we're sitting here--and I
8 believe everybody should get theirs, but you're
9 not leaving us out of this. We got centers, how
10 about the Center for Law and Social Justice at
11 Medgar Evers? How about the Center for Black
12 Literature at Medgar Evers? For you to come here,
13 Provost Wrigley, Executive Director Rini, how dare
14 you come here and not have a single person of
15 African ancestry, a single African, whether
16 they're from the continental Africa, the
17 Caribbean, African-Americans, none of us are up
18 there, and you're going to come here with a
19 straight face to talk about centers? This is
20 outrageous. And it's racist for you to forget a
21 quarter of a population of students. And then
22 when they ask you something Black--are you
23 uncomfortable with Black people? What is it? You
24 don't know any stats on Black folk, they ask you a
25

1 little question, you can't answer any of that. So
2 then why didn't you have someone come up and sit
3 there that could? This is a problem with CUNY
4 Central. Maybe you all need to diversify CUNY
5 Central more and have more Black people up there
6 so we won't be left out of important hearings like
7 this. We're having a crises at Medgar Evers.
8 We're struggling at Medgar Evers. We have a Black
9 male initiative all throughout CUNY, we have male
10 development, Black male emphasis on male
11 development, without getting nothing. We're like
12 invisible people, we don't even exist.

14 I don't even have a question for
15 you. I'm leaving. I'm leaving because it's an
16 insult for you to sit here and not bring any of
17 our people to the front like you having some
18 hearing. You haven't heard us, and we don't want
19 to hear it from you, we want to hear from our
20 people. We've got enough people that can
21 articulate this. Yes, they're on the list as
22 witnesses, I'm not talking about that, I'm talking
23 about being a part of the CUNY Central
24 presentation.

25 I was the chair of this committee

1
2 for eight years, we fought for Puerto Rican
3 Studies, we fought for Dominicans Studies
4 successfully, and you're going to come here and
5 leave us out. And you all shouldn't have let them
6 do it either. You should have said that Blacks
7 should be included. Don't come in here, try to
8 get yours, and then forget us.

9 This hearing is an insult to Black
10 people, an insult to people of African ancestry,
11 and I'm not sitting here for this. Thank you, Mr.
12 Chair.

13 [Applause]

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

15 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: We will--

16 [Off mic]

17 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --and I've
18 got to say that also, I would like to add also
19 that it would be much better also if--yes, it was
20 a concern that I also had by not having a center
21 of Black study on the panel representing CUNY, but
22 we will continue--

23 MALE VOICE: I think he--

24 [Crosstalk]

25 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Sorry.

MALE VOICE: --to answer your
question. [Off mic] question.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So I just
and of course--if the panel has [off mic] question
but--

JULIA WRIGLEY: We can't hear you.

[Off mic]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Microphone.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I just want
to say that besides that concern that I could
have, I just want to continue analyzing what is
the topic of the hearing, which is the impact of
the studies in centers at City University of New
York. Now I'm calling on Council Member Cabrera.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you
so much, Mr. Chair. And welcome to the hearing
today. I have a few questions, so if you could
give me the short version, I would appreciate it.
I'm just very curious to know, I don't know the
answer to many of these questions. Question
number one, do you have a Center for Religious
Studies?

ANTHONY RINI: There are numerous

1 studies for religious studies. There's Jewish
2 Resource Center at Baruch, and there are a number
3 of other religiously oriented that are sort of a
4 umbrella list that we included--gender identity,
5 race, ethnicity, religion and sort of the overall
6 sort of the way we look at centers and institutes.
7 We didn't specifically focused on ethnic, but
8 there are religious based--

10 JULIA WRIGLEY: [Interposing] I
11 would just add the Graduate Center is just
12 establishing a Center for the Comparative Study of
13 Religion.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay.
15 Fantastic. Second question is, do these centers
16 have advisory counselors and do they--council, and
17 do they include students in the council?

18 ANTHONY RINI: I think that a
19 number of them do have advisory councils. And I
20 do believe that they do--

21 [Off mic]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Is that a
23 requirement--

24 [Crosstalk]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: --to be a

center? And if it's not, may I recommend that it will be? I mean something that really is going to have a tremendous impact upon students, I'm hearing all the good reports.

JULIA WRIGLEY: Ramona, did you want to--

RAMONA HERNANDEZ: Yes, Councilman, the mandate, it's an executive body made up of faculty and an advisory board made up of various groups including community members, including students, and people from the business sector. I must confess that the advisory board, the Dominican Studies Institute is missing the students.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay. Here's my next question, what is the greatest challenge that the centers are facing, other than the budget issue? 'Cause that's coming up very soon, but I know this is not a budget hearing. So other than the budget issue, what would you say is the bigger challenges that the centers face?

ANTHONY TAMBURRI: I think the challenges are different really and I think their specific to the various centers. I think that I

1
2 can only speak to the challenges of--the non-
3 financial challenges of the Calandra Institute,
4 and I think it has to do with the idea of ethnic
5 identity among Italian-Americans--those who
6 actually identify as "ethnics" and those who
7 don't.

8 And pardon me for going out a
9 little bit, but the language survey I mentioned,
10 there were two very interesting questions. One
11 said how do you identify and we had a series of
12 answers, one being Italian-American, one being
13 American, and 27% identified as Italian-American.
14 The next question was, do you have Italian
15 ancestors going back to your grand grandparents,
16 57% said they had Italian ancestors. So there's a
17 question of self-identity I think that then leads
18 to other issues and other challenges.

19 [Crosstalk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Here's my
21 next question, what was the last center to--when
22 and which program was the last center to open?

23 JULIA WRIGLEY: I think the most
24 recent ones are the graduate centers establishing
25 three centers, the one I mentioned on comparative

1 religion, I'm not sure they're actually official
2 yet, but they're underway. And there is one on
3 globalization, and there is one on a scientific
4 study of social study of--

5 [background noise]

6 JULIA WRIGLEY: I'm sorry.

7 [Crosstalk]

8 ANTHONY RINI: --one recently
9 established this summer in Korean Studies at
10 Queens College, I'm not sure of the exact name of
11 it, but it was probably the most recently one
12 established in June of 2010.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And my
14 last two questions I'm going to put them both
15 together. What's the total budget for all the
16 centers; and how do you evaluate the effectiveness
17 of these centers? I know the strategic goals were
18 mentioned, but [off mic] can establish strategic
19 goals, but how do you measure whether you
20 successfully reach those goals?

21 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: Go ahead, I'll
22 follow.

23 RAMONA HERNANDEZ: I think that we
24 use a varied mundane way to measuring what we do,
25

1 particularly when it comes to events, activities
2 that we do with the community, which I did not
3 mention because I didn't want to go too long, but
4 their response to those calls. We have waiting
5 lists whenever we do anything, whether it's a
6 concert, whether it's an art exhibit, we have
7 waiting lists, people who cannot come in because
8 the capacity at City College or the room, even the
9 largest auditorium is not enough. And it's not
10 enough because the events that we do, they're all
11 free to the public and the events that we do are
12 attended by students, faculty, but also the people
13 outside the walls of City College, the community,
14 and the communities defined here are large.

16 How do we know that what we do has
17 an effect out there? Well, because we also have
18 to translate what we do. There are people who
19 come who only speak Spanish, and there are people
20 who come who only speak English, so we are sort of
21 reaching out to both communities and then it's
22 upon us and that require more resources and more
23 of everything to communicate with the large
24 audience.

25 Of course, there are other ways in

1
2 which we measure the--and in terms of this very
3 professorial and very academic way to measuring,
4 but this is the mundane way, people will respond
5 or they will not respond in our case.

6 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: I think that's
7 one of the major ways we do it, how many people
8 attend our events, what's the feedback that you
9 get, and how many return people do you get. We
10 have a series of people that we could sort of
11 flippantly call a fan club that come to our
12 events.

13 The other thing is, we were one of
14 the first institutes, and perhaps we're still the
15 first of recent times, that is the last five years
16 since I've been here, to go through a self-study,
17 and it's been a long process that we've been going
18 through. It started over a year ago where we
19 worked as the institute, we have 19 full-time
20 people at the institute, but then eventually we
21 came up with a document, our own self-study and
22 that was then vetted by two outside experts, one
23 local from the Casa Italiana at NYU and the other
24 who is the director of the Immigration Center in
25 Minnesota, University of Minnesota, which is the

largest depository of those types of documents.

