

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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December 17, 2008

Start: 01:13pm

Recess: 01:54pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E: CHARLES BARRON  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Tony Avella  
Miguel Martinez

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

Edison Jackson  
President  
Medgar Evers College

Jay Hershenson  
Senior Vice Chancellor for University Relations  
Medgar Evers College

Iris Weinshall  
Vice Chancellor for Facilities Planning and  
Construction  
Medgar Evers College

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2 CHAIRMAN BARRON: Good afternoon,  
3 my name is Councilman Charles Barron, and this is  
4 the hearing of the Committee on Higher Education,  
5 here at City Hall. And I'm going to be joined  
6 with my most consistent and loyal supporter of  
7 CUNY and all that it is, it does, is Councilmember  
8 Tony Avella, from Queens. And as it's required at  
9 my hearings, give him a hand clap, you know. You  
10 can't clap in any other hearings but mine.

11 [applause] Clapping is forbidden in other  
12 hearings. Today's hearing, and I'll introduce our  
13 staff as we go along, but today's hearing is one  
14 of the more important hearings that we'll probably  
15 have here at the City Council, because it involves  
16 an institution, Medgar Evers College, that has  
17 been a real stalwart institution in our community,  
18 and has produced great individuals, and has been a  
19 place not just for students to be educated, but  
20 also for the community to be educated, and extends  
21 itself to the community, and we're happy today to  
22 do this hearing, to get a just relationship with  
23 Medgar Evers and the state and the city. So, I'll  
24 read my opening statement for the record, and then  
25 we'll hear from those who are come to testify

1  
2 today. Good afternoon and welcome to today's  
3 Higher Education Committee hearing. This  
4 afternoon's hearing examines the reclassification  
5 of Medgar Evers College as a four year institution  
6 for capital budget purposes. Although Medgar  
7 Evers is a four year institution within the CUNY  
8 system, it has the unenviable distinction of being  
9 classified as a two year college for capital  
10 budget purposes. Capital status as a community  
11 college means that all capital expenses, such as  
12 new construction and land purchases, are supposed  
13 to be shared by the city and the state. State of  
14 New York assumes complete responsibility for the  
15 capital funding of all other senior colleges. In  
16 the early 1960s, the Central Brooklyn community  
17 expressed a desire for a local public college.  
18 Given the tumultuous political climate of the  
19 times, the community leaders showed great  
20 foresight in seeking an educational institute and  
21 education institute to foster and implement the  
22 ideas. While the country exploded over issues of  
23 race, war and poverty, Central Brooklyn recognized  
24 the importance of developing the community and  
25 empowering youth with knowledge. Education was

1 and remains a constant equalizer. Medgar Evers  
2 College was established with a mandate to meet the  
3 educational and social needs of the Central  
4 Brooklyn community, The college's faculty and  
5 students believe that education has the power to  
6 positively transform lives of individuals, and  
7 it's the right of all individuals in the pursuit  
8 of self-actualization. We here at the Higher  
9 Education Committee tend to agree with that  
10 philosophy, a transformative education. In spite  
11 of the college's valiant goals, Medgar Evers was  
12 downgraded to a junior college in 1976. In 1994,  
13 after years of struggle, the college won back its  
14 original status as a four year senior college;  
15 however, when the state legislature returned  
16 Medgar Evers to four year college status, it did  
17 not change its capital status, as a community  
18 college. Today, we are here to ask two very basic  
19 questions. First, why? Why is an institution of  
20 higher learning, a place that exists to promote  
21 self-improvement and development of personal  
22 values, denied the necessary funding? And let me  
23 reiterate, that as a four year senior college,  
24 Medgar Evers should receive all capital funding  
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1  
2 from the state. Second question, how can we  
3 rectify this problem? How do we ensure that  
4 Medgar Evers is appropriately funded so that it  
5 can continue to fulfill its mission? It is my  
6 belief that the equalizing, that by equalizing  
7 Medgar Evers with the other CUNY senior colleges,  
8 we fortify our commitment, and show the students  
9 that their contribution to society is not only  
10 appreciated, but needed. Today we'll hear from  
11 the first witnesses, and I do want to welcome the  
12 President of Medgar Evers, and the administration  
13 of CUNY. We welcome you so much to this hearing,  
14 glad that you're here to testify. And your names  
15 will be read, and then we'll have you commence  
16 with your testimony.

