

TESTIMONY OF EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR VITA C. RABINOWITZ

City Council on Higher Education Committee Hearing

250 Broadway, 14th Floor

Thursday, September 15, 10:00 A.M.

Thank you and good morning, Chair Barron and members of the Higher Education Committee of the City Council. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you and to thank you, as always, for your steadfast support of the City University of New York, and our students and faculty, and for the generosity of the Council to CUNY over many years, including your visionary support of the City Council Academic Achievement Scholarship.

I am here today to testify as to the status of CUNY's progress on the goals set forth in the 2012-2016 Master Plan. Those goals, initiatives and outcomes--along with new contexts, opportunities and challenges--have informed our aspirations in the new 2016-2020 Master Plan, which will come to a vote before our Board of Trustees on September 26th. The new Master Plan is aligned with a new Strategic Framework, nearly completed, that will set forth bold goals in key areas, including access and completion.

Today, I am honored to be accompanied at the table by Dr. David Gomez, the President of Hostos Community College. Dr. Gomez was named president only a year ago, but he has a long and distinguished record of senior leadership at Hostos and at Kingsborough Community College of Brooklyn. He will talk from his experience about how the 2012-2016 Master Plan inspired and guided some of the changes he led and observed at Hostos and elsewhere at CUNY over the past four years, the life of the plan. There are many senior leaders and other specialists in the audience today who are additional resources if needed.

I would like to begin by quoting from the Plan its major goals:

By the end of the period of this Master Plan, 2016, CUNY will fulfill its current trajectory and be widely recognized as the preeminent public urban university in the world. This recognition will be based on CUNY's continuing to adapt its historic mission to the complex needs of the 21st-century, particularly the 21st-century needs of New York City and New York State. CUNY's achievement in 2016 will be founded on its status as offering a high-quality, affordable education to the changing population of New Yorkers; generating significant basic and applied research; having a world-class faculty, as well as the requisite advisors, facilities, library resources, and academic and enterprise technology that are essential to teaching, research, and learning in our times; having smooth and efficient pathways to degree completion and pipelines from the public schools; and having a model culture of evidence collection and assessment as part of responsible and strategic resource management/stewardship. By 2016, CUNY will bring to fruition initiatives that garner the many benefits of an integrated university while simultaneously respecting and encouraging the unique identities of its colleges.

Colleagues, I humbly submit that CUNY has made outstanding progress on even its loftiest aspirations—even in these challenging times for public higher education in our nation.

CUNY is indeed increasingly nationally recognized as a preeminent public university in several key areas. President Obama frequently refers to CUNY as a national model in college readiness—in Early College and Career High Schools which support students in grades 9-14 and in ASAP (Accelerated Study in Associate Programs), an initiative to which I will return in a few minutes. The State of Ohio has turned to CUNY to help launch ASAP programs in that State, and other states and systems are calling. Four years ago, we announced the opening of a new community college called just that The New Community College, the first new community college in NYS in 40 years. Four years later that college has attracted one of CUNY's largest gifts and been renamed Guttman Community College. Just last month, just four years into its existence, Guttman was named the number one community college in New York State, #1 of 121 schools, by EDsmart.org, and was cited for its academic quality, student satisfaction, and three-year graduation rate of over 50%.

We are deeply honored that Michelle Obama chose to give her final commencement address as First Lady at City College, and was visibly moved by the outstanding student speeches on the value of a City College education by the valedictorian and salutatorian, one from the Macaulay Honors College and one from the SEEK program.

CUNY's distinction is evident at all levels, from the pre-college and associate degree programs to graduate and professional programs. To name just a few achievements, our fully online bachelor's programs, offered through the School of Professional Studies, are now ranked #1 in the State of New York and #11 in the nation by *US News and World Report*, tied with such national leaders as Arizona State and Penn State. Just this week, new rankings by ValueColleges.com places SPS's online programs at #5 in the nation. According to the latest National Science Foundation survey, the CUNY Graduate Center is among the nation's top 30 in the number of doctoral degrees granted annually. Yesterday, we learned that CUNY's William E. Macaulay Honors College received the highest rating among public university honors colleges and programs, earning five "Mortarboards" out of a possible high score of five. Macaulay is one of just three honors colleges in the northeast to receive this accolade. CUNY Law School has risen markedly in state rankings, and its clinical program is now ranked third in the nation. In the past year, we have created the new CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy in Harlem and opened the CUNY School of Medicine, also in Harlem on the City College campus, which will be from its inception one of the most diverse and inclusive medical schools in the nation.