So we got their report a few months ago, which I'm happy to say was a positive report and it had some good suggestions.

EDWIN MELENDEZ: In our case, we undertook a strategic planning process and on page five we list kind of the goals that we developed out of that. We set annual objectives or milestones that we like to achieve, and on page four what I did was to just list the various indicators that we used to assess those areas. For instance, in research our journal, we estimate so-called impact factor and subscriptions as two indicators of success; for staff publications, how many referee articles out of a total population, how many books our staff publishes; for external funding, external [off mic] and so on and so forth. Even education, the number of courses that we can cross list with departments, the number of students. These are just quantitative and qualitative.

In the library, the number of collections that we acquire every year at both the primary and secondary sources, the number of

1
2 scholarships that we grant, the number of visitors
3 that we have. In terms of outreach, we get into
4 the number of people that participate in the
5 events, the composition of that, the networks that
6 they represent. In terms of the Voices, the
7 number of sections and pages that we create on the
8 website and so on and so forth.

9 So for each of the areas that we
10 operate, we set specific indicators that we
11 collect data for ongoing year and, in my case, I
12 report to the Provost and we have a rotation of
13 each of these areas where we report our progress
14 in these indicators, and at the end of the year we
15 put all together in an annual report.

16 So the question of accountability
17 and measurement of impact and performance is to
18 the core of what we try to do, at least on a
19 management side.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Let me
21 close--yes.

22 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: [Interposing]
23 Let me mention something about measuring, and that
24 is through the years, actually since 1975,
25 actually before the institute existed through the

Center for Italian studies at Brooklyn for example, there have been studies done, a number of our professors through the years have done studies on the Italian-American student and the Italian-American student at CUNY or the Italian-American high school student because that was a period which was a real crucial and critical period for the Italian-American students--the dropout rate was 22, 23%, whatever. And those studies were done over the years and they were shared with various institutes, various departments, etc., and so those were really good indicators.

And of recent, we have two counselors who are currently working on issues of this nature, that is stress on students, self-achievement, and things of that sort. And we actually have put all of those studies together and we will be having a publication of sort of 30 years of those studies, which will not only be a history, but can help us also see what we can learn for the future as far as our students now, whether they be Italian-American or other ethnic groups.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I think it

1 would be very profitable--and I'm just going to
2 turn it over right now back to the chairman--but I
3 think it will be very profitable to have a
4 standardized survey, that way you can see the
5 impact that it's having on the students and you
6 can measure from program to program using the same
7 survey or standardizes. Thank you so much, and my
8 compliments in all of your centers.

9
10 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I have two
12 follow up questions, then I will call on
13 Councilwoman James. What are the procedures to
14 create a center?

15 ANTHONY RINI: The procedure for
16 create a center is a single campus entity, so the
17 procedures are prescribed by those campuses, which
18 would require a self-study planning document which
19 would be reviewed by the faculty governance at
20 that campus and would look at, like I said, in my
21 testimony would look at the academic merit or the
22 service that that entity was going to provide and
23 the financial feasibility, the ability to leverage
24 that center for external funding, as well as
25 duplication, if there was duplication within CUNY,

1
2 or more likely on that campus, whether or not
3 there would be a need for that approval. But that
4 approval happens at the campus level for centers
5 and then it goes to the Office of Academic Affairs
6 for further review, similar review, similar
7 attributes for review, and then it goes to the
8 Board of Trustees' agenda for approval.

9 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Great. And
10 next question is about how does a center or
11 institute involve the community in getting the
12 community feedback or also getting the community
13 involved in their planning processing event that
14 the center put together?

15 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: We have actually
16 a community advisory committee that consists of
17 people from the community, some of them are
18 lawyers and whatever and non-academics actually,
19 so that we can get different perspectives. So we
20 meet once a month and we go over what we've done,
21 and most of them do attend our events, and that's
22 one way.

23 We also get feedback from, whether
24 it's our TV show, whether it's our webcasts and
25 our other programs. And we look to see what's in

1
2 the community. So, for example, the brouhaha of
3 the last couple of weeks over the [off mic] fees.
4 We dealt with that in a PR way. What we did was,
5 yesterday we interviewed somebody, tonight it's
6 going to be webcast and it'll be on our web. So
7 we try to look into those issues, including what
8 we think is going to be the unfortunate loss of
9 Pier A to the Italian-American--the National
10 Italian American Museum.

11 EDWIN MELENDEZ: In our case, we
12 have almost a community participation on every
13 level. Like my colleagues, we have an advisory
14 board that is integrated by community members and
15 there is actually one student who we probably will
16 increase that. And we also have--for the library
17 we have an advisory board that is academics and
18 professionals and so forth, so there are two
19 groups that we engage.

20 But more importantly, we get
21 feedback from our events. Most of our events are
22 organized, our courses, they are all in
23 partnership with some--most of our events are
24 organized in partnership with community
25 organizations. We also have a couple of programs--

1
2 -for instance, this April we're celebrating Puerto
3 Rican Poetry Month, we have a couple of community-
4 based activities where we're going to go. But we
5 also will harness all the events and put them in a
6 calendar that we publish. We do the same for
7 November Puerto Rican History Month, so this
8 promoting partnerships so our events are--the
9 community's embedded in the planning and the
10 process of bringing people to the events.

11 And if you look at the calendar of
12 events, there are always intersecting networks for
13 disabled students, for all kind of constituencies.
14 Last Friday, we had one on our architects, we're
15 planning one for the business community next
16 April, and so on and so forth.

17 So for us, community outreach and
18 participation is at the core of what we do.

19 MALE VOICE: I'm sorry.

20 RAMONA HERNANDEZ: Thank you, thank
21 you for that question, I appreciate that question.
22 I think that the community is involved in
23 everything we do. An example is the library. We
24 open every Saturday and not necessarily because
25 the students come to use the library on Saturday,

1
2 but members of the community and we have an
3 arrangement with City College. In most places, in
4 order for you to use the library you must show a
5 campus I.D. We made an arrangement with the City
6 College Library that members of the community,
7 they just have to show an I.D. and they're welcome
8 into the Dominican library. So that's one way.

9 The second way is that we
10 intentionally organize events, activities in
11 collaboration with community-based organizations
12 or cultural groups in the Dominican community or
13 the larger community. The archives has an
14 advisory board that is completely made up, besides
15 the archivists and the director, of members of the
16 Dominican community, particularly because this
17 involves acquisition of documents that have to do
18 with their lives.

19 So the other aspect that I wanted
20 to mention is that for us to do an event of the
21 Dominican Studies Institute in one language,
22 English language, it have to be at noon on a
23 weekday, otherwise, if we do it Saturday or in the
24 afternoon or the evening, you have to be bilingual
25 because the community will attend and they will be

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there from the beginning to the end.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And my last question, Edwin, if you can go back to page six--

EDWIN MELENDEZ: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --this is not a--and the only reason why I has no make any other questions because I don't want too many questions that is related to budget, we will discuss that in the future, but since that information came from you, page six, you say that--the last paragraph, you say that assuming that the budget, the budget stay at the 2011 \$250,000--

EDWIN MELENDEZ: Right.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --that's the number, right?

EDWIN MELENDEZ: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

EDWIN MELENDEZ: It is of some significance, too also.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

Council Member James.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.
First, let me join the sentiments of Council Member Barron, who left. I too think that it was

1 not politically smart to have a center which
2 reflects the African diaspora on this panel. It
3 says a lot about CUNY Central and about the
4 planning for this panel here today. I would be
5 remiss if I did not say that I believe that part
6 of the problems related to Medgar Evers College
7 are sort of emblematic of the fact that a group
8 representing the African-American diaspora is not
9 on this panel.
10

11 I want to direct my questions today
12 to the Provost Ms. Wrigley and to Mr. Rini for the
13 purposes of this discussion, which relates to the
14 issues at Medgar Evers College. Let me begin by
15 saying that CUNY has more than 100 research
16 centers and institutes, the center is primarily
17 focused on research, humanities, politics, the
18 environment, health, and other areas, including in
19 areas, in social areas. They offer academic
20 resource access to archives, research
21 opportunities, and a wide range of other events.
22 It's also important to note that some members of
23 these centers--and then correct me, Provost, if
24 I'm wrong--some of them do not provide
25 instruction, they do not teach, is that correct?