17 FEMALE SPEAKER: Our first panel  
18 will consist of President Edison Jackson, Vice  
19 Chancellor Jay Hershenson, and Vice Chancellor  
20 Iris Weinshall. Will you please raise your right  
21 hands? Do you swear or affirm that the testimony  
22 you're about to give is to the best of your  
23 knowledge truthful and accurate? Thank you,  
24 please state your names for the record before you  
25 begin your testimony.

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[pause]

SPEAKER HERSHENSON: Senior Vice  
Chancellor for University Relations, and Secretary  
of the Board of Trustees, Jay Hershenson.

SPEAKER JACKSON: Edison Jackson,  
President of Medgar Evers College.

SPEAKER WEINSHALL: Iris Weinshall,  
Vice Chancellor for Facilities Planning and  
Construction.

CHAIRMAN BARRON: Before you  
commence your, with your testimony, I want to  
particularly pay a debt of gratitude to Jay  
Hershenson, for of course for years of support,  
but the fact that you're testifying. I think this  
might, first time I've seen you testify before  
this committee, and it shows the importance and  
the commitment to Medgar Evers and, so we thank  
you for your testimony.

SPEAKER HERSHENSON: Thank you,  
Chairperson Barron, members of the Higher  
Education Committee, Councilmember Tony Avella,  
Committee Council and staff. Thank you for the  
opportunity to speak with you about the  
reclassification of Medgar Evers College as a four

1  
2 year institution for purposes of the capital  
3 budget. Chair Barron, all of us at CUNY, are  
4 deeply grateful for this committee's longstanding  
5 support of CUNY, and in particular, of Medgar  
6 Evers College, and for your outstanding, and I  
7 would add consistent leadership and support for  
8 this great institution. I would also note your  
9 tremendous support and involvement with the birth  
10 of the Black Male Initiative, and we're just  
11 extremely proud of that program. Thank you, also,  
12 Mr. Chairman, for your support of the Model City  
13 Council two weeks ago, which met in the council  
14 chambers, and was just another great example of  
15 the work of this committee, with City University,  
16 to provide opportunities for high school students  
17 to participate in learning about the running and  
18 operations of government. And I would like to say  
19 for the record that Chairperson Barron received  
20 the Founders Award for the Model City Council. So  
21 thank you very much, and we're going to continue  
22 those types of programs so we can provide  
23 opportunities for young people. With me today  
24 are--Please.

25 CHAIRMAN BARRON: That was cue for

1 y'all to clap 'cause I received the award.

2 [applause] If you don't get the cues, I will help  
3 you along the way. And we want to thank Miguel  
4 Martinez, councilmember from Manhattan, for  
5 joining us, a long supporter of CUNY.  
6

7 SPEAKER HERSHENSON: With me today  
8 are CUNY Vice Chancellor for Facilities Planning,  
9 Construction and Management, Iris Weinshall, and  
10 Medgar Evers College President Edison O. Jackson,  
11 who I would inform the committee is the senior  
12 senior college president of the City University of  
13 New York. [applause] It is a special privilege  
14 for me to make today's introductions, because I go  
15 back a long, long way with Medgar Evers College.  
16 I actually go back all the way to the original  
17 facilities, when there was a mosque that was  
18 utilized by the institution; I got back to the  
19 Santini building, which was a horrible warehouse  
20 containing walls that you could actually see  
21 through. That's where the original library was.  
22 I worked with Assemblyman, not Councilmember, but  
23 Assemblyman Al Vann at the time, when he was in  
24 the legislature, when he successfully obtained  
25 state capital funds to put a down payment on the

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2 land underneath Academic One. And I also had the  
3 privilege of knowing Reverend James Oscar Lee, who  
4 made the original motion for Medgar Evers College.  
5 So, thank you Mr. Chairman for acknowledging the  
6 fact that my heart has always been with Medgar  
7 Evers. As the committee knows, while Medgar Evers  
8 College was designated a senior college in 1971,  
9 as the Chairman indicated, its status was changed  
10 to a community college during the 1975-76 New York  
11 City fiscal crisis. Medgar Evers College had its  
12 senior college status restored in 1994, but that  
13 occurred only on the operating side, not on the  
14 capital side. On the capital side, which you will  
15 hear from Vice Chancellor Weinshall, funding for  
16 the college is currently financed and managed in  
17 the same way as community college funding. In  
18 June of this past year, 2008, CUNY's new 2008-2012  
19 comprehensive academic plan was unanimously  
20 approved by our board of trustees, and will be  
21 reviewed by the State Board of Regents in January,  
22 before going to the governor. That's the process  
23 that we are obliged to follow. The plan makes  
24 clear the position of the university on the  
25 subject of Medgar Evers capital funding. Allow me

1  
2 to read from the plan: The state provides 100  
3 percent support for the funding of capital  
4 projects at the senior colleges, and 50 percent  
5 for capital projects at the community colleges and  
6 Medgar Evers College, with the city providing the  
7 matching 50 percent. The university cannot access  
8 state funding for the community colleges and  
9 Medgar Evers College without the city match.  
10 Since Medgar Evers is a four year school, CUNY  
11 will as noted earlier actively work to secure  
12 senior college status and 100 percent state  
13 funding of capital projects there, as well."  
14 Chancellor Matthew Goldstein has long supported a  
15 change in Medgar Evers' classification for capital  
16 budget purposes, in accordance with its status as  
17 a four year college. The fact that we are able to  
18 discuss this issue with the City Council higher  
19 education committee today is a tribute to  
20 President Jackson's leadership, who was  
21 instrumental in developing support for restoration  
22 of senior college status. The chances of the  
23 college obtaining senior college status  
24 substantially improved after President Jackson  
25 came to the college in 1989. CUNY has worked

1  
2 closely with the mayor's office, City Council,  
3 state legislators and the governor for many years  
4 to effectuate the move of the sanitation garage  
5 from across the street of the main building, and  
6 to obtain state and city matching funds for the  
7 academic building. And I do want to acknowledge  
8 again, for the record, the tremendous support of  
9 former Councilmember Mary Pinkett [phonetic], the  
10 late Mary Pinkett, and Ed Regowski [phonetic],  
11 both of whom were members of the City Planning  
12 Commission, when the City Planning Commission, at  
13 our urging, voted to remove the sanitation garage  
14 from across the street of a public college. And  
15 that was a, and that should be part of the record.  
16 My colleagues will describe the results of this  
17 unified approach, which places the practical needs  
18 of the Medgar Evers College students, faculty,  
19 staff and community first, resulting in the  
20 capital achievements to date, including Academic  
21 Building Number One. And the reason I use the  
22 word "practical needs" is because, yes, we made a  
23 judgment working with the president of the  
24 college, that it was more important in the short  
25 run to get the funding necessary to build out the

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2 campus, than to immediately deal with the issue  
3 that is before this committee today. So we went  
4 for the resources and when you're at Medgar Evers  
5 today, you obviously see the results of that work,  
6 again with the help of the City Council. Since  
7 1989, the college has flourished under the  
8 leadership of President Jackson, with a growing  
9 enrollment, new academic programs, strong  
10 community outreach, and a revitalized campus that  
11 is a focal point for Central Brooklyn. I would  
12 like to introduce first President Jackson to speak  
13 about the capital issue from the college  
14 perspective, and then Iris Weinshall to describe  
15 the capital budget situation, and going forward  
16 our specific needs. And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 SPEAKER JACKSON: Mr. Chairman,  
18 members of the Higher Education Committee, to my  
19 colleagues sitting at the table, it is indeed an  
20 honor and a privilege for me to appear before you  
21 this afternoon. First I want to say thank you for  
22 the great support that Chairman Barron and this  
23 committee and the City Council, the support they  
24 have given to Medgar Evers during my tenure as  
25 president. As Senior Vice Chancellor Jay

