

**Dr. Eduardo J. Marti, President
Queensborough Community College/CUNY**

Testimony before the

*New York City Council
Higher Education Committee*

November 19, 2009

The Honorable Charles Barron, Chair

Good afternoon, Chairman Barron, and members of the Higher Education Committee. My name is Eduardo Marti, President of Queensborough Community College. I am here to provide testimony on the impact of the proposed State cuts to community colleges and how these cuts will affect our students at Queensborough Community College.

Before I begin, I want to express my deep appreciation to you; Chairman Barron, your Committee and the City Council for your unwavering support of CUNY and its community colleges. It is because of your past support that we are still able to serve a large number of students who otherwise would be denied access to our great University.

Community colleges are the portals of entry to higher education. But these portals are getting smaller and smaller. It is sad to see that even though public officials, especially in New York City, try their very best to maintain these portals wide open so that the most needy students can see their dreams of a better life fulfilled, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain educational services to the most needy of populations.

It is almost ironic that nationally, when, finally, we have a President who recognizes the importance of community colleges and who is willing to put some \$12 Billion into an American Graduation Initiative that calls for the increase of 5 million more Associate degree recipients by 2010, the fiscal situation in the States is causing draconic reductions in State budgets. It is almost ironic that as community colleges attempt to bring more services to more students, we are forced to close the open door because we have run out

of space. It is ironic that while educational institutions are willing to serve more students, we have to cut services or significantly increase the cost of attendance.

I am proud to serve in a University that, with the support of public officials, has taken care to protect community colleges against unreasonable cuts. This City Council has fought for our students. Because of your victories, we can still serve the largest class ever. We have been limited only by our physical space. But, now, it seems that we may be limited by fiscal constraints.

At the risk of stating the obvious, let us think about the typical CUNY community college student. There is Rana Said, a chemistry student who came to us from one of the local area public high schools and found an academic home at Queensborough. She is now pursuing her Bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering at Stonybrook. And, Rosa Rosales, again, another chemistry student who came with serious basic skills deficiencies. She graduated from Queensborough, went on to earn a degree from Buffalo, and is now gainfully employed at a chemical company in Port Washington on Long Island. Rosa also teaches a lab section at our College. Where could they have gone?

You know what we do.... You and many of the City leaders are products of CUNY and you know how important it is to maintain the services that increase our retention rates and our graduation rates. We have done good work but there is so much more to do.....and, this takes resources. We do not have the luxury of doing more with less. We are willing to do our part but we need your help.

The CUNY Compact calls for private philanthropy, productivity gains and for modest tuition increases. The proposed budget that was presented to our Board of Trustees calls for a small increase of \$30 per semester. It just makes sense. But if the State cuts are kept as proposed, there will be a \$270 per FTE reduction to our basic aid. This represents \$9 million to CUNY's community colleges and, as was stated before, if the \$120 cut to TAP is not restored, the most needy students will suffer the most.

If we continue on this path, the natural conclusion will be to reduce services, cut courses and, in short, provide less service to our students. All this while our President is trying to address the fact that community colleges are for the public good, for the welfare of our economy rather than for the individual's

gain. All this, while we try to ensure that our workforce is competitive. All of this, while we recognize that the majority of the minorities are attending community colleges.

So, Mr. Barron, here we are again. We are looking for you to help us. We are looking for you to place the spotlight of public attention on these egalitarian educational institutions that serve our City and our country so very well. Let us join forces to ensure that these proposed cuts do not come to fruition. Let us ensure that we preserve access and quality at CUNY's community colleges.

Testimony of Peter Grant Jordan
Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
The City University of New York
New York City Council Higher Education Committee
November 18, 2009

Good afternoon, Chairperson Barron and members of the Higher Education Committee. I am Peter Grant Jordan, interim vice chancellor for student affairs of The City University of New York. I am honored to join my colleagues this afternoon to offer testimony concerning the state's Deficit Reduction Plan and specifically the impact the proposed cuts to the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) will have on CUNY students.

As Budget Director Sapienza said, the governor has proposed a \$120 mid-year reduction in TAP awards for all TAP recipients.

Here is what we know about how CUNY students benefit from TAP and the effects the governor's proposed \$120 mid-year and future cut will have on our students:

- Seventy percent of CUNY's full-time undergraduates rely on financial assistance to cover their educational costs. The reduction in TAP, no matter how small it may appear, is certain to undermine the already thin financial margin on which 70 percent of CUNY students operate.
- TAP helps students cover their tuition costs, which permits them to use Pell grants and other forms of aid to cover indirect educational costs such as books, fees, transportation, and related expenses. Just as a TAP cut will force students to rely more on these other sources of aid, it will also drive them to increase their job hours outside of college and/or increase their dependence on loans.

The University is keenly aware of well-documented research that indicates what it takes for university students, including CUNY students, to succeed in college. Let me remind you of two important factors that foster student persistence and graduation.

- First, we know that students who attend college full-time persist and graduate at higher rates than part-time students. Currently, the majority (63%) of CUNY students are enrolled on a full-time basis (carrying 12 credits or more per semester).
- Second, the evidence is undisputed that students who hold jobs off-campus are more likely to stop out, drop out, or extend time to completion of their degrees. Already, 41% of CUNY students work 20 hours or more per week. Therefore, as you know, our Student Financial Aid Initiative includes a component to create additional on-campus jobs for students.

The proposed cuts have the potential of undermining what little financial security students now depend on to keep them engaged in full-time study. These cuts could also increase their dependence on off-campus employment and loans. We are deeply concerned that these proposed cuts would hinder lower-income students' path toward a degree and better career and financial opportunities, particularly in these tough economic times.

The University's priority is to assist the neediest students. As Chancellor Goldstein has often said, financial aid is most equitable when it is aimed at students with the greatest need—these are often students who have the most to gain from a college degree.

It is worth noting that the federal government, recognizing the importance of keeping financially needy students out of harm's way, increased the maximum Pell grant award this year to \$5,350, an increase of \$619 from the previous award year. As our country faces its greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression, we must encourage students to prepare for a competitive future and improve their long-term financial security through public education.

I want to echo my colleagues in expressing my tremendous gratitude to you, Chairman Barron, the Higher Education Committee, and the New York City Council for your unwavering support of CUNY. We ask for your continued partnership as we seek to ensure that our growing numbers of students have the resources they need to achieve their educational dreams.

Thank you.

**New York City Council
Hearing on New York State's Budget Deficit Reduction Plan
Testimony of President Ricardo R. Fernández
Lehman College, City University of New York
November 18, 2009**

Thank you, Mr. Sapienza. Chairperson Barron and Members of the Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on New York State's Budget Deficit Reduction Plan. I am Ricardo R. Fernández, President of Lehman College.

Lehman College is grateful for New York City Council's enduring commitment to CUNY and its senior and community colleges. We look forward to continuing to work with you in helping provide our students with the knowledge and skills they need to live, work, and prosper in the 21st century.

For many of Lehman College's students, higher education would be out of reach were it not for federal and state financial aid programs. Receipt of a financial aid award helps the City's neediest students gain access to higher education. A dependable stream of financial aid makes it possible for these students in good academic standing to progress with their coursework and graduate with their baccalaureate degree.

Lehman College has a student body of just over 12,200 students. Of that number, 9,700 are undergraduate students. Just over 60% of Lehman College's students are Bronx residents. As one would expect, with the Bronx having a median family income of just 60% of the national average and a poverty rate that is twice the national average, a disproportionate share of Lehman College's students comes from lower-income families.

The most recent survey of incoming freshmen is representative of Lehman's overall student body. The data is instructive of the financial challenges faced by Lehman College's students. In that survey, nearly 50% stated that their families would provide no resources to cover their educational expenses during their first year at Lehman College.

In terms of family income, the contrast is even starker. 38% of our students reported annual family income of less than \$20,000 per year vs. 11% at all public four-year schools. 73% had family income of less than \$50,000 in contrast to only 35% of the students at all public four-year colleges. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that just 26% of Lehman College's incoming students were confident that they would have sufficient funds to finance their education. From an institutional perspective, that lack of confidence is worrisome.

New York State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) plays an important role in making it possible for Lehman College's students to pursue higher education. Presently, Lehman College has 3,540 TAP recipients. 82% receive \$1,000 or more per semester. 47% receive \$2,000 or more each semester. For many of Lehman College's students, every dollar in aid truly makes a difference. Neither they nor their families have the financial ability to absorb the proposed cut.

Already, many of Lehman College's students spend considerable time working off-campus. One-third of Lehman College's students work more than 20 hours per week. Nearly 20% work 35 or more hours each week. A partial loss of TAP assistance may confront a student from a low-income family with the need to work longer hours to continue his or her studies—if he or she can find a part-time job in the recession-swept labor market.

In short, the proposed reduction in TAP assistance is likely to have a negative impact on college retention and graduation rates. Additional time spent earning money to finance the cost of higher education could lead to reduced time available for academic activities. Reduced time spent in classes, on homework, or in lab could undermine a student's academic performance. In our experience, a student's running out of funds often leads to his or her temporarily "stopping out" from college. Either outcome would reduce his or her chances of graduating.

In today's demanding global business environment, a college degree is increasingly becoming the minimum foundation for job security and a meaningful income. Higher education is vital to helping today's neediest students realize tomorrow's career and life opportunities.

In closing, while acknowledging the difficult financial condition of our State, we must not lose perspective of the value of investment in higher education and the impact reductions in such investment can have on today's students, particularly those from lower-income families. A failure to understand the value of higher education will certainly have real implications for tomorrow's labor force and tax base.

The City University of New York



**Testimony of University Budget Director Matthew Sapienza
New York City Council Higher Education Committee
Impact of State Deficit Reduction Plan
November 18, 2009**

Good afternoon, Chairperson Barron and members of the Higher Education Committee. I am University Budget Director Matthew Sapienza, and I will be testifying this afternoon in place of Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance Ernesto Malave, who is taking an extended medical leave. Also testifying are two of our college presidents: Ricardo Fernández, president of Lehman College, and Eduardo Martí, president of Queensborough Community College. Our panel also includes Peter Jordan, interim vice chancellor for student affairs. We are pleased to have the opportunity to offer testimony regarding the state's Deficit Reduction Plan and its impact on CUNY's programs and services.

The University is very grateful for the New York City Council's longtime support of CUNY's operating and capital needs. All of us at CUNY look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the council on behalf of CUNY's growing student body.

In fact, the University is experiencing record enrollment growth. The number of students enrolled in credit-bearing courses this fall is almost 260,000, an increase of more than 6 percent over fall 2008 and the highest since 1974. CUNY's senior colleges saw an enrollment increase of 4.6 percent from fall 2008, while the community colleges experienced a 9 percent increase over fall 2008 enrollment. Adult and continuing education enrollments are also expected to exceed all records by the conclusion of the academic year.

This unprecedented growth reflects the economic challenges currently facing our country and our state, as increasing numbers of students look to gain advanced skills and reshape careers in order to compete successfully in a changing economic environment. At the same time, the enrollment increases are a measure of New Yorkers' increased confidence in CUNY, where students know they can find the high-quality, affordable education that is the hallmark of public universities. As a partner in CUNY's advancement, the council shares credit for the University's resurgence.

Maintaining the quality of its academic programs remains the University's highest priority. However, record enrollment growth poses significant challenges. The demand for faculty, programs, class sections, academic and student services, and classroom and laboratory space is also at record levels. The surge in students has taxed the University's resources and infrastructure at every level.

During this time of economic crisis, our state and our city face difficult financial choices, as reflected in the governor's Deficit Reduction Plan. Every state or state-supported agency, to the extent that it can, must work to alleviate the state's burden. The proposed reduction for CUNY's senior colleges in the current year is \$53 million, which represents a 4.8 percent cut in state support, taken against non-personnel service (OTPS) costs.

Clearly, it is difficult for the University to absorb a mid-year reduction, particularly when it follows previous cuts to CUNY's senior colleges totaling \$68.3 million. While the University anticipated the likelihood of a mid-year cut and took appropriate measures to mitigate its effect and prevent significant diminishment of academic services, the fact remains that, as Chancellor Matthew Goldstein has said, it will have a chilling effect on CUNY's plans. As the legislature reviews the proposed OTPS reductions, the University will continue to focus on protecting its core mission. Going forward, a serious concern is the cumulative effect of the cuts on the quality of education at our senior colleges; we must prevent the permanent damage that will result from a sustained period of reductions.

In addition, the reduction plan proposes cuts in state aid to the community colleges in the amount of \$260 per student, as well as cuts to related community-college support, including child care centers, rental aid, workforce development, and the College Discovery program. Community colleges are a focal point of our national and state recovery efforts, providing affordable degree and workforce training programs for increasing numbers of students. Unprecedented national initiatives to increase the number of college graduates, including President Obama's American Graduation Initiative, have been directed at community colleges, which serve almost half of our country's

undergraduates. CUNY's community colleges have absorbed significant enrollment increases, straining their ability to meet the wide range of student needs. Over the last decade enrollment has increased by 43 percent at our six community colleges. This year, the University experienced an increase of nearly 60 percent in the number of applicants who selected a community college as their first-choice college. Four community colleges have seen the number of students grow by well over 10 percent since last year - Queensborough Community College alone is up almost 18 percent. For these reasons, the University will remain vigilant about the fiscal health of its community colleges, one of the state's best engines of economic development.

The governor has also proposed a \$120 million mid-year reduction in TAP awards for all TAP recipients. Based on the 63,850 TAP recipients at CUNY in spring 2009, this reduction would lower our students' TAP awards by \$7.7 million for the spring 2010 semester. When applying this cut to a full year—based on an unduplicated count of undergraduate TAP recipients of 86,300 for all of 2008-09—the reduction in TAP that our students would be facing in Fiscal Year 2011 would exceed \$10.3 million. If this proposal is enacted, our lowest-income students would be forced to use part of their Pell grants to meet their tuition responsibility at CUNY during each term that they are enrolled, thereby reducing the funds available for other expenses such as fees, books, and transportation.

Financial aid awards, always critical to enabling access to higher education, are essential in times of fiscal distress. The University's priority is to assist the neediest students. Thanks to the continued assistance of this committee and the council, the University is providing \$10 million of financial assistance to students this academic year through the CUNY Student Financial Aid Initiative. This initiative encompasses several measures, including partial tuition waivers, a tuition payment plan, a textbook/e-book program (the subject of a previous committee hearing), and a student employment program. Financial aid is most equitable when it is aimed at students with the greatest need and those in the middle class, who are hard-pressed.

Today, more than ever, economic conditions require that all of us work together to protect those most vulnerable and to enable the state and city to recover and, ultimately, invest in New York's future. During these very challenging times, CUNY looks forward to continuing its partnership with the council in order to maintain the University's critical role in revitalizing our economy and bolstering our educated workforce.

I will now ask our two esteemed presidents, Ricardo Fernández and Eduardo Martí, to describe the impact that these proposed reductions will have at the campus level. Thank you.

Professional Staff Congress/ CUNY
Testimony on Governor Paterson's Proposal to Reduce the New York State
Estimated Budget Deficit
For the 2009 - 2010 State Fiscal Year

New York City Council
Committee on Higher Education
Delivered by Arthurine DeSola, Secretary

Good afternoon, Chairman Barron and distinguished members of the Committee. I want to thank you for holding this hearing and giving the PSC an opportunity to testify to the serious impact that midyear budget cuts to CUNY's budget proposed by Governor Paterson will have on the University.

On behalf of the 22,000 faculty and professional staff in our union, I urge you to call on the Senate and Assembly to reject the governor's Deficit Reduction Plan. There are alternatives – both short and long term – to raise revenues that would forestall what will be a devastating loss in the middle of the academic year.

Having spent time in Albany this week, we can report that while some legislators have pledged not to cut education, they have made it clear that they do not include CUNY and public higher education in this pledge. Thus it is of extreme importance that members of the Committee and the City Council as a whole call on their state colleagues to reject the proposals to cut funding to higher education!

I will get right to the point: CUNY is chronically under-resourced and cannot absorb more cuts. The Deficit Reduction Plan (DRP) proposed by Governor Paterson would take an additional \$53 million dollars from CUNY's senior colleges and \$9.9 million from its community colleges immediately. CUNY's budget has been cut the last two budget cycles. Lawmakers diminished State funding to CUNY senior colleges by \$68.3 million in the 2008-2009 academic year and \$44.6 million in the current year. Altogether this is \$176 million over two years at a time when CUNY's enrollments have soared.

The Governor's Deficit Reduction Plan will damage CUNY's core academic program and jeopardize educational quality.

Governor Paterson contends that these cuts will be limited to non-personnel services, but we believe that cuts of this magnitude – in the middle of the year -- cannot be absorbed without hitting the classroom.

Total state aid to CUNY's senior colleges this year – before the proposed cuts are implemented - is \$1.1 billion and state aid to CUNY community colleges is \$192 million. But only 15% of CUNY's total expenses are non-personnel. Thus, there is no way to make these cuts without addressing personnel -- and without cutting into the students' education.

In the face of such large reductions in State aid, CUNY is relying on greater student enrollments and charging higher tuition to make ends meet. That is not the way to solve CUNY's funding crisis. More students require more resources. The number of students has grown faster than the number of full-time faculty needed to teach them. The result is more overcrowded classrooms and more reliance on part-time adjunct faculty.

Governor Paterson's choice in cutting college funding runs exactly counter to the direction being signaled by President Obama, who made the historic announcement this summer of a federal funding initiative for community colleges. The Obama administration has called for an additional five million community college degrees and certificates by the year 2020. CUNY is on the way to contributing to this number through its soaring community college enrollments—as well as its strong tradition of four-year college education. New York State has a chance of being a leader in this initiative; the Deficit Reduction Plan cut works in just the opposite direction.

Cuts to TAP, Educational Opportunity Programs and scholarship programs hurt students' ability to progress toward graduation.

The proposed Deficit Reduction Plan would not only cut CUNY directly, but also take \$28.4 million from programs administered by the Higher Education Services Corporation including a cut of \$26.2 million from the Tuition Assistance Program (or TAP). All students receiving TAP would see their grants cut by \$120 beginning in the spring semester.

This may seem like a small amount, but for many students, it will mean fewer books, supplies and other necessities or increasing their work hours and sacrificing what time they have for their studies. State funding for on-campus child care centers at both senior and community colleges would also be cut under the Governor's plan.

There are alternatives to mid-year reductions.

Rather than close the door to a college education for New York's working people, we urge you to call on our elected State Senators and Assembly Members that the Governor pursue other options.

First, use the State Tax Stabilization fund, which has \$1.039 billion, and the State Rainy Day Fund, which totals \$400 million, before cutting CUNY's budget.

Second, pursue additional federal stimulus funding. Though federal ARRP funds will be available next year, this may not last long enough to pull New York out of this severe recession. Governor Paterson would do well to show leadership by pressing Washington now for second round of stimulus moneys that would help New York and the 47 other states maintain critical services including public higher education.

Third, utilize the state's enormous buying power to negotiate bulk purchases from pharmaceuticals companies for the Department of Health. The Fiscal Policy Institute estimates that savings could be in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Finally, enact additional progressive tax reform of the state's personal income tax. Last year, the Legislature took an important step by imposing a modest increase on the state's highest earners. However, this tax reform was both small and temporary. We believe that the only lasting solution to the structural deficit is to restore a progressive tax system.

A great university needs more public funding, not less.

The reductions proposed in the Deficit Reduction Plan would be devastating because they come on top of a history of underfunding. They are cuts to a university that has already been compromised because of the lack of funds. Every classroom, every library and every laboratory bears that out. We cannot absorb another cut and call on the City Council to immediately appeal to the Governor and Legislature.

CUNY needs more -- not less -- funding if it is to ensure that all students have a chance at a good life, and if New York is to have the educated workforce that positions it to grow as the national economy recovers.



**TESTIMONY OF THE
NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON HIGHER
EDUCATION
REGARDING THE IMPACTS OF PROPOSED CUTS TO CUNY
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2009**

PATRICK KRUG, NYPIRG CHAIRPERSON

Hello. My name is Patrick Krug. I'm Chairperson of the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), and a student at Brooklyn College.

NYPIRG—the New York Public Interest Research Group—is New York State's largest student-directed non-partisan research and advocacy organization, with a Board of Directors comprised of college and university students elected from campuses with NYPIRG chapters across the state, including nine at CUNY schools and one at a private college (Pratt Institute) here in New York City.

We are deeply concerned about the rising cost of college, the impact of the current recession on students' access to higher education, and the harm that could be done to students by the latest round of proposed cuts to CUNY's state funding.

NYPIRG thanks the Council's Higher Education Committee for being such an influential advocate for state funding for higher education. The state legislature and the governor are currently negotiating legislation to close the state's \$3.2 billion deficit, and we need to convince our elected officials in Albany to avoid making cuts to higher education. The most important thing the City Council can do to preserve access to affordable, quality higher education in New York City is to protect (and eventually expand) City funding for financial aid, opportunity programs and community colleges. In this economy, we would not be surprised to see another round of proposed cuts from the Mayor, and CUNY students need you to support us now more than ever.

Governor's Deficit Reduction Plan

Governor Paterson has proposed hundreds of millions of dollars in mid-year cuts to higher education. At CUNY, these proposed cuts would reduce funding for opportunity programs like College Discovery (\$83,000) and the Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (\$306,000). The governor's plan would also reduce funding for CUNY senior colleges by \$53 million and CUNY community colleges by \$9.9 million, and even shrink Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) awards by \$120 per student.

We know that the state budget crisis demands hard choices, and that the deficit cannot be closed without them. Nevertheless, we believe CUNY students have already paid their share of sacrifice to budget deficits, and that deeper cuts to higher education would undermine the state's economic recovery. In the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 state budgets, CUNY absorbed a total of \$113 million in funding cuts. In addition to those cuts, CUNY students have been subjected to big tuition hikes (\$600 at senior colleges and \$350 at community colleges), and the senior college tuition hike is largely being swept into the general fund to pay down the deficit.

Long before this recession, state support for CUNY had been declining. In fact, a recent report shows that from 1992 to 2009, at CUNY, state support for senior colleges declined by 14% and support for community colleges declined by 25.6% when adjusted for inflation and full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment.¹

According to the Chancellor, CUNY's senior college enrollment has increased by 4.6% and their community college enrollment has increased by 9% since the fall of 2008.² Revenues derived from rising enrollment and this year's tuition hike have allowed CUNY to add some full-time faculty, but the University is still struggling to serve their expanding student body.³ CUNY is underfunded, and they are making ends meet by relying far too heavily on overcrowded classrooms and part-time faculty members.

Another round of cuts to CUNY could make things much worse. It could reduce critical student services like counseling and childcare, push class sizes beyond capacity, and reduce course offerings so much that many students will have trouble graduating on time because they can't get the courses they need. Another funding cut could also force another difficult-to-bear tuition hike.

Avoiding a Tuition Hike

In their 2010-2011 Budget Request, CUNY is urging the State and City to provide enough money to cover 100% of the University's mandatory expenses, such as energy costs, benefits, collective bargaining agreements, etc. CUNY is also seeking a tuition hike of \$60 per year for community college students and \$90 per year for senior college students. CUNY plans to use money from that tuition hike combined with a requested modest increase in state funds to hire more full-time faculty, and provide support for expanded research, academic enhancements, and student services.

While we applaud CUNY's efforts to fortify the University, we are deeply concerned that the governor and legislature won't honor their request to fund these additional investments. Instead, we fear, they will once again sweep state funding away from CUNY and offset that cut with students' hard-earned tuition dollars.

Students working with NYPIRG will be urging the legislature and the governor to fund CUNY's current obligations expenses *and* these new investments, so that CUNY might avoid any tuition hike. Please join us in pressing the legislature and the governor on this point.

¹ Fiscal Policy Institute, *New York State's Underinvestment in Public Higher Education*, P. 13, January 2009.

² Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, *Testimony before the New York State Senate Finance Committee Regarding the Impact of Deficit Reduction Plan*, October 27, 2009.

³ CUNY Board of Trustees Calendar, November 23, 2009, Item 3C.

Maintaining Access

In the past, many lawmakers and CUNY stakeholders gave their reluctant support to tuition hikes, in part, because they knew that the Tuition Assistance Program would be there to protect access for most low-income students. In the current budget climate, there are no guarantees that TAP will be there to shield low-income students. In his Deficit Reduction Plan, Governor Paterson proposed reducing every student's TAP award by \$120. Legislative leaders have indicated that they will oppose cutting TAP this time, but we would not be surprised to see another cut to TAP proposed in the Executive Budget. A tuition hike—even a \$60 or \$90 hike—would be too much for many low-income students to bear, especially if it came paired with a financial aid cut.

Even if TAP survives the next budget process unscathed, and most of the poorest students are protected from the effects of these proposed tuition hikes, thousands of low-income adult CUNY students will still be harmed. More than 18,000 CUNY students receive smaller TAP awards because they qualify for TAP through the program's much-less-generous "Independent Awards Schedule."⁴

These students—typically working-poor, unmarried, adult students with no dependents of their own—already receive maximum TAP awards that pay significantly less than CUNY's full-time undergraduate tuition.⁵ Independent students felt the sting of this year's tuition hike, and they will feel it again if tuition is increased.

This year, CUNY is reinvesting \$10 million generated from the recent tuition hikes back into programs to protect students' access by providing partial tuition waivers, more affordable textbook options, expanded work study and discounts on the tuition payment plan. NYPIRG could not support the tuition hike but we were glad to see CUNY's commitment to protect students who might otherwise have been priced out of college by the tuition hike. We're anxious to hear how these programs have played out—especially, how many students have benefitted from the waivers. Your recent oversight hearing regarding textbooks has already helped shed some light on how CUNY's textbooks initiative is saving students' book money.

Next year, if the state fails to provide CUNY with the resources it needs, and tuition is increased again over the objections of students and families, CUNY should continue and expand their Student Financial Aid Initiative.

Community Colleges

Last week, a *New York Times* article chronicled the end (temporary, we all hope) of open admissions at CUNY community colleges.⁶ Years of underfunding from the state, rising

⁴ Higher Education Services Corporation, *2008-2009 Annual Report*, Table 10, *TAP Recipients by Dependency Status and Sector*.

⁵ Students who qualify for the TAP program through the Independent Awards Schedule can only receive up to \$3,025 in TAP (dependent students can receive up to \$5,000). Even worse, to receive their \$3,025 maximum award, students on TAP's Independent Awards Schedule must earn a net income of less than \$3,000—a shockingly low limit.

⁶ Foderaro, Lisa W., "Two-Year Colleges, Swamped, No Longer Welcome All," *New York Times*, November 12, 2009.

enrollments and a recent crest in applications caused by the recession are actually forcing CUNY to turn away students who need their help.

If last year's cut to state funding for community colleges had not been offset by federal stimulus dollars, things at CUNY community colleges would be much worse. Now, CUNY is once again facing a big cut to state funding for community colleges.

Community colleges are crucial for New York City students. They are the only affordable entryway into higher education for thousand of low-income students, and they may be the first place workers turn when they need to update their job skills after a layoff or strengthen their resume to compete in a tight job market.

CUNY is urging the state to increase funding for community colleges by \$43.7 million, but they are also proposing a \$60 per semester tuition hike for community college students. NYPIRG wholeheartedly endorses greater state support for community colleges but cannot support a tuition hike because community colleges typically serve a large contingent of low-income part-time students who do not receive TAP or Pell, and many adult students who receive smaller TAP awards determined by TAP's miserly Independent Awards Schedule.

We ask the members of the Council's Higher Education Committee to support CUNY's efforts to increase state and city funding for community colleges. We also ask you to join us in our call to increase city and state support by an amount great enough to avoid a tuition hike.

In closing

We thank the Council's Higher Education Committee for your efforts to maintain affordable and accessible public higher education. Our state and city are facing unprecedented challenges, and they are being forced to make difficult choices. We appreciate the vigor you bring to your higher education advocacy and oversight efforts, and we look forward to your continued support when the struggle to protect funding for higher education shifts focus to the New

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/18/09

Name: Patrick Krug (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 9 Murkay St, 3rd Floor

I represent: NYPIRG

Address: Same as above

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: Nov. 18, 2009

Name: ARTHUR LIE DEOLA (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: BC 61 Broadway, Suite 150, N.Y., N.Y.

I represent: BC

Address: 61 Broadway, Suite 150, N.Y., N.Y. 10006

CUNY
PANEL

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: VICE CHANCELLOR PETER JORDON (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: PRES. EDUARDO MARTI

I represent: PRES RICCARDO FERNANDEZ

Address: MR. MATTHEW SAPIENZA, CUNY
BUDGET DIRECTOR

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms