

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

-----X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

-----X

April 28, 2009

Start: 1:28pm

Recess: 4:05pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: CHARLES BARRON
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Tony Avella
Gale A. Brewer
Robert Jackson
Letitia James
Miguel Martinez
Darlene Mealy
Larry Seabrooks
Eric Ulrich

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

Hally Sealy
Student, BMI participant
Medgar Evers College

Dan Peters
Student, BMI participant
Brooklyn College

Kurt M. Sealy
BMI Program
New York City College of Technology

Sharon Shin
Student, Vallone Scholarship recipient
Queensborough Community College

Garrie Moore
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
City University of New York

James Murphy
Associate Dean for Enrollment
City University of New York

Dr. Elliott Daws
Director, Black Male Initiative Program
City University of New York

Matthew Sapienza
Budget Director
City University of New York

Jodie Roure
Assistant Professor, Director
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Ronald H. Brown
Summer Legal Prep Program

Joseph Wilson
Professor of Political Science, Director, Co-Director
Brooklyn College, Graduate Center for Worker
Education, BMI ERIS Program

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

Arthurine DeSola
Secretary
Professional Staff Congress of CUNY

Mary Lou Billock
Associate Dean for Special Projects, Professor
CUNY Law School

Dr. Reggie Blake
Physics Professor, Project Director
New York City College of Technology, BMI

Suzie Walker
Student, SEEK participant
New York City College of Technology

Cynthia Suprin
Attorney, Former SEEK participant

William Huang
Student, SEEK participant
New York City College of Technology

Marcos Pichardo
Student, SEEK participant
New York City College of Technology

Anthony Heyward
Student
Borough of Manhattan Community College

Lisa Lamanna
Student, Vallone Scholarship recipient, Member
College of Staten Island, NYPIRG

Ferdinand Almalvar
Student, Member
Borough of Manhattan Community College, NYPIRG

Fitz King
Student
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

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

Cheryl Wilkins
Associate Director
College Initiative Program, a BMI funded program

John Molina
Recipient
College Initiative Program, a BMI funded program

Terrance Sadiq McSween
Student, BMI recipient, President
Hostos Community College, Black Student Union

Balter Uli
Student
CUNY Law School

1

2

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Good

3

afternoon. My name is Councilman Charles Barron.

4

[Applause]

5

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you,

6

thank you. I'm not one who likes a lot of

7

attention.

8

[Laughter]

9

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I believe. I

10

want to thank all of you for coming out. Let's

11

give our CUNY students a big hand clap for coming

12

out and stop the CUNY cuts. We're letting the

13

city know, we're letting the Council know that we

14

must, must prioritize CUNY like you did Yankee

15

Stadium. Prioritize CUNY like you did the Mets

16

Stadium and like they're doing with the Nets

17

Arena. Don't cut our scholarships. We're the

18

ones, CUNY students and I'm a prime example I have

19

a double degree, Hunter and Brooklyn New York City

20

Tech degree. We stay in this city for over ten

21

years. We contribute billions of dollars to the

22

economy and we're 450,000 strong. You don't want

23

to mess with us. You don't want to mess with us.

24

So we're saying to this city that

25

they need to prioritize CUNY. I don't care what

1
2 the budget deficit is, it really doesn't matter
3 because \$60 billion is going to be spent. They're
4 going to balance this budget by June 30th because
5 they have to. \$60 billion, that's a larger budget
6 than every African country. There's not a country
7 in Africa that has a \$60 billion in Africa.

8 There's not a country in the Caribbean that has a
9 \$60 billion budget. There's not many states in
10 the United States that have a \$60 billion budget.

11 We're you're in a nation that has a
12 \$3.6 trillion federal budget, a \$131 billion state
13 budget and a \$60 billion city budget, there's no
14 reason why they should be cutting the Black Male
15 Initiative, they should be cutting the
16 scholarships. There's no reason why they should
17 be cutting CUNY. The money is there. The money
18 is there.

19 So this hearing is about saving our
20 programs of opportunities. I'm a SEEK student.
21 When I was in community college I was on College
22 Discovery. I'm a College Discovery student as
23 well. And I'm going to be the first mayor of New
24 York City with a GED. I have a GED. So after
25 Tony Avella, I'm talking about way down the road.

1

2 As a matter of fact I was thinking after Barack's
3 eight years I might just do that. But anyway,
4 I'll be the first on with a GED.

5 Those of us who struggle hard and
6 have to work long hours and really put in a lot to
7 our education, it's time for this city to
8 recognize us and appreciate us and to hold us up
9 on a pedestal and put your money where your mouth
10 is. Don't tell us that you're the mayor for
11 education or the president for education or the
12 governor for education and then you cut the
13 budget. The Bible says where a man's heart is,
14 his soul lies his treasure. So put your money
15 where your mouth is. Thank you very much, We're
16 going to get this hearing started.

17 One of the long time supporters of
18 CUNY and a great supporter of this committee and a
19 Mayoral candidate; you're not supposed to say that
20 at a hearing but I slipped. Never say those
21 things. When you're a chair of a committee this
22 is not about politicking. You should never say
23 he's running for Mayor because you should not do
24 that at hearings like this. I don't want to ever
25 hear you'll say anything like that again. Give a

1
2 big hand clap to Mr. Tony Avella, Council Member
3 from Queens.

4 Ton: And a CUNY graduate.

5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And a CUNY
6 graduate. We have a new member of our committee
7 that we're welcoming, Eric Ulrich. We thank you
8 so much for choosing our committee to be on. He's
9 a new member of the City Council and Council
10 Member Miguel Martinez, a long time supporter of
11 the community from Manhattan.

12 One of the more fiery supporters,
13 charismatic speakers and one of the most
14 intelligent Council Members we have is Council
15 Member Letitia James from Brooklyn. And then a
16 hard working Council Member from Brownsville who
17 works hard as the new chairperson of the Women's
18 Committee and has worked hard in her first five or
19 six years, Darlene, seven? Four, first four years
20 in the City Council working for Brownsville, Ms.
21 Darlene Mealy, the Council Member from
22 Brownsville.

23 And the Council Member from
24 Manhattan, a hard working lady who always puts
25 CUNY first in Manhattan when there are budget

1
2 talks and that's Council Member Gale Brewer, the
3 technology chief around City Hall.

4 My staff member, please give
5 Monique Washington Indigo a big hand clap. And
6 these two dynamic women, I want them to introduce
7 themselves because they make me appear far smarter
8 and more intelligent than what I really am. They
9 do all the work, I get all the glory but they're
10 behind the scenes doing all the research, putting
11 all of these hearings together. So I want them to
12 introduce themselves to you and their titles.

13 TRACY O'DELL: I'm Tracy O'Dell and
14 I'm the Counsel to the Committee.

15 TANYA CYRUS: I'm Tonya Cyrus and
16 I'm the Policy Analyst to the Committee.

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Once again
18 this hearing is to really save our programs.
19 Every year we go through this annual budget dance
20 with the Mayor, he automatically cuts our
21 programs. He cuts everything in sight. He says
22 it's not a cut, I'm just not renewing the funding.
23 So every year we have to be stressed, every year
24 we have to come out and pack this place. When you
25 do that it means something because I remember when

1
2 I first came in to office and I was fighting the
3 Mayor about the budget. He said you're
4 complaining, I don't see no people outside
5 demonstrating against the budget. So when you
6 come out like this, they understand it, they hear
7 it, it has an impact and it means something.

8 So today's hearing, we want to
9 really fight them to put back all of the money
10 that they're taking out of CUNY, whether it's the
11 community colleges or the four year colleges on
12 the state level or it's our special programs, BMI
13 and SEEK and College Discovery. We want to make
14 sure that they know that they are not going to be
15 able to cut our programs without a real fight from
16 the students of CUNY.

17 I tell you, if we ever got it
18 together CUNY, if we ever got it together in this
19 city and organized everybody to get registered and
20 know that they have a huge CUNY voting block and
21 they know that you are a force, a power that has
22 to be reckoned with. There's over 400,000 of us.
23 If we went anywhere and on a count of three we
24 sneezed, the walls would come tumbling down.
25 That's how powerful you are potentially. They're

1
2 not afraid of you if you don't unite like that.
3 When you unite like that, trust me, they will come
4 to you because elections are won by less than 100
5 votes sometimes. Less than 1,000 votes elections
6 are won.

7 If they know that 400,000 CUNY
8 students are only going to vote for those that
9 have CUNY interest at heart. And don't give us
10 this talk about how education means so much to you
11 and how we should work hard and prioritize
12 education. Then when it comes to the money you
13 don't have any money for us; we're the first thing
14 you want to cut. We're having enough trouble.
15 They're raising the transit fair already. We just
16 had a water board meeting. You have to pay for
17 water. The water is like ridiculous, you better
18 watch it. Turn that water off. You might take a
19 drop out and wash your face and turn the faucet
20 off. Let me not go there. Anyway.

21 Everything you're paying for. They
22 want tolls on bridges. They want congestion
23 pricing. Everything but having the millionaires
24 pay a little more. They did a little bit. They
25 got a little bit more out of the millionaires this

1

2 time around but not enough. Let's get a stock
3 transfer tax, a millionaire's tax on all of those
4 taxes on those who have it to pay. They have it.
5 If you can take \$800 billion and bail out Wall
6 Street, that is the biggest welfare check in the
7 history of this planet to the richest people on
8 the planet. So if you can bail out Wall Street
9 bail out 125th Street, bail out Fulton Street,
10 bail out CUNY Street, bail out the rest of us.
11 Anyway, I'm getting upset. I'm going to say
12 something to get me in trouble.

13

Let me get this hearing going.

14

We're going to call our first panel up. We want
15 to have a panel of students to come up first so
16 we're just trying to pick four students to come up
17 first because we want to hear from our students
18 first. Tell the administration what we would like
19 and we thank them for working with us on this one.
20 But sometimes we need to let the students speak
21 first and let the administration feel what the
22 students are feeling. Let everybody know about
23 how students are feeling and then we'll bring on
24 the administration and other program leaders. So
25 thank you very much and let's proceed with our

1

2 hearing.

3

4

COUNSEL: Kurt Sealy, Sharon Shin,
Hally Sealy and Dan Peters.

5

[Long pause]

6

7

8

9

10

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Brother man,
that's our seat man. I was just kidding about
you'll being registered and taking us out. He's
ready to do it today. And we did this randomly
just to make sure we have students go first.

11

12

13

14

15

16

COUNSEL: Please raise your right
hands. Do you swear and/or affirm that the
testimony you're about to give is to the best of
your knowledge truthful and accurate? Thank you.
Please state your name for the record before you
begin your testimony.

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

HALLY SEALY: Good morning Mr.
Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is
Hally Sealy. I earned my GED in November 2006
through the Black Male Initiative Program at
Medgar Evers College. This is a program initiated
by our college president Dr. Edison O. Jackson and
is now in every CUNY college. I thank you very
much for this opportunity to share with you the
success of this program and what it has

1

2

accomplished.

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

The BMI program started in May 2006 at Medgar Evers College to encourage and assist African American males, especially those who were incarcerated and on drugs to get back in to school to get their GED and transition to college. I am one of those students, however, I fortunately was not on drugs nor was I incarcerated but I took advantage of the free program because I could not have afforded to pay my tuition.

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

The model is the BMI program at Medgar Evers is a rotational one where every day students are taught specific subject areas by very qualified instructors, some with PhDs. The administrative staff and instructors are very caring, informative and nurturing, resulting in the great success of the students. I passed by GED in November 2006 and transitioned to college in Spring semester of 2007 to do my prerequisites for my associate's degree in nursing.

22

23

24

25

I was then able to apply for the Peter Jennings Laureate award which I was awarded in June 2007, receiving \$1,000 to assist with my college tuition. That semester, my first in

1
2 college, I was on the Dean's list, having done 19
3 credits, seven courses, getting 5 A's and 2 B's.
4 If I was told while doing my GED through the BMI
5 program that I was going to do so well I would
6 have believed.

7 But now I was a new person. I was
8 thinking differently and there was a hunger for
9 knowledge within me. In Fall 2007 I was
10 encouraged by what I have achieved academically so
11 far I thought I should return to the program and
12 assist my brothers by tutoring them in math. This
13 I did in Spring 2008 but was more able to do so
14 significantly in terms of time spent with the
15 students in the Spring of 2008.

16 During this time of tutoring I was
17 gaining experience in teaching adults and the way
18 they learn, not knowing that this was a new school
19 of thought. When the Adult Education Alumni
20 Alliance started at the Mayor's office I was
21 elected to represent Medgar Evers College program.
22 With my colleagues on the AEAA, we were able to
23 examine adult education programs available to see
24 what was encouraging, what could have been
25 different, the hurdles we encountered and really

1
2 what we would have liked to see or have while
3 doing our respective programs.

4 Coming out of that alliance, we
5 were given a transition to college internship at
6 the Mayor's office. We are now in our second
7 semester of that internship so I'm now a mentor to
8 the new interns. This is for a three credit
9 program at Kingsborough College in leadership and
10 community development. While on this AEAA
11 Transition to College internship, I was involved
12 in researching adult education and transition to
13 college which made me realize that adult education
14 was a new school of thought. Some of the
15 documented theories that I was innocently
16 practicing while doing my tutoring I learned like
17 involving adults and acquiring the role in
18 education, I learned that these are some of the
19 things that you have to take into consideration
20 when teaching adults.

21 This course and tenure of work have
22 allowed me to develop my leadership abilities as
23 part of the collective group. Years ago I learned
24 that leadership was an individual thing but now I
25 know and have experience that it is a collective

1
2 effort which enhances teamwork. As recent as last
3 Friday I was elected to be part of the Teachers as
4 Leaders program. This is a scholarship program
5 for men of under-represented race to be trained in
6 involving teaching of math at the primary,
7 intermediate and high school levels. I was
8 elected because my director of the program noticed
9 my leadership abilities.

10 I have developed personally--

11 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing]

12 Let me do this because we have a lot of people so
13 I'm going to need you to--

14 MR. SEALY: [interposing] I'm

15 almost done. And I have--

16 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing]

17 Hold on, hold on. When they say I'm almost done
18 that scares me because I don't know what almost
19 means. We have about a whole bunch of people
20 signed up so I'm going to need you to wrap it up.

21 MR. SEALY: Half a minute. Yes, I

22 now think critically, I have developed my
23 leadership skills so I am a new person. This has
24 caused me to now return and give to my community.
25 I, therefore on behalf of the students past and

1

2 present, implore you not to end or cut the funding
3 of this program, which is so important not only to
4 African men but men of all races. My testimony,
5 therefore, shows that the program has and can
6 continue to develop men personally and improve a
7 family life styles in our community. It would be
8 nice to see funding continue or be increased for
9 there is an increase in the students application
10 for this program in this semester. Once again, I
11 thank you for this opportunity to testify.

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.

13 Thank you very much.

14 DAN PETERS: Good evening everyone.

15 My name is Dan Peters. I am graduating senior at
16 Brooklyn College. I am a double major in
17 political science and African studies with a minor
18 in history. When I first entered Brooklyn College
19 I was a chemistry major actually. While I was
20 doing okay, it wasn't really a degree that I
21 wanted. After the first semester, it wasn't a
22 pretty sight, actually. I walked into the African
23 department, who coincidentally was the director of
24 the BMI program and he actually took my under his
25 wing. This was in 2006 and for me the rest has

1

2 been history.

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

In constant conversation with scholars like Professor George of the African Department, Professor Noel Anderson, Professor Wilson it has transformed to the point where now I am thinking about and strongly with the intentions of becoming an university professor. I am a CUNY Pipeline fellow. I am, after graduation, on my way to Ghana to study abroad. I'm doing all these things and it's because of the BMI program. I'm actually an education manager in the BMI program.

I was at first a mentee then I became a mentor. Now I'm an education manager conducting the outreach program to high schools because sometimes the problems, you can't actually fix it in the colleges, you have to go out in the high schools because when they're coming in they already damaged. I'm pretty sure most of the mentors here could echo that problem that when they come on campus they see that these students need a mentorship and need it from as early as high school. So when you cut the program like this, you're not just cutting it at college, you're cutting it at high school level as well

1

2 because that's actually where the pipeline is
3 really reached.

4

5 And to see that when they are
6 actually here how many of them after the first
7 year drop out. Having a program that is reducing
8 its budget, it cripples us. It cripples the work
9 that the mentors really want to do because
10 sometimes if you go there and you feel what am I
11 here for, what tangible difference can I make?
12 I'm one of the end products of that tangible
13 difference. But if you continue to cut the budget
14 every single year and every year we come back here
15 then it's going to be spinning top in mud as my
16 mother likes to say.

17

18 I'm not the only one in college
19 right now. I have an older brother at Medgar
20 Evers. My mother just graduated from Medgar
21 Evers. My sister is at City College. And we all
22 know the value of education but we also know the
23 value of mentorship. When you move that from us,
24 it's really impeding us from moving forward. You
25 all want to be the middle class and it's not fair.
It's not fair when you take away one of these
components that's going to get us in there. There

1
2 are many men who I am sure would like to be part
3 of the CUNY Pipeline program or the Honors Academy
4 but they don't have the direction to go there.

5 That's all I have to say.

6 KURT SEALY: Good afternoon ladies
7 and gentlemen of the Council, fellow CUNY members.
8 My name is Kurt Sealy and I'm from the New York
9 City College of Technology, BMI Program. I want
10 to join this afternoon with the chorus of voices
11 that support funding for the BMI. We at City Tech
12 our BMI program focuses on the STEM disciplines,
13 science, technology, engineering and math.

14 Now time and again the President of
15 the United States has continued to reiterate the
16 importance of us cultivating a new generation of
17 scientists if the country is to move forward and
18 be competitive. Ladies and gentlemen, the program
19 at City Tech continues to reach down and to help
20 cultivate that crop of scientists that the
21 President continues to call for. During my time
22 as a member of the program I've seen young men and
23 young men choose over the liberal arts disciplines
24 to focus on physics, to focus on chemistry, to
25 focus in other areas of science. Oprah Winfrey

1
2 famously remarked that there is no such thing as
3 luck. What you have is opportunity meeting people
4 who are well prepared.

5 I beg you today to understand that
6 has the country faces its darkest hour, there is a
7 silver lining on the horizon. We need to prepare
8 for those opportunities that will come. Ladies
9 and gentlemen, I beg you, please I implore you to
10 continue your support for programs like these.

11 There are other so-called
12 immeasurable that we don't ever seem to consider.
13 I can tell you what the BMI has meant to many of
14 our young men and women. I can tell you about a
15 young man who came from a home where he was abused
16 and he'd never found a family until he came to the
17 BMI program. I can tell you about a young woman
18 who comes every day with nothing to eat. Who
19 comes and finds a family at the BMI program who
20 cares for her, who looks out for her, who reaches
21 out to her every single day. Ladies and
22 gentlemen, I beg you again, continue your support
23 for the BMI program. Thank you.

24 SHARON SHIN: Hello, My name is
25 Sharon Shin and I'm here to speak on behalf of the

1
2 Peter F. Vallone scholarship. I chose to attend
3 Queensborough Community College knowing that I was
4 going to receive an excellent education, which
5 would help me achieve my goals. I live with my
6 parents and like the rest of America, we're in a
7 difficult financial situation. As a fine arts
8 major I have to worry about the cost of books in
9 addition to art supplies. You can't imagine the
10 relief my family and I felt when we found out I
11 was chosen to receive the Peter F. Vallone
12 Scholarship, \$250 each semester that I attend QCC
13 and maintain a 3.0 GPA or better. Not only did
14 this scholarship help me financially, it motivated
15 me to work harder in school to reach my 3.95 GPA
16 that I have right now. It also gave me a great
17 amount of confidence.

18 I learned something very important
19 about myself that I never knew until I came to
20 Queensborough. I'm actually great at what I do.
21 When I graduate from Queensborough I plan on
22 transferring to a competitive four year arts
23 school which I never planned to do before. The
24 Vallone scholarship definitely gave me the boost I
25 needed to push myself further.

1
2 I would like to see the funding
3 restored to the Peter F. Vallone scholarship so
4 that future students can benefit as I did. Thank
5 you.

6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.
7 Let's give them a big hand clap. We thank all of
8 you for your testimony. Any questions anybody?
9 Thank you very much for your testimony. I
10 appreciate it. I failed to say that also Council
11 Member Darlene Mealy is also a new addition. In
12 addition to heading up the Women's Issues
13 Committee, which I also serve on, she's also a new
14 addition to the Committee on Higher Education so
15 we welcome you. Now we'll hear from the
16 administration.

17 COUNSEL: We'll hear from Vice
18 Chancellor Garrie Moore, Director Jim Murphy and
19 Director Elliott Daws. In the interest of time
20 we're definitely going to ask you to summarize
21 this here. I'm certain that this will be for the
22 record and when we get--

23 The good thing about this, to let
24 you know how useful this is going to be, the
25 Council Members that you're talking to, the Mayor

1
2 doesn't pass the budget, we do. So these hearings
3 are very, very important because you're talking to
4 Council Members. When we get behind the scenes
5 after you'll leave, I have to now go behind the
6 scenes and say hey, don't forget CUNY. Make sure
7 you don't let them take CUNY out because it is
8 this Council that's going to pass that budget.
9 This is going to be very, very important. Your
10 testimonies are very on time, on target and
11 extremely important. But with this, if you could
12 summarize it so that we can get to as many
13 students as we can, I would greatly appreciate it.
14 Thank you very much.

15 COUNSEL: Please raise your right
16 hands. Do you swear and/or affirm that the
17 testimony you're about to give is to the best of
18 your knowledge truthful and accurate? Thank you.
19 Please state your name for the record before you
20 begin your testimony.

21 GARRIE MOORE: Good afternoon Chair
22 Barron and members of the Committee. I am Garrie
23 Moore, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at
24 the City University of New York. Accompanying me
25 today is James Murphy, the University Associate

1
2 Dean for Enrollment and Elliot Daws, the Director
3 of the CUNY Black Male Initiative. I'm grateful
4 to have the opportunity to speak with you this
5 afternoon--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA:

7 [interposing] I'm sorry, is the statement in here
8 or...

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Do we have
10 your testimony?

11 MR. MOORE: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: A copy of your
13 testimony?

14 MR. MOORE: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: It's in here?

16 MR. MOORE: No, it's a separate
17 hand out.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Sergeant of
19 Arms, did you pass his testimony around? All
20 right. You may proceed.

21 MR. MOORE: The Chairman said keep
22 it brief so we were keeping it brief. Again I am
23 privileged to have the opportunity to speak with
24 you this afternoon. I will share with you
25 information before the other presenters present on

1
2 two programs that I believe are living examples of
3 how programs can succeed when they are supported.
4 The two programs I'm speaking of are SEEK and CD
5 programs. My colleagues later on will talk about
6 the Peter F. Vallone scholarship and the CUNY
7 Black Male Initiative, two other programs that we
8 know are very, very important to support.

9 SEEK and College Discovery programs
10 are essential to the City University of New York's
11 mission of providing access to higher education
12 for the poor of New York City and state. And they
13 serve as one of the many strategies that we use to
14 reduce gaps in students' success. As you know
15 SEEK and CD are two CUNY higher education
16 opportunity programs. They bear the distinction
17 of being the first state funded opportunity
18 programs in the nation. That alone makes them
19 important.

20 But equally important is the fact
21 that nearly for a half century SEEK and CD have
22 provided students a small financial supplement and
23 developed innovative, academic and counseling
24 initiatives that enable them to compete with their
25 better prepared non-program peers. At no time in

1
2 our nation's history is there a greater need to
3 ensure that we are educating all of our residents.
4 We believe that supporting the Vallone scholarship
5 and the Black Male Initiative will put us further
6 down the road towards supporting all of our
7 students. Thank you.

8 JAMES MURPHY: Good afternoon
9 Chairman Barron and fellow Council Members. My
10 name is James Murphy. I'm the University
11 Associate Dean for enrollment. In 1998 the City
12 Council created the Peter Vallone scholarship for
13 CUNY students who graduated from a New York City
14 high school. Recipients are required to have
15 graduated with a minimum of an 80 average and
16 maintain a B average while in college. Initially
17 the city provided \$7 million in funds for this
18 program. This enabled CUNY to award eligible
19 student \$1,250 a year. In the initial year
20 approximately 4,500 students received funding.

21 However the number of recipients
22 has steadily increased. By 2007 the Council had
23 increased funding to \$11.6 million when
24 approximately 13,400 students received an award.

25 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Excuse me.

1

2 The funding increased and who was the chair of the
3 committee when that happened.

4

MR. MURPHY: To tell you the truth,
5 I think it was you.

6

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Oh, oh, oh,
7 oh.

8

MR. MURPHY: I'm not sure but I'm
9 pretty sure it was you.

10

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay, just
11 checking.

12

MR. MURPHY: Everything good that's
13 happened to CUNY in the past couple of years
14 you've been responsible for.

15

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay. I'm
16 just trying to...

17

MR. MURPHY: Okay. Unfortunately
18 budget constraints, and this was not your doing,
19 had reduced the amount the city has been able to
20 provide. CUNY is very grateful to the city for
21 the \$6.7 million it provided for the approximately
22 13,800 students who received an award this year.
23 The combination of reduced funding and an increase
24 in the number of eligible recipients has resulted
25 in awards of \$500 per year.

1
2 Vallone scholarships provide many
3 students funds needed to attend CUNY, especially
4 in tough economic times. Some students use the
5 funding for tuition while others use it for books
6 and supplies. We thank the City Council for their
7 generous support in the past, especially you
8 Council person Barron and hope we'll be able to
9 receive funding for this valuable program for the
10 next fiscal year and beyond. Thank you very much.

11 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very
12 much for that testimony. But on this one we
13 really have to struggle because we have that \$11
14 million over the last few years. Last year was
15 the first time they really cut it back, I think
16 \$6.7 and that's a budget I didn't vote for. We
17 need to say to our Council Members that we should
18 not vote for budgets that cut us like that. So
19 you're quite accurate about that. Elliot.

20 DR. ELLIOTT MR. DAWS: Good
21 afternoon my name is Elliott Daws. I am the
22 University Director of the City University of New
23 York Black Male Initiative Program. Based on
24 promising models at Medgar Evers College, a CUNY
25 college in central Brooklyn led by President

1
2 Edison O. Jackson, the University created a BMI
3 program during the 2005-2006 academic year that
4 funds projects throughout the CUNY system that are
5 designed to increase the enrollment and retention
6 rates in students from groups that are severely
7 represented in higher education with the focus on
8 African American males.

9 Through its focus on one of the
10 most severely under represented populations in
11 higher education, CUNY BMI represents one
12 expression of CUNY's commitment to access and
13 diversity. Though targeted towards African
14 American males and other under represented groups,
15 CUNY BMI projects do not discriminate based on
16 race and gender and will serve as models for
17 improving educational outcomes of all students.
18 All programs and activities of the Black Male
19 Initiative are open to all academically eligible
20 students, faculty and staff without regard to
21 race, gender, national origin or other
22 characteristic. However, the program focuses on
23 African American males who remain one of the most
24 severely under represented populations in higher
25 education.

1
2 With the generous support of four
3 consecutive grants from the New York City Council,
4 CUNY BMI has funded projects throughout the CUNY
5 system that focus on the following six areas. I'm
6 going to just briefly go through those six areas.

7 Increasing enrollment of diverse
8 populations through diversity recruitment,
9 promoting academic success and improving retention
10 and graduation rates through structured mentorship
11 programs and the development of academic learning
12 communities. We know that through higher
13 education research, mentorship, mentorship,
14 mentorship is the key to increasing retention
15 rates and improving graduation rates.

16 Facilitating access to higher
17 education with students who have fallen out of the
18 traditional K through 12 education pipeline to
19 college through support of targeted GED programs.
20 At present, BMI supports 2 targeted GED programs.
21 We heard from a student who went through the
22 Educational Ladders Initiative Program at Medgar
23 Evers. We also have another targeted GED program
24 through the CUNY Adult Literacy program. These
25 both targeted GED programs have 60% completion

1
2 rates so those students we then prep them to go on
3 into college. Because of the severe non-
4 completion problem or drop out problem in New York
5 City public high schools, as many as 67% of
6 African American males don't make it through the
7 traditional K through 12 education pipeline. It's
8 important for us to support targeted GED programs
9 as another alternative pathway into higher
10 education.

11 Exposing CUNY students to graduate
12 and professional school opportunities. At present
13 we support one pre-med program and two pre-law
14 programs, which I'll talk more about later.
15 Supporting re-entry programs that assist formerly
16 incarcerated individuals in making the transition
17 to higher education. We support a higher
18 education re-entry program called the College
19 Initiative. We know that there has been a problem
20 in our society in terms of the explosion of
21 incarceration rates since the mid-1980s. We want
22 to make sure that formerly incarcerated
23 individuals have a pathway into higher education
24 and our support of the College Initiative program
25 demonstrates that.

1
2 Encouraging CUNY students,
3 particularly African American, Caribbean and
4 Latino males to pursue careers as New York City
5 public school teachers. At present, less than 2%
6 of the K through 6 educators here in New York City
7 are African American males. Less than 4.5% of K
8 through 12 educators are African American males.
9 So it's very possible for the next generation of
10 public school students to go through their entire
11 public school education without having a single
12 African American male teacher in their experience
13 because of the very low numbers of African
14 American males as New York City public school
15 teachers. We use some of the funding from the
16 City Council to support programs that help
17 students from this particular population consider
18 careers as New York City public school teachers.

19 The funding that we've received
20 from the New York City Council over the course of
21 the last four years has been consistent and has
22 allowed us to support 25 projects throughout the
23 University. Approximately 20 to 100 students are
24 served through their participation in our
25 structured activities, such as mentorship programs

1
2 sponsored by each of the 25 projects. CUNY BMI
3 academic programs including the CUNY BMI annual
4 conference and the CUNY BMI Distinguished Speakers
5 series are free and open to the public and are
6 another way in which we reach the larger public
7 with respect to our program activity. Hopefully
8 we recruit more students to come to the
9 University.

10 My testimony lays out some of the
11 conferences that we've had over the last couple of
12 years. We had a conference in 2007 at CCNY that
13 focused on the state of education for African
14 American students. That was a very successful
15 conference; over 480 people came. We had another
16 successful conference last year at Medgar Evers
17 College on African American males in the U.S.
18 legal system. We had many law schools come and
19 recruit CUNY students at that conference. Over
20 510 people came to that conference.

21 We've also been able to leverage
22 the City Council funds to seek funding from
23 private foundations and corporate giving programs
24 that have also supported our program. We can not
25 use the City Council funds to provide individual

1
2 scholarships for students but we have used private
3 funds that we've gotten from the Deutsche Bank
4 American's Foundation, the Shock Foundation for
5 Public Education as well as the Goldman Sachs
6 Foundation to provide individual scholarships to
7 students.

8 Particularly in our Teacher as
9 Leaders Project which provides full scholarships
10 for training for the New York State teacher
11 certification exams. We conduct monthly workshops
12 to help our students to make sure that they pass
13 the first three certification exams to get
14 preliminary certification. Career development and
15 public policy workshops, clinical education
16 experiences and mentorship from current and former
17 New York City public school teachers; we've been
18 very fortunate that we've had a number of public
19 school teachers to sign up to serve as mentors to
20 our students.

21 We're very grateful to the City
22 Council for their support of this program over the
23 course of the last four years. The program has
24 grown such that at present about 3,000 students
25 receive services from the various projects

1 supported by the CUNY Black Male Initiative. Once
2 again, thank you so much for your support over the
3 course of the last four years. Thank you.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Very
6 impressive. We thank you very much for that
7 testimony. This is the kind of ammunition we need
8 when we go into the budget room. I also want to
9 thank Dr. Daws for the support by the Black Male
10 Initiative on a recent event that really honored
11 two great, great Black men and that was Dr. John
12 Carlos and Dr. Tommy Smith, the great Olympians
13 from 1968.

14 And it was really an historic
15 moment because right here in this chambers they
16 have been really isolated and castigated all
17 through the years. Those are the brothers that
18 raised their clinched fist during the National
19 Anthem at the 1968 Olympics, the reason being
20 because they were fighting against racism. They
21 felt that the racism in our society should be
22 addressed and they wanted to use that moment to
23 express their views. They were punished severely;
24 they couldn't find jobs, their lives were
25 threatened.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

John Carlos was saying when he left Harlem to go to the Olympics he was John Carlos, the hero. When he came back after protesting he was like a villain. A lot of people, I don't know if you saw that poster. Did you see the white Athlete that was in there too? He even supported the protest and he had a button on supporting the Olympic project. When he went back to Australia he was also isolated and punished. He died and it was alcoholism and everything, supporting that time in 1968.

So we had a historic moment right here in the City Council with the first time that I think they've been recognized by a government body. And it was done right here and Dr. Elliot Daws was very instrumental in that. And Mr. Paul Washington was here. Give Mr. Washington a big hand clap, he was instrumental in that. Before we proceed, and I want everyone to do this no matter what our ethnicity is, say Black Power.

[Laughter] Did everyone do it? Did you check? Let me just try it one more time. I want to make sure nobody. Everybody watch John Katalaski because I want to make sure that this happens. So

1

2 are we ready? Let's try it again because this is
3 about power to the people, power to the people.
4 Do you know what I mean? So are you ready? Raise
5 the fists. Black power. Did you do that?

6 Just a couple of questions, if you
7 can give us the numbers of people that are
8 serviced in CD and SEEK and I think you said 3,000
9 with the Black Male Initiative. We have to
10 mention, always, Dr. Edison O. Jackson, the
11 President who is retiring at Medgar Evers. That's
12 the first time I heard of Black Male Initiative
13 stuff when it came from him at Medgar Evers
14 College and now we have it throughout the entire
15 University. So in his absence we want to give him
16 a big hand clap, for Dr. Edison O. Jackson.

17 But just some of the numbers and
18 then what happens to them? Is there any tracking
19 of the students, like the ones in the two year
20 college what percentage goes into the four year
21 colleges or do they go to other four year
22 colleges? Just some of the numbers.

23 MR. MOORE: Currently the SEEK
24 enrollment is at 8,772 and the CD enrollment is at
25 2,500 students. I don't have the exact numbers

1
2 in terms of how many track into four year
3 institutions but I can tell you that approximately
4 80% of the incoming freshman finish their semester
5 in good academic standing.

6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Okay,
7 excellent.

8 MR. MOORE: I can also tell you
9 that the longer they're in the program, the higher
10 that percentage is in terms of their success. I
11 can also site that out of the SEEK and CD
12 programs, that we have among us in New York
13 doctors, lawyers, City Council members, Chairs of
14 Committees, we have corporate heads, journalists,
15 college professors, social workers, all very
16 successful individuals that have gone through the
17 SEEK and CD programs.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Council Member
19 Martinez and Council Member Ulrich have questions.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Thank you
21 Mr. Chair. Vice Chancellor Moore.

22 MR. MOORE: Yes, sir.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Isn't
24 SEEK a federally funded program?

25 MR. MOORE: State. SEEK is funded

1

2 through the state.

3

4

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: The state?

5

6

7

MR. MOORE: Yes, the funds come to the University and the University makes a commitment to fund the SEEK program.

8

9

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Is that the same for the College Discovery?

10

11

MR. MOORE: Yes. I'm sorry. CD is through the city.

12

13

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Through the city?

14

MR. MOORE: Yes, correct.

15

16

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: What's the total amount for the CD?

17

18

19

MR. MOORE: We have our budget person here. May I ask him to respond to that please?

20

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Sure.

21

MR. MOORE: Matt Sapienza.

22

23

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: State your name for the record and your title.

24

MATTHEW SAPIENZA: Matthew

25

Sapienza, Budget Director at CUNY. SEEK is a

1
2 fully funded program from the state, \$17.1 million
3 we get in SEEK funds. College Discovery is funded
4 by both. The state does provide funding for
5 College Discovery. It's about \$828,000. In
6 addition the University supplements about three--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ:

8 [interposing] I'm sorry because I got a little
9 confused when you said you were budget director I
10 was thinking of Malalaise so I'm not paying
11 attention to your numbers. Can you start again?

12 MR. SAPIENZA: Sure, he's my boss
13 so.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Okay.

15 MR. SAPIENZA: SEEK is \$17.1
16 million. It's funded solely from the state.
17 College Discovery, we receive about \$828,000 from
18 the state and in addition, the University uses
19 about \$3.5 million of its city funded operating
20 budget to add to the state allocation. So it's
21 about \$4.5 million that is the total budget for
22 College Discovery and about \$820 of that for this
23 year comes from state funds.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Basically
25 from the CD, the College Discovery, the

1
2 allocations from the city for operation that the
3 University designates for the program.

4 MR. SAPIENZA: Correct, about \$3.5
5 million of the city supported budget goes to
6 College Discovery.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Okay,
8 thank you. Vice Chancellor, you mentioned that
9 80% of the freshmen do well their first semester.
10 But there's no additional data in terms of
11 following those students for the four years?

12 MR. MOORE: There is other data. I
13 apologize I don't have any?

14 MR. MURPHY: I don't have any data
15 with me. We can supply you with that data.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Yes, that
17 would be very interesting because as a CUNY
18 student myself, you know that there is that
19 phenomenon of a large number coming through the
20 door but not a large number exiting the door. I
21 think that that's imperative that in the
22 University we have the support system and the
23 services available to help students come out the
24 door. It's not just the amount of students coming
25 in the first year but also how many are we

1

2 actually getting out that are graduating, which is
3 extremely important. There are many factors that
4 contribute to that. I just want to be clear on
5 that.

6 And on the Black Male Initiative, I
7 want to first congratulate the work you're doing
8 in terms of leveraging the public dollars to seek
9 the public dollars. It's very impressive to see
10 what you've done in terms from the foundation
11 dollars that are coming in. So this is extremely
12 important information for us as we sit down at the
13 budget negotiating table to indicate this is not
14 just a program that depends solely on public
15 funds. But the public funds are allowing the
16 funding from the private sector to come in.

17 I also wanted to ask you a question
18 as it relates to graduate level. Many minority
19 students are not at par with our counterparts in
20 terms of graduate studies, either Masters or PhD
21 programs. What are you guys doing in that area?

22 MR. DAWS: First, I just wanted to
23 respond to your comments with respect to the
24 private funds. It's been very difficult for us to
25 go after funding from the private sector so the

1
2 funds from the City Council really help us to make
3 the argument to private foundations and corporate
4 giving programs like the Deutsche Bank America's
5 Foundation, the Shock Foundation.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ:

7 Absolutely.

8 MR. DAWS: So we have been working
9 very hard on that and we will continue to do so in
10 the future. As far as graduate programs, of the
11 24 projects we have a number of projects that are
12 devoted specifically to helping CUNY students make
13 it into graduate and professional school. We have
14 one program called the Pipeline to Justice program
15 at the law school that assists students at the law
16 school in the law school application process, help
17 and assistance with the LSAT in terms of the law
18 school admissions process.

19 We see that there's more reliance
20 on the LSAT in law school admissions, not only at
21 CUNY Law but throughout law schools generally.
22 This program that CUNY BMI funds, supports, helps
23 students from largely under represented
24 populations make their way into law school. Mary
25 Lou Billock who is an associate professor at CUNY

1
2 Law is the BMI Program Director, who is here, who
3 make speak a little bit about that later on.

4 We have another pre-law program
5 that's coordinated by an assistant professor in
6 the Department of Latino and Latin American
7 Studies at the John Jay College of Criminal
8 Justice, Professor Jodie Roure who is here in the
9 first row, who runs another pre-law program at
10 John Jay. She's stated several times that our BMI
11 funded projects meeting that if it wasn't for the
12 funds from this program, that pre-law program
13 wouldn't exist. They've been very successful in
14 getting students into law schools throughout the
15 country from John Jay College. So those are two
16 law school programs.

17 We support another program at the
18 Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education, a
19 pre-med program that helps students from under
20 represented populations with the focus on African
21 American and Latino students. It's a mentorship
22 program at Sophie Davis. There's also a program
23 at the graduate school called Widening the Doors
24 to Academia that's intended to diversify the
25 professoriate, encouraging more African American

1
2 and Latino students, in particular, to make their
3 way into graduate programs, and then get supports
4 that they need to complete the PhD and then move
5 hopefully into teaching at the University level.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: That is
7 extremely important, particularly getting our
8 student PhD into the classrooms where we need to
9 do more to diversify. Do you track? I just don't
10 know and if you do it would be interesting to look
11 at it, do the students that participate in the
12 Black Male Initiative do you track how many of
13 those go on to these programs and actually are
14 successful? If any yet because I know it's a four
15 year roll program so I don't want you running--
16 it's in here. So I'll look for that information.

17 MR. DAWS: There are 25 different
18 projects so there may be varying degrees in terms
19 of the tracking that each project does. But I
20 think that the projects that focus on graduate and
21 professional school do a very good job of tracking
22 those students and finding out where they show up
23 the next year after they graduate from CUNY.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Okay,
25 thank you. Mr. Chair just finally, with the Peter

1

2 Vallone scholarship I know at one point you
3 presented the Committee with the geographical
4 showing of where the students were coming from.
5 Do you have an updated? Or has it changed much?

6

7

8

MR. MURPHY: That hasn't changed
much over the years but we can get you an updated
copy of that.

9

10

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: It hasn't
or has--

11

12

13

14

MR. MURPHY: [interposing] It has
not changed significantly over the years but we
can get you an updated copy of where the awards
are coming from.

15

16

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: Okay,
thank you Mr. Chair.

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you
Mr. Chairman. Before I begin I thought it was
funny. I wanted to share with you that as I was
walking in the chambers, one of the administrators
thought I was one of the students. They didn't
think I was a Council Member but I thought that
was pretty funny.

24

25

At any rate, I don't think that
anyone can negate or argue with the fact that

1
2 these initiatives are not only very useful but
3 also very successful. But perhaps one of the
4 greatest challenges I think that you face is the
5 lack of college preparation at the high school
6 level, particularly in some of the New York City
7 public high schools. So based on that can you
8 discuss briefly some of the remedial courses that
9 are offered through CUNY that help counter this.

10 MR. MURPHY: I don't know how
11 extensive of a presentation I can give you. I can
12 tell you that the students coming in to CUNY are
13 tested in proficiency for English, reading,
14 writing and math. We do offer remedial course
15 work at the community colleges, not at the senior
16 colleges, in those subjects. I don't know how
17 much more information you need on that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: That may
19 help a great deal in terms of retention.
20 Obviously as my colleagues was pointing out just a
21 few moments ago, the ground swell of people coming
22 in the door, there's a great disparity between
23 that and the amount of people who are coming out
24 of the door. I don't think that the blame is with
25 CUNY or with the professors or with the

1
2 administration. I think that if that foundation
3 has not been laid before they walk through that
4 door, that it makes it extremely difficult for you
5 as professors to keep them there. Maybe it may be
6 worth starting a discussion to see how CUNY can
7 partner with some of the public high schools in
8 terms of college preparation so that this problem
9 won't be that problematic later on down the road.

10 MR. MOORE: I know that our
11 admissions folks and our recruitment folks meet
12 regularly with the high school counselors to
13 engage in conversation so we can do exactly what
14 you just describe. Understand who are students
15 are coming in to the system and equally important,
16 understanding what it is that we must be prepared
17 for when these students enter our doors. That is
18 happening. I can tell you that there is a lot of
19 work to be done in that area and we will continue
20 to work on that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you
22 for your testimony, thank you Mr. Chairman.

23 MR. MURPHY: If I could just add to
24 that, CUNY has a large program called College Now
25 with the New York City public high schools where

1
2 juniors and seniors in high school attend college
3 courses at the community and senior colleges for
4 free. The final thing I would say is that the
5 quality of students graduating from New York City
6 public high school coming to CUNY has increased
7 tremendously over the years.

8 MR. DAWS: I'd just like to add
9 that some of the Black Male Initiative funds are
10 also used to increase the representation of
11 students from under represented populations in the
12 College Now program so that's another way that
13 we're trying to get more students in the pipeline
14 to college.

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Well let me
16 just say this that the love fest is over on this
17 point. I just have to always offer my honest
18 criticism. I don't think you should have ever
19 taken remedial out of the four year colleges. I
20 think we should have continued remediation in the
21 four year colleges and not just have remediation
22 at the two year colleges. The other thing is we
23 have to end mayoral control of our schools on the
24 public school level. It is not true that we're
25 getting better equipped students out of Bloomberg;

1

2 they're getting worse. It's not happening.

3

4 I know the Chancellor and the Mayor
5 had a nice little press conference and the Mayor
6 is using that for his political gain to make it
7 seem like wow, there's 6,000 students now being
8 enrolled in CUNY colleges under his mayoral
9 control. Yes, but probably 5,000 of them don't
10 have the skills to really attend college. And
11 6,000 of them can't get a gig if they don't attend
12 college. So mayoral control has failed us and we
13 need to end that and call on your legislators to
14 end mayoral control because it sunsets in June,
15 meaning it ends in June.

16

17 First of all, it just doesn't make
18 any sense. One person to have all of the
19 dictatorial power over education, turn it into a
20 business and after \$22 billion investment. If you
21 count the seven years I've been here, when I came
22 in the budget was \$12 or \$13 billion. It went up
23 to \$22 billion. Now you're talking about spending
24 almost \$1 trillion in the last eight years on
25 education and 48% of our students are still not
graduating. They're trying to shut down public
schools and open up charter schools. Turning our

1

2 education system into test taking mills.

3

4 Every school you go to is test
5 prep. Principals are cheating just to get the
6 test scores up so they don't look bad. And
7 they're dumbing down the test so that students can
8 pass the test and then tell everybody we increased
9 the scores since I've been mayor. Well if you
10 spend almost an average of \$10 to \$12 billion a
11 year to incrementally increase test scores that
12 you dumb down, a test that you dumb down, where is
13 the science? Where is the art? Where's the
14 music? Where's the economics? Where's learning
15 about finance? Where's learning about the green
16 economy? Tests, take tests so the mayor can say
17 scores went up and you should continue to give
18 them his control. The only thing who benefited
19 from mayoral control is countries like Snapple who
20 got a no bid contract in his billionaire business.
21 But that's not what this hearing's about. I don't
22 know why you'll made me say that. Thank you very
23 much. Gale.

24

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

25

First of all congratulations on your work. Is
there any money coming from Washington in the

1

2 stimulus that could aid you in your efforts?

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

MR. MOORE: That's an excellent question. The Chancellor has established a group of individuals who are looking at that very question to see what is in the stimulus package to support these programs and services. We had a meeting just yesterday and that is being studied very carefully so I don't know at this point.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I just want to thank you because some of the best high schools in the City of New York are yours.

MR. MOORE: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know because on my campus, Martin Luther King, Hunter has a high school, 60% of the graduates went to Hunter directly and took courses at Hunter Science High School at Hunter College. As I said 60% went to the Hunter College so it is a tremendous asset. I think universally from Middle College High School to Hunter, your schools are excellent so thank you very much.

MR. MOORE: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very much for your testimony. And we'll take the next

1
2 panel. Thank you. I also want to recognize
3 Council Member Robert Jackson from Manhattan. We
4 thank him, give him a big hand clap. And our
5 Finance Analyst, Shadawn Smith we want to give her
6 a big hand clap for all of the information she
7 gives us and we'll bring our next panel.

8 COUNSEL: Professor Jodie Roure,
9 Mary Lou Billock, Dr. Reginald Blake, Professor
10 Joseph Wilson and Arthurine DeSola. Please raise
11 your right hands. Do you swear and/or affirm that
12 the testimony you're about to give is to the best
13 of your knowledge truthful and accurate? Thank
14 you.

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: And you can
16 proceed you're your testimony.

17 JODIE ROURE: Hi, my name is Jodie
18 Roure. I'm an Assistant Professor at John Jay
19 College of Criminal Justice. We've met before. I
20 am the Director of the John Jay College Ronald H.
21 Brown Summer Legal Prep program and it's sponsored
22 with St. John's University School of Law.

23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I'm going to
24 ask all of you to make your testimonies concise
25 and summarize so that we can get as many in as

1
2 possible. You can proceed. The others as you
3 testify, just give your name and who you are.

4 MS. ROURE: Thank you. I come
5 before you today to thank you for believing in our
6 program. And as Professor Daws stated, but for
7 this funding the John Jay College Ronald H. Brown
8 program would not exist. And that is despite the
9 numerous extensive funding proposals to both the
10 college university and private foundations. Your
11 investment has repaid itself in legal kind over
12 six times in scholarships alone this year. I
13 provided a handout for you, a little brief summary
14 of the facts.

15 But more importantly despite
16 obstacles in society that have impeded access for
17 students of color to gain law school admissions,
18 we have proven that this can be overcome. So I
19 think the best focus here would be to provide you
20 with some results.

21 If you turn to the first page of
22 the handout that I gave you, the average LSAT
23 score amongst our students who are first
24 generation and low income, these are the criteria,
25 or students from under represented groups in the

1
2 legal profession for this particular cohort year,
3 that is the 145. The mean standard is about a 150
4 something, depending on where you are in the
5 United States. This year alone we've had 58
6 acceptances with 35 scholarships, almost \$600,000
7 in scholarships. Most of our students have been
8 accepted and if they haven't been accepted it's
9 because admissions are still pending.

10 According to the 2000 Census, 24.9%
11 of the U.S. population are non-white. Regrettable
12 within the legal profession this number is
13 drastically lower. The ABA Commission on Racial
14 and Ethnic Diversity in the profession reports
15 that only 9.7% of all lawyers represent racial or
16 ethnic minorities. Minorities comprise
17 approximately 10% of all lawyers and judges in the
18 United States. This is our problem.

19 This under representation of
20 African Americans and Latinos and Latinas in the
21 legal profession is of grave concern. In
22 comparison to a multitude of social issues
23 indirectly and directly affected by the criminal
24 justice system, these include but are not limited
25 to immigration detention, access to a proper

1
2 education and the national over incarceration of
3 Latinos and Latinas and African Americans in
4 comparison to the general population of the United
5 States.

6 There is an enormous need for
7 Latinos, African Americans and other minority
8 communities to have diverse attorneys represent
9 them. It is important that we as a nation provide
10 opportunities for cross section of all populations
11 to participate in a "democratic and
12 representative" government in these United States.
13 This program does that and we have proven that
14 with your funding we are changing the
15 diversification of the legal profession, which
16 will help us address the social ills.

17 These are students that have a
18 commitment to community, including the work in
19 high schools. They work in New York City high
20 schools and they work with community college
21 students. They stay in law school, which is the
22 most important thing. And they are making it
23 through the pipeline. We have managed to plug the
24 legal pipeline through this program and I just
25 really, really urge you to see how important this

1
2 is in order for us to address all types of social
3 problems in New York City and across the United
4 States. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.

6 : Good afternoon Council Members
7 and Mayor Barron, excuse me Freudian slip. My
8 name is Joseph Wilson, professor of Political
9 Science at Brooklyn College. I also direct the
10 Brooklyn College Graduate Center for Worker
11 Education, which develops more Masters and
12 Doctoral students of other than any other program
13 in CUNY. So I have to get that plug in.

14 I'm also one of the co-directors of
15 Brooklyn College BMI ERIS program. Our program
16 plays a vital role in the lives of some of the
17 most vulnerable students at Brooklyn College. We
18 recruit students of color. Working with local
19 high schools, ERIS provides mentors in all
20 subjects. We have a drop in study center with a
21 computer lab. Last year we had over 1,500 drop
22 ins at our center. We have to emphasize that
23 without your support we wouldn't have drop ins but
24 we'd have drop outs.

25 To that point, our program has

1
2 increased the Black male retention rate at
3 Brooklyn College. So currently over 70% of our
4 ERIS scholars return to school as a result of our
5 work, the retention for African American men has
6 risen to match the general student retention rate.
7 We assist needy and deserving and brilliant
8 students who face sometimes insurmountable social
9 problems. We provide counseling and we assist
10 when students run into a crisis. ERIS is also a
11 pipeline program. We send students to the school
12 of education and into law and doctoral programs
13 and masters programs. Earlier today you heard the
14 eloquent testimony from Dan Peters, one of our
15 success stories.

16 We would not exist without your
17 funding, please save BMI and ERIS. These are
18 critically important, not only for Brooklyn
19 College and for people of color and African
20 Americans but for all New Yorkers. Please save
21 our programs. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.

23 ARTHURINE DESOLA: Good afternoon.
24 Good afternoon Chairperson Barron and
25 distinguished members of the Council and Higher

1
2 Education. Thank you for the chance to testify on
3 behalf of the 22,000 professional staff members of
4 the City University of New York. The SEEK and
5 College Discovery programs--

6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing]
7 Excuse me, could you just state your name and your
8 title for the record, miss.

9 MS. DESOLA: Certainly. I'm very
10 sorry.

11 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: It's all
12 right.

13 MS. DESOLA: Please excuse me. My
14 name is Arthurine DeSola. I'm the Secretary of
15 the Professional Staff Congress of the City
16 University of New York. The SEEK and College
17 Discovery programs serve some of CUNY's neediest
18 students. These programs are, by design, only
19 available to entering college freshmen who are
20 academically disadvantaged and come from families
21 with incomes below the poverty level, which is
22 \$26,420 for a family of three.

23 The SEEK and College Discovery
24 program are among the biggest success stories of
25 CUNY. With greater resources to provide enhanced

1
2 counseling services, academic support and
3 supplemental financial aid, including modest
4 stipends for students, these programs have a long
5 track record for moving very low income students
6 from a marginalized position to the high levels of
7 academic attainment.

8 But the number of positions in SEEK
9 and College Discovery have declined as state
10 funding has withered. In 1990, funding was
11 sufficient to offer places for 4,321 freshmen.
12 However by 2008, the number has fallen 40% to only
13 3,180 freshmen. Declines are worse at the
14 community college level where the need is likely
15 to be greatest. Community colleges enroll only
16 906 students in College Discovery last year. I
17 want to repeat that. CUNY community colleges
18 enrolled only 906 students in College Discovery
19 last year.

20 Both of these programs are funded
21 by the state and while these programs were not cut
22 this year, they have been reduced in other years.
23 More important state investment in CUNY overall
24 has declined over the last 20 years. As
25 documented by the Fiscal Policy Institute, they

1
2 Excuse me. I don't mean to interrupt but could
3 you summarize.

4 MS. DESOLA: I certainly will.

5 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Because we
6 have a whole lot. And looking at the couple of
7 pages you have here.

8 MS. DESOLA: I know. Give me a
9 moment. In the interest of time, my testimony has
10 been submitted. This year we strongly urge to
11 restore cuts to the community college budget
12 proposed by Mayor Bloomberg Preliminary Executive
13 Budget. We urge the Council to restore the \$11.5
14 million for the Vallone scholarships for fiscal
15 year 2008 levels and to restore the \$3.8 million
16 for vital programs including the Black Male
17 Empowerment Initiative and other programs. And we
18 ask you to provide \$160 million in capital funding
19 for matching state authorized capital investments.
20 We call on the City Council to also invest new
21 funds for critically needed services including
22 expanding counseling services and hiring
23 additional full time faculty.

24 Finally, we reiterate that we
25 appeal to New York City to invest in CUNY, to

1
2 invest in CUNY students with public dollars and
3 not with unfair tuition increases that make CUNY
4 students pay for New York City's budget deficit.
5 Thank you for this opportunity to be heard.

6 MARY LOU BILLOCK: Good afternoon.
7 I'll be very brief. My name is Mary Lou Billock.
8 I'm the Associate Dean for Special Projects and a
9 professor of law at the Law School. When Elliot
10 asked me if I would come to the hearing and bring
11 some students. I said I'd be happy to come to the
12 hearing but I couldn't bring any students. It's
13 the last week of classes and it's a really
14 important time for them to be in school. So along
15 with my remarks you'll see some portraits of some
16 of the students as well as their stories so I
17 brought them in spirit.

18 You have my remarks but I will say
19 echoing what you heard from the first speaker on
20 this panel, that lawyers are the least diverse
21 profession in the United States. The enrollment
22 of African Americans in law school reached its
23 peak in 1995 despite an overall growth in law
24 school enrollment of 4,000 students since that
25 time. Two-thirds of African American applicants

1
2 to law school get rejected. Two-thirds of white
3 applicants get accepted. Why? As you've heard
4 it's an over reliance on LSAT scores. There's a
5 gap, African American mean score is 142 and the
6 Caucasian mean score is 153. What accounts for
7 that gap? I'm not exactly sure. I can tell you
8 what it's not. It's not intelligence, it's not
9 diligence, it's not responsibility, it's not
10 motivation and it's not potential. I can tell you
11 that based on 25 years of working with students
12 who outperformed their LSATs at CUNY Law School.

13 When the over reliance on LSATs
14 came to CUNY we decided to do something different.
15 With the help of BMI and the City Council
16 sponsorship of BMI we started our Pipeline to
17 Justice program three years ago. Since then 22,
18 23 and 25 students in each year have been admitted
19 to law school. We have another 23 coming next
20 year. 80% of the students in the program are
21 Black males or Latinos and they were all denied
22 admission to every law school in the country
23 before they entered our program. One year later,
24 they're law students.

25 I'll conclude by saying that

1
2 society doesn't need more lawyers, it needs more
3 lawyers who believe in justice, who understand the
4 needs and concerns of communities that have been
5 neglected or worse and will understand the power
6 and promise of those communities to move our
7 country forward. And we believe that's where our
8 Pipeline to Justice students are going. Thank
9 you.

10 DR. REGGIE BLAKE: To the Committee
11 on Higher Education of the New York City Council,
12 to the honorable Chairperson Charles Barron, to
13 the distinguished committee members I say a
14 pleasant good afternoon. My name is Dr. Reggie
15 Blake and I'm a professor of physics at the New
16 York City College of Technology, City Tech. I've
17 been privileged to serve as a project director of
18 City Tech's Black Male Initiative program from
19 it's very inception some four years ago.

20 I thank you for this opportunity to
21 testify of the growth, the success and the value
22 of City Tech's BMI program. As you well know the
23 genesis of the CUNY BMI program can be traced to
24 the heart and the mind of Dr. Edison O. Jackson,
25 president of Medgar Evers College. After pursuing

1
2 the dismal academic landscape of CUNY,
3 particularly for young Black men Dr. Jackson had
4 an epiphany. The vision of transformation to
5 increase, to encourage and to support the
6 inclusion and the academic success of under
7 represented groups in higher education,
8 particularly for Black males.

9 As the only science, technology,
10 engineering and mathematics STEM designated BMI
11 program within CUNY, City Tech's BMI Program has
12 been true to the spirit and to the intent of Dr.
13 Jackson's vision. We started as a fledging group
14 four years ago but today our BMI program has over
15 300 students. We have turned gatekeeper courses
16 into gateway courses.

17 One of the hallmarks of our program
18 is a unique research mentoring paradigm that we
19 have developed. For research we have provided
20 mentoring to our students in satellite and ground
21 based remote sensing, cell biology, organic
22 chemistry, computing and hyper media and
23 telecommunications. Our BMI students have done
24 research in Mexico. This summer one is going to
25 study climate change in the arctic. Another

1
2 student will be doing an internship at the famed
3 Johns Hopkins University. Another student has
4 been accepted to an internship at Rutgers
5 University. And yet another student will be going
6 to Hawaii to present a paper that she co-authored
7 with her mentor, a paper at the Association for
8 the Advancement of Computing Education.

9 One of our recent graduates was
10 accepted to the Masters program in Computer
11 Science at City College. He started his Masters
12 program in the Spring 2009 semester and he
13 simultaneously studying satellite remote sensing
14 as far as data compression and data encryption is
15 concerned. A BMI student who transferred to City
16 College this spring just got a full five year
17 scholarship in biomedical engineering and he is
18 doing very, very well.

19 It is abundantly clear that City
20 Tech's BMI program has helped to transform the
21 STEM culture at City Tech at all levels, from the
22 SUNY administration down to the students. We have
23 instituted a program that is centered on student
24 success and is predicated on the myriad of student
25 support services that includes mentoring,

1
2 advising, counseling, peer led workshops,
3 tutoring, paid research internships and such like.

4 Our STEM students now feel
5 empowered and confident. One of our BMI students
6 in electrical engineering technology will be this
7 year's salutatorian at our school, which means he
8 got the second highest grade in the entire
9 college. So our STEM program at City Tech has
10 done well. We have reached all levels and our
11 student activities are at a very high level at
12 City Tech. Our school is really experiencing a
13 renaissance of a kind, our BMI program has to be
14 shared or has to be given credit for its rebirth.
15 Qualitative assessments and preliminary
16 quantitative analysis all indicate that the STEM
17 outlook at City Tech has dramatically been
18 increased. Our retention rates, our graduation
19 rates are all expected to show marked
20 improvements.

21 It is therefore imperative that
22 this committee continues to provide funding for
23 work that CUNY BMI is doing. At City Tech, we
24 have been very vigilant in seeking external
25 funding so that our BMI program may be sustainable

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

and institutionalized. By May 1st this year, this coming Friday, our BMI task force at City Tech will have submitted four proposals to NSF, to U.S. Department of Education and to Wal-Mart trying to garner funds to institutionalize our BMI program. We're serious about the BMI issues however until we can secure such funding, we will certainly appreciate the funding not being cut by this committee. It is indeed vital to us.

An investment in CUNY BMI program is an investment in the future of this city, this nation and this world. I implore you and I beseech you, I appeal to you, please do not lay the budget ax to the BMI tree. Please do not turn back the clock, please do not muddle Dr. Jackson's vision. We have come too far. We have accomplished too much and we have too much more ground to cover.

I close by reminding you that a seed until it's released is only a promise of a tree. The death of a seed is the burial of a forest. Please do not kill this forest. Yesterday Ignizia Inazzi addressed the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of

1

2 Engineering and the Institute of Medicine.

3 President Obama said that science is more central
4 for our prosperity, our security, our health, our
5 environment and our quality of life than it has
6 ever been. And if there ever was a day that
7 reminded us of this shared stake in science and
8 research, it's today.

9 The President went on to say I'm
10 going to participate in a public awareness and
11 outreach campaign to encourage students to
12 consider careers in science and--

13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: [interposing]
14 You were doing really well and I just hate to cut
15 you off but you were on a roll, brother.

16 DR. BLAKE: I'm done.

17 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I thought you
18 were going to wrap it up when you said I encourage
19 you. You had a nice roll but then you got like
20 the preachers do, as I conclude and then they say
21 that ten times before they conclude. You were on
22 a nice roll. I hate to cut you off but we have to
23 summarize.

24 DR. BLAKE: I'm going to summarize.
25 I just want to urge this committee to join CUNY

1
2 BMI and President Obama in accepting the challenge
3 of the 21st century by making available the funds
4 necessary to continue Dr. Jackson's vision. Thank
5 you.

6 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very
7 much. Personally, this has been a great panel. I
8 hope we have all of your written testimony because
9 the information. You have copies of yours? Make
10 sure we get copies of your testimony. We
11 appreciate all of the words from this particular
12 panel and we want to make sure that we have all of
13 them for the record. And we will and we want to
14 invite Paul Washington, I think he had to leave.

15 But we're going to have a
16 Juneteenth program, June 19th hearing in the
17 chambers and we're focusing on science. So we
18 really would like for you to join us and be a part
19 of that. We're going to be getting some of those
20 of us who have come out of CUNY and other places
21 and really focusing heavy on science and
22 technology. Thank you very much and we'll call up
23 the next panel.

24 COUNSEL: Alucian Jalo, Jesse
25 Jones, Joanna Gomez, Jeffrey Valdez. Tremaine

1

2 Gooden.

3

4

5

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Some people
may have had to leave so we're going to keep
calling. Call up another.

6

7

COUNSEL: Suzie Walker, Marcos
Pichardo, William Hung.

8

9

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Go on until
you get five.

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

COUNSEL: Donaldson Conserve,
Cynthia Suprin. Please raise your right hands.
Do you swear and/or affirm that the testimony
you're about to give is to the best of your
knowledge truthful and accurate? Thank you.
Please remember to state your names before
beginning your testimony.

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

SUZIE WALKER: Good afternoon. My
name is Suzie Walker. I'm from City Tech College
and I represent the SEEK program. SEEK is one of
the successful programs offered by CUNY that has
helped to mold individuals like myself. SEEK is
not only a program that helps students
financially, it is a program that offers trust,
communication and respect to their students
because without respect you have nothing.

1
2 One way they have helped me was by
3 introducing me to my counselor, Miss Keyshia. She
4 has helped me grow and showed me the complete
5 diverse perspective of our college. Thanks to her
6 I'm a proud undergraduate on the roll of reaching
7 higher education. Restraining programs like SEEK,
8 to me mean students missing a great opportunity
9 and meeting great people like Miss Keyshia that is
10 willing to go the extra mile to help students like
11 myself graduate.

12 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Is your
13 counselor here?

14 MS. WALKER: Yes, right there.

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON:
16 Congratulations.

17 CYNTHIA SUPRIN: Good afternoon
18 distinguished panel. My name is Cynthia Suprin
19 and I represent the SEEK program. As a high
20 school graduate from Haiti I had some difficulties
21 with English, American History and American
22 Government. As I took the ACT test, it was clear
23 that my point of weakness was English. I only
24 passed the math portion. Thus what I thought was
25 a curse in taking remedial classes and being

1
2 introduced to the SEEK program was actually a
3 blessing.

4 Because of failing the English
5 portion of the ACT test, I unknowingly contributed
6 to my success. By failing the ACT test I was
7 introduced to the SEEK department. As a SEEK
8 student I had the opportunity to really understand
9 the American system and colleges and the level of
10 attention that I have to work on in addressing my
11 studies. As I was assigned to the SEEK
12 department, a SEEK counselor who helped me in
13 times of need, in guiding me in achieving my goal
14 to become an attorney.

15 First and foremost the SEEK
16 counselors are very well connected with the
17 outside world and offer an opportunity, a
18 supporting hand beyond anyone's expectations.
19 However, another importantly and helpful section
20 of the SEEK department is the SEEK tutoring lab.
21 I was privileged. And let me repeat that, I was
22 privileged to have a helping hand with all the
23 assignments, which I needed help in. The best
24 thing about the lab is that the tutors are
25 specialized in different fields, which makes the

1
2 lab truly unique. SEEK tutors are very accessible
3 in terms of working hours and the time they allot
4 you for tutoring sessions.

5 I realize how blessed I was when I
6 realized that not all college students had the
7 same opportunity that I had. I heard some non-
8 SEEK student complain about their English lab
9 because they don't have that many hours and they
10 don't want to allocate that much time to them. I
11 heard some non-SEEK students ask me, how can I
12 enroll in the SEEK program or you are so lucky to
13 be in the SEEK department.

14 Also because of the tutors' various
15 backgrounds I always had somebody in the tutoring
16 lab to help me. For instance, the lab has
17 attorneys who help me prep for the LSAT and help
18 me with my personal statement. This is among the
19 help I have received in the seek tutoring lab.
20 Because of SEEK I became top of my class and I
21 graduated summa cum laude out of 2,000 students
22 graduating in 2004, there were 81 summa cum laude
23 and I graduated with a 3.8 because of the SEEK
24 lab.

25 Because of the SEEK department I

1

2 was much more prepared for law school. As I
3 previously stated my counselor was well connected
4 outside. So there was one in particular that
5 referred me to an attorney who helped me with my
6 personal statement and I got accepted to various
7 schools despite my LSAT scores. In addition, the
8 same attorney told me how to survive in law
9 school. Thus the SEEK department was the tool to
10 my success.

11

12 Because I excelled in classes the
13 SEEK department offered me a tutoring position.
14 With such a position, I could give back to the
15 program in a small way. My appreciation for the
16 program depend. As a tutor, I see the progress of
17 my tutees who attended tutoring sessions. The
18 most fulfilling thing is when my tutees receive a
19 good grade because of my guidance. And they come
20 to the lab to show me their appreciation. Such
21 acts always made me reminiscence I was in that
22 position. I even had a tutee who came up to me,
23 thank me and wanted me to attend her graduation
24 because her only impediment in passing was math.
25 I speak on behalf of all SEK students that this
program is essential to CUNY colleges because of

1

2 it's particular attention to college students who
3 need the extra help in succeeding in college. I'm
4 a prime example of the SEEK department. Because
5 of SEEK I am an attorney and I'm proud to say I'm
6 a SEEK student. Thank you.

7

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.

8

9 WILLIAM HUANG: Good afternoon. My
10 name is William Huang and I represent City Tech
11 SEEK. I want to start by saying that I'm not your
12 typical student because I've never really been
13 into school. I've always been an average student
14 in high school and I wasn't even thinking of going
15 to college. But because of my parents, I took it
16 upon myself to enroll in to City Tech.

16

17 There are many times during my
18 enrollment that I was doing really bad or wasn't
19 putting enough effort into school. I just thought
20 that this was just me. I just thought that I
21 wasn't made for education. But as I learned, as I
22 met Miss Keyshia, my counselor, she taught me
23 about how education has a lot to do with your
24 future and how it helps you and how it makes your
25 future a lot more bright.

25

I didn't really have any goals or

1
2 passions before I enrolled in City Tech. Ever
3 since the SEEK program I think that I must have
4 had plenty of dreams. I'm thinking of becoming a
5 psychologist or opening up my own business, like a
6 Boys and Girls Club, somewhere children can go to
7 after school. I'm just really glad that I have
8 such a great counselor like Miss Keyshia to guide
9 me along the way. So that's it.

10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: That's a lot.

11 Thank you.

12 MARCOS PICHARDO: Hello, my name is
13 Marcos Pichardo and I'm in my second year at the
14 New York City College of Technology. I represent
15 the SEEK program. Before arriving here it was
16 difficult for me to map out what my plans were
17 after high school and also my future career. I
18 simply knew however that I needed a plan. It was
19 clear to me that the unguided student that I
20 heavily portrayed was not going to cut it in the
21 real world. I did, however, know what it felt
22 like to be supported by a few teachers and I
23 thought that it was necessary for me to be in an
24 environment where encouragement and belief in a
25 student were its main priorities.

1
2 As a member of the SEEK program, it
3 is important for me to speak out and encourage
4 this message, the search for education elevation
5 to knowledge. To me this means taking diffident
6 students, putting them in study halls and tutoring
7 halls with exceptionally good tutors and mentors
8 and showing them how to find solutions to their
9 problems. The SEEK program has provided me as
10 well as other students with many services which we
11 would not otherwise be able to obtain due to costs
12 or simply unavailability.

13 I have attended many math, science
14 and English session in which I have one on one
15 instruction with tutors who put 100% effort in
16 showing me how to find solutions to my work.
17 Every question was backed by solution, every
18 mistake solved creatively in a way in which mad
19 the work look easy. The computer lab in the SEEK
20 office is also critical to the program. Thus I
21 believe the SEEK program deserves continuation of
22 funding so that students who have no other source
23 of that information outside of the schools stay
24 connected to the internet to be able to carry out
25 their homework assignments and research projects.

1
2 I'm also thankful to have a
3 counselor in the SEEK program, Keyshia Swabby, who
4 I come to for support and encouragement as well as
5 help me to get organized in terms of class
6 scheduling and graduation requirements.

7 Altogether the SEEK program brings a sense of
8 security to all its students who are involved with
9 it. By continuing to fund the program, you have
10 not only made an impact on the lives of many
11 students, you also would have contributed to
12 society. This is true because you are equipping
13 students with the ability to attain knowledge that
14 makes society function in a way that is productive
15 as well as responsible.

16 Today I am a student who looks to a
17 promising future, one that includes many goals to
18 be achieved and promises to be kept. Just as the
19 SEEK program has given to me so I will give back
20 by continuing its message. One thing I have
21 learned from the program is to never give up on
22 what seems distant and help students less
23 fortunate than myself who show ambition and hunger
24 for knowledge, the typical SEEK student.

25 TREMAINE GOODEN: Good evening, my

1

2 name is Tremaine Gooden from Queensborough. I've
3 used all parts of the Males of BMI program at
4 Queensborough Community College. The most
5 successful aspect for me was the peer mentoring.
6 When I meet with my peer mentor, who always asks
7 how am I doing in my classes, if I need help with
8 anything. Even though he's not in my major he
9 still tries to help me in any way he can. He
10 became like an older brother, someone I could look
11 up to.

12

13 I've been a member of Males for
14 four semesters. I was invited to become part of
15 the leadership of Males. This demonstrated
16 confidence in my abilities and it showed me that I
17 could do something more and my opinion counted.
18 Through the Males program I started an internship
19 in the Spring 2009 semester at the CUNY Language
20 Emerging Program, CLEP. I work with computers and
21 I also teach CLEP students how to use them.

22

23 My major is electric technology.
24 The paid internship funded by the Males Initiative
25 has allowed me to apply what I know. It's also
preparing me for my future classes. I am really
beginning to understand computer problems. The

1
2 person overseeing the internship confirms or
3 corrects what I think is a solution to the
4 computer problem. This has built up my
5 confidence.

6 The internship has also improved my
7 communication skills. This has happened because I
8 am taking English 101 at the same time. I have
9 learned to break down a problem and explain it
10 simpler so that a person I'm working with can
11 understand. The process has even helped me in my
12 English essays. The Males program makes me want
13 to try harder in my college classes. My grades
14 have improved dramatically; in English I am
15 carrying a B, ET704, A and web design B. I
16 recommend that a New York City Council continue to
17 fund the Males Initiative at Queensborough
18 Community College.

19 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very
20 much. Honesty compels me to say this is one of
21 the best panels we've had. We should have had you
22 on much earlier but thank you. Yes ma'am.

23 MS. SUPRIN: I would like to add, I
24 know some of the distinguished panelists wanted to
25 know the success rate in terms of higher

1
2 education. Personally, while I was at the SEEK
3 lab we were six friends from the SEEK department.
4 And out of six, three of us went to law school; I
5 graduated. One is in Penn State, the other one is
6 in the University of Maryland. The other one got
7 a PhD acceptance letter from Berkeley College so
8 that's among my peers. There's many more.

9 In terms of the LSAT score, it's
10 very true. It was not a lack of intelligence. I
11 studied hard. It's just because I have an
12 impediment in English being from Haiti. But it
13 was a funny thing because the law school I ended
14 up with, they called me for an interview because
15 of my LSAT scores. They saw a huge discrepancy
16 between my LSAT score which was a 143 and my GPA
17 which was a 3.8. So they spoke to me and they
18 said I know that LSAT scores are not indicative.
19 I could assure you that people who have a higher
20 LSAT score than you will fall out of law school
21 and you'll make it. I could tell you people with
22 160s couldn't even pass the first torts exam. I
23 could tell you the people that I know who are in
24 law school right now from the SEEK department who
25 are excelling. And one who even transferred to

1

2 law school and that takes at least a 3.3 to
3 transfer.

4

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Excellent.

5

Yes ma'am.

6

7 MS. WALKER: Another thing I would
8 like to add. Another good thing that SEEK program
9 offers is probation for students versus just
10 kicking them out the school. I feel that's a very
11 important thing.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: That's very
14 important because they need a chance to get it
15 together. Don't worry about struggling with
16 English, we all do. I'm married to a
17 schoolteacher. My wife is a schoolteacher for 18
18 years and the principal. So when I get up in the
19 morning, I have to take my time, good morning
20 Inez, how are you today? Did I get it right?

21

22 So I have to make sure I get it
23 right because we're not English people, we're
24 Africans. We didn't originally speak English so
25 people think that we're speaking bad, no, we speak
differently because some of the influences of our
original African language is a thing they call
linguistic retention. You retain some of that

1
2 stuff in the deeper structure of our languages.
3 Because of the racism in society when we do that
4 it's bad English. When Europeans do that, it's an
5 accent. So there are some differences. Moving
6 right along. Thank you very much for your
7 testimony. I'm proud of all of you. Keep up the
8 good work. Do you want to say something?

9 MR. PICHARDO: Yes, actually I want
10 to say something about the services offered by
11 SEEK. To me in my personal opinion, I believe the
12 offer extraordinary service. They actually treat
13 you as if you were like a family member. I'm not
14 going to say anything bad but I believe that in
15 City Tech and many other colleges, they do their
16 job just to do their job. But in SEEK it's like
17 they are your closest family, they want to see you
18 succeed. They really care, they really try.
19 That's what I wanted to say.

20 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I can
21 certainly validate that because I am a SEEK
22 student myself at Hunter College. We had special
23 counselors where they were really caring about us.
24 I was a student leader and they were making sure
25 that I spent as much time in the classroom as I am

1
2 spending outside organizing. So I went through a
3 whole lot. Some was a summa cum laude, I was a
4 thank you Lordy. You know how that is, thank you
5 Lordy he got out of there. So congratulations and
6 we're proud of all of you.

7 COUNSEL: Next panel, Lisa Lamanna,
8 Ferdinand Almalvar, Sandra Yee, Rodney Datsun and
9 Anthony Heyward. Fitz King, Valetta Jawersa.

10 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: You got it.
11 Swear them in.

12 COUNSEL: Please raise your right
13 hands. Do you swear and/or affirm that the
14 testimony you're about to give is to the best of
15 your knowledge accurate and truthful? Thank you.
16 Please remember to state your names before
17 beginning your testimony.

18 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: You may
19 proceed. Somebody want to go, anybody.

20 ANTHONY HEYWARD: Good afternoon

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Good
22 afternoon.

23 MR. HEYWARD: Good afternoon. My
24 name is Anthony Heyward and I'm a proud student of
25 the Borough of Manhattan Community College. I

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

will graduate this May.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON:

Congratulations.

MR. HEYWARD: And thereafter I plan to transfer to City College to complete my baccalaureate and teacher's certification in elementary education. In May of 2004, the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York approved its master plan. This document included for the first time, as we've heard today, an initiative on the Black male and education. This Black Male Initiative has consistently implemented programs throughout various campuses at the City University with the goal of reversing the negative trends of low retention and higher education among minority males.

At the Borough of Manhattan Community College the Black Male Initiative takes the form of the Urban Male Leadership Academy. Today, I would like to talk about the aspects of the academy from which I personally benefited. They are the Each One Reach One peer mentoring program and the Teachers as Leaders Project. The Each One Reach One peer mentoring program is

1
2 designed to give students on academic probation,
3 the mentoring and tutoring to improve their grades
4 by pairing them up with high achieving student
5 scholars.

6 Students receive peer guidance and
7 training in areas of proper study techniques, test
8 taking and instructions on using campus resources
9 to help them maintain their careers in college.

10 I've been a mentor for three semesters. My first
11 semester, through the Each One Reach One peer
12 mentoring program I was placed in a high school
13 where I worked with high school students.

14 Thereafter, in the last two semesters, I've worked
15 with college students.

16 As a mentor I have personally seen
17 first hand the positive differences made. Many of
18 the students who were previously mentees in past
19 semesters have improved their grades enough to
20 become mentors themselves. The greatest strength
21 of this program, in my opinion, is that the
22 mentoring program creates an environment of
23 connectedness in our community and peer
24 solidarity, something that they would never get
25 elsewhere.

1
2 In an effort to address the
3 disproportionate lack of male teachers of color in
4 New York City, CUNY BMI has created the Teachers
5 as Leaders Project to assist current City
6 University students. The Teachers as Leaders
7 Project has been especially helpful to me because
8 while I am focused on my goal of becoming a New
9 York City teacher, I am a husband and a new
10 father. The assistance from the program, both
11 financial and advisory, is helping me balance my
12 extensive schedule, a full time job and a six week
13 old baby who doesn't sleep at night. Although I
14 am sure I would be able to achieve my goals
15 without the assistance of the program, the
16 assistance of the program is helping me do it at a
17 much faster pace.

18 I look forward to continuing my
19 education at City College next semester and I
20 thank you for hearing me out today.

21 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.

22 FEMALE VOICE: Good afternoon
23 honorable Councilman, committee Council and good
24 afternoon CUNY representatives, my fellow
25 students. I represent the Borough of Manhattan

1
2 Community College but I also represent CUNY as I
3 have been elected for a CUNY leader recently. I
4 am BMCC ambassador, mentor, tutor and I am a
5 single parent as well. I would like to become a
6 teacher of mathematics in New York City public
7 education as being a product of a BMI Teachers as
8 Leaders Project.

9 As such I would like to speak for
10 not cutting any funds for BMI foundation. Though
11 targeted towards African American males and other
12 under represented groups, I regard myself as a
13 product of under represented group. CUNY BMI
14 funded programs do not discriminate on the basis
15 of race or gender and will serve as a model for
16 improving educational outcomes for all students.
17 Most of the under represented groups are school
18 drop outs who have chosen to receive a means of
19 survival and significant cash now instead of
20 embracing a long term career and larger income in
21 future.

22 Many of the under represented
23 groups do not believe in their chance of getting a
24 comfortable position in society by devoting
25 themselves to acquiring perfect, long term

1
2 education crowned by a degree. With the election
3 of a new administration in the White House
4 legislations are being implemented to allow every
5 child to acquire higher education with a strong
6 emphasis on science; by President Barack Obama in
7 leadership of that. Social educational programs
8 already conducted in the 90s in U.S.A. will bring
9 minorities, especially African American males, to
10 believe in themselves and to choose honest, brave
11 and responsible paths towards their successful
12 future and welfare of their offspring and also
13 welfare of the entire New York State and future
14 generations. Thank you very much.

15 LISA LAMANNA: Good afternoon, my
16 name is Lisa Lamanna I'm a bio major at the
17 College of Staten Island. I'm an active member of
18 the NYPIRG chapter of CSI and I'm a long distance
19 runner. I hope to one day be a doctor of
20 osteopathic medicine. I'm here to ask you to
21 reject the Mayor's proposal to eliminate the
22 Vallone scholarship, which helps CUNY keep
23 affordable for more than 12,000 students.

24 NYPIRG, New York Public Interest
25 Research Group is New York State's largest non-

1
2 partisan research and advocacy organization with a
3 Board of Directors comprised of college and
4 university students elected from campuses with
5 NYPIRG chapters across the state, including nine
6 CUNY schools. We're deeply concerned about access
7 to affordable quality higher education. I
8 received from need based financial aid as well as
9 merit based aid including the Vallone scholarship.
10 This aid pays for most of my tuition but I still
11 struggle to pay for books, transportation, food
12 and other expenses. Those expenses add up quick,
13 as we all know. This year I tried borrowing
14 friends' books to save some money. And my sister
15 tried not paying for books at all.

16 The recently approved tuition hike
17 of up to \$600 at the CUNY senior colleges scares
18 me. I'm working part time already and the extra
19 hours I'll have to work to keep up with the
20 additional tuition will make it harder for me to
21 maintain the grades I need to keep my
22 scholarships. Combined with the tuition hike, the
23 Vallone cut would increase my out of pocket
24 expenses by \$1,100 much more than I can afford.

25 Right now students and families

1
2 have less money to spend, their savings are being
3 depleted and their jobs are less secure. CUNY
4 should not be increasing tuition and the city
5 should not cut financial aid. If both the tuition
6 hike and the Vallone scholarship cuts are enacted,
7 it seems very likely that I would have to cut back
8 to a part time course load and find another job so
9 I can make ends meet. Without full time status I
10 lose my health insurance, my spot on the track
11 team, my teaching scholars position and possibly
12 more of my financial aid.

13 I work really hard to keep my
14 grades up and these grades earned me these
15 scholarships and these scholarships make my
16 education possible. So the proposal to eliminate
17 the Vallone scholarship is like a slap in the
18 face. It makes me feel that the city does not
19 value my hard work and the contribution I make to
20 CUNY. Students like me are vital for CUNY and the
21 city; we raise the level of scholarship at our
22 campuses, increase the prestige of the university
23 system and when we graduate we contribute
24 substantially to the city's economic and tax base.
25 We deserve and demand your support.

1
2 Don't let the Mayor cut the Vallone
3 scholarships. The program has already been cut
4 too much. First it was \$625 for the Fall 2007
5 semester then the awards went down to \$465 for the
6 Spring 2008 semester. Before this year, our
7 awards were cut again to \$250 per semester.
8 Instead of cutting the award further, the city
9 should restore funding for the program back to its
10 2008 level of \$11.2 million. This may be a small
11 amount to some but for most of CUNY students,
12 every dollar really does count. Thank you.

13 FERDINAND ALMALVAR: Hello Mr.
14 Chairman. I, too, am a student with a GED so I
15 concur with your analysis that we should be
16 appreciated more. My name is Ferdinand Almalvar
17 and I am student at Borough of Manhattan Community
18 College studying human services. I'm also an
19 active member of NYPIRG. When I finish my studies
20 at BMCC I plan to attend a four year college,
21 probably Brooklyn or City College. Ultimately I
22 hope to be an educator and a guidance counselor.

23 I decided to attend a CUNY
24 community college because it made financial sense
25 for me and because I thought it would help me ease

1
2 back into being a student. I'm 24 years old and
3 have been away from school for a while. Having
4 worked a variety of odd jobs and not being
5 presented with the kind of satisfaction or career
6 opportunities that I was hoping for, I'm thankful
7 that CUNY has offered me an affordable path to
8 self improvement and success.

9 I'm here today to urge you to help
10 keep that path open by protecting city funding for
11 community colleges. The Mayor's proposal to
12 reduce city funding for community colleges by
13 \$30.2 million is a terrible idea. In this
14 economy, the city needs CUNY to be stronger than
15 ever. We know enrollment at CUNY is way up. At
16 my school it has risen 13% since last year. These
17 students are turning to CUNY for job skills to
18 compete in this awful job market and because they
19 can't afford more expensive four year schools.

20 Unfortunately, instead of investing
21 in the community colleges in their hour of need,
22 the Mayor has proposed cuts that could lead to a
23 painful tuition hike and undermine the quality of
24 the CUNY education. When the Mayor has offered up
25 similar cuts in recent years the City Council has

1
2 honored their maintenance of effort agreement with
3 CUNY and restored the cuts. I urge you to do so
4 again this year.

5 As you know, the state legislature
6 recently restored the Governor's proposed 10% cut
7 to community colleges. That restoration has given
8 students like me hope that CUNY will be able to
9 avoid a tuition hike or at least reduce the size
10 of the hike before the \$400 recently approved by
11 the CUNY trustees. If the City Council steps up
12 and restores the Mayor's entire proposed cut then
13 much of the need for the community college tuition
14 hike will be gone. With your help, this tuition
15 hike can be avoided.

16 In this economy, this era of
17 greater than 8% unemployment when students are
18 flocking to CUNY in record numbers, family incomes
19 are on shaky ground and CUNY financial aid
20 applications are up 33%, community college needs
21 to remain affordable and accessible. Working poor
22 adult students with no dependents of their own,
23 such as myself, would be particularly burdened by
24 a \$400 community college tuition hike because they
25 get short changed by TAP. In fact, if the

1
2 proposed tuition hike is fully implemented, even
3 the poorest independent students at community
4 colleges won't receive enough TAP to cover their
5 full tuition.

6 Under law, they can only receive up
7 to \$3,025 in TAP. At 24, I fall into this
8 category and would see my out of pocket expenses
9 increases if tuition goes up the Fall by \$400. I
10 have a younger sister, Hope, who would also be
11 hurt by the tuition hike. She is also a student
12 at BMCC. The first person in my family to go
13 right from high school to college, Hope was unable
14 to receive any financial aid at all because of a
15 complicated custody situation. Instead of getting
16 the help she obviously needed, she was forced to
17 pay out of pocket and work full time while she
18 went to school. Now she has a huge outstanding
19 balance and can't register for classes until she
20 pays it off. Financial aid can fail even the
21 neediest students and when it does, tuition hikes
22 make the situation even worse.

23 For independent students like me,
24 for students like my sister who fall through the
25 cracks and for the middle income families who've

1
2 seen their jobs put at risk and their savings
3 shrink, I urge you to restore the proposed cut.
4 At \$30.2 million cut to community colleges could
5 also lead to cuts to student services; bigger
6 classes and reductions in course offerings. When
7 similar cuts were proposed in passed years,
8 administrators considered elimination of adjunct
9 teaching positions and core selections. Increases
10 in class size, reductions in library hours and
11 tutoring services and even cuts to campus security
12 budgets as a way to save money. Cuts like these
13 could seriously undermine the quality of a CUNY
14 education.

15 I have a particular concern that a
16 reduction in city funding can make it harder for
17 CUNY to honor their commitment to expand
18 counseling services for students. I know CUNY is
19 trying but I speak from experience when I say that
20 the counseling services they offer aren't always
21 adequate to address students' needs. They simply
22 don't have enough resources and too many students
23 don't get the help they need until they are
24 already in crisis. On a personal note, I would
25 like to say that the counseling services that I

1
2 received in high school, CDS School High School,
3 were far more adequate than I have been receiving
4 at BMCC. That's not at the fault of BMCC
5 administrators but that's a fact from my personal
6 experience.

7 I struggle with major depression.
8 Last semester my symptoms had worsened and I ended
9 up having to drop two classes. Dropping those
10 classes caused my enrollment status to change from
11 full time to below part time. I lost some of my
12 financial aid because of that change, a lot of my
13 financial aid. And the whole episode ending up
14 costing me \$900. If counseling services were more
15 accessible I might have gotten help earlier,
16 before things got out of control. We thank you
17 for your attention and for your hard work in
18 guiding the City University through this difficult
19 time. We know we share the same goals in ensuring
20 affordable, accessible, high quality public higher
21 education to students of New York City.

22 Again, on a personal note going to
23 college and having a career are dreams of mine and
24 my sister's. If you allow this budget cut to
25 happen, now or in the future, you will be

1
2 deferring our dreams and what happens to a dream
3 deferred? You will be seriously hurting our
4 society, our city, our state and our country by
5 eliminating services to CUNY and cutting budgets
6 to CUNY. And I hope and I am an optimist, that
7 you will be able to restore these cuts and not
8 allow the Mayor to get away with this. Thank you
9 very much Chairman.

10 FITZ KING: Good afternoon Council
11 Member Barron, his staff and to the remaining
12 audience. My name is Fitz King and I'm a senior,
13 political science major, philosophy, economics and
14 history minor with a 3.84 GPA attending John Jay
15 College of Criminal Justice.

16 Let me start off by saying that I
17 am humbled before your presence. Migrating to the
18 United States as a child, I never imagined I would
19 be addressing members of the Council. At any rate
20 I'm here requesting your continued support in
21 funding the City University of New York's Black
22 Male Initiative. Before you is living proof of
23 how your funding can change a person's life. I
24 want to express my gratitude and briefly explain
25 how it has impacted my life.

1
2 A little over a year ago I came
3 across a college advertisement for the Ronald H.
4 Brown summer law program affiliated with John Jay
5 College's Department of Latin American and
6 Latino/Latina studies. From that day forward I've
7 been bound for the legal field. My interest in
8 the law began in Iraq where I realized my passions
9 lay within the public sector. When I returned to
10 the States I knew that I needed a plan of attack
11 to prepare for law school. However I had no idea
12 where to begin.

13 Through the summer prep program, I
14 was able to take classes at St. John's University
15 School of Law and gain practical experience as a
16 legal intern at the Kings County District
17 Attorney's Office. And as a judicial intern for
18 Judge Matthew Sharino at the Richmond County
19 Courthouse where I still serve as a intern.
20 Little did I know acceptance into the program
21 would entail such memorable experiences and
22 unleash a vast support system through its focused
23 administration. However, the summer law program
24 will not be a success without CUNY BMI's funding
25 which is now in your hands. This funding is

1
2 crucial to diversify the legal field. In our
3 metropolis we need more lawyers who look like me
4 to take care of the public interests.

5 I sit here today as one of the many
6 thankful beneficiaries of the New York City
7 Council's Opportunity Programs, specifically CUNY
8 BMI. Through your offices, countless New York
9 City youths are able to advance their educations
10 despite of lack of personal finances. As
11 discussed by Director Daws, BMI provides a way for
12 marginalized individuals to gain valuable
13 information necessary to attain a higher level of
14 education through workshops and distinguished
15 speakers series.

16 I do not come from a wealthy
17 family. I work full time and am finishing an 18
18 credit semester towards my Bachelor of Arts
19 degree. I truly believe I would not be on my way
20 to law school if it were not for the Education
21 Committee's funding and help of BMI and John Jay's
22 Ronald H. Brown program director Dr. Jodie Roure
23 and her staff. Each link in the chain is
24 instrumental. Our chain needs to maintain its
25 diversification goal and without this funding, who

1

2 knows how this goal will be effected.

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

Also, I have recently decided to pursue a JD/PhD track in political science while at law school. This direction will further my public interest aspirations by giving back towards higher education. As I stated earlier, I'm living proof of the benefits your generous funding provides. Without your support CUNY BMI can not successfully assist CUNY colleges. BMI design plan to improve enrollment and/or graduation rates of students from under represented groups, particularly Black males, will suffer. Therefore I implore you, ladies and gentlemen within the chambers, to continue your support of CUNY BMI through adequate funding.

I fear the consequences will hurt the progress we are making. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank all of you. Once again, these testimonies are very, very important to us and they'll be here for the records. And trust me, when we go back in this very room that you're in, it will be Council Members all up and

1
2 down here for hours wrestling over what should be
3 cut out of the budget and put in the budget.
4 We're talking about a \$1 billion budget deficit
5 and these are the stories that I'm able to bring
6 to my colleagues and some of them heard some of
7 the stories already. And it really helps us when
8 we fight. We've been successful in prior years in
9 getting it back in.

10 Last year we took a little cut,
11 this year we're talking about enhancements because
12 that's how they trick us. Save the cuts, don't
13 cut, don't cut. No, we need more. Enrollment is
14 up and we're doing very good so we need
15 enhancements not just stopping the cuts. Thank
16 you very much for your testimony. I appreciate
17 all of you very much.

18 MR. ALMALVAR: I would like to add
19 one thing.

20 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Sure.

21 MR. ALMALVAR: From the testimony
22 that I've heard today about the College Discovery
23 program, the SEEK program and the BMI program, I
24 have tried to enroll in the CD program. I've
25 gotten different responses about why I'm not

1

2 eligible. But because of the testimony that I've
3 heard today, I'm going to make a very concerted
4 effort to enroll in the College Discovery program
5 as much as I can if there is any room for
6 eligibility at all so thank you for that.

7

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Excellent.

8

Thank you, thank you very much.

9

COUNSEL: Elias Alcantava,

10

Christopher Brown, Cheryl Wilkins, Terrance Sadiq

11

McSween.

12

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Eliot, before

13

you'll leave I just wanted to greet our long time

14

supporter, particularly at John Jay and all

15

throughout CUNY, Council Member Larry Seabrooks

16

from the Bronx. Give him a big hand clap. We

17

thank him for coming by and always supporting us.

18

COUNSEL: Roxie West, Jayeda

19

Triblett.

20

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Let me just

21

ask is there anybody here who is up here to

22

testify. You can take a seat now. If not, this

23

will be the last panel. Okay, that's it. Thank

24

you.

25

CHERYL WILKINS: Good afternoon, my

1

2 name is Cheryl Wilkins--

3 COUNSEL: [interposing] I'm sorry.

4 Please raise your right hand. Do you swear and/or

5 affirm that the testimony you're about to give is

6 to the best of your knowledge truthful and

7 accurate? Thank you. Please remember to state

8 your names before you begin your testimony.

9 MS. WILKINS: Good afternoon, my

10 name is Cheryl Wilkins. I'm Associate Director of

11 College Initiative Program. We're a reentry

12 program that assists men and women who have had

13 some involvement with the criminal justice system

14 to begin or continue their college education. We

15 are a BMI funded program and our population

16 reflects the prison population, which is mainly

17 men of color.

18 Our program effects change in a

19 major way. I would like to say we're contributing

20 to building an economy. With a college degree,

21 our students not on Medicaid they're able to get

22 good jobs and get health insurance. Unfortunately

23 our students pay market level rate rent and for

24 the most part, what they're doing is basically

25 giving back to the community they might have

1
2 helped wreck as a youth. Most of our students go
3 into the social work field for many reasons but
4 the main reason is because they want to mentor
5 younger students and maybe deter them from going
6 down the path that they've been down.

7 BMI is the catalyst of this
8 mentorship program. Also with the counseling and
9 guidance, young people guiding young people into
10 the positive direction, BMI utilizes our students
11 who average age is about 35. The Pataki era and
12 nobody was getting out of prison so a lot of them
13 stayed in prison for a long time, along with from
14 the laws like the Rockefeller Drug Laws. So now
15 they're coming out trying to make a difference in
16 their communities. Without the support of BMI,
17 College Initiative will not sustain at all. And
18 today, I just want to bring an example. Mr. John
19 Molina and he's a student of mine.

20 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.

21 JOHN MOLINA: Good morning Mr.
22 Chairman, distinguished members, I'm a student at
23 the College Initiative. I'm a member of their
24 reentry program. There is no doubt in my mind
25 that when I think about my life post incarceration

1
2 and I did almost a decade in jail, that the single
3 most important event that allowed me to
4 successfully make the transition back into a
5 contributing member of society was the day that I
6 sat in that orientation at the College Initiative.

7 After doing eight and a half years
8 in jail, the thought of coming home was scary. It
9 was daunting. I was gone for a decade; computers,
10 internet, cell phones, all of that was very, very
11 scary. So I sat through the orientation listening
12 to the success stories of the students who came
13 before me but I was most moved, though, by the
14 statistics. The adverse correlation between
15 education and recidivism; the number of years go
16 up, the recidivism goes down. If I knew one
17 thing, I knew that I never wanted to go to jail
18 again. So I used going back to school as a
19 mechanism to stay away from jail.

20 It wasn't easy and I didn't know
21 where to begin. I was coming home. I had IRS
22 problems, I had back child support problems, I had
23 defaulted student loans and I had housing issues.
24 I was essentially homeless and living in a three-
25 quarter house, sharing a room with three other men

1
2 with no cooking facilities. I was overwhelmed but
3 I was determined to make a change in my life. So
4 I went to the College Initiative and I kept on
5 pestering them and they gave me information about
6 how I could rehab my student loans and have them
7 consolidated. So after six months I pestered them
8 again and they helped me through the whole
9 computerized FAFSA process. Then I had problems
10 with being incarcerated, zero income and they
11 helped me through that process as well.

12 They also put me into an
13 accelerated program for my math. I hadn't seen
14 algebra in 20 years. You're sitting there for an
15 ACT test and you're looking at all of those
16 symbols and those exponents and I was saying to
17 myself, what did I get myself in to. Cheryl was
18 very knowledgeable and she put me into an
19 accelerated program. I was able to pass the
20 second part of the ACT test and I don't even have
21 to take a math test now in college.

22 So here we are two years later.
23 After this semester I'll be a senior at Lehman.
24 I'll be starting a four year in health services
25 administration. My GPA is a 3.85. I've been on

1

2 the Dean's List ever since.

3 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Excellent,
4 congratulations.

5 MR. MOLINA: I paid the IRS, I
6 don't owe any child support. I have a roof over
7 my head. I have a little hooptie. I'm a
8 contributing member of society.

9 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Wait a minute,
10 you doing better than us?

11 MALE VOICE: You don't drive a
12 hooptie.

13 MR. MOLINA: In any event,
14 investing in BMI, their projects, this initiative
15 it makes sense. So when you make the argument to
16 the Mayor, I pay tax dollars, I pay rent, I pay
17 child support, all of that since he's a business
18 man, all of that effects the GDP.

19 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: That's right.

20 MR. MOLINA: We effect the GDP so I
21 strongly urge the Council to vote to enhance the
22 funding with BMI projects. Thank you very much.

23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very
24 much for your testimony. Thank you.

25 TERRANCE SADIQ MCSWEEN: Hello,

1

2 good afternoon. It's afternoon now. Council
3 Member Barry, members of the audience that still
4 remaining, my name is Terrance Sadiq McSween, I'm
5 the president of the Black Student Union at the
6 Hostos Community College. I also would like to
7 address Mr. Eliot Daws, the director and president
8 of the BMI program. Just to speak a few minutes.
9 I didn't have anything written or prepared because
10 I believe that this is something that so close and
11 near and dear to my heart that a written testimony
12 is not enough to really state what I had to say.
13 I want to come from the heart with it.

14 The Black Male Initiative program,
15 I am a beneficiary of it. I've received funds
16 from the Black Male Initiative program to empower
17 men and women that attend Hostos Community College
18 in a health awareness program. Also, I'll do
19 personal training, which enhances not only the
20 body but it helps the mind to organize and
21 construct your thoughts. This program, the Black
22 Male Initiative program, has enhanced my want to
23 want to succeed. It's a support system, it's a
24 mentoring program. It funds the dreams and
25 aspirations of many Black men and women of African

1
2 descent. It's responsible for helping create an
3 environment to assist in interpersonal relations
4 and health dialogue about ways to rebuild the
5 Black and Latino community.

6 In closing, I want to keep it
7 brief. Reparations were never given. America is
8 a nation that's for the people, by the people as I
9 look up and I read the statement from Lincoln.
10 They were never given to Black men and women.
11 Again, we were pacified by given so-called equal
12 opportunity. And while individuals have been
13 supported by trust funds and those that have been
14 fortunate to receive benefit from business
15 practices which were unfair to minorities but
16 favored the betterment of the majority. There are
17 no secrets about the conditions that have been
18 forced up on the minority community.

19 But we now, in a post-Jim Crow era
20 and a President Barack Obama era, now the sky is
21 the limit. So my import is to give more to the
22 program and to allow us to reach our full
23 potential as beautiful diamonds that shine bright
24 and to continue to progress the image, the
25 economic status, the education and the unity in

1

2 the Black community. Thank you.

3

4

5

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you very much. Thank you. Pay us our reparations they can keep welfare, huh?

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

BALTER ULI: Good afternoon members of the committee Council. My name is Balter Uli. I am also a graduate from the Ronald H. Brown pre-law program. Professor Jodie Roure, who testified earlier, she was one of my first teachers ever since I went to college and has remained my guiding star not only in acquiring a wonderful education but acquiring also a moral and ethical learning, I guess, knowledge.

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

I immigrated to this country in 2001 from Albania seeking political asylum, which I was granted. I always wanted to do something for the people and I'm not just saying it mindlessly and without have given it much thought. Because to do something for people means it's not just the word but it's something that might actually ask one to also give one's life. I'm simply referring to the past and also the present.

24

25

So law school I thought was a good choice for me, a good place to be. Becoming a

1
2 lawyer would be the proper profession and one of
3 the ways to help people, despite the law
4 profession and its reputation in destroy rather
5 than improving our society presently. I couldn't
6 help but just jot down what a lady said earlier
7 about careers. She said something to this extent,
8 I think CUNY Law School doesn't need more lawyers,
9 it needs more lawyers who believe in justice - key
10 word: justice.

11 I don't think I wanted to go to law
12 school. I thought that I have come too far to
13 turn back. Alone, working two jobs and trying my
14 best to succeed. Now knowing in hindsight of the
15 past, knowing what I have gone through and what
16 one needs to go through to achieve, in order to go
17 to law school. Just the process of applying, the
18 process of preparing is, I think, 90% of what
19 graduating law school requires, effort and
20 sacrifice. That does not include the financial
21 aspect of it.

22 I am in my second year of college
23 and I think in my third year they started the
24 program. And I enrolled and applied and was
25 accepted. Ever since these people have helped

1
2 educate me in how best to prepare for law school,
3 this program has not only helped us through
4 textbooks but also by example. These individuals,
5 we have had people who testified earlier about
6 what the program taught us. I am simply going to
7 testify about the people who teach us there.

8 The money you're given is not just
9 to anybody but you're giving to people who teach
10 by example. Ghandi, I read his biography a week
11 ago and he says something like this, the true
12 textbook for the pupil is his teacher. And they
13 have been our teachers, Professor Roure and
14 Professor Leonard Baines at St. John's Law School
15 and other professors who I do not do justice
16 presently by mentioning their names. When these
17 people teach us they teach by example. They work
18 hard. Professor Roure has just given birth to two
19 wonderful babies, twins. As a mother, is
20 mothering us and we're not just a few but we're
21 grown up an still behave a little bit like babies.
22 So she has too many babies to take care of, too
23 much to sacrifice and she's doing that. And other
24 people here, too, her assistants as well; they
25 keep in contact with us. They want us to succeed.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

I recently received an answer, I applied to St. John's Law School. I applied to five other law schools, one denied me and St. John's responded to me because I did very poorly on the LSATs and I abhor tests. You were saying something about the city's concerned more about tests than actually welfare of the students or something to that extent. I do believe that's true and I do believe that's very, very sad.

And it's also sad the fact that here we have today, we have to beg for money for education. They should understand that. They should give it and say thank God we have to give it and we don't have to think twice about it. Of course, they have to keep check on it. They have to regulate it a little bit so they can make sure we're actually, there are some results but not like this.

Just to conclude, the money you're giving is going to wonderful people, people who care. The money is well spent because it's succeeding. St. John's recently responded saying that they have conditionally accepted me whereas previously if I had not been a member of this

1
2 program I don't think they would have ever, ever
3 considered me.

4 CHAIRPERSON BARRON:

5 Congratulations.

6 MR. ULI: Ever, ever considered me.
7 St. John's is a good school with highest
8 reputation. I met all the faculty during the
9 summer and they are people who have worked hard
10 all their lives so it's not easy for them to make
11 this decision but they made it. They have
12 invested, what they have done most is they have
13 given me a chance to succeed, which I think is the
14 key, the most important thing in society because
15 most people do not get this chance. As was
16 mentioned earlier, people have the commitment,
17 they have the education and knowledge, they have
18 the self discipline, self help but they don't get
19 the chance and they give us this.

20 I've kept in contact with my fellow
21 students, fellow classmates with whom I attended
22 the program and they're all doing well and they're
23 all trying to do something. But more so they gear
24 us for one single purpose, for this, Lawyers for
25 Justice and not lawyers for money. I hope I'm not

1
2 wrong. I want to believe that I'm not wrong and I
3 want to keep that belief in me and I believe that
4 they will keep in contact with us through law
5 school. They have offered to help us prepare
6 while attending school to guide us in how to best
7 prepare and best attack the law school exams,
8 which are very, very, very hard.

9 Thank you very much for giving us
10 this opportunity to testify. And please, please,
11 please give it considerable thought, give it
12 serious thought to this because as you well know--
13 with all the documentation that has been given to
14 you, even if you didn't know that we need lawyers
15 of different backgrounds, especially from the
16 African American and Latino side. Because given
17 their percentage in this country, namely the
18 percentage they represent I think they have, not
19 they have but they have the background, they have
20 the ammunition on how best to help the people of
21 this country, especially with regard to justice
22 and truth. So please, please do help us. Thank
23 you.

24 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you.
25 Thank you very much. Thank all of you for your

1

2 testimony. I just wanted to say that that
3 concludes our hearing but I do want to say that
4 believe me, no matter how many people are here
5 your testimony means something. It means
6 something to this committee, to my other
7 colleagues. It's all on record, it's being
8 recorded and we do take this very seriously when
9 we go to our budget battles. So that concludes
10 our hearing. And seeing that there's no more--you
11 wanted to say something else?

12 MR. MCSWEEN: Briefly I just wanted
13 to reiterate the fact that the Black Male
14 Initiative, it helps give exposure to those people
15 in Black communities that wouldn't normally get
16 the same exposure or education, diverse cultural,
17 just taking it in. Me, as an individual, I don't
18 think I would be where I was at or where I am
19 without the understanding of different cultural
20 backgrounds and understanding on where they're
21 coming from. In essence of that, it's a support
22 system. The brother came home from prison and
23 what helped him succeed was a support system.

24 So the BMI program is just another
25 form or means of support. All of these programs

1
2 that people have voiced their opinions on, it's a
3 support system so that we can succeed where we've
4 been laden with rules and regulations that have
5 been placed on us so that we couldn't succeed.

6 I know I come from third generation
7 share croppers. I talked to my grandfather before
8 he passed this year. He knew a lot about things
9 that went on in the past. He was just proud of me
10 and the progression that I've made and in my
11 vision and in my perspective of life. That all
12 comes to exposure and like I said, that support
13 system and that BMI is a great deal of support
14 system in the CUNY system. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Well thank you
16 very much and that concludes. You have our
17 support 100% and we just have to fight to make
18 sure that the Council does the right thing. That
19 concludes our hearing. I thank you very much, all
20 of you for staying to the end. This meeting is
21 now adjourned.

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Amber Gibson, 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 Amber Gibson

Date May 19, 2009 _____