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JULIA WRIGLEY: That's [off mic].

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. Some of these centers are supported by CUNY, but most of them rely upon outside resources, is that correct?

JULIA WRIGLEY: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. In addition to that, I'll say that these centers are central vehicles for research and academic studies, is that a correct statement?

JULIA WRIGLEY: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. Let me point out, these are just some of the centers that exist, and as was indicated a few minutes ago, centers continue to be approved each and every day, Provost, is that a correct statement?

JULIA WRIGLEY: Perhaps not every day, but--

[Crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
[Interposing] Well once--frequently, okay, fair enough. City College; the Dominican Studies Institute; Hunter College; these are just some, the Center for Puerto Rican Studies; John Jay

1 College; the Center on Race, Crime, and Justice;
2 Lehman College; the Institute for Irish-American
3 Studies; Queens College, the Asian-American Asian
4 Research Institute, also at Queens College; the
5 Asian-American Center; the Center for Byzantine
6 and Modern Greek Studies; the John Calandra
7 Italian-American Institute--congratulations; CUNY
8 Graduate Center; Middle East and Middle Eastern
9 American Center; the Center for Latin American,
10 Caribbean, and Latino Studies; the Institute for
11 Research on the African Diaspora in the Americas
12 and in the Caribbean; the Center for Jewish
13 Studies--all at the CUNY Graduate Center. And at
14 CUNY Law School, the Center for Diversity and the
15 Legal Profession and the Center on Latino and
16 Latino Rights and Equalities.

17
18 And at Medgar Evers College, which
19 I will get into in a moment, I want to ask you,
20 Madam Provost, has any center ever been dismantled
21 by any president as far as you know, and, if so,
22 at what college and when and for what purpose?

23 JULIA WRIGLEY: I expect that
24 centers have been closed over time because, as
25 issues change and so forth, centers have a

1
2 lifespan. I don't know--do you know some that
3 have been closed?

4 ANTHONY RINI: Well in my
5 testimony, I'm not sure if you were here for that,
6 every five years there is a review of centers and
7 institutes at the campus level--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Yeah.

9 ANTHONY RINI: --and those are
10 approved centers and institutes that have gone
11 through the process prior and are recorded in the
12 Board of Trustees' minutes for the meeting that
13 they were approved at. Those every five years
14 campuses do their own reviewing--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
16 [Interposing] Mr. Rini, the question is as far as
17 you know, has--

18 [Crosstalk]

19 ANTHONY RINI: [Interposing] Yes,
20 campus centers--

21 [Crosstalk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
23 [Interposing] When was the last center that was
24 closed?

25 ANTHONY RINI: This year, I don't

1
2 know--and one off my head, this year--in 2010 was
3 the five-year review of centers and institutes and
4 a number of centers and institutes were closed
5 because they become dormant.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Dormant.
7 What active center as far as you know has been
8 closed by CUNY by any president, do you know of
9 any?

10 ANTHONY RINI: I do not know of
11 any.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. If
13 you could provide me with a name or a list of
14 active centers that have been shut down by current
15 presidents in the CUNY institution, I would
16 appreciate that.

17 I was here for your testimony, and
18 I want to go to your testimony, Mr. Rini, and
19 thank you for reminding me. It's a three-prong
20 approach when one wants to open this new center or
21 get approved for a new center. First it has to be
22 approved by the local government of the local
23 college, correct?

24 ANTHONY RINI: Correct.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Second, then

1
2 it has to be approved, approved or reviewed by the
3 CUNY Central Office of Academic Affairs, is it
4 approved or reviewed, sir?

5 ANTHONY RINI: It's reviewed and
6 approved because--

7 [Crosstalk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
9 [Interposing] And then it goes to the Board of
10 Trustees, correct?

11 ANTHONY RINI: Yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: But
13 primarily you rely upon the local college, is that
14 not correct?

15 ANTHONY RINI: Yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. Are
17 you familiar with the problems or the issues at
18 Medgar Evers College?

19 ANTHONY RINI: Only from what I've
20 seen in the press.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. Madam
22 Provost, are you aware of the issues related to
23 Medgar Evers College, some of the problems?

24 JULIA WRIGLEY: I haven't been
25 personal involved in them.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. You have not been personally aware of them. Are you aware the Center for New Leadership at Medgar Evers College?

JULIA WRIGLEY: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. And would it be fair to say that the Center for New Leadership is somewhat of a renowned center and one of its kind? Focusing on--

[Crosstalk]

JULIA WRIGLEY: [Interposing] That I don't know.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. Do you know of any other center in the CUNY system which focuses on reentry?

JULIA WRIGLEY: I think there's one at John Jay.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. And that one continues to operate?

JULIA WRIGLEY: Yes, I--

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: And it's supported by its president?

JULIA WRIGLEY: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. And

1
2 are you familiar with the W.E.B.'s DuBois--well
3 were you familiar with the W.E.B.'s Dubois Center
4 at Medgar Evers College?

5 JULIA WRIGLEY: Just that it's on
6 this list, yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. Do
8 you know that it no longer exists? You're aware
9 of that?

10 [Crosstalk]

11 JULIA WRIGLEY: No, I didn't know.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: And do you
13 know that New Leadership was a contract, they were
14 evicted from Medgar Evers College, are you aware
15 of that?

16 JULIA WRIGLEY: I am aware.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: And do you
18 know that they were ceremoniously dumped by the
19 president of Medgar Evers College, that he walked
20 into a class and gave an eviction notices to the
21 professors, are you aware of that?

22 JULIA WRIGLEY: No, I did not.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. Do
24 you know if the Board of Trustees is looking at
25 that?

JULIA WRIGLEY: Well to the best of my knowledge--

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

JULIA WRIGLEY: --and this center was not officially approved by CUNY by the Board of Trustees.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: What center? Which one?

JULIA WRIGLEY: The New Leadership.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: New Leadership was not. So New Leadership did not get approved by the local government structure of Medgar Evers College?

JULIA WRIGLEY: That I don't know, but just it would come to the 80th Street Office of Academic Review and Program Planning--

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Yes.

JULIA WRIGLEY: --and I don't believe it came to that office.

[Crosstalk]

MALE VOICE: --into that office nor did it ever get to the Board of Trustees.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: So it was never approved by the Board of Trustees?

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JULIA WRIGLEY: No--

[Crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay.

JULIA WRIGLEY: --believe so.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --and it was
never approved by--

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I'm sorry,
Councilwoman--

[Crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --we have to
focus on the impact or the--on the center and
institute, the recently because I think there's a
litigation--

[Crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. So
the--

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --that
involve--that's in the litigation that involves
Medgar Evers.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay. So
let me put aside New Leadership, what about W.E.B.
DuBois, do you know whether or not W.E.B.'s DuBois
was approved by the local governing structure of

Medgar Evers College?

ANTHONY RINI: I do not know.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Do you know whether or not it got approval from the CUNY Central Office of Academic Affairs?

[Off mic]

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: What about the Board of Trustees?

[Off mic]

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Madam Provost, are you aware that some elected officials in Central Brooklyn had requested a meeting with the Board of Trustees and we were shot down, are you aware of that?

JULIA WRIGLEY: No, I wasn't.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Are you aware that it was two members of Congress, five members of the state legislature, and four members of the City Council from Central Brooklyn that were denied an opportunity to meet with the Board of Trustees, are you aware that?

JULIA WRIGLEY: No.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: If you heard of that, would you think that was something that

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should be addressed?

JULIA WRIGLEY: Well is this the matter under litigation? Because I don't feel I should--

[Crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:
[Interposing] Not the meeting, the meeting's not under litigation, meeting was a simple request.