Our senior colleges are opening exciting new schools, for example, Brooklyn College's Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema at Steiner Studios, with multiple new MFA programs. And the senior colleges are offering more of their own stand-alone doctorates—in Instructional

Leadership and Nursing Practice at Hunter College, Nursing Practice at the College of Staten Island and Lehman College, and the Executive Business Doctorate at Baruch College to name a few. In 2014, in the crowning achievement of the decade of science, CUNY opened the Advanced Science Research Center, a state-of-the-art university-wide science facility that is the equal of any in the world. Specializing in the interdisciplinary areas of nanoscience, neuroscience, structural biology, environmental sciences and photonics, ASRC scientists are collaborating with each other, with CUNY faculty from across the campuses, and students at all levels, and with scientists across the city and around the world, creating research and training opportunities that never existed before at CUNY.

The period of 2012-2016 comprised the end of what was known at CUNY as the decade of science. Of course, we are in fact in an era of science that extends far beyond a decade, but it is worth reviewing quickly what that designation meant for the university. Beginning in earnest in 2005 and continuing strong to this day, CUNY has made a significant commitment to improve science teaching and research, making a multi-billion dollar investment in faculty, facilities, degree programs and student educational opportunities. This initiative has elevated science across the CUNY landscape and improved the quality, breadth and depth of scientific offerings at all levels. We hired and supported over 300 new science faculty members, a 20% increase in STEM faculty since 2005, and increased the number of students in undergraduate STEM degree programs by 70%. Beyond the ASRC, we built new science facilities at City, John Jay, Hunter and Queens Colleges, to name a few.

These select highlights—and there are too many to mention-- are very exciting and they raise our profile and extend our reach within and beyond the city, but they must not overshadow the enormous progress CUNY has made in the past four years on the most fundamental aspects of

our mission: access, excellence and student success. I turn to these now, in response to issues raised in the plan.

Increased Access

- CUNY continued to expand access to higher education for New Yorkers. Between fall 2012 and fall 2016 (preliminary figures), the number of new students entering CUNY as freshmen and transfer students rose by 4,517. CUNY's total headcount increased by 4,096 in that period. Indeed, last year represented CUNY's highest enrollment in its history.
- Access means little without true opportunities to succeed and the tools to do so. 57% of all CUNY students—and over 80% of Community College Students—enter CUNY with remedial needs. In 2009-2010, CUNY piloted a program called CUNY Start designed to serve students with significant developmental needs in reading, writing and math. CUNY Start students defer matriculation for one semester to receive intensive instruction and support for a modest fee of \$75. The results were so encouraging that in the period of the 2012-2016 Master Plan, CUNY moved quickly to scale up CUNY Start from 150 students in the pilot to 3,600 students enrolled in 2015-2016. Encouraged by continued success in this format, in 2014, CUNY created and piloted an intensive 8-week math intervention called Math Start modeled on the semester-long CUNY Start math course. Over 90% of the students became math-proficient in 8 weeks. The city recently funded a major expansion of Math Start to serve 1,000 students in 2016-2017, and 4,000 students in 2018-2019. The 2012-2016 Master Plan notes an intention to permit alternatives to elementary algebra for developmental math students who intend to major in non-algebra-intensive majors. Quantway and Statway were successfully piloted at BMCC and

LaGuardia Community Colleges, respectively. Students taking these courses passed them at significantly higher rates than similar students taking Elementary Algebra. These and other innovations at other community colleges have reduced achievement gaps and changed the career prospects of thousands of students. And they have informed our plans for the future of developmental education at CUNY.