1  
2 Hershenson has indicated, he's given you the  
3 historical perspective as to the journey of Medgar  
4 Evers College. And I'm deeply grateful for the  
5 support that Chancellor Goldstein and that  
6 chancellery have given to Medgar and to our  
7 community. Medgar is one of the largest public  
8 employers in Central Brooklyn. It is an economic  
9 engine that is helping to spawn new economic  
10 development in the area around Medgar. If you  
11 look at Nostrum Avenue, from Eastern Parkway to  
12 Empire, there are new businesses that are being  
13 created, people are changing the façade on their,  
14 their buildings, and wonderful restaurants and  
15 etc. In, in addition to that, thank you, on  
16 Bedford Avenue, there used to be buildings that  
17 were boarded up. Now, every space now has been  
18 taken and new businesses are being created. And  
19 so Medgar as it's, as it's, as it has grown, has  
20 created a new kind of energy in our immediate  
21 locale, in terms of the economic development. So  
22 not only are we providing education opportunities,  
23 but also providing opportunities for growth in  
24 terms of economic quarters that we, that abut  
25 Medgar Evers College. We have the highest

1 enrollment that we've had in the history of the  
2 college, and we're now 6,122 students. And when I  
3 came to Medgar it was 2,300 students. And so, we  
4 have ex--we have in fact grown substantially, and  
5 have been able to attract some of the most  
6 outstanding faculty members one could find  
7 anywhere in these United States. And, and so  
8 people come to us because they want to be at  
9 Medgar, and because its history, because of its  
10 mission. As we indicated, we are about 50 percent  
11 completion in terms of our academic complex one,  
12 which is, will be, will house a school of science  
13 health and technology, and which will be the state  
14 of art in terms its facilities. And because we  
15 are constructing this, this facility, we have been  
16 able to attract faculty members in the sciences  
17 who could have chosen to go other places, but with  
18 the promise of this facility, have come to Medgar  
19 and have brought research grants with them. And I  
20 could not have been able to attract them had we  
21 not had this promise of, in a year or so, we'll  
22 be, would have complete this facility, and will be  
23 able to give, have the research capability to do,  
24 to allow faculty members to do their research. It

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2 is with the support that, and I, the strategy that  
3 we, that Senior Vice Chancellor Jay Hershenson  
4 talked about, while we were not able to get the  
5 powers that be in the state to change the  
6 legislation, we will, we are grateful for the  
7 support that this City Council and this Committee  
8 on Higher Education, and the mayor's office, and  
9 found the governor's office to fund \$240 something  
10 million for this facility. And in addition to  
11 that, what, what we own all the property, from  
12 Bedford to Franklin, in terms of that track of  
13 land, which will allow us to have some ability to  
14 expand in the future. Our request is to, is to  
15 request a change in this, in legislature,  
16 prospective rather than retrospective, so that  
17 whatever's in the queue right now will continue to  
18 be funded by Reso A dollars support from the mayor  
19 and the matching from the state. I am, want to  
20 say that we've, we've come a long way, and that  
21 I'm, I'm very grateful. We could not have done it  
22 without the cast of great supporting folks who  
23 made it all possible. It says something, I just  
24 want to say, it says something, this, these new  
25 facilities, that, that is we call the S Building,

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2 across the street, and the academic complex, it's,  
3 it sends a message to our community that we are of  
4 value, and we've been affirmed, 'cause there's an  
5 investment in our community, from the powers that  
6 be, and so there is this excitement that not only  
7 our students, and they say, "Well, can I just stay  
8 here another year so I can graduate and do my  
9 sciences in this new facility?" There's a sense  
10 that, that we're special. We have not always had  
11 that feeling, 'cause they've been fighting against  
12 the odds in many ways. But in the, in the last  
13 five years, we've seen just a renaissance in terms  
14 of construction and support. And I, I want to  
15 just also say that, many projects in the - -  
16 facility have been outstanding, we have begun to  
17 move in that way, funding for our pool, which is  
18 what, Olympic sized pool that we have not been  
19 able to operate because it was, had deteriorated  
20 so much. And Iris has been grateful in terms--  
21 great in her leadership to bring a lot of the, our  
22 facilities up to acceptable level of a college.  
23 And, and I want to say publicly, thank you so  
24 much, for what you've done. Jay's always been,  
25 been there for us, and certainly the chancellor

1 and the chancellery. And then the elected  
2 officials. I mean, what could we do without you?  
3 And the support that you have given us. And, and  
4 I have prepared testimony, but I'm speaking from  
5 the heart, that, that we really truly thank you  
6 for what you are doing and this hearing, because  
7 we need to be made whole. And so that Medgar does  
8 not have to worry about whether or not the  
9 priorities of the mayor, those priorities are the  
10 same as the state legislature. And, and we've  
11 been blessed because we've been able to get that  
12 kind of support. But that doesn't necessarily  
13 mean that it will always remain that way, in terms  
14 of the priorities of the state and the city. So,  
15 with the changing of the legislation, then does  
16 mean that Medgar's capital projects would be  
17 funded as other senior colleges. It also takes  
18 away a stigma, 'cause it, I mean, it is a stigma.  
19 So 'cause the question becomes, why not? Or why  
20 Medgar is in this category? And so this hearing  
21 today is, is another step in this whole movement,  
22 it's in the master plan in terms of the  
23 university's commitment to this change. And we  
24 hope that this committee them will take whatever  
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2 current and future, that are necessary to ensure  
3 that Medgar Evers College remains able to serve  
4 the students, faculty, and community neighbors  
5 that make up its stakeholders. Let me first talk  
6 about ongoing capital projects. Academic Building  
7 One is one of our successes. This new building,  
8 already in construction, will provide the college  
9 with a state of the art facility for study and  
10 teaching of science. At a 195,000 gross square  
11 feet, this new building will be able to house the  
12 college's programs in biology, math, nursing, and  
13 physical, environmental and computer sciences.  
14 These programs currently reside in the Carol  
15 Street Building, a structure that has outlived its  
16 usefulness, and is itself in need of extensive  
17 repairs and upgrades. Academic Building One will  
18 provide thirteen classrooms, fourteen science  
19 teaching labs, 31 research modulars, five computer  
20 labs, a 100 seat lecture hall, offices for the  
21 faculty, and a 350 seat cafeteria. As part of  
22 this project, the Youth Collective Building  
23 adjacent to AB1 will be demolished and Crown  
24 Street closed, with the resulting space converted  
25 to landscaped green space for the college and its

1 community neighbors. The Academic Building One  
2 and its surrounding green space, once completed in  
3 the summer of 2010, will form the basis of what is  
4 to be a campus like setting for Medgar Evers  
5 College. This project achieved full funding  
6 through a creative combination of Reso A and  
7 mayoral funds, and city and state appropriations,  
8 due in large part to the efforts of the Council  
9 and borough officials. CUNY and Medgar Evers  
10 College are deeply grateful to you, Mr. Chairman,  
11 as well as Letitia James from District 35, the  
12 councilwoman, and Brooklyn borough president Marty  
13 Markowitz, whose efforts have enabled us to  
14 proceed with this capital projects, which is so  
15 vital to the future of the Medgar Evers College,  
16 to CUNY, and to the City of New York. In addition  
17 to AB1, other capital projects currently underway  
18 at Medgar Evers include the much needed upgrade  
19 and expansion of the library in the Bedford  
20 Building, the refurbishing of temporary classroom  
21 structures located at the Carol Street Building,  
22 ADA compliance upgrades to the entrances and  
23 elevators at the Carol Street Building, and  
24 extensive repairs to the building's pool facility.  
25

1  
2 These other capital projects are now underway,  
3 thanks again in large part to the council and the  
4 borough officials who helped secure the necessary  
5 funding. But these projects have all been delayed  
6 by the need to develop alternative funding  
7 strategies, and these delays have had significant  
8 impact beyond the college and even beyond CUNY.  
9 For example, the pool that was built here to serve  
10 the college as well as its Brooklyn neighborhood,  
11 has had its useful, its usefulness delayed by  
12 several years, while we work to secure funding for  
13 the extensive renovation and repairs necessary  
14 before it could be put back into use. Additional  
15 capital projects that have been identified include  
16 the Carol Street Building itself, which as I  
17 mentioned needs extensive upgrades to continue to  
18 serve the student and faculty population at Medgar  
19 Evers. Medgar Evers' current funding status has  
20 consequences that impact the very future of the  
21 college. Medgar Evers is poised for growth,  
22 especially now that the global economic downturn  
23 has spurred a jump in already increasing  
24 enrollment numbers university wide. A new vision  
25 for Medgar Evers includes the academic building

1  
2 and its green space, as well as the kernel of a  
3 new integrated campus that will include an  
4 expanded and renovated Bedford Library, an  
5 additional new building for the business, a  
6 theater, a gym, a new pool, among other  
7 possibilities, that would finally replace the aged  
8 and worn out Carol Street Building. Because of  
9 the challenges inherent in its current funding  
10 status, the college finds itself forced to spend  
11 ever diminishing operating funds on a day-to-day  
12 maintenance for buildings and facilities that  
13 should be replaced. The challenge for us is to  
14 plan adequately to meet the every growing needs of  
15 our current and future students, faculty, and  
16 community neighbors. I want to thank you,  
17 Chairman Barron, and the committees, and the  
18 committee members, and would be happy to answer  
19 any questions.

20 CHAIRMAN BARRON: I want to thank  
21 all of you very much for your testimony, and to  
22 you, Vice Chancellor Weinshall, I want to  
23 personally, and I'm sure on behalf of all the CUNY  
24 students of BMCC, thank you for your commitment  
25 and work toward us getting the funds necessary, a

1  
2 major achievement in the rebuilding of Fitterman  
3 Hall, for BMCC, certainly the entire CUNY  
4 administration Jay, and John, all of us worked  
5 very, very hard on it, but I particularly want to  
6 thank you for that, and thank all of you for the  
7 testimony. I just have a few questions, and I'll  
8 turn it over to my colleague. One, why do you  
9 think it took so long for them to restore Medgar's  
10 classification? And then why once they finally  
11 did it, why did they just restore it on the  
12 expense side and not the capital side?

13 SPEAKER HERSHENSON: Well, I can  
14 share some perspective on that question, which is  
15 obviously a very, very astute one. First, first  
16 of all I would have to say that prior to President  
17 Jackson's leadership [off mic] university did not  
18 have [off mic] leadership matters - - leadership  
19 matters, [off mic] that he galvanized [off mic]  
20 that makes an enormous difference. We all, we all  
21 make arguments in merits, there's no question, and  
22 the merits are here in this case obviously, but,  
23 but having a sterling educator at the helm of  
24 Medgar Evers College made an enormous difference.  
25 Secondly, the, the state legislature has a

1  
2 different dynamic, as we all know, historically,  
3 than the City Council. And the state legislature  
4 historically has been divided between two parties  
5 for many years. And the interests are broad, in  
6 terms of the geography of the state. And while I  
7 think it's fair to say that our friends in the  
8 assembly were very, very much supportive of the  
9 restoration of senior college status from the  
10 outset, that it took our friends in the assembly,  
11 and then within the governor's office, quite some  
12 time in order to determine what it would take in  
13 order to get a piece of legislation that would  
14 bridge both houses. And this was the university's  
15 experience back in the '80s and in the '90s when  
16 for example New York City Community College, your  
17 alma mater, became New York City Technical  
18 College, and had to part of a piece of legislation  
19 where the College of Staten Island was, received  
20 its status, so that the two houses were bridged.  
21 And when senior college operating status was  
22 restored for Medgar Evers College, at the same  
23 time, although not directly related, at the same  
24 time, there was a subsidy that was granted to  
25 students from Nassau County and for Suffolk

1  
2 County, who were in attendance at FIT, here in New  
3 York City, which as you know is considered to be,  
4 for State University of New York purposes, a  
5 community college, as you well know. And a, a  
6 portion of the operating costs was paid for by the  
7 State of New York, in an appropriation that was  
8 approved by the legislature and agreed to by the  
9 governor, in the same time zone as senior college  
10 operating status was approved for, for Medgar  
11 Evers. And that was what occurred to, in  
12 political terms, make senior college operating  
13 status happen. The, the legislature did not come  
14 to a conclusion on the capital issues. My own  
15 belief is that there were other capital issues of  
16 interest on the, on the senate side, and there are  
17 people there who obviously could speak for  
18 themselves. The irony of the situation, however,  
19 is that two years later, Governor Pataki removed  
20 the state subsidy for the Nassau and Suffolk  
21 changes that were made, which were called charge  
22 back. It was a charge back subsidy, so that  
23 subsidy no longer exists, and I think it's fair to  
24 say that there's probably four of us who remember  
25 the discussion that I just articulated. But I

1  
2 would, I would chalk it up to the politics between  
3 the assembly and the senate at that time. I  
4 would, I would argue now, going forward, that  
5 we're in a different time and a different place.  
6 We have a president and an institution that has a  
7 clear demonstrated record. We would have the City  
8 Council and the City of New York very much on the  
9 same page here. I had an informal conversation  
10 with one of the deputy mayors earlier today about  
11 that. So there would be a unified front. There  
12 is obviously new leadership at the state level,  
13 and also much focus, as the chairman pointed out  
14 to me before the hearing, there is much focus on  
15 the need for economic stimuli, and the impact of  
16 the capital program that Vice Chancellor Weinshall  
17 indicated. So I think we have to learn from the  
18 lessons of history, and we certainly have  
19 accomplished the tremendous amount in terms of  
20 moving this campus forward, but the vision that  
21 President Jackson and Vice Chancellor Weinshall  
22 indicated of, of a vision for the future, a fully  
23 integrated campus, that provides the most modern  
24 facilities, is a vision that we really need to  
25 have as a priority.

1  
2 CHAIRMAN BARRON: Like to add  
3 anything?

4 SPEAKER JACKSON: I don't think I  
5 can add much to what Senior Vice Chancellor has  
6 stated here. I've watched the political scene  
7 during my tenure here, and I just, and to see the  
8 machinations that have taken place to deliver the  
9 change in stature for Medgar's expense budget, but  
10 leaving intact its funding formula for 50/50  
11 between the state and the city, and one could  
12 always raise the question as to why we have not,  
13 you know ,drilled on that issue, but rather really  
14 talk about how best to meet the needs of Medgar  
15 Evers College. And we've done that, I think  
16 reasonably successful, but we should be made  
17 whole. So our thrust has really been, and when is  
18 the most appropriate time to do that. And we  
19 believe, we collectively believe, that this is the  
20 appropriate time to do that.

21 CHAIRMAN BARRON: You know what,  
22 that's very, very important, because I don't think  
23 people sometimes fully understand when you have to  
24 be very dependent on the City to match capital  
25 money, if you have a mayor like Giuliani, who was

1 not a friend of CUNY, in my humble opinion, y'all  
2 don't have to move your heads or show no approval,  
3 'cause I want to make sure we get this thing  
4 through, just in case somebody up there likes  
5 Giuliani, but was a real impediment, you know, to  
6 that process. So, what basically happens, and  
7 correct me if I'm wrong, let's say the state  
8 decides to allocate \$110 million for capital  
9 money, for CUNY and hold on part of that being for  
10 Medgar Evers, that the City would then have to  
11 match that, and if they don't, we can't access it.  
12 And see, and that, that's the bind we've been in  
13 for a long time. And this is the right time the  
14 City should not be against it, because it takes,  
15 during this, you know, crisis, it takes them off  
16 the hook of having to deal with the capital side  
17 of Medgar Evers. And then the state is talking  
18 about, you know, increasing some capital  
19 expenditures. And so this would be the perfect  
20 time, and then there's a transition in the Senate.  
21 And then most importantly, most importantly to all  
22 of this, my wife, Inez Barron, has been elected to  
23 the State Assembly, and that's going to be the  
24 sole reason why this succeeds. [laughter] But we  
25

1  
2 are going to be working with you, the legislative  
3 body, and we do have a resolution here in the City  
4 Council. This committee is just a commencement,  
5 the beginning of us launching a real strong  
6 movement for this to happen, and we have friends  
7 like Senator Eric Adams, who has a senate bill for  
8 this to happen, and Assemblyman Karim Kamara  
9 [phonetic] who has an assembly bill for this to  
10 happen. So those two bills, we are going to  
11 fashion some legislation, a resolution here in the  
12 City Council, to support those two bills. And  
13 then from here on, we will continue to commence a  
14 strong, strong push to make this happen. I'm very  
15 optimistic about this one. We got Fitterman Hall,  
16 now we're going to get Medgar Evers and it's going  
17 to be a good year--in spite of all that's going  
18 on, this is going to be a great, great upcoming  
19 year for CUNY, as we deal with the crises and  
20 fight the tuition hikes and anything else that we  
21 need to battle, there is going to be some shining  
22 stuff. Councilmember Avella?