JULIA WRIGLEY: Well I guess the fundamental issue, the controversy over the center is under litigation, and so I don't feel I should speak to it.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Okay, Madam. So I thank you for that. If you could just relay to the chair that, in fact, we are renewing our request for a meeting with the Board of Trustees separate and apart from the litigation. I understand the litigation is over New Leadership, but we would like to speak to you about issues above and beyond New Leadership at Medgar Evers College, and as a duly elected member of the New York City Council, along with my colleagues, I think we have a right and a right to seek a meeting with the Board of Trustees, particularly

1 since you're asking for funding.

2 JULIA WRIGLEY: Okay.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I have
5 other questions. How much does the research that
6 has been produced by a studies for the center and
7 the institute has helped the city to reshape our
8 need and when it came to those particular ethnic
9 groups that you've been doing the studying that
10 you've been studying for years? How much has
11 those--you think that what has been the most
12 important research or the outcome of the research
13 that you have produced that you think that it
14 helps us as a city, as a government to have a
15 better understanding of the need of those
16 particular ethnic groups that you--

17 [Crosstalk]

18 EDWIN MELENDEZ: [Interposing] Over
19 the last few years, we've sponsored the
20 conferences on pathways, workforce development
21 issues and how people are connected to jobs, and
22 the role that CUNY programs may play in that
23 process, we sponsor conferences. A lot of these
24 have papers that are produced and then we produce
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2 proceedings and so forth on the whole question of
3 how to teach Puerto Rican history. We had another
4 conference on cultural competence, cultural
5 pluralism, and how our graduate schools
6 professionals are trained and the education. We
7 have a conference--

8 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ:

9 [Interposing] Sorry to interrupt.

10 EDWIN MELENDEZ: Yeah.

11 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: But I
12 meaning on research.

13 EDWIN MELENDEZ: Right, in this
14 conference, for instance, the last conference on
15 public policy we sponsored a research that about 8
16 or 10 papers that were produced by various
17 scholars within the CUNY system and beyond, and
18 those papers eventually will go through a review
19 process, either published in the journal or
20 published as a special issue. This forthcoming
21 conference on religious in the Latino community,
22 Puerto Rican Latino community, the proceedings
23 will constitute a volume. So the connection
24 between our seminars and the research that we
25 promote is very--we sponsor activities.

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2 In terms of the impact, for
3 instance, if I can take the workforce development
4 one, we're really dissecting in various of growth
5 including the education field, but also health,
6 but also green jobs and the forthcoming, upcoming
7 technology industries, how are they really serving
8 our population and we do it in a comparative
9 nation.

10 So in terms of what is the impact
11 on the city, this research, demographic research
12 that we do on changes and so forth allow both the
13 academic things, but also the agencies to plan
14 what they do. As you know, not all the agencies
15 actually have the capability or interest or
16 expertise to dissect this population, particularly
17 when they're small groups, right? So the growing
18 Latino population, as much as we represent a large
19 share of the New York population, are still a
20 small number and the data is hard to come, so we
21 have to come up with mechanisms and methodologies
22 to really assess this populations.

23 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And let me
24 use [off mic] as an example.

25 EDWIN MELENDEZ: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: [Off mic].

EDWIN MELENDEZ: Right.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: And

probably Dr. Hernandez can probably elaborate on finding that the Dominican study [off mic] in the family, single mother [off mic] and who are the men leader in the family, what is the average income of Dominicans in the United States, and I believe that that finding of elected officials it's not [off mic] their understanding because that publication was never done in the past. So that's my question on what research, what has been the outcome of research that you have produced--

EDWIN MELENDEZ: Right.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --that you believe [off mic] institute we were able--we continue efforts [off mic] this data [off mic] new information, that now it's up to the government--

[background noise]

DR. RAMONA HERNANDEZ: I appreciate your question, sir. I don't think that there is any piece of research cited most out there than the Dominican profile and this is a profile, social economic profile based upon the census

1 data. We were the first one to produce--to
2 analyze the Dominican people in New York as well
3 as in the U.S. using census data and this is a
4 piece that is cited over and over and over and the
5 work we do with that is that we update those
6 numbers. Those numbers also are used by
7 community-based organizations, this is information
8 that they use to request funding to put proposal
9 together, because this is a publication that
10 details the social economic standing of the
11 Dominican people--whether they have jobs, how much
12 money they make, what kind of family structure
13 they have.

15 But I think that the research that
16 we have done that have impacted the most, if you
17 ask me, is the fact that I think we have changed
18 the mentality of institutions and lots of people
19 who used to think that Dominicans were birds of
20 passage, that they were here temporarily, and that
21 they are thinking to return home. I think that
22 the work that we do at the Dominican Studies
23 Institute show every day that they are here to
24 stay and I think this is extremely important as a
25 people to know that they're not just here thinking

1 to go back every day.

3 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: I refer to some
4 studies that were done previously, the socio-
5 psychological portraits, for example, of CUNY
6 students--Italian-American CUNY students and also
7 high school students, the drop out rate, etc.
8 Those studies have had great impact in moving
9 community leaders to do things. I think they also
10 have their value today because they show us what
11 we should not do anymore, what we should be
12 attuned to because there is still some of those
13 issues today in the Italian-American community
14 with the Italian-American youth, and as I
15 mentioned, we still engage in those.

16 And there's another study that we
17 did that was actually in tandem with the Mayor's
18 Executive Order 120 where in 2008 he added six
19 languages other than English in which basic city
20 information needs to be available and one of those
21 was Italian, and at that point we were doing a
22 study on demographics of who speaks Italian, who
23 doesn't speak Italian, we found out that there are
24 hundreds of thousands of people who still do speak
25 Italian. And so that those issues are still--

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2 those linguistic issues, in spite of what the
3 popular culture may think, are still around.

4 Finally, let me say that some of
5 the more recent studies that we do on the
6 perception of Italians by non-Italians by what we
7 call the dominant culture here, dominant culture
8 thinking in the United States also shows that
9 there are still, in spite of the fact of the
10 Sopranos and Jersey Shore, etc., that there are
11 still certain perceptions about Italian-Americans
12 that, unfortunately, are most offensive, remain
13 offensive today.

14 And we did engage in those studies
15 also.

16 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: My last
17 question is what are the--why are the center and
18 institute so important to CUNY and what are the
19 challenges that you feel we face, in this case,
20 the institution, in order to keep expanding the
21 center so that a center continue playing that
22 important role that is so needed, especially for
23 youth who will be growing or born in this country?
24 And I know that there has been a misperception
25 that when you folks who are studying a group, that

1 particular group will not be integrating in the
2 society versus the reality, which is that when a
3 group is strong in the cultural, it make them more
4 proud in the nation or the city where they are...
5 Okay, so what are the challenges and why are the
6 centers so--

7 [Crosstalk]

8 JULIA WRIGLEY: [Interposing] I
9 think the centers are very important to CUNY
10 because of exactly what's being discussed.
11 They're the link in part between the university
12 and the community--they're the students, they're
13 the community, they're the faculty, and they draw
14 together those elements. They have a lot of
15 cultural programming, they have a lot of research
16 programming, and they are also more nimble. The
17 academic curriculum is not a nimble item in that
18 once a curriculum, you know, it takes a long time
19 to change a curriculum, it's very imprinted upon a
20 university and the faculty all have to agree. But
21 the centers and the institutes have a kind of
22 flexibility which allows them to change as the
23 needs of the local community change and the needs
24 of the city of New York change.
25

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2 So I think that the great array of
3 centers and institutes that we have shows the kind
4 of attachment to the life of the city of New York
5 as demonstrated by these and all the others as
6 well.

7 ANTHONY TAMBURRI: To get to your
8 question of those born here, for example, and we
9 can take Italian-Americans because we first came
10 here in the 1870s and 1880s, we're five, six
11 generations deep. What is curious is that there
12 are 15 and 16 year olds who very much consider
13 themselves Italian, but they're not Italian vis-à-
14 vis those in Italy, and that culture, whether it
15 is Italian, whether it's Dominican, whether it's
16 Puerto Rican, whatever, that culture morphs into
17 something else here in the United States because
18 of it's--and I use this word in an academic sense
19 and in a positive sense--because of the
20 "contamination" that takes place with the
21 cultures, we use that word now positively in the
22 academy.