Rising Success Rates

- This past year, CUNY reached an all-time high in the number of degrees it conferred—50,022. This figure is up more than 10% from 2011-12, the year before the last master plan was released.
- Graduation rates have been rising steadily in both our associate and our bachelor's programs.
 - The 3-year grad rate for freshmen entering our associate programs rose from 12.6% for the 2009 entering cohort to 17.5% for the 2012 cohort.
 - The 6-year grad rate for freshmen entering our bachelor's programs rose from 51% to 53.9% (2006 and 2009 entering cohorts).
- ASAP

CUNY's nationally acclaimed ASAP program is the university's most successful single initiative to raise degree completion rates. The program was founded in 2007 with support from the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity to improve graduation rates among community college students. As of fall 2015, ASAP has served 12,780 students. Last year alone, more than 8,000 students were enrolled at nine colleges. ASAP's results have been nothing short of remarkable. To date, the average three-year graduation rate among ASAP students is 53 percent compared with 23 percent for similar

students. I want to underscore the outstanding 2-year graduation rate of 34.1% for ASAP students vs. 12.5% for comparison group students—the highest 2-year community college graduation rate to date. Given the program’s proven value, with the city’s generous support, CUNY plans to greatly expand the program, growing it to 25,000 participants in FY 2019. Besides expanding ASAP, CUNY will also embark on the ultimate proof of the ASAP concept at a single college: a campus-wide expansion of ASAP at Bronx Community College.

- Guttman Community College 3-year graduation rates are comparable to ASAP outcomes at about 50%, whereas most associate degree completion rates hover in the teens or low twenties.
- CUNY is now piloting a variant of ASAP at the baccalaureate level at John Jay College. The early returns on the program, which was inaugurated last year, already shows improved retention rates and credit completion.

Improving Transfer Processes

- Pathways Initiative: The 2012-2016 Master Plan cites the Pathways Degree Completion Initiative as its most ambitious effort to make CUNY a more coherent, integrated public university system, a core part of its original mission, for the benefit of our students.
 - Since the inauguration of the Pathways Initiative in fall, 2013, transfer enrollment has increased at CUNY from 21,205 in fall, 2012, to 25,068 in fall, 2015.
 - Many more CUNY students are transferring within CUNY since the inauguration of Pathways. There is a 31.1% increase from fall 2012 to fall 2015 in the number of students transferring from a CUNY associate degree program with an associate degree to a CUNY baccalaureate program.

- The percentage of students who were denied credit for a transferred course dropped from 33.1% to 12.8% in the 2012-2015 period.
- In recent years, about two-thirds of the new students who enter CUNY bachelor's programs during a typical year are transfer students, the majority from within the CUNY system.
- These preliminary data three years into the Pathways Initiative are most encouraging. As with all major CUNY initiatives, we continue to monitor implementation and assess the effects of Pathways on student outcomes and student success.

Improving career opportunities: New academic programs

Since the submission of the last Master Plan in 2012, CUNY has registered well over one hundred new degree and certificate programs across the system in a wide variety of academic disciplines, many with a professional focus on sectors that count in NYC and NYS: tech, healthcare, transportation, construction, government, media, finance, security, hospitality, the performing and creative arts, and tourism. In accordance with the directives in the Master Plan, many of these new programs are dual/joint degree programs or have been designed to articulate with other CUNY programs to create career ladders for our students. With curriculum and courses developed by CUNY faculty, these new offerings serve the full spectrum of New Yorkers from high school graduates seeking technical training in certificate programs through undergraduate, master's and Ph.D. programs. Within the last year alone, Baruch College created three new majors in data analytics: in computer information systems, marketing and marketing analytics, and information risk management and cyber security, as well as minors in marketing analytics and CIS data analytics.

A number of other innovative programs have been created, many of which are unique not only to CUNY but to higher education in the New York City area. These include a Master of Science in Translational Medicine at City College, a Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Science at York College, a Bachelor of Technology in Applied Chemistry at New York City College of Technology, a Master of Science in Disability Services in Higher Education at the School of Professional Studies, and a Master of Arts in Arts Administration at Baruch College. Medgar Evers College is launching an innovative interdisciplinary BFA program to connect students to careers in the arts in New York City. CUNY has also introduced new master's and doctoral degrees in healthcare fields such as nursing and physical therapy to reflect the increased licensure standards by accrediting agencies and to respond to the employment needs of the city and state.

