

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

----- X

February 26, 2016

Start: 1:10 p.m.

Recess: 3:35 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.  
14th Fl

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS: James Vacca  
Fernando Cabrera  
Jumaane D. Williams  
Laurie A. Cumbo  
Ydanis A. Rodriguez  
Vanessa L. Gibon

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

Frank Sanchez, Vice Chancellor  
Student Affairs  
City University of New York, CUNY

Jermaine Wright, Director  
Black Male Initiative Program  
City University of New York, CUNY

Cheryl Williams, Associate Dean  
Special Programs  
City University of New York, CUNY

Marlin Myers, Student  
New York City College of Technology

Clara Norton, Director of Admission  
City University of New York, CUNY

Kevin La Monte Jones  
Student and BLMI Member  
Brooklyn College

Javon Henry, Student  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Jalil Thomas, Student  
Bronx Community College

Chico Ninjiqua (sp?)  
Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs  
CUNY University Student Senate  
President, Undergraduate Student Government  
Hunter College

John Rose, Dean for Diversity, Hunter College  
Project Director for the Hunter College Black Male  
Initiative, Brothers for Excellence

Kristy Clementina Perez, Interim Director Percy  
Sutton SEEK Program, Baruch College  
Director of the Urban Male Leadership Academy,  
UMLA, Scholars Program

Dr. Angela Anselmo, Director  
Seek Program

Emily Valez, Student at Baruch College  
President, Woman Empowered for Success, WES

Omar Saril (sp?), Student  
Medgar Evers College

[sound check, pause]

[gavel]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet please.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Good afternoon. Oh, I like that. Your response is good. I'm Council Member Inez Barron, and I am the Chair of the Committee on Higher Education. Today's oversight hearing will examine the status of the Black Male Initiative and black academic offerings at CUNY. But before we start, as we are in the month of February, which is designated for the observation of black history. As the Chair of the Committee on Higher Education, I wanted to offer some observations on the ancient institutions of higher education. The Kingdom of Kemet, commonly known today as Egypt, was one of the centers of learning in the ancient world. Even as today when students seek to be educated by the best universities, such as CUNY, and professors seek tenure at the most revered institutions in the world, such as CUNY, Roman and Greek historians such as Herodotus noted that they traveled to Egypt to study. Unless we forget, Egypt is in Africa.

[background comments, applause] Oh, we--we--we ask the people not applaud. We ask that you--you use the

sign language symbol. Thank you. The liberal arts studied there were grammar, rhetoric, logic, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and harmony/music. Sounds like the STEM, which has tram--translated to STEAM to include the arts. While Pythagoras is credited with the theorem  $A^2 + B^2 = C^2$ , the Africans could not have constructed the pyramids at Giza more than 4,000 years ago aligned perfectly with the constellations and still be standing today without knowledge of geometry and astronomy. On the west coast of Africa the University of Timbuktu was established 3,000 years ago, and flourished among the trade routes for gold and salt. The three university campuses there had about 25,000 students. Their course of study included math, astronomy, metallurgy, architecture, medicine and navigation. As we continue to focus on the scientific contributions, architectural wonders, artistic inspirations, advanced math formulae, and theories of government and social groups that are part of the foundations of civilization, let us continue to acknowledge the magnificence of African heritage.

As today's topic: Black Male Initiative and Black Academic Offering at CUNY, the Black Male Initiative was established in 2004 by Chancellor Goldstein using funding provided under the leadership of my husband, Charles Barron, when he chaired this committee to address social discrimination in education, in the treatment in the criminal justice system, and in employment. It is based on a set of recommendations proposed in that year by the university task force on the Black Male Initiative. Those recommendations were to:

1. Provide strong university leadership on the challenges facing black youth and men;

2. Strengthen the college-to-college pipe--the school-to-college pipeline to enable many more black male students to move into higher education;

3. Increase admission and graduation rates at CUNY colleges;

4. Improve teacher education to prepare professionals for urban education;

5. Improve employment prospects for black males;

6. Contribute to the reduction of the incarceration rate for black men;

7. Establish an institute for the achievement of educational and social equity for black males; and

8. Involve experts in the implementation of the recommendations.

There is no dispute that the socio-economic fact is then prompted, the creation of the Black Male Initiative still exists, and continue to demand even more aggressive action. There are more Black and Latino men incarcerated than ever before. Black and Latino men continue to experience levels of unemployment that far exceed state and national averages. The number of Black and Latino men teaching our children remains disproportionately low compared to the number of Black and Latino children in our schools. And the percentage of Black and Latino men who graduate from New York City schools college ready continue to be unacceptably low. A nice recommendation of the task force was to establish benchmarks, and hold colleges accountable for implementing these recommendations. This year we'll consider whether such benchmarks have been

established, whether they're adequate, and whether the university is adequately accountable for the implementation of the recommendations. A visit to the CUNY Black Male Initiative website does reveal data about the academic performance of BMI participants. However, that data only covers the years 2010 through '13, and is inadequate for measuring the progress the program is making in each of the areas it set out to address. I look forward to CUNY's testimony, and I can say at the outset that we need more current and detailed information in order to fulfill our oversight obligation. Today's hearing will also examine the black academic offerings at CUNY. While black academic offerings are not a part of the Black Male Initiative, they are important to the education and the development of black men. Hunter college has the no--the noble distinction of establishing the first Black Studies Department in the country, and at one time many of CUNY's campuses had such departments. Notably, City College had a robust Black Studies Department led by Professor Leonard Jeffries. However, not all of these departments continue to exist. The City College Department was downgraded to a program in the



wake of political controversy surrounding Dr. Jeffries. At the same time, it appears that there is substantive work being done by professors to advance black culture, and to address criminal justice issues at our campuses such as Medgar Evers College. The question is whether these programs provide students all of the benefits of academic departments that award majors and minors, and what is the university's commitment to such scholarship and cost--cost offerings? I'd like to thank the Committee's staff for preparing today's hearing, Chloe Rivera, our Policy Analyst; M. Ndigo Washington, my Legislative Director and CUNY Liaison; and Jeff Campagna, the Committee Counsel. And with that, we'll hear from our first panel. I'd like you to raise your right hand so that I can swear you in.

Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee, and to answer all questions honestly?

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: I do.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you so much. You may begin. Please identify yourself and give your testimony.

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: Well, good afternoon, Chairperson Barron and members of the New York City Council on Higher Education Committee. My name is Frank Sanchez. I'm the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the City University of New York, and I thought perhaps before my formal testimone-- testimony, you would allow me maybe to share a brief except from one of our students that wrote recently in the Brooklyn Student newspaper about Black History Month. The student's name--the article is entitled *Brooklyn College Celebrates Black History Month from Durrell Ben*. Black history month, also known as National African-American History Month grew from a need to acknowledge and celebrate the significant role that African-Americans play in the United States history. Black history began as a just week long celebration in the early 1900s, sponsored by an association known today as the Association for the Study of African-American life and history. The initial event inspired other institutions to host local celebrations. According to history.com, President Gerald R. Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976 calling upon the public to seize the opportunity to honor the too often

neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history. The holiday grew to national acclaim, and is now celebrated all across the United States as well as other countries like Canada and the United Kingdom. The author quotes, "The way to encapsulate the significance of this program is it has presented me and people I've grown to know and love with opportunities and resources that would not have been so easily accessible otherwise. To these students and many others, Black history is an important part of their identity, and should be acknowledged and celebrated this month and every month." Again, that's student Durrell Ben from Brooklyn College. I know we have some Brooklyn College students in the crowd. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about the CUNY Initiative Program. Members of this panel would like to share with the committee specific strategies CUNY is using to advance the BMI program, as well as additional efforts to further support our black students across CUNY colleges. I'm joined by the University Director of the BMI Program, Jermaine Wright; Cheryl Williams, Associate Dean of our Special Programs; and BMI student at New York City

College of Technology, Marlin Myers. CUNY is deeply dedicated to serving the young people of New York City and New York State many of whom come from historically under-represented groups in higher education. Specific to educating and serving our black student community, CUNY has made remarkable strides. For instance, among all public and private institutions of higher education in New York City, CUNY educates 80% of all black undergraduates. Furthermore, CUNY educates 74% of all Pell Grant recipients who are studying at NYC, and in 2014, 42% of CUNY's undergraduates were first in their family to attend college. But the City University of New York is committed to providing all of our students with the resources and services and support they need to succeed in college. As the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, I'm especially privileged and proud to oversee several programs and projected dated-- dedicated to providing opportunities to historically underrepresented groups in higher education. Among these programs is the CUNY Black Male Initiative. I believe it is extremely important to offer some historical context at this hearing regarding the CUNY BMI, and the unwavering support of individuals who

took it--who took it from concept to reality. In May of 2004, the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York unanimously approved a strategic plan for 2004 to 2008. This comprehensive planning document included for the first time in the university's history, and Chancellor's Initiative on the Black Male and Education. In the fall of 2004, Chancellor Goldstein established a university task force on the Black Male Initiative. He asked then Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Selma Botman, to identify faculty members and administrators to its relevant knowledge and expertise to serve on the task force and charge it with developing recommendations that would include a series of action oriented projects to help black males to overcome the inequalities that led to poor academic performance in the K12 system, the weak enrollment retention and graduation from institutions of higher education, and the high rates of joblessness and incarceration. During its six months of deliberations, the task force was presented with convincing evidence that black males in New York City face patterns of ongoing and distinctive discrimination in many aspect of their lives, most evidently in education, in

treatment by the criminal justice system, and in employment. The discrimination they face has profound consequences for their wellbeing and security, and is manifested in unacceptably high rates of leaving school before high school graduation and imprisonment, and in unacceptably low rates of post-secondary degree completion and stable participation in the workforce. These grim realities have adverse impacts on family members and communities. And I know Chairperson Barron you outlined the nine different major recommendations of that task force. So I won't go over those again. But after the hearings before the Higher Education Committee of the New York City Council, chaired by the Honorable Charles Barron, the University was awarded funding from the New York City Council and began to implement some of the aforementioned recommendations. Through the initial grant, 15 demonstration projects were funded to improve the enrollment and/or graduation rates of students from underrepresented groups particularly black males. Funding was also allocated to increase opportunities for individuals without a high school diploma to enroll in GED courses and anything towards college

preparation. To provide support for formerly incarcerated individuals to enroll in college, and to survey workforce development opportunities in New York City construction industry. Through targeted-- though targeted towards black males, these projects do not discriminate based on race or gender. They will serve as models for improving educational outcomes for all students. All programs have activities where the Black Male Initiative are open to all academically eligible students, faculty and staff without regard to race, gender, national origin or other characteristics. Now, in its tenth year, the CUNY BMI program continues to grow and build on the successes of the past nine years. Over the years, CUNY BMI has seen significant growth in student participation. With the initial grant of 15 demonstration projects, today BMI is the largest program of its kind in the U.S., distributing \$2.5 million to 31 projects across 19 CUNY campuses including the Graduate Center, and serving over 2,500 students. Jermaine Wright, Director of the CUNY's BMI program will be addressing the committee shortly, and be going into greater depth about BMI's current

programs, its dedicated staff, the students it serves and its many, many successes.

In addition to BMI, CUNY has had a long-- a very proud history of providing access to college students through higher education educational opportunity programs. In fact, CUNY has been a national leader. This year, we celebrate the 50th anniversary SEEK, Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge program. In 1966, the Honorable Percy Ellis Sutton, as a member of the New York State Assembly, fought to create SEEK, and I'm proud to say that in 2011, CUNY renamed the SEEK Program, the Percy Ellis Sutton SEEK Program. Associate Dean, Chair Williams, is here today, and she'll speak about the tremendous success of this program that now serves over 8,200 undergraduates experiencing recent successes recruiting black students at our senior colleges. Dean Williams will also tell you about College Discovery, the SEEK's partner, at CUNY Community Colleges as well as our new Foster Care Initiative. The intent of the SEEK program in 1966 as well as the more recently established programs were designed specifically for underrepresented students including many black students enrolled at



CUNY. All of these programs are designed to provide access and support to students who might not otherwise have equality of access to high quality higher education. Many of our black students face challenges and obstacles beyond recruitment, retention and graduation rates. In fact, a recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that black students majored less frequently in the lucrative field of engineering and pharmaceutical sciences than in such lower earning areas of social work and psychology. Although black college enrollment grew from 10% to 15% from 1976 to 2012 according to the National Center for Educational Statistics, the new report suggests that this group of students is still not being funneled towards the highest paying careers. This study highlights the need to do more in the area of career and other services, and I believe the CUNY BMI should be the leading vehicle to make this happen. CUNY is grateful to the New York City Council for your ongoing leadership, advocate-- advocacy and support of the BMI program, and now I'd like to turn--turn over this part of our testimony to Jermaine Wright the Director of the BMI Program.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: [off mic] I'm Jermaine Wright, Director of the CUNY Black Male Initiative.