23 So those are very important issues
24 with regard to individual identity and ethnic
25 identity that it changes. And so the 15-year-old

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2 is no longer the Italian of the 40-year-old or 45-
3 year-old parent and of the 70-year-old grandmother
4 and great-grandmother, and so on and so forth, but
5 is still Italian but something different.

6 And that culture has its own
7 manifestations, it has its own articulations,
8 whether it's hip hop, even for Italian-Americans,
9 whether it's the old Frank Zappa, or the young new
10 Frank Zappa, it's whether it's someone like Ani
11 DiFranco, and so on and so, of that whole
12 alternative aspect of the various cultures that we
13 all study and represent.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Well it's
15 good to hear that and the understanding we have of
16 the importance of the center. And I just also
17 hope that an area where we also have to include
18 and offer more classes, like, I don't want to wait
19 for my daughter to go to CUNY and knowing that
20 there's a BA on Dominican Study and there's no
21 classes offering that BA. So I just think that
22 [off mic] on the Puerto Rican or any other area
23 where we feel that we should offering those
24 opportunities for our students.

25 And so thank you to this panel.

And now we're going to be calling the next group.

Thank you.

ANTHONY RINI: Thank you.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Calling on Patricia Krueger from Dominican Study Institute, Joseph Sciorra from Queens College.

MALE VOICE: No, no, he's just a visitor.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

MALE VOICE: Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Great. Joyce Moy from CUNY Asian-American Nation Research Institute, and Kyung Ji Rhee from Center for--

[background noise]

FEMALE VOICE: --Leadership.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: --New Leadership.

[Off mic]

PATRICIA KRUEGER: There are three of us?

JOYCE MOY: [Off mic] so far.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

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2 Because all of the number of people that had show
3 interest on testify so we're going to be following
4 the clock--using the clock. So any of you can
5 begin--

6 [background noise]

7 [Off mic]

8 PATRICIA KRUEGER: Who wants to
9 start?

10 JOYCE MOY: I can start, I'm Joyce
11 Moy, the Executive Director of the Asian-American
12 and Asian Research Institute at CUNY, and I'm
13 going to just keep my comments brief, you have a
14 memorandum from me.

15 I really wanted to address the
16 issue that Chairperson Rodriguez mentioned and
17 that was our value to the city of New York. I
18 think in terms of the academics, we clearly are
19 integrated with the academics in terms of Asian-
20 American studies and Asian studies. Our institute
21 focuses both on the Asian-American populations, as
22 well as the world's Asian communities. However,
23 one of the most important things that we do is
24 really to engage the Asian-American community and
25 other cultural and ethnic groups across the

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2 disciplines and across the commonalities that we
3 share, as well as discussions about differences.
4 We also do a great deal in terms of informing
5 agencies and in terms of working with other
6 sectors of our communities, such as the business
7 community, medical and mental health facilities,
8 and so on.

9 Let me just give you an example of
10 the kinds of things that our institute, and I
11 believe many of the other institutes within CUNY
12 do as well. We were approached once by a hospital
13 that provided medical care to Asian-American
14 senior citizens and there was a tremendous
15 conflict that was brewing between the staff and
16 the patients and the families of the patients.
17 Much of this occurred because of a lack of
18 understanding between both parties. We went in
19 and did some training that was entitled Chinese
20 Beliefs About Illness, Dying, and Death. And
21 because we were able to explain the cultural
22 expectations and the cultural issues that were
23 involved, we believe that we were tremendously
24 impactful in defusing the situation that occurred.

25 Let me just give you a quick

1
2 example of what happened. When I originally came
3 into those facilities, I really thought that the
4 staff was quite anti-Asian, and part of it was
5 because of the kinds of things that the staff was
6 saying about the patients and their families. But
7 as I listened more carefully, I realized that
8 these comments were born out of concern for the
9 patients. For example, Asian-Americans, certain
10 segments of the Asian-American populations believe
11 that it is the flow of energy that will cause your
12 revitalization and your healing so they would come
13 into the premises and they would vigorously
14 massage the patient--and some of these patients
15 are elderly, they suffer from osteoporosis and
16 things like that, and so the staff was concerned
17 that in fact injury could take place. But the
18 Chinese thought, in fact, that the staff was
19 preventing them from healing their family members.

20 They would give them cold water and
21 cold water is something that's not good,
22 especially with elderly people whose chi, or
23 energy flows, were diminishing. They wanted them
24 to have boiled water where the fire would have
25 infused the water with the energy that they needed

1 to recuperate.

2
3 So by coming in and doing the kind
4 of training that was necessary from the security
5 guard to the doctors, including accompanying the
6 doctors through their medical rounds and talking
7 with them as they examined patients and talk to
8 families etc., we were really very instrumental I
9 think in helping that particular community. And
10 this is the kind of role that, in fact, many of
11 our institutes and centers play--providing
12 resources to educational settings where they are
13 dealing with new populations and their issues that
14 they may not be able to understand and being that
15 linkage to the community.

16 So I'm just going to leave my
17 comments at that. But when you talk about the
18 impact of the centers and institute, they are well
19 beyond the walls of CUNY itself. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: So [off
21 mic] two-minute [off mic] we [off mic] three
22 minutes.

23 JOYCE MOY: Oh, I apologize.

24 [Off mic]

25 PATRICIA KRUEGER: Okay. Good

1
2 afternoon, Honorable Council Members. My name is
3 Patricia Krueger and I'm right now in the position
4 of being CUNY Dominican Studies Institute only in
5 first post Doctoral researcher. It's a true honor
6 to do this work. And at the same time, I also
7 want to acknowledge that a few of you council
8 members have mentioned this current educational
9 crisis that we are finding ourselves in, and there
10 is no doubt that our work also has to be directed
11 to address the so-called educational crisis. And
12 a lot of our educational work that we do at the
13 CUNY Dominican Institute is exactly that: Trying
14 to figure out how to configure these challenges
15 into our everyday work.

16 So for me, this means really trying
17 to figure out on a daily basis how to disseminate
18 the wealth of our educational materials, either
19 through the library or the archives, or also that
20 our research produces to disseminate those to our
21 learning communities in New York City schools as
22 well as in other educational spaces.

23 We are committed to developing and
24 facilitating numerous special workshops and
25 seminars for students and faculty at City College

1 across the disciplines to strengthen awareness
2 about the multiple uses and functions of our
3 material. So in other words, even though we focus
4 and we are centered on Dominican Studies related
5 topics, you don't have to be Dominican in order to
6 find the vitality of the work that we do and the
7 space that we maintain and so carefully take care
8 of.

10 We also design unique short and
11 long-term initiatives to expose underrepresented
12 high school youth to professional careers,
13 especially in the natural sciences, engineering,
14 and math, and, thus, we wish to increase their
15 presence in these spaces of higher education.

16 We offer guidance and mentorship to
17 our undergraduate student, staff, and interns as a
18 way to secure the successful completion of their
19 undergraduate degrees and also their pursuit of
20 graduate school.

21 And most importantly, we invite our
22 supporters and constituents to help us with
23 establishing Dominican Studies Institute as a very
24 unique community educational resource center.

25 So this with the fiscal support of

1 funders such as you, the New York City Council,
2 that our endeavors and commitment to the
3 educational well-being of our communities and
4 across our communities can grow and will flourish.
5 Thank you very much.

6
7 KYUNG JI RHEE: Good afternoon, my
8 name is Kyung Ji Rhee, I'm the Juvenile Justice
9 Director of the Center for New Leadership, and I'm
10 here to speak about two things. One, point of
11 accountability and process at CUNY with respect to
12 the center application approval process specific
13 to the Center for New Leadership. Yes, it is
14 under litigation, but I believe that for the
15 greater and critical importance of public
16 education and information, we are more than happy
17 to share and I think it's important for everyone
18 to know what is going on.

19 So, put simply, there is a process
20 that I think everyone's been brought up to date on
21 in terms of the center approval process, and what
22 needs to be clarified is that the Center for New
23 Leadership, after being incubated at Medgar Evers
24 College at the invitation of the president, the
25 then-president, President Jackson, came after six

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2 years of careful development and incubation under
3 Center for Law and Social Justice, went through a
4 thorough application process which was approved at
5 the executive committee level by the executive
6 board of the College Council. Now College Council
7 at Medgar Evers College is the highest governing
8 body at the local college that approves the center
9 application and we were unanimously approved, and
10 that was done in May of 2009.