Improving career opportunities: Expanded experiential learning opportunities

The 2012-2016 Master Plan recognizes the importance of experiential learning to our students' success. We are pleased that more CUNY students leave CUNY with degrees, but we also want them to leave with real-world experience, a resume that they can be proud of, and a network of peers and partners that they can turn to. Last year, the Chancellor convened a task force on experiential learning and charged it to develop a plan that was right for CUNY and would expose every interested student to authentic experiential learning opportunities within and beyond the classroom. The core of our plan, completed June, 2016, calls for greatly expanded active learning opportunities, more engagement with our city, its institutions, agencies and workplaces, and more internships for CUNY students. CUNY has expanded its highly successful CUNY Service Corps, in which students have quality, supervised paid internships in agencies and organizations along with academic mentoring and peer supports. The plan also calls for expanded undergraduate research experiences and study abroad opportunities, among others. One of the

ways CUNY has created experiential learning opportunities is via partnerships with other great institutions and organizations. Just last week, *The New York Times* announced an innovative partnership among CUNY, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and The Rockefeller Foundation. Funded by the City and Rockefeller, this \$1 million initiative will create the CUNY Cultural Corps, based on the Service Corps model, that will place dozens of students in paid internships at cultural institutions across the city including MoMA, the New York Botanical Garden, Carnegie Hall, American Museum of Natural History, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Staten Island Museum, and more. The Cultural Corps will create opportunities for students to gain valuable experience in one of New York's most vibrant sectors, and may one day lead to a more diverse arts workforce. Another innovative partnership among CUNY, Cornell Tech, and Verizon called the Women in Technology and Entrepreneurship in New York or WiTNY, seeks to grow and diversify the tech workforce by expanding the participation of women in the computer science pipeline. Medgar Evers College is developing smart new entrepreneurship programs that are inspiring their students to compete and win entrepreneurship competitions, and Medgar Evers is a vibrant site for CUNY's Start Up NY ventures with new companies, bringing internship opportunities for our students and collaborations for our faculty.

Colleagues, there is entirely too much to say about the past four years at CUNY. In my focus on academic quality and student success, there are obviously many areas that I did not touch upon at all. And while all of our major initiatives bore fruit, some were more successful than others, and much work remains to be done. CUNY serves the great diversity of New York surpassingly well, but access could be even wider. At CUNY and throughout the nation, there are still too many students who arrive not fully prepared for the rigors of college work. Our traditional

developmental education programs must be improved, indeed, transformed. Degree completion is increasing at CUNY at all levels, but it is not nearly where it needs to be.

CUNY can and must be a leader in preparing the workforce for the 21st century, and this will require improving STEM education across the curricula, deepening our relationships with the DOE, and developing a much stronger level of engagement between employers and CUNY.

There is much work to do, but we are building on a solid record of success, our direction is clear and our resolve is palpable.

Thank you for your time.

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

HIGHER EDUCATION HEARING

Thursday, September 15, 2016 - 10:00 AM, 250 Broadway, 14th Floor

Hostos Community College of the City University of New York

David Gomez, Ed.D, President

Madam Chair and members of the Council, thank you for the opportunity to address you today and thank you for your support of the University in general and our community colleges in particular. It has been my privilege to have served the City University for the last 42 years including 28 years at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn. This, I believe, has given me a deep appreciation for both the importance and the impact our colleges have had in our City.

For the past 48 years, Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College has proudly served the South Bronx and surrounding communities as a gateway to academic and socioeconomic achievement. We have worked diligently to fulfill the goals of CUNY's 2012-2016 Master Plan and fully intend to continue this work in our next plan.

Hostos has had a productive year in terms of student success, grant and contract revenue, and productivity initiatives. The 2015-2016 academic year yielded 1,196 graduates (the largest graduating class in the college's history); an increase of 37% from last year's total. The three-year graduation rate for our fall 2012 cohort was 20.6, an increase of 8% from fall 2011 and 12% from fall 2008, the highest increase among all CUNY community colleges.

While we are proud of our success, we remain mindful of the work yet to be done. Successful completion of developmental education continues to be one of the most significant

barriers to degree completion. 90% of our students require support in at least one basic skills area. The more remedial work students need, the less likely they are to remain in school. We are committed, therefore, to increasing the number of students who successfully complete remediation in their first year of college. Beginning in fall 2013 we increased the number of workshops offered during summer and winter for students needing support, with targeted sections for high fails and multiple repeaters. We aligned funding to meet this goal and, where data showed evidence of success, activities were scaled up. We have explored a number of ways to increase retention: creating and implementing a number of student supports; re-engineering and revising our remedial and developmental programs in Mathematics, English, and Language and Cognition; and redoubling our efforts at creating new and strengthening existing college readiness programs. We are also looking at ways to promote greater student-faculty interaction, which has been shown to improve retention.

Our Division of Continuing Education and Workforce Development has had great success with its Math Start Pilot program. CEWD has played a crucial role in realizing the College's PMP goal of increasing the number of non-degree to degree pathways. We are nearing the launch of two such programs---Interdisciplinary Food Studies and Construction Technology and Management.

The College plays an important role in providing the educational and workforce development opportunities to strengthen the economy of the South Bronx. I note with pride the rebound of the College's NCLEX pass rates, which highlights Hostos' reputation as key source of new, highly-skilled healthcare workers. Our annual Alumni surveys indicate that 88% or more of our Radiologic Technology students find high-demand and well paid jobs. Nearly 100% of

our Dental Hygiene graduates find employment within a year. RNs and LPNs also quickly find employment. Hostos is developing additional Allied Health programs to meet regional market demands and is in the process of creating a non-credit to credit pathway for an Occupational Therapy Assistant program in order to meet the projected 21% growth in the labor market.

Hostos remains committed to the definitions of excellence as articulated in our 2011-2016 Strategic Plan. Every decision we make is guided by our response to these critical questions: What best serves our students? What are our outcomes? What have we done right and where can we improve? Answering those questions honestly requires that we look critically at what we do and, more importantly, address what needs improving. Based on what the data shows us, we build on what works and revise what doesn't.

In my experience, this approach is not unique to Hostos. I believe that the Chancellor and the leadership of this University are equally committed to evidence based decision making and to the continuous improvement of our academic offerings and support services to our students.

Thank you for your time and attention.

David Gómez, Ed.D

President, Hostos Community College

Sharon Persinger, Treasurer
Professional Staff Congress/CUNY
NYC Council Higher Education Committee
September 15, 2016

Good afternoon. My name is Sharon Persinger. I am a professor of mathematics and computer science at Bronx Community College, Treasurer of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), and a graduate of City College and the Graduate Center. I am speaking today on behalf of the 27,000 instructional staff members at CUNY represented by the PSC. Thank you Chairperson Barron and the members of the Higher Education Committee for holding this hearing and offering us the opportunity to testify, to review the 2012-2016 CUNY Master Plan, to recognize the gains made under this plan, and to point out areas where improvements still need to be made. I want to offer some comments on the 2016-2020 CUNY Master Plan, focusing on those areas where improvements still need to be made.

To begin with, there should be more formal, wide-reaching discussion of the Plan before it is brought before the CUNY Board of Trustees. Many Board members, including the Chairman, are new having been confirmed on this past June. Many of them have no doubt not had the opportunity to study and raise questions about the Plan which the University will be implementing. While the Board of Regents sets the timing constraints for approval of the Plan, there are significant new directions for the University outlined in it, about which there should be broad discussion.

PSC representatives would welcome the opportunity to engage in fuller discussion of the Plan. We support a number of its goals, particularly for increased full-time faculty and staff. However, I want to point briefly to a number of key concerns:

1. The planned expansion of online instruction raises serious questions. The PSC has already begun to deal with the implications for contractual terms and conditions for teaching faculty in our recently negotiated and ratified contract, but we are also concerned about the quality and effectiveness of instruction. On line instruction is not appropriate for all students and all instructors. Many CUNY students benefit significantly from personal interaction with faculty, particularly at the General Education level. The issue of increased faculty face-to-face time with students is also an issue the union has raised at the bargaining table and one on which the University has made a commitment to act before the ratification of a successor agreement. The union's goal in these discussions is both to ensure the quality and availability of instruction and to protect the rights of faculty.
 - The PSC acknowledges the need for significant capital investment in servers and software to accomplish the goal of expanded online education. However, the faculty and professional staff cannot tolerate a repeat of the purchase and implementation of CUNYfirst , the all-in-one program for administering students, finance, and human relations, where hundreds of millions of dollars were spent for off-the-shelf software which did not meet the needs of this University.
 - Furthermore, such spending should not be at the expense of hiring more full-time faculty; the Plan makes almost no mention of the fact that a majority of courses at CUNY are taught by part-time faculty, many of whom do not have office hours to meet with students and who are not fully integrated enough into their departments to participate in discussions about the curricular changes that will arise because of the expansion of online instruction. At the School of Professional Studies, likely to play a vanguard role in implementing the goal of expanding online instruction, almost all the faculty are part-time, and there is not a rigorous practice of engaging those faculty with curriculum development.

2. The Plan also emphasizes the ongoing goal of establishing course equivalencies and easing credit transfers—also known as Pathways, or an expansion thereof. I do not have time to restate all the PSC’s objections to Pathways. As noted in the 2016-2020 Plan, results have been uneven. However, I must raise the persistent caution that in a university as large and complex as CUNY, with a student population that has the broad range of preparation that CUNY students have, there is a serious risk of reducing course content to the lowest common denominator in the name of “ease of credit transfer”. That potential result does not serve our students or CUNY well. Above all, it is essential that widespread curricular adjustments, if there are to be any, be developed by elected faculty representatives, through faculty governance. If CUNY and the Board of Trustees do not want a repeat of the response by the faculty and staff to the initiation of Pathways, they must observe the essential rights—and expertise—of the faculty in the development of curriculum.

A goal that is not explicit but is obvious and implicit is the critical need for increased operating funding for CUNY:

- The Plan acknowledges the widespread understaffing of student support services—from counseling and advising to administrative services—where many employees work countless, uncompensated hours on behalf of students because there are not enough of them to meet students’ needs. It is worth noting that City funding increases in the past 2 years have made a difference at community colleges, by permitting the hiring of more advisors. Increased support staffing must be addressed University-wide.
- There is reference to the importance of recruiting and retaining world-class faculty, a goal the union supports, but I urge you to remember the importance of the “journey person” faculty—and not just in the STEM fields, but in the social sciences and the humanities as well. CUNY needs more full-time faculty and more diverse faculty. Too

many courses are already taught by part-time faculty, and an entire generation of full-time faculty will be retiring over the next 10 years. Large-scale full-time faculty hiring will be needed to replace us and to move CUNY closer to its goal of 75% of courses taught by full-time faculty, and will provide expanded opportunities for accomplishing true faculty diversity. Opportunities for scholarship and student mentoring—not just for the “stars” but for all of the faculty—are critically important. CUNY will not attract the faculty it needs without offering adequate time for these aspects of their work and that requires adequate funding.

On behalf of the members of PSC, I urge all members of the Higher Education Committee, all Council members, and everyone in the hearing room, to come to the campuses and see the work we are doing and the achievements of our students. Those achievements are not always measured in graduations rates.

Thank you.

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Name: Donna Linderman, Univ. Dean for

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I represent: CUNY Director

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Name: Haris Khan

Address: 149-35 Northern Blvd Apt 3H 11354 Flushing NY

I represent: CUNY Student / NYPIRG

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Address: _____

I represent: PSC

Address: 61 Broadway

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Name:

~~Execut~~ Vita Rabinowitz

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Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost

I represent:

CUNY

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David Gomez

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I represent:

Hostos Community College - CUNY

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