23 COUNCILMEMBER AVELLA: Actually,  
24 the only--thank you Mr. Chairman--the only  
25 question I had for the panel, and you sort of

1  
2 partially answered it, is what more can we do on  
3 our level to make sure that this does happen now.  
4 And you alluded to the resolution that I guess  
5 you're working on, which is a good step forward.  
6 Is there anything else that you can suggest that  
7 we're not doing that we should do? Yes, I agree  
8 with you, now is the time to strike.

9                   SPEAKER HERSHENSON: The--First of  
10 all, you're doing it, because you're the first,  
11 the first level of government to come forward,  
12 with a hearing, with focus, and you're saying from  
13 the outset that we're going to need a city/state  
14 partnership to make this happen. We're absolutely  
15 going to need a coalition with, with state  
16 officials. And you know that the university,  
17 through its comprehensive plan, is backing this  
18 unanimously. There will need to be follow up  
19 discussions based on the resolution that our  
20 chairman has indicated. And then we need to take  
21 this through the process. This is, this is a  
22 great start. I couldn't agree with you more. The  
23 only thing I would conclude with is that the fact  
24 that my son was born on June 12<sup>th</sup>, which happens to  
25 be the same day that Medgar Evers the man was

1  
2 assassinated. And I have always said to him, from  
3 the earliest age, and Edison knows, we've talked  
4 about this, that my son walks six blocks to go to  
5 school. That Medgar Evers the man walked nine  
6 miles every day, to and from school. So if we  
7 want to learn a lesson in persistence, the  
8 persistence of our president, our chairman, our  
9 members of the committee, we will win this. Thank  
10 you.

11 CHAIRMAN BARRON: Well, I want to  
12 thank you very much. This is, as I said, this is  
13 the commencement of our movement--really not the  
14 commencement, we've been at it for a while--but  
15 this will certainly jumpstart it. And we're going  
16 to take it from here, we'll be communicating to  
17 the governor, to the senate leaders, the assembly.  
18 We'll write letters from this committee about his  
19 particular hearing, and make sure that it gets to  
20 the proper authorities in the state, to let them  
21 know that we really would like to see this move.  
22 We'll be meeting with you frequently. And it's a  
23 good time, you know, with Barack Obama ascending  
24 to the presidency, and David Patterson as the  
25 governor. Just got to get the knife out of his

1 hands, so he can stop cutting us so much, we're  
2 bleeding very badly. If I can just get him to  
3 just raise a few pennies on them millionaires, you  
4 know, that might balance things off. So I'll just  
5 be nice for today, only because it's Medgar Evers  
6 [laughter] I don't want to do anything to mess  
7 that up. But we really got to look, as we go  
8 forth, in the city budget and state budgets, to  
9 really see how those who can afford to sacrifice  
10 and give a little more, is really, give them a  
11 opportunity to do that. But at least, by at  
12 least, you know, putting forth some revenue  
13 generating ideas that will do actually that. You  
14 know, we're going to come into some really trying  
15 times here at the City Council. We have to go in  
16 a day or two, maybe even as early as tomorrow,  
17 have to determine whether we're going to raise the  
18 property tax on homeowners. Tough decisions,  
19 raise property tax or cut everything in site. And  
20 that's what they do when they put you up against a  
21 wall, and don't do those progressive taxation  
22 things that could happen before we get up against  
23 a wall. And then so with all of that happening,  
24 it is really, really just a wonderful, wonderful  
25


1  
2 thought that we're going to be able to, and I  
3 believe we're going to be successful, in getting  
4 Medgar Evers reclassified and the capital side to  
5 have 100 percent from the state. So I thank you  
6 very much, and want to thank all assembled here.  
7 This is the team that makes me smarter than what I  
8 really am. So when you hear me see, speak  
9 intelligently, it's because we have one of the  
10 best teams that a council committee could have.  
11 So I want y'all to give my team a big hand  
12 [applause] clap for the great work. Thank you  
13 very much, and this hearing is adjourned.

14

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John David Tong", written over a horizontal line.

Date JANUARY 5, 2009