11 Because of the transitional period
12 that this took place under, the application which
13 is to be forwarded to the Office of Academic
14 Affairs in CUNY Central was not forwarded and the
15 provost at the time, Elizabeth Nunez, has
16 expressed that she never even got to see the
17 application because of all the kind of
18 transitional turmoil and logistical kind of burden
19 that that administration was going through.

20 The CUNY bylaws state that the
21 highest governing body is the College Council,
22 that it is incumbent upon the new administration's
23 provost to forward the application, the
24 recommendation of the executive board of the
25 College Council to CUNY Central.

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2 mention is this, after we got the eviction notice
3 on December 3rd that it was not satisfactory to
4 overturn the decision of the previous provost's
5 decision not to forward the application, incorrect
6 premise because the previous provost never
7 disproved the application.

8 But the point that I do want to
9 bring here that needs to be also looked into
10 further by the Council is that on December 17th,
11 CUNY administration personnel were ordered to
12 cease our computers in the middle of the night
13 with no search warrant, no notice, and that is
14 under litigation, and I have the court transcript,
15 which I am more than happy to publicly distribute
16 'cause it's a public document, where the judge has
17 warned and told and instructed CUNY to return our
18 computers--which they have--and hardware but they
19 have retained copies of our hard drive.

20 And I need everyone to understand
21 that the largest public higher education
22 institution in this country is in severe violation
23 of First Amendment rights and civil rights
24 violation.

25 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

1
2 Thank you. And I'm going to be calling the next
3 panel, and I would like to recommend for the next
4 group to focus on keep on the topic, which is
5 analyzing the impact of the center and the
6 institute. And since there is a litigation going
7 on, we would like to keep the whole case of Medgar
8 Evers, especially when things related to
9 litigation, out of the topic.

10 So now we're calling--thank you--

11 [Off mic]

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, and
13 now we're calling on Ricardo Gabriel, CUNY
14 Graduate Center; Patricia Mathews-Salazar, Center
15 for Ethnic Studies; and Esmeralda Simmons from
16 Center for Law and Social--

17 [Off mic]

18 MALE VOICE: Thank you.

19 [Off mic]

20 RICARDO GABRIEL: Good afternoon
21 and thank you for this important opportunity to
22 speak about the impact of ethnic studies at CUNY.
23 My name is Ricardo Gabriel and I speak to you
24 today as a proud alumnus of Hunter College's
25 Africana and Puerto Rican Latino Studies

1 Department. I am also a current research
2 assistant at Hunter Center for Puerto Rican
3 Studies and a Ph.D. student in sociology at the
4 CUNY Graduate Center. This is an issue I care
5 deeply about because it was the Ethnic Studies
6 Department and the Center for Puerto Rican Studies
7 at Hunter College that sparked my passion for
8 higher education.
9

10 I transferred to Hunter after two
11 years at a private university because I was so
12 excited that there were these programs and
13 institutions that actually spoke to and validated
14 my and my family's history and experiences as
15 working-class Puerto Ricans and Latinos in the
16 U.S. The Center for Puerto Rican Studies quickly
17 became my intellectual home, as I used its
18 resources for numerous academic projects, as well
19 as for personal interest, and developed supportive
20 relationships with librarians, researchers, and
21 affiliated faculty. It gave me a point of
22 reference and allowed me to develop a better
23 understanding of the world. That grounding helped
24 me develop the confidence to know that I did
25 belong in academia and helped me excel in all of

1
2 my classes.

3 As someone who now does research on
4 access to higher education, I can tell you that it
5 is exactly these kinds of experiences that make
6 ethnic studies centers so invaluable. In order to
7 retain unrepresented students at CUNY, or anywhere
8 else in the country, it is extremely important to
9 have culturally relevant coursework, faculty, and
10 advisors that relate to the students, and
11 institutions like Centro, like the Dominican
12 Studies Institute, like the Institute for Research
13 on the African Diaspora that give students a sense
14 of belonging. These centers also produce high
15 quality academic work that become valuable
16 resources for students, policymakers, educators,
17 and New Yorkers of all backgrounds.

18 In closing, let me say that if
19 public higher education in New York City is to
20 remain true to its historic and noble mission of
21 inclusion and access for all, these centers of
22 diversity must be enthusiastically protected and
23 supported. Thank you very much.

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

25 ESMERALDA SIMMONS: Good afternoon,

1
2 members of the Council. My name is Esmeralda
3 Simmons, I'm the Executive Director of the Center
4 of Law and Social Justice, and I thank you for
5 having these hearings.

6 I think this is a very interesting
7 situation here. I too am a graduate of the
8 Department of Black and Puerto Rican Studies--we
9 called it Black then--

10 [Crosstalk]

11 RICARDO GABRIEL: --changed the
12 name.

13 ESMERALDA SIMMONS: --and I was one
14 of the students that brought that department into
15 being in the late sixties during the student
16 revolts at Hunter College.

17 My mentors at the Black and Puerto
18 Rican Studies Department were none other than Dr.
19 John Henrick Clarke, Dr. Tilden LeMelle, Dr Frank
20 Bonilla. These were the people that molded me,
21 and these were also the folks that quote urged me
22 to go into civil rights law and be an advocate for
23 racial justice.

24 I'm here to discuss the topic,
25 which is the relationship between centers and

1 institutes and ethnic studies. I'd like to start
2 off by saying with no disrespect intended that the
3 use of ethnic to describe our studies department
4 is demeaning. Every group in this country is a
5 part of an--has its ethnicity. When you use the
6 word ethnic, you are in fact saying that there is
7 a majority culture and then there's these ethnics.
8 In fact, we consider our culture to be just as
9 valid--I'm talking about Africana Studies, I'm
10 talking about Latino Studies, whether it be
11 Dominican, Puerto Rican, I'm talking about Asian
12 Studies, I'm talking about any quote study in
13 CUNY, including Irish, Arab-American, etc. When
14 you use the word ethnic you in fact say that we
15 are somehow the other, so I am not going to use
16 that term ethnic but instead talk about how our
17 centers--how my center, the Center for Law and
18 Social Justice, that I am the founding director
19 of, has had an impact on ethnic studies.

21 Well the truth of it is, it is a
22 give-and-take. If it were not for the Black and
23 Puerto Rican Studies Department of Hunter College
24 I would not be the Executive Director of the
25 Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers.

1
2 Those ethnic quote studies departments are the
3 ones that give birth to leaders, to the people who
4 are committed, ethical, knowledgeable, and on
5 course, grounded with their community, and know
6 how to relate their community to the issues of the
7 day. So they give birth to people who then go
8 forth and do the work in the community like I do
9 and all the rest of my staff at the Center for Law
10 and Social Justice.

11 In addition, the centers and the
12 institutes support the studies, the various Black
13 studies, Latino Studies, Asian Studies program by
14 having the students in those programs directly
15 learn by doing around projects in our institution.
16 They come to our institutions so they can see the
17 impact between ivory tower knowledge and real-
18 world existence. I have brought students from
19 Medgar Evers, from John Jay, from Columbia
20 University, I daresay, to this exact room to
21 hearings so they can see what they are studying,
22 how it relates directly to the world of public
23 policy.

24 I would like to close by saying
25 that my center has been in existence now for 25

1 years at Medgar Evers. There are other centers
2 which my center incubated, like the Center for New
3 Leadership. There's other centers which are now
4 under attack like the DuBois Bunche Center. I'm
5 saying this because our centers have worked
6 collaboratively, an attack against one is an
7 attack against all. Our college--Medgar Evers
8 College is born with a mission to serve the
9 Central Brooklyn community, it is directly in the
10 charter of our college, and yet the centers that
11 are doing this work are being ticked off, knocked
12 off one by one.

14 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.
15 Thanks. Like to call the next panel composed by
16 Joseph Coello, T. Rasul, and Dr. Brenda Greene.

17 MALE VOICE: What was the second
18 name?

19 FEMALE VOICE: Brenda Greene.

20 [Off mic]

21 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Brenda, T.
22 Rasul.

23 T. RASUL MURRAY: Rasul Murray?

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yeah.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Yeah, Rasul

[off mic].

[Long pause]

DR. BRENDA GREENE: Is this on?

Good afternoon, Council Members, I'm Dr. Brenda Greene, and I thank you for giving us the opportunity to present here. I'm a professor of English at Medgar Evers College and have been so for the last 30 years and I'm also Executive Director of the Center for Black Literature. I spent most of my professional life as an educator, teaching students and engaging in the work of the college as Department Chair, Director, Coordinator of writing and literary programs.

Kevin Warren, in an essay recently in the Chronicle of Higher Education, suggested that African-American Literature had come to an end. His rationale was that African-American literature was the literature of a distinct historical period, namely, the era of constitutionally sanctioned segregation known as Jim Crow. The problem with Warren's argument was that he defined African-American literature in a very narrow way. And this is tantamount to arguing that because the holocaust is over, the

1 literature that has emerged as a result of this
2 atrocity is over. This argument presented a
3 static view of literature and ignored the
4 continual impact of history and memory on literary
5 works. And I cite this argument as an illustration
6 of what has occurred at Medgar Evers College and
7 what the centers and programs are currently
8 experiencing.

10 The current leadership has a very
11 narrow and static view of education. It's ignored
12 the legacy and tradition of Medgar Evers College.
13 The mission of Medgar Evers College is grounded in
14 the concept of a holistic education for our
15 students, they're guided by the philosophy of many
16 historically Black colleges, those created to
17 serve students who were underrepresented and who
18 did not have access to higher education.
19 Historically, Black colleges speak to the value of
20 empowering students for success by creating and
21 surrounding them with an educational and
22 culturally rich, nurturing environment of faculty,
23 staff, and administrators. They emphasize the
24 importance of activism and service.

25 Medgar Evers College's Centers are

1
2 essential to fulfilling the college's mission of
3 improving students' understanding of self, past
4 and present societies, preparing students for
5 leadership roles in a changing world, developing
6 non-degree educational and co-curricular programs
7 and interacting with CUNY representatives. Our
8 centers actively engage students in learning and
9 recognize that a broad range of learning is
10 necessary for student success.

11 The leadership under the current
12 president and provost lacks integrity with respect
13 to the fulfillment of the college's mission. The
14 current leadership has dismantled programs and
15 shown a lack of respect for the work of our
16 centers. It has dismantled rather than expanded
17 student support services, co-curricular programs,
18 and academic programs that supplement student
19 instruction. It has only responded to critical
20 issues cited by faculty, students, and staff when
21 the media, community, and elected officials have
22 called attention to these issues. And rather than
23 conducting an informed assessment of the college,
24 it's distorted data, demoralized faculty, and
25 violated shared governance, and the infrastructure

1
2 necessary to ensure that our students receive a
3 balanced education.

4 We are losing our institution
5 because we remained embroiled in a battle to
6 maintain the integrity of its mission. We need
7 leadership who value and understand the integrity
8 of this mission, who will build, rather than
9 dismiss the past, and who respect our centers,
10 shared governance, faculty, and students. And we
11 call upon you to help change the leadership so
12 that we could do the work that is necessary.

13 It has been very ironic to sit and
14 listen to CUNY's views of centers and, at the same
15 time, watch the dismantling and lack of support
16 for centers within Medgar Evers College.

17 T. RASUL MURRAY: Thank you for
18 calling these hearings and thank you for this
19 opportunity to address this committee.

20 My name is T. Rasul Murray, I'm a
21 community and cultural activist in Brooklyn.

22 Fredrick Douglass reminds us that
23 power concedes nothing without a demand. In the
24 beginning, there was race-based chattel slavery.
25 The passage from that time to this has been forged

1
2 by the sacrifice and demands of the African
3 descendant community. Concomitant with the
4 struggle to end slavery and segregation, and its
5 remnants have been the efforts to assure
6 educational opportunity for Africa's children in
7 America. One consequence was the development of
8 the historically Black colleges and universities.
9 These institutions assured the successes of the
10 movement to end segregation.

11 As opportunities were achieved to
12 create a place for students of African descent in
13 the previously segregated, or near segregated,
14 institutions for higher education, African
15 descendant scholars and students demanded and won
16 Black Studies programs--programs designed to bring
17 to historically White institutions a perspective
18 that encompassed an Afrocentric view, transcending
19 the bounds of the traditionally Eurocentric
20 academy. These scholars reflected a perspective
21 traditionally excluded from, or marginalized by,
22 the academy.

23 Black studies programs emphasized
24 the importance of the history, culture, and values
25 those students brought to their institutions.

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2 They provided students with a supportive
3 environment as they navigated their academic life
4 and the sometimes hostile, or uncaring,
5 environments they found. Those programs were hard
6 won by the demands placed on power.

7 It was these Black studies programs
8 that gave rise to the concept of so-called Ethnic
9 Studies that, until recent times, enriched our
10 academic communities or enriched more of them.
11 The needs of Brooklyn's African descendant
12 students moved our community to demand an
13 institution that could fulfill the needs met until
14 then only by the historically Black colleges and
15 universities. This was ethnic studies writ large,
16 a Black college in Brooklyn, designed to serve the
17 unique needs of a student body of color. Black
18 Studies did not emerge from the benign good will
19 of the academy, it was the consequence of demands
20 that the African descendant worldview be reflected
21 in the academy. It began with Black studies. And
22 Medgar Evers College, named for a hero of that
23 history of Black resistance, grew out of the
24 demands of the African descendant community for an
25 institution that was responsive to the particular

needs and priorities.

Some would argue that the election of a president of African descent, somehow introduced a post-racial society, eliminating the need for Black or ethnic studies, much less an institution that addressed the particular needs of students of color. There are few persons of African descent whose life experience would suggest that the needs that gave rise to Black studies and Black colleges have been left behind in our national progress. In spite of this, today, as we see the elimination of Black studies programs at college after college in the City University system, we're witnessing a systematic effort to dismantle Medgar Evers College. Today, demands must, again, be made to power to reverse the assault on college programs, the reduction of services to students, the systematic disregard and disrespect for the Medgar Evers' faculty and students. The progress of the past half-century cannot be eroded.

As a consequence, we demand the removal of the president and provost who have instituted that systematic dismantling of the

mission of the college. We demand an administration committed to creating academic excellence and dedicated to providing students of color with an education that meets their educational and cultural needs, while serving the needs of the broader Brooklyn community.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

JOSEPH COELLO: Good afternoon, Council Members, and thank you for having these hearings. My name is Joe Coello, and I sit before you today to show my solidarity to the students and the faculty and the alumni and the parents of the Medgar Evers College that has been under attack for the past 12 years--oh I'm sorry, 12 months--12 years.

I am a board member for the DuBois Bunche Center at Medgar Evers and also a board member for Center for New Leadership, and I am here as actually a parent of a freshman at Medgar Evers.

Division for the Medgar Evers College has been set in stone many years ago, no one man or group of men should come between the

1 college and its mission. The damage to the
2 reputation of Medgar Evers and the many who fought
3 to create this institution, this community
4 must be reversed. The professors and faculty that
5 you continue at CUNY Central to ill-treat are our
6 teachers, our mentors, and our families, and we
7 take these assaults very personally. This campus
8 was created to right the wrongs of a failed
9 educational system in Central Brooklyn that
10 continues to churn out under-educated,
11 undervalued, undernourished, and, eventually,
12 underemployed youth.

14 In 1982, the same fight was fought
15 by this Central Brooklyn community, by students,
16 and the community at large. We must return Medgar
17 Evers College to a school of respect, and not
18 ridicule. We must ensure that the student
19 services and faculty return to their appropriate
20 posts. We must move away from petty arguments and
21 small minded administrators. We must get on with
22 the task at hand educating our children. We must
23 vow to never let this happen again. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.
25 Thank you, and now we're going to the last panel.

1
2 Thanks. Gloria Dulan-Wilson, Grace Omes
3 [phonetic], and Harry Williams.

4 [Off mic]

5 [Long pause]

6 HENRY WILLIAMS: Shall I begin?

7 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Yes, begin,
8 yes.

9 HENRY WILLIAMS: Okay. First, my
10 name is Henry Williams and my testimony is
11 specifically going to address the IRADAC Center at
12 the Graduate Center of the City University, which
13 is what they call their African Diaspora Research
14 Institute. And to briefly introduce myself, I'm a
15 City College alumnus and I'm currently a doctoral
16 student at the CUNY Graduate Center in English and
17 my particular focus is literature and culture of
18 people of the African diaspora.

19 So as time is short, I'm going to
20 briefly try to make two points. Number one, which
21 is the importance of centers such as IRADAC and
22 the Center for Puerto Rican Studies to my own
23 research. Two, the importance of these institutes
24 and what they should mean to CUNY's central
25 mission.

1
2 And my particular area of research
3 focuses on the area of literature and culture and
4 activism known as the Black Arts Movement from the
5 late 1960s to mid 1970s. And I'll point out that
6 this is an area of scholarship that until recently
7 could not be done in universities, including this
8 one, because it was not seen as "real"
9 scholarship. So centers such as IRADAC and the
10 Center for Puerto Rican Studies are really central
11 to myself and scholars like me being able to
12 produce this type of research and be properly
13 trained to teach students in these areas, which is
14 actually what we do.

15 And one very quick example of what
16 they did was a conference held this past January
17 on the past, present, and future of Black Studies
18 in universities, and it actually brought some of
19 the people who were founders of the entire
20 discipline of Black Studies to New York City to
21 help us work through some of these issues. And
22 that's the type of thing that would not happen
23 without these type of centers, but obviously, if
24 you're going to train scholars and actually open
25 this up to community members, things like that are

central to you're being able to do it.

To quickly move on to point number two as time is running out, I'd like to briefly quote the minutes of a 1969 CUNY Board of Trustees meeting, it was then called the New York City Board of Higher Education. But the minutes say, "When considering the great body of knowledge and the critical importance of these studies--meaning Black and Puerto Rican Studies--to the urban problems which the City University considers its prime commitment, it is our considered judgment that further efforts should be made and made promptly. We therefore state that it shall be the policy of the City University and its constituent colleges to encourage the development of programs of Black and Puerto Rican Studies within the university and to give the funding of these programs special priority.

We further state that in view of our commitment both to the urban setting and to the educational excellence, the university should establish as a goal the attainment of national preeminence and leadership in these fields." To my knowledge, that resolution is still in effect.

1
2 So when looking at possible areas
3 of excellence that can distinguish the university,
4 this, I argue, is one of the central areas that
5 CUNY should be looking at because it is something
6 that other universities cannot compete with us
7 with.

8 And in what the U.N. has declared
9 as the Year of People of African Descent, this
10 study by the City Council's Higher Ed Commission
11 could not come at a better time. And I thank you
12 very much.

13 GLORIA DULAN-WILSON: Good
14 afternoon, my name is Gloria Dulan-Wilson, I am a
15 journalist, but I'm also a community activist.
16 And by way of background, I was the first Director
17 of Student Activities for City College's SEEK
18 program when it was started under the Honorable
19 Percy Ellis Sutton. I was brought in by Irving
20 Bramneau [phonetic], at the time was the president
21 of CCNY. I also was the assistant director of
22 counseling under the SEEK program for Brooklyn
23 College. All right? I also have my masters in
24 guidance and counseling from Hunter College, and I
25 was head of juvenile justice in Los Angeles under

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the Los Angeles Unified School District.

And what I am looking at right now is a complete recycling of the kind of nonsense that we came through when we first started the SEEK program in the sixties. The same kind of undermining, the same kind of discounting of what our culture was about and who we were when I was trying to bring programs on that would be relevant to Black and Latino students.

I'm very, very happy to know that the Italian students are getting their fair share, but what I am finding very interesting is that they are able to highlight all of the reasons why their academic centers are very important, but no one can seem to see the same parallel value for what has been established at Medgar Evers over the last 20 years under the cooperation of the community and under the leadership of Edison Jackson.

When you bring in a person that I have called a Trojan horse, whose main mission has been to completely dismantle what has been accomplished under the guise of academic excellence--I come from a family back [off mic] ,

1
2 what has happened and what is happening at Medgar
3 Evers is a heinous travesty that has nothing to do
4 with academics, it does have to do with a certain
5 amount of mean-spiritedness and what I call ethnic
6 cleansing--and I'm putting it where it is, right
7 at the feet of Chancellor Goldstein and
8 Hershenson.

9 Now Pollard, for whatever reason
10 has been an anathema to what Medgar Evers stands
11 for. We had a Black think tank, that Black think
12 tank is comprised of people who have done well by
13 doing good, by serving in the larger community of
14 Brooklyn, who needed the examples. It's not just
15 about academia, everybody can do book learning.
16 It's also about people who have taken what they've
17 known and applied it so that other people can then
18 by interaction be able to learn something from it
19 and take it further. And what I am looking at
20 right now is nothing short of something that
21 people should be sued for.

22 You come in, if we had done the
23 same thing at the Yeshiva and said that the
24 information that the Yeshiva's provided were not
25 relevant, every one of my brothers and sisters

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2 from the Jewish committee would be all over you
3 like a wet suit.

4 I would defy you to go to Hostos
5 College and tell the students at Hostos that they
6 don't need to learn to speak Spanish or they don't
7 need to learn about the Dominican Republic or
8 Puerto Rico or Cuba, I defy you to do that. And
9 by the same token, we have to take the same stand.
10 I write about it, I am a journalist, it's now
11 international. The fact that CUNY higher-ups have
12 seen to target the only Black institution that
13 they have--and I say Black because we are, we're
14 Caribbean Black, we're African Black, we're
15 African-American Black, we're Latino Black, we are
16 a Black institution, the only one in the New York
17 area and you can't see fit to support what it is
18 that makes that school great.

19 I would defy them to do that, to go
20 to Harvard University and tell Henry Louis Gates
21 that he's not relevant, which is what they've done
22 to Roger Green. I would defy you to go and tell
23 Cornell West that what he does is not relevant,
24 which is what they've done with the DuBois Bunche
25 Center.

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2 I think that they need to not only
3 re-examine and reestablish and reinstate and make
4 whole what has happened to this school, but they
5 need to reestablish their funding and this thing
6 of taking the intellectual property that belongs
7 to Divine Pryor, the Center for New Leadership is
8 nothing short of Nazi criminalism, writ large.
9 That's my statement, I'm sticking to it.

10 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: Thanks.

11 GLORIA DULAN-WILSON: Welcome.

12 CHAIRPERSON RODRIGUEZ: I would
13 like to [off mic] the panels and everyone from
14 CUNY [off mic] Italian Study Institute, and the
15 Dominican Study Institute, the Puerto Rican Study
16 Institute, and the other member of the panels who
17 came here to testify, sharing so much experience
18 when it comes to the centers. I just want to end
19 this hearing saying that we respect and we think
20 all directors of the institute that we have in
21 each campus of the CUNY and we just hope that we
22 always find a way of how to keep all centers and
23 institutes alive. The role of the center is so
24 important, it is not the center is focused on the
25 Black or Latino or Asian, it's the needing

1
2 important, it's not for those particular ethnic
3 group. I think that where we are moving right now
4 is looking at how close we live in this planet.
5 And anyone who is raising a family, let's say, in
6 the Anglo community would like to see their child
7 exposed to other cultures, to other experience.
8 So when we have approached this issue and we
9 advocate for being sure that we can invest in more
10 resources on the institute, it's not only because
11 these will hope the particular center, the ethnic
12 group that work around this investigation, it's
13 because that's where we're moving, it's because we
14 share this planet and it's because so important
15 that our future generation does much better than
16 what we've done. And I think that we have made a
17 lot of progress as human beings, but we've been
18 divided for so many centuries and it is time for
19 us to respect and value each cultures and I
20 believe that each centers play a major role being
21 sure that each of us, especially our children,
22 have the opportunity to live in another society.
23 Thank you. And this hearing is adjourned.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Tammy Wittman, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature

Tammy Wittman

Date March 20, 2011