[on mic] Good afternoon, Chairperson Barron and members of the Higher Education Committee. Before I begin and give my formal testimony, I'd like to acknowledge all of the CUNY BMI students as well as administrators and faculty members who have taken part today in this hearing. So thank you all for your continuous support and dedication. The City University of New York Black Male Initiative through its focus on one of the most severely underrepresented populations in higher education, represents one of CUNY's expressions to the most significant commitment to access and diversity. CUNY BMI as a program was established in 2005, and is based on a promising model that first started at Medgar Evers College. Through the continuous support of the New York City Council, over the last 11 years, CUNY BMI funds projects throughout the university. As of November, 2013, CUNY BMI was baselined. Therefore, the \$2.5 million CUNY BMI received from the New York City Council is now a part of CUNY's operating budget allocated by the New York City Council. These projects are designed to strengthen

the educational pipeline for severely underrepresented students, particularly men of color. Since its beginning in 2005, CUNY BMI has grown from 15 projects to over 30 projects in 2016. CUNY BMI projects do not discriminate based on race and gender, and will serve as a model for improving educational outcomes for all students. All programs and activities at CUNY BMI are open and available to all academically eligible students, faculty and staff without regard for race, gender or national origin. CUNY BMI Central provides vision and leadership and monitors the progress of all 31 campus based BMI projects. CUNY BMI Central provides fiscal management and oversight of the \$2.5 million yearly grant from the New York City Council, directs cross-functional staff, and establishes strategic directives and organizational goals. CUNY BMI Central designed a bi-yearly site visit process in which each project can be viewed in and assessed. The goal is to review BMI projects in action with the purpose of understanding each project's strength, and areas of needed improvement. Each project should--can--should maintain and contain three fundamental components: Diversity recruitment, structured

mentoring and academic enhancement. All visits include a 60/60 approach, which was created by our Associate Director Shawn Best. A 60-minute--60-minute meeting with BMI project staff and senior campus administrators and 60 minutes of observing activities and interactions with students. After each visit, CUNY BMI central staff provides a Site Visit Assessment looking at key areas of programmatic elements. Each assessment is designed to uplift with a goal of providing technical support where needed. Based on the Site Visit Assessment, CUNY BMI Central identified best practices as it pertains to the following areas: Institutional Commitment, Diversity, Recruitment, Structured Mentorship, Academic Enhancements/Programming, and Advisory Committee within five categories: Pre-college, community college, comprehensive, and senior college, graduate and professional school programs and re-entry programs. Each project listed under each category they provided a one to two-page description within the expertise areas. Overall, this is an exciting opportunity to expose some of the best practices of CUNY BMI not only to CUNY itself internally, but outside higher education institutions

to spread the impact of the CUNY BMI model. Our Best Practices document is now completed, and can inspire other universities around the state and the country to star their own BMI project, and help attract/assist more underrepresented students, particularly men of color. All 31 BMI projects contain diversity recruitment, Structured Mentorship, and academic programming with the following goals:

To increase enrollment and matriculation of underrepresented students; to increase retention of underrepresented students; to improve the overall GPA of underrepresented students; and to increase the graduation rates of underrepresented students.

Diversity recruitment involves strategies that increase enrollment of underrepresented students participating in BMI projects. CUNY BMI projects recruit current and prospective on CUNY students using a wide range of methods such as letters, emails, students workshops, teacher recommendation, and basic word of mouth, all of which have resulted in the successful recruitment of students. For example, the Urban Male Leadership Program at the Borough of Manhattan Community College recruits current and prospective students, BMCC students,

through a wide variety of methods: Students workshops, teacher and staff recommendations, email blasts, flyer distribution, basic word of mouth have all resulted in a successful recruitment of UMLA participants. Recruitment efforts take place on an ongoing basis through the school, include--including summer sessions. One of UMLA's most successful recruitment strategies centers on its involvement with the college's Summer Immersion Program, which provides free developmental courses to incoming freshmen in need of remediation. UMLA's Project Coordinator serves on the team of Special Advisors to the summer immersion students. The Program Coordinator provides advisement and supports all immersion students, but primarily focuses on engaging men of color. To supplement this advisory role, the program coordinator runs a series of workshops geared towards men of color that teach practical principles of college success such as time management, networking tips and test taking strategies. Student participation in these workshops is ensured by requesting that each summer immersion professor send a minimum of two male students during each workshop. Our next component, Structured Mentorship, can

include peer advisor and/or faculty administrator element. Peer--peer mentoring is where high performing upper class men students are trained to be peer advisors to assist lower class students.

Freshmen/administrative mentoring peers, faculty members with a student who has similar interests.

Mentors undergo extensive formal orientation facilitated by the project administrators. Mentors are provided with the tools and strategies needed to motivate students to work toward achieving long-term academic and career successes. Over the past five years, participation in the CUNY BMI Structured Mentorship component has grown from 1,500 in 2010 to 2,500 in 2014. For example, the mission of Urban Male Initiative Peers Advocates Mentoring Program is to empower men of color at John Jay College of Criminal Justice while creating a meaningful college experience while improving academic performance, retention and graduation rates. These goals are achieved through the participation in mentoring activities, support services. Mentors encourage academic excellence, self-esteem and personal growth. Some of the expectations and quality--qualifications of the program are as follows: [pause] Advocates

are expected to meet with their assigned mentees a maximum of five students at least three times a month on the campus during academic school years. This position requires a nine-month commitment during the fall and spring semesters. Advocates will seek to gain a better understanding of their mentee strength and weaknesses while facilitating activities through their success. Some outcomes for mentees include including--excuse me--including self--self-knowledge, improving self-esteem in social and academic professional settings. Students select--students selected will be required to attend training at the beginning of the fall semester. Peer advocates must be able to build constructive and positive relationships, [coughs] have interpersonal and strong interpersonal and communication skills; possess the ability to effectively engage with peers, students and faculty members; possess the ability to demonstrate good judgment and ethical behavior; have the desire to assist students in transitioning to college and pursuits; and demonstrate organizational time--excuse me--organizational and time management skills; and be sensitive of individuals of different educational, economical, cultural and racial



backgrounds. The time commitment involved includes that students be committed a one--a full academic year, fall and--fall and spring. Be--be able to complete training b-weekly, submit a supplemental questionnaire and attend staff meetings once a month. Attend two academic or professional development programs on the campus with each mentee assigned, and then lastly attend a minimum of two diversity recruitment events throughout the year. The training involved in the workshop or the training and workshops include Perfecting Your--Perfecting Your Elevator Pitch; Network tips, Dos and Don'ts When Interacting With Your Mentees; Academic Opportunities on Campus; a Time Commitment and Motivating Others. Once again, eligible--the eligible students receive a stipend in the amount of \$1,000, which is split between the fall and the spring semester. And finally, our Academic Enhancement in a programming layer. It provides an additional layer of support and contributes to a sense of inclusion to the Institution for Underrepresented Students in the form of conferences, distinguished speaker series, workshops, talk sessions, learning communities, tutoring and lending libraries. Students who

perceive that they share a common interest in academic abilities with other students and faculty members are more likely to feel a sense of integration within the larger college community, and thus including their likelihood to increase persistence in graduation. For example, at BC Baum, a DMI project at Brooklyn College[coughs] that is designed to provide students who receive a General Equivalency Diploma, a GED, with the opportunity to attend Brooklyn College as first time freshmen, rests its success on the foundation of an academically rigorous full-time learning community informed by CUNY BMI's best practices and high impact student supports. About two weeks prior to the start of the semester of the cohort begins a mandatory one-week orientation to help students prepare for college. The orientation introduces students to a tutoring component, academic workshops, advising and counseling. The one-week orientation helps students establish personal connections to the people they will be interacting with at Brooklyn College such as fellow students, faculty, staff members, administrators, students and former BC Baum cohorts. Students are also connected to support services

available to them during their time at Brooklyn College. Throughout their orientation they begin to build a community and strong support within the cohort. This community building is essential for the population we serve. In the learning community, students are placed in their first semester consisting of 12 credits. Students are required to take English Composition, Pre-Calculus, Freshman Seminar, and General Ed Music Course, and an elective. Data from CUNY BMI research--data from CUNY's Office of Institutional Research shows that students and cohorts 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 as well as '14 show that students who participate on a regular basis on CUNY B--in CUNY BMI on average out-perform students in the--in those cohorts. When BMI Black and Latino males are compared to Black and Latino males who are not participating in CUNY BMI, Black and Latino males within BMI constantly have far better first year graduation--excuse me--retention rates and GPAs. Specifically, data from 2014 illustrates that Black males within CUNY BMI pursuing an associate degree, on average have a 2.32 GPA while Black males and Latino males pursuing an associate's degree who do not participate in BMI have a 2.18 GPA.

When we look at the retention rates of BMI, Black and Latino males at the associates degree level, it is 65.6% in comparison to 58.7% for Black and Latino males who do not participate in BMI. Similarly, 2014 Baccalaureate data demonstrates that BMI--Black and Latino males pursuing a Baccalaureate Degree on average had a 2.79 GPA in comparison to Black and Latino males pursuing their Baccalaureate Degree who did not participate in CUNY BMI who have a 2.69 GPA. When you look at the retention rates for BMI Black and Latino males at the Baccalaureate level, it is 87.4% in comparison to 80.1%, which is those of Black and Latino males who did not participate in BMI. Hence, indicating the positive income--excuse me--the positive impact with CUNY BMI. Lastly, before I concluded, I'd like to share an email that I received from a BMI student at Brooklyn College yesterday:

Dear all, so far I've been admitted to six doctoral programs: The University of Delaware, Howard, the University of California Riverside, the University of Virginia, Indiana University and Yale. Yes, I've been accepted to Yale's PhD Program in English. March is going to be a busy month for me. March 6th to the 8th, I'll be in Delaware. March 9th

I'll be in California. March 14th to 15th I'll be in Virginia. March 25th I'll be in Indiana, and in March--from Mar 29th to the 30th I'll be in Connecticut visiting Yale. I owe a lion's share of my success to the Black and Latino Male Initiative, BMI Project at Brooklyn College. This program has been the foundation for me from day one. There's no way I'd be able to be where I am today had it not been for the assistance of Mrs. Nicole Sinclair's leadership, Mr. Patterson's wisdom, and Ms. Fernandez's warm encouragement. Together, the three of you perform a tri-sector that cannot be reproduced. BMI is without a doubt the best thing that has ever happened to me in my academic career. Thank you.

[background comments]

MARLIN MYERS: Good afternoon, everybody.

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: Well, wait because we're now turning to Cheryl Williams, Associate Dean of our Special Programs.

ASSOCIATE DEAN WILLIAMS: Good afternoon. I'm Cheryl Williams. Good afternoon, Chairperson Barron and members of the City Council Education Committee. I am the University Associate Dean of

Special Programs, which is the office that oversees the Percy Ellis Sutton SEEK and College Discovery programs. SEEK and College Discovery have the distinction of being the first higher education opportunity programs in the nation. Both were created during the Civil Rights Movement for the express purpose of providing Black and Puerto Rican students access to the City University of New York . Given that history, it is appropriate that we asked to give an accounting of how well we've lived up to the mission and vision of our founders. It's for this reason that I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to address you today, and to share how SEEK and College Discovery are serving students of color, particularly black students. I have three goals today:

1. To give an updated student profile since I testified two years ago;

2. To briefly describe our new Foster Youth Initiative; and

3. To share what we have done to address the decline in enrollment of black students, particularly at the five selective colleges.

The Profile. Currently, there are 11 SEEK programs at CUNY senior colleges and six College Discovery programs at six of the seven community colleges. In fall, 2015, SEEK enrolled 8,324 students, which is slightly more than in 2014. College Discovery enrolled 2,401. Their family incomes are low, and cannot--and can be no more than 185% of the Federal Poverty Level. For a family of four, that means early less than \$45,000 a year. You can imagine the financial needs they face. In both SEEK and CD about 60% are female. The average age is 19. The vast majority are people of color. Hispanics comprise the largest ethnic group in both programs, 41% in SEEK and 58% in CD. Asians are the fastest growing group in SEEK and make up 29%. Their numbers are smaller in CD at 14--at 12%. Black enrollment is nearly equal in SEEK and CD. In CD it's 20--in CD it's 21%, in CD it's 23%. (sic) A profile wouldn't be complete without pointing out that admissions to SEEK and College Discovery is contingent on having academic as well as income need. While the requirement in CD is a high school average of less than 80, that--the mean high school average for CD freshmen is 71. In SEEK, academic need means

being academically inadmissible at the enrolling in college. They could not be there were it not for the SEEK program. The mean SAT score of SEEK students is 210 points lower than for regular admits. 47% of SEEK students and 59% of CD students started fall 2015 needing remediation. I won't go into performance data today, but simply put, our students are a good investment who demonstrate the value of providing economic social and financial support. Let me talk a little about the Foster Youth Program. Out of a growing concern for the plight of foster youth, and their low college completion rates, New York State legislators appropriated nearly half a million in this year's state budget to support additional services for foster youth enrolled in SEEK and College Discovery. The program is in its infancy, but we are off to a good start. We've hired a clinical social worker with a background in youth services to design and knead the program, which we've branded Youth Matter. Thus far, we've enrolled over 60 foster youth who are either currently and formerly in care. The overwhelming majority are Black and Latino. The students receive services and resources beyond those available in SEEK and College Discovery.



Among the benefits are support from a youth advocate who's a social work intern; social support through Affinity Group meetings, and excursions, meal vouchers, and access to emergency fund, and also a monthly Metro Card and tuition pay to take summer and intercession courses. Several of the students attended the CUNY luncheon held at the Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus Weekend. Again, we're just getting started. So I hope you'll invite me back to give a more robust report--report.

Now, to move to enrollment. Between 1990 and 2015, while Latino enrollment grew by five percentage points, total Black enrollment in SEEK fell by 17 percentage points. At the five most selected colleges, senior colleges, the drop was 20 percentage points. This trend was of grave concern in light of our mandate and mission, but we were making little headway until 2010. Each of--each of--each fall, the Office of Special Programs issues a Request for pro--for Proposals, an RFP, as a way of encouraging innovation and program enhancements. That year, Baruch SEEK under the leadership of Dr. Angela Anselmo and Kristy Perez secured funding to secured funding to created a program that would

increase the number and success of Black and Latino males. The Urban Male Leadership Academy was born. The program's success, design and student outcomes were beyond phenomenal. Piggybacking on the idea of changing the recruitment process in fall 2012, and again in 2014, we made the Special Programs RFP theme increasing the number of underrepresented populations, particularly black, a priority. The two most successful programs were at Baruch and Brooklyn College. You will hear about the UMLA this afternoon, so I won't steal their thunder, and go into their outcomes. But I would like to give you a snapshot of the Brooklyn Brothers Project. The Brooklyn Brothers Project is aimed at increasing the number and retention of Black and Latino males enrolled in the SEEK Program. The Brooklyn Brothers are SEEK upper classmen that are trained as mentors who help recruit and support incoming freshmen and transfer students. Each brother is responsible for ten mentees, and helps them negotiate the Brooklyn College environment, understand course requirements, and become about--and become informed about various college activities. While I don't have hard data on the program, the anecdotal information I've received

success--suggests that the presence of the Brooklyn Brothers has made Brooklyn College a more welcoming place for black males. I have to also add that there has been lead--new leadership at the SEEK program at Brooklyn, and they are not in--they were not in existence or they didn't continue the program. But we will be encouraging them to revisit that idea under the new leadership. What we have begun to see is a small increase in black enrollment. In fall, 2015, black enrollment went up by one percentage point as compared to 2010. The trend is even more promising at Brooklyn College where black freshmen enrollment increased by six percentage points, and more dramatically, at Baruch by 15. We are encourage, but definitely not satisfied. The Office of Special Programs will continue to widen the net so that our population more closely mirrors the demographics of the New York City public school system. What is needed is continuous intentional recruitment, support from campus senior administrations, collaboration with faculty and staff, and wide spread communication of our students' success. Thank you.

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: I'll turn it over now to BMI student Marlin Myers.

MARLIN MYERS: Good afternoon, everyone.

My name is Marlin Myers, and I'm--I'm in Computer Engineering Technology. I am a student at New York City College of Technology also called City Tech, and I am a member of the City Techs Black Male Initiative program. I'm also the President of the Black Male Initiative program. Dr. Reginald Blake is the Program Director of--for City Tech BMI Program. Our BMI program is the only STEM designed BMI program in CUNY. I was first introduced to the City Tech BMI Program through a City Tech academic intervention initiative that was led by Associate Provost Dr. Pamela Brown. It was at this meeting that I met BMI champions Dr. Blake and Ms. Sonya Johnson. When I first enrolled at City Tech as one of a group of students who did not need to take intermediate courses. However, I ended up doing poorly in my first two semesters. For those two semesters my GPAs were 1.808 and 1.854 respectively. By this time I was on a probation, which meant that I was on the verge of being dismissed from City Tech for poor academic performance, by then I had lost my

financial aid to begin the third semester. It was then I was--it was then as a rejected, a discarded student that the BMI student found me, saved me, and transformed me and gave me hope. Dr. Reginald Blake and Ms. Sonya Johnson became my mentors at the critical third semester juncture of my academic life. The third semester was a pivotal turning point for me. With the guidance, help, support and academic empowerment I received from the BMI, I started to see that I could do it. I could actually hit the reset button and begin a new path towards academic success. That semester with a new attitude--and a renewed attitude, my GPA rose to a 3.420 in my fourth semester. I made the Dean's List with a 3.750 GPA. I could not have done so without the support I received from my mentors, and from my BMI family. Not only my academic life has been positively transformed by the BMI, but socially life was as well. I became a member of 500 Men Making a Difference, a non-profit organization that Ms. Johnson introduced me--that introduced me to our young men in BMI. Since then, we have worked on a number of community events alongside Congressmen, Senators and Brooklyn Borough President the Honorable

Eric Adams, and other great men such as Charles Barron. Emotionally I am definitely in a better place in my life since I became a member of the DMI program. I have found the support and encouragement I need to grow into the scholar and the young man that I am supposed to be. When I was on probation, my mentor Ms. Johnson, not only assisted me in writing my appeal letter, but she also helped me to put my package together for submission to the Appeal Committee so that my financial aid would be reinstated. Additionally, she prepared the letter, which my mother needed to support--submit so that our family's public assistance program would be reinstated. These acts of kindness provided with me the emotional stability I sorely needed that could focus--that I--that I could focus on my academic pursuits. Without a doubt were it not--were it not for City Tech's BMI program, I would not now be aligned to graduate with my Bachelor's Degree in Computer Engineering and Technology. As far as extracurricular activities are concerned, since becoming a member of the BMI program, I have become involved in tutoring, mentoring, STEM scholar (sic) trips, STEM conferences, and a whole host of

community services. Thanks to the BMI, I am now a well rounded individual. From my perspective, we-- the leaders are City Tech BMI, and I am extremely grateful that a City Tech BMI program has built me. Presently, along with the BMI--being the BMI President of the--that--in addition to the club, I am a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success, a member of the National Society of Black Male--of Black Engineers. I am Member (sic) At-Large to the Governmental Association, a part of the College Association Board. I am also a Dean's List student. As--as I look forward to a bright academic future, I will further strive to enhance and support my BMI program so that students who come after me may afford the same opportunities for academic access and success that I received. I am ever so appreciate-- ever so appreciative of all that I have gained from this life transforming program, and I say a sincere and profound thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: [off mic]

Obviously we're very-very proud of that.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I'm sorry?

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: We're obviously very proud of Mr. Myers here, but that concludes our testimony.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, than you very much. I have several questions. I want to first acknowledge that we've been joined by several of the committee members. We have Council Member Vanessa Gibson, Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, and Council Member Jumaane Williams, and I'm sure that they'll have questions, which we will also offer to you. I have lots and lots of questions. First of all, I want to say that I think that BMI is doing a great job. Overall, you're reaching your goals, you're--we have testimony from people who've been touched by it, and we certainly know that even as you touch one, it makes an important difference. We want to commend you for doing that, and we do have some questions for you. I noticed that the--it says the retention rates dropped relatively--dropped relative to over our CUNY rates, but the GPAs of black, BMI students increased and exceeded the GPAs among all students. So, how is that you can account for that increase? How can we account for that increase?



1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

41

2 VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: [off mic]

3 Jermaine.

4 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Which is  
5 commendable.

6 JERMAINE WRIGHT: I would say primarily  
7 students of intervention of BMI, our programmatic  
8 model of diversity and recruitment, structured  
9 mentorship and academic programming allows us to have  
10 hands-on with our students on a consistent basis to  
11 ensure that we're not only a part of their lives  
12 academically, but as you can see here, we consider  
13 ourselves family. So we hold each other accountable.  
14 So I think because of that program model that we have  
15 in place, that stresses academic success, we've been  
16 able to increase the retention rates of our students  
17 as well as GPAs.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And the BMI, as we  
19 know, is open to all underrepresented students. Do  
20 you have the statistics and the breakdown as to  
21 whether the ethnic groups that are represented in the  
22 BMI population, Black, Latino, Asian and other  
23 groups?

24 JERMAINE WRIGHT: Yes, we do. We  
25 primarily on our website report CUNY BMI students

versus CUNY students generally going to be highlight-  
-Black and Latino male BMI students and Non-Black and  
Latino male students, butt we do have the demographic  
breakdown of White, Asian and others as well.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, you can--you  
don't have that with you today?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: No, we do not.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, you can get  
that to me. Uh-huh, right--and--and again the GPAs  
have gone up, which is commendable, but I think that  
the retention rate has been somewhat of a decrease  
for BMI. So in 2010 it was 91.9%. 2011 I have 91.5.  
2012 I have 93.9 which, of course, went up from what  
it had been previously, but then the last data that  
we have, which is 2013, says 86.5. So from 2010 to  
2013, that represents an overall decrease. So do you  
have any idea what happened? What accounts for those  
students not remaining in the program, and can we  
also determine how many years they were in before  
they dropped out? So, and--and I do see that it  
compares the overall rate to CUNY in terms of first  
year retention rates. Also, it's first year. So  
it's a first year. So at CUNY in 2010 it was 91.9%  
as compared to CUNY 86.3%. So it appears that BMI's

retention rate the first year is going down or has gone down, and CUNY's retention rate is going up incrementally from 86.3 to 87.3. So just one, but do you have any idea as to why that rate has been dropping at the end of the first year?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: The way the data is looked at, it's the first year retention rates for first time freshmen. So it looks like the entering first year freshman class every year. So with that being said, CUNY BMI isn't absolved from the overall enrollment of the institution itself. So I think what's happened during that standpoint is that BMI over the decades, over the five years in which we've been collecting data from 2010 to 2014 we've been very--a lot more accurate in what it is that we're doing and targeting the students that---that we've been working with. So, we've gotten better over the years in looking at the data. Needless to day, the institution is catching up with BMI, but nonetheless, BMI still outperforming the institution itself when you look at the retention rates. Because within those parameters is, if I'm not mistaken, BMI students still have a larger retention rates than the institution generally. So I think it's more so as

stated in our overall mission and vision that CUNY BMI hopes to be a model that could be emulated and replicated about the institution. So it's catching on that mentorship, tutoring and academic supports are important to a student's success, and a lot of those things have been adopted by the institution as well. Which has helped the institution to increase their retention rates as well, borrowing from some of the successes of other programs such ASAP as well as SEEK and CD. So needless to say, I think it's a catching up of the great successes of BMI in it's 2010 years to 2013 years, and a leveling out. But nonetheless, BMI still has slightly larger retention rates.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Well, I--I think that contradicts what the statistics are, but when you---

JERMAINE WRIGHT: [interposing] I don't have them in front of me.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --have time you can look at them, and you respond as--as you look at them. It's a little bit to look at now. You may not. Did you just pass him this chart.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: Today.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. So I'll--I'll give you some time to digest that. In terms of the-- the programs that you have-- First I want to commend Marlin. I did meet you at an event in Brooklyn. You're part of the 500 Men Organization, and you were very distinguished. My husband and I were there when you made your presentation, and I said, "I remember that young man." So, I want to commend you for how you pulled yourself from what was a very I think--I guess depressing situation, and wondering how can I do it and have now made a complete turnaround and created a great model. So I want to commend you for that. The other question that I have is, is there any support that's given for students in BMI. I heard you say that the Mentoring Program the mentors get \$1,000 stipend over the course of the two semesters. Is there any financial support that's available to the mentees in terms of non-academic costs, textbooks, transportation? Or, are there any programs that can participate in that can help defer some of those financial costs?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: For our mentees primarily we incentivize our mentors or our mentees. We do offer lending libraries. So at some of our BMI

projects we'll buy some of the more expensive core subject books, and we'll have them available for loan, and we also do lap--laptop loans as well. So, I'd like to get back your retention question, because I do--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Okay.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: --have the numbers in front of me.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: So as indicated, the BMI in 2010 had a 91.9 retention rate in comparison to over--overall CUNY institution of 86.3 in 2011, 91.5. In comparison to the institution's 86.5, BMI had a 93.9 in comparison to the institution's 86.85, and in 2013, it was 86.5 in comparison to the institution's 87.3, which was a slight decline. And then in 2014--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Oh, you have '14. I don't--

JERMAINE WRIGHT: [interposing] Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --have '14. Okay.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: It is 87.4 in comparison to 80.1, which was noted in our--in my

testimony. It will be updated on our website soon.

So, we had--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Okay.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: --somewhat of a slight  
off year, and that was actually our largest  
enrollment year of 2,871 students enrolled.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Which  
was 2014?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: Which was 2013.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: '13.

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: What I--what I  
would add I think it would be even more striking is  
that when you look specifically at the Black and  
Latino males, their retention rates are consistently  
way above what the--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Uh-  
huh.

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: --general BMI-

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Yes.

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: --and the  
general CUNY. I think--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Yes.

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: --I mean that--  
this is in the end what the program was designed for--  
--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Uh-  
huh.

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: --to focus on  
this population, and when you look at 2013, the Black  
and Latino males are at 93.7--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Uh-  
huh.

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: --and the  
general CUNY is at 87.3.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And do you have 2014  
for the--that second column?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: Yes. I do.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: You gave us 2014  
from the first column.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: I'll be able to provide  
that to you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: I didn't have it here  
with me--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] All  
right.



JERMAINE WRIGHT: --but I'll be able to provide that to you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, great. So how many students participate in BMI?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: As of--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] You state--

JERMAINE WRIGHT: Because of the way we, um, do our reporting for us, our numbers will come out in the March 4th Media Report when by--by that time doing its roll--enrollment. So we often don't ask our BMI projects to give us enrollment data up until the second semester to be sure that if there's any attrition, if there's any students who have not decided they don't want to take part in the program. So we wait until March. So we don't have that data yet for this year, but the numbers from last year was 2,005 students took part in BMI. And these are students who we engage with the intervention of BMI. However, there are almost about 8,000 students who have either attended at minimum one BMI program, but we do have a co--a core amount of students we track, and this is what the retention rates and GP are based on is that core of 2,005.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And you indicated that BMI exists at the 11 senior colleges, and I think five of the community colleges?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: They're included in all of the community colleges, and also of the senior colleges. This date--this semester or last--this year we actually brought on Guttman Community College, which is our new BMI project--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Uh-huh.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: --the United Men of Color Project.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: All right. So each school has its own name for BMI, right? So, at--okay, each of the colleges has it by their own name? So Brooklyn College this is an old short that I have of student participation that CUNY BMI funded projects. So at Brooklyn College is it ARAS (sp?) or is it something different now?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: No, it's now the Black and Latino Male Initiative. It's no longer ARAS. (sp?)

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. So if you could get me the updated names for each of those, I

would appreciate that. I have more questions, but I'm going to call on my colleague now. We'll first hear from Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: First of all, congratulations for the Chancellor's leadership of the--of the BMI and, you know, everyone that has contributed for this they break the news to them. And about like, you know, my being able to see or hear overall [squealing mic, and pounding sound] That's right? To hear the story about the student's testimony about how there's an incident that have changed a life. You know, this is our revolution. When we have a city where 46% of New Yorkers are living in poverty so there's a lot that we've got to do, and I think that it is nice to go to a breakfast and celebrate what brought apart Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Cesar Chavez did in the past. And yes, yes we hope we have to always remain--remembers those leaders, but it's challenging when they ask is how-- what is our role to continue to delay us. So when I look at this institution, it's not only the academic. You know, I was a graduate student for City College and probably many students thought--thought that when they saw me walking through the Council that I never

graduated. Because even though I got my BA, I continued being involved in the campus. Even when I got my masters degree, I continued being involved in the campus because at the end of the day, we know especially for those that come from disadvantaged communities. And we got the most important P-A-Z (sic) of our life. It's the one learning to be active in your community. Knowing that you have to be the voice of the voices. Knowing that you--we will never get it by ourselves. Because sometimes we hear those people say, you know like, you know, my cousin or whatever friend he didn't graduated because, you know, he didn't want to do it because my father, you know, didn't support me. I was raised by the single mother who didn't have the time. You know, we come up with a lot of excuses in reality, and sometimes there's people who believe that they did it by themselves. And I think that the most important also support that I--again, based on--on this--this dream that I have on being a son or your conference (sic) and--and talking so the leadership of this, it's not--it's about the support to abandon a model on a particular class. It's a consciousness. It's about learning about our role, learning that

there's a reason why more than 95% of the 14,000 people on Rikers Island, there's Black and Latino. Know that we had to get back at general (sic) state of our community in being the role model in a practical way. Knowing that we have to go back and volunteer our time to our high school. Knowing that no it's not possible to say that we will produce a number of engineers or architects that we need unless we have a tight line on how to take those kids from elementary to junior high, high school so that they will get there. So again, for me this is like--this initiative makes a big difference not only on creating the support that we need in the academic field, but also with the value. Learning, though, that, you know, if we want to change our city, we can have a city with 46% of people being poor, and as Malcolm has said, Education is the passport of the future. And that's where education that we're going to be taking our people to be part of the middle class. Because they will have a different discussion, and we can go back and forth and have a different opinion--opinion on my issue. But if we keep our community being poor, we will not be able to be at a place where Malcolm (sic) can say that we

should be. So, let me, you know, my most important question is what has been your experience taking your former students who benefit from these initiatives being active in their community or in our city paying back by services for the help that they get through this initiative?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: Well, I'll give you three examples. We have--and I think there--there's more, but the three that I can think of are actually three BMI students who have come through the BMI program who now work for BMI. And they could have worked anywhere else that they wanted to, but they perceive that the support, the help that they got from BMI, they wanted to give that back. So they began volunteering after they had graduated from the BMI program on their campus, and within the large school community and eventually led to employment for them. So we have James Bravo who was a member of the Urban Mill--was a part of the Urban Leadership Male Academy at--at Baruch College. James was one of the initial individuals that started at UMLA, and now he dedicates his time to that program by doing Saturday workshops with the young men undoing racism, the type of Black and Latino males in New York City, and they

do a plethora a other community service building projects. And then at Lehman we have the Urban Male Leadership Program, and we have David Savaras (sic) who in the same vain who has gained tremendously from the BMI project at Lehman College, and now he is their volunteering, and eventually now works BMI project there. So those are two examples of students who have gained from the BMI project, and who wanted to come back and volunteer for the BMI project in the larger community as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

[pause]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. We've been joined by Council Member Laurie Cumbo and Council Member Jumaane Williams, you have questions?

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for--for doing this hearing, and thank you for your testimony. I know on some it you came in with the--with the young brother's testimony. Congratulations. You did the opposite of me. I started high and went low. So, I think that's good, and--and congratulations. I was looking at the final--and you may have missed some of the testimony. The final report to the Chancellor, the task force

2 proposed nine major recommendations. Are all those  
3 nine major recommendations the goals or BMI? Are  
4 you--do you follow those as you move forward?

5 JERMAINE WRIGHT: Those nine  
6 recommendations are somewhat of the blueprint and the  
7 structure for the things that we do. However, our  
8 goals in particular are to increase GPA, increase  
9 retention, increase graduation rate of  
10 underrepresented particularly men of color.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So the first  
12 one is to provide strong university leadership when  
13 the challenges facing black youth and men? Is that--  
14 is that one of those?

15 JERMAINE WRIGHT: Is that?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Is that one of  
17 them?

18 VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: Yes.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Because I'm  
20 happy that we have--I remember that one of the things  
21 that people often lament I think CUNY has and the DOE  
22 has and sometimes they don't have the ability to fix  
23 all the things that happen before them. It sounds  
24 like they--you're rejecting that notion and still  
25



trying to fix some of the things that happened before. Is that--is that correct.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: And also the last one said establish benchmarks, and hold colleges accountable for implementing these recommendations. Can you explain what some of the benchmarks are and how you hold the colleges accountable?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: [coughs] I think with our data collection in 2010 to present has been one of the ways that have begun to hold benchmarks. We primarily look at first year retention rates. We look for associate's degree and baccalaureate degree. We look at GPAs as well as the associate level and the baccalaureate level, and we look at the semester credit accumulation for those two levels as well. Prior to 2010, we did not get into the business of doing the data collection, but we saw it as a necessity and a need to actually begin to focus on. So now we have a five-year track record of that data, and the way our data works it's always a year behind. So our 2014 is our most recent. Then at the 2016 and the 2016, we'll have our 2015 data after the summer

is over and our students have completed that semester.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: And the second one strengthen the School to College Pipeline. How--e you doing that, and how are you doing that?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: Well, what we began doing about two years ago going on our third year, is have CUNY BMI College Awareness Workshops with the Eagle Academy, with other DOE schools with District 79, the Department of Probation in an attempt to expose underrepresented students particularly black men to higher education. So through the series of workshops, which culminates with them actually filling out a CUNY application online with our assistance. So, we've been doing that program in the sense of ensuring that we get to the target population. We'll be expanding that with the help of the University Director for Admission, Karin Martin, and ensuring that we have a more robust approach of how we do that.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I think this piece is important. Do you have a, um, a--a formal partnership with DOE to connect with the--the young people DOE?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: The--the program the work that we're doing, it's not formal, but I'm sure at the university level I think there is--

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: Yeah, the question whether or not there are formal kind of agreement that someone will use from the Department of Education. Of course, CUNY has 11 early colleges, high schools that work very closely with the Department of Education, and--and certainly the--the CUNY starting program works to help students take care of any kind of remedial--remedial needs before starting at CUNY. I know they work very closely with the Department of Education.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I don't--I don't think Ed s trying to put together a pipeline to do what I think you're saying you're trying to do. So I'm trying to see if that kind of pipeline formally exists.

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: Yes, In fact, where we originally had a Vice President of Student Affairs was going to join us today to talk about some of the outstanding work that Medgar Evers is doing in building partnerships, relationships with high

2 schools to build that pipeline and--and not just at  
3 the high school ages, but at the middle school ages--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing]  
5 Yeah.

6 VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: --exposing  
7 early with each one of those young boys about the  
8 possibilities of college. And we certainly could get  
9 more information on that. As you know, there's been  
10 some great news on it recently, the good work of  
11 President Crew.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Do know if any  
13 other colleges are doing that? Is--is CUNY kind of  
14 trying to replicate that.

15 VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: Cheryl.

16 ASSOCIATE DEAN WILLIAMS: Just to add  
17 onto what VC Sanchez talked about, where we have  
18 really strong pipelines around our training (sic) as  
19 well. So we have Upward Bound and Talent Search  
20 programs where those students are on CUNY campuses,  
21 and they are in middle and high schools. And  
22 typically they enroll in much greater numbers than  
23 students who are not involved in those programs. So  
24 they serve as a strong pipeline into CUNY.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: If I remember correctly, and the reason I'm saying it, I think when I enrolled in college, I have a couple of degrees. You know, I did pretty good on the SATs, but I was a good test taker. Classroom is a different story, but--but I remember--I believe CUNY actually came to Brooklyn Tech and did some--some presentations and I--I applied it. If I didn't, I don't know what I--what I would have done necessarily. I don't know that that happens in other colleges. I think certain--certain high schools get treated differently. And so I'm trying to figure out if the treatment we received at Brooklyn Tech is being given to other high schools and other--other types of high schools are treated the same. I noticed when I was at the high school, we were being treated differently than some of my friends that were going to other schools.

VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: Sure. We have our Director of Admissions--University Admissions, Clara Miller, and they could share a little bit more some of the outreach and presentations that happen throughout the city. I--I don't--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing]  
3 Madam Chair, is that all right?

4 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [off mic] Yes, if  
5 she would [on mic] if you would like to come up and  
6 be sworn in, we would be glad to have your testimony.  
7 If someone would make some room or bring another  
8 chair. [background comments]

9 That would be fine or we can put flip  
10 our--okay. Yes, ma'am.

11 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Do you affirm to  
12 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the  
13 truth in your testimony before this committee, and to  
14 answer all questions honestly?

15 CLARA NORTON: I do.

16 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. Give us  
17 your name, please, and you can answer the questions.

18 CLARA NORTON: Clara Norton and I am the  
19 University Director of Admission at CUNY. So we do  
20 have obviously a central Office of Admission. We  
21 also admission offices at each of the individual  
22 campuses. So both at the central level and at the  
23 college level when we're engaged in recruitment and  
24 outreach. Strictly at the central office level we do  
25 about 1,400 recruitment visits of the variety that

you were kind of referencing. In a given academic year we are also partnered within New York City DOE for things like College Application Week wherein we spend time in hundreds of high schools assisting students with completing college applications to CUNY and elsewhere. We're also working very closely with the New York City Department of Education with regard to their College Access for All Initiatives, which include college visits for students both in middle school as well as in high school, and so we're coordinating the pilot version of that to begin this spring with eighth graders from DOE schools as the initial version. And with the next several years that will roll out to every eighth grade. But also at the central office level we have an admission counselor who is assigned to every high school in the five boroughs of New York City. So there is an admissions professional who has responsibility for every high school public, private parochial within the city New York. And N2 follows up with them to either participate in things like college fairs or presentations about, you know, as you referenced how--how to apply, what the university has to offer, and then provide support to the professionals at that

2 institution and that school as, you know, they assist  
3 students through the application process.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Well, thank  
5 you. I have a couple more questions, but Madam  
6 Chair, I would--I would like to see--

7 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] I have  
8 more questions also. So you can keep your seat.

9 CLARA NORTON: [off mic] For me?

10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes.

11 CLARA NORTON: Okay, sorry.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I would love to  
13 see--I want to do a couple questions, but I would  
14 love to see some of the data of some of the schools  
15 that are visited. Just so we can a look at--

16 CLARA NORTON: [interposing] Right.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: --where, and if  
18 there's--I would guess that there might be some  
19 spaces and places that are not being visited or given  
20 the same attention. I would love to be wrong, but  
21 just from my experience, I feel that that may be the  
22 case, but I'd love to see where those visits are and  
23 what exactly happened.

24 CLARA NORTON: Sure.



COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Did--one of the goals, and I guess this back to the BMI, to--through teacher education to prepare professionals for other indications. Can you tell me about some of the preparation that goes on, for the people involved with BMI?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: Well, previously BMI had the teachers as leaders on programming where we had individuals who were preparing for the teaching profession in DOE. As of 2011, we no longer have that programs as the funding from Deutsche Bank was no longer there. However, in the onset of YMI 2.0 and the inclusion of a thousand new teachers of color to DOE, CUNY Central has been working with BMI itself to assist in the recruitment of 600 students of color particularly men of color to enter the teaching profession. So we have been assisting Ashley Thompson and her office in that regard to ensure that we meet that 600 number by 2017 to ensure that we diversity DOE.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you and just two more questions. For some reason, even with all of my love for CUNY they have had failures in trying to diversity professors and people who were in

front of the classroom even though we seem to be the system that is educating the most diverse. Is there anything going on with trying to connect people who are coming from the program encouraging them to either teach or the ones that--who want to teach to try to encourage them to go back to CUNY to help with some of that diversification?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: As it pertains particularly to BMI [coughs] some of our students do return and a lot of them are pursuing PhDs, and are not to the point of completion, and some of them have stressed an interest in coming back. So for instance at the ARAS Program we had a young man by the name of Dan Peters who was about to complete his PhD and has been an adjunct professor at Brooklyn College for some time. So that's one of the instances CUNY BMI students who have gone on to the doctoral level who have goals or want--still want to come back into the CUNY system and teach as alternative track professors.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: One of the reasons that the--we've often heard that--that the--they want to--I think it's an excuse to--just to be frank, but one of the reasons has been that the

people who graduate Black and Latino students are on high demand. So they--they may go elsewhere. Have you heard that as a response to the young people who are coming out of BMI?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: Not by and large, but more--more so the reality. The real reality is that individuals pursuing a PhD are--are not by and large a huge pool. I'm pursuing a PhD as well as my Associate Director because we understand the necessity to have men of color achieve this terminal degree. But within my own cohort of my PhD program at Rutgers and his, we don't see us there often Black men. So within a small pool from which to pull from of individuals who are making it to that PhD level, and then coupled with where they want to go to teach, a lot of them--a lot of DMI students as well as myself want to come back to CUNY and teach as well to ensure that it is a representative environment for our students that they see professors who apply them in the classroom as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: And then my last question I think the Chair made reference to it. Just looking at the charts, we all talk about talk about the grade point average, but a lot of them seem

replicate the same kind of track. It looks like so--the--the folks who were in BMI, do better than the non-BMI, but not better than the entire BMI. The folks who are Black and Latino inside BMI are doing better than their non-BMI Black and Latinos. But they're not doing better than BMI itself, or CUNY itself for the most part. Is there a reason that we can't close that gap? [pause]

JERMAINE WRIGHT: So as it pertains to the GPA levels that I'm looking at because our program is open and available to all students, we target specifically or this chart targets specifically our Black and Latino males so--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing] Yeah. No, I know why the--I know the reason that--

JERMAINE WRIGHT: [interposing] Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: --there's a difference is that there are people who are not Black and Latino.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: But I'm wondering how close we are to closing that gap since we are--we're putting a lot of attention there. So I'm happy that it's higher than--than non-BMI folks,

but I'm not happy that it hasn't caught up to CUNY or BMI as a whole. And so is there something that we're doing or do we realize what that gap hasn't closed?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: Well, as I look at the--the numbers on it even our most recent numbers, which I'll with you thereafter. As you look at BMI as a whole as you look at the Baccalaureate level in particular, BMI on the Baccalaureate level has been out-performing CUNY students generally. So, I guess your question as to why the institution hasn't caught as--as the whole or because BMI has out-performed in GPAs from 2010 up to 2013 as it pertains to GPAs at--at the Baccalaureate level.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing]  
Well, I'm looking at GPA full-time student associates, and it says BMI as a whole 2.49. BMI Black and Latino male 2.36, which is lower than all BMI. Non-BMI Black and Latino male 2.25. Which--which is a good sign. It's lower than--not a good sign, but it's shows that the BMI is working and the CUNY is 2.47, which is higher than BMI Black and Latino male. I think I'm correct.

CLARA NORTON: Sorry, we're just trying to figure this out.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I've got a good  
3 CUNY education so I can figure--

4 JERMAINE WRIGHT: [interposing] Right.  
5 No, no, no, no, no not at all. Not at all. So as  
6 we're looking at the GPAs at the associate degree  
7 level, I think my point is still remains. So I'm  
8 looking at it in 2010, GPA of a full-time associate's  
9 degree--and this is coming directly from our website--  
10 -is 2.51 in comparison with CUNY, which is 2.39, and  
11 then when you look at 2011, it's 2.49 for a CUNY BMI  
12 and that the institution is 2.4.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: But what I'm  
14 saying is the Black and Latino males within there are  
15 not doing as well.

16 JERMAINE WRIGHT: Oh, you're comparing  
17 the--the BMI Black and Latino males in comparison--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing]  
19 Yes.

20 JERMAINE WRIGHT: --to all the BMI stuff.  
21 I'm sorry. So, as you look at that, I think what it  
22 really is telling that, and why we did the comparison  
23 of the nine is to show that there's still obstacles  
24 and impediments to our Black men of color. That even  
25 despite the skills that--or the resources that BMI

has given our Black men of color, they're fairing far better than those who are not receiving those--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing]

Yes, correct.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: --those--those

resources, but we can do better, and we hope to address that gap. However, when you look at our overall demographic population of the 2,500, 2,200 and plus are Black men of color. So it's a small population of others. So primarily our Black men of color are the ones leading the charge on the GPA, and I'm thinking conversely maybe others that may be bring--bringing it down a bit. So I'll provide you with that demographic information of the entire breakdown of the chart. Because the lion's share of this breakdown is coming from Black and Latino males.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Well, thank you very much. This is an exciting program. I know some people have problems when we target just Black and Latino programs. I don't know why because the problems were created by raced targeted things. So I think to fix it sometimes we have to use the--the mirror what the problems were to begin with. But I'm glad other people have access to it because it's a--

it's a good program. I just want to make sure we are remedying what has been presented to us at--at this moment in time. I got a wonderful education there. I learned--they helped me train to become a better trouble maker to get to when [laughter] I got here. So, my hope is that more people can access to it, and hopefully we can continue to make the program better. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, Council member. I--I just have some follow-up questions. First of all, we want to make sure that we know yes it's called the Black Male Initiative, but it's open to all. It's not restricted. So we need to make sure that that's clear. And you mentioned that--there are CUNY Liaison Counselors or Admission Counselors. Does--if I were to call the high schools in my district, and ask them do they have the name of the person, do they have that name? Has that person reached out, or is that person there waiting for the high schools to call them.

CLARA NORTON: That person has reached out. So they should know who that person is at the university level, and then there may also be a contact that they use more frequently at a particular



college campus depending on how many other students are matriculating at a given college. But yes, they should absolutely know who that is--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Okay

CLARA NORTON: --and the information is also available on the website who the coordinator is for each borough. So that if they have questions about that. We also provide a counselor help desk. So again we understand that professionals who are working with students often only get to see those students very briefly, right.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Yes, uh-huh.

CLARA NORTON: That they are--they have very large caseloads. So they can also contact us. We have a number and an email address specifically for counselors or teachers or professionals who are working with students so that they get a more immediate response.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, and you said that you're partnering with the DOE, and it's a pilot program and there will be 20 schools that you're looking at?

CLARA NORTON: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Who selected the 20 schools and what was the criteria?

CLARA NORTON: The DOE selected the 20 schools, and I am not aware--I--I don't know off the top of my head what the selection process was. I know there was one, but I don't recall--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] And who--who's--

CLARA NORTON: --what criteria was.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --the person at the DOE that would be able to give me that answer?

CLARA NORTON: I have to tell you this.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing]  
Besides the Chancellor.

CLARA NORTON: Yes, correct.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: You don't want to--

CLARA NORTON: [interposing] Yes. No.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --burden her with that.

CLARA NORTON: We can give you that contact information.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

CLARA NORTON: The person just changed so--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, that would be good to know, and the question regarding having more men of color coming into CUNY and standing in front of the classroom, I understand that you said there are graduates or those from CUNY--from the BMI program who go on to pursue that, but is there an outreach? Is there recruitment? Is there something that says listen, this is the program, and we want to recruit you to come back to CUNY? Not just someone who decides, but as--as someone has said, you know, they stumbled into the BMI, but is--is there a program that we can identify that says listen, we are specifically trying to get Black men. I know the city is reaching out to have Black men come into the DOE, and stand and, you know, and be teachers and stand in front of the classrooms as a targeted program recruiting those Black men. And I understand that CUNY is working with them. Is CUNY--does CUNY have a program for Black and Latino students, Asian students who come and say, listen, we really need you to come back into CUNY?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: That's more so for not a BMI person--

CLARA NORTON: [interposing] Right.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: --so I defer.

CLARA NORTON: So I mean what I would reference is--and again I mean this isn't totally my area either, but what I would reference is as an example at Hunter College alone and some of these are located at other campuses as well. There are 11 programs in the STEM discipline targeted at underrepresented students to try to encourage them to go on to PhD level research in the sciences. And-- and some of these things are federally funded programs like Mark--MBRS and Live (sic). Some of them are things that have been created strictly within CUNY like the LSAMP's (sic) Program, which is a collaboration between CUNY campuses and the Graduate Center. Some of them are broader New York City partnerships like Astrocom, which works with the Museum of Natural History and with Columbia University to have students with interests in physics and astrophysics. But all of them are partnering students where faculty mentors are getting students' hands on research experience as undergraduates. Many, if not all, offer financial incentives, internships, you know, various ways that the--that the financial part plays into it. But all with the

goal of increasing the number of underrepresented students who are earning doctoral degrees particularly in--in the STEM field. So--and there are some of those kinds of things I believe in some of our other disciplines as well, but obviously STEM is one that we would really like to see an improvement. So--so that's one example of the kind of work that's going on, and giving students an opportunity to really work closely with faculties so they could envision themselves in these roles.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So did you describe it as LSAMP, is that what you said?

CLARA NORTON: Yes, that's correct.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Can you spell that that?

CLARA NORTON: It's--it's LSAMP. It stands for--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Okay.

CLARA NORTON: --Louis Stokes Alliance from our--for Minority Participation. Yes.

MALE SPEAKER: [off mic] Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And how about how many--

CLARA NORTON: [interposing] And look, they all tished about it already. [laughter]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: About how many participants has it--is it open to all of the CUNY campuses, senior campuses or--

CLARA NORTON: [interposing] That's in all CUNY campuses, and I don't know the number of participants, but perhaps someone does. Otherwise we can get that information for you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, great thank you. I do have a question, though, sort of about the data from BMI. Do you track the students by cohorts or is just collectively represented? So as students move on, do you track them by cohorts?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: Currently we do not track them by cohorts. We get the first year, the first time, the first year freshmen data--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Uh-huh.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: --for every one of our students that come in year by year.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Would that be something CUNY would have the capacity to do so that we could see as cohorts move through. You had

mentioned that 2000 I think you said 12 was the largest enrollment that you had. Is there a way that it could possibly be done. So that we could see how cohorts are progressing?

JERMAINE WRIGHT: I'm we could follow up with our of Office--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Okay.

JERMAINE WRIGHT: --Institutional Research and ask that.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: That might be good. Okay. All right. I think that gets them. Oh, I just wanted to say yes Medgar Evers College the pipeline program that they have is not only restricted to high schools. There are several schools that I'm very pleased to say in my district that are party of the Medgar Evers pipeline, and they do include junior high schools in that regard, and that may be most of the questions that I have. Oh, yes, one other questions. The mentors that are in your program, do you give them special training to reduce any kind of incidents of sexual harassment between males and females? Do they get some special training in that regard to increase their sensitivity and awareness of that regard--

2 JERMAINE WRIGHT: [interposing] Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --as a part of it.

4 VICE CHANCELLOR SANCHEZ: With today's  
5 record. Do you want to answer?

6 JERMAINE WRIGHT: He'd be glad to.

7 MARLIN MYERS: Well, an issue I think  
8 last year all of a sudden the leaders within the  
9 college have to do a Title 9 workshop. So basically  
10 for even in my also--all clubs and other programs in  
11 the school. You have to also go to I think that's a  
12 two-hour training of Title 9, the one that's about  
13 sexual harassment. For example, even knowing how to  
14 approach it, and how to avoid it.

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Great. I think that  
16 concludes all of my questions. I do want to thank  
17 you so much for coming, and taking quite a bit of  
18 time to present your testimony. It's very helpful,  
19 and we look forward to working with you going  
20 forward, and any questions that we may have asked, if  
21 you can get them back to us, we would appreciate  
22 those answers. Thank you. [background comments  
23 pause] I'm going to call the next panel, which is  
24 going to be the USS representatives. We have Julio  
25 Thomas, USS; Javon Henry, the BMI Ron Brown Program;



Kevin La Monte Jones from the BMI Program at Brooklyn College; and Chica Onunuka (sp?) coming forward also. And I'm going to ask that each of you limit your testimony to three minutes. I'm going to ask them to please set the clock. [background comments]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay.

[background comments and noise]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet please and sit quietly.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: As CUNY is leaving, I do have questions. I know they always leave a representative, and I do want to ask if you could at some later date give us the data on the other academic program that exists. I forgot to ask that, but I know Hunter has the program, a department. So all of those questions that were referenced, I'd appreciate that. I did forget to ask. Thank you.

[background comments, pause] Thank you, and if you would raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee, and to answer all questions honestly?

NICHOLE ST. CLAIRE: I do.

KEVIN LAMONTE JONES: I do.

2 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. You may  
3 begin. Give us your name.

4 KEVIN LAMONTE JONES: Good afternoon,  
5 Madam Chair Barron and Committee members. My name is  
6 Kevin LaMaonte Jones. I am a television and radio  
7 major and pre-law major at Brooklyn. I'm part of the  
8 Black and Latino Male Initiative, and my Director, of  
9 course, is the illustrious Ms. Nicole St. Claire. My  
10 testimony here how did I get connected with the Black  
11 and Latino Male Initiative. It was point in my  
12 return to school after 24 years. This is my first  
13 week at Brooklyn, and it was during the welcome fair  
14 on the yard I was introduced to some of the members  
15 of the BLMI. Now this group of well dressed young  
16 men engaging everyone passing by it especially  
17 impressed me with their confidence as I was unsure  
18 and a little apprehensive re-engaging at my age  
19 having returned to school since 1990. This  
20 particular group stood out to me because they were  
21 the only group out of the 75 plus clubs participating  
22 that looked like me. Now, as I approached this table  
23 greeted with genuine excitement, I know instantly  
24 that there was a place of refuge in this group, and I  
25 wanted to be among these young men visibly destined

for greatness. My mentor Mr. Lawrence Patterson was--  
is the Project Coordinator, and he was among that  
group of young men when I first was introduced. I am  
ever so grateful for his unwavering support and  
encouragement. Mr. Patterson's counselors just one  
of the most treasured gifts I received among the many  
as an ambassador of the Black and Latino Male  
Initiative. It is through Mr. Patterson's  
coordination that we have the mouth of the Phoenix in  
which we have many of the faculty members that come  
in, and assist. So while Mr. Patterson is my mentor,  
I was introduced to Dr. Horoon Kharem, who has also  
been a major impact on my life and my career  
academically and overall. It is without question  
that Mr. Patterson is more than project coordinator,  
and Dr. Kharem is more than just a professor to not  
only me but the over 180 members that's a part of the  
Black and Latino Male Initiative, but he his a  
passive mentor--mentor in every sense of the word,  
and I certainly know him to be my mentor in deed. My  
enrollment in school prior to Brooklyn was 1990. I  
ended my GPA with a 1.66 semester. My overall GPA  
was 2.2. My fears in conjunction with my last  
performance had held me captive for many years, and

held up my performance in returning to school. It was in the fall of 2014 when I returned, and I was told that iron sharpens iron, and so one may does another. And I found this proverb to be ever so true in the Black and Latino Male Initiative at Brooklyn College because my very first semester I--I received I earned. Let me say I earned a 4.0 GPA, and I've repeated that same performance for the last five semesters, and I currently enjoy a cumulative 4.0 GPA. I am the Treasurer and the Business Manager for the Brooklyn College Radio station where I produce a show each and every week cutting it up with KS, a social--surround social issues, race, justice and equality, of which I am the producer. I am also ambassador with the Black and Latino Male Initiative, but not only have the Black and Latino Male Initiative been such a pillar and a backbone to my very existence, it is a holistic approach that beyond my academics because we are a body of brown skin scholars that we empower each other. And as Director Wright was say previously that young men--My Shane McGregor, who has been instrumental in my life, and as he embarks upon his doctorate program, Yale being one of--he's one of the very individuals that

assisted me in my continued success at Brooklyn College. I also would--just want to say that I've created a space in my home. I've been in power to reach back and give through the mentorship, through that body of cohorts as Director Wright was talking about. That in my home each and every Friday, Saturday and Sunday we meet, and that's all we do is study [bell] because we challenge each and every last one of them to come and meet that same expectation. I just want to close with this to say that currently, I--I went to the Ron Brown Prep Program in which I stood out as a leaders. I received the highest civil procedures score, the highest comprehensive score, the best legal writing proof, and I've been empowered to go on to do even more. I'm grateful. I am currently working with the Honorable L. Priscilla Hall with the Second Department Appellate Court. I worked with the Kings County District Attorney's Office, and I'm also a member of the 77th Precinct Council. And it's because of Black and Latino Male Initiative that has fortified me, and given me truly the wind beneath my wings. I want to say that Brooklyn College Black and Latino Male Initiative has

given me the opportunity to continue my journey in--  
Frederick Douglas said--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: To end and--and one  
enter. [laughter]

KEVIN LAMONTE JONES: Frederick Douglas  
that it is easier to build strong children than to  
repair broken men. I'm so grateful that the Brooklyn  
College Black and Latino Men didn't just build strong  
children, but they attempt to rebuild and repair  
broken men. For that I am truly, truly grateful, and  
my journey shall continue. Thank you.

JAVON HENRY: I'm next? [coughs] Good  
afternoon. My name is Javon Henry. I'm from John Jay  
College of Criminal Justice. I have a major--I major  
in Political Science as well as a minor in Latin  
American Studies. I am a part of the Ronald H. Brown  
Law School Program as well as the Urban Male  
Initiative. I was connected to the BMI programs I  
belong to because I was sought out by the Ron Brown  
Program and BMI Directors, Professor Jodie Roure and  
Maria Vidal who each advertised the programs  
respectively. You know, Professor Roure emailed me--  
emailed me an application directly to my house. For  
the Ronald H. Brown Program, you know, we had to

apply and that was one of the most intense interviews ever where I saw the--the last person to interview come out crying. So the program was definitely well prepared. I am fortunate enough to have these several being my mentors, Professor Jodie Roure, Maria Vidal, Professor Jose Morin and Jermaine Wright, my most immediate BMI mentors and the list goes on forever. I'm not going to take up your time saying that. The Ron Brown program also provides me with a structured mentoring program where I'm paired with a practicing attorney. So, the impact BMI has had on me, the BMI program is directly related to my academic success, grade point average increase and my personal development. This has to be New York City Council's best spent money. The Ronald H. Brown [bell] Law School Prep Program is a two-year intense academic law school prep program. During the first summer of the Ronald H. Brown program, I partook in three weeks of simulated law school classes by the law school faculty of St. John's Law School. The curriculum was extended, it was extremely challenging and difficult. It was like learning a different language. Because of the Ron Brown program, I have grown exponentially both academically and

professionally. The program has assisted me increasing my GPA from a 3.0 to a 4.0 as I graduate my last semester here. The real support provided me with the Thunder (sic) program that raised my self-esteem and confidence overall, and made me more of a national competitive study. The Ron Brown program has provided me with a collector of legal experience--legal experiences including a clerkship with the Honorable Judge Sean L. Simpson at the Brooklyn Criminal Court, and at the New York State Attorney General's Office Consumer Protection Division at Harlem. With this thing what can be attained with a law degree at such a professional level of people who are of color made me realize that I can be the next New York Attorney General, or I can be the next Supreme Court Justice if I so desire. But, you know, to explain the social impacts and the impacts this program has had on me, you know, during the Recession of 2008, you know, my house is foreclosed. You know, that ushered in like, you know, a dark time for my family and how we got by it. And I remember during high school at that time I wasn't focused on my academics. I was more focused on just getting by on a daily basis. So when I applied to colleges, I was



rejected by most of the schools I applied to except for John Jay. So I rejected the idea that I can be become an attorney, but, you know, I rejected that idea. So as a result, I started John Jay with the intent of becoming a police officer. The Ronald H. Brown program and the Urban Initiative Program allowed me to pursue my original dream of becoming an attorney. It has made it a reality. You know, this week I had a law school call me offering me a leadership scholarship, which covers my tuition by 75%. I had to look at the Dean of Admissions and say, "You sure you meant that for Javon Henry? You got that correct?" You know, and the law schools accept us. They keep coming. Because of my BMI mentors I have been able to attend programs at the United Nations as well as go to Albany and meet representatives, study abroad in Argentina and learn to speak Spanish, and the list just goes on forever. Again, I won't take up your time with that. The Ron Brown Law School Prep program is working hard to change that diversifying legal profession with students who are diverse like me as a Black male. I add to the diverse perspective both to the legal profession and the legal discourse of the United

States of America. I would like to conclude by saying thank you for supporting the Ron Brown Law School Prep program and the UMI program by funding BMI. I cannot say it would be on the same path if I had never met my BMI mentors and practiced in these programs. I would like to publicly thank Mr. Jermaine Wright for supporting me in the program I have participated in. To New York City Council, I ask that you please continue support of these programs so that we can change the face of the legal profession one face at a time.

JALIL THOMAS: Greetings. Greetings, Honorable Inez Barron, the Committee on Higher Education [bell]. I'll wait until this ends.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Go ahead. Go ahead.

JALIL THOMAS: My name is Jalil Thomas. I am student of Bronx Community College. I'm sorry. I'm a student at Bronx Community College. I'm currently studying business administration with the concentration in management. I'm grateful to be speaking about BMI and its impact, and how the initiative created another success story. I came from New York--I came to New York from Chicago a couple years ago being 17. I came from Chicago a

couple years ago. Being that I was living there 17 years of my life coming to New York with no familiarity and with New York's culture was extremely nerve wracking. When I was in Chicago, I was not the best student. While in high school I attended three different high schools and summer schools in three consecutive years. I was simply--I simply wasn't disciplined enough, and my environment took a huge effect on my lifestyle and decisions I made. Fortunately, I graduated on time and three days after my graduation, I moved to the Bronx. I knew no one. My brother and my mother was my only support system at the time. The proximity of my home and Bronx Community College was perfect, which prompted my decision to start there. I knew nothing about CUNY, but I knew a beautiful campus was staring me down from the hill, and that there was a place where I would start my college career. After attending my first college orientation I was excited about the road ahead, and I immediately reached out to my student life faculty for leadership opportunities. When I was introduced to the recent BMI--to the recent Director of the BMI program at my school, Janelle Knox, a bond was made, and coincidentally, he

was also from Chicago. After a long talk, we--he extended an invitation to the BMI kickoff meeting at my school, and during that kickoff meeting, I met some amazing gentlemen. Many of them had similar stories like mine. They were all welcoming and goal oriented. My specific BMI subject is called the Men of Color Initiative, and it is so unique as it is one of four CUNY campuses has one under a program in a club structure. The club gave me the opportunity of running as an--for an executive position in the spring--in the fall of 20--in the spring of 2015, and I was elected Vice President of that club. During my term I was exposed to amazing opportunities on my campus that I took advantage of, and every single one I was awarded--I was awarded the Community Day Scholar, Emerging Leader Award and also the Men of Color was awarded the best new club on campus. The Men of Color Initiative abided--it provides that all members had to live by on a daily basis. The environment that was created around me led to better decisions that helped me make--helped--helped make other people around me go as well. With that being said, after tenure of being Vice President of the Men of Color Initiative, I am proud to say that based off

the connections that I made and the reputation that I've built, I stand before you today as the elected Student Body President of Bronx Junior College. Not only did I beat the statistics of the six-year graduation rate of African-Americans in community colleges, I'm the youngest member of my board and out of the 15 members, 6 of them ran with me, and all six [bell] were elected. The impact of this program is so powerful, and I'm requesting from this Council to advocate for more funding for the program so we could hear--so we can hear more success stories. Also, I would like to commend Shawn Best and Jermaine Wright for helping us so much with the cultivation over the past several years since our BMI has been on our campus since 2007. I thank you.

CHICO NINJIQUA: Greetings, Councilwoman Barron, and Committee on Higher Education. My name is Chico Ninjiqua (sp?), and I serve as the Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs to CUNY University Student Senate, and as the President of the Undergraduate Student Government at Hunter College. I am the resident--I'm am a resident of City Council District 27 in Jamaica, Queens. I would like to start off by thanking you all for your commitment to

higher education. In the midst of a conversation regarding the future to CUNY due to major proposed cuts, I am grateful to be here today to speak about the BMI program, which has impacted me. But, also because this programs aligns itself so well with the University Student Senate's mission of preserving the accessibility of higher education within the City University of New York. The troubled status of African-American males in higher education has attracted tremendous attention nationally. Researchers have made the complexities of this problem increasingly clear while educators, administrators and policymakers alike have grappled with the question of what must be done to improve African-American males' success. At CUNY, we begin to find answers to these problems with BMI. According to the fall 2014 Hunter College Institutional Research Undergraduate Student Profile, on 12% of the students at Hunter are African-American. So three years ago. When I read that at Hunter, I was in need of a community of African-American scholars at Hunter College to encourage me through my journey. Fortunately for me, Hunter--CUNY BMI was my first home, and I am grateful to have

joined. BMI helped me secure an internship the summer of my freshman year at Downstate Medical Center. When I decided to explore leadership opportunities, it was my BMI family that supported me. In less than three years at Hunter I have had the opportunity to serve as the Vice President and as the President of the Student Body in large part due to the great BMI team that believed in me. In my time in this capacity, I have helped to promote diversity and student involvement on campus. My amazing Hunter experience was shaped by the dedicated and loving BMI staff, Shawn Best, BMI University Associate Director and former Hunter BMI Project Coordinator, Dean Jon Rowe (sp?) and Dr. Marcella Canterella. Shawn never fails to remind me that I was once so shy, and now I can never stop talking. [laughs] I am humble to have found a home at BMI. I can attest that BMI is fulfilling its mission and investing in the lives of African-American men and women and students of all races and ethnicities at CUNY. My colleagues and are proof that the program is also producing student leaders. I cannot thank you all enough for making the commitment nine years ago to invest in such an initiative that provides

authentic mentorship, academic and social support to African-American students actively engaged in their journey to graduation and future success. Your investment is proof that this committee understands that there is systemic barriers that deter racial achievement and lead to opportunity gaps, and that post-secondary institutions along cannot close them. [bell] But through your commitment and support we can succeed. So thank you and thank you for your steadfast support and investments to the students of the City University of New York.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. I want to thank the panel for coming, and certainly each of you by your presence and your testimony share with us your accomplishments, pays tribute to what BMI has been able to do, and you're certainly working with some great judges. I know both the judges that you reference, Judge Hall and Judge Simpson. They are remarkable women. So you have great mentors in your lives and moving in that area. I want to encourage you, and say thank you again for coming. Thank you.

CHICO NINJIQUA: Thank you.

MALE SPEAKER: Thank you.



CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I'm going to call our next panel. We have John Rose from Hunter College BMI; Emily Valez from Baruch College, BMI; Kristy Perez from Baruch College CUNY, and Angela Anselmo from the SEEK Program at Baruch College. [background comments, pause] If you would raise your right hand, please. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee, and to answer committee questions honestly?

PANEL MEMBER: [off mic] I do.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. You may begin. Give us your name, please?

JOHN ROSE: Okay, good afternoon, City Councilman Barron, and my name is John Rose, and I'm Dean for Diversity at Hunter College. I also serve as the Project Director for the Hunter College Black Male Initiative known as Brothers for Excellence. I might add that I would normally have deferred to the ladies on the panel, but they asked me go first. So I'm going to go first. I was taking my lead. I'm pleased to be here this afternoon. We thank the City Council for its continued support of the BMI Program, and to briefly describe our campus program. The goal

of the Brothers for Excellence program is to foster personal and academic success for participating students in a mutually supportive community. It's been modeled after Dr. Shaun Harper's Study of successful Black men in predominately white institutions, and is based on five success factors: Academic achievement at 3.0 GPA or higher; leadership and a club activity or initiative; service to the community; relationships with faculty and administrators who can serve as mentors; and being part of a community that is feeling welcomed, centered and respected. We have structured our program so as to provide opportunities for students to achieve each of these five success factors. We've developed within our structured mentorship program a so-called passport program that's designed to walk students through their academic journey and to identify activities and actions appropriate in each of their undergraduate years that will contribute to their personal and academic success. My colleagues and I have structured our program over each semester to provide a combination of informational supports about resources, opportunities, scholarships, graduate and professional programs, our financial

support, and what we call emotional supports, proactive, and to some students intrusive advising or merging, our peer support and mentoring, instrumental supports or workshops and writing personal essays; Developing the elevator talk and the networking skills, and appraisal supports. That is assessments of progress for individual goals, and giving them feedback loops on how they're doing. Our informational supports includes weekly programming that is relevant to the needs, goals and aspirations of our students. This semester drawing on the energy that has been expressed in the Black Lives Matter Movement, our programming is about words matter, and concerns a variety of self-help topics from personal branding and reputations to financial literacy, to health and wellbeing know-how. Informational support also includes taking our students to opportunities. Literally taking them to opportunities, and thanks to President Raab and her generous support of our program, we have taken students [bell] on trips to graduate schools in Philadelphia and New Haven. I see my time is up. Let me just mention, and concluding that we have had a success in raising GPA rates for all of our students. When we look back

historically, rates have risen from fall to spring semester and eight years ago the GPA rate in the fall was 75% of our students was below 3.0. This past fall the GPA rate for 65% of our students was above 3.0. And I might add that we have something close to 25% of our students with 3.5 or higher GPA. So, we think that that has a tremendous implications for not only retention. But for graduation and for success in post-graduate and circumstances including PhD programs of which we have ten students who have entered PhD work--PhD programs that the most competitive institutions. So thank you very much for your continued support of our program.

KRISTY PEREZ: Good afternoon. My name is Kristy Clementina Perez. I'm the Interim Director Percy Sutton SEEK Program at the Baruch College, and the Director of the Urban Male Leadership Academy Scholars Program. The UMLA program was created in 2009 by Dr. Angela Anselmo, the SEEK Director of Baruch to address the low enrollment of Black and Latino males with SEEK and the college. Since 2009, Dr. Angela Anselmo has arranged several RFPs on expanding admissions criteria to increase the number of Black and Latino males within the SEEK program and

Baruch College. Each of the RFPs were approved by the CUNY Central Office of Special Programming and Enrollment in Management Division at Baruch College. Additionally, for the past several years the CUNY Black Male Initiative has funded the Urban Male Leadership Academy program. The broader admissions criteria included less emphasis on GPA and SAT, and interview process, letters of recommendation and personal statement. In this way, males that would have--that have potential would have the--would have otherwise not been accepted into SEEK, and Baruch would still have the opportunity to attend Baruch SEEK Program. This has resulted in a slow, but steady increase in the percentage of traditionally underrepresented students in the SEEK program. From 31.8% of the total SEEK enrollment in 2012 to 90% in 2015. The increase of underrepresented students in our incoming 2015 class was also made possible with the institutional support from Presidents Mitchell Wallace during--who charged the Enrollment and SEEK with increasing the underrepresented student population within SEEK. Just to give some numbers, in 2010, we had 155 students within our SEEK program and of that, only 4.5% were Black and 31% were

Latino. Jumping down to 2015, we had 134 incoming SEEK students and 20% of those students were Black and 70% of them were Latino. Our vision for the UMLA was not only to increase the enrollment of and graduations of Black and Latino males, but to also develop the conscious male leaders with the anti-racist and anti-question framework. Provide life affirming and transformative men of color interim environment, and create concrete and useful development opportunities and goals for UMLA students with a UMLA program. Just to share a little bit about what we offer, they are SEEK students as well, but they also have to attend the summer program with an additional day of society (sic) workshops that are run by clinical male social workers, Black and Latino male social workers. They also during the academic school year have to attend one Saturday workshop a month. And they have workshops such as: What Does It Mean to be a Responsible Man of Color; Explain Oppressive Language and Understanding Institutionalized Racism. They're required to take two leadership courses--two leadership--two classes, one leadership and one Black and Latino studies course, and they are also [bell] giving opportunities

to develop their leadership skills in the advisory board and just to locate workshops and also attend ambassadors for Baruch seeking UMLA. Just to give you a little bit of where we're at right now, in 2010, we had 20 young men. We started with 20 young men. Ninety-five percent of those young men completed their first year. We have--we had our first graduating class back in 2010--14. So of that, 14 have graduated. So that's 70% of the--of the young men have graduated from that cohort, the 2010 and the 2011 cohort. We had 16 young men in that program and 13 have graduated thus far before the six-year range for both cohorts, and that was 81% this year. Overall, we had about 90 young men that have been enrolled in our program, and we currently have--so it's a total of 27 graduates, and still about 50 some that are still with us. It was mentioned before that we had a young man that works within our program. Our model has always been work ourselves out of a job. So now what I used to do as the Director--I graduated at James Farrell (sic) of the New Korean Outreach. And I have a couple of things that maybe you can read because I don't want to take any more time. But we also have our video

link and also our 50th SEEK celebration links that also highlights one of our most--great graduates Justin Carl. (sic) Thank you.

ANGELA ANSELMO: Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to be here with you again. I am the Director of SEEK Program at Baruch College, the Director of the Urban Male Leadership Academy, and the--we created the Urban Male Leadership Academy Scholars program. I'm currently on trial leave, and will officially retire in 2016 after 43 years of service at Baruch. This is a follow up to the testimony I presented on December 10, 2014, and it-- at that time, I said please ask me back so I can report, and I gave you a lot of bad news at that time. And, what's happening here is that the University Dean Chair Williams talked about the incredible numbers, the dramatic change in our enrollment, and so has Ms. Kristy Perez. And basically what we're seeing is that we started in 2010 with only 4.5% of an African-American presence in our programs. The Percy E. Sutton SEEK program and now in 2015, our freshmen we have over 20%. So, that is like a miracle. So this testimony really is meant as an additional piece of information to better



understand how this change came about. Since many people have asked well how is that possible? And it's my hope that these particulars can assist in replicating our results at other CUNY campuses. In fact, this transformation was the result of many forces over a long period of time, approximately 10 years. Sometimes concurrent, but all consistent with regard to the urgency of increasing the enrollment retention and graduation of underrepresented groups especially Black males in CUNY. It truly takes the village, and we start with that first report of the Chancellor's task force that really laid bare what was happening nationally and locally. The report shook a lot of us up, and next, with the support of the New York City Council was essentially to raise first. It provided the grants that created the CUNY BMI resulting in the creation of so many of the programs that were mentioned here today. And second, I think the Council keeping the issue of Black male achievement as a priority, and consistently asking for accountability. The third is the University BMI under the leadership of first Elia Doors (sic) and late--later Jermaine Wright and his team. They have nurtured and fostered effective-- [bell] Okay, um--

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] Please continue this is almost a follow-up to all of the things--

ANGELA ANSELMO: [interposing] Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --that I asked a year and a half ago. Please.

DR. ANGELA ANSELMO: Yes, and it's really they are fostering effective and viable programs across CUNY. Their efforts have resulted in transfer of bridge programs--program with the MCC, the UMLA and the BMI Collaborative at Baruch, all projects focused on the increase in enrollment, retention and graduation of the underrepresented students especially Black males. Likewise, the support from the University Office of Special Programs under the leadership of Dean Cheryl Williams, has been with us from the beginning. The dramatic shift couldn't have happened without their support. First, in giving us seed money in the form of a planning grant for the creation of UMLA, and then second subsequent grants aimed at the development of alternate admission standards, strategies to better align SEEK enrollments with the original mission of SEEK. The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond inspired

and made us think about accountability in a new way. They're Undoing Racism Workshop, which was taken by all members of the SEEK program--I--I take all my staff--changed our perspective with regard to the institutional organization of racism into our role of the safe keeper. And then many of the members of Baruch faculty good people through the venue of the Faculty Senate cam together and voiced their concerns about the lack of student diversity and the reliance of only SAT as the litmus test for admissions into Baruch. In fact, the one whole session of the Faculty Senate was dedicated to talk about this issue. One such faculty member, Arthur Linn (sic) organized an open forum on CUNY admission policy and its impact on Black and Latino--Latino enrollment. It was open to the public, an New York City high school teachers, guidance counselors had the opportunity to voice their concerns. Even a member of the Community Service Society that published one of the most influential reports on enrollment at CUNY attended. What became clear was that many felt that CUNY admissions process was flawed, and was not serving young people in any under served community. But perhaps the greatest change--game changer in the

struggle to--to diversify the SEEK enrollment was the support of the President of Baruch College, Dr. Mitchell Wallerstein. After meeting with SEEK and studying the matter, he charged the Vice President for Enrollment Management to work collaboratively with SEEK to ensure that at least 50% of the 2015 SEEK freshman class would come from underrepresented groups. He said it publicly and it was noted as part of the minutes of the Faculty Senate. This directive changed the nature of our relationship with Baruch's Offices of Enrollment and Recruitment and Admissions. We are now included in their meetings. We participate in the decision making process including enrollment targets in admissions criteria. We have become partners with them in--in improved recruitment and outreach strategies. All this has resulted in a dramatic shift in our freshman enrollment. Today, the SEEK program is once again alive. Well, the bottom line is that, okay, we're doing very good, but it's a fraction. Our numbers are a fraction of the population in CUNY. I hope that we become a template that--to show--to show that it's possible that the SATs are not the only way for our young people to--to--to come into CUNY. When we give them the

opportunity we have a structured program in support, our students like the students who spoke before the, you know, a few minutes ago are magnificent, and we just have to partner with the rest of CUNY maybe to borrow of the things that we're doing with the PMI, and SEEK. Thank you.

EMILY VALEZ: Good after--good afternoon. My name is Emily Valez. I would like to read my testimony, and if I have time, a testimony of another student at Baruch College, which is currently in the Urban Male Leadership Academy Scholars Program that Kristy and Dr. Angela Anselmo were talking about. So this is my testimony: I am currently a full-time student at Baruch College. My name of--my area of studies is Operation Management with a Minor in Communications Studies. I am currently the President of Woman Empowered for Success or WES, a student co-organization powered by the Black Male Initiative at Baruch College. WES is club that comes under the BMI umbrella and start in '13. After attending various WES meetings that is already stated, I became the first president of the organization at the end of my freshman year. Essentially, my involvement with this club or organization is how I became connected to the

BMI. Roberta Queno (sp?), the founder of Women Empowered for Success and an Administrator for the BMI at Baruch College became my mentor. The BMI was able to make my club possible, and because of that I was able to evolve academically, socially, and professionally. A lot of the skills that I learned through being president, such as organizational skills, have been applied to my academics, allowing me to currently maintain a 3.5 GPA. Due to the BMI supporting this student co-organization, WES, I was able to help grow the organization not only to learn about my strengths and weaknesses, ultimately clarifying my desired career choice. Through my relationship with my BMI mentor, Rebecca, she has coached me on valuable skills such as communication and leadership. I have--I have also been able to have her as support--as a support system for 2-1/2 years. Through WES I also host events and meetings frequently allowing me to step outside of my comfort zone, and ultimately be more confident in my capabilities. Due to the BMI, I have excelled in my academics, solidified my career goals, and have developed a wide range of skills. The BMI has been a crucial component of my growth and development. It

has also made my experience in college that much more meaningful and enjoyable. After my experience with the BMI program and it's conference, I am sure that this is an excellent tool and platform that is necessary in all CUNY campuses.

And then the testimony that I would like to read is from a student Bigno Mellow, (sic) and his testimony reads as follows: I am currently a full-time student majoring in finance a Baruch College. Within Baruch College, I am enrolled in the SEEK and Urban Male Leadership Scholars Program. Kristy Perez, UMLA's Program Director, surrounds young Black and Hispanic male students, men of color with an outstanding supporting task. If it was not for the constant outreach of staff and current UMLA members, I would have never know about the various opportunities at my reach. Personally, with the Ron Brown Mentorship UMLA's programs offers, I do not know how I would have surpassed its rigorous barriers in my professional and educational life. For instance, as an incoming freshman, the first--the first semester can be overwhelming. However, with tremendous health with James Bravo (sp?) Program Coordinator and Kia (sic) Wilson, UMLA mentor, Baruch

College became a second home for me. These guys have developed a road map, bombarded me with must know information about the college, and most importantly held my hand during my first semester at Baruch College. And I'll end there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. I want to thank you for coming--for staying. It's been rather lengthy, but your testimony has been very important. But I do have a couple of questions for this panel. You indicated that the enrollment of African-Americans, Black and Latino male--male--Black, Latino and Asian students went from 4% to 20% in 2010 to 2014. I think that's commendable, and I heard you say, you know, that's great and it's good, and we need to continue improve.

DR. ANGELA ANSELMO: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I heard that. Do you have a goal? Do you have a percentage that you're aiming for, for the next two, three, four years or whatever?

DR. ANGELA ANSELMO: Well, I would like to see a kind of comparison with--with the DOE. Over 70% of the students in the DOE are Black and Latino. That to me is really-- You know, when we're talking



about underrepresented--underrepresentation or overrepresentation, I think that's the standard. That gives us an idea of where we should be especially in Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program. So I'd say at least 70%. This year we hit 90% of our incoming class is Black and Latino, the freshman class, and where now it's 50% of the entire program is Black and Latino. Okay, so I--at least 70% that I'd like to see through the programming maybe reflect. I think the Asian population in the DOE is about 15%. That's fine to have them. You know, I'd like to have that mirror.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: A mirror--

DR. ANGELA ANSELMO: [interposing] Yes

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --all else to what it is. Great. Thank you. I'm glad that you had the opportunity to come back. I hope that you enjoy your leave, and as for as long as you--

DR. ANGELA ANSELMO: [interposing] I'm-- I'm--I keep working.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] I--I appreciate your coming.

DR. ANGELA ANSELMO: --but I--I appreciate you keeping us to our commitment, and being--making us accountable.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing] That's what I need to do.

DR. ANGELA ANSELMO: So they come back. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you, and also you spoke of the goals to have students at 3.5--is it a 3.0 GPA?

JOHN ROSE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: How do you manage to do that? That's commendable, and I think you said 75% were less than 3.0--

JOHN ROSE: [interposing] Right.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --and that evolved to 65%, and greater than 3.0?

JOHN ROSE: Correct. Right. So we have the mutually supportive communities so that students feel--and the use this term themselves that it's a safe space to be smart. So when they see themselves rewarded for thoughtful comments or any research they do and they bring back to the group, for any successes they had, it sort of begets a sense that

success is really what we were all about, and what we've seen successively in each exceeding cohort is a greater retention to the things that you need to do to be successful as a student. We've had some of our more successful students come and talk about their strategies for achieving higher grades, how they interact with faculty members. You know, how they plan out their research papers in advance. How they identify other students in the class that they can form study groups with to help them be successful. And that gets passed vicariously to other students who are in the group. So with each successive generation of students we've seen a more attentive group who aspire initially to hire GPAs, and the result has over time improved the GPA of our full start set from what it was in 2008 to what was last semester.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And how many students are in the cohort or how many students are in your total program?

JOHN ROSE: So it varies from year to year, but generally it's--we have 60 to 80 students in our--who are participating in a structured mentoring program in any given year.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And you follow them by cohorts in terms of their success and the GPAs. Do you have that information disaggregated by cohort?

JOHN ROSE: We--we look--we do a report to Shawn and to Jermaine each year that talks bout the number of students who have GPA improvement, and the number of students who have GPAs above a very high level like 3.5. So we do provide that information. We have it and follow it.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you so much, and I appreciate your coming, and offering your testimony. Thank you.

JOHN ROSE: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And we're going to move to our final panel. Thank all of you for staying, and the panel is going to be Joshua Davis from CUNY; Omar Saril from Medgar Evers College, and Eslupe Genera from the Community. If I mispronounced your name, please forgive me. [background comments, pause] I know one of the other panelists had to leave. Perhaps both of them left. So this is going to be a power panel, the power of a person of one, the power of one. If you'd raised your right hand. Oh, the other person is here? Okay, good. Thank

you. If you would raise your right hand, please.

Oh, it does matter?

JOSHUA DAVIS: Oh, sorry. [laughter] I was using my phone with the--I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I didn't know whether or not I should ask. I said well, maybe he can' use his right hand. I don't want to offend him. [laughter] Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before the committee, and to answer all committee questions honestly?

OMAR SARIL: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you and you may begin. Give us your name.

OMAR SARIL: Well, I'll--I'll start. My name is Omar Saril. My major is Public Administration. I'm also a student of Medgar Evers College, and my testimony I got connected to BMI through Medgar Evers College and Male Empowerment and Development Center. I work for a program called the Medgar Evers Brotherhood. We serve as a mentoring program for the male population at the college to address retention and to build life schools. [coughs] The Brotherhood aims to address issues of

student engagement by holding partici--participants accountable for themselves and for each other, and advocating for yourself as an individual is a process that involves know who you are. Now, that is the biggest question many youth will face. Who are you? Being honest with--being honest with life, yourself and other is the first step. You must be honest about your weakness and your confident--and confidence in your strengths. During that process, humility sneaks in. Now, humility is a very important trait when it comes to working in or with a group. The skill to put others' important above your own is learned through trial and error. Weekly sessions take place outside of the school setting in a traditional meeting format. Students gather to play basketball, work together in libraries and the cafeteria. Students also attend an annual barber shop. Now the barber shop is a gathering of men of all ages getting hair cuts, eating and conversing. The atmosphere is the most important factor of the barber shop because of the discussions and the bonds that are--the bonds that are formed. I personally received a boost of knowledge during one match of a chess game with a gentleman that I was playing

against. It pushing forth an environment of positive criticism and positive criticism and positive bonding, and an unofficial workshop on a--on another important question, which is what is a man? Plenty of young men grow up in a community where a man isn't present in the home, and many role models exist at every turn. The influence--influence is a solid force that pushes anyone down the wrong road or down the right road. Being able to be a mentor for the Medgar Evers Brotherhood [coughs] has allowed me to give back to where I see a need in the community, a role that gives me purpose, fulfillment and joy. It's joy to--it's joyful to see a young man come in with his arms crossed and he's cautious, and then he come out of his shell to lead, to laugh and to learn. Now, human connection is still very important even as technology is soaring. A hand shake, a hug and even uttering a phrase such as have a great day can change the mood of any young man in today. Everyone has hardships, and not having family and friends who were able to be there for me to turn to, but where does a young man go to--you know, turn to if he doesn't have any friends or have any family? So being someone to turn to is only motivating me to be on top of my

game, and letting my actions be influe--influential in being a stepping stone to improve. That means going to class, showing up at office times, communication in my profession, access to action clinic and maintaining a respectful GPA to be proud of. And teachers and educators and mentors can still learn from students. Life is a constant lesson, good or bad. My purpose includes giving out a few [bell] Kudos to students so they can skip over certain mistakes that can lead to setbacks. I see the BMI everyday in the mirror, and I decided that being an influence is who I am. Thank you.

JOSHUA DAVIS: Good afternoon. My name is Joshua Davis. I'm also a student at Medgar Evers College. My major is public administration, and I'm a part of the Black Male Initiative. I got connected to the Black Male Initiative through Medgar Evers College at the Government and Development Center. That is where I began to become familiarized with the BMI program. So it's just the barber shop, the Mega Man Check-in, and the Brotherhood helps to provide a support system to a population young men that otherwise would not have access to those services. The Brotherhood is a mentoring program that I'm



involved in at that college, and that aims to address the issues of student engagement by holding participants accountable for themselves and for each other. The program helped me in numerous ways. For example I mentored--I helped mentor freshmen that are now coming into the college. It is a scary feeling at the age of 18 coming into a new environment, intimidated and taking college development's unique courses and struggling both academically and socially. As a senior that has traveled the path, I can give first hand--first hand accounts on how to navigate the institution with the aim of being successful in a way that is tailored to a student who is coming from where I came from. This program gives underclassmen the tools they need to become self-advocates so that they can--can turn--in turn share those same--those skills when they--they be--they themselves become mentors. At times due to financial hardships students don't have the money to get a haircut, and look as professional as they would like to. But the barber shop at Medgar Evers College not only builds self esteem, but gives students an outlet to express themselves in a way that is comfortable. Colleagues and I attend the barber shop to decompose,

meet--meet minds and, of course, get their hair--our haircuts by licensed barbers. At the barber shop, men are able to building professional relationships and develop deeper connections to their community that can last a lifetime. With Mega Man checking is a form that avails Mega Men the ability to hear and speak to prominent--to prominent men who understand the plight being a college man. Throughout my college career, the higher up I go towards graduating the less I see of Black men in my classes. It is hard graduating from college, let alone graduate with nobody that really relates to you graduate with you. The Mega Man Check In is safety net that allows a voice to the scarcity of Black male students at the college, the real minority in this case. This event also helps to provide support to our Mega Man through vital information on services, products, and opportunities that are--that are readily available to them that may not likely receive anywhere else. I just want to thank Miss--the Honorable Inez Barron, and I just want to let everybody know that, you know, Medgar Evers started this, and we are doing really good things. [bell] We're doing great things. I

just want to thank everybody that's here today.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I want to thank the panel for coming and sharing your testimony, and certainly in the Black community the barber shop is I guess just below the Black church.

JOSHUA DAVIS: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: So it's a very significant--

JOSHUA DAVIS: [interposing] Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: --institution in our community, and certainly you spoke about knowing yourselves, that also is so important as we look at the academics and all of those things that we talk about. And it reminds me of bringing us back full circle to what I started with because of ancient Kemet that was the ultimate to know yourself and to be true to yourself. And so we thank you for coming, and sharing your testimony. Thank you.

JOSHUA DAVIS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: There being no further testimony, I want to thank the audience for coming for participating and for sharing, and we will now end this hearing. Thank you. [gavel]

1 COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

124

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date March 8